

**The Music of Phillip Houghton:
Interpreting the Influence of Visual Art
Works in his Compositions**

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Abstract

Phillip Houghton (April 26, 1954 – September 30, 2017) was “one of Australia’s greatest guitar figures and composers” (Slava Grigoryan as cited by Cerabona, 2018). Houghton had been trained in visual arts before studying music, and influences from the visual art and references to visual stimuli played a major role in his compositions. This study discusses the process of developing a meaningful interpretation, performance and presentation of Houghton’s compositions with a focus on the visual art influences referenced in his music.

This research project unfolds through three case studies, spanning a period of a year and a half. Each case study draws repertoire that I selected for the respective concert programmes in which I focused on the works by Phillip Houghton. The selection was made by instrumentation, namely, works for solo guitar, works for ensemble guitar, and mixed chamber ensemble works including the guitar. These three different programs were presented live on June/2016, November/2016, and June/2017 respectively. During this period, I had the opportunity to communicate with Phillip Houghton in person, which added further insight and personal dimension to both the technical and interpretative aspects of his compositions. The exegesis also contains a video with selections from the three performances.

Each case study is discussed in a specific chapter, in which I also provide analyses on the relevant aspects of the works, the artworks that inspired them, and the process of developing a musical interpretation and a visual display. This design was developed to allow the reader to focus on each stage of a progression as it follows: 1) basic background of the pieces in the given program, 2) identification of the art works referenced by Houghton and my impressions from such works, 3) followed by musical analyses that serve to determine the correlations between the referenced artworks and the musical features, and finally 4) a discussion on strategies to bring the emerged understanding into interpretative and performative decisions. Each of Chapters 4, 5 and 6 follow the same progression, and reflect the contents of the three concerts mentioned above.

Statement of Originality

*This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university.
To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published
or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.*

(Signed) _____

Name of Student

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

“Form, structure, content, context, rhythm, harmony, texture, colour, line, balance, motif, symbols, allegory, story, myth, narrative, design, patterns, counterpoint, juxtaposition, development, placement, timing, dynamic, speed, space, layers, hues, tones, opaque, transparent, gradation, gestures, modulation, undulation, accents... and a lot more... I could be talking about painting or music: the brush or the sound.” (Houghton as cited in Nistico, pp.14, 2016).

Phillip Houghton thought of light and sound in terms of the speed and resonance of vibrational frequencies of energy, with light being fast, higher-band frequencies, and sound being slow, lower-band frequencies. He also notes that we can see some light, such as a rainbow, but high vibrational light frequencies such as gamma and x-ray cannot be perceived by the naked eye. We can hear quite a large range of pitch, but if they are too high like a dog whistle, or too low as in a low-pitched whale song, these too are imperceivable. (Houghton as cited in Nistico, pp.14, 2016).

These analogies are not only there to fit into a physical description of light and sound. Houghton’s philosophy about influences interacting goes to the core of his creative output regardless of the medium. “Now and then, I try to paint what I hear, hear what I paint, or write stories and poems.” “It’s all about the medium of choice, and the particular skills and desires of the individual to ‘voice’ their ideas... whatever field they may work in. To try to describe this voice, I came up with the word ‘mythod’ meaning our own personal myth or story, our experience, our memory and history, our dreams and imagination, and how we each need to speak it.” (Houghton as cited in Nistico, pp.15, 2016).

Within this exegesis are three case studies that investigate the music of Phillip Houghton and the visual influences in them, all detailing a process leading to an informed interpretation. These selections based on instrumentation focus on solo guitar music ensemble guitar music, and mixed ensemble music featuring guitar. The thinking behind this is that different tonal

colour mixes between these configurations are similar to different paints, pens, pencils and other materials that a visual artist may use.

As mentioned in the Abstract, each case study is structured in a way that mimics my approach to learning and researching repertoire as a performer. In 1) the *Introduction* section, there is some background information about the piece, such as publication dates, an idea of where in the composer's output the repertoire belongs, and some relevant programmatic information, including influences cited by Houghton not related to visual art.

2) The *Related Artwork* sections are the area of primary interest for this exegesis. In these sections, I seek to relate both Houghton's and my reactions to the artworks presented. When Houghton had specified certain paintings related to certain compositions, I attempted to portray the connections my imagination attached to them. I later saw my own evocations between some Houghton paintings and compositions, which I shared in the *Related Artwork* sections, and also incorporated into the interpretations.

3) The *Analysis* sections focus on the musically descriptive elements of the music compositions. There are elements of programmatic and visual description tied to musical ideas and devices where appropriate. However, it should be noted that these connections are often metaphorical, and do not necessarily align with specific notated areas in the scores. I have also used graphic descriptions to allude to the *shape* of various elements of certain pieces, including a visual representation of the structure of *Dervish*, as well as a graphic notation and *acousmograph* depiction of *Wave Radiance*. These visual illustrations are used only for the compositions that display a significant connection to them.

Finally, 4) the *Interpretation and Presentation* sections delve even further into the metaphorical depictions that I developed into a narrative under the guidance of my guitar teacher Ms. Karin Schaupp. These narratives became the associative mental images that sustained meaning during my performances. This section also covers the development of various projections of images used for display during performance.

Like my approach to learning and researching repertoire, this design will hopefully allow a reader to cross-reference the different sections, and also develop new and interesting connections for their own portrayal of Houghton's music. I perceived Houghton's

descriptions, metaphors and images to allow performers and by extension, their audience, tap into their own imaginations and meanings into his music. I feel that this design allows for descriptive data to coincide with the readers impressions of the various imagery, metaphors, descriptions depicted within the exegesis.

Phillip Houghton Biography

Phillip Houghton was born in Melbourne on the 26th of April in 1954 and passed away in the same city on the 30th of September 2017. He trained as a visual artist at the Prahran Technical College, before dropping out after three months. He later undertook classical guitar lessons with Sebastian Jorgensen, and also began teaching himself composition. He received early encouragement from John Champ, Peter Mummé and Helen Gifford. He accepted a position at the Montsalvat Artist Colony in Melbourne as artist in residence and guitar tutor from 1977 to 1981. Between the years 1977 and 1980 he also pursued a career as a classical guitarist, touring extensively and later recorded by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), which unfortunately (with the exception of a selection of trios with Roger Treble and Sebastian Jorgensen) was never broadcast due to a severe rattle in Houghton's guitar. At the age of 26 he decided to abandon the performance aspect of his career to focus on composition.

Houghton's early output between 1976 and 1982, included the solo works *The Passing* (19), *The Romantic* (1975), *Study in Patience* (1975), *Long Deep Waltz* (1976), *Red Goldfish* (1977), *Jade Unicorn* (1979), and *Iliad* (1980). His own description of these works is of a progressive evolution of his composition style from struggling to learn notation while writing out improvisation, development of the use of space, movement, silence and time, development of longer, more substantial melodic lines, and use of modulation, cross-string sustain in scales, and chords, suspended harmony, bends and damping techniques. Houghton also considered *Iliad* to be the major breakthrough of that period, citing the development in "intricate 'line' constructions"; artificial harmonies; 'volatile' harmony; unusual right and left-hand techniques; massive 'leaps' to tones and colours." (Houghton, as cited in Lynch. 1994).

Early output in ensemble music included *The Mantis and the Moon* (1975-76) for guitar duo, which eventually became the first movement of *Three duets* in 1990, *Relic* and *Initiation* from *Six Trios* (1981-82) for guitar trio, and *In Amber* (1982) for guitar and string quartet. In these compositions, Houghton explores motoric rhythms, “swift ‘note clashes’ and more adventurous modulations and moods.” (Houghton, 1994), and with *In Amber*, “giving equal weight to each instrument – to create a balanced mashing of voices and rhythms,” while “shifting intervals and chords give it a ‘hazy’ key centre.” (Houghton, as cited in Lynch 1994).

In Houghton’s words, “After [composing] *Iliad* and *The Ancients*, life caught up with me... I didn’t write another solo for eight years” (Houghton as cited in Lynch, 1994). Houghton’s life experiences during this time translate into Houghton’s his music, in particular, a seven-month stint as a labourer on a gas pipeline from Alice Springs to Darwin in Australia’s Northern Territory 1987. Memories of this period of his life were the impetus behind the work *From the Dreaming* for flute and guitar composed in 1992.

The Black Rose Prelude, composed in 1988, began a very prolific period of composition lasting until around 1995. This was the period in which his most well-known, longest formed, and most performed works were written. It was in this time when Houghton composed his first large substantial solo, *Stélé*, and *God of the Northern Forest*, now almost canonic in the guitar repertory. Houghton was perhaps even more prolific with ensemble music in this time, penning *Lament* and *Alchemy* to complete the *Three Duets* with *The Mantis and the Moon*, and *Opals* for guitar quartet. *Two Night Movements*, and *From the Dreaming*, were another artistic breakthrough for Houghton, feeling that the writing for duet with guitar and flute/violin, was “a challenge that freed up my melodic lines”. (Houghton reminisced by Lynch, 1994). His large-scale mixed chamber work, *The Light on the Edge* for two guitars, harp, percussion, zither, double bass and didgeridu was also composed in this time, and was recorded by Peter Constant and Marion Schaap and friends on the recording titled *The Light on the Edge*.

It was also during this period that Houghton began what he termed a “cottage industry,” Moonstone Music Publications, allowing him to self-publish his works, importantly being facsimiles of his handwritten musical calligraphy. Hand written scores can give a musician greater insight into a work as Elaine Gould states “...some professionals

today still say that well-spaced hand copying or a composer's manuscript, tell us more about the music than the impersonality of a computer-set page ever can." (Gould, 2011).

4 YELLOW GOLDFISH

Andante non troppo
 ♩ = 40 (♩ = 120)
 whimsical, lazy, musingly, summery

At once a mad jester, and a melancholy magician

THE GOLDFISH SUITE © Phillip Houghton ♯ Moonstone Music Publications 1977-78 / 2003

Fig. 1 *Yellow Goldfish* excerpt

In the opening section to *Yellow Goldfish* (Fig. 1) from *The Goldfish Suite*; as well as being a beautifully presented score by a skilled calligrapher, it is incredibly detailed in directions for the player. It is highly descriptive, as one can see, there is a description of the fish's personality - "At once a mad jester, and a melancholy magician", some descriptions to fit the state of being of the fish with the tempo information at the start of the score - "whimsical, lazy, musingly, summery," and, at the bottom, the line "becoming agitated!" giving the player an indication of what is to come that is a little more poetic than "leading towards *agitato*." The score is also very prescriptive, in that the player has detailed information on the intended string choice, fingering, and timbres to be produced. On an instrument such as the guitar, these choices greatly affect the sound produced in terms of colour, shading and articulation.

Ophelia – a haunted sonata was the last complete new published work of Houghton's composed in 2004; also during this time, he completed some other well-known works

including *Kinkachoo – I love you*, and *Wave Radiance* for guitar duo. Houghton is well known for making revisions to his compositions, and from the late 1990's to 2015, he made what would be the final versions of ten earlier works, including *6 Short Solos*, *The Goldfish Suite*, *Brolga*, *Opals*, *Nocturne* (originally for piano, arranged for guitar quartet), *From the Dreaming*, *In Amber*, and *The Light on the Edge*.

Phillip Houghton cites many influences in his music, most prominently, visual art, mythology, and the environment.

Meeting Phillip Houghton

I met Phillip Houghton in person for the first and only time in 2016, I had arranged to have a lesson with him at his apartment in Sydney. I flew in fairly early in the day and had a look around the suburb as he was quite firm about not meeting any earlier than midday. He greeted me warmly and we had some small talk about cricket and Australian football.

Houghton had retained many artefacts over the course of his composing career, including some that he shared with me; these included various papers written about him and his music, paintings, drawings, his own lecture materials and composition sketches, some of which are referenced in this exegesis.

I began with *Green Goldfish* from *The Goldfish Suite* and was incredibly nervous when it came time to play for him. I did not perform at the intended standard. One of the first things that he suggested to do was to “lower the stakes,” to reduce it all down to a technical level, think less about mistakes and the interpretation, and to practice slowly more often. He felt that I was still “sight reading,” and should look more at my hand positions for cleaner shifts.

He was very observant with physical movement, noted there was excessive tension in my right hand, and also mentioned that when I got to a tricky passage my right leg would move out and put me off balance. He suggested that I use the natural body motion to play with more freedom, to use my chest more than my left-hand thumb for pressure on the strings in the left hand. He also mentioned that relaxation begins in the jaw, and that tension there will translate to the rest of the body.

Houghton suggested utilising a technique he referred to as “rhythmic lifting,” which was explained as holding the finger on a note until a rhythmic moment within the phrase, allowing for much cleaner phrasing. He gave me an example of the final run in the Villa-Lobos *Etude No. 1* (Fig. 2),

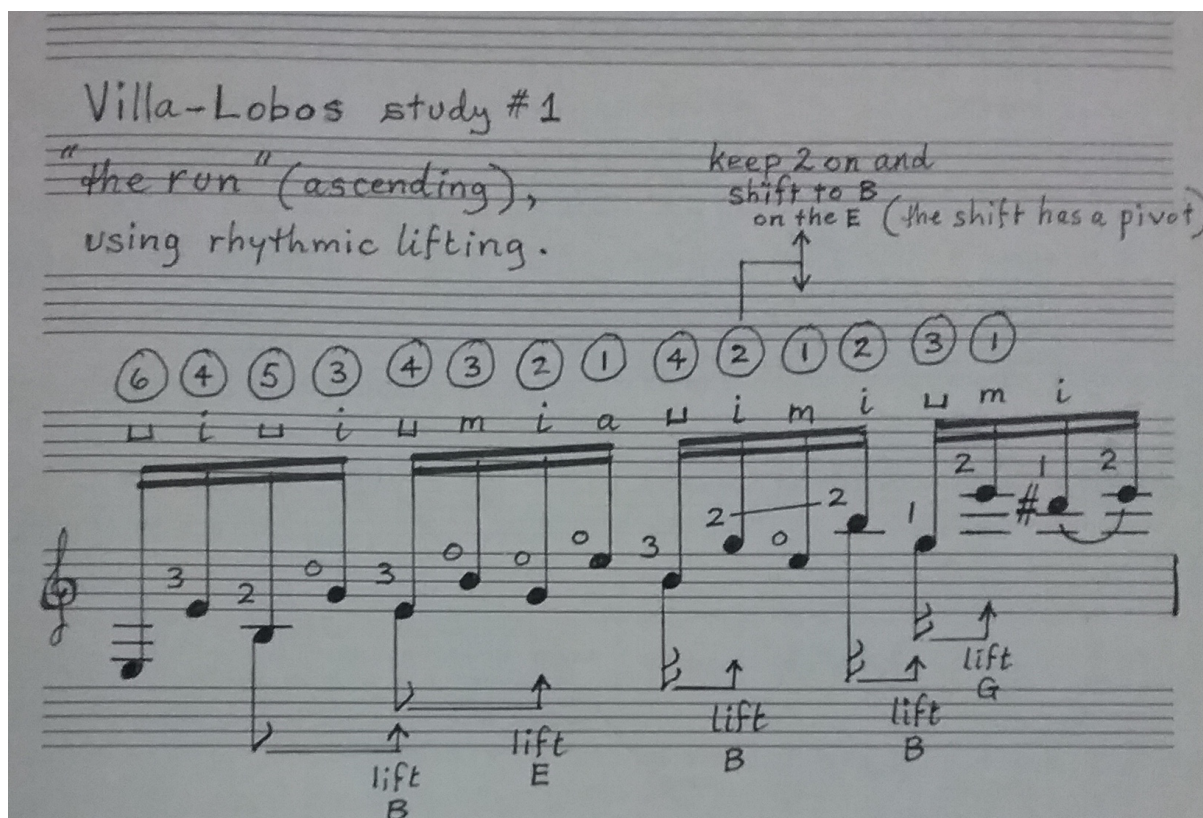


Fig. 2 Villa-Lobos rhythmic lifting

Houghton even wrote the rhythmic lifting into *Green Goldfish* (Fig. 3).

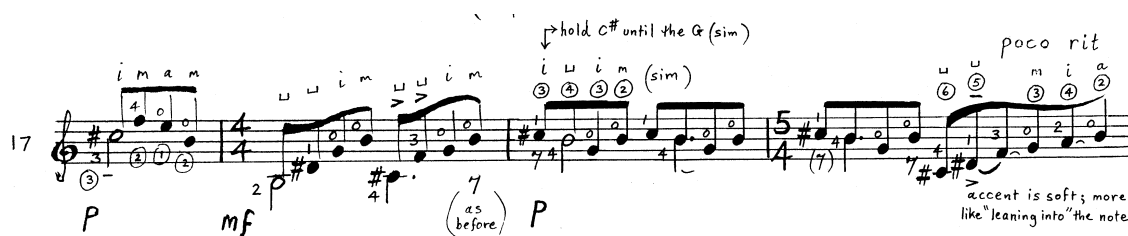


Fig. 3 Green Goldfish

Note the rests in bars 18 and 20, instructing the player to release the 4th finger C # and B respectively to change across to another string.

This information was revelatory in seeing how pervasive Houghton's many influences made their way into his works. In this regard, it was from his teaching approach, greatly influencing my technical preparation of his compositions. This knowledge made me aware of the breadth of influence within his music, and how naturally he incorporated them, also informing the process of analysing the works in the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

To better understand the language of the visual artist, it is important to read through various topics on visual art. A good place to start was the writings of Paul Klee in his *Temporis Collection*. Klee's art was directly connected to Houghton's through the painting *God of the Northern Forest* which served as the inspiration for Houghton's solo work of the same name. Paul Klee's writings about his art theory cite many musical influences, which Houghton notes as an influence in his artwork and music. When talking about Klee's contemporary, Kandinsky, Houghton had expressed:

"I should also say that initially I was trained as an artist and there has always been a connection for me between visuals and sound. I know that the painter Kandinsky was always trying to paint sound and I found that as an artist that was exactly what I was trying to do. Then it came to me that I would prefer to make sounds rather than paint them." (Houghton cited in Byzantine, 2000).

Klee's writing about *Tonality* (Klee, location 2831-2919) directly influenced the graphic representation of Houghton's study of shading, colour, and dynamic *Wave Radiance* that appears on page 52 of this exegesis. For Klee, tonality meant the movement of tone value, offering an example, that being of white to black. I used this gradient to describe the change in timbre on the guitar from ponticello to tasto. Klee also writes about the addition of colour to shading giving an impression of temperature, which I referenced to the voicing of sonorities in the work. (Klee, Op. Cit.).

Renaud Côté-Giguère notes in his writing about the guitar music of Tōru Takemitsu, that performing the notated colour changes in his music means much more than simply moving the right-hand position between bridge and fretboard. He asserts that Takemitsu's cultural and personal ethos needs to be understood to fully grasp the timbral diversity in Takemitsu's music.

