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A Deeper Shade of Blue: A Compositional Folio Informed by Ethnographic Research into the Sydney Jazz Scene

Jeremy Rose

A folio of original musical compositions and thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Sydney

March 2015

Volume I: Thesis

This submission comprises a folio of creative work and accompanying thesis. It is in three volumes and includes three accompanying discs
Statement of Originality

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.

..............................

Jeremy Rose
31 March 2015
Abstract

This folio contains scores and audio recordings of five original compositions with critical commentary and ethnographic investigation. The research aims to test existing concepts of an Australian jazz identity and create new constructs for how music is created by a practicing jazz composer and performer. The research presents the results elicited from 11 interviews with selected Sydney jazz scene participants, providing an oral account of the way they create, conceive and perceive jazz music in Sydney and to compare evidence.

In the five compositions I research various ways of integrating improvisation, non-Western and Australian influences into jazz and classical music contexts. I provide a case study of eclecticism and the role of improvisation in shaping programmatic goals with specific reference of my major work *Iron in the Blood: Music Inspired by Robert Hughes' The Fatal Shore* for jazz orchestra and two narrators. The other works include *River Meeting Suite* for saxophone quartet, sitar, vocals, tabla and iphone, *Oneirology* for saxophone quartet and piano, *Between Worlds* for string quartet and saxophone and *Border Control* for flute, piccolo, bass clarinet, trumpet and vibraphone.

This research addresses some of the deficiencies in the literature on Sydney jazz and creative music and illuminates the creative practices lying behind the creation of localised jazz identities through a case study of my composition portfolio and creative process. By expanding discussion beyond my own compositions, this project helps flesh out how “Australian” approaches to jazz composition, are realised across the Sydney scene and how these are distinct from other locales of jazz music production around the world.

My perspective as a significant stakeholder within the jazz community, given that I am a performer, composer, performing artist, band manager and label director provides the research with a unique credibility and valuable insight into the field.
Table of Contents – Folio

Critical Commentary

Music Scores


3. *Oneirology* (2013), for saxophone quartet and piano, in four movements. Duration 34 minutes

4. *Between Worlds* (2014), for string quartet and saxophone, in three movements. Duration 15 minutes

5. *Border Control* (2014), for flute, piccolo, bass clarinet, trumpet and vibraphone, in three movements. Duration 14 minutes

Audio Recordings

1. *Iron in the Blood: Music inspired by Robert Hughes’ The Fatal Shore*

   Performed by Jeremy Rose and the Earshift Orchestra
   conductor, soprano saxophone soloist: Jeremy Rose
   woodwinds: Evan Antwell-Harris, Scott McConnachie, Michael Avgenicos, Matt Keegans, Paul Cutland
   trumpet and flugelhorns: Patrick McMullin, Callum G’Froerer, Charles Casson, Nick Garbett
   trombones: Mike Raper, James Macaulay, Eleanor Shearer, Colin Burrows
   piano and harpsichord: Joseph O’Connor
   guitar: Ben Hauptmann
   bass: Thomas Botting
   drums: Daniel Fischer

2. *River Meeting Suite*

   Performed by Sarangan Sriranganathan and Bobby Singh with the Compass Quartet
   Christina Leonard, soprano saxophone
Jeremy Rose, alto saxophone
Matthew Ottignon, tenor saxophone
Luke Gilmour, baritone saxophone
Sarangan Sriranganathan, voice and sitar
Bobby Singh, tabla

3. **Oneirology**
   Performed by Jackson Harrison with Compass Quartet
   Christina Leonard, soprano saxophone
   Jeremy Rose, alto saxophone
   Matthew Ottignon, tenor saxophone
   Luke Gilmour, baritone saxophone
   Jackson Harrison, piano

4. **Between Worlds**
   Performed by Nick Russoniello with Acacia Quartet
   Nick Russoniello, alto saxophone
   Lisa Stewart, violin
   Myee Clohessy, violin
   Stefan Duwe, viola
   Anna Martin-Scraser, cello

5. **Border Control**
   Performed by Ensemble Offspring
   Lamorna Nightingale, flute and piccolo
   Jason Noble, bass clarinet
   Callum G’Troerer, trumpet
   Claire Edwardes, vibraphone
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I would also like to thank my family and friends for their tireless support, patience and belief in my musical journey.
Introduction

This case study of five original compositions examines the use of improvisation and the integration of non-Western influences into jazz and contemporary classical music contexts, and tests existing concepts of a universalist Australian jazz aesthetic against 11 interviews with Sydney jazz scene members and documented reflections of my own compositional process. The findings unsurprisingly rebuke homogenous representations of Australian jazz practice while simultaneously revealing sites or hubs of connectivity in relation to compositional thought. In particular, my investigation reveals a spectrum of unique strategies in the Sydney jazz scene deployed towards what at first appear to be similar ends: the integration of improvisation into various predetermined platforms in an attempt to efficiently utilise various players’ skills in “pragmatic” compositional design and the adoption of a diverse set of musical influences including a turn towards Asia and locally produced rock music. These strategies are underpinned by an aesthetic goal that seeks to highlight diversity of individual experience in the production of musical works. While these strategies can on one hand be linked to meta-tropes of Australian jazz production such as “eclecticism” and “pragmatism” (see Johnson 2000, Whiteoak 1999), I argue in this critical commentary that their outcomes belie the diverse nature of an Australian jazz scene woven together by divergent approaches to jazz practice.

The field of jazz studies outside of Australia has frequently turned to an analysis of “culture” as a way of accounting for such variations in approach and style. Indeed, Amiri Baraka (Leroi Jones) famously wrote in the 1960s about the way in which the music’s context was inextricably linked to its meaning. His stinging indictment of jazz discourse in “Jazz and the White Critic” (1963) proclaimed that it was impossible to extricate the music from its racial and class politics since these were the social forces that had made the modern jazz genre what it was. Many exceptional studies have followed, linking the wider social reception of jazz with the specific cultural practices of musical communities or “scenes” in explanations or illuminations of sonic content (Hughes 1974, Ogren 1989, Radano 1993, Kenney 1993, Berliner 1994, Gabbard 1995, Collier 1996, Monson 1996, Panish 1997, DeVeaux 1997, Gerard 1998, Erenberg 1998, Lock 1999, Tucker 2001, Jackson 1998). These texts form a foundation for ethnographic inquiry into jazz, each revealing new methods and paradigms through which we might understand how the music is made.

Paul Berliner's *Thinking in Jazz* (1994) for instance exemplifies the potential for fieldwork and interviews to illuminate the ways that musicians develop the broad array of skills required for
professional performance practice – from collective group interplay to personal musical vocabulary development. The strengths of this monumental work lie not just in Berliner’s musical analysis but also in his innovative qualitative methodology that collects and integrates the opinions of sixty musicians into a comprehensive portrayal of the creative processes in jazz. As he explains: “Understanding how the artists themselves viewed the issue, how they defined their own musical practices, was of central importance” (Berliner 1994: 5). By allowing many of his theories to emerge through the data collection process, Berliner is able to challenge certain stereotypes and misconceptions of the music by taking seriously the often under appreciated perspectives of jazz musicians themselves. As fellow ethnomusicologist Ingrid Monson has claimed about the work: “No musical parameter is left unexamined, and the complex interplay between composition and improvisation is nowhere presented with greater nuance and detail” (Monson 1996: 5).

Monson in turn has contributed to the growing field of jazz ethnography by investigating the under-explored interaction of rhythm sections in jazz ensembles through dialectical musicological and ethnographic methodologies. Monson’s findings articulate how “interactiveness” facilitates cultural meaning and ideologies both in the musicians themselves and audiences on a wider level. Cultural practices based around identity, politics and race are explored throughout interviews with participants and then woven into musicological analysis, suggesting that sonic outcomes tend to reflect a community-building imperative:

When a musician successfully reaches a discerning audience, moves its members to applaud or shout praises, raises the energy to dramatic proportions, and leaves a sonorous memory that lingers long after, he or she has moved beyond technical experiences…. and into the realm of “saying something.” (…) this verbal aesthetic image underscores the collaborative and communicative quality of improvisation. A moment of community, whether temporary or enduring, can be established in such moments through the simultaneous interaction of musical sounds, people, and their cultural histories (Monson 1996: 1-2).

Monson’s collegial dynamic with the interview participants allowed privileged access to information that musicians would otherwise be unwilling to share and the opportunity for her to practice and perform theories presented in the interviews in turn facilitated her personal reflection on the subject matter.
Indeed, the sort of ethnography Monson and Berliner involve themselves in falls under the umbrella of what is broadly known as participant-observer ethnography. That is to say, their attempts to elevate the voices of artists involved in the production of jazz through interviews and field observations extends to a discussion of their own observations of performing jazz as well. Berliner explains the rationale for such a methodological approach in the opening pages to his work:

> Using myself as a subject for the study-training myself according to the same techniques described by musicians-offered the kind of detail about musical development and creative process that can be virtually impossible to obtain from other methods. So, too, did reflection during my own performances on the experimental realm of jazz. Musical experiments in the practice room-for example, trying to invent and develop musical ideas-proved especially useful for testing different ideas about improvisation (Berliner 1994: 10).

