

# SOFiA

## Exploring Values, Meaning and Spirituality

### Faith vs Dogma

Martin Buber said that he was in favour of all religions at their beginning. At their beginning there was a vision, a revolutionary thought, or a deep experience. However, as time goes on, that originating experience is no longer compelling, so instead, a pattern of rational argument is developed to justify the position held. In other words, dogma emerges and with it, arguments about the correctness of this or that doctrine.

Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, saw parallels between an obsessive compulsive neurosis and the emphasis on dogma in Christianity, particularly in the Catholic Church.

In Freudian theory, neuroses emerge through disturbances in the normal development of early childhood. In the 'anal phase' the young child discovers that it has a will of its own. It learns to say 'no' and this causes conflict with its environment, particularly with parents over toilet training. The child is confronted by the overwhelming power of the parents and is forced to concede. When that process goes awry, an obsessive-compulsive neurosis emerges. The neurotic must

repeatedly wash its hands, for example, in order to fend off the anxiety, that is caused by the conflict between rebellious feelings and the internalised authority of the parents.

Similarly in the church community. The hierarchy has overwhelming authority and the individual believer needs to conform to the officially declared statement of faith.

Freud's thinking was developed further by Theodor Reik, in his book *Dogma and Compulsion*. He articulated the idea that dogma brought about rebellion against the imposition of the official view and that obsession about the details of dogma was a covert expression of that rebellion.

Now dogma in religion is a widespread phenomenon, though most evident in Christianity. In Judaism there was a similar phenomenon, but this tended to relate more to practical and ethical issues. On page

11 we have a wonderful example from Theodor Reik. If an oven comes into contact with unclean meat, it becomes unclean too and must be destroyed according to the rule in Leviticus. The issue is whether if an oven is divided into two both halves must be destroyed or only the half contaminated by the meat. The ensuing debate is hilarious and results in the authoritarian attempts to impose divine authority being subverted by democratic process.

*The Editor*

### Help Wanted!

Your committee is in dire need of help. At the AGM some members' term of appointment came to an end and no new members were voted onto the committee. The committee needs to be bigger in order to do its job properly. The job is not onerous and only requires an interest in the aims of SOFiA.

Meetings are held monthly using Zoom, so you can participate from home at your computer. In the past, there has also been a face-to-face meeting in February in Wellington. Travel costs will be reimbursed.

To find out more or to volunteer, contact a committee member (see page 3).

## Meditative Moments.

The Beatles rose to fame with simple, catchy songs such as *She loves you yeah yeah*, or *I wanna hold your hand*.

As time went on, their songs became way more sophisticated and indeed they became thought leaders in the 1960s counterculture, penning lyrics and unorthodox music that were influenced by the avant garde thinking of the time: Indian philosophy, transcendental meditation and psychedelic drugs.

*Tomorrow Never Knows* is one such song. It's probably more about experiences under psychedelic drugs but it is equally applicable to the experience of meditation.

The opening words, "turn off your mind, relax and float downstream" are taken word for word from the book "The Psychedelic Experience" by Timothy Leary. This book aims to be a commentary on the Tibetan Book of the Dead, whose exoteric meaning is a guide for souls on their journey after death and before their next incarnation. Leary argues that the book actually has an esoteric meaning, available only to the initiated, namely a guide for the soul on its meditative journey.

George Harrison felt that the lyrics were very heavy and philosophical, so the title chosen is deliberately vague so as not to draw attention to them. The working title was "The Void."

The song is the final track on the album *Revolver* and was sung and largely written by John Lennon. Musically it is quite revolutionary. It basically stays in the same key of E (an Indian tradition) and is the first pop song to use reversed sounds.

George Harrison wrote:

You can hear (and I am sure most Beatles fans have) *Tomorrow Never Knows* a lot and not know really what it is about. Basically it is saying what meditation is all about. The goal of meditation is to go beyond (that is, transcend) waking, sleeping and dreaming. So the song starts out by saying, 'Turn off your mind, relax and float downstream, it is not dying.' Then it says, 'Lay down all thoughts, surrender to the void – it is shining. That you may see the meaning of within – it is being.' From birth to death all we ever do is think: we have one thought, we have another

thought, another thought, another thought. Even when you are asleep you are having dreams, so there is never a time from birth to death when the mind isn't always active with thoughts. But you can turn off your mind and go to the part which Maharishi described as: 'Where was your last thought before you thought it?'

