

Indigenising Australian Music: Authenticity and Representation in touring 1950s Art Songs

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In the early 1950s, 'Aboriginal songs' composed by Alfred and Mirrie Hill, Arthur S. Loam and Victor Carell were toured throughout regional Australia in a travelling show staged by Beth Dean and Victor Carell. The shows, which also included Dean's solo renditions of sacred Aboriginal men's initiation dances, were supported by Adult Education Boards and the Arts Council of Australia and aimed to educate audiences on 'authentic' Aboriginal dance and music traditions. Detailed program notes recounted the stories on which the songs and dances were based, collected by anthropologists. Dean, the recently-arrived choreographer and dancer from Denver, and Carell, her Australian baritone husband, just returned from Italy and the US, toured their show entitled 'Dance and Song around the World' to all Australian states in hundreds of performances between 1950 and 1954, and less frequently thereafter. The show situated the performances of Aboriginal culture within a tradition of 'ethnic dance' and music, and programmed them alongside music and dance originating in the Americas, Spain, the Pacific and Asia. But it was the performances of Australian traditions on Australian soil that attracted the most interest.

The Hills' 'Aboriginal songs' and Dean's 'Aboriginal dances' sought to present performing arts unique to Australia, a practice that had its origins in the decades before the war, but that was taken up with renewed intensity in the 1950s.¹ The works were performed by recent arrivals to Australia who had little or no contact with Aboriginal people or cultures, and were performed in the absence of Aboriginal people in design, composition, choreography or participation in the performances, in spite of their claims to authenticity.² However, Dean and Carell's shows were typical, rather than anachronistic, in being engaged with Aboriginal *culture* but disengaged from Aboriginal *people*, in spite of their marketing as authentic cultural representations.³ Engagement with Aboriginal music in the 1950s was fundamentally self-referential. Non-Indigenous choreographers looked to the writings of non-Indigenous ethnographers, and to the compositions of non-Indigenous composers for ideas and inspiration. Their self-referring discourse explicitly excluded Aboriginal people, while simultaneously making a claim to authority to speak on Aboriginality and Australian identity. In looping back to anthropological discourse, performances of Aboriginal culture reproduced early Australian anthropological practices that Patrick Wolfe has characterised as a 'soliloquy – a Western discourse talking to itself'.⁴

While Wolfe's settler colonial theory provides an apt explanation of the over-representation of non-Indigenous voices in such performance contexts, alternative theorisations from Indigenous scholars also offer a more processual explanation of the repetitive practices of representation. One alternative theorisation of settler and Indigenous relationships in Australia is offered by Goenpul, Quandamooka scholar Aileen Moreton-Robinson, who suggests we might 'conceptualize the current condition not as postcolonial but as postcolonizing with the associations of ongoing process, which that implies'. Indeed, while the version of Record of this manuscript has been published and is available in *Postcolonial Studies*, 23 February 2020, <http://www.tandfonline.com/10.1080/13688790.2020.1727968>

non-Indigenous representations of traditional Aboriginal culture have stood in the way of the postcolonizing of Australian art music, Aboriginal musicians and dancers have continually resisted replacement, and have continued to respond with resilience and creativity to efforts to the marginalisation of their agency, in part by continuing to transform performance practices in ways that maintained ties to long-established traditions and their cultural contexts. In the 1950s, Aboriginal performers reinvented their own cultural traditions on a range of performance stages. Well-networked and talented producers like Yorta Yorta/Wiradjuri man Bill Onus curated a diverse range of performances and exchanges of Aboriginal performance arts throughout the 1940s and 1950s in events that are yet to be fully documented. Perhaps the most well-known of these was the 1951 Aboriginal Moomba 'Out of the Dark' in Melbourne, featuring Aboriginal singers Harold Blair and Georgia Lee, among others.⁵ In spite of glowing reviews of these shows, they were not taken up by the arts bodies that supported Dean and Carell's touring performances.⁶ Nevertheless, Aboriginal performers continued to reinvent public performance contexts for their work building momentum into the 1970s when a number of new companies were formed (albeit mainly in dance and theatre spheres rather than musical ones).⁷

The settler colonial soliloquy of 'Australianist' art music was not confined to the 1950s, or to the era of assimilation policy that was then at its height. Indeed, a cohort of largely non-Indigenous composers have continued to speak with authority about Aboriginal music and dance and to claim that their compositions represent Australia and its people by evoking the sounds of Aboriginal people in the bush.⁸ The national body for new Australian art music – the Australian Music Centre (AMC) – records a total of 39 composers whose 131 works (92 of which were composed between 1980 and 2010) are written about or in the style of Indigenous cultures. But only a handful of these composers (William Barton, Lou Bennett and Christopher Sainsbury) are, themselves, Aboriginal.⁹ Recent statements by some non-Indigenous composers have described their conscious attempts to achieve an Australian sound through use of Aboriginal material. One of Australia's leading composers Ross Edwards has described the aim in his *Mass of the Dreaming: Missa Alchera* (2009) to make it 'identifiably Australian' by 'infusing Latin and other texts I set to music with rhythms and drones of Australia'. Emerging composer Katia Beaugeais describes her work *First Light at Uluru* (2015) in which "'Didgeridoo-like" vibrato sounds and unique atmospheric sound effects symbolise the cultural significance and spiritual atmosphere of this powerful landmark'.¹⁰ As both descriptions make clear, Edwards and Beaugeais evoke 'drones' and 'dijeridoo-like' musical effects for atmospheric effect in their works. In doing so, they soliloquize on Aboriginal Australia, in dialogue only with their own imaginings of Aboriginal music.

In this article, I argue that public performances of 'Aboriginal songs' by touring performers like Dean and Carell between 1950 and 1954 were part of a larger project of The version of Record of this manuscript has been published and is available in *Postcolonial Studies*, 3
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generating a performative lexicon of Aboriginality that could be drawn upon to inspire a non-Indigenous Australian music and dance tradition. The elements of this musical lexicon were constituted through listening to a limited repertoire of recorded songs made available to the composers by non-Indigenous anthropologists or amateur collectors. The new compositions set small fragments of tunes, mimicking the composers' idea of the Aboriginal songs they had heard, in arrangements that conformed to European harmonic practices, able to be performed by a pianist and classically-trained singer. In turn, these compositions were performed as 'Aboriginal songs', and came to be heard as templates for how Australia's Indigenous music could be deployed to build a unique compositional voice. Furthermore, I suggest that this performative vocabulary continued (and continues) to be employed in musical practice by Australian composers. That this compositional language is several steps distant from Aboriginal song traditions and is indebted to the work of non-Indigenous composers and performers rather than actual Aboriginal musicians is, however, seldom acknowledged.

Anthropologists' representations of Aboriginal performance cultures and musical traditions directly fed into performative representations of Aboriginality toured by 1950s performers, not just by proxy (through publication of books and recordings), but through direct reciprocal relationships between anthropologists, composers and choreographers, in which ethnologists such as C. P. Mountford disseminated their recordings of Aboriginal song to composers Mirrie and Alfred Hill and encouraged them to use them as the basis of new compositions. Mountford also introduced the composers to those who could stage performances of these new works, the performers in turn carefully crediting Mountford as the point of origin of the stories and song materials that formed the basis of their works. In the discussion below, I introduce some of the music composed by Mirrie and Alfred Hill, Alfred S. Loam and Victor Carell and toured by Dean and Carell, before placing these performances within the political and social context of the post-war era. Finally, I demonstrate the reverberations of this 1950s musical language of indigeneity in more recent thinking about Australian composition.