In Berliner’s case, such a personal perspective on musical development and creative process colours – or better yet, enhances in Berliner’s mind – the interpretation of data produced by other participants in his study.

Yet overstepping can occur in participant-observer accounts. In a criticism of studies that feature the researchers voice too prominently, Carolyn Ellis and Arthur Bochner explain that a “mode of story-telling… akin to the novel or biography [emerges] and thus fractures the boundaries that normally separate social science from literature... the narrative text refuses to abstract and explain” (Ellis & Bochner 2000: 744). Ellis and Bochner relay the criticism of autoethnography:

> As part ethnography, autoethnography is dismissed for social scientific standards as being insufficiently rigorous, theoretical, and analytical, and too aesthetic, emotional, and therapeutic (Ellis, 2009; Hooks, 1994; Keller, 1995). Autoethnographers are criticized for doing too little fieldwork, for observing too few cultural members, for not spending enough time with (different) others (Buzard, 2003; Fine, 2003; Delamont, 2009). Furthermore, in using personal experience, autoethnographers are thought to not only use supposedly biased data (Anderson, 2006; Atkinson, 1997; Gans, 1999), but are also navel-gazers (Madison, 2006), self-absorbed narcissists who don't fulfil scholarly
obligations of hypothesizing, analyzing, and theorizing (Ellis, Carolyn, Adams and Bochner 2001: 37).

Leon Anderson (2006) has suggested a middle-ground solution might be forged if participant-observers keep in the forefront of their minds the importance of how one argues for the significance of their data. In other words a researcher’s involvement in the simultaneous creation and processing of ethnographic data can create unique results that would otherwise be difficult to obtain but the value of this data still needs to be demonstrated in relation to current theories and debates occurring in a given discourse. As an example of how this might occur, Anderson points to Robert Murphy’s The Body Silent (1987), a work that utilises auto-ethnographic methods in an inquiry into the effects of spinal disease. Anderson writes:

Murphy’s book seeks connections to broader social science theory – especially using his own experiences to argue that conceptions of liminality provide a more accurate and meaningful analytic framework for understanding human disability than does a deviance perspective (Anderson 2006: 378-379).

Anderson’s point here is that by engaging in a current critical debate, the significance of Murphy’s data collection is made apparent to the reader of Murphy’s study. Anderson goes on to offer other useful advice about how a researcher might integrate himself/herself into a work without transitioning fully into the ‘evocative’ or literary realm, including the importance of narrative visibility of the researcher self, the ability to observe the interaction of the researcher’s investigation on other subjects (“analytic reflexivity”) and the inclusion of dialogue with informants beyond the self. Examples such as Anderson’s (2006) immersion as a complete member researcher into the social world and sub-culture of recreational skydiving and David Karp’s (1996) analysis of depression sufferers are put forth as examples of approaches that go beyond the limits of an “outsiders” perspective while at the same time providing an alternative to evocative “novel-like” auto-ethnographic accounts.

This research project aims to investigate the phenomenon of “Australian Jazz” identity through a participant-observer inquiry that embraces Anderson’s (2006) call to integrate reflection on practice into current critical debates. My purposes in this endeavour are two-fold. First, I aim to test assumptions about the nature of Australian jazz put forth in the existing literature detailed in Chapter One. Second, I aim to draw into clearer relief how cultural forces within the Sydney jazz scene have shaped my own compositional approach. As this project constitutes my submission
for a PhD in composition, the music I have produced as a participant-observer necessarily forms the main focus of this narrative and should in turn form the main focus of assessment (80% of the mark awarded for the compositions themselves/20% of the mark awarded for critical commentary).

As a researcher and performer/composer, I am well situated to produce an investigation of the Sydney jazz scene and access the “special” data that would otherwise be inaccessible to other researchers. My work as a saxophonist and composer operates in a fertile overlap of jazz, popular, world, experimental and classical music, bringing me into contact with a vast array of music communities which together frequently work together in the Sydney jazz scene. I in turn possess an extensive network of contacts built through ten years of performing, recording and touring as a professional musician. I am happily preoccupied with music and connected with key stakeholders through multiple ongoing projects as well as my own record label, Earshift Music, making my position significant in terms of researcher insight, experience and commitment.

In terms of compositional practice, I aim to create works that move effortlessly between notated and improvised music, jazz and classical music and other categorisations. Over the course of preparing the works for my composition portfolio, I have investigated the mixing of musical elements such as non-Western and folk music melodic references, modal jazz harmony, the use of improvisation, orchestration, texture, use of a narrative and rhythmic structures based on number sequences. I have also worked to juxtapose elements of intercultural and cross-genre music through paraphrase, rhythmic references, and the use of diverse orchestration and textures. I demonstrate the originality of these compositional processes and solutions with particular reference to other practices within the Sydney jazz scene in my critical commentary.

My process has been a natural and instinctive indigenisation and integration of influences from Greek, Balinese, North and South Indian, Ethiopian and Australian music. These new sources have been utilised in a range of contexts in the portfolio and have resulted in an integration of various compositional techniques. The compositions have in turn been composed for musicians from various backgrounds: musicians with backgrounds in improvised music, including jazz, Indian music and free improvisation, and musicians with non-improvising background. This division has allowed me to explore approaches to working with improvisation in various compositional contexts.
Compositions in this portfolio written for improvisers include a major chamber work for jazz orchestra and two narrators (Iron in the Blood, 72 minutes), a saxophone quartet with sitar, vocals, tabla and iphone, (River Meeting Suite, 37 minutes) and a saxophone quartet with piano (Oneirology, 34 minutes). The compositions for musicians with non-improvising backgrounds include a string quartet with saxophone (Between Worlds, 14 minutes) and a chamber work for flute, piccolo, bass clarinet, trumpet and vibraphone (Border Control 15 minutes).

Embarking on such a project was inspired by my intrinsic curiosity in music from both an outward looking panoptical vision of the world in which I adopt influences from my experiences and travels around Australia and abroad, as well as an introspection that seeks to unravel and explain to myself the complex identity of my homeland. We live in a post-modern, post-colonial, post-national (post-everything?) world in which categorisation of musical styles is not only made challenging by the complexity of an artists’ practice, but necessitates deeper delving into new directions in order to find sources for new cross-fertilisation. Coming to terms with my Australian heritage has been an important step towards moving beyond self imposed stylistic limitations and questions of authenticity. This PhD portfolio provides a snapshot of my process and influences during a particular historical moment.

Chapter One traces efforts to chart the emergence of numerous jazz identities around the world, both within and outside of the United States. Whilst originally defining these identities based on sonic content tied to their geographic location, these studies increasingly incorporated a discussion of the cultural forces that lie behind the music. I argue that a turn in research design has signaled for a broader methodology to include an investigation of the cultural processes to gain a broader picture of how these identities are produced. I discuss the phenomenon of ‘glocalisation’ in which jazz music identities experience a push and pull of both ‘global’ and ‘local’ influences in an effort to re-inscribe the music with local significance. Here I “interrogate the Australian sound” through a review of existing literature on jazz music in Australia, which fail to find any common thread or aesthetic. However two recurrent themes are extracted and defined: pragmatism and eclecticism, and I set forth my plan to test these themes throughout this thesis and composition portfolio. I outline my methodology, which includes selecting and conducting interviews with 11 participants from the jazz scene, outline my methods for coding and presenting the data, and discuss performance participation in the creation of my own works.
Chapter Two presents the findings of the interviews in a discussion of how artists’ compositional decisions are influenced by the themes identified in Chapter One. It reveals the divergent nature of the artists’ creative processes and artistic trajectories, reinforcing the case for individual agency as a way of explaining the Sydney scene. However this is complicated by the artists simultaneously rejecting the notion of a universalist Australian sound whilst acknowledging the existence of legacies of local influence. I trace the emergence of style eclecticism in Australian jazz music from the 1960’s and broaden our understanding of the theme through the interview data, revealing three salient points. Artists’ creative decisions are shown to be facilitated through a broad definition of jazz music and an economic diversification of performance opportunities in genres outside that of their original training. These economic motivations are also shown to be underlined by personal loyalties with the intent of sharing both learning outcomes and income. Eclecticism is shown to manifest through the adoption of the sounds and aesthetic of Oz Rock and a turn towards Asia, in which includes non-Western music borrowing and intercultural dialogues. I argue that eclecticism can be best understood through an ‘indigenising impulse’ in which artists create meaning by re-inscribing jazz music with local significance in an attempt to authenticate (consciously or not) their place within the world. Compositional choices are shown to be driven by responses of a pragmatic nature that reflect economic, historical, cultural, aesthetic and kinship factors. I discuss strategic responses to the pragmatic nature of the Sydney jazz scene in which compositional design is meted out to efficiently maximise the musical product with limited means.

