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

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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.

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

Chapter One

Introduction

This exegesis examines the role and influence of voice in selected works by Jack Body, in particular two instrumental works with vocal provenance: the string quartet *Saetas* (2002) which derives from transcriptions of traditional flamenco singing, and *Meditations on Michelangelo* (2007) for solo violin and string orchestra, which evolved from his earlier vocal work *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo* (1982).

In order to contextualise Jack Body's vocal work, I will briefly discuss the historical role of voice in Western music, and deal with some biographical details of his life which are relevant to my subject. The second chapter of this thesis explores Body's *oeuvre*, musical style and compositional approaches, and includes a proposed typology for his vocal works. Subsequent chapters analyse *Saetas* and the two works *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo* and *Meditations on Michelangelo* to illustrate his transformation of pre-existing vocal melodies into new instrumental works, so that vocal provenance is given to a new, non-vocal work. Whilst the first work is a straightforward example of Body's frequent compositional practice of transcription and transformation, which he calls 'double transcription', an analysis of the two works *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo* and *Meditations on Michelangelo* shows

the transformative aspects of that process, and a closer examination of how Body retains both vocal quality and text meaning within the non-vocal works.

Peter F. Stacey's method for analysing the relationship of text to music has been most helpful in this regard.¹ He discusses the subject in detail, including its history and the reception of vocal music in general. I should point out here that the focus of this document is confined to the specific role of voice in the creative process of composition, rather than on broader questions about the reception of Body's music, or the cultural significance of his choice of vocal sources.

I first met Jack Body in 2004 when I began studying at Victoria University. Since that time, and especially whilst writing this thesis, his compositional practices have influenced and informed my own compositions, and I have experimented with works of vocal provenance (a string quartet) as well as learning a great deal from the wide variety of his vocal works when setting text for my own pieces.

Beyond my own critical analyses of the selected works, the primary source of data for this essay is a series of interviews with Jack Body, in which we discuss the use of voice as a theme within his work. There have been a number of interviews and articles published about Jack Body which I found useful during my research, including Sarah Shieff's chapter about him in her book *Talking Music: conversations with New Zealand musicians*, and a

¹ Peter F Stacey, 'Towards the analysis of the relationship of music and text in contemporary composition' *Contemporary Music Review*, Vol. 5, no. 1, 1989, available from <http://www.informaworld.com/10.1080/07494468900640501>; accessed 11 March 2010.

number of articles about his work by Dugal McKinnon, John Elmsly, Michael Norris and Noel Sanders. Although a great deal has been written about his transcriptive processes, I believe this is the first time that his compositional methods in regard to the transformative aspects of ‘double transcription’ have been focused on.

The Voice in Music

The use of the voice within music is a vast subject, and a thorough discussion of this topic is well beyond the scope of my present work. This section is simply intended to orientate the reader to some of the major themes of import to vocal music within the context of this essay.

It goes without saying that the voice is fundamentally important in the history of making music. In a study of the evolution of music from its earliest beginnings in the ancient world, Curt Sachs in 1943 stated baldly: ‘Music began with singing’.² Over two hundred years earlier, this was what Jean-Jacques Rousseau also believed. Writing the definition for *chant* in the *Dictionnaire de musique* in 1712 he recognised the infinite musical possibilities inherent in the human voice, exceeding not only what we can produce with musical instruments, but also what we can represent through musical notation.³ Rousseau believed in the primacy of melody over harmony, and regarded our preoccupation with the latter as symptomatic of a human

² Curt Sachs, *The Rise of Music in the Ancient World East and West*, New York: Dover Editions, 2008, p. 21.

³ Julia Simon, ‘Singing Democracy: Music and Politics in Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s Thought’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 65.3 (2004), p. 449. Available from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3654140>; accessed 17 July 2010.

decline from a utopian existence where people lived in balance with nature and with each other.⁴

Even if this seems a rather romanticised notion of early man and his music, the importance of the human voice cannot be understated. As Wishart observes, we impute intention into any sonic event produced by humans, but most particularly when the voice is used, with all its primeval communicative power.⁵ First of all there is the sheer physicality of vocal production: Sachs says ‘Singing is indeed an activity of our bodies, or rather, of the totality of our being. It requires almost all the muscles from the stomach to the head...’.⁶ Even in a formal concert setting, the presence (or introduction) of vocal material into a mixed ensemble immediately grabs our attention, and we are drawn with our ears and our eyes to the singer; we become fixed on this ‘being of sound’.⁷ Furthermore, it becomes the vehicle for direct communication by the use of words with all their multitude of meanings, both linguistic and non-linguistic.

Jack Body takes full advantage of this special relationship that we have with voice. From his extensive choral writing, and use of voice either live or as an electroacoustic element in composition, through to source material for transcription and transformation into instrumental music, voice has been central to his work: indeed, I believe it is a musical truism that he frequently

⁴ Christopher Norris, ‘Deconstruction’, *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, available from <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/44653>; accessed May 24, 2010.

⁵ Trevor Wishart, *On Sonic Art*, Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1996, p. 240.

⁶ Sachs, *The Rise of Music in the Ancient World East and West*, p. 36.

⁷ Saul Williams, ‘The Future of Language’, in Mark Elefeld (ed.), *The Spoken Word Revolution*, Naperville: Sourcebooks, 2003, p. 21. “a latin (sic) transcription of the word “person” is “being of sound”.”

references. For Rousseau, the voice, through an unadorned vocal line, was the paramount vehicle for direct expression of human feeling. As I will show in my examination *Saetas* and the *Michelangelo* pieces, Jack Body also taps into this manifestation of primal passion by using vocal melodies as source material for new works.

Jack Body

A reasonable amount of biographical material already exists regarding Jack Body's life,⁸ so I will restrict myself here to an overview of those points relevant to this exegesis: his musical education, early artistic expressions, travels and influences.

Jack Body was born in 1944 in the Waikato. He was interested at an early age in both art and music, and although the latter was to become his primary occupation, this does presage the development of a strong leaning towards working across disciplinary boundaries in his adult life. As we shall see, it is also indicative of a deeper dissolution of boundaries within his work and his very nature, illustrated by such aspects as his later interest in non-Western cultures. Whilst studying music at Auckland University, he became involved with choral and organ music at St Mary's Cathedral Parnell, and his earliest works were choral, with undergraduate pieces such as *People Look East* and *Ave Maria Gratia Plena* both written in 1965.

⁸ Much has been written by Jack Body and others, see bibliography for a relevant list.

In 1969 he went to study in Europe with Mauricio Kagel and Gottfried Michael Koenig. Early in his career he rejected the use of some contemporary Western compositional practices such as twelve-tone theory, preferring to explore ‘other musical traditions, which almost always derive from modal melody’.⁹ In this he was not alone: Mabry, in an overview of twentieth-century vocal music, concludes that many composers at this time were demonstrating a critical attitude to the use of established techniques, and experimenting with new ways of organizing sound.¹⁰

Body had a preference for modal melody, which led to early and consistent writing for the voice. Much, if not most, vocal music is modal, especially in traditional music (not least Gregorian chant); his musical experiences at school and at St Mary’s Cathedral cemented this connection between vocalicity and modality.

In a recent conversation,¹¹ he talked about hearing Webern cantatas and songs, and how they struck him as ‘angular’ and difficult to sing: ‘modalism seems much kinder to the voice’. Modalism and melody became central to his instrumental and vocal work, and the voice, as a source of modal melody, provided inspiration for his compositions.

His return to New Zealand took him overland through the Eastern Mediterranean and Asia, where he encountered this modalism in a new

⁹ Jack Body, ‘IAMIC Virtual Composers in Residence Programme March 8th 2010’, *IAMIC website*, available from <http://www.iamic.net/news/iamic/virtual-residence>; accessed 27 April 2010.

¹⁰ Sharon Mabry, *Exploring Twentieth-Century Vocal Music*, Oxford: OUP, 2002, p. vii.

¹¹ Jack Body, interview at Victoria University, 21 June 2010.

context. The journey was to prove creatively fruitful, leading to works such as *Kryptophones* (1973) inspired by listening to music and voices on a short-wave radio, and *Pater Noster* (1973) after the singing of Tibetan monks in Bodhgaya, Northern India. These two pieces both display, in different ways, the development of Body's use of voice and the beginnings of vocal provenance in his work, as well as reflecting his discovery of non-Western idioms.

A period of working in Indonesia in the mid-seventies added to his experience of other cultures and solidified his engagement with Asian culture in particular. In 1980 he began teaching at Victoria University in Wellington (subsequently the New Zealand School of Music), but continued to travel extensively as a means to deepen and extend his knowledge of non-Western cultures.

It is the very unfamiliarity of non-Western music that fascinates Body: its structure and sonority, its purpose and practice within its native context. Referring to himself as an 'amateur ethnomusicologist' he works to 'unlock' the beauty and meaning of music, to understand and learn from it.¹² This is a fundamental aspect of Body's work, which explains much of his fascination with other cultures, art forms, practitioners and musical traditions and leads most often to his use of transcription as a tool for understanding and appreciating them.

¹² Jack Body, 'Tribute and Riposte' *Canzona* Vol. 28, no. 49, 2007, p. 45.

The voice, through language, accent, and timbral qualities is naturally reflective of culture, and vocal music can be a potent signifier of the culture it derives from. It is not surprising, then, to find vocal music coming under Body's transcriptive scrutiny and being transformed and transplanted into new works.

Looking specifically at his use of voice, one is immediately struck by the frequency of vocal presence in Jack Body's work. Recorded or live, composed, transcribed or sampled, human voice is present in more than half of his *oeuvre*.¹³ It is seen at all points on his compositional journey from the very earliest choral works such as *People Look East* (1965) up to the present day: he is currently completing *Three Dreams and a Nightmare* for vocal ensemble.

At the heart of this is his fascination with the voice as sound source: 'I've always been interested in the voice, the qualities of individual voices, accents and the sound characteristics of different languages...'.¹⁴ Yet it is not the words themselves that Body is interested in, but the person behind the words: 'words are seldom objective...they tell us more about the speaker than the thing being spoken about'.¹⁵

In the following chapters I will look at how Jack Body works with the voice in his music to express particular themes, concerns and ideas, accessing cultural

¹³ See appendix B for a summary of Jack Body's vocal works.

¹⁴ Jack Body, quoted in Michael Norris, 'Apropos Appropriation', *Canzona* Vol. 28, no. 49, 2007, p. 43.

¹⁵ Jack Body, liner notes to *New Zealand Electronic Music*, Wellington: Kiwi, 1975, p. 13.

and social archetypes through the embodiment of sound, and its subsequent distillation into non-vocal works.

Chapter Two

This chapter examines Jack Body's *oeuvre* and predominant aspects of his musical style and compositional approaches, particularly in relation to his vocal works. It includes a more detailed exploration of his particular concerns and interests: concepts of passion and hard work, aspects of alterity and binarism, and representation of the Other, especially in his engagement with the music of other cultures. Following this I propose a typology for his vocal works, categorising them according to the style and presence of vocal material presented in the final work, with a discussion of his compositional approaches relevant to my study.

The Work of Jack Body: themes, concerns and interests

As previously noted, the journey back from Europe in 1973 had as much significance for Jack Body's musical direction as the study he went there for. Since those early days his preoccupation with modal melody has often resulted in the composition of vocal music; it also often leads him to non-Western sources (both vocal and instrumental) for inspiration. His *oeuvre* spans a spectrum of genres and media, including film scores, electroacoustic, orchestral, choral and chamber music, numbering in excess of 100 works.¹ He has become renowned for his techniques of transcription and transformation, a process he refers to as 'double transcription' (see below for a fuller discussion of this method), and his work with many aspects of Asian music, particularly with the Indonesian gamelan orchestra.

¹ See Appendix A for a list of works by Jack Body.

Notions of physicality are a focus in Body's compositions, both in the characters who populate his works (Rewi Alley and Michelangelo are two good examples) and in his own life. This physicality is expressed both in terms of hard work² and passion. On one hand, there is the concept that the more labour invested the greater the reward; he always feels that he must compose for a reason, and made the purposeful decision to study music rather than visual art because composing was 'painfully slow and difficult'.³ In contrast to this, his music consistently reflects his desire to celebrate the sensual pleasures of life, both corporeal and intellectual. He is very often inspired by another artwork, be it poetry, art or music. These concepts of passion and hard work are often expressed through use of the voice, an entirely appropriate vehicle, given its physicality, its literal embodiment.

Another aspect of Body's work is a continual fascination with that which is foreign or 'other', in turn leading to a deeper exploration of self, so that postmodernist concepts of 'Otherness' can be identified in much of Body's work. Postmodernism defines the Other as that which is different to our selves (delineated by race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, nationality, or any other characteristic), creating an 'us and them' mentality which solidifies the boundary between these binary opposites. Much postmodernist thinking focuses on the boundary itself, proposing that it is pliable, and that there can be a 'slippage' between self and other.⁴ Body's work is always exploring this

² Jack Body, quoted in John Elmsley, 'Body Language: Jack Body at 60', *Canzona* Vol. 26, no. 47, 2005, p. 66.

³ Jack Body 'Sex, politics, religion - and music', *Jack Body website* available from http://www.jackbody.com/sex_politics_religion.htm; accessed 15 February 2010.

⁴ Stephen K. White, 'Postmodernism and political philosophy', in E. Craig (ed.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, London: Routledge, 1998, available from <http://www.rep.routledge.com/article/S086SECT1>; accessed 23 June 2010.

boundary, destabilising and estranging the familiar typically by presenting the Other within an established Western framework. Both Norris⁵ and McKinnon⁶ discuss a variety of dualisms presented in Body's work, whereby notions of alterity are explored through particular binary subjects (homosexual/heterosexual, Occidental/Oriental, transgressive/conventional etc) using specific pairings of musical techniques such as chromatic/tonal materials, and the *frisson* of consonance and dissonance.⁷

Noel Sanders identifies two processes at work, dependent on whether the source material is from within Body's own culture, or outside of it ('foreign'):

What is academic has been seen or heard for what it is: ... deconstructed and then recomposed; while what is exodemic is, or forms the basis for, textual hard copy.⁸

This would certainly explain the reason why historical material (the academic, according to Sanders) is either sparsely quoted or heavily reworked: take for instance his choral deconstruction of the fifteenth-century *Carol to St Stephen* (1975), or the orchestral *Hello François* (1976) based on 'La Favorite' by François Couperin.