The whole point is that we are the song. The self is coming from a state of pure awareness, from the state of being. All the rest that comes about in the outward manifestation of the physical world (including all the fluctuations which end up as thoughts and actions) is just clutter. The true nature of each soul is pure consciousness. So the song is really about transcending and about the quality of the transcendent.

### Tomorrow Never Knows

Turn off your mind, relax and float  
downstream

It is not dying, it is not dying

Lay down all thoughts, surrender to the void  
It is shining, it is shining

That you may see the meaning of within  
It is being, it is being

[Instrument Break]

That love is all and love is everyone  
It is knowing, it is knowing

That ignorance and hate may mourn the  
dead  
It is believing, it is believing

But listen to the colour of your dreams  
It is not living, it is not living

[Outro]

Or play the game "Existence" to the end  
Of the beginning, of the beginning  
Of the beginning, of the beginning  
Of the beginning, of the beginning  
Of the beginning

# About SOFiA

SOFiA (The Sea of Faith in Aotearoa) is a network of people interested in the non-dogmatic discussion of values, meaning and spirituality. We want to explore for ourselves what we can believe and how we can find meaning in our lives.

SOFiA is not a church: it is a forum for discussing ideas, experiences and perspectives. SOFiA itself has no creed; its members come from many faiths and from those with no attachment to any religious institution.

If you are in sympathy with our aims, you are most welcome to join us; receive our Newsletter, attend a local group and/or come to our Conferences.

We follow similar organisations in the UK and Australia in taking our name from "Sea of Faith", the 1984 BBC TV series and book by the British religious academic, Don Cupitt.

## Committee

Our national Committee oversees the work of SOFiA.

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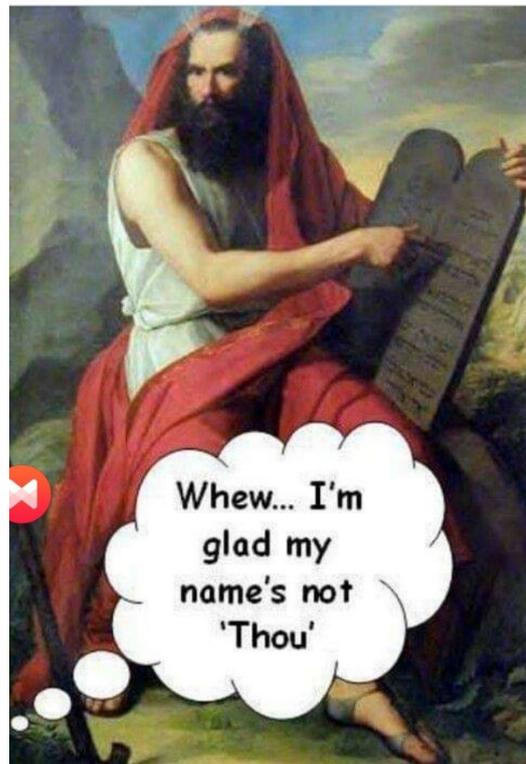
## Life Members

Sir Lloyd Geering ONZ, Don Cupitt (UK), Ian Harris and Noel Cheer (deceased). Also Suzi Thirwell, Yvonne Curtis and Peter Cowley.

**Publication deadline** for the next Newsletter is 7 May 2020.

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# SOFiA News

## From the Committee...

Your committee met on 12<sup>th</sup> February – all four of us! In the past, the February meeting has been a face to face affair, meeting for a Saturday at one of the Wellington churches. This year, we defaulted to a “Zoom” meeting: we are all returnees and know each other well. Chairman is Ian Crumpton; Secretary is Steve Collard, Treasurer Phillip Grimmett, and committee member Brian Ellis. Other officials are Laurie Chisholm, magazine editor, and Peter Cowley, webmaster. We are in serious need of more members. **We have not planned an AGM yet, but unless we get some strong support, it could be our last, with the task of disbursing funds in hand.** Being on the committee does not involve travel, as we meet using “Zoom” – an easy to use meeting app. similar to Skype. Work involves organising, and someone to keep in touch with local groups.

