

JACK BODY: CRAFTING THE ASIAN SOUNDSCAPE IN NEW ZEALAND MUSIC

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Introduction

Jack [John] Stanley Body is a New Zealand composer whose eclecticism is culturally and geographically very wide; he is prolific in his creative outputs; he is well-known nationally and internationally within and across a range of compositional styles; and he is celebrated in New Zealand, having received a New Zealand Order of Merit (ONZM) in the New Year's Honours (2001), and having been a Laureate of the Arts Foundation of New Zealand (2004).¹ Jack Body was born in Te Aroha on 7 October 1944,² and after high school his musical training took three main directions in the field of composition: firstly, at the University of Auckland between 1963 and 1967 under the guidance of Ronald Tremain (1923–98); secondly, with two short-term internships in 1969 and 1975 at the electronic music studio at Victoria University of Wellington with Douglas Lilburn;³ and thirdly, with Mauricio Kagel (1931–2008) in Cologne.⁴ In his mid-thirties, Body embarked on a career as a university lecturer in composition from 1980 at Victoria University of Wellington, and formally retired from the same university in 2009. From orchestral works to electro-acoustic forms and from installations to multi-media events, Body embraces diverse sounds in his creative work. Here I will focus on his specific interests in Asia, particularly Indonesia and especially Java, and the influences that Asia has had on some of his creative works. I will investigate what it is about Body's compositional voice that shows Indonesian influences, what stands out in his compositional style, and what this means for New Zealand in terms of its Asian connections.

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- 1 For background on Jack Body from the composer's perspective, see his personal web site: <http://www.jackbody.com>.
 - 2 John Young, "Body, Jack," in *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40558> (accessed 9 March 2012).
 - 3 The former School of Music at Victoria University of Wellington was incorporated into the New Zealand School of Music in 2005 as a collaboration between Victoria University of Wellington and Massey University.
 - 4 Young, "Body."

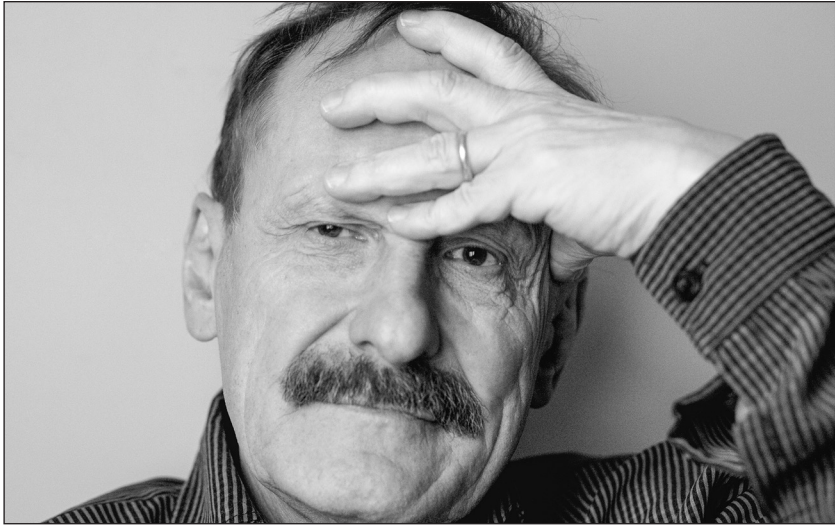


Figure 1. Jack Body. Photography courtesy of Gareth Watkins.

New Zealand composers have done much to establish a foundation for producing new music in the classical genre.⁵ Some composers have styles that emulate those of the western world, while others have developed their own distinctive New Zealand voice.⁶ What exactly this voice is has been contested over many decades, but it has often included drawing musical ideas from the country's physical landscape and environment, indigenous Māori population (e.g., Helen Fisher, David Hamilton, Alfred Hill, Martin Lodge, Anthony Ritchie, and Gillian Whitehead), or from broader South Pacific cultural influences (e.g., John Elmsly, Gareth Farr, David Hamilton, and John Rimmer).⁷ While Asia has come closer to New Zealand through migration and intercultural and transcultural flows,⁸ the type of Asian influence in Body's compositions might be categorized in two main ways: influences while living, working, or travelling in Asia; and influences from Asians and Asian culture in New Zealand, whether short-term visitors or long-term residents.

5 Such composers include Alfred Hill (1869–1960), Douglas Lilburn (1915–2001), John Ritchie (b. 1921), Ronald Tremain (1923–98), David Farquhar (1928–2007), John Rimmer (b. 1939), Jenny McLeod (b. 1941), Gillian Whitehead (b. 1941), John Cousins (b. 1943), Jack Body (b. 1944), Dorothy Buchanan (b. 1945), Ross Harris (b. 1945), Anthony Ritchie (b. 1960), and John Psathas (b. 1966).

6 See, for example, Jack Body, "The New Zealand Musical Identity," *Canzona* 3 (10) (1981): 18–26.

7 SOUNZ maintains a database that lists many compositions and some of their influences.

8 See, for example, Jacob Edmond, Henry Johnson, and Jacqueline Leckie, eds., *Recentring Asia: Histories, Encounters, Identities* (Leiden: Global Oriental, 2011).

