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Reviews of Australia's orchestras, of its national music education, and of the Australian National Academy of Music have been announced by the Federal Government. In this issue, Richard Gill and John Hopkins reflect on what the reviewers might find.

Australia – The Land Of Bland

The Federal Government has recently commissioned a national review of music education to be conducted by a committee under the chairmanship of Professor Margaret Seares, musician, senior academic and currently Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the University of Western Australia. Two more reviews into musical life in Australia, also commissioned by the Federal Government, will examine, under businessman and arts devotee James Strong's chairmanship, the professional orchestral circumstance in Australia and under composer Jonathan Mills' chairmanship a review committee will examine the functions of the Australian National Academy of Music and the Australian Youth Orchestra.

The three reviews are obviously related but it is the first review, the music education review, I wish to address. That there has been a steady and long decline in the standard of music education in Australia at all levels of schooling is clearly evident from speaking to students who study music at secondary schools. This decline has been counter-balanced, in a very small way, in a few isolated parts of the country where good music teaching takes place, mainly in private schools, with some equally good teaching in a few government-funded schools. Schools with strong music programs in which teachers and students have a good understanding of music, its place in society, its worth and its value generally, are simply not the norm.

The current arts curricula in most states of Australia are combined in a subject called Creative Arts which includes Music, Dance, Drama, Visual Arts and rather stupidly (by some states in Australia) Media Studies are included as an arts subject.

This type of curriculum structure has led to a state or condition of blandness in which all the arts are placed together in a mish-mash without any sense of the individual characteristics of each of the art forms having any genuine identity or integrity. Many curriculum writers whose experiences of the art forms are frequently very limited and function at a very low level, have no concept of what the arts mean to children, how they should be taught and more important, by whom should they be taught. The educational bureaucrats can trot out the usual clap-trap about the arts benefiting society and helping children learn maths but not one of these bureaucrats to whom I speak, and I speak to them regularly, can

string two words together in explanation of why we teach arts and above all why we teach music.

I suspect that the review will find that there has been an abdication of the genuinely musical elite because in Australia no-one is elite in any field of endeavour except sport, and the real musical minds have been turned off battling any longer because, by virtue of their abdication from the classroom, they have seen arena events, school spectaculars and colour-and-movement shows take over from genuine music-making.

I suspect further that the review will find that music education has, in many parts of the country, become an entertainment which is now best expressed exclusively with dance, accompanied by pre-recorded, appallingly amplified music, together with gyrating body-movements which, in the disturbingly demented mind of its creator is called or even more ludicrously, choreography. All the music is popular, transient, sounding all the same and as bland as the minds of its composers and interpreters.

This condition in music education has been allowed to emerge because the people who could have changed it have remained silent. The reviewing committee will find that teachers have been intimidated by the populists and have weakened in their approach to fighting the trend in recency, relevancy and immediacy because they have been hood-winked by educational bureaucrats whose facility with meaningless educational jargon trotted out regularly as a matter of course at power-point presentations has convinced them that children should have what they like best and then they will learn musical concepts very well. (To learn musical concepts very well you need real music and frankly 'Absolutely Everybody', an already out-dated popular song currently recommended in the New South Wales Creative Arts Teachers' Support materials, doesn't do it for me.)

Let's not even get into the stupidity behind this sort of thinking but let's hope that the perceptions of those whose job it is to find out what is happening in our schools, and what is happening to the musical development of our children will be sharp enough to realise that:

(i) if you teach children a body of identifiable factual musical information using a wide and diverse repertoire of music from the last sixteen-hundred years, say, including popular music then

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Guest Editors, Australasian Music Research

Dr Anne-Marie Forbes
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Located at

21 Royal Parade, Parkville,
Melbourne, Australia.

Phone: 61 3 8344 4607

Fax: 61 3 9349 4473

Email:
ozcentre@music.unimelb.edu.au

Web Page:
www.music.unimelb.edu.au/
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children will have the ability to make choices; and
(ii) if you teach this music with a view to achieving musical literacy, then along the way, children might be encouraged to make their own music.

It is to be hoped that the committee will also discover that teacher-training for music at the primary level is almost non-existent and those classroom teachers have limited time to teach the basics of literacy and numeracy generally let alone arts subjects.

