

Australasian Music Research Journal: Volume 8 Music And The Australasian Media

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The latest edition of Australasian Music Research Journal (Volume 8), edited by Anne-Marie Forbes, is now available from the Centre for Studies in Australian Music. Taking as its theme "Music and the Australian Media" a variety of perspectives are represented by the papers included, ranging from the vantage point of historical musicology and reception history to multi-media interfaces in composition and research. The volume comprises the following articles:

"Four Cheers for Peggy Glanville-Hicks: A Survey of her Australian reception to 1975"
by Suzanne Robinson

"Johann Secundus Kruse—An Australian First: A study in Gender, Class and Nationality"
by Johanna Selleck

"Modernism, *The Canon* and Schoenberg Reception in Australia"
by Jennifer Shaw

"From Little Acorns: The First Queensland State Quartet, 1944–1948"
by Adrian Thomas

"Reception, Recognition and Reputation: Australia's Intersivity Choral Festivals in Mainstream Press Criticism since 1950"
by Peter Campbell

"Sonic Narratives: Intermedia Transformations in the Work of AustraLYSIS"
by Roger T. Dean and Hazel Smith

"Six Decades on the Podium: Interviews with John Hopkins"
by David Pear

Historic Australian Art Song No 3: Fritz Bennicke Hart (1874 – 1949), AE Songs

Settings of poems by AE (George William Russell) Edited by Anne-Marie Forbes with Bronwyn Arthur

The third volume of Historic Australian Art Song, edited by Anne-Marie Forbes, will be available from the Centre for Studies in Australian Music by November 2005. The AE songs are the most substantial collection of the sets of songs produced by Hart to texts by poets of the Celtic literary renaissance. Hart's AE songs are arranged as seven sets of seven songs comprising opp. 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33 and 34. This edition has been prepared from the original manuscripts housed in the Fritz Hart collection at the State Library of Victoria.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF
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review

THE CENTRE FOR STUDIES IN AUSTRALIAN MUSIC

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SURVEYING THE CENTURY: Larry Sitsky surveys a century of Australian piano music in his latest book.

Australian Piano Music Of The Twentieth Century

By Larry Sitsky
ISBN: 0-313-32286-4

Publisher: Greenwood/Praeger
RRP: \$19.05 hardcover

In a sense, the preparation for this book had been going on for the last 50 years—ever since I came to Australia in 1951 and began to study at the Sydney Conservatorium. Through my teacher there, the formidable Winifred Burston, I was immediately introduced to music by Australian composers and the interest has remained with me ever since. In the intervening half century, I got to know many of the composers in our great country, and many have been and still are not only colleagues but also friends. So it was both natural and inevitable, as the twentieth century drew to a close, that I would consider writing a book about Australia's piano music; an added bonus was that I had performed a large chunk of the repertoire myself.

Restrictions had to be put into place: the book deals with 'art' and 'concert' music only; there was simply no room to deal with 'educational' music, or with music written for piano four-hands and/or two pianos—maybe another time! The words in inverted commas are of course horrible in a way, but I use them here because the constituency will know what I mean by them. As it is, I would say that well over a thousand scores were examined by me in the preparation for this book.

There was the thorny and potentially embarrassing question of my own contribution to Australian piano repertoire. This was resolved by including an essay by Roger Woodward. Within it, he addresses many matters outside of my own music: artistic issues pertinent to Australia; cultural displacement, now so common in this country with its policy of multiculturalism; and other composers active at the same time. Woodward, who must be Australia's most famous pianist and widely respected internationally, delivered a piece that, quite obviously I did not attempt to control or influence.

The twentieth century embraced the dominance of the piano as an instrument at its beginning and moved through to a computer-driven society when the old mould of composer/pianist and pianist/composer is no longer the norm. This does not mean that major works will cease to be written for the instrument, but now it is less likely to be written by a performing pianist.