Asia is a huge continent with diverse nations, cultures, and individuals, and to talk of Asia or Asian as an entity is problematic. However, for the purpose of this discussion, the geographical and physical continent of Asia points to a place of inspiration for Body, and at the same time the Asian diaspora and cultural flows that are re-centring Asia help produce a hybrid world where place and space are problematized as contested notions in the sometimes essentialized field of Asian studies.⁹ In this context, this article identifies Asia as a pivotal point of inspiration for Body, and explores examples of how these national soundscapes, especially those of Indonesia, have become manifest in much of his compositional output. In undertaking this research, two main questions arose in connection with Body and Asia: Where is Asia in his work and why is it there in the first place? Questions such as these help provide an interrogation of the place of Asia in aspects of musical composition in New Zealand, which in turn helps show the diversity of New Zealand compositional voices. Overall, therefore, a study of Asian influences on Jack Body helps show how Asia and Asian people have helped shape New Zealand lives.¹⁰

The methods used for this article are mixed. Historical research on background and existing work about Body has required extensive library and archival study. As well as an entry on Body in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, which helps show his international reputation as a composer, there are several books that already provide a biographical context, or at least a summary of his life, which helps situate this discussion.¹¹ There are also several succinct writings on Indonesian music topics, either by him or about him, in periodicals such as *Music in New Zealand*, which until its final issue in 2002 included much information about New Zealand composers. In New Zealand, as noted above, there are several organizations that help create a community for many composers. There are also a plethora of recordings and scores of New Zealand music that have been essential for gaining a broader background on Body's music.

While historical method provides the foundation for this article, the research has also included talking to and interviewing Body about his work. While a smaller contribution to the overall research, two extensive interviews with the composer in 2007 and 2008 have helped add a personal dimension and authority by allowing me to include the composer's voice on his experiences and influences.¹² I incorporate extensive quotations from these interviews as a way of including the voice of the composer himself. My interest in Body's work has spanned several decades, and working in the New Zealand tertiary institutional system has helped me understand more about him and his music. That said, when a colleague at another university becomes the focus

9 Edmond, Johnson, and Leckie, *Recentring Asia*.

10 Compare Henry Johnson and Brian Moloughney, eds., *Asia in the Making of New Zealand* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2006).

11 For example, Sarah Shieff, *Talking Music: Conversations with New Zealand Musicians* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2002).

12 Jack Body, interview by Henry Johnson, Dunedin, 2007; Jack Body, interview by Henry Johnson, Wellington, 2008.

of a research project, a whole new set of issues arise. How can one write about a colleague from another university? How does this relationship influence the writing process? Did it influence the interviews? Acknowledging some of the methodological issues that underpin this discussion, I aim to use the historical information collected as a foundation for the discussion and the qualitative data as a reference point for discussion of several key points that emerged during the interviews. As a way of attempting to break down such issues, the draft and final versions of this article were sent to Body for critical comment.

Biography has long been a scholarly research method in the field of musicology, and in ethnomusicology, with its interests in music and in the music-making individual, biography has captured the attention of many scholars.¹³ As Stock comments,

Ethnomusicologists have turned to biography as a result of three trends within the discipline. First, in our fieldwork we encounter and observe musical individuals, sometimes (but not always) in environments where musical individuality is a marked characteristic of the musical culture as a whole. Second, reappraisal of the politics of representation in ethnographic writing has encouraged us to document more closely the interactions of specific individuals. Finally, new notions of culture themselves place greater emphasis on individual role and agency, thus stimulating us to look at more length at the individual choices made by musicians and others.¹⁴

Over the past few decades increasing attention has been given to using biography as a research method for helping to understand insider perceptions of musicians,¹⁵ and scholars such as these have done much to influence the methods and style of the current

13 See John Batchelor, ed., *The Art of Literary Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); Bronwyn Davies and Susanne Gannon, eds., *Doing Collective Biography: Investigating the Production of Subjectivity* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2006); William H. Epstein, *Contesting the Subject: Essays in the Postmodern Theory and Practice of Biography and Biographical Criticism* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 1991); Laura Marcus, *Auto/Biographical Discourses: Theory, Criticism, Practice* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994); Jolanta T. Pekacz, "Memory, History and Meaning: Musical Biography and Its Discontents," *Journal of Musicological Research* 23 (1) (2004): 39–80; Nolan Porterfield, "Telling the Whole Story: Biography and Representation," *Journal of Folklore Research* 37 (2/3) (2000): 175–83; Jonathan P.J. Stock, ed., "Toward an Ethnomusicology of the Individual, or Biographical Writing in Ethnomusicology," *The World of Music* 43 (1) (2001): 5–19.