Maybe music is important enough to be taught properly by teachers who know music, who can recognise good music from rubbish and who are afraid to stand up and say 'I have taught

my last ABBA song'. The Land Of Bland will remain ever so unless all Australian music teachers, whether class-room or studio teachers unite and insist on high musical standards achieved from the teaching of musical information which has substance and rigour.

'It isn't rocket surgery' said a professional violinist to me when I explained this circumstance. I replied 'No, it's not even brain science'. Let's hope the review committee will help us sort out this appalling mess and that we can in this country come to our senses and restore music to its rightful place in the curriculum.

RICHARD GILL

Changing The Orchestral Map

From 1963 - 1973 as Director of Music of the ABC the six state symphony orchestras were my responsibility. During these years the wind sections of Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and Sydney Symphony Orchestra were consolidated by the appointment of associate principals; and later associate principals were added to the string and brass sections. The string strength was established on a permanent basis. Previously additional strings were added for the weeks of the main concert seasons in Sydney and Melbourne. The calls of the Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth and Hobart orchestras were increased from 7 to 8 per week. There were some small increases in the size of these orchestras, and three-hour calls were reduced to two and a half hours except on the days of concerts.

More recently mergers have taken place in Brisbane and Perth resulting in very large orchestras being maintained at great expense in comparison to the amount of concert activity appropriate to meet the needs of these cities. The Adelaide orchestra has also increased in size. The present total government funding is \$56 million per annum which represents a high proportion of the orchestra's turnover. The federal government believes it is time to review the position of orchestras since several are under financial stress. It is clear the present situation cannot continue and new approaches need to be considered.

Consideration should be given to maintaining the M.S.O. and S.S.O. at their present strength as the two large symphony orchestras of Australia, but reducing the orchestras in Brisbane, Perth and Adelaide to around 67 permanent players (Strings 12. 10. 8. 6. 4, Woodwind 3. 3. 3. 3, Brass 4. 3. 3.1, Percussion 3 and 1 harp). Orchestras of this size can play most of the standard repertoire and many 20th century works. It will be essential to establish lists of experienced casual players for

extra and deputy work. There may be ways of securing casual players on the basis of "first call contracts" since many good players who are reluctant to commit to playing full-time in an orchestra will agree to accept engagement for specific periods or programs.

Tertiary institutions can provide only limited orchestral training as their degree courses have many subjects and other demands. The total hours in the academic year allowed for playing orchestral music as part of a degree course is roughly equivalent to four weeks work in a full-time professional orchestra. Students who aim for an orchestral career try to get orchestral experience outside their institution in A.Y.O., state youth orchestras, music camps, etc. This results in serious gaps in the essential knowledge of the standard orchestral repertoire, and insufficient awareness of style and performance practise. As the standard of Australian orchestras continues to rise it will become more and more difficult for such players to gain places.

This critical situation can be solved by re-establishing a training orchestra on a national scale. (The ABC formed such an orchestra in 1966, Lawrence Jacks (principal viola W.A.S.O., and Eric Bramble, 3rd horn M.S.O. are just two of the players who went through that training orchestra.) Ideally the training orchestra should have at least 46 players. It should be established at the Australian National Academy of Music in South Melbourne so that it is independent of all tertiary institutions. Academy teachers and visiting musicians would provide a level of training that would be of the highest international standard. It would provide great opportunities for the development of young soloists and conductors through rehearsing and performing with the orchestra.

Consideration should also be given to the needs of North Queensland, which currently receives just one visit a year from the Queensland Orchestra and has to rely on community orchestras like the Barrier Reef Orchestra in Townsville. There is a need for a core group (10-15) of experienced instrumentalists/teachers who would

join in and extend the present activity. Such a group could service schools and public concerts in centres like, Cairns, Ingham, Innisfail, Ayr, Mackay, Charters Towers if Townsville was the base. It could benefit the tourist industry and Distance Education.

PROFESSOR JOHN HOPKINS OBE

Musicianship In The 21st Century: Issues, Trends & Possibilities

Edited by Sam Leong
ISBN: 0-909168-50-4

Publisher: Australian Music Centre
RRP: \$60.00 – paperback edition

"Musicianship: skill or artistry in performing music"

(*Collins English Dictionary* – Australian Edition, 1986).