Sadly, we have no means of organising a conference this year. No-one has put their

hand up to organise or host even a two-day event. We are exploring the possibility of offering a single lecture, (the “Lloyd Geering Lecture”?) possibly at a Wellington venue. This would be before the election. We’ll further consider the possibility at our next committee meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> April and would welcome any input or suggestions.

Last year’s conference was generally well received, the two day format was regarded as an improvement by most, the venue (All

Souls’ Church, Merivale) proved most acceptable, and the speakers, including the younger ones, were much appreciated. Catering was entirely voluntary, organised by Tricia Crumpton with help from her sister, niece, and next door neighbour! As a result of that, and All Souls’ generous rates, the conference made a small profit. We have about \$12,000 in hand. Doug Sellman did a great job of organising the whole thing.

With the committee’s best wishes, and hopes,

*Ian Crumpton*

## Ephesus Weekend

The annual Ephesus weekend workshop will be held at Cross Creek, Featherston from midday Friday July 31 to noon on Sunday August 2.

John Thornley will be speaking on theopoetics (see newsletter 145). His topic is ‘Exploring the Spiritual and Secular in Popular Music’.

For further information contact Ian Harris by email [ianharris@xtra.co.nz] or by phone 562-7726.

# Shirley Murray: Hymnwriter Extraordinaire

31 March 1931—25 January 2020

*‘The sermon is the theology of the preacher  
the hymns the theology of the people’*

Shirley Murray always said that her husband John was the theologian, she was just a hymnwriter. Typical kiwi self-deprecatory comment! This article draws on prose writings in the Journal *Music in the Air* (1996 to 2015), edited and published by John Thornley, with a focus on exploring the spirituality of Kiwi culture and arts, and especially music-making. Full acknowledgement to sources is found at the end of the article. John provides the signposts, but Shirley leads us on the journey.



## A Karl Barth quotation

“Karl Barth once wrote, ‘The Christian community sings. It is not a choral society. Its singing is not a concert. But from inner, material necessity, it sings’. This is the

constituency I write for and the one I have spent most time singing with.”

## Stale bread

“For much of what fills our hymnbooks is stale bread, once nutritional perhaps, but furred with mould. I long for the fresh bread of relevant theological thought, crunchy, soul-satisfying stuff – the real food of faith.”

## Inclusive hymns

“I write out of controlled desperation with the Church for its inability to deal seriously with new theological insights. I write with an awareness of what we are not yet saying to one another. In this category, I place, among others, hymns which are truly inclusive, not only of gender, but of all sorts and conditions of people – the solo parent for the differently-abled, for instance.

I look for hymns which can be sung at interfaith gatherings, such as Radha Wardrop’s ‘Join Hands in the Spirit’ (AA 82) or Jenny McLeod’s peace carol ‘Light of Lights’ (AA 89); it is time that we acknowledge what we share with other faiths.”

## Justice and Peace

“Even in terms of what Jesus was saying and doing in the Gospels, there were gaps. Where were the hymns on peace for a post-nuclear people? Surely Jesus was on about peace? Or hymns about issues of justice and human rights, which might connect with his trial and crucifixion? Or, for that matter, money? Have you ever seriously sung ‘Take my silver and my gold / Not a mite would I withhold’?

There was almost nothing to sing about justice which reflected our contemporary world, at least until Fred Kaan and Brian Wren began writing. There was no hymn I could find which connected the Passion story with the worldwide, daily torture of prisoners of conscience, no carol which linked the Christmas story with the tide of

refugees. 'All Things Bright and Beautiful' was fine but did not really connect with our responsibility to care for the planet. In the area of social concern, Bob Dylan and Joan Baez then seemed to be saying it all."