Touring an Emerging Hybrid Musical Aboriginality

Keen to disseminate the results of his expeditionary collecting in 1948, C. P. Mountford, leader of the American-Australian Scientific Expedition to Arnhem Land, shared recordings of songs from Groote Eylandt and Oenpelli (now Gunbalanya) collected on the expedition with the married Australian/New Zealander composers Alfred and Mirrie Hill.¹¹ Mirrie Hill used these recordings as the basis for several piano compositions, while Alfred sourced his Australian content from poems published by A. P. Elkin and Bill Harney.¹² Both Alfred's songs and Mirrie's piano works (dedicated to Beth Dean) formed standard parts of Beth Dean and Victor Carell's repertoire in their touring shows, with the piano works performed by a range of different

pianists who joined their tours for shorter periods of months.¹³ Though Mirrie Hill's piano works enjoyed a less active performance life, in subsequent years other singers would widely perform Alfred Hill's songs alongside Alfred S. Loam's collection *Aboriginal Songs*, so that the songs became well-known items of the Australian music repertoire.¹⁴ Loam's arrangements, also performed periodically by Carell, were based on songs collected and notated by Dr H. O. Lethbridge in and around Maranoa, Queensland in his years of living there and touring the countryside as a regional doctor. Loam, conductor of the Maranoa orchestra, arranged the songs for voice and piano. They were published in 1937 and were received with claims that they might form the beginning of an Australian national folk tradition.¹⁵ In recordings, such as those made by Alan Coad and others, the 'Aboriginal songs' featured alongside other Australiana, such as 'Swagman's Song' and 'Waltz with me Matilda', and the Loam songs took on a weightier significance as representations of Aboriginal culture when Aboriginal tenor Harold Blair adopted them as part of his standard repertoire in the 1950s.¹⁶ Margaret Walker's Unity Dance Group also took two of Loam and Lethbridge's songs on tour to Communist nations to include 'aboriginal songs' alongside other Australian folk music, and choreographer Gertrud Bodenwieser utilised Loam's arrangements to accompany her new work *The Kunkarunkara Woman* in 1955.¹⁷

Alfred Hill sent his song *Poor Fellow Me* to A. P. Elkin for comment in 1950. The anthropologist praised Hill for 'rhythm and tunes [that] reflect the Aborigines' feelings'.¹⁸ Similarly, Mountford not only encouraged others to use songs collected by him in their creative works, but closely followed the works, maintaining friendships with both the Hills, and Dean and Carell, and preserving copies of their outputs and the press surrounding them among his papers, alongside copies of the Loam songs.¹⁹

Decorated in costumes and bodypaint that their programs insisted was 'authentic' (see Figures 1, 2 and 3), Dean and Carell began touring their program of dances and songs of the world in 1950 after completing a three-year tour of Australian capital cities with Irving Berlin's *Annie Get Your Gun*. Later, accounting for their expertise in Aboriginal performance traditions, this three-year period was resignified as a time of intensive study of Aboriginal cultures. In reality the only contact with Aboriginal people in this time seems to have been with a tribe met on a brief trip to Oodnadatta in South Australia, and in 1954, Dean recalled her first experiences of meeting Aboriginal people on a trip through Central Australia: 'I had never seen aborigines before... but I had read and heard so much about them that it almost seemed as if I was meeting old acquaintances'.²⁰ Instead of direct observation of, or tuition in, song and dance practices, Dean and Carell's experience was chiefly derived from consultation with anthropologists C. P. Mountford, T. G. H. Strehlow and A. P. Elkin and viewings of films made by Mountford at the Department of Information film studio, described in a publicity article about Dean as 'sacred male dances no woman is allowed to witness'.²¹ These encounters with living

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anthropologists were combined with extensive study of the weighty volume on Central Australian Aboriginal people by Baldwin Spencer and Francis Gillen.²²

INSERT Figure 1

Figure 1: Image published in Robert Sullivan 'From Back of Beyond' *Sunday News New York*, 9 December 1951. Clipping from MLMSS 7804/22/4, Dean and Carell papers. [NB Dean is swinging a bullroarer – an object used in ceremony to signal the beginning of men-only proceedings, as documented in *Dust for the Dancers*.]²³

INSERT Figure 2

Figure 2: Clipping from *The Age* 16 January 1953, p.4 in MLMSS 7804/8/3, Dean and Carell papers, also <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article206119133>.

INSERT Figure 3

Figure 3: Programme for performance of Beth Dean, Victor Carell and Dory Stern at the Sydney Mercury Theatre 29 & 31 October 1952 from Beth Dean and Victor Carell Papers MLMSS 7804/8/3, State Library of NSW.

The direct collaborations between anthropologists and composers/choreographers indicate a preoccupation with questions of how Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures might be brought together in creating a national style in the late 1940s and 1950s. Anthropologists such as Elkin and Strehlow (and Mountford to a lesser extent) were by no means dispassionate observers of the Aboriginal cultures they documented, but rather were actively engaged in political discourse about the welfare of Aboriginal people.²⁴ Elkin, Mountford and Strehlow, and the song collector H. O. Lethbridge all lived and studied with Aboriginal people for substantial periods of time – Mountford and Strehlow in Central Australia, Elkin and Mountford in Arnhem Land, and Lethbridge in Queensland. For the anthropologists, their collections and knowledge of Aboriginal cultural practice became the basis of ongoing careers and means for claiming authority to speak on matters of national importance and political policy. Lethbridge's collection presented an opportunity in his collaboration with Loam to propose a national folk song tradition. Once the materials were collected, they quickly became imbued with a social and cultural currency within non-Indigenous Australian culture. Elkin's rhetoric for sharing cultural materials contended that art could make deeper inroads into consciousness about Aboriginal cultures than anthropological analysis had hitherto been able to achieve:

the growing interest in and appreciation of primitive art in general and of aboriginal art in particular has a very important human, as distinct from scientific, implication. It is gradually causing persons who otherwise would either ignore or despise the aborigines to

realize that a people possessing an art which is full of traditional meaning as well as expressive of many interesting motifs is much higher in the human scale than had been previously thought. The average white person is not impressed by totemism, kinship and sociological studies of aboriginal life, but a simple presentation of a native people's art is something which... will contribute materially to the appreciation of the Australian aborigines both as a people possessed of artistic powers, and as human personalities.²⁵

This sentiment was echoed by some Aboriginal performers in the 1950s, who saw their public demonstrations of dance and music as deliberate political manoeuvres that aimed to raise awareness of the value of Aboriginal culture. Leading up to Bill Onus' and Doug Nicholls' Aboriginal Moomba show in 1951, the organisers were keenly aware of the potential for a successful show to influence non-Indigenous audiences. As the papers reported, Nicholls told the assembled cast: 'Never before have we had the chance to show the public what we can do. This is it'.²⁶

Meanwhile, among non-Indigenous performers, public presentations of 'Aboriginal songs' neglected the nuances of songs composed and performed by Aboriginal musicians and their variability across the many Aboriginal nations of the Australian continent. The newly composed works reduced the music to a simple set of criteria that could not only be comprehended by Western-trained musicians, but could be translated to a variety of formats for new works involving chamber and orchestral instruments from the Western art music tradition. The performances of so-called 'Aboriginal songs' arranged by non-Indigenous composers and performed in the configuration of singer and accompanying pianist created a highly approachable forum for audiences versed in European traditional, classical and popular music. While such compositions made little impact on the still-Europe-gazing world of modernist music, the works and their frequent performance fashioned a market for non-Indigenous engagement with Aboriginality in social contexts across the country that were otherwise almost entirely segregated from communities of Aboriginal people and their cultures.

