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PERCUSSION AND THEATRICAL TECHNIQUES: AN INVESTIGATION INTO PERCUSSION THEATRE REPERTOIRE AND ITS PRESENCE IN AUSTRALIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC CULTURE

Kaylie Dunstan

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of requirements for the degree of
Master of Music Research
University of Sydney 2015
I declare that the research presented here is my own original work and has not been submitted to any other institution for the award of a degree.

Signed: ............................ Date: ...............
Abstract

*Percussion theatre* is a relatively new term that can be effectively used to discuss a body of musical repertoire for percussion that employ theatrical techniques. A generic approach of *percussion theatre* may include the specialised use of lighting, props, costume, space, and in some cases multimedia. At the focal point of this thesis are the techniques of acting, vocalisation and gesture. It discusses how the skill set of the percussionist can be expanded to better suit the broader performance demands required by compositions. Percussionists who perform percussion theatre repertoire would greatly benefit from interdisciplinary study to develop the theatrical skills specific to this genre.

Stylistic trends in European, American and Australian compositions of this genre are explored in detail. Furthermore, this thesis includes a discussion of a series of written interviews with key exponents of this body of musical work in Australia. Central to this discussion are both, the technical demands of the performer, and the factors that need to be considered when composers engage with the above theatrical techniques. Finally, significant factors leading to the success of the compositions on the performing circuit are also considered with a view to discover how to promote and further develop this nascent form of performance art.
Tuesday, 23 September 2014

Dr Daniel Rojas  
Arts Music Unit; Sydney Conservatorium of Music  
Email: daniel.rojas@sydney.edu.au

Dear Daniel,

I am pleased to inform you that the University of Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) has approved your project entitled “Australian Percussion Theatre: An investigation into the prevalence of dramatic percussion performance within Australian classical music from the mid twentieth century”.

Details of the approval are as follows:

Project No.: 2014/748
Approval Date: 9 September 2014
First Annual Report Due: 9 September 2015
Authorised Personnel: Rojas Daniel; Edwardes Claire; Dunstan Kaylie;

Documents Approved:

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HREC approval is valid for four (4) years from the approval date stated in this letter and is granted pending the following conditions being met:

**Condition/s of Approval**

- Continuing compliance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans.

- Provision of an annual report on this research to the Human Research Ethics Committee from the approval date and at the completion of the study. Failure to submit reports will result in withdrawal of ethics approval for the project.

- All serious and unexpected adverse events should be reported to the HREC within 72 hours.

- All unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should be reported to the HREC as soon as possible.

- Any changes to the project including changes to research personnel must be approved by the HREC before the research project can proceed.
Note that for student research projects, a copy of this letter must be included in the candidate’s thesis.

Chief Investigator / Supervisor’s responsibilities:

1. You must retain copies of all signed Consent Forms (if applicable) and provide these to the HREC on request.

2. It is your responsibility to provide a copy of this letter to any internal/external granting agencies if requested.

Please do not hesitate to contact Research Integrity (Human Ethics) should you require further information or clarification.

Yours sincerely

Dr Fiona Gill
Acting Chair
Human Research Ethics Committee

This HREC is constituted and operates in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council’s (NHMRC) National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007), NHMRC and Universities Australia Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2007) and the CPMP/ICH Note for Guidance on Good Clinical Practice.
Acknowledgements

This venture is brought to you by my wonderfully brilliant supervisor, Daniel Rojas. You have been so patient and cool as a cucumber through this whole process and I can’t thank you enough for pulling out all the stops to make sure this thesis is the best in can possibly be. You really are top notch.

A big thanks to my mentor, Claire Edwardes whose passion for new music is truly inspiring. You always encourage me to raise the standards and you have so much knowledge and wisdom to offer. Thank you for giving me a push when I need it and for being so encouraging when the pressure is on.

Thank you to all of the participants in this study. Thank you for taking the time and energy to enlighten this research with your vast experience and knowledge. Coming to find out about all of the passionate people devoted to promoting percussion has been an incredibly enriching experience.

Of course, to my devoted fan club: Lizzie, you are a rock and I can’t tell you how much your support means to me. Nina, thank you for your generosity, your kind spirit is a pleasure to have around. And of course Jane-Marie, my bestie, thank you for lending an ear for me to vent to. You are the epitome of dedication and hard work; you really are my inspiration.

Mum and dad, I don’t know what I would do without your support. Thank you for your unconditional love and advice. To my siblings, Nelly, John and Anthony, I love that our relationship is so close even with the long distances in between. Thank you for just being there.

And to the guy who gave up everything for me, thanks for your unconditional love too.
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Percussion and Theatrical Techniques: An Investigation into Percussion Theatre Repertoire and its Presence in Australian Classical Music Culture

0. Introduction

0.1. Towards a Definition of Percussion Theatre

Percussion theatre is a relatively new term that may be used to encapsulate a collection of musical works for percussion that require the employment of theatrical techniques. The label percussion theatre is one of two closely related terms in existence—the other being theatre percussion—yet highlights the use of percussion instrumentation as the principal element. Other relevant terms and characteristics highlight the ambiguity of the style and the difficulty in orientating a constructive discourse.

Contemporary percussion music has seen some significant developments in recent years. The performance practice and pedagogy have reached a certain amount of uniformity in Western classical music culture since emerging as a sophisticated and engaging discipline. There are now abundant opportunities to specialise in a given area of percussion such as that of the symphony orchestral, marimba, classical contemporary, popular, jazz and world music. Despite the complex and varied mechanics involved in negotiating percussion music, composers are contributing to the expanding repertoire through innovative approaches, namely by incorporating theatrical techniques as discussed in this thesis.

In much of the percussion family the player produces sounds with no direct physical contact with the instrument, commonly using an array of sticks, beaters or mallets to strike the instrument playing surfaces. A great number of percussion instruments are propped up by stands or tables and do not require to be stabilised by the performer. This gives a certain amount of kinaesthetic freedom to invest more physical activity into musical expression, tone production and theatrical techniques. By contrast, keyboard instruments such as the piano and organ involve intricate operating systems for tone production. Consequently, the instrumentalist has a degree of separation from these mechanisms. Percussion is well suited to extra-musical techniques given the liberties of
gesture and movement, as well as the overarching visual aspect of conventional performance.

Since traditional and modern percussion practices are fundamentally theatrical in nature, some classical composers have developed approaches to combine theatrical techniques with percussion performance. In such cases, the percussionist may be directed to engage in one or more of the following techniques:

- Acting
- Vocalisation
- Gesture (that is, a physical action or bodily movement, dissociated from sound production).

These dramatic elements will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two alongside relevant musical examples where the composer indicates the theatrical directions. In contrast, performers may offer varied theatrical interpretations in addition to the music presented.

The archaic view that the composer is the creator of a piece of music while the player remains an agent (Foss, 1963: 45) is not valid in such instances as collaborations, workshops and interpretive licence. In cases where the composer does not explicitly give a direction in the score, the musician may assume the prerogative to elaborate on the score according to the nature of the piece. Erik Santos wrote a multi percussion solo entitled Zauberkraft (2006), which is derived from a sonnet by Rainer Rilke. When I performed this composition in 2008, I chose to recite the poem at the outset of the performance, before launching into the piece itself. The opening of the composition is mystical in nature and the addition of the dramatic presentation of the poem set up the ambience of the work. Given the latitude afforded to musicians in the discerning use of rubato, long pauses and expressive gestures, adding a dramatic element is not only possible, but can also enrich the delivery of a performance.

A broad interpretation of percussion theatre suggests the use of lighting, props, costume, space, and in some cases multimedia. In these settings, the percussionist is merely interacting with external components rather than actively engaging with any theatrical skills. This study examines the genre of percussion theatre from the perspective of how the performer participates directly with both theatrical and instrumental skills. Of
particular importance is how the theatrical expertise can be expanded to better suit the demands of a composition in this genre.

0.2. Aims and Objectives

The purpose of this study is to explore the historical development and foremost characteristics of percussion theatre, as well as the popularity of the relevant repertoire along with the demands placed on the percussionist. The question of Australia’s contribution to this genre is a central concern of this thesis. Furthermore, the discussions herein will reveal the subjective nature of performance art and the propensity to divide music into categories. It must be said, however, that taxonomical approaches are notoriously flawed; making distinctions between styles and genres inflate the risk of amassing the ambiguity of terminology and forging superfluous barriers between compositions. Notwithstanding, I endeavour to expound percussion theatre in the hope that it provides a platform for further development of the style, while leaving room for open-ended interpretation of what constitutes a theatrical piece.

I will posit that percussionists who perform repertoire that requires theatrical action (acting, vocalisation, or gesture), would significantly benefit by undertaking professional theatrical coaching. Each section of this study is indeed geared to promoting the cause of establishing percussion theatre as a specialised musical discipline that necessitates sufficient aptitude in the aforementioned theatrical skills. An integral stage in this research is a written interview, aimed at establishing an overview of Australian percussion theatre repertoire and identifying influential figures in its development.

The results of the survey will ideally provide further insight into the demands of the percussionist and how percussion-playing techniques have evolved, prompting the enquiry of whether this genre can justifiably stand as a specialised discipline. There may, for example, be a need for further development of a musician's acting abilities, as well as attending to complications of balancing the human voice with over-powering percussion instruments. Considering the aforesaid complications and the sliding scale of percussion theatre repertoire being performed, possible factors contributing to the success of a new composition and its performance frequency will be explored. This exploration will be carried out with reference to compositions uncovered from the
interview responses. From these discussions, I will seek to identify potential areas for improvement, such as how the genre may be further developed and promoted.

0.3. Scope of Study

It is necessary to acknowledge various practices and perspectives of percussion theatre that will not be detailed in this thesis. There are a number of popular theatrical percussion ensembles such as Blue Man Group, Stomp and Scrap Arts Music. Such groups are well known for their vibrant, large-scale productions targeting youthful audiences with their upbeat drumming patterns, inventive instruments and energetic choreography. Also present on the world tour circuit are internationally renowned Taiko ensembles such as Kodo from Japan and Taikoz based in Australia. Taiko is a traditional Japanese performance art incorporating drumming and dance. Marching drums have their own traditions that have branched out into different styles across the globe. Drumline is a popular rudimental style of drumming in the United States, featuring stick twirling, throwing and back-sticking, combining rhythmic virtuosity and visual flair. There are parallel disciplines in Europe, including the Royal Swedish Army Drum Corps (disbanded in 2011) and Top Secret Drum Corps (Switzerland).

These groups are popular forms of large-scale productions. Because of the focus on contemporary art music in this thesis, such groups are irrelevant here. Similarly, institutions such as street theatre, dance and acting studios do not form part of this study. The reason for these exclusions is that there is a vast array of performing mediums, including pop music groups and shows for children that use some form of theatrical element. This would deter from the detailed investigation into the fundamental theatrical performance techniques.

The scope of this study is strictly limited to dramatic arts within classical music from the middle of the twentieth century. This includes the avant-garde and other related movements that emerged from Fluxus, French Music Theatre School, Cage, Kagel and those within the surrounding circles. The premise is classical music by such composers and collaborative artists, which utilises dramatic arts as a secondary addition. Works involving a trained percussionist engaging in theatrical techniques is the focal point.
In regards to movement, this research will take a look at gesture for purely visual affects, rather than gestures that directly produce sound. Mary Broughton (Broughton, 2008) provides a suitable preface to this aspect of percussion theatre. Broughton focuses on the superficial movement that is not required to produce sound on the instrument. The present thesis follows in this conception of percussion theatre. Other sources such as those derived from the field of dance offer discourse on the significance of expressive gesture and body awareness, leading to the subtopic of choreographed movement as an element of percussion theatre.

Given the scarce scholarship of percussion theatre outside Europe and North America, this thesis will focus on the Australian repertoire of this genre. Non-theatrical Australian percussion works such as *Omphalo Centric Lecture* composed by Nigel Westlake in 1984 and Ross Edwards' *Marimba Dances* of 1982 are played constantly throughout the world. There have been other worthy contributions to percussion repertoire, however it is unclear how much of this is theatrically-based. Please note here once again that this thesis has accounted for this lack of data and the information presented in this study is to the best of my knowledge.

0.4. Overview of Existing Creative Works and Review of Literature

0.4.1. Overview of Repertoire and Data

This research will contribute to the growing body of academic works on the topic in recent years. Many theses briefly deal with elements extracted from percussion theatre, while few engage in direct discourse on the topic. There is notable dispute surrounding the label 'percussion theatre' and other variations, as well as opposing views on what constitutes theatricality. Most strikingly, there is a lack of expert scholarship dedicated to this topic and few proposals for progressive improvement. This paper differs from others dealing with percussion theatre in that it presents the genre as a specialised discipline within the field of percussion – a position supported by the wealth of relevant repertoire already in circulation.

The existing body of solo percussion repertoire within this genre is impressive given its infancy. I have catalogued nearly 250 works that utilise percussionists and theatrical
techniques within a chamber music setting. Several art music composers are internationally regarded for their contribution to the percussion theatre catalogue. These composers have contributed a number of widely performed compositions, which have been cited in several publications.

American composer, Stuart Saunders Smith (b. 1948), for example, is revered for his many theatrical works for various instruments, especially percussion. Notable works for this medium are:

- *Songs I-IX* (1980)
- *By Language Embellished* (1989)
- *...And Points North* (1990)
- *The Authors* (2006)

Fellow American Frederic Rzewski (1938) has written the following compositions:

- *Coming together and Attica* (1971)
- *To the Earth* (1985)
- *Lost and Found* (1985)
- *Fall of the Empire* (2007)

Greek-born composer Georges Aperghis (1945) and French-born Vinko Globokar (1934) wrote a number of works that tied into the French Music Theatre School. Aperghis composed:

- *Le Corps à Corps* (1978)
- *Graffitis* (1980)
- *Le Coups de Foudre* (1985)

Meanwhile Globokar conceived the following works:
• Toucher (1978)
• Tribadadum extensif sur un rythme fantôme (1981)
• ?Corporel (1985)
• Ombre (1989)
• Kvadrat (1989)
• Dialog über Erde (1994)
• Pensée écartelée (1997)

Argentine-German composer, Mauricio Kagel (1931-2008) composed the earliest works relevant to this study:

• Sonant (1960/…) (1960)
• Sur Scène (1960)
• Match (1964)
• Dressur (1976)
• Rrrrrrr (1985)
• L’art bruit (1995)

London-based Australian composer and percussionist Graeme Leak (1960) has arguably contributed the most to this genre in Australia with the following compositions:

• Yo Yo Man (1991)
• I Love Jazz (1991)
• Percussion Maintenance Team (1999)
• Percussion Construction Team (2007)

Another Australian composer Timothy Phillips (1967) has the following percussion theatre works to his name:

• Clogwork Orange (2001)
• As Quiet As… (2004)
• Hand Dance (2005)
With the exception of Kagel, who was the forerunner of instrumental theatre, the percussion theatre repertoire is concentrated in the 70’s and 80’s. The above list comprises of mostly published compositions and the solos by Saunders Smith, Aperghis and Globokar are particularly well-regarded in percussion recitals around the world.

It is difficult to document all percussion theatre compositions in existence due to the lack of regulated catalogues with sufficient performance notes and the instances of unpublished works. Such pieces are circulated only through word of mouth and as a result of being in direct contact with the composer to obtain the score and performance materials. This is especially applicable with younger experimental composers who create works without commission or the prospect of publication. The archive records within the Internationales Musikinstitut Darmstadt go back to the 1940’s when the New Music Summer Course began. The lectures and concert recordings, however, are exclusively available in hard copy at the school library itself. They are, fortunately, in the process of being converted to digital form and will consequently enable their availability online.

Published books dedicated to recent developments (since ca. 1950) in the art of percussion are sparse. They may be categorised into biographies, discographies, compositional techniques and analytical discourse. While catalogues such as Meza (1990) quickly become out-dated, they retain their usefulness in the research of percussion history in Western culture. The detail of each inclusive work, however, is insufficient when researching a specific style of composition, as the entries do not include analyses of form or performance.

Among the few practitioners with the expertise in percussion theatre, the only notable publication is The percussionists art: same bed, different dreams (Schick, 2006). An analytical and philosophical discourse into advanced standard percussion repertoire, this book is filled with insightful anecdotes and suggested approaches to performance. Chapter 5 entitled Face the Music: A Look at Percussion Playing discusses the theatrical nature of percussion and draws on several compositions that exploit this quality. His in-depth exploration of Toucher and ?Corporel (Globokar), ...And Points North (Saunders-Smith) and Antiphony VII: Revolution by Kenneth Gaburo (1984) are noteworthy.
Schick also provided the writings accompanying Aiyun Huang's *Save Percussion Theater* DVD (2012). Her project is aimed at works written for the Parisian percussion ensemble *Trio le Cercle* and they are among the most renowned compositions of this style. Showcased works on the DVD include:

*Les guetteurs de sons* (1981); Georges Aperghis

*Le corps à corps* (1978-79); Georges Aperghis

*Dressur* (1977); Mauricio Kagel

*L'art bruit: solo for two* (1995); Mauricio Kagel

*Toucher* (1973); Vinko Globokar

*?Corporel* (1985); Vinko Globokar

*Temazcal* for maracas and tape (1984); Javier Alvarez

*Variations sur un texte de Victor Hugo* (1991); Jean-Pierre Drouet

Huang does not make a concerted effort to justify her motives for ‘saving’ percussion theatre or how her project could salvage the reputation of the genre. The DVD jacket contents testify to the ground-breaking work of the ensemble and offer parameters for the category of percussion theatre, while making concessions of ambiguity. The project stems from Huang’s doctoral thesis (under the direction of Schick at the University of California, San Diego), in which her final chapter focuses on ‘interpretation through theatrical intention’ (Nelson, 1999). She analyses one of the above works, *Le Corps à Corps* and writes on the history of music theatre.

