

Ambient Voice



Dean Frenkel

Ambient Voice

- 1** **Mirror of the Sky / Sea** 6'07"
(originally *Bathing in Stillness* by Mark Clement Pollard)
- 2** **Summer Waves** 10'34"
(originally *Summer Etude* by Kate Adam and Ariel Valent)
- 3** **New Year's Dawn** 7'16"
(originally *Sweet Light of Day* by Mark Clement Pollard)
- 4** **90 Mile Dream** 6'44"
(originally *Odyssey for a Lone Bassoon* by George Dreyfus)
- 5** **Symphony of the Earth** 10'57"
(originally *Gratitude* by Andrew MacGregor)
- 6** **Walking on a Sea of Moonstone** 9'13"
(originally *The Travelling Dimension* by Kate Adam and Ariel Valent)
- 7** **Wishmaker** 10'23"
(originally *Between Home and Heaven* by Mark Clement Pollard)
- 8** **The Wisdom of Bones** 7'03"
(originally *Nature* by Kate Adam and Ariel Valent)

Ambient Voice features Dean Frenkel's haunting harmonic vocals strategically placed over and within the music of outstanding Australian composers, including Mark Clement Pollard, George Dreyfus, Andrew MacGregor and Invention in Time

This CD also has a bonus CD-ROM section that features MPEG movie footage of Dean Frenkel performing live and demonstrating the ancient art of vocal harmonics, together with Tom Lewis (didjeridu), Christopher Young (clarinet) and Linda Laasi (vocals)

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Ambient Voice

This project arose from an original concept to record an ambient/world music album with strategic placements

harmonics would simultaneously contribute a unique and evocative sound to the music. My confidence in this concept came from myriad experiences of combining vocal harmonics with many instruments and music types. For me, **Ambient Voice** is more than an autobiographical journey of



of harmonic vocals over and within a selection of outstanding compositions and recordings by Australian music artists. I anticipated that the musical compositions would add complexity to the sound of the harmonics, while the

sound, it is a connection of pre-industrial with contemporary music with an added multicultural context.

A short history

Ancient knowledge is encrypted into the sounds of harmonics. Though vocal harmonics have only recently been introduced to western society, tribal cultures worldwide have been practising harmonic vocalising for many centuries and perhaps for thousands of years in their meditation, spiritual, shamanistic and musical journeys. Indigenous peoples everywhere have traditionally applied their soundscapes to landscapes.

The instrument believed by some to be humankind's first, the didjeridu has been incorporating vocal harmonics techniques into its playing since the beginning. Indeed, vocal harmonics may even be older than the didjeridu. Evidence can be seen through its widespread practice in surviving cultures throughout the world; in Tibet, Mongolia, Tuva, Sardinia, by Canadian Inuit women, Australian Aborigines, Southern African tribes and more. Many of these cultures have aural-based histories with their survival dependent on the passing of their traditions by word of mouth. A sense of their sound survives through the experience of listening to the ancient art of harmonics.

Not being comfortable with the term 'harmonic singing' I prefer to call the art 'vocal harmonics'. Singers sing songs and arias with words, harmonic vocalists do not sing songs by definition. They play their harmonic voice as a musical instrument. Harmonics are components of notes which exist manyfold in all sounds.

They are vibrations representing the very source of life. Vocal harmonics and its particular form of listening necessarily involves an expanded yet more focussed method of listening to sound. A good listener is able to notice the different harmonics in the sound and follow the range of harmonics as they are played. Rather than focussing on the one whole sound a harmonic listener can raise their listening consciousness and hear higher and lower sounds otherwise missed by our familiar way of listening. DEAN FRENKEL

A journey begins

My passion for vocal harmonics began on the banks of the Goulburn River on new year's dawn, 1993 when I heard a peaceful chap Randall project his high harmonics across the river to my utter disbelief and fascination. To me it was wondrous a human being could make such angelic sounds. I later discovered that any person can make these sounds and rapidly learn the basics. I approached Randall, attempted to mimic his sounds and found a very slight harmonic in accompaniment to my voice. One minute I didn't know it was possible and the next moment I could sing two notes at the one time. I was utterly delighted! Then fortuitously my car radio broke down.

At the time I was taking many long driving trips, and rather than repair it, I devoted my considerable time on the road exploring harmonic sounds and developing my harmonic vocal techniques. The objective was to make my harmonic voice more prominent than my drone voice and hopefully eliminate it to leave the harmonic voice standing out on its own.