Viewing the 20th century in retrospect, some clear tendencies emerge. Paradoxically, the Australian 'identity', of so much evident concern to some composers, was in fact in the end protected by those very composers who seemed least concerned about it, simply by living and working in this country and by pushing their personal boundaries. These composers form a kind of modernist stream in Australian music and are responsible for a solid tradition of high quality art music for the instrument. They are the composers who attracted most of our attention and whose work we value the highest. Thus, a genealogy could be drawn by starting with the modernists Hooper Brewster-Jones, Roy Agnew, Margaret Sutherland, Raymond Hanson, Dulcie Holland and Moneta Eagles (all pianists, to whom I would add Dorian Le Gallienne); we would then go on to the second generation of like-minded souls who would include Keith Humble, Don Banks, Nigel Butterley, Richard Meale and Donald Hollier; a third generation of such modernists could comprise Gerald Glynn, Graham Hair, Roger Smalley and Ann Ghandar. This is just an illustration of one particular strand. Other strands dealt with in the book look at non-pianists, at composers who looked back rather than forward, at quasi-salon composers, at composers of miniatures.

The post-modern phenomenon is also examined, including minimalism and maximalism, and the new generation; the Australian piano concerto is surveyed, and the book ends with a chapter entitled "The Anti-Composer in Australian Society: Kitsch is Alive and Well", which deals with issues sociological and philosophical, and may raise some ire.

So, the book is not just about modernist tendencies in our piano music; it also looks at composers who used the piano in a more conservative manner and wrote pieces with titles that connected them directly and strongly with the past; in other words a strand that was softer in sound and intent, appealing to a wider public while still retaining some aspects of high art.

The third strand I and my small but invaluable team of helpers and researchers identified is that of composers who have met head

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on, and dealt with in their own ways, the question of a distinctively 'Australian' music. This concern with the Australian identity, as in all the art forms, has also been present since the turn of the last century. Interestingly, it forms a very small part of the whole output for piano. One could argue that many more composers than the ones we have chosen have concerned themselves with this issue. For example, is Hector Maclean's *Sun Music* any more or less Australian because of its title and the traditional notion of Australia being a sunburnt country?

There is of course an additional strand that falls for the most part outside the scope of this research. It is also of some lineage and treats the piano unashamedly as a parlour instrument. The heritage of this strand is well established and colourful. Many of the productions of this type lavished time and money on elaborate art works for the covers; many were very popular hits and sold multiple editions. Quite often the contents (i.e. the music) did not match the promise of the cover. The evolution of the first strand, my primary interest, is largely what the book is about. Beginning with isolated individuals working by themselves, this strand gathered momentum and volume as the century flowed on, becoming increasingly diverse and complex, a sign of a healthy culture.

There were at least two important areas of discovery in the preparation of this volume. One was the unveiling and study of valuable materials still in manuscript form and an attempt to place these composers into the perspective of the first

strand. It was not so much that my team uncovered composers hitherto unknown, but rather, that we blew the cobwebs away from much music that was known to exist but had not been seriously addressed. That in itself was for me enough justification for the whole project.

The second was confirmation that this first strand had always been there, and that Australian modernism and art music was not an invention of the last thirty or forty years of the 20th century but had roots from much earlier on. This to some extent flies in the face of popular wisdom on such matters. Unfortunately, serious study of Australian music is a relatively new phenomenon and so various mythologies enshrined in the writings of earlier writers had been accepted without question for, it seems to me, too long. What is uncovered here is a new look at our first strand, which was more substantial than some of us suspected.

The book is lavish in its use of over 300 musical examples. It is my simple and fairly obvious belief that quotes that are typical of the composer and that support the text are a thousand times more evocative than paragraphs of dry prose. It has always been my aim to stimulate the reader to go out and find the music for further exploration.

It is my hope that books will follow this book on Australian piano music in due course, on other aspects of our musical culture.

LARRY SITSKY

Race Against Time: The Diaries Of F.S. Kelly Selected, edited and introduced by Thérèse Radic

ISBN: 0-642-10740-8

Publisher: National Library of Australia

RRP: \$29.95 – paperback edition

In the past 20 years or so, musicologists researching Australian classical music have been expanding the nation's cultural history by recovering, from dusty libraries to damp backyard sheds, artefacts of forgotten composers and performers. This is all foundation scholarship in which the various activities are slowly being pieced together to form Australia's cultural map.

Significant recovery research has been invested into the music of a generation of women composers such as Esther Rofe, amongst many

others. Theses, scholarly articles, archived interviews, and more importantly recordings of these composers have been achieved, and while more can be done, the rate of scholarship in this area is enough to suggest the groundwork has been established for others to undertake more detailed investigations.