As mentioned earlier, the majority of research data on percussion theatre is through academic theses. An increasing number of rising professionals are exploring the theatrical nature of percussion, gestures, the use of text and the general evolution of percussion practice. The research typically consists of a broader discourse on
percussion playing, with single and sometimes multiple chapters on particular theatrical elements or repertoire.

There are several notable sources that are dedicated to the history of percussion repertoire, including *Text, movement and music: an annotated catalogue of (selected) percussion works 1950 – 2006* (Grant, 2006). Grant completed this paper at the Victorian College of the Arts and includes a number of Australian unpublished works that may not have been catalogued outside of Australia. Despite the timeframe suggested in the title, the earliest work she lists involving extra-musical elements is Kagel’s *Match* for two celli and percussionist, written in 1964. Grant lists 37 percussion solo and chamber pieces, organised according to the theatrical element the compositions utilise.

Other researchers have provided analytical studies of percussion works in Australia, including Schmorl (1996) and Martin (1996). Due to be released in 2015 is Louise Devenish’s thesis entitled *...And Now for the Noise: Contemporary Percussion in Australia, 1970-2000*. She also forms a duo with fellow percussionist Leah Scholes and is a participant in this study. She focuses on Graeme Leak’s Theatre show *From Africa to the Kitchen Sink* (1991) while Sablinskis (1981) addresses the use of theatrical elements in his account of percussion repertoire.

Whiting-Smith (2012) discusses the use of text with the pretence of telling stories. Schick makes a similar assumption in his contribution to *Save Percussion Theater notes* (A. Huang, 2012). The connection is not surprising given that Schick supervised Smith’s thesis. In subsequent chapters, Whiting-Smith uncovers the dangers of spoken text, addressing issues such as natural pitch as a female, voice projection and following the ‘tone’ of the music. The thesis concludes with a representative list of pieces.

Strom (2012) is a very relevant dissertation to the present thesis. Strom sets out to name and justify the previously uncategorised genre (2012: 2) through historical evidence, representative repertoire and suggestions on how to market and promote such music. Strom and I share similar views on a great number of musical and theatrical concepts. There are, however, certain matters of contention such as the name and framework of theatrical percussion.
0.4.2. Conflicting Attitudes to Percussion Theatre

Strom categorises ‘theatre percussion’ based on a broad range of characteristics. She argues that the previous notion of the style is vague; yet includes multimedia as a viable theatrical element; itself a complex medium. The notion that the use of audio/visual equipment qualifies a piece as theatrical, is an ill-fitting generalisation.

She further claims that a work is clearly categorised in this manner when the musical or percussion component becomes secondary to the extra-musical element. If this were indeed the case, one could argue that a trained percussionist would not be essential to the success of a composition. The works catalogued within this topic area, however, pose a veritable musical challenge, calling for an accomplished percussionist to negotiate rhythmically demanding passages and interpret complex musical language.

I side with Strom in that she rationalises her views with supporting arguments and considers alternative perspectives. She also states that her categorisation of ‘theatre percussion’ is an attempt to be inclusive of more repertoire. Other authors, such as Stone (2008) and percussionist Tieghem (Pareles, 1987) have failed to be as discerning and there seems to be some misconception as to the art of percussion theatre. Stone writes about instrumentalists becoming theatre performers, however he draws from operatic case studies where the musicians are merely shifted onto stage in order to play their instruments, with no additional skill or action required.

David Van Tieghem is a percussionist based in the United States, known for his fusion style and collection of found objects as instruments. In a New York Times article, he was quoted as saying ‘I call what I do percussion theatre, or something like that’ (Pareles, 1987). He continues ‘I have a couple of tables full of percussion instruments, toys and props. I use some pre-recorded tapes, some movement and some funny stuff, too.’ As far as I can tell, his concept of theatre is derived from outdoor performances, tapping on signs, billboards, paths or any matter that gets in his way, as well as music videos. While there may be flirtations with elements of the theatrical (playing outdoors, which is referred to as ‘environmental’), Van Tieghem’s work appears inline with the theatricality that is typically inherent in conventional percussion performance.
There have been a number of interesting works written by Australian percussionist and composer Graeme Leak that require theatrical techniques to be employed by the performer. The presence of pre-recorded text in Leak’s composition *And Now for the News*, is suggested by colleagues as being a standard percussion theatre piece. This claim is refutable based on the impartiality of the percussionist who merely mimics the spoken rhythm on their instruments. Filtering these compositions for the purpose of this study, however, has become necessary based on the misconception that outdoor performances automatically qualify a work as theatrical. They may draw on concepts evident in circles like *Fluxus*, who blur the lines between art and everyday life, however the theatricality component is not significant.

**0.5. Methodology**

0.5.1. Written interview

A written interview consisting of six questions was conducted with selected Australian composers and percussionists who have known experience in the production of at least one percussion theatre project, or who have extensive involvement in collaborations that may overlap with theatricality. The main objective of the interview was to establish the presence of percussion theatre in Australia and in turn establish an extensive catalogue of Australian compositions of this genre (see Appendix D). The secondary goal was to ascertain the challenges faced by the composer or percussionist in performing any particular piece. The results of the interview were used to compare perceptions of the genre among the participants and existing scholarship, as well as reveal commonalities and differences between works from the three continents (Europe, USA and Australia) and thereby establishing a definitive genre.

I initiated a short list of Australian composers and percussionists who have established themselves as practicing professionals within the last 50 years. I emailed a set of descriptive survey questions to 18 individuals and I received 11 responses. The relevant definition of the genre for this thesis as well as the nature of the interview process were both outlined in the initial ‘Participant Information Statement’ (see Appendix A). This definition was put forward to the participants in order to minimise the chance of misunderstandings causing measurement error (while still allowing for
individual judgement) and to facilitate relevant responses. Participants were asked to answer the questions within one calendar month, suggesting that they may wish to confer with colleagues with regard to certain details pertaining to a particular work.

The first question was concerned with the participant’s status as a practitioner and asked details regarding time spent abroad dedicated to music study and practice (which would potentially suggest cross-continental influences). The five remaining questions were geared toward participants citing percussion theatre works they had encountered through various mediums. These included: library catalogues, long play records, compact discs, internet resources (including YouTube and other modes of musical dissemination), festivals, concerts, masterclasses and personal collaborations. The participant was then asked to describe how the example is theatrical and what technical or logistical challenges were evident. The complete survey can be found in Appendix B.

The survey questions were conceived to address the issue that music performances are often ‘one-time’ occurrences. Many published compositions are listed in library catalogues as well as record labels and are therefore easily uncovered and researched, while unpublished works are largely undocumented and witnessed only by those surrounding its performance. It was on this basis that the questions were devised and they relied on the extensive experience of the music professionals taking part in the survey.

The main objective of this research is to determine the presence of percussion theatre in Australia, which includes not only the compositions themselves, but the performers and composers who have made an impact on the genre. This information has historical significance as well as providing documentation of the ideas and unique contributions of the musicians. Additionally, the individual expertise of the participants is crucial to the endorsement of the material uncovered in the survey. For these reasons, it is important that each person be identified by name with a brief account of their music experience. As stated in section 8 of the Participant Information Statement in Appendix A; I asked for permission for participants to be identified because:

not all accounts of percussion theatre performances can be substantiated by recordings or sheet music, so some of the information presented in this study must stand on the reputation of each participant alone.
This information would also allow for further scholarship into the field of percussion theatre based on the unique knowledge relayed by individual participants.

The wide scope of information solicited within this study called for a ‘mixed methods’ approach as proposed by John W. Creswell. He states that, ‘the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone’ (Creswell in Fitzpatrick, 2014: 12). On the nominal scale (unordered numeric data), the overall number of Australian percussion theatre works composed was listed according to: year of composition and the frequency of gesture, acting and vocalisation being employed. The qualitative data, on the other hand, comprised of the instrumentation of the compositions, how theatrical concepts were integrated into the work and the challenges involved.

The justification for using the written interview is based on the inadequacy of other research techniques in revealing the anticipated number of compositions. A great deal of effort was put into initial background research prior to conducting the written interview in order to exhaust a reasonable amount of alternative avenues of data collection. These methods involved institutional data such as dissertations and library catalogues, publishing companies, program notes and internet databases (such as YouTube).

When considering the survey design, face to face interviews would have produced more skewed and in-depth responses. This technique, however, would have been justifiable with a sample group limited to just several people. In order to collect the breadth of data needed for the cross-sectional study across Australia, the written interview became the appropriate alternative. To facilitate comparatively in-depth responses, participants were asked to consent to follow-up questions to clarify any information presented.

The survey was of exploratory design, collecting ample qualitative data, which then led to the relevant quantitative data (Bergman, 2008: 69). Once the sample data was retrieved, further online research was needed to scrutinise the music compositions and their relevance to the topic. This seemed to be the most efficient approach in terms of time and resources involved, as well as providing the best chance to achieve the research outcomes.
The focus of this study was to depict trends among the variables such as the instances of each of the three theatrical techniques (acting, vocalisation and gesture) and the year of composition. A correlational approach attempting to demonstrate the strength and quality of a piece based on its published status or performance frequency, would not have been a realistic goal, especially since access to the scores and performance recordings was limited. Instead, the survey was designed to accumulate undocumented works and render overall trends, in order to provide a foundation for further, in depth study of the genre.

According to Creswell, there are two main types of surveys: cross-sectional and longitudinal. He states that as well as identifying trends from a sample population, the primary reasons for utilising a survey include collecting data on opinions towards a particular issue, as well as practices of the participants (Creswell, 2012: 377). The reasons for conducting a cross-sectional survey in this project are unconventional, since no opinions have been requested from the participants and they have been asked to be observers themselves, usually the role of the researcher. This recourse is testament to the lack of percussion theatre scholarship in Australia. The only variables called for in the survey design was that the participants embody at least some experience with percussion theatre in Australia and that one of the three central theatrical techniques was implemented by the percussionist/s.

0.5.2. Analysis of Data

There are many techniques and software geared towards analysing research data. The Software Nvivo by QSR International claims to organise and analyse data quickly and easily (QSR International, 2016). Aside from the cost of obtaining such software, I was not confident that it would prove to be a worthwhile investment given the follow-up investigation required in building a music catalogue relevant to the research topic. I anticipated that some responses would be less detailed than others and that there may be some measurement error or misunderstanding of the questions, therefore I allocated time to research compositions uncovered in the responses.
Although the participants recount their involvement with percussion theatre as a phenomenon, this research project does not strictly incorporate the practice or analysis of phenomenology. The analysis of data was an ongoing process while each survey was returned. Known as progressive focusing, this enabled me to refine my method of interpreting the information. Endnote has been a crucial tool throughout the project and this software allowed for a comprehensive and searchable categorisation of elements within various responses. Each composition was itemised and placed in the database, detailing the response source, year of composition, publishing details, instrumentation, a short description (usually found in the survey response) and the theatrical technique/s employed (acting, vocalisation or gesture). Once the data was substantiated through further independent investigation and labelled ‘Australian percussion theatre’, various searches through the Endnote database were done to determine the quantitative data and trends. The results, along with data relating to the practice of percussion performance in context with established European and American conventions are discussed in Chapter Three.

0.6. Chapter-by-Chapter Overview

I begin Chapter One by proposing a new perspective of the early stages of percussion theatre. Instrumental theatre is introduced as a key factor in the development of percussion theatre; this practice as well as various ideologies in existence during the mid-twentieth century conspired to re-invent music performance. A system of social networks, collaborations, influential styles and the timeline of works composed, are examined to determine any notable trends leading to percussion theatre. Important figures and significant repertoire from both Europe and the United States are discussed, which are subsequently linked to the historical development of this genre in Australia.

The Historical background laid out in Chapter One reflects my attitude towards this topic, which derives from events occurring in the 1950s. These events are presented as precursors to modern-day percussion theatre repertoire. It was during this time that instrumental theatre, John Cage, the avant-garde, musique concrète and collaborative groups such as Fluxus, shared similar innovative concepts with the universal purpose to transform the notion of classical music. Introducing such connections between
continents may be regarded as speculative. The possibility of such connections are evident, however, by the observable trends in the chronology of theatre compositions.

**Chapter Two** discusses the concept of percussion theatre and defines its characteristics in detail. The polemics of confining music to a genre are explored, along with its merits and necessity. Section 2.2 will put forward examples of musically trained performers role-playing as musicians in a rudimentary style of music theatre. Composers, however, have progressively required expanding skill sets from performers, not the least of which has demanded trained percussionists to adopt theatre practices in their performances. My research reveals the trepidation with which trained musicians approach playing with the added element of acting. Characterisation is a derivative from acting, yet still significant as an extra-musical skill. A great deal has been written about gesture and how this may compliment or detract from music. I propose strategies on how to incorporate these theatrical elements and the implications these have on the percussion theatre genre.

Using the results from the written interview, I discuss the history of percussion theatre in the three main continents in **Chapter Three**. Once the impression of the genre in Australia has been established, any trends and comparisons are examined based on the amount of compositions, timeline, theatrical techniques employed and the frequency of performance. These findings are then integrated with that of North America and Europe.

**Chapter Four** discusses the validity of percussion theatre as a specialised genre. I will analyse the different challenges and demands made on the percussionist and how, if at all, theatrical direction complicates those demands. Some observations result from the survey while others are based on my experience with the repertoire as a performer and spectator. These observations also cross over to the question of why certain repertoire is/not in circulation, versus the more frequently performed works. I examine possible factors contributing to a composition's success within the genre.

In the **Conclusion** I discuss whether my suspicion that Australia has made comparably less progress in this genre is justified based its disproportionately smaller population and geographic isolation. Is there a hidden collection of unpublished percussion theatre
works in Australia? Does a genuine interest in the genre exist? I will give an overview of the role Australia has played in developing this type of music. Looking at the overall genre and the techniques required, the importance of theatrical study are assessed and furthermore, whether or not such a venture would assist in the promotion of percussion theatre music in Australia.
1. Chapter One – Historical background

1.1. Kagel and Instrumental Theatre in Europe

In essence, percussion theatre rests conceptually and historically on the practice of instrumental theatre. Percussion theatre is arguably a subcategory of instrumental theatre, comparable in visual appearance and characteristics. Other expressions within contemporary classical music such as the avant-garde, electronic music and theatrical xylophone shows may have made an impact towards the emergence of percussion theatre. The legacy of Mauricio Kagel (1931–2008) is, however, distinctly linked to the materialisation of many compositions within this genre.

In 1957 Kagel moved from his birthplace of Buenos Aires, Argentina to Cologne, Germany. Kagel first heard the term instrumental theatre during a lecture given by Heinz-Klaus Metzger at the Darmstadt Summer Course in 1959. This was the catalyst for Kagel’s subsequent compositions, which included two works composed simultaneously, Sonant (1960/…) and Sur Scène. In Sonant he went about ‘transforming the playing of musical instruments into theatrical action’ (Heile, 2006); as though Kagel conceived the motions of playing the score ahead of the notes per se. In the movement entitled ‘Pièce touchée, pièce jouée’ the instrumentalists mime the playing of the music on the score. The audience is forced to consider the physical action of a musician executing a score, without the sound itself being heard.

In Sur Scène the performers (Baritone, speaker, mime artist and three musicians including a percussionist) are ‘Presenting musical performance within a quasi-theatrical context’ (Heile, 2006: 35). A speaker recites critical notes with bizarre inflections throughout, while a mute actor grows increasingly anxious in the audience. The baritone and instrumentalists are part of the drama more than the music. They appear indifferent to realising the composition in a manner typical of a traditional concert setting. The music itself plays a subservient role to the predominant dramatic content. This is a typical characteristic of instrumental theatre, where the theatrical aspects are highlighted beyond the musical aspects of a performance.
Kagel gave percussionists a more central role in *Match* (1964). Scored for two celli and one percussionist, this work is reminiscent of a tennis match where the cellists duel extroverted musical figures while with the percussionist ‘acting’ as the umpire. Kagel manipulates the space of the stage layout and movement around this space, executed with precise timing, resulting in heightening the dramatic and musical tension.

In these previous examples, percussion is given a supporting role within a larger theatrical context. In 1976, Kagel wrote exclusively for percussion in *Dressur*. The piece for 44 wooden instruments was dedicated to and premiered by Trio le Cercle in 1977. The performance takes place in a mock circus ring (resembling the practice of animal training), where the performers engage in melodic games, rituals and carefully timed dramatic pauses. Comic elements result from the interaction between players, as well as novelty gags. The characterisation should be playful and spontaneous as the performers attempt to modify each other’s behaviour and at times use vocalisations like a quasi-ritualistic fashion. *Dressur* is a quintessential representative of percussion theatre, born out of the instrumental theatre genre.

