

Mark-Carthew_s-97.7FM-CASEY-RADIO-interview-2017

**Pre-Recorded at the Berwick Lodge Primary School Recording Studio, Berwick Victoria, Australia for the Casey Radio Student Hour 97.7 FM Casey Radio. August 9th, 2017*

Announcer (Rob Kelly) : Hello. Welcome to the Berwick Lodge Primary Student hour on 97.7 FM Casey Radio.

Kemea: Hi, my name is Kemea.

Savannah: And I'm Savannah.

Kemea: And we're interviewing Mr Carthew, the newest leading teacher to join the staff here at Berwick Lodge.

Savannah: Welcome, Mr Carthew, to the Berwick Lodge Student hour. How does it feel to be here in the studio for the first time?

Mark: This is a fantastic set-up, I have to say. I've just been recording a song to go off on my latest book. I love being in the studio, this is awesome.

Kemea: What made you choose to start teaching?

Mark: That's a really good question. I've been teaching for over 30 years, and I started off as a carpenter, actually, would you believe, for about a year. Then I decided that – I just really liked working with people, with adults as well as kids. I just felt a calling to get involved. I suppose teaching is a very creative profession, too. So I started off as a phys-ed teacher, then I went to teaching music in classroom, and I just love teaching.

Savannah: What was your favourite subject, and why?

Mark: My favourite subject in school was probably English, not surprising that I enjoy writing and reading in particular, but English. But also I loved art. I was one of those kids at school that – I loved high school. Sometimes when you talk to adults and they say 'I didn't really like school' – I absolutely loved school. Maybe that's one of the reasons I became a teacher – is I had such a good experience both in primary school and high school.

Kemea: What did you do before teaching at Berwick Lodge Primary?

Mark: Last year I was at Anderson's Creek Primary School, part time, teaching music and performing arts and doing lots of big festivals and stuff. The year before that I was at Yarra Road Primary School teaching grade two part time. And in those few years before that, I was helping various universities, Swinburne University and RMIT with their teacher education courses, because I left primary teaching – my job at Birmingham Primary School, I was a leading teacher there, to do my PhD. That's what's called a doctorate. So I'm actually Dr Carthew. Don't get sick – because I can't fix you! It's not that sort of doctor. But I left teaching for four years to do that research and university life.

Savannah: Now Mr Carthew, we've been doing some research on you, and understand that you are an award-winning author. You have written a number of books. What's your favourite book you've written so far, and why is some translated to Korean?

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Mark: Ah, look, a really difficult question. I've written over a hundred books in various shapes and forms, and that also includes songs and plays and other education resources. They're all special in their own way. It's a bit like someone saying 'who do you like more – your mum or your dad'. You love them both in different ways. It's the same with books. But you're always pretty close to the book you're currently working on. And the latest one, *The Great Zoo Hullabaloo!*, which I've brought in for you girls, I'm pretty close to that at the moment, because I'm about to record a song. So as an author you never lose love of your old books, but you're always just working on a new project – that's just how it works. They're all pretty special. I love the *Five Little Owls*. I love the artwork in that. I love working with the funny stuff, with Mike Spoor, he's my English Terry Denton-style illustrator. We've done three together so far; *Newts, Lutes and Bandicoots*, *Wicked Wizards & Leaping Lizards* and *Witches Britches, Itches & Twitches!* I just love working with him because we both share a silly sense of humour for all my funny jokes and stuff. We are currently working on another quite different picture book project... but every illustrator is different. They bring a special magic to a book.

Kemea: What would be your top three tips for young writers wanting to become authors?

Mark: Great question. Read. Read. And just enjoy books for what they are. I think you become a better writer if you read what other people are writing. That's quite a common tip from a lot of other authors and illustrators that I mix with as I go around on festivals and touring around and stuff. That would be the top tip – to read and access books. That could be online books as well, of course, these days.

The other top tips to becoming a writer, I suppose, is to find your own voice and think outside the box a little bit. What I mean by thinking outside the box – experimenting with different ideas so that not just the same old, same old. Something a bit different. Come up with something original and a bit different and maybe give things a bit of a twist. Because readers like having a bit of a twist.

Savannah: We thought we could finish off with a few quick 'getting to know you' questions. Are you ready?

Mark: Sure am!

Kemea: What do you like doing on holidays or after school?

Mark: I like playing with my dog Jindi, who's a little red kelpie. I like gardening. I do like my computer, I must admit. So I do quite a bit of making contact with some of my other friends through things like Facebook and that sort of stuff. But I also love walking. I'm fortunate enough to live next to a national park, so I love walking in the forest. Those sort of things. Playing guitar around the campfire. Around the log fire. Our house has a log fire at home. I do relax when I play music or listen to music as well. I love listening to music.

Savannah: What is your favourite colour?

Mark: Probably purple, I reckon. Purple or blue. You can see that in some of the covers of the books there, too.

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Kemea: What's your favourite book, and why?

Mark: My all-time favourite book would be *The Lord of the Rings*, by JRR Tolkien. I love all that magical realism, or the fantasy world that was created by Tolkien and people like CS Lewis, and Lewis Carroll. I like all those sort of mythology books, in particular. *The Hobbit*, *Lord of the Rings*, would be probably up there with my all-time favourites.

Savannah: What's your favourite food in the whole world?

Mark: Favourite food in the whole world! Oh! I'm going to go guacamole – a little smashed avocado sandwich!

Kemea: What footy team do you follow?

Mark: Oh, it's embarrassing! The Demons – although, the girls' footy team – the women's footy team's done really well. I've barracked for Melbourne ever since I was a little kid. My dad gave me a Melbourne footy jumper when I was about four years old and that's stuck with me. They've had some good years in there.

Savannah: Do you have any pets?

Mark: Yes – as mentioned, I've got a pet dog, Jindi, who's a little kelpie. We have lots of local birds coming to our property. They're not pets, I don't like keeping animals all caged up. But I love our native wildlife we have at our place.

Kemea: What's your favourite animal, and why?

Mark: Such a difficult question! I love wombats. In *The Great Zoo Hullabaloo!* my next book, it's all about animals that, once again, escape from the zoo like in *The Moose is Loose!* I've got little meerkats in there and baby kangaroos. I can't even answer that question! But I do love Australian native animals like wombats, koalas and kangaroos.

Savannah: What's your favourite super hero, and why?

Mark: Favourite super hero! Oh – dearie me! I grew up being a bit of a fan of superman, but I think some of the super heroes that have come out recently – I love Ironman movies, I have to say. I really like Ironman. It's so cool. I just like the way he invents things and makes things happen in a really cool way.

Kemea: Well, that is all the questions we have time for today. Thank you, Mr Carthew, for coming in and having a chat with us!

Mark: A pleasure, and thanks for such really insightful questions. Well done!