Eventually I succeeded by hiding my fundamental voice behind the drone of the car and I learnt to listen to the harmonics on their own. Working with sound at every opportunity I jammed with the fantastic Peter Gleeson and met my eventual wife, Linda Laasi, at an audition with a vocal harmonics group. This represents the beginning of a stunning series of journeys which continue to this day.

Production credits

Thanks to my wife Linda Laasi and son Jackson, my source of everything; also to Thomas Grubb who calmly contributed his considerable recording and arranging skills.

Special thanks to Martin Wright at Move Records who made the commitment to back a new vision and ultimately made the project possible.

Thanks to the outstanding composers and musicians, chiefly Mark Clement Pollard, Kate Adam, Ariel Valent, Andrew MacGregor and George Dreyfus. In the spirit of music they kindly gave me permission to compose and record harmonic vocals over carefully selected pieces they had previously released.

To my favourite visual artist, the late Lin Onus whose work **In Search of the Waterhole** is featured on the cover and to Jo Onus for granting permission to use it.

To Alessandro Servadei who designed the CD cover, backcard and booklet and is responsible for its marketing. To Marilyn Thomas for her proof-reading skills and creative input. To the Gyuto Monks of Tibet and to Peter Gleeson for their energy and tireless promotion of the ancient vocal techniques.

And finally to Paul Pena and everyone else who stretch the boundaries of musical horizons.

Track notes

All works have been produced and remixed by Dean Frenkel and Thomas Grubb at the Move Records studio in Melbourne.

- 1 Mirror of the Sky / Sea**
(originally titled **Bathing in Stillness**, composed by Mark Clement Pollard)

Dean Frenkel, vocal harmonics, together with Gongworks Gamelan, Ashley Bird, Marcie Civins, Danny Suran, Ben Dickson, Joan Skilbeck, Alison Beckett, Andrew Carcasi, Nikol Mckail, Taran Carter, Jacob Cartwright, Evan Meagher, Peter Head and John Zutic (vocals).

- 2 Summer Waves**
(originally titled **Summer Etude**, composed by Kate Adam and Ariel Valent)

Dean Frenkel, vocal harmonics, together with Kate Adam (marimba) and Ariel Valent (vibraphone).

- 3 New Year's Dawn**
(originally titled **Sweet Light of Day**, composed by Mark Clement Pollard)

Dean Frenkel, vocal harmonics, together with Robert Schubert (clarinet), Zoe Black (violin), Isin Cakmacioglu (violin), John Lynch (viola) and Rachel Atkinson (cello).

- 4 90 Mile Dream**
(originally titled **Odyssey of a Lone Bassoon**, composed by George Dreyfus)

Dean Frenkel vocal harmonics, together with Matthew Wilkie (bassoon).

- 5 Symphony of the Earth**
(originally titled **Gratitude**, composed by Andrew MacGregor)

Dean Frenkel, vocal harmonics, together with Andrew MacGregor (shakuhachi), Linda Laasi and Dean Frenkel (vocals) and Tom MacGregor (keyboards and textures).

- 6 Walking on a Sea of Moonstone**
(originally titled **The Travelling Dimension**, composed by Kate Adam and Ariel Valent)

Dean Frenkel, vocal harmonics, together with Kate Adam (marimba) and Ariel Valent (vibraphone).

- 7 Wishmaker**
(originally titled **Between Home and Heaven**, composed by Mark Clement Pollard)

Dean Frenkel, vocal harmonics, together with Graeme Shilton (alto saxophone), Julie Raines (harp) and Peter Neville (vibraphone).

- 8 The Wisdom of Bones**
(originally titled **Nature**, composed by Kate Adam and Ariel Valent)

Dean Frenkel, vocal harmonics, together with Kate Adam (marimba) and Ariel Valent (vibraphone).

Source recordings

- 1, 3, 7** Reproduced with permission from a **handful of rain ...** (MD 3218) by Mark Clement Pollard.

- 2, 6, 8** Reproduced with permission from **Natural Expression** by Invention in Time.

- 4** Reproduced with permission from the **The Marvellous World of George Dreyfus Volume 2** (MD 3190) by George Dreyfus.

- 5** Produced by mediadogs productions from the album **4 Shakuhachi Meditations (AMS02)** by Andrew MacGregor.

Extras

To see the bonus MPEG movie featuring performances of and demonstrations by Dean Frenkel and friends go to the Move website: <http://www.move.com.au/disc/dean-frenkel-ambient-voice>