Kagel wrote two more theatre pieces for percussion; a version of *Rrrrrrr...* (1982) for percussion duo in six movements, and *L’art Bruit: Solo for Two* (1995). The latter was premiered by percussionist Isao Nakamura and requires one helper and a pre-recorded tape of the instruments. Kagel explains in a letter to Nakamura that ‘the assistant was needed to make the course of the piece “more elegant” than the chaotic tumble between piles of instruments and mallets typical of solo pieces for percussion’ (Heile, 2006: 66). *Rrrrrrr...* is a radio play with 41 pieces and *Radio Fantasy* is the concert version consisting of the same amount of pieces, six of which are scored for percussion duo. The six movements all begin with the letter ‘R’: ‘Railroad Drama’, ‘Ranz des Vaches’ (Call of the cows), ‘Rigaudon’, ‘Rim Shot’, ‘Ruff’ and ‘Rutscher’ (Gallop). The theatrical characteristics of this suite are in some ways subtle, using sound effects, stage direction (placement of players and instruments) and one instance of visual gesture.

Kagel had a flair for theatre. He would often direct performances of his own compositions with a keen eye for timing and visual effectiveness. Kagel would also instruct his students to draw comics and compose music to them, which tied into his notion of theatre because ‘in that way they (students) had to construct stories, plots.'
And the relation between the description of something, and a *sounding fact* that occurs *because* a determinate thing has happened, that already has to do with theater’ (Solare, 2009: 12).

The fact that Kagel was influential lead him to encourage his students to seek originality instead. When asked what advice he would give to young composers, he replied ‘sincerity’. He urged them ‘not to run after fashions, or after what critics want to write about contemporary music, nor after the music that scores successes at festivals, but doing as in Speleology, the science of exploring caves: to go very deep inside and say *this* is what I want’ (Solare, 2009: 10). He also equates music composition to inventing, meaning that music does not exist prior to the sound-world being created. Realistically, do we really ‘invent’ music in a vacuum with no outside influences? The interaction of composers and performers as outlined below produced some of the most innovative compositions of the mid-twentieth century.

Kagel and Stockhausen both lived in Cologne in the late 1950s and early ’60s. Both incorporated theatre into their music, although Stockhausen’s approach differed from Kagel’s. Karlheinz Stockhausen (1928-2007) began experimenting with electronics early on in his career and he used spatial manipulation in some of his most famous pieces. *Gruppen* (1955-7) for 3 orchestras and electric guitar was originally meant to be for orchestra and electronics. Instead, he produced a serial composition with 3 simultaneous tempi in surround sound.

In 1957 he composed *Zyklus* for solo percussion, where the setup is staged in a circle and the performer makes a full rotation by the conclusion of the performance. After further innovations with *Kontakte* (1960) for percussion, piano and electronics, he produced *Originale* in 1961 thanks to the collaborative effort of artist and future spouse Mary Baumeister. During a performance of *Kontakte* various ‘real people’ are superimposed such as actors, a painter, child, newspaper salesperson and street performer etc.

Stockhausen composed numerous cycles, *Tierkreis* (1974-75) (the twelve zodiac signs) with twelve music boxes, each playing a melody allocated to the individual sign. *’Musik im Bauch’*10 (1975) one of the stand-alone pieces from *Teirkreis*, is performed by six
percussionists moving in the manner of music box figures. *Licht* is a seven-day opera cycle composed between 1977 and 2007, and two notable percussion theatre pieces are ‘*Kashinka’s Gesang als Luzifers Requiem’*(for six percussionists and flute, all in costume) from *Samstag* (Saturday), and ‘*Nasenflügeltanz*’ (Wings of the Nose Dance) for singing solo percussionist and electronics. In 2006 Stockhausen wrote *Himmels Tür* (Heaven’s door), which is the movement corresponding to the 4th hour in the 24-hour cycle *Klang* (sound). *Himmels Tür* will be discussed in further detail in Chapter Two.

Many other contemporaries of Kagel and Stockhausen experimented with theatre but without highlighting percussion as the centre focus. Vinko Globokar (b. 1934) and Georges Aperghis (b. 1945) are two composers renowned for their work in instrumental theatre. Globokar had worked closely with Stockhausen on *Aus den Sieben Tagen* (1968), consisting of 15 text-directed free improvisations. He also assisted Berio on a venture to Berlin between December 1964 and May 1965, and he taught composition with Kagel and played trombone in his Kölner Ensemble between 1967 and 1976. Kagel wrote *Atem* (1970) for him, which Globokar performed regularly.

Globokar was well acquainted with the foremost composers of the instrumental theatre scene and this greatly influenced him in his own trajectory as a composer. In Berlin, while Berio was composing *Traces* (for soprano, mezzo-soprano, two choruses and two actors), Globokar started composing *Vole* for three choruses, orchestra and speaker. Improvisation was a large part of his music life, notably through New Phonic Art Ensemble (of which percussionist and future collaborator Jean-Pierre Drouet was a member). From 1973-79 he was director of instrumental and vocal research at IRCAM, where he researched sound production (Lund, 1988: 3). Globokar used this experience and his knowledge of linguistics to produce new techniques and sound in his compositions.

Aperghis was introduced to theatre through his wife, Édith Scob, whom he married in 1976. In that same year he founded Atelier Théâtre et Musique (ATEM) and wrote music increasingly for musicians and actors (which he had done previously). Most significantly, he held strong ties with the ensemble *Trio le Cercle* (Jean-Pierre Drouet, Gaston Sylvestre and Willy Coquillat), who as a group and as individuals championed his percussion compositions, often involving theatre. Such examples include *Le Corps à*

1.2. Cage and Fluxus Ideology in the United States

While various composers were experimenting with instrumental theatre in Europe, there were similar events and figures transpiring in the United States and these radical worlds would often coincide. Stockhausen and some of his contemporaries in Europe went about exploring music of the avant-garde in an intellectual manner. The hype of serialism had died down but European composers such as Stockhausen continued to use it as part of their compositional processes. Cage describes his style as:

(Maintaining) the two most essentially conventional aspects of European music – that is to say, the twelve tones of the octave (the frequency characteristic of the material) and regularity of beat (affecting the element of method in the composing means). As a consequence, the performer – in those instances where his procedure follows any dictates at all (his feelings, his automatism, his sense of universality, his taste) – will be led to give the form aspects essentially conventional to European music. (Higgins, 2002: 72)

In many ways, avant-garde enthusiasts in the USA were opposed to this ‘conventional’ approach and Stockhausen’s attitude towards jazz, calling him a ‘Cultural Imperialist’. His remarks about jazz at a Harvard lecture in 1958 (according to Henry Flynt) referred to it as ‘primitive…barbaric…beat and a few single chords’ (Piekut, 2011: 90-91).

Flynt’s friend George Maciunas (also based in America) was the director of Fluxus, a group of artists whose philosophy was to celebrate life through a state of flux, thereby blurring the line between art and life. Maciunas had contempt for the ‘high culture’ separating the social classes, sarcastically saying:

Art must appear to be complex, pretentious, profound, serious, intellectual, inspired, skilful, significant and theatrical; it must appear to be valuable as a commodity so as to provide the artist with an income. (Fusik, 2013: 113)

Maciunas officially established Fluxus in Germany with a series of concerts in Wiesbaden and Cologne at Mary Baumeister’s art studio. Bauermeister first collaborated with Stockhausen with Originale in 1961; they later married in 1967 but divorced in 1972, ending their working alliance. Fluxus member Nam June Paik was also a student of Stockhausen and remained sympathetic to his work, persuading Maciunas to include his music in festival programs. Paik was chosen by Stockhausen to be the action composer in his Originale and block out the stage directions for the cast.
At the American premiere in New York – initiated at the request of Charlotte Moorman – some members of the Fluxus movement were performing, including Paik. Maciunas organised a picketed protest outside, and even coerced Robert Delford Brown to light a stink bomb on stage during the performance, forcing the evacuation of the hall. This caused an irreversible rift in the group and relations between Maciunas and Moorman.

At around the same time, American composer Roger Reynolds (b. 1934) became internationally recognised with his instrumental theatre composition *The Emperor of Ice-Cream* (1962). The work was the first of several works incorporating spatial manipulation and vocalisation by instrumentalists. He later received a Fulbright Foundation fellowship, which allowed him to live in Cologne between 1962 and 1963 (at the same time as Kagel and Stockhausen). One may deduce from Reynolds’ following observation that influence was either received or imposed.

[There are] two types of American musicians in Europe: students who entrench themselves in European institutions and compositional styles while still asserting their American character; and radical performers under the influence of Fluxus-type events, who, in Reynolds’s opinion, perpetuated in Europe inaccurate interpretations of Cage. (Beal, 2006: 132)

Fluxus continued its radical preaching both in the United States and Europe through its young members, many of whom were private students of Cage or his students the New School of Social Research (as was the case with Maciunas and La Monte Young). John Cage (1912-1992) was not considered a Fluxus member, however compositions such as *Child of Tree* (1975) exemplify his inclusion of Fluxus ideology. Indeterminacy was a common feature in both camps, although Cage was much more controlling in his directions, whereas Fluxus pieces are more open to interpretation. In fact the freedom they possess allow for the performance to take place anywhere, not necessarily a concert hall, and the performers are often the audience themselves, as in the peculiar *Three Lamp Events* (1961) by George Brecht12 (Friedman, 2002: 23). This illustrates how Fluxus was a way of thinking, of re-examining everything in life as a work of art.

Some artists in the group were followers of Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968), an artist who pioneered the Dada movement. Dadaism challenged the accepted conventions of art, promoting the idea of ‘anti-art’. Often shocking in delivery, it offered the audience little to re-orientate itself. Fluxus on the other hand, aimed to take the audience into a state of liminality while encouraging the re-evaluation of a given idea by providing an alternative context (Gartner, 2009: 40).
An example of this can be found in Ben Patterson’s *Simple Opera* (1995) where the narration is interrupted by an increasing amount of gags, comprised of toys left to the discretion of the performer/director. Each interruption adds an additional gag ‘chime’, growing incessantly as the work progresses. The audience typically responds with laughter, then talking, followed by reflection and finally comprehension as the work settles into its rhythm. Fluxus embraced theatre in an extreme and abstract manner, as if to revolt against the conventional Western art forms (Beal, 2006: 121).

Harry Partch (1901-1974) was a prolific American composer who also challenged traditional approaches to composition. Partch seemed determined to debunk every aspect of performance art, from the Western scale, to the construction of instruments and eventually the role of musicians in music theatre. He drew on Ancient Greek and Japanese Noh Theatre in writing his works, including *Delusion of the Fury: A Ritual of Dream and Delusion* (1965–66). There are several specially made percussion instruments doubling as the backdrop, and the chorus, integrated by instrumentalists, are dressed in costumes to denote certain characters. This was a significant innovation of Partch’s work, where musicians found themselves on stage as part of the company, not hidden away in an orchestra pit (Griffiths, 1995: 100-101).

Each pioneering figure mentioned above offers a unique approach to music-theatre. Despite vast differences in compositional techniques and styles between the two continents, composers unified in challenging the established traditions of classical music performance, an aesthetic that lies at the core of contemporary music. Such aesthetic was politically and socially motivated (as evident in Dada and the riff between Fluxus and Stockhausen), making the theatre an ideal platform for further evolution.

Initial research into the history of percussion theatre has uncovered only some direct connections between compositional influences. The network of alliances is an intricate nexus and there are many instances where musicians cross paths without necessarily associating a given composition with another. The influences discussed above have mainly taken place under the umbrella of a mentorship rather than professional exchange. Kagel reminds us that following stylistic trends and creating original works are mutually exclusive. In fact, his concept of exploration suggests that artistic merit
derives from working in a very personal way, avoiding the methods and approaches of peers. Whether knowingly or not, many composers in separate geographical locations have had similar ideas when it comes to incorporating extra-musical components to their compositions. While there is a wide range of music and theatre infused activity to consider, instrumental theatre has carried the most directional momentum in contributing to the development of percussion theatre.

1.3. Australia’s Music History

Australia has had a comparatively modest contribution to the percussion theatre genre. Generally speaking it is sufficiently rich in experimental and avant-garde music, and can boast of visits from composers such as John Cage and ensembles like Percussions de Strasbourg. Australian audiences have not been deprived of originality and while some musicians have dabbled in instrumental theatre, others have relished in it.

One can merely conjecture whether Syd Clayton (b. 1939) was informed by the work of Kagel and ‘instrumental theatre’ composers, but he clearly experimented using this medium. A renowned jazz musician, Clayton proceeded to make an extensive contribution in Australian experimental music. In one particular performance in 1968\textsuperscript{13}, workmen percussively ‘constructed or destroyed’ a given prop in the performance space. These ‘workmen’ were accompanied by a percussionist, while two people behind a silhouette were served a meal (Jenkins & Lyssiotis, 1988). There are striking similarities between this performance and Stockhausen’s Orginale where several real-life events of role-plays are performed concurrently.

In the following year, Clayton curiously combined concepts found in Kagel’s Match (1964) and Cage’s chance techniques. Using miniature roulette tables as chance operations (Green, 2009), he composed a cricket match, which he then transcribed into music notation for double bass and trumpet\textsuperscript{14}. The piece was called Yehudi and incorporated other performance elements, including ‘magical gesture’ (Jenkins & Lyssiotis, 1988), transforming the musicians into actors.

Clayton not only used music compositions as the basis of his artistic outlet, he was also a playwright. In his play Tell Basta Bubastis (1970), the three actors involved play musical
instruments (guitar, flute and bass drum) to some extent. The text of the work was
selected by chance from a book of 20 Chinese Poems (Jenkins & Lyssiotis, 1988). This
and other plays, employ the element of chance, indicating that Clayton did not
discriminate the two art forms in his aleatoric experimentation. During this time, he
also took his performances to the streets, again relying heavily on chance operations.

Similar to Match, his play Handsdown gourds (1971) for five actors and percussion, was
aleatorically conceived from the events of a cricket match. Sonnet Man Juniper (also
composed in 1971) involved four actors dressed as the instruments of a string quartet,
who in turn become their respective instruments as well as play them (Jenkins &
Lyssiotis, 1988).

Clayton’s exploration of theatre in music, plays and environmental (or street
performances) works then expanded to sports. After becoming familiar with baseball,
he was fascinated by the theatrics of the game. It is difficult to detect how this interest
impacted his compositions during this time. Being a percussionist himself, this likely
influenced the frequency of which he included percussion in his instrumentations. Many
of these works have theatrical qualities as seen in the instrumental theatre genre, most
notably in compositions incorporating acting, particularly gestural techniques. With the
limited research analysis conducted on his music, it is not known to what extent he
wrote theatrical techniques for a percussionist. Nevertheless, his work remains a
critical step towards exploring the specialised skills involved.

As we shall see, Clayton’s work may have made an impact on other composer-
percussionists like Graeme Leak (b. 1960), who has been an active professional since
1978. As well as street performances and percussion theatre compositions, Leak
achieved some notability with his Spaghetti Western Orchestra. Active from 2004 and
as of late 2014, they ceased productions and touring. The group reinvented Ennio
Morricone scores from the Spaghetti Western genre and re-enacted stories with clever
humour and theatrical flair. Their performances involved lighting, staging, costumes,
props, singing and an array of percussion and other musical instruments. Leak’s
reputation is overwhelmingly based on the percussion theatre idiom, which will be
discussed further in Chapter Three.
Australia’s percussion history has been well established, with groups such as the Melbourne based Australian Percussion Ensemble led by John Seal between 1972 and 1977 and Speak Percussion directed by Eugene Ughetti. Sydney-based Synergy Percussion is the oldest currently-active contemporary music ensemble in Australia (“Synergy Percussion,” 2013). Both groups have commissioned and premiered a vast amount of new music, although theatrical performances have been scarce.

Synergy’s original members formed the nucleus of the percussion section of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra – Colin Piper, Richard Miller, Ron Reeves, Michael Askill and Iain Bloxsom. Three of the most well-known Australian works for percussion ensemble were written for Synergy, namely Omphalo Centric Lecture (1984) by Nigel Westlake, Prelude and Dragon Fly Dance (1991) by Ross Edwards, and Djilile (1986) by Peter Sculthorpe. While theatrical influences were limited, Colin Piper played in a production of Hanz Werner Henze’s El Cimarron in the Adelaide Festival in 1976, with Lyndon Terracini as the Baritone vocalist.

Peter Sculthorpe (1929-2014) wrote How the Stars were Made (1971) for Percussions de Strasbourg for their Musica Viva tour around Australia. Barry Conyngham composed Six (1971) also for the same tour. Shortly after, Synergy member Michael Askill was invited to study in Strasbourg. He returned to Sydney in 1974. While international relations and influences were alive during the 1970s and 80s, any hint of reproduction of the percussion theatre style by the likes of Globokar and Aperghis are not immediately apparent. Percussion ensembles such as Synergy commissioned—as they continue to do so today—a prolific number of works by Australian composers. The nature of these compositions naturally rests on the style of each individual composer, which during this period, was only sporadically influenced in any significant manner by instrumental theatre and the like (Martin, 1996).

In recent years, Eugene Ughetti established Speak Percussion. Having studied in Europe, he performs regularly at the Lucerne Festival, Switzerland. Speak Percussion is at the cutting edge of experimental music. Their performances have elements of theatre, multimedia and instrument construction (such as glass instruments). Ughetti is a participant in this study and his contribution is discussed in section 3.1.
Two percussionists who already have a number of percussion theatre works in their repertoire are Vanessa Tomlinson (b. 1971) and Claire Edwardes (b. 1975). Tomlinson studied with Steve Schick in San Diego and Edwardes received her masters at Den Haag, the Netherlands. Tomlinson has performed many of the European works, and there are several recordings available on the internet.\textsuperscript{15} \textit{Hi Hat and Me} by Australian Matthew Schlomowitz was written for Edwardes and utilises vocal techniques including narrative and animal sounds. Her collaborative work with \textit{Ensemble Offspring} has produced concerts such as \textit{Bargain Garden} in 2013 at Carriage Works and the \textit{Secret Noise} in 2015. Both productions had no stage, used lots of movement, text and dramatisation.