14 Stock, "Toward an Ethnomusicology of the Individual," 5.

15 For example, Virginia Danielson, *The Voice of Egypt: Umm Kulthum, Arabic Song, and Egyptian Society in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1997); Stephen Jones, "Reading between the Lines: Reflections on the Massive *Anthology of Folk Music of the Chinese Peoples*," *Ethnomusicology* 47 (3) (2003): 287–337; Stock, "Toward an Ethnomusicology of the Individual"; Jonathan P.J. Stock, *Musical Creativity in Twentieth-Century China: Abing, His Music, and Its Changing Meanings* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1996).

article. Moreover, composer-ethnographers such as Body offer ethnomusicology a way of comprehending how sounds are interpreted the world over.¹⁶

My discussion is structured around two distinct parts. The first of these focuses on Body's Asian inspirations and New Zealand composition. Where is Asia embraced in his creative work? How does it feature in his work? Why is it there? Questions such as these provide a starting point for understanding the connection between Body and Asia, and how he has contributed to the New Zealand soundscape. The next section offers a case study of different Asian influences on his work in connection with Indonesia and especially gamelan (Indonesian percussion).¹⁷ The purpose of the case study is to establish areas of relevance that offer a background to Body's life and work, and help in understanding some of the intricacies of Body's music. Several spheres of Asian engagement and creativity emerge in the discussion that shed light on Body's (1) recording and re-presentation; (2) links with performers; and (3) teaching. The objective is not to offer musicological analyses of specific works but instead to use these works as points of reference for understanding where, how, and why Asia appears in Body's compositions. My aim in this article is not to offer an in-depth biography of Body but, rather, to provide a framework for showing basic information about him in connection with some of the ways he has been pivotal in bringing Asian influences into the contemporary soundscape of art music composition in New Zealand.

Asian Inspirations and New Zealand Composition

As a nation, New Zealand has an integral history of migration.¹⁸ The first known migrants were the indigenous Māori peoples, and then British colonization followed in the nineteenth century. Subsequent decades in the postcolonial era have witnessed massive migration mainly from various European countries and more recently from Asia and elsewhere. As a result of a distinct history of diasporic flows, there are many types of transplanted musics that have been recontextualized in the New Zealand context, hybrid forms that derive from the nation's diaspora communities or globalizations, as well as new music in many different styles.

In a nation with strong British heritage and a present-day population with diverse cultural backgrounds, it is inevitable that some spheres of music-making will have been transplanted and localized. The field of (western) classical music composition is one such example. New Zealand's music institutions and organizations have long modelled

16 Compare Simone Krüger, *Experiencing Ethnomusicology: Teaching and Learning in European Universities* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 173–88.

17 See Neil Sorrell, *A Guide to the Gamelan* (Portland: Amadeus, 1990).

18 See, for example, James Belich, *Making Peoples: A History of the New Zealanders* (Auckland: Allen Lane, 1996); Stuart William Greif, *Immigration and National Identity in New Zealand: One People, Two Peoples, Many Peoples?* (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1995); Jane Roscoe, *Documentary in New Zealand: An Immigrant Nation* (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1999).

themselves on international counterparts (especially from Britain), and for music education this has meant having training in the classical music canon and associated performance practices. Such instruments as piano, violin, and voice are typical of this cultural tradition, and New Zealand has produced its own share of international stars in this field. From Dame Kiri Te Kanawa (b. 1944) to Jonathan Lemalu (b. 1967), the globalized world of western classical music maintains a dominant presence in the musical fabric of New Zealand.¹⁹ Over the past few decades, however, New Zealand has increasingly looked to its Asian neighbours for trade and cultural connections, mainly as a result of Britain joining the European Economic Community in 1973 (later the European Union), and migrants from Asia have, since the relaxing of the Immigration Act in 1987, been settling in New Zealand in greater numbers than before this time.²⁰

While looking to the East, Jack Body has been inspired by Asia in a number of ways. These influences include his many and sometimes long-term excursions to Asia; his music activism in his long-term engagement with Asian culture in the New Zealand context; and him inviting Asian musicians to New Zealand to perform and/or to work with composition students at Victoria University of Wellington. Body has worked, visited, and undertaken field research in various Asian countries, particularly Indonesia and China. He says he “discovered” Asia in Indonesia.²¹ During many of his Asian excursions, he has been active as a guest lecturer and composer in residence at various Asian institutions. His engagement with many of the sounds he has encountered has influenced much of his creative work, often providing him with ideas and sonic materials for his compositions.²² For example, Dando’s recent profile in the *New Zealand Listener* of the work of the composer offers a succinct overview of his activities and key works.²³ As one example of several interviews or profiles that portray Body as a leading New Zealand composer, Dando’s summary features numerous references to his influences from Asia. In recent years, for example, Body was a guest of the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, China, in 2008; and he was artist in residence at Aichi University of the Arts, Japan, in 2011. Other influences that should be mentioned are his *O Cambodia* (2011), which commemorates victims of Pol Pot’s regime; his opera *Alley* (1997), which portrays the life of Rewi Alley (1897–1987), a New Zealander who lived in China from 1927 until his death; his retirement celebration concert, entitled “Gong

19 Compare Henry Johnson, ed., *Many Voices: Music and National Identity in Aotearoa/New Zealand* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010); Glenda Keam and Tony Mitchell, eds., *Home, Land and Sea: Situating Music in Aotearoa New Zealand* (Auckland: Pearson Education New Zealand, 2011); John Mansfield Thomson, *The Oxford History of New Zealand Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

20 For example, Johnson and Moloughney, *Asia in the Making of New Zealand*.

21 Body, interview 2008. Compare Jack Body, “Jack in Java, II.,” *CANZ Newsletter* (1977): 23–25; Jack Body, “A New Zealand Composer in Asia,” *Landfall* 36 (3) (1982): 312–17; Valerie Harris, “Jack in Java,” *CANZ Newsletter* (1977): 3–4.

