AUTHOR ACCEPTED MANUSCRIPT

The More-than-human Worlds of Australian *Shakuhachi* Music

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ABSTRACT

The development of an Australian *shakuhachi* scene has seen the composition of new music for this Japanese flute that responds to Australian landscapes and environmental issues both local and global. This article examines the web of relations – the social geography of Australia's *shakuhachi* scene; cultural imaginaries linking the instrument with nature and ecology; composers' phenomenological relationships with places and creatures – that make up the "more-than-human worlds" of these compositions. In doing so, it presents the first scholarly study centred on the Australian *shakuhachi* scene and shows how instruments and new musical repertoires can mediate environmental concerns and projects of place-making.

MANUSCRIPT

Creeks and Rivers, Victoria and New South Wales

"I've always related very, very strongly to land and environment. And I was travelling...all round the place, looking at places I'd known for a long time and seeing them absolutely devastated." Australian composer Dindy Vaughan described to me the severe drought that affected Australia at the turn of the millennium.[1] "There was no water in a lot of places where there should have been water. The ground was hard and cracked. There was no grass left. … It looked like the end of the Earth."

In 2001, amid the drought, Vaughan attended a workshop for the Melbourne Composers' League run by *shakuhachi* (Japanese end-blown flute) player Anne Norman and harpsichordist Peter Hagen. She described being "incredibly switched on" by the workshop and the next morning wrote a piece: "It seemed to be just sitting there in my head." This became the first movement of her suite for *shakuhachi* and harpsichord, "Prayer for Restoration of Our Rivers", which "reflects on the devastation wreaked by 200 years of white settlement, but also seeks to encapsulate the special qualities, the living spirit, in each of the waterways" (Vaughan 2005, n.p.). Over the next two years, she revisited rivers around the state of Victoria, and used their names for five further movements in the suite. Three solos each for *shakuhachi* and harpsichord followed, again named after waterways. All these pieces were released on the album *Up the Creek* (Cracked Records 137, 2005). The name of the album, a pun on an Australian idiom used to describe a difficult situation, also references the troubled state of the nation's rivers.

Despite my persistent questions about her compositional process, Vaughan had little to say: "The total process is inexplicable to me." It was as if the pieces just came, with little conscious planning. She told me instead about places and their stories, including the ultimately unsuccessful community action to save Koonung Creek that is memorialised in one of the *shakuhachi* solos (the creek lay in the way of Melbourne's Eastern Freeway). Listening back after more than a decade, Vaughan was struck by the complexity of the sentiments underlying her pieces: anger and despair at the treatment of Australian Aboriginal people and the environment, combined with hope for the land's endurance and celebration of its rebuke to human exceptionalism and self-importance.

The More-than-human Worlds of Australian *Shakuhachi* Music

In its use of the *shakuhachi* to explore environmental degradation and Aboriginal rights,

Vaughan's "Prayer for Restoration of Our Rivers" is testament to the complex fate of Japanese traditional music today. Prompted by such cases, this article asks two questions. How has the *shakuhachi* become implicated in Australian projects of place-making and environmental concern through the creation of new music for the instrument? More broadly, how might we theorise the processes through which music becomes tied to the more-than-human world? To answer these questions, the article presents the first scholarly study focussed on the *shakuhachi* in Australia, despite the presence of an active *shakuhachi* scene and the significance of the instrument in the country's wider musical life. Based on this, it offers some ethnographically and historically grounded suggestions for conceptualising the association of music and environment as a process with intertwined social, cultural and phenomenological dimensions.

The article emerges at the meeting point between three currents in recent scholarship on music. First, it joins a rich vein of work thematising "place" in diverse genres of Japanese music (e.g. Hankins and Stevens 2014; Hill 2019; Keister 2008; Novak 2008; Plourde 2019; Tokita and de Ferranti 2016), including *shakuhachi* music (Browning 2016, 2017; Day 2020), as well as work on place and space in East Asian music (Howard and Ingram 2020) and music studies at large (e.g. Born 2013). Second, it contributes to the study of Japanese musical instruments, especially engagements with globalisation and cultural hybridity, such as Johnson's analyses of the "Okinawan guitarscape" (2013) and the "roots and routes" of the *shakuhachi* (2014), part of a resurgent interest in organology within ethnomusicology (e.g. Bates 2018; Roda 2014). Third, it participates in music studies' recent environmental turn, evident in the burgeoning field of ecomusicology (Allen and Dawe 2015) and in interest in the "more-than-human" in music (Wright 2017; Browning 2021; McKinnon et al. 2024) – albeit a disciplinary turn that has paid relatively little attention to Japanese music (exceptions include Edwards 2011; Yamada 2017).

The article brings these currents together to show how musical instruments and the new compositions they precipitate can contribute to musical place-making and crystallise environmental

sentiments. In doing so, it addresses the relatively limited study of the intercultural dynamics of place-making that Japanese music can elicit (exceptions include Johnson 2013; Novak 2013). In addition, while there is a growing literature on "eco-organology", examining issues of environmental degradation and sustainability associated with making musical instruments (summarised in Allen 2023), there has been little study of how musical instruments can mediate environmental sentiments outside of contexts of instrument-making and aside from attention to the materials used (see Dawe 2015). This article therefore provides a novel perspective on the way that musical instruments can become caught up in musicians' concerns about the environment and – through the creation and performance of new music – mediate those sentiments within a wider cultural sphere.

Environmental sentiments attach to the *shakuhachi* not only because of the materials used to make the instrument (although the naturalness of bamboo is pertinent here), but because of a wider constellation of ideas connecting the instrument with nature that also encompasses its "natural" timbre and mimetic capacities, the places and phenomena referenced in its traditional repertoire (*honkyoku*, "original pieces"), and imaginaries surrounding its significance within Japanese history and culture (see Browning 2016; 2017). In this article, I examine how these affordances of the instrument are mobilised to create new repertoire that has become caught up in projects of place-making and in affective and ethical orientations beyond the human.

To theorise these phenomena, I examine what I call the "more-than-human worlds" of Australian *shakuhachi* music: the complex web of human and non-human relations at stake in some new repertoire written for the instrument by Australian composers. I argue that these more-than-human worlds encompass three broad forms of relationality: first, the social geographies that constitute the Australian *shakuhachi* scene; second, the cultural imaginaries linking music with nature, landscape and environment that attend this East Asian instrument in the Australian context; and third, the phenomenological engagements with more-than-human entities that animate some

composers' "lifeworlds" (Yaka 2023). I see these forms of relationality as distinct, yet interconnected, and none alone can account for the phenomena discussed in this article. By using the term "more-than-human worlds" I seek to avoid nature-culture or nature-society dualisms that have been much critiqued (e.g. Descola 2013; Haraway 1997; Whatmore 2002) and instead recognise a network of relations that includes human social interactions, but also extends to interactions between humans, environments and non-human creatures; relations that are at once deeply culturally mediated and embodied in the here-and-now.

My conceptual framework draws on Georgina Born's influential article on how "music materializes identities" (2011), extending her concern with social identities to encompass more-than-human relations. My attention to these three broad forms of relationality (social geographies, cultural imaginaries, phenomenological engagements) is loosely based on Born's theorisation of four autonomous yet mutually interfering "planes" of social mediation that shape music's materialisation of identities (378). Alongside this, I follow a rich seam of work across the humanities and social and cultural geography that explores the "more-than-human" world and seeks to credit the agency of more-than-human entities (Lien and Pálsson 2019; Panelli 2010; Puig de la Bellacasa 2017; Tsing 2013; Whatmore 2006). I argue that new *shakuhachi* music does not simply "evoke" or "represent" places and creatures (although it certainly does this). Rather, by combining Born's insights with this literature, I identify a reciprocal relationship whereby music both emerges from composers' relations with the more-than-human world and materialises these webs of relationality in the form of sounds, scores, performances, stories and more. The music both composes and is composed by these more-than-human worlds.

