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A Portfolio of Compositions

submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Music in Composition

at

The University of Waikato

By

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University of Waikato

Hamilton, New Zealand 2010
Abstract

The pieces in this portfolio cover a wide range of methods and styles - from work for a single vocalising percussionist, to singing bowl and electronics and a work for full orchestra. The aim of this portfolio is to demonstrate my technical and musical proficiency as well as to give an overview of my personal composing philosophy and style.

The portfolio opens with a work for orchestra, *A Study in Scarlet*. It differs from my previous orchestral works and is based on a musical code of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s book, titled *A Study in Scarlet*. This was read in the 2009 Todd/NSZO Young Composer Readings. The second work is *manatu*. It features tinkly piano, wind chimes and ethnic instrumentalists in a chamber ensemble to create a musical sound world. This was written for and premiered at Bang on a Can’s summer music festival in Massachusetts 2009. The piano work *ātanga* is an adaptation of *manatu* for solo pianist and was written for the Dame Malvina Major Foundations Showcase Concert in New Plymouth. This adaptation proved to be a worthwhile exercise in efficient use of music material. *Wrong Number* is a Janet Frame poem set for soprano and real-time effect processing of audio. *Confessions – Part I and II*, for solo violin and string orchestra is based on the Fibonacci series and explores my love for string sonorities. *Sand Song* was written for a friend who asked me to set a poem she wrote. Here I demonstrate my love for setting text and voice to say something beautiful and precise. This song now stands as a eulogy for her Father. *Paribaka*, for vocalising percussionist, is a setting of Apirana Taylor’s poem *Paribaka* and was written for Australian performer Louise Devenish. I explore further in the realm of live acoustic and electroacoustic music with *Orison* a piece I wrote for myself to perform live with singing bowl and Ableton Live. Finally *The Headlines Today* for five improvising musicians explores the music of shouting and the vernacular of place.
To Delsie Boult

The most amazing Grandma in the world
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CD and DVD Track Listing

CD

1 - *A Study in Scarlet*  
   for orchestra. (Todd / NZSO Young Composer Readings 2009)

2 - *manatu.*  
   for chamber ensemble. (Bang on a Can 2009)

3 - *ātanga.*  
   for solo piano and wind chimes. (Pianist: Tama Porter, Live at The University of Waikato’s Lilburn Composers Concert)

4 - *Wrong Number*  
   for soprano and live electronics. (Soprano: Diantha Hillenbrand, Recorded at The University of Waikato)

5 - *Confessions Part I*  
   for solo violin and string orchestra. (Conductor: James Tennant, Soloist: Dr Lara Hall with The Waikato Universities String Orchestra)

6 - *Confessions Part II*  
   for solo violin and string orchestra. (computer realization)

7 - *Sand Song*  
   for soprano and piano. (Soprano: Diantha Hillenbrand, Piano: Elizabeth Dobson)

8 - *Paribaka*  
   for vocalizing percussionist. (Performed by Louise Devenish)

9 - *Orison*  
   for singing bowl and live electronics.

DVD

1 - *manatu.*  
   Live at premiere - Bang on a Can summer musical festival, Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art

2 - *ātanga.*  
   (Pianist: Tama Porter, Live at The University of Waikato’s Lilburn Composers Concert)

3 - *Wrong Number*  
   (Soprano: Diantha Hillenbrand, Computer: Elizabeth Dobson. Live at The University of Waikato’s Lilburn Composers Concert.)
My Musical Concerns

An essay
My Musical Concerns

“Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life.” (Picasso)

There are several musical concerns and questions I have sought to address in this portfolio, where each work is researched and written to explore a certain idea or concept. Throughout, there are important undercurrents that tie the works together, centred around compositional questions of why, how and for who.

I feel a vocational impulse to compose. It has been a life-long journey of learning, and an aspiration from a young age starting soon after beginning piano lessons. I have never wished to be talented in other ways, apart from in painting and photography. I compose not because I have to, but because I could not live happily without doing it. I have frequently found myself agitated from prolonged periods of low compositional activity, often due to work commitments and physical fatigue.

Who to compose for?

I believe that to compose for selfish gain is futile. With music I want to create something bigger than myself, and to reach an audience or person to soothe (or help) their soul. Many artists seek to do this by making an argument or point through their chosen medium. I find this to be a very disciplined process.

In the succinct words of Witold Lutosławski’s artistic purpose for composition; “One thing always undeniable to me: no sound sequence, no vertical aggregation should be composed without regard being given to every single detail of expression, colour, character, physiognomy. Even the minutest detail should satisfy the composer’s sensitivity to the maximum degree ... there should be no indifference.”

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How I compose

Lutosławski wrote “to assess a composers creative output can be to distinguish between two polarised but complementary characters; the introvert and the extrovert – silence and solitude are essential to enable a composer to inhabit the introverted conceptual world from which creative ideas develop.”

Composing is not an impersonal art – one throws oneself headlong into this conceptual introverted world. Generally, to quote Picasso, “I begin with an idea and then it becomes something else”. I am influenced by poetry and literature and the works of composers who I find empathetic. I frequently compose from the heart and not the head where this introverted conceptual world comes from, infusing musical thoughts and theories into pieces to create something that can be appreciated on different levels.

Composing to relate to people who are not musically knowledgeable is sustainable and worthwhile. Edwin Carr said “music must be magic – even if it's intellectual – it must be magic – I want to relate to my audiences.” Some may say it is degrading to “water down” musical ideas and concepts to create something understandable to the everyday person. However if all music is composed purely for the benefit of the musically educated yet surpasses everyone else’s understanding and kinaesthetic response to the music, then music as a human endeavour is doomed to be nothing more than an elitist pastime. A body of compositions that are accessible to the common person must exist in order to attract the interest and passion of those who will continue the art into the future. The creation of music is more than an intellectual endeavour and serves many functions in our society. Therefore, music should be composed that reaches out and engages the everyday person.

Why I compose

Each new work offers a challenge. Again in the words of Picasso, “I am always doing that which I cannot do, in order that I may learn how to do it.” All the while I am concerned about the

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3 Bodman Rae, The Music of Lutosławski, pg 261.
musical outcome. I love to read about music theory and explore certain theories but the practice of music comes first and must fit the creative space in which the work is created.

As a true synaesthete might experience colour and sound as an integrated entity, I try to think about how a certain music could taste, feel or look if it were a living organism. I have an affinity with landscape and in particular the qualities of Taranaki. Being an amateur photographer I am interested in our experience of textures in landscape - the way light differs from sunrise to sunset and its interplay over Mount Taranaki is an example of what I strive to capture in my photography. I find composing a very visual yet textural art form and often tackle it the same way as I would when taking a photo – finding the right balance of foreground and background in a way that presents a perfect piece.

I believe in the multiplicity of purposes for music and compositional skills and that this view can enhance ones sustainability as a composer, teacher and musician. Additionally, I believe we need to be musicians. I frequently explore one or two new instruments each year and take lessons and sit exams for another. This enhances my skills not only as a musician but as a composer, enabling me to write more idiomatic works.

**Introduction to the Music**

I have attempted to with all these pieces to impart some of myself and my musical ideals to explore an idea, while staying true to my creative identity as a New Zealander who grew up in Taranaki. During 2009 I was fortunate enough to attend a music residency programme which had a great impact on how I write music. I was incredibly inspired to continue extending myself as a composer and endeavoured through all my work to bare my soul to the listener; believing that an audience can connect better to the work if they can hear the composers personality in it.

Another task I have thought about while working on this portfolio is summed up in the words of marimbist Nancy Zeltsman “performers depend on composers for music that challenges and inspires.” I consider this frequently while writing - believing that a performer can portray music more convincingly to an audience if they can “feel it” or enjoy it.

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7 Zeltsman, N. “Commissioning New Music”. (Percussive Notes 37:5 October 1999.)
I decided after Bang on a Can to not rely on the University’s computer equipment to create digital works. Over the past few years I have been assembling my own studio and in particular building a live performance rig for myself to perform mixed media electro-acoustic and live performer works. While this project is still in its infancy I have goals to extend the set up. The beginnings of this project were explored in my work *Wrong Number* for soprano and computer and *Orison* for singing bowl and computer. Both of these pieces are included in this portfolio.

I will briefly introduce each work in this portfolio along with a short justification.

The portfolio opens with a work for orchestra, *A Study in Scarlet*, especially written for the NZSO Todd young composer readings. It is heavily influenced by Dutilleux and shows my desire for escaping from the style of my previous orchestral works. The second work is *manatu*, and was written especially for Bang on a Can’s 2009 summer festival (from now on referred to as BOAC 09). It features tinkly piano, wind chimes and ethnic instrumentalists in a chamber ensemble to create a musical sound world.

The piano work *ātanga* was written for Tama Porter to premiere at the Dame Malvina Major Foundation showcase concert in New Plymouth. It is an adaptation of *manatu* and proved to be a worthwhile exercise in efficient use of music material. Both pieces now stand alone as their own entities while sharing the same sound world. Shrinking a ten minute chamber work for eleven performers to one pianist is no small feat and I learnt a lot from the process.

*Wrong Number* came about from my love for vocal music. I wanted to write another large song cycle this year, but instead I decided to try something different and set a Janet Frame poem for soprano and realtime effect processing of audio. I explored this mixed live acoustic and electroacoustic genre further with *Orison* – a work for singing bowl and live electronics.

*Confessions – Part I and II*, for solo violin and string orchestra was inspired by the work of American composer Julia Wolfe. She is passionate about creating sumptuous string timbres and textures and inspired me to experiment with this medium despite never feeling any

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8 For my Honours portfolio I wrote *Dried Corsages* – 5 songs for soprano and marimba detailing the experience of a young nurse going to war.
particular attraction to strings. I enjoyed exploring the beauty of a virtuoso performer who whether sustaining one note or playing a fury of passages can create and maintain interest.