The Australian Cultural Context after WWII: national identity and the turn away from Europe

When Dean and Carell arrived in Australia in 1947 as cast members of *Annie Get Your Gun*, they encountered a country in cultural transition. The horrors of genocide in World War II had drawn attention to the outmoded White Australia policy that had dominated thinking on immigration and Australian culture for decades, even if Australia remained slower to change than elsewhere.²⁷ This coincided with reconceptualization of Australian citizenship, as distinct from British citizenship and a push for a dramatic program of immigration that would bolster Australia's population in light of fears about the security of the nation's borders.²⁸ The resulting political agenda of assimilation had the dual, and contradictory, effect of creating a need to

define a unique Australian national identity to which new immigrants would be expected to assimilate, and of impressing upon Aboriginal people the need to integrate more closely into mainstream Australian culture (consequently placing pressure on the maintenance of specific regional traditions).

The desire for a uniquely Australian identity, rather than one defined by Australia's links to Britain and greater Europe, resonated well beyond the immediate post-war years, capturing the attention of creative practitioners for decades to come. A crucial element of this more inward-looking attempt to define Australian culture was the turn towards cultural practices that were uniquely Australian; those of Australia's First People, especially those of the Centre and Far North.²⁹

Historians focusing on this period have drawn attention to the emergence of the notion of 'identity crisis' after 1950.³⁰ James Curran and Stuart Ward describe a 'new nationalism' characterised by profound disorientation. This disorientation resulted from Australia's reimagined position as a nation with weakening ties to its imperial parent as a consequence of Britain's turn towards Europe and downgrading of the racial ties of empire.³¹ The relative obscurity of Aboriginal music and dance traditions in the cultural imagination of 1950s Australian audiences, especially those in the southern states, allowed performers like Dean and Carell to argue that their intention in performing the 'Aboriginal songs' of Hill, Loam and Carell was to expose audiences to neglected traditions in their own backyards. In 1953 Victor Carell recounted that the idea to 'exploit Australian song' came to him while working on NBC radio programs in New York in 1945.³² After hearing a broadcast of South African folk songs, Carell put together his own program of Aboriginal songs, a path that led him to arrange to meet the anthropologist C. P. Mountford, who was touring his films about Aboriginal art in the USA at that time.³³

In his influential study of appropriative settler colonial visual arts, Nicholas Thomas has pointed to the 'unstable duality' of appropriations, which are both appropriation and homage. Thomas suggests that however degraded or objectifying the settler colonial uses of Aboriginal art, these uses have drawn attention to and stimulated interest in Aboriginal cultures.³⁴ Similarly, Russell McGregor argues that while white Australians engaged with Aboriginal art only on their own terms, contemporary Aboriginal people also supported the increased dissemination of their cultural products and the appreciation of cultural practice that followed. Furthermore, these appropriations were indicative of a growing realisation that settler Australians must become more receptive to Indigenous Australians.³⁵ However, accounts from Aboriginal audience members who remember the tours of appropriated Aboriginal-themed

shows in the 1950s and 60s suggest that while the performances' representation of putatively authentic dances and songs brought the idea of Aboriginal music to the stage, they also highlighted disparities between the valuation of Aboriginal cultural products as central to Australian distinctiveness, and the social, economic and political realities of Aboriginal people's access to the cultural marketplace. Debra Bennet McLean recounted in 2005 her memories of reactions to the touring performances of John Antill's symphonic ballet *Corroboree* in Queensland (the ballet was choreographed first by Rex Reid and later by Beth Dean, and toured throughout Australia):

As a *Goorie* child born in the late 50s and growing up in the 60s, I recall how Antill's music, and the National Ballet performance, caused quite a stir in *Murri* circles.³⁶ Being pre-referendum days, some saw it as official recognition of our existence in this country, even a backhanded compliment to Aboriginal people. Others considered it an 'experiment', and though the term was not then used in my community, others saw it as 'appropriation' without our consent by the 'Other'. In reality, we asked ourselves how many Aboriginal people could ever really contemplate, let alone afford, to attend the ballet in the era of the 'colour bar'; most Aborigines could not walk freely into an Australian town without an exemption form or 'dog tag' at the time of Antill's composing *Corroboree*, nor could they even sit in the same milk bar or use public toilets at the time of the premiere of the ballet *Corroboree*.

In some ways, the *Corroboree* phenomenon was comparable to the '*Black and White Minstrel*' shows popularised in American culture. *Corroboree* was in fact white people painted as black people, telling a black story.³⁷

Tropes of Aboriginality

In the 1950s and 60s, Alfred Hill's *Poor Fellow Me* was one of the most widely performed of the songs on Dean and Carell's programs (alongside Loam's *Maranoa Lullaby*), and in it are audible many of the tropes of Aboriginality that have continued to circulate in discussions among composers and their critics and commentators ever since. This poem was singled out in Harney and Elkin's volume as one of those most accurately transcribed from the singing/recitation of Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory, in contrast to other poems in the volume that were altered with greater poetic license by the compilers of the collection.³⁸ 'Wanderer's Lament' from which the song text for 'Poor Fellow Me' was taken, used a Walaka rhythm, according to the authors. This would situate the song in southwest Arnhem Land – probably one of the Wangga songs that Allan Marett has written about extensively.³⁹ The poem centres on the regretful refrain 'Poor Fellow' a term (*bobala*) ubiquitous in Aboriginal English and often used in connection with the mourning of loss of Country by Aboriginal people.⁴⁰ The

song text not only evokes the grief about Country so pertinent to Aboriginal people in the mid-century and today, but also draws on a view pervasive in this period that the extinction of Aboriginal people and their culture was an inevitability, a characterisation that led to romantic lamentations about the 'dying race' of Aborigines. In Hill's setting of the poem, the romanticism of this notion is emphasised by the shift into a major key for the final phrase of the text 'So let me die, Peaceful I lie'.⁴¹ It is clear too that Dean (and possibly by association Carell) firmly believed in this notion of Aboriginal people as a dying race. In a paper entitled 'Stone Age Riches', Dean wrote: 'It is tragic to face the fact that they are a fast dying race and soon will be no more... The aborigines may be stone age remnants, but they are rich in the real meaning of the world.'⁴²

Musically, Hill's song features formulaic practices that would come to be thought of as broadly characteristic of Aboriginal music by non-Indigenous composers. The vocal line of the first page of the song shown at Figure 4 exhibits some of these melodic characteristics – repeated pitches in each bar that move in small steps over a narrow range of pitches, and a melody that steadily descends in each phrase. Though not directly mapped onto particular existing Aboriginal songs, these melodic tropes would come to be significant in discourse on the characteristics of non-Indigenous composition inspired by notions of Aboriginality.

