

S3E15 Finding Our Voice

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SUMMARY KEYWORDS

recordings, music, work, wonderful, resources, interviews, sydney, jess, videos, australian, listening, students, idea, podcast, daytime, website, sounds, project, click, making

SPEAKERS

Jess Lee, James Humberstone, Zoë Humberstone, Lillian Li, finley humberstone

Z Zoë Humberstone 00:04
Music Zettel

F finley humberstone 00:07
with James Humberstone.

J Jess Lee 00:17
When we close our eyes and appreciate sounds in nature, we are able to send sounds coming from all different directions. We can mimic this in our recordings by using panning.

J Jess Lee 00:27
I'm in soundtrack and here I have a short recording of leaves rustling. This is what it sounds like.

J Jess Lee 00:39
If we click the Show instrument button here, we can see that the pan control is set to 0% which means that the sound is coming through the left and right speakers equally. Let's see what happens when we drag this all the way to the left.

J Jess Lee 01:00
If you listened with headphones, you should have been able to hear the sound only come through your left ear. Similarly

through your next call summary.



James Humberstone 01:09

Welcome to Music Zettel. The podcast about engaging students in creative pluralist music making drawing on my own work as an academic, a teacher and a composer and producer. So you were just listening to the voice of the wonderful teacher Jess Lee, who is one of our wonderful musical graduates music education graduates here at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. And I was privileged to work on an amazing project with Jess and two other of our graduates, Lillian Lee and Vicki Jiang, from late 2022 through to about the middle of 2023 on a project called Finding our voice, which was a series of commissions of new Australian music



James Humberstone 02:02

command command that isn't the right word steered inspired by the completely brilliant Genevieve Lacey. Some of you will know Genevieve best as the recorder queen, amazing virtuosic, recorder player. But many of you who follow new music will also know Genevieve as a curator and a commissioner and a collaborator. And I've worked around Genevieve for all the best part of 20 years in the various institutions that I've worked in, but I've never got to work on a project with her before. So it was really brilliant to be involved in this project. In fact, when she first got in touch with me, it was just to ask for some advice. They had various funds and plans to make education resources to as part of this series of a Commission's new Australian work. And they were keen to, you know, get a little bit of advice, and maybe have some kind of fresh, fresh idea fresh, something a little bit different to maybe what's been out there before. And the thing that I kind of pitched to the team. A big international team of people who were helping make this come to life was that I while you know, the sort of predictable thing to do with contemporary Australia Australian music is to really aim it at young people in their final year of schooling. Um, so in my state, we have a mandatory topic, if you're doing the art music course music, too, called Music of the last 25 years with a focus on Australian music. And so obviously, that kind of thing it fits into we also have Australian music mandated throughout our different age groups. And if we look then more broadly at the Australian Curriculum, similarly, we're encouraged to look at Australian music in the Australian curriculum, and also the music of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists. So it's tempting to sort of zone in on those older, young people. And that, you know, that's great. There's lots and lots of good resources aimed at those people. And some of the things that we've made here are definitely suitable for working with older students. But I suggested that in nearly every state and territory in this country, as in many, many countries around the world, maybe even the majority of countries around the world, the only time that we get, you know, mandatory music with young people, and a and And a qualified music teacher is at the start of high school. And so I said, why don't we use this music? You know, I mean, contemporary music can be, you know, different confronting, weird, wonderful. And so you know, that might be considered a little bit harder for younger people to get involved with. But I argued that, you know, why not make it all actually aimed at younger people and get them involved. And I also said that I thought that the way in was to avoid lots of score reading and study of the work that naturally happens. But what we do in this kit, and this fits with other things that I've talked in this podcast series about creative teaching musical creativity, what I suggested was that we focus in on the new works that are created more as models of creativity. And we just pluck one little thing out of each work. And we turn that into creative activities for young people. So it's not about sitting and listening, and studying a score, or reading a text or memorizing facts and being it's all about how do we get