Chapter Three investigates the role of improvisation in achieving artistic and programmatic goals in an analysis of my compositions. I discuss how this is underpinned by an attempt to highlight the diversity of experience of the performers whilst simultaneously projecting a sense of unified self. The role of improvisation is highlighted through the colouring of notated ensemble passages with individual and collective improvisation. I assess and discuss various pragmatic responses to the creation of improvisational platforms for musicians from different backgrounds. These are underlined by a philosophy of using idiomatic writing that is applicable for non-Western musicians and jazz musicians, as well as changing the notation to construct improvisation platforms with high degrees of specificity for classical musicians.

Chapter Four presents a case study of Iron in the Blood: Music Inspired by Robert Hughes’ The Fatal Shore, and explores the integration of non-Western and Australian influences in my works. I discuss the background and influences on Iron in the Blood, drawing attention to their transnational
nature whilst also drawing on Australian folk music. I discuss how the works’ objectives are to create a rich fabric of perspectives drawing from the narrative’s depiction of the character’s voices in The Fatal Shore, and how this is explored in musical terms. I trace the use of cyclic themes throughout the work, which transform to depict the altering narrative of the convict’s passage from slavery to freedom and Australia’s journey for a sense of unified self. I discuss methods for composing and performing melodies that reference folk and non-Western traditions in Iron in the Blood, and cross-reference with other works in the portfolio including River Meeting Suite and Between Worlds. This includes the harmonisation of non-Western modal systems and reharmonisation of folk material in an effort to reinvent it in new harmonic and rhythmic contexts. I outline the integration of Sheehan’s Number Diamonds system to generate rhythmic structures in Iron in the Blood, and how it reshapes the way we ‘hear’ non-Western modal material in Border Control. I finally present a summary of the research in Chapter Five and point to areas that warrant further investigation.

This research carries out an investigation of jazz composition practice as a function of Sydney jazz culture in an effort to illuminate and refine previous efforts to chart Australian jazz culture. In broad terms, this research is motivated by a desire to place Australian jazz identity amongst questions of authenticity and cultural nationalism, questions that surround all art forms in Australia. In turn, I aim to gain a better understanding of my own composition practice, and to inform my view of Australian jazz culture through the ethno graphic lens so successfully deployed in studies of the New York jazz scene. In an innovative twist, my composition is informed by a report of finding from 11 interviews with a parallel analysis of my own compositions and recording portfolio. The significance of the project is evident through its cohesive methodology based on ethnographic and composition analysis and critical commentary. It is a collection and presentation of important interview data documenting the Sydney jazz scene, and an analysis of my composition portfolio. It is an important step towards bringing together practice based research and critical commentary, or what is often known as a composition ‘exegesis’ into a broader academic context, along with engaging in the public dialogue surrounding authenticity and performances of jazz music in Australia. In compositional terms, the portfolio is significant in its engagement with Australian history, its pragmatic compositional design utilising improvisation for musicians from various backgrounds and its integration of non-Western influences into jazz and classical music contexts.
This project helps demystify and address some of the deficiencies in the respective literature on
Australian jazz and illuminates cultural practices lying behind the manifestation of Australian jazz
identities. By expanding discussion beyond my own compositions, the project helps flesh out
how approaches to jazz composition are realised across the Sydney scene and how these are
distinct from other locales of jazz music production around the world. The project serves as a
model for other such studies across the broader field of music.
Chapter One

Australian jazz or jazz made in Australia? Jazz identities, meaning and globalisation

Jazz music’s malleable improvisatory methods and diverse social utility have enabled the recent emergence of distinct creative practices both linked to the genre’s traditional roots in the United States and, simultaneously, to cultures outside the United States. Geographic location has frequently served as a frame for grouping these new sonic “identities,” revealing the persistence of a rhetorical tradition with long roots in jazz scholarship. Indeed, early jazz scholars were keen to point out that jazz music sounded differently depending on where it was made, focusing first on the sounds of cities like Kansas City, New Orleans, Chicago and New York and then later on the broader geographic arenas of the “west” and “east” coast. Initially, investigations seeking to distinguish the voice of one city from another relied on qualitative methods bent on charting sonic content (see Driggs and Frank, 2005: 56, 86). Yet a second wave of scholars in the late 1940s would break new ground in the investigation of jazz “identities” by insisting that sonic differences could only be appreciated through an examination of the cultural practices from which they emerged. Since the publication of Sidney Finkelstein’s (1948) ethnography on American jazz practices, methods for examining the cultural forces lying behind the production of jazz have been refined and many useful models have been developed to help us explore what actually happens when jazz music is created in distinct geographical sites. The concern of this thesis is to explore and interrogate notions of jazz cultural ‘identity’ in yet another geographically distant location from its origins, a location which has been the site of distinct and unique collaborations, recordings, performances and compositions: Sydney, Australia.

1 The definition of “jazz” around the world is rife with challenges given its contested nature in academic and popular discourse, in which the origins of the music are so remote from the music that the meaning has been adapted and re-conceptualised. How do we create meaning and interpret jazz that is not ‘authentic’? Without syncopation, the swing beat, the blues “scale,” timbral conventions, characteristic “bebop” chromatic passing notes in an improvisation and African American authentication, is it really jazz? This is a complicated field for jazz purists and scholars and has been the source of an ongoing question that has become particularly relevant given that the music has become a truly transnational art form, providing a vast array of meanings and identities to locales (Kater 1987, 1992; Starr 1994; Jones 2001; Johnson 2000; Ansell 2004; Atkins 2001).

2 For examples on various geographic locations, see Chicago - Kenney (1993), Kansas City - Driggs and Frank (2005), New Orleans – Peretti (1992).

3 An exploration of Australian jazz music and identity is a complicated subject given that music essentially has a “life of its own” in the familiar postmodern and postcolonial world beyond its original conception. The analytical problem of viewing music tied to its roots and questions over authenticity is the appropriation of music by people in places other than its origin (Frith 1996: 109). Jazz music is now taught in music academies all over the world, allowing national identities to emerge and musicians to translate the jazz tradition in their own way (cf. Atkins 2003).
Over the past twenty-years, jazz scholars have sought to develop a language for discussing the interaction of hegemonic notions of jazz style and the local traditions musicians draw on when they perform jazz music. Sometimes referred to as a “glocalising” effect, such interaction has been shown to commonly result in hybrid musical styles in which both ‘global’ and ‘local’ ideas about jazz music manifest simultaneously (Robertson 1994; Robertson 1995; Nicholson 2005, 167). Within the global jazz economy, “glocal” dialects have been particularly useful in authenticating the participation of non-Americans in the production of jazz. Indeed, as Yui Shoichi points out, many of these approaches embrace what might be considered a form of “jazz nationalism” – an assertion of a unique jazz identity through the integration of sonorities heard to be somehow indigenous to one’s specific geographic location. Nicholson (2005) and Atkins (2001) have written about the pros and cons of this situation, describing how such an approach has both created many derivations of the jazz genre while also leading to rising tensions in racial politics, “authenticity”, and conflict between imitators and supposed innovators, arguments that often contradict the essential ethos of jazz as a “universal language”. Atkins explains: “There is an obsession with identifying and filtering the ‘pure’ or ‘authentic’ core of the music from the eclectic and multiracial contexts in which it was created (Atkins 2001: 11). Tensions aside, there can be little doubt that “glocal” or “nationalistic” paradigms of jazz practice have been audible around the world. Just a few of the more recent examples include “Japanese Jazz”, “South African Jazz”, “Brazilian Jazz” “Australian Jazz”, “European jazz” and more specifically the “Nordic Tone” (Atkins 2001; Ansell 2005; Muller 2007; Johnson 2000; Medbøe 2013, Connell 2002).

Musical syncretisms are of course not novel in ethno-musicological discourse. The sort of interactions that produce glocalised versions of jazz have been observed in a wide variety of “new” musical styles around the globe (Wallis & Malm 1984; Yudice 2001; Gross, McMurray, & Swedenburg 1994). Yet recent work on syncretism in international jazz scenes has sought to paint a more complicated picture of the fusion phenomena. E. Taylor Atkins’ work on jazz in Japan demonstrates the music’s power to transform sociocultural milieus – to serve as an ideological force capable of breaking down the limitations of jazz within national borders and to work as an agent of globalisation and modernisation within Japanese culture more broadly. His book Blue Nippon: Authenticating Jazz in Japan (2001) pursues questions of identity and creativity as they relate to Japanese musicians’ efforts to “sound Japanese” within a musical tradition both rooted in and running parallel to the African-American experience. Through interviews and fieldwork, Atkins moves beyond standardised assessments of syncretic musical sonorities by looking to the
production, consumption, and resultant disputes around identity, aesthetics and social mores that result from the glocalisation process. His work presents a conceptual framework for the study of jazz in other non-American contexts and signals a broader trend in which national identity as a strictly sonic phenomena is increasingly being questioned.