INSERT Figure 4 here

Figure 4: First page of score of Hill, Alfred. *Poor Fellow Me: Wanderer's Song*. Words by W. E. Harney and A. P. Elkin from *Songs of the Songmen*. Sydney: Chappell, 1950.

A superficial knowledge of recorded Aboriginal song might certainly produce these three melodic characteristics. Phrases that begin with a repeated pitch, and an overall descending contour have often been found to characterize melodic lines across Aboriginal song traditions.⁴³ But as a summary of Aboriginal song composition in the hundreds of song traditions across Australia, this set of descriptors is inadequate. Musicologists, such as Linda Barwick and Catherine Ellis among others, have carried out detailed and nuanced musical analysis of a range of song traditions that provide evidence for such musical characteristics as intricate rhythmic relationships between melodic line and rhythmic accompaniment and between each song in a series that persist over extensive song cycles.⁴⁴ Structural complexity, along with highly allegorical text practices, might equally be thought of as dominant characteristics of Australian Aboriginal song. In 1991 Ellis wrote in *Sounds Australian*:

Very few composers have taken the trouble to examine the structural intricacies of Aboriginal music. They have preferred to look at the superficialities: a descending melody, a regularly repeated stick beat, a didjeridu-like sound.⁴⁵

As Ellis observed, this reductive summary of Aboriginal song style to a set of melodic qualities has had surprising longevity in discourse about Australian composition. By and large, composers have been resistant to the idea that understanding Aboriginal song would require knowledge of the overarching structure of song cycles and relationships between tempi of songs in a set, allegorical text, and location for where songs should be sung, and by whom, even though these principles are documented in a range of musicological studies.⁴⁶

Some examples may demonstrate the persistence of these ideas in recent discourse. In Christine Logan's 2007 discussion of Colin Bright's compositional style, she argued that rather than directly borrowing from Aboriginal melodic or rhythmic materials, Bright drew on tropes that signify 'general features and musical principles underlying Aboriginal music such as limited use of pitch range, repetition, and overall descending shape in melodic lines'.⁴⁷ Logan's analysis of the features of Aboriginal musical principles is consistent with Bright's professed approach to his composition, as outlined in 1989 in the same publication in which Ellis would publish her critique two years later:

The landscape in Australia... suggests an overall sense of STASIS to me which can be achieved in many ways: - ostinato techniques, flatish melodic lines, sustained textures, static harmonies or a limited or restrictive hierarchy of pitches. But for sounds that express some spirit of the land, how is it possible to ignore Australian aboriginal music, which contains many of these musical techniques and encapsulates the quality of stasis in a seemingly subliminal way.⁴⁸

Bright's characterization of the Australian landscape as static echoes centuries of settler colonist readings of the perceived monotony and sameness of country that seemed so alien to European sensibilities, industrial development and poetic symbolism.⁴⁹ In his influential 1987 spatial history, Paul Carter contrasted perception of monotony with 'the picturesque', which was bound up with the imaginings of settlers travelling through the landscape. That which was able to be settled was seen as picturesque and that which slowed the traveller's progress towards the picturesque became monotonous.⁵⁰ Carter suggested that settlers made claims on the Australian landscape by naming places using little-understood local Aboriginal words to 'incorporate nature within the framework of settlement'. These token uses of language did not honour the displaced inhabitants of a region, but rather aimed 'to cultivate the illusion of a natural place... by commemorating the picturesqueness of the aboriginal language, the white namers rendered the Aborigines tacit conspirators in their own destruction'.⁵¹ Non-Indigenous

composers have similarly often failed to conceptualise an intimately-known landscape, intricately described by the songs of Aboriginal people who belong to that Country, and instead have imagined in Bright's terms a 'seemingly subliminal' musical stasis, as a direct correlation to 'a particular type of land' – a sentiment, which suggests the land is not that of one's own home, but is instead, a foreign landscape.

In 1991, musicologist Wilfrid Mellers identified Peter Sculthorpe as the lead composer in creating a distinctively Australian music. Mellers argued that Sculthorpe's distinctiveness was in the evocation of 'Australian emptiness', a notion whose presence he identifies in the works of Australian visual artists, and which is evocative of the colonial concept of *terra nullius* that has so pervaded settler colonial responses to the Australian landscape.⁵² Sculthorpe's evocation of the landscape and use of string instruments to imitate bird song also used a transcription of a melody from central Arnhem Land as the basis for the melodic content of numerous works throughout his career.⁵³ Equating Australian landscape with emptiness and monotony, and conflating Aboriginal people with this interpretation of the land has remained a shorthand in composer discourse into the late 20th and 21st centuries, in spite of the intervention of scholars like Ellis, and her contribution to polemical discussions in *Sounds Australian*. Ellis' critique of the use of superficial aspects of Aboriginal musical techniques such as drones, melodic and rhythmic patterns, as actions which create an appropriative tradition may have influenced some, but have not effected a widespread correction to this practice.⁵⁴

The persistence in Australian compositional discourse of superficial understandings of Aboriginal song traditions and a focus on melodic and rhythmic characteristics instead of structural or discursive ones cannot be disentangled from ideas about primitive music, which underpin the approaches of composers of the 1950s. Clive Douglas' well-known 1956 manifesto 'Folk song and the brown man - means to an Australian expression in symphonic works' gave detailed musical examples of how composers might incorporate Aboriginal music into their orchestral compositions. Douglas, in his role as conductor at the ABC, had researched Australian folk traditions looking for the kind of inspiration that European composers such as Bartok and Kodaly had found in their national musical traditions. In the tropes of nineteenth century discourse on art music as high art, folk music was a necessary counterpart and was by definition simpler, less structurally complex, lower. Douglas had also composed works with Aboriginal titles, and like the Hills and Dean and Carell, had studied Spencer and Gillen's volume.⁵⁵ The compositional examples he gave attempted to solve problems posed by song fragments that fail to conform to European diatonic harmony, due to the 'primitive quality of the voices'. To overcome these, Douglas suggests focusing on rhythmic drive and a 'bizarre effect suggestive of a tribal corroboree' in order to evoke primitive music.⁵⁶ Douglas' perception of musical style was limited by the conceptual

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framework he applied to Aboriginal composition. His summary of Aboriginal music was conceived as a description of traditions that represented an earlier stage of human development than that represented by European civilisations. That these ideas underpin Douglas' conceptualization of musical form is transparent in his use of descriptors of Aboriginal people as representing 'antiquity' and the 'original ancestor of mankind ... from the cradle of man's evolution', and his introduction to the list of musical characteristics:

Unlike European folk-song, the brown man's chant is no ready-made melody but rather a motif - the germ of a musical idea as yet undeveloped... The intervals of his chant ... follow a pattern of repetition without much invention... the primitive rhythms, beaten out on spears and boomerangs, give a monotonous regularity of the most elementary accent. How then can a composer utilize such crude material?⁵⁷