22 Young, “Body.”

23 Ian Dando, “Sing the Body Electric,” *New Zealand Listener*, 19 September 2009, 19–25, <http://www.listener.co.nz/culture/sing-the-body-electric> (accessed 9 March 2012).

Crazy,” which featured compositions (his own, his colleagues’, and his students’) for gamelan; and, amongst various other Asia references, the three Asia–Pacific festivals he has organized in New Zealand (in 1984, 1992, and 2007). As Body comments, “it’s a passion of mine to engage with the cultures of this region [Asia], and to find ways to present this music to excite my friends and whoever else might be out there receptive to new experiences.”²⁴ He continues:

“Frankly speaking, I find the traditional music of other cultures a much more potent source of inspiration than the music of my composer colleagues,” says Body. “You can only really understand yourself and your culture by stepping outside and placing yourself in another social and cultural context. That’s why I love listening to music from elsewhere, unfamiliar, maybe difficult to understand music. I believe musical composition should be the exploration of new worlds of aural sensibility. And that’s why I love travelling.”²⁵

Body’s engagement with Asia is carried out in Asia and in New Zealand. In New Zealand, this influence might be in the form of being a dynamic force behind the organization of a music festival, or inviting Asian musicians to New Zealand to stage their works or to collaborate with emerging composers in the tertiary education system. Another way that Body engages with Asia in New Zealand is through gamelan performance. Indeed, Body’s commitment to exposing New Zealanders to the sounds of Asia through gamelan is testament not only to his inherently eclectic musical influences but also to his grounding in the musical soundscapes of Asia.

Indonesia

Indonesia has had a tremendous influence on Body’s life and creative outputs. Following his undergraduate studies at the University of Auckland, he visited Indonesia on several occasions in the 1970s and many times after. His first encounter occurred following a trip to Europe. In 1971, he was returning to New Zealand overland via various countries and regions, including southern Europe, North Africa, the Middle East, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India, and the last leg of the journey home was through Southeast Asia, where he travelled to Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia. It was this last country that had a major impact on him, and it was an encounter that was to change the direction of his life and his compositions in the years to come. As Body notes, “there was something about the climate and the people and the openness that really attracted me. I thought this is a place I want to come back to, and I went back there for four months [in 1974].”²⁶ As discussed below, Indonesia has had many influences on Body, from its cultural and environmental soundscapes to its people, and these made a remarkable

24 Body, qtd. in *Ibid.*

25 Body, qtd. in *Ibid.* See also Centre for New Zealand Music, *Sounz News* 35 (October 2009): 8.

26 Body, interview 2007.

impact on the composer in the 1970s and beyond, and helped establish a way of thinking about all music that was to contribute to many of his creative works thereafter.

Body has returned to Indonesia on various occasions, and has spent much time travelling around many of its various islands and regions. During his four-month visit in 1974, Body helped make arrangements for the shipment of New Zealand's first gamelan (a set from Cirebon), which had been acquired by Victoria University of Wellington ethnomusicologist Allan Thomas (1941–2010), who had also developed a strong interest in Indonesia and gamelan music in particular. In 1974 these instruments were housed in Auckland, but transported the following year to Wellington where they set the scene for a continued engagement with gamelan at Victoria University. In fact, it has been through gamelan in New Zealand that Body and many of his students have explored new sonorities in musical composition. Body had an extended stay in Indonesia between 1976 and 1977 as a guest lecturer in Yogyakarta in Central Java at the Akademi Musik Indonesia (now called Institut Seni Indonesia). This longer period in the country gave him the opportunity to engage at a much deeper level with many spheres of Indonesian culture and society, subsequently inspiring him to draw many compositional ideas from his discovery of a soundscape that captivated his creative imagination. It was at this time that he met his lifelong collaborator and partner, Yono Soekarno.