By contrast, the music of other cultures (Sanders' exodemic) is left much more intact as an artwork which is reverently responded to, framed or

⁵ Michael Norris, 'Tonal Desires', *Canzona*, Vol. 28, no. 49, 2007, p. 59.

⁶ Dugal McKinnon, 'Other Notes: Jack Body's *Alley*', *Canzona*, Vol. 28, no. 49, 2007, pp. 48-57.

⁷ Norris, 'Tonal Desires', p. 62.

⁸ Noel Sanders, 'Convocations, Evocations and Invocations: Jack Body and his Calling(s)', *Music in New Zealand*, Summer 1994-95, p. 22.

reflected upon with newly-composed material. Examples of this latter category are *Arum Manis* (1991) for string quartet with recording of an Indonesian street violinist; *Campur Sari* (1996) again for string quartet, with live Indonesian performers; and *Palaran* (2004) for voice with orchestra. The technique in these pieces is one of role reversal, allowing a non-Western music to take centre stage, with conventional art music in a supporting role.⁹ Here the unfamiliar is brought into the ambit of the familiar, as a way to blur the boundaries between self and Other.

Sanders' conceptual binary can be viewed as defining a continuum describing the depth of processing that the original work is subjected to: the 'exodemic' are musically and culturally intact, revered, whilst the 'academic' are transformed, and contain a higher degree of newly-composed material.

I propose that Body's works which have a vocal provenance are part-way along the continuum Sanders' observations appear to set in place: vocal melody is generally preserved intact, whilst its setting is radically altered to create a new work, once again highlighting the importance of melody over harmony. This is done primarily by transcribing the vocal melody into a non-vocal (therefore non-linguistic) Western classical instrumentation such as string quartet, and by the exploration of new harmonic possibilities inherent within the melodic/modal material of the original.

In discussing the ethics of transcription, Body suggests that we should understand much of what he does as being within the established Western

⁹ John Psathas, 'Tribute and Riposte' *Canzona* Vol. 28, no. 49, 2007, p. 44.

music tradition of *homage*, where borrowing was traditionally seen as an act of flattery: consider for instance Bach's organ transcriptions of Vivaldi concerti, or the transcriptions of Stravinsky and Schoenberg.¹⁰ Even though questions of intellectual property and copyright are current concerns in the composing world, nevertheless it is also fair to observe that 'the use of existing music as a basis for new music is pervasive in all periods and traditions'.¹¹

Transcription and re-workings

Whilst the prospect of trying to define 'the singularity of JB's multiplicities'¹² is outside the scope of this paper, it is useful at this point to summarise the creative threads I have identified thus far, and explore some key compositional techniques relevant to the areas of his *oeuvre* I will be focusing on. These include his process of 'double transcription'; the re-working and development of material over a number of related works; and collaborative work with other artists.

As already noted, Body explores the boundary between binary opposites (self/other; heterosexual/homosexual; male/female; familiar/foreign etc.) seeking to soften defined boundaries, often through a process of presenting the Other within a familiar/accepted setting. This is done through a

¹⁰ Jack Body, quoted in Norris, 'Apropos Appropriation' *Canzona*, Vol. 28, no. 49, p. 41.

¹¹ J. Peter Burkholder, 'Borrowing', *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, available from <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/52918pg1>; accessed 24 June 2010.

¹² Sanders, 'Convocations, Evocations and Invocations: Jack Body and his Calling(s)', p. 20.

predominantly melodic modal palette, referencing physicality through notions of hard work and passion.

A primary tool for Body's exploration of the Other is his process of 'double transcription'. The process involves an initial close study and writing out (in Western notation) of the music in question: listening intently is a particular aspect of Body's teaching, and one of the key skills developed in transcription work. The initial act of transcription is seldom straightforward, because the music will invariably use pitch, scale, metre and rhythm in ways that are quite different to those of the Western Art Music tradition, but it has a two-fold benefit to the composer: information about the musical makeup of the specific piece, as well as a better understanding of the culture from which the music comes. The resultant transcription is treated in a variety of ways, so that the outcome can range from pure quotation, or re-voicing with new instruments, through to fragmentation and recontextualising with creative abstractions of and responses to the original material, whilst still retaining an essence of the original.

Transcription is a process of respecting, exploration and understanding, yet even as component parts are respected, materials are always being synthesised into some kind of a new whole. Body's compositional ideas are constantly evolving and sometimes an extended exploration of a culture, theme or subject area will produce a series of related works, which are more or less

connected. Examples of this are the *Sentimental Songs* series,¹³ the loose collection of ‘Carmen’ material (see *Saetas* below) and the development of *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo* into *Meditations on Michelangelo*. Nothing is ever beyond revisiting, as we shall see demonstrated in the possibilities for future incarnations of *Saetas*. It is hard to define where some works begin and end as material is worked and reworked over a series of incarnations, each giving inspiration to the next: it is as if any one work is just a ‘snapshot’ of the piece at that time.

Body identifies opportunities to materialise these musical elements, matching or pairing creative concepts and current musical preoccupations to circumstance, often by way of creative collaborations with others. Whilst his own artistic impetus overflows definitions of media and blurs the boundaries within his own creative expression, it is often further enriched by his sharing projects with other creators: dancers, film makers, performers and other composers. This ‘meeting of creative personalities’¹⁴ is most apparent in Body’s *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo*, discussed below.

Vocal Music of Jack Body: a typology

As has already been seen, Body is most interested in modal melody, and the voice is a natural vehicle for that style of music, either as a source of material for the composer to access or as a presenter of his final product. Furthermore

¹³ First the arrangements of *Songs My Grandmother Sang* (1993) for voice and piano, followed by *Three Old Fashioned Songs* (2000) for piano, *Three Sentimental Songs* (2001) for piano and percussion, and *Songs of Nostalgia* (2001) for voice and ensemble.

¹⁴ Peter F Stacey, ‘Towards the analysis of the relationship of music and text in contemporary composition’ *Contemporary Music Review*, Vol. 5, no. 1, 1989, available from <http://www.informaworld.com/10.1080/07494468900640501>; accessed 11 March 2010, p. 19.

the voice, as embodied language, most efficiently encapsulates the DNA of that cultural Other that Body seeks to engage with, in the same way as Roland Barthes refers to *geno-song*, ‘where melody explores how the language works and identifies with that work’.¹⁵

The vast quantity of Body’s work written for, or inspired by, the voice requires some categorisation in order to see the patterns of influence and compositional procedures involved. To facilitate the ensuing discussion, I would propose that all of them can be categorised within one or more of the following broad forms:

1. Monodrama: recorded or live spoken text/dialogue/narrative spoken over or ‘framed’ with music: for example *Turtle Time* (1968) or *The Street Where I Live* (2007). On a surface level, the voice is the carrier of meaning/text, although the sonic qualities of the voice become source material for the musical response of the composer.

2. Vocal music: Text setting for voice with or without instrumentation, sung recorded or live, often transformed text (deconstruction, invented language). Voice is the vehicle for meaning (as above), but is further contextualised and elaborated by being a musical voice. Examples of vocal music are *Five Lullabies* (1988) for SATB choir, and *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo* (1982) for soprano and mezzo-soprano.

¹⁵ Roland Barthes, transl. Stephen Heath ‘The Grain of the Voice’ in *Image-Music-Text*, New York: Noonday Press, 1977, p.182.

3. Voice as sound source: Here the voice stands as signifier, representative of such things as a culture, social group or embodied voice. It might be source material for use in electroacoustic music such as *Kryptophones* (1973) or *Musik Dari Jalan* (1975); this category also contains traditional or indigenous music that retains musical autonomy, ‘framed’ with instrumental ensemble, such as *Waiata Maori* (2005) and *Campur Sari* (1996). The re-contextualising of these intact sounds within a composed ‘frame’ often challenges their aesthetic function for the intended listener, in that the non-Western music takes centre stage, with conventional art music and/or musicians in a supporting role. In Body’s case this is primarily a process of homage or reverencing a work, person and/or a culture that he admires. It is, in McKinnon’s words ‘contra double transcription’.¹⁶

4. Vocal music as provenance for instrumental work – a source of inspiration, or material for transcriptive processes where no voice is present in the completed work. There are many examples throughout Body’s *oeuvre*, sometimes complete works such as *Saetas* (2002) for string quartet, or *Meditations on Michelangelo* (2007) for solo violin with string orchestra. Although largely the result of ‘double transcription’ processes, there are occasions where the influence can be less exact: in the opera *Alley*, for instance, the timpani is instructed to play ‘suggesting the tones of the Chinese language’ and in *Flurry* (2002) for three string quartets, Body uses motives

¹⁶ McKinnon, ‘Other Notes: Jack Body’s *Alley*’, p. 55.

suggestive of national characteristics, where the section representing Mexico is ‘reminiscent of a protest song’.¹⁷

Even in the case of vocal provenance for an instrumental work, where the original gesture of vocal production is no longer apparent to the listener, it can still be discerned. We are aware of an inference or vestige of voice in the final product, in a similar way to Smalley’s concepts of ‘gestural surrogacy’ in electroacoustic music, where the source or cause of a sound-making object can still be inferred even without that source being present.¹⁸

Given the quantity of vocal works within his *oeuvre* I intend to limit my exploration of Body’s works to two pieces that are representative of many facets of his vocal works. In *Saetas* (2002), the essence of traditional flamenco songs has been distilled into the new medium of string quartet: looking at this work will explore his ‘double transcription’ processes as well as his use of vocal provenance.

Related to this concept of vocal provenance, *Meditations on Michelangelo* is an instrumental work that Body developed from his previous vocal piece *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo*. Although transcription was not a tool employed in this case, looking at his process of transforming the vocal piece into an instrumental one will tell us much about the second half of his ‘double transcription’ procedures.

¹⁷ Jack Body, ‘Programme note to *Flurry*’, *SOUNZ Website*, available from <http://sounz.org.nz/works/show/16518>; accessed 15 June 2010.

¹⁸ Dennis Smalley, ‘Spectromorphology: explaining sound-shapes’, *Organised Sound*, Vol. 2, no. 2, 1997, p. 112.

Norris proposes that Body's consistent use of transcription has entered into his compositional practice at such a deep level that it can be demonstrated in works that are non-transcriptive in origin, and identifies elements within non-transcriptive works that can be seen as a synthesis of different transcriptive influences.¹⁹ In examining the composer's processes in making *Meditations on Michelangelo* I will show that the transformative element of 'double transcription' is also a separate compositional practice in itself, independent from the transcription required for a work such as *Saetas*.

¹⁹ Norris, 'Tonal Desires', p. 59.

Chapter Three

Saetas (2002)

Jack Body had been exploring concepts of vocal provenance in the three years leading up to writing *Saetas*, including some instrumental re-workings of tunes from Francis & Day's *Popular and Community Song Book (For All Occasions)*, a book of vocal music that he had known since childhood¹, and the string quartet *Flurry* mentioned in Chapter 2. His methods of 'double transcription' were also well established by this time, having begun in 1982 with *Melodies for Orchestra*. In *Saetas* Jack Body chose, for the first time, to work with transcriptions of vocal music, translating them into the instrumental context of a string quartet. The voices presented melodic lines that could be utilised for their modal and chromatic qualities, independent of any harmonic progressions attached to or implied within the original.

At the time of writing *Saetas* his creative output was very much preoccupied with the figure of Carmen Rupe, a New Zealand iconic personality, transsexual, brothel owner and mayoral candidate. In taking the name Carmen, Rupe (real name Trevor Rupe) was identifying with stereotypes of Iberian flamboyant emotions as personified by Bizet's heroine, representative of the archetypal Spanish *femme fatale*.

Body had been trying to create a large-scale work based on Rupe's life for the previous decade, having been inspired by reading her autobiography. Previous

¹ Jack Body, 'programme note to 3 Sentimental Songs' at *SOUNZ Online* available from <http://sounz.org.nz/works/show/17720>; accessed 15 May 2010

projects to create a ballet work with the Royal New Zealand Ballet, and a song-cycle with dancer for the NZSO had had their commissions withdrawn. Finally, he was able to create *Carmen Dances*, which was premiered by the NZSO in October 2002.²

With *Saetas*, Body was still preoccupied with the Spanish materials he had been researching for his Carmen pieces, particularly the semi-improvised, highly ornamented songs associated with the Spanish Flamenco genre known as *Saeta*, and used transcriptions from a variety of sources to present a four-movement work based on this. He was scrupulously open about his source material, going so far as to provide recordings to the performers for their reference, and documenting them in great detail in the score notes.

He wrote *Saetas* in response to a commission by the New Zealand String Quartet in the same year, and they premiered it in October 2003. Making the most of opportunity, Body utilised the little-known versatility of NZSQ cellist Rolf Gjelsten who also plays accordion.

