

or when defending myself against the regular barbs of my many jealous rivals in the NSW legal profession:

Your Honour,

Who are we, as humble servants of the Lord, to say what action may, or may not, have 'reasonable prospects of success'. Your Honour, when our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ offered his life for our sins, he did not ask if his sacrifice would have 'reasonable prospects of success'. Just as I, like the Son of the Father, came before the Court, not having 'calculated' by chances like a money changer or dove seller but instead I acted on the basis of something more intangible: divine providence (p 93).

I found myself laughing to the point of pain when reading this book. The subject-matter means it is unlikely to have much immediate appeal except to legal practitioners, academic lawyers and law students. That is a shame because the humour is really driven by Bullstrode's Falstaffian personality and, based on a carefully controlled series of experiments carried out in my living room over the last few months, is appreciated by people without any particular training or interest in the law.

I should add that the book is not without faults. Parts of it are dominated by what some readers might deprecate as undergraduate humour and it contains errors that cannot be explained away by the unreliable narrator. The last chapter, which covers Mr Whitelocke's time as senator for the Northern Territory, is comparatively flaccid (no doubt because, as Mr Whitelocke freely admits, it was 'dictated but not read') and, in my opinion, the deliberately amateurish pictures do not do justice to the genius of the text and should have been left out.

But these are minor irritations. The humour is prolific and at times attains a rare level of invention: I am unlikely to forget Bullstrode's 'First Rule of Participative Conversation' or his retelling of the story of King Solomon and the two mothers. For those lawyers and non-lawyers who are, as it has been put, 'burdened with a sense of humour', this book will provide hours of enjoyment.

JAMES HUTTON is a reader at Eleven Wentworth Chambers, Sydney.

THE WAY OF THE WORLD

Mose Allison; CD, Anti-/Shock; 2010, \$32.99

After 12 years of retirement, Mose Allison re-entered the studio to record 'The Way of the World', thanks to producer Joe Henry. It's a perfect match, too. The persuasive Henry, a fine singer-songwriter himself, played a pivotal production role with talents as diverse as Teddy Thompson, Solomon Burke, Mary Gauthier and Rodney Crowell. Allison's great records have influenced countless performers, across musical genres, for more than half a century. Now, at age 82, the venerable Mose has lost none of his cool wit and incisiveness, underpinned by a trademark, blues-powered piano. Joe Henry has brought on board backers Greg Leisz (guitar), David Piltch (bass), Jay Bellerose (percussion), and Walter Smith on tenor sax, allowing Allison to breeze through four covers and eight new songs. The cheeky opener 'My Brain' is actually a self-mocking take on Willie Dixon's 'My Babe', celebrating Allison's cerebral acuity while enumerating the hourly diminution of his little grey cells: 1200 neurons. He gives religion short shrift on the delightful 'Modest Proposal', delivers a graceful rendition of the ballad 'Once in a While' and turns up the instrumental heat with 'Crush'. Leisz's elegant guitar is a highlight of Loudon Wainwright's 'I'm Alright' and Roosevelt Sykes' 'Some Right, Some Wrong'. Unfortunately, Allison's closing duet with daughter Amy on 'This New Situation' remains unconvincing.

GET LUCKY

Mark Knopfler; CD, Vertigo/UMG; 2009, \$21.95

Even in Dire Straits' mid-80s heyday, Mark Knopfler let his Fender Stratocaster take centre-stage. His musical technique has evolved over 30-odd years into an amalgam of British folk narrative and US country balladry, spiced with a dash of JJ Cale-style smoky Oklahoma blues. Between movie soundtracks, he's also recorded more recently with Chet Atkins and Emmylou Harris, and released several tuneful solo CDs. Knopfler's latest, 'Get Lucky', is among his best ever, an

all-original album containing thoughtful narratives, superb melodic arrangements and a hefty dose of nostalgia. Two songs, 'Remembrance Day' and 'Piper to the End', evoke the ghosts of soldiers past. Knopfler is donating their royalties to the British Legion Poppy Appeal. Indeed, they're both also family affairs: 'Piper' was inspired by Knopfler's Uncle Freddie, a Black Watch piper killed in battle in 1940, while other Knopflers feature in the 22-voice choir of kids and mums heard on 'Remembrance'. The CD's two best tracks involve great crafts: 'Monteleone' is a subtly orchestrated tribute to master luthier John Montelone, while in 'So Far From the Clyde', the Glasgow-born balladeer laments the passing of an era as a ship makes its final journey to the ship breaker's yard.

MIKE DALY is a journalist and music reviewer.