There is clearly a gap in knowledge with respect to theatrical exploration in Australian classical music. The survey conducted in this study (the results discussed in \textbf{Chapter Three}) is aimed at completing fragmented accounts of percussion/instrumental theatre in Australia. This initial background research is an indication of the kind of theatrical avenues that have been explored in Australia and have led to percussion theatre as it is today. The survey results indicate that there is currently a new generation of percussion theatre enthusiasts emerging. Australia does not have the historical longevity of this tradition as compared to Europe and the United States. However, an increasing cohort of contemporary Australian musicians have begun to make a serious contribution to this genre.
2. Chapter Two – Percussion Theatre and the Techniques

2.1. The Case for Categorising Music

Creating a distinction between music performance and music theatre performance is a complicated prospect. One could posit that in order for any performance to be deemed as music theatre, there need only be an element of music and of theatre to be drawn together. Furthermore, every music performance could be considered as some kind of theatrical endeavour. Typically, the musician arrives at a theatre, walks onto a stage, dressed in a conventional costume, with performance lighting and takes on an altered persona to express music. As Griffiths (1995: 181) asserts, a ‘musical performance is by nature dramatic, and that a soloist in concert dress, playing on a platform, is an actor’. If we are to examine percussion performance from this perspective, it must be necessarily regarded as an ‘innately theatrical’ (Hinkle, 2010: i) and detailed choreography (executing the notes and logistics required by a score) around carefully selected props (percussion instruments).

As seen in Cage’s Living Room Music, props and instruments are conjoined. The stage is furnished as a living room and the four performers play on found objects such as a newspaper, wooden furniture and a door in the first and last movement. One observer may approach found objects as props, while another perceives them predominantly as instruments. Similarly, a certain costume may enlighten the theatrical imagination of one audience member; conversely, according to someone else’s judgment, all concert music performances are inherently ‘in costume’. Differences in perception cannot be rigid. When defining percussion theatre, or any other style of music, one must be flexible in their approach so as not to discourage subjectivity. Such a concession is necessary given the interpretive nature of art. Consequently, any attempt at categorisation should illuminate a concept rather than delineate barriers.16

When it comes to categorising music, Smith uses the analogy of maintaining or “containing” a lawn. In a quasi-environmentalist gesture, Smith and his wife planted trees and flowers as ‘escaping from the suburbs into the woods’ (Smith, 1994: 215). He equates music art with nature, ‘letting patterns emerge out of the sound’s [sic.] demand
to take their own shape’ and demonstrates this by neglecting the upkeep of his backyard (Smith, 1994: 215).

Smith continues on to discuss the viability of open and closed systems in music and how expression should change:17

Serialism, chance music, or any self-contained system for that matter, creates a music of perfection. Perfection, like belief, is a closed system. A closed system leads to itself. Such systems close in on themselves. Such systems create music which admires itself by not contradicting its own agenda. A closed system can only lead back to its origin. It is a fortress - static and defensive... Open systems move because they are unbalanced. If a system is balanced, then there is no movement—especially no movement outside its own hierarchies. Only the unbalanced move. The unbalanced move, or fall. (Smith, 1994: 217)

Smith proposes that to listen is, in fact, to listen to one’s self. **Self** changes; therefore sounds, and in turn music, must necessarily change. His perspective of how music should evolve can be applied to the act of categorising music. Applying the characteristics of a closed system to a music genre would be ecologically detrimental and lead to a ‘stalemate’ with nothing left to explore within the genre. Instead, genres such as percussion theatre should remain open systems, which allow for continual expansion and adaptation through external influences.

I am less inclined to limit percussion theatre to what it is not. Doing so would not serve my intention to promote the exploration and possibilities that result from the converging of theatrical techniques with percussion playing. The characteristics of percussion theatre are expansive and are on a sliding scale. Gesture, vocalisations and acting may be utilised at varying degrees, affecting the overall dramatic impact of the musical component of a performance. The frequency of their inclusion has a bearing on the theatrical effectiveness, as well as there underlying function. For example, in Mark Ford’s *Stubernic* (1986) for three percussionists on one marimba, the players are instructed to rotate around the marimba while playing a passage consisting of an ascending scale (Ford, 1986). This is the only purely theatrical gesture within the piece (that is, not directly responsible for sound production) and is a fleeting visual effect.18 On the other hand, Tierry de Mey’s *Musique de Table* for percussion trio (1987) uses hand gestures to accompany lively rhythms that contribute to its artistic appeal. This piece possesses a higher level of theatricality than the first based on the frequency of the gestures being used and its embedded dramatic purpose within the piece. Nevertheless, both pieces remain comfortably within the spectrum of the percussion theatre genre.
There is no perfect system for categorising music and it is by nature abstract, not absolute in its measurements or delineation. For the purposes of this thesis, employing the term 'percussion theatre' serves to provide further academic support to establishing a genre (as the repertoire has only recently been discussed through comparative studies), to justify a specialised field and to aid in the discourse of compositions with theatrical themes. Some papers have proposed alternative views on this topic, which are discussed below. Similar to 'instrumental theatre' 'music theatre' or 'theatre music', several terms are circulating to describe the same category, however the fundamental characteristics such as acting, text and gesture, remain consistent throughout the existing scholarship.

2.2. More than Role-Playing

Early historical flirtations with the theatrical in music performance strayed marginally from the norm. Musicians would typically be assigned elementary role-playing functions that required little skill outside of their instrumental training. Haydn’s Farewell Symphony, for example, directs musicians to prematurely disperse by the time the symphony draws to an end. Gaetano Donizetti’s opera L’Elisir d’amore (1832) calls for a band on stage (banda sul palco) for Doctor Dulcamara’s entrance (Stone, 2008: 190).

Stone writes about ‘musicians who perform as actors on stage’ in various operas over recent centuries. The term ‘actors’ here is a stretch since in most cases, as Fisher-Lochhead pointed out:

Even when instrumental ensembles are featured onstage (the marching band in Wozzeck, for example), they are used to represent musicians in the dramatic narrative. There is no attempt to situate their actions in a broader field of gestural significance. (Fisher-Lochhead, 2011)

In his early instrumental theatre works, Kagel used dramatic actions and text but the musicians necessarily remain musicians. Their skills are still largely valued as instrumentalists, aside from the requirement to speak. Works such as Sonant involve speech and also mime, although not in the formal sense. As Heile pointed out:

What is most remarkable here is that the players are not miming: the inaudible music is exactly notated and composed with the same rigour as the other music; it is in fact serially constructed... The players play themselves, and act as if they were rehearsing (given this low degree of role-playing, it is questionable whether one can speak of theatre in a strict sense at all). (Heile, 2006: 36)
Heile justifiably questions the term ‘theatre’ in this context. When compared with Stone's liberal view of acting, it might seem severe. Writer for Grove Music Online, Paul Attinello projects the significance of the meaning of dramatic events rather than their execution: ‘Instrumental theatre acknowledges the physical presence of the performers and requires them to perform sound with a presentational dramatic meaning’ (Attinello, 2009). Since expression and perception of theatre is on a sliding scale, it is important to appreciate larger degrees of ‘role-playing’ and when it is perceived to be crossing over into the realm of acting (as opposed to the exaggeration of playing a musical instrument).

Whether role-playing or acting, quality in execution cannot be taken for granted. The dramatic meaning may be lost if the act of role-playing comes across inauthentic. Any uneasiness in the effort towards characterisation should not be perceivable by the audience. This shortfall is distinctly separate from the exaggerated techniques inherent in stage acting. A musician is not required to present a character as personable or ‘realistic’, only in such a way that it is done with conviction.

I view percussion theatre as inviting the player to extend their performing capacity beyond their instrument and realise dramatic techniques at a deeper level. Only when the percussionist achieves a comparable level of dexterity in these associated skills, can a work procure a true synthesis of performing arts.

The distinction between role-playing and acting lies in the persona presented during a musical performance. If one retains the traditional impression of performing as a musician, where the music is personified through a degree of interaction between the ensemble and/or the audience so as to create a sense of theatrical drama, it would be considered role-playing. The musicians are brought to life, so to speak, and their roles are featured beyond animated figures presenting music. Acting extends this responsibility to involve characters from an abstract context. That is, characters may be presented in a musical setting, however their conception is based on external conditions. The performer carries a character’s depth through dramatising a storyline, displaying mannerisms such as demeanour, vocal manipulations such as accent and tone, as well as articulating emotions. These skills will be discussed in detail below.
2.3. Acting

At a masterclass at the Manhattan School of Music 2007, Steve Schick gave a presentation on some of his recent projects. One project required him to grow a beard and ‘perform’ an address in gibberish. The production was entitled *Oscar, Pièce de Cirque* and was written by Roland Auzet in 2005. In order to prepare for the performance, he would take the manuscript and practice in a café of a morning, evoking curious and unwelcoming reactions from other fellow patrons. Ironically, the same behaviour Schick displayed later on the stage during production, was a spectacle audiences paid to go and see.

This example reveals a paradox between social norms and artistic licence. Certain behaviour in one setting is deemed socially unacceptable; when the same behaviour is ‘acted out’ in a separate, yet still public context, it is considered an intriguing piece of performance art. As previously mentioned in Chapter One, Fluxus was renowned for jesting with the boundary between art and reality. This next section first deals with the undeniable link between real-life people and characters, before exploring any given person’s capacity to impersonate or act.

The ability to act comes from knowing one’s self as well as knowing the character to be portrayed. Every person, including characters, are made up of outer and inner characteristics. An actor has the responsibility to uncover the characteristics, not only that appear to the audience, but also hidden personality traits that are not immediately apparent (Cannon and Brosnan, 2012: 94). These might include lonely, thoughtful, kind, intelligent and loyal. Identifying inner characteristics avoids a 2-dimensional caricature and gives the character more depth. From these characteristics, an actor can draw on his/her own emotions and feelings and apply them to the situation being conveyed:

> The actual moment of engaging emotion on behalf of the character is, in effect, felt simultaneously by the actor as an act of imagination and as an act of empathy. The actor’s personal relationship to the emotion or any events associated with the emotion may be tapped associatively through memory, but finally must be surrendered to those of the character. (McCutcheon and Sellers-Young, 2013: 36)
Acting can also be linked with the imagination of a child playing ‘house’ (Schreiber and Barber, 2005: 25). Once the actor has gone through the process of relaxation and concentration, they can enter ‘the world of the character’ (p. 26).

Good acting can be accomplished by relating to a character through situations the actor experiences in his or her own life. Once this is established and the actor focuses on a particular set of emotions, this may be referred to as being ‘in character’ or becoming a character. This sort of personal involvement in a character stems from what is known as ‘Method Acting’ and was devised by Russian Constantin Stanislavsky (PBS, 2001). While this is a widely accepted model, German playwright Berthold Brecht wanted to remind his audiences that actors do not become the characters, and that the spectator agrees to accept the actor’s representation of a particular role (Ruhe, 2007). The underlying quality between the two practices remains that the performer conveys a realistic representation of a character.

Theoretically, acting seems straightforward to accomplish. However, there is some debate as to the natural acting ability amongst musicians. Recent sources have indicated that acting skills amongst opera singers are found lacking. Australian tenor Christopher Busietta blogs about what makes a great opera singer and in reference to acting, begins by writing that it is a traditionally neglected skill (Busietta, 2012). Busietta highlights the various ways an opera singer is required to portray a character, such as how to sing a fortissimo with various emotions, making sense of the text, reacting to the ensemble characters and being able to sing in various positions (e.g. lying down).

For opera singers, acting on stage requires an entirely different set of skills to screen or theatre acting. Not only is the acting on screen supposed to be naturalistic compared to a flamboyant portrayal onstage, but also in opera, singers must negotiate conductor’s cues, stage directions and character portrayal, whilst manipulating extremely intricate vocal and musical techniques. In her journal article for Opera News entitled ‘Just Act Natural’, Dona D. Vaughn also concedes that acting in opera is incapable of being ‘natural’ and that many singers lack in this skill. This is largely due to a complacent attitude in early stage educational programs (Vaughn, 2012). She argues that acting has risen to the same importance as singing, with a comparable amount of techniques to
master. She concludes ‘I am dismayed when people say they go to the opera to hear singing actors. I go to the opera to hear singers. How wonderful it is if they also can act!’

On the other hand, Fred Cohn argues that the effective portrayal of a character comes from singers’ convincing treatment of the music: ‘The drama of Boheme lives significantly in its music; one could argue that the singers' skill in "acting" the role of Mimi or Rodolfo is directly connected to their ability to realize the full expressive potential of the vocal line’ (Cohn, 2002). He draws on Giuseppe Taddei’s interpretation of Falstaff during L’onore ladri: ‘Was the shaking not conveyed through the great, guttural resources of his voice, with his physical posture (although totally appropriate to the dramatic moment) serving to focus attention on the vocal gesture?’ This statement deals with the dilemma of dramatic intention through body language in conflict with controlled singing. He concludes that Maria Callas’ esteemed reputation as a great actress has endured through audio recordings. ‘You want to discover the secret of Callas's "acting"? It's easy - just listen.’

The common thread in the above views is that opera singers generally possess no innate gift in acting. It is an assumed skill based on the necessity to portray a character through musical drama. Yet it is easy to overlook the various other processes available to communicate an operatic figure. The plot is written through the score and brought to life through musical expression, which calls into question the theatrical relationship between the aural and the visual. Music in unto itself is not explicit and only has the capacity to offer an impression of drama. This would suggest that drama requires a visual or textual element to portray literal meaning. The challenges of operatic performances are paralleled in percussion theatre and one must ask, are the techniques of acting limited by the musical demands of a performance? How do these issues impact the theatricality of chamber music performances? These concerns are addressed in Chapter Four.

There also seems to be a widespread understanding that instrumentalists cannot act. Globokar, writes in his article, Anti Badabum (Globokar, 1992: 77-82) about the requirements of acting in his pieces, and later (Globokar in Strom, 2012: 73) declared in a spoken interview, ‘musicians can't act and actors can't play.’
Schick found it difficult to pretend to be exhausted at the conclusion of *Antiphony VIII: (Revolution)* and confessed that ‘I have always been a very bad actor’, asserting that all musicians share the same fate (Schick, 2006: 164). Heile praised Kagel’s effective use of theatre without depending on the musicians having to act. ‘Kagel avoids the rupture between music performance and acting which tends to produce bad music theatre (particularly as musicians tend to be self-conscious and poor actors)’ (Heile, 2006).

With regard to percussion, all of the above statements are at least in part true, simply due to the obvious fact that percussion pedagogy does not include dramatic arts. One might agree with Heile’s convictions and bypass dramatic performances all together, or interpret it as a challenge. It is indeed possible that a percussionist who is drawn to repertoire that involves acting, may have a natural disposition for it while those who avoid such repertoire are likely to not posses this aptitude.

Acting appears in a number of percussion theatre compositions, including *Songs I-IX* by Stuart Saunders-Smith. The subtitle states ‘for percussionist-actor’, stipulating from the onset how the piece is to be presented. The acting requirements are highly demanding, using various accents in speech, vocal pitch and dynamic control, exaggerated gestures, dramatic pauses and changes in character.

Some compositions are based on characters and temperaments, such as *Ix6* by Paul Sarcich (2014). The performer plays a series of musical passages according to certain given characteristics that typify six progressive age groups, from an impulsive toddler, to an arthritic senior citizen. Vocal techniques are used throughout. This concept of personifying music is indeed not new and in fact many professional musicians use character and emotions to help give their music meaning. One passage may, for instance, be characterised as menacing, another as pensive. Even musicians in training are taught to heed similar indications on a score and play *agitato*.

At the very broadest levels, all musicians may be considered actors and all people, storytellers. These natural inclinations are often lost in experimental music theatre. The transformation of telling a story to an acquaintance to ‘performing’ a narrative to a larger audience, loses a sense of ease and natural propensity. This is perhaps in part due to the shock of public speaking, the intimidation of a larger space, a failure to immerse
oneself in a character or over-rehearsing to the point of artificial expression. Nevertheless, practicing to achieve internalisation of a text is crucial to have a convincing dramatic aspect to the performance.

Dan Senn (Senn, 1988) writes in his performance notes for Peeping Tom: 'a small theatre piece and therefore the text should be deeply internalized, just as a good actor prepares lines for a performance.' Having performed this piece, I can substantiate Senn's recommendation. Not only is there text to be delivered; more importantly a narrative must be carried. In order to do so, the performer must have independency from the script so as to become immersed in the character of a voyeur as required by this work. Senn draws a parallel with an actor rather than a narrator, which suggests a personal connection with the events, not only because the text is in first person, but because it resembles an actor's monologue.

The techniques involved in acting are varying and individualised. This is the case particularly within the complex experimental music scene. The initial vision of the composer determines how a role is to be carried out; that is, what tools are to be used in portraying a character. Often, the composer will require the use of speech, at other times, emotion through physical gestures. The skill of acting as an additional expression to the music requires significant self-reflection as well as a thorough understanding of how the performance comes across to the audience. This discussion serves as the basis for further inquiries into a suitable method for intricately combining the art of instrumental playing and acting.

