

Bunbundalui - notes by the composer 23/1/2008

The piece was written for pianist Rob Williams** and the ensemble NYET in 1992. It was first performed by him with Megan Cavanagh-Russell on an Ensoniq Sampler keyboard and myself on didjeridu in Gallery 9, Deloraine Tasmania 10/4/1993.

The MIDI keyboard ("Sampler") part:

The piece is based on recordings made of the Crested Bellbird *Oreoica gutturalis* at Mt. Mary (Elpranama) near Harts Range in the Northern Territory in 1992. These appear not only as recordings (sometimes slowed down) in the music, but the keyboard "instrument" is largely comprised of fragments of the call which are sampled, looped and spread over the keyboard.

The original version was for the Ensoniq Performance Sampler which had (in today's terms) a laughable amount of memory. Hence I could only use very small fragments of the bird's call. I have nonetheless retained exactly these fragments in subsequent arrangements for the Ensoniq ASR 10 Sampler (1994) and most recently (2008) for the computer program Vsampler controlled by a MIDI keyboard.

I have also made "Soundfont" files of the Vsampler version, so the piece can now be realised using a 5 octave (61 note) MIDI keyboard controlling a computer with Vsampler or any other audio program capable of loading "Soundfont" files. There are no program or channel changes throughout the piece, so virtually any MIDI keyboard will do, but it should have velocity control for dynamic contrast. Copies of the necessary files are available from me directly - email ron@ronnagorcka.id.au

In 1997 in preparation for a concert in Harima, Japan, I rearranged the piece in order to be able to play the didjeridu and sampler parts simultaneously. This necessitated some peculiarities in tuning the notes of the keyboard which I have retained in the current arrangement as they make the piece much easier to play. They are as follows:

Considering mid C = C3

- (a) all notes below D2 play looped recordings of the Crested Bellbird at various speeds.
- (b) E2 plays B3, F2 plays D#3 and A2 plays B3. These notes are used extensively.
- (c) In addition E5 plays A5 (in measures 81 and 82) and C6 plays C#6 (measures 76 and 77).

The didjeridu:

The didjeridu plays fundamental B, represented by the lower line of the staff, and a hooted note, represented by the upper line. B is a very low fundamental and many instruments of this dimension do not "hoot" easily. In much of my music using didjeridu I do not consider the hoot to be crucial, but in this piece the contrast between the low note and the hoot imitates the contrast in the Bellbird's call between a high and (much softer) low note. The didjeridu I originally wrote for is very long and thin, and I recommend the use of such an instrument. The actual pitch of the hoot is of no concern.

A recording of the piece is available on the CD "Devils of the Night" available from Move Records, Melbourne Australia.

** I am indebted to Rob Williams for his interpretations of this piece, especially in preparation for a concert in Harima, Japan in 1997. Many of his suggestions are incorporated in the score.