A Partial Mapping: Places, Projects, Music

This article is a partial mapping that documents a few fragments of the more-than-human worlds of Australian *shakuhachi* music. The large quantity of Australian music for the *shakuhachi* and the variety of places with which it is entangled make a comprehensive account hard to imagine. More than this, my discussion insists on what Tsing (2000) calls "the partial, tentative, and shifting ability of the storyteller to identify elements at all" (327), pushing against the idea of an analysis that encapsulates the entire scene. In an influential critique of social scientific and anthropological perspectives on globalisation, Tsing argues that rather than naturalising the "global" thinking that was so prevalent at the turn of the millennium, scholars should instead investigate specific local constructions of the "global". Tsing calls these "projects": "relatively coherent bundles of ideas and practices as realized in particular times and places" (347). Accordingly, I try not to privilege one framework for understanding "Australian *shakuhachi* music" and instead analyse variegated local constructions. I focus on composers who overtly identify "nature", environment or Australian landscapes as important commitments orienting their work and discuss how they cultivate various senses of place, whether local, national or global. These are, following Tsing, "projects" of place-making and scale-making: local commitments to making certain sites and scales meaningful through music.

My account is also partial because of the contingency of ethnographic fieldwork. I draw on ethnography conducted in Australia between 2015 and 2017,[2] including conversations with composers and *shakuhachi* players, as well as observation of concerts and investigation of archival traces of particular compositions and the wider scene, including recordings, programme and album notes, websites, and newsletters. My account focusses on musicians based in and around Melbourne, because that is where I lived, although I also conducted fieldwork in Sydney and further afield. One figure, Anne Norman, features in several case studies, because she was a generous interlocutor and an active presence in Melbourne's musical life before and during my time there. In vignettes drawn from this fieldwork, I foreground how music, people, and places become knotted

together in distinctive ways. These vignettes function therefore as more than evocations of pieces or performances, they are also intended to ground the discussion in the emotional, sensory, aesthetic and social dimensions of composers' work and thus convey the complexity and sometimes deeply-felt nature of the projects of place-making at stake in this music – features that would be flattened by only taking a bird's eye view. As Tsing asks, "Through what social and material processes and cultural commitments do localities or globalities come, tentatively, into being?" (2000, 348).

The next section of the article locates the *shakuhachi* within the Australian new music scene and begins to sketch some of the social geographies and cultural dynamics that will be illustrated – or in some cases complicated – by the ethnographic vignettes and later discussion. I then build a partial mapping of the more-than-human worlds of Australian *shakuhachi* music through a series of case studies, each referencing places (and sometimes creatures or natural phenomena) in compositions by the composers Anne Norman, Johanna Selleck, Anne Boyd and Ross Edwards – joining the sketch of Vaughan's work above. I then step back from these case studies to analyse in turn the social geographies, cultural dynamics, and local phenomenologies that condition and animate these projects of musical place-making.

Locating the *Shakuhachi* within Australian New Music[3]

The *shakuhachi* is now relatively established, at least compared to other non-Western instruments, within "new music" scenes around the world – a situation built on a number of factors, including the late twentieth-century growth of an international *shakuhachi* scene, primarily in Australia, Europe, and the USA (Casano 2005; Day 2014; Keister 2004), as well as interest among non-Japanese composers in the *shakuhachi* and Japanese traditional music more broadly (Benítez and Kondō 1993; Lependorf 1989; Sheppard 2019). My aim here is not to provide a full account of

the development of the Australian *shakuhachi* scene itself, but that process is intimately tied to the emergence of a repertoire of new music for the instrument written by composers resident in Australia. Given that, this article begins the work of documenting some contours of the wider scene.

Like any facet of the instrument's history in Australia, the *shakuhachi*'s relationship with new music is closely tied to Riley Lee, a Chinese-American player, whose artistic career has involved substantial periods in Hawai'i, Japan and Australia.[4] Lee moved to Australia in 1986 and began working as the country's first professional *shakuhachi* player. Alongside working as a teacher, performer, recording artist and scholar, Lee has himself composed numerous pieces for the *shakuhachi* and been involved in the commissioning and performance of new compositions. Perhaps his largest direct impact on the Australian contemporary music scene has been through his collaborations as a performer with some of its most prominent composers, including Anne Boyd and Ross Edwards (both discussed below). Within the Australian *shakuhachi* scene itself, Lee's role is hard to overstate; he remains its most prominent figure, as well as being a well-known musician within Australian cultural life more broadly.

Numerous factors, including performances by Lee, and later by other Australian *shakuhachi* players (most of whom were initially his students), as well as airtime for the *shakuhachi* on Australian national radio, performances at festivals, and wider interest in Japanese culture coincident with the strong Japanese economic growth prior to the 1990s, helped to create awareness of the instrument among a range of listening publics associated with world, new age, folk and contemporary music. At the same time, some Australians began to learn to play the *shakuhachi* (and in some cases later to perform and teach) and made individual study trips to Japan, while the activities of the Australian Shakuhachi Society (ASS, founded in 1997),[5] including national festivals, local workshops, and visits by prominent *shakuhachi* performers from Japan and elsewhere, also served both to transmit musical knowledge and raise awareness. These two processes of growing cultural recognition of the instrument and increasing practical involvement by

specific individuals fed into each other to create an active scene. This, in turn, helped cultivate interest in the instrument among composers and led to the perception of the *shakuhachi* as a viable new music instrument.

There were, however, no clear watershed moments. Like many non-Japanese *shakuhachi* performers, Lee had been improvising, composing and playing twentieth-century repertoire by Japanese composers from early in his career – thus new music was heard in Australia perhaps as soon as the instrument arrived. If any piece holds the distinction of being the "first" Australian composition for the instrument it was likely composed by a player-composer such as Lee. But to focus on such "firsts" is to fail to recognise the social geography underlying the emergence of Australian *shakuhachi* music: various individual performers, collaborative relationships between composers and performers, pedagogical relationships between *shakuhachi* teachers and students, and the wider infrastructure provided by institutions such as the Australian Shakuhachi Society all helped cultivate specific local circumstances out of which new pieces could crystallise. In each case, distinctive interpersonal and institutional circumstances conditioned musical production. For example, Vaughan's "Prayer for Restoration of Our Rivers" and her subsequent pieces for *shakuhachi* grew not from one composer's exposure to the *shakuhachi* via recorded media, but rather through the initiative of Norman and Hagen as performers, supported by the Melbourne Composer's League, a non-profit organisation promoting new music across local, state and regional (Asia-Pacific) scales.[6]

Today, although the *shakuhachi* is not universally known within the Australian contemporary music scene, its presence is well established.[7] Times have changed in the decades since Tokita (1991), writing about "Japanese influence on contemporary Australian composers", suggested that "Australian composers are most unlikely to use an actual non-Western instrument except perhaps percussion" (466). Despite this change, Tokita's interest in the broad dynamics of cultural influence remains pertinent to the *shakuhachi*'s presence in the Australian new music

scene. Hence, for composers such as Anne Boyd, "Japan" is a recurring reference point in their oeuvres, beyond any engagement with the *shakuhachi*. Analysing such preoccupations, some scholars have called for typologies of different kinds of Asian "influence" on Western art music or of intercultural synthesis (Tokita 1991, 465-6; Everett 2004, 15-21). Others have sought to exemplify the underlying cultural dynamics in schematic terms. For example, identifying a "logic of alterity" in Australian composer Peter Sculthorpe's influences, Cook (2013) writes:

> [A]ttempting to create a distinctively Australian musical identity in the late 1960s, Peter Sculthorpe reacted against the British-dominated past of Australian music and his own training at the University of Oxford by means of close engagement with Balinese music, for example, in *Sun Music II* and *III*: here the syllogism is Balinese = not-British = Australian. (85)

Cook's syllogism seems at once instructive and reductive, a plausible yet partial account of Sculthorpe's motivations: as Cook acknowledges, but does not fully explore, it begs questions about Sculthorpe's turn to musical affiliations in the Asia-Pacific region, rather than with Australian Aboriginal music (ibid.). Typologies of East-West influence are likewise fraught, bringing insights about cross-cultural interaction yet also risking reinscribing the very categories they seek to deconstruct.