In terms of Indonesian influences in Body's compositions, some of his field recordings of this period were used in electro-acoustic pieces, and his piece *Musik Dari Jalan* (Music from the Street) (1975) offers an early example of the sound world that was inspiring the composer at that time.²⁷ This particular piece was based on the soundscape produced by the voices and instruments of street hawkers. This short composition of nine minutes, which is one of a series of six pieces that was inspired by field recordings in Indonesia, was an especially important work for the composer, not only because of its Indonesian influences early in his career, but also because the work won a prize in 1976 at the Bourges International Electroacoustic Music Festival, which was organized by the Institut International de Musique Electroacoustique de Bourges, France. Interestingly, Douglas Lilburn had entered the piece in the competition without Body's knowledge. As well as a cash prize, the award included an opportunity to work in an electronic music studio in France. As Body has commented, "its [*Musik Dari Jalan*'s] success made me realise the potential of Indonesia's fertile soundscape."²⁸ "I was so fascinated by street hawkers calling out, so it was really a piece about that, and taking the sounds out of the environment."²⁹ This particular piece was actually composed by using one of Allan Thomas' Indonesian field recordings, and, following this early period of new works inspired by Indonesia, Body subsequently made a series of similar pieces over many years, and many of them were based on his own soundscape recordings made there in 1976–77. "At the end of that first year I bought

27 For an analysis of the piece, see John Young, "Source Recognition of Environmental Sounds in the Composition of Sonic Art with Field-Recordings: A New Zealand Viewpoint" (PhD diss., University of Canterbury, 1989).

28 Body, qtd. in Dando, "Sing the Body Electric."

29 Body, interview 2007.

a Nakamichi cassette recorder and started travelling, exploring village traditions, and started making recordings in Madura [island] and East Java mainly. And so I became interested in collecting.”³⁰

These electroacoustic pieces were inspired by the Indonesian soundscape, and on his website he notes some information about their background:

“Duets and Choruses” (12 min.) (1978). “A collage of Indonesian birds, frogs and monkeys.”

“Musik Anak-Anak” (Children’s Music) (10 min.) (1978). “A work using the sounds of Indonesian children’s toys, most of which are constructed from ‘found objects’ and discarded materials.”

“Fanfares” (12 min.) (1981). “A work using the sounds of Indonesian street hawkers playing musical instruments to attract children.”

“Musik Mulut” (Mouth Music) (11 min.) (1989). “A work extrapolated from a recording of a jew’s harp player from Lombok, Indonesia, the sound of which becomes a metaphor for death.”

“Jangkrik Genggong” (10 min.) (1985). “A work using six different versions of the same popular Javanese song as interpreted by street musicians recorded in Yogyakarta.”³¹

Some of Body’s other works that have an Indonesian element include:

“Arum Manis” (string quartet with tape) (1991).

“Campur Sari” (string quartet with traditional Javanese musician) (1996).

“After Bach” (gamelan with 4 viola soloists and massed violas; also a version without gamelan) (2001).

“Palaran: Songs of Love and War” (small orchestra with traditional Javanese singer) (2004).³²

30 *Ibid.* Around this time Body developed the use of recording and transcribing sound as part of his compositional method. See Jack Body, “Musical Transcription as an Adjunct to Musical Composition: A Personal View,” *Canzona* 14 (34) (1991): 9–15; Young, “Source Recognition of Environmental Sounds.”

31 Jack Body, Works by Date, www.jackbody.com/works_electroacoustic.htm; http://www.jackbody.com/works_by_date.htm (accessed 10 March 2012). Compare Jack Body, *Street Music of Java* (Kiwi Pacific OMCD-006, 1989). For recordings of some of these pieces, see Jack Body, *Horizons: New Zealand Electronic Music* (Kiwi Records SLD-54, 1977); Jack Body, *Cultures Electroniques 1, Le Chant du Monde* (LDC 278043, CM 201, 1986); Jack Body, *Suara: Environmental Music from Java* (Ode Records, Manu CD, 1380, 1993), first released in 1987 by Kiwi Pacific (TC HLS-113).

32 Commissioned by the Atlas Ensemble of Amsterdam, a group that includes western, Middle Eastern, and Chinese instruments, and orchestrated in 2009.

“Polish Folk Dances” (Javanese gamelan, two clarinets, baritone saxophone) (2007).

“Melodies for Orchestra” (slow movement) (orchestra) (1983).

“So Short the Life” (Javanese gamelan) (1989).³³

Works such as these help show the influence of the Indonesian sound world on the composer in his compositions over several decades. He was influenced by new sounds in Indonesia, and often crafted and recorded these works in the New Zealand setting.

Even though Body spent considerable time in Indonesia on various occasions, where he came across different types of gamelan amongst many other styles of music, it was not until his return to New Zealand that his interest in gamelan really developed, primarily in connection with his work at Victoria University. While he notes modestly that he has not actually composed that many pieces for gamelan, the importance of the instruments and music for him was found particularly in New Zealand, not only when he immersed himself in the newly acquired gamelan instruments that were to become a focal point for Indonesian music in tertiary education in New Zealand at that time, but also through interactions with several visiting professional gamelan tutors at Victoria University and with numerous visiting Indonesian and non-Indonesian performers (he was responsible for bringing many of them to New Zealand). As he comments,

It wasn't really until I came back [to New Zealand] and we had a teacher—that was Midiyanto [he taught for two years in New Zealand from 1983]—in Wellington that I started playing gamelan, becoming interested in gamelan. So gamelan is a second thing, and I've composed very little [for it], but I facilitate other people exploring gamelan and encourage my students, especially composition students, and by default I became the manager of our gamelan.³⁴