1.1 Interrogating the “Australian Sound”

Such investigations into Australian jazz practice have yet to occur, although the problems of assessments based purely on sonority are well known to Australian jazz writers. *Sydney Morning Herald* jazz critic John Shand’s *Jazz: The Australian Accent* (2009) for instance attempts to argue for a discrete sonic identity but struggles to find any common threads or aesthetic values in the music of the artists he profiles. As Shand explains, “no pattern emerges in quantifiable sonic terms.” John Whiteoak’s book *Playing Ad Lib: Improvisatory Music in Australia 1836-1970* (1990) in turn rejects the idea of an Australian sound but points to what might be considered an Australian jazz ethos – the general eclecticism of Australian jazz that results from transplanted musical cultures and relative “out-of-sync waves of decontextualised musical influence” (Whiteoak 1990: xiv).

Whiteoak views improvisation as the key mediator of this eclecticism, suggesting that there exists the “potential [for improvisation to serve] as musical Esperanto, or perhaps, pidgin, enabling expressive cross-generational, cross-gender, cross-aesthetic, creative, harmless, educational and joyful human play” (Whiteoak 1990: xxii). Bruce Johnson’s significant contribution to the discourse, *The Inaudible Music* (2000), in turn pursues an argument for Australian jazz’s uniqueness outside the sonic realm, describing the effects of the cultural practices of ‘pragmatism’ and ‘mateship’ on the design of Australian jazz compositions (Johnson 2000: 162).

Johnson’s notion of an Australian musical ‘pragmatism’ is rooted in his observations of how early Australian jazz musicians negotiated their own jazz performance practices at great distance from the jazz vanguard of the United States. Referring to the early days of Australian jazz history, Johnson writes of how “intermittent access” to recordings lead to the emergence of a “pragmatic musical eclecticism” in Australian circles that combined with the infamous “she’ll be right” spirit of colloquial fashion to allow for the “improvis[ation] [of] workable solutions from whatever is lying around” (Johnson 2000: 162). As a case in point, Johnson points to the Graeme Bell Band’s

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repertoire, use of thrown together instruments and indifferent stage personas as representative of such an ad hoc approach that sought to emblazon the very definition of improvisation both within and beyond the musical context onto the Australian jazz ethos.

Johnson in turn views the idea of ‘mateship’ as a related theme to Australian musical ‘pragmatism’. He defines the term as a fluid relationship between both musicians and audience stemming from a prioritisation of the music’s social function over its artistic merit. Johnson finds support for this idea in his examination of the role the Socialist Eureka Youth League played in promoting jazz early on in Australia and the generally left leaning views of jazz’s early practitioners (Johnson 2000: 16). In practical terms, through this lens musicians’ creative decisions and professional conduct can be seen as directly influenced by personal loyalties. Max Harris’ recollection of the Bell band’s tour of the United Kingdom highlights how the perceived conception of polyphony was used to essentialise the idea of mateship:

The Australian jazz underground provides the last surviving embodiment of Lawson’s mateship imperatives... the old musicians... have enjoyed a sustained and reassuring empathy with their now paunchy and raddled audiences. There has been an unchanging human environment in which the traditions has been able to survive and develop. Jazz has built an ethos of mateship around itself” (Harris 1973: 15).

Jazz music allowed interpreters to recast the music’s meaning to assert nationalist cultural tropes. Similar expressions of Australian cultural fascinations include irreverence, black humour and larrikinism. A further example includes Graham Bell’s band and their “rebellious” nature, characterised through the music’s individualism-in-collectivity (Atkins 2013: 165). Jazz music was therefore re-inscribed and interpreted to fit a social narrative of Australian identity.

The idea that local cultural practices such as those identified by Johnson might form a better platform for trying to figure out how Australian’s negotiate and construct the mechanics of their own jazz scene underpins Nicholson’s (2005) thoughts on Australian jazz. Nicholson points out that “Culture, national attitudes and habits, and even climate can all play a part in forming a glocal dialect” and goes on to quote from acclaimed pianist Paul Grabowsky, who portrays the cultural climate of Australia as rude, impolite, irreverent, derogatory, and yet down at its core deeply pragmatic due to its limited access to resources (Nicholson 2005: 188). Grabowsky points to parallels between Australia’s historic founding as a European civilisation on the edge of Asia –
far removed from hegemonic social and technological infrastructure – and the experience of younger jazz musicians coming to terms with their artistic displacement from America and the requirement that they develop a style of their own through an improvisational sound world (Nicholson 2005: 188). Like Johnson, Nicholson’s motive in relaying Grabowsky’s thoughts seems to be to shift the focus from sonorities themselves to how sonorities are negotiated within a specific cultural frame and this idea in turn guides the strategic rationale of this thesis.

In this thesis I explore the themes of eclecticism and pragmatism – themes associated with how sonorities are negotiated rather than the documentation of sonorities themselves through interviews, field observations and participatory ethnography as laid out in qualitative research texts Rapley 2004, Creswell & Clark 2007, Denzin & Lincoln 2011, Gobo 2008, and Hammersley & Atkinson 2007. Through an exploration of these themes I hope to find out why jazz artists in Sydney seek to fuse other styles such as rock music and non-Western influences so avidly with their jazz practise. I also hope to raise questions as to why and how jazz musicians deftly move between related styles in their practice, as well as what strategies they employ to create these diverse musical projects. I also wish to raise questions as to what impacts, if any, do the conditions of the Sydney scene and their cultural upbringing have on their compositional design.

The findings of these questions serves to contextualise my composition portfolio and critical commentary, making connections where appropriate between the themes mentioned above and the findings of the interviews. These themes are explored through a discussion of several elements in my music: the creation of improvisation platforms, integration of non-Western influences and applications of Sheehan’s Number Diamonds.

1.2 Ethnographic Methodology

Prior to the research period of this project, I had informal conversations about the topics outlined above with musicians, friends and academic ethnomusicologists. At first it felt a little strange playing the role of both an academic and a practising artist, as is the trend in many artistic fields, and I was uncertain that I would be able to add anything new to current debates. I also worried I might face a general ambivalence from musicians towards the topic of Australian jazz identity – especially when considering the experiences of Monson, Berliner and Jackson, in which it took time to build a rapport with musicians who at first seemed distant. Yet I was encouraged that the topic was of wider interest during this initial period of consultation and subsequently set
out to draw upon my broad network of musicians and friends as well as professional acquaintances I had met during my ten years of professional activity as a musician, band leader, promoter and sideman as I embarked on the data collection phase of the study.

### 1.2.1 Participant Recruitment

A list of interview participants was drafted with the aim of providing a spectrum of thought and perspective. These included musicians from various generations, various instruments, various styles of jazz and varying experiences of working overseas. This was guided by the work of Gobo (2008) in which it is suggested that participant recruitment should aim to paint a complete picture of an investigative field (Gobo 2008: 190-200). Participants were therefore targeted in terms of their relationship to specific key demographics. There is a significant gender imbalance in the Sydney jazz scene and this accounts for the male heavy participant pool.

Participants were contacted in accordance with my University of Sydney Human Ethics Approval (Protocol SCM0008) via my supervisor Christopher Coady. If participants expressed interest in the interview component of the study, they were provided with Participant Information Sheets and Consent forms. All participants were made aware that the interviews would be documented by audio recording and that their names would be used in any publications and presentations of the research findings, the justification being that for historical documentation reasons, the research contained significantly valuable data documenting a particular historical moment in Australian jazz music.

Using age as a point of distinction, the interview pool could be divided into four groups of musicians:

- Pianist Mike Nock (1940) was added for an elder generation perspective.

All the musicians had international performance experience however Lucian McGuinness and Sean Wayland were selected to provide a more detailed comparison of their experiences working
in both Australia and other cities abroad. McGuiness spent many years living and working in Sydney but had recently relocated to The Netherlands, providing insider perspectives on the Dutch jazz scene. Similarly, Wayland had spent most of his years in Sydney but had relocated to New York City.

David Theak, artistic director of the Jazzgroove Mothership Orchestra, a Sydney based Jazz Orchestra, and lecturer and director of the Sydney Conservatorium Jazz Orchestra, offered perspectives on working with a large ensemble. Drummer Simon Barker, leader of two Korean-Australian collaborative projects Daorum and Chiri, along with saxophonist Sandy Evans, whose recent research included collaborations with Indian Musicians, offered insider perspectives on intercultural jazz. Lloyd Swanton, bass player with the improvising piano trio The Necks and world music/jazz ensemble The Catholics offered further insight into style eclecticism, improvisation and principles of band longevity.

Upon closer examination of the scene we must take into account that performance is not the only form of connectivity between the musicians. The jazz scene in Sydney revolves around multiple layers or spheres of activity, which include the participation of government funding organisations, concert promoters, booking agents, record labels, recording engineers, jazz club owners and employees, radio producers, critics, audience members, jazz award associations and academics. Frequently the roles of these participants overlap, as is the case with performers serving as their own booking agents, record producers, and audience members for other musicians. The point I am attempting to stress here is that the scene is one that is dynamic and overlapping with many different parts of the music industry, as musicians’ careers often undertake multiple directions at once.

