

INTIMATE HISTORY No.1: YONO (2005)**Jack Body**

I met Yono in 1976. In knowing him through these many years I have learnt many things. The stories of his childhood in a village in South Sumatra continue to surprise and fascinate me, and it has long been my wish to make a work with his collaboration.

In this 'intimate history' Yono speaks for himself. Excepting the very first section (*rebana Betawi*) which I recorded in Jakarta in 1994, all the examples of music were recorded in Yono's village in 1977 & '78. These genres include children's music with bamboo stamping tubes, music to accompany martial arts (*pencak silat*), Islamic chants accompanied by frame drums (*jedor*), rice pounding music (*lesung*), and music played on instruments improvised from cut rice stalks (*dremenan*). Yono himself intones and sings a traditional Javanese song, the text of which may be freely translated as:

This is an ornamented pangkur (poetic form).
As a model for the living,
Let it be known
What is good and what is bad.
Local customs should be observed,
As well as ordered existence maintained,
Day and night.

I was delighted to accept a commission to work again in the studios of IBEM, having not worked in the medium of electroacoustic music for many years.

Footnote. In Indonesia in 1977 the minimum age for consensual sex between members of the opposite sex was 9. It has since been raised to 13. There are no laws concerning sexual relations between members of the same sex, although attitudes regarding this vary from region to region.

INTIMATE HISTORY No.2: SSSTEVE (2008)**Jack Body**

This work is created from an interview I conducted with Steve Jones in June 2005 when the Hua family shawm band, which he was managing and researching, held a residency at SOAS, London University. Our conversation covered Steve's researches in Chinese music and also aspects of his particular speech impediment. At my request he demonstrated two Chinese instruments: the *erhu* fiddle and the double reed shawm *suona*. These informally played musical examples, along with Steve's recorded voice, constitute the material of this 'Intimate History'. The work was realised in the studio of the Visby International Centre for Composers (VICC) in Gotland, Sweden, during April 2008.

Stephen Jones has been documenting living traditions of folk music in rural China since 1986. A co-founder of CHIME, the European Foundation of Chinese Music Research, since 1993 he has held research fellowships at SOAS. Apart from many articles and CDs, he is author of the influential *Folk music of China: living instrumental traditions* (OUP 1995/1998 with CD). His book *Plucking the Winds: lives of village musicians in old and new China* (CHIME, 2004, with CD) is a riveting, lavishly-illustrated ethnography of the 20th century in one north Chinese village told through the experiences of its ritual musicians. His book *Ritual and music of north China: shawm bands in Shanxi* (Ashgate, 2007) includes a DVD documentary; a second volume, (Ashgate, 2009) also with DVD, describes musical life in Shaanbei.

Steve is also a violinist in leading early music ensembles in London, and features on many of the seminal modern recordings of Bach, Mozart, etc.

Love Sonnets of Michelangelo (1982)
Linden Loader (mezzo-soprano) & Karen Heathcote (soprano)

The **Love Sonnets of Michelangelo** I wrote for Michael Parmenter with whom I worked on a programme entitled 'Between Two Fires'. (Also included was a dance-theatre work I created collaboratively with Michael, using his voice as well as his body, with imagery extracted from the diaries of Franz Kafka.) At the time I was focused on different styles of melody, having just completed my Five Melodies for Piano. Inspired by the lovely voices of some of the then current students in our School of Music, I felt that women's voices gave the expressive quality I wanted, as well as providing a useful 'cover' for the overtly homoerotic tenor of the texts. The original production used film, shot by my good friend Bayley Watson, showed the dancer's prostrate figure, swathed in bandages. As the performance unfolded the cloth was gradually cut and peeled back by hands belonging to an old man whose face we never saw, the intended metaphor being of the sculptor cutting away marble to reveal the male form that he sensed already existed within the stone. The work has since had other performances that have discarded the theatrical elements, most successfully when each setting is prefaced by a reading of the poem in translation.