## In the Public Arena

"I began to realise the public arena I had entered. In the beginning, whenever one of my hymns was sung for the first time, I was on edge. Would it work? Would anyone honestly tell me if it did not? One line certainly gave offence to a women's organisation who wished to use 'Faith Has Set Us on a Journey' (FFS 14). In the verse that honestly confronts those who 'leave' the church, this was not an acceptable idea, it seemed, so the word 'serve' was substituted, thus ruining the entire punchline:"

## Faith has set us on a journey

Faith has set us on a journey  
past the landmarks that we know,  
taking risks with no insurance,  
but the Word that tells us 'Go!'

Some are swags of easy conscience  
who with others hitch a ride,  
some are tourist-package Christians,  
dollar safe, with Book and guide.

There are others on this journey –  
those who long and pray and search,  
heave the stones to free the structures,  
love the Christ and leave the Church.

## 'Good Words'

I want to talk about choosing good words for singing, and how they form and inform our theology. If we are to market our product, that is our faith, it has to be not only believable but workable and immediately understood. So with our hymns, they must be believable and immediately understood.

If I were to do a little word picture, I would put 'language' on the left, 'theology' on the right, and between and linking them, like a rainbow, 'imagery'. It is imagery, especially fresh imagery, that makes the difference between a tired old text and one which stimulates us to say 'yes!' to those ideas that stir us because they relate to our world and our experience.

We just can't be a 'Church singing itself to sleep'. On the other hand, it is old imagery which confuses, switches off and alienates someone coming new to church culture. I am glad no one has ever asked me to explain 'Praise to the Holiest in the height'.

## Illustrations of Shirley's Imagery

Like a father you protect me,  
teach me the discerning eye,  
hoist me up upon your shoulder,  
let me see the world from high. (AA 94)

Peace is not born at the end of a gun,  
peace is a family gathered as one;  
here is Epiphany, wrapped up in the shawl,  
Christ who is Light, who is wiser than all. (COC 37)

Small things make the big things grow:  
grains of wheat inside the dough,  
puffs that fill a big balloon,  
notes that make a happy tune. (AA 123)

Excite our minds to follow you,  
to trace new truths in store,  
new flight paths for our spirit space,  
new marvels to explore. (FFS 11)

Song of faith in exultation,  
rising through the vaults of prayer,  
tune of simple celebration  
offered up in open air,  
sung in chapel and cathedral,  
descant to our daily tone,  
sung from sick bed or in prison,  
faith must often sing alone. (FFS 37)

Shelter us, tenants of your love,  
gather us round a common fire,  
warm us in company with Christ,  
give us the heart to feel, to share  
table and lodging without bond,  
space in our living, in our land. (AA 2)

Through our nation's spent frustration,  
through the corridors of stress  
may there move a kindlier wisdom  
all may feel and all may bless;  
tax and tithe are for a purpose  
shared to shield the poor and weak;  
past the symptom of our sickness  
let the voice of justice speak. (FFS 80)

## Church and World - Imagery of the Body

“My meaning was certainly to the ‘world’ as the ‘body’ of God and the call of the Church to be the resurrected ‘body’ of Christ. I’ll try to explain what it means in terms of my hymn-writing. For a start, it has to be with the parameters of reality being defined by the World, not the Church, in the broadest sense.

I suppose I grew up believing that ‘the Church tells you what the World is’ (good/evil, heaven/hell) and the World should be brought into the Church in order to ‘save’ it. Now, I live in a World where all the parameters are being pushed out, and we recognise fewer barriers between people and faiths. Hopefully, we learned a great deal about this in mission fields and aid programmes, and recognise that the Body of God is the World, not the Church.

As to hymns, my immediate instinct was to avoid any language that sounded ‘religious’ in that it used, or over-used, pious expressions that are ‘in-house’. This includes the whole concept of God/Jesus as King, references to the blood of the Lamb, eternal bliss and the like, along with an indulgence in sentimentality (for example, ‘Our blest Redeemer, ere he breathed his tender last farewell’).