Before looking at each of the four movements of *Saetas* in turn, I will briefly discuss the *Saeta* singing tradition. *Saetas* (translated variously as "arrow" or "dart"³) are semi-improvised mournful songs from Southern Spain which are sung by lamenting *saeteros* (penitents) during Holy Week processions, as statues of Jesus and Mary are carried through the streets on the shoulders of

² William Dart, 'Tribute to drag queen' in *New Zealand Herald* 28 October 2002 available from http://www.nzherald.co.nz/lifestyle/news/article.cfm?c_id=6&objectid=3001241&pnum=0; accessed 20 May 2010

³ Andrés Batista, *Maestros y Estilos. Manual Flamenco*, Madrid, 1985, p.16.

penitents (Body refers to ‘a Spanish penchant for self-flagellation’⁴). Whilst some writers refer to *saetas* as unaccompanied⁵, many recordings (including those Body transcribed) present the songs interspersed with wind band interludes and accompanied by a strong drum pulse, most often a slow march. A common feature of *saetas* is the *quejío* or lament. It consists of the single cry ‘Ay’ (variously spelt as ‘Ay’ ‘Aie’ ‘Aiye’ ‘Ai’ ‘Ayi’ etc) sung as the opening phrase in one long, melismatic line lasting for a full breath (see figure 1 below).

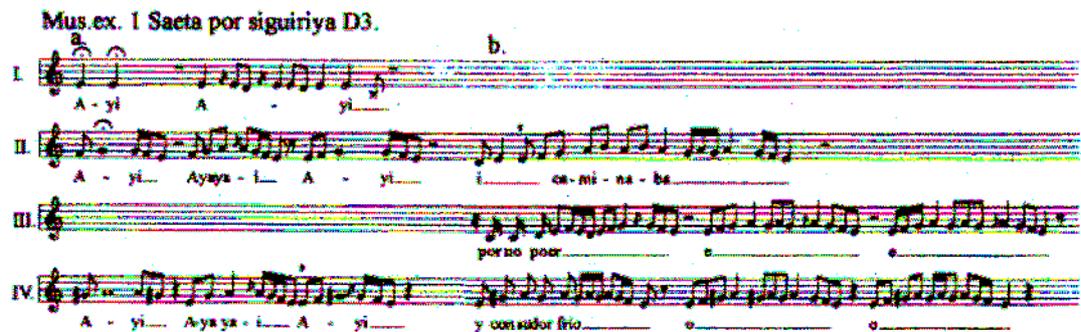


Figure 1: Some examples of *Quejíos* in a traditional *Saeta*.⁶

The *quejío* is a significant element in Body’s *Saetas*, beginning with the opening bars of the first movement.

1. Wolf/Tchaikovsky

In the first of the four *Saetas*, Body uses a specific motif from Tchaikowsky’s Sixth Symphony (figure 1) and a lied by Hugo Wolf (figure 2), both of which

⁴ Jack Body, *Saetas*, Wellington: SOUNZ, 2002, p. 1.

⁵ Corinna Kramer and Leo J. Plenckers, ‘The Structure of the Saeta Flamenca: An Analytical Study of Its Music’ *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, Vol. 30, 1998, p. 102. Available from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/768556>; accessed 23 June 2010.

⁶ Kramer and Plenckers, ‘The Structure of the Saeta Flamenca: An Analytical Study of Its Music’, p. 107.

he regarded as conveying ‘penitential anguish’ through which he establishes an expressive link to the *saetas*. Certainly the Tchaikovsky motif is a highly dramatic example of Romantic music, with its upward-sweeping string crescendo to a tenuto half-diminished seventh chord.



Figure 2 Tchaikovsky Symphony Six IV bb.19-21.⁷



Figure 3 Wolf *Spanisches Liederbuch IX* bb.1-3.⁸

The lied that this movement is based on, “Herr, was trägt Boden hier”, is a setting of Spanish folk poetry much in keeping with traditional *Saetas*⁹.

⁷ Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky, *Symphony No. 6 in B minor ‘Pathetic’, Op. 74*, New York: Edwin F. Kalmus, p. 201.

⁸ Hugo Wolf, transl. John Bernhoff, ‘Herr, was trägt der Boden hier’ in *Spanisches Liederbuch*, Frankfurt: Edition Peters, pp. 87-8.

⁹ Translation in Wolf, *Spanisches Liederbuch*:

Lord, what doth the soil here bear,
Which thou wa’rest with thy tears?
“Thorns, dear heart, for me,
And for thee its blossoms fair.”

Lord, where brooks of tears are flowing
Will e’er blossoms deck the heath?
“Yea, I tell thee! Many a wreath,
Will be twined beyond man’s knowing”

German poet Paul Heyse translated it from the Spanish in 1852, and at that time both the poetry and Wolf's setting of it were taken to convey the character of the Spanish original.¹⁰ Even though Body regards this Wolf lied as essentially Germanic,¹¹ he is still able to re-connect to perceptible Spanish qualities in the work, and, by treating it as a quasi-saeta¹² he seeks to reconstruct the material in a form closer to its original. He does this by adding saeta-style ornamentation to Wolf's vocal line, keeping it intact in all other respects.

The opening bars of this movement (and therefore the whole work) make a bold statement, combining the pianistic material at the beginning of the Wolf, the sweeping upward motif from Tchaikowsky, and an 'Aiye' *sung* by all four performers (example 1). This is significant in itself, an indication of the vocal provenance of the piece in the very first bars of the work.

Tell me, Lord, for whom they twine
All these wreaths and garlands! See!
"Those of thorns they twin for me,
Those of flowers I give to thee."

¹⁰ Barbara K. Sable, 'The translation chain in some of the Hugo Wolf settings of the *Spanisches Liederbuch*', in Joseph F. Smith (Ed.), *The Journal of Musicological Research* Vol. 5, Nos. 1-3, 1984.

p. 213.

¹¹ Jack Body, interview at Victoria University 21 June 2010.

¹² Jack Body, *Saetas*, p.1.

I. Wolf/Tchaikowsky Jack Body 2008
 Herr, was trägt der Boden hier/ Symphony 6, movement IV

Al - - - yo

Example 1: Jack Body, *Saetas* movement I, bb.1-3.

Violin II plays the melody from Wolf from b.10, transposed up an octave. Throughout the movement, the melody is presented *sul ponticello*, a colouristic effect that Body chose for its unpredictable harmonics, saying that this mimics the complex multiple harmonic possibilities of the human voice when singing.¹³

It is interesting to note at this point that much of the whole work presents the strings in the upper part of their register. This is to some extent due to the cello being replaced by accordion from the second movement, but is apparent also in this first movement, where the violins' tessitura is equal to a high female voice, and much of the cello and viola writing remains above *c'*. This tessitura also mimics the strained (head voice) expression often found in vocal lamentations such as the *quiejo* which is the subject of this work. Harmonic material is sparse, restricted to a few references back to the Wolf, at bb.14-16, for instance.

¹³ Jack Body, interview at Victoria University, 21 June 2010.

2. Saeta (as sung by Manuel Vallejo)

This movement is derived from a transcription of the saeta 'Casi al Calvario Camina', sung by Manuel Vallejo.¹⁴ The cello player takes up his accordion here, and in doing so, implies a movement away from the Classical tradition so strongly symbolised by the string quartet format. By including an instrument primarily identified with folk music (though not specifically *saeta* nor Spanish folk music), Body strengthens the connection with folk art that had already been established through the selection of Wolf's settings of Spanish folk poetry. The accordion plays short, low cluster chords in the left hand, simulating the death-march drumbeat on the original recording, with occasional right-hand material. Some melodic material is presented by the viola from b.3, which is the original melody transposed a major fourth lower, to *a*. The violins have the directive 'Searing beams of light', which, according to the composer, is 'just an image, suggestive perhaps of Spanish religious ecstasy'.¹⁵ Nevertheless they present, in composite, the melody from the original, at its correct pitch. Temporally displaced either before or after the viola, (see Example 2, where the viola's melody in b.4 is repeated by the violins in b.5) they trace an identical replica of the melody.

¹⁴ It is uncertain exactly which LP Body transcribed the saetas from, but both tracks can now be found on the CD *Semana Santa in Sevilla: Maestros de la Saeta*, Planet Records: P-511CD, 1995.

¹⁵ Email correspondence with Jack Body, 24 May 2010.

II. Saeta: Manuel Vallejo

The musical score for 'II. Saeta' by Manuel Vallejo, measures 1-8, is presented in a multi-staff format. The tempo is marked $J = 80$. The key signature consists of two flats. The score includes staves for Violin I, Violin II, Viola, (Cello) Accordion, Violin I, Violin II, Viola, and Accordion. The score features dynamic markings such as *ff*, *sim.*, and *fff*. Red circles highlight specific melodic passages in the Viola and Violin I parts.

Example 2: Jack Body, *Saetas*, Movement II, bb.1-8.

Thus the viola presents the melody in a register most appropriate for the mournful subject matter (to perform it at pitch with this instrument would be too bright) whilst the original becomes a fractured decoration between the two violins. There is very little harmonic material in this movement, mainly restricted to some dissonant clusters in the right hand part of the accordion. Therefore the movement continues to have an emphasis on melody and thus on vocal provenance: the music is ‘sung’ by the instruments.

3. Aye Triste Vida Corporal (as sung by Victoria de Los Angeles)

This movement derives from a transcription of ‘Aye Triste Vida Corporal’ from the fourteenth-century Mystery of Elche, in a recording by Victoria de

Los Angeles,¹⁶ a Spanish operatic soprano well known for her portrayal of Bizet's Carmen. The source material here is not exactly a *saeta*, though it is of a similar subject matter, and once again begins with a *quejío* which, as I have already shown, is a significant indicator of the *saeta* tradition.¹⁷

In this movement, the composer begins to present new harmonic structures developed from the existing melodic line. The introductory material in this movement begins with a dense texture of cluster chords and a G minor / flattened second modality, opening out over the first ten bars to emphasise a G unison. These clusters display a shift into more harmonic material, which is significant in that it does not occur until this third movement, confirming the structural dominance of melody up to this point. From b.11 the viola presents the source material, notably now with an A natural (b.13), which rubs against our previous expectations of the flattened A from the introductory material. This is also significant as it moves away from a strongly Phrygian mode (stereotypically Spanish) to a more familiar minor scale (associated with Northern European music). In contrast with the previous movements, the viola plays *ord.*, with the supporting strings *sul pont.* throughout. In these juxtapositions of elements between the source material (the Other) and his own (Western) tradition, Body is challenging our expectations as the piece evolves: from melody to harmony; Phrygian to minor; *ord.*, and *sul pont.*; and an accordion in a string quartet! Even the new harmonic material is

¹⁶ Victoria de Los Angeles *Five Centuries of Spanish Song*, Seraphim Records, Seraphim 60233

¹⁷ Ai, trista vida corporal! Oh sad life of the flesh!
Oh, món cruel, tan desigual! Oh cruel world, so unequal!
Trista de mi! Jo que faré? I am sad! What will become of me?
Lo meu car Fill, quan lo veuré? My dear Son, when will I see you?

challenged towards the end of this movement: at b.51, equivalent to the vocal line “my dear Son” all the strings play together in unison, with the viola completing the line solo against a simple i-V-i progression in the accordion. Thus, the new harmonic language reverts to the traditional at the cadence.

4. Saeta (as sung by Antonita Moreno and Carmen Linares)

Movement 4 presents material from another traditional *saeta*, this time sung by Antoñita Moreno ‘Madre de la Esperanza’, from the same LP as movement 2. Body previously heard a recording of this *saeta* sung by Carmen Linares, a flamenco singer who was to visit New Zealand the following year to perform at the International Festival of the Arts. He had originally hoped to be able to write for her in one of the earlier *Carmen* projects.¹⁸

This movement begins with another vocalisation of the exclamation *Ai*, marked ‘with anguished fervour’, by the quartet players. The accompanying foot beats pulse regularly throughout, and gradually crescendo to the end in imitation of the drum beat heard on the original *saeta*. The accordion takes on the voice part for this movement – transposed up to a G scale, perhaps in continuation of the previous G-centred material of Movement III. Leaving the harmonic role to the three string players, it plays only a right-hand melody, once again avoiding a traditional – even clichéd – use of the instrument, which might have occluded the vocal provenance of the original. Still, the accordion changes the nature of the vocal music much more than the string

¹⁸ Jack Body, interview at Victoria University, 21 June 2010.

instruments did in the previous movements, because its reedy timbre is so different from the strings, and has less of a ‘vocal’ quality.

In this movement it is the turn of the strings to present the dyads and chromatic clusters, fluctuating now between *sul ponticello* and *ord.*, and gradually opening out into a novel melodic progression.

In using vocal provenance for *Saetas* Jack Body is working with the inbuilt modality and implied harmonies expressed within the sung melodic line, a line whose shape avoids the angular, unvocal presentation he reacted against in the Webern cantatas (see above, page 8). His preservation of the original melody intact, coupled with techniques that mimic voice qualities prove his intent to maintain the vocal nature of the original.

However, in reinterpreting the harmonic material of the transcriptions (either actualised, as in the Wolf lied, or suggested in the vocal lines of the *saetas* and the Victoria de Los Angeles song), he moves beyond concepts of reverence, homage or the mere repetition of the sung line. In a recent conversation¹⁹ he identified this as his creative contribution to the work: the imagining and bringing into actuality harmonic structures implied in the melodic line.

In keeping with the idea that the ‘Carmen’ materials are not completely exhausted in terms of their compositional material, Body has expressed the intention to re-write *Saetas* for a string quartet with additional accordion player. This is in order to make its performance more practical, since cello

¹⁹ Jack Body, interview at Victoria University, 21 June 2010.

players who also play the accordion are not common. However, he also suggests that he might one day rework the *Saetas* materials into a new vocal-orchestral work, thereby affecting a process of triple-transformation.²⁰

Saetas, then, is a manifestation of a group of works either actualised (as in *Carmen Dances*) or in potential. It is a clear example of Body's 'double transcription' methods, whereby pre-existing music is transcribed and transformed into a new work: in this case by using vocal provenance to create a work for instruments. In the next chapter, I will begin to look at the series of works that began with Body's *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo*, a text setting for two voices which subsequently became the vocal provenance for his string orchestra work *Meditations on Michelangelo*.