For Côté-Giguère, the music of Takemitsu is closely related to both nature and the *ma* aesthetic derived from Japanese art. Côté-Giguère states "*Ma*, meaning both space and time, is fundamental in Japanese art. This aesthetic is often represented as the void between two separate worlds: paintings of faraway trees through the fog or blurry reflections in the water

are applications of *ma* in visual art” (Côté-Giguère, 2017. p. 16). Even with cultural differences, the aesthetic is analogous to what I believe Houghton was trying to achieve.

The programme notes in Phillip Houghton’s scores give detailed descriptions of the programmatic material his works are based on. The scores themselves are beautifully handwritten, and as well as having very specific information on tempo fluctuations and tone colour, often have instructions such as those in *Opals* for guitar quartet suggesting which colours are being portrayed at different points in the music.

Jan LaRue’s *Style Guides for Style Analysis* presents a range of strategies for analysing music within the notion of a “style-analytical routine.” This routine begins with looking at the work as a whole to identify the *Large Dimensions*, which include major shifts in sound (dynamics, timbre), contrast and frequency of tonality (modality, pitch class etc.) and vertical function, connected thematic ideas, contrasts in meter and tempos and rhythms, and variety in form. Then, moving on to *Middle Dimensions*, we look at specific phrases, and the ideas within the parts of the piece. And finally, the *Small Dimensions*, where sub-phrases and motives reside. The descriptions of these features became the data sets from which the analyses were formed.

Various biographical and interview sources were also used to develop an insight into the world of Phillip Houghton, these included his website, the Australian Music Centre website, various periodicals and materials given to me by Houghton, with permission for their use approved by the authors.

This exegesis, in its design and development, explores a wide range of approaches and source material. The literature review reflects the scope of tools and studies used to distill and refine the various data sets that unfolded throughout the project. However, this exegesis attempts to bridge the divide between describable features and metaphors within Houghton’s music, leading to an actionable understanding of the processes used to create performative interpretations.

Chapter 3: Methods

The overall project was divided up into three separate case studies (Fig. 4), with a focus on 1) solo guitar repertoire, 2) ensemble guitar music, and 3) mixed chamber repertoire. The repertoire was selected specifically for the programmatic connection to visual artworks and visual stimuli.

Case Study No. 1	Case Study No.2	Case Study No. 3
<i>Stélé</i>	<i>Opals</i> – Guitar Quartet	<i>From the Dreaming</i> – Guitar and Flute
<i>God of the Northern Forest</i>	<i>Brolga</i> – Guitar Duo	<i>In Amber</i> - Guitar and String Quartet (or Quintet)
<i>Kinkachoo, I Love You</i>	<i>Wave Radiance</i> – Guitar Duo	
<i>The Goldfish Suite</i>	<i>Three Duets</i> – Guitar Duo	<i>The Light on The Edge</i> – Two Classical Guitars, Harp, Double Bass, Percussion and Environment Sounds
<i>Fantasia - As a Jade Unicorn Might in the Rain.</i>	<i>Suite of Six Trios</i> – Guitar Trio	

Fig. 4. Case Study programme

In Case Study 1, *Stélé* (1989) in four movements, is perhaps Phillip Houghton’s best-known work, references Ancient Greek artefacts. *God of the Northern Forest* (1989) references both

the “dark, brooding, forest” of the Paul Klee painting titled *God of the Northern Forest*, and also the Eltham Copperhead Butterfly. *Kinkachoo, I Love You* (1998) employs the same scordatura used in *God of the Northern Forest* and it is common for the two pieces to be played together within a concert programme. Houghton describes the Kinkachoo as a “mythical bird, once wounded in the spirit-realm, heals and flies into the world” (Houghton, 1998). *The Goldfish Suite* (1977/78-2003) is a set of four miniatures about a green, red, purple and yellow goldfish. These were composed in 1977/78, and then heavily revised in 2003. *Fantasia – As a Jade Unicorn Might in the Rain* (1979), is a miniature, originally composed for lute, later transcribed for the guitar. Houghton “imagined, hidden away in a remote jungle, an ancient statue of a jade unicorn which may or may not come to life whenever it rains.” (Houghton, 1995).

In Case Study 2, *Opals* (1994) for guitar quartet explores the colour and movement of light in Australia’s national precious stone, the movements are titled *Black Opal*, *Water Opal*, and *White Opal*. *Opals* also references two Australian paintings. *Opal Spirit* by Lyndall Gerlach in 1993, and *Circe Invidiosa* by John Waterhouse in 1892. *Brolga* (1994), initially inspired by the painting *Spirit of the Plains* (1897) by Sydney Long, attempts to express a bird like ‘presence’ in one movement of 5 sections titled 1. *Flying in Landing... my what a big beak you have!* 2. *Feathers/Dance* 3. *Alone... a bridge of sighs* 4. *Dusk in the Otherworld...seen through the eyes of pearl* 5. *Black Silhouettes in Burgundy Light* (Houghton, 1994). The suite *Three Duets* (1976/1994), features *The Mantis and the Moon*, which Houghton describes as “an existential “Insect/Lunar Comic-Tragedy of Whimsical proportions.” (Houghton, 1994). Finally, I decided on three movements from *A suite of six Trios*. These were *Impromptu...A Dance of Faith*, referencing the red figure paintings by Henri Matisse, *Relic*, and *Initiation*, described on the score as a “homage to Duchamp: ‘Nosferatu Descending Staircase,’” a play on words of Duchamp’s famous painting *Nude Descending a Staircase*.

Case Study 3 features *From the Dreaming* for guitar and flute, which concentrates on Houghton’s impressions of central Australia. He has three paintings connected to this work. *In Amber* for guitar and string ensemble had the working title ‘A fossil in Amber’ where Houghton drew parallels between a fossil frozen or suspended in amberstone and the sound frozen or suspended in string instruments waiting to be brought to life. Finally, *The Light on the Edge* “expresses feelings generated by the northern tropical coastline” of Australia.

Presentation Development through Action Research and Reflection

The concept of looking for the connections between visual art and the work of Phillip Houghton began with the programme notes attached to his scores. Very early in my correspondence with him, he provided me with a document with questions he had answered for the guitarist Daniel Nistico. One of the questions asked was “You’ve mentioned that your paintings and music share a close bond. I was wondering if you could expand on that, especially in relation to ‘From the Dreaming,’ and the three paintings that are associated with the piece.” (Nistico. 2016). Part of Houghton’s response to this question was to direct the reader to the paintings section of the website with directions on how to find the paintings in question. For example: “these are found (on my website) at 7 rows down, last in the row, and 12 rows down, last in the row,” (Houghton, as cited in Nistico 2016), before going on to describe one particular drawing in detail.

This prompted me to ask “Are any other paintings on your website connected to your compositions? In particular, the pieces I’m performing, *Stele*, *The Goldfish Suite*, *God of the Northern Forest*, *Kinkachoo*, *I love you*, and ‘*Fantasia... As a Jade Unicorn Might in the Rain*. Would you mind giving a few words on how they are connected to the works? And may I use them in slides in my lecture recital?” To which he referred me to several paintings on his website, as well as emailing more illustrations later on.

Attending a musical performance engages an audience’s eyes as well as their ears, so the concept to incorporate visual stimuli in the performances seemed to me a very natural one. The option of artistically developing these ideas using Houghton’s works and inspirations alongside developing a musical interpretation intrigued me greatly. With vastly less experience in delivering visual presentations than musical ones, I was less cautious and more experimental with my ideas for visual display. My method was to draw upon what I had believed worked from earlier performances, and then to incorporate new ideas into the next event, as explained over the next three paragraphs.

For the visual display while performing in my first recital, I used a range of paintings referred to me by Houghton for each of the works performed. I enlisted assistance to help change slides during the lecture recital. I provided the person changing slides with a copy of my

speech, with notes on when to change slides with a description of the slide. I did the same thing with the scores of the pieces I performed. I had arranged the slides to change in the way that I felt best suited the music. These included not only Houghton's paintings, but also of artworks that inspired certain works, including Paul Klee's *God of the Northern Forest*, and the Ancient Greek artefacts that were the inspiration for *Stélé*.

The second lecture recital was similar, in that slides of paintings and artefacts were displayed during performance, this time more based on my reactions than that of the composer. In the guitar quartet *Opals*, there are annotations for which colours are perceived at which time, as if the musician is turning the opal, and also the movement of these colours as the opals are turned. A student from the Queensland College of Art designed some monochrome digital files of changing shape and shade for me to use for the purpose of performing *Opals*, for which I coloured in frame by frame in accordance to what was written on the score. Again, there was someone to change the slides as the performance went on, with annotations including the slide number and descriptions.

For the third recital, I collaborated with a VJ (video jockey), for the use of projection and audio reactive software. For this recital, I wanted the reaction of the video artist of the music being performed. As I had felt confident to delve more into my own reactions into the second recital, I was intrigued to see how Houghton's music and art influenced the work of another kind of artist. I supplied him with audio recordings of the recital programme and also showed him to Houghton's website, where he could view his artworks. I instructed the VJ to showcase Houghton's artworks in the recital, as well as receiving permission from Houghton to alter his works during the performance. The video artist was also free to use his own imagery.

Each of these performances drew upon and advanced upon the ideas used in previous performances. Reflection led to the advancement of the ideas in each instance, and none of these developments were a radical departure on what had come before.

Analysis as a Step Towards Interpretation

As well as understanding the way musical elements fit together to create a musical work, analysis can be used as a way of interpreting meaning within a musical work. When it comes to analysing works connected to visual stimuli, be that via title, programmatic explanation, score annotations, or even personal connection, one is looking for elements that can be connected with visual language. These elements can be contour, shape, structure, texture, colour, shading, foreground and background. These can also be applied to different terms of scope within a piece of music, be that within a phrase, or a chord voicing at the micro level, and structure and form at the macro level, all of these visual terms can be applied.

The initial model for analysis that I applied was based on the ideas suggested by Tobias Pontara, based on philosopher Joseph Margolis' views on critical plausibility in his 2015 paper "Interpretation, Imputation, Plausibility: Towards a Theoretical Model for Musical Hermeneutics." Within, he describes two basic requirements as described by Margolis, "(1) it must be consistent or compatible with 'the describable features' of a given artwork; and (2) it must conform with 'relativized canons of interpretations that themselves fall within the tolerance of a historically continuous tradition of interpretation'" (Pontara, 2015).

For the first requirement, I used Jan LaRue's "Guidelines for Style analysis" to develop a "style-analytical routine" to describe the physical musical features in terms of form, major shifts in sound (dynamics, timbre), contrast and frequency of tonality (modality, pitch class etc.) and vertical function, connected thematic ideas, contrasts in meter, tempos and rhythms.

For the second requirement, Pontaris goes on to say that 'there are no absolute standards of such interpretative relevance; instead there are, with regard to any given work of art, a number of distinguishable interpretive canons, a sum of distinct traditions, each related to or grounded in a specific cultural myth (or collection of such myths).

During the course of investigating Houghton's music, I moved more towards using the myth that he had created for his own music in the way that I understood it. Houghton would often connect music with art, mythology, his own experiences, and also other artists (composers).

My reference material became what Houghton himself had written about his works in his programs or elsewhere. I moved away from using analysis as description, and more towards using it as a tool for interpretation. While I did use data from the describable features of the works using the La Rue guide, I used data from Houghton's writings rather than cross referencing with any specific musical tradition.

There were also some experimental analysis designs; visual aspects included into some of the works, that came directly from the physical properties of the works. This included shapes created of sections from Audio Timeliner Audio Annotation Tool software (Yorgason, 2016), pitch frequency and intensity displayed as colour with Acousmographie software (Ina GRM. 2003-2013), and also hand drawn graphs, using shading for timbre with height for dynamic, or pairing instruments on foreground or background parts, with colours used to describe the tonal centres.

The methodology of La Rue, and Pontaris described above was the process used to extract raw data from scores and recordings. With the assistance of my supervisor Dr. Gerardo Dirié, I developed a process of refining the raw data into the descriptive analyses used within the exegesis. These forms of analysis all combine to enhance a visualisation of the music initiated by the title, program notes, and score annotations.

Use of Narrative and Visual Stimuli to Inform a Performance

In the course of preparing each presentation, my lessons with Ms. Karin Schaupp were invaluable. She had worked extensively with Houghton on preparing *Stélé* for the recording on her 1997 recording *Soliloquy*; and has an intimate knowledge of many of his works through performance, recordings and pedagogy.

Schaupp's pedagogical method for interpretation is informed by acting method; using narrative, imagery, and character development to create an arc throughout a piece of music. This method also allows a performer to maintain a focus on projecting the emotions evoked through these processes.

I kept notes about the interpretative decisions made using these methods, and also how successfully or not this worked with the programmatic elements and discoveries in musical developments found through analysis. I also cross-referenced the visual aspects found within the score analysis with the paintings and pictures, to see how I felt they did or did not fit in with my perceptions or pre-conceptions of the works.

There were times that I felt that these things combined incredibly well, and others not so well. With either there is still valuable information to be taken from these methods, and scope to reapply and improve upon the works where things didn't match as easily. With art, there is a freedom to change the way it is perceived.

Summary

Each of these methodological processes were refined into the four sections that make up each case study, chapter, or concert. 1) *Introduction* uses the information from Houghton's scores, artworks, writings and interviews to introduce the compositions being performed in the recitals attached to each case study. 2) *Related Artworks* introduces Houghton's artworks that are related to each of his works. It also describes details of the development of my ideas on incorporating art into performances as mentioned in *Presentation Development through Action Research and Reflection*. 3) *Analysis* sections present the analysis of certain works from each of the case studies. These were formulated with the methodology explained in *Analysis as a Step towards Interpretation*, with artistic decisions being made from the analyses being incorporated into the final section of each case study, 4) *Interpretation and Presentation*. This final section weaves data extracted from analysis with narrative as explained in *Use of Narrative and Visual Stimuli to Inform a Performance*, and also describes the outcomes of *Presentation Development through Action Research and Reflection*.

Chapter 4: Case Study 1

Introduction

The repertoire selected for this Case Study was based on the representation of visual stimuli in the works, as well as representing different periods of Houghton's output. In the following sections of this Case Study, there will be a) a related artworks section, b) analysis section, and c) interpretation and presentation section. The purpose of this is to show how analysis of narrative, visual stimuli, and understanding of musical elements, structure and form come together to shape an overarching interpretation. This introduction and following related artworks section will cover all the compositions eventually presented for the performance of Houghton's guitar solo repertoire. In the analysis section and interpretation and presentation section, there will be fewer compositions covered to allow for a more in-depth analysis than would be possible if attempting to cover all of the repertoire.

Stélé, composed in 1989, is the most famous of all of Phillip Houghton's guitar works, it was premiered by John Williams at the Adelaide Arts Festival in 1990. *Stélé* was composed for a friend of Phillip Houghton's, Evangelos Karavitis. Houghton had received from Karavitis a book featuring images of ancient Greek artworks, and this, alongside Karavitis' Greek heritage, was the inspiration to start composing the piece. Houghton stated that the first movement, also titled *Stélé* took him six months to write, as he struggled with material and form, but that the other three movements came quite quickly, almost in real time. (Houghton, as cited in Byzantine, 2000).

A stele is described by Grove Art Online as a "stone or pillar set upright in commemoration of some event or as a marker for a grave. Stelae are frequently carved or inscribed... the word stele is used chiefly in the Mediterranean world." (Collon et al. 2003). The *Stélé* of Demokleides is a funeral stele for a hoplite, or citizen-soldier killed at war, and depicts the hoplite on a trireme (or war ship), helmet beside him, with head in hand, as if lost alone at sea. The second movement, *Dervish* is based on this statue of a boy riding a horse titled the Jockey of Artemision, with the musical form being Houghton's response to the whirling Dervishes. The third movement, *Bronze Apollo*, is based on this statue titled Piraeus Apollo, an ancient statue lost in time until the early 20th century. The work has the subtitle *Copper*;

Bronze, Water, Air, Green, Perfume, and is presented in two sections: *A – Premonition*, and *B – Arpeggio*. The final movement, *Web* is depicted as a tying together of the other movements, a culmination and completion of the work as a whole.

God of the Northern Forest was composed in 1989 in the midst of a very prolific period of Houghton's output, being composed shortly after, but before the premiere of his magnum opus *Stélé*. Between 1982 and 1989, he hadn't composed any guitar solos. *God of the Northern Forest* is Phillip Houghton's portrayal of Paul Klee's painting of the same name. Dedicated to his former teacher, Sebastian Jorgensen, the piece nods towards Sebastian's Nordic heritage and upbringing in Eltham, to the north of Melbourne, by adding a reference to the Eltham Copper Butterfly, a species of insect only found in the state of Victoria, Australia.

Kinkachoo, I Love You, composed in 1998 has the same tuning as *God of the Northern Forest*. Houghton has described the two works as companion pieces, with the order of performance being up to the player, but his own preference being for "*Kinkachoo*" to be performed after *God of the Northern Forest*." The programmatic element for *Kinkachoo* is as follows: "The Kinkachoo, a mythical bird, once wounded in the Spirit-Realm, heals and flies into the world." (Houghton, 2003).

The Goldfish Suite, composed in 1977/78, was performed on Houghton's concert tours, but the entire suite was not published until 2003, when he made substantial changes to the work, almost completely re-writing two of the movements, and only leaving *Red Goldfish* in its original form. In order, the movements of the *Goldfish Suite* are titled as follows: 1. *Green Goldfish*, 2. *Red Goldfish*, 3. *Purple Goldfish*, and 4. *Yellow Goldfish*. The inspiration of the piece was initiated by the red gold fish in the pond at Montsalvat and reflects "the movement and colour of goldfish." (Houghton, 2003).