as quickly as we can to making music. So I'm actually recording my podcast in a slightly different way. Today, normally, I'm recording into a door. But actually, today I'm recording into some screen capturing software because I wanted to have, I just wanted to be able to go through all of the materials that are available on the finding our voice website with you, sort of in real time. Rather than finding all of those things in various different Dropbox and Google Drive folders and putting them all together. I'm literally going to be clicking on the website, through and just going through it for for some time, I was gonna say for half an hour, I have no idea how long I'm going to click through it. I'm not going to go and look at every single resource on there. But you should. So I've mentioned the address is finding our voice dot a, you know, common they're finding our voice.au and there were 11 commissions of Ozzy artists, including Are you ready for this incredible lineup, William Barton, Linda may Han Oh, Lisa Ilian, Madeline Flynn, Jenny Hector, Tim Humphrey, Mark Atkins, Erkki, velt, Haim Mathias, Shaq Arnott Lior Nigel Westlake Lou Bennett, and Sonny Kim. And so I'm going to be talking about the resources that are on the website today. And the voice that you just heard, giving some instructions about creating a soundscape and panning and things like that. That was the wonderful Jess, in one of those educational resources that I'm going to take you through today. But the first thing that you'll probably want to go and have a look at when you arrive at the website is the film's of the performance and the little sort of behind the scenes videos that are there. So yeah, when you arrive at the website, there's a button on the menus that just says watch. And if you click there, you'll see beautifully produced video recordings of the works. So you know, I just said this isn't about sitting and listening to recordings, but you totally can sit and listen to recordings. And I just said that, you know, new music can be a little bit you know, confronting, confronting or weird and wonderful for, for young people, maybe especially younger young people. But actually, you know, there's this the, the thing that I love about working with Genevieve and working with this kind of project is that it really there aren't sort of boundaries around different styles. There are definitely pieces in here that you would describe as you know, very avant garde. And there are pieces on here that you would regard as you know, quite Poppy in nature, and everything in between. And so you know, yeah, I guess you know, you all know that I'm a self titled pluralist, but I would certainly suggest whether or not Genevieve wants that title that I would give it to her I think she's I think she's just a wonderful musician who loves music and culture and you know, this, this whole project is so wonderful. It's so out there in so many ways, but so down to earth, and yeah, just all these different wonderful ideas about music. So the tutorial I was just playing you after you've gone through and watched some of the beautiful films of the music and listen to the repertoire. Click on the Next button along which is called resources. And each work has got its resources. We wanted to make an offer Flying versions. So for each resource, there's a PDF, that you can literally just download and print out. Because we know, various schools have got limitations of what they can access while they're at school. You know, all those kinds of things. So we made those versions for you so that, you know, if you're in that situation, or if you just, you know, maybe you don't trust, various connections at school, or whatever, you can download a lot of these resources by



James Humberstone 10:28

going to the PDF, and downloading the PDF, and then the links resources from the PDF, printing it out, et cetera, et cetera. But the best way to do it is to go and actually look at the online web page of each one. And the the tutorial video that you will, you could hear Jess talking in is for the work dark, quiet by Madeline Flynn, Jenny Hector and Tim Humphrey. And we actually got to go to this. I'm trying to remember who it was, it was Jess and Vicki and I. And it was down in Bundanon, which is on the south coast of New South Wales or near the south coast of New South Wales wonderful art center. And this amazing work was installed in the dark, there was a