1.2.2 Interviews

Formal semi-structured interviews were conducted with many of the participants from the groups outlined above. Tim Rapley (2004) argues that interviews are the most common form of gaining ‘special insight’ into a subject’s contemporary cultural experience, and that we live in a society dominated by interviews. Used in a wide variety of social spheres from news, documentaries, research and entertainment, interviewing “pervades and produces our contemporary cultural experiences and knowledges of authentic personal, private selves” (Rapley 2004: 15). Such comments support my use of interviews as a methodological tool for unlocking
cultural meanings and ideologies that inform the music and interpretation of jazz music in Australia. Interviews were conducted on-site at the Sydney Conservatorium, in an empty classroom at the Seymour Centre on Sydney University’s main campus where I have a casual staff office, at a recording studio in Camperdown, at the subjects’ homes and at my own residence. The interviews lasted between 30 minutes and two hours and were semi-structured along guidelines presented by Dawson (2007: 67-88) and Gobo (2008: 196). These texts outline how to develop an interview schedule; starting with general, non-personal issues, establishing a rapport with the interviewee, asking open questions, keeping the questions short and to the point, listening to responses and probing where necessary. The interview schedule I used was organized around the themes identified in the first half of this chapter and yielded data that painted a much more complicated picture of cultural practices in the Sydney jazz scene than is currently acknowledged in the standing discourse.

Prior to each interview I briefed myself by reviewing the artist’s discography and by familiarising myself with previous interviews with the artist, although some had never been formally interviewed. This provided knowledge of the participant’s background, where they were placed within the scene and was able to develop a sense of what their social opinions were most likely going to be. In short, I tried hard to learn as much as I could about a musician’s background so that I could discuss relevant issues that had been left unexplored in previous interviews. Each interview posed certain challenges and the format varied a great deal between the different artists.5

1.2.3 Performance Participation

During the course of the study, my own work in turn became a focus of inquiry, and I engaged in reflective note taking related to my roles as composer, performer and bandleader. These acts of reflection allowed for both an expanded data set and the honing of an insider perspective lens that I could use during the interpretation of the data. Such an approach is in line with the ‘artist as researcher’ paradigm in which the author is “fully integrated into the life of the group under study and is more engaged with the people; he or she is as much a friend as a neutral researcher”

5 Mike Nock and David Ade's interview were the longest at almost two hours in duration, covering extensive biographical information. David Ades, whose health has been in a rapid decline since being diagnosed with terminal lung cancer, gave a biographical interview as much as a research focused interview for posterity reasons. Ades unfortunately passed away not long after the interview.
(Angrosino 2007: 55) and meets many of the goals of a more participant focused ethnography that I describe in the Introduction.

In turn, over the course of the project, I composed new works for a variety of existing and new ensembles, rehearsed with the groups and undertook extensive recording and performance activities. The projects are listed below:


### 1.2.4 Coding of Data

Data from my interviews and field-work were transcribed and coded according to a general inductive approach, as laid out by Thomas (2006). Thomas outlines a straightforward way of carrying out qualitative analyses that categorises interview data with pertinent themes. This understanding of inductive analysis is consistent with Strauss and Corbin’s (1998) description: “The researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data” (Thomas 2006: 12). On the y-axis, each row was filled with a response from an interview participant. Iqbal (2007) states that deducing themes along the lines of inductive theory allows the researcher to draw from the “frequent, dominant or significant themes inherent in raw data, without the restraints imposed by structured methodologies” (Iqbal 2007: 16). If the response corresponded to a particular theme, it would be allotted a ‘1’ under the x-axis column. Themes would be added as each interview was transcribed and coded, amounting to a range of themes.
that was grouped into larger headings such as “Thoughts on Australian jazz identity,” “Creative Processes” and “Aesthetics.” This method allowed for easy collating and sorting once I had coded all the interviews. The interviews were then collated into a master spreadsheet that allowed efficient comparison of topics between interviews.

1.3 Summary

By testing and exploring the themes of pragmatism and eclecticism this investigation will help to clarify and flesh out how “Australian” approaches to jazz composition are realised across the Sydney scene and how these are distinct from other locales of jazz music production around the world. This research reveals how cultural practice in the Sydney jazz scene is much more complicated than currently acknowledged in the existing discourse, and that enquiries warrant a broader enquiry than mere sonic analysis. In turn, this study adopts current methodological practices from within the field of ethnomusicology and analytic-autoethnography, forming a triangulation of evidence that is significant in both depth and scope. Through the collection of data through the interviews, which also acts as an important historical document, the research provides a snapshot of the participants’ thoughts on creative practice in Sydney and contextualises the personal notes in the critical commentary and analysis of my composition portfolio. These acts of reflection allowed for both an expanded data set and the honing of an insider perspective lens that I could use during the interpretation of the data. This chapter has outlined how such an approach is in line with the ‘artist as researcher’ paradigm, and practice based research. My research perspective as a significant stakeholder within the jazz community, given that I am a performer, composer, performing artist, band manager and label director provides the research with a unique credibility and valuable insight into the field.
Chapter Two – An Improvised Aesthetic: Interview Results

“Music is often understood as a place where Australians can hear their own accent and so reinforce their sense of Australian-ness.” Caroline Elder

This chapter charts the findings of the interviews through a discussion of how compositional decisions are connected to the themes of pragmatism and eclecticism. As this thesis forms part of my submission for a PhD in composition, I have chosen to focus on creative practice in an effort to contextualise the state of play before delving into a critical commentary of my portfolio. This chapter explores how decisions to include non-Western influences are connected to both pragmatic compositional design and an effort to embrace eclecticism as an aesthetic philosophy. Certain scoring approaches in creating platforms for improvisation are also found to be connected to both themes in the way they call on performers to advance the music in their own terms guided by performance directions. These include the generation of responses and interpretations that simultaneously create a fission of notated material with improvised performance that allows for individual projections of oneself whilst remaining connected to the composers artistic agenda. The exploitation of performers improvisational strengths through the use of specific performance directions facilitates numerous interpretations and in turn embraces and champions an eclectic approach. The discussion of these practices is then connected in relation to my portfolio in the critical commentary in Chapter Three and Four. Ultimately, the findings of the following chapters highlight how artists embrace a diversity of approach and celebrate their individual experience. This study rejects the idea of a universalist Australian aesthetic and supports the idea of an heterogeneous sonic identity, championing individual agency whilst acknowledging legacies of local influence.

2.1 Rejecting an “Australian Sound”

The interview results show that whilst the interview participants’ ideas about jazz practice operate in parallel with other scenes around the world, there were nuanced differences in application. Whilst acknowledging a variety of perspectives of jazz music, from straight ahead swing and bebop, complete with associated stereotypes such as the “the guy with the hat, the smoky jazz club,” (Slater, 2013) many of the interview participants’ eclectic performance and compositional attributes were facilitated through a broad definition of jazz. This parallels many non-American
jazz identities around the globe, not to mention American practitioners that embrace an evolutionary ethos in the music, as compared to a neo-classical stance. The diversification of styles was also found to be a pragmatic response motivated to generate multiple performance opportunities outside of styles than their main genre without being seen as “selling out.”

In general the interview participants were dismissive of an Australian sound. Indeed this speaks to the heart of a jazz musician who seeks evolution and defiance of limitations through naïve, simplistic categorisation of their art. For example, Australian saxophonist Sandy Evans expressed fears about the idea of an “Australian sound” in terms of how it might limit interpretations of her practice:

I find for myself that this is a superfluous discussion. I am much more interested in music being an expression of a shared humanity, regardless of nationality, race, ethnicity or gender… Each person’s practice is very, very complex and diverse, and I’ve had experiences in the past where people have used a small element of something that I’ve spoken about to be the whole picture.

Evans was not alone in holding such a position. Mike Nock’s interview for example, began with the statement: “I can’t see there to be any difference. But then again, maybe there would be.” Phillip Slater similarly asserted: “There is no Australian jazz, it is just jazz that is made in Australia.” Similarly, James Greening said, “I don’t think I can express in words what makes them Australian.” It appears that in being forced to label their music, musicians fear limiting the creative boundaries of their practice, as suggested in the Evans example above.

Interview participants however confided in the emergence of a shared local dialect in jazz music that echoed the way we use language. This might perhaps be best understood as a ‘legacy of local influence’ in which certain groups have greater influence over the scene than others, manifesting into what outsiders may consider a ‘dialect’. Phillip Slater for instance reflected on this notion, commenting that critics overseas perceive there to be sonic differences in the music he has created. He claims his music was reported to “sound different from the jazz that they are used to,” and suggested that jazz music, with its improvised nature, carried a local dialect just as the Australian accent does: the music he produced was a combination of influences unique to the experience of living in Sydney. Slater continues:
Perhaps one perception of people that start to become familiar with Australian cultural products in general, it could be different from what they are used to. There could be a slight interesting combination of things or the influences will be different. But I don’t think there is a prescribed Australianness that they are after. And I think it should sound different. Now, I am in the middle of it so I really don’t know how it sounds different, but just as the Australian accent sounds different, I don’t know how, I just speak with an Australian accent. And when you speak I don’t even notice your accent. We are just talking, it has just evolved naturally, it’s a biological thing. I think music is probably the same way.