2.4. Use of Speech

In his program notes for Huang's Save Percussion Theater DVD, Schick maintains that a narrative needs to be present for the text to be deemed theatrical. He argues that mere vocalisations without a story add to the timbre and texture of the music; the voice is simply another instrument. This position is in line with the idea that theatricality is predominantly a visual expression, but stands in disagreement with the plight of the opera singer's vocal expressions discussed in the previous section. Le Corps à Corps (1978) for percussionist and zarb, employs both treatments of text, using the voice as an instrument to imitate the drum (including a tongue click in bar 142), as well as
presenting a narrative (see Music Example 2a). This demonstrates the theatrical value of vocal sounds towards a spoken recitative. Schick places an emphasis on how the performance is received. Consequently, when bereft of narrative, a performance lacks a coherent plot and therefore is disqualified as theatrical. My perspective, by contrast, comes from the theatrical skills the percussionist must employ in order to execute a composition, and as such, utterances carry great theatrical significance.

Percussionists require adequate vocal technique to be heard above instruments that readily produce loud volumes without causing damage to the vocal organs. Huang made concessions in the treatment of the vocal work in James Wood's Rogosanti (1986) and reworked the score to eliminate the issue of imbalance between the voice and drums. She admits that she does not possess formal vocal training but feels her alternative approach serves her better since her voice and the instruments exist as two separate timbres, therefore they did not need to match (A. Y. Huang, 2004: 32). Despite Huang's valid reasons for not concerning herself with the difficulties of balancing dynamics, I suggest that vocal projection training would open up more possibilities in choosing which interpretive approaches to take.

Another case where this issue crops up is Zivkovic's To the gods of Rhythm where the performer competes with the djembe (or other hand drum). Some performers choose to amplify their voice by way of radio microphone. As a female with a naturally higher pitched voice, I used this characteristic to separate my voice from the drum by way of
pitch frequency. The issue of amplification is the same in Shlomowitz’s *Hi Hat and Me*, but not in *Songs I-IX* by Saunders Smith, due to the delicate, softly-spoken nature of the instrumentation. However, the performance space and acoustics may have limitations to the projection of the voice, without any vocal training. Even though the instrumentation was for small objects, I used microphones for the table of instruments as well as my voice so that the textures would carry. In retrospect, the ideal resolution would have been to have no amplification at all, or only for the instruments. This is only a personal preference that favours natural acoustics rather than processed sound, unless for specific sound manipulation purposes.

We have seen that the challenges that face today’s contemporary performers vary from traditions of the past. An opera singer spends years manipulating their vocal chords and strengthening their diaphragm to fill a concert hall with their voice. Similarly, a stage actor will receive guidance in voice production and announcing every consonant. Furthermore, tailored performance spaces were constructed from the sixteenth century for opera and theatre performers, which in addition to the acquired performance techniques, would assist the voices to carry. Music performance has branched out into a vast array of performance spaces where the acoustics may not be as helpful. Whether speaking narratives or utterances, a theatrical percussionist would certainly benefit from formal vocal training, particularly in maximising sound projection without damaging the all too delicate vocal chords.

### 2.5. Choreography and Gesture

I will now turn to the use of gesture and choreographed movement that are indicated in music scores. Gesture in this context, refers to movement that does not inherently produce sound, and exists purely for visual purposes. It is necessary, in the context of percussion theatre, to differentiate between choreography and stage directions. While both are typical elements of theatre (in contrast to non-dramatic musical scores), they each serve different dramatic roles. Stage directions in such works like Anne Boyd’s, *As Far as Crawls the Toad* (1970), are limited to exiting through the audience, exploiting the use of space and acoustic capabilities. This can also be construed as straining the performer/audience relationship. Similarly, in *Quête* (1984), Hames requires the bass drum to continue sounding until after the player disappears from the auditorium,
reaching its conclusion only once the sound is inaudible. This, in effect, serves to expand the performance space beyond what established at the beginning of the performance. Stockhausen heightens the level of drama in *Himmels Tür*, bringing a young girl through the audience as if proceeding into Heaven. The percussionist disappears behind a black curtain, having persuaded the higher powers to grant them entrance through the gate of Heaven (a church door built for this performance).

These examples illustrate the use of space and movement to achieve varying theatrical effects. They convey a sense of sonic manipulation, which the audience may or may not interpret as theatrical. These are akin to many other forms of sound manipulation including that of surround sound. As noted previously, theatrical elements are evident on a sliding scale. Certain instances of physical placement have less impact on the drama than others. For instance, Kagel’s *Match* places the cellists at both ends of the stage with the percussionist in the middle. By executing a series of ‘combative’ musical passages that rally back and fourth the performance clearly becomes reminiscent of a tennis match. The movement ‘Rim Shot’ in his percussion duet version of *Rrrrrr…*, also has the two drummers at opposite sides of the stage, however the treatment of the music material suggests that this is more aurally significant. The two drummers play figures in tandem, alternating musical ideas and passing drum rolls across the room, giving a panning effect as though through speaker manipulation. Creating a spatial audio effect can increase the level of drama within a performance and when the music combines with the visual imagery (a tennis match with players and an umpire), a scene is established.

Gesture is another feature tied in with sound production and possesses vital importance in the visual aspect of music. The theremin is an electronic musical instrument invented in 1919 by Russian physicist Leon Theremin (1893-1996), which uses antennas to detect gesture and produces sound without one physically touching the instrument (Eyck, 2013). An orchestra is said to be the conductor’s instrument, using physical gesture to generate an audible response. *Aphasia* (2011) by Mark Applebaum and *Silence Must Be* (2001) by Thierry de May, both employ hand gestures that are coordinated with prepared electronic recording. These examples suggest a correlation between gesture and sound that is often ignored.
In his book (Schick, 2006: 140), Schick describes a moment captured in a photo where he is performing *Zyklus* to schoolchildren. As he prepares for a ‘fierce’ stroke to the gong, a young boy with a hearing impairment has his fingers to his ears. The gesture is enough for him to realise the implications of the sound to be produced, even though he does not witness the audible result. The question is, since this child perceives a gesture that does not produce sound, is it more theatrical to him than another audience member? Even though he does not hear the sound, he perceives it. This thought-provoking concept is evident in Thierry’s *Silence Must Be*. This work begins with only silence and a mixture of sweeping and rigid hand gestures resembling everyday actions such as turning on the ignition in a car. In the middle of the piece, sound is heard along with the same kind of gesture. Though the sound is short-lived and soon returns to silence, one can inevitably hear that the sound corresponds to the gestures.

The use of gesture can greatly aid the delivery of musical expression. It may be used to reinforce the musical tension in a phrase, the mood of a passage and the variation in how material is treated. Taken to an extreme the use of gesture becomes a distraction. Unflattering and exaggerated movements are common amidst many virtuoso performers. For percussionists, the stick height is sometimes augmented, the footwork is unnecessarily busy, excess movement disrupts the musical phrase and facial expression can risk looking unnatural.

Such over-zealous movement and showmanship are the premise for selective compositions by composers such as Jennifer Stasack. In the fifth movement of *Six Elegies Dancing: for solo marimba* (1987), as shown in the Music Example below, the performer interrupts the musical passages with silent, large, sweeping arm gestures. The performer also mimes playing the marimba, as if the sound is ‘cutting’ in and out. The piece finishes with a soft roll in the high register and the mallets gently lifted into the air as though the sound floats away. This piece lends itself as a satirical account of disrupting, virtuosic movement, which holds no bearing on the delivery of the music.
Broughton (Broughton, 2008: 145-173) discusses bodily gesture as relevant to expressive marimba performance. The study was comprised of two experiments measuring how well a performance was received from a live performance (Experiment One) and from an audio-only presentation (Experiment Two). This research found that participants responded more positively to audio-only performances that played with physical expression. This distinction was intensified in Experiment One containing audio/visual examples. Her study differentiated between varying degrees of gesture and how the listener interpreted the sound from watching the performance.

Her summarising comments (Broughton, 2008: viii) call for focused study in expressive gesture: ‘bodily movements and gestures can enhance perception of expressive marimba performance and therefore warrant focused attention in pedagogy and practice.’ Students certainly need to become aware of their physical movements as performers, prioritising gesture and choreography to enhance their musical interpretation. This is a step toward extending visually expressive techniques for dramatic purposes.
2.6. The Use of Multimedia

A play is by definition theatrical. A script performed on the screen is a motion picture, maintaining the dramatic techniques of acting, characterisation, speech, plot, and costume/props. Julie Strom (Strom, 2012: 37) in her paper on what she refers to as theatre (noting the emphasis by the order of words in theater percussion) defines the genre by the following formula: ‘percussion + extra-musical elements, which may include but are not limited to movement, speech, and/or theatrical multimedia = theater percussion’. She states that multimedia compositions are not theatrical by default. She concludes:

Therefore, it is imperative to note that the combination of percussion and electronics does not necessarily result in a theater percussion piece, but that the combination must also include an inherently theatrical element (e.g. reaction to the electronics, or a clear, non-metaphorical story that underlines the musical/electronic experience). (Strom, 2012: 30)

The use of a storyline is left unexplained in Strom’s argument and is open to the assumption that program music renders itself theatrical. Of course program music may include narration as in Carnival of the Animals or Peter and the Wolf. Other canonical works such as Symphonie Fantastique and Tchaikovsky’s Romeo and Juliet are, however, considered to have a ‘clear story’ but require no narration or acting, whether on screen or on stage. One must assume that by using the term ‘non-metaphorical storyline’ Strom excludes works with an abstract plot; that is, a subtext that is only represented or implied through pure music.

In order to illustrate her concept of ‘theatrical multimedia’, Strom draws on the example of Buster Keaton (2006) by Christopher Fellinger (Strom, 2012: 34), a percussion duet with a black and white silent movie projected on screen. As mentioned above, Strom would refer to this kind of work as theater percussion because of the manner in which the performers react to the film—by way of improvisation on the drums as though performing an improvised dialogue with the characters on screen—and thereby contributing to the storyline. There may be an element of characterisation in the percussionists’ role in response to the actors on screen, which would in itself uphold the theatrical element more convincingly than the presence of the film. It is the performers themselves who are engaging live on-stage and therefore carry the weight of theatricality.
In a technological twist to this discussion, *Schlag!* (2003) composed by Roland Auzet, involves a virtual character Oscar, who interacts with the ensemble, controlled by a technician using a remote (Mueller, 2012). Oscar has text, movement, facial expressions and inflection, all of which are involved in the delivery of a play. There is a revised version of this production from 2005 entitled *Oscar, pièce de cirque (Schlag Opus 2)*. The actors and musicians in this production also actively engage in theatrically. This includes American percussionist Steve Schick, who professed his lack of acting ability in his book (Schick, 2006: 164). Even if Oscar were the only ‘character’ and the musicians just instrumentalists, the live interaction would hold more bearing as a theatre production than a film accompanying music (or with the roles reversed).

Dramatic interaction between the musician and multimedia is key to the level of theatrical content, as already discussed earlier in this chapter. *Time and Money* by Pierre Jodlowski also incorporates gesture in sync with electronic sound effects, as does *Aphasia* by Mark Applebaum. These works offer a dimension of performance that goes beyond the sonic world. The senses are confused and perhaps amused momentarily while the brain re-orientates the aural and visual intake. All of these multimedia examples are coupled with dramatic performance techniques at the hands of the performer. The distinguishing factor is that the mere presence of multimedia provides a means of interaction in the same vain as an associate artist, whereas the theatrical performer engages in a dramatic action. Therefore, multimedia can be acutely theatrical, but it is usually the additional performance techniques that warrant the composition as a percussion theatre work. Rather than preclude multimedia works from the parameters of the genre, this distinction demonstrates the adaptable nature of the percussion theatre art form.

As we move into *Chapter Three*, it is important to note that subjective human perception results in many viewpoints of performance art, as well as the various aspects significant to each person. Speaking from the percussionist’s perspective as opposed to that of a composer or spectator, the significance of percussion theatre lies in the theatrical performance techniques foreign to a musician’s typical professional training. The next series of works discussed are rooted in this aspect and they provide an overview as to how physical gesture, vocals and acting techniques are utilised in Australian classical music culture. When considering the overall impression of each
composition, the concepts of theatrical performance as outlined above are relevant to authenticating the stylistic trends of the genre.
3. Chapter Three – Unifying the Style

3.1. Written Interview Results

Strom and Huang both speak of the extinction of percussion theatre. Strom (Strom, 2012: 6) questions the appropriateness of their programming in various concert events, including solo/ensemble percussion concerts, orchestral and art installations. She is uncertain about the target audience; claims that a lack of funding prevents more frequent performances; and that programmers are deluded to think that using ‘percussion theatre’ to publicise concerts will make the audience enjoy such performances. Strom is also concerned with the plight facing the popularity of contemporary classical music as a whole, a field I believe is undervalued, but not endangered.

Huang (A. Huang, 2012) alludes to the notion that percussion theatre is endangered as she reveals in the title of her DVD Save Percussion Theater. She does not specifically stipulate why there is a lack of enthusiasm, nor how her DVD and other projects seek to renew interest. Huang does mention (A. Huang, 2012: 3), however that she undertook this project upon the realisation that many percussionists were unfamiliar with the work of Trio le Cercle and sought to educate percussionists about the ensemble’s output of repertoire.

Given the concerns expressed by Strom and Huang, is ignorance indicative of a genre or style that is doomed to extinction? The results of the survey I carried out would suggest not. As already highlighted at the conclusion of Section 1.3, an increased interest in Australian percussion theatre has become apparent in recent years. This is substantiated by Graeme Leak’s own survey response:

I am aware of a new generation of players who work with the additional elements of performance required for theatrical presentation – awareness of the space, presence, holding character, gaze, set, lighting etc. etc. I think this is quite a recent thing, in the last ten to 15 years.

The main objective of this survey was to uncover a potentially large list of repertoire that could be considered percussion theatre. I could then identify a number of things such as: the theatrical techniques that had been favoured (if any); whether the
compositions are published; which composers and performers had made a substantial contribution to this genre; and the timeframe of the compositions.

Prior to gathering the survey data, I sourced twenty-four percussion theatre compositions from Australia, 154 from the United States and Europe combined. The data collected from the survey amounted to an additional sixty-five Australian compositions. In total, my research uncovered eighty-nine Australian percussion theatre compositions; this amounts to 243 works in all. This record is by no means exhaustive and I have accounted for the inclusion of each entry based on the criteria set out in Chapter Two: the percussionist is either acting, vocalising or gesturing during the work. It is also difficult to discern whether a piece is theatrical due to scant or non-existent descriptions and a lack of available public recordings. The results are thus, necessarily to the best of my knowledge, representative of the percussion theatre genre.

The written interview was designed to target the gap in repertoire awareness within this genre. The participants consisted of Australian percussionists and composers who are known to have connections with new contemporary music. During the correspondence in the survey process, some participants recommended other musicians who could offer additional insight to the study. These new avenues were pursued and a wider breadth of information was gathered. Each participant was presented with a series of questions to prompt their memory of percussion theatre repertoire they had knowledge of, or involvement with. The Participant Information Statement, and survey questions are detailed in Appendix A and Appendix B respectively.

Interpreting the survey process was complicated because of vague understanding of this relatively new genre. This was so despite the fact that the Participant Information Statement stated that participants:

> are invited to take part in a research study about percussion theatre, where the performer engages in a dramatic role such as acting, delivering text or choreographed movement within a classical music solo or ensemble setting.

Further clarification was given upon request and the participants were encouraged to be more inclusive of their repertoire lists rather than omitting potentially significant compositions.
Of the three theatrical techniques in this discussion, acting was the least represented, with 22 Australian compositions involving this skill. Gesture accounted for 59 compositions and vocalisation was used in 51. Some compositions used a mixture of theatrical elements, including Kate Neal’s *What Hath II* (2011). The composition is preceded by *What Hath I*, but with the addition of vocals and gesture. The following description is found on the Australian Music Centre website:

What Hath II is a fully notated percussion quartet which explores and abstracts encoded methods of communication. The ensemble uses sound, light, and movement to explicate patterns derived from binary code, morse code, and light coding. The aural, visual, and physical fuse together into a common language. (AMC, 2012)

With regard to gesture, some participants offered instances of compositions with instrument setups around a space and others with physical movement within the space. Stationary setups were not applicable to the final results. However, examples such as the following were included. Vanessa Tomlinson recalls Raymond Chapman Smith writing a piece for her with tam tam. Upon communication with the composer himself, I discovered that the piece is called *Fire-i* (1993) for solo percussionist and is scored for tam tam, roto toms and a singing percussionist who hides behind the tam tam.

Percussionist Leah Scholes has composed two works that call for acting and role-playing. In *Breakfast Serial* (2007), the percussionist executes various percussion-playing techniques with a cereal box (and its contents) for a young child who sits at the table, waiting expectantly for their breakfast. Humour is a strong characteristic of this piece and a performer who enthusiastically experiments with new playing techniques as though improvised would be best suited to perform this work. Effective facial expressions and dramatic pauses are crucial to the delivery. *Ex Libris* (2013) is equally playful, the subject of which are books within the context of a library. In addition to role-playing and dramatic gestures producing sound with the books, puppetry is cleverly introduced with a figurine with feet made of castanets, crumpled paper as the body and the director’s hand—in this case Penelope Bartlau—clenched at the head with two eyeballs protruding.