Here, I want to foreground the complexity and ambivalence of composers' engagements with musical alterity. Australian compositions for *shakuhachi* sometimes rely on conventional labels such as "Japanese" and "Australian", "Asian" and "Western", but they also offer "sites from which we see the instability of [such] social categories" (Tsing 1994, 279; see also Ang 2010, 130–32). No doubt the incorporation of the *shakuhachi* can be seen as stemming from orientalist impulses or as part of a wider effort to distinguish Australian new music from that of Europe and

America, but it also points, I will argue, towards Aboriginal cultural geographies, regional (Asia-Pacific) affiliations, and local and global ecological anxieties. In place of Cook's strict "logic of alterity", I see the *shakuhachi*'s otherness as offering a flexible cultural resource for place-making projects that are irreducible to national or international frames of reference or to linear dynamics of appropriation or exoticisation.

Before my case studies, I note one final feature of the *shakuhachi*'s place within Australian new music. Emerging in a zone of cultural overlap (Tsing 1994, 279), this repertoire effects a strange combination of marginality and prominence: it stands on the edge of both the *shakuhachi* tradition and contemporary classical music – even more so because of tendencies to frame Australia as peripheral to an international new music scene centred on Europe and North America. Yet, as scholars such as Tsing show, the marginal is worth attending to: music incorporating this Japanese flute holds a powerful place in some Australian musicians' lives and, through its liminal status, the *shakuhachi* can infiltrate prominent moments of national and global musical place-making, as I discuss below.

Black Currawongs, Flinders Island

Anne Norman, one of Vaughan's collaborators on *Up the Creek*, is also active as a composer, and nature and place are central themes in her work. Speaking with Norman in early 2016, I was especially interested to hear about a piece she was working on titled "Evening Cantillations".[8] Researching new music for *shakuhachi* often means interviewing composers about pieces written many years earlier, so the chance to discuss work-in-progress was particularly valuable. Norman half-performed and half-talked me through the piece. It opens with a field recording of forest sounds and bird calls recorded on Flinders Island off Tasmania. Over this she reads a poem that

grew out of seeing and hearing the island's Black Currawongs. "Caara caara" echoes back and forth between the recorded bird calls and her half-sung imitations. The poem gives way to a short piece for *shakuhachi*, violin and viola full of evocations of currawong calls, which Norman played to me through Sibelius software. The piece comes with a story about ecological learning: the poem references concern over Black Currawongs' "vulnerable" status, but she later discovered only one subspecies, *Strepera fuliginosa colei* of neighbouring King Island, is in fact endangered, and she incorporated this into her account of the composition and its inspiration.[9] Soon afterwards, Norman took this musical material to an artistic residency in Tasmania where she developed it into the finished piece.

Months later I heard a performance of "Evening Cantillations" at a concert, *The Way of the Flower: Stillness in a World Gone Mad*, in suburban Melbourne. Curated by Norman, the concert also featured Brandon Lee on *koto* (plucked zither), and *ikebana* Japanese flower arrangements by Shoso Shimbo, both Melbourne-based artists. Interweaving musical performance with Norman's poetry, field recordings, projected images and *ikebana*, this was an unusually theatrical setting for the *shakuhachi*. Pieces ranged from traditional *honkyoku*, through twentieth-century repertoire by Japanese and British composers, to several of Norman's compositions. During the first half, large-scale *ikebana* arrangements on stage provided a dramatic frame for the performance. After the interval, Shoso Shimbo and his assistants became part of the stage action, adding large flowers and leaves to a framework of bamboo as Norman and Lee performed. This combination of media literally *staged* the "naturalness" of the event, performing the concert's subtitle: "finding our place within nature, through ikebana, music and poetry". Yet it did so in a way that decentred any exclusive association between Japan and nature through repeated references to Australian landscapes: Flinders Island, Point Lonsdale, the Tarkine and Norman's home on the Mornington Peninsula were variously made audible through field recordings, evoked in compositions, made visible through projections of photographs, and referenced in programme notes and poetry. Details

that reinforced the "naturalness" of Japanese music – for example through the choice of the *honkyoku* piece "Shingetsu" (Heart-Mind Moon), a piece often associated with autumn, or Tadao Sawai's "Kaze no Uta" (Song of the Wind) for *shakuhachi* and *koto* – appeared alongside references to Australian creatures and places.

Port Fairy, the Four Seasons

In February 2017 I attended an event in the Melbourne Recital Centre to launch an album of compositions by Johanna Selleck, titled *The Prospect and Bower of Bliss* (Tall Poppies TP 240, 2016). After introductory speeches, the musicians – two sopranos, one percussionist and Anne Norman on *shakuhachi* – played movements from a song cycle included on the CD called "Seven Tanka", settings of poems by Australian poet Graeme Ellis. Selleck's writing for the *shakuhachi* is highly idiomatic. Movement 1 opens with breath sounds, and two distinctive trill techniques: Norman quickly rubs the open third hole while adjusting blowing pressure so that the trill splits between octaves, low-high-low. Then she trills hole three while keeping all other fingerholes closed, shifting between lowered (*meri*) and upright (*kari*) head positions, giving a sliding trill. These trills would be familiar to many *shakuhachi* players from the *honkyoku* piece "Tsuru no Sugomori" (Nesting Cranes). Listening, I was struck by a passage that occurs shortly afterwards, when both sopranos repeated the lyric "broad *shakuhachi*" twice as the *shakuhachi* plays.

Speaking with Selleck helped me to understand the piece's combination of idiomatic writing and peculiar reflexivity at play in the lyric referencing the *shakuhachi*.[10] Ellis wrote "Seven Tanka" after hearing Selleck's earlier "Songs of the Earth and Sky" (2008) for *shakuhachi* and percussion. Selleck then decided to set Ellis' poetry to music: the chain of artistic responses resulted in a reflexive reference to the *shakuhachi* within Selleck's "Seven Tanka". Written for the inaugural

concert of the International Shakuhachi Chamber Music Composition Competition in 2008, "Songs of the Earth and Sky" grew out of Selleck's long-term collaboration with Andrew MacGregor, a prominent Australian *shakuhachi* player and primary organiser of the competition in 2008 and 2010.[11] Selleck and MacGregor's collaboration began with "Becoming" for *shakuhachi*, soprano, countertenor, bass, and string quartet, a piece commissioned in 2006 for the Port Fairy Spring Music Festival, where MacGregor was a featured artist, and revised in 2007 for the Castlemaine Festival and again in 2013. "Becoming" sets *haiku* and *haiku*-inspired poems in multiple languages (including Japanese, English, French and Tibetan in the 2013 version), structured around the theme of the four seasons (movements are titled "Spring", "Summer", "Autumn" and "Winter", plus a cadenza, interlude and finale). Selleck worked closely with MacGregor to understand *shakuhachi* technique and, after MacGregor's retirement, with Norman. Hence, like "Seven Tanka", the score for "Becoming" integrates traditional techniques such as *koro-koro* (double trill) and *muraiki* (breathy playing) into Selleck's compositional idiom. Such features, then, stem from a history of collaboration and artistic response between performers, composer and poet, signalling a long-term, developing relationship between the *shakuhachi* and new music scenes in Australia.