_Sand Song_ was written for a friend who asked me to set a poem she wrote. Here I explore my love for setting text and voice to say something beautiful and precise. This song now stands as a eulogy for her Father.

Writing a solo piece for performer Louise Devenish was on my musical agenda since coming home from Bang on a Can. _Parihaka_, for vocalising percussionist, was one of those pieces that came together easily and acts as a protest about what happened at Parihaka. It is a setting of Apirana Taylor’s poem _Parihaka_.

_The Headlines Today_ explores the music of shouting in an indeterminate work, improvised about news headlines.
Let the Music Begin
E. J. Dobson

A Study in Scarlet

for orchestra
A Study in Scarlet

Programme Note

*A Study in Scarlet* (2009) is a short work for orchestra focusing on woodwind and metal percussion timbres. The motivic and harmonic material is derived from tone clock principles and a musical code based on Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s book, titled *A Study in Scarlet*.

Performance note

*A Study in Scarlet* was selected for the 2009 NZSO / TODD Corporation Young Composers Awards. In August it was work-shopped and recorded by the NZSO, conducted by Hamish McKeich. The recordings were broadcast on Radio New Zealand Concert on the 25th of October 2009. Sincere thanks to composer and mentor Ross Harris, Hamish McKeich, The New Zealand Symphony Orchestra and Radio NZ Concert.
A Study in Scarlet

Instrumentation

Score at concert pitch, except octave transposing instruments.

2 flutes
Oboe
Cor anglais
2 clarinets in Bb
2 bassoons

2 horns in F
2 trumpets in Bb
2 trombones
Bass trombone
Tuba

Timpani

Percussion 1 - Triangle, mark tree and metal wind chimes
Percussion 2 - Medium suspended cymbal and high sizzle cymbal
Percussion 3 - Vibraphone

Strings

Duration 5 minutes, twenty seconds.
A Study in Scarlet

Analytical Note

This piece grew out of a love for musical codes. Having just read Doyle’s first Sherlock Holmes book *A Study in Scarlet* I decided to “encode” this book into a piece. I wanted to voyage to a sound world I had not yet experimented with in an orchestral medium. A world that is quieter and slower moving - contrasting with my recent orchestral work *Ricercare per Vita*, a busy, loud and densely textured toccata.

The form of *A Study in Scarlet* is inspired by the first section (rehearsal mark 1 – 17) of Dutilleux’s *Timbres, Espace, Mouvement*. I pay tribute to his haunting cor anglais solo (*Timbres* - bar 47) by placing my cor anglais solo at the typical climax point of *A Study in Scarlet*. I have emulated the mood of Dutilleux’s opening by also utilizing atmospheric percussion sounds.

The instrumentation focuses heavily on woodwind. As a wind player I am biased towards its timbre and wanted to explore the sound. The cor anglais is almost a soloist while the brass and the strings are largely ignored. The woodwind timbre is contrasted with bright metallic percussion which is dissimilar with my previous 2008 fascination with wooden percussion.

The work is predominantly set in 3/2. This is to suspend gestures through the bar by the use of repeated triplets or crotchets (i.e. bar 12, woodwind or bar 19-20, woodwind and vibraphone). These pulsing repeated notes help the harmony to feel quite stagnant and slow moving.

The opening texture morphs out of “thin air” like fog drifting over the plains at dawn. The first tunes heard are pieces of musical code from Doyle’s book *A Study in Scarlet*. The dark themes unravel, muddying up the texture with stagnant pulses of clustered woodwind chords that drift in and out of unison. The plot thickens with brief wind and vibraphone solos, and breaks down to a disjointed wind quartet at bar 28. The quartet is to add rhythmical interest and helps evoke the franticness often involved with figuring out a mystery.
The strings enter at bar 32 with their main theme which features large angular intervals - in contrast with the small interval motivic material from the beginning. It helps build momentum to the fortissimo tutti at bar 42. This quickly collapses into an anticlimax of a cor anglais solo supported by light percussion and wind. The solo here, where one would expect a large climax, became my favourite section of the work due to its sparse instrumentation.

The strings enter again at bar 66 with a stomping ostinato supporting a restless vibraphone solo. Strains of the musical code filter through the winds and vibraphone to reinforce the mysterious feeling. The second tutti at bar 70 suddenly diminishes again to stagnant pulsing woodwind timbres, reinforcing the feeling of an unattainable outcome to the mystery. The piece then fades, with a final reiteration by cor anglais and flute of thematic material derived from the opening.

The score is cutaway to reveal only what is necessary. Often to see the bigger picture one has to use imagination - much like Holmes looking at a crime scene. I set this as a challenge for my notational skills and felt *A Study in Scarlet* suits the calligraphic eye-catching individualism of a cut away score.

“All looked so peaceful and happy, the rustling trees and the broad silence of grain land that it was difficult to realise that the spirit of murder lurked through it all”

The main harmonic and motivic material is based on the third hour of the tone clock. (Intervals $1 + 3$). I translated the following sentence into a musical code using this scale.

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“There’s the scarlet thread of murder running through the colourless skein of life, and our duty is to unravel it, and isolate it, and expose every inch of it.”

Each letter was assigned to a note of the scale depending on how frequently it appeared in the sentence. For example; the letter E appears 14 times, all letters appearing 14 times became a = Gb etc, or letter A, appearing 7 times became D. Motivic and harmonic material were then formed upon this code. Three examples of how this musical code translated into motivic material follow.

All examples are in concert pitch

Cor Anglais Bar 5 (concert pitch) Clarinet 1 in 4 has the M = Bb. The U (D) is substituted for C, to provide semitone clash with clarinet.

![Cor Anglais Bar 5](image)

Oboe bar 7

![Oboe bar 7](image)

The vertical harmony at bar 12-15 is based on the “scarlet” set of notes clustered into chords.

Clarinet 2, bar 11 (concert pitch)

![Clarinet 2, bar 11](image)

11 Doyle, A.C. *A Study in Scarlet*, Chapter Four.
A study in Scarlet
E. J. Dobson

.manatu.

for

2 flutes, Bb clarinet, violin, cello, piano,

vibraphone, percussion and

two instrumentalists from Kyrgyzstan
“...pay this tribute to a place we all called home...”

Dedicated to the Dobson’s who have loved 674 Lincoln Road for nearly a century.

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12 Dobson, E. J. Tribute to a Place. Song lyrics 16-04-09.
Programme Note

manatu:

1. (verb) (-hia,-tia) to remember, bear in mind.
2. (stative) be homesick, anxious, sad.
3. (noun) reminder, memorandum.\(^{13}\)

.manatu. pays tribute to lands, past or present, which are significant and meaningful in our lives and that serve as references for who we are. However, when time calls for change .manatu. reminds us not to feel lost without that place and to let our hearts heal and become whole again.

Performance Note

This was recorded live at Bang on A Cans Summer Music festival at MASS MoCA (the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art) July 2009. Many thanks to Bang on a Can, MASS MoCA, Todd Reynolds, Julia Wolfe, David Lang, Michael Gordon and the entire Bang on a Can Festival faculty and fellows.

Performers:

Conductor: Todd Reynolds (New York)
Kyrgyzstan Instrumentalists: Kutmanaaly Syltanbekov, Kambar Kalendarov.
Flutes: Roberta Michel, Kelli Kathman (New York)
Clarinet: Rafael Caldenty Crego (Spain)
Violin: Jeff Young (New York)
Cello: Fjola Evans (Canada)
Piano: Kate Campbell (New Jersey)
Vibraphone: Louise Devenish (Perth, Australia)
Percussion: Steven Sehman (New York)

\(^{13}\) (manatu). Mäori Dictionary Online.
.manatu.

Instrumentation

Transposed Score

Musicians from Kyrgyzstan playing ethnic instruments:

Kutmanaaly Syltanbekov: Choopo choor, sybyzgy
Kambar Kalendarov: Choopo choor, chogoino choor

Flute
Alto flute - doubling on piccolo
Clarinet in Bb
Violin
Cello
Piano
Two percussionists:
Percussion 1: vibraphone
Percussion 2: suspended cymbal - (large, rich sound), wind-chime station (mark tree and metal and wooden wind chimes), triangle, tom-toms (medium and low).

Percussion 2 key:

1 – tom-toms
2 – wind chime station
3 – suspended cymbal
4 - triangle
Note for performers

A wiggly line over top of any note(s) – indicates it is to be played in a wailing/mournful style to imitate the Maori instrument called the Koauau. To do this bend the note slowly a quarter tone flat and a quarter tone sharp while using lots of vibrato.

The embellishment at the end of notes indicates to play a Maori hi-ianga. (translates as the drag or terminal glissando). It is an “expulsion of breath accompanied by a glissando drop of the voice/instrument over the interval of a 3rd or 4th”.  

Percussion performance:

This part is ad lib. and needs to be played empathetically in regards to the other performers. The percussionist is to improvise with the wind chimes at marked places leaving the chimes to resonate and fade naturally. Tom-toms pitches can be selected by the performer.

Piano gliss:

To be performed on string inside of piano in a rapid sweeping manner with fingers. Hold down pedal.

Woodwind:

Either circular breathe or stagger breathing where possible.

Kyrgyzstani Instrumentalists (Choopo choor, chagoino choor, sybyzgy)

Play as near as possible to notated pitches, while still adhering to instruments natural tuning.

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Flute fingering:

Multiphonic, bars 46 and 86

Clarinet fingering:

Fig 1; Timbral trill
Bar 16, 32, 140

Fig 2: Dyad. Bar 46,

Fig 3: Dyad 2. Bar 54,

Dyads: Dull and pale timbres, slightly reduce pressure on register key to produce.

Duration ten minutes

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Special thanks: For last minute help with formatting and editing; my total gratitude to Ryan Youens. <www.ryanyouens.com>
.manatu.