performance in the in the building inside. But also you got to go out and walk in the darkness with red lights so that you didn't scare the animals away. And, and walk well, yeah, there were various installed things with sound and objects and shapes that you got to interact with. Yeah, that did interesting things with sound as you went around. So on the on the website for this, this was one that we all wrote together, I think. And then Jess put it together at the end of the period when we were making these resources. But it starts off with an activity for building your own head hide, which is like a box built around you to change the way that you're perceiving sound in the outdoors. And Jess has made beautiful illustrations for how to build one of those with your with like a cardboard box. And then and then we've got some recordings that you can listen to while in your head hide that change the way that you perceive some natural sounds and justice provided those sounds, then we send kids off to go and make field recordings in the dark. So you can see what I mean. Even though this all is totally related to the actual work that we went to ourselves in Bundanon, you could actually start these activities without ever hearing the piece, you could just have everyone you know, take a cardboard box and stick it over their heads and start listening to sounds and seeing how their perception is altered. You can send people out with you know, their phone, or some other kind of device into the dark to make some recordings. And you can get them to follow the tutorial on Editing field recordings into a soundscape all without ever hearing the weird and wonderful work. Now, obviously, at some point, you're gonna say are you probably wondering where this where these fun, weird, wonderful activities are coming from that we're all taking part in, let's have a look at this piece. And then you can also use the full recording of it, or the or the other resources that are there. Like, you know, the like I was saying sort of behind the scenes kind of videos, if the students are interested to supplement what they know. And probably if you if you do decide to use these resources, you know, with older students in the in the higher end of secondary school, then probably you would want to supplement more heavily with those, you know, background interviews and things like that, because that gives them lots more detailed information about many things that happen in the work as I say, Our aim was take just one spark of an idea from the composition that that allows us to create, you know, to do something creative, and then throw young people straight into doing those creative things. All right, so I'm just clicking back on resources. I'm at work today while I'm recording this, and the University of Sydney's internet is not making me very are not making my browser very happy. So I'm just filling in there we go while there while it reloads. But yes from the Resources page. As I say you can download PDFs or You can, you can click a little button that says View Online. So I'll go into I mentioned before, you know some of the work, which is a little bit more poppy. So this joint work by Lior, Nigel Westlake and Lou Bennett, called Napa, William Cooper is an incredible work, which Yeah, definitely, you know, it's the best of all three of those musicians, you probably already know those, those musicians. And in this resource, what I did was that I used the the recordings of the artists talking about the work to actually introduce the story behind this piece. Now, this is really important. I'll encourage you to actually go and read the story properly, because I can't do it justice off the top of my head. But the story of Napa William Cooper, and a protest against what the Nazis were doing in Germany, in November 1938, the Kristallnacht event, and this amazing connection that we have between this Australian and protest, and something terrible that was happening in Europe. And so this piece of music tells that story and tells the wider story of this man's life. And so, I provide an excerpt of that story, and I provide a little bit, what I've done is I've cut three bits of the song, I'd love to play this to you. But I'm not going to play it into the podcast, because, obviously, finding our voice. And Genevieve commissioned the works. And they've got the copyright to put these beautiful videos and recordings up on the website where you can go and watch them totally for free and for nothing. But that doesn't necessarily mean and I've obviously worked with and got all of these recordings from when I was working on the resources. But that doesn't necessarily mean I've got permission to play them live on my podcast, sadly. But what I did was that I took Nigel and Leo's style of

composition and orchestration. And I point out that the stories from these three excerpts that I cut out of the work, these three excerpts were the stories are being sung over the top are actually all recorded over simple four chord patterns, you know, just obviously, the orchestration being Nigel Westlake is totally and utterly incredible. But, you know, the actual, the idea of having a repeated chord pattern itself is something that hopefully, we can relate to, and we can sing over. So we don't actually ask students to create their own four chord pattern here, what I did was I created three in the style of the music, of, of the whole work, and we send students to a bunch of different historical websites to find their own story to tell of course, they can go off and do their own research, but we provide them with six reputable sites to make a start. We and then yeah, as I say, we we've we've got the example from this and then we go to the the the chord patterns in the style of that I made for them. So I'll play you a couple of those now this is the first one that we give them and so they can simply take that story and sing it over the top of this in a way that they think fits.



James Humberstone 19:11

There we go that I'll do on that one. And maybe I'll just pick this one this is the third core pattern



James Humberstone 19:37

so there we go. And then what we do as well as providing those just as you know mp3 So that they can play on the on the website you can download all of the all of the files. So that is each individual track from those chord patterns. And as both MIDI and as audio and in very As formats, and then we've got a video. And I actually made all of the resources for this particular one, we shared the workout between us. But I got Jess and Lillian to do all of the voiceover work because I thought actually thought it was quite important that when the students are working on this, that they hear young people's voices, and you know, these, these guys were in their first year of teaching at the time. So let's just have a listen to a little bit of the video that shows them how to put that material together.



Jess Lee 20:40

You have three kinds of files to use when you download the chord pattern packages. In this video, I'll show you how each can be used. First, you have the mp3 backing track. This is the chord pattern looped over and over for two minutes, you can drag this into any DAW you'd like then record a second track over the top of it. Here, I'm dragging it into the free app audacity, I can then add another track to record myself singing.