²⁰ Jack Body, interview at Victoria University, 21 June 2010.

Chapter Four

Text setting in Love Sonnets of Michelangelo

Having seen some of the processes of transcription and vocal provenance at work in Jack Body's *Saetas* I will now turn to an examination of similar processes in another of his works that does not rely on transcription as a starting point. *Meditations on Michelangelo* (2007) for solo violin and string orchestra also evolves from the provenance of a vocal work, though this time of Jack Body's own making. Beginning with the source work, *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo*, it will become clear that the concept of binary opposites is an important element in this series of works: the use of two voices; themes of love and death, skin and stone; head voice and chest voice; unison and interval; dissonance and consonance.

As I have already mentioned, Norris and McKinnon both write about aspects of polarity, dualism and pairings in Body's work. Norris focuses on the harmonic procedures employed in three non-transcriptive works by Jack Body,¹ including the *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo*, whilst McKinnon makes an analysis of Body's opera *Alley*.² The musical binary pairings discussed by McKinnon in his analysis of *Alley* can also be discerned in the *Love Sonnets*, and are further developed in *Meditations on Michelangelo*.

¹ Michael Norris, 'Tonal Desires', *Canzona*, Vol. 28, no. 49, 2007, pp. 58-67.

² Dugal McKinnon, 'Other Notes: Jack Body's *Alley*', *Canzona*, Vol. 28, no. 49, 2007, pp. 48-57.

An initial study of the source work, *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo* (1982), paying particular attention to the way the composer sets the texts to music, will inform a subsequent debate about the contiguity of meaning from the earlier work to the later one. In looking at Jack Body's text setting techniques, I have found Peter F. Stacey's method for analysing the relationship of text to music most helpful, and will give a general outline of this before my analysis of Body's work.³

This system comprehensively covers a wide variety of aspects and terminology with regard to text setting. Aside from the formative influence that language has on music, and its descriptive and prescriptive properties, the main focus of Stacey's system lies in the conjunction of music and word, on a continuum from recitation over music (Stacey cites Classical melodrama as an example) to aria.

Stacey's method of analysing text in music proposes six areas of focus:

1. The text(s)
2. The condition of the text(s)
3. The vocal style(s)
4. The intelligibility of the text(s)
5. The technique(s) of relating music and text
6. The relative status of the media

³ Peter F Stacey, 'Towards the analysis of the relationship of music and text in contemporary composition', *Contemporary Music Review*, Vol. 5, no. 1, 1989, available from <http://www.informaworld.com/10.1080/07494468900640501>; accessed 11 March 2010.

It is of particular interest to this present study that whilst the potential for musical sounds to convey meaning is reliant on the listener attributing significance to that sound, nevertheless the existence of a previous version of the musical material which has a firm semantic connection (in the form of text) provides both a source of self-created correspondences for the composer, and a 'map' to inform the new work for the listener.⁴

In order to find out if the meaning of the original text is carried over into the new work, I will look at the correspondences that Body creates in *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo* and his subsequent treatment of them in his *Meditations on Michelangelo*.

Love Sonnets of Michelangelo

In 1982, Body had just completed his *Five Melodies for Piano* (later describing them as 'true and authentic and unselfconscious'⁵), where he used musical styles derived from outside the Western art music tradition, but presented them using contemporary Western methods such as muting strings within the piano, and written in a broadly minimalist style which used simple, repetitive, slowly evolving rhythmic patterns to reveal melodic lines. He continued his exploration of these unconventional methods of presenting melody in the *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo*, using elements of Italian bel canto singing and expressive folk song with contemporary techniques of vocal

⁴Stacey, 'Towards the analysis of the relationship of music and text in contemporary composition', p. 23.

⁵ Jack Body, quoted in John Elmsley, 'Body Language: Jack Body at 60', *Canzona* Vol. 26, no. 47, p. 66.

production and musical styles, and setting texts from Renaissance Italy to portray modern homoerotic sentiments. In these elements we again have a juxtaposition of binary opposites, which will be strengthened by his choice of text and further developed in the music itself.

Body's setting of intimate poems by the painter, sculptor and inventor Michelangelo Buonarroti was written specially for the first solo programme of emerging dancer-choreographer Michael Parmenter.⁶ The *Love Sonnets* were originally performed with Parmenter dancing and a film backdrop which also featured the dancer, with bandages being unwrapped, suggesting the sculptor uncovering the subject within the stone.⁷ Subsequent performances of the music used a new film made by Jack Body, featuring Parmenter, which became the basis for a DVD released in 2004.⁸

Michelangelo, the Italian Renaissance artist best known for his art, sculpture and architectural masterpieces, is additionally now hailed by many as the foremost madrigalist of the Italian Cinquecento.⁹ His sonnets, numbering less than the madrigals, are nevertheless better known. Whilst there is overall agreement that much of Michelangelo's love poetry was addressed to male subjects, we should consider how our contemporary concept of love is different from the various categories of emotion defined as 'love' in Michelangelo's time. Clements defines these as: *amor umano*, human, or

⁶ The dance programme was *Between Two Fires*, 1983.

⁷ A recurring word within the chosen sonnet texts is *spoglia*, lit. 'strips' referring to human skin.

⁸ Privately produced by Jack Body, with Michael Parmenter (dancer), Jack Body (speaker), Linden Loader (mezzo) and Lesley Graham or Karen Heathcote (soprano).

⁹ Creighton E. Gilbert, 'Introduction' in John Addington Symonds *The life of Michelangelo Buonarroti Vol 1*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002, p. xxvii.

sensual love; *amor onesto*, a Platonic transcendental emotion born of the *dolce stil nuovo* movement; and the religious fervour of *amor buono*.¹⁰

Indeed, Clements cites the sonnet *S'un casto amor, s'una pietà superna*, which Body selects for his first sonnet, as an example of the second category, a poem that Rolland hails as “one of the most beautiful songs to perfect *friendship*”¹¹ (my italics). Body, however, clearly regards these poems as pertinent to a contemporary homoerotic ethos, a point shared by many people ever since John Addington Symonds’ biography of Michelangelo, written towards the end of the nineteenth century and famously quoted by Oscar Wilde at his trial.¹²

Although Body clearly understood the homoerotic tenor of the texts, he chose to write for two female voices (mezzo and soprano). The reasons given by the composer were the availability of some fine voices at the Victoria University School of Music, the particular expressive qualities of female voices, and his perception of female performers as more able to express the sentiments in the poetry. The vocal range suggests countertenor and castrati voices, perhaps reflecting the Renaissance beginnings of opera, referring back to Michelangelo’s era, compared with Body’s use of male falsetto voice in the later opera *Alley* which McKinnon says represents ‘the feminised, androgynous, castrated or homosexual man’.¹³

¹⁰ Robert J Clements, *the Poetry of Michelangelo*, New York: University Press, 1966, p. vii.

¹¹ Romain Rolland quoted in Clements, *the Poetry of Michelangelo*, p. 187.

¹² Creighton E. Gilbert, *The life of Michelangelo Buonarroti Vol 1*, p. xxxiv. Symonds translated the sonnets with the correct gender of pronouns, removing the ‘opaque veil’ drawn across them when they were first published by Michelangelo’s grand nephew in 1623.

¹³ Dugal McKinnon, ‘Other Notes: Jack Body’s *Alley*’, *Canzona*, Vol. 28, no. 49, 2007, p. 56.

Body also says that female voices 'mask' the implicit homoerotic nature of the texts.¹⁴ This last reason is interesting, given the 're-gendering' of much of Michelangelo's poetry that has been undertaken in the past, in an attempt to present him as heterosexual.

It is beyond the scope of this study to examine in depth the sexual politics of Body's work, yet regardless of the debate about the nature of Michelangelo's sexuality, and its expression through his poetry, it will suffice here to accept that he is a homosexual hero, who has attained this status primarily on the evidence of these sonnets, and that Body's reading of them is contemporary in this respect. As Body puts it: 'I chose poems that had a homoerotic implication. And they seem to speak to me eloquently of a universal gay sensibility and its dilemmas - desire, aging, etc'.¹⁵

The selection and combining of texts is usually undertaken at the beginning of a compositional project, and is significant in itself. In choosing these texts, Body is seeking to align himself with this contemporary reading of Michelangelo, as made clear in the statement above. It is interesting at this point to compare Benjamin Britten's work *Seven Sonnets of Michelangelo* (1940) written for and dedicated to his partner Peter Pears at the official inception of their relationship.¹⁶ One would speculate that the choice of

¹⁴ Jack Body, 'programme note to *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo*', *SOUNZ Online* available from <http://sounz.org.nz/works/show/10414>; accessed on 14 May 2010.

¹⁵ Email correspondence with Jack Body, 24 May 2010.

¹⁶ Philip Brett, et al., 'Britten, Benjamin.' In *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, available at <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/46435pg3>; accessed 23 June 2010.

material was for very similar reasons to those of Body, and there is even some commonality of text in that both composers chose to set *S'un casto amor*.

Body's choice of texts for the *Love Sonnets* presents Michelangelo as a hero with many of the same attributes as another heroic character, Rewi Alley, who would later become the subject of Body's opera *Alley* in 1997. There are many aspects of Alley that can also be discerned in Body's Michelangelo: McKinnon, in his discussion of *Alley*, refers to a reverence for the sensuality of the male body; aspects of mutability; a fascination (or 'swoon') which leads to the self's undoing; and a reconciling of homoeroticism within a radically different culture from our own. As I will show, all these aspects can be found in Michelangelo as well. The chosen poems illustrate Michelangelo's struggle to reconcile these facets of his psyche, and Body's musical setting exploits the use of the two voices to represent them. We shall see how the relationships between the two voices change as the work progresses.

In addition to these choices of poetry forces, and musical styles which begin to set a scenario of binary opposites, Norris proposes a schema of deliberate tension whereby Body exploits the opposition between conventional modal materials and an expressive chromaticism to engender the primary affects of desire and eroticism. I have found Norris' pitch analysis of each movement of *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo* most helpful in my exploration of this work and will refer to it in my analysis of individual movements below. However, I will focus primarily on the text setting of the poems, and propose that it is primarily the use of melodic material throughout the piece, and the selection

of two female voices, which most directly convey these passions, whilst the modal material identified by Norris can be seen as a potential harmonic language, limited by the present setting for two voices but subsequently fully developed in the *Meditations on Michelangelo*.

The seven texts chosen by Body for *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo* come from a corpus of over 300 sonnets written during Michelangelo's life. With the exception of the seventh, which will be discussed later, they all follow the Italian or Petrarchan style of an octave (two quatrains) followed by a sestet (two tercets),¹⁷ setting out a problem and the resolution to it respectively.

Body sets the text of *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo* in the original Italian language. A translation is not provided with the score, but each sonnet is preceded by a synopsis of the poem.¹⁸ Body had an Italian speaker read the poems, so that he could understand the flow of the texts and set them with correct linguistic stress, and he considered the meaning of the text in key lines rather than setting words on an individual basis.¹⁹ The stanzaic structure of the sonnets has been retained, so that octet, quatrains, sestet and tercets are all represented musically; changes in musical material (modes, voice, register – even rehearsal marks in the *Meditations*) occur predominantly at these structural points. His settings therefore reflect each text as a whole in their literary structure (high-level mimesis), rather than at the localised level of “word painting” (low-level mimesis).²⁰

¹⁷ A quatrain is a stanza of four lines; a tercet is one of three lines.

¹⁸ For the full texts in Italian with English translations see appendix C.

¹⁹ Jack Body, interview at Victoria University, 21 June 2010.

²⁰ Stacey, ‘Towards the analysis of the relationship of music and text in contemporary composition’, p.12.

Overall, Body treats the texts linearly, presenting them completely and non-repetitively. *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo* is written as unmetred music, relying on the linguistic stresses within the text to define tactus. He chose this approach to make the score easier to read, and also to convey to the performers a sense of freedom in the singing style. The score is hand-written with text in capitals, and there is great detail in expression marks, which reflect the nature of the text at any particular moment. Each movement begins on a new page, with tempo text and metronome marks as appropriate. Given that there are no bar or page numbers I shall refer to specific sections of the score by the movement number and text presented.

1. 'The poet contemplates ideal love, shared equally by two hearts.'²¹

We know that the subject of this poem was Tomasso Cavalieri, a man twenty four years Michelangelo's junior, to whom Michelangelo dedicated over 300 of his poems (sonnets and madrigals), and was written in the year that they met. Michelangelo is philosophical here, maintaining an air of rational consideration of emotion as he observes two lovers objectively, whilst the power of that emotion yet remains a palpable undercurrent of the sonnet. It is precisely the kind of poem that we find discreetly 're-gendered' in early editions of the poets work, later to be corrected and held up by Symonds, et al, as evidence of Michelangelo's homosexuality.²²

²¹ Jack Body, *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo*, Wellington: Waiteata Press, 1988. Subtitles here are paraphrases of each sonnet, written by Jack Body, from the text presented at the end of Waiteata Press score.

²² Creighton E. Gilbert, in John Addington Symonds, *The life of Michelangelo Buonarroti Vol 1*, p. xxxiv.

The first eleven lines (i.e. the octave and first tercet) of the verse utilise an octatonic collection (Figure 1).²³ Each line is set in an upward-winding melodic motif, and consistent iteration of the pitch *c*' leads a C tonal centrality to this section of the movement. Body adds new pitches at significant points in the text, developing the pitch class set to a maximum of eight pitches at line 6 on the word “cielo” (*heaven*). This has an effect of building tension, a reflection of the extended rhetorical question in the text. There is a corresponding resolution of tension in the last three lines of the text: Body makes a dramatic change of pitch material into a hexatonic collection with three chromatic ornamenting notes to illustrate this.