Intentionally, as far as I could, I have kept away from the Church-type doctrinal or dogmatic statement, such as expressed in ‘The church’s one foundation’, and crossed over into another way of dealing with this, as in my hymn ‘Teach us, O loving heart of Christ’ (AA 130):”

### Teach us, O loving heart of Christ

Teach us, O loving heart of Christ,  
What only love can say:  
‘Father, forgive’ and still forgive  
the blindness of our way.

Torn is the world you came to save –  
it bleeds from hands and side,  
slow is your church to bear the scars  
where suffering love has died.

We have not healed our neighbour’s hurt

nor learned our neighbour’s tongue:  
across the span of creed and race  
your song is not yet sung.

We have not found your way of peace  
when lack of peace is death:  
we have not fed with word or bread  
the hunger of the earth.

Christ in whose hands were thrust the nails  
and yet for us could pray –  
forgive the things we have not done,  
the words we do not say.

The whole thrust of ‘Star-Child’ (COC 40) is for the entire world to experience Christmas, from street kids to the forgotten elderly, and this has to be expressed in language we now relate to:

### Star-child

Star child, earth – Child  
go-between of God,  
love Child, Christ Child,  
heaven’s lightning rod,

*This year, this year,  
let the day arrive,  
when Christmas comes  
for everyone,  
everyone alive!*

Street child, beat child  
no place left to go,  
hurt child, used child,  
no-one wants to know,

Grown child, old child,  
mem’ry full of years,  
sad child, lost child,  
story told in tears,

Spared child, spoiled child,  
having, wanting more,  
wise child, faith child  
knowing joy in store,

Hope-for-peace Child,  
God’s stupendous sign,  
down-to-earth Child,  
star of stars that shine,

“Hence, in other places, such words as ‘laser’, ‘website of love’, ‘stock markets’. ‘God’s holy internet’ represent an attempt to

make our imaginations work in the present world rather than the unreal past.” (And, one from the computer world, from ‘In What Strange World’ HIOS 77: ‘You test my faith in a different sphere, O God, my God / You guide the cursor that brings us here, O God, my God’ – Editor)

“Maybe our re-awareness of the full humanity of Jesus, rather than his divinity, is the point which allows us to move from Church language to ‘secular’ language. I’m thinking of the impact of the parables – people stuff, everyday language – as well as the fierce arguments of Jesus with the religious lot in more ‘religious’ language. Telling the story is a ‘secular’ thing, while preaching the doctrine the Church thing.”

## An expanding universe

In what strange land will I sing your song,  
O God, my God?

To what new code must my heart belong,  
O God, my God?

The boundaries shift as the lines delete,  
and the way back home is a tired beat:  
there are new directions to take my feet  
to follow you.

With what new eyes will I see your hand,  
O God, my God?

By what new chart will I understand,  
O God, my God?

The old worlds wither away and die;  
your new creation is like the sky,  
with new-found galaxies spinning by,  
which dazzle me.

You test my faith in a different sphere,  
O God, my God.

You guide the cursor that brings me here,  
O God, my God.

For childhood things keep me in the past,  
remembered hymns that still hold me fast,  
familiar words that were meant to last,  
and sing along.

You put a new song into my mouth,  
O God, my God.

You lift my spirit to touch your truth,  
O God, my God;

you give me bread when I fear a stone,  
you do not leave me to walk along,  
my heart will trust in your heart’s unknown,  
O God, my God.

Music © Colin Gibson No 77 HIOS

## Because of the Baby

Because of the baby when Gabriel told her,  
because of the baby when Mary said ‘Yes!’,  
because of the faithful, the brave and the hopeful,  
still Christmas keeps coming to comfort and bless.

Because of the baby the parents were suspect,  
because of the baby, just anyone’s guess,  
because there are children conceived without  
welcome,  
still Christmas keeps coming in tears and distress.

Because of the baby, they camped in a stable,  
because of the baby, no classy address,  
because there’s poor justice for helpless or homeless,  
still Christmas keeps coming to stir and redress,

Because of the baby King Herod was frightened,  
because of the baby great rulers played chess,  
because of the mitres and thrones that have tumbled,  
still Christmas comes close to the least and the less,

Because of the baby the planets were dancing  
because of the baby the world became light,  
because in this child is the stardust made holy,  
will Christmas keep coming,  
and coming

and coming  
till all is made joyful and peaceful and right!