James Humberstone 21:06

So the tutorial goes through, I think Soundtrap and bandlab and various free bits of software that you can use that on. And also the difference between using the MIDI files and the MP threes or a four wives or whatever. Yeah, so that can be done on all sorts of things. The other thing that I should have mentioned that we have at the end as well is that we mapped all of this to the Australian Curriculum for your seventh and eighth music. We could have also, I guess

extended that into individual state syllabi. But for reasons that you are fully aware of from other episodes of this podcast, some states take a fairly loose approach to interpreting the curriculum and some much more straightforward. So yeah, we're stuck with doing Australia Australian Curriculum then. Alright, so I'm now just looking here at the at the website and wondering which one I might show you next, I'm trying to remember which ones I did and which ones the other teachers did. So I've just opened up here, Sonny Kim's work mother tongue, motherland. It's a really beautiful work with artists who interviewed their mothers or dealt with the idea of mother in their work. And so of course, you can probably guess, what we do for our first part of our project in this is that we is that we, you know, ask students to interview their mothers, or someone who is a mother figure to them. And again, I've got I've got in here, we actually came into the car, and I wasn't I was on long service leave when we made this. But yeah, we made I came in and made videos with Lillian and Jan gas, play a teeny, weeny little bit of this, because it's just fun. And Hi,

 Lillian Li 23:04

I'm Lillian. And I'm just and we're here to give you a few handy hints on how to make high quality interview recordings using

 Jess Lee 23:10


a smartphone or another device like a laptop.

 23:15

Before you get started, have a think about the sort of space you want to record in. Cafe is a good place for a chat. But there's too much background noise. And even an empty room, if it's too big, has lots of reverb, which makes the recording buoy. So

 Jess Lee 23:31

a small room with soft furnishings rather than bare walls are

 James Humberstone 23:34

so cute, cute little tutorials to help help students make nice recordings. And yeah, there's there's a few. There's a few screenshots and things like that as we go on. And yeah, then we've actually got engagement with Sonny's dramaturgy. So the actual planning document that she used to plan the performance of her piece. And then we get into this idea of compromise ation, which I stole from a friend of mine, Adrian Kingwell, who is a wonderful music and composition teacher and also a fantastic composer himself. Yet so this idea that we're kind of composing as we go through a framework or whatever. And then we've got Yeah, materials for improvisation provided on on the page as you go and some of these materials we've actually drawn from the, from the performance of the from the performance of Sonny's motherland mother tongue work so that's sort of to create a music bed that then goes behind an edited recording interview with

parents and and I have to say some of this stuff becomes quite emotional when you hear the the full performance because, of course, it's not all necessarily in English, is it? So you know, we live in a multicultural society so nice to hear children talk to their mothers in an A not English language. One more thing I'd like to tell you about all of these projects is that it draws on one of the ideas from my study and teaching of project based learning that I was talking about in the last episode of this, of this podcast, where we are trying to aim towards some kind of public presentation of learning or real life outcome. And so yeah, we've just got a presentation of learning header, at the end of every project, before we get to the Australian Curriculum mapped outcomes. I think that those those presentations have learning even even if more in intention than, than actual fact, because obviously, it's hard to organize a performance for a mandate for six mandatory year seven classes, or however many your school has, every single semester. But that idea around around the work is a is a kind of, it's kind of a nice one to do. And, you know, yes, something to aim for. And of course, a presentation of learning doesn't have to be a concert, it might be some way of sharing the work within the school, or maybe some way of sending files home, that kind of thing. Yeah, so there you go. There are eight amazing works, fantastic recordings and videos, eight sets of resources, many of them made by these wonderful graduates, Jess, Lillian and Vicki. And I really can't recommend all this material to you more strongly finding our voice dot a, you know, common, they're finding our voice.au, click on the watch bit, and then click on the Resources page, once you've got an idea of what's happening in each work. And my advice is, even though they do download the PDFs, they useful offline versions, click on the View Online button. And yeah, then you get to see, you know, videos and audio files and templates to download tutorials, all that kind of stuff that we made. For the, for the resources to go with each work completely free, completely available. And if you know Australian music or contemporary music is part of your curriculum, part of maybe your mandated syllabus, then I think that this would be really, really valuable for you. And so that is it, dear listener, that is the end of this season of music that'll Why have I run out of ideas? No, I have not run out of ideas. I've got many, many more ideas. In fact, just this week, as I was finishing, I told you in my last podcast, I was working on the project for this year's project based learning classes. In our junior year secondary course here at the Sydney Conservatorium with a wonderful cohort of pre service teachers I've been that reminded me to listen to some old interviews that I did, as part of my MOOC, the place of music and 21st century education, which you can still do free online, it came out in 2016. I don't think there's a lot of people doing it anymore. So you won't get a lot of peer review on there. But all of the videos are there, you do not when it asks you if you'd like to pay for the certificate, you do not need to pay. And there's hours and hours and hours of brilliant footage. I say it's brilliant, not because I'm in it, but because I interviewed many of my favorite thinkers about music education, and got to talk about many things that I think are important in music education, at the moment to those wonderful people. And I was listening to an interview that I did with the late Richard Gill, and I've got you know, I remembered that I had all sorts of off cuts. The plan was, we sent all of those off cuts to, you know, the media people thinking that even though they hadn't made it into the MOOC, that we could use them just as wonderful materials to share with teachers to inspire teachers. And sadly, nothing happened with that work and I cannot find my copy of it, but I do still have the fully uncut