Scholes recently formed a duo with fellow percussionist Louise Devenish called The Sound Collectors. They commissioned *Confluence* (2014) by Lachlan Skipworth and premiered *Sub Aerial* by Cat Hope in 2015. In *Confluence*, humming is used to blend
with the resonance of two vibraphones, and physical movements are ‘conceived as one unified musical gesture’ (Skipworth, 2014).

Another noteworthy performance ensemble is Playing Fields. This ensemble experiments extensively with the fusion between visual arts and music (such as bowling balls) and have even incorporated a real estate auctioneer in one of their productions. Specific compositions mentioned in the survey are Moments Unremarked by Peter Humble and Quartet as a collaboration, both written in 2001.

Ensemble Offspring features percussionists Claire Edwardes (Co-artistic director) and Bree Van Reyk. Bargain Garden (2013) and The Secret Noise (2015) employ both dancers and actors. It demands the delivery of text and gesture by the musicians.

The majority of compositions highlighted are unpublished and many of these in turn, were one-off events. These results were expected and account for the lack of documentation of relevant performances. Even with the absence of readily available scores, percussion theatre is well and truly supported by the legacy and reputation of prominent composer-percussionists. In fact, the six composers who have produced four or more works are all percussionists. These are:

- Graeme Leak
- David Hewitt
- David Pye
- Michael Askill
- Vanessa Tomlinson
- Chris Henzgen

Graeme Leak has produced an impressive array of percussion theatre compositions ranging from theatre shows through to quirky solo works. His collaborations and touring shows include the Homeboys (1989), From Africa to the Kitchen Sink (1991), The Ennio Morricone Experience (2000-2006), The Lab (2003-2007) and Four Winds Cinematic Orchestra (2010). Some individual chamber works are excerpts from these productions. Other small-scale compositions include I Love Jazz (1991), The Art of
Noises (1995) and Museum Walk (2004). Leak is also renowned for his environmental works performed outdoors, which will be addressed at the end of Section 3.2.

David Hewitt’s compositional output is substantial. He is also an active performer, championing works by his peers, in particular Graeme Leak. As a performer-composer he has been a member of The Seymour Group, The Song Company, Taikoz, Playing Fields and The Ennio Morricone Experience. As a composer he has also produced community projects such as the Bermagui Powertool Orchestra, where the cast of local residents were required to act and move throughout the work. Both Leak and Hewitt have achieved the highest number of percussion theatre works to date, with 19 titles each, according the study.

David Pye has also built a solid reputation within the genre. He has written extensively for percussion with vocals, such as Duck! (1992), The Drummers of Gilgamesh (2002), Rebana Loops (2003) and Wacke (2004). The Drummers of Gilgamesh directs the percussionists to move around stage depicting a battle scene.


Vanessa Tomlinson has commissioned and premiered a number of new works, such as Hypnotic Strains (1998) and Spill (2007) by Erik Griswold, and Broken Approach (2014) by Cat Hope. She is also creatively engaged as an arranger and composer. Her arrangement of UR Sonate (1994), relies heavily on the delivery of text over percussion instruments. Her compositions include Practice (2000) using voice, Static (2014) incorporating instrument miming and Still and Moving Paper (2014). She also collaborated with Hewitt, Leak and Peter Humble on Quartet (2001).

Chris Henzgen is the owner of Middle C publications and has composed several percussion theatre works for school ensembles. In the early 1990’s he wrote Dining Diversions for percussionists around a dinner table. In Paradiddles (2010), he directs
performers to hop to their percussion setups creating paradiddles with their steps.\textsuperscript{31} \textit{Those Trying Drummers} (2012) is a parody of percussion section mishaps and \textit{Poetry in Motion} (2014) involves mime.

These pieces date back to approximately 1990. The earliest Australian percussion theatre piece uncovered by my research, however, was Victor Park’s \textit{Preliminary Final} (1982). The work has a strong resemblance to \textit{Yehudi} (Clayton) and \textit{Match} (Kagel) covered in \textbf{Chapter One}. Based on an Australian Rules Football match held in 1981 between Collingwood and Geelong, Park assigns performers one of several roles, namely the umpire, the ball, Collingwood and Geelong players, as well as the prospective cheer squads. The extent of theatrical involvement seems to be at the discretion of the performers, who are encouraged to consider the visual aspects as well as the aural. Australian percussion theatre has clearly been on the rise since this work: from only seven compositions in the 1980’s, to twenty-four in the 1990’s and fifty-eight from the year 2000, and twenty-four of these since 2010. Furthermore, there are four known works currently in development.

These accounts are a representative list of significant repertoire within the Australian percussion theatre genre. I did not include environmental works as the distinction of theatricality could not properly be determined and works with instruments placed in strategic positions for the purposes or sonic manipulation were also omitted. Despite these limitations, the survey has proven successful in its effectiveness at uncovering hidden works not readily attainable in database searches.\textsuperscript{32}

3.2. Comparing Styles Across Continents

Despite the proliferation of percussion theatre in Australia, this genre has been far slower to develop than Europe and the USA. Louise Devenish—who researches Australian contemporary percussion history—mentions in her survey response that, ‘The first contemporary percussion works composed by Australians appeared in 1970/1971’. With the obvious geographic isolation, it is not surprising that Australia has only in recent years started to explore this field. Nevertheless, Australian percussion theatre has developed along a very unique path to that of Europe and America.
Henzgen recalls conversing with the Janetzski Brothers (also known as Janetzski Trio), who played xylophone arrangements in the 1920’s. Although he never saw them perform live, he believes their repertoire came from overseas and had theatrical elements, the nature of which we can only speculate. Some of these Australian works have similarities with works abroad, which I will explore below.

Other participants nominate prolific overseas artists as having an influence in their own awareness of percussion theatre. Graeme Leak recalls encountering a percussion trio or quartet by Vinko Globokar (title unknown). Eugene Ughetti also cites Jean Charles François promoting music theatre in Melbourne during the 1970’s and 1980’s. Matthew Schlomowitz, the composer of Hi-Hat and Me, has being living in London since 2002 and he regards Kagel and other European pioneers as influential to his own creative output.

International travel and education evidently play an important role in the widespread dissemination of percussion theatre. Vanessa Tomlinson, for instance, studied in Freiburg, Germany before spending an extended period of time in San Diego with Steve Schick and other American contemporary artists. It is unreasonable to fathom that Australian composers and percussionists have not been influenced by European trends in this area, especially when several have reminisced about witnessing memorable performances by international artists and composers.

The three primary theatrical techniques consistent throughout the well renowned percussion theatre works listed in the Introduction – acting, vocals and gesture – have set the parameters for the interview. Acting techniques are used less frequently than the others and vocalisations are decisively the most used extra-musical technique. Vocalisation has been used to various effects, such as utterances, singing and narration. It is interesting to note here that a common perception of theatre is that it is visually based. However, this is not true of the majority of works for vocal percussion that contain no other theatrical direction in the score.

On the other hand, the survey indicated that there are more gestural pieces existing in Australia. Gesture can be doubled with movement around the stage (contrast to placing stationary instruments around the space), such as hiding behind a tam-tam (Fire-i by
Raymond Chapman Smith in 1993) or excessive movement between set-ups (Paradiddles by Henzgen). A recurring compositional technique from outside Australia has been using gesture as an illusion of sound production, executed by synchronising audio samples with prescribed movement. This is the case in Aphasia, Time and Money and Silence Must Be!

My research has not found evidence of an Australian composition that uses electronics and mime. Chris Henzgen, however, did incorporate a similar concept in his percussion duo Poetry in Motion during the fourth movement, Cinquain. In this piece, which does not contain electronics, player A picks up a pair of brushes and mimes the part being played by player B. Eugene Ughetti also performed a piece by American choreographer, Deborah Hay entitled Seeing Seeing Seeing (2009). As he walked around stage playing a small Peking opera gong, he progressed to miming the striking of the gong, which led to the audience imagining the continuation of sound.

Acting may also procure movement around the stage, as in Schela Veocsap’s A Drum History (1987). With the addition of a narrator who relays the history of drumming, the three percussionists are not only required to ‘illustrate’ the story in the music, but to also act out the story. Henzgen explains: ‘Examples of (acting) include “fighting” with broomsticks, “hitting” players on their heads, imitating animals by crawling and hopping across the floor, dancing a waltz, etc.’

Humour is a significant characteristic of the entertainment value in this piece, as well as in Breakfast Serial by Scholes. Compositions from abroad that involve acting techniques often contain a sombre, absurd undertone. Peeping Tom (1988) portrays voyeuristic tendencies, Himmels Tür (2006) addresses the pursuit of gaining entrance into heaven and Songs I-IX (1980) consists of nonsensical poetry and sudden shifts in character.

Acting is found predominantly in the large-scale productions at the hands of Graeme Leak and associate artists discussed in the previous section. These elaborate performances came complete with lighting effects, costumes, props and a dramatic storyline. Acting and role-playing would have been inherent in all of these, calling for energised and versatile performances. Graeme Leak began with Homeboys alongside
Michael Hennessy. The storyline was based on two men in business attire playing on ‘found objects’ in a living room after work.

A stylistic trend that seems prominent in Australia is the existence of environmental compositions, pioneered largely by Leak. Such works are usually conceived for percussion ensemble formations (not necessarily percussion instrumentation) and performed outdoors, incorporating the surroundings and spatial depth. There have been instances of these kinds of performances overseas, as is popular for festivals and outdoor gatherings, however they tend to result from practical or logistical considerations rather than compositional. Pieces that have embraced these situational performances are works such as *iOrpheus* (2007) by William Duckworth, performed in the water, Graeme Leak’s *Incredible Hulls* (2005) played on boats and *Ringing the Chargers* (2010) for aerial bell ringers and percussion duo. These compositions are distinctive based on their creative merits and the depth of integration with the environment. These compositions have not been the focus of my study however they have surfaced repeatedly throughout the written interview, showing that to many musicians, it is a means of theatricality.

Australia does not have the depth in percussion/instrumental theatre history to the extent of Europe and the USA, largely due to its geographic isolation. However, with the proliferation of advanced communication and transport technology, such geographic distance has become less of an issue in recent decades. This research has determined that the use of vocals and gesture are favoured in percussion theatre writing, gesture being more prominent in Australian compositions. Mimicry has been widely utilised, both to imitate acoustic sounds, and in Europe, electronic samples. Humour is a common thread in compositions of Australian origin, and are often based in realistic settings such as a library or living room, whereas conceptual storylines are prevalent in celebrated works from abroad.
4. Chapter Four – A Specialised Genre

4.1. Complications of Theatrical Techniques

While the survey has proven successful in uncovering new Australian percussion theatre works, it was not so effective in identifying significant depth of information about the challenges involved throughout the repertoire. Performance complications can be readily observed, however, in a considerable amount of the repertoire already discovered in this genre. What follows are my own observations of these challenges as a percussionist delivering public performances of these works. I will assume the musician is a technically proficient percussionist and address the challenges that arise from incorporating theatrical elements.

Percussion pedagogy does not typically involve projected vocalisation, dramatic movement or characterisation. Consequently, the inclusion of these practices can be a challenge to integrate into a percussionist’s skill set. I have already discussed this dilemma in the light of such difficulties as procuring an adequate volume and balance between the voice and percussion. Works may also demand for a performer to execute a music line accurately while delivering spoken or sung text in contrasting rhythm.

The following extract is from a multi-percussion solo entitled close(d) by Anthony Leigh Dunstan34, which I premiered in 2012. The polyrhythms alone require immense concentration. The inclusion of a detailed vocal line necessitates a distinct level of physical coordination. The vocal treatment shifts at section C and the performer rambles *ad libitum*, which may in itself affect the accuracy in timing of the instrumental playing. See Music Example 4a:
Music Example 4a.  close(d), bar 21-25, vocals over instrumental playing, bars 21-25

In close(d) the percussionist assumes the identity of a person who confides in their instruments that they have committed a heinous act. The setup itself is intricate and had to be redesigned throughout the workshopping process. Crotales, gongs and temple bowls need to be struck in quick succession or simultaneously. This calls for careful layout of the instruments in positions reachable with a 2-mallet span in a single hand using a four-mallet technique. Beyond these incredibly difficult demands, most sections incorporate spoken text. All the while, of course, embodying a troubled, anxious character.

For some pieces there is also the language barrier to contend with. Being born in Australia and learning only minimal French in school, compositions from the French music theatre school (Globokar and Aperghis) are ambitious for me. Contrary to opera singing, foreign languages are not built into the percussion pedagogy and tend to dissuade even percussionists of the highest calibre from attempting a particular work. When preparing for a performance of Le Corps à Corps with spoken French text, I recorded a native speaker, demonstrating the pronunciation of each word. This approach proved invaluable and helped me hone this skill for the performance.
Gesture is another multi-faceted skill. As for actors and dancers where the visual presentation is crucial, practicing a piece such as *Temazcal* in front of a mirror is necessary to convey the symmetry and choreographed spectacle. Video recording oneself is also effective. Although it does not allow for the immediate adjustment of gestures, this method can help the artist analyse their movement with greater objectivity than the instantaneous feedback of the mirror. These feedback mechanisms help to maximise the limited rehearsal time by engaging muscle memory to internalise the precise movement and required positions to negotiate a complex work of this kind. There are passages in *Temazcal*, for example, where both hands are required to be stretched out at shoulder length to shake the maracas while lowering the arms gradually. The arms must be aligned and each stage of the descent should be uniform in each arm.

The field of dance relies heavily on muscle memory for gesture and body movement. Leman and Naveda examined how dancers develop a spatiotemporal reference frame, or basic gesture, which is found in ‘memory patterns in the mental and/or motor domains’. They concluded that by using the body as the centre of reference, dancers use time and space awareness to teach their muscles repetitive dance patterns (2010: 71). Apart from the deployed basic gesture as a physically repetitive dance pattern, we believe that it is straightforward to conceive basic gestures as body schemata and/or body images that guide dance and music couplings in the motor and mental domain. This can also be linked to information theoretical and physiological studies of action perception couplings, where reference frames are assumed to play a role in guided action. (Leman & Naveda, 2010: 88)

*Temazcal* instructs the performer to synchronises their gestures to the sound effects from an electronically generated track. Timing these gestures without any visual cues is difficult, particularly because the audio track is intermittent. The performer must possess an impeccable sense of timing as well as a reliable spatiotemporal reference frame. In Pierre Jodlowski’s *Time and Money*, the performer alternates from playing dextuplets on a wooden cube with various sweeping and clasping motions in the air. The ‘air gestures’ are synchronised with sound samples such as a coin spinning on a table and then stopping when the hand clasps the air (See *Music Example 4b*). The gestures should be rehearsed to a point where they are exaggerated, dramatic and precise. In this case, Jodlowski has cleverly generated the sound effects with exact note-lengths based on the metronome marking (crotchet = 60/63).
The circled numbers indicate when the performer triggers the MIDI pedal and in so doing has control over the timing of the electronics. Footwork must then also be rhythmically placed so that the hand gestures coincide with the sound effects. Musicians are fortunate that the techniques required to play a musical instrument greatly improve their kinaesthetic awareness. Certain muscle groups can be engaged or disengaged to maximise the efficiency of a particular movement, as evident in the practice of the Alexander Technique on the harp:

Pedal facility is greatly increased when muscles of the upper thighs and lower back are not engaged unnecessarily in moving the pedals. If the task of moving the pedals is concentrated in the feet and ankles, with some lower leg movement, pedal work will be much smoother and more efficient. (Hembreiker, 2010: 38)

Each example cited above requires mastery of the percussion instruments that are utilised. They also demonstrate the complex demands required of the performer to seamlessly coordinate extra musical elements into the performance.

4.2. Factors Leading to Successful Repertoire

Much of the percussion theatre repertoire remains unpublished. There are standard pieces from internationally regarded composers that are published and have been in circulation for years, such as ?Corporel. Other regularly performed scores, however, are out of print, for example Le Corps à Corps. In such cases, percussionists must rely on their network of colleagues to source the sheet music and accompanying material. Other composers such as Graeme Leak and Pierre Jodlowski choose to sell their compositions privately. It is a misconception that works that are not regularly performed are inferior in quality. Realistically, there is no correlation between quality of music and its published status, as illustrated by the fact that certain unpublished pieces are in circulation around Europe.
Matthew Shlomowitz produces unpublished compositions that have proved popular amongst performers and audiences. *Hi Hat and Me*, for instance, continues to receive many international performances. Gérard Buquet is a revered composer, tuba player, conductor and director of the New Music Ensemble at the Musikhochschule Karlsruhe, Germany. His unpublished percussion solo with electronics *Surimpressions* (2006) does not receive regular performance to my knowledge, yet was recorded by Elisa Humanes.\(^\text{36}\) The work begins and concludes with slow motion mime of striking the instruments. The percussion music, while difficult, is delicately woven into the cleverly pre-mixed electronics.

