

Make your own kind of music

Ubiquitous, soundtrack of *The Magnificent 16*

Reviewed by
Philip L Kerr

Differences ... are the
heart and soul of our
need for each other

Ubiquitous, liner notes



In his twenties **Philip L Kerr** (INTP) played in rock bands and dabbled in recording. After time off for parenting he is playing again with a few friends who are old enough to know better.

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The Magnificent 16 is a magnificent obsession. Danielle Poirier, the initiator and realiser of this 9-year project, describes it as 'a multimedia gallery of type portraits ... meant to inspire people to understand each other, to change the world in a loving way'. (Yes, you guessed it: Danielle is an INFP.)

Last year in this *Review* Danielle offered a selection of extracts from her interviews with 100 representatives of the 16 types—the 'Magnificent 16'. And back in 2004 she told us about the challenges of creating a soundtrack to complement the interviews. *Ubiquitous* is that soundtrack.

Why a soundtrack? 'In trying to illustrate psychological functions and types', says Danielle, 'I have found most mediums to be incomplete':

Marrying several mediums together in a joyfully polygamous collage brings the viewer closer to experiencing the difference, which is my ultimate goal ...

Music did not figure in Danielle's concept until she heard the ESTP violinist François Guay play 'a wicked, wild and tumultuous upheaval of sounds', and 'suddenly, music became an imperative to add to the other multiple layers of portraits':

I fell into two worlds ... One grounded me in my body, bid me to move, to stretch, to expand my presence into the world physically. The other called for stillness, to feel a presence growing within: hope, joy. This, I thought, is exactly what the functions do—they propel us into different worlds.

François was persuaded to come aboard as musical director, and the *Ubiquitous* project was under way.

Ubiquitous is a CD of 16 tracks, 'musical improvisations inspired by Jung's typology as interpreted by I Myers and K Briggs'.

The first thing that strikes you is the cover, painted by Danielle herself: a Daliesque dreamscape under a Van Gogh night sky. Welcome to INFP World.

In keeping with its objective of illustrating differences, *Ubiquitous* features an array of singers and players. Catherine Bazin's versatile vocal improvisations are backed by Karine Beauchamp, Franck Imperato, Pascal Vanasse and Sylvain Poirier. The musicians include François Guay (*violin*); Philippe Chaput, David Bujold and Sylvain Poirier (*guitars*); Yoël Diaz (*keyboards*); Olivier Labrèque and Jean-François Martel (*basses*); and Normad Bock and Fabrice Laurent (*drums and percussion*).

Bruno Bélanger handles the sound, while François Guay doubles as musical director, working to his own Artisan brief: 'You tell us what you want, someone throws out an idea and we play'. All of the performers are volunteers, attesting to Danielle's INFP gift for enlisting others to her cause.

John Lennon said that writing about music is like dancing about lovemaking (or words to that effect!). How can I, an INTP, review music created to express what it feels like to be any of the 15 types that I am not? 'In my own way' is the only answer, I guess—and no doubt Danielle would concur.

My take on *Ubiquitous* will reflect not only my type, but also my musical grounding in the rock and pop of the 1960s and 1970s. Here, then, is my take on the 16 tracks, along with Danielle's own commentary on the making of the music, as she reported back in 2004.

ISTJ: 1:02

The title is the length of track: hyper-literal. But we must avoid the pitfall of equating ISTJ with the plain, simple and prosaic: as Isabel Myers notes, introverted sensing is characterised by an 'eccentric inner self'. Dick Thompson's tag for *Si* is 'Surreal', and 'surreal' is what we get here: a short loop of synthesised riff under harmonised scat voices and sax, which for me recalls The Residents' 1970s avant-garde doodlings. At the same time, brisk and bustling.

Danielle: *The image of introverted sensing that guides me is from Sue Clancy, who once described it as a Niagara Falls-like cascade of information pouring into awareness . . .*



Danielle Poirier (*front*) with technician Bruno Bélanger, musical director and violinist François Guay, and vocalist and artistic director Catherine Bazin

ENTJ: You Go This Way, I Go That Way (Blessed Order)

A funky run on bass guitar in a regular 4/4 time, punctuated with drums that drive the track. A violin enters, long notes that start to soar. A clipped finish for a crisp close.

I want this music to say: this is where I am going, and I am getting there in the most direct way possible. . . . we eventually get it by encouraging Jean-François to play a few bars of his electric double bass . . . to create a brawny, muscular tone . . .

ESFJ: In Perfect Harmony (Ode to Bobby McFerrin)

The title pays homage to the vocal wizard famed for his singalong hit, 'Don't Worry, Be Happy'. A *capella* male and female voices blend with handclaps to create an African feel, a marketplace ambience that warmly evokes life 'out there'.

Sylvain starts singing a little ditty . . . with a slight twist that gives it a Bobby McFerrin feel. Light, engaging, harmonious and definitely something you want to sing along to . . . a multitude of voices inspiring the world to sing in perfect harmony.

ESFP: Salsa, Sunshine and Lollipops

The soundscape of a Brazilian carnival. A cool, breezy vocal, violin and conga drums in samba—or salsa?—rhythm, à la Sergio Mendes (if you remember the Sixties).

. . . it is sensuous, spontaneous, warm, the most in-the-body experience we have had so far, a refreshing experience brought to us by way of a grounded, rounded Latin rhythm. My hips cannot not move.

ESTJ: Oak It Is

Bass, drums and keyboards in the 1980s style of ABC or Orchestral Manoeuvres In The Dark, before the violin adds a dash of bluegrass. Four beats per bar in four-bar blocks: straight and square.