James Humberstone 30:00

interviews with people such as Richard with the wonderful musical Futures Learning Futures. Visionary educator, David Price. Ethan Heine, Brad Fuller and Peter Orenstein, back in the northern beaches, days, yet lots of wonderful, wonderful, wonderful music educators and broader education lists. And, you know, listening to that yesterday was making me think, well,

it's kind of crazy that that, you know, we made so much good material, obviously, it was great to cut it down into short videos for the course. But some, you know, lots of people would still enjoy those interviews. So I do plan at some point to sit down and just edit any gobbledygook out of those and just include them as a series of conversations that I think will be very interesting. And that's probably its own season of music settle on its own. But I am not going to commit to doing that. And keeping this season going, simply because not because I don't have enough material or ideas. I've got plenty of other drafts ideas for completely fresh episodes as well. But simply because there are two weeks on one day of semester to go here at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. And I will be teaching not every day, but I'll be teaching an awful lot. I've got lots more lecture prep to do for my final lectures. And then even though semester ends, you know, obviously there are things like exams, presentations, I'm hoping to see you all at daytime Music Conference online, if you're in Sydney, come and watch it here in the venue that has gone live today. In fact, he says trying to see if I can tell you the address for that I can't tell you the address for that, I'm going to tell you the address for that in a second. So go and get something ready to write that down, whether it's a scrap of paper, or the Notes app on your phone. So I hope to still be keeping in touch with you all over these coming weeks. But we also have an intensive coming up following the end of semester. And then going into June, late June and early July. I am hoping to have a bit of a break. But on top of that I will be preparing for is my International Society of music education conference in Finland, Helsinki, and the MS tech commission for music teachers, which is in Tallinn, Estonia. So even though I've got these very busy couple of weeks, you might then think well, the mid semester break will be a relaxing time plenty of time to get on with making podcast episodes. It's actually going to be a hectic, hectic, hectic period. I've got papers to write for those conferences, and other research projects to finish off, but I am feeling so pleased with myself. He says patting himself on the back that I've managed whatever it is 15 episodes in the season. It's the longest season by a long, long way of music settle. And it's been so nice. Just a couple of students today from our Masters of Teaching course we're saying that they were enjoying the C series. So thanks so much to everyone who's taken the care and the time to get back to me and thank me for the work I do still have the ambition that one day this will become a much more two way conversation that they'll I'll find a way to make it easy for you to get messages to me about what you think about the things I'm talking about and thinking about and include those messages in episodes. But in the meantime, thanks very much for listening to music settle. I hope to see you at daytime the address if you would like to book a free ticket to come and see daytime here at the Sydney con with me. It is on June, Friday, June the 14th. The address is bit.ly a y slash daytime and then the date 1506 2024. I'll say that again. BIT dot L y slash daytime all lowercase daytime 15 06202415062024. So if you go there, or you can just go to the Sydney Conservatorium website, go to box office and scroll down to that date. They are in chronological order as you might expect, you can simply click there, book yourself a free ticket come and hang out here at the day to watch a time we're going to have presentations from my technology and music education course from my students sharing some of their work. And if you're not here in Sydney, you can still stream it you don't have to be in Adelaide where they're based. You can go to daytime.com.au of easily, you then do have to pay a fee as a delegate, but it's just a normal delegate fee. Maybe some schools may or may not pay delegate fees for you. I'll leave that in your hands. But there you go. That that's, that's that's the way that we might stay in touch over the next few months. And then who knows, maybe I'll have found time to edit some interviews, or to have further rants on things that I wanted to have a rant about. Maybe I will add to this season with the odd one off post into the podcast stream but otherwise, I will see you in the next season of music settle and again. Thank you very very much for listening.





ZORA Humberstone 33:55

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



finley humberstone 36:02

Music in this episode was composed by James Humberstone