Fantasia – As a Jade Unicorn might in the Rain composed in 1979, is one of Phillip Houghton's earlier compositions. It was originally composed for the lute in lute tablature and was dedicated to his lute teacher Roger Treble. The guitar transcription of this Fantasia came soon after the original lute composition, and to match the tuning of the lute, the 3rd string G of the guitar is tuned down to F# and a capo has been attached to the third fret. He has transposed the score for ease of reading in the guitar transcription as is common for lute

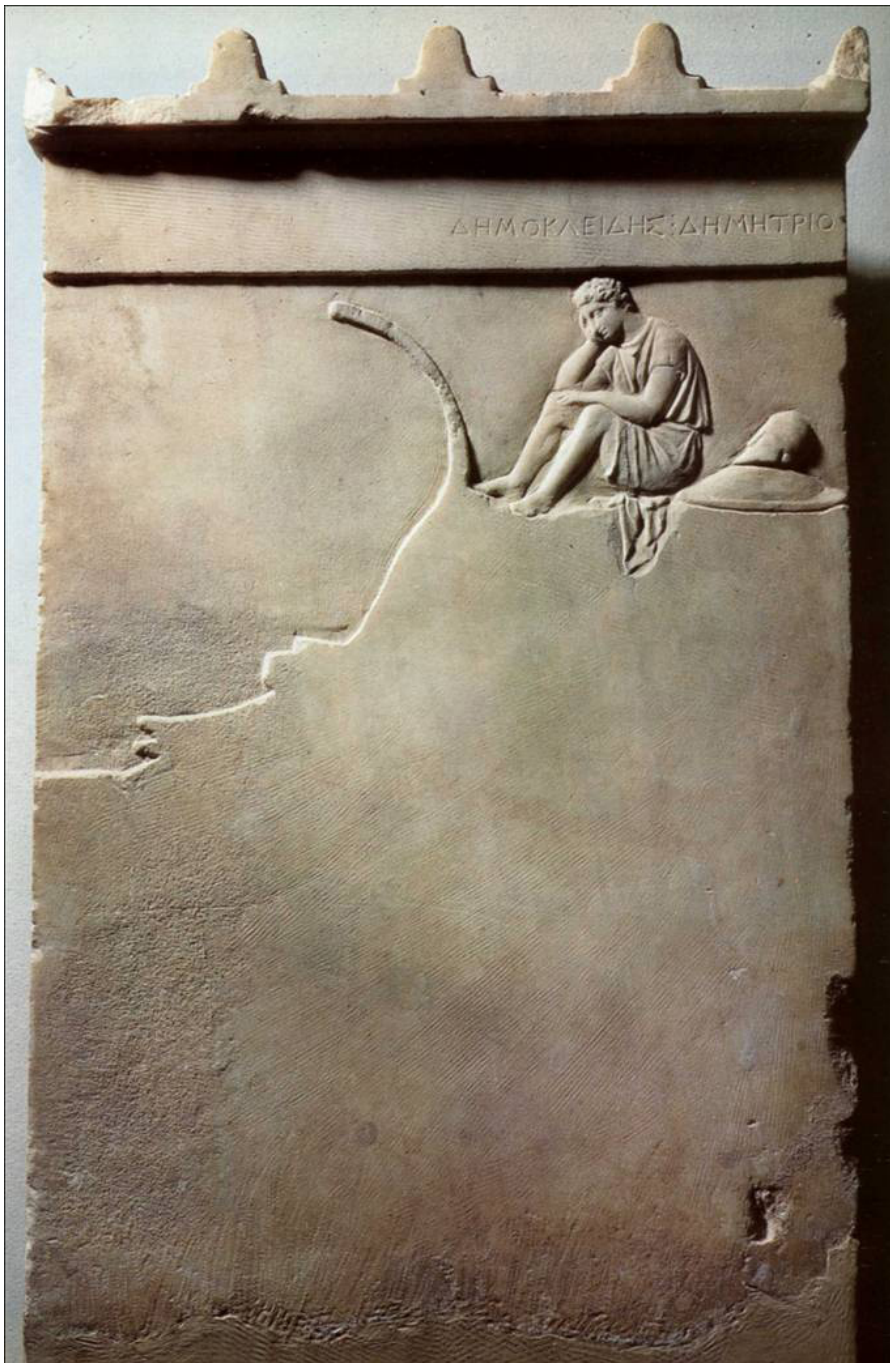
transcriptions in the guitar repertoire. For the programmatic element to this piece, Houghton “imagined, hidden away in a remote jungle, an ancient statue of a jade unicorn which may or may not come to life whenever it rains.” (Houghton, 1995). The first publication of *Fantasia – As a Jade Unicorn might in the Rain*, as well as *Red Goldfish* was in *Six Short Solos*, published in 1992.

Related Artworks

For the first Case Study, here are a combination of both Houghton's and my own responses to artworks referenced for each work, it will combine both original works by Houghton as well as works that inspired certain compositions

Stélé

The images that sparked Houghton's imagination for this work are the following Ancient Greek artefacts.



The Stélé of Demokleides (Fig. 5) was the inspiration behind the entire work, but especially the first movement also titled *Stélé*. Even though it is in itself a striking image, the contextual knowledge of it being a funerary monument does affect the way it is viewed. The soldier depicted has seen battles and storms, and now he sails forever on the seas of time.

Fig. 5. *Stélé of Demokleides* (Anon. 4th century, B.C.)



Fig. 6. *The Jockey of Artemision*. (Anon. 140-150 B.C.)

The Jockey of Artemision (Fig. 6) was the initial inspiration for the second movement *Dervish*. A very striking image of a boy who appears to be calmly riding what appears to be a very fast race horse at full gallop. The image strikes in me a sense of relentlessness that comes through very strongly in the musical translation. Is this image secondary to the piece over the inspiration of the title, that being of whirling dervishes from the Mevlevi Sufi Order? The spinning of the dervishes is no less relentless than a charging horse, even if they do seem as though the intention is quite different.



This early bronze statue titled *Piraeus Apollo* (Fig. 7) was the inspiration for the third movement of *Stélé* titled *Bronze Apollo*. In section A, *Premonition*, Houghton attempted to musically represent “the actual raw bronze being turned, beaten and forged by those ancient hands which made it.” (Houghton, 1994). The statue spent several millennia lost at sea, and in section B *Arpeggio*, Houghton “imagined the statue having a ‘soul:’ in my realm of fantasy, the statue somehow possessing an awareness being expressed in the movements subtitle *Copper, Bronze, Water, Air, Green, Perfume.*” (Houghton as cited by Lynch, 1994).

Fig. 7. *Piraeus Apollo* (Anon. 6th century B.C)

This is the image that Houghton used as the cover of the publication of the *Stélé* score (Fig. 8). The sea plays a large part in the work, and the landscape gives no indication to a specific time or place. The haziness of the image lends itself to a sense of mystery and timelessness.



Fig. 8. *Stélé* cover art. (Houghton, 1989)

Houghton also felt that the following images correlate with *Stélé*:

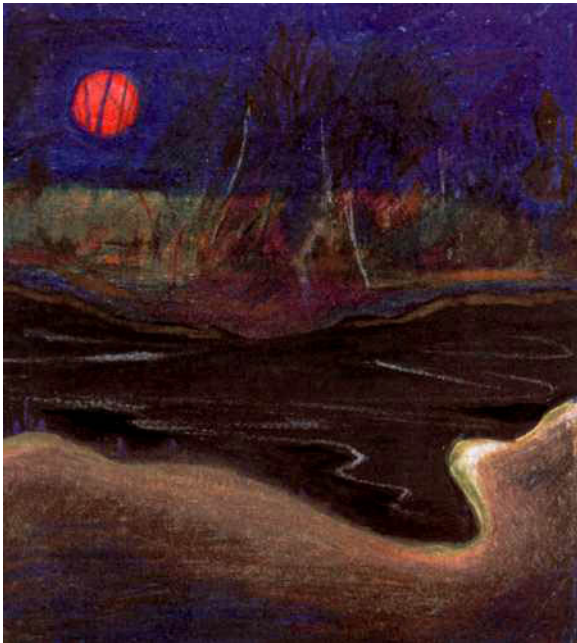


Fig. 9 *Red Moon over River Styx (Houghton)*



Fig 10. *Ruins (Houghton)*



Fig. 12. *In the Flame of the Muse (Houghton)*

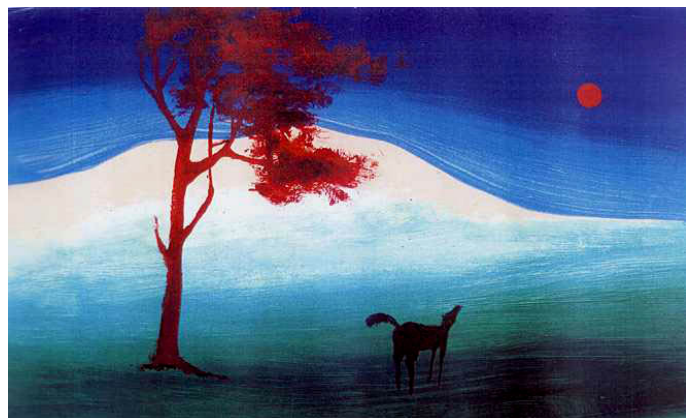


Fig. 11. *Equus Baying at Red Moon (Houghton)*



Fig. 13. *While the Muses Dance A Brighter Flame Burns* (Houghton)



Fig. 14. *His Wife Waits for him on the Other side of River Styx* (Houghton)



Fig. 15. *Red, Ancient Figures* (Houghton)



Fig. 16. *Moon with Twisted Tree* (Houghton)

It is not difficult to make connections between the artworks when taking into account motifs that reappear in both the images and the titles. With *Red Moon over River Styx* (Fig. 9) as a starting point, a connection is easily made to the moon themed pieces, *Ruins* (Fig. 10), *Equus Baying at Red Moon* (Fig. 11), and, *Moon with Twisted Tree* (Fig. 16). The reference to the mythological River Styx is continued with *His Wife Waits for him on the Other side of River Styx* (Fig. 14), with a similarity between the figure in the paintings, and those in *Red, Ancient Figures* (Fig. 15). The three stars motif in *His Wife waits...* is repeated in *While the Muses Dance A Brighter Flame Burns* (Fig. 13), which shares similarities in both title and colour scheme with *In the Flame of the Muse* (Fig. 12).

The biggest connection for me and the work *Stélé* came from *His Wife waits...* and *Red, Ancient Figures*. In Greek mythology, the River Styx refers to the boundary between the living and the dead in Hades, so a connection with ancient Greek artefacts seemed logical. I liked to think of the wife figure being married to the hoplite referenced in the stélé artefact, separated by and eventually reunited in death, adding additional poignancy, particularly to the first movement.

God of the Northern Forest

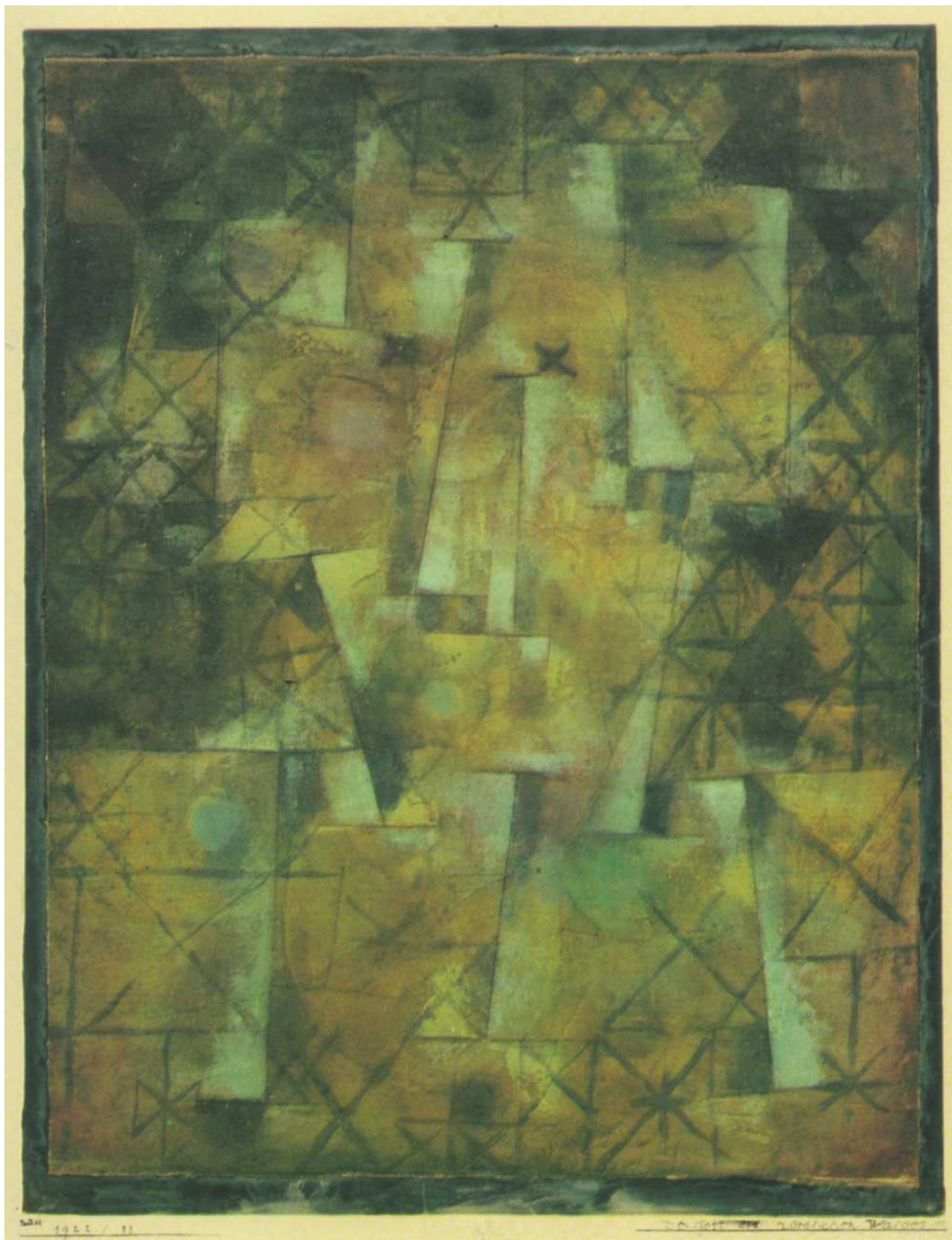


Fig. 17. *God of the Northern Forest* (Klee, 1922)

This work was inspired by the Paul Klee work of the same title (Fig. 17) and was also used on the cover of the publication of the score.

“A total response to the Paul Klee painting. Written in a frenzy, one incredible evening. I wanted to create huge sounds on the guitar, in a melodic way (not just ‘chainsaw-

rasgueado’!) and try to express the vastly contrasting feelings and themes into one cogent piece. Much thought went into it over months, then wham!” (Houghton via Lynch, 1993).



Fig 18. *Alternate God of the Northern Forest cover art (Houghton 1993)*

In the event that Houghton was unable to obtain permission from the Klee estate to use *God of the Northern Forest* on the cover of the score, he painted this alternative (Fig. 18).

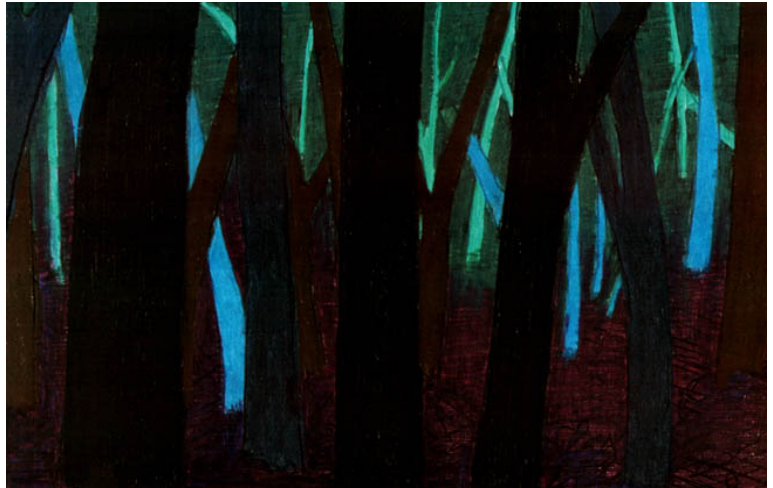


Fig. 19. *Of a Forest Floor, Inside a Forest* (Houghton)



Fig. 20. *Of a River Bank/Forest, Across a River* (Houghton)

These paintings (Fig. 19, Fig. 20) all have a combination of dark and luminous features. Houghton noted that he felt that the scordatura employed in *God of the Northern Forest* captured the “resonance” of the Klee painting. Klee’s theory on “tonality” (light and shade, warm and cool colours) combined with these paintings had a profound impact on the way I perceived the different areas of the work.

Goldfish Suite

Like *Stélé* and *God of the Northern Forest*, Houghton also created a painting for the *Goldfish Suite* (Fig. 21) in 1978/79, with the intention of this being the cover of a possible edition later on, though it was never published



Fig. 21. *The Goldfish Suite* (Houghton, 1979)

Houghton also considered the following pictures to be related (Fig. 22, Fig. 23, Fig. 24, Fig. 25).



Fig. 22. *Music in Dark Water* (Houghton)



Fig. 23. *Beach* (Houghton, 1978)



Fig. 24. *Goldfish Cloud* (Houghton)



Fig. 25. *Poets Festival '78* (Houghton, 1978)

Kinkachoo, I love you

For this piece, Houghton did not note that any of his paintings were specifically connected; but felt that the following came close (Fig. 26, Fig. 27, Fig. 28).

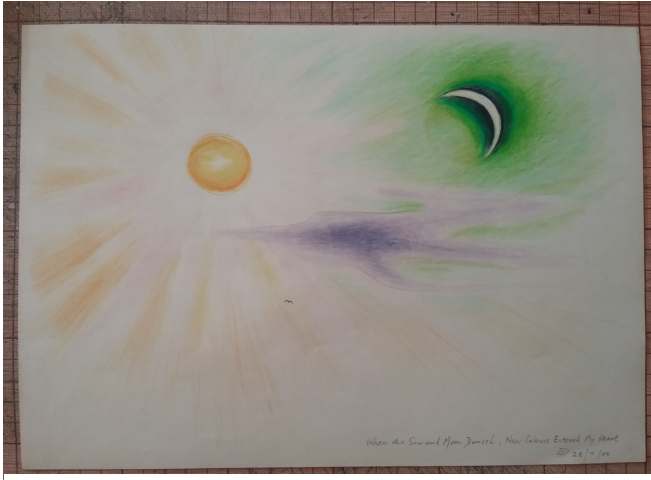


Fig. 26. *When the Sun and Moon Danced, New Colours Entered My Heart* (Houghton, 2000)

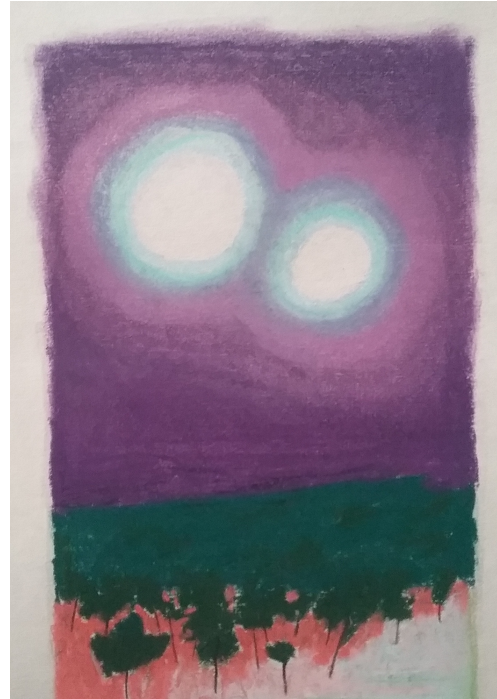


Fig. 27. *2 Moons* (Houghton, 1991)



Fig. 28. *Opalescence* (Houghton)

Fantasia...as a Jade Unicorn Might in the Rain

Much like *Kinkachoo*, Houghton didn't acknowledge a specific connection to his artworks, and also cited *Two Moons* and *Opalescence* like he did in *Kinkachoo*, with the following three artworks (Fig. 29, Fig. 30, Fig. 31).



Fig. 29. *Lovers Make Blue* (Houghton)



Fig.30. *Warrior Dreams a Forest* (Houghton)



Fig. 31. *Fern Forest* (Houghton)

Analyses

This analysis section and the following interpretation and presentation section will focus on two important Houghton compositions, *Stélé*, in four movements, and *God of the Northern Forest*, a single movement work.

***Stélé* Analysis**

The movements of *Stélé* are presented in a slow-fast-slow-fast structure, with the opening movement (and in fact the entire piece), *Stélé*, being inspired by the Stélé of Demokleides. Please refer to the earlier sections of this Case Study for the definition, description and photographic representation of the Stélé of Demokleides.

Movement 1 – *Stélé*

The sonorities in the introduction set up this first movement of around four minutes duration, and indeed the entire work. Tension is built and then released, until a pivotal sonority, (Fig. 32.) built off a tritone F # and C doubled in octaves combines with an open G and E string is performed. This sonority comes back into use again throughout the work. There are four main sections to this movement lasting for a duration of around four minutes; the introduction, an A section (Fig. 33) featuring episodes of lyrical melancholy and long melodic phrases, a B section which begins with a transposition of the first theme of the A section (Fig. 34). This leads into arpeggiations of similar sonorities to the introduction, before returning to another theme from the A section leading into the climax and coda. The climax (Fig. 35) is based around a diminished 7th arpeggio, which I perceived to be a violent event of some description, be that a storm or a battle due to the depiction of a soldier in a sea vessel. This transitions into a much more stable, consonant repeated sonority (Fig. 36) with harmonics, again representing the melancholy of the hoplite depicted.



Fig. 32. *Pivotal sonority*

Andante $\text{♩} = 88 (\text{or } 92)$

Fig. 33. A section theme

calmo, dolce

Fig. 34. Transposed theme

Maestoso furioso pesante
più allegro

Fig. 35. Climax

molto lento

Fig. 36. Consonant repeated sonority

Movement 2 - Dervish

The second movement, *Dervish* is based on a statue of a boy riding a horse titled the Jockey of Artemision, with the musical form being Houghton's evocation of the dance and music of the whirling Dervishes. *Dervish* features a motoric rhythm, with the 12/8 time signature giving the groups of three notes a galloping feel, this movement is relentless through its two and a half minute duration.

Interestingly, this movement as well as the third movement *Bronze Appollo*, both use the extreme ponticello colour of the guitar in the introduction. In the realm of plucked, fretted instruments, the term "metallic" is often used instead of ponticello. So it is fair to suggest that this colour is used to depict the bronze in both of these movements.

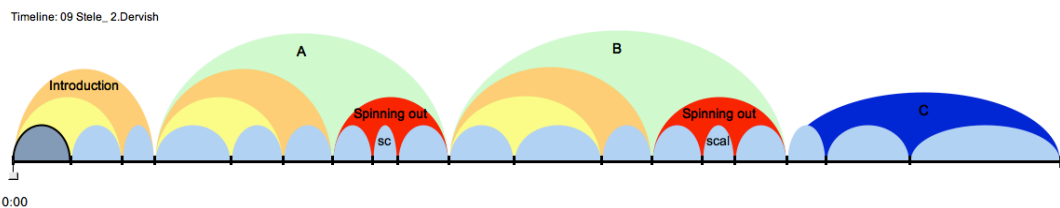


Fig. 37. *Dervish Form*

Fig. 37 shows a visual representation of the form of *Dervish*, which despite being through composed, shows structural similarities outside of the pitch material. The yellow segments represent areas of a repeated thematic idea, while the segments highlighted by orange identify a transition towards new material. In sections A and B, the red segments marked ‘spinning out’ are added, the structure of both ‘spinning out’ areas are similar between the three light blue segments. The first segment contains rapid arpeggiations of sonorities, utilising open strings, the second features scalic runs, and the third, a transition into the next section. The work is completely through composed with no reprise of any of the material presented, but is made cohesive by this structure, which gives an impression of a spinning motion, and the galloping rhythm the impression of a racing horse.

Movement 3 - *Bronze Appollo*

The third movement *Bronze Appollo* has a duration of four and a half minutes, and is based on the statue of Piraeus Apollo, an ancient statue retrieved from the sea in the early 20th century. The work has the subtitle *Copper, Bronze, Water, Air, Green, Perfume*, and is presented in two sections: *A – Premonition*, and *B – Arpeggio*. Houghton has said of this work, that in *Premonition*, he “attempted to abstract, musically, the actual raw bronze being turned, beaten and forged by those ancient hands which made it. I tried to capture some kind of tactile “elemental” imprint or impression being made on silence. History records the completed statue spending millenia lost in the sea, and in section B, *Arpeggio*,” he “imagined the statue having a *soul*; in” his “realms of fantasy, the statue somehow possessing an *awareness*” (Houghton, as cited by Lynch, 1994).

The movement begins much like the first movement *Stélé*, with a single sonority (Fig. 38), which is similar to the pivotal chord in the first movement. The A section is highlighted by rapid changes of timbre and tempo (Fig. 39), in the beginning with short phrases, that get longer as the section progresses, each subsequent phrase being based on a different sonority,

there is a common use of the bass notes A \flat and B \flat which become a more structural element of the B section.



Fig. 38. *Bronze Apollo* introduction

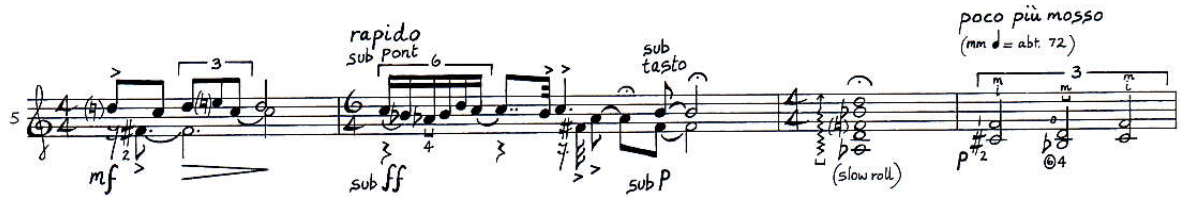


Fig. 39. *Bronze Apollo* rapid change in tempo and timbre.

The B section is based upon arpeggios as the title suggests, much like the arpeggiated figures in much of Houghton's output, they are sonorities utilising the resonance of the open strings (Fig. 40). Beginning with an oscillation between A \flat and B \flat in the bass, the arpeggios are arranged into three distinct sections, with the pivotal chord from the first movement that appears here in an enharmonic spelling, being the climactic point of each of these sections (Fig. 41). Shifting shapes up and down the fretboard expand on the motif. In the first two sections, the climaxes are treated with opposite timbres, the first being in the *molto* *tasto* position, and the second being in the *molto* *ponticello* position. The third climactic point is at a lower dynamic than the first, which then leads to the fading sonorities combined with harmonics to end the movement.



Fig. 40. *Bronze Apollo* arpeggios



Fig. 41. *Enharmonic spelling of pivotal sonority from movement 1, Stélé*

Movement 4 - *Web*

The final movement is yet another relentless work of just over two minutes duration. Houghton describes *Web* as “a short relentless drone that compresses and weaves elements used in the preceding three movements.” (Houghton, 1990). It is the fastest movement of the suite and has a motoric element similar to that of *Dervish*, but this time in a simple triple meter, with the use of accents giving it additional momentum. Rock music influences are also clear in this movement with the use of *power chords* being very prevalent in the introduction. The work is primarily in two sections, the first section being a binary A, B, A, B, and the second section being episodic, with the underlying motoric rhythm continuing, moving through different chords, and voices within the chords. As the piece marches towards its conclusion, the intensity continues to rise with dynamics and sharp accents and staccato, leading to the rapid sixteenth-note figures, and the rising arpeggio at the end, finishing with a G to A5 modal ending.

***God of the Northern Forest* Analysis**

God of the Northern Forest was composed in 1989 in the midst of a very prolific period of Houghton’s output, being composed shortly after, but before the premiere of his magnum opus *Stélé*. Between 1982 and 1989, he hadn’t composed any guitar solos. *God of the Northern Forest* is Phillip Houghton’s portrayal of Paul Klee’s painting of the same name. Dedicated to his former teacher, Sebastian Jorgensen, the piece nods towards Sebastian’s Nordic heritage and upbringing in Eltham, to the north of Melbourne, by adding a reference to the Eltham Copper Butterfly.

This short and mysterious guitar solo work is about five and a half minutes long. It features great shifts in dynamic textures, starting with an intense opening, featuring bass and treble textures playing off each in a manner akin to a brass and string section in an orchestra. About one third of the way through the piece, this diffuses into the lighter texture representing the Eltham Copperhead butterfly. After this, Houghton masterfully weaves elements of these two contrasting ideas together, until the more dominant gesture finally takes over again in a reprise of the introduction, leading to a coda.

The textural interest in this work comes from the resonance of open strings, in this case, enhanced by the scordatura. Houghton retunes the sixth string of the guitar up a half step from E2 to F2, to create new sonorities, as well as allowing the repeated first inversion Dm chord the maximum resonance of open strings. Houghton also felt that the bass note F captured something of the paintings “resonance.” While tuning a guitar low to high F, A, D, G, B, E would suggest a Lydian mode collection, the piece appears primarily composed in the D Dorian mode. This is due to the melodic line ending phrases in the Dorian cadences of vii to i or ii to i, and also the fact that the repeated sonority is the Dm chord (Fig. 42).



Fig. 42. Introductory section featuring repeated Dm/F sonority

The tension built by the repeated chord texture and the high tessitura texture is diffused by a decrescendo over a repeated sonority leading into an impassionato and rubato section built around a Dorian melody. The section weaves long phrases featuring a combination of quavers, crotchets and crotchet triplets.

Pedal notes form a major part of the structure of the work. For the most part the pedal note is the open string F. The allegretto from bar 27 is where the reference to the Eltham Copper *Butterfly* begins with the D note pedal in crotchets replicating the beating of wings (Fig. 43). Much like the painting itself, it would be fair to suggest that he uses these elements as a background colour to paint foreground images over. In the beginning of the “butterfly” section the score is marked to move from a ponticello to a molto tasto position, in the space of three bars. This kind of shading using the colour range is a prominent feature in Houghton’s works. The melody is structured out of a little ascending motif that weaves itself around the D pedal with descending variations.



Fig. 43. D note pedal above the melody

The previous sections, though having wild fluctuations in tempo, all remain in 4/4, the development of the current section changes to 3/4 (Fig. 44). The F pedal is back, but this time as part of an ostinato also featuring the higher pedal note D, tying it to the previous development. This time the melody soars high above the ostinato, like a butterfly above the trees.



Fig. 44. *Ostinato featuring low F and high D pedals*

With the low F pedal re-established, block chords lift the intensity to something reminiscent of the introduction, while the melodic motif comes out of the beginning of the current section, now in 6/4 (Fig. 41).



Fig. 45. *Combination of opening section sonorities with more recent thematic material*

A gentle rising and falling arpeggio section appears seemingly out of nowhere. The F note pedal remains as the lowest note in all of the arpeggios, remaining in the Dorian mode until a transformation takes place and an inverted B \flat 6 chord enters and rises in dynamic leading back to the block chord section, which in turn leads back into a reprise of the introduction. Here the incredibly guitaristic device of using a unison with a stopped note and open string (Fig. 46) gives the rolled chords a unique character.



Fig. 46. *Open and stopped notes unison notes rolled in sonority*

The coda maintains the F pedal, which now alternates with an open A. The melody is harmonized in thirds and fourths, again giving a new impression of texture, leading to the final sonorities based around that first chord. The last two chords are produced with a *tambora* effect.

Interpretation and Presentation

Stélé – Bronze Apollo & Stélé

My earliest recollection of a lesson with Karin Schaupp was working on the movement *Bronze Apollo* from the work *Stélé*. This lesson was also my introduction to the philosophy of incorporating a narrative into an interpretation. The section of the movement titled *Arpeggio* essentially adds up to one very long phrase of arpeggiated sonorities (Fig. 40). My initial idea for this narrative was me walking through the Elysian fields with Apollo and having interactions with various Ancient Greek Gods depending on how I perceived the mood of each arpeggio. This helped me to stay focussed throughout the areas of repetition and respond to the dynamic and changes of timbre in a less mechanical manner.

Later, through discussions with Houghton and reading about his perceptions, I learned that he liked to think of the Bronze Apollo statue referenced, while spending thousands of years under the sea, as somehow possessing a soul. That the statue moved, or imagined moving around, which was also a similar narrative to the one used in *Fantasia... As a Jade Unicorn might in the Rain*. I found this concept very similar to the idea of a koan, described by Miriam Webster as “a paradox to be meditated upon that is used to train Zen Buddhist monks to abandon ultimate dependence on reason and to force them into gaining sudden intuitive enlightenment.” (“Koan,” 2018).

The *idea* of being in a state of meditation while practicing the movement allowed me to listen and associate Houghton’s presentation of multiple ideas at once, such as the statue moving, or not moving to the notes coming out of the guitar as I performed them. In the introduction titled *Premonition*, my initial ideas met with Houghton’s description of the statue being forged (refer to page 35). This assisted in the phrasing by allowing the shifting of tone colours annotated in the score to match with a mental visual image of metal being forged (Figs 38, 39). The visual as well as aural concepts of this imagery, made it really feel that I was shaping the phrases in the way the ancient metallurgist was shaping the bronze. (See video performance no. 2 *Bronze Apollo*).

In the first movement *Stélé*, when looking at the image that inspired it, I see a downcast lonely figure, no company, helmet by his side. This image was reinforced with Houghton’s

In the introduction I imagined a Thor-like God hammering out a forest with hammers on an anvil, achieved by performing the sonorities with an emphatic sforzando attack in the ponticello position (Fig.42). At the same time his omnipotence allows him to be in his forest investigating his work. Between bars, 13 and 26, there is an echoing of the hammering with the repeated F2 in the bass, whilst thinking of the rubato phrasing of the melody being part of the creation of the forest (Fig. 48). The imagined God looks upon the trees, the animals, and the streams, until the butterfly comes along in bar 27 (Fig. 43), where he is so transfixed by the butterfly (referenced by the bars containing only the note D4), that he becomes the butterfly, with the melody in the bass referring to both the hammering by referencing the note F2, and the investigation of the forest with the free nature of the melody, which I perceived of the omnipotence of the God.



Fig. 48. *Echo of Anvil*

For the remainder of the development, these three visual references of hammering (attack of sonority), observing (rubato in melody), and flying (repeated motifs) are intertwined and each have moments of being foreground and background. I imagined the cinematic technique of panning in and out of each of these, leading back to the original image of the God hammering out his creation in the re-entry of the introduction. The thread that I wanted to hold in my mind throughout the work and shifting images, was the omnipotence of the *God of the Northern Forest*.

For the visual aspect of this first lecture recital, I used slides of the images from the Related Artworks section, in an order that I felt matched the mood of where each piece was in real time. To facilitate the slide changes to occur at the correct time, I annotated the scores with the corresponding time cue points. I also employed the help of an assistant to change these slides during the performance.

Chapter 5: Case Study 2

Introduction

For this recital lecture, due to time constraints, some movements from two of the compositions had to be dropped. This was to accommodate the range of compositions that I felt best represented Houghton's guitar ensemble output in a visually influenced program over the course of his career. I selected the following movements from these two works for performance: Three duets (I. The Mantis and the Moon), and A Suite of Six Trios (IV. Impromptu... dance of faith, V. Relic, VI. Initiation).

Opals for guitar quartet, composed in 1993, with revisions made in 1995, 2001 and 2014 has become part of the standard repertoire for classical guitar quartet, performed by many world-renowned ensembles. The opal is the national precious stone of Australia, and in the program notes Houghton recounts a story about how he found a gem store in the middle of nowhere and found a black opal that sang to him. He spent 80 of his remaining 81 dollars, made it home to Sydney broke, and began working on *Opals* that night. *Opals* is a dynamic suite in three movements exploring colour, texture, rhythmic layering, and spatial elements of the guitar ensemble. (Houghton, 2014).

Water Opal was inspired by an 1892 painting titled *Circe Invidiosa* by John Waterhouse, depicting the mythological enchantress Circe holding a crystal bowl of emerald water while casting a spell. *Water Opal* is a spacious departure from the dense textures included in the other movements.

The white opal is known for “an effect known as ‘pinfire’, which is glittering points of greens and reds, and ‘the rolling Flash’, which describes layers of colour that ripple abruptly and sparkle when the stone is moved.” Houghton notes that in *White Opal*, he “attempted to represent these characteristics with layers of cross-rhythms and abrupt modulations, in a vibrant pulse.” (Houghton, 2014).

Brolga for guitar duo, was composed in 1994. The work was inspired by *Spirit of the Plains*, a work by Sydney Long painted in 1897, an art nouveau fantasy that depicts brolgas being led

in a dance by a nature spirit. Houghton did not intend for the work to be a literal depiction of the painting, but as an attempt to express a bird-like “presence” or “reflex,” mentioning that the jagged chords and rhythms are represent the riot of loud honking and convulsive leaping that make up the mating and territorial dances of the brolga. The work is presented as one continuous movement that has five different sections. These are titled: 1. *Flying in, Landing...* “my, what a big beak you have!” 2. *Feathers/Dance*. 3. *Alone... a bridge of sighs*. 4. *Dusk in the otherworld... Seen through eyes of pearl*, and 5. *Black Silhouettes in Burgundy Light*. (Houghton, 1994).

The Mantis and the Moon is a guitar duo composed in 1976. Houghton suggests that this work of just over three minutes duration “could be a kind of existential ‘Insect/Lunar Comic-Tragedy of Whimsical Proportions!’ The piece is in two sections, the short frenetic *Scherzo* depicts the life of a praying mantis, especially its incredible movements of swaying around then darting off. The second section *Largo* depicts its death, in which Houghton imagined the dying mantis ‘seeing’ the moon and dreaming for the first time, before slowly curling up, and all is still. (Houghton, 1994).

“*Suite of Six Trios* was written in 1981 to celebrate the opening of the Chapel at the Montsalvat Artists Colony in Eltham, Victoria.” (Houghton, 1997). *Impromptu...dance of faith* references a series of paintings of red figures dancing in a circle by Henri Matisse. Houghton “saw these figures as my friends in a celebration of friendship (the faith between friends!)” (Houghton, 1997). *Relic* is a gentle piece in two sections with an interesting modulation from G Aeolian to F Lydian. *Initiation* was inspired by a security helicopter during a Commonwealth Heads of Government Ministers (CHOGM) meeting, “The rotors created a pulse; a pitch. I went home and ‘rote’ it down and out came *Initiation*.” (Houghton, 1997).

Related Artworks

For this second Case Study looking into the connected artworks and visual stimuli, the inclusion of works inspired by natural phenomena, including the opal and praying mantis, display another influence cited by Houghton, being that of the environment. This is not to say this is not pervasive in all of his works and was certainly evident in the repertoire and connected artwork of the first Case Study. Featuring references to forest and jungle (*Fantasia...As a Jade Unicorn Might in the Rain* and *God of the Northern Forest*), animal life (*Goldfish Suite* and *Kinkachoo, I love you*), as well as a reference to the sea (*Stélé*), these influences of natural phenomena are secondary influences in Case Study 1, while they are more direct in Case Study 2 according to title and programmatic information.

Opals

The opal is the national stone of Houghton's native Australia, and the work *Opals* was inspired by the chance purchase of a black opal in New South Wales. The work is in three movements titled *Black Opal*, *Water Opal*, and *White Opal*.

Houghton describes the black opal as "a stone of fantastic colour. Against a dark matrix, electric purples, blues and greens predominate, refract and collide in a fiery rainbow of splinters of brilliant light. Found in black opal is the 'harlequin checkerboard,' which describes black patterns of colour which I 'heard' as block patterns of sound. This led me to make the mark on the score of *Black Opal*, 'like a big kalimba'." (Houghton, 2014).



Fig. 49. *Circe Invidiosa* (Waterhouse, 1892)

Water Opal was inspired by this 1892 painting titled *Circe Invidiosa* (Fig. 49) by John Waterhouse, depicting the mythological enchantress Circe holding a crystal bowl of emerald water while casting a spell. There is no ‘water opal’ per se, but water is a key component within opal, with Australian opals generally having a water content of 5 to 6 percent, and in this movement, Houghton imagines “a kaleidoscope of floating watery colours – ‘my imagined transparent feeling’.” (Houghton, 2014)

“Set against a white matrix, the lighter colours of white opal are brilliant and translucent, Evident in this stone is an effect known as ‘pinfire’ (glittering points of greens and reds) and the ‘rolling flash’ which describes layers of colour that ripple abruptly and sparkle when the

stone is moved. I've attempted to represent these characteristics with layers of cross-rhythms and abrupt modulations, in a vibrant pulse." (Houghton, 2014)

Brolga

Brolga was inspired by the painting titled *Spirit of the Plains*, by Sydney Long. Cited by Houghton as one of his favourite paintings, it invokes his interest in mythology with the depiction of a nature spirit leading a dance of brolgas. "Especially evocative are the paintings shimmering pastel colours of claret, mauve, silver, misty blue, soft honey-gold ochres and gum greens. While Long's beautiful painting inspired this piece, the music became not so much a literal description of it but an attempt to express a bird-like 'presence' or 'reflex' ie... I've represented the brolga's mating/territorial dance - a riot of loud honking and convulsive leaping - with violent jagged chords and rhythms" (Houghton, 2014).

Wave Radiance

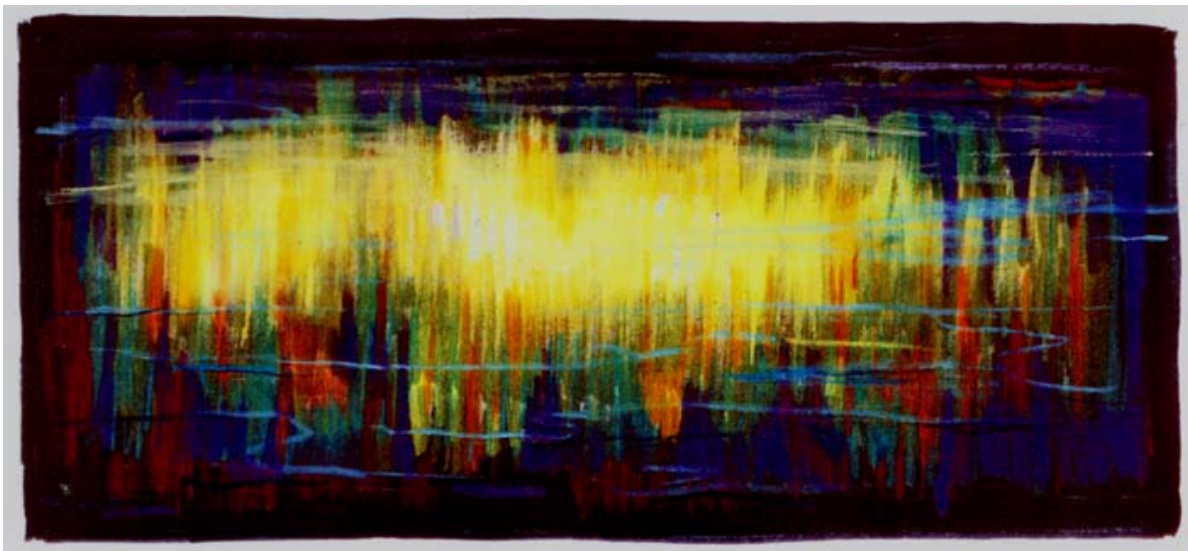


Fig.50. *River Surface at Night - Wave Radiance* (Houghton, 1992)

This painting, *River Surface at night - Wave Radiance* (Fig. 50), was painted by Phillip Houghton in 1992 around the time he composed the guitar duo *Wave Radiance*. The combination of the shapes and shading in this painting share intriguing similarities with both a graph I composed from elements of the score and also a spectrogram of a recording of the work, which can be seen in the analysis section. Houghton also, considered *Of a River*

Bank/Forest, Across a River, Music in Dark Water, and Goldfish Cloud displayed in the Related Artworks referenced in Case Study 1 (from page 31.)

The Mantis and the Moon



Fig. 51. *The Mantis and the Moon* (Houghton, 1977)

This is a cropped (by Houghton) image of an unfinished cover for a publication of a score for *The Mantis and the Moon* (Fig. 51), that never eventuated. The work ended up being a part of the suite *Three Duos* in 1994. The piece itself represents the life and death of a praying mantis, and that is encapsulated in this painting.

A Suite of Six Trios

The three movements from the trios to be performed at this recital were *Impromptu... Dance of Faith, Relic* and *Initiation* (with subtitle *homage to Ducamp: Nosferatu Descending Staircase*).

The Dance by Henri Matisse was the image that inspired *Impromptu... Dance of Faith*, Houghton imagined the red, dancing figures as his friends. “The sources of Matisse's "The Dance" lie in folk dances, which even today preserve something of the ritual nature - albeit not always comprehended today - of pagan times.” (Copyrights: © Succession H. Matisse)

Nude Descending Staircase by Marcel Duchamp is what I believe Houghton was referring to with *Nosferatu Descending Staircase* in *Initiation*. Nosferatu referring to another mythological creature, the vampire. It appears to be a play on words. The painting was revolutionary in its depiction of motion, which is the primary focus of *Initiation*. “Duchamp reduced the descending nude to a series of some twenty different static positions whose fractured volumes and linear panels fill almost the entire canvas. The faceted disintegration of the mechanized figure and the monochromatic tonality are typical of Cubist painting of the time.” (Temkins et al. 2000)

For *Relic* and *Initiation*, I chose my own reference images. Houghton told me of these paintings depicting sound in the form of a vibrating arrow landing in a landscape. He also noted that it was a theme he had been returning to since his teenage years. (Houghton, personal communication, September 2016) These resonated with me, particularly the painting titled *Excuse me, but a Giant Arrow Head has Landed on our Planet* (Fig. 52).



Fig. 52. *Excuse me, but a giant Arrow Head has Landed on our Planet* (Houghton, year unknown)

I used this for display during the performance of *Relic*, Houghton explained it as a new note arriving on the planet, and the people celebrating its arrival. *Relic*, being a gentle, ancient sounding modal work, to my ear sounded as a reverence. In my imagination, this reverence was directed to some kind of sacred artefact (or relic), which I felt matched this painting, and Houghton’s description of it.



Fig. 53. *A New Note Arrives on their World* (Houghton, year unknown)

This painting is titled *A New Note Arrives on their World* (Fig. 53). I decided to use this one for *Initiation* due to its relationship with the previous painting. Houghton described the coloured squares as other notes that had arrived and become part of the landscape. The arrow head is a new arrival, and the figures around it are very excited, one is even riding a skateboard. (Houghton, personal communication, September 2016). I thought the bright energy matched really well with the excitement of *Initiation*.

Analyses

Wave Radiance

Wave Radiance is a composition for guitar duo written in 2002, with a final, shortened revision completed in 2004. The piece is dedicated to the Dutch/Australian Z.o.o duo featuring Peter Constant and Marion Schaap, as well as Australian composer Gerard Brophy. The composition, through its seven minutes is an exploration of colour, dynamic, light, and shade. After the short introduction, it contains no melody. The piece requires the guitarists to place a capotasto (capo) on the third fret, as this was as Houghton states - “the sonority I had in mind.” The Harvard Dictionary of Music describes sonority as - (1) In discussions of 20th-century music, a sound defined by some combination of timbres or registers, especially one that plays a significant role in a work. (2) The tonal quality produced by a performer or an instrument. (3) Simultaneity. Houghton’s usage of the word sonority is in reference to (2), while any other usage to sonority in this analysis will be in reference to a simultaneity: two or more notes performed at the same time. I use the term sonority, because the harmonic structure being used is not that of traditional functional chordal harmony, but the quality of sound within the simultaneity is as important as the fact that several notes are being performed at once.

The introduction presents a series of harmonic events, with bright sonorities bursting forth into existence, giving the impression of light being emitted out of darkness. A phrase is created with a melodic contour of sonority being traded between the two guitars: this phrase being repeated with an elongation. The very first sonority becomes important, as it is a structural function later in the work, it is the only sonority performed by both guitars in the introduction at the same time (Fig. 54). This textural approach - first together, then overlapping, also gives an indication of the harmonic approach throughout the rest of the work. The space between the sonorities also highlights, with the natural decay of the notes, the fading out of parts or voices.

Handwritten musical score for "Wave Radiance Introduction". The score consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The tempo is marked as $\text{♩} = 100$ and the mood is "spacious, hovering, mystical". The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score is divided into measures with various annotations: "6 Ford", "4", "f ord", "release the D# (in bars 9-17 also)", "steady state on A, sempre", "pont", "fast roll, like a whack, emphasize the 2", and "LV". There are also some circled notes and arrows indicating performance techniques.

Fig. 54. *Wave Radiance Introduction*

During the main body of the work, a continuous steady eighth note pulse is used exclusively, giving the impression of a sustained sound, bypassing the issue of the fast decay of the guitar. The two guitars span swathes of timbre and dynamic, with hairpins denoting dynamic, and arrows describing the gradual shift of right-hand position from ponticello to tasto, or vice versa, creating, as the title suggests, waves of sound (Fig. 55). The basis of the structure of the piece comes from the different treatments of timbre and dynamic. I made a graph of the piece without the introduction (Fig. 56): the line in the centre is the timeline, the shapes above this belong to guitar I, the shapes below, to guitar II. Height denotes dynamic, and shading the right hand colour positions, with the dark shading representing a *molto tasto* timbre, and light, faded shading a *molto ponticello* timbre.

Handwritten musical score illustrating dynamic and timbral gradation. It shows two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The score is divided into measures with various annotations: "tasto", "f", "PPP", "molto pont (to tasto)", and "to molto pont". There are also arrows indicating the direction of the right-hand position shift.

Fig. 55. *Dynamic and timbral gradation in Wave Radiance Score*

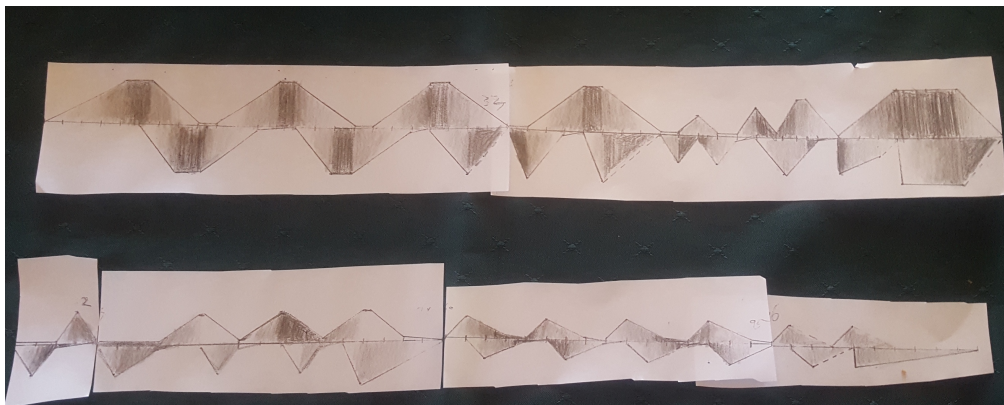


Fig. 56. *Graphic depiction of dynamic and timbre across time in Wave Radiance*

For the first half of this main section, guitar I has the one sonority of a perfect fifth for the entire time, fading in and out, never completely silent. Each ‘event’ occurs with guitar II performing a different sonority, fading in from and then back to silence, giving an impression of light and shape passing in front of the listener. The sonority mix gives a sense of both changing colour and also height. The ranges in the guitar II sonorities move quite radically, and diversify in consonance and dissonance, including one low dissonance placing overlapping a note between the perfect fifth interval performed by guitar I. In the lead up to the climax point of the piece, a fragment of the very first sonority in the piece is performed by guitar II, first as a block chord (Fig. 57), and then as a two-note motif (Fig. 58). In the climax both guitars perform the same perfect fifth sonority at forte; the first time since the introduction that both guitars are performing at the same dynamic level at the same time.

The image contains two handwritten musical staves. The left staff (Fig. 57) is for guitar I and shows a block chord of a perfect fifth (D4 and A4) with dynamics ranging from *sc. ppp* to *mp*. The right staff (Fig. 58) is for guitar II and shows a two-note motif (D4 and A4) with dynamics ranging from *mp* to *ppp*. It includes markings for 'molto pont (to tasto)', 'heavy vibr on (4) A sempre', and 'tasto'.

Fig. 57. Return of introductory sonority Fig. 58. Two note motif

After this climax, the work begins to wind down towards a fade out. The perfect fifths performed by guitar I become perfect fourths and fade to silence for the first time since the introduction; as guitar II repeats a sonority of a major third in natural harmonics. The wind down continues with both guitars playing the same sonorities, displaced by a bar, and fading out with dove-tailed single note harmonics across both guitars.

In the programme notes, Houghton states that the point of the steady quaver (eighth-note) pulse is to facilitate the transition of colour and dynamic. He also mentions an image that inspired the work as “a deep, dark ocean with all kinds of exotically coloured creatures and jellyfish floating in and out of view... drifting like luminous clouds of evanescent colour and light, in a black void, suspended in time and space.” (Houghton, 2004). This is a striking concept to keep in mind as the constant shifting of dynamic does act like waves. Through a spectrogram (Fig. 59), one can see the waves very easily. The emerging luminosity and bright

colours come from the interaction of the sonorities in the two guitars, and, from the shifting timbral changes. This can also be seen in both the spectrogram of a recording by Leonard and Slava Grygorian recording titled *This Time* (Grygorian Brothers, 2014), and also quite clearly in the painting *River Surface at Night - Wave Radiance*, on page 49. This creates the scenario of having a different image in mind for each event coming in and out of view, carried along by the pulse and wave-like dynamic.

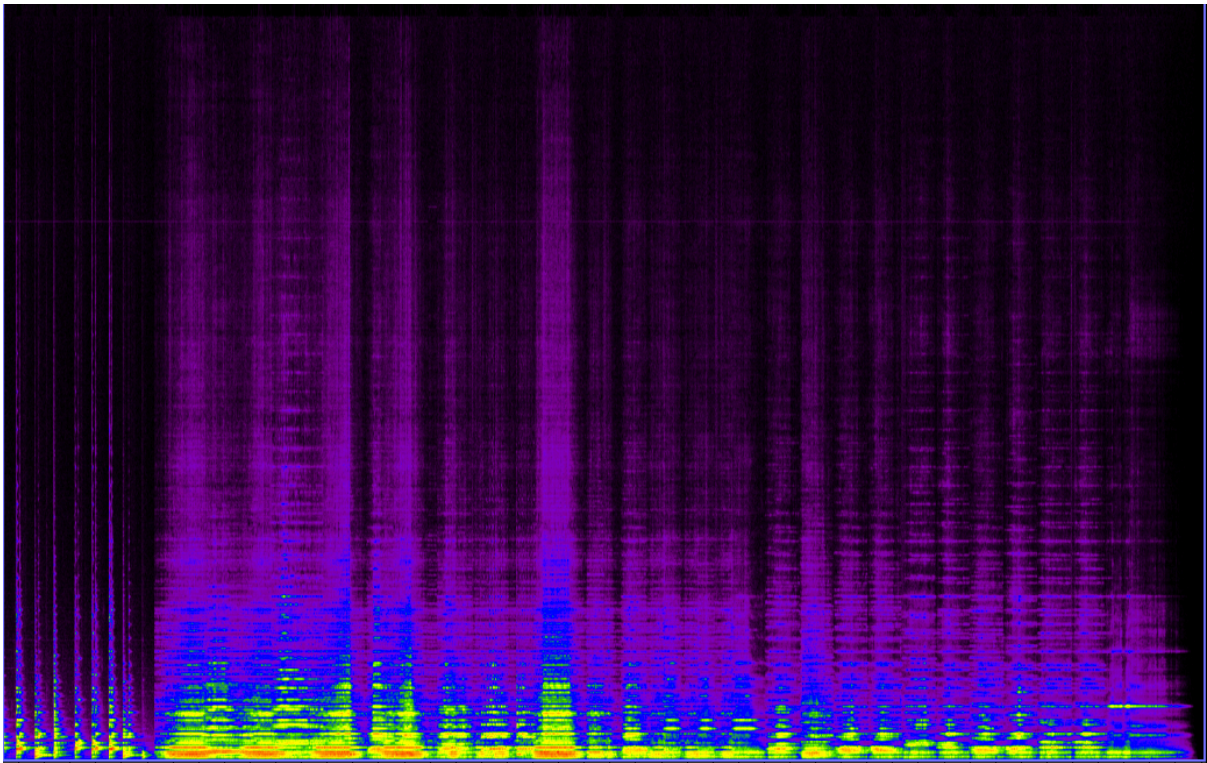


Fig. 59. Spectrogram representation of Grygorian Brothers recording of *Wave Radiance*

Opals

Opals was originally composed in 1993, with revisions made in 1995, 2001, and 2014. This mature composition is the only one he has composed for a standard guitar quartet, while his other quartets *News from Nowhere* and *Nocturne* featuring contra bass and octave guitar.

Opals is a dynamic suite exploring colour, texture, rhythmic layering, and spatial elements of the guitar ensemble.

Black Opal has a reasonably short duration of around two and a half minutes. It makes use of ostinato in each of the guitar parts to establish a texture from which areas of interest grow out, much like the colours seen in the black background of an opal as one rotates it. The piece begins with the spatial element of different guitars echoing the guitar IV notes in pizzicato, before explosions of colour and pulsating rhythms continue throughout the piece, until a coda that blurs together elements of the introduction and other elements of the piece, giving a premonition of the structure of the second movement.

The structure of *Black Opal* gives an impression of different shapes and dimensions of shape through its form in exchanges of textural interest. Within this shapes structure, the impressions of colour (annotations of different colours are cued in the score), as well as light refraction are weaved in and out in terms of ostinato, timbre, melodic line, arpeggiation and articulation.

Primarily, the structure is based on the alternation of an entire group texture (generally *ostinato*) with that of melodic material in one or more of the parts. The movement could be considered to be in A, B, A' form, with the coda included as part of the A' section. The three sections are of a similar length, with the A and A' sections featuring large developmental areas, while the B section consists of four smaller segments.

The first developmental area of the A section marked “brilliant – electric purple/emerald like a big kalimba (thumb piano)” (Houghton, 1994), is in G Dorian mode, it is in 3/4 time, and it is made of four bar phrases alternating between group ostinato and melody and accompaniment. The guitar II ostinato (Fig. 60) is present for the entire 20 bars. In a way, this development area hints at the form of the movement, the alternation between group ostinato and melodic material growing from it is on display here. For the purpose of this description

of form we will call this area an *ostinato* area as the ostinato bars do outnumber the melodic bars.



Fig. 60. *Guitar 2 ostinato.*

The feature areas of the second developmental area of the A section (marked “like a waltz, warm ochre, sky blue”) are the melodic ideas coming through in guitars I and III (Fig.61). Guitar III has short phrases over one two, or three bars, and retains a rhythmic similarity, while guitar I plays a pizzicato phrase (with harmonics over the end), that spans the twenty bars here as well. Guitar II gives shape to the section, with four bar divisions of held simultaneities, before moving into four bar divisions of ostinato with or without a bass note, leading into next section. The guitar IV part has notes on the first two beats of each bar, turning into each beat of the 3/4 bars near the end.



Fig. 61. *A section development*

The B section “*burnt carmine – sienna/ bright lime and violet*” begins with a modulation, the key signature has changed from one flat to three flats. The bass pedal of F over this 8 bar developmental area suggests that we have moved to F Dorian. Here (Fig. 62), we have one repetition of a different four bar ostinato in every part, this then modulates back to G Dorian in another 8 bar area “*like a waltz again, gracefully, ultramarine/jade*”, which begins with

guitar III playing a variation on the part performed in the second area of the A section over the first four bars. The melodic material in the guitar I part is much more active this time, introducing triplets for the first time, when the previous fastest rhythmic value was the quaver. The upper parts harmonise leading into the climactic section of the piece, and the last two developmental areas of the B section.

The image shows a musical score for guitar parts, likely from a contemporary piece. It features five staves. The top staff has a circled number '55' above it. The second staff contains the text 'u i u i m i (sim)'. The third staff has 'pizz' (pizzicato) markings. The fourth staff includes dynamic markings: 'mf', 'mf >', 'mp', 'mf', and 'mp'. The bottom staff has dynamic markings: 'f >', 'f', 'mf', 'f >', 'f', 'mf', and 'mp'. The score includes various rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes.

Fig. 62. Each guitar part has its own ostinato

“Swirling - like oil & water – black & silver/orange & purple” has the most chromaticism of the movement, and involves many motives trading off between parts (Fig. 63). Guitar III has an ascending arpeggiated sonority, that alternates with descending arpeggiated sonorities in the guitar I part. Within this larger interplay between guitars I and III, there are also some smaller motifs being traded between guitars II and IV, giving the impression of swirling in different directions.

The image shows a musical score for guitar interplay. It features four staves. The top staff has the text 'swirling - like oil & water - black & silver/orange & purple' and 'C VII'. The second staff has 'sub tasto' and 'C II (h)'. The third staff has 'C VI (h) (hold barre VI until bar 12)'. The fourth staff has 'G I + see below', 'gliss', 'vibr', 'pizz', and 'no vibr'. The score includes various rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes, and dynamic markings like 'mf' and 'mp'.

Fig. 63. Interplay between guitars 1 and 3, and guitars 2 and 4

The final developmental area of the B section, “jagered¹ (sic), powerful – ruby red/black” (Fig. 64) introduces the fastest rhythmic values of the piece, initially semi quavers, and then when leading into the A’, sextuplets.

The image shows a complex musical score for the final development of the B section. It consists of five staves. The top staff is the vocal line, with lyrics "jagered, powerful - ruby red/black" written above it. The second staff is for guitar III, with the instruction "C III novibr" and a circled 3. The third staff is for guitar II, with the instruction "novibr" and a circled 2. The fourth and fifth staves are for guitar I and guitar IV, with the instruction "i m" and a circled 1. The score includes various rhythmic values, including semi-quavers and sextuplets, and dynamic markings such as *ff* and *mf*. A handwritten note "(same dynamics for gts 1&2)" is present. The score is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one flat.

Fig. 64. B section final development

A² - “Dark purple/light ice green/yellow splinters” begins with the guitar II ostinato from the 1st development section of A being performed by guitar III, transposed down a perfect 4th (Fig. 65). These first 8 bars have the appearance of moving to a new place with descending sonorities in the guitar II part, leading into a mini canon between guitars I and IV which then leads to a transposition back the original ostinato section. Two bars before the change, guitar II begins playing repeated harmonic and fretted D notes, this alternation of notes becomes an important feature in the third movement *White Opal*. These continue through the original transposition. The order of the guitar parts has now changed from the A section to A’, guitar II has moved to guitar III, and guitar IV now has the previous guitar 3 and 4 parts combined into one.

The image shows a musical notation for a modulated ostinato. It consists of a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The notation shows a sequence of notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. Above the staff is the word "ord" and below the staff is "P subito".

Fig. 65. Modulated ostinato

¹ Combination of the words “jagged” and “red.”

The Coda has the pizzicato notes from the introduction performed by guitars III and IV, this time not as echoes, but doubled in octaves on beat one of each bar. Two bars of melody from the initial A section are converted into an ostinato in the guitar 1 part. This condensing of ideas into a short time frame is fundamental in the second movement *Water Opal*.

Water Opal makes use of various motifs to either define or blur the form of the movement. The structure of *Water Opal* is binary with a transitional area connecting the two main sections, and a coda, which also acts as a transition into the final movement, *White Opal*. The A section introduces the different areas of material in a gradual, flowing way, while the B section tightens, and condenses the ideas of the A section into a more rigid structure. The section “*Mysteriously, like water and “spells” ...Luminous,” “milky-honey/turquoise/deep dusk emerald,”*” begins with sonorities being performed in half-notes in duple meter. This creates a feeling of pulse for the duration of the movement. Houghton has written into the guitar III part carrying this pulse “Gt III needs to drive the pulse = no rubato, keep a steady beat.” (Houghton, 2014). These broad rolled sonorities are contrasted with a mildly syncopated *tambora* passage in the guitar IV part. Leading into the end of this phrase are a run of descending natural harmonics, similar descending phrases are used throughout the movement to unify or differentiate between ideas.

The flowing half-note pulse of the guitar III sonorities is interrupted for the first time at bar 29 “*flowing, kingfisher – oriental blue*” (Fig. 66), the sonority played in the previous bar is held for an extra three beats, while guitars I and II harmonise a line of tied eighth-notes and sixteenth-note triplets. The interrupted pulse of the guitar III sonorities does continue, with lengths being changed to coincide with the meter changes, in either 2 or 3 (I’m including a 2/4 bar followed by 1/4 as a 3/4 bar for guitar III only), with the harmonised upper parts performing a variation with a similar rhythm. Finally, a rapid harmonisation in major sixths between guitars I and II appears to end this initial interruption as the pulsing textural idea occurring throughout the A section appears to continue. But it is short lived, as this time there are some ascending natural harmonics leading into another interrupted section, with guitars I and II performing a similar function to what they did in the first interruption, but this time the pulsing sonorities are dropped completely. This time, the interruption functions to lead to a new area.

Fig. 66. Two beat pulse and interruptions

The end of the A section is a section made using a percussive groove in the guitar IV part and a rock music style riff in Guitar III. Guitars I and II trade *fills* much in the way lead guitarists in a rock band would do. There is even a *blues bend* in the guitar 1 part (Fig. 67), where the notation includes arrows for the direction of pitch bend, but also the hand-written note slowly rising from B to C.

Fig. 67. Rock music based section with blues bends

Between the A and the B sections there is a short transition “ripples of ice blue and green”, during this transition, guitar III is again playing broad rolled sonorities, in three bar phrases. The first is an unstable sonority, followed by two bars of a repeated stable sonority. During the unstable sonority bars, there are rapid runs in thirty-second notes, harmonised by major thirds, in the guitar I and IV parts, the first time ascending, second time descending. While this goes on, the guitar II part is performing arpeggios of sonorities that create more dissonance and more instability against the guitar III arpeggios. In the final bar of this

section, guitar IV is performing an ascending run of natural harmonics, which is established in the A section, gives an indication of moving to a new area (Fig. 68).

The musical score for Fig. 68 shows a transition between sections A and B. It consists of four staves for guitars I, II, III, and IV. The top staff (Guitar I) is marked 'nat harms' and 'arm 7', with dynamics ranging from 'PPP' to 'MP'. The second staff (Guitar II) is marked 'LH harms' and 'RH harms', with 'arm 17' and dynamics from 'pp' to 'mf'. The third staff (Guitar III) has 'let fade' and 'mf' markings. The bottom staff (Guitar IV) shows rhythmic patterns with 'mp' and 'p' dynamics. Measure numbers 98 and 100 are clearly marked.

Fig. 68. Transition between A and B

The B section has the same rhythmic flow of repeated sonorities as the A section, however, this time including notes higher in the register. Rather than being a textural mass from where ideas grow out, the B section features a melodic line in the guitar I part which builds from intervals presented in the introduction of the movement with natural harmonics. Like the A section, there are also “interruptions,” but this time, it comes in the form of the unstable sonority (Fig. 69) from the transition being used, and a pattern of notes in sextuplets joined to long notes, harmonised in minor thirds (inverted major sixths) reminiscent of the interruptive sections of A. The B section is balanced with a repetition of a fifteen bar phrase (interruption is during the 7th bar), the repeat features the melody raised one octave in guitar I with an additional counter melody. At the end of each phrase in the B section, guitar II performs the descending natural harmonics presented in the A section.

The musical score for Fig. 69 shows an unstable chord as an interruption. It includes staves for guitar I, guitar II, and tamboura. The top staff (Guitar I) is marked 'like honey', 'poco tasto', 'mf', 'expressivo, vibr', and 'calmo'. The second staff (Guitar II) is marked 'horns', 'normale', 'sub f', 'sub mp', and 'poco tasto (less intens)'. The bottom staff (Tamboura) is marked 'tamboura', 'p', 'mp', and '(back of nail)'. Measure numbers 56 and 60 are indicated.

Fig. 69. Unstable chord as interruption in place of change in pulse or meter

The conclusion to the B section is the same *rock riff* and percussion section (“earth colours – rocks”) that ended the A section, this time extended slightly with guitar I developing the “blues bend” motif. This riff section then blends seamlessly into the coda (“ethereal wisps, casting spells”), with the thirty-second note phrase ending the riff section beginning the coda.

The coda features elements hanging over from the end of the B section with the thirty-second note phrase from guitar I coming in on every fourth bar, and the guitar IV part retaining a simple percussion motif from the B section every second bar. The guitar II part here alludes to a very important rhythmic device used in the final movement *White Opal*, that being semiquavers being played in groups of three. There is a gradual fade over this section, each of the repeated motifs within each part take over from each other, creating a spatial, extended melodic idea growing out of an overall texture. The movement concludes with fading harmonics on the note E.

White Opal contrasts the other two movements with an explosive introduction that diffuses into the familiar design of the ostinato with changing ideas around it. The use of textures in this movement is based around a distributed layer of sixteenth-notes or sextuplets in at least one of the parts at all times until bar 79, when it changes into eighth-notes. The layering over the top of this rhythmic strand occurs in the following ways:

Between bars 7 and 17 – guitar IV provides the rhythmic strand, with guitars II and III giving a one bar antecedent phrase, with guitar I providing the consequent phrase over two bars, creating three bar phrases (Fig. 70). From bars 14 to 17, guitar II performs a syncopated line suggesting the change that is about to happen. Overlapping arpeggiated sonorities introduce changes in material, such as the example from bar 18 (Fig. 71). The use of cross-rhythms across different parts in repeating sixteenth notes (Fig. 72), show a four pattern in guitar I with a three pattern in guitar IV. Highlighted doubling, where the doubled parts are only a fragment of the overall ostinato (Fig. 73), where guitar IV creates a textural syncopation with guitar III, utilising rests and the exact same pitches. On only two occasions in the entire movement do all parts share the same rhythm (Fig. 74), and in the lead up to the final climax the texture is moved from sixteenth-notes to eighth-notes (Fig. 75).

The structure of the movement is based on sections of building dynamic and textural interest, leading to the crescendo of overlapping sextuplets, as mentioned earlier. The length of these portions moves from larger to smaller as the movement progresses.

Fig. 70. Antecedence and consequence

Fig. 71. Arpeggiated sonorities leading to change in material

Fig. 72. Cross-rhythms repeated across repeated sixteenth-notes

Fig. 73. Highlighted doubling between Guitars III and IV

Fig. 74. All parts sharing the same rhythm

Handwritten musical score for guitar, featuring four staves. The score is in 4/4 time and features eighth-note textures. The first staff has melodic lines with vibrato markings. The second staff has a bass line with a "let fade" instruction. The third staff has chords with "pont harm" and "ord" markings. The fourth staff has a bass line with "harm 5 arm 7" and "let notes ring" markings. Dynamics include p, mf, and mp.

Fig. 75. Eighth-notes texture

Interpretation and Presentation

Wave Radiance

The biggest difficulty in interpretation came with the piece *Wave Radiance*. When performing it, I feel it very much like a meditation. The repeated pulse and swelling sonorities convey a feeling of floating. The piece is probably the easiest to play technically, but the player's attention is needed in many different aspects, in particular how the two players interact with each other. Analysis helped in understanding how the textural interplay was structured. For the majority of the piece, the two parts are in opposing motion in terms regarding timbre and dynamics, but with rhythmic unity until the climax, where the rhythms are displaced. The dynamic and timbral variations are treated very much like harmonic and melodic variation in more traditional styles of music. Understanding how it worked here was important as far as being sensitive to what the other player was performing and timing the shifts correctly.

Again, using a narrative to hold the piece together was something that Karin Schaupp encouraged greatly. Houghton's vision was that of luminous underwater creatures floating in and out of view. I used the idea of the repeated eighth-notes as being some kind of motor of the vehicle the players occupied. The different events were patterns of light outside of the vehicle, some regular, and others stranger. I changed the scene from an underwater one to a straight, flat desert road, from car lights to lightning and unexplainable lights. I annotated the specific points in the score for my performance partner. I could have used the idea of a submarine to maintain Houghton's idea, but decided to use the idea of a road trip as something both myself and playing partner would have experienced, obviously with fantastical elements added.

The concept of using a narrative here, like with *Bronze Apollo*, was to maintain a focus, and allow this narrative to direct the dynamic and timbral shifts rather than performing them in a mechanical way. I was not as convinced in my own performance using a narrative for this piece as it was for the *Bronze Apollo*. I felt that simply reacting to the phrases while performing them created the imagery of luminescence and movement in my mind; allowing a feedback loop of sound and mental imagery to direct the dynamic and timbral changes in a natural, non-mechanical way.

Opals

When analyzing *Black Opal*, my supervisor, Dr. Gerardo Dirié suggested designing something to move with the colours that Houghton had annotated into the score. Houghton had described these as “exotic colour annotations” that were never intended to be taken too literally, saying that they were more like “poetic suggestions”/playful “triggers” for the imagination. (Houghton, 2004).

However, while analyzing the form of the work, they also act as milestones and mark the sections. For my first attempt, I used various shapes and sizes for the different colours mentioned in the annotations. For example, a splinter of yellow is going to be just that. “swirling like oil and water” brings to mind circular shapes. Still pictures weren’t really an option, but having no animation skills, I lined up a several coloured shapes in Powerpoint and scrolled through them in time with a recording. During a section of a particular colour combination, I would have the colours swap between shapes or shapes moved to different locations. By doing this, I had a visual memorisation of the score that was different to phrases and dots on a page. It turned out to be a very effective way of internalising the material in the piece.

For the performance, there was too much to go wrong with this approach, so I commissioned an animation. I received some digital graphics files that could be used and coloured in as appropriate. These files were coloured frame by frame, and like in the previous performances, I had an assistant changing slides following an annotated score. As a concept I felt it worked quite well but could have been much better had I worked more closely with the artist over a longer period of time.

Chapter 6: Case Study 3

Introduction

For this recital, I proceeded without the lecture segment as I found it more important to perform all of the works, even going over time to allow for *Two Night Movements* to be in the program. In place of the lecture component, there was the work of a local Video Jockey (VJ), who had extensive experience in live events using audio reactive software.

From the Dreaming for guitar and flute, is in three movements and references Houghton's experiences in the Northern Territory outback in 1986. "I finally got to experience Australia's outback: its red deserts and searing heat; its isolation and stillness; the flora and fauna; and its sudden violent storms. I discovered ancient riverbeds and caves; in the spring, the red carpet of dust was covered in flowers of yellow, orange and purple; and on one memorable day, a small Gecko hitched a ride on my shoulder and in my pocket." (Houghton as cited in Lynch 1991).

The first movement, *Cave Painting*, references these outback caves, with the physical aspects of ancient rock art and rock formations, and the more intangible feelings of mystery and 'powerfields.' In *Wildflower*, Houghton imagines "a single flower in an ever changing panorama and climate of storms, drought, heat and isolation – isolation and endless space." (Houghton, 1991). And *Gecko* is a scherzo about the lizard Houghton befriended.

In Amber, for guitar and string quartet, was originally composed in 1982. This is yet another of Houghton's works to include a number of revisions. The final movement *Initiation* is adapted from the final movement of *Suite of Six Trios*; and in 2010, a bass part was added to be performed with either guitar and string quintet, or guitar and string orchestra. "The first movement, *Dance*, is made up of a series of tableaux, with connected motifs and rhythms switching constantly various keys and simple/triple time. The second movement, *Dream*, is notation of actual music that I heard in a dream. It was written quickly so as to 'record' the dream before it vanished. In this sense, the music is much like a 'sonic memory' (or 'dreamscape') in which drones and melodies entwine and flow organically.... like perfumes in a jungle." (Houghton, 2015).

The Light on the Edge, was composed in 1993 for the Darwin International Guitar Festival, with a final revision made in 2015. There have been two revisions of the instrumentation, in 1995 there was the addition of harp, zither, and environment sounds recorded by composer Peter Mummé to the original line-up of two guitars, double bass, percussion, and didjeridu. The 2015 revision incorporated the zither part into the harp part and made the didjeridu part optional upon hearing a John Williams & Friends rehearsal without it. Having said that, Houghton also notes that “being a drone instrument, the didjeridu greatly influenced the form the music would take. It establishes the basic note of each movement, while the other instruments shift around related keys and ‘blurred notes’ creating other colours.” (Houghton, 2015). The work is in four movements:

1. *YIN... the light in the earth*
2. *RIM... the light on the edge*
3. *TURQOUISE SEA... glides at night like liquid black opal*
4. *SPIRALLING BLUE FLAME...the sky is alive*

“Feelings for the earth, sky, sea, spirit and visions of dawn and dusk horizons, coastlines, red ochre earth and opal colours coaxed this piece into being. The inspiration behind the work is probably best expressed in the following lines, written long before the music:

A place between worlds
where land and sea touch
dreams and reality melt
and the Sun and Moon kiss
the light on the edge...”

(Houghton, 2015).

Related Artworks

For the third recital, I had decided to enlist a Video Jockey with the intention that he would first immerse himself in Houghton's music and art work and make a video show that worked in conjunction with the performance. There was no lecture component in this event, so a programme with Houghton's artworks associated with each corresponding composition was provided.

From the Dreaming

"I'll try to describe this drawing (Fig. 76): it dates from 1991/92. The drawing, done with ink pen and lead and coloured pencils, is about time and timelessness. It's a dream I had, mixing now or later with 13 billion years ago... what was land was sea was land was earth, was space was void... all symbolically 'layered' into one image."

(Houghton, as cited in Nistico, 2016). Houghton then goes on to explain in detail the images and how they bond with each other, also saying that he



Fig.76. *Untitled – Dreamscape* (Houghton, 1991/92)

attempted to include all of that in *From the Dreaming*." (Houghton, as cited in Nistico, 2016).

The following outback landscapes were also related to *From the Dreaming* (Fig. 77, Fig. 78), I feel they match quite well with Houghton's description of the outback in his programmatic notes supplied on page 76.



Fig. 77. *Untitled - Of a Flooding Desert* (Houghton, year unknown)



Fig. 78. *Untitled - Red Desert* (Houghton, year unknown)

In Amber

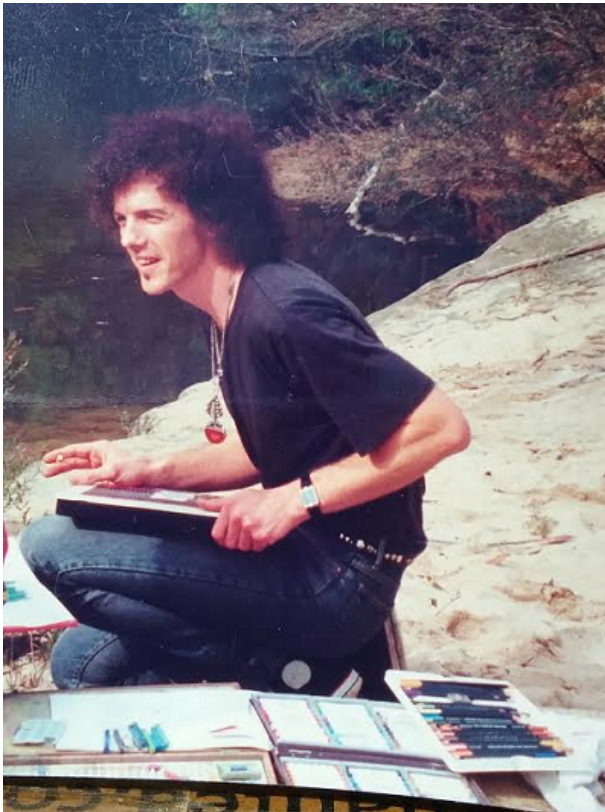


Fig. 79. *Houghton Drawing at a River* (Houghton, 1991)

In Amber was inspired by the piece of amber “tree of life pendant” Houghton is wearing in this photo (Fig. 79), made and given to him by master jeweller Tim Benson. “The working title of this work was ‘A Fossil in Amber’ in which I drew parallels between a fossil ‘frozen/suspended’ in amberstone and the sound ‘frozen/suspended’ inside the stringed instruments waiting to be brought to life.” (Houghton, 2015)

For the recital programme, I used the following image (Fig. 80), for no other real reason than it was “speaking” to me as a response to *In Amber* in terms of sound and concept.

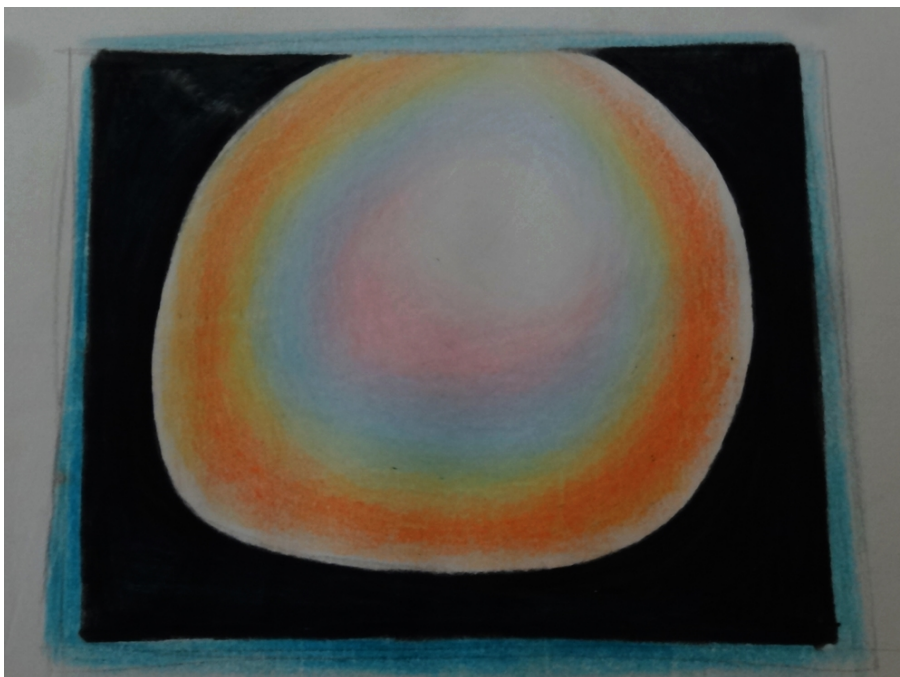


Fig. 80. *Untitled - Multi coloured Orb* (Houghton, year unknown)

The Light on the Edge

The Light on the Edge is another work that was based on landscape, and its programme notes have already been discussed on page 71.

Many of Houghton's artworks fit these descriptions, yet it was this painting (Fig.81), that I associated the most with the composition and particularly with this description, "Feelings for the earth, sky, sea, spirit and visions of dawn and dusk horizons, coastlines, red ochre earth and opal colours coaxed this piece into being" (Houghton 2015).



Fig. 81. *Untitled - Blue, Yellow, Black* (Houghton, year unknown)

Analyses

From the Dreaming

From the Dreaming was composed in 1991 for the Byzantine/Mallon Duo in with a revision made in 1997. Phillip Houghton's programme notes state "The music of FROM THE DREAMING was inspired by a 7 month visit to Australia's central and northern outback regions in 1986. It left powerful impressions on me – the searing heat, the isolation, and stillness, ancient river beds and caves, sudden violent electrical storms, and the red carpet of dust sprinkled with flowers of vibrant yellow, orange and purple. The outback is an eiree² (sic) world of iridescent colour, a fantastic spirit world both savage and beautiful where everything means something and nothing, and where the stars at night are only inches from your eyes." (Houghton, 1991).

This three-movement work has a duration of approximately twelve minutes and is structured in a fast-slow-fast alternation: 1. Cave Painting, 2. Wildflower and 3. Gecko

1. Cave Painting.

This first movement is around four and a half minutes long. It begins with a burst of colour with a rapid D Lydian mode scale run in the flute, ending on a small motif based on the interval of a major second. The structure of this movement is based upon the repetition and development of the accompanying guitar part. The flute part, while using recurring motifs, is through composed.

Houghton uses various echo techniques to give an impression of a cavernous space throughout the movement. These include, in the introduction, the repetition of the two-note motif mentioned earlier. The guitar part in the A section also uses repeated notes of a different timbre with the open string D3, fretted D3, and open D2. This motif allows notes to ring on while other notes are played. Houghton did mention that this "riff" (Fig. 82) was an

² Phillip Houghton often used word play and combination words in his score, I believe this spelling to be intentional.

impression of a didjeridu, which he describes as producing "...a drone that can become infused with rhythm. It creates a horizontal line of great momentum." (Houghton, 2016).

Fig.82. Didgeridu riff

The interruptions to this riff are groupings of sextuplets that are copied by the flute, which upon its repetition turns into an overlapping part between the two instruments, leading to a descending sequence in both parts. This descending sequence (Fig. 83) is a preview of the next section, also featuring cascading arpeggio figures utilising open strings and descending fretted notes in the guitar and phrasing utilising fast rhythms and held notes in the flute. Here, the idea of cavernous space is created with sforzando and a *ff* marking, each new sonority being followed immediately by decrescendo in the guitar part (Fig. 84). An increase in tempo and dynamic leads into the climax of this first movement, featuring block chords and rasgueado in the guitar, and rapid sextuplets in the flute. The movement then diffuses with natural harmonics and reduction of tempo and dynamic.

Fig. 83. descending sequence

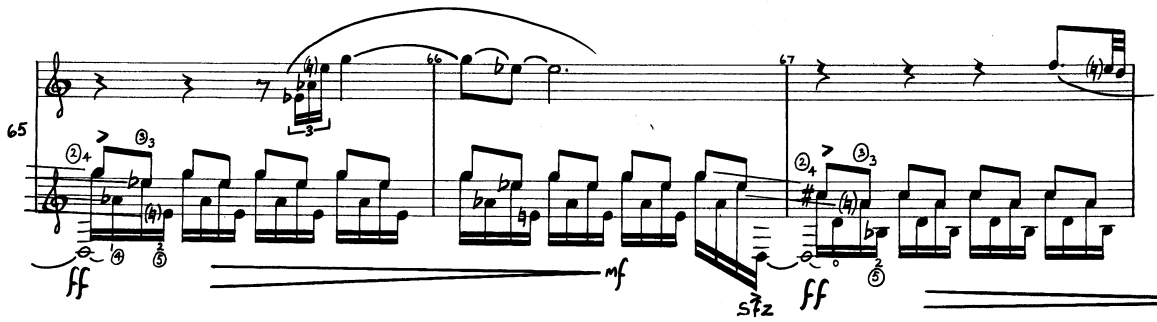


Fig. 84. *Descending Sequence with decrescendo in guitar*

Harmonically, the movement works upon a fixed bass of the note D in the guitar, an approach also used by the didgeridu in the work *The Light on the Edge*. The first sonority performed by the guitar (Fig. 85) is what the final sonority resolves to in the conclusion (Fig. 86). It could be described as a polychord, with the lower part containing the notes D, A, D, and the higher C, E, E. The use of drone in the guitar part allows for great freedom in the use of chromaticism in the flute part, which Houghton exploits, creating many exotic colours, that are enhanced further when the guitar part also exploits some chromaticism while still retaining the D fixed bass.

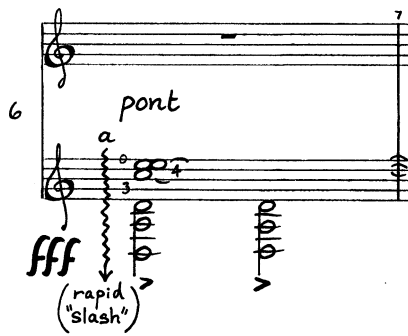


Fig. 85. *Opening guitar sonority*

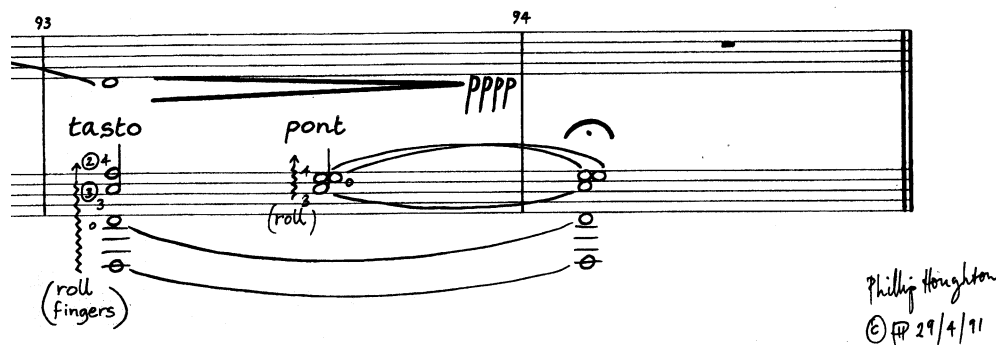


Fig. 86. *Concluding with opening guitar sonority combined with suspension*

2. *Wildflower*

Wildflower, of approximately five minutes of duration, is the longest movement of this work. Primarily in triple meter, this movement has a floating, ethereal quality enhanced by the clever use of dynamic and tessitura used to emphasise Houghton's evocation of colour: to the brilliant red desert background and vivid foreground of the wildflower. I must note here that this analysis is including the cut that Houghton suggests between bars 29 and 49.

A key feature of this movement is the flexible tonality, with the introduction fluidly shifting between D Phrygian and D Dorian in the introduction (Fig 87). The use of G #, C #, E b, B b is added from bars 11 and 24, suggesting possibilities of various A and D minor configurations before settling back into the D Dorian to conclude the A section (Fig. 88). The phrasing here is flowing eighth-notes and half-notes producing the majority of the rhythms, which get busier with eighth-notes and later sixteenth-notes as the chromaticism adds tension. The section diffuses with sixteenth-notes. While being busier rhythmically, it is presented in unisons and diatonic thirds, bringing a sense of calm with *rallentando* and *decrescendo*.

The image shows a musical score for Figure 87, illustrating the alternation between D Dorian and D Phrygian modes. The score is written on two staves: a treble clef staff on top and a bass clef staff on the bottom. The top staff contains a melodic line with notes and rests, marked with bar numbers 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10. A slur covers the notes in bars 7, 8, and 9. The bottom staff contains a bass line with chords and notes, also marked with bar numbers. Chord symbols are present: 'c III' above bar 7, 'b P.' below bar 8, and '1/2 c VII' above bar 9. The notation includes various rhythmic values and accidentals, such as a sharp sign above the note in bar 8 and a flat sign below the note in bar 9.

Fig. 87. *D Dorian and Phrygian alternation*

Fig. 88. Added chromaticism relaxing into D Dorian

The form of the work is through composed, with changes in material marked by changes in tempo. From the beginning of the movement until bar 121, the increased tempo moves the piece forward. Starting at 80 bpm, it then jumps to 88 bpm, accelerates into 126 bpm, 144 bpm and 200 bpm, before slowing down to conclude the movement with a F7/C chord.

The second section at bar 46 is the first example of the use of tessitura and dynamics as a colouristic device. The guitar part features a repeated sonority at a *mp* dynamic, and has a natural harmonic A note supporting a diatonic cluster of E, F and G. The flute part is marked *delicato* and is in a *p* dynamic, but the repeated F6 and G6 motif (Fig. 89) is written in a register described as “clear and brilliant” in Samuel Adams’ *The Study of Orchestration* (Adler, 2002). The requirement of playing in a delicate fashion in a brilliant register does create a challenge for the flutist, but the resulting combination with the guitar has a haunting transparent quality.

Fig. 89. Diatonic cluster combined with high tessitura

From bar 60, the guitar accompaniment changes from a bass note followed by block chord on beats one and two to flowing eighth-note arpeggiated sonorities. The tessitura of both instruments align throughout this section (Fig. 90), alternating between the middle register and high register on both instruments (the guitar has a constant D2 or E2 bass throughout, with the high register notes combining with open bass notes). From bars 96 to 107, the flute stays in the high range after doubling the guitar during the crescendo to another tempo shift. The guitar continues to alternate its ranges, this time with the instruction to shift the right-hand position back and forth between *tasto* to *ponticello*. The flute range lowers before fading out and handing the guitar part the climax of the movement, a rapid descending sequence with *crescendo*, *accelerando*, and movement to *ponticello*.

The image shows a musical score for guitar and flute, measures 77-81. The guitar part (bottom staff) features a constant bass note (D2 or E2) and flowing eighth-note arpeggiated sonorities. The flute part (top staff) alternates between middle and high registers. Annotations include 'warmly, cantabile', 'mf', and 'sub tasto'.

Fig. 90. Guitar and flute matching tessituras

The conclusion of the movement is a series of vignettes beginning with an echo of the last part of the guitar sequence, followed by a descending flute sequence in eighth-notes with repeated arpeggiated sonority in the guitar, and then a flute solo over three bars. Each of these has a reduction in tempo and a decay to silence. The final ten bars evoke the introduction as the movement fades with the decay of a guitar sonority.

3. Gecko

Gecko is a bright and lively scherzo, with a duration of just over three minutes. This movement is episodic, with the episodes introducing ideas of interrupted phrasing, and a rhythmic accompaniment *groove*, that is treated in a reductive fashion with the change of meter from 5/4, to 4/4, and then 3/4. The key feature of the opening section of this movement is the interplay between flute and guitar, as they alternate between creating a single part and call and response phrasing (Fig. 91). The use of silence in the opening of this section is very

effective in creating tension, and the two instruments mesh closer and closer together, until a 5/4 groove is established in bar 30.

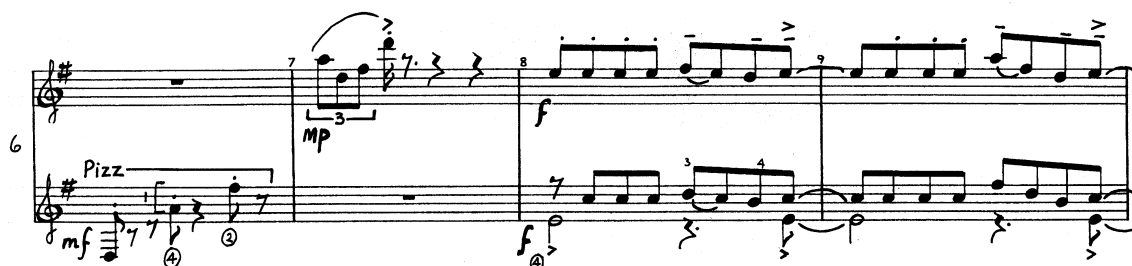


Fig. 91. *Call and response followed by harmonised rhythmic unison*

The 5/4 in the guitar part (Fig. 92) is structured as a 3+3+2+2 grouping of eighth-notes, or a feeling of compound time interspersed with simple time. The guitar part alternates between bass notes and block chords, and arpeggiated sonorities. The flute part begins with broad lines interspersed with little flourishes, much like a small lizard darting from one place to another, and then finishes this section with a flurry of triplets. Harmonically, this section hints at being in the C Lydian mode. Adding more chromaticism as the section reaches its climax, the meter also shifts to 4/4, this time 3+3+2, with a syncopated bass in the guitar. Big rolled chords in a 6/4 meter accompany a flute sequence, first with sixteenth-notes changing across each eighth-note, then repeated single eighth-notes, and then at half the speed with quarter-notes and relaxing to silence (Fig. 93).



Fig. 92. *5/4 groove*

Fig. 93. *Slowing flute sequence*

The final section builds in a variety of ways. Beginning with the flute and guitar performing an E4 with four separate voices at the start; the guitar utilising a stopped third string and open first string and natural harmonics (Fig. 94). The flute performs short phrases working off this E4 while the guitar exchanges short two-note double stops with harmonics mimicking the higher note in eighth-notes. This builds into an *agitato* featuring *staccato* and rests (Fig. 95), which builds into the finale of big open sonorities in the guitar and triplets throughout the flute part. With the flute part finishing on the highest note written for it in the entire work, a D7.

Fig. 94. *Four voices playing a unison E7*

Fig. 95. *Agitato, staccato and rests*

Interpretation and Presentation

In this section, I will discuss some of the more technical challenges that came up regarding ensemble work, which also apply very much to the repertoire presented in guitar ensemble for Case Study 2.

From the Dreaming

Preparation for this work included a Masterclass with the visiting Z.o.o duo from the Netherlands. This duo featuring Peter Constant and Marion Schaap had produced the first *all Houghton* recording titled *Light on the Edge*, with various guest performers in 1996, and worked very closely with Phillip Houghton in the creation of the recording. We performed the first movement of the work *Cave Painting*, and the class was quite memorable for its intensity, with particular attention being played to the flute part. From the very first phrase, it was all about getting into the spirit of the piece and I recall my flute partner being told to really exaggerate that first crescendo and accelerando, and to be really aggressive with the staccatos. I recall my strings also being a little on the old side as well, as my projection was not what was required at the Andante con moto at bar 25. A suggestion was made for a different type of string which was very effective, as was employing a more attacking stroke for that section.

In Amber

For *In Amber*, finding a string quartet was the most difficult aspect, eventually putting together an ensemble featuring a Masters level cellist, and undergrad violins and viola. we fixed ensemble issues, such as rhythmic disparities, which in the context of Houghton's use of cross-rhythms, is something that demands close attention in an ensemble setting. Knowing *who* is playing together *where* is something that takes up much of the rehearsal time, and rhythmic cohesion between the individual parts and the overall pulse is very challenging. For example, the eighth-note displacement between the violins I and II in the first movement *Dance* was something that required a good deal of sectional work between those players. *Leading* and *balance* was another issue, as the attack on a bowed instrument is much slower than that of a guitar and being amplified brings on a new set of challenges, with tone settings as well as a balanced level being all important.

The Light on the Edge

The instrumentation for *The Light on the Edge* was for two guitars, harp, double bass and percussion. As per Ms. Schaupp and Houghton's suggestion, rehearsals began just with the guitars. This was actually among the easiest rehearsals, considering that I had performed with the other guitarist already, and the guitaristic nature of Houghton's writing. For the full group rehearsals, however, we had a very tight turn around, and could only start two weeks before the performance, which led to some very intensive weekend rehearsal.

Houghton had also mentioned that when John Williams and some of London's best musicians performed this work that they had used a conductor and strongly recommended that I do as well (Houghton, personal communication). I employed the assistance of a Masters conducting student, who I had worked in with the creation of the Riverside Guitar Ensemble. We went through the score together before undertaking the rehearsals. I was blessed to have very talented and committed musicians to pull this quite difficult work together in such a short time.

Presentation with VJ and audio reactive imaging software

The VJ with whom I collaborated with was someone I had played in an improvisatory band in previous years. The visual aspect of that band was a major part of it, and he had been getting quite a bit of work in clubs and dance music events using projection, image mapping and audio reactive software. I discussed with him the option of utilising Houghton's paintings with his image mapping, and he was quite open to it. Again, there were more time constraints than what allowed to get a truly representative version of Houghton's art with his music. As he was overseas for several months before the concert, again, I only had a few days to meet with him before rehearsing. I did attend one of his events and I really enjoyed the audio reactive animation. I had given him audio of all the music, as well as a list of connected paintings that could be found on Houghton's website. I had no choice but to trust him to rehearse it on his own, however, he had not yet incorporated the imagery only a few days before the recital.

The day before the recital, the recital hall had been booked for a rehearsal. Due to a lack of availability from most of the musicians, I was able to rehearse one duo and used the rest of the time in the space on technical requirements. It was an opportunity to give the VJ time to map the projection to the screen, and it also gave me an opportunity to see some of the imagery that he was to use. I was impressed with the imagery he had incorporated in to Houghton's artwork.

On the day of the recital, I spent most of the day rehearsing for the final performance with the different groups. In the two hours before the recital, I had the venue for sound check and lighting plots. I was very fortunate to have the help of Karin Schaupp to assist with the balance of the amplifiers and acoustic instruments as well as the PA feed of the environmental sounds used with *The Light on the Edge*.

Overall, while it was a very challenging event to put together, I believe it was successful. Some lessons learned were aspects of rehearsal scheduling, and the delegation of tasks. It was a worthwhile and meaningful tribute to Phillip Houghton, made even more poignant by his passing only months after this event.

Conclusion

Taking on this project has led to artistic outcomes that I could not fathom before. The combination of analysis, interpretation of Houghton's programmatic annotations, technical focus in practise and presentation, visualisation and use of narrative demanded my complete attention. I was incredibly fortunate to be able to engage with Phillip Houghton, and he challenged many of my pre-conceptions. He always encouraged me to think of the way I viewed his music, what images they brought to my mind. His gift to the world is a body of work that stimulates every area of the imagination for performer and audience.

There is a duality in Phillip Houghton's work, the completed score is a work of precision, carefully hand written, and attention to every detail. The scores are much more prescriptive than the output of most composers, and he continued editing his works for a long time after their release or premiere. When I had a lesson with him, he was very interested in rhythmic precision, and laying a solid technical foundation for a performance before getting too caught up in interpretive details. This may give an impression of stifling a performer's creativity due to such technical specificity. But while technical interpretive decisions relating to tempo, rubato, timbre, and note grouping have a very obvious function in expressive phrasing, I was looking for a deeper understanding for creating an evocative performance.

Houghton's scores are also more descriptive than those of most other composers. And it is in these descriptions or epigrammatic annotations in the score and program notes which are incredibly important to the work. Where the written musical notes have that specificity, the textual descriptions are broad, and whether incidentally or by design, this creates a very individualised stimuli to a player's imagination. The influences he cited for his works are always multi-faceted. When there is a specific backdrop such as a painting like *God of the Northern Forest* or ancient Greek artefact such as *Stélé*, he also likes to provide further influences, such as the Eltham Copper Butterfly in *God of the Northern Forest* and the whirling dervishes into *Stélé*. An understanding of one area of the source material never really gives the full story, and the way an individual player combines these diverse influences will create a different visualisation or narrative sustaining each performance.

Within this exegesis are my explorations to holistically understand the visual, mythical and metaphorical meanings within Houghton's scores and to bring these out through performance and sound. Due to the dualistic nature of technical specificity and Houghton's interest in sparking the imagination through his "mythod," I resorted to various methodologies suited for the different aspects of the study. Score analysis was used to look at the technical requirements of a composition, while at the same time looking for semiotic descriptors of Houghton's programmes and the referenced artworks. Through experiments I found shapes and colours that were represented visually in a *spectrogram*, graphic depiction of a score, or shape in reference to structure. While many of these facets could be shaped and sculpted by technical decisions, the deeper meaning and portrayal was informed by the way in which the findings of the study activated my imagination while performing. Through the narrative design taught by Karin Schaupp, to the evocation of meditation leading to a feedback loop of mental imagery, sound, and a performers reaction to them, it was possible to really *feel* the emotional context to experience *as if* really seeing colour, shape and form while performing.

This study allowed me to understand and establish a process that helped me go beyond mere technicalities. By diligently polishing all the instrumental technical demands from the compositions, I was then able to focus entirely on their implied methods, narratives and visual stimuli. My refocusing on these foundational aspects helped me to direct them to give my playing correlated shape, character, and emphasis on their meanings, thus animating the works and the performance. This process can be expanded, revised and calibrated to continue my approaching repertoire with fresh and creative perspectives.

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Appendix A: May 26, 2016. Answers for Ian Ahles.

May 25, 2016. Answers for Ian Ahles (PhD doc). page 1

Q1 Do you always get the programmatic and image based ideas for your pieces before you compose? Or do you also get the ideas from the music as it is being formed? And are there times where all of these elements are influencing each other as the work is being developed?

A: Ian, regarding the above 3 questions about "programmatic and image based ideas" I suggest, at risk of repeating myself, that you see the Nistico paper --- especially Questions 6-9 on pages 7-16.

To try to answer this question here: yes, sometimes all of the above and no, sometimes none of the above. Sometimes there are no "programmatic or image based ideas" whatsoever --- there is just a desire to write music, no further intention. Sometimes there is no "intention". Sometimes there is emptiness and boredom, a lot of waiting, a lot of reviewing and editing, a lot of hard work. I use no formula.

Sometimes it can be otherwise --- feelings and dreams and scents and images and textures and symbols and colours can trigger associations and lead to "gateways" for the imagination. In responding to that, I'm not trying to write "cartoon music" that specifically describes each scene or word or frame of a "film": rather, I simply respond to what the trigger or "gateway" (whatever it may be) SUGGESTS.

In doing so, it is not a "cold, intellectual intent" --- it is a feeling, of complete involvement, that may be flawed and passionate or quiet and still --- like a wild horse, not a fully trained show pony ... or a farmer reading the land, not a book on farming. It is unpredictable. We become open to change, where necessity is the Mother of invention ... where we may act on a hunch, or be "in the zone": we call it the imagination. It's nothing special, everyone has it --- especially everyone under the age of 8.

Q1 continued next page 2

Q1 cont.

In your question, you are basically asking about "when" do I get ideas. Yes, sometimes while I'm composing, sometimes after, and sometimes before --- sometimes a long time before, for example: I saw the 'Stele of Demoklides' in a book in 1985 and thought about it for over 3 years before writing a note (which became the solo 'Stele'), and I saw the John Waterhouse painting 'Circe Invidiosa' when I was about 10 in 1964 and thought about it for 29 years before writing 'Water Opal' in 'Opals' in 1993. Yes, "when" --- like "why", it can have no time or reason.

In 1978 when I was 23 I did a drawing called 'Fervour' which tries to portray what I felt about the "creative process" --- I sent this drawing to you in an email dated May 17th, 2016. In this drawing I use the common symbol of a bridge we may cross to go on "the journey". Other times, other artists will use other images as symbols or allegory to signify this: for instance, Lewis Carroll in 'Alice in Wonderland' (1865) uses a White Rabbit:

^{you} "Alice dreams that she sees a White Rabbit and follows him down the rabbit-hole, into the Hall of Many Doors."
^{image, idea, symbol, archetype, etc}
^{unknown, origination} ^{possibility, discovery}

The White Rabbit might represent Nature?, curiosity?, breaking rules?, fun?, danger?, adventure? --- who knows!?! But the point is: the White Rabbit might not be just a white rabbit --- it could be something else.

We use images, symbols, allegory and myth as triggers or "gateways" for things we may want to share: stories --- through song, poetry, literature, art, music, film, dance --- that can give voice to things that may otherwise be voiceless, bring meaning to things that may otherwise seem meaningless, create memory of things that may have been forgotten, and shine light on new paths that may be taken. From ancient cave paintings to the latest Banksy image, stories make connection between our feelings and dreams and the world around us --- that we can all share.

May 25, 2016. Answers for Ian Ahles (PhD). page 3

Q 2 Are any other paintings on your website connected to your compositions? In particular, the pieces I'm performing this semester. 'Stele', 'The Goldfish Suite', 'God of the Northern Forest', 'Kinkachoo, I Love You', and 'Fantasia ... As a Jade Unicorn Might in the Rain'. Would you mind giving a few words on how they are connected to the works? And may I use them in slides in my lecture recital?

A: All of my paintings are connected to my music, and vice versa. As to how, please see Nistico paper Q9 page 14 (especially 1st para).

However, yes, some paintings are more specifically related to pieces of music than others. Of the pieces that you are playing these would include the following (on my website and those in recent emails I sent you):

'STELE': the cover of the edition was specific to this piece.

Other paintings on website that I feel correspond with it are:

1st row down, first in row 'Red Moon Over River Styx'

1st row down, third in row 'Ruins'

2nd row down, first in row 'In the Flame of the Muse'

2nd row down, last in row 'Equus Baying at Red Moon' (10 million yrs ago)

3rd row down, last in row 'While the Muses Dance a Brighter Flame Burns'

10th row down, third in row 'His Wife Waits for him on the Other Side of River Styx'

14th row down, third in row 'Red, Ancient Figures' (Ian, the close-up one)

14th row down, last in row 'Moon with Twisted Tree'

THE GOLDFISH SUITE: the one specific image for this piece is the sketch for the cover of a possible edition (never published) that I sent you in a recent email (depicting the 4 goldfish, done in 1978/9).

Q 2 continued next page 4

May 25, 2016 . Answers for Ian Ahles (PhD).

page 4

Q 2 cont.

THE GOLDFISH SUITE (cont.) : another related image that I also sent to you via email is 'Flying Fish' (from 1976). Images that are on my website that are also related are :

2nd row down , second in row 'Music in Dark Water'

8th row down , third in row 'Beach' (1978)

8th row down , last in row 'Goldfish Cloud'

Last row , first in row 'Poets Festival '78' (Montsalvat, where I lived)

GOD OF THE NORTHERN FOREST : in case I couldn't get permission to use the Klee painting for the cover of the edition , I did the painting at 4th row down , second in row . Other related paintings are :

4th row down , first in row (of a forest floor , inside a forest)

3rd row down , second in row (of river-bank / forest , across a river)

KINKACHOO, I LOVE YOU : none specific , but the painting I recently emailed you comes close 'When the Sun and Moon Danced , New Colours Entered My Heart' (2000) . The '2 Moons' painting I also emailed you is related too , as is 'Opalescence' on website at 13th row down , third in row .

FANTASIA ... as a Jade Unicorn Might in the Rain : none specific , but again , the '2 Moons' painting I emailed you is related , and on website :

11th row down , first in row 'Lovers Make Blue'

11th row down , last in row 'Warrior Dreams a Forest'

13th row down , second in row 'Fern Forest'

13th row down , third in row 'Opalescence' (for its delicacy)

May 25, 2016. Answers for Ian Ahles (PhD). page 5

Q3 Where did the name 'Kinkachoo' come from? Is it your own name for the spirit bird mentioned in the program, or does it come from an already existing mythology? Or even a mythology of your own design?

A: There is a personal story behind the use of the word

"kinkachoo": one of my friends told me that when she was a child she had nursed an injured bird back to health, until it flew away one day. She was happy for the bird, yet she cried it had gone, knowing she'd never see it again.

My friend told me that she didn't know what kind of bird it was, but that it made a sound that she said sounded like "kinkachoo" --- so she called the bird by that name.

A few years later, while thinking about love, loss and separation, I wrote a little piece about it, calling it 'Kinkachoo, I Love You'. The music came out quickly, in real-time, and was perfectly formed --- it needed no revision. I then imagined/invented the little story, an allegory, about the bird to accompany the piece:

"---- the Kinkachoo, a mythical bird, once wounded in the Spirit-Realm, heals and flies into the world ----"

May 25, 2016. Answers for Ian Ahles (PhD). page 6

Q 4 'The Goldfish Suite' seems to be set in pairs of opposite colours, green-red and purple-yellow. Was there a particular intention for this? You thanked the red goldfish in the pond at Montsalvat for starting it all, were the other colours of goldfish present there as well?

A: First off, there are no green or purple colours of real goldfish. They don't exist ---- I invented them.

No, it was not my original intention to colour-coordinate matching pairs of "opposite colours" of goldfish. My intention was to write music. I designed the Suite from the music I wrote ---- it so happened that the "music-opposites" matched "colour-opposites" also (as per norm!, is very common!). I was aware of this, but the actual music comes first ---- it always does.

As I mention in the edition, I was inspired by colour and movement --- especially the fluidity of movement: hence my using fish, in this instance, goldfish as my image or "gateway" into the music. With this in mind, I tried to give the music a kind of translucent, watery texture and flow ---- that was like a "watercolour".

The various colours I use reflect my ideas about the "character and mood" of colours. I wrote 'Red' first, on August 13th 1977 as a birthday present for my mother Ida Houghton (ne Roberts).

No, there were no other colours of goldfish in the pond at Montsalvat (at least, not at the time --- back in August 1977). I wrote a 'Silver' goldfish also, but left it out of the Suite --- I also made many other sketches that I didn't use. The original Suite dates from 1977-78. I revised the Suite in 2003 (which I published).

May 25, 2016. Answers for Ian Ahles (PhD). page 7

Q5 From speaking with you previously, you have a great awareness of the times and places you have conceived, developed, and completed your works. Do you consider these things to be as much of an influence as the subject matter itself? Feel free to elaborate.

A: Ian, it's the "stuff of life" that really matters --- family, friends, homes, places, work, etc. Artists and composers are no different to anyone else. You say I have "a great awareness of the times and places you have conceived, developed, and completed your works". Again, like anyone else, I have experiences, feelings, memories.

As for "subject matter" --- the use of any "subject matter" simply rolls-out of the life and mind of the individual. It can (of course) be about anything. It's up to the individual.

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This next question is from my supervisor .

Q 6 For analysis of 'Fantasia', ask the composer about specific composers he may have had in mind (Navvaez?, Milan?).

A: I had no specific composers in mind , rather the period of the Medieval and the Renaissance and not just related to music but to all fields of art , culture , history and myth .

'Fantasia' was written for my friend Roger Treble who lent me his lute and also gave me lute lessons . In writing this piece , I was inspired by the lute itself --- in particular its sound . I wrote it for the lute , on the lute (in Tablature) , also making a version for the guitar (pretty much immediately) .

(By the way , both Navvaez and Milan played and composed for the vihuela , not the lute . That's not to say I don't love their music !)

'Fantasia' was also inspired by the myth of the unicorn , as an allegory for the purity , innocence and mystery of Nature that is now lost . The unicorn was the symbol or "gateway" for the music I was trying to write this was back in 1979 it was a dream I had

. . . . about us losing something beautiful .

Phillip Houghton III
May 25 , 2016