This is an inadequate definition, but at least an attempt to express the meaning of the term, which is more than can be said for the various music dictionaries which have no entry for the word at all. What does the term mean? Is it as simple as a person's ability or skill in playing an instrument or singing? Surely the ability to produce the notes is just the beginning? Steven Laitz, writing in this new book, offers one definition of musicianship as "the ability to notate what one hears, to sing what one sees, and analyse musical events", but suggests that it really encompasses a far more broadly ranging set of abilities.

If it is a matter of learning or developing certain abilities, the question could then be asked "Can musicianship be taught"? The authors of a number of music textbooks would say so. Rupert Thackray's *The Hearing Eye* and *The Seeing Ear* are two such examples, where, through a sequential series of exercises covering not only sight singing and written dictation, but also modulation, sequences, cadences, repetition, key change and time change, a "firm foundation for general musicianship" is provided.

Gary McPherson, in the Foreword to this book, recalls musicianship classes both in secondary school and at conservatorium level, where he was "exposed to an inordinate number of four-part harmony exercises and ear training drills". With what result? McPherson suggests that he might have "picked up some useful theoretical knowledge and probably refined my aural abilities as well", but remains convinced that "there must be better ways of preparing musicians than those worn out ideas that continue to form the main core of activities in formal music training".

I well remember my musicianship class in the Faculty of Music at Durham University, where in the first session, the opening 12 bars of the Prelude to Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* were played as a transcription exercise, with the introductory comment from the lecturer that "if we could do this, we would end up being better musicians." My aural and transcription skills have been suitably honed by the experiences of that musicianship class, but it is the other musical experiences – the 'real life' experiences – which help make musicians musical.

This timely and overdue book ("long hoped for", as one writer comments), contains 25 chapters written by international authors and leading authorities on music and music education from 12 countries, presenting a variety of viewpoints concerning musicianship in the 21st century. The book is an attempt to bring together a select group of musical practitioners and educators from

a variety of musical backgrounds, to share their perspectives on the many issues, trends and possibilities of musicianship training in the 21st century.

It would be an impossible task to examine every existing practice or phenomenon in a single book such as this, but its 25 chapters present a range of perspectives with representations from five continents that include music theatre, jazz, 'classical' and indigenous music.

The resulting chapters range from a review of past and present teaching of musicianship in Hong Kong schools, to a review of musicianship and music education in Brazil, to an examination of the development of music education in South Korea, to a description of the challenges of teaching musicianship to actors from the perspective of a musical director.

Much of this book is interesting, revealing and challenging, including Pamela Burnard's chapter titled "How musical are you?" in which she propounds notions of musicality and musicianship; Victor Fung's chapter in which he states that "Musicianship is an essential foundation for everyone involved in music education"; Sam Leong's contribution in which he discusses what "good musicianship is about"; Tony Gould's chapter bearing the same name as the book, in which he talks about the less obvious factors – both musical and non-musical – which affect an individual's music-making; Ros McMillan's chapter on improvisation; Mike Nelson's chapter on jazz; Helen Stowasser's writings on musicianship and motivation, in which she decries the fact that a vast number of music teachers still believe that grinding through a series of graded examinations is the only safe way to prepare for a career in music and comments on the "stifling effect they [the graded examinations] have upon the development of musicianship skills"; and Scott Trendwith's chapter on cross-cultural experiences and what he has learned from the Australian Aboriginal.

George Odam, Research Fellow at London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama, contributes an informative chapter gives some background on the teaching of musicianship and offer suggestions on the way forward. He notes that:

If musicianship courses are to mean anything, their intent must be to equip the professional musician well for future professional practice and to encourage them to be creators and controllers of change.

Aptly, he concludes:

Finally, that term *musicianship*. All it can mean is the function of being a musician. I cannot ... think of any other subject except sport that uses such a generic term as

sportsmanship, and that has a very different connotation. I cannot think of any examples where such a term has been used to denote a collection of taught courses that are separate from and not integrated with the main areas of

teaching of the subject ... I now undertake to stop using the term whenever I can, and vow to discourage its use in music education when the opportunity arises.