Note: This text came as Shirley’s Christmas gift card in 2018. It can be sung to tune For Everyone Born No. 17 in FFS. Alternatively, a solo reader could read it in a nativity service.

## Where Does Compassion Start?

Where does compassion start?

Where does compassion grow?

Her seed is at the heart  
of every faith we know:

compassion honours others' place,  
dethroning self with willing grace.

How does compassion thrive  
in worlds of greed and grief?

Her goodness stays alive  
through those of strong belief:

compassion, luminous and clear,  
outshining wastes of war and fear.

Where is compassion's role  
in cultures, or in creeds?

At centre, with the soul  
who feels another's needs:

compassion brings the touch of friend,

a bandage that will bind and mend.

Dynamic is the power  
that heals, restores and gives,  
connecting at the core  
with everyone who lives,  
transcending culture, colour, race,  
compassion builds the house of peace.

Note: This text is a response to Karen  
Armstrong's Charter for Compassion

## Coda

"How do I conclude? I began writing hymns for my own clarification. As Joy Cowley said in a radio interview March 1994, 'I write to make myself visible'. For me it's writing myself into faith. If, on the way, I connect with others and we can share the songs, then something real has been created."

## Shirley's Hymnbooks

are published by the New Zealand Hymnbook Trust. All texts include both words and tunes.

**AA Alleluia Aotearoa 1993**

**COC Carol our Christmas 1996**

**FFS Faith Forever Singing 2000**

**HIOS Hope is our Song 2009**

## Contacts

All books and related CDs can be purchased from Epworth Books (Philip Garside) Email: [books@pgpl.co.nz](mailto:books@pgpl.co.nz)

Contact John if you want copies of the Shirley Murray articles used in this article.  
Email: [johngill@inspire.net.nz](mailto:johngill@inspire.net.nz)

*John Thornley*

"Faith derives from reality or God, while belief derives from faith. Scholars anachronistically project twentieth century assumptions about the priority of belief over faith and misrepresent all known prior civilizations. By returning to the central significance of faith he hopes to overcome the modern tendency of objectifying religious life, the result of which is valuelessness, scepticism and loss of faith."

*Wilfred Cantwell Smith: A Theology for the World.* By Edward J Hughes

"Western scholarship tends not to explore the quality of persons in whom a particular form of faith is made luminous. Instead of reflecting on exemplary persons, it has approached life as a system of beliefs. It has turned the focus away from faith in persons towards the objects of faith....forgetting that the significance of such objects lies in the meaning they hold and the values they elicit." Ibid p 20

## Kate Tempest: Hip Hop Poet

Kate Tempest performed at Wellington's Michael Fowler Centre on Monday 24 February 2020, as part of the Wellington International Arts Festival. Kathryn Ryan, host to National Radio morning programme, interviewed Kate on the morning of her Michael Fowler Centre concert. You can download and listen to the interview on National Radio (NZR, Kathryn Ryan) Here are quotations from this interview, with linking comments:

Kate was rapping on the streets of East London at age 14. She is not an overnight pop star, 'here today/gone tomorrow'. Now aged 35, in her 20-year career she has published 3 CDs, 3 plays, 3 poetry collections, and a novel. In 2015 she was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. Tempest believes if you're a writer, you're paying such close attention to what you experience and witness that often it can seem prescient:

'You don't realise how something has affected you until you work it out through what you make. There's things that preoccupy me that I research, that I spend time reading up on and that will never come out in my lyrics and then there are things that I don't even realise I've been struck by that suddenly are in everything I'm writing, so it's a mysterious situation.

