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APRIL 2006  
Volume 11, No. 4

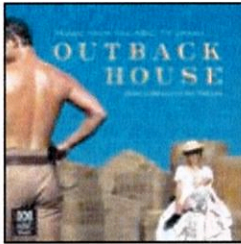
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## Outback House \*\*\* 1/2



ART PHILLIPS  
 ABC Music/Warner Music Australia 5046797412  
 20 tracks - 59:27

If you are a fan of historical reality shows that take people back in time to live like their ancestors, then Australia has a show for you: *Outback House* gives people an opportunity to recreate life on the Australian Outback in 1861. A group of people return to Oxley Downs, a fully-operational sheep station, to experience what the many pioneers in Australia's history did. To accompany this journey, composer Art Phillips provides an epic and sweeping score.

- ▶ Phillips is an American-born composer who has been living in Australia since 1988. He has won many Emmys for his television work, most familiarly for the soap operas *Guiding Light* and *Santa Barbara*. He is currently the president of the Australian Guild of Screen Composers. The fast turnaround for the scores for this series meant that Phillips needed to create the music on high-end synths. He wrote about 30 minutes of music for each of the eight one-hour episodes, and this disc is a good sampling of all the material.

The style of the music leans toward a mixture of Vangelis, James Horner and a little bit of Hans Zimmer. There are many fine touches, including a nice arrangement of "Amazing Grace." The melodic ideas have a period feel, even if the fully orchestrated renditions do not. "1861 Lament" employs a gentle "violin" melody that sounds like some distantly remembered folk song. Though it's not a quote, the melodic contour is similar to a theme from *Braveheart*. That Horner-esque style of synth string writing is attractive and appropriate for this production. There are also great Western-sounding moments in the score, in addition to a fine main theme in tracks like "Big Country" and "Sheep Shearing." "Homesick" is one of several standout tracks written for solo guitar and basic string accompaniment.

—Steven A. Kennedy

Comments regarding this review can be sent to: [stev4uth@hotmail.com](mailto:stev4uth@hotmail.com).