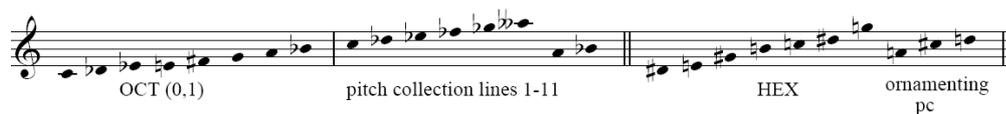


Figure 1: pitch collection for sonnet I, (from Norris).²⁴

One of the more striking aspects of this first sonnet is Body’s use of only one of the two voices available. I suggest that this is reflective of a number of aspects of the text. Firstly, the poet is looking on this situation objectively, commenting on a relationship from an outside and singular perspective. In some ways it is the voice of reason, or ‘higher self’ that we will see represented in subsequent movements, always by the higher voice. In contrast to this, the aspect of these two lives within the one is subtly represented by the contrasting pitch material of the two sections (lines 1-11 vs. lines 12-14) and the internal symmetry of the Octatonic pitch set, illustrating a reliance on dualisms even in this first, solo movement.

²³ For more details of scales used see Michael Norris, ‘Tonal Desires’, *Canzona*, Vol. 28, no. 49, 2007, pp. 62-4.

²⁴ Norris, ‘Tonal Desires’, p. 63.

Another reason for the single voice is that the text speaks of a fusion: of lives, wills and bodies. This setting presages the use of unison to represent unity, singularity and being in agreement which will become significant in each subsequent movement. It also sets up one polarity in the dualisms that I will comment upon in later in my analysis

2. 'The poet laments the obsessive power of carnal passion.'

Dating from around 1547-50 this sonnet again refers to Michelangelo's friendships with men, seeking to defend his reputation against accusations by the trouble-making Aretino by implying that his feelings are Platonic.²⁵ In this sonnet, unashamedly autobiographical (he speaks in the first person) Michelangelo struggles with his feelings of *amor umano* seeking to transmute them somehow into the 'heavenly things' of *amor bueno*.

In this movement we have an abundance of the dualisms and binary opposites which are a hallmark of the work: *amor umano* and *amor bueno* are represented by the lower and higher voices respectively; correspondingly there is declaiming (*sprechgesang*) in the lower voice, and singing in the higher; chest and head voice also suggest male and female aspects. Oscillation is another aspect of this movement, as the musical material swings between these sets of opposites. The lower voice moves from declaimed text to sung and back again; a counterpoint of voices foregrounds first the lower then the higher voice/passion. The high voice leaps a major ninth and more, in and out of chest voice: wildly swinging from one state to another, she is a victim of

²⁵ Needs reference

her passions ('burdened by grief', 'gripped by jealousy') and beyond consolation. The central point of these oscillations, the 'pivot' around which the swing moves, is invariably a unison, so that in the first quatrain a unison at *passa per gli occhi al core* marks a movement from one singer to another, and from sung to declaimed.

In contrast to the stormy nature of the octet (marked 'with passion!'), the sestet is set with calmer material ('espressivo'). Patient, measured triplets move stepwise through a falling figure that often outlines, but never exceeds, a tritone. Oscillation is still a feature, but at a macro level, as the lower voice sings the first tercet and the higher voice the second. Utilising moments of unison, the higher voice sings a series of treble pedal tones picked out of the lower voice line in the first tercet, and vice versa for the second, suggesting a sense of support for one another, rather than opposition. (see example 1).



Example 1: Extract from *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo* Movement II.

Even when the high voice leaps as widely as before, it is more measured, less fraught: 'meno mosso' instead of 'with passion!'. The lower voice, creating pedal supports to her vocal line, is now firmly back in her place as the subconscious, animalistic passion (represented by *sprechgesang*) subdued by the reasoning of (sung) higher thought; they settle together on the word

spoglia 'skin', a word which will have a continued significance within the work as the next movement demonstrates.

3. 'The poet longs to sacrifice himself to the beauty of his loved one, taking the image of the silkworm who sheds his own skin in order that the body of his loved one may be more beautifully adorned.'

In this poem, Michelangelo wishes for a chance to give his skin to clothe his beloved, 'to clasp that breast' or being made into shoes to save his loved one's feet.²⁶ This notion of the body as a leather pelt recurs constantly in the artist's poetry; this sonnet is commenting on both his awareness of the increasing debility of his own body, and his desire to rise phoenix-like from death.²⁷

Here are the *spoglia* again, 'strips' of skin: one is reminded of the bandages unwrapping Parmenter's body in the original film backdrop.

The movement is sung as a solo by the lower voice, appropriate given the corporeal nature of the subject matter. Norris notes the sinuous contours of the melody (most appropriate for the worm sloughing its skin!) and the highly expressive dyad leaps, most particularly the opening major sixth ($a - f\#$).²⁸

This interval, both major and minor, is a signifier of soaring emotion in late Romantic music, and has many famous uses from Verdi to movie scores. Repetition of this dyad is linked back to text setting, as it becomes an identifying marker of the first quatrain, repeated four times in as many lines.

²⁶ Also note Michelangelo's comment in the *Diàlogos em Roma*: "What judgement will be so barbarous as not to understand that a man's foot is more noble than his shoe?" Quoted in Clements, *the Poetry of Michelangelo*, p. 76.

²⁷ Clements, *the Poetry of Michelangelo*, p. 48.

²⁸ Norris 'Tonal Desires' p. 63.

Its expansion out to a *g#'* gives a boundary interval of a major seventh, a precursor to the dyad *d' – c#''* which is a significant feature of the second quatrain, where it is also iterated four times. In the sestet, the text meaning straddles the two tercets (*che con ventura stringe si bel seno, /che 'l giorno pur m'arresti; o le pianelle*), and there is a corresponding continuation in the melodic line, with the voice not coming to rest until *pur m'arresti*; this shows that Body regards the meaning as more important than the verse structure (in just the same way as the poet did in this case).

4. 'The poet declares his love. "Though the world may condemn this love, through it I may find God." '

Once again, Tomasso Cavallieri is the subject of this sonnet. In the two years since they first met, rumours had been spreading about their relationship.²⁹ In 1534 Michelangelo, who was himself frustrated at the wagging tongues, felt it necessary to reassure Tomasso, even as he was once again displaying his feelings, to ignore the gossips.

On a higher level, the poem shows Michelangelo's struggle to reconcile his feelings of *amor umano*. His argument is that this love emanates from the corporeal body, which itself is infused with divinity in its reflection of God: therefore it would be sanctioned by divinity.³⁰

The dual states of *amor* discussed in the poem, and the logic that unites them are represented by the rhythmic unison of the two voices, often complemented

²⁹ Needs reference

³⁰ Clements, *the Poetry of Michelangelo*, p. 207.

by pitch unisons and octave doubling. Using only two alternating (oscillating) note values (quaver and dotted quaver) the composer sets one syllable per note, so that lexical parameters dominate particularly strongly in this movement. The musical materials lend an air of calm religiosity, aloofness even, and a partnership where both facets of the artist’s persona (as represented by the two singers) are in agreement ‘facing things together’. The fusion of the first sonnet has split into two voices but here they act as one. This calm togetherness is rather undermined by the turbulence of a pitch field in constant flux.

Norris analyses the pitch collections in this sonnet, which start out in a stable fashion – A Phrygian followed by A flat Aeolian (but already destabilised by modulating mid-phrase), and soon these changes become rapid, and the pitch collections are ornamented with non-modal pitches, so that it is hard to justify any consistent scalar rules, even though Body is clearly selecting from one or another modal pitch class set at any particular moment.



Figure 2: Pitch collections in Movement IV, from Norris³¹

The intervals between the two voices, however, remain stable and consistent – dyads in unison, major seconds, perfect 4ths, perfect 5ths, minor 7ths, octaves, and major 9ths, oscillating between unison/octave dyads and more expressive intervals.

³¹ Norris, ‘Tonal Desires’, p.63.

The lack of chromatic intervals in this movement, coupled with the rhythmic device, create a feeling of cool logic. The intervallic stability between the voices controls the emotions represented by the constantly fluctuating modality, in contrast to the emotional instability of previous movements. This illustrates the emotional binary described in this movement, between the logical controlled aspect of *amor bueno* and the unstable passion of *amor umano*.

5. ‘Gripped by passion, the poet sees no escape from love. “By trying to diminish grief I but double it.” ’

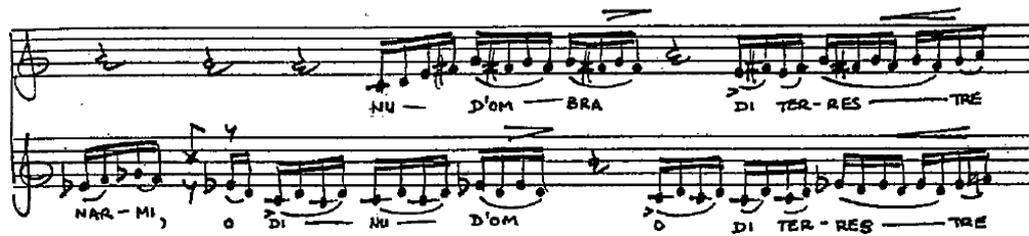
In this sonnet, Michelangelo lays bare his anguish as prisoner of his own emotions: ‘Obsessed and moved by you, I seem to get/Weaker. My passion takes my strength away’.

He worries away at this, unable to create an artistic representation of the love-object, ‘I cannot shape an image or...a counterpart to lessen my desire’, pacing back and forth between its inexpressible loveliness and his frustration at the debilitating grip of his own passion. A sense of resignation prevails in the sestet, which ends with the triumphant realisation that submitting to love is the ultimate act of bravery.

Body amplifies the mood of this text by using a *moto perpetuo* rhythm, beginning with a solo lower voice, indicative of the ‘lower’ nature of the emotion displayed. This gives constant forward motion to the movement, which develops through a melismatic stepwise upward line punctuated by

hand claps from either or both singers. In contrast to the preceding movement, musical rather than textual parameters are dominant, as single syllables are set over many notes.

Norris identifies a number of octatonic pentachords that Body used as pitch material for different sections of the movement. These are often used in pairs, as the voices move almost invariably in parallel major thirds throughout the octet of the text (see example 2 and figure 3).



Example 2: Extract from *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo*, movement V.



Figure 3: Octatonic Pentachords from Norris³²

Whilst the voices are predominantly moving in a strict rhythmic unison for the body of the text, the end of each phrase is given a longer melisma in one voice so that the other finishes the word first. This is counterbalanced by the other voice starting the next phrase, with the original one joining in after a syllable or two at their usual major third interval, and creates a layering and echoing effect at phrase level, descriptive of Michelangelo's mood swings in the octet of the sonnet. It also has a practical effect of maintaining the *moto perpetuo*

³² Norris, 'Tonal Desires', p.64.

nature of the piece whilst allowing singers to breathe, and provides rhythmic variation (further supported by accents and claps).

The hand clapping appears throughout the octave, most particularly in the first quatrain. Rhythmically unpredictable and in stark sonic contrast to the voices (yet still embodied) they are suggestive of flagellation, with all its religious and/or sexual connotations.

The sestet presents a new version of rhythmic variation against the constant *moto perpetuo*. Beginning with the lower voice holding the semiquaver movement as before, the higher voice presents the text in a widely-leaping melodic line, returning to the semiquaver-major third parallel material at the end of the text line. For the tenth line the higher voice holds the *moto perpetuo* while the lower voice has a melodic line, and so on.

Here again, Body has separated out the elements of Michelangelo's psyche, as the poet resigns himself to his situation. Each voice has its say, debating the resolution until, at the last line ('He is no coward who discovers this!'), both voices come back to a rhythmic unison at major third intervals again.

6. 'Even the heart of an old man falls victim to passion. "A small flame consumed and fed on me in my green youth: now that the wood is dry, what hope have I against this fire more fierce?" '

Dating from about 1544, when Michelangelo was nearly seventy,³³ this sonnet laments the fiery ravages that love inflicts upon his heart, and how their effect is all the greater as he grows older. The embittered complaints of the octet are once more softened with resignation in the sestet of the sonnet, piqued by the black humour that he should cheat the worms as his ashes are blown far away by the wind.

Body's treatment of this text is another form of oscillation. The single melodic line, utilising the same pitch material as Sonnet II, leaps about through the extremes of both singer's ranges. It again makes use of spoken (or half-shouted in this case) *sprechgesang* material, but is shared between the two voices, passing back and forth with a sung/shouted unison pivot note at each changeover. This pivot point occurs on every second beat, so that a change of voice often happens mid-word, the text arbitrarily sliced up so that meaning is obscured. The pivot pitch is accented, in both the sung and spoken voices as well as by fact of it being the only point where both sound together, creating a syntactic fragmentation of the text (as defined by Stacey).³⁴ Its deconstruction into a series of syllables, reduced to its component parts, is perhaps analogous to fire reducing wood to heat, light and ash.

³³ Clements, *the Poetry of Michelangelo*, p. 271.

³⁴ Stacey, 'Towards the analysis of the relationship of music and text in contemporary composition', p. 21.

Nevertheless, certain words stand out from the stream – *verde* (for the green wood which represents youth) and *arso* ‘burned’, as the top pivot note takes another step up on its way to a high G#. The rhythmic pulse pauses only briefly at the end of the first couplet, to be immediately rekindled by both voices launching into the next line, setting off the oscillation again (example 3). ‘*Gioco*’ the lovers’ games, marks the end of the octave, presented climactically by the high G# in the upper voice.



Example 3: Extract from *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo VI*.

The sestet marks a change in Body’s use of these materials, in sympathy with the change of sentiment in the text. In contrast with the octet, where surface meanings of the text have been occluded through this metrical chopping-up, each voice presents a whole phrase, reflecting the tone of the poem in this section. Using a weeping downward-tumbling *sprechgesang* motif which makes the most of the sonic features of the Italian language to convey the first line of each tercet (first the high voice, then the low voice for the second tercet). The phrases are no longer cut up here, perhaps reflecting the air of resignation in the text. Even when the second and third lines of each tercet return to the chopped text, the pitches are stable in each voice, though the relationships between them are uneasy: augmented fifths, minor ninths and major sevenths, and the voices often cross, inhabiting each other’s register.