Background

Bang on a Can’s Summer Music Festival is a top performer and composer residency programme run by the leading contemporary music group Bang on a Can. American composers David Lang, Michael Gordon and Julia Wolfe formed Bang on a Can in 1987 and are “dedicated to commissioning, performing and creating... exciting and innovative music”\(^{15}\). Every year they run a special three week festival in July-August at the Massachusetts Museum of Contemporary Art (MASS MoCA). I was one of nine international composers accepted into the 2009 festival and am the only Kiwi to have ever attended. While there I met composers and performers from all over the world. We all performed, listened to and talked about contemporary music non-stop.

As part of my attendance to BOAC 09 I was asked to write a brand new chamber work which would be work-shopped, premiered and recorded. This piece was written in a short time frame while I was busy organising two fundraising concerts to help with attendance to BOAC 09 as well as organising travel and applying for funds for fees and flights. .manatu. was inspired by John Psathas’ piano and percussion concerto View from Olympus and his use of high tinkly piano mixed with bright metallic percussion.

BOAC 09 was a life changing experience - so much so that I have since referred to my composition as Before BOAC and After BOAC. The multitude of music I heard live every day was astounding. The vast range, style, timbre and ingenuity and the sheer virtuosity of it has since inspired my music.

BOAC helped to validate myself as a composer. The reception of my work after the premiere was heartfelt and moving with many musicians and composers commenting on how beautiful my score was. I received praise from the performers for writing enjoyable parts to play. In particular the percussionist who played vibraphone, Australian Louise Devenish, enjoyed the mood and atmosphere of the work. We have since begun collaborating and my first piece for her, Parihaka, is included in this portfolio.

\(^{15}\) Bang on a Can website. <http://bangonacan.org/about_us>
Of the nine composers invited to write for the Kyrgyzstani ethnic instrumentalists, I was only one to accept the challenge to include them in my piece. Up until the day of meeting Kutman and Kambar (two musicians from Kyrgyzstan) I did not know if they could read Western music notation or speak English. I first met them with their interpreter from Russia and I found out that they could read music and one could speak some English. Interestingly they had had my music for a few weeks and had worked through learning it despite one slight mishap. Unfortunately the exhausted composer (after working 72 hours on it in four days) accidentally slipped them one page of the piccolo part, which was virtually impossible for Kutman to play on his native instrument the sybyzgy.

By involving the Kyrgyzstani musicians it differentiated my piece from the other composers. Several musicians and composers were curious as to how I wrote for them. All I had while writing the work was several inaccurate Youtube videos of someone playing Kyrgyzstani instruments. From this I approximated range on the piano and notated simple but sing-able lines. My backup plan, if reading the notation was a problem for them, was that I could teach their part to them aurally by singing it.

For Kutman, (the one who did not speak English) it was no small feat taking part in BOAC 09 as it was the first time he had played with a Western ensemble or played a contemporary classical piece. He had initial difficulties with communication and unification with the ensemble, however these were overcome and the experience was invaluable to both him and me. The Spanish clarinettist, Rafael Caldentey Crego, was empathetic in the way he communicated with the Kyrgyzstani’s. To aid Kutman’s performance in the ensemble Rafael sat next to him and wrote cues for Kutman’s part on his clarinet part. Rafael was a great communicator and, despite not speaking Russian, he was able to convey performance directions and important information to them. Rafael’s help was invaluable to the ensemble and he taught me a lot about communicating without English.

While both Kutman and Kambar found performing in the ensemble tiring they were so genuine in their enjoyment of the experience. Much to my pleasure and humility, whenever I passed them in the hallway or at the pub at night they would bang their heart, smile and say “manatu...manatu” and start singing one of their lines from the score.

The two instrumentalists played a lot of different instruments, including the temir ooz komuz or the jigach ooz komuz (metal and wooden jaw harps), komuz and domba (three
and two stringed guitar like instruments), the chopo choor (like an ocarina – which came in many different sizes) the chogoino choor (wooden pipe shaped instrument) and the sybyzgy (a flute like wooden instrument). My background as a wind player and owner of many wind instruments lead me to use the wooden wind instruments for .manatu.. Additionally their similarity to other ethnic instruments such as native American flutes, Chinese bamboo flutes or the Japanese Shakuhachi allows for many different potential interpretations of .manatu. in the future. While I assumed Kutman and Kambar would be amplified for the premiere any sections where they play I set sparsely, not just dynamically and texturally sparse but tonally sparse, allowing their non Western diatonic tuning to sound natural.

The main question I dealt with while writing this piece for a prestigious international festival was how will I make this my own, and did I want it to sound inherently of New Zealand? As being the first Kiwi to ever go to BOAC I decided I did want to incorporate elements of New Zealand into my work. To do this I used a Maori hi-ianga at the end of most phrases. This combined with the koauau-like imitation suited the mournful nature of the piece. I had no problem communicating what sound I wanted and one brilliant flute player from New York piped up “oh so it’s like a waiata?” She had played Helen Fisher’s Te Tangi a Te Matui before as her previous teacher was Alexa Still.

The first few rehearsals instantly quelled my main concerns about the blending of the timbres and if the atmospheric sound world I imagined in New Zealand would come alive in Massachusetts. Instantly I felt the work had a distinctive sound world - one which the performers and audience could connect with. I had no concern over timing and technical issues as the performers were studying doctorates at the likes of Harvard or Yale or had equally impressive resumes under their belts.

**Postscript**

This piece was a prelude to a change in circumstances that affected my artistic development as a composer. Primarily the experience from BOAC 09 and writing .manatu. was a large step forward in believing the validity of my work.

One of the main highlights while at the festival was meeting Steve Reich. Before attending, everyone had opinions on what Steve Reich would be like. Safe to say the basic summary of him I received from most people was wrong. He was with us for the middle week of the
festival and came to our composer seminar to give a personal lecture. When I met him he shook my hand and in a gruff voice said “ahh you’re the New Zealand girl”\textsuperscript{16}, and will probably remember me as the photographer and avid note taker. He talked about the importance of developing your signature sound and advised believing in our work. “Do something you really believe in and feel strongly about it. If we don’t believe in it, how will anyone else believe in it.”\textsuperscript{17}

He spoke about the importance of writing music that people enjoy listening to, and doing it well. “It really doesn’t matter what you do – it’s how you do it - do it extremely well”\textsuperscript{18} His goal being to provide a sound world to move audiences, physically, mentally and emotionally. I believe that is what I did with \textit{manatu}. This piece was born out of a torturous move off the family farm through dark feelings of depression and displacement. It became a solace or a light to sooth my broken heart.

I will always remember his parting advice “If this inspiration inspires your ideas and energy – do it. Something good will come of it. Otherwise go bite another horse”\textsuperscript{19}. I have no intention of biting a horse Mr Reich so I will forever try to be inspired.

\textsuperscript{16} Quote from Steve Reich – personal seminar at Bang on a Can 2009. 23 August 2009.
\textsuperscript{17} Steve Reich Bang on a Can 2009.
\textsuperscript{18} Steve Reich Bang on a Can 2009.
\textsuperscript{19} Steve Reich Bang on a Can 2009.
more in time, with pulse

.manatu.
.manatu.
slightly relaxed...

Kun.
Kam.
Fl.
A. Fl.
Cl.
Vln. I
Vc.
Pno.
Vib.
Perc.
little more movement
.manatu.

more movement, gradual cres to 126
K. Tempo $= \frac{\text{value}}{40}$ (like beginning)
.manatu.

very delicate & atmospheric

pp

as before — ad lib. gliss

sul pont.

media legato

soft tremelo

brushes or fingers

PP
E. J. Dobson

.ātanga.

for

solo piano and wind chimes
Dedicated to

Tama Porter

The Dame Malvina Major Foundation

Bang on a Can Fellows, Faculty and MASS MoCa Staff 2009
.ātanga.

Programme Note

ātanga

1. (verb) (-tia) to adorn, embellish, enhance.
2. (stative) be beautiful, attractive, handsome, stunning, good-looking, gorgeous, appealing, exquisite, comely, fair, fine.  

.ātanga. is an adaption of my work .manatu. from BOAC 09. When .manatu. was premiered at BOAC 09 everyone who spoke to me about it said that it was really beautiful, so the title of this solo pays homage to their loving reception and reaction to my music.

The wind chimes were an integral part of the chamber work and I could not bear to part with them for this adaptation. They are to be set up on a cymbal stand overhanging the low register keys of the piano, and are to be played with whichever hand is available, in a gentle sweeping motion. The performer must play the chimes empathetically and may choose to use certain registers of the chimes for certain sections of the piece.

The piano adaptation was especially written for Tama Porter to perform at the Dame Malvina Major Foundation Annual showcase concert on the 15th of August 2009 in New Plymouth’s TSB Showplace.

Performance Note

The version on the CD is Tama Porter’s live performance at the annual Lilburn Trust Young Composers Competition at The University of Waikato, October 2009.

Duration 7 minutes

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20 (ātanga) māori Dictionary Online.
.ātanga.

Background
I was asked to write a work for the Annual Dame Malvina Major Foundation Young Performers Showcase concert in New Plymouth. Having grown up in Taranaki I am affiliated with the foundation. I was to be a part of the concert by giving a speech about BOAC 09 and writing a new work for Tama Porter to perform. Tama is an up and coming brilliant seventeen year old pianist and musician from Waitara who is also affiliated with the Foundation.

While at BOAC 09 I was surrounded by vast quantities of amazingly different music. This inspired me to start many different piano works. However after consulting my mentor, composer and BOAC co-founder David Lang, I decided to take on the great challenge of adapting my work .manatu. which I had written for the festival for solo piano. We discussed the validity of creating works this way, as well as the efficient use of musical material. He suggested I call the piece by another title to avoid future confusion.

