

TRAUMTON Records

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pop

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## Montmorensy Writ in Water

Montmorensy: vocals, piano

and the Montmorensy Orchestra

### Listening tips:

- [ 7 ] Ducks Don't Need Satellites
- [ 10 ] Grass in Antarctica
- [ 2 ] Crow

*"a song can be a symphony" – Montmorensy*

## Who the duck is Montmorensy?

*Montmorensy is a crazed composer, a piano-poet, a star-gazer, a day-dreamer, a dizzy thinker, a silly soul, a wanderer, a wonderer...*

*Montmorensy is a renaissance man trapped in modern times.*

*He likes to stay home in his pyjamas.*

Australian pianist, composer and singer-songwriter Paul Hankinson does not deny that Montmorensy is a pseudonym.. a kunstlername.. but suggests "it's more of a name for the world of my imagination - the sounds and ideas that haunt or humour – than it's a name for me. 'Montmorensy' is more of a mood.. a feeling.. an attitude.. a way of making music, sure, but also a way of viewing the world."

Paul was born and lovingly raised in a small town called Grafton. One day, during a holiday with his aunty, Paul shocked his unsuspecting parents by playing an Olivia Newton John song he had heard in the car on the Wurlitzer in the living room. Upon returning home, Rodney and Veronica purchased a piano and there was no stopping the child! He played everything he heard on television, or radio, any song sung, whistled or hummed to him. Eventually, at age 6 he started to write songs of his own. At age 14 he wrote a musical (the music was good, the story was ludicrous. It was never performed.). Around that time, he developed a deep love of classical music, in particular the music of Beethoven, Brahms, Schubert and Schumann, a love which endures to this day.

Paul went on to study piano at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music in Brisbane, graduating with the University Medal. He gave many recitals, was soloist with orchestras and was the winner of several competitions and scholarships.

In 2006 he moved to Berlin and almost immediately began writing songs, something he had not done since becoming obsessed with Beethoven String Quartets some 12 years earlier. The first song he wrote, 'Ducks Don't Need Satellites' held a kind of whimsy which reminded him of letters his dear friend Mary used to write him.. letters in the style of Jane Austen.. letters addressed to Lord Montmorensy, Esquire. " The name just seemed to fit with this approach to writing. It was fun to describe something as being Montmorensy – it allowed me to stretch outside myself, to be unashamedly romantic, eccentric, crazy, to have a head full of violins!"

After 4 years in Berlin, honing his craft, refining the Montmorensy flavour, forming the Montmorensy Orchestra and developing a small but loyal audience, it was time to document.. time to make an album.. to find the dream sound.. of course Traumton was the perfect label!

The original plan was to use mostly the home-made demo versions of the songs – exploring the idea that what Montmorensy imagined in his head and what Montmorensy was able to make with "the machines" were two very different things.. it was to be an unrealised vision, an unfulfilled dream yet a testament to the powers of the imagination. It was to be finished in February.

But when Martin Offik, co-producer and sound engineer suggested they should \*doch\* realise the dream and bring the orchestra out of Montmorensy's head and into the studio.. it was a tasty idea.. too tempting to resist and February became March became April became May and well.. the album was finally finished in December!

"I feel so filled with gratitude and also completely overwhelmed that Stefi [Stefanie Marcus – head of Traumton] allowed the album to evolve in this way, naturally and unforced.. taking such care and time – and that Martin was willing to sacrifice his health (we lived on Ritter Sport and Coffee) and his sanity by sitting next to me for those countless hours – that friends missed breakfasts and trains to bring their beautiful instruments of wood and brass to the studio to fill my music with their skill and their warmth and their humanity. The artwork too. Carola and Simon worked tirelessly to bring to life those silly paper things I pasted and painted.. both determined to make sure the art walked hand in hand with the music. I don't think albums are really made this way anymore. But I think you can hear it.. you can hear the love, you can feel the friendship."

"The album is completely over the top.. It's crazily ambitious and borderline delusional. The fact that it begins with an overture .. well.. a "Croverure" says it all really."

In this collection of lusciously orchestrated theatrical pop songs, we encounter Montmorensy.. filled with a boyish wonderment yet grappling to find his footing in a world where the bees are disappearing, grass is bursting through the ice, stars are being flung out of the galaxy and goldfish are losing their minds. Determined to restore harmony, he embarks upon a quest to find that elusive and fleeting Beauty that exists but for a moment, ever fading, writ in water.

"It's an exploration of the self not by looking down and in.. but rather by looking up and out! It's all about a sense of wonder. It's unconscious of cool, not afraid to be silly. It's also a collection of stories.. all told with a tender affection and a forgiving joy for a topsy-turvy world in a giddy galaxy in a universe which is upside down and inside out."