Nothing could be further from a unison, perhaps suggesting that although the fire has settled somewhat its alchemy has transformed the wood to a new state, a mutability reflected in Body's treatment of the text in this movement. The textual dominance that Body has generally employed in the previous five movements is reflective of both Platonic and Renaissance thinking on the subject. The treatment of text in movement six, then, indicates a purposeful deconstruction of that principle, and is an example of Body's use of contemporary techniques to destabilise established or traditional thought.

7. "Sleep is sweet, but better to be made of stone, ... wake me not."

The last movement in this series does not set a sonnet, but a shorter poem by Michelangelo, an 'autonomous quatrain' of just four lines.³⁵ Written in response to a poem by Giovanni Strozzi who imagined how it would be if one of Michelangelo's statues were to wake, it gives voice to the sculpture of Night, *La Notte*, which the artist completed for the new sacristy of the Basilica of San Lorenzo in Florence (1525-31). The second line of the poem 'while pain and guilt still linger here below' has also been translated as 'While wrong and shame exist and grow',³⁶ and the whole quatrain is actually a political criticism of contemporary members of the Medici family, who Michelangelo regarded as being responsible for the deplorable conditions in Florence after the siege of 1529.³⁷ Here, then, *Notte* is asking not to be woken, lest she should see the mess that Florence was in: 'Blindness and numbness' are preferable. However, Body's setting does not reflect the political irony

³⁵ Elizabeth Jennings, *The Sonnets of Michelangelo*, Manchester: Carcanet, 1988, p. 24.

³⁶ Emerson, quoted in Jennings, *The Sonnets of Michelangelo*, p. 98.

³⁷ Jennings, *The Sonnets of Michelangelo*, pp. 98-9.

inherent in this poem. As in the second movement, he takes it on face value, as another expression of the artist's emotions. This clearly illustrates the composer's autonomy in interpreting extant text for his intended purpose: the creation of an artistic work in sympathy with a gay ethos.

The movement, marked "Quietly", is descriptive of sleep with its dreamy, unpulsed languor. Not only does Body use rhythmic unisons (as he did in the fourth movement) but the pitch material is now in unisons/octave doublings, creating a most pronounced sense of unity. Yet oscillation is once again present, between dualisms (as pairs rather than opposites) of complementary pitch sets, two voices and different registers, reinforcing the sleep/stone, pain/guilt (wrong/shame), blindness/numbness pairings of the text.

The music of this movement represents a metamorphosis into a new state of being, as the sleeper becomes petrified in stone. The fused voices sing (in equivalence) one pitch, travelling along one melody which, at the last line, reminds us of its inherent dual nature by presenting a rare repetition of text, coupled with a short phrase of dyadic material ending with a major second between the voices. The stone is alive, but asleep.

In conclusion, *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo* charts a journey exploring the struggles of the poet to reconcile various aspects of his passionate homoerotic preoccupations. Body musically represents these primarily in the changing relationship between the two voices. The first movement, sung by one voice, already speaks of two hearts fused as one; these two persona are split into a higher and lower self in the second sonnet; by the third the lower voice is presenting his subconscious desires; in the fourth both voices balance and

oscillate, calmly transmuting earthly love to higher things. After this central movement, the fifth re-embodies ('grounds'?) the work through rhythmic unison in continual motion, before the sixth deconstructs the text and the couple. The final movement unites the two voices into one person, who is stone and yet only sleeping.

It is true to say that the stanzaic form of the original poetry is evident in the structure of Jack Body's *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo*, but this does not really prove that Body consciously used the poetic form to structure his music. Rather, Body's consistent reflection of the semantic meaning of the text, which was written in accordance with that form, coupled with his preservation of the text intact and complete (indicating a 'homage' or reverence of the material) meant that the strong poetic form is easily identified within Body's musical structure. This is clearly illustrated in his treatment of the text in the sestet of movement III, where Michelangelo runs text over the two tercets, and Body follows that form in his music (see page 47).

Formally, some symmetry within the work as a whole is apparent, pointing once again to Body's use of binary materials. Movements II and VI share pitch material and a use of *sprechgesang*. Movement IV, as the central movement, is the first time the two voices really sing together, balanced and 'speaking as one'. Movements I and VII are binary opposites, where often one is contained within the other³⁸: one/two voices (the former contained in the

³⁸ A phenomena noted also by McKinnon in his analysis of *Alley* where he describes an aspect of Alley's character as a topography "where other is folded within self". McKinnon, 'Other Notes: Jack Body's *Alley*', p. 52.

latter); sonnet/quatrain (the latter contained within the former); solo and unison.

These dualisms, though, are really just a way for Body to explore and express his response to the themes within Michelangelo's poetry. It is melody that is centrally important to the piece, indicated by the composer in his programme note, and supported by his choosing the minimal resources of two voices. It is the use of melody that so profoundly conveys the passions of the poet to the listener. Simon, paraphrasing Rousseau, points out succinctly: "...it is not the sounds themselves that move the listener and excite the passions but rather the passions behind the sounds."

Body clearly identifies and sympathises with the imagined passions behind this poetry. Through his role as central organiser of this project, his selection of poet and poetry, subject matter, style of musical material and alignment with other artists in its extra-musical presentation he connects the performers (and through them the audience) directly with that realm of passion that he particularly wants to share.

We come now to the question of whether the expression of emotions so clearly presented by two voices in *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo* can be retained and discerned by the listener once the text and the voices have been removed. That is to say: how much of the message is contained within the music itself?

In setting the music for instruments, both the voice and the text are lost, and a distinction should be made at this point between the use of voice and the use of language. As Stacey points out, words of themselves have a value independent of their context: they have a differentiation between *significant* and *signifié* that music does not.³⁹ This is very straightforward: lose the words and the specific meanings of a text-based work are gone. Body comments in regard to the Michelangelo works: “how can you convey...any of those ideas and feelings except through words?”

Yet, as I will demonstrate, in the instrumental work *Meditations on Michelangelo* he does continue to represent the voice by using various musical techniques, and through the reworking of what was once vocal material he continually references the work back to both voice and text, often amplifying the original poetic meaning.

³⁹ Stacey, ‘Towards the analysis of the relationship of music and text in contemporary composition’, p. 23.

Chapter Five

Meditations on Michelangelo

Looking back, Jack Body feels that the *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo* and *Five Melodies for Piano*, which he had also written in 1982, mark a point in his compositional career where his individual artistic voice emerged.¹ In 2007, still very attached to the music of *Love Sonnets*, he had an opportunity to develop them into *Meditations on Michelangelo*, when he received a commission from the Japanese violinist Reiko Suzuki. In 2009 he wrote another version for violin and piano.

His reworking of the musical material in 2007 was intended, according to a programme note, to intensify its emotional content whilst still maintaining the essence of the original poetry.² In a recent conversation, he said that when writing *Meditations on Michelangelo* he was focussing on the musical material, and that the original message in *Love Sonnets* has been lost with the omission of words in the new work.

In this chapter I will look at the transformative processes Body used in writing *Meditations on Michelangelo* and how the essence of both voice and poetry is presented in the new work.

¹ Jack Body, interview at Victoria University, 21 June 2010.

² Jack Body, 'programme note to *Meditations on Michelangelo*' *SOUNZ Online* available from <http://sounz.org.nz/works/show/18325>; accessed 5 June 2010.

It is important to differentiate between vocal provenance and textual provenance at this point. Body has left behind both the voice and the text that was carried by the voice. In the following analysis I will show how each of these is represented in the new work, and will show that much of what can be found in *Meditations on Michelangelo* relates back to the text rather than the voice.

To begin looking at *Meditations on Michelangelo*, we must first observe that the piece is now, of necessity, notated metrically, with varying time signatures for each movement, a practical consideration to allow for the ensemble to coordinate their playing. An implied tactus in *Love Sonnets* that corresponded to natural rhythms inherent in the text had to be explicitly defined by bar lines once the text was no longer present. For the purposes of this section of my paper, any reference to bar numbers therefore refers to *Meditations on Michelangelo*; reference points in the *Love Sonnets* will still be given by text and/or text structure.

The order of the movements remains the same, and the first line of original text is given as a subtitle for each movement of the new work, suggesting that the text is still relevant to *Meditations*. In some of the movements the vocal line has been transposed by a tone or semitone, most likely to facilitate instrumental techniques such as use of natural harmonics and open strings.

In the first movement, the solo violin plays the melodic material from *Love Sonnets*. This section is metrically stable in 4/4 with additional rests between phrases to reproduce the correct down-beats inherent within the text-setting of

the original. The vocal line is otherwise intact, except that the nature of instrumentation allows for the possibility of finer decoration (b.10, for example). The instrumentation now creates a possibility for registral changes, the first occurring at bb.11-13. This is significant in that the section corresponds to one line of text in the original, and the re-registration to a lower tessitura reflects the meaning of that text: '*s'un 'aspra sorte all'un dell'altro cale*' 'if one bitter fate is shared by both'.

A further exploitation of registral possibilities is used in b.14, where a textual repetition (*s'un spirto, spirto,...*) is developed into an echo an octave lower. However, the text-supremacy soon deteriorates, so that by b.19 (line 6 of the original) the registral changes are settling into a pattern of high then low registers. These still adhere to the phrases of the original music, which themselves were governed by the text phrasing. This fluctuation in register can be seen as a reference to the oscillation found in so much of the *Love Sonnets*. As a result of this new scheme, some significant moments of low-level mimesis are undermined so that, for instance, the setting of *cielo* 'sky' in the original on the highest pitch of *abb'* has been transposed down an octave and the word-painting is now lost.

Registral changes are used in a different way in bb.34-38 as the repetitive *g''-d#'* motif in the *Love Sonnets* is developed further by stating it an octave lower, then its original pitch and finally an octave higher.

Whilst the string orchestra is primarily materialising the harmonic progressions implicit in the *Love Sonnets* here (using *sul pont* again, a ‘voice indicator’ which Body had previously used in *Saetas*) there is an important moment at b.19, where they begin a tremolo ascent, representing, perhaps, the flying souls of the original text at this point, a reference not apparent in the original music. This would suggest that the text meaning is still uppermost in the composer’s mind when writing *Meditations*.

In examining the second movement, it becomes clear that even though more of a transformation has occurred from the original material at this point, Body intends the lower voice of the *Love Sonnets* to be played predominantly by the string orchestra. A pizzicato motif in the lower strings suggests, perhaps, the blink of an eye (the original text ‘*Passa per gli occhi al core in un momento*’, ‘it passes from the eyes to the heart in a second’), which develops through pitch variations to imitate the panicked half-whisper of the lower voice heard in the *Love Sonnets*, helped along with *piano* open-string arpeggios from the solo violin.

Dynamic variation here foregrounds the melody which the higher voice sang in the *Love Sonnets*, so that the solo violin plays *forte* except for the *piano* ‘asides’, which fret along with the panicked undercurrent of the string orchestra. By b.11 these two materials are blending together (this is the beginning of the second quatrain in the original). Again maintaining the form of the original vocal work, the ‘sestet’ section from b.21 elongates and decorates the lower-voice triplet motif of *Love Sonnet II* now re-voiced for the string orchestra. Likewise, the ‘second tercet’ (from b.31) has the solo violin

working through the logic presented in the poem at this point, the whole movement finishing with an echo which ripples through the orchestra on the significant *spoglia* (skin) of the original. Once again it is clear that the narrative of the original work has been maintained and amplified by the instrumental version, even though the specific semantic content of the original is no longer present.

In the third movement the solo violin plays the material originally presented by the lower voice (in the *Love Sonnets* this movement was written for lower voice only). The string orchestra begins the movement by suspending notes from the melodic line (rather like reverb), to create cluster chords made up of the same pitch material.

A strong emphasis in the orchestral writing at b.13 coincides with the text *mia morta spoglia* (lit. 'my dead strips') in *Love Sonnets*, again amplifying the significance of *spoglia* in this work, and illustrating a continuing attention to text.

Initially, the fourth movement seems fundamentally different from *Love Sonnet IV*. The calm, metrical unisons of the *Love Sonnet* have become lively ('with a joyful lilt' 'bell-like'), multi-layered and with unpredictable pulse. The separation of material representing the high and low voices of the *Love Sonnets* is no longer clear: indeed the solo violin line is derived from the melodic material of both original voices concurrently (see Figure 1), often obscured by registral changes. The new solo violin line determines the schema for the fluctuating metre of *Meditation IV*, whereby quavers in the original

translate to 2/4 bars and dotted quavers become compound or irregular bars, or contribute to an arrhythmic 8/8 (3+3+2) bar.

Meditations on Michelangelo IV, solo violin bb2-8

Love Sonnets of Michelangelo IV, Soprano and Alto, opening line

Veg - gio nel tu - o bel vi - so, si - gnor mi - o, quel che nar - rar

Figure 1: *Meditations on Michelangelo*, movement IV (solo violin) bb.1-6, and *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo*, movement IV, first system.

The string orchestra also reproduces the material from both voices of Love Sonnet IV. The violins share the melodic contour of the higher voice, while the violas and cellos share material from the lower voice part. Each pair plays alternate notes creating a compound melody between them (see figure 2), which amplifies the oscillating nature of the Love Sonnet version.

(bell-like) *fmp*

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Double bass

Love Sonnets of Michelangelo IV, Soprano and Alto, opening line

Veg - gio nel tu - o bel vi - so, si - gnor mi - o, quel che nar - rar

Figure 2: *Meditations on Michelangelo*, movement IV(string orchestra) bb.1-6 and *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo*, movement IV, first system.