One of the greatest artists of all time, Michelangelo was also an important poet. These settings of some of his most personal sonnets articulate the anguish of love and desire, as well as the despair of old age. The musical style combines the theatricality of Italian bel canto with the direct expressivity of folksong. **Love Sonnets of Michelangelo** was originally sung by Leslie Graham and Linden Loader and danced by Michael Parmenter.

LOVE SONNETS OF MICHELANGELO

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The Sonnets of Michelangelo, trans. Elizabeth Jennings (Carcanet,
1988)

XXXII S'un casto amor, s'una pieta superna

If love is chaste, if pity comes from heaven,
If fortune, good or ill, is shared between
Two equal loves, and if one wish can govern
Two hearts, and nothing evil intervene:

If one soul joins two bodies fast for ever,
And if, on the same wings, these two can fly,
And if one dart of love can pierce and sever
The vital organs of both equally:

If both love one another with the same
Passion, and if each other's good is sought
By both, if taste and pleasure and desire

Bind such a faithful love-knot, who can claim,
Either with envy, scorn, contempt or ire,
The power to untie so fast a knot?

LVII (ii) Pasa per gli occhi al core in un momento

It passes from the eyes into the heart
In a split second. Thus all beauties may
Find by this means a wide and generous way;
And so, for countless men, desires start.

Burdened by grief and gripped by jealousy,
I am afraid of such a powerful passion.
Not, among countless faces, can I see
One which in life can give me consolation.

If mortal beauty satisfies desire
Completely, then it did not come from heaven;
Such strong emotion comes from human fire.

But if I pass beyond this and have striven
For healthy things, I need not be afraid
That I, by base desires shall be waylaid.

XXI D'altrui pietoso e sol di se spietato

To others merciful and only to
Itself unkind, this lowly creature who
Sloughs off its skin in pain that it may give
Pleasure to others, dies that they may live.

So do I long for such a destiny -
That from my death, my Lord, you might alone
Take life; then by my death I too might be
Changed like the worm which casts its skin on stone.

For if that skin were mine I could at least
Be woven in a gown to clasp that breast,
And so embrace the beauty which I crave.

Then would I gladly die. Or could I save
My Lord's feet from the rain by being shoes
Upon his feet - this also would I choose.

LIV Veggio nel tuo bel viso, signor mio

I see in your fair face, my dearest Lord,
That which in life I cannot fitly tell.
Your soul already, though flesh holds it still,
Has many times ascended to its God.

And if the vulgar and the malignant crowd
Misunderstand the love with which we're blest,
Its worth is not affected in the least:
Our faith and honest love can still feel proud.

Earth is the meagre source of all that we
Can know while still fleshbound. To those who see
In the right way, it gives most copiously.

All that we have of wisdom and of faith
Derives from earth, and if I love you with
Fervour, I shall reach God and find sweet death.

XXVII Non posso altra figura immaginarmi

I cannot shape an image or acquire,
Either from shadow or from earthly skin,
A counterpart to lessen my desire:
Such armour is your beauty shut within.

Obsessed and moved by you, I seem to get
Weaker. My passion takes my strength away.
By trying to diminish grief I but
Double it. Like death, it comes to stay.

And it is useless now for me to try
To win the race against such loveliness,
Which far outstrips the fastest runner here.

Love with its hands so tenderly will dry
My tears and make all labour seem most dear.
He is no coward who discovers this!

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

If a small, steady flame can quickly dry
The sap within a young green heart, what power
Will raging bonfires have when they but try
An old man's heart which moves to its last hour?

If time in general gives a meagre span
To life with all its values and its claims,
How much less will it grant a dying man
Who, in old age, still plays at lover's games?

The answer lies in my experience:
The wind which blows my ashes far away
Deprives the worms of their own rightful prey.

If in green youth I wept at milder pains,
In flames more fierce I've little hope that I
May overwhelm them now my wood is dry.

LXXVIII Caro m'e il sonno, e piu l'esser di sasso

Dear to me is sleep: still more, being made of stone.
While pain and guilt still linger here below,
Blindness and numbness - these please me alone;
Then do not wake me, keep your voices low.