These frameworks, imagining Aboriginal cultures as lower on the evolutionary ladder, underpin the reduction of entire song traditions to a set of melodic characteristics. Building on the work of Spencer and Gillen as the originary theoretical foundation, they replicated the violence to cultural relativism at the core of Patrick Wolfe's critique of Spencer and Gillen's legacy in representing Arrernte cultural knowledge.⁵⁸ The fundamental conceptualization of the music as primitive and mediaeval prevented authors like Douglas from conceiving of structural complexity, even though complexity was one of the pillars of the modernist thinking that was so persuasive for art music composers in this era. The 1950s were a crucial time for establishing, disseminating and cementing reductive notions of Aboriginal music, an approach which Ellis poignantly named 'Aboriginal-design-tee-shirt-syndrome'.⁵⁹ Touring performers of the 1950s played a key role in familiarizing the non-Indigenous public with formulaic notions of Aboriginalism, whose actual links to cultural traditions were deemed less important than citation of acknowledged experts on Aboriginal cultures such as Elkin, Mountford and Strehlow.⁶⁰

In subsequent years, the kinds of performances staged by Dean and Carell, with their total absence of Aboriginal people, became increasingly unviable. Even by 1953, Dean and Carell embarked on an expedition through Central Australia and Arnhem Land, realising that in order to choreograph the ballet *Corroboree*, their work needed more credibility than just the study of Aboriginal dance and music from books.⁶¹ By the 1960s and 1970s, though the shows continued to be performed, Dean and Carell turned their focus to finding ways to include Aboriginal performers in their shows, and later, brought their attention to the South Pacific, where they produced and directed the 1972 inaugural South Pacific Festival of Arts (now Festival of Pacific Arts).⁶² Significant performance events by Aboriginal musicians and dancers were also to be seen on stages in Australian capital cities in the 1950s and 1960s, including events organised by Aboriginal performers and producers and those orchestrated by major

non-Indigenous Australian arts bodies, such as the Aboriginal Theatre, under the auspices of the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust.⁶³ But art music of the 1970s saw the rise to unprecedented prominence of Peter Sculthorpe, a composer whose career heights were built on the representation of his music as evocative of an Australian sound (or in Mellers' terms an Australian 'emptiness'), one based on the imagined sounds of Aboriginal Australia and the landscape.

The creation of a performative 'Aboriginalism' that could be mined and reiterated throughout the twentieth century increasingly solidified a national settler style that took the guise of representative and inclusive inter-cultural collaboration. Generations of audiences encountered Aboriginal culture through non-Indigenous performers or the works of non-Indigenous composers, a practice that came to stand for engagement with living traditions of Aboriginal performance.⁶⁴ While the repeated performance of Aboriginal arts in the 1950s by non-Indigenous performers may have opened up a stage that would later be increasingly populated by Aboriginal performers exhibiting their own cultural products, it is also certain that appropriative performances dominated the limelight, creating historical representations of Aboriginal culture that had little or nothing to do with Aboriginal people. The place of these performances in Australian history, is therefore far from simple to disentangle – they both capitalised on a growing interest in what indigenised Australian performance arts might sound and look like, and simultaneously claimed the authority to speak on Aboriginal culture, occupying spaces of cultural expertise.⁶⁵

Beth Dean remained convinced of the authenticity of her performances of Aboriginal dance and song well into the later years of her life, and equally oblivious to her role in the settler colonial dynamic of replacement. She continued to give lecture demonstrations on Aboriginal dance and song, such as one in 1993 on the occasion of donating ephemera from her 1950s performances to the National Museum of Australia. During this lecture, a 75-year old Dean demonstrated the movements of a wide sweep of Aboriginal dances she had observed in film footage and on her 1953 expedition, accompanying herself by singing, while her husband and a small audience of Friends of the Museum watched on. She criticised the recent Festival of Pacific Arts (1988) demonstrations of Aboriginal dance, lamenting

In 1953, we saw men and women with fit bodies, dancing with strong intent, concentrated – it was pure dedicated art of a classic idiom, thousands of years old. What we saw in 1988, in several cases, was sloppy imitation performed by unfit, fat dancers, with obviously little idea of the intent of the dances.⁶⁶

Dean followed these remarks with her own lithe interpretations of the dances. Her depictions of *real* Aboriginal dance (and song), she seems to say, have suffered no such fate. Dean's

continued insistence on the authenticity of her dance practice can usefully be viewed within the framework that settler colonial studies seeks to establish – the continual reinforcing of the settler colonial discourse talking to itself, that evades the possibility of becoming postcolonial, instead persisting in replacing and usurping Indigenous presence, even in the face of that Indigenous presence's equal postcolonizing persistence.⁶⁷

Conclusion

In composer forums such as the AMC's publication *Sounds Australian* (now *Resonate*), the ethics of appropriating Aboriginal melodic and rhythmic fragments have been frequently debated. Whole issues of the journal have been devoted to this theme – in 1991 and 2006 – with contributions from composers, musicologists and performers. In the two issues separated by fifteen years, debates about appropriation were similarly polarised, some authors advocating for caution in appropriating musical materials that were not well understood, and others arguing for the benefits of repurposing melodic, rhythmic and instrumental elements of Aboriginal music in works of non-Indigenous composers. In the more recent issue in 2006 authors were more attentive to the complexity of borrowing and appropriation, composer Liza Lim articulating the epistemological differences between European, Chinese and Aboriginal cultural frameworks that make this kind of engagement so challenging and emphasising the need to engage more closely with specificities and particularities of Aboriginal cultures, instead of imagining an overarching culture that can be drawn on haphazardly.⁶⁸

In Australian composition, the reiteration of notional characteristics of song that remain unmapped onto specific musical styles has generated practices that are not just appropriative, but that disconnect indigeneity from individual historical or living Aboriginal people and their traditions. These reductive representations of Aboriginal music have worked to supplant the authority of owners, composers and performers of Aboriginal songs in widely accepted representations of Aboriginal music by non-Indigenous Australian composers and their audiences, if not in understanding of this authority by Aboriginal musicians and dancers and their communities. Unlike other performing arts in which shifts towards self-determination in the 1970s saw Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance and theatre quickly move from the folk domain onto the main stage, self-determined Aboriginal music has remained in the realm of the popular, and only very recently (in the 2000s) has made significant inroads into 'high' art.

Just as shifts towards self-representation in the 1970s resulted from concerted activism from Aboriginal organisations, individuals and their allies leading up to the 1967 referendum on constitutional change, practice-based advocacy is now starting to have an effect on art music institutions. Dharug composer Chris Sainsbury's recent Platform Paper, documenting the work of his Indigenous composers mentoring program, Ngarra Burria, and arguing against the

exclusion of Aboriginal musicians from dominant art music practice is making an impact, with new commissions for Aboriginal composers featuring in a recent exhibition *The Songs of Home* at the Museum of Sydney, and cultural organisations following suit.⁶⁹ Postcolonizing work like that of Sainsbury intervenes in the ongoing perpetuation of settler colonial discourses and bring to the fore new voices that may challenge art music's soliloquizing on Aboriginal culture.

¹ In the visual arts, this kind of engagement with Aboriginal art as a vehicle for unique Australian art occurred earlier – in the interwar years – although in art too this flourished on a broad scale chiefly in the 1950s and 1960s. For discussion of visual arts and emerging national identities see Ian McLean, *White Aborigines: Identity Politics in Australian Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 6; Russell McGregor, *Indifferent Inclusion: Aboriginal People and the Australian Nation* (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2011), 19-27.

² Though Dean asserted in media interviews and programs that she had been ‘living with’ and learning about Maori and Aboriginal cultures for 5-8 years, this was an exaggeration. See Amanda Harris (2017) “Pan-Indigenous encounter in the 1950s: ‘Ethnic Dancer’ Beth Dean” *Australian Historical Studies*. V48(3), 328-45.

