

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.

Distilling the Essence: Vocal Provenance in the Work of Jack Body

Carol Shortis

A thesis and portfolio of original compositions
submitted to the New Zealand School of
Music in fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Music in Composition.

New Zealand School of Music 2010

Abstract

Jack Body is a prolific New Zealand composer of contemporary art music, who is best known for his engagement with the cultures of our Asian neighbours, and his transcription and transformation of their music has influenced a whole generation of composers in this country. However, in addition to this fascination with non-Western music, the use of voice as a means to express and explore the human condition has been an underlying theme in much of his work. This study uses critical analyses of three specific works by the composer to explore both text setting and his use of vocal provenance as a transformative compositional process. The string quartet *Saetas* is examined as a straightforward example of vocal provenance in instrumental music. An analysis of the text setting in *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo* informs an examination of the subsequent work for solo violin and string orchestra *Meditations on Michelangelo* where Body uses his own earlier vocal work as provenance for instrumental music. Body's compositional practises in regard to the transformation from voice to instrument can therefore be separated from his response to original text, allowing an examination of the specific techniques he employs in works in which vocal provenance strongly informs instrumental compositions.

This written dissertation is submitted with a portfolio of my original compositions that explore the use of voice in solo and choral works, as well as using the provenance of voice for instrumental music. These compositions were informed and influenced by my research of Jack Body's work.

Acknowledgements

This thesis could not have been written without the help and support of many people.

Firstly, I am most grateful to my co-supervisor Dr Dugal McKinnon for his patient and insightful guidance throughout the research and writing process, without which I would have given up on numerous occasions. His continual attention to both the content and presentation of my work, along with his support and encouragement, contributed substantially to the success of this project.

Thanks also to the subject of my thesis, Associate Professor Jack Body, who was always keen to discuss the minutest aspects of his compositional practice, often in regard to works that he wrote decades ago. His willingness to provide information, scores, and recordings of his work proved invaluable to my research. His enthusiasm, energy, and wonderful sense of humour often inspired me in both my research and my creative work.

Professor John Psathas was co-supervisor for my portfolio of work. My thanks to him for his support and encouragement, his very constructive criticisms and the many hours spent discussing my creative work.

I am also grateful to the wider university community: to the New Zealand School of Music, particularly Professor Donald Maurice for his help in the early planning stages of my Masters study, Dr Barbara Moroncini for her knowledge and support, Senior Technician Roy Carr for everything he does with such patience, and to the administrative staff for their support and good humour; to Sue Kelly at the Victoria University Postgraduate Student's Association for her help with facilities, and to Dr Deborah Laurs at Student Learning Support. I was a very grateful recipient of a Victoria Masters Scholarship, and a Kathleen Stewart Postgraduate Scholarship.

Finally, special thanks to my family: to Bill, Darrin, Holly, Matt and Liam, who have supported me through six years of full-time study, and without whom none of this would have been possible.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Chapter One	
Introduction	2
The voice in music	4
Jack Body biography	6
Chapter Two	
The Work of Jack Body	11
Transcription and reworkings	15
Vocal music of Jack Body – a typology	17
Chapter Three	
Saetas	22
Chapter Four	
Love Sonnets of Michelangelo	34
Chapter Five	
Meditations on Michelangelo	59
Chapter Six	
Conclusion	69
Appendix A	
List of compositions by Jack Body	73
Appendix B	
List of compositions by Jack Body which use voice or have vocal provenance	76
Appendix C	
Texts for <i>Love Sonnets of Michelangelo</i>	78
Bibliography	85