Arranging an eleven part ensemble for piano was a large task and was a good opportunity in which to grow as a composer. It was the first time I had undertaken such a large adaptation or written such an extensive piano work. I have become fond of the result which has lived on beyond its premiere. .ātanga. has been performed The University of Waikato’s Annual Blues Awards where I won Creative and Performing Arts Person of the Year 2009. Tama Porter performed .ātanga. again at the annual Lilburn Trust Young Composers Competition at the University of Waikato in October 2009 and it is scheduled to be played by ex-pat New Zealander Justin Bird at The Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore in 2010.

Analytical Note
I wanted to write a beautiful piano solo that the New Plymouth audience would easily understand so I focused on keeping the meditative and atmospheric aspects of .manatu. I

21 (Private conversation with David Lang. At BOAC 09 July 2009.) He does not have a problem with it and borrows from himself all the time.

22 Initially because the two piece were shaping up to be so similar I was going to call them the same thing.
was fortunate to have such a talented musician to work with, as this piece is a lot more difficult than what one would usually write for a seventeen year old, grade eight pianist.

The opening page is a literal translation of *manatu*. with the right hand picking up the opening motives from the flutes and the clarinet. At rehearsal figure B the left hand has the Kyrgyzstanis’ first main tune embellished with appoggiaturas (bar 20 from *manatu*). Section C originally featured piano motivic material so it adapted easily for this solo. This section and the end became Tama’s favourite parts to play due to the flowing melody.

Rehearsal mark D is the first mini climax and to aid the drama two repeated chords were added here. These chords and the following section build the momentum up to the second climax just before rehearsal mark G. Neither climaxs are at the traditional climax place of 2/3rds through the work – they occur sooner and support the distinctive mood and shape of this solo.

From *manatu* most of bars 44 – 53 were cut however the virtuosic build up to bar 57 became the main climax of *ätanga*. The original woodwind solo through bars 60 – 79 were cut because of length and consistency.

Section G is my favourite part of the work in terms of character. The chimes, which have not been recently used appear more frequently and blend with the piano’s quasi improvisation of the second Kyrgyzstani’s tune (bar 85 of *manatu*). This theme is supported by improvised left hand tremolos which extend the resonance of the piano to imitate the woodwind’s vibrato on sustained notes. When played empathetically and with sustain the tremolos proved to be effective and became a characteristic of the piece.

A further large section of *manatu* bars 97 - 129 were cut; including the main climax at bar 126 - the clarinet solo with toms and heavy vibes. This and the next section, marked satirical, did not fit the luminescent mood established in the piano solo. However the Kyrgyzstani’s second tune (*manatu*, bar 129) led beautifully to the end of the piano solo. The piano rises up through the registers and ends sustained with one final wind chime glissando.

The wind chimes were kept on a whim after hearing how well they worked in *manatu*. I enjoy how inherently musical they are so I could not bear to part with them. Tama’s teacher was initially worried about the volume of the chimes and whether they would be
heard. My main concern was the chimes not overpowering the piano. If the chimes are hung near the piano’s opening then they are amplified sympathetically with the natural resonance of the piano through the sound board. In all the halls in which ātanga. has been played the sound of the chimes and piano has been a successful mix.

**Learning Experience**

In retrospect the form could have been more precise. In some performances the sections have felt disjointed; however, other times it flows beautifully dependant on the performer’s interpretation.
.ātanga.

for Tams Porter

atmospheric, spacious, sad & melancholy $\frac{8}{4} = 40$

let chimes vibrate... ad lib. play with hands

glis.

Wind Chimes

Piano

Chimes

E. J. Dobson

E. J. Dobson © 2009
.âtanga.

fresh, airy & delicate (yet still sad)
more movement  \( \frac{\tau}{\tau} = 60 \)

Chimes

\( \text{ad lîk, gradually speed up throughout run) } \)

\( \text{rub. pp} \)

with fôkôs.
.átanga.

very delicate & atmospheric  
gradually slow down...

Chimes

lift pedal occasionally...very sustained through last section

Chimes  
glis.  
let all resonance fade..

NZ / USA 2009  
G. Dobson
E. J. Dobson

Wrong Number

for

amplified soprano, live effects and computer
Dedicated to

Diantha Hillenbrand
Wrong Number

Programme Note

This piece grew out of a conceptual song cycle for soprano and computer. It is a setting of Janet Frame’s poem *Wrong Number*, from her poetry collection *The Goose Bath.* The work makes use of real-time effects processing of both voice and pre-recorded audio samples that are manipulated to create a soundscape over which the soprano sings.

Text *Wrong Number* by Janet Frame

It is not the right time to telephone me.
I have been emptying ashes
from two fires,
getting rid of old bodies of embers
with traces in my hair and eyes
stinging and
flames freshly bleeding where I struck the hot coals
meaning only to bring about
a deathbed
revival as I promised, setting my speech
to match the fires frail whispering,
I must be
Cruel (surely you have heard it!) to be kind.
But I am tired and it is not
the right time
to telephone me and ask, in a strange voice
Hello is that the Mornington
Butchery?

---

23 Janet Frame’s poem is used with permission via the Janet Frame Literary Trust.
24 All samples recorded by EJ Dobson. Apart from “telephone ring” – see bibliography.
Performance Note

This work was premiered at the annual Lilburn Trust Young Composers Competition at The University of Waikato, October 2009, by soprano Diantha Hillenbrand and Lizzie Dobson and was awarded equal first place in the electro-acoustic section by John Cousins. The version on the accompanying CD was recorded at The University of Waikato’s recording studio by Diantha Hillenbrand and Elizabeth Dobson and is one possible interpretation of the work. Thanks to Diantha Hillenbrand for her committed performances of the work.
Wrong Number

Instrumentation
Soprano, with large range (G3 to B5)
Computer operator

Technical Requirements
Laptop with soundcard. Ability to have 1 line in and stereo out
Ableton Live on laptop (7.0.1 or higher)
Midi controller. (i.e. m-audio trigger finger)
1 vocal microphone plus pop filter
Wide stereo speakers. (Preferably 2.1)

Note on Notation
Small Soprano Score: The small vocal only score should be used as a learning aid for the soprano to master interpretation and timing. In live performance use the full score.

Full Score: Notation is proportional and approximate. Every interpretation of the score will be different as the backing is adaptable to the singer’s interpretation.

Soprano Staff: Indicates all performance directions for the soprano. Accidentals apply only to the note they precede. As the backing track is not tempo driven, it is up to the singer to aid the dramatic momentum by changing her pace. Sections 1-4 are to sound improvised and the performer may use what is written as a guide to do so.

Vocal effects: Notates the effects to be applied to the soprano by the computer operator. These are an indication to aid performance and can be interpreted freely. Freeze delay means keep the delay signal running via pre programmed action.

Computer samples, computer effects: Gives description of backing sound to aid soprano. Includes direction for manipulation of samples (performed and triggered by the operator).

Synthesiser: Indicates pitched synthesizer pedal notes (pre-mapped to midi controller - performed by operator)

Solid black line following any event indicates that event is to continue for the indicated time.
Arrowed lines joining different staves indicate that part should be synchronised.

**Duration** Nine minutes, dependant on interpretation.

**Details for Live Performance**
This is an Ableton Live set controlled by laptop keyboard and an M-audio trigger finger. Indications of performance are notated on the score; however, each performance is ad lib, and can be interpreted by the performers as they wish.

**Ableton Live Tracks**
Ten channels of sound, including two for live soprano input, five for samples (bussed onto a submixed channel) and two for synthesizers. Samples arranged horizontally by scenes (1-13) which are triggered at the marked places on the score. Each channel of sound can be sent to the four effect units for manipulation. (reverb, delay, ultrapitch vocoder and pan). All samples have been additionally pre manipulated.

The master track has a mastering chain consisting of compressors, equalizer, high frequency stereo ambience and a light reverb.

All automation and effects are mapped to the midi controller and laptop keyboard. i.e. P= Play, E= turns on / off high pass filter on EQ, F= freezes the delay signal.

**Example of mapping**
Any midi controller could be used. This is an example with the M-Audio trigger finger.

1-4: Submix, voice, synthesizer and master volume faders.

5 – 12: Effects sends (signal amount send to effect units)

Square touch pads: Plays the pedal notes of synthesizer (notes indicated on score)
Wrong Number

Background
Wrong Number came about with my love for vocal music and song cycles. I wished to write another large cycle this year. However to “do that which I cannot do, in order that I may learn how to do it” I decided to set a NZ poem for soprano and electronic backing with live manipulation of effects, samples and voice. Previously I had written for instrument and tape (A Clear Shell, for flute and tape: 2008) and found this an exciting yet limited medium to work in due to the inflexibility (yet practicality) of a fixed “just press play” tape part. Moving into real time processing and working with a live “tape part” lent much more flexibility in the creation of this “sound poetry”.

As I own all the equipment necessary to realise a live performance of this piece it was not necessary to rely on university resources.

Analytical Notes
Number rehearsal marks were used as they fit with the theme of the text.

Vocal Line

This is a free soliloquy heavily set around the third tone clock hour of intervals 1+3. G, Ab, B (C) D, Eb, Gb G.

![Musical notation]

The vocal line exploits a large vocal (G3 to B5) and dynamic range. The strong tonal centre of G assists the soprano in live performance by means of a reference pitch and suits the fixed nature of the poem.

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26 For my Honours portfolio I put together Dried Corsages; A five song song-cycle for soprano and marimba detailing the experience of a young nurse going to war.

27 Quoted in Chang, Wisdom for the Soul, pg 288.


29 Schat, Tone Clock, pg 57.
The soprano moves between a state of subconscious to conscious. This is respectively depicted by heavy reverb, delay and atmospheric drones, to minimal or no vocal effects backed by sparse bird calls, shovel scrapes and bucket sounds (cleaning out the fire) to suggest the present.

**Vocal effects**

Despite the voice’s suitability to be a source of “concrete raw material” ³⁰ I have chosen to treat it subtly in consideration of the soprano’s tone and identity. The voice setting is focused on having the text clear and audible throughout – the feeling being that use of extended vocal technique might obfuscate the meaning and story of the text.