³ See McGregor’s discussion of Rex Ingamell’s ideas about Aboriginal people’s cultural legacy in redeeming “the nation that now laid claim to their lands”, which seeing Aboriginal people as beyond salvation. McGregor, *Indifferent Inclusion*, 25-26.

⁴ Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology*, 4. See also Chris Healy’s discussion of self-referential ‘Abo art’ *Forgetting Aborigines* (Sydney: University of New South Wales Press, 2008), 83; and Veracini *The Settler Colonial Present*. I am also alert to Deborah Bird Rose’s critique of Wolfe, in which she implies that Wolfe’s focus on elite male theorists while ignoring his contemporaries also soliloquizes, nevertheless the choreographers and composers I discuss also looked exclusively to the white male theorists that Wolfe centres in his analysis. Bird Rose, Deborah. ‘Review: Settler Colonialism and The Transformation of Anthropology.’ *Postcolonial Studies* 4, no. 2 (2001): 259–60.

⁵ Reviews and related documents in Papers of Harold Blair, 1924-1976, MS 8950, National Library of Australia; Sylvia Kleinert (1999). ‘An aboriginal Moomba: Remaking history.’ *Continuum* 13(3): 345-357.

⁶ See for example ‘Moomba - something to rave about’ *The Courier-Mail*, 29 June 1951: 2. Accessed: 25 June 2019 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article50094479>.

⁷ For a fuller exploration of Aboriginal music and dance performances on public stages in this era see Amanda Harris, *Representing Australian Aboriginal Music and Dance 1930-70*, (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, forthcoming 2020).

⁸ For further discussion of how non-Indigenous travellers listened to Aboriginal music in the bush see Amanda Harris (2014). Hearing Aboriginal Music Making in Non-Indigenous Accounts of the Bush from the mid-20th century. *Circulating Cultures: Exchanges of Australian Indigenous Music, Dance and Media*. A. Harris. Canberra, ANU Press: 73-97.

⁹ This list is not exhaustive and some obvious composers are excluded (James Penberthy), Australian Music Centre [http://www.australianmusiccentre.com.au/search?page=4&type=party&pf\[sub\]=91&pfr\[\]=Composer](http://www.australianmusiccentre.com.au/search?page=4&type=party&pf[sub]=91&pfr[]=Composer), accessed 24 November 2017.

¹⁰ ‘Mass of the Dreaming: Missa Alchera’ *Australian Music Centre website* <http://www.australianmusiccentre.com.au/workversion/edwards-ross-mass-of-the-dreaming-1/24674>, accessed 3 June 2017; ‘The online home of Katia Beaugeais’

<http://www.newmusicblock.com/event/first-light-at-ulu-wind-symphony/>, accessed 3 June 2017.

¹¹ The Oenpelli songs were recorded by Colin Simpson and Ray Giles. Linda Barwick and Allan Marett, ‘Aural Snapshots of Musical Life: The 1948 Recordings’, in *Exploring the Legacy of the 1948 Arnhem Land Expedition*, eds Martin Thomas and Margo Neale (Canberra: ANU E Press, 2011), 358.

¹² MLMSS 6357/63 ‘Three Aboriginal dances’ / arranged and composed by Mirrie Hill. W. E. Harney and A. P. Elkin, *Songs of the Songmen: Aboriginal Myths Retold* (Melbourne: Cheshire, 1949). Alfred Hill had

previously composed works based on musical material from New Zealand Maori traditions, where he had spent much of his life. For discussion of Alfred Hill's Maori compositions, see Melissa Cross, 'The Forgotten Soundtrack of Maoriland: Imagining the Nation through Alfred Hill's Songs for Rewi's Last Stand' (Masters Thesis, Massey University and Victoria University, 2015). On Mirrie Hill's use of Mountford's recordings (actually recorded by Colin Simpson) in orchestral and piano works, see Anthony Linden Jones, 'The Circle of Songs: Traditional Song and the Musical Score to C.P. Mountford's Documentary Films' in *Circulating Cultures: Exchanges of Australian Indigenous Music, Dance and Media*, ed. Amanda Harris (Canberra: ANU Press, 2014).

¹³ Hill, Mirrie, *Three Aboriginal Dances* (Sydney: Southern Music Publishing, c. 1950).

¹⁴ *Poor Fellow Me* was performed in 1950 by Raymond Beatty 'FAREWELL BROADCASTS BY SWING CLUB BAND' *The Manning River Times and Advocate for the Northern Coast Districts of New South Wales (Taree, NSW : 1898 - 1954)* 23 September 1950: 5, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article172829684>, and 1955 by Norman Barnes ALFRED HILL, 'The grand old man of Australian music' *Le Courier Australien (Sydney, NSW : 1892 - 2011)* 11 February 1955: 6, <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper/article/225595938>, while Loam's songs were included in some of the early performances by Carell 'Outstanding Show By Beth Dean' *Camperdown Chronicle (Vic. : 1877 - 1954)* 22 September 1950: 7, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article23576459>, and later became standard items in Harold Blair's repertoire.

¹⁵ See for example 'Aboriginal Songs' *Sunday Mail (Brisbane) (Qld. : 1926 - 1954)* 20 June 1937: 32. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article97889733>; 'AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL SONGS' *Sunday Times (Perth, WA : 1902 - 1954)* 20 June 1937: 23 (First Section). <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article58782739>.

¹⁶ *Poor Fellow Me* was recorded by baritones Alan Coad in 1951 (Columbia DO-3391) and Igor Gorin (HMV 7EBO-70001) (recordings in National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA)), and Loam's songs were recorded by Enid Conley-Williams in 1946, and Harold Blair in 1960, though he had been singing them since at least 1950, see NFSA title no. 245797 – unreleased recording of Blair singing Maranoa Lullaby; Nananala Kututja.

¹⁷ World Youth Festivals Prague 1947, Budapest 1949, Berlin 1951, Pieces 27-29 folder, Box 59 – 90-2-1 Unity Dance Group – Notices & Programmes, Margaret Walker papers MS 8495; Bodenwieser Ballet – PROMPT file – Ephemera, National Library of Australia, Canberra.

¹⁸ Elkin also took issue with the question of whether his rival Mountford really deserved credit for the recordings on which Mirrie Hill had based her compositions. A. P. Elkin to Alfred Hill 21 September 1950. Elkin's co-author Bill Harney also wrote with praise of *Poor Fellow Me*, WE (Bill) Harney to Alfred Hill 6 September 1950, MLMSS 6357/5, 531-576, Hill family - papers, music and pictorial material of Alfred Hill and Mirrie Hill, 1854-1984, SLNSW.

¹⁹ See copies of these works and press clippings in C P Mountford collection PRG 1218/86, State Library of South Australia. A copy was also gifted to anthropologist F. D. McCarthy by the artist Byram Mansell who designed the cover for the song's publication, after seeing designs collected by Mountford on the 1948 Arnhem Land Expedition. This copy is held in the AIATSIS collection.

