

S3E4 Structuring poetry structuring music


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poem, music, score, sound, areopagus, work, resource, students, notate, agape, modern, luca, listening, samples, recordings, ancient, poetry, love, ideas, year

SPEAKERS


finley humberstone, ZoÃ« Humberstone, James Humberstone, Luka Lesson

-  Luka Lesson 00:00


For the first time that night, the guests of this symposium step out of Agha thorns house and the city of ancient Athens is covered in gray haze and smoke. The ancients see in front of them, protesters and police staring back at them from the streets. The modern people see glowing figures in the shape of ancient Greeks, their bodies adorned with robes and a light shining beneath their clothes, old men and leather sandals a woman draped in linen sheets, the ancients seen modern citizens with inner filaments, neon beings in mid photosynthesis wearing clothes, they've never seen bulletproof vests and military boots on their feet

-  ZoÃ« Humberstone 00:45


Music Zettel

-  finley humberstone 00:47

With James Humberstone

-  Luka Lesson 00:48

appears right in front, two fathers of the two areas with their two little sons start to

-  James Humberstone 00:54

welcome to Music settle a podcast about engaging students in creative, pluralist music making, drawing on my own work as an academic teacher, and a composer and producer. And in fact, you've just been listening to more of my composition and production, the demo track for the fantastic I say, I did this last podcast can I say my music is fantastic. I seem to be doing it I

probably shouldn't, for the fantastic track Areopagus five from the new the new piece that I have created with the amazing Luca lesson, agape and other kinds of love. If you don't know anything about that show, then that's because you've come in at episode four of season three. And you should have started at episode one where I explain what the essentials are of the story, obviously, you need to either come and see the show or buy the book, or the album when it comes out. To really understand the story and all of the incredible complexity and brilliance that goes into it. I'm talking about Lukas brilliance now not my own, because I'm not that brilliant whatsoever. But I did write music, that props up Lukas brilliant poetry. And in many ways, that's what the job of a composer is in this situation, or the job of a film composer in film where you can take brilliant scripts and brilliant cinematography and incredible editing and special effects. But then you can add on lashings of emotional content. And that's what's really going on, I was saying things about my own work. Because I'm very, very proud of that, of that beginning of that piece, Areopagus five,



Luka Lesson 02:53

to her shoulders, like a call to pray. Chaos and Cosmos watch odd and from above



James Humberstone 03:08

Athens, and the peace that comes after it Acropolis because it is a work in which everything comes together at the end in a in a great huge climax, agape and other kinds of love. And in the last podcast, I talked about the different sound worlds in agape. And I shared with you two challenges for students first to create a sort of atmospheric pad like sound, a sustained soundtrack and use it as the soundtrack for some real footage from NASA. And then second, to draw on the idea of an ancient world maybe stealing some of my ideas about Ancient Greece or maybe doing some research and looking about other worlds. And of course, the other world in this is the the pan to sound comes from. We've got the modern Athens and the ancient Athens and then the outside time, space of chaos and Cosmos. And all of those things come together in these in these two movements. And that's what you were hearing there. Violin synthesizers, low bap, elements, drumkits samples, Luca. Really? I mean, sort of declamatory, isn't it he's telling a story. It's definitely poetry. But with the beat and everything, there's no doubt that it's on the edge edges between poetry and rapping, and rap. And so, yes, I'm super, super proud about that. So this week, I'm talking about that work that you do as the kid imposer in something like this working with, it could be film, maybe you would like to change this resource if you don't already teach a unit on film music or video game music, of course, which is very popular nowadays. And video game. Video game production is becoming a huge industry as big as Hollywood film production. So maybe you will, you'll, you'll take some of these ideas, and maybe you'll head off in that direction. But really, that's very much how I, how I see it, especially in the more poetry parts of agape and other kinds of love in the parts where Lucas sent me a



