

*Niel van der Watt*

*Kamermusiek*



*Chamber Music*

*Annalien Ball*



## Niel van der Watt

be aspects of character, personality or lives that intrigue and challenge me. These I try to capture in music.

Once a piece exists, it requires someone to play it and someone else to listen. So begins the fragile relationship between the listener, performer and composer, each contributing to the music in his or her own way through imagination and interpretation.

The music in this recording is instantly accessible and resonates with common experience. Because of this it has a good chance of remaining in the memory. Isn't that what the composer hopes for?

**Niel van der Watt** has a doctorate in musicology from UNISA. Since 1987 he has taught music at Pretoria Boys High School in addition to conducting the school's Dixie Band and Symphony Orchestra. He is an active composer and choral arranger and his works are regularly performed and recorded both in South Africa and abroad. Most recent recordings are the choral cycles, Liedwerk van Klip, (Cantamus Corde - Prof Petru Gräbe), Job and Griekwaloflied (Singkronies - Prof Johann van der Sandt).

Almost without exception my music has its origins in people. People fascinate me – and so the initial spark to create comes from an individual or a group of people. It might be as simple as a request or a need that I see. It may

# Chamber Music

## 1 **East is Inside** (1998)

Helen Martins, the late outsider-artist from Nieu-Bethesda, once answered a query about the direction her cement sculptures faced by saying, “East is inside”. My friend, the dancer Sue Hall, inspired by the intriguing Martins, created a modern dance sequence in which she brought the cement figures of the Owl House garden to life. My contribution was the music, hence this piece for solo piano.

## 2 - 3 **Tymphony** (1994)

Timothy de Klerk played this piece (named after him) on the French horn, although it was originally written for cello. The two movements are contrasting in character, but there is a subtle melodic relation between them. The second movement is in fact a variation on the first; all I have done is re-interpret what has already been heard in an African idiom.

## 4-5 **Con'scertino** (1992/4)

The first two movements of this piece (Longing for something & Celebrating something) were written for Conrad Derksen, a superb soprano saxophonist. Later two further movements (Waiting for something & Enjoying something) were added, written this time with the clarinet in mind. Now we have a sonata in which four emotions are contrasted. The clarinet, so close to the human voice, is equally adept at expressing longing and fun.

## 6-7 **Phylomonic** (1995)

This was written for Philip Nolte, hence the wordplay in the title. The first movement, a lazy tune reminiscent of township pennywhistle music, is followed by a more restless

and irregular second movement. In the middle of this movement the piano and violin pursue one another in a swift canon, each trying to gain the upper hand.

## 8 **Lamennet** (2002)

The inspiration for this came from the very expressive soprano saxophone playing of Albert Mennen. Its somewhat melancholy character offers an insight into the true heart of the soprano saxophone in contemplative mood. The short cadenza demands considerable skill from the performer.

## 9 **Musica Cantanda** (1998)

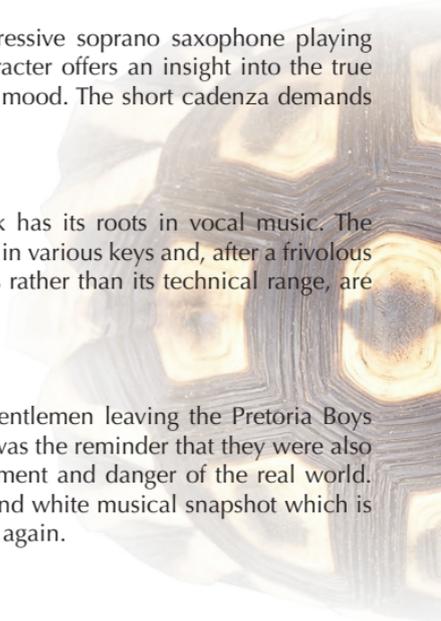
As the title indicates, this single movement work has its roots in vocal music. The opening five-note motif is explored and developed in various keys and, after a frivolous middle section, returns. The cello's vocal qualities rather than its technical range, are represented here.

## 10 **Leaving School Blues** (1996)

This piece was originally written for six young gentlemen leaving the Pretoria Boys High School Dixie Band. In the back of my mind was the reminder that they were also leaving the secure haven of school for the excitement and danger of the real world. This bittersweet departure is captured in a black and white musical snapshot which is tinged with the possibility that we might not meet again.

## 11 **African Carol** (1996)

*African Carol* combines a lyrical vocal line with a harmonic-rhythmic accompaniment that is unmistakably African. The simple statement engages the listener with its ancient, yet timeless message.



## 12-14 **Trio** (1998/2001)

The first movement of this piece is sub-titled “Judge’s Ditty”, after an ex-trumpeter, Bernard Jadrijevič. The tempo indication, “Harry-casual”, serves more than one purpose! The Aulos Trio commissioned a work and so two movements were added to form the Trio for Oboe, Bassoon and Piano. The second movement is introspective whilst the third is willful and streetwise with elements of the bossa nova rhythm and the blues scale making an appearance.