²⁰ *The Daily Mirror* 6 May 1952, clipping in Subject File: Overseas tour, 1951-1952, MLMSS 7804/22/4; John Godwin "Choreographer inspired by stone age cultures: Hunt for new ballet themes In New Guinea jungle" *Daily Telegraph Magazine*, 27 December 1954, clipping in Literary correspondence: *Dust for the dancers*, 1955-1965, MLMSS 7804/3/9, Dean and Carell Papers.

²¹ 'From Primitive to Ballet' *People* 12 August 1953 pp. 17-19, clipping in Subject file: Research trip – Central Australia, 1949-1953, MLMSS 7804/24/2, Dean and Carell Papers.

²² Baldwin Spencer and F. J. Gillen, *The Native Tribes of Central Australia* (London: Macmillan and Co, 1899).

²³ Beth Dean and Victor Carell, *Dust for the Dancers* (Sydney: Ure Smith, 1956), 176.

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²⁴ See Wolfe's discussion of the role of anthropological representations of Aboriginal society in informing Government policy in Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the transformation of anthropology*, 7; Elkin as the driving force behind the policy of social assimilation in Haebich, *Spinning the Dream*, 78-79, and as an advocate for the virtues of Aboriginal societies in McGregor, *Indifferent Inclusion*, 21. For discussion of Strehlow's advocacy of Indigenous 'land rights' from 1937 and his arguments against proposed policies of self-determination in the early 1970s, see Tim Rowse, 'Strehlow Damns Coombs,' in *Rethinking Social Justice: From 'Peoples' to 'Populations'*, ed. Tim Rowse (Canberra: Aboriginal Studies Press, 2012). And of Strehlow's contributions to public discourse on assimilation see McGregor, *Indifferent Inclusion*, 104-05.

²⁵ Elkin's preface to Fred McCarthy's 1938 publication *Australian Aboriginal Decorative Art*, quoted in Nicholas Thomas, *Possessions: Indigenous Art, Colonial Culture* (New York, N.Y.: Thames and Hudson, 1999), 165.

²⁶ 'Aborigines might play before King' *The Argus*, 22 June 1951: 3. Accessed: 26 June 2019 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article23066242>.

²⁷ Haebich, *Spinning the Dream*, 29. See also Andrew Markus' discussion of the persistent racism that was a reaction to Japan's dominance of the war in the east, and that coexisted with international recognition that policy based on ideas of racial superiority was no longer acceptable. *Australian Race Relations 1788-1993* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1994), 155.

²⁸ The shift in the international dynamics of empire can be seen from the 1950s, though Australia still strongly identified with Britain in the late 1940s, indicated by the fact that White Australian citizens in this era still identified their nationality/racial identification as "British". See census data for 1947 in *Official Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia No. 39 – 1953*. Deaths of servicemen were also recorded as "Heroes of Empire" newspapers – e.g. in the *Adelaide Advertiser*, see "Family Notices" during the Second World War, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-title44>. See also Haebich, *Spinning the Dream*, 37.

²⁹ Russell McGregor has suggested that under Paul Hasluck's scenario of assimilation, 'the Aboriginal cultural heritage would not disappear, but rather would dissipate into folkloric remnants, and Aboriginal identity would not be erased but privatised, contracting to little more than an individual's sense of personal ancestry'. McGregor, *Indifferent Inclusion*, 93.

³⁰ James Curran and Stuart Ward, *The Unknown Nation: Australia after Empire* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2010), 17.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 6-7, 14-16.

³² 'From Primitive to Ballet' *People*, 12 August 1953, 19, clipping in MLMSS 7804/24/2, Subject file: Research trip – Central Australia, 1949-1953, Dean and Carell papers. This story is also recounted in Dean and Carell, *Dust for the Dancers*, 1-2.

³³ Victoria Haskins also discusses this encounter, pointing out that Mountford's diaries suggest that Dean and Carell already had a plan for an Aboriginal ballet in mind when they met with him in 1945: Victoria Haskins, 'Beth Dean and the Transnational Circulation of Aboriginal Dance Culture: Gender, Authority and C. P. Mountford,' in *Circulating Cultures: Exchanges of Australian Indigenous Music, Dance and Media*, ed. Amanda Harris (Canberra: ANU Press, 2014), 30.

³⁴ Thomas, *Possessions*, 49, 141.

³⁵ McGregor, *Indifferent Inclusion*, 136-40.

³⁶ *Goorie* is an identifier usually used by Aboriginal people from northern NSW or southern Queensland, *murri* collectively identifies Aboriginal people from southern Queensland.

³⁷ Debra Bennet McLean, 'Right of Reply: An Indigenous Perspective of Encounters as a Source of Dialogue,' in *Encounters: Meetings in Australian Music: Essays, Images, Interviews*, ed. Vincent Plush, Huib Schippers, and Jocelyn Wolfe (South Brisbane: Queensland Conservatorium Research Centre, 2005), 7.

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- ³⁸ Harney and Elkin, *Songs of the Songmen*, 8.
- ³⁹ Allan Marett, *Songs, Dreamings, and Ghosts: The Wangga of North Australia* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 2005).
- ⁴⁰ Linda Barwick, personal communication, 2016. A well-known use of the term is in the title of Xavier Herbert's novel: *Poor Fellow My Country* (Sydney: Collins, 1975).
- ⁴¹ Hill, Alfred. *Poor Fellow Me: Wanderer's Song*. Words by W. E. Harney and A. P. Elkin from *Songs of the Songmen*. Sydney: Chappell, 1950.
- ⁴² Beth Dean 'Stone Age Riches', unpublished manuscript Beth Dean: Literary Manuscripts: Articles, 1955-1988, MLMSS 7804/46/6, Dean and Carell papers.
- ⁴³ See the various articles on traditions of Australian song in 'Aboriginal Traditions' *Currency Companion to Music and Dance in Australia*, eds. J. Whiteoak and A. Scott-Maxwell. (Sydney, Currency House Inc): 26-37.
- ⁴⁴ See for example Linda Barwick, 'Tempo Bands, Metre and Rhythmic Mode in Marri Ngarr 'Church Lirrga' Songs,' *Australasian Music Research* 7 (2002).
- ⁴⁵ Catherine J. Ellis, 'Creating with Traditions,' *Sounds Australian* 30 (1991): 14.
- ⁴⁶ One exception prior to the 2000s is British composer Peter Maxwell-Davies, who wrote about the strong influence of the structural complexity of Aboriginal song cycles on his compositional thinking. Maxwell-Davies credits Cath Ellis' articulation of this to a shift in his thinking about his work. Maxwell-Davies, Peter (1972). Foreword. *Australia's Contemporary Composers*. J. Murdoch. Melbourne, Sun Books: ix-x.
- ⁴⁷ Christine Logan, 'Colin Bright and the Psyche of Place,' in *The Soundscapes of Australia: Music, Place and Spirituality*, ed. Fiona Richards (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 42.
- ⁴⁸ Colin Bright, 'An Australian Sound?,' *Sounds Australian* Spring (1989): 13.
- ⁴⁹ See for example the construal of Australia as empty and spatially available to be filled or appropriated in Lesley Head, *Second Nature: The History and Implications of Australia as Aboriginal Landscape*, (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 77-79.
- ⁵⁰ Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay: An Essay in Spatial History* (London: Faber and Faber, 1987), 242 & 247.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 250-51.
- ⁵² Wilfred Mellers, 'New Worlds, Old Wildernesses: Peter Sculthorpe and the Ecology of Music,' *Atlantic* 268, no. 2 (1991): 94 & 98.
- ⁵³ For discussion of Sculthorpe's use of the *djilile* melody, see Steven Knopoff, 'Cross-Cultural Appropriation: A Musicologist's Perspective,' *Sounds Australian* 67 (2006), and Harris, 'Hearing Aboriginal Music Making'.
- ⁵⁴ Ellis, 'Creating with Traditions,' 13-14. Ellis was not the first to be critical of fragmenting melodies of Aboriginal song in the service of an Australian cultural identity. Music historian Roger Covell's seminal account of Australian music suggested that the exploration of 'territories of music relatively untouched by the standard varieties of European music' would be more productive than imitation of melodic fragments. Covell, *Australia's Music*, 72.
- ⁵⁵ Rhoderick McNeill, *The Australian Symphony from Federation to 1960* (Ashgate, 2014). Other composers of this era similarly sought to incorporate Aboriginal titles and storylines into their compositions, in addition to Antill, James Penberthy also composed a number of works themed around Aboriginal stories.
- ⁵⁶ Clive Douglas, 'Folk Song and the Brown Man - Means to an Australian Expression in Symphonic Works,' *Canon* 10, no. 3 (1956): 82-83.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 82.

