

Programme Note

A significant part of the fun of playing computer games is created by the music. In consoles of my youth such as the Nintendo Entertainment System, the computing power (or lack thereof) meant that the sonic possibilities were quite limited. Music and sound effects were almost entirely created by the combination of a number of internal synthesisers. Other aspects of the music such as the tempo were dependent of the speed of the internal electronics. In **Nintendo Music** I have employed some of these idiosyncratic musical features and translated them to the clarinet and piano.

One type of video game are side-scrolling platform games, such as Super Mario Brothers. In such a game the main character must try to kill a number of various small monsters, negotiate the challenging terrain (e.g. not fall off a cliff onto spikes below) and try to get to the end of the level in the quickest possible time. At the end of each level or end of the game, a much larger and difficult monster (typically called a "Boss") will appear, accompanied by a change of music. (Super Mario Brothers is an example of a platform game.) **Nintendo Music** is based upon the structure of such a platform game.

Video games are seen by many as a waste of time: I can personally attest to their addictive qualities. On the other hand, extensive playing of these games can significantly increase hand-eye co-ordination, leading to better reaction times in dangerous situations. In 1995 I narrowly avoided a head-on collision with a bus – my mind switched over to 'videogame mode' and I was able to swerve quickly and decisively, as if playing a game without the life-changing consequences. So maybe computer games aren't so much a waste of time after all.

The duration of **Nintendo Music** is approximately 6 minutes. It was commissioned by Ars Musica Australis for the Australian clarinetist, Andrew Harper.

Nintendo Music

for clarinet in A and piano
by Matthew Hindson, 2005

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