At b.43 the string orchestra actually verbalise the word *l'amor* (love) in an 'intimate, senuous [sic] whisper' whilst playing the dyadic material from the *Love Sonnet* for that text. Here then, in the very centre of each work (movement IV is the central movement, the word occurs in the centre of the poem, at the beginning of line seven) we find the central concept of the piece: love. It is brought into sharp focus by its presentation using *the voice* reminding us once again of the work's connection with the *Love Sonnets*, with Michelangelo's text and with its vocal provenance.

The high point of this movement, from b.82 (marked 'ecstatic'), corresponds to '*trascendo a Dio*' 'transcend to God' in the *Love Sonnets* and is extended and embellished to intensify the emotion portrayed in the original.

In the fifth movement the solo violin does not have a separate role: rather it is subsumed into the Violin I line, further embedding the higher 'self' within the lower 'body' of music. The hand claps of *Love Sonnet V* have been transcribed into the lower strings, with double basses slapping their fingerboard and occasional *pizzicato* in violas and cellos. Higher strings perform the two vocal parts, with one significant elongation of the original material, effectively repeating the text '*di terrestre spoglia*' ('earthly skin'). Phrases from the original here often run together into long melismas, as the consideration of breath requirements for singers is no longer a concern. The transcribed melody is passed through the orchestra, with various pairings of instruments taking turns. Even though the original phrases are now fused together, this 'pass-the-phrase' technique still occurs in all cases at the beginning of poetic lines. Significant moments within the text continue to be

emphasised: at b.20 at the end of the first quatrain; b.24 on 'love'; and bb.27-8 '*priva e spoglia*' ('deprived of strength'). At bb.32-33 there is a tutti finale to the octet at 'like death it comes to stay'.

In the sixth movement the solo violin performs a reconstruction of the melodic line that had been fragmented in the vocal version. Voice-determined roles still predominate, with violas doubling below first violins for the higher voice, and cellos doubling second violins to transcribe the lower voice. A *tutti* emphasis at b.21 corresponds with the end of the first quatrain, and whilst this does not go entirely unnoticed in the vocal version, the emphasis has nevertheless been *increased* in the later work, marking a clear connection to the text '*foco*', 'fire', which is so central to the concept of the original sonnet. Harmonic material is added at what were 'pivot points' in *Love Sonnet VI*, again pointing to textual provenance in this movement. However, the musically oscillating nature of the original has been obscured by the lack of contrast between a sung/shouted *sprechgesang* high/low pitch (head/chest voice), the octave doublings, and the full melody iterated by the solo violin. The vocal provenance for this movement has almost disappeared.

By contrast, the vocal qualities used in *Love Sonnet VI* are very much in evidence in the second half of this movement, in bb.37-40 and 47-50, which were the first line of each tercet in the original. In *Meditations* they become an ad lib 'wild, unpredictable' and 'passionately' played series of descending glissandi by solo violin; the subsequent lines are voiced by soloists from each section of the string orchestra, non vibrato and 'purged of emotion'.

These closing sections, with their distillation of material, draw attention to the pitch relationships between notes, essentially presenting a fragmented melodic line much in keeping with the musical materials of *Love Sonnet VI*. Along with the elision of reiterated pitches (previously necessary for text setting), which now allows the listener to focus on timbre, this section illustrates a closer connection to the musical qualities of the voices in the original.

In the last movement, the solo violin has a short introductory section that derives its material from *Love Sonnet VII*'s opening melody, with registral changes from the original. From b.6, the basses and cellos play cluster chords which show a schema of alternation between the two whole tone scales, while the higher string orchestra play the melodic line, with some 'reverberation' techniques as used in the third movement. The closing bars (bb.31-35) in the lower strings also reinforce the oscillation between whole tone scales. These scales are a development from the original scalar material discernable in *Love Sonnet VII* identified by Norris.³

The final piece in this series on Michelangelo was a version for violin and piano, written in 2009. This version of *Meditations on Michelangelo* was also written for Reiko Suzuki to perform, with pianist Gao Ping. The reworking of material is clearly a progression from the string orchestra *Meditations* and is largely a piano reduction of that work, with a few notable exceptions. Although the material in the initial movements is very straightforward, and there are overall no changes of key or metre from the previous work, we should bear in mind that Body is now back to a version which has two

³ Norris, 'Tonal Desires', *Canzona* Vol. 28, no. 39, p. 64.

performers, and it is interesting to see how the composer re-envisioned the roles of the players.

For instance, in the fourth movement, where the roles of 'higher' and 'lower' voice were re-cast in the string orchestra and a new melody created for the solo violin, in the new version they have not reverted back to their previous roles. Now all of the original music is contained within the piano playing, and the violin plays the new line created for the *Meditations* in 2007. By contrast, in the sixth movement the original oscillation between voices (which deconstructed the text) is reinstated, with the violin as higher voice, and piano as lower, whilst retaining the additional harmonic material presented in the second version. It might be that the timbral differences between the violin and piano make this possible again, whereas the *Love Sonnets* use of head/chest voice was difficult to reproduce with the strings.

Here then, firstly with the *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo* and subsequent versions of *Meditations on Michelangelo*, we have a clear example of Jack Body's processes of development and transformation of material from vocal to non-vocal material, whilst still maintaining the essential core of the original poetic expression. It is clear that all of the musical materials presented in *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo* have been used and in many cases enlarged, amplified, and fleshed out with harmony in *Meditations on Michelangelo*. Moreover, with his consistent attention to the detail of the original text, even to the inclusion of a significant word embedded right at the core of the instrumental work, we can trace a chain of meaning from the most recent work right back to the original poetry.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

Music has its own ‘language’, of course, enunciated in the tensions of pitch, time and volume, coloured by timbre and texture⁴ that Western music has spent so many hundreds of years assigning meaning to. As Norris⁵ illustrates, Body is no stranger to this language and uses it continually within both *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo* and *Meditations on Michelangelo*. It is not my intention, in focusing on the continuation of text meaning in *Meditations of Michelangelo*, to marginalise the significance of the musical content of the work: indeed, it was the musical materials in the *Love Sonnets* that inspired Body to write the latter work.

Body has other reasons for drawing on pre-existing works for inspiration. He admits to being insecure about purely creative activity, and perhaps one aspect of working with this material could be an attempt to avoid facing the blank page, “struggling to create something out of nothing”.⁶ This frank admission of his own insecurity about making music is juxtaposed with his deep respect for the confidence and ease of many Asian musician-composers, and he defends his ‘magpie borrowings’ through admitting a passionate admiration for the exotic material.⁷

⁴ Deryck Cooke, *The Language of Music*, London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1959.

⁵ Norris, ‘Tonal Desires’, *Canzona* Vol. 28, no. 39, p. 63.

⁶ Jack Body ‘Tribute and Riposte’ *Canzona* Vol. 28, no. 49, 2007, p. 46.

⁷ Jack Body, *Pulse*, New Zealand: Rattle, 2000.

In the vocal provenance of pieces such as *Seatas*, as well as the larger corpus of ‘double transcription’ works, Body seeks to ‘grasp the intangible’ in another’s music, knowing that his own ideas and perceptions will be “shaken up, transformed and enriched.” During the transformative process, he tries to recreate the music in another form ‘and through this recreation transmit something of those qualities to which I first responded’.⁸

The qualities that Body transmits in *Saetas* are all linked to the vocal provenance of the original source materials. Firstly, there are the timbral or sonic qualities of voice, transformed by techniques such as *sul ponticello*; secondly, there is modal melody, transmitted by a faithful re-voicing into the new instrument (even restoring an imagined authenticity, as in the quasi-saeta decorations of the Wolf lied in the first movement); thirdly, there is textual provenance, which can be discerned in a variety of compositional techniques including musical emphasis (for instance the unison section in movement 3), and the vocalising of text by instrumental performers (this, of course, makes direct reference to the vocal as well as the textual provenance here).

In *Meditations on Michelangelo*, rather than responding to another’s music, the vocal provenance was Body’s own work. All of the qualities that he brought out in *Saetas* can be seen in *Meditations* as well: the sonic transformations of string techniques and registral changes; a precise representation of the original modal melody; textual provenance including a vestige of text from the original (the whispered ‘*l’amor*’) and musical

⁸ Jack Body, *Pulse*

emphasis in places that previously expressed significant text, particularly the continual references to '*spoglia*'.

There are many correspondences between the *Meditations* and *Love Sonnets* that can easily be explained by a direct music-to-music transformation. The composer has taken a melodic line and harmonised it, using a harmonic structure implied in the original; certainly the use of string orchestra in the *Meditations* allows Body to fully realise the harmonic potential implied in the melodic material of the *Love Sonnets*. Much of the residual structure that corresponds to text could be explained by the fact that the original music closely referred to the structure and meaning of the text; this simply got 'carried forward' into the instrumental version. In an overall sense, too, there is a general musical expressiveness in the *Meditations* that can be linked to the specific textual meaning of the *Love Sonnets*.

Beyond this, we have what Stacey refers to as 'the potential of certain sounds to take on significance within the context of a ... group of works by the same composer'.⁹ These sounds can only be significant to an audience that has knowledge of the previous work; their significance for the composer can be seen in the compositional decisions made at the time those musical materials are developed into a new instrumental work: decisions such as the inclusion of significant spoken material within the instrumental work; reference to the original text as subtitles for movements; and development of musical material in keeping with the original text, rather than the original music. All of these

⁹ Peter F Stacey, 'Towards the analysis of the relationship of music and text in contemporary composition', *Contemporary Music Review*, Vol. 5, no. 1, 1989, available from <http://www.informaworld.com/10.1080/07494468900640501>; accessed 11 March 2010.

compositional elements are present in both *Saetas* and *Meditations on Michelangelo*, yet only detailed knowledge of the source material will reveal their significance to the listener.

Regardless of the source material, Jack Body distils the essence of voice into his new compositions by removing elements (the voice, the words) and adding others (instruments, harmony). By maintaining contact with this source of embodied music, his compositional practice reflects Jean Jacques Rousseau's thoughts on the subject. He proposed that the voice in music was:

a primordial language, a philosophical fiction that functions as an archetype for every meaningful immaterial effect, the basis of which is the 'sign of passion'. The mechanism that indicates and gives outward manifestation to this immateriality is the voice ..."¹⁰

¹⁰ Catherine Kintzler, 'Rousseau, Jean-Jacques', *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, available from <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/23968>; accessed 24 May 2010.

Appendix A

List of compositions by Jack Body in chronological order

Title	Year	Instrumentation
Ave Maria Gratia Plena	1965	choir
People Look East	1965	choir
The New Liturgy	1966	choir
Four Haiku	1967	piano & strings
Four Stables	1968	piano
Three Love Songs	1968	voice & strings
Turtle Time	1968	narrator & ensemble
Silence and Me	1970	electroacoustic - tape
23 Pages	1971	orchestra
In Memoriam Memorabiliam	1972	choir
Superimpositions computer music	1972	piano
Kryptophones	1973	electroacoustic - tape
Paternoster	1973	choir
Resonance Music	1974	guitar & percussion
Carol to St. Stephen	1975	choir
Musik Dari Jalan (Music from the Street)	1975	electroacoustic - tape
Song Cycle sound/light/image installation	1975	voices & tape
Hello Francois	1976	orchestra
Marvel not Joseph	1976	choir
Duets and Choruses	1978	electroacoustic - tape
Make Us Merry, with Canons for Brass	1978	voices & brass
Musik Anak-Anak (Children's Music)	1978	electroacoustic - tape
Aeolian Harp	1979	cello
Aeolian Harp	1979	viola
Aeolian Harp	1979	violin
Bamboo Music	1979	bamboo instruments
The Caves of Ellora	1979	piano & brass
Encounters	1980	electroacoustic - tape with actors
Wananga i te rangi	1980	electroacoustic - tape
Fanfares	1981	electroacoustic - tape
Vox Populi	1981	choir & tape
Five Melodies	1982	piano
Love Sonnets of Michelangelo	1982	voices
Poi	1982	electroacoustic - tape
Melodies	1983	orchestra
Circle of Solitude	1985	amplified voice & percussion
Jangkrik Genggong	1985	electroacoustic - tape
Little Elegies	1985	orchestra
Poems of Solitary Delights	1985	narrator & orchestra
Epilogue:	1986	field recording
Interlude: Ciblon environmental music	1986	field recording
Interlude: Dremenan reed instruments rice stalks	1986	field recording
Interlude: Gua Tabuhan music played on stalactites and stalagmites	1986	field recording

Interlude: Kotekan rhythms with rice pounding poles	1986	field recording
Prelude: Azan environmental recordings	1986	field recording
Three Rhythmics	1986	piano
Interior	1987	chamber septet & tape
Three Transcriptions	1987	string quartet
Five Lullabies	1988	choir
Epicycle	1989	string quartet
Musik Mulut (Mouth Music)	1989	electroacoustic - tape
African Strings	1990	guitars
East African Transcription	1990	marimba
Arum Manis	1991	string quartet & tape
Vox Humana	1991	radiophonic
Psalm 150	1992	choir
Three Elegies	1992	chamber ensemble
Songs my Grandmother Sang Arrangements	1993	voice & piano
Wedding Song for Saint Cecilia	1993	choir
Sun and Steel (Homage to Mishama)	1994	electroacoustic - tape
Nocturne	1995	cello & piano
Nowell (in the Lithuanian manner) Christmas carol	1995	choir
Pulse	1995	orchestra
Sarajevo	1995	piano
Campur Sari	1996	voice & string quartet
The Garden	1996	16 instruments
Alley	1997	opera
Fours on my teaching	1997	narrator & piano
Fours on my teaching	1997	narrator & orchestra
Invocation	1998	choir
Bells for John - 60th birthday of John Rimmer	1999	
14 Stations	2000	amplified piano
Fanfare for Bert	2000	orchestra
Three Old-Fashioned Songs	2000	piano
3 Sentimental Songs / Sentimental Songs	2001	piano & percussion
After Bach	2001	gamelan & strings
After Bach	2001	strings
After Bach	2001	violas
Pange Lingua arranged by Jack Body	2001	choir
Songs of Nostalgia (Sentimental Songs)	2001	voice & ensemble
Carmen Dances	2002	guitar concerto
Flurry	2002	string quartet
Mazurka 40 - After Chopin	2002	piano
In the Curve of Song	2003	Voice, ensemble & tape
Love Poem	2003	voices & organ
Saetas	2003	string quartet
O Mensch, bewein dein Sünde gross	2004	ensemble
Palaran: Songs of Love and War	2004	voice with orchestra
Pange Lingua Gloriosi	2004	choir
Paradise Regained	2004	piano & gangsa
Tribute to the Blues arrangements	2004	ensemble
Two Blues	2004	piano
Bells of Venice	2005	piano, glass soloist & glass orchestra