These comments echo the findings of Nicholson (2005), who conveys the variety of glocal “jazz dialects” across the world, referencing a strong analogy to language. As Nicholas states: “Jazz is a musical language with its own vocabulary, grammar, etymology, morphology, and syntax, and has, like language itself, evolved naturally so that it continues to have relevance to its ‘language community’” (Nicholson 2005: 45). Jazz music, along with other improvised music therefore is an apt vehicle for legacies of local influence to enact themselves through the process of glocalisation.

Simon Barker in turn, points to cultural process as a salient point of difference in marking such shared legacies of local influence, conferring the initial instigation of this research into cultural process as a way in explaining how musicians in a locality share a sense of identity. Barker explains that there may in fact be distinctive cultural processes, or a particular “way of communicating” that is constituted not only by the sum of the individuals within an Australian ensemble, but also through shared cultural experience. Specifically, Barker suggests that perceived perceptions of landscape in the music are complicated by a shared response amongst an ensemble to the music on the label ECM:

So there is something there but I don’t know if it’s intensity of space or any of those things because when we were starting out we were listening to those ECM records like everyone else, so responding to Manfred Eicher’s way of doing things as much as anything, as much as the landscape of Australia. So yeah, I don’t know. I don’t know how clear that is, that’s why for me it is all about those relationships and bands that have those.
Barker’s understanding of “relationships” point towards the notion of collective identities harboured through shared cultural experience, historiography, and aesthetic. The problem persists however, of how to place and explain such identities within a broader scene. Perhaps one way of reconciling these tensions is to suggest the existence of an “improvised aesthetic” in Australian jazz musicians born out of cultural, political, historical and temporal frames that can be adhered to or ignored. This would suggest that musicians in the scene share common aesthetic attributes and feelings towards the music, however the sound of their music does necessarily have to possess similar sounds. Phillip Slater explains:

When I have played in front of trumpet players, they can hear that I have listened to and studied similar stuff to what they have studied, but its different. Because I have probably got it off a recording, the method of me absorbing has been different and it has been filtered through me listening to Scott Tinkler, Warwick Alder and Miroslav Bukovsky, and all these great trumpet players, Bob Bernard, and fusing that with all the Freddie Hubbard, Clifford Brown and Miles Davis stuff that they have all listened to... And that’s what’s interesting.

The diversity of influences on Australian musicians also varies greatly but often have common local influences that are known (mostly) only at the local or national level. Jazz music, along with other aspects of the arts, is a key site where stories of both being Australian are produced, while at the same time reflecting the transnational nature of the music.

2.2 Tracing the Eclectic Approach

“Music all over the place changes and it’s inevitable that it changes, it’s the natural state of it. Jazz embraces that.” Phillip Slater

The term ‘eclecticism’, as suggested by Whiteoak (1990) is a comprehensive term that poses an array of challenges in scrutinising, given jazz music’s embedded innovative spirit. Whiteoak suggests several factors that help explain the diversification of influences on jazz music made in Australia through the establishment of ‘new music’ cooperatives throughout the 1960’s in which jazz musicians often circulated and collaborated with. Whiteoak traces these diverse influences on

7 Slater 2013, interview
jazz musicians of the period to several factors including the adoption of electronics, the influence of experimental theatre and experimental art, non-Western influences, and cross overs with contemporary rock. These hubs of activity furthered the observations of Graeme Bell’s ‘eclectic’ performance in Europe in the 1950’s and served as a catalyst for certain Australian jazz musicians to embrace style eclecticism (Whiteoak 1999: 277).

Three salient themes around the concept of eclecticism emerged from the interview data set: 1) Eclecticism manifests as a broad vision of what jazz is and can be. Such a position reflects global trends in jazz, and as I will discuss, is akin to the nature of jazz music itself, which balances innovation within limits. 2) Eclecticism as a diversification of musical activity in order to increase musicians’ incomes. While this parallels jazz practice in other parts of the world, interview participants suggest that personal loyalties akin to Australian expressions of friendship, or ‘mateship’ played a key role in motivating musicians to pursue diverse musical projects. 3) Eclecticism manifests in the indigenisation of influences including Oz Rock and borrowings from Asian traditional music.

Such integrations are seen to be part of an indigenising impulse and convey evidence of glocalisation in the Sydney scene as musicians forge their own identity. This can be understood in light of similar nationalist interpretations of jazz music in Japan and Brazil in which artists’ sought to authenticate their music through adopting traditional instruments and folk melodic material. The interview participants however, in an ironic twist are observed to be turning to the same sources as the Asian counterparts, exhibited through musical referencing of Asian rhythmic and melodic traditions. The influence of Oz Rock in compositional terms is discussed through the music of the bands the Alcoholicks and pianist Sean Wayland, in which terraced dynamics, adoption of distorted guitars and rock drum feels convey such an aesthetic.

2.2.1 Embracing Jazz’s Innovative Spirit

The embracing of jazz music’s innovative and experimental spirit has been cited throughout the music’s history as artists broadly define jazz to include universalist approaches to the tradition, endemic musical borrowing from a wide variety of musical styles, and in turn facilitating an eclectic approach and result. Haftor Medbøe’s (2013) thesis on Scottish and Nordic jazz identities discusses the complexities of labelling musical borrowing of ethnic influences on the music, such as the “Nordic Tone”. He discusses how interpretations of such borrowings are often limited to
the ethnicity of an artist but in real practice however, the influence of these artists is parallel to the same innovative aesthetic as early jazz pioneers: “[The] Nordic Tone is the result of ethnic and cultural fusions as various as those which spawned early American Jazz” (Medbøe 2013: 67). This section highlights how national and cultural fusions, evident in the interview participants’ practice is facilitated by an inherent broad definition of jazz and “innovative aesthetic.”

Eclecticism was a natural part of the musicians’ outlook on jazz and creative music practise for many of the interview participants. General comments on eclecticism include “people in Australia are really open to all kinds of music” (Simon Barker), “it’s an eclectic age” (Mike Nock), “you choose vehicles that you travel in, stylistic vehicles,” (James Greening) and “The variety of different styles is important,” (Phillip Slater). In turn, it was not uncommon for the participating musicians to perform in a range of genres and styles at the far ends of the jazz spectrum. Slater discussed his projects covering a variety of styles including contemporary jazz, reinterpretations of Australian contemporary classical music, work with pop and theatre productions, dance projects and cross-cultural collaborations. Similarly Lloyd Swanton described his eclectic range of projects as covering the “whole continuum.” Definitions of jazz by the participants generally aligned themselves with the key words “improvisation” and “tradition”. Sandy Evans for example quoted from Niko Higgin’s (2013) definition of jazz, which defines jazz as an “An inter-related network of mostly improvisation based musical practices rooted in, but not exclusive to 20th century African American expressive culture” (Higgins 2013: 222). This definition facilitates the various interpretations of the music tradition and such an “innovative aesthetic.”

The diversification of jazz musicians’ performance careers was driven by a natural attraction to different sounds and experimentation with different music styles. Simon Barker commented on how such diversity of styles surrounding his upbringing led him to gravitate towards like-minded musicians:

So from a young age I felt extremely uncomfortable about feeling that something should be excluded from your listening. And so fortunately the musicians that I’ve hung out with are so eclectic in their tastes that it is absolutely normal to be coming from any direction as far as new material goes.
Phillip Slater in turn endorsed a conception of jazz music that prioritises experiences of transience and aims for evolution, whereby recordings become snapshots of a particular individual’s influences at a moment in time:

Music all over the place changes and it’s inevitable that it changes, it’s the natural state of it. Jazz embraces that. It is this thing that every time you play, it changes. So that’s my connection to the tradition. And so it makes sense that me living over here in Australia with computers and CDs and access to music, I can listen to music and love it, but change it. It comes down to that stylistic thing. Because I don’t think of it as a style, I listen to someone like Louis Armstrong and I can hear the ingredients that are in that. And I think, wow, if he had heard “so and so”, it would be completely different. And so history is really just a snapshot of what people have access to. I think the great jazz musicians today are just a part of the tradition as anywhere along that line.

Lloyd Swanton similarly recognised the role of individual interpretation and creative freedom through improvisation in forming a broad definition of jazz. His comments confer notions of a non-universalist Australian jazz sound and point towards glocalised local accents born out of the improvised nature of the music. Swanton explains:

I don’t think there’s a lot to hang on to in terms of a uniqueness. I think jazz is so individualistic by its nature and because there is a degree of improvisation in it there will always be certain local characteristics wherever it’s being made.

