



JACK BODY

Poems of Love and War

David Greco,
Baritone & Counter-tenor

Budi Surasa Putra,
Javanese Vocalist

Martin Riseley, Violin

Robert Easting, Narrator

New Zealand
Symphony Orchestra

Kenneth Young

Jack Body (b. 1944)

Three Arias from 'Alley' • My Name is Mok Bhon • Palaran: Poems Of Love And War Meditations On Michelangelo • Poems Of Solitary Delights

Three Arias from 'Alley'

During my first visit to China, in 1985, I began to consider the extraordinary life of Rewi Alley, a New Zealander who lived sixty years in China, arriving in Shanghai in 1927. I worked with Alley's biographer Geoff Chapple to assemble a libretto for an opera. Directed by Chen Shi-Zheng and conducted by Peter Walls, *Alley* was produced by the Wellington International Arts Festival in 1998, the centenary of Alley's birth.

The opera opens with the aged Alley slumped in a chair, haunted by memories. The Chinese god of death, Yen Wang, interrogates Alley about his life and work in China, while Alley's younger self challenges his older self, examining his successes and failures, and questioning his motivations.

In 2010, at the invitation of the NZ Symphony Orchestra, I orchestrated three arias for inclusion in an NZSO concert for the Chinese New Year. The selected arias are those of the young Alley as he reflects on key experiences, the first as being moved by the heroic defiance of a young Com-munist suspect being dragged away for execution, the second as being inspired by seeing a multitude of workers digging a canal and by the sensuality of a young workman dousing himself with water, and third, hearing in a dream the voices of abandoned and exploited children calling to him.

The texts are drawn from Alley's own writings.

My Name Is Mok Bhon

I have been haunted by the Cambodian genocide ever since reading Dit Phran's account of living through the Khmer Rouge years, dramatically portrayed in the 1984 movie *The Killing Fields*. In 1995, at MOMA in New York, I chanced upon a deeply disturbing photographic exhibition of portraits of victims from the infamous Tuol Sleng prison (also known as S-21), where an estimated 14,000 men, women and children were photographed, interrogated, tortured and finally executed as perceived enemies of Pol Pot's paranoid regime.

In 2007 I visited Cambodia for the first time, where I made daily visits to Tuol Sleng, to sit among the portraits, trying to grasp the enormity of this monstrous history. Mok Bhon is the name of one of these victims, the person who, in my mind,

came to represent the many. His face haunted me, his eyes burned into me. At the beginning and end of my work a recorded voice is heard, speaking in Khmer:

'My name is Mok Bhon ... Please remember me ...
Remember all of us ...'

My Name is Mok Bhon uses transcriptions I made of two types of traditional Cambodian music: a funeral song played by an ensemble comprising gongs, drum, gong-chime circle, *sralai* oboe, and singer, and a plaintive 3-note melody played on the *sneng*, an instrument constructed from an animal horn with a reed inserted in its side. The live performance of my work was accompanied by images I shot at Tuol Sleng, assembled as a video by Andrew Brettell.

This work was commissioned for the NZSO by my friend Jack Richards, who requested a dedication also be made to Kong Orn, a friend of Jack's who was also a victim of the Khmer Rouge purges.

Palaran: Poems of Love and War

Among the many subtleties that can be found in Javanese gamelan music, I have always been struck by the exquisite rhythmic dichotomy between the steady pulse of the main body of instruments and the rhythmically freer layering of singer, *suling* bamboo flute and *rebab* fiddle. While generally these 'refined soloists' must pace themselves to arrive at the frequent cadence points at the same time as the larger group of instruments, in the *palaran* style it is the vocal soloist who signals the points of change; the gongs set up a repeated pulse, only moving to the next pitch on the singer's cue.

The forms of Javanese sung poetry each have emotional and psychological associations, much like Indian *rag*, or Arabic *makam*, and offer the singer considerable scope for personal interpretation. Several of the melodies used here blur the distinction between the *pelog* and *slendro* modes through the use of expressive 'bending' (*miring*) of certain pitches.

The texts chosen are drawn from tradition, and juxtapose images of love and pity with those of forcefulness and aggression. I am indebted to Budi Putra for the selection of

the texts and melodies, and to Yono Soekarno for the translations. The poetry is rich in allusion and word-play, its true meaning often resistant to translation.

Palaran was commissioned in 2004 by the Amsterdam Atlas Ensemble, a chamber ensemble comprising Western, Middle Eastern and Chinese instruments. This orchestration for Western orchestra was made in 2009.