Intimate History no. 1: Yono	2005	Radiophonic
Remembering	2005	electroacoustic
Tribute to the Blues arrangements	2005	ensemble
Tui, korimako and kokako)	2005	organ & tape
Waiata Maori	2005	voice & Ensemble
Passio	2006	voice & Ensemble
Rainforest	2006	flute & harp
Rainforest	2006	flute & piano
Fire in the Belly	2007	piano trio
Meditations on Michelangelo	2007	violin concerto
Polish Folk Dances / Polish Dancers	2007	ensemble
Rainforest	2007	piano trio
The Street Where I Live a "landscape prelude"	2007	piano & CD
Intimate History no. 2: ssteve	2008	radiophonic
Jibrail	2008	choir
A House in Bali	2009	narrator & string quartet, gamelan
Meditations on Michelangelo	2009	violin & piano
My Name is Mok Bhon	2009	orchestra
Gada Yina Africa	2000	cello & percussion

Appendix B

List of compositions by Jack Body which use voice or have vocal provenance

Choral

<i>Title</i>	<i>Year</i>	
Ave Maria Gratia Plena	1965	unaccompanied SATB
People Look East	1965	unaccompanied SATB
The New Liturgy	1966	unaccompanied SATB
In Memoriam Memorabilium	1972	unaccompanied SATB
Paternoster	1973	4 soloists, choir & instruments
Carol to St. Stephen	1975	SATB choir multiple divisi with 3 soloists
Marvel not Joseph	1976	Double SATB choir with 2 soloists
Make Us Merry, with Canons for Brass	1978	voices with brass ensemble
Vox Populi	1981	Choir and tape
Five Lullabies	1988	SATB choir or vocal ensemble
Psalm 150	1992	SATB choir
Wedding Song for Saint Cecilia	1993	for mixed choir
Nowell (in the Lithuanian manner) Christmas carol	1995	SA choir Multiple choirs, orchestra, gamelan, organ and shofar
Invocation	1998	shofar
Pange Lingua arranged by Jack Body	2001	choir and gamelan
Pange Lingua Gloriosi	2004	choir and ensemble
Passio (collaboration)	2006	SATB and wind and percussion band
Jibrail	2008	SATB ensemble and gongs
Three Dreams and a Nightmare	2010	SSATBB

Other vocal

Three Love Songs	1968	tenor, viola and cello
Love Sonnets of Michelangelo	1982	two female singers
Poems of Solitary Delights	1985	narrator/singer and orchestra
Songs my Grandmother Sang Arrangements	1993	voice and piano string quartet with Javanese musician (singer in movement 2)
Campur Sari	1996	movement 2)
Alley	1997	opera
Songs of Nostalgia (Sentimental Songs)	2001	voice and Ensemble
In the Curve of Song	2003	voice, ensemble and recorded voice
Palaran: Songs of Love and War	2004	orchestra with Javanese singer
Waiata Maori	2005	Maori singer and ensemble

Spoken Word

Turtle Time	1968	narrator and ensemble
Circle of Solitude	1985	vocalising percussionist
Fours on my teaching	1997	narrator and piano
Fours on my teaching	1997	narrator and orchestra
Intimate History no. 1: Yono	2005	Radiophonic
The Street Where I Live a "landscape prelude"	2007	for piano and recorded voice
Intimate History no. 2: ssteve	2008	Radiophonic
A House in Bali	2009	narrator, gamelan and string quartet
My Name is Mok Bhon	2009	orchestra with tape and video

Electroacoustic work

Silence and Me	1970	recorded voice
Kryptophones	1973	recorded voice
Musik Dari Jalan (Music from the Street)	1975	recorded voice
Song Cycle sound/light/image installation	1975	poetry by bill Manhire
Musik Anak-Anak (Children's Music)	1978	recorded voice
Encounters	1980	with audience participation
Fanfares	1981	recorded voice
Jangkrik Genggong	1985	recorded voice
Epilogue:	1986	Field recording
Interlude: Gua Tabuhan music played on stalactites and stalagmites	1986	Field recording
Prelude: Azan environmental recordings	1986	Field recording
Vox Humana	1991	recorded voice
Sun and Steel (Homage to Mishama)	1994	recorded voice

Vocal Provenance

Three Old-Fashioned Songs	2000	piano
3 Sentimental Songs / Sentimental Songs	2001	piano and percussion
Flurry	2002	string quartet, reminiscent of song
Saetas	2003	string quartet, inspired by Spanish song
Tribute to the Blues arrangements	2004	Instrumental quintet
Two Blues	2004	piano
Tribute to the Blues arrangements	2005	13 piece ensemble
Rainforest	2006	flute and harp, from Pygmy song
Rainforest	2006	flute and piano, from Pygmy song
Meditations on Michelangelo	2007	violin concerto, from <i>Love Sonnets of Michelangelo</i>
Meditations on Michelangelo	2009	violin & piano, from <i>Love Sonnets of Michelangelo</i>

Appendix C

Texts for *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo*

A number of translations of Michelangelo's poems exist. They tend to paraphrase the meaning in order to preserve the meter and rhyming scheme of the original sonnets. English translations here are from Jennings¹, and are the same as the translation read by Jack Body before each of the movements on his 2004 film *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo*.²

¹ Elizabeth Jennings *The Sonnets of Michelangelo*, Manchester: Carcanet, 1988.

² Jack Body, *Love Sonnets of Michelangelo*, 2004.

1. S'un casto amor, s'una pietà superna

S'un casto amor, s'una pietà superna,
S'una fortuna infra dua amanti equale,
S'un'aspra sorte all'un dell'altro cale,
S'un spirto, s'un voler duo cor governa;

S'un'anima in due corpi è fatta eterna,
Ambo levando al cielo e con pari ali;
S'amor d'un colpo e d'un dorato strale
Le viscer di due petti arda e discerna;

S'amar l'un l'altro, e nessun se medesmo,
D'un gusto e d'un diletto, a tal mercede,
Ch' a un fin voglia l'uno e l'altro porre;

Se mille e mille non sarien centesmo
A tal nodo d'amore, a tanta fede;
E sol l'isdegno il può rompere e sciorre?

If love is chaste, if pity comes from heaven,
If fortune, good or ill, is shared between
Two equal loves, and if one wish can govern
Two hearts, and nothing evil intervene:

If one soul joins two bodies fast for ever
And if, on the same wings, these two can fly,
And if one dart of love can pierce and sever
The vital organs of both equally:

If both love one another with the same
Passion, and if each other's good is sought
By both, if taste and pleasure and desire

Bind such a faithful love-knot, who can claim
Either with envy, scorn, contempt or ire,
The power to untie so fast a knot?

2. Passa per gli occhi al core in un momento

Passa per gli occhi al core in un momento
qualunque obbietto di beltà lor sia,
e per sì larga a sì capace via
ch' a mille non si chiude, non ch' a cento,

d'ogni età d'ogni sesso; ond' io pavento,
carco d'aflanni, e più di gelosia;
né fra sì rari volti so qual sia
ch' anzi morte mi die 'ntero contento.

S' un ardente desir mortal bellezza
ferma del tutto, non discese insieme
dal ciel con l'alma, è dunque umana voglia:

ma se pass 'oltre, amor tuo no me sprezza,
ch' altro Dio cerca; e di quel più non teme
ch' a lato vien contro a sì bassa spoglia.

It passes from the eyes into the heart
In a split second. Thus all beauties may
Find by this means a wide and generous way;
And so, for countless men, desires start.

Burdened by grief and gripped by jealousy,
I am afraid of such a powerful passion.
Nor, among countless faces, can I see
One which in life can give me consolation

If mortal beauty satisfies desire
Completely, then it did not come from heaven;
Such strong emotion comes from human fire.

But if I pass beyond this and have striven
For heavenly things, I need not be afraid
That I by base desires shall be waylaid.

3. D'altrui pietoso e sol di sé spietato

D'altrui pietoso e sol di sé spietato
nascie un vil brutto, che con dolce doglia
l'altrui man veste, e la suo scorza spoglia
e sol per morte si può dir ben nato.

Così volesse al mie signior mie fato
vestir suo viva di mie morta spoglia;
che, come serpe al sasso si discoglia,
pur per morte potria cangiar mie stato.

O fussi sol la mie l'irsuta pelle
che, del suo pel contesta, fa tal gonna
che con ventura stringe sì bel seno,

che 'l giorno pur m'aresti; o le pianelle
foss' io, che base a quel fanno e colonna,
ch' al piovere 'are' pur adosso almeno!

To others merciful and only to
Itself unkind, this lowly creature who
Sloughs off its skin in pain that it may give
Pleasure to others, dies that they may live.

So do I long for such a destiny –
That from my death, my Lord, you might alone
Take life; then by my death I too might be
Changed like the worm which casts its skin on stone.

For if that skin were mine I could at least
Be woven in a gown to clasp that breast,
And so embrace the beauty which I crave

Then would I gladly die. Or could I save
My Lord's feet from the rain by being shoes
Upon his feet – this also would I choose.

4. Veggio nel tuo bel viso, signor mio

Veggio nel tuo bel viso, signor mio,
quel che narrar mal puossi in questa vita:
l'anima, della carne ancor vestita,
con esso è già più volte ascesa a Dio.

E se 'l vulgo malvagio, sciocco e rio
di quel che sente, altrui segna e addita;
non è l'intensa voglia men gradita,
l'amor, la fede e l'onesto desio.

A quel pietoso fonte, onde siàm tutti,
s'assembra ogni beltà che qua si vede
più ch' altra cosa, alle persone accorte;

né altro saggio abbiàm né altri frutti
del cielo in terra; e s' i' v'amo con fede,
trascendo a Dio, e fo dolce la morte.

I see in your fair face, my dearest Lord,
That which in life I cannot fitly tell.
Your soul already, though flesh holds it still,
Has many times ascended to its God.

And if the vulgar and malignant crowd
Misunderstand the love with which we're blest,
Its worth is not affected in the least:
Our faith and honest love can still feel proud.

Earth is the meagre source of all that we
Can know while still fleshbound. To those who see
In the right way, it gives most copiously.

All that we have of wisdom and of faith
Derives from earth, and if I love you with
Fervour, I shall reach God and find sweet death

5. Non posso altra figura immaginarmi

Non posso altra figura immaginarmi,
o di nud' ombra o di terrestre spoglia,
col più alto pensier, tal che mia voglia
contra la tua beltà di quella s'armi.

Ché, da te mosso, tanto scender parmi,
ch' amor d'ogni valor mi priva e spoglia,
ond' a pensar di minuir mia doglia,
duplicando, la morte viene a darmi.

Però non val che più sproni mia fuga,
doppiando 'l corso alla beltà nemica;
ché 'l men dal più veloce non si scosta.

Amor con le sue man gli occhi m'asciuga,
promettendomi cara ogni fatica;
ché vile esser non può, chi tanto costa.

I cannot shape an image or acquire,
Either from shadow or from earthly skin,
A counterpart to lessen my desire:
Such armour is your beauty shut within.

Obsessed and moved by you, I seem to get
Weaker. My passion takes my strength away.
By trying to diminish grief I but
Double it. Like death, it comes to stay.

And it is useless now for me to try
To win the race against such loveliness,
Which far outstrips the fastest runner here.

Love with its hands so tenderly will dry
My tears and make all labour seem most dear.
He is no coward who discovers this!

6. Se da' prim' anni aperto un lento e poco

Se da' prim' anni aperto un lento e poco
ardor distrugge in breve un verde core;
che farà, chiuso po' da l'ultim' ore,
d'un più volte arso, un insaziabil foco?

Se 'l corso di più tempo dà men loco
a la vita, a le forze e al valore;
che farà a quel che per natura muore
l'incendio arrotto d'amoroso gioco?

farà quel che di me s'aspetta farsi:
cenere al vento sì pietoso e fero,
ch' a' fastidiosi vermi il corpo furi.

Se verde in picciol foco i' piansi e arsi
che più secco ora in un sì grande spero
che l'alma al corpo lungo tempo duri?

If a small, steady flame can quickly dry
The sap within a young green heart, what power
Will raging bonfires have when they but try
An old man's heart which moves to its last hour?

If time in general gives a meagre span
To life with all its values and its claims,
How much less will it grant a dying man
Who, in old age, still plays at lovers' games?

The answer lies in my experience:
The wind which blows my ashes far away
Deprives the worms of their own rightful prey.

If in green youth I wept at milder pains,
In flames more fierce I've little hope that I
May overwhelm them now my wood is dry.

7. Caro m'è il sonno, e più l'esser di sasso

Caro m'è il sonno, e più l'esser di sasso,
mentre che 'l danno e la vergogna dura,
Non veder, non sentir m'è gran ventura;
però non mi destar, deh! parla basso!

Dear to me is sleep: still more, being made of stone.
While pain and guilt still linger here below,
Blindness and numbness – these please me alone;
Then do not wake me, keep your voices low.

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