'I witness the world by paying attention'

'It's about trying to get closer to meaning'

John and Gillian Thornley have a daughter Louise working in RNZ. Louise said the in-house staff preparing notes for Kathryn didn't know a lot about her, so Dad

was asked to jot down some questions. Here's one question which was picked up, related to her 2019 CD *The Book of Traps and Lessons*:

'The producer of your most recent CD is Rick Rubin, a founding Rap producer in New York. He also revived Johnny Cash's career in the latter years of his life. What difference has come with Rubin as producer?'

Kate told listeners that this CD was in the making over five years, with continuing online dialogue with Rubin:

'His ears have definitely affected the life of this record. You know this record wouldn't sound like this without him, the record wouldn't be from the perspective it's from without him...(and speaking of the creating process) This is beautiful I'm telling you, this is one of the most incredible feelings in my life of gratitude.'

Now one question that wasn't included: 'In a BBC interview with a British church leader, you said you were not religious. Yet reviewers comment on the spirituality experienced at your concerts. From a UK critic: 'It feels as if we are not in a theatre but a church...gathered around the hearth,

## A Beginner's Guide to Hip Hop/Rap Culture

Hip Hop has been the dominant indigenous African-American artistic expression, emerging in the late 70s in the New York ghettos, and now a global style in World musicking – throughout UK/Europe, Asia, Caribbean/Latin America, Africa, Australia/Aotearoa and the Pacific.

As with European classical music, in both the White and Black art forms, new styles are created from a process of cross-fertilisation. The Western classical forms of symphony and chamber music are not frozen dinosaurs but re-created via interaction with global indigenous cultures. Likewise with African-American musicking.

In the creative arts nothing remains fixed, everything evolves and changes, just like human life.

The Classical line covers 400 years, the African-American line 150 years. Both exhibit musical forms and values arising from the historic social and cultural settings. If melody and harmony sum up music in the Classical line, rhythm and song are highlighted in the African-American.

Spirituality can be found in both music lines. John Thornley's article on 'Theopoetics in Music' in Issue One of the SOF Newsletter, has quotations from churchman David Edwards and musician Herbie Hancock, expressing a religious and secular understanding of spirituality in African-American music.

There are four facets to Hip Hop – the music, the words, the dance, and the visual areas. To be more specific – synthesiser and percussion, rap or spoken poetry, breakdance, and graffiti art.

Kate Tempest's art highlights the musical and lyrical or poetic influences in the African-American line of music making.

hearing the age-old stories that help us make sense of our lives. We're given the sense that what we are watching is something sacred. Any comment?'

This writer's first encounter with Kate's work was a YouTube movie of her 2015 performance of 'Hold Your Own' at the Glastonbury Rock Festival, where she held in the palm of her hand an outdoor audience of around 50,000 people. There was a close-up of one individual with tears in her eyes, such was the power of Kate's 'preaching'. This is one of her finest rap poems, and is included on the latest CD, *The Book of Traps and Lessons*, a good place to start if you wished to make your own encounter with this extraordinary global artist.

In her interview with Kate Tempest, Kathryn Ryan commented that among the heaviness of Tempest's work – it doesn't flinch from the depths of anxiety and psychic terrors in people's lives today – there is a simplicity and positivity at its core.

Kate was glad to have this confirmed, commenting: 'The creative act is an act of love in itself' and 'And I always come back to love.'

The final words of her last Rap at the concert, 'People's Faces', which is also the final song on *The Book of Traps and Lessons*:

'And I love people' *John Thornley*

**Note:** John Thornley, Palmerston North (johngill@inspire.net.nz), has a recent half hour radio show on Manawatu People's Radio, which features Kate reading five of her rap poems. 'Hold Your Own' (see below) is one of the five poems included ([www.mpr.nz/show/wesley](http://www.mpr.nz/show/wesley)).

## Interesting Texts

For Sigmund Freud, religion was a collective compulsive neurosis. Church and military were both archaic forms of social organisation, in which individuals delegate their freedom and independence to a patriarchal head.

That the revolutionary tendencies, that result in subtle questions, actually are directed against an over-strict God, is clear from many examples. I will give only one

example from the theological discussion of Judaism. In Leviticus 11.35 it says:

Anything that one of their carcasses falls on becomes unclean; an oven or cooking pot must be broken up. They are unclean, and you are to regard them as unclean.