LINDSAY HUTCHINSON

Student Research: Update

The two abstracts below are for research projects currently being undertaken within the Faculty of Music and nearing completion. Ian Burk's thesis on the influence of Alfred Ernest Floyd on cathedral and church music in Australia examines the manner in which the English musical traditions to which Floyd belonged were nurtured in Australia from 1915 -1947. Johanna Selleck examines ideas about gender, class and nationality as seen through the eyes of music critics and commentators in late nineteenth century Melbourne.

A Tradition Transplanted and Nurtured: The Influence Of A.E. Floyd On Cathedral and Church Music In Australia, 1915-1947

Alfred Ernest Floyd regarded himself 'as a direct inheritor of the English Cathedral Tradition as established by Samuel Sebastian Wesley (1810-1876),' a tradition he claimed to have realised and further developed and to have passed on to succeeding generations. He was also a champion of sacred and secular choral music as a focus for music education.

After a period of training at King's College Cambridge, and as assistant organist at Winchester Cathedral, Floyd's most significant contributions to church and choral music were made at Oswestry School and Oswestry Parish Church in England, and at St Paul's Cathedral in Melbourne-where he eventually settled.

Upon arrival at St Paul's, Floyd found a well-established musical foundation of boys choristers and professional lay clerks which rehearsed and performed six days a week. The boys were educated at the Cathedral choir school. During his thirty-two years at St Paul's, Floyd brought the music there to a pinnacle of musical performance and professionalism. He also trained many who later went on either to establish musical careers or to become active and useful amateur musicians.

Floyd was also successful in raising the profile of early music in Melbourne for over two decades. His primary interest was English choral music of the 16th and 17th centuries, which he promoted by presenting sacred music recitals at St Paul's Cathedral and by taking part in concerts of secular music organised by the British Music Society.

In preparation for writing the thesis I identified the task as two fold; Floyd's acquisition of the musical tradition to which he belonged and in which he worked prior to migrating to Australia, and the imparting and nurturing of that tradition in Australia.

First I focussed my research on a survey of the musical culture in the United Kingdom during Floyd's formative years, as well as an examination of the state of music in church in the United Kingdom when Floyd became professionally active in this area. I also made a thorough investigation of the work and influence of S. S. Wesley, and ideals he enunciated in his attempt to reform English Cathedral Music.

I then carried out extensive archival and anecdotal research to enable me to describe the musical environment in Australia in which Floyd worked, to identify themes and issues with which he was concerned, to document his activities at St Paul's as a showcase for realising his ideals, and to evaluate the extent to which he achieved those ideals and his success in perpetuating the traditions he espoused.

IAN BURK
(PHD STUDENT)



Alfred Ernest Floyd, organist and choirmaster at St. Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne, 1915-1947

Notions Of Identity: A Socio-Cultural Interpretation Of Music Criticism In Melbourne, 1880-1902

Melbourne was a bustling metropolis in the final decades of the nineteenth century. The turbulence of the pastoral boom, intensive immigration and the gold rush had subsided and a thriving city with grandiose public buildings and a new university had emerged. By the 1880s the groundwork had been laid for a cultural blooming and for some serious self-questioning in the lead up to Federation. In this context, the work of the artists of the Heidelberg school, journalists of the *Bulletin* and writers such as Henry Lawson and Banjo Patterson came to represent a quest for a new identity - one that was responsive to the unique social and physical conditions of the Australian environment. The same concerns that helped to shape the work of these artists and writers also impacted upon discussions about music.

This thesis examines music criticism of the time within the context of the broader social and cultural milieu. Five main performers (and the local artists who usually performed alongside them) serve as focal points for discussion: The French-born, American violinist Camilla Urso who toured the colonies in 1879-80; Melbourne-born violinist Johann Kruse who returned to



Camilla Urso, French-American virtuoso violinist who toured Australia 1879-1880

Australia in 1884-5 after having been appointed principal of the Berlin Philharmonic; the British contralto Janet Patey who performed in Melbourne with the ill-fated Victorian Orchestra in 1890; the young Russian pianist Mark Hambourg whose concert

tour of 1895 met with a mixed response, and finally Dame Nellie Melba who returned home for a concert tour as an internationally recognised star in 1902. The focus of this study is not on the artists themselves, but rather, the reaction of the press and public to them.