Like other new *shakuhachi* compositions, Selleck's pieces draw on broader cultural imaginaries surrounding music and nature. She writes that "Becoming" "celebrates both the connections between and the uniqueness of different cultures: our connections between each other and with nature" (Selleck 2013, n.p.). Multilingual poetry speaks to this idea, while the centrality of *haiku* and the four seasons as structuring devices grounds the piece in familiar tropes about Japanese attitudes towards nature (see, for example, Shirane 2013). The piece appeals simultaneously to cultural sameness, in treating music, poetry and the feelings they provoke as "universal … transcend[ing] the barriers of language or culture", and to difference: "rhythms and intonations idiosyncratic to the sound of each spoken language have been explored as musical parameters in themselves" (Selleck 2013, n.p.). Selleck's decision to construct her piece around the

Japanese poetic form of *renga*, whereby multiple poets contribute thematically linked verses, plays an important part in the balancing of cultural specificity and universality. "Becoming" opens with a verse by Selleck herself, which references "mackerel sky" cloud formations and the "sleepy fishing village" of Port Fairy. As her programme note indicates, this "sets the season and occasion" in traditional literary style, situating coastal Port Fairy, the site of the piece's first performance, as a starting point for cosmopolitan travels. Moreover, the sensitivity to location is understood to be ongoing: "It is envisaged that 'Becoming' will continue to respond to time and place by incorporating translations [of the poetry] into different languages each time it is performed, thereby undergoing a fluid and constant metamorphosis" (ibid.).

Earth

Anne Boyd's compositions for *shakuhachi* grow out of what are widely described by both commentators and Boyd herself as the two most important influences on her music: the Australian landscape and Asian music (see Tokita 1996; Macarthur 2007). The story of her coming to compose for the instrument underlines the importance of performers as catalysts for the creation of new music for Japanese instruments. Boyd's "Cloudy Mountain" (1981) was originally written for flute and piano, but perhaps because of its *shakuhachi*-like flute writing (Tokita 1996, 195) was subsequently adapted for *shakuhachi* and *koto* by Riley Lee and Satsuki Odamura, a Japanese koto master long-term resident in Australia. Other compositions by Boyd such as "Goldfish through Summer Rain" (1978) have been adapted for *shakuhachi* and *koto* or harp, and Boyd has subsequently composed pieces specifically for Lee and harpist Marshall Maguire such as "Yuya 3" (2005). As well as somewhat defusing Tokita's critique of Boyd's lack of engagement with Australian-based performers of Japanese traditional music in her early work (1996, 197), these

compositions demonstrate that instrumentalists can take active roles in both reframing existing compositions and inspiring composers' subsequent choices of instrumental resources.

The natural phenomena referenced in pieces such as "Cloudy Mountain" are decidedly imagistic, drawing on widespread associations between East Asian art, nature and spirituality, untethered from particular sites or environmental concerns. By contrast, Boyd's "Angry Earth" (2006) for *shakuhachi*, two harps and orchestra, is overtly environmentalist. It was written for Riley Lee and the Sydney Youth Orchestra, commissioned by Ars Musica Australis. Where the environmentalist *shakuhachi* pieces discussed so far pair relatively modest instrumentation with relatively local environmental concerns, "Angry Earth" matches expansive musical resources with a similarly expansive vision of place and environment. The composer's programme note begins by describing 2005, which witnessed the Indian Ocean tsunami, Kashmir earthquake and Hurricane Katrina, as "a year of catastrophic natural disasters, events that in our insurance policies would be described as 'Acts of God'" (Boyd 2006, n.p.). Boyd's global conception is evident in the title of the piece and its individual movements ("Earth's Scream", "Earth's Mourning", "Earth's Dance"), illustrating Pedelty's (2012) observation that "Earth is becoming a central 'place' in our musical consciousness" (21). Boyd's programme note figures the orchestra as "the voice of the earth" and the *shakuhachi* and harps as "the voice of the spirit". Her personal fusion of Buddhist and Christian beliefs, and her description of composing as a spiritual process, have been widely discussed (see Tokita 1996, 194; Macarthur 2007, 2008, 2009), and the programme note to "Angry Earth" particularly foregrounds Christian ideas. Here, again, the *shakuhachi* is embroiled in unusual cultural territory, its Japanese Buddhist associations seemingly permitting its transposition into a Christian frame of religious reference. On top of this, "Angry Earth" enlists the *shakuhachi* within a project of musical place-making on a global scale, mediating distinctly cosmopolitan hopes and fears for humanity and the environment. Boyd makes relatively little mention of the instrument's origins or of Japanese traditional music, instead giving the instrument an unqualified place in the

piece as a figurehead for global environmental sentiments.[12]

From the Australian Bush to Sydney Opera House

Like Boyd, Ross Edwards is often described as composing music inspired by Australian landscapes, especially the sounds of insects and birds.[13] And as with Boyd, the *shakuhachi* is caught up in this framing of Edwards' work.[14] Even before composing for the instrument, Edwards was familiar with *honkyoku* and recognised its influence on his writing for other instruments, most obviously in "The Tower of Remoteness" (1978) for clarinet and piano, a piece inspired by both Zen Buddhism and the sounds of the bush in coastal New South Wales. His first piece for the *shakuhachi*, "Raft Song at Sunrise" (1995), grew out of a collaboration with Riley Lee and artist Ross Mellick, and was part of an exhibition of Mellick's raft-like bamboo installations at the Art Gallery of New South Wales in 1996. Edwards' programme note describes it as introducing the expressive "human voice" of the *shakuhachi* to "the timeless and mysterious sound world produced by insects".[15] Edwards' collaboration with Lee has resulted in more pieces, including "Tyalgum Mantras" (1999), "Dawn Mantras" (1999), "Heart of Night" (2004) and "Voice of the Rain" (2017). As the title of the latter suggests, the role of the *shakuhachi* has diversified since "Raft Song". As Edwards put it to me, the instrument features as a "[h]uman voice, [but] also bird, wind and water voices. My textures, by now, are complex melanges in which many voices coexist in what seems to me to be an inevitable fusion."

Edwards' turn, in the 1970s, away from European modernism and towards Australian environmental sounds alongside concerns with spirituality, ritual and dance, is a prominent narrative in both his own writings and interviews, and much of the commentary on his music. Robbie argues that this "stylistic trajectory...[involves] the rejection of the Britishness of his earlier

music, a rejection that … opens the door to the Australian bush … rendering his rejection of modernism as a patriotic act, and casting his compositional style as distinctively Australian" (2008, n.p.). This treatment of Australian musical identity as the other to Britishness bears resemblance to the "logic of alterity" Cook sees in Peter Sculthorpe's musical development. Paying attention to the *shakuhachi*, however, reveals concerns with multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism that go beyond Cook and Robbie's emphasis on the juxtaposition of national identities.