## 15 **Nocturne** (1994)

This “night piece” originally composed for Betsie Schaap (née van Rooyen), has been prescribed for the Hennie Joubert Piano Competition, Wellington. All the elements of a traditional nocturne are present, although the melodic line contains all sorts of less conventional rhythmic adventures. When I wrote the short middle section I had a picture of a pastoral scene bathed in bright moonlight in my mind.

## The Artists

### **Susan Mouton** (cello)

Susan Mouton began cello lessons in Durban and completed her studies at the University of Pretoria. She then joined the NSO in 1983 and was appointed principal cellist in 1987. Currently she leads the cello section in both the JPO and the JFO. She is married to violinist Miroslav Chakaryan, has a son, and lives in Johannesburg.

### **Lizet Smith** (clarinet)

As principal and second clarinetist in various orchestras, Lizet regularly gives recitals with, amongst others, Annalien Ball. Whilst the clarinet is her primary instrument,

she is also adept at the piano and recorder. She is married to Hendrik and lives in Pretoria.

**Johanna Roos** (violin)

Johanna Roos holds a MMus from the University of Pretoria and a PG Diploma in solo and ensemble work from the Royal College of Music, where she studied under Natalia Bayarsky. She has recently returned to South Africa after a two year stint as assistant teacher at the Yehudi Menuhin School in Surrey. Johanna is married to Mike, has a daughter and lives in Pretoria.

**Marc Botha** (soprano saxophone)

Marc Botha received his MA degree cum laude from the University of Pretoria in 2004. He has been an active performer and tutor since 1998 and currently teaches music at Pretoria Boys High School. A regular soloist and chamber musician, he has recorded with the Tuks Camerata and Singkronies choirs.

**Kobus Malan** (oboe)

Kobus Malan is a member of the JPO and teaches at St Albans College in Pretoria. He is also the driving force behind the Chamber Music Concert Series of South African music for the Dutch South African Society in Amsterdam, Netherlands. Kobus is a member of the Aulos Trio and lives in Pretoria with his son.

**Fanie Jooste** (bassoon)

Fanie Jooste studied the bassoon under Prof Helman Jung at the Nordwestdeutsche Musikakademie, Detmold, Germany. He is currently Professor of Music at the North West University in Potchefstroom where he lives. He performs regularly as chamber musician for the South African Chamber Music Society and especially as member of the Aulos Trio with whom he has been on two concert tours to Europe. Fanie is married to Ems and they have a son and two daughters.

**Annalien Ball's** piano studies culminated with tuition under Marian Friedman. Currently she specialises in chamber music and is a member of a number of ensembles, including the Aulos Trio, Allegri Trio and the newly formed Trio Chalumeau. Annalien is married to Stephen, has two daughters and lives in Pretoria.



**Annalien Ball**

## Thank you to...

- My parents and immediate family for their support;
- My brother Riaan for his advice and encouragement;
- The students at Pretoria Boys High School and others mentioned earlier for their, often unwitting inspiration;
- Yvonne Reyburn and Mathilda Hornsveld who were the guinea pigs for all the piano parts, solo or accompaniment;
- Annalien for her major role in this recording - without her it would not have happened;
- The performers for their enthusiasm, friendship and kindness;
- Lindsay Reyburn for his assistance with the text;
- Andreas and Wiebke for their expertise and all the extra hours.

*Niel van der Watt (July 2005)*

# Chamber Music - Niel van der Watt



- 1 **East is Inside** - piano
- 2-3 **Tymphony** - cello & piano
- 4-5 **Con'scertino** - clarinet & piano
- 6-7 **Phylomonic** - violin & piano
- 8 **Lamennent** - soprano saxophone & piano
- 9 **Musica Cantanda** - cello & piano
- 10 **Leaving School Blues** - clarinet & piano
- 11 **African Carol** - violin & piano
- 12-14 **Trio** - oboe, bassoon & piano
- 15 **Nocturne** - piano

**Annalien Ball** - piano

**Susan Mouton** - cello

**Lizet Smith** - clarinet

**Johanna Roos** - violin

**Marc Botha** - soprano saxophone

**Kobus Malan** - oboe

**Fanie Jooste** - bassoon

**Recording Venue** Musaion, University of Pretoria

**Date** 23 - 24 October 2004

**Recording Engineer & Editor** Andreas Lamken

**Artistic Adviser** Niel van der Watt

**Producer** Andreas Lamken – prospect

**Copyright** Niel van der Watt

**Cover Photograph** Eugene Ashton

**Booklet Design** Fearika Heyns

**Printed in Germany**