Many emerging composers also produce compositions that remain unpublished. One such example is *Lemons and Oranges: For Melodica, Percussion and Tape* (2010) by young Dutch composer Trevor Grahl (1984). This solo percussion work incorporates gesture and acting, where the performer collapses amidst the audience at the conclusion of the piece. I witnessed the work during a showcase of graduating composers from Conservatorium van Amsterdam. I have also been in contact with Mansoor Mani Hosseini, a Paris Conservatoire graduate who has sent me his percussion theatre scores. Among them is *Cage in a Room* (2009), a musical lecture of quotes by John Cage. The text is witty and is treated as a spoken musical line. The phonetic sounds are stretched through varied rhythms and dynamics. These manipulations are coupled with the use of a radio tuned to a talk-show.

The issue of compositions not receiving wide exposure is not limited to unpublished works. Publishing organisation Middle C Associates chooses not to distribute publications through retailers, instead working directly with schools and teachers. The owner of the organisation, Chris Henzgen, revealed to me as part of this study that he takes frequent business trips throughout the year to promote his music both here in Australia and internationally.\(^\text{37}\) His reasons for limiting his market practices were originally based on reservations regarding copyright infringement in the early 1980’s. The excessive use of photocopying was crippling to the publishing business, so they decided to bypass the cost of retailers and deal directly with the customers, building a strong rapport. Supply and demand, he says is also an unwanted burden, where some retailers apply pressure on publishers to produce more works. A third factor is the consideration of cost, which is kept to a minimum when the ‘middle man’ is taken out of
the equation. Additionally, the organisation has better control over customer service, as well as having a more in-depth knowledge of their catalogue. (See Appendix C).

When choosing to undertake a chamber recital, it is rare that I resort to online catalogues to procure a new work. I respond more enthusiastically to a work when it is showcased either in concert or on a recording and there is ample repertoire in my catalogue waiting to be programmed. An increasing number of works are available for sale complete with a blurb about the piece. However, even when a score sample and a short description about the piece are provided at the point of purchase, it only provides a small window of transparency. I would assert that a composition is much more likely to become widespread when there is a quality recording readily available.

Surprisingly, the survey results suggest that recordings such as those found on YouTube hold little bearing on promoting a new work. Question 3 in the survey asks what compositions, if any, the participants discovered by means of video or audio recordings. Thea Rossen was the only participant to recall finding an Australian percussion theatre piece (Leak’s YoYo Man) on YouTube, which she later saw performed live. David Hewitt and Paul Sarcich both saw live performances of Graeme Leak and Thea Rossen attended the Australian Percussion Gathering in Brisbane 2010, where she witnessed Leah Scholes perform Breakfast Serial. In fact, most accounts of percussion theatre works were either witnessed personally or produced at least in part by the participants themselves. Concerts and workshops are indeed the most effective marketing tool for contemporary music pieces according to my research.

There are a number of factors that may deter performers from performing repertoire. Composers’ manuscripts are at times very difficult to read. Scores often require proofreading and revisions after receiving the premiere. The music may also be far too technically challenging and the logistical demanding unreasonable. Such issues must be rectified to improve the chances of the work being regularly and widely performed. A fitting example is Quête: Ritual for Perambulatory Percussionist (1984). Melbourne-based percussionist Peter Neville commissioned this work and despite his best intentions, he never premiered the work. The primary reason appears to be lack of time in committing to the work, requiring 3-6 months in preparation.
Quête is published by the Australian Music Centre and is scheduled for its world premier as part of my Master of Music graduation recital in 2016. The piece calls for an elaborate costume including magician’s hat with a secret load chamber, and tap shoes or clogs. The percussionist cautiously makes their entrance onto the stage, a bass drum attached to their back, with a bike horn on top and cymbals between the knees, as well as mallets concealed in the outfit. The set up is extensive and intended to be scaffolded, with an assistant operating two industrial fans from offstage and a lighting engineer operating a follow spot. The score is extremely difficult to digest, with fast, irregular rhythms being spread over many instruments, at some points notated over a system of twenty-one lines (see Music Example 4c).

Music Example 4c. Quête: Ritual for Perambulatory Percussionist, p. 9, system 2

Despite all of these obstacles, the entertaining and theatrical possibilities are potentially powerful. I am optimistic about the future of percussion theatre, based on its visually rich components. Humans are growing more accustomed to being engaged by visual stimuli—television, advertisements, video games, and educational methods—referred to as ‘visual culture’, which has become integral in modern society (Kroeber & Palgrave, 2006: 45-46). Countless studies have been conducted on youth to assess the negative effects of television and similar forms of entertainment. One such study was conducted at Iowa State University:

If we train the brain to require constant stimulation and constant flickering lights, changes in sound and camera angle, or immediate feedback, such as video games can provide, then when the child lands in the classroom where the teacher doesn't have a million-dollar-per-episode budget, it may be hard to get children to sustain their attention. (Douglas Gentile in "ISU study finds TV viewing, video game play contribute to kids' attention problems", 2010)
This increasing reliance on visual stimulation calls for serious consideration about how we deliver music to the wider public. Broughton’s study on gesture in marimba performance (Broughton, 2008: 206) is testament to the potential for making music more captivating. Especially since people are in the habit of placing music in the background during social and private situations. One can too easily become complacent to its existence. Therefore, when music is visually exciting, a new, wider audience are intrigued.
5. Chapter Five – Conclusion

5.1. Implications of Existing Percussion Theatre Repertoire

The underlying motivation of my research is to promote percussion theatre as a powerful means of musical expression and to highlight the need for further development. This thesis has documented the relatively brief yet vast history of percussion theatre, demonstrating that it is in no measure a fleeting novelty. There have been many expressions of this medium, ranging from earnest social and political statements, to light-hearted and humorous incidents. Some encompass all of the above.

During the course of this research, I have gathered over 200 titles of percussion repertoire that decisively portray a significant theatrical element. Many other examples remain suspended over blurred lines of categorisation. This study would have been much less effective without the term I opted for to discuss the heritage herein, namely percussion theatre. This is because collectively referring to the repertoire as percussion theatre reinforces the stylistic commonalities between the works, as well as aiding the establishment of a specialised field. Such distinctions do not trivialise artistic creativity and originality. On the contrary, contributing to the body of academic works that set out to give this art form a title helps substantiate its status and potential.

Percussion theatre has evolved from instrumental theatre, the avant-garde, technology and everyday life. As this thesis reminds us, artistry does not exist in a vacuum and we are all influenced by our environment and heritage. The intricate network of collaborations, international tours, festivals and broadcasts, leave little doubt that intercontinental relations have spurred the evolution of percussion theatre.

While percussion theatre is in no danger of becoming extinct, its widespread success would be greatly aided by an improvement of accessibility. Measures of success do not correspond with how a work is received by the audience; as these receptions change over time and between demographics. Dissemination of works of this genre is better accounted for by the availability and accessibility of musical scores. The logistical necessities should also be considered by the composer in order to promote the ease of performance and touring. These considerations will ensure the continuation of new
commissioned works and regular performances that are key to the development of the genre.

5.2. Assessing the Need for Further Interdisciplinary Study

While there are many aspects of theatre, this study has focused on, what I suggest, are the three components that most affect the skill set of the percussionist: Acting, gesture and vocalisation. These techniques have significant ramifications on the compositional make up and should be expertly performed. It is widely viewed that musicians rarely possess the skills of a proficient actor, despite our training in emotive, musical expression. Complacency in even the most naturally gifted percussionist is potentially detrimental when negotiating the complexities of percussion theatre. Specific acting training is, therefore, recommended because of the kind of insights that professional instruction can afford a musician toward a more convincing performance of this genre.

Gesture seems underrated among young musicians learning their craft. Such choreographed motions, however, can carry a great sense of dramatic tension and engage the interest of audiences. Most people without theatrical experience have limited awareness of their bodies and how they move. A dancer on the other hand has a deep understanding of all aspects of movement. Performers who seek to specialise percussion theatre would greatly benefit from working with a professional dancer, and perhaps an Alexander technique expert, in order to apply a deeper and more informed appreciation of movement in his/her work. The visual aspect of performance cannot be undervalued.

Vocalisations have been the most widely utilised non-instrumental technique in this genre and some concessions have clearly been made in an attempt to even out the dynamic imbalances due to the loudness of percussion instruments. There are some instances where amplifying the voice or changing register is entirely appropriate. These decisions can be based on stylistic concerns within the composition. Nevertheless, expert instruction to assist vocal projection would prevent damage to the vocals and expand the possibilities of interpretation. Vocal training can also maximise the use of pitch and timbre so that the performer can readily access a variety of techniques and develop tools to create greater contrast in their vocal quality. The vocal chords may be
adequately controlled to allow for effects such as a breathy or husky tone as well as many other possibilities, making the use of these delicate organs versatile.

This paper has demonstrated that minimal broadening of the three main theatrical skills has enhanced the presentation of percussion theatre works. There is now a need for further research that examines the learning process of a piece of music theatre, one that takes into account additional theatrical training.

5.3. Percussion Theatre Moving Forward in Australia

It is imperative that percussion theatre repertoire receive increasing representation by performers actively promoting this genre. Fortunately, there are several individuals who have demonstrated a particular commitment in this field. These include such performers as Claire Edwardes, Vanessa Tomlinson, Dalmazio Babare, Timothy Phillips and others who have been discussed in Chapter Four. As revealed in this study, many other Australian percussionists and composers have already contributed significantly to the growth of the genre. These individuals create the momentum behind the promotion and commissioning of percussion theatre compositions.

In order to maintain this momentum, I urge that further collaborations be forged, with an emphasis on productive working relationship between composers and performers. Through a clearer understanding of the challenges the percussionist faces, an understanding of idiomatic percussion writing and the acquisition of specialised skills in stagecraft and theatrical techniques, I posit that sophisticated experimentation within this genre can continue to proliferate in Australia.

Given the overwhelming amount of repertoire and growing interest in the field of percussion theatre, further research in the practices of dance (as well as other disciplines of body movement and awareness), acting (including vocal techniques) and singing, could lead to the establishment of a percussion theatre method. This would lead to the specialisation of percussion playing that is distinguished from other branches of related performance endeavours such as orchestral, solo marimba and non-Western percussion.
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Endnotes

Introduction

1 Magic Power.
2 Sonnet number 29 from his Sonnets to Orpheus.
3 Based on the rhythmic and sticking patterns prescribed in the Percussive Arts Society International Drum Rudiments.
4 The drummer rotates the stick in the hand and strikes the drum with the back end of the stick.
5 The investigation of human experiences within a given phenomenon.
6 Electronic music.

Chapter One

7 Rrrrrrr... is the title given to each group of pieces with a particular instrumentation, which can be performed in isolation.
8 A traditional melody used by Swiss herdsmen to call the cows for milking.
9 Player One swishes bunches of canes up and down in an alternating fashion with arms outstretched to the side, producing the sound effect of an accelerating steam train.
10 Music in the Belly.
11 Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique.
13 The piece formed a part of a series of five performances at La Mama Theatre; The piece is untitled.
14 Realised by Roger Holmes and Barry McKimm respectively; McKimm played alongside Clayton in an improvisation trio with Robert Rooney.
15 For example, see the following URL’s:
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1EoLvGA48Uo
   https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t2XGVpXysKg

Chapter Two

16 Forming categories in music may not make for a sharply defined idiom, however doing so highlights a shift in stylistic focus. Categorising art is not about making laws, but observing formulas. Music discourse is guided by patterns and comparisons, so a commentary on similarities and differences is not only instinctive but also fundamental to the practice. Simply naming a style with common characteristics is designed to aid the discourse of that topic.
17 Open system: adapts by interacting with the external environment to produce an output; Closed system: isolated from the external environment.
18 There is an instance during the piece where two players tap out rhythms on the frame and resonators of the marimba, however the visual element is a by-product of the intended percussive sounds.
19 Singer and artistic director of Opera programs at the Manhattan School of Music.
20 Music critic and writer for Opera News magazine.
21 Mental and Manual Calisthenics by Elden (Buster) Bailey and Method of Movement by Leigh Howard Stevens are both popular method books that in no way deal with expression and gesture.
A wooden goblet-shaped drum, played with the fingers while resting on the thigh.

English translation of French text: The bronze sinking deep in armour; dives into the guts; for another fifty kilometres of the track.

Buster Keaton was a silent movie comedian focused around the 1920's, and is likely featured in the film presented within this work.

Chapter Three

Similarly, I found that there was a gap in my own awareness of the work of this group, even though the genre is a significant part of my artistic identity. The fact that little has been written about this topic and its consisting repertoire is what lead me to focus on the uncovered material within Australia. I was under the assumption that if my teachers had not enlightened me about the wealth of Australian percussion repertoire (and in turn compositions that carried a theatrical quality), then they had simply not been documented. It was implausible that the work of Graeme Leak and compositions like Hi Hat and Me were isolated in their materialisation, especially with the likes of Synergy (NSW), Clocked Out duo (QLD), The Sound Collectors (WA) and Speak Percussion (VIC), who are active new music advocates.

In 2014 I premiered Brad Gill's Night Songs for timpani solo. He proposes that the piece maintains noteworthy theatricality. While the music is extraordinarily difficult to execute, it does not entail the three dramatic techniques at the core of this study: acting, vocalisation or gesture. The piece contains clear exchanges in the voicings between the hands, shifts in 'character' between sections and intensifying levels of ‘musical tension that is dramatic in mood throughout. Based on the fact that there are no ‘theatrical’ directions noted in the score, it is possible that Gill’s interpretation of theatre encompasses a broad range of musical drama inherent in many outstanding compositions. There may be others who justifiably share this observation and I do not seek to discredit anything that is a matter of opinion. Rather it seeks to highlight a trend in significantly tangential theatrical techniques towards a specialised percussion practice.

Members include Vanessa Tomlinson, Graeme Leak, David Hewitt and Peter Humble.

In this emergent genre in Australia, I have noted that producing four compositions seems to be a mark of active engagement by the composer.

Music educator, who began teaching percussion in 1977.

Originally by Kurt Switters.

Right Left Right Right, Left Right Left Left.

With additional participants and time permitting, more examples may further be found, however this study was not designed to establish an exhaustive catalogue, but rather a representative list of influential figures and stylistic trends.

Steve also received education and experience in Europe.

Chapter Four

My brother.

Muscle memory.

Percussion Professor and Director of the Percussion Department at the Conservatoire Municipal in Drancy, Paris.

Until undertaking this research, I had not come across Henzgen or his music, which is often comical and theatrical.
Appendix A: Survey Participant Information Statement
Percussion Theatre: An investigation into the prevalence of dramatic percussion performance within Australian classical music from the mid twentieth century

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION STATEMENT

(1) What is this study about?

You are invited to take part in a research study about percussion theatre, where the performer engages in a dramatic role such as acting, delivering text or choreographed movement within a classical music solo or ensemble setting. Through this survey, I intend to record written accounts and examples of percussion theatre in practice within Australia dating back to the mid twentieth century through to the present. This will hopefully establish an historical context of the percussion theatre genre in Australia in order to inspire new compositions and projects of this nature.

You have been invited to participate in this study because of your expertise in the field of percussion and/or contemporary composition. I am confident that you can share invaluable knowledge and information on the history of percussion theatre in Australia based on your experience involving percussion within the classical music scene. This Participant Information Statement tells you about the research study. Knowing what is involved will help you decide if you want to take part in the study. Please read this sheet carefully and ask questions about anything that you want to know more about.

Participation in this research study is voluntary. So it’s up to you whether you wish to take part or not.

By giving consent to take part in this study you are telling us that you:
✓ Understand what you have read
✓ Agree to take part in the research study as outlined below
✓ Agree to the use of your personal information as described.

You will be given a copy of this Participant Information Statement to keep.
Who is running the study?

The study is being carried out by the following researcher:

- Kaylie Dunstan, Master of Music candidate, The University of Sydney.

Kaylie Dunstan is conducting this study as the basis for the degree of Master of Music at The University of Sydney. This will take place under the supervision of Daniel Omar Rojas, Associate Lecturer in Arts Music.

Since you may be acquainted with the researchers and other participants involved in this study, there is the potential for conflict of interest when responding to questions relating to other musicians in the Australian community. However, the survey aims to collect data free from opinions, philosophical views or critiques of performances and colleagues. As the questions will be directed at triggering your recollection of examples of performances involving percussion theatre, personal judgments are unnecessary and therefore I anticipate no cause for concern that any conflict of interest will occur.

What will the study involve for me?

Should you wish to take part in this study, you will receive an email containing several questions relating to your personal recollection and records of examples of percussion theatre taking place (see point 1 for a description of this genre). This may include live performances of solo or ensemble works which involve percussion theatre at concerts, festivals, events, functions, masterclasses, conferences, demonstrations or the like. You may also refer to published or unpublished manuscripts, sheet music, audio or video recordings, articles, concert programs and any other materials that verify the presence of percussion theatre in Australian classical music culture.

As the survey is in written form, you will have the opportunity to reflect on your responses before submitting them via reply-email one month after receiving the survey. During that time you are asked to consider your experiences as active or passive observers of percussion theatre that immediately come to mind. You are then encouraged to make notes as you recall information and converse with colleagues throughout the month, so that your final responses contain as much detail as possible.

If you have supporting material such as recordings, sheet music etc. you may refer to these in your responses but are not required to surrender them for this study at any time. If you do not possess supporting materials for any given percussion theatre example, you can still include these experiences in your responses. Please be as specific as possible when giving names, places and dates when recalling examples of percussion theatre.