**Backing**

Ableton Live provided the platform with which to build the piece. The backing is controlled by the operator who follows the singer’s interpretation. The exact sound content (not length) of each scene is determined earlier by the composer and processed in a way to not disguise its origin. Samples are natural bird sounds and urban life.³¹

**Joining the two sound worlds**

I am interested in the contrast and interaction of the voice and electronic backing and consider a successful piece one which joins the “temporal flexibility of the human interpreter” ³² with the poetic realms of electroacoustic music. Amplification is necessary to create fusion between the voice and backing. A final reverb unit on the master track is to “blur the boundaries of the live performer’s voice, room acoustics and electronic sounds.” ³³ The text is to “enhance and accentuate certain aspects of the electroacoustic context” ³⁴ for example the opening shovels may not become clear as to their origin until the soprano sings “I have been emptying ashes from two fires”.

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³⁰ Weber-Lucks, Electroacoustic Voices, pg 63.
³¹ Recorded by the composer with Sony PCM-D50 handheld recorder.
³⁴ Menezes, Morphology, pg 301.
Length was not a consideration while constructing this piece as the narrative of the text was so strong and I felt it could sustain interest over an extended period of time. Menezes quotes Messiaen “The listener will perceive much less the existence of time the better the composition is organised.” This has been a guiding principle for me in this work.

A version for flute and electronics exists of this work as well which works really well due to the similar register and timbre of the flute and soprano voice.

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35 Quoted in Menezes, *Morphology*, pg 306.
Wrong Number
Based on tone clock scale: G, Ab, B (C) D, Eb, Gb G
Score for practice / rehearsal only

Janet Frame E.J. Dobson

Soprano Solo

It's not the right time to telephone me.

I have been emptying ashes from two fires, getting rid of the old bodies of embers with traces in my hair and eyes

stinging and flames freshly bleeding where I struck the hot coals, meaning only to bring about a deathbed revival

as I promised setting my speech to match the fires frail whispering, I must be cruel But I am tired (and) It's not the right time to telephone me and ask in a strange voice

"Hello" Is that the Mornington Butcher-y?"

E.J. Dobson © 2009
Wrong Number

Janet Frame

ej dobson © 2009

1
Largo \( J = \text{circ} 60 \)

25”

PPP free - quasi soliloquy

Soprano

Vocal FX

P - Play from start

Computer samples

Computer FX

Synth

pp

S. Solo

Ah

Ah

Vox FX

delay 0%--------------------------50%

Comp

seme 1 loops

Synth.
Wrong Number

Live recorded loops of soprano, randomly looped and eq’ed differently

Recorded Soprano

S. Solo

\[ P \]

\[ m_p \]

\[ \rightarrow p \]

Vox FX

\textit{manipulate delay & reverb through to 4}

Comp.

\textit{cross fade between two synths}

Synth.

\[ \]
Wrong Number

Adagio $\frac{4}{4} = \text{circa 69 bit faster}$

\text{angry / annoyed & brisk}

It's not the right time to telephone me.

Minimal vocal effect

Scene 5 - dark rumble backing, telephone drone - heavy pan

PPP PPP

mp softer

I have been emptying ashes from two fires, getting

Manipulate delay, EQ

record live loops and play back

Scene 6 - crackles and sizzles enter and build, roar of fire sound
Wrong Number

S. Solo

mp

\begin{align*}
\text{rid} & \quad \text{of} \quad \text{the} \quad \text{old} \quad \text{bod} - \quad \text{ies} \quad \text{of} \quad \text{em} & \quad \text{hers} \\
\text{with} & \quad \text{traces} & \quad \text{in} \quad \text{my} \quad \text{hair} \quad \text{and} \quad \text{eyes}
\end{align*}

\textit{f} \quad \text{big} \quad \text{inhale}

Vox FX

\text{reverb - 25\%}

\text{manipulate} \quad \text{delay} \quad \text{through} \quad \text{to} \quad 8

Comp

\text{crackling} \quad \text{sounds} \quad \text{builds}

\text{Scene 7 - loud} \quad \text{crackles} \quad \text{and} \quad \text{bass} \quad \text{grinding}

j = \text{circa 69}

S. Solo

mf

\begin{align*}
\text{sting} & \quad \text{ing} \\
\text{with} & \quad \text{traces} & \quad \text{in} \quad \text{my} \quad \text{hair} \quad \text{and} \quad \text{eyes}
\end{align*}

\textit{f} \quad \text{big} \quad \text{inhale}

Vox FX

\text{reverb - 0\% - 50\%}

Comp

\text{fade out submix (60\%)} \quad \text{for} \quad \text{smooth} \quad \text{transition} \quad \text{into} \quad \text{scene 8}

\text{fade between 2 synths} \quad \text{to} \quad \text{create} \quad \text{contrast}

95
Wrong Number

Scene 8 - low crackle
submix back to normal volume

Scene 9 - low crackle heavily panned

a death-bed revival as I promised

fade out submix to 20%
Wrong Number

**10**

**a tempo**

S. Solo

 mf hurrying along

setting my speech to match the fires frail whispering.

p whisper like

Vox FX

reverb - 20%
delay - 0%

Comp

Scene 10 - shovel and crackles, with fire roar

(cue 11 for soprano)

**11**

S. Solo

 mf angry yet contemplative

I must be cruel to be kind (d)

p softer - like an after thought

Vox FX

delay 50%

Comp

f subitomp

But I am tired

Yes I am tired

Vox FX

reverb 25%
delay - 0 - 50%

Comp

[Scene 11 - shovel plus low roar]
Wrong Number

S. Solo

mp slower and tired

but I am tired...

mf brisk and fast

(and) it's not the right time to

Vox FX

reverb 50%
delay 0%

minimal vocal effects

Comp

Some 11B - backwards telephone and roar

mp

mf

S. Solo

f

mf contemplative
& slower

telephone me. (yes) It's not the right time It's not the

Vox FX

reverb - 25%

Comp

f

S. Solo

right time to telephone me. and

Vox FX

fade out effects

Comp

mp
Wrong Number

S. Solo

wait for shovel to stop before going on

mf quasi spoken

Vox FX

reverb 50%
reverb = 0%
ultropitch = 5%

Comp

Scene 12 - backwards shovel
Scene 13 - evening birds

mf

S. Solo

is that the Mornington Butcher y?

Vox FX

Comp

(c) Debbie
Hamilton, New Zealand 2003

99
E. J. Dobson

Confession(s)

Parts I & II

for

solo violin and string orchestra
Confessions – Parts I & II

Programme Note

“God safely quit her of her burden... if she may confess it”. King Henry VIII, Shakespeare.36

The first movement is spiralled around the Fibonacci series which controls pitch, rhythm and structure. This was written on a composing retreat at Hokio Beach October 2009. The second movement is fugal based and inspired by the string works of American composer Julia Wolfe. It was written in Hamilton in January 2010.

Performance Note

The first movement was read by The University of Waikato’s String Orchestra conducted by James Tennant, with Dr Lara Hall performing the solo. The recording is for reference only. In the absence of a bass player cellist Edward King read that part. The recording gives a fair representation of the overall mood and atmosphere of the piece and I am pleased with the subtly of the string sound and textures.

The second movement is straight from Sibelius played through Miroslave Orchestra plug in and Sibelius player. This was then mixed in Ableton Live. It misses a lot of the detail and subtly of a live performance however is a fair representation of the rhythm.

Confessions – Parts I & II

Instrumentation

Violin Solo
Violin 1
Violin 2
Violin 3
Viola
Cello
Double Bass (with C attachment)

**Duration** I - ten minutes

II - seven minutes
Confessions – Parts I & II

Background

I wrote this piece after being inspired by Julia Wolfe while at BOAC 09. It did not come from a preconceived idea, unlike a lot of my other music, although it grew into something quite intense and dark. I toiled with the idea of writing a violin concerto for a few years having loved John Adams and Philip Glasses violin concertos. This piece is my first delve into solo string territory. The first movement is a battle of tension and release - almost like the soloist is trying to confess something. The second is rhythmical and lighter in mood and atmosphere – like the soloist is trying to move forward after a bad period of life.

Analytical Note

Movement I

This movement was written on mandolin at a composers retreat at Hokio Beach early October 2009. The Fibonacci series is used in this movement as a way to achieve balance and symmetry by applying it to form and other parameters at will. The piece is fixated with the tension between the string group (who are mainly routed in the harmonic series of E) and the soloist who soars overtop - obsessed with the note F. The soloist tests the sound and tonality of this F against the backing - struggling to find a resting point.

The Fibonacci series can be applied to a wide variety of parameters in music and I will briefly talk about a few ways I applied it to Confessions Part I.

Why use Fibonacci

I decided to experiment with manipulating a system to my creative means. I kept in mind Kramer who said “the additive and proportional properties of the Fibonacci series give it an internal

consistency and attractiveness that make it a better candidate... than any randomly chosen series of durations."  

It helped form instant coherency within the work.

The Fibonacci series was applied strictly and intuitively to the composition. Often rules would be applied to a section which would then inspire the piece further.

**Structure**

The Fibonacci series was applied to a fixed duration to provide satisfying structural proportions.\(^{39}\) The 10 main sections were then made at each division of the total length by phi (8/13) – my chosen Fibonacci ratio number. For example; the total duration divided by phi became the climax point, the climax point divided by phi marked the beginning of the cadenza. Fibonacci also influenced instrumentation – for example in the opening page how many and when instruments enter (bar 2, 2 players, at first division of phi; bar 3, 3 players at second division of phi, bar 4, 5 players at third division.)

Phi was used for large scale structure as well as micro structures within sections. The cadenza is structure to phi proportions, as well as the outro section (rehearsal mark H) between the climax and the ending.

