

NUFFA THAT

A tribute to Chris Mann

Voice & MIDI keyboard (controlling audio software)

Ron Nagorcka

Vale Chris Mann 1949 - 2018

An early memory of Chris is from my second year at Melbourne University when I accompanied him to the annual swearing competition during Orientation week. He was there to compete. The rules were that you needed to keep swearing for as long as possible without repeating yourself. Generally 30 secs could be seen as a good run. Chris kept going for at least 5 minutes – with phrases familiar and unfamiliar until they had to pull him off the stage! If the performance sounded somewhat medieval it was (as he explained later) because it was largely out of Shakespeare who he claimed had written some thousands (was it?) of profanities. Chris seemed to know most of them.

Meaning is such a pissy little concept pretty much sums up Chris Mann's texts or sound poetry or linguistic frolicking. Never would he earnestly say like my uncle Perce *Ya get me what I mean?* I'd say *Ya get me what I mean don't?* would be more his style.

Yet these 'words' of his, seemingly constructed from a concoction of linguistic theory, Australian vernacular, Shakespearean shadings and god knows what else exudes all sorts of crazy ideas as well as a strange musicality. Hearing him perform in that high rapid-fire nasal voice was—I always thought—the only way to really appreciate his work and its lilting tilting nuances. It never occurred to me until now to set any of his texts – let alone to sing them, but as a tribute to his particular genius I decided to give it a go. I have found it a considerable challenge to make things work to my satisfaction, but I now sure know more about what he never meant to mean.

Vocal Part:

I wrote the piece for my own voice - but anyone could sing, speak or otherwise vocalise the text to the specified rhythm