In the Sanhedrin, the question was raised, what if one divided the oven into two parts and put sand between the two. Will the oven be impure through contact with carcasses. The Sanhedrin answered yes, Rabbi Eliezer Eliezer said no. The course of the debate was presented as follows:

On that day, Rabbi Eliezer presented numerous proofs, but he didn't succeed. So he said, 'may this carob tree decide! Immediately the tree moved a hundred, some say four hundred cubits from its roots. But they replied: "that proves nothing." Thereupon Eliezer called upon the river to decide. Immediately, the river flowed backwards. When this proof too was not allowed to stand, Eliezer called, "So may the walls of our house of learning decide." They tilted and threatened to fall on the gathering. The vice-president Rabbi Joshua ben Chanania stood up and called to the walls, "When the wise argue amongst themselves, you are not to interfere." The walls remained as they were. They didn't fall out of respect for Rabbi Joshua and they didn't straighten up out of respect for Rabbi Eliezer. Finally, he said, "So may heaven decide" A voice came from heaven, "Eliezer is right." Again, Joshua stood up and called, "You have said to us, O God, the law is not in heaven. Further, you have commanded us to judge according to the majority." The report closes with the words, "The wise came together and banned Rabbi Eliezer". *Baba Metzia (part of the Talmud) 59h.*

One sees, here God is hit with his own weapon. The Talmud also adds a characteristic note to the report. There it is told that the prophet Elijah appeared to a rabbi from time to time and reported about things that were going on in heaven. On one such occasion, the rabbi asked him how God responded to Joshua's rebuke. "He laughed," replied Elijah, "and said: 'My children have defeated me.'" *Dogma and Compulsion*

## Hold Your Own

But  
When time pulls lives apart – hold your own  
When everything is fluid and nothing can be known with  
Any certainty  
Hold your own.  
Hold it till you feel it there  
As dark and dense and wet as earth  
As vast and bright and sweet  
As air

When all there is, is knowing that you feel what you  
Are feeling  
Hold your own

Ask your hands to know the things you hold

I know the days are reeling past in squealing blasts  
But stop for breath and you will know it's yours  
Swaying like an open door when storms are coming  
Hold

Time is an onslaught  
Love is a mission

We work for vocations until in remission we wish we'd  
Had patience  
And given more time to our children  
Feel each decision that you make  
Make it  
Hold it

Hold your own

Hold your lovers  
Hold their hands  
Hold their breasts in your hands like your hands were  
Their bra  
Hold their face in your palms like a prayer  
Hold them all night, feel them hold back  
Don't hold back  
Hold your own

Every pain  
Every grievance  
Every stab of shame  
Every day spent with a demon in your brain  
Giving chase  
Hold it

Know the wolves that hunt you  
In time they will be the dogs that bring your slippers  
Love them right.

And you will feel them  
Kiss you when they come to bite  
Hot spouts digging out your cuddles with their  
Bloody muzzles  
Hold

Nothing you can buy will make you feel whole  
This whole thing thrives on us feeling always incomplete

It is why we will search for happiness in whatever  
thing it  
Is we crave in the moment  
And it is why we can never really find it there

It is why  
You will sit there  
With the lover that you fought for  
In the car you sweated years to buy  
Wearing the ring you dreamed of all your life  
And some part of you will still be unsure that this is what  
You really want

Stop craving  
Hold your own

But if you're satisfied with where you're at  
With who you are  
You won't need to buy new makeup or new outfits or  
new pots and pans  
To cook  
New exciting recipes for  
New exciting people to make yourself feel like the  
New exciting person  
You think you're supposed to be

Happiness the brand is not happiness

We are smarter than they think we are  
They take us all for idiots  
But that's their problem

When we believe like idiots  
It becomes our problem

So hold your own  
Breathe deep on a freezing beach  
Taste the salt of friendship  
Notice the movements of a stranger

Hold your own  
And let it be catching  
*By Kate Tempest, from The Book of Traps and Lessons,  
Kate Tempest Republic Records 2019*