**Rhythm control**

The Fibonacci series was mapped to rhythm in a matrix and was applied to various rhythmical values. For example in bar 17 the cello rhythm is taken from line three of the matrix (3, 5, 8 etc), applied to semi quavers and acts as a pedal point. The first note is three semiquavers long, the second is 5 semiquavers long etc. This uses the E harmonic series starting on the 5\(^{th}\) harmonic. Another example is bar 87 in the double bass which is another pedal point built with these principles.

This is the first three lines of the Matrix which was applied to a rhythmical value.

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<thead>
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\(^{39}\) Kramer, *The Fibonacci Series*, pg 120.
Pitch Material

The harmonic material is based on the harmonic series due to its correlations with the Fibonacci series. Initially the string orchestra was to play in natural tuning to aid the resonance.\(^{40}\) While the orchestra is primarily rooted in the harmonic series of E the soloist floats over top in the harmonic series of F. F was chosen to purposely provide a semitone clash with E and because F is not found in the E harmonic series until quite high up. It is as if the soloist is trying to find a musical zone to meet with the orchestra, and plays with the inharmonicity around F with the use of microtones and different voicing’s. For example bars see 19-28 and the use of designated strings for the same pitch. These sustained F’s in the soloist are built with the rhythm matrix at the seventh division of the structure. (Rehearsal mark B).

Motivic Material

The Fibonacci series inspired motives - in particular how many notes in each phrase. For example rehearsal mark B – violin I, the number of notes in each phrase are additive according to the Fibonacci series. \(1 + 1 + 2 + 3\) etc.

Movement II

The second movement is based on a semi tonal fugue in Bb major, starting on D, with an occasional raised G# (Ab). The movement also explores pizzicato and double stops. It purposefully has more rhythmical vibrancy than the first movement which is a characteristic I wanted to explore in this movement. The fugue inspired and created the sound of the harmony which developed as the fugue continued. Each repetition starts on a different scale note. (i.e. Violin I starts on G in bar 2. Violin II starts on D in bar 5. Viola starts on C in bar 8. These entries were dictated by the Fibonacci series (the cello’s sustained note is supportive).

\(^{40}\) This was not feasible with the time available.
The fugue builds to rehearsal mark C where the soloist enters with a shorter section of sustained F’s referring to the first movement but set in a more relaxed context. The cadenza moves to a dark section of unrest which begins with a large sustained G minor chord at rehearsal mark E (Bar 51). The Soloist and Violin I take up little Fibonacci inspired figures (groups of three or five). This section was very much inspired by Julia Wolfe’s *Four Marys* where she wrote large unstable sliding sustained chords. This is followed by a small interlude in Bb and Gm at rehearsal mark F.

The middle section (rehearsal mark G) drives relentlessly forward with stomping slap pizzicato chords inspired by John Adams’ *Chamber Symphony*. The double bass takes off with a retrograde version of the fugue at H. This fugue builds to bar 122 where the bass starts playing augmented sustained notes which help drive the harmonic momentum. The piece winds down toward the end reminiscent of the ending of the first movement, but with a little more momentum.
Confession(s) Part I
for solo violin and string orchestra

E. J. Dobson

0.05" - Atmospheric and light

Violin Solo

Con sord., heavy bow pressure

Violin I

Con sord., heavy bow pressure

Violin II

Con sord., heavy bow pressure

Violin III

Con sord., heavy bow pressure

Viola

Con sord., heavy bow pressure

Violoncello

Con sord., heavy bow pressure

Double Bass

Con sord., heavy bow pressure

E. J. Dobson © 2009

107
E. J. Dobson

Sand Song

for

soprano and piano
Dedicated to the

Hillenbrand Family
Sand Song

Programme Note
While working with soprano Diantha Hillenbrand on my piece Wrong Number she asked me as a favour to write music to one of her poems. I was humbled to be trusted with such a text and am honoured to write a piece that now stands as a eulogy for someone who was tragically taken from her family’s life.

Text Sand Song by Diantha Hillendbrand 41
A misty cling to a fluid mirror still,
That which sinks into the seeping sand.
There, in soothing silence, I breathe
And feel the salt tingling.
I can almost taste it, tinted with sweetness
As it elapses as the waves on the beach

A simpler idol of my own, I see no longer here
But mine is not a burgled soul
He will not be eternally where I cannot go
His days were gentle as the moon doth wane
Yet I wish I were the last to hold
Him on this Earth before he flew away

A desperate cling to a mirror of his life
That which sinks into the seeping sand
In soothing silence I breathe
And hear nothing, but deafness inwardly
I can almost see him, innocent and sweet
As he elapses as the waves on the beach

41 Text: Sand Song Diantha Hillenbrand © 2009
Performance Note
This recording was made at The University of Waikato’s Academy of Performing Arts, Concert Chamber by soprano Diantha Hillenbrand, pianist Elizabeth Dobson and music technician Terrance Maxwell, February 2010.

Duration five minutes
Sand Song

Analytical Note

*Sand Song* was written at the same time as *Confession(s) Part I* and features a similar obsession with the pitch F. This is prominent through though the opening motive in *Sand Song*. The song is basic ternary form due to the similarities between the first and third stanzas.

The 7/8 time signature is to emphasise the feeling of hesitance and longing. While it feels slightly disjointed the flow of the song is helped by the changes between 6/8 and 7/8. e.g. bars 26-36 and 51-56. The 7/8 bars give an important amount of space during and after phrases which are crucial to evoke the feeling that the singer was unable to move on or deal with the subject.

Syncopation during the piano (e.g. bars 17-22) is to depict the “elapsing waves” rocking and the falling figures (e.g. bar 9) are to illustrate the singers reference to “seeping sand”. The singer floats into syncopation at bar 11 as if to evoke that while the world continues and the waves elapse around her she is moving at her own pace separately.

The second stanza builds to a climax at “He will not be eternally where I cannot go, His days were gentle as the moon doth wane” then sinks to a poignant moment where the poet wishes she was with the person at the moment of death. As a sign of the singer’s grief and emotional vulnerability the piano’s main motive returns at 35 deflated. Unlike before it is unable to reach the repeated high F’s. The falling figure in bar 38-39 falls shrinks to a minor seventh (RH D-C-Eb). Previously the piano had octave intervals (RH bar 3 G, F, F) and suggests the singers fragile state of mind.

At bar 45 the piano reaches its highest note: a Bb. This becomes unison with the soprano in preparation for the final peaceful “I breathe” (bar 46) which leads into the final recapitulation of the piano’s motive.

The harmony of *Sand Song* evolves from the initial major 7th opening interval. It sets up tension which is resolved at bar 3 with the Bb major chord. The suspended chords help to evoke a wistful and sad mood.
This is one of my favourite pieces due to its emotional weight and meaning. I was fortunate, in a way, that the intended pianist who had had the music for three weeks dropped out the night before the scheduled recording time. At such short notice I could not source another pianist so I had to step in to play myself. I really enjoyed the opportunity to play in the concert chamber as it is such a highly regarded facility for chamber music. Also, despite my lack of official piano player status, I was pleased to have the chance to play music with Diantha again. After the recording I caught a music lecturer in the hallway (who knew about my pianist fail at the last minute) and he asked who I got to play. I remarked “I played! I winged it, and there were even some takes in which I don’t think I played wrong notes.” To my amusement he commented “Ahh! Finally a composer who plays their own music.”

While the recording is not perfect, I believe it still captures the intended mood and atmosphere for the work sufficiently.

I also set this work for marimba and voice and sent it to a percussionist from BOAC but as of publication I was unable to get the recording. Therefore I had to omit it from this portfolio.
Sand Song
To the Hillenbrand Family...

Diamtha Hillenbrand

\[ \frac{4}{\text{4}} \] = 100 Atmospheric, spacious, breathing and delicate

Soprano Solo: \[ \begin{align*} &- & - & - & - & - & - & - \end{align*} \] Piano: \[ \begin{align*} &- & - & - & - & - & - & - \end{align*} \]

4

4

A misty cling to a

5

fluid mirror still, That which sinks into the sifting sand...

Text © Diamtha Hillenbrand 2009 | Music © E. J. Dobson 2009
There, in soothing silence, I breathe

I breathe And feel the salt tingling I can almost taste it,

_tinted with sweetness_ As it

c- laps as the waves on the beach _gradual cresc. to 22_
Sand Song

simpler idol of my own, I see no cure-get here but

rumbling but quiet tremelo

mine is not a burgled soul. He will not be eternally where

I cannot go. His days were gentle as the moon doth wane. Yet I

tender

wish I were the last to hold him on this Earth be-

slow tremelo speed
Sand Song

A tempo

He flew away

A desperate cling to a mirror of his life
That which sinks into the seeping sand.

There, in soothing silence,
Sand Song

1: I breathe I breathe And hear nothing but deafness inwardly

50: Oh I can almost see him, innocent and sweet As he

55: rit. A tempo (gradually get slower)

e-lapses as the waves on the beach.

58: Very slow

PPP...
E. J. Dobson

Parihaka

for

vocalising percussionist
“I will sing for you a song of Parihaka” 42

42 Tin Finn Parihaka. Song Lyrics, from the album ‘Tim Finn’. 1989.
Parihaka

Programme Note

“I never knew about Parihaka”

The former is a quote from the poem *Parihaka* by New Zealand poet Apirana Taylor. I instantly felt connected to Taylor’s poem. The opening line rang true from my own experience of growing up in Taranaki, having heard the word “Parihaka” but never knowing what it meant or learning about it at school.