Among Edwards' compositions, one exemplifies these concerns. At 5.48 am on 1 January 2000, a girl soprano soloist, Riley Lee on *shakuhachi*, and four other instrumentalists playing saxophone, didjeridu and gongs, performed Edward's "Dawn Mantras" on top of the Sydney Opera House, with the Sydney Children's Choir at the harbourside below. The performance, devised by artistic director Nigel Jamieson, was broadcast to an international audience to mark the Australian dawn on the first day of the new millennium. It featured in the television programme *2000 Today*, an enormous global collage of music and dance, more than 24 hours long, and in various versions for different broadcasters. Although not as overtly reliant on natural imagery as some of Edwards' other pieces, issues of place-making were very evident in the piece and its broadcast. The combination of Aboriginal, Western, Japanese and Burmese instruments parallels the use of Australian Aboriginal, Latin and Asian languages in its choral parts. Such features frame the piece as a musical representation of the nation: multicultural, syncretic, optimistic. It was, in Edwards' words, "about the wonder of the dawn, hope for the millennium" (cited in Kerr 1999). The decision to perform from the roof of the Opera House situates the piece on one of Australia's most iconic landmarks (and certainly the most iconic of Australian music-making). Yet, through its participation in an unprecedented act of mass-mediated performance and reception, "Dawn Mantras" reached beyond national self-representation to global musical imagining: the performance took place hours after local celebrations (at midnight) and was primarily intended for broadcast rather than for local audiences, with the performers miming to a pre-recorded soundtrack.[16]

Sites, Scenes, Scales: Social Geographies of Australian *Shakuhachi* Music

In April 2017, as I travelled to the Sydney suburb of Manly to interview Riley Lee, my ferry passed the Sydney Opera House. Seeing the building's white sails curve above the harbour, I was once more struck by the inclusion of the *shakuhachi* in "Dawn Mantras". Its presence in that place at that time says a great deal about both Australian new music and the Australian *shakuhachi* scene, and represents a remarkable moment in the instrument's history – a moment that might have been incongruous if the social and cultural processes discussed in this article had not prepared the way. Before and since that high-profile event, numerous composers and performers have created music for the instrument such that the *shakuhachi* has come to participate in many projects of Australian musical place-making. The issues at play are varied and engage a wide range of spatial scales, including Australia's relationships with both Asia and the Global North; the politics of indigeneity in contemporary Australia; global conceptions of Earth as damaged or threatened; Australia's distinctive places, animals and plants; and local and national environmental problems. Clearly this Japanese instrument has found its way into many facets of contemporary Australian musical identity.

In the remainder of this article, I examine three forms of relationality that underpin the more-than-human worlds of Australian *shakuhachi* music, turning first to social geographies before considering cultural imaginaries and local phenomenologies. My discussions with composers and archival research suggest several important social dimensions to the *shakuhachi*'s entry into the new music scene. I have found little evidence that top-down cultural policy intended to forge stronger connections between Australia and Asia has had much direct impact on this new repertoire, although it is likely that a broad and indirect influence cascaded down from agreements such as the

bilateral Cultural Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of Japan (1974) and the Basic Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation between Australia and Japan (1976), through organisations like the Japan Foundation and Australia-Japan Foundation.[17] Instead, much creation of new Australian *shakuhachi* music seems to have been driven from the bottom-up by composers and performers, both individually and in collaboration. *Shakuhachi* players (and sometimes their collaborators on other instruments) have played a key role in approaching composers, encouraging them to write for the *shakuhachi* and sharing their knowledge of the instrument and its music. Some composers have responded enthusiastically, occasionally developing sustained relationships with *shakuhachi* players. Larger-scale initiatives that commission or otherwise solicit new compositions, such as the annual festivals of the ASS, the International Shakuhachi Chamber Music Composition Competition, and the 2008 World Shakuhachi Festival, represent the institutionalisation of this performer-driven support for new repertoire. While the effects of top-down cultural policy are hard to trace, governmental and cultural institutions and commercial organisations with remits well beyond the *shakuhachi* have nonetheless played an important part in supporting new music for the instrument. In a series of personal reflections on the history of the *shakuhachi* in Australia written for the ASS newsletter,[18] Riley Lee notes that Australian Shakuhachi Festivals and other commissioning initiatives have found support from local, state and national grants (see Lee 2003) and highlights the importance to his own career of Musica Viva, a national organisation focussed on chamber music (ibid.). Composers, especially the country's more prominent artists, likewise find support to write for the *shakuhachi* via national new music organisations, as with the commissioning of Boyd's "Angry Earth" by Ars Musica Australis. Lee also identifies the importance of recordings and record labels to the scene (Lee 2004b). The label Tall Poppies has, for example, produced many of Lee's recordings, as well as Selleck's album *The Prospect and Bower of Bliss*.

Performers' interventions were not always direct acts of collaboration: activities which

contributed to broader awareness of the *shakuhachi* have also had important effects – as, for example, when *shakuhachi* performers have been featured artists at festivals, which has led others to commission new works. Indeed, several of the pieces discussed above were commissioned for or premiered at local or regional festivals, a mark of the significance of regional music festivals within Australian cultural life (Gibson and Connell 2016). Although most performers are based in or near major urban centres such as Melbourne and Sydney, one refrain in my conversations with *shakuhachi* players and composers was that new repertoire was often tied to a professional involvement in the regional arts scenes evident in such festivals. Indeed, several of the composers discussed here are as likely to be heard in regional or suburban community centres, arts spaces and festivals as in the urban concert halls typically associated with new music.

In his reflections on the scene, Lee also draws attention to the role of regional festivals and Australian national public service broadcasting corporations in exposing audiences to the instrument, allowing performers to reach larger audiences than self-produced concerts, including listeners who might not attend a concert focussed solely on the *shakuhachi* (2003, 4-5; 2004a, 2). He also notes the importance of prestigious urban festivals and touring organisations in legitimising *shakuhachi* performers and in providing "access to or inclusion in significant publicity drives" (2003, 4-5). Concluding his serialised history for the ASS newsletter in a 2005 issue, Lee states that although "the *shakuhachi* was almost unknown in Australia less than twenty years ago, it is now an integral part of the Australian musical culture" (2005, 5). He also suggests that the Australian *shakuhachi* scene has "all of the elements of an established music tradition", including "composers for the instrument" (ibid.). While these reflections should be read cautiously – as based on Lee's personal experiences and views – they also speak to the work of Lee and others in building a lively Australian *shakuhachi* scene over the course of several decades, and they chime with my conversations with other players. The resulting network of social relations – interpersonal and institutionalised, within the scene and in wider Australian cultural life – has played a crucial part in

forming the more-than-human worlds of Australian *shakuhachi* music.

Cultural Imaginaries: Mediating Nature and Environment in Australian *Shakuhachi* Music

To this social geography, we should now add the cultural imaginaries at play in Australia that have helped connect the *shakuhachi* both to nature and the environment in general and to Australian places and natural phenomena in particular. Any analysis of these imaginaries must begin by recognising the ongoing circulation of ideas about Japanese people, culture and music as having a unique or special connection with nature. This association was cultivated both within Japan, through self-reflexive nationalist discourses of cultural and musical uniqueness (Edwards 2011; Shepherd 1991; Tokita and Hughes 2008, 26), and in Western representations of Japan, through what Walker calls "green orientalism" (2005, 15). No doubt the legacy of such ideas is at play to some extent whenever the *shakuhachi* is associated with nature, including in the pieces discussed here, although composers and *shakuhachi* players are typically unaware of the nationalist roots of such discourses and indeed positively value the "naturalness" of the *shakuhachi*'s sound.