James Humberstone 05:39

track of him reading the poem. And then I orchestrated it. And sometimes, I just find rhythm in his voice in his recording, even when I didn't realize it was there by reading the written version of the poem. And so what I've provided in the resource is actually two recordings. You've just

been listening to a part of the demo. But I've also got a live video of Luca performing Areopagus five, most of it at the National Museum of Australia, which is where we premiered this work in 2022. It was showing there alongside the traveling exhibition of the British Museum, they're traveling exhibition of ancient Greek stuff that they stole from Greece, sorry that they exhibit that is they are helping look after from Greece, Luca. And I, of course, super aware to all the irony, all of the crossed ironies going on here. But it was really, really an amazing exhibition and an amazing opportunity to go and perform this work in the theater. So if you if you go and jump into the resource you can see and that gives you a chance to see some of the amazing lighting design by Laura Jade, and to see Greta playing the violin live. Remember I said, For the ancient Greek world, we have the Shaka man, this amazing, this modern reimaged version of the Canon che, ancient Persian instrument, we've got in the ancient world samples of instruments like with santoor, being played via samples. And then in the modern world, or Greta plays the violin, various other things, she also sings, and Ella, who you can see on the other side of the stage, when you watch that video, is playing various synthesizers and triggering lots of samples off a launch pad and an Ableton Push. So you can press buttons on those and get cool sound effects happening in exactly the right place, you'll be able to not just hear it, as you've heard an excerpt, but also also see, Luca performing it when you go in and look at that resource. And as I've said, in previous weeks, I will not say that long address again, I will just put it in the show notes that if you go to my website, humberstone.org, you very quickly find all of this information there. So what else is in here, then apart from those resources? Well, basically what I've provided you with is everything that you need for students to do their own analysis of this work, we've got an excerpt of Areopagus five, the poem written by Luca that you can open up there in the website. And hopefully, they've done the other work that we looked at in the last episode about the sound worlds. So they can go through that recording, and read the poem and mark where the different sound worlds happened. The other things that I talked about, were different elements of sound design. So I talked about the chaos and Cosmos sound design, in addition to the synth pads, the different sort of white noise and bleeps and bloops. And I had examples of those, both in the resource and also in the last episode of the podcast. And I also talked right at the end, about the idea of making using a heartbeat for when we keep going back to the Areopagus because there is this idea of a murmur in the dirt and that something is changing, and that the worlds the ancient world on the modern world are breaking through and meeting which is what happens in this scene finally, and, and so and then you've got all of the different some samples. So the sound of the sense Centuri, from ancient AP and Athens with the modern low BAP sounds, and so on and so forth. And so students can actually use this as a listening exercise to go through reading the poem, listening and thinking about those signed worlds and identifying where in the poem they come and how the music is supporting what is happening in No text. Now, I have also then put in that resource, a checklist as a separate page so that you can immediately see all of the things as soon as you open it up and know what the answers are the sort of spoiler alert, not required. But then you can use that checklist to see whether you manage to spot everything that is there. And then you're thinking, but hang on, James, that's lovely that we've got a checklist, but how are we the teachers supposed to know where everything comes? Well, I've also provided the score. So I actually had a chat with Lucas today. And I think that we should make the whole score available for purchase from his website, you can buy the book, agape and other kinds of love from Lucca.lesson.com, go to the shop, class sets are available. And I'm going to at some point in the next few weeks, I'm going to sit down and do a neat edit of the score. Obviously, we've made some changes as we've been developing the live versions of the show, and make sure that it's consistent with the versions that you'll see perform being performed around Australia this year. And coming very soon to the Parramatta river side if you're listening just as this has come out the Riverside Theatre in Parramatta on the 29th of February in the first of March. But yeah, I'll get a score up there as

well. And of course, later in the year, we've got the album coming. So the the score of the show will even if we make cuts to some of the songs for the album, it will then include the great majority of that work too. So a useful score study item, if that's the kind of thing you want, either as a teacher who's teaching it and wants to see exactly what comes where, but also as the students. So I said that these, these latter two resources are really for what we we call in New South Wales, stage four and stage five, so year nine to year 12, in most states and territories. And obviously, if you're doing a course that requires a score analysis and score reading, then the score is very useful. However, I also want to make the point that this whole assignment can be done in a DAW adore a digital audio workstation, without necessarily needing to do score reading. So if you're teaching a course, that allows students to compose and do audio production, music production, in adore, then they can still use this. Even without the without the scoring you the teacher might want to just download the free version of the excerpt of Areopagus five there, just so that you can, you know, confirm with the students what sounds you heard, and, and where you may also find it interesting. And I've got some of this further down in the resource, you may find it interesting, just to note how I notated on a sort of traditional Western art music score. Ideas like drum beats, and one shot samples like explosions and sounds of riots and things like that. How do you write that in a score to be played, of course, there's no kind of like, traditional standard practice. So you very much a lot of that I had to design as I was doing it. So there you go, as I say, that will allow you to then uncover how I allowed the poem to help me design the music all of



Luka Lesson 13:26

its spokes leading inwards.