In 1870 Parihaka was the “largest and most prosperous” Maori settlement on the West cape of Taranaki, New Zealand. Village leaders, Te Whiti o Rongomai and Tohu Kākahi, were committed to peaceful protest against the “mass confiscation and disposition of Maori from their land.” In the 1860s they created Parihaka to escape further land threats and protect their rights as indigenous people. Due to the government continuing to take land by force, in 1879 Te Whiti and Tohu sent Maori over Taranaki in a peaceful protest to plough up newly surveyed land and uproot survey pegs. By 1880 tension had risen so much that during this time many were exiled and unjustly sent to prisons to die in terrible conditions without trial. In 1881 Native Minister John Bryce lead “644 troops and 1000 settler volunteers” to invade Parihaka and were met by village children singing and unarmed men. Over the three week attack Parihaka was “reduced to a ruins” the houses, agriculture, animals and valuable possessions were plundered and destroyed. Years later Te Whiti and Tohu were eventually allowed to return to their community after being forcibly removed by the government. Parihaka is now a small coastal town where the spirit of Te Whiti and Tohu live on though regular traditions including an annual peace festival. It has since inspired many poets, musicians, artists and film makers to pay tribute to what happened there.

Text: *Parihaka* - Apirana Taylor

We never knew
about Parihaka
it was never
taught anywhere
except maybe
around the fires
of Parihaka
itself at night
when stories
are told
of the soldiers
who came
with guns
to haul us up
by the roots
like trees
from our land
though the Prophets
called peace peace
it was never
taught at school
it was all hushed up
how we listened
to the Prophets
Tohu, Te Wāhīti
who called
Peace Rire rire
Paimairire
but the only
peace the soldiers knew
spoke through
the barrels
of their guns
threatening
our women, children
it was never
taught or spoken
how we
were shackled
led away to the caves
and imprisoned
for ploughing our land.

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**Performance Note**

This piece is to be premiered on March the 11th at the Blue Room Theatre in Northbridge Perth, followed on the 18th at the University of Western Australia in the Octagon Theatre and then on March the 29th in Perth by Louise Devenish at the Ellington Jazz Club. I am heading to Perth to see the final performance. The recording included with this portfolio was made by Louise in preparation for these concerts.

**Set up**

The following image is a suggested set up for performance and the one that Louise has worked out to suit her performance style. Note her vibraphone has an extended lower range (C below middle C), so she is able to rest the kalimba on the low register which is not used in this piece.

Additionally note the cloth over the back half of the snare – which she has done to provide two snare timbres.

*Parihaka Set up by Louise Devenish*
Parihaka

Instrumentation

1 vocalising percussionist.

Voice, with medium –low range – (A3 – G#4) this can be sung up an octave if preferred.
Alto kalimba: Hugh Tracey brand
Vibraphone (motor off)
Triangle – two or three different pitches
Woodblock – high and low
Snare drum (with snare on)

Percussion key

triangle
woodblock (high and low)
snare drum (with snare on)

Note for performer

Sticks are to be chosen by performer and sections marked freely are to be played ad lib - concentrating on a smooth transition between instruments.

Vocal line can be sung up an octave. At all times the text takes preference – it is to be clear and audible throughout.

Translation and pronunciation

An mp3 of Taylor speaking Parihaka can be found on Taylor’s website and is a useful guide for performance and pronunciation. “Rire rire Paimairire” can be interpreted as Peace and Mercy.

Duration eight minutes

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49 Kalimba such as http://www.hughtracey.com/ - recommended by Devenish.
Parihaka

Analytical Note

The initial reason for writing a work for a percussionist sprung from a musical connection at Bang on a Can. While playing my vibraphone part in my work *manatu*, Louise Devenish (an Australian percussionist) and I spoke about the potential for collaboration in Australasia. She liked my style of writing and was interested to see what I would write for solo percussion.

Once back in our respective homes I began researching to write her a solo work. While listening to her CD of music that she had had written for her in Australia there were two obvious types of solos that stood out. I could write either a virtuosic showy piece for percussion 52 or something rather different: her CD included a gorgeous song for voice and marimba titled *Run* by Graeme Blevins. It was in the style of a children’s song with easy to sing repetitive phrases. I enjoyed the performance value of this inherently innocent writing style and therefore chose to use this aspect of Louise’s performance abilities.

While beginning to research writing this piece I had a memorable conversation with New Zealand composer Susan Frykberg. I was working out how to structure the piece and if to have an electronic backing, i.e John Psathas’ *One Study, One Summary*. Louise said there would be limited performance opportunities on her part if the work had a backing due to accessibility of P.A systems. Susan agreed with Louise and suggested I think about having a “‘meta-narrative’ that takes people on a journey”, as well as how the story of the performer will be told in the performance. 53 A few days later, while thinking about this advice, I remembered reading Taylor’s *Parihaka* poem and thought it would suit a narrative type piece.

The publication in which I found Taylor’s poem featured a CD of the poets reading their works. Hearing Taylor’s gravelly voice speak this text brought the rhythm of the poem alive and I started to hear how I could set it to music. I chose it because it was intrinsically of

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52 However she had a few pieces like this already - including an interesting work by Australian composer David Pye for marimba and bull frogs/tape
53 Private correspondence with Susan Frykberg 18/11/2009
New Zealand and Taranaki and believed that a New Zealand based theme would add an interesting dimension to mine and Louise’s Trans-Tasman collaboration.

I chose Taylor’s poem because the subject was easy to interpret straight away. Despite my love for extended metaphor type poems I felt over a 5-10 minute time frame it would be too hard for the audience to stay attentive and understand the meaning. I wanted the text clear and precise. The multiplicity of uses for a vocalizing percussionist allowed me to explore the effect of percussion and voice while focusing on having the drama and the storyline lucid.

An outline of the form came to me while improvising at the piano that afternoon. I mapped the mood and instrumentation of each section, if any lines of the text would repeat and where interludes or solos could go.

The instrumentation initially started with the Kalimba – a thumb piano (Hugh Tracey Alto model) which Louise had recently acquired. This particular model has 15 keys and is tuned as per the diagram. They are re-tuneable so I replaced the F# with an F natural to use the mixolydian mode of G.

The change of instruments is something I worked out by having a pretend set up of the performance. Most of the transitions are written in such a way as to allow for one hand to continue playing while the other moves to a different instrument. For example: Bars 16-20; the last two beats of bar 16 and the whole of bar 17 are played with the right hand on the kalimba allowing the left hand to move to the triangle. These instrument changes are marked to be played freely giving the percussionist as much time they like to change over. Having seen the graceful style of Louise’s movements while performing I am certain that these changes do not have to be visually distracting and will not take away anything from the piece.

54 (Kalimba Magic) <http://www.kalimbamagic.com/learnhow/learnhow_altokalimba.php>
I have chosen certain parts of the text to repeat – either to tie sections together or to help clarify meaning and reiterate important lines of the text. For example bar 22 – repeating “who came with guns” backed by militaristic style drums adds emphasis. Primarily the percussion part is there to support and sustain the text acting as a commentary element rather than a virtuosic solo for percussion. It features a mixture of sustained and detached rhythms that are linked to the vocal line however only at specific times the backing and vocal line are in unison. For example the two parts are in unison at bars 44-45 and 57-59 for the text “Though the prophet called Peace Peace”.

The piece opens innocently – evoking the improvisational way I began writing and evoking a childlike innocence with the open 5ths and the suspended 2nds and 6ths. The modal repetitive feel of the voice melody is something which could easily be taught and passed on aurally - alluding to the Maori tradition of passing on karakia and waiata. The rhythm of the word “Parihaka” is an important motive which is used frequently through the work.

The piece moves to a different harmonic scheme at C, since the vibraphone offers more chromaticism, with more angular intervals such as augmented 4ths and minor 7ths. I chose vibraphone for this section to make a dreamy wistful character and at D is the first time the voice and the percussion solo sync – as if they are coming to agreement in their mutual wish for peace.

At E the piece returns to the innocent state of the opening with the return of the Kalimba. The voice melody turns into an osinato in the left hand of the vibes with the right hand playing variations of the main “I never knew about Parihaka” tune. G has slight references again to the “Parihaka” tune but stays in the dreamy character and moves to the prayer like part of “Rire rire, Paimairire” (Mercy mercy, peace, mercy). The tempo changes through bars 99-104 are there to make sure text will be heard and will be clear as the text is most important.

At rehearsal mark I the work builds to the loudest section with a snare solo. Initially this was for tenor drum and snare but later cut out at Louise’s recommendation. The woodblock moves in 4/4 and 6/8 patterns creating interest while the snare moves in demi-semi quavers. The vibraphone gradually sneaks in to make the transition to J smoother.

55 She suggested keeping instrumentation simple to aid the playability of the piece.
The vibraphone then plays the pitch D at 133 to prepare the performer for the last section – a return to innocence with the kalimba and the opening perfect fifths rhythmically augmented to suggest finality of the music. This is designed to show the finality of the story of Parihaka – all we can do now is to remember and learn the lessons of the past.
Parihaka

for Louise Drevonieh

Apirana Taylor

E. I. Dobson

Voice

Kalimba

Percussion

Vibraphone

We never knew about Pariha-ka it was
never taught anywhere except maybe around the fires of Pariha-ka of Pariha-ka of Pariha-ka of
Parihaka

Voice

165

ha-ka it-self at night when stories are told

Kal

Voice

18

when stories are told of the soldiers who came with guns

Kal

Voice

22

(first time only)

who came with guns (when) to haul us up by the

Kal

Voice

26

roots like trees from our land

Kal
Parihaka

31

C

\( \text{j} = \text{approx 100, expressive} \)

Perc.

\( \text{mf} \quad \text{mp} \quad \text{mp} \)

Vib.

\( \text{mf} \quad \text{p} \quad \text{dreamy} \)

\( \text{mf} \quad \text{p} \quad \text{mp} \)

36

Perc.

\( \text{p} \quad \text{mp} \)

Vib.

\( \text{mf} \quad \text{p} \quad \text{mp} \)

41

Voice

\( \text{p} \quad \text{tail} \)

though the Prophets called Peace peace peace

Perc.

\( \text{mf} \quad \text{pp < mf} \quad \text{pp < mf} \quad \text{p} \)

Vib.

\( \text{mf} \quad \text{pp < mf} \quad \text{pp < mf} \quad \text{p} \)

46

same tempo as C

Vib.

