

whole, and significantly enhances an understanding of stylistic diversity in this artist. And as with most studies of musical texts, the reader will be at an advantage if recordings and/or music videos are at hand. Hawkins notes that the benefit of examining commercial artists is the ready availability of such resources. To this end, the book includes a discography for those readers who decide to follow the music closely. The bibliography principally covers works in the fields of popular music studies and cultural theory, and in these areas it is a useful, although not exhaustive, resource.

Throughout *Settling the Pop Score*, Hawkins presents some of the interpretive possibilities afforded by examining pop texts alongside issues of identity and culture. Broadly conceived, the book is concerned with the relationship between text and context; surely familiar, albeit rocky terrain in musicology. As a sustained effort to re-inject aesthetic concerns into the study of popular music, this work provides evidence that both texts and contexts are involved in producing meaning, even in commercially produced and supposedly 'image-driven' music. While some problems arise through an avoidance of 'theoretical debate,' the author's emphasis on interpreting particular pop musicians and their 'identities' is a valuable and engaging exercise. Indeed, at its best, Hawkins's method of interpretation flirts with the same sense of *jouissance* that he often finds in the artists themselves.

Graeme Leak, *Performance Making: A Manual for Music Workshops*

Sydney: Currency Press, 2003

ISBN 0 86819 673 8; pb, xiv+146pp, ill.

Reviewed by Judith Clingan, AM

Graeme Leak's *Performance Making* offers advice and workshop ideas useful for those musicians who wish to or are required to lead mixed groups of people in exploring creative group improvisation. Perhaps a subtitle to the book, making clear the improvisatory nature of the 'performances' to be made, would help steer the right people to it—or perhaps Leak enjoys the possibility that 'straight' musicians or music educators might peruse it, anticipating something else, and then be hooked. Certainly I enjoyed reading it and, apart from a few reservations, I would happily recommend it to music educators of all sorts, as well as to practising improvisatory performers.

Leak's main thesis is that 'the body is the ultimate instrument,' an instrument which is rarely explored by those musicians who have concentrated on mastering the technical difficulties inherent in most classical Western instruments. It is refreshing to come across a musician who believes that music is so much more than dots on paper, and that even totally untrained people, using nothing but the human voice, body percussion, found sounds and movement, can be led in a short space of time to becoming convincing performers. Such results can only be fostered by aware, courageous, innovative, empathetic and versatile workshop

leaders. Leak claims that the exercises in his book, which lead to such imaginative improvisatory performances, can be used by anyone. In most of the areas discussed, I agree with him, but I think that his vocal exercises are pitched far beyond the capacities of random participants in a workshop. However, generally speaking, these exercises could be productively used with high school students, tertiary music students, or random members of the public interested in exploring music. In addition, as Leak points out, the book can be used 'in contexts beyond the arts. Its exploration of game-playing, listening, risk-taking and collective creativity can encourage team-building and enhance communication skills' in the workplace and in sport performance.

Music educators who have never ventured into improvisatory work with random workshop participants may be anxious that the process would be too uncertain, that many people would find it all too difficult. It appears that the random members of the public who have attended Leak's workshops have settled quite quickly. He quotes remarks made by his students: 'as soon as we picked the energy levels up, by deciding to have fun, ideas began to flow and the piece came into existence;' 'mistakes don't have to be the end of the world;' 'a lot ... can be made of listening to what the moment demands and adapting to it.' In my work in this field, with musically adept teenage students in Canberra in the 1980s and early '90s, and with adults of mixed backgrounds in Australia and Europe over the last decade, I have sometimes encountered a certain difficulty with classically taught instrumentalists: they have often found it very hard to let go of the notions that music must be in a certain key or a certain time signature. It is often more fun, and more productive, to work with people who have no traditional instrumental training at all. Of course, one encounters timidity and lack of confidence, but anyone following Leak's guidelines on how to ensure that everyone feels supported and not threatened, should be able to help participants overcome those fears and to discover the joy of unfettered musical creativity. I wish I had had access to a book like this decades ago. I really enjoy Leak's marvellous combination of serious commitment to the worth of the activity and an easy-going, human-centred practicality.

The book is cast in two parts. Part One deals with the preliminaries and the big picture: chapters 1 and 2 outline what human attributes are necessary for group music-making; chapter 3 discusses the practical needs in terms of space and equipment; and chapters 4 and 5 discuss the necessary breakdown of areas to be explored, how to plan sessions, how to select sub-groups, what goals to aim for, what big-picture methods to use in pursuing those goals; how to refine the ideas explored so as to create a full public performance.

Part Two starts with three chapters of physical exercises. I must confess that it is unlikely that I will ever spend as much time on these as Leak recommends (30 minutes per session), although certainly I agree that body awareness and lack of self-consciousness in the use of one's body will facilitate one's performance. Two chapters follow of warm-ups and drama games, many of which could lead very fruitfully into musical exploration.

The final two chapters are devoted to exercises based on each of the component attributes of the odd human construct we call music: noise/silence; pulse = beat; metre or time divisions; rhythm; pitch; melody; harmony, timbre; dynamics; texture; duration. At the end are several appendices outlining possible lesson plans for courses of varying lengths; practical notes relating to public performances; how to make a string can; and a glossary of terms. The exercises

dealing with each musical notion one by one open up these areas to the non-initiated, while still giving competent musicians something to think about.

There are two areas where I disagree with Leak's approach. My major disagreement is with his exercises relating to sung pitch. Either Leak has been fortunate enough to work only with highly-trained, pitch-aware people who are not afraid to use their singing voices, and who can demonstrate their intellectual/aural comprehension of intervals vocally, or he has not tried these exercises with average, non-singing non-musicians. I find them challenging even for my best choral singers. The same exercises on instruments would be very useful, but for non-instrumentalists who have barely sung I would devise less daunting exercises.

The other area of disagreement is more minor: the use of the word 'tone.' As I understand it, 'tone' in American usage equates with 'note' in English or Australian. A 'tone' in English/Australian usage is two semitones (which I think Americans call a 'whole step'). In the glossary Leak uses 'tone' for both 'note' and 'whole step' in the same breath. This would be very confusing to many people.

Apart from these two quibbles, I admire *Performance Making* very much. My hope is that this sort of musical creativity could become a norm in both secondary and tertiary music lessons—and for all those people out there who will probably never pursue music single-mindedly, repeated exposure to this form of musical expression could lead to changed lives.