He continues:

Allan Thomas managed the gamelan for many years and at a certain point he ... said “now you do it” ... we have a core of players that have had a lot of experience, and this marvellous musician, Budi [Budi Surasa Putra],³⁵ ... then in addition to that we've got Balinese gamelan. Gareth Farr bought the instruments and by chance we have this marvellous composer artist, Yudane [I Wayan Gde Yudane].³⁶

33 Body, *Works by Date*.

34 Body, interview 2007.

35 He has been teaching gamelan in New Zealand since 1996.

36 Body, interview 2008.

Gamelan is known in many tertiary and community settings in the western world.³⁷ Once ethnomusicologist Mantle Hood (1918–2005) established in 1958 a gamelan group and gamelan performance programme at the University of California, Los Angeles, the genre quickly became a common sight in music education around the western world, and Body, like many other composers and performers, was attracted to gamelan (especially Central Javanese gamelan) for various reasons:³⁸

They are instruments that people come to and can sit down and in an hour they could be playing something fairly close to the genuine music... also it's communal, so that's something very nice... can you imagine establishing a western style orchestra and giving people playable instruments to play and within one hour playing anything? It's impossible!³⁹

After the establishment of the gamelan from Cirebon by Allan Thomas in 1975, the university acquired further instruments, and in 1977 a Central Javanese gamelan, which was named Gamelan Padhang Moncar,⁴⁰ was gifted to the Indonesian Embassy in New Zealand and is on permanent loan to the university. The first ensemble of instruments was in the pelog (seven-tone) tuning, and the School of Music soon commissioned the slendro (five-tone) tuning. The instruments became the focal point for non-western performance at the university, and many works were soon composed for the group. Over the years Gamelan Padhang Moncar has given numerous public performances in Wellington; tours of New Zealand; an Indonesian tour in 1993/94, 2002, and again in 2007; and even made several appearances at the New Zealand version of the WOMAD festival in Taranaki (2003 and 2012).

As a micro music of New Zealand,⁴¹ Gamelan Padhang Moncar has had a major impact on the compositional outputs of many aspiring composers who have passed through the tutelage of Jack Body and the School of Music at Victoria University of Wellington. Many of these students, like Body, have written for these sound-producing instruments, and, as well as the numerous assessment works that have formed part of the university's compositional programme, a number of these composers have had their

37 Many gamelan around the world are listed with the International Gamelan Institute (www.gamelan.org).

38 Soon after the establishment of gamelan at Victoria University of Wellington in 1975, several other universities and enthusiasts started ensembles elsewhere around the country: Nelson (now in Auckland), University of Canterbury, and University of Otago. See Henry Johnson, "Striking Accord! Gamelan, Education, and Indonesian Cultural Flows in Aotearoa/New Zealand," in *Asia in the Making of New Zealand*, ed. Henry Johnson and Brian Moloughney (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2006), 185–203; Allan Thomas, "Gamelan in New Zealand: A Chronology," *Balungan* 2 (3) (1986): 41–42.

39 Body, interview 2007.

40 On Gamelan Padhang Moncar, their history and activities, see <http://www.gamelan.org.nz>.

41 Compare Mark Slobin, *Subcultural Sounds: Micromusics of the West* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1993).

gamelan compositions recorded and published by Jack Body as part of the gamelan's activities.⁴² As the home to New Zealand's first gamelan, the Victoria University music programme has fostered a very close connection between gamelan and composition where Body actively encouraged his students to participate in gamelan classes, and Gamelan Padhang Moncar has been a catalyst for new gamelan works and has helped produce an array of eclectic New Zealand composers for over three decades, many of whom have engaged in composing for gamelan, including Ross Carey, Judith Exley, Di Fairly, Gareth Farr, Michael Norris, Helen Bowater, and Megan Collins (there are numerous others).⁴³

In this teaching and learning context, Body notes the importance of learning about the musics of other cultures, which reflects his work both as an ethnomusicologist and as an eclectic composer with a passion for the global soundscape: "I thought even then [during his period teaching composition in Indonesia in 1976–77] that composers should be aware of other music traditions simply because other music traditions represent different ways of thinking about music—the structure of music, the function of music, which are very important questions for composers of new music."⁴⁴ Moreover, he comments on some of the internal elements of gamelan music that excite him and he uses as examples of music structures to inspire his students:

You can take a structure like a *gatra* [four-beat unit] and 4/4 and you can look at some traditional [gamelan] repertoire and see what beautiful asymmetry there can be within that very square pattern. And the entry of the *gerong* [male chorus] and the relationship of the vocal line and the way that it moves off and comes back; the change of *irama* [tempo]; suddenly you get this—it gets slower but the ornamentation gets faster; and also we often for long periods will play in *pelog* [seven-note scale] and then move to *slendro* [five-note scale] and it's so calming.⁴⁵

Body has been influenced by gamelan in many ways. After nearly two decades learning about many aspects of Indonesian music, as well as managing the Victoria University of Wellington gamelan, Body composed his first piece for the entire Javanese ensemble in 1989: the piece "So Short the Life." As he notes,

After many years of playing gamelan, this is my first attempt to try to write for the ensemble. There are few specific references to traditional gamelan

42 For a list of over one hundred New Zealand compositions for gamelan from 1975 to 2009, see Gamelan Padhang Moncar, "NZ Compositions Date Order," http://www.gamelan.org.nz/NZ%20compositions_files/nz%20compositions%20date%20order.htm (accessed 12 March 2012). Many of the composers listed were students at Victoria University of Wellington and studied under Jack Body.

