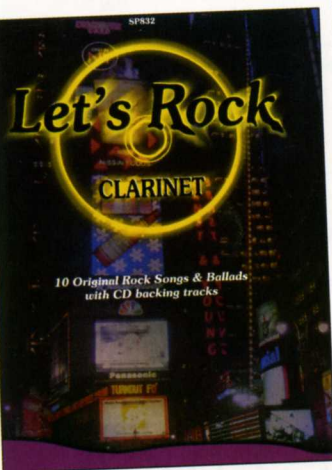


LET'S ROCK CLARINET

Roy McCormack
Clarinet and CD
Spartan Press £9.99

The book comprises ten pieces for clarinet, rather limited viewed in isolation, in the way that a transcribed vocal line often is. Turn on the CD however, and the additional gift is revealed – a free band and stadium with every purchase. The rock backing track is committed, professional and full and variously includes electric guitars, bass line, synths, drums, even timpani. Clarinettist, you shall go to the gig!



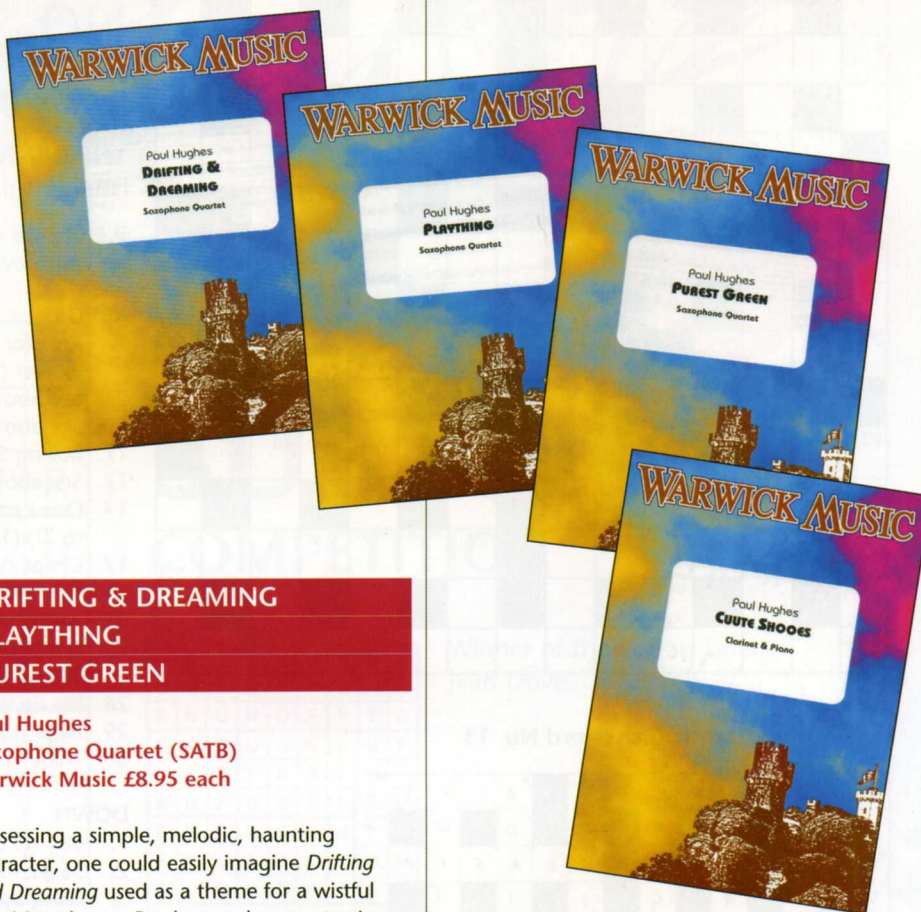
The songs are all McCormack originals,

competently arranged and with harmonic originality. Several passed the Old Grey Reviewer Whistle Test. The only credited backing musician is the creator of the drum loop, a shrewd investment, as the energy and professional production provide the power behind this experience.

For each number, there is a CD track with and without clarinet, clearly referenced from the book. Throughout, the recorded clarinet plays resolutely on, not unduly excited, but indicating a very plausible outcome in reality. The clarinet essentially takes a vocal role, thus neatly avoiding the doomed challenge of blending the mellow woodwind with the electric backing. A similar package of the same songs is available for various other instruments, including oboe and cello.

The intended grade four to six standard is perhaps a slightly high estimate. Complex notation reflecting precisely some imagined jazzy vocal realisation is sensibly avoided and the parts are easy to read. There is however important rhythmic content and syncopation, some variety in pitch, and a few finger exercise passages. But the strength of this package is that the grade four clarinettist can briefly dream his or her way on stage at Wembley with a few assorted rock gods; in which case practice will not be a problem.

David Morris



**DRIFTING & DREAMING
PLAYTHING
PUREST GREEN**

Paul Hughes
Saxophone Quartet (SATB)
Warwick Music £8.95 each

Possessing a simple, melodic, haunting character, one could easily imagine *Drifting and Dreaming* used as a theme for a wistful television drama. Producers please note. A reflective, slow, waltz, this charming piece offers a sustained three-part texture with gently undulating propulsion provided by the tenor.

Of this triptych, *Plaything* is by far the most difficult. However, it won't sound particularly hard to the lay listener, for the challenge to the saxophonists lies not in mastering runs of brilliant and self-evident virtuosity but rather in maintaining ensemble cohesion through an abundance of off-beat and unusual rhythms. *Purest Green* is a light-hearted quartet in which the baritone provides a walking bass, while the upper parts move in parallel above. Effective when combined as a simple three-movement quartet, these titles are also satisfying as stand-alone pieces of ABRSM grades five to seven.

As with many Warwick publications, a sound file is available (free) on the web, at: <http://www.warwickmusic.com>
John Robert Brown.

CUUTE SHOOS

Paul Hughes
Clarinet and Piano
Warwick Music £6.95

A light-hearted one-movement work, *Cuute Shooes* bears the instruction 'tongue in cheek'. Rhythmic but not overtly jazzy, cute but not corny, nicely complex without being overly difficult, one could see this becoming a popular item in the ABRSM grade lists at around grade six or seven. If you collect pieces that are fun to play, and which can serve as sight-reading for advanced students, here is one to consider. Paul Hughes is a young London-based pianist and composer from whom we are going to hear more, I'm sure.

Although the performance is somewhat mechanical, *Cuute Shooes* can be heard in a soundclip on the Warwick Music site, at: <http://www.warwickmusic.com>

A version is available for euphonium and piano.
John Robert Brown

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Stephen Davies