\( \text{mf} \quad \text{mp} \)

50

Più mosso

\( \text{p} \quad \text{mf} \quad \text{mp} \quad \text{rit.} \)

166
though the Prophets called Peace peace peace

it was never taught at school

it was all hushed up

no, it was never taught at school
Voice:

it was all hushed up

Perc.:

Detached, rhythmic and pianissimo
Bring out RH melody

Vib.:

and oh how we listened.

mf dreamy

Voice:

mf

Perc.:

mf

Vib.:

f beautiful and flowing - pedal phrases
But the only peace that the

soldiers knew spoke through the barrels of their guns threatening

threatening

notate optional

ff
Parihaka

Voice

threatening

W. BL. Low

Perc.

slower \( \frac{d}{100} \)

W. BL. High

Vib.

rit.

Voices

Voice

Women and children

Women and children

Vib.

W. BL. High

Perc.

p

Vib.


Voice

Women and children

[Text]

rit.

Women and children

p

pp – mp

171
a tempo $\text{l} = 100$

Parihaka

Voice

Kal.

Perc.

Vib.

mf innocent but sad

it was ne-ver taugh-t or spo-ken

how we were shack-led led a-way to the caves

and im-Pri-sioned for plough-ing our land
E. J. Dobson

Orison

for

singing bowl and Ableton Live
Orison

Programme Note
Singing bowls are beautiful instruments and I wanted to explore their sound with a short piece. I intend to make this into larger piece in the near future as I feel there is yet untapped potential here. I wrote this work to perform myself exploring a cross over role between composer/performer and as a further experiment with my live performance set up.

Note on Performance
The recording here is a live performance of the work, performed by myself, in my home studio.

Instrumentation
Singing Bowl (pitched in E)
Performer

Technical requirements
Laptop with soundcard. Ability to have 1 line in and stereo out
Ableton Live on laptop (7.0.1 or higher)
Midi controller. (i.e. m-audio trigger finger)
1 vocal microphone
Wide stereo speakers. (Preferably 2.1)

Duration Four minutes
Analytical Notes

Further experiments with my live performance set up began with two main goals; to create satisfying music, and to have a multiple purpose set up which can be used for future works. This set up will be one “that can facilitate the performance of many different compositions encompassing many different musical styles.” 56 One example of future use is going be an improvised electroacoustic music performance at the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery in New Plymouth, May 2010. This concert titled Let the Art Sing has been organised by composer Susan Frykberg and will be a collaboration between New Plymouth musicians, composers and artists.

In Orison and with future experiments “the evolution of the instrument forms the basis of the composition itself.” 57 In this case the building of an Ableton Live set with the framework, mapping, programmed control of live effects and manipulation of pre-recorded samples to create a piece.

I was interested in this medium of electroacoustic music having loved performing and taking part in live music making, rather than the isolated art form of a “just press play” electroacoustic piece.58 When interactive music is realised by playing the computer like an instrument creatively then “the composer... takes on the roles of, for example, instrument designer, programmer and performer.” 59

With Orison I liked the flexibility of being able to adlib the composition which could be different with each interpretation.60 The piece is unscored due to its improver nature.

Orison explores the use of reverb, delay and filters on various sound samples all recorded by the composer with the singing bowl. This creates a backing, which is further manipulated live and mixed with the live acoustic singing bowl.

57 Drummond, Interactive Systems, pg 125.
58 Often I have felt disembodied from previous studio work in performance.
59 Drummond, Interactive Systems, pg 125.
60 Quoted in Drummond, Interactive Systems, pg 125.
E. J. Dobson

The Headlines Today:

New Zealand – 16.12.09

For five spoken voices & an indeterminate length
The Headlines Today

16 . 12 . 09

Programme Note

Children 'drugged' by nursery staff, Flashing breasts big traffic hazard and Charges after fish and chip shops raided were in the news today. Today being 16 . 12 . 2009.

Contentious or amusing headlines brought to you from New Zealand straight to New York City.

Performance Note

In the Headlines Today was written for thingNY 61 – a collective of composer-instrumentalists who were looking for short works to perform at a concert called SPAM in New York on December the 19th 2009.

A recording of this work had not been tracked down by the time this portfolio went to print.

61 For more information see <http://www.thingny.com/>
The Headlines Today

16 . 12 . 09

Instrumentation

Five adventurous musicians / improvisers.

Duration

An indeterminate length – determined by pre-designated performer. Ideally anywhere between one and five minutes.

Performance Instructions

Each performer is to have a score; one of the five cards below printed.

The performance begins with all five performers vocalising the title “The Headlines Today. New Zealand 16.12.09”.

Each performer is to act and speak like a character from any news headline in their score. For example a gunman: Alleged gunman may plead guilty, or a mother: Second Chance for Crash Mum. The interpretation of this character can be as extreme or subjective as the performer wishes. Performers can choose to vocalise all or any amount of their headlines.

While in character, each performer must interact with other performers and the audience while only speaking out their headlines.

The performance ends when a pre-designated performer reiterates the title.

Analytical Note

While at Bang on a Can I saw a piece by New York composer/percussionist Jude Traxler called *Fallout* for two performers arguing on any subject (2008). Traxler is a composer of experimental and conceptual indeterminate music. This particular piece was performed by many people who argued/shouted with each other situated at various places over the MASS MoCA art gallery. What fascinated me (as I walked around taking photos) was the rise and fall of people’s voices, the accents and the intonation, which, once mingled into the surrounding environment, became the music of the work.

This led me to think about what can be called the music of shouting. This is a technique that has been explored by many composers including L. Berio in *The Cries of London* where he set well known and often heard cries from street vendors. This has been thought of as an “exercise in characterisation and musical dramatisation.” When you apply this to capturing the essence and mood of a place, then the vernacular of the surroundings becomes the musical substance. Jude played on this idea in *Fallout*. It can be performed anywhere, from street to theatre, using whichever subject to argue about. Therefore this particular music can be sourced from any situation and found anywhere. Upon doing some research I came across New Zealand composer Daniel Beban who must have thought the same thing when he recorded auctioneers and race callers. I found this all quite interesting.

I toiled with the idea of writing a musical indeterminate work for thingNY, i.e. blocks of music that a performer chooses to perform in a short space of time. However when thinking about the performance space, the location and the performers themselves I thought it would be an ideal situation to work with accents and musical shouting. As it was to be performed in New York it would also be interesting to exploit the difference in country and accents.

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I scanned the papers for Kiwi sounding headlines – things contrasting to what American papers would write about. Headlines that were inherently part of New Zealand culture and that sounded interesting. These I divided up into five performer scores and set about writing a list of rules for performance – composing the piece not through music but through actions and drama.

By bringing a slice of New Zealand to New York I thought it would add drama to the characterisations of the performers.

Would this piece still be as interesting in New Zealand? With the right set of performers it would still hold value and interest. Through different performer’s interpretation each performance of *The Headlines Today* would take on a different character.
EJ Dobson

The Headlines
Today. New Zealand 16.12.09

Sentences ease firefighters’ loss

Old lounge suite for sale for $100,000

Teacher’s 30-year career draws to end

Cubicle dairy farms ‘greener, more productive’

Teen killed in Maraetai crash named

Nearly 100-year-old butter found at Scott Base

Helping hand for school

Ban on P ingredient at least a year away

US trade talks confirmation ‘significant’

School closure unjustified – board of trustees

Unicyclist a stand-up

Been there, still printing the T-shirt

Charges after fish and chip shops raided

‘I was like an Egyptian pharaoh conserved alive’. Kampusch

Long age of Enlightenment

Midwife faulted following newborn’s death

Body found beside Auckland police station

Cellphone jamming in all prisons soon

Worker who fell asleep on job unjustifiably dismissed

Laser pointed at plane

Police raids smash drugs ring

Reekers admits hairdresser’s murder

Escaped prisoner hunted in Paremoremo

New Zealand Horsemeat falling off French menus

Injured paraglider winched to chopper

Tax fraudster wins partial appeal victory

Gift-giver’s guide to perfume

Hairdresser comes to rescue

Flashing breasts big traffic hazard

Gangland daughter ‘murdered’ says family

Man dies of natural causes, police say

What the Kiwi gossip mags say

Farms pose ‘threat’ to wildlife

Man admits killing Marie Jamieson

Nick wins on borrowed guitar

Christmas tree thieves’ plans axed by owner

Prisoner still on the run, investigation launched

Maui’s dolphin sighted

Views split over drunk

Old technology’ for $23m scheme

A grandstand view

Ageing population Taranaki issue

Charles Dickens’ toothpick sells at auction

Canterbury dairy farms flout environmental rules
### The Headlines

**Today. New Zealand 16.12.09**

- **EJ Dobson**
- **Risky second chance for manslaughter mum**
- **Technology brings Santa to his fans at Starship**
- **Heart attack victim found after missed appointment**
- **'Maori' flag will gain meaning in time, says Key**
- **Woman run over after flashing**
- **Meningitis kills Urewa schoolgirl**
- **Joyce: No more than $3 for Transmission Gully toll**
- **New research on language disorders**
- **Schools aiming 'too low'**
- **Outlook hazy on sunscreen labels**
- **The road stars have aligned**
- **Tauranga basks in sun**
- **'Invisible children' warning**
- **Govt looks at cap on spending**
- **Festive feast a bit cheaper**
- **Lamp post falls across motorway**
- **Ruminating on the harm cows do**
- **Quad bike restrictions rejected**
- **Last-ditch effort for climate deal**
- **Harawira won't face charges**
- **Finn's pen could be a real life saver**
- **P-addicted pair jailed for stealing vans to fund habit**
- **PM: It's okay to give light snacks**
- **Conflicting evidence on hammer threat**
- **Do you have faith in the Government's handling of the economy?**
- **Principal on 41 child abuse charges**
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God Bless

Elizabeth Dobson, February 2010.