Such ideas also intersect with broader issues of orientalism and appropriation in this music. Take, for example, the second movement of Boyd's "Angry Earth", which draws much of its harmonic material from the pitches A, B-flat, D, E, and F. Boyd's programme note describes the music as based on the "Japanese hyojoshi scale" – presumably a mistaken reference to the hirajōshi scale, which is similarly characterised by nuclear tones a fourth apart, infilled with an additional pitch a semitone above the lower nuclear tone (i.e. A-B-flat-D and E-F-A).[19] This minor-inflected scale perhaps supports Boyd's musical evocation of "Earth's mourning" (the title of the movement) and, if so, this appropriated Japanese scale is imbricated within her "eco-cosmopolitan" project (Heise 2008). It also represents the kind of appropriation of musical materials that, alongside

limited direct engagement with Japanese musicians or contemporary Japanese culture, led Tokita, writing in 1991, to describe Boyd straightforwardly as an "orientalist" (185).

Several decades later, much new Australian *shakuhachi* music, including Boyd's "Angry Earth", reworks the instrument's associations with nature and Japan towards other ends (see Browning 2016, 71; 2017, 186-7; drawing on Novak 2010). In Boyd's case, the instrument is enlisted within the musical construction of "Earth" as a place and it is notable that her programme note for "Angry Earth" describes the *shakuhachi* as "the voice of the spirit" and the orchestra as "the voice of the earth", thus linking Western instruments most closely with nature. If "Angry Earth" signals a moment of ecological concern about what Boyd calls the "dying and ravaged earth", then Edwards' "Dawn Mantras" encapsulates a more hopeful spirit of millennial and multicultural optimism from only a few years earlier. Both pieces enrol the *shakuhachi* within projects of global consciousness that are tied to transnational mediascapes: "Dawn Mantras" was conceived for international TV broadcast; "Angry Earth" responds to multiple global disasters only apparent to Boyd, resident in Australia, through mass media.

Vaughan's "Prayer for Restoration of our Rivers" provides a contrasting case. This composition emerges not from global media flows, but, as I discuss below, from local phenomenological encounters with the land. Relatedly, Vaughan enlists the *shakuhachi* not within a project of eco-cosmopolitanism, but within grassroots environmentalism tied to specific places and political causes (such as opposition to development of the Koonung Creek). Talking with me about the *shakuhachi*'s Japanese origins, Vaughan commented, "I recognise it as a Japanese instrument, but … it's totally applicable to this place and time too to me. It's not in any way exotic." Whether locally or globally oriented, none of the pieces discussed here simply use the *shakuhachi* as a symbol of Japan; rather it is drawn into projects that give voice to many places and entities. Wherever the *shakuhachi* speaks for a river, a bird, the wind, or the spirit, the instrument's difference from Western musical culture becomes allied with the alterity of the natural and/or

spiritual worlds.[20] The level of abstraction at which this elision of the cultural, natural and spiritual operates allows the *shakuhachi* to adapt to diverse projects of musical place-making. Key to this sense of alterity are two oft-mentioned musical characteristics of the *shakuhachi*. On the one hand, composers value its timbral complexity, tonal flexibility, unusual trills and effects, and the apparent temporal freedom of *honkyoku,* all of which distinguish it from Western art music norms. On the other hand, these same features are seen as anticipations of, or parallels for, extended instrumental techniques developed after World War II by Western composers and instrumentalists. Together, these ideas position the instrument in a relationship of intimate difference with contemporary art music.

The *shakuhachi* is not, however, unique in its ability to speak of or for nature: many pieces combine it with other instruments and composers draw on a broad tradition, internal to Western art music, of finding inspiration in nature and place.[21] Where the *shakuhachi* is set alongside other instruments, musical place-making is sometimes concerned with attitudes towards nature in different cultures and, by extension, with cultural diversity more generally. Here, local senses of place blur into broader projects of multiculturalism and eco-cosmopolitanism. This is overtly articulated in "Becoming", where Selleck emphasises a broad human capacity to connect with a nature that is shared, yet differently understood, across cultures. Another version, exemplified by Vaughan, recognises cultural difference while insisting on the relevance of instruments like the *shakuhachi* to local issues. Place-making and multiculturalist projects overlap further in "Dawn Mantras", where the *shakuhachi* at once represents Japan, Japan-in-Australia, and Australia-in-Asia, as well as – heard alongside other instruments and in the context of an international TV broadcast – Australia-in-the-world and the world itself, shared by humanity.

Although their engagements with the often troubled politics of Australian multiculturalism, Aboriginal rights, and the country's relationship with Asia are varied, what connects all these pieces is that they are allied with arguments for cultural engagement and exchange, rather than with

historically dominant narratives that advocate either protectionist insularity or a narrowly economic relationship between Australia and the wider region (Ang 2010, 2016). Indeed, today's Australian *shakuhachi* scene has emerged through direct and sustained cross-cultural interaction with Japan (the absence of which Tokita criticised in Boyd in the early 1990s). This occurs primarily through Australian players learning from Japanese *shakuhachi* masters and collaborating with Japanese musicians resident in Australia (such as the *koto* player Satsuki Odamura), but, more recently, also entails Australian players teaching Japanese students (as was the case for a young Japanese player who was living in Melbourne and studying with Norman during the period I was there).

Finally, in tracing the cultural imaginaries underlying the more-than-human worlds of Australian *shakuhachi* music, it is important to note the widespread concern with place and nature in Australian music at large.[22] Richards (2007) describes "an overriding sense of [Australian] musicians having an imaginative connection with the immediacy of the physical environment and a general acknowledgement that landscape has to play a part in shaping the music of the country" (1). The nine categories of "themes and influences in Australian music" listed on the website of the Australian Music Centre, include "Asian influences", "Environmental influences" and "Landscape influences".[23] By looking inwards to Australian landscapes and outwards to the country's regional position within Asia, such terms offer important labels through which the contemporary music scene understands and represents itself. Indeed, traffic between the new music scene and academic musicology, including via composers discussed here, has helped to establish these labels on a double front, both creatively and discursively (Boyd 2007; Edwards 1992).

It seems likely, therefore, that the place-making projects I have described here are part of a synergetic cross-fertilisation between the *shakuhachi* and the new music scenes, which allows the concern with nature and place to be sustained, pluralised and perhaps amplified across both. Clear lines of cause and effect are hard to draw, especially with respect to the idea that such concerns have increased because of the interaction between these two scenes. But the repertoire that has

emerged at the intersection between these parallel projects of musical place-making demonstrates what Tsing calls "conflation", whereby "overlaps among ideological projects produce an added intensity all around" (2000, 334). Even if the history of this mutual influence is elusive, it is clear that Australia's *shakuhachi* and new music scenes are now thoroughly entangled with each other. And although many of the pieces discussed here were written some time ago, the issues of environmental degradation, Aboriginal rights and multiculturalism with which they engage remain important within Australian public discourse.[24]

Composers' Lifeworlds: More-than-Human Phenomenologies and Australian *Shakuhachi* Music

While these social and cultural geographies are important, the music described here is not reducible to these broader dynamics. As the case studies above show, each piece also arises out of the specificities of composers' biographies, as their personal musical idiom mediates other cultural, political, and spiritual concerns. But more than this, composers' artistic work is often entangled with phenomenological engagements with the more-than-human world. It seems likely that this phenomenological perspective is relevant, to some extent, to many or all of the composers discussed here, but it was most apparent to me in the cases of Vaughan and Norman. This stems in part from the contingency of ethnographic fieldwork – I spent more time with these two composers, including visiting their homes – but it also reflects my choice of case studies: some pieces draw attention to composers' local phenomenological encounters, while others highlight the importance of cultural imaginaries surrounding Japanese nature or global mediascapes.