Meditations On Michelangelo, for solo violin and strings

Considered alongside Michelangelo's masterpieces of painting and sculpture, his poetry adds new, often poignant insights into his character and sensibility, his struggle against the obsessive power of love and desire, and his adoration of male beauty.

Meditations is based on one of my previous compositions, a setting for two female voices of the seven of Michelangelo's sonnets. Composed in 1982 for dancer/choreographer Michael Parmenter, this music-theatre work combined dance, music and film.

I still have affection for the music I composed more than thirty years ago, and in this composition of 2007 I rework the material, intensifying its emotional quality, making explicit the harmonies 'implied' in the original, and 'amplifying' the expressivity of the voice through the rich resonance of strings, in the absence of the actual poems themselves.

The work is in seven movements:

1. Sonnet XXXII

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

Contemplating ideal love, shared equally.

2. Sonnet LVII

Passa per gli occhi al core in un momento ...

Lamenting the obsessive power of carnal passion.

3. Sonnet XXI

D'altrui pietoso e sol di sé spietato ...

The poet longs to sacrifice himself to the beauty of his beloved, picturing the silkworm which sheds its skin in order that the body of the beloved may be more beautifully adorned.

4. Sonnet LIV

Veggio nel tuo bel viso, signor mio ...

A declaration of love. 'Though the world may condemn this love, through it I may find God.'

5. Sonnet XXVII

Non posso altra figura immaginarmi ...

Gripped by passion, the poet sees no escape. 'By trying to diminish grief, I but double it.'

6. Sonnet XXVI

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

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

7. Sonnet LXXVIII

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

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

The work was commissioned by Japanese violinist Rieko Suzuki, and is dedicated to her.

Poems Of Solitary Delights

This work was composed for performance during the 1985 Cambridge Summer Music School (in New Zealand), to mark the school's 40th anniversary. It is dedicated to composer Douglas Lilburn (1915–2001), who was the composition tutor during the first two Cambridge schools. 1985 also marked Lilburn's 70th birthday, and I chose this cycle of poems as being empathetic to his personality, as someone who valued privacy and who found pleasure in solitary activities such as reading and, of course, composing music.

Scored for a small orchestra, the work makes much use of ostinati, and circular melodies shared between instruments. An exotic aspect of the orchestration is the inclusion of an electronic keyboard emulating the sound of a *koto* (Japanese zither). Originally I intended that the narrator should momentarily burst into song, but in this version a second performer is used. The scoring was revised in 1986 and again in 2003.

The Japanese poems by Tachibana Akemi (1812-1868) are used here in an English translation by Geoffrey Bownas and Anthony Thwaite from *The Penguin Book of Japanese Verse* (used with the permission of the publisher).

Jack Body

Palaran: Poems Of Love And War

Durma Palaran Suragreged Si. Sanga miring

The eagle Jathayu attacks the king Rawana in an attempt to rescue Sita, who is being abducted.

nDedel sigra Janthayu niyub amapag
Rawana dèn ungkuli
sinamber kinepyak
pinatuk baunira
patuk kapeteg trus maring
lambungé bencah
muncar ludira mijil.

Immediately Jathayu glides, charging, high in the sky.
Rawana is enshadowed, then fiercely
struck, slapped,
stabbed in the shoulder
grabbed and pulled,
his abdomen then torn open,
spurling blood.

Megatruh Pl. Barang

King Gunawan, departing for a battle, farewells his beloved.

Sira Prabu Gunawan manembah nuhun
wong agung ngandika malih
yayi yèn ingsun tan ayun
kang sawèneh ana angling
mbésuk ing palastraning ngong/sun.

His Majesty Gunawan greets her
and repeats
'My dear, if I do not survive
this battle you will meet me
again in the after-life.'

Mijil – Gagadwaspa Si. Sanga miring

Correct behaviour means fighting hypocrisy

Nistha iku tindak walangati
saliring pakéwuh
iya béla-béla ing ciptané
mring santana myang punggawa mantri
angguung gangga runggi
andhedher pakéwuh.

Betrayal is contrary to the heart
all those shameless deeds
hiding the truth
from both the soldiers and the commandant
stating what is not true
sowing seeds of disrespect.

Pangkur Gagad Kasmaran Pl. Nem

Love sickness

Tat kala prihatin dahat,
awit bangun malah sadinten malih,
ing mangkya wimbuh sadalu,
gagat bangun rahina,
prapta angin silir-silir mawa eburn,
kadya luhing wengi milya,
nangisi sang kenèng wingit.