One of the most important figures in Australian music research has been Thérèse Radic. Over the past four decades she has produced books on Melba, Heineze and Marshall

Hall, together with numerous scholarly articles, particularly on the music from the colonial era. It is the nineteenth century that has become the new frontier of Australian music research, and Radic's forthcoming book on colonial music will go a long way to fill the lacunae in the area.

Australian classical music from the end of World War I is reasonably well documented, but the nineteenth century and the early post-colonial era is still, in terms of enlightened published research, Australia's musical dark ages. This is not to say that published commentaries (such as *The Oxford ... The Currency...* and Roger Covell's 1967 book) avoid the topic, but it is broad brushstroke stuff, which suits their survey-based inquiries. I do not suggest that scholars have not touched the area (eg John Whiteoak and Thérèse Radic herself) but they are the exception rather than the rule.

So a publication on composer-pianist Frederick Kelly (1881-1916) is a warranted cultural investment. Ironically, Kelly fails to appear in most of the Australian survey books on music but he does have small entry in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music* (at least in the 3rd edition) and the latest Grove. Perhaps the most detailed account to appear in an Australian reference book, before Radic's publication, is John Carmody's entry on Kelly for the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*.

Why such scant attention? A significant reason can undoubtedly be attributed to Kelly's short-lived career being honed in England rather than Australia, and that he was dead by the age of thirty-five. Nonetheless, Radic's book, like that of Jim Davidson's work on Louise Hanson-Dyer, provides the reader with an insight into an Australian establishment figure who was able to maintain his musical interests through the support of generous private means.

Frederick Septimus Kelly was born in 1881 into a wealthy mercantile family and was educated in Sydney Grammar School, Eton College, Balliol College at Oxford University and in Frankfurt where he studied, amongst other musical subjects, composition with

Iwan Knorr—the same man who tried to instruct Percy Grainger. Kelly was an Olympic rower (for Great Britain), a fine pianist, and a composer of solo and chamber music – larger scaled works were contemplated but not forthcoming. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal in January 1916 for gallantry at Gallipoli and died later that year on the battlefield at Beaucourt-sur-Ancre in France.

Nonetheless, due to his station in life, he was able to rub shoulders with a who's who of the English establishment—aristocratic, political and cultural. It was through these links, from the Asquith family to Donald Tovey (who died in 1940 and not 1914, as printed in the book), that Kelly was able to draw together a life, especially in music. The diaries, which are housed in the National Library of Australia, have been edited in such a way that Kelly's passion for music comes through without the dross of daily life bogging the narrative down. Unfortunately, Kelly was quite introspective about discussing his compositions, except in the most perfunctory manner. But while this is very much a negative, the upside is discovering more about the man and his milieu. It also gives the reader a glimpse into Victorian and Edwardian cultural life at its source, and one that can be translated to the Australian scene, at least in general terms. Radic splendidly introduces the reader to the man and his environment in her accompanying essay, which also has a thorough display of detailed footnotes—something that not all publishers allow these days. The lack of an index, however, is a concern.

One hopes that the next step will be a commercial recording of his music, which is also housed in the National Library of Australia. These performances might add to the speculation as to what the composer might have been capable of showing the world had he not been cut down while serving the Empire at a time of crisis.

JOEL CROTTY

Current Research: Update

Postmodernism In Australian Art-Music

Linda Kouvaras (Faculty of Music) and David Bennett (English Dept with Cultural Studies) have been awarded a three-year Australian Research Council Discovery Project Grant. This project will be the first systematic investigation of the emergence of postmodernism in Australian art-music, combining the perspectives of Musicology and Cultural Studies. It will demonstrate how resistance to postmodern cultural theory is hampering the critical reception of important new trends in contemporary Australian art-music. Through a series of case studies of major works and their critical reception, and investigations of music-teaching practices, it will develop new methodologies for a synergy between Australian musicology and postmodern cultural studies. Its primary outcome will be a monograph that puts Australian art-music on the map of international debates about postmodernism in music.