43 For example, Jack Body, *Tabuh Pacific* (Ode Records, CD Manu 1514, 1995).

44 Body, interview 2008.

45 Body, interview 2007.

composition. Instead, I have tried to focus on the nature of the instruments themselves, the attack and decay of the tones, and most especially the rich spectrum of overtones within each sound. As the piece progresses, the fundamental tones are deliberately suppressed, while the upper partials are reinforced—a journey into the interior of the sounds. The text is adapted from Chaucer who was quoting Hippocrates: “So short the life, so long the craft to learn.” “Ars longa, vita brevis.”⁴⁶

In this piece he notes some of the musical influences of gamelan, but comments that it is

not related to traditional forms at all, but [tries] to explore the sound of the instruments, for instance taking the slenthem and touching it in its node, in the centre, and hitting it near the end producing the upper partials, and letting them ring. So like exploring the instruments, the nature of the instruments, but in a non-traditional way.⁴⁷

As well as having cultural knowledge of gamelan forms and performance practices, such an approach to the sounds of gamelan instruments shows Body’s experimentation with sound that moves beyond traditional cultural practices.

Over the years, the gamelan at Victoria University of Wellington has become a focal point for Body and his composition students, and through this medium, which encourages ensemble performance and collaboration in various ways, he and many others have found their own creative voice in the eclectic sound world of composition: “I say [to my students] ‘if you don’t know about these instruments you can either join the group or at least come to some of the sessions’, ... but you collaborate”:⁴⁸

I encourage my composition students to play gamelan, to experience a “different” kind of music-making. It’s really only by playing the instruments that you can understand how they sound best and how to create new music for them. We’re trying to develop a New Zealand tradition while still acknowledging gamelan’s traditional Indonesian cultural roots. The *Gong Crazy!* programme has fantastic variety, with the addition of instruments from China and Sumatra, electronics and singers. I’m collaborating with the amazing Balinese musician Wayan Yudane, in a piece for gamelan, actor and string quartet.⁴⁹

46 Gamelan Padhang Moncar, “Highlights,” <http://www.gamelan.org.nz/history/%20and%20highlights.html> (accessed 12 March 2012).

47 Body, interview 2007.

48 Body, interview 2008.

49 Body, qtd. in Dando, “Sing the Body Electric.”

The “Gong Crazy! New Music for Gamelan” event was actually for his own retirement celebrations at the university, and in it Body naturally utilized the gamelan in terms of its use in so many of his and his students’ compositions over several decades. In an interview about this event, Body was asked, “Why gamelan?”⁵⁰ His response to this question, as shown below, helps show his pride in being part of New Zealand’s contribution to music composition that has been inspired by a gamelan in Wellington:

Simply because Victoria University [to which the School of Music is affiliated] was the first place in New Zealand to have a gamelan. We’ve had it for some 30 years, ever since Allan Thomas bought the first set in the mid-70s. Since then, we’ve acquired two more large sets. Essentially, gamelan is an orchestra of tuned metal percussion plus a few other instruments—with a uniquely sensuous kind of sound.⁵¹

More recently, in 2003, a further gamelan from Bali has been housed at the university. This latest addition, named Gamelan Taniwha Jaya, belongs to composer Gareth Farr, one of Body’s former students and also a composer who has been greatly inspired by the sounds of Asia in many diverse ways.⁵²

Body has even arranged several pieces of music for gamelan, a process that utilizes the instruments as sound-producing objects with a possible intention of attempting to remove them from their authentic cultural home. For example, during the tour of Indonesia in 2007 by players of the New Zealand School of Music’s two gamelan groups, it was noted that, “Another audience favourite was Jack Body’s arrangement of a number of Polish Dances for Javanese gamelan and two clarinets and baritone sax.”⁵³ In this context, Body’s work contributes to contemporary global flows and challenges notions of authenticity in many styles of music, whether from Poland, Indonesia, or New Zealand.

In the New Zealand context, Body is also particularly active in collaborations in Indonesian and other musics, whether with Indonesian resident musicians, visiting performers, or locally based musicians who practise Indonesian music. In connection with one such collaboration, he notes:

Yudane has a CD with Ode Records, called *Arak*, and the last track [“Paradise Regained”] ... is a piece that he and I made together [Body produced the album]. It’s with gangsa—he gave me ... two parts, 8 bars, 16 bars. And then I took it away and wrote a piano part from that, and the gangsa part which

50 Body, qtd. in *Ibid.*

51 Body, qtd. in *Ibid.*

52 Johnson, “Striking Accord!”; Henry Johnson, “Composing Asia in New Zealand: Gamelan and Creativity,” *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* 10 (1) (2008): 54–84.