⁵⁸ Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event* (London, New York: Cassell, 1999), Chapter 1. Wolfe's focus was on Spencer and Gillen's 1899 claim that Arrernte people did not understand the cause of human pregnancies. Wolfe showed that Spencer and Gillen projected theories about European history onto Aboriginal people 'independent of empirical Indigenous data' and that this reinforced imperial thinking about Aboriginal people as a race so alien to white Europeans as to be less-than-human. While presenting here Wolfe's assertion of this violence to relativism, I also acknowledge critiques of Wolfe's wholesale demolition of Spencer and Gillen by Philip Batty who reminds us that 'the descendants of the Aboriginal groups Spencer and Gillen documented are perhaps the most avid excavators of their ethnography'. Batty, Philip. *Assembling the Ethnographic Field: The 1901-02 Expedition of Baldwin Spencer and Francis Gillen. Expeditionary Anthropology: Teamwork, Travel and the 'Science of Man'*. edited by Martin Thomas and Amanda Harris New York: Berghahn Books, 2018, 58.

⁵⁹ Ellis, 'Creating with Traditions', 14.

⁶⁰ On 'Aboriginalism', see Bob Hodge and Vijay Mishra, *Dark Side of the Dream : Australian Literature and the Postcolonial Mind*, trans. Vijay Mishra (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1991); Bain Attwood, 'Introduction,' *Journal of Australian Studies* 16, no. 35 (1992).

⁶¹ Antill's 1946 symphonic ballet *Corroboree* holds a central place in Australian music history as the first major orchestral composition to enter the standard repertoire as a work engaging with a unique Australian culture, and much has been made of Dean's 1954 gala performance of the ballet for Queen Elizabeth II. See for example James Murdoch, *Australia's Contemporary Composers* (Melbourne: Sun Books, 1972), 11; Roger Covell, *Australia's Music: Themes of a New Society* (Melbourne: Sun Books, 1967), 70; Anna Haebich, *Spinning the Dream*, 308-9; Victoria Haskins, 'Dancing in the Dust: A Gendered History of Indigenising Australian Cultural Identity,' in *Intersections: Gender, Race and Ethnicity in Australasian Studies*, ed. Margaret Allen and R.K. Dhawan (New Delhi: Prestige Books, 2007); Haskins 'To Touch the Infinity of a Far Horizon: A Transnational History of Transcultural Appropriation in Beth Dean's *Corroboree* (1954),' *Australasian Drama Studies* 59 (2011); Amanda Card, 'From 'Aboriginal Dance' to Aboriginals Dancing: The Appropriation of the 'Primitive' in Australian Dance 1950-1963,' in *Heritage and Heresy: Green Mill Papers* (Braddon: Australia Dance Council, 1997); Suzanne Spinner, 'Corroboree Moderne,' in *Modern Frontier: Aspects of the 1950s in Australia's Northern Territory*, ed. Julie T. Wells, Mickey Dewar, and Suzanne Parry (Darwin: Charles Darwin University Press, 2005).

⁶² Their inclusion of Aboriginal performers largely responded to assertion of the right of self-representation by Aboriginal performers following the 1967 referendum, some photographs of the dancers they co-ordinated in a 'Ballet of the South Pacific' in 1970 are included in the National Museum of Australia 'Beth Dean with dancers from Yirrkala'. AR00019.006.004, Beth Dean Carell collection no. 1, <http://collectionsearch.nma.gov.au/?object=178571>. Susan Cochrane notes that after Dean and Carell's initial input in setting up the Dance Theatre of Fiji and Cook Islands National Arts Theatre, both groups rejected the hybrid/balletic mix of dance tutoring and subsequently formed other self-determined performance groups. Susan Cochrane, 'Becoming Art: Some Relationships between Pacific Art and Western Culture' (PhD Thesis, University of Wollongong, 1995), 464-66.

⁶³ Dean turned a critical eye on the early tours of the Aboriginal Theatre Company in an essay entitled 'Indigenous Dance Theatre', Beth Dean: Literary Manuscripts: Articles, 1955-1988, MLMSS 7804/46/6, Dean and Carell papers. For more on the tours of the Aboriginal Theatre see: Amanda Harris (forthcoming 2020), 'Representing Australia to the Commonwealth in 1965: Aborigiana and Indigenous performance' *Twentieth Century Music*, V17(1).

⁶⁴ Katelyn Barney suggests that Aboriginalism has filtered into the wider 'Western' population through history, anthropology and literary studies academics, but I would suggest that popular representations of Aboriginal culture by popular performers, and indeed popular (as distinct from academic) The version of Record of this manuscript has been published and is available in *Postcolonial Studies*, 21 23 February 2020, <http://www.tandfonline.com/10.1080/13688790.2020.1727968>

anthropology have also been significant for cultivating these ideas. Barney, Katelyn. "Gendering Aboriginalism: A Performative Gaze on Indigenous Australian Women." *Cultural Studies Review* 6, no. 1 (2010): 215.

⁶⁵ See also Tim Rowse's invocation of the messiness of this history (2014), "Indigenous Heterogeneity." *Australian Historical Studies* 45(3): 301.

⁶⁶ Beth Dean, 'Lecture/Demonstration by Beth Dean on Her Ballet Corroboree', National Film and Sound Archive, Title No: 368548, Canberra.

⁶⁷ Lorenzo Veracini (2011). "Introducing settler colonial studies." *Settler Colonial Studies* 1(1): 1-12.

⁶⁸ Lim, Liza. (2006). Crossing Cultural Boundaries and Ecstatic Transformation. *Sounds Australian*, 67, 10-17.

⁶⁹ Sainsbury, Christopher. *Ngarra-Burria: New Music and the Search for an Australian Sound*. Platform Paper 59: Currency Press, 2019. Sydney Living Museums, Exhibition: Songs of Home, 10 August – 17 November 2019, Museum of Sydney, <https://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/exhibitions/songs-home>, accessed 17 October 2019. Sainsbury reported on approaches from other major organisations in a presentation to the symposium *Narrating Music and Social Change*, 10 October 2019, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, convenors Christopher Coady and Amanda Harris.