A time of unbearable sadness,
from waking up until the day's end,
followed by yet another day,
and the day that follows will start with a jolt,
accompanied by a dewy breeze,
like the tears of the night,
crying for the one who bears the sadness.

Sendhon Kagok Ketaton uran-uranipun Semar ing Gara-gara Si. Manyura

The clown Semar, god of the Pandawa in the Javanese tradition, sings in a deliberately cryptic fashion.

Duh duh duh, ao ao
duh yana sun anembang ilir bumbung tébok kang dèn
anam arang
babo babo duh yana kirag kirig kaya di semprong
bokongé

Oh my, my, ao ao
oh my soul, I'm singing a 'bamboo fan', a sparsely woven
tray
yes, oh yes, oh my soul, in agitation, as if one's backside
has been torched

O, ao ao
duh yana tikus langu trembalo kang sobèng longan

Oh, ao ao
oh my soul, foul-smelling mice are rodents that frequent
the space under the bed

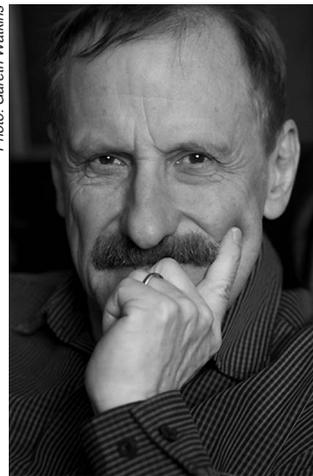
babo babo duh yana calurutan kaya nggoléki bédangé.

yes, oh yes, oh my soul, running in circles as if searching
for one's lover

Traditional Javanese

English translations by Yono Soekarno

Photo: Gareth Watkins



Jack Body

Jack Body has composed ensemble, vocal, orchestral and electro-acoustic music, as well as film music, music-theatre and image/sound installations. He has been commissioned and performed by the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, the Auckland Philharmonia, the New Zealand String Quartet and NZTrio, as well as international ensembles such as the Amsterdam Atlas Ensemble, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, the Song Company (Sydney), and Kronos Quartet, for whom he has written four works. He curated three Asia Pacific Festivals (1984, 1982, 2007), as well as festivals of New Zealand music in Amsterdam, Santa Cruz California, and Beijing, and has published many scores and recordings of New Zealand music, as the editor of Waiteata Music Press.

Jack Body has documented traditional Indonesian music, and as manager of a Javanese gamelan he has facilitated the creation of new repertoire for gamelan and other instruments, collaborating with numerous New Zealand composers as well as leading Indonesian artists. Other collaborative cross-cultural projects include *O Cambodia*, a programme with three other composers to create new works for piano trio and three traditional Cambodian musicians, and a project of new compositions played by the NZ String Quartet with the Forbidden City Chamber Orchestra (Beijing). His *Songs and Dances of Desire*, a tribute to the iconic New Zealand Maori drag queen Carmen Rupe, was a highlight of the 2013 Auckland Festival. He lectured in the School of Music at Victoria University of Wellington (now the NZ School of Music) from 1980 until his retirement from teaching in 2009.

**David Greco**

The Australian born baritone David Greco has established himself as a fine interpreter of art song, oratorio and opera. After appearing with Dame Emma Kirky in her Australian concerts in 2006, he has worked with many distinguished chamber and early music ensembles, including the Australian Chamber Orchestra, the Freiburg Barockorchester, the Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra under Ton Koopman and The Tallis Scholars under Peter Phillips. In 2009 he made his Italian debut at the Teatro Comunale, Modena, in Handel's *Agrippina* (Pallante), and in 2012 appeared with Glyndebourne Festival Opera in Purcell's *The Fairy Queen* under Laurence Cummings, followed by the rôle of Orestes in Cavalli's *Il Giasone* for Pinchgut Opera, Sydney, Australia, and performances of J.S Bach's St Matthew and St John Passion in Amsterdam.

Photo: Ola Renska

**Budi Sarasa Putra**

Budi Sarasa Putra was born in 1969 in Solo, on the island of Java, Indonesia, of a family that had had a musical tradition over many generations. He played gamelan from an early age, accumulating wide experience as a versatile performer. He graduated at the Performing Arts University in Solo in 1994, and since 1996 has lived in New Zealand, working in the cultural and information section of the Indonesian Embassy, and directing Victoria University's Gamelan Padhang Moncar. Accomplished on all gamelan instruments, as required by tradition, he also has a special talent for vocal music.