The work of Özge Yaka (2023) provides valuable conceptual tools for understanding the more-than-human phenomenologies at stake in Australian *shakuhachi* music. Writing about

community opposition to hydroelectric power plants in Turkey, Yaka develops the concept of "lifeworld" to examine "how…non-human entities and commons become a central part of people's everyday world of experience through continuous bodily relations, engagement, and experience" (2). Taking a phenomenological approach to understanding environmental engagement and activism, Yaka argues that it is through embodied, sensory and affective engagement with non-human entities that they come to occupy a "place in our social and experiential world that motivates us to protect them" (ibid.; on "care" in more-than-human worlds, see also Puig de la Bellacasa 2017). Where music studies has often focussed on the relationship between performance and environmental activism (Pedelty 2016, McDowell et al. 2021), the work of Yaka and others (see Lounela, Berglund and Kallinen 2019) might also help us recognise how musicians' sense of environmental ethics emerges from wider phenomenological experience. Whether or not they are overtly associated with activism, composers' engagements with non-human entities sometimes play a crucial part in their lifeworlds and the environmental sentiments embodied in their music.

Speaking to Vaughan and Norman, it always struck me how quickly both would turn to stories of particular places and landscapes connected to their music, sometimes referencing repeated visits over years or decades. A list of Vaughan's compositions, most of which are for Western instruments, is full of place names that map out regional Victoria and beyond, and it was through sustained engagement with such places that Vaughan witnessed the environmental decline that motivated "Prayer for Restoration of Our Rivers". Similarly, many of Norman's compositions and albums reference places across Australia and grow out of time spent in these landscapes. "Evening Cantillations" emerges from direct encounters with Black Currawongs. She also spoke of a long-standing interest in Brolgas (*Grus Rubicunda*), an Australian crane, and of time spent travelling rural Victoria to see these birds. Some of their stories linked places and creatures to particular artistic communities and festivals: both Vaughan and Norman spoke of the Lake Bolac Eel Festival in Western Australia, where Norman's "Brolga Suite" premiered in 2010. They also evoked sensory

memories and affective states (Yaka 2023, 6): awe at a rushing river, concern over drought, delight at the sound of a Black Currawong. This storytelling also implicated their immediate environments, and generous offers to visit their homes provided further insights into these composers' lifeworlds. For example, on one of several visits to Vaughan's home, she took me on a walk around her neighbourhood, including showing me one place where she had planted a number of trees without permission in an act of "guerilla gardening" (see Crane, Viswanathan and Whitelaw 2013). During visits to Norman's home, she told the story of playing *shakuhachi* with a Grey Butcherbird that would sing in her garden and took me on a walk to see the coastline of the Mornington Peninsula, where conversation turned to the plants on the seashore. Such acts and anecdotes – visiting trees, a tale of being visiting by a bird – are testament to the everyday forms of "more-than-human sociality" (Tsing 2013) that shape composers' lifeworlds.

Such experiences offered a window onto composers' phenomenological engagements with the more-than-human world, both in their everyday lives and in their travels around Australia. They also led to conversations about how the more-than-human world was implicated in composers' biographies and lives beyond music. Vaughan explained how her own heritage – Aboriginal Australian, Celtic and French – had motivated a life spent making music and caring for the land. As she put it, "From the time I was very young, the two essentials in my life were music and country." This reference to "country" invokes Indigenous Australians' use of that term to describe their traditional lands or what Bird Rose (2011) summarizes as "the matrix of all the living beings and all the life-systems that interactively share that time and place" (91). Vaughan also told stories of her work as a writer, educator, and activist, and explained how bushwalking, weed clearing, public meetings, and poetry were all important parts of her life, alongside composing. Similarly, Norman shared her interests beyond music, including writing eco-poetry (which sometimes features in her compositions) and writing a novel for children, again on environmental themes. In both cases, music forms part of a constellation of activities oriented towards the more-than-human world.

The intertwining of phenomenology and biography was particularly apparent when visiting Norman's home. I found the walls of her house dotted with poetry and pictures of performances, friends and collaborators, including a large cutting of late Living National Treasure Yamaguchi Gorō, one of her *shakuhachi* teachers. Three *shakuhachi* resting on a cabinet were camouflaged amid the wooden furniture and many wooden sculptures placed around the rooms. Home-made driftwood creatures with twisted bodies and strange expressions stood on table tops and hung from shelves thick with books, shells and stones, all testament to time walking on beaches, collecting from shorelines. These jostled with artwork, much of it Japanese; a mat and vase woven from natural materials during courses with Aboriginal women; bird and animal skulls; sculptures with startling shell faces, granite testicles and feet: objects full of stories, memory, and humour. Norman's home made it clear how musicians' lives can be archived in the material culture of their domestic spaces (see Feld 2012, 13-15), embodying their social networks, cultural connections and phenomenological engagements with the more-than-human world. One of Norman's *shakuhachi* compositions, "Whispered Shadows" (2014), asks the player to integrate their voice within the *shakuhachi*'s melodic line through gasps, sung harmonies, whispers, and a half-rhyming spoken list of natural objects in Japanese and English: "hone, happa, ishi, hibiki, kai, tane, hane, koeda; a bone, a leaf, a stone, an echo, a shell, a seed, a twig, a feather". Having visited Norman's home, I was struck by the parallel between these lyrics and the objects and sculptures that characterise her domestic space, such that "Whispered Shadows" itself functions as a partial textual and sonic archive of Norman's lifeworld.

Speaking with Vaughan and Norman, hearing their music, and visiting their homes produced a feeling akin to the "diasporic intimacy" that Feld describes in his ethnography of jazz cosmopolitanism in Accra (2012, 205; after Boym 1998): the understanding that people from very distant places can share, often through mutual musical experiences, the intimacy and personality of domestic spaces and, in this case, shared embodied engagement with the more-than-human world.

As a British citizen, temporarily resident in Australia for a few years, I found I had lots to talk about with Vaughan and Norman through shared musical reference points, interest in and concern for the environment, and everyday habits of spending time outdoors, in activities such as walking or gardening. Common ground such as this highlighted our shared participation in both the transnational *shakuhachi* scene and what could be called, borrowing a phrase from Tsing, a cosmopolitan culture of "nature loving" (2005, 121).

Stories, material culture, shared intimacies: all of these provide glimpses of the phenomenological engagements with the more-than-human world that constitute composers' lifewords. Ethnography deals sometimes with co-present phenomenological experience between ethnographer and research interlocutor – a shared walk, a joint encounter with a plant or landscape – and sometimes with the traces of interlocutors' past phenomenological experience – in memories, stories, and artefacts. These lifeworlds, at once embodied, sensory and affective, are co-constitutive of composers' musical creativity and artistic outputs; their compositions are both archives of those lifeworlds and intrinsic to those lifeworlds, as music-making is woven into their everyday experiences.

Partial Mappings: Composing More-than-human Worlds

This article has presented perhaps the first scholarly study of the Australian *shakuhachi* scene, contributing to understanding of a significant region in the instrument's transnational circulation. Building on work on "place" in Japanese and East Asian music, I have highlighted the understudied intercultural dynamics of place-making that attend some Japanese music. Likewise, extending current work within ecomusicology, I have shown how musical instruments can mediate environmental sentiments, not only through practices of instrument-making, but also through the

new musical repertoires they generate. I have argued that it is only by thinking across composers' lifeworlds and the wider social geographies and cultural imaginaries they inhabit that we can begin to trace what I have called the "more-than-human worlds" of Australian *shakuhachi* music: the complex web of relations at stake in the projects of musical place-making in which the instrument has become entangled. Accounting for the, in some ways remarkable, presence of Australian places and creatures – and, indeed, issues of Aboriginal land rights and millennial multiculturalism – in music for this Japanese musical instrument means bringing together a range of considerations: from social relations between musicians to the cultural infrastructure of grassroots arts festivals in Australia; from broad eco-cosmopolitan thought to ideas about the relationship between music and nature in the cultures of both Japan and Australia; from mass media representations of moments of imagined global connection to phenomenological encounters with particular landscapes and creatures.