James Humberstone 13:42

Just like the other resources that I've created around agape and other kinds of love, this is all about student creativity. So even though what I've described could probably be taught as an extremely boring, dry listening lesson. Sorry about that students, but you know, sometimes you have to do it, it could be taught like that. But the aim is to get them understanding what's going on and how I did it and why I did it so that they can do it themselves. I was lucky enough to work for many years, as I'm sure many of you listening to this know with the wonderful Richard Gill who used to say the purpose of learning music is to make it and then to make it up and that's very much still sits with me in the way that I teach. Nowadays, although I doubt Richard would have been maybe doing so much hip hop, as I am doing but that's okay. You know, that's, that's, that's where the pluralist ingredient comes in. So make it and then make it up. And what I've provided next with Lukas permission and blessing is a copy of his poem May your pen grace the page which has actually been used in the year 12 English course here in New South Wales for the last X number of years, I think four years or something. So many, many students who are finishing high High School NOW or going have finished in the last few years and have moved on. Will might already know Lucas work and might know this specific poem. And of course, he because it's been used in a lot of course study in the English course, there are a nice recordings around and so Luca allowed me to get hold of one of the recordings that he made of that poem, so that it can be dropped into a door. Or if you're using a music notation program that allows you to load an audio file in, I think, lots of the lots of the popular ones do, then of course, you could music notate compose to the poem, if you wanted to. And what I've done here is that I've created in the remaining bits of the resource, some, some

prompts to help students get started to avoid what I call blank page syndrome. So some questions here, what is the mood of the poem overall, does the mood change between lines or sections, what kind of music best present represents that mood? Is it fast or slow, loud or quiet consonant or dissonant, smooth, or spiky, and so on, and I get them to think about it structurally and the sound and actually to work acoustically. And without a score, even if they are going to eventually make a score, just to mark up the poem with the kind of sound design or the kind of mood that they're going for. And then they might start improvising with sound or playing around with sound. If they're going to write the composition in a door, they might do it there. And if they're going to write it in a notation program, then they might take those little experiments and start working out how to notate them. So there you go. That's my, that's my idea. I've included in the resource as well, some ideas for scoring. And showing a little bit of a few comments about how I notated some of those ideas in the score. But of course, you can, as I said, get that whole excerpt and download that for free and open it up. So there you go, I'm going to leave you in this final podcast about using these teaching resources. With all of the materials for the show, hopefully, some of you will get to see the show. I'm gonna leave you with the track that comes after Areopagus five a little excerpt from the Acropolis track after the people have come together. And leading on towards the final track the title track agape, which you heard in a couple of a couple of podcasts ago, I hope that all of this is useful if you go and make any changes to these resources and make something new out of them. Or if you've got student work that you are allowed to share under the rules of student work in your state, territory or country. I would love it if you would share your thinking your ideas and any music students have made if that's allowed, that will be absolutely fantastic, really inspiring for me to know that this stuff is going around and getting used and maybe to inspire me to go and make more of it and keep updating it as the year goes on. And the show is yeah, it goes around, goes around the country and then eventually goes overseas. So here you go, leaving you with a little bit from across the years,

L Luka Lesson 18:26

it dances and thrusts like a flock of starlings rising and falling of the dimmer and dusk alone, the ratio of pure love slowly starts to revolve in a circle, a gigantic Halo, the size of the path above the head of the city, and it shines brighter and brighter, and the people's bodies radiate.

L Luka Lesson 19:01

Until the light of the people's bodies and the light of the cloud of dust become one and a blast white phosphorescence across the city, and peasants and adolescence become one with pigments of graffiti. Every breath becomes luminescent music

Z Zoã« Humberstone 19:17

Music Zettel was written, presented and produced by James Humberstone.

F finley humberstone 19:23

Music in this episode was composed by James Humberstone



Luka Lesson 19:28

Slade with Alexander the Great. Josephine Bonaparte.