DR LINDA KOUVARAS AND DR DAVID BENNETT

Composing Biographies Of Five Australian Women: Motherhood, Marriage And Music

In this thesis, the impact of marriage/partnership and motherhood on the careers of five Australian composing women will be explored. These participants include well-known Australian composers – Margaret Sutherland (1897-1984), Ann Carr-Boyd (b. 1938), Jan Preston (b. 1951), Elena Kats-Chernin (b. 1959) and Katy Abbott (b. 1971).

The demands and expectations placed by society on women through marriage/partnership, domesticity and motherhood have meant that their life experiences differ from those of their male counterparts, since there has been less time and creative space available to them to develop their careers; hence they have faced greater challenges than their male colleagues in becoming publicly recognised as serious composers. Acknowledging that the challenges women face in successfully combining marriage/partnership, motherhood and career can only be revealed through closer inspection of this female experience, in-depth biographical studies

of each of these women will be undertaken. In order to explore the external influences, expectations and ideologies each composer might have experienced during their respective eras, their individual narratives will be situated within the wider, external, altering contexts of feminism and the family in Australia, constructions of motherhood, perceptions of women's creativity and the musical 'climate' for women composers in Australia.

Primary sources to be used are drawn from a range of materials which have not yet been sufficiently tapped. In the case of Sutherland, these include her own (mostly unpublished) written autobiographical reflections, interviews conducted by the author with relatives and friends, and interviews conducted by others. The latter include an interview by Mel Pratt in 1972 for the Oral History Program being carried out at the National Library of Australia,¹ and a long, unpublished typescript dating from 1978, which was written by Stuart Rosewarne following a series of interviews he undertook with Margaret with a view to preparing a biography of the Sutherland family.² The situation is different with Carr-Boyd, Preston, Kats-Chernin and Abbott, since they are alive, none of them has kept an autobiographical journal, and there no other primary sources such as letters or memoirs available for study. Thus my primary sources are their own words spoken during my interviews with them, and possibly also interviews with family members and friends.

A range of other sources will be drawn upon to provide the context for the study and the theoretical paradigms adopted. These include literature in the areas of new musicology/feminist musicology, social history – feminism and the family in Australia, commentaries on the situation of women composers in Australia, perceptions of motherhood, feminist biography, biographies of creative women, and oral history/ethnography. The principal methodologies which form the foundation of this study, however, will be derived from theories of feminist biography and oral history/ethnography.

It is clear, from an overall assessment of the current literature on these composers, that there is room for greater biographical analysis, in order to shed light on the different experiences and challenges faced by the participants in this study as a result of leading lives in which they have attempted, or are attempting, successfully to combine their roles as creative women with those of marriage/partnership and motherhood. Indeed with regard to Sutherland, David Symons did raise the need to explore the feminist slant on her life and work, stressing that it was not his intention in his book to adopt a feminist approach, but that "future studies may adopt other approaches including the pursuit of the gender issue at much greater depth".³ In general, where scholarship has been undertaken, there has been a greater concentration on

their compositions and not so much on the women behind them, their own voices, or as mentioned, in the case of Sutherland, the voices of those who knew her. Indeed there appears in general to be a lack of scholarly biographical publications produced about women born after 1950 which confront the issue of professional/creative lives combined with motherhood/partnership. The impact of private, domestic lives on the public domain and events has not traditionally been thought worthy of consideration in the sphere of academic or historical inquiry. This thesis will fill a small gap in this field, in the belief that the articulation women's different experience as composers is both a valuable and necessary addition to current scholarship.

In summary, then, the current study is important for two major reasons. First, it adds a new dimension to the scholarship currently available on significant Australian composers. Secondly, it takes the view of current scholarship in feminist biography that it is important to consider not only creative product, but the life of the person behind the product.

JILLIAN GRAHAM
(PHD STUDENT)



Ann Carr-Boyd



Katy Abbott

- 1 Mel Pratt, transcript of taped interview with Margaret Sutherland, 5 April 1972, Oral History Section, National Library of Australia, TRC 121/31.
- 2 Stuart Rosewarne, "The Sutherland Family", unpublished typescript, 14 November 1978, private collection of Tony Bunney.
- 3 David Symons, *The Music of Margaret Sutherland* (Sydney: Currency Press, 1997) ix.