These musicians appear to be speaking to the same point - given jazz music’s inherent creative liberty through borrowed and re-interpreted improvisational vernacular stemming from African-American music traditions it is inevitable that individual interpretations and hybridisation follows. Whiteoak’s comments of Australia being a transplanted culture in which musicians adapted the limited sources of influence, provides a fervent climate for such innovations to take place. These ideas of freedom within limits are supported by formal studies on improvisation which charts the creative freedoms of musicians within stylistic frameworks. Keith Sawyer’s (1992) investigations into jazz improvisation suggest that musicians are naturally adept to undertaking limited innovation with certain levels of conformity. He outlines:
Although many talk of being faithful to the music, to the jazz domain, there is also a recognition of the importance of breaking with tradition, of going beyond the domain definition. As with other scientific and artistic fields, creativity consists of innovation within constraints.\textsuperscript{8}

Although this goes to some way to explaining how broad definitions of jazz facilitate an eclectic approach, it still leaves open the question of what degree do local influences assert themselves on eclectic choices.

Nicholson discusses the phenomena of broad definitions of jazz and how it facilitates hybrid forms of the music to emerge. He cites how jazz musicians around the globe grapple with the ‘rules of the game’ instead embracing jazz as a \textit{lingua franca}, in a push and shove of global influences that are reinvented with local meaning (Nicholson 2002: 172) Piedade (2002) for example, points to a “friction of musicalities” in Brazil where despite North American influence in the use of improvisation in instrumental music, musicians attempt to redefine jazz from its cultural imperialist roots in an attempt to avoid the “contamination from the \textit{bebop} paradigm and seek an expression that is more rooted in Brazil” (Piedade 2002: 53). The broad definition of jazz in the country is also reflected by the limitation of such a term, which now encompasses a wide variety of styles including “national rock/blues, \textit{bossa nova}, \textit{pagoda}, \textit{sertaneja} music, \textit{samba}, \textit{forro}, \textit{axe} music, \textit{lambada}” (Piedade 2002: 42). Definitions become almost superfluous in the context of embracing jazz music’s natural affinity of innovation, hybridization and eclecticism.

\textbf{2.2.2 Economic Diversification and Universal Competence}

\textit{“It keeps things fresh. You have to be versatile.”} Matt Keegan\textsuperscript{9}

Eclecticism in performance and composition design can also be driven by artists’ economic motivations and pressures to work in styles closely related to jazz music. Several of the interview participants’ reflected a pragmatic diversification of their practice that operated in a fertile overlap of creative, commercial and educational contexts. The phenomena of diversification of performance and composition practice is a poignant example of how the themes of eclecticism and pragmatism are fused. Trombonist Lucian McGuinness’ performance activity for example

\textsuperscript{8} Keith Sawyer “Improvisational Creative: Jazz Performance Creative Research Journal, 1992: 258

covers a wide variety of audiences, generating income streams from various performance contexts. McGuinness is able to juggle diverse projects with a knack for entrepreneurialism, and as he discusses, lead to such an approach through a search for a wider audience base.

As of right now, I have a piano-less jazz quartet called the Impermanent Quartet, which I write music for and is dear to me but doesn’t do very much. I have a ‘worldy’ jazz band called Goodness My Guinness, which is a little more accessible and we have a CD and I push it a little harder. I have a quintet called the Vintage Quartestra. And that’s like a turn of the century, dance orchestra and popular harmony quintet. I have a vaudeville cabaret show called Little Egypt. I have a trombone shout choir called Salvation Street Shout, and that’s it I guess. I am deeply involved with the Jazzgroove Orchestra but that’s more of a consultancy role… I’m mindful that each of those projects might have some audience overlap, but they’ve all got different audiences essentially. So the people that I can market one thing to won’t be interested in another. So I have to separate them consciously and in name and everything…

The strategy suggested here in the conscious avoidance of “audience overlap” allows musicians to draw upon different music communities to generate a wider fan base and diversify their profile development, ultimately allowing them to generate an industry around themselves in numerous niche music market scenes.

Saxophonist Matt Keegan similarly discussed in our interview how his creative process was guided by strategies of music diversification whilst composing music for an Indian collaborative project. The Indian collaboration was born out of winning the 2011 Freedman Fellowship, a $15,000 bursary to undertake a project of one’s choosing. In an interview reported for The Australian newspaper, Keegan describes the perceived economic challenges musicians’ careers face that require one to be stylistically versatile.

As a jazz musician, anywhere in the world, you have to take what’s on offer to survive. In Sydney there is not enough work for one particular band. That’s true even on the upper level of the pop and the rock scene. In Europe or America you’d be able to tour enough with just one group, but here you have to have your finger in a number of pies. It’s good, though. It keeps things fresh. You have to be versatile.\(^\text{10}\)

\(^{10}\) published in The Australian newspaper July 12, 2011. Accessed online 8 February 2015
Keegan’s collaboration with Indian folk musicians was a relatively new venture for him, one that would facilitate the opening of international music markets. Indeed India poses enormous opportunities for employment for Sydney’s jazz musicians, with its relative proximity (compared to Europe), its large population, and, as Keegan explains above, artistically rewarding possibilities for collaboration and intercultural dialogues to result in new performance markets.

Eclecticism related to economic motivations are of course common in music scenes around the world. Niko Higgins (2013) thesis compared the Indian Karnatik musicians in Chennai with college-aged jazz students at Wesleyan University. Both groups exhibited a perception that their comprehensive virtuosity in Indian music’s “complicated, varied, and theoretically deep” rhythmic improvisatory language and jazz music’s complex harmonic improvisational dexterity enabled them to gain a “universal competence” (Higgins 2013: 93). These musicians seem to purvey a sense of musical superiority whereby improvisational skills are supposedly translatable to other music styles without adhering to years of studying such a tradition. Higgins confirms our observations of eclecticism driven by economic motivations, in which he argues the strategy generated increased performance activity drawing on wider markets for the Indian musicians:

Musicians who invoked this idea of universal competence and who got hired by musicians outside of the practice of their training benefitted from a wider circulation of their names. This potentially could lead to more and better paid opportunities with Fusion (Higgins 2013: 94).

The question of authenticity in intercultural music or ‘fusion’ dialogues is often problematic with musical purists, and it seems the further one investigates a musical tradition, the more one discovers the naivety of such musical borrowing. For example the notion of “universal competence” was criticised by Sandy Evans who argued that it was an arrogant supposition of artistic superiority on non-Western music practices. The case of Evans and Simon Barker’s intercultural collaborations with Indian musicians and Korean musicians respectively, suggests that artists have different paths for navigating musical borrowing from non-Western cultures and responding to such questions. Evans discusses the call for respect of non-Western traditions and her individual call for deeper understanding of such music:

You know, as jazz musicians, there is kind of an arrogance, not to you personally - I don’t mean that at all, we all do it. And the thing is, I’ve seen it in musicians from other powerful traditions where you’ve had a deep long journey learning an improvisatory art form. You tend to think that that means you can do anything but in actual fact I think that’s rubbish. I think there’s all sorts of assumptions behind that statement. And yes it means you can do your type of improvisation or even be quite flexible about some of the applications of that in other situations, but I don’t think its quite as clear cut as that and straight forward as that statement makes it seem….. We certainly do have some flexibility to engage in other types of music making but I think its really important to respect the fact that other disciplines and other cultures and other traditions have a lot of stuff that we don’t have a clue about.

In a similar way, Simon Barker’s path to collaborations with Korean musicians can be seen in light of his comments about the do-it-yourself demands on a jazz musician and how this motivated him to think of ways of generating authenticity for his place within the scene.

Points of difference in the interview results however include how this facet was facilitated through concepts of personal loyalties in which musicians’ choice of personnel was influenced not only by broadening their networks, but through sharing learning outcomes and developing musical techniques collectively. This assisted in collective financial gain. i.e., helping out your ‘mates’. The phenomenon of economic eclecticism may appear universal however in the Sydney context the aim is for everyone (or as many as possible) to have an economic win. Lucian McGuiness reflects:

The guys that play in the jazz quartet are not involved in the R’n’b cabaret because I need different skills. And I’m interested in learning different skills from those people. The best thing about the jazz quartet is that I can learn performance skills from the jazz guys I am playing with. And in the 19th Century popular song quintet I can learn performance skills and stylistic skills and vocal skills from the people in that group.

Learning outcomes were therefore influenced through diversity of practice and sharing experiences and techniques amongst ensembles. The economic motivations by musicians to embrace eclecticism and diversify their performance and composition practice is therefore related
to the phenomena of ‘legacies of local influence’ through ad-hoc mentorship and emulation of musicians from a wide variety of styles.

2.2.3 Indigenisation in Sydney Jazz: Oz Rock Music and a Turn Towards Asia

“I always found in my generation, that there was always an element of Rock.” David Theak

The integration of jazz with folk and traditional music influences in glocal scene studies can be understood as an attempt to indigenise the music underpinned by nationalist motivations. To gain a better understanding of how this operates we can cross-examine against a successful case study on the Japanese jazz scene by Taylor Atkins (2001). The history of jazz practice in Japan stands as a particularly poignant example of how a desire to assert independence of voice has occasionally resulted in the incorporation of traditional instruments and aesthetic. Atkins suggests that the Japanese were inspired to form parallel journey’s to distil “Japanese-ness” in their music by newly formed Afrocentric models of authenticity as indoctrinated by Amira Baraka (Atkins 2001: 250). Japanese jazz critics sought to define a “Japanese sympathy”, a unique sense of space harboured by classical composer Toru Takemitsu, even suggesting the existence of a separate Japanese expression, akin to what Baraka described in the blues of black Americans (Atkins 2001: 249).