Photo: Budi Sarasa Putra

**Martin Riseley**

Martin Riseley studied with Dorothy DeLay at The Juilliard School, where he completed Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts Degrees. He was concertmaster of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra for fifteen years, where he performed a large number of concertos. He has played chamber music with leading musicians such as Pinchas Zukerman, Yo-Yo Ma and John Kimura Parker, and has held other concertmaster positions, including Interim Associate Concertmaster of the National Arts Center Orchestra. In New Zealand he has given performances of the complete Paganini *Caprices* and has made the first CD recordings of some important chamber works of Douglas Lilburn.

Photo: Ellis Bros. Photography Ltd.

**Amitai Pati**

Amitai Pati is of Samoan descent and has recently completed an MA in Advanced Vocal Studies at the Wales International Academy of Voice under the tutelage of Dennis O'Neill. He was the winner of the prestigious Lexus Song Quest in 2012 and has extensive experience in choral singing, having performed and toured with the New Zealand Youth Choir, the Graduate Choir and the Auckland University Choir. He has performed as a backing vocalist on George Benson's and Andrea Bocelli's New Zealand tour, and performed in NBR New Zealand Opera's *Hohepa* for the New Zealand International Arts Festival and in *Rigoletto*. He has sung in master-classes of Joseph Rouleau, Della Jones, Dame Josephine Barstow, Dame Anne Murray, Richard Bonyng, Dennis O'Neill and Dame Kiri Te Kanawa.

Photo: Garth Badger

**Robert Easting**

Robert Easting is Emeritus Professor at Victoria University of Wellington, where he taught English Language and Literature 1973-2010. He has been an amateur choral singer since 1954, most recently with The Tudor Consort (Wellington), and Musica Contexta (UK) for their Chandos recording (2012) of William Byrd (*The Great Service in the Chapel Royal*).

Photo: Les Maiden, for Victoria University Image Services

**Kenneth Young**

Kenneth Young is one of New Zealand's leading conductors and composers. He works regularly with all the major orchestras in New Zealand and Australia while also making appearances in Europe and Japan. His numerous recordings of New Zealand and Australian orchestral music have been recognised internationally, and his own works are performed regularly throughout Australasia, Europe and America. He is a lecturer in composition and conducting at the New Zealand School of Music and in 2004 was awarded the Lilburn Trust Citation in Recognition of Outstanding Services to New Zealand Music.

Photo: Deborah Rawson

New Zealand Symphony Orchestra

The New Zealand Symphony Orchestra is the country's national full size, full-time professional orchestra and one of the world's oldest national symphony orchestras, in existence since 1946. The orchestra is continually on the road, touring as many as a hundred symphonic concerts as well as dozens of dedicated concerts for children and small communities each year. In 2010, the NZSO completed the most prestigious and successful international tour in their history, appearing at the Kultur- und Kongresszentrum Luzern, the Victoria Hall, Geneva, the Shanghai World Expo and the Musikverein, Vienna. Earlier tours have featured concerts at the BBC Proms, the Snape Maltings in England and the Aichi World Expo in Japan. Led by Music Director Pietari Inkinen, the NZSO has won consistent praise in the press for its performances, both in concerts and on recordings. The NZSO has an extensive catalogue of recordings, mostly on the Naxos label. More than one million of these CDs have been sold internationally in the past decade. www.nzso.co.nz



Photo by Patrycja Szwarzynska

Jack Body is one of New Zealand's leading composers. His fascination with Asian traditional music has had a profound impact on music which often tells 'dark stories of repression and unjust political imprisonment' (*New Zealand Listener*). Body's opera *Alley* tells the extraordinary life of Rewi Alley, whose powerful experiences in China are reflected in these specially orchestrated arias. *Palaran: Poems of Love and War* draws on the subtleties of Javanese gamelan and traditional vocal styles, while *Poems of Solitary Delights* gives a musical context to Japanese poet Tachibana Akemi's light-hearted meditations on solitary pleasures. In contrast *My Name is Mok Bhon* references Cambodian traditional music to express the trauma and anguish of the Khmer Rouge years.

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**Jack
BODY**
(b. 1944)



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2 Men at work	6:01	7 Sonnet LVII	3:31
3 Night	4:27	8 Sonnet XXI	2:29
4 My Name is Mok Bhon	12:30	9 Sonnet LIV	2:51
(Recorded voice: Somara Ouk)		10 Sonnet XXVII	1:47
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