. . . an engaging pop tune with a somewhat Cajun violin feel to it, a light-hearted and finely orchestrated song with definite commercial appeal.

ESTP: Funk & Audacity

Funky it is, in a Doobie Brothers 'Listen To The Music' minor-key groove. Scat vocals and violin declare that it's good to be alive.

. . . a funky, eclectic, audacious kind of funk . . . The voice and violin imitate and respond to — almost challenge — each other.

INFJ: 41 Yeats Avenue

The longest of the 16 tracks is arhythmic, and atmospheric. Disembodied voices and instruments used as effects paint a sound picture in measured stepwise movements. Pink Floyd's sonic explorations in 'Careful With That Axe, Eugene' come to mind.

Sylvain's guitar suspends a few simple notes in the air; François' violin plays a gentle, furtive whale song glissando; Normand plays his chimes, bells, gentle bongos, a very discreet free-floating non-rhythm . . . we have mysticism, dreams and imagination in a womblike vessel.

INFP: Nested

A voice projects long, throaty notes with primeval resonances of calls from minarets or Himalayan hills. A violin joins in; a shaker punctuates without adding rhythm, as the bass underpins a picked guitar.

Catherine's first notes cause me to shiver . . . The violin tenderly introduces a plaintive, dissonant voice. The guitar cuddles her gently. The bass offers the net into which she falls. The percussion enfolds her spirit with a blanket. They are one.

INTJ: Quantum

A guitar picks out echoing notes, the bass steps up and down, moving forward in pairs of notes, with a violin interpolating. This is more 'systematic' than the INFJ track.

What can we do to create the same kind of floating, dreamlike space [as we did for INFJ], but add some kind of structure to it, some kind of edge? . . . It is a leap into quantum physics, a space odyssey.

INTP: Golden Mean

Full-on, medium-paced Philadelphia funk, à la the Average White Band or Steely Dan (an INTP group, in Peter Geyer's analysis). Bluegrass violin leading into an ascending chromatic chord sequence. Short and sharp.

The image that keeps popping up is of a clear and strong internal structure, coiffed by a cacophonous swarm of bees. . . . The violin weaves its mind-boggling, complex melody in and out of the rhythmic structure to convey how ideas swarm the mind . . .

ISFJ: Hourglass

A cyclic pattern of guitar notes, with chimes adding an air of lightness, and a *la-la* scat vocal pattern. Enclosing—and enclosed.

Cascading notes flowing into place in a repetitive motif, similar but slightly different each time . . .

ISFP: Butterflies and Felicity

Gentle percussion, bird sounds and running water, leading into a minor-key guitar and more *la-la* vocal. Legato notes from a cello or viola set an introspective mood.

ISTP: Kerplunk! The story of Archimedes' bath

Fascinatin' rhythm, then be-bop vocals, before becoming violin-driven. It swings!

We want conventional jazz, an apparently laid-back approach to music that has a rigorous internal structure. . . . The rhythm section is crisp, sharp, staccato, yet there is quite a groove happening . . .

ENFP: Sheherezade

Modal lines from an Arabian or Eastern stringed instrument, with a complementing vocal. Later, drums. The atmosphere of a Moroccan market. 'Come to the Casbah!'

I want music that will make me float and dream with my eyes wide open. Nothing is as it is, everything is as it could be.

ENTP: On the edge

A violin swoops up and down the strings, while double-tracked voices intertwine and a drum thumps a Roman galley beat.

. . . a syncopated rhythm that easily illustrates an 'irrational' function—full of surprises, unpredictable. . . . It just explodes, it has no boundaries.

ENFJ: Ubuntu

Plain mid-tempo chords create a spiritual feel in the style of 'Let It Be'. Multiple African-sounding voices sing in counterpoint.

As soon as Yoël, the pianist, sits down to play the agreed chords, something quite gospel starts to happen. Everyone rallies and joins in . . . I feel uplifted.



Olivier Labrèque (*bass guitar*), Normand Bock (*percussion*), and Sylvain Poirier (*guitar*) take time out from the recording of *Ubiquitous*.



Danielle Poirier conceived and realised *The Magnificent 16* and its soundtrack, *Ubiquitous*.

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So that is *Ubiquitous*, as far as my words can do justice to it. But there's no substitute for actually hearing it yourself. At AusAPT's national conference last year, *Ubiquitous* provided a distinctive musical prelude to the opening session, and drew a couple of encore plays during the event.

Ubiquitous is sold by Danielle's company, the evocatively-named Rebel Eagle. (The bird of freedom appears to be a resonant image for INFPs: John Lennon's 'Free As A Bird' and Jimi Hendrix's 'Little Wing', for example, and fiction writer Julia Holland's 'winged children', who 'long to fly higher'.)

Next time you're running a type workshop, instead of playing a CD of whale songs or sounds of the forest to set the mood, why not give *Ubiquitous* a go instead?

Ubiquitous? C'est magnifique. ❖

References

- Myers, Isabel, with Peter B Myers, *Gifts differing: Understanding personality type*, Palo Alto, CA: Davies Black 1995 (1980).
- Poirier, Danielle 2004, 'The pursuit of musical portraits', *Australian Psychological Type Review* 6:1, 35-44.
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*Well, she's walking through the clouds
With a circus mind that's running wild
Butterflies and zebras and moonbeams
And fairy tales
That's all she ever thinks about
Ride on with the wind . . .*

Jimi Hendrix, 'Little Wing'