Prior to the thesis being submitted for publication, you will be invited to read through thesis extracts that refer directly to you and your survey responses. This gives you the opportunity to voice any concerns you may have about the content and we will discuss potential changes before the manuscript is published.
(4) **How much of my time will the study take?**

This survey will take place over approximately one month. The day you confirm you have received the survey via email will mark the beginning of the study. Submission date of your responses will be 4 weeks later and it is asked that you submit your responses by the end of the 4 weeks. Under the same confidentiality agreement during the survey, I may review your responses and ask you to provide more information on a certain point for potential inclusion in the thesis. Once you receive my acknowledgement and note of gratitude, this then concludes your participation in the study until you review the thesis extracts, if you wish to do so.

(5) **Do I have to be in the study? Can I withdraw from the study once I've started?**

Being in this study is completely voluntary and you do not have to take part. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relationship with the researchers or anyone else at the University of Sydney.

If you decide to take part in the study and then change your mind later, you are free to withdraw at any time. You can do this by notifying Kaylie Dunstan via email or phone without damaging professional standards or relationships.

You may also refuse to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer in the written interview.

(6) **Are there any risks or costs associated with being in the study?**

There is little to no risks or costs associated with this study. If you mention a colleague in any of your responses, you are encouraged to keep your comments impartial and free from judgement. If your statements are matter-of-fact, we do not expect that there will be any risks or costs associated with taking part in this study.

(7) **Are there any benefits associated with being in the study?**

We cannot guarantee or promise that you will receive any direct benefits from being in the study.

(8) **What will happen to information about me that is collected during the study?**

Only your written responses to the survey questions will be used in the study and may be included in the final Masters thesis. No contact details or personal information will be published or provided to anyone not conducting this study. You may request to see your survey responses at any time but individual statements will be kept confidential from other participants or third parties until the publication of the thesis. The results of the survey will be kept secure in electronic format, password guarded in Kaylie Dunstan's records. While this study may be talked about in symposiums and/or journals, the survey and their results will not be discussed with anyone other than the participants and the researchers until publication of the thesis.

By providing your consent, you are agreeing to us collecting personal information about you for the purposes of this research study. Your information will only be used for the purposes...
outlined in this Participant Information Statement, unless you consent otherwise. Your information will be stored securely and will only be disclosed with your permission, except as required by law. Study findings may be published, and you will be identified in these publications if you decide to participate in this study. This is because not all accounts of percussion theatre performances can be substantiated by recordings or sheet music, so some of the information presented in this study must stand on the reputation of each participant alone.

(9) Can I tell other people about the study?

Yes, you are welcome to tell other people about the study.

(10) What if I would like further information about the study?

When you have read this information, Kaylie Dunstan will be available to discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage during the study, please feel free to contact Kaylie at kdun6132@uni.sydney.edu.au and on 0403 568 488.

(11) Will I be told the results of the study?

You have a right to receive feedback about the overall results of this study. You can tell us that you wish to receive feedback by ticking the relevant box on the consent form. This feedback will be in the form of a one page lay summary. You will receive this feedback after the study is finished.

(12) Will I be told the results of the study?

Research involving humans in Australia is reviewed by an independent group of people called a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC). The ethical aspects of this study have been approved by the HREC of the University of Sydney [INSERT protocol number once approval is obtained]. As part of this process, we have agreed to carry out the study according to the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007). This statement has been developed to protect people who agree to take part in research studies.

If you are concerned about the way this study is being conducted or you wish to make a complaint to someone independent from the study, please contact the university using the details outlined below. Please quote the study title and protocol number.

The Manager, Ethics Administration, University of Sydney:
- **Telephone:** +61 2 8627 8176
- **Email:** ro.humanethics@sydney.edu.au
- **Fax:** +61 2 8627 8177 (Facsimile)

This information sheet is for you to keep
Appendix B: Survey Questions
Thank you for agreeing to take part in this survey. The purpose of this study is to establish a comprehensive historical timeline of percussion performances infused with dramatic art within the Australian classical music scene (referred to in this study as “percussion theatre”). Specifically, this thesis is concerned with repertoire where the percussionist performs music as well as employs dramatic techniques. These techniques may include the following:

- Acting
- Performing text
- Choreographed movement
- Characterisation

In the interest of achieving a comprehensive study, I encourage you to give a broad range of examples using these techniques. If you are unclear whether or not an example fits within this list, please include the example in your answer nonetheless.

As you read each question of the written survey below, please take a moment to write down your immediate thoughts and memories as they come to mind. In the interests of accuracy, please allow up to a month for gathering any further information you feel is important or relevant.

When you have completed the survey questions and are satisfied that all relevant information has been included, please forward you responses on to kaylie6132@gmail.com. If your entire response does not fit on the lines provided, please attach an additional word document to the email, correctly labelled with the question number.

*Please note: You are not required to disclose any artistic opinions or information that you feel may compromise your or other musicians’ good standing.
**Question 1.** Please state your name and how long you have been a practicing professional on the Australian classical music scene, including any periods you may have spent overseas?

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

**Question 2.** What Australian percussion theatre compositions have you come across in libraries, online catalogues, journals etc. that date back to the mid 20th century? If possible, please provide the title, composer, instrumentation and how you obtained the print music.

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________

**Question 3.** What Australian Percussion Theatre video/audio recordings have you come across in libraries, CD's/DVD's, websites, or YouTube etc. that date back to the mid 20th century? If you can, please provide the title, composer, performer, instrumentation and where you found the recording.

______________________________________________________________

______________________________________________________________
Question 4. As an observer, what Australian percussion theatre performances have you experienced, whether these be at a concert, festival, recital, master class, or competition etc.? Please provide as many details as you can about the performances, including when and where you observed the performance and what evidence suggests it is a percussion theatre piece.

Question 5. As a performer/composer/contributor, what Australian percussion theatre performances have you been involved with, whether these be at a concert, festival, recital, master class, or competition etc.? Please provide the names of any other contributors, as well as when and where the performances took place. What were the demands and expertise required of the composer and performer in each instance?

Question 6. Are there any other examples of Australian Percussion Theatre repertoire that you can recollect? These may include published or unpublished works, collaborations involving Australians, even vague references you have heard through discussions or on the grapevine. Any other information relating to this genre, however incomplete, may be beneficial to this study.
Appendix C: Chris Henzgen Email on Publishing
Hi Kaylie,

Here are a few thoughts (and some background information) on why our music publishing company, Middle C, deals directly with schools and community ensembles rather than through retail music shops.

Our business dates from 1980. In those days, the blatant disregard of copyright was pretty bad - far worse than today (although things are far from perfect at present). AMCOS has gone a long way towards rectifying the situation but the problem still exists. Unfortunately, a sizable portion of the general public sees nothing wrong with photocopying illegally. In my opinion, teachers - not just music teachers - could have a huge, positive impact upon young minds if they would set a good example themselves. We have seen how society's values can change with a concerted effort from educators and politicians.

When we started publishing music, maintaining our position as the sole distributor was one way of curtailing wholesale illegal photocopying. Nowadays, it is not such a problem. However, we have always done it this way and it seems to be working. So, why change it?

A second consideration is our composers and arrangers. One of the professional organisations I belong to is the Australian Band and Orchestra Directors Association (ABODA). I joined in 1985 when the first national conference (ANBOC) was held in Melbourne. I suppose I would be one of the few people to have been present at every ANBOC.

Quite often there have been noted overseas composers featured at ANBOC. It has been horrifying to learn that some of their publishers demand anywhere from a dozen to two dozen new concert band pieces annually. This might explain why some of the repertoire tends to sound a bit formulaic. Personally, I couldn't imagine coping with such a workload and would never place any of our writers under such pressure.

However, pressure can also come from retailers. The satisfied customer who has purchased a clarinet quartet is likely to return to the same music shop for more of the same. This might only be a few months later, long before our talented woodwind composer has even thought about writing another clarinet quartet. You can see where I'm heading with this. All twenty of our composers are current or former music educators. Teaching is their main sphere of activity and the composing is only an occasional hobby on the side.

A third and hugely important consideration is our customers. There are several aspects including price, access, customer service, product knowledge, product development and discovery of new composing / arranging talent.

By operating from home and by dealing directly with customers we can avoid the middle man and keep our prices competitive. Our compositions and arrangements would not be any better if purchased through a retail music shop, but they would cost customers more money. We like to believe that our publications are affordable for anyone anywhere in Australia who uses sheet music.

Music occurs all over - not just in the major population centres - and we make it a point to visit country and rural locations as well as capital cities. In fact, in some instances, I have been the very first sales rep to visit that particular school. Yes, we do have the internet nowadays and it is possible to order music online. However, being able to examine the music closely in person, being able to ask pertinent questions and being able to seek advice from an experienced music educator can be very reassuring for a young teacher or conductor who is just starting his or her career.

Customer service also includes product awareness and knowledge. I don't think it is arrogant to believe that I would have a better understanding and knowledge of our publications than some shop assistant would. However, it goes further than that. When I visit a customer again, I want to find out about the pieces that were purchased last time. What worked best? Which pieces did musicians and audience members enjoy the most? What, if anything, did not work so well? Has the customer's situation changed? Has the band progressed from grade 2 music to grade 3 music? Are there three concert bands now instead of two? Are there now two percussion ensembles? Naturally, we are constantly adding new customers - and yet, the majority of our sales are repeat business. This is generally a good indication that we are doing something right.

In recent years (as the main Middle C sales rep) I have generally found myself away from Geelong every second week during term 1, term 4 and the majority of term 2. Personal contact is good customer...
service and it does help us to continually improve our products. Not only am I able to get feedback about Middle C compositions and arrangements, I am also able to discover new repertoire by other publishers. I often gain firsthand knowledge by working with ensembles. For example, in the first half of this year I have conducted concert bands in U.S.A., New Zealand, Malaysia and various states and territories in Australia. The two most recent events took place last month in Albury (NSW) and Adelaide (SA).

Sometimes, a prospective composer will approach us out of the blue. However, in many instances, my initial contact with these future Middle C composers occurred whilst on a sales visit to their schools or community ensembles. We recently sent off a contract to an Aussie music teacher who is teaching at an international school in Malaysia. (We haven’t received the signed contract back yet so it remains to be seen whether or not this particular composer will join the Middle C team.)

Crikey, that’s probably enough of an answer, Kaylie. However, I would like to add a comment about the availability of percussion music here in Oz. Things have improved, no doubt due in part to places like Optimum Percussion, passionate people like yourself (i.e. advocates) and the availability of some charts online. However, it was not so long ago that I had a VCE quartet (percussion ensemble) at Matthew Flinders. Two of the girls were doing Percussion for year 12. A search of the Percussive Arts Society catalogue revealed several enticing titles. Unfortunately, I was unable to purchase any of those pieces - not even one! - here in Australia, despite scouring music shops in several capital cities. Apparently, the overseas publishers were unwilling to send individual copies of pieces and insisted upon a minimum quantity (e.g. 10 copies of the same piece or perhaps it may even have been 20) before they would ship the music. The Australian retailers, knowing that it might be decades before they eventually sold that many copies of such an obscure work, were reluctant to make such a financial commitment. So, there was an unfortunate stalemate. I only managed to obtain most of those quartets because I attended the Mid-West Band Clinic in Chicago. (I found one of the pieces at the very first stall I went to.)

- Chris
Appendix D: Australian Percussion Theatre Catalogue
Acting


Henzgen, Chris: 'Dining Diversion's' (1990's) for percussion trio, unpublished.

Henzgen, Chris: ' Those Trying Drummers' (2012) for concert band, published by Middle C.


Hewitt, David; Leak, Graeme; Cronin, Patrick; Witton, Dan; Conley, Borris: 'The Ennio Morricone Experience' (2000-2006) for chamber ensemble, unpublished.

Hewitt, David; Leak, Graeme; Cronin, Patrick; Witton, Dan; Conley, Borris: 'Exotica' (2002) for chamber ensemble, unpublished.

Hewitt, David; Leak, Graeme; Cronin, Patrick; Witton, Dan; Conley, Borris: 'Fistful of Tunes' (2003-2006) for chamber ensemble, unpublished.

Hewitt, David; Leak, Graeme; Cronin, Patrick; Witton, Dan; Conley, Borris: 'Four Winds Cinematic Orchestra' (2010) for chamber ensemble, unpublished.

Hewitt, David; Leak, Graeme; Cronin, Patrick; Witton, Dan; Conley, Borris: 'Phobia' (2003-2006) for chamber ensemble, unpublished.

Hewitt, David; Leak, Graeme; Cronin, Patrick; Witton, Dan; Conley, Borris: 'The Session' (2005-2006) for chamber ensemble, unpublished.

Leak, Graeme: 'From Africa to the Kitchen Sink' (1991) for multi-percussion solo, unpublished.


Park, Victor: 'Preliminary Final' (1982) for percussion ensemble, published by Middle C.


Veocsap, Shgela: 'Bravura' (2009) for xylophone solo/duo with ensemble accompaniment, published by Middle C.

Veocsap, Shgela: 'Drum History' (1987) for percussion trio, published by Middle C.
Gesture

Babare, Dal and Leak, Graeme: 'Flounder' (1990's) for percussion duo, unpublished.
Hatu, Ensoku: 'Jungle Gossip' (1992) for percussion quintet, published by Middle C.
Henzgen, Chris: 'Cinquain' (2014) for percussion duo, published by Middle C.
Hewitt, David: 'Bembanaka' (Developing) for community ensemble, unpublished.
Hewitt, David: 'Biamanga Percussion' (Developing) for percussion ensemble, unpublished.
Hewitt, David: 'Stonewave Taiko' (Developing) for community ensemble, unpublished.
Hewitt, David; Leak, Graeme; Cronin, Patrick; Witton, Dan; Conley, Borris: 'The Ennio Morricone Experience' (2000-2006) for chamber ensemble, unpublished.
Hewitt, David; Leak, Graeme; Cronin, Patrick; Witton, Dan; Conley, Borris: 'Exotica' (2002) for chamber ensemble, unpublished.
Hewitt, David; Leak, Graeme; Cronin, Patrick; Witton, Dan; Conley, Borris: 'Fistful of Tunes' (2003-2006) for chamber ensemble, unpublished.
Hewitt, David; Leak, Graeme; Cronin, Patrick; Witton, Dan; Conley, Borris: 'Four Winds Cinematic Orchestra' (2010) for chamber ensemble, unpublished.
Hewitt, David; Leak, Graeme; Cronin, Patrick; Witton, Dan; Conley, Borris: 'Phobia' (2003-2006) for chamber ensemble, unpublished.

Hewitt, David; Leak, Graeme; Humble, Peter and Tomlinson, Vanessa: 'Quartet' (2001) for percussion ensemble, unpublished.

Hewitt, David; Leak, Graeme; Cronin, Patrick; Witton, Dan; Conley, Borris: 'The Session' (2005-2006) for chamber ensemble, unpublished.

Hope, Cat: 'Sub Aerial' (2015) for percussion duo, self-published.


Leak, Graeme: 'From Africa to the Kitchen Sink' (1991) for multi-percussion solo, unpublished.


Neal, Kate: 'What Hath II' (2011) for percussion quartet, unpublished.

Park, Victor: 'Preliminary Final' (1982) for percussion ensemble, published by Middle C.


Schaeffer, Peter: 'Time Breathing' (1990) for chamber ensemble, unpublished.
Whiticker, Michael: 'Man, the skin cancer of the earth ' (1991) for chamber ensemble, published by Australian Music Centre.

**Vocalisation**

Babare, Dal and Leak, Graeme: 'Flounder' (1990's) for percussion duo, unpublished.
Hewitt, David: 'Bembakan' (Developing) for community ensemble, unpublished.
Hewitt, David: 'Biamanga Percussion' (Developing) for percussion ensemble, unpublished.
Hewitt, David: 'Ondes' (Developing) for multi-percussion solo and electronics, unpublished.
Hewitt, David: 'Stonewave Taiko' (Developing) for community ensemble, unpublished.
Hewitt, David; Leak, Graeme; Cronin, Patrick; Witton, Dan; Conley, Borris: 'The Ennio Morricone Experience' (2000-2006) for chamber ensemble, unpublished.
Hewitt, David; Leak, Graeme; Cronin, Patrick; Witton, Dan; Conley, Borris: 'Exotica' (2002) for chamber ensemble, unpublished.
Hewitt, David; Leak, Graeme; Cronin, Patrick; Witton, Dan; Conley, Borris: 'Fistful of Tunes' (2003-2006) for chamber ensemble, unpublished.

Hewitt, David; Leak, Graeme; Cronin, Patrick; Witton, Dan; Conley, Borris: 'Four Winds Cinematic Orchestra' (2010) for chamber ensemble, unpublished.

Hewitt, David; Leak, Graeme; Cronin, Patrick; Witton, Dan; Conley, Borris: 'Phobia' (2003-2006) for chamber ensemble, unpublished.

Hewitt, David; Leak, Graeme; Cronin, Patrick; Witton, Dan; Conley, Borris: 'The Session' (2005-2006) for chamber ensemble, unpublished.


Leak, Graeme: 'From Africa to the Kitchen Sink' (1991) for multi-percussion solo, unpublished.


Neal, Kate: 'What Hath II' (2011) for percussion quartet, unpublished.


Pye, David: 'Here is the shell that was never ours, but remembers' (2005) for percussion ensemble, unpublished.


Smith, Martin-Wesley: 'Visiting the Queen' (1992) for marimba solo and MIDI piano, self-published.


Whiticker, Michael: 'Man, the skin cancer of the earth' (1991) for chamber ensemble, published by Australian Music Centre.