For the majority in the nationalist Japanese jazz movement, such indigenisation was best pursued by turning to Japanese folk and classical music forms such as hogaku and min’yo. The incorporation of traditional instruments, textures and aesthetics helped construct what many would interpret as a Japanese national accent. Atkins uses the example of pianist Akiyoshi Toshiko to demonstrate how these nationalist trends were best remembered in the public’s imagination:

Akiyohsi’s compositions represent a variety of styles, textures and influences, but her “orientalised” pieces, featuring taiko drums, vocal textures from the no theater, and Tabackin’s eerily “oriental” flute work, have received the most attention in Japan and elsewhere (Atkins 2001: 257).

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11 Theak 2013, interview
In this context it is surprising to observe artists in Sydney demonstrating a break in expectations of indigenising their music with Australian Aboriginal music, instead adopting the sounds and aesthetic of Oz Rock. Oz Rock, commonly known as Pub rock, as the name suggests, is rock music that was popularised during the mid-1970’s to the mid-1980s, predominantly performed in crowded pubs (Stratton 2004: 1). The term was first coined by James Cockington who claimed Oz Rock to be a “distinctly Australian phenomenon” that gained a strong sense of melodic and lyrical clarity inherited from European folk music sensibility, carrying lyrics with themes of alienation and championing against working class oppression (Stratton 2004: 1). Cockington outlines the cultural climate of an Oz Rock performance:

At its peak ... pub rock was a style of music found nowhere else. Bands from the UK and America were astonished when they saw these huge brick sheds with all the charm of a bus shelter, filled to the rafters with screaming shit-faced masses. Most were frightened (Cockington 2001: 184).

Cockington’s description here describes how the social consumption of the music was embedded in the interpretation of the music, allowing Australian cultural tropes to become infused in the public imagination of Oz Rock ‘being Australian’. This formative period in Australian popular music has been little acknowledged as an influence on jazz musicians.

Simon Barker suggests that Oz Rock in fact plays more of an important role than we suspect, claiming that jazz musicians, particularly from his generation, grew up listening to “the rock thing”. He explains his attraction to the genre as “meat and potatoes” simplicity in the music, which aligned itself with the working class but speaking to a much wider audience. He continues:

Like that ACDC, raw, blues-rock, played in such a simple way but it’s so strong. And because of them there were so many bands that came later like the Angels, Rose Tattoo, that were definitely responding to ACDC. And their producers, these two guys called Vanda and Young who helped create that sound. When I was a kid I did work experience with those guys. I spent a week with them. It was amazing they were like rocket scientists making rock music. It was really inspiring to see how deep you can get into it.

David Theak agreed, suggesting that Oz Rock music was a part of everyday life in his informative years:
I always found in my generation, that there was always an element of Rock. We all grew up in the 70’s, particularly with me on the Northern Beaches, with a dozen large rock and roll music venues, the Hoodoo Gurus, Midnight Oil, and to a certain extent, just classic Aussie rock.

The Oz Rock aesthetic, as described by Theak, includes notions of “robustness”, loudness and an “aggressive” time feel: “There has always been that underlying thing that even though we are all interested in jazz, there was a culture that was much more hard hitting, aggressive style of music. And I think that reflects a lot in Australian jazz. And the Alcohotlicks are a prime example if you ask me.” Theak’s comments echo Cockington’s notions of Oz Rock, in which elements of roughness plays an important part in forming the music’s connections with working class sentiment, whilst suggesting that an underlying aesthetic of Oz Rock has played a role in jazz musicians of his generation.

The Alcohotlicks are a jazz-rock fusion trio consisting of two guitarists Aaron Flower and Ben Hauptmann with drummer Evan Manell. Their album You, You (2008, Jazzgroove Records) is a culmination of rock guitar riffs, rock drum feels, extreme shifts in texture and dynamics, mixed with virtuosic improvisations stemming from a simplified ‘jazz’ vocabulary more in line with a non-schooled rock musicians’ aesthetic. Composition titles reference the “meat and potatoes” simplicity suggested by Barker, such as Hot in Hell, Buddy Ol’ Pal, and Hey Man, Yeah Man. Simon Barker explains further:

There is a group called the Alcohotlicks that has a pretty amazing thing that they do, an amazing edge to their sound. They have this feeling that is reminiscent of lots of great Australian rock music that they have found a way to get into. There’s a real feeling of jazz and real rock that has been melded together.

Sean Wayland suggested that Oz Rock grew in popularity in Australia at the time several of the interview participants were forming ideas about Australian music identity. Wayland recalls memories of absorbing the music through the popular TV show ‘Countdown’ (Wayland 2013, interview). He goes further to suggests that this show represented a “coming of age” in Australian popular music and helped (in his mind) to forge a concept of Australian identity. He
describes musicians that have similarly experienced watching this TV show as a “connection” which facilitates mutual understandings of the aesthetic of Oz Rock.

Australian rock from 1978-1983, I think that is Australian. That’s the text I think. I mean there’s some jazz compositions too but really that’s when people wrote music and it infiltrated people’s minds. It’s the only time that Australian music really infiltrated Australian people in a really large way that connects people. It connects me and ‘Gordo’ (Gordon Rytmeister).12

This aesthetic is applied to music making in jazz contexts, evident in Wayland’s recordings Australian Rhythm Changes, (2005, self release), Expensive Habit, (2007, self release), and Surf Music, Chiko Roll, (2013, self release), exhibiting jazz improvisations with heavy influences of rock rhythms, rock guitar based riffs, and evocative, nationalist titles such as ARC (Australian Rhythm Changes) and Tasty Cold Chisel (Chiko Roll), a reference to the Aussie rock band Cold Chisel and the eponymous deep fried fast food common in Australian culture. The observation of jazz musicians turning towards Oz Rock exhibits a break in global trends by not turning to Australian Aboriginal indigenous music, as one would expect.13

In a related phenomenon, musicians were also observed to make a conscious turn towards Asia underpinned by an effort (as Barker suggests) about becoming non-Western. Collaborations with Asian musicians and musical borrowing from traditional music can be understood as an expression of agency rather than national identity. Simon Barker14 and Sandy Evans have made significant contributions to intercultural music among the interview participants. Barker’s ensembles highlight the multiplicity of individual voices in an effort to explore the force and effect of each individual both within the group and on each other. The resultant collection of idiosyncratic sonic combinations, use of extended techniques, the development of ‘grips’ or motifs, and portrayal of traditional Korean song via long time collaborator, Pan’ Sori singer Bae Il Dong, create a collage of individual expressions that weave together into a rich collage of perspectives. Barker’s collaboration with Bae Il Dong and musicians Phillip Slater, Matt McMahon and Carl Dewhurst on the album Daorum (2009, Kimnara Records) takes impetus

12 Wayland 2013, interview
13 Although significant recent collaborations include the Australian Art Orchestra’s ground breaking Crossing Roper Bar project with the Young Wagilak Group (Vol 1 – 2011, Vol 2 – 2014)
14 Simon Barker’s compelling journey into Korean music is powerfully captured in the Emma Franz documentary Intangible Asset #82 (2008)
from the free improvisations of ECM recordings discussed earlier, juxtaposed against sections of intercultural improvised dialogue with Il Dong’s voice. The marriage of cultures becomes even more intimate in the trio setting on the album *Chiri* (2010, Kimnara Records), featuring Barker and Il Dong with Melbourne trumpeter Scott Tinkler. The textures and orchestrations shift throughout the album, such as the solo exploration of timbre and bending of pitch by Tinkler on *Chirisan Sinawi, Pt. 1* and *Echo*. These moments of repose are juxtaposed against the often highly interactive rhythmic duos of Barker and Tinkler. The interweaving of Il Dong’s traditional songs amongst the diverse array of textures created by Tinkler and Barker, ranging from incredibly sparse to extreme shifts in dynamics and rhythmic density. This creates a uniquely intimate format for the expression of individual and collective agency within the ensemble.

Barker suggests a notion that through intercultural musical exchange, such as his collaborations with Pan’ Sori singer Bae Il Dong, his playing adopts aesthetic sensibilities of Korean traditional music in an effort of “becoming” a non-Western practitioner. In light of Atkins (2001) and Piedade’s (2003) findings which illustrated the concept of indigenisation in Japanese and Brazilian musicians of turning inwards to find sources of inspiration to assert a conscious use of their surroundings, Barker and his ensembles are instead turning to the same sources as their Korean counterparts. Barker explains the significance of their collaborations:

I think the kind of approaches Australians take to playing jazz music combined with the Korean side of the project has really resonated with people in Korea. The way jazz is made in Korea and in Japan is very different to here. So in that respect, the kind of music Daorum makes or Chