

***Kiravanu*: Opera for children embedded into a K-6 programme**

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Abstract

This paper introduces PhD research currently in its first year. The research aims to identify practical approaches a composer can take to writing music for primary students which delivers learning through a clear progression of skills involved in performing the new music as well as explicitly programmed lesson plans that permit the learning to be achieved in ordinary class time instead of as an extra-curricular project.

The investigation focuses on opera for children, and this paper will consider the history of this genre and present a new exemplar of the approach being documented: *Kiravanu*. The writing and teaching of *Kiravanu*, a 100-minute opera premiered by students of MLC School in Sydney in 2008 with an outreach project to Broken Hill Central Primary School will be reviewed. Video of rehearsal and performance, examples of scores and related lesson plans and resources will be shared and opened to discussion with those attending.

Introduction

This paper will present a new opera and learning resources for children, *Kiravanu*, through the context of a composer working in the field of education. A brief introduction to this tradition will place the project in historical context and will also identify differing approaches composers have taken to their involvement in the education field in the past. Initial analytical work summarising practice in writing for children will identify the composer's approach in musical terms and compare it to the approaches taken by other composers of children's opera as well as art composers who have created classroom material and music methods.

The philosophical approach of the composer and the commissioning institution will be examined before observations of the work itself and summary points drawn from its premiere. Finally the direction that this research might take in the future will be discussed, and opened to questions and

input from those present.

Composers in music education and children's opera

In current times, the composer has been given a somewhat aloof position among his musical peers. This is no less encouraged in music education, where despite the inclusion of composition in the curriculum, many teachers are reluctant to teach it and many students find it difficult.

Naturally, if a musical process such as composition is not taught and encouraged (as aural and performance skills are), students will find composition difficult. Composing is seen largely as a separate activity to performance and aural development, and composers therefore are seen to have a separate and particularly individual skill.

While the composer may have been separated from the everyday 'chores' of learning music, there is a long tradition of composers being interested in music education. As will be seen, some have taken a philosophical or aesthetic approach to the question of how children can best learn music, while others have composed music for the children themselves. And for those who have composed repertoire specifically for children, some have considered the pedagogical implications of such repertoire, some have not, and a few have taken the connection one step further, writing prescriptive methods for learning music based on their own compositions or arrangements and belief in how music is best learned.

Mid-eighteenth century

The disconnection of the learning of composition from other musical skills has not always existed, and thanks to the interest that composers have taken in music education in western art history we can trace different approaches over the last 300 years. If we look back to the published thoughts of Leopold Mozart (W. A. Mozart's father), C.P.E. Bach or Johan Quantz in the mid-eighteenth century, each composer advocates a complete music education in three parts: "Composition, singing and instrumental practice"¹

Each composer wrote books on a general music education based around the learning of their

¹ Lawrence, Ian. (1978) *Composers and the Nature of Music Education*. London: Scolar Press. p31.

preferred instrument - for Mozart the violin², Bach the keyboard³ and Quantz the flute⁴. Their approach was holistic not only with regard to the acts of performance and composition, but also to the prospective audience of their published work: the young, musically-uneducated child. Quantz wrote that he was "showing the young people who devote themselves to music how they must proceed", Mozart that his intention was "to bring beginners on to the right road and to prepare them for the knowledge of, and feeling for, musical good taste" and Bach believed that with his instruction "(beginners) will easily attain a proficiency that they would hardly have believed possible".

Elizabethan composers

Treatise on composers' 'best' approaches to music education can be found even earlier than these three masters. In his book *Composers and the Nature of Music Education*⁵, Ian Lawrence introduces texts written by Elizabethan composers Thomas Morely⁶, Christopher Sampson, John Playford⁷ (whose book was edited by Thomas Campion and Henry Purcell), John Dowland, Michael Praetorius and Thomas Campion himself⁸. Lawrence is at pains to point out that "it is perhaps important to stress at this stage that Morley and his fellow writers were not writing for professional musicians."⁹

These Elizabethan and eighteenth century composers actively taught all aspects of music and were instrumental in approaches to teaching by other musicians of the time. The composition of music for children can be traced back even further, and presents us with the earliest precursors of children's opera that can be found. Hugo Cole writes:

² Mozart, Leopold. (1756) *Versuch einer gründlichen Violinschule*. Salzburg. Trans. Knocker, E (1951) *A Treatise on the Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing*. London.

³ Bach, Carl Philipp Emanuel. (1753, 1762) *Versuch über die wahre Art das Clavier zu spielen*. Berlin. Trans. Mitchell, W. J. (1949) *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*. London.

⁴ Quantz, Johann. (1752) *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversiere zu spielen*, trans Reilly, E.R. (1966) *On Playing The Flute*. London.

⁵ Lawrence, Ian. (1978) *Composers and the Nature of Music Education*. London: Scholar Press.

⁶ *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke* (1597)

⁷ *A briefe Introduction to the Skill of Musick* (1654)

⁸ *New Ways in Making Foure Parts in Counter-point* (c. 1611)

At certain medieval festivals, choirboys in France and England would elect their own boy bishops and might enact their own ludi teatrales. Thus, church records of 1497 tell us that at St Martin of Tours, on the second day of Advent, masked 'innocentes' would go into the city, where farces, moralities and miracles would be played – certainly with music. In Tudor times, choristers' masques were often played at court, the Children of Paul's appearing before Queen Elizabeth more often than any other company.¹⁰

Cole goes on to recount performances of operas or *intermedes* performed in French Jesuit colleges in the seventeenth century, written by composers such as Intermes and later Marc-Antoine Charpentier at the Collège Louis-le-Grand in Paris, and in England masques which were sometimes performed at private schools. Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, in fact, was premiered at the Josias Priest's girls' school in Chelsea in the summer of 1689.

In the eighteenth century, around the time Mozart, Bach and Quantz were writing their texts, opera in these kinds of schools ceased to be performed - Cole suggests that this was because "the art of opera lost its aristocratic aura and gained a doubtful moral reputation". Nonetheless, it can be seen that composers continued to take an active interest in the musical education of the young, and a new generation of composers toward the end of the century, including Rameau and Couperin, debated the best age to begin musically educating the young, with the latter arguing that the optimal age was as early as six years.

Music continued to be part of the Western school curriculum, although in his book *Music Education; Tradition and Innovation*¹¹, Robert Walker suggests that music only remained on the education agenda for the purpose of religious indoctrination, and that the quality of the musical content provided was simplistic to propagate the church's message most clearly: "So emerged a tradition of rather colourless and stylistically neutral "school" music."¹²

Nineteenth century

Happily, the beginning of the nineteenth century, the romantic period and another new generation

⁹ Lawrence, Ian. *Op cit.*

¹⁰ Cole, Hugo. (1990) Children's Opera. *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com:80/subscriber/article/grove/music/O901058> 29th May 2009.

¹¹ Walker, Robert. (1984) *Music Education; Tradition and Innovation*. Springfield: Charles C. Thomas Publishers.

of composers brought renewed interest in music education from the composer's viewpoint. High on the list of composers who wrote texts about music education are Weber, Schumann, Berlioz, Wagner and Wolf¹³. Berlioz published his *Traité de l'instrumentation et d'orchestration modernes* (1841), and Wagner *Die Kunst und die Revolution, Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft, and Oper und drama*, although while the latter's dense texts encouraged scholarly investigation they would not be considered as educational material in of themselves.

Lesser known composers also published popular books on composition, harmony and broader music education including J G Albrechtsberger (1736-1809) (Beethoven's teacher), J G Weber (1779-1839) and A J Reicha (1770-1836). Albrechtsberger's *Gründliche Anweisung zur Composition* (1790) was translated into to English in 1834 as *Methods of Harmony, Figured Bass, and Composition, Adapted for Self-Instruction* and similarly Weber's *Versuch einer geordneten Theorie der Tonsetzkunst* (1821) - which begins with an analysis of Beethoven's harmonic language - was translated into English 1841.

Later in the nineteenth century more composers published journal articles on music education including Schumann, Hummel, Spohr, Czerny, Cherubini and Bruckner. In Russia composers Tchaikovsky and Rimsky-Korsakov extended this tradition out of central Europe and while England did not have any composers as well known as these during this period, a number of lesser known composer-teacher-academics including Sterndale Bennett, Charles Stanford and Hubert Parry continued to publish their ideas and have input to the school system.

Twentieth century

Even those of us qualified and working in music education today, when posed with the challenge to think of some composers who published music for children or wrote extensively about approaches to musical learning, would most likely name composers from the last 100 years. Certainly in modern day schools educators often discuss the approaches and methods of

¹² Ibid, p8.

¹³ A more complete list of publications by composers in this period is included in Lawrence, Ian. op cit.

composers such as Carl Orff or Zoltan Kodály, or the repertoire for children of Benjamin Britten, Gustav Holst, Aaron Copland or in Australia Matthew Hindson. It is, therefore, important to recognise that as long as composers have been writing music and writing about music, many of them have actively been thinking about music education. We identify with the most recent great composers most in education because our curricula and our peers are still most influenced by - or reacting against - their affect.

There is no doubt that the increase of communication and movement in the twentieth century allowed for a greater self-awareness for composers concerned in music education, and further allowed for ideas to be shared and influenced ever more quickly and effectively. Add to this the rapidly diminishing opportunities for gainful employment as a composer in religious or courtly institutions through the nineteenth century, and composers have been more frequently forced to resort to teaching for income, and therefore think about music education. While some, such as Stravinsky, were reluctant teachers, many composers found themselves more engaged in their own music making through the experience of sharing it with children, especially as the twentieth century went on.

For example, while Holst may have sounded a reluctant teacher when he said "In the music profession nearly everyone has to teach. The reason is an economic one - there is a larger demand for teachers than for singers and players.¹⁴ ", Lawrence points out¹⁵ that he chose to continue teaching at St Paul's Girls School for some 29 years - long after he needed to financially. Holst is also quoted as saying "That remark of Shaw¹⁶ is not essentially true. Teaching is not an alternative to doing. Teaching is doing.¹⁷" Holst, of course, became one of the composers who wrote music both for children to perform and for children to enjoy.

¹⁴ 'Lecture at Yale on the Teaching of Art' (1929) in Imogen Holst, *The Music of Gustav Holst* (London, 2nd Ed., 1968), p. 151

¹⁵ Lawrence, Ian, *op cit*.

¹⁶ George Bernard Shaw: "He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches."

¹⁷ p.151 of I. Holst, *op cit*

Five categorisations related to music education

This latter distinction—music children perform and music *for* a child audience—used to refer to composer's work in earlier centuries, becomes especially important as we consider the music education activities of twentieth century composers. This distinction is made between composers who

1. Write concert music (including children's opera) for children to perform
2. Write classroom music for children to perform, with specific pedagogical aims
3. Write classroom music for children to perform, with a prescribed method for teaching
4. Write music for children to listen to
5. Teach music in schools or universities and publish their thoughts on music education

In addition, we may further divide the act of 1. writing concert music for children to perform into two groups:

- 1a. Those writing for children who are already trained and progressing musicians
- 1b. Those writing for children who have no specific musical training outside the generalist classroom

Concert music for children

Of course, many composers worked in more than one of these groups, but these distinctions remain important because they inform the philosophical approach of the children's opera central to this new research, and also because they further refine the conclusions that can be drawn about composers' involvement in music education. In the twentieth century, compiling an exhaustive list of art music composers who have written in the first category (concert music for children) would be an enormous task, but leading composers included not just Holst but also Britten, Weill, Copland, Vaughan Williams, Holst, Bartók, Kodály, Hindemith, Bloch, Debussy, Janacek, Martinu, Nielsen, Poulenc, Prokofiev, Ravel, Sibelius, Stravinsky, Maxwell Davies and Richard Rodney Bennett. Composers writing music in the fourth group, which is least relevant to this

research, included Prokofiev and Dohnányi.

Of the first group, Vaughan Williams, Holst, Bartók and Kodály created a modern tradition of arranging folk songs for children (which, as will be seen, became a central guiding principle of the Hungarian approach to music education as directed by Kodály) which were designed to be performed in non-specialist or peripatetic music classes, therefore fitting into group 1b. Such arrangements were very popular but have been criticised by music educators who saw the arrangement of folk tunes to suit the composer's style or the ability of class music as a contradiction to the idea of presenting such music in the first place: "The use of indigenous music in art music is merely illustration of how it is possible to modify folk music in the interests of art music."¹⁸

Benjamin Britten, a composer central to this thesis as a successful composer of children's opera, wrote music for both parts of group 1. Britten's Children's opera *Noye's Fludde*, as will be seen below, can be performed by children with a non-specialist music education, but has solo parts which require a high level of singing ability. On the other hand, many of his other works for children were written especially for some of Britain's best children's choirs. The same can be said for composer Peter Maxwell Davies, who was director of music at Cirencester Grammar School from 1959 to 1962 and, as Walker explains "was a young composer exploring the techniques of composition and sharing the process with the students. *O Magnum Mysterium* was a public manifestation of the kind of daily contact between students and composer that was being established at the school."¹⁹ Maxwell Davies' work was, however, designed for students already succeeding in the music programme, who had a certain level of technical expertise, which is why his music would not qualify as generalist classroom music. Writing for excelling children's

¹⁸ Walker, Robert. Op cit.

¹⁹ Walker, *op cit.*

ensembles has continued to interest Maxwell Davies over the following decades, and some of his works have been premiered at his St Magnus Festival in Orkney by the local school orchestra.

Composers writing about music education

As well as teaching music and writing for children, composers of the fifth group named above continued to share their thoughts on music education as they had for three hundred years. In the first half of the twentieth century, a number of composers moved from Europe to the US, where they found themselves teaching in the university system. These included Stravinsky, Schoenberg, Bartok, Hindemith and Milhaud. Schoenberg, who should be noted for his ability to teach the music of all styles, not only his own, felt passionately that music education could be improved. In a questionnaire he completed in 1929, he wrote:

"1. Are you satisfied with the present educational system?

'No'.

2. What defects strike you as most serious?

'The way the young are stuffed with "ready-made" knowledge and acquire only "tangible" qualifications.'

3. What is your idea of good educational methods?

'Encouraging young people to look at things for themselves, to observe, compare, define, describe, weigh, test, draw conclusions, and use them.'²⁰

Webern, reflecting on Schoenberg's ability as a teacher, wrote "Schoenberg educates actually through creating. He follows the traces of the student's personality with the utmost energy, tries to deepen them, to help them break through, in short, to give the student the courage and the strength to put himself in a position from which everything he views becomes, through the manner in which he views it, unique."²¹ " Lawrence concludes that "Like Stravinsky, and many other

²⁰ Schoenberg, Arnold. (1965) *Letters*. New York, Faber and Faber pp. 135-6.

²¹ Webern, Anton. (1912) *Arnold Schoenberg* (Munich); Eng. trans. Morgenstern)

colleagues, Schoenberg wanted students to be taught music, not taught 'about music'.²² " Paul Hindemith, one of the most active composer-educators of the century, combined great output in the field of writing about music education (such as *Elementary Training for musicians* (1946) and *A Composer's World* (1952)) with composing many concert works for children to perform, and future research into his children's opera will be central to this project. In France Debussy, Fauré, Dukas and Milhaud wrote a little about music education, and Messiaen published *Technique de mon langage musicale* (1944), a major work.

Composers writing music for the classroom

A great many composers wrote music categorised above in group two (music for children to perform, with specific pedagogical aims). The most well known in this group is Carl Orff, who published a series of books called *Music for Children*²³ using specially designed instrumentation and integrating the development of vocal skills, movement (based on Émile Jacques-Dalcroze's teaching of Eurhythmics) and improvisation. The music composed is often ostinato-based, with melodic material which progresses from a few notes, through the major and minor pentatonic scales to diatonic tonalities. Rhythms, meters and vocal range are expanded through the progression of the books. While Orff's published output does have a definite progression of musical concepts, and while Orff wrote and spoke extensively about the progression in which he believed children could best learn, the system (especially as it has become interpreted in modern day schools) is described as an *approach*, not a literal method, and Orff advocated the adaption of his material to meet the needs of the class, the culture in which it is being used, and the further composition and improvisation of music which follows his principals. As such, this music does belong to group two, not group three. It is also most definitely music designed for the classroom, with very clear pedagogical aims.

While Orff's music is probably the best known in this group, and certainly the best surviving in

²² Lawrence, Ian. *Op cit.*

²³ Orff, Carl and Keetman, Gunild adapted Murray, Margaret. (1952) *Music for Children volumes I to V*. London:

use in schools today from the last century, a great number of other composers wrote music in this category. These include Walford Davies who broadcast radio programmes in singing and percussion music through the BBC in the 1930s and 1940s, and a number of composers who incorporated contemporary compositional approaches into ideas for curriculum such as R. Murray Schafer (*The Composer in the Classroom and Ear Cleaning*), George Self (*New Sounds in Class*), John Paynter and Peter Aston (*Sound and Silence*), Robert Walker (*Sound Projects*), Brian Dennis (*Experimental Music in Schools*), Gertrud Meyer-Denkman (*Experiments in Sound*) and a number of composers through the Manhattanville Music Curriculum Program. All of these composers attempted to make their new music available to the generalist music classroom and students who had not had any specialist music training. Some of the books suggest a developmental approach, while others are not so clear, but all attempt to integrate the learning of musical concepts through the performance of this classroom music.

The prescribed approach and Kodály

The final group to consider as listed above is group three (classroom music for children to perform, with a prescribed method for teaching), which is similar to group two to but differentiated here to reflect a strict development of skills through a prescribed methodological approach. Of course, there are many such courses in existence, but are mostly written by specialist performers or educators, not composers. The epitome of the composer taking this approach in the twentieth century was Zoltan Kodály, who was a strong advocate for improving music education and the social benefits that he believed this could bring:

Anyone who is concerned about what will take place here musically in a generation or two cannot pass a school indifferently when he can hear singing coming from it. What does this singing say? Mostly this: "For us is this good enough? There is little time and little pay; the headmaster does not like choral singing. I have no ambitions, I am happy to keep body and soul together..." This is not the text of the song, and yet this is what is heard from it louder than anything else. What they sing does not even approach art. The way they are singing is far below the level of talented naturalism. If we look into the curriculum we can see that those who planned it were far away from the Greek ideal of education which cast music in a central role. And in most cases practice is unable to realise even the prescribed minimum. [...] That is why even in our educated circles ignorance in music is often quite painfully

apparent. Musical infantilism goes hand in hand with a highly developed culture in literature and the visual arts; and those who fight for what is good with their right hand, sponsor trashy literature in music with their left.²⁴

Kodály developed a method for teaching music through singing, which like the Orff approach, is still used in many schools today. He developed John Curwen's hand signals for solmisation (non-fixed Doh) developed to help teach pitch to choirs, and formalised its introduction in his method. As mentioned above, he adapted Hungarian folk songs and, like Orff, began the study of pitch in the major and minor pentatonic modes as well as using a naming formalisation for rhythm which is taught beginning with only crotchets and quavers, and adding shorter and longer notes as children progress onto more complex material. While Kodály had a social agenda not only to improve music education in Hungary but to bring back "Hungarianness" (through folksong) into the modern, urban Hungary, his method has been adopted and adapted in many countries including all of the major English-speaking ones.

Context for this project

Orff and Kodály, then, become the two art music composers most well known for focusing on music for educational purposes even more than their concert music. While still in use in many schools today, often as the fundamental philosophy for some of the top music departments in the western world, some music educators and other composers have, of course, found weaknesses in the systems developed by these composers. Even the premises on which each approach is based has been brought to question before: already mentioned is the simplification of folksong to meet western harmonic systems, and to make it easier to teach, and Orff's reliance on ostinato or the basis of harmonic beginning as the pentatonic scale is questionably irrelevant to cultures whose music has not grown from these musical elements. At the most critical end it has been written "Despite the protests from the supporters of Orff and Kodaly, it can only be said that the music contained in their school work for children is little more than a series of technical exercises. In

²⁴ Kodály, Zoltan. (1929) *Children's Choirs* from (1974) *The Selected Writings of Zoltan Kodály*. London: Boosey

neither method are the crucial issues of musical style and social context addressed.²⁵”

This research simply does not enter into the political debate. Instead, it interests itself with what all composers have had to say about music education, and what music composers have written for children. It focuses on children's opera and as such all successfully performed repertoire for children by all composers is of interest. The music of all above groups is therefore relevant, and because the music of Orff and Kodály is so widely used, it makes an important reference point of repertoire. Where this research turns to make judgement of the success of musical and educational material, however, it will be into investigation of the new opera central to this thesis. In the meantime, the historical context given so far informs of the tradition of which this new music is part.

Children's opera in the twentieth century

Before we can conclude this review, we must look more specifically at the development of children's opera in the twentieth century, because the reservation of the previous century was over, and it enjoyed a growth in this period. A thorough overview has been provided the article by Hugo Cole already alluded to²⁶, in which he describes the growing catalogue of children's opera and operetta published by Novello at the turn of the century, and the affect the new teaching methods of the Weimar Republic had in encouraging Hindemith, Weill and Egk to turn to writing opera for children, taking "the composition of didactic works for the school room as seriously as their work for concert hall or opera house."²⁷ " In America, Copland began composing children's opera with *The Second Hurricane* (1939) and in England Benjamin Britten, as already mentioned, wrote music for both untrained and trained children: "In *The Golden Vanity* (1966), written for the fully professional Vienna Boys' Choir, children shoulder full responsibility for the performance

and Hawkes.

²⁵ Walker, Robert. *Op cit.*

²⁶ Cole, Hugo. *Op cit.*

²⁷ Ibid.

and play adult roles. In the two other operas, children's voices form part of a wider timbral palette, and the diatonic innocence of their music is contrasted with the music of the adults' world. *The Little Sweep* (1949) calls for trained children of nerve and stamina who can hold their own alongside adult singers, while in *Noye's Fludde* (1958) only elementary skills are demanded of young singers and instrumentalists and little responsibility is placed on their shoulders.²⁸ "

Britain became a hotbed for this genre: Alan Bush, Richard Rodney Bennett, John Gardner, John McCabe, Stephen Oliver, Malcolm Williamson all published children's operas over this period, and Maxwell Davies himself wrote three. Continuing research in this project will elucidate the type of music written and whether the approach was to create children's opera in the groups named 1a and 1b above - namely those for skilled instrumentalists, which reading suggests is the case of the majority, or for generalist music classroom.

Benjamin Britten's *Noye's Fludde* - practical considerations

Benjamin Britten's *Noye's Fludde* (1958) is given a brief practical analysis here because it serves as an excellent comparison to the practical approach taken to create *Kiravanu*, the new opera around which this research is centred. As mentioned above, *Noye's Fludde* is intended to cater for general music class students, not musically trained children, but in the context of a full operatic setting with support by a professional pit orchestra. In fact, *Noye's Fludde* was the catalyst for the beginning of *Kiravanu*, because the school that would premiere it had performed *Noye's Fludde* three years earlier and as a decided success. The school was, therefore, looking for a new opera which could extend the capabilities of the entire primary school, and also one which could build on the collaborative success that had been adopted for *Noye's Fludde* which had included older students in the pit orchestra, professional musicians who taught at the school and non-music staff (primary classroom staff) in the roles of Mr and Mrs Noye, which created a unique co-performer relationship for the students and teachers.

Noye's Fludde, a medieval Chester Miracle Play set to music lasts approximately 50 minutes.

²⁸ Ibid.

Britten is extremely clear about the lead roles in the opera and who should play each part. These parts are to be played by experienced or trained musicians ("Mr and Mrs Noye should be accomplished singer-actors... Sem, Ham and Jaffett and their wives should have well-trained voices and lively personalities. They should not be too young - perhaps between eleven and fifteen... The Gossips should be older girls, with strong voices, especially in the lower register...²⁹") while the animals are played by any untrained children. In addition, there is both a small pit orchestra (treble recorder, piano four hands, organ, timpani and string quintet) with parts to be played by professionals and a larger amateur orchestra (descant recorders 1 & 2, treble recorders, 4 bugles in Bb, 12 handbells in Eb, violins 1, 2 and 3, violas, cellos 1 and 2 and double basses with extended percussion section) which can be performed by children if they have had some level of instrumental training. Again Britten is clear about what the capability of each player should be in his notes in the score. Thus Britten allows for the challenging involvement of all children, whether musically trained or not, as vocalists or instrumentalists. This is an ideal approach for the majority of schools whether they have a good music curriculum or not, because it is very normal (sadly) to have a minority of musically experienced students who can take the lead roles.

Looking more closely at the musical content of the score, Britten takes the approach one might expect having read the above. The following chart gives an indication of the kind of musical content asked of selected parts in different movements in the opera:

Scene	Part	Range	Metres	Rhythms	Other description
Lord Jesus think on me	Congregation	E4 to D5	3/2 and 2/2	Crotchets and minims	Mostly stepwise movement, unis.
Have done, you men and	Noye	E3 to D4	2/2	Crotchets, quavers,	Leaps and

²⁹ Britten, Benjamin. (1958) *Noye's Fludde*. London: Boosey and Hawkes.

wemen				minims, dotted rhythms	accidentals
Father I am all readye bowne	Sem, Ham, Jaffett	E4 to F5	2/2	Crotchets, quavers, minims, dotted rhythms, much syncopation	Leaps, accidentals and key change; counterpoint
Ha ha ha	Gossips	E4 to A5	6/8	Quavers and crotchets, fast	Leaps, articulation
Storm, figure 70	Child's solo violin	G3 to D5	4/2	Crotchets and minims	Mostly stepwise movement
Figure 34	Animals group 1	Eb4 to F4	4/4	Dotted quaver and quaver rhythms	Repeated material
Figure 36	Animals group 2	Eb4 to F4	4/4	Dotted quaver and quaver rhythms	Repeated material
Figure 38	Animals group 8	Eb4 to F4	4/4	Dotted quaver and quaver rhythms	Repeated material
Figure 44	Animals groups 6 & 7	Eb5 to Eb6	4/4	Dotted quaver and quaver rhythms	Repeated material
Waves, figure 75	Rip Strings	G3 to E5	4/2	Triplets	Open strings only

This data is easily expanded with further analysis (and will be for the purposes of the full thesis), but serve to confirm as one would expect - the parts for musically untrained children or beginner instrumentalists have a narrow range and the music is not complex, while the solo parts have a wider range. The range that Britten expects the untrained voice to sing in is usually around an octave from D4 to D5, although he makes allowances in the score for boys with broken voices, and one can see that some of the animals groups (the birds) are given much higher parts. In other words, Britten makes a conscious effort to make sure that the music is suitable for the children it is written for. In fact, further analysis of the music written for the classroom by Orff and Kodaly

finds very similar things. Looking at the first few volumes or workbooks published by each a similar progression is seen:

Composer	Publication	Range	Metres	Rhythms	Other description
Orff and Keetman	Music for Children volume I33	Initially E4-A4: becomes C4-A4, eventually C4-C5 (sometimes E5 and D5 in passing, G5 in song 40.)	2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 6/8 later 6/4	Crotchet, quavers in pairs, triplet quavers. Later dotted rhythms, very occasional semiquavers.	Pentatonic (major and minor) - in early songs, as few as two notes (the falling minor third)
Daniel	Kodály Approach workbook 1	C4 to A4	2/4, 4.4	Crotchets and quavers	Pentatonic
Orff and Keetman	Music for Children volume II	Initially C4-A4: becomes C4-E5	2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 6/8, 9/8, 12/8, 6/4	Crotchet, quavers in pairs, triplet quavers, dotted rhythms, semiquavers.	Major - introduces the 4th first, then the leading note.

The extraordinary thing about *Noye's Fludde* is that while much of the music is kept simple for the children performers, it is still unmistakably Britten. And this is very much an important point to make about the value of children performing opera instead of school musicals. What is written is original, powerful art music, part of the voice of the composer. While the style of the composer may be eclectic and influenced by the work of composers who have gone before, the music is not derivative nor popular for the sake of being popular. A student who performs *Noye's Fludde* has performed one part of the important canon of western art music, and will have been challenged musically and extended. Britten himself wrote "it is very difficult to write simple music with character", and Copland and Weill echoed this, the former saying "the musical challenge ... was to see how simple I could be without losing my identity"; the latter, that "simple music can only be written by the simple musician ... simple works are not minor works".

The approach when creating *Kiravanu*

A context now provided, the focus turns to the creation of this new children's opera. All of the above issues and approaches were considered in the composition of *Kiravanu*. Firstly, the musical aims were set out: it should have a small professional pit orchestra (flute, oboe, trombone and string quintet) like *Noye's Fludde* which would be performed by senior students or staff (and eventually was actually performed by both, making it a larger orchestra in premiere) and also a percussion orchestra for the older children (the targeted age range was NSW primary school age - kindergarten to year 6, approximately 5 to 11 years of age), nicknamed the Kiravanchestra; short solo parts (both vocal and instrumental) for children of all ages, lead roles for very experienced primary children as well as for older children or adults. There should be choruses for all students to sing in, and these should be appropriate (similarly to the above tables) to the age range of the groups singing in each one.

After searching around unsuccessfully for a story to adapt, an original storyline was created together with the librettist, Mary Elizabeth. Mary Elizabeth, based in Vermont, USA, is a widely published author of children's learning materials, many of which are language and literacy resources. She also has extensive musical experience, having authored over 3,000 pages of international music education content and a series of educational computer programs called "Groovy Music" for Sibelius Software. Mary Elizabeth and I worked closely online, sharing documents on a website we developed and having regular meetings via internet video. Mary Elizabeth created a series of drafts for the libretto, each one becoming closer to the eventual story, which she describes as such:

It was a very dark moment in the history of the world—the present moment, as it happens—and Father Time knew that something must be done if the destructive disregard of the world and its denizens was not to have the direst consequences for all. By now, there was no chance that a single hero or even a small group could do enough to bring us back. No: only the concerted effort of the many could address the issues of global warming, drought, famine, endangered species, poverty, and pollution with which the world was fraught. And so, Father Time took the daring step of calling forth the *Kiravanu*—the spirits of each and every place in the world—to gather with him and see what might be done to save the world. But the *Kiravanu* cannot stay long from their homes without detriment to the world. Will they take the risk of answering Father Time's call? Is there enough time to accomplish anything before they must return home? And where can they find the help that is so sorely needed?

Along with the *Kiravanu*, twins Pat and Molly call the Creatures and the Elements to help them solve the problem. These three main groups were divided by age so that age-appropriate music could be written to challenge each age group:

Kindergarten to year 2: Elements

Years 3 and 4: Creatures

Years 5 and 6: *Kiravanu*

Each successive group was given slightly more challenging music to perform, and was able to attempt a wider range of performance and improvisation activities. For example, the Elements sing simple, short, step-wise melodies within the range of C4 to C5, while the *Kiravanu* sing choruses in 2 parts with a range of C4 to G5, as well as having recorder and percussion parts for playing on stage. There were seven lead roles, including three parts for adults – to be sung by teachers at the school – and, as mentioned, many smaller solo opportunities for other children. Stylistically the music follows the demands of a balanced music curriculum, covering many styles. The work is an opera, not a musical, and is almost entirely sung. Each part of each scene is linked to a musical concept. Where helpful, simplified classroom arrangements or extensions have been written to allow all children to learn all parts in class. The approach is a common one at the pilot school, MLC School: all children learn all parts; where appropriate there are accompanying pitched and unpitched percussion parts; solos can be played on many instruments, and recorder range is catered for wherever possible.

Unique approach

The purpose of any PhD is to add some unique knowledge its field. In *Kiravanu*, we wanted to further the scope of the genre of children's opera and with the above design were able to create a structure for a new work that should be useable in any English-speaking primary school and more relevant to the modern classroom than, for example, the Britten. But a further dimension needed to be added to make this possible.

In most states of Australia, public primary schools do not have a specialist music teacher on staff.

Many run band programmes or choirs, but these are usually taken by a privately-hired music specialist, who may be running programmes at several schools at once. Even in schools that are lucky enough to have a specialist music teacher, these teachers are usually divided across all classes in the school or if allocated to one class, then unable to easily improve music in other years. Thus the challenge of putting on a large work such as a children's opera is too daunting for most: and for those who do it, it involves hundreds of dedicated out of school hours (for both the staff and the children) because enough time cannot be given within the set curriculum.

Kiravanu sets out to fix this. As each act was finished, special rehearsal recordings were made and given out on CD so that students could sing their parts in the classroom without the aid of a specialist music teacher, and sing them at home. And to make the most of classroom time, both the libretto and the music were mapped to the NSW primary curriculum, so that rather than needing to be learned outside of the music programme, *Kiravanu* could become the programme. Provided lesson plans and resources would enable the teacher to prepare for the performance of the opera over 6 to 12 months (depending on how concentrated the delivery of lessons was) in time dedicated to English, Science, HSIE, Arts or PDHPE. No other large scale work has been resourced as such: see the attached Sample Teaching Kit, which was also shared freely with schools attending the premiere in 2008.

Further development of research

At this point in time, the resources available for a NSW school who wish to perform *Kiravanu* are a full score, vocal score with piano reduction, lesson plans which map every scene of the opera to the NSW syllabus, rehearsal recordings, and a DVD of the premiere performance. [At this point in the presentation of this paper a short film which shows excerpts of the DVD will be shown.] The final version of the opera was one hour and forty minutes: a shorter version of around an hour is to be completed which will mostly include chorus material. Sample lesson videos will be filmed to more clearly convey how to teach the repertoire to non-specialist music teachers. Mapping of the resources will continue to include all states of Australia, and if the scope of the project will

permit it, the lesson plans for the opera will also be mapped to the syllabi of other English speaking countries including New Zealand, the US, Canada and Great Britain.

To put *Kiravanu* in a more solid research-based setting than the historical and analytical one set out so far, a qualitative approach will be taken to analysing student response to the teaching material. At this time, future schools in each state of Australia are being sought for these trials.

The response of different groups of children to the materials will be analysed, including the responses of children in different states, different kind of schools

(government/independent/religious/secular/all boy/all girl/co-ed), different socio-economic backgrounds and so on. The delivery of this paper serves as an opportunity to locate schools around Australia who would be interested to perform the whole or part of *Kiravanu* and participate in this research.

By its close, then, it is hoped that this research will contribute to the body of knowledge and repertoire in music education in several ways: it will provide a superb resource useable by any school; it will provide new data on the success of this particular music and historical perspective on this genre; and it will provide a guide to other living composers hoping to write in this field.

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