As I noted earlier, my account here is necessarily a partial mapping. My analysis suggests that composers' musical works, their stories and perhaps even their domestic spaces are likewise partial mappings of the more-than-human worlds of Australian *shakuhachi* music. In idiosyncratic and fragmentary ways, they crystallise the social, cultural and phenomenological relationships at stake in composers' lives, the Australian *shakuhachi* scene, and the country's wider musical life. To properly understand the significance of these relationships we must attend to what Born (2011) calls the "mutual mediation" of "musical formations…and social identity formations" (382, 384), albeit extending those social formations to the more-than-human (Browning 2021). This complex web of relationships provides the conditions for the creation of this music even as the music itself produces and animates those relationships, imbuing them with personal and collective significance (see Born 2011, 378). Thus, new *shakuhachi* music is not only a product of the social geographies and cultural imaginaries at play in the Australian *shakuhachi* scene: the music itself also motivates musicians and composers to build and sustain collaborative relationships and to learn about and reimagine the

instrument's cultural associations. Composers' musical creations not only emerge from, but also give value to, their lifeworlds. These are mappings, then, not only in the sense of representations, but in the sense of active projects of place-making, in which music both composes and is composed by its more-than-human worlds.

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[1] My account draws on interviews with Vaughan in Melbourne in January and February 2016 and March 2017.

[2] My ethnographic snapshot and historical discussion open a window onto a phenomenon that extends well beyond my period of fieldwork and continues today. More recent examples include the album "Five Elements" (2020, ABC Classic), a collaboration between Riley Lee (*shakuhachi*) and the Enigma Quartet, described as "a kaleidoscopic journey through the Australian landscape" (see https://www.australianmusiccentre.com.au/product/the-five-elements; accessed 7 April 2025) and Ross Edwards' composition "Vespers for Mother Earth" (2020, premiered 2024), for eight voices and large ensemble, including *shakuhachi* (played by Lindsay Dugan), described as "a response to our present-day ecological crisis" (Edwards 2024, 13). Edwards' "Raft Song at Sunrise" (1995), discussed above, and his recent "Vespers for Mother Earth" demonstrate that the *shakuhachi* has been caught up in ideas about Australian nature and the environment for almost three decades.

[3] This heading references Everett and Lau 2004.

[4] My account here draws on my interview with Lee in Manly in April 2017, as well as conversations with other players and my own participation in the scene between 2015 and 2017 while resident in Melbourne. See also https://rileylee.com/bio (accessed 7 April 2025) and Lee (2003).

[5] See http://www.shakuhachi.org.au/ (accessed 7 April 2025).

[6] https://www.melbournecomposersleague.com/ (accessed 7 April 2025).

[7] The "The Five Elements" album mentioned above, with pieces by 10 well-known Australian composers, is just one indication of the *shakuhachi*'s notable presence within the Australian new music scene.

[8] My account is based on interviews with Norman in Melbourne and the Mornington peninsula in January and February 2016.

[9] See https://annenorman.wordpress.com/2016/04/16/evening-cantillations-2/ (accessed 7 April 2025).

[10] My account is based on interviews with Selleck in Melbourne in April 2016 and April 2017.

[11] MacGregor's former website for the competition (http://www.shakuhachichambermusic.com) offered a rich resource, although it is no longer available. It included a register of new music for the *shakuhachi* and information for composers on tuning, range and techniques. Because MacGregor has retired from the *shakuhachi* scene and relocated, information about his activities is relatively fragmentary, but he had a significant impact on the Australian scene and on the creation of new music for the instrument. Archival material on the International Shakuhachi Chamber Music Composition Competition can be found in past issues of the Australian Shakuhachi Society newsletter.

[12] The role of the *shakuhachi* is similarly unmarked in the analyses by Macarthur (2008, 2009).

[13] See https://www.rossedwards.com/ (accessed 7 April 2025).

[14] My account is based on email correspondence with Edwards in March and April 2017, while my discussion of "Dawn Mantras" also draws on my interview with Lee in Manly, April 2017, Kerr (1999) and the short video available at http://theoperahouseproject.com/#!/some-great-moments/millennium-part-2 (accessed 7 April 2025).

[15] http://www.rossedwards.com/raft-song-and-sunrise-1995/ (accessed 7 April 2025).

[16] See also http://www.rossedwards.com/dawn-mantras-for-live-performance/ (accessed 7 April 2025).

[17] For details on these agreements, see https://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/dfat/treaties/ATS/1976/3.html (accessed 7 April 2025); https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/japan/basic-treaty-of-friendship-and-co-operation-between-australia-and-japan (accessed 7 April 2025). For discussion of Australia-Japan and Australia-Asia cultural relations, see Rix (2013) and Walker and Sobocinska (2012) respectively.

[18] Archived here: http://www.shakuhachi.org.au/newsletters/ (accessed 7 April 2025).

[19] Boyd similarly refers to the "hyojoshi mode" in her programme note for "Jade Flower Song" (2006), there spelling out its use of "the notes A, D, E, F, and B flat". The complexities around the

naming and spelling of Boyd's scale are beyond the scope of this article, but for a detailed discussion of Japanese modes that informs my analysis, see Tokita and Hughes (2008, 19-20).

[20] A similarly multi-layered sense of alterity (albeit with more fraught politics) accompanies the incorporation of the didjeridu into Australian art music (see Paget 2013). The presence of the didjeridu in Edwards' "Dawn Mantras" grows, in part, from Lee's group Con Spirit Oz, founded in 1998, which included prominent Aboriginal didjeridu player Matthew Doyle, who performed in "Dawn Mantras". The didjeridu also contributes to the multiculturalist instrumentation of the piece and is enrolled within Edwards' wider interest in Aboriginal culture and reconciliation (see Boyd 2007, 16-17).

[21] See various contributions in Allen (2011) and Allen and Dawe (2015).

[22] This can be situated, in turn, within the long-standing concern with place and landscape across the arts in Australia. Within the visual arts, scholarly literature typically focuses on a tradition of Australian landscape painting dating back to at least the 1860s, usually narrated via figures such as Tom Roberts, Frederick McCubbin, Arthur Streeton, Margaret Preston, Albert Namatjira, Sidney Nolan, and Arthur Boyd (Mulligan and Hill 2001, 34–71). Place is equally a preoccupation in Australian literature and film, where according to Turner "the texts seem to invite us to accept that the land is central to a distinctively Australian meaning" (1993, 30; also Mulligan and Hill 2001, 72–111; Haynes 1998; Tompkins 2006). The relationship between artistic traditions established following colonisation and much older Aboriginal musical, narrative and visual cultures, as well as with new Aboriginal cultural forms that emerged in the late twentieth century (e.g. "dot paintings"), is a key concern. Issues discussed in this article recur throughout this broader literature, including the turn to landscape in order to forge a distinctive Australian artistic identity and artists' engagements with issues of colonialism, Aboriginal land rights and environmental degradation. The *shakuhachi* occasionally crosses between these art worlds. For example, the album *Shoalhaven Rise* (Black Sun Music, 150192, 1995) was recorded during Riley Lee's residency at the artist Arthur

Boyd's Bundanon property and its cover is a landscape painting specially painted by Boyd for the album.

[23] See http://www.australianmusiccentre.com.au (accessed 7 April 2025).

[24] The literature on each topic is extensive. Rootes (2001) provides an overview of sources on Australian environmentalism. Merlan (2005, 482–8) summarises the indigenous land rights movement and associated literature. Jupp (2007) and Jakubowicz and Ho (2014) discuss Australian multiculturalism.