In seeking to describe and assess each musical performance, the critic brings a wide range of subjective judgements to bear upon the task, often creating stereotypical vocabularies that tap into underlying notions of gender, nationality and class. The music reviews suggest that for women, the highest praise was most often reserved for her role as interpreter rather than her skill as a performer; the idealised role as "nurturer of the family" was sublimated into a "nurturer of society". Whereas models of womanhood remained firmly anchored in the vocabulary of the feminine, those pertaining to men transcended gender into the realm of national ideology. Masculinity was expressed in a way that defined the ideal "Australian" not simply the ideal "male". Also evident in the music reviews are the deep social divisions that existed in a society which prided itself on being egalitarian. Social hierarchies reveal themselves through an educated elite who perceived themselves as moral guardians for the "lower classes" - destined to drag the unenlightened masses out of the darkness of "ignorance" into the light of "civilization". An appreciation of the "higher forms of music" was seen as a reliable indicator that this was occurring.

As such, the music reviews provide a unique perspective and new insight into notions of identity in late nineteenth century Australia.

JOHANNA SELLECK
(PHD STUDENT)

Music in Rural Australia

Readers will be interested that three music articles appear in an "Arts and Culture in Rural Australia" issue of the journal *Rural Studies* (Vol 13, No 3, 2003): Elizabeth Mackinlay and John Bradley consider *Many Songs, Many Voices, and Many Dialogues: A Conversation About Yanyuwa Performance Practice in a Remote Aboriginal Community* (pp. 228-243); Aaron Corn presents *Outside the Hollow Log: The Didjeridu, Globalisation and Socio-Economic*

Contestation in Arnhem Land (pp. 244-257), and John Whiteoak *'Pity the Bandless Towns': Brass Banding in Australian Rural Communities Before World War Two* (pp. 287-212). *Rural Society* is published and marketed by the Centre for Rural Social Research at Charles Sturt University, Locked Bag 678, Wagga Wagga NSW 2678. E-mail: csr@csu.edu.au; web <http://www.csu.edu.au/research/csrs/fjournal.html>

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Australasian Music Research Journal,
Volume 8

Volume 8 of *Australasian Music Research*, edited by Anne-Marie Forbes, will be available by November 2004. Taking as its theme "Music and the Australasian 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.

PUBLICATIONS (all prices given below include 10% GST)

The following publications are available for purchase from the Centre:

- *Riders to the Sea*, opera by Fritz Hart. Full score \$88, vocal score \$44.
- *Giovanni*, opera by Alfred Hill. Full score \$55, vocal score \$33.
- *Stella*, opera by G.W.L. Marshall-Hall. Full score \$55, vocal score \$33.
- *Sound Ideas: Australian composers born since 1950*. A guide to their music and ideas, compiled and edited by Brenton Broadstock, \$38.50.
- *Aflame with Music: 100 Years of Music at The University of Melbourne*, 50 essays from the 1995 Centennial Conference held at the Faculty of Music, \$43.95.
- *The Conservatorium of Music University of Melbourne: An Historical Essay to Mark its Centenary 1895-1995*, by Peter Tregear, \$30.80.
- *A Franz Holford Miscellany Including his Middle Sea*, compiled and edited by Jennifer Hill and Kerry Murphy, \$22.
- *Register of Theses in Australian Music*, disk \$33 (institution), \$22 (full), \$11 (student).
- *Australian Music: An Annual Bibliography 1995*, disk \$33 (institution), \$22 (full), \$11 (student).
- *Songs*, by Dorian Le Gallienne, \$22.
- *Herrick Songs: Settings of Poems by Robert Herrick*, by Fritz Hart, \$55.
- *Joy*, opera by Lindsay Brunson. Full score, \$38.50.
- *The Quickening*, opera by Johanna Selleck. Full score, \$38.50.
- The journal *Australasian Music Research*, \$66 (institution), \$33 (individual), vol 1-4, 6-7; \$44 (institution), \$22 (individual), vol 5 only.
- *Index to the Australasian Musical News 1911-1963*, by Lina Marsi, \$88 (institution), \$66 (full), \$44 (student).
- Sound Heritage CD Sets
 - Nature Sounds of Australia* (1 CD), \$27.45.
 - The Great Bands of Australia* (2 CDs), \$38.45.
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 - Songs*, by G.W.L. Marshall-Hall, \$22.
 - Selected Works for Women's Chorus*, by Fritz Hart, \$22.
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