53 Gamelan Padhang Moncar, “Highlights.”

he could play. So he plays it and it's with piano, so I guess that's something. But it's collaboration. I guess it's 80% my composing, because his was just the basic thing, but yes that's one piece.⁵⁴

In another collaboration in 2005, Body is seen as, not only a collaborator in musical terms, but also someone who creates in New Zealand and for New Zealanders compositions that have deep social and cultural meanings. In this performance, he worked with fellow Indonesia-inspired composer (and former student) Gareth Farr and a visiting Balinese dancer in what can be seen as a hybrid performance that does much to show Asia in New Zealand lives and across cultural boundaries:

INDONESIAN gamelan music, spoken word, traditional dance and a choir specialising in Gregorian chant combine forces on Sunday at Wellington's St Mary of the Angels in a show honouring victims of the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami. Indonesia was one of the worst hit nations. *Vita Brevis: Inter-Cultural Meditation on Life's Brevity for Voices, Gamelan and Dance* includes music from Wellington composer Gareth Farr and Jack Body and singer and masked dancer Nyoman Sukerta (pictured) from Bali.⁵⁵

Such collaboration with Asian performers is a practice in which Body has been particularly active throughout his career, and many of these performers who have visited New Zealand have helped inspire new compositions. Body has helped nurture the dissemination of Asian culture and musical knowledge in New Zealand: "We try and do a different project every year with guest artists from Indonesia, and I can generally find some funding to help that happen. We make recordings, we make our own compositions."⁵⁶ Over several decades of active facilitation, numerous Asian composers and performers have come to New Zealand to work with him and his students. In connection with Indonesia and Indonesian music, such visitors and collaborators have included Indonesians Rafiloza, Agus Supriawan, I Wayan Gede Yudane, I Wayan Sadra, Dodi Satya Ekagustdiman, Rithaony Hutajulu, Irwansyah Harahap, Michael Asmara, and keroncong diva Waljinah and her keroncong ensemble; and Americans Lou Harrison, Elaine Barkin, and Jody Diamond.

Body's engagement with Asian culture in New Zealand also extends to short-term and long-term Indonesian migrant musicians. His work that includes gamelan has involved many collaborations with Wellington- and Dunedin-based gamelan performers, including Budi Surasa Putra and Joko Susilo, respectively. More recently, as already noted, he has collaborated much with Wellington-based performer and composer I Wayan Gde Yudane.

54 Body, interview 2007; I Wayan Gde Yudane, *Arak: Balinese Intoxication* (Ode Record Company), iTunes, <http://itunes.apple.com/us/album/arak-balinese-intoxication/id279393979> (accessed 12 March 2012).

55 "Make a Date," *Dominion Post*, 18 November 2005, 7.

56 Body, interview 2007.

Conclusion

Jack Body has contributed greatly to New Zealand's engagement with Asia in terms of the content of and influences on many of his compositions. A brief encounter in the early-1970s when he transited through Indonesia during a return trip to New Zealand turned out to have a major and lasting impact on his life and especially on the nature of his creative oeuvre.

This article has shown that Body has been a major figure in bringing aspects of Asia to New Zealand. His many experiences of visiting Indonesia, whether short-term or long-term, have allowed him to gain an understanding of Indonesian culture; his fascination with the sounds he heard, whether gamelan, village musicians, or street performers, as well as the environmental soundscape surrounding his everyday life, influenced the way he composed music; and a wider audience, in New Zealand, Asia, and elsewhere, has experienced his creative works and celebrated his particular interpretation of the sounds he hears and the expression he seeks to capture through composition.

Several themes have emerged during this exploration of Body's engagement with Asia. As well as the cultural impact of Indonesia and gamelan on his life, Body's compositions often have collaboration at their core. Not only does he work with performers to produce the works, but he often engages with people making music in Asia. He hears sounds; he records those sounds; he transcribes those sounds; and he writes compositions based on and sometimes including those sounds. While many of his works have an existence based on such a procedure, Body's passion for people and collaboration also includes his activism in bringing Asian and other performers to New Zealand, or working with those already living in New Zealand, to collaborate with him. Lastly, Body is a teacher who has inspired many of his students to create music, collaborate, and engage with the sound world around them, wherever they are. These students have often played gamelan in New Zealand, and most first experienced this Indonesia music genre in the New Zealand context; and they have created new music for the instruments, or been inspired by the instruments.

Jack Body's creativity is an expression of his life. It is an active engagement with the natural and musical soundscape in which he lives. It motivates others to listen and learn. As one of many New Zealanders who have been inspired by Asia, Jack Body has travelled much in Asia, brought Asian ideas into his and others' work, and helped create a culture at home that encourages New Zealanders to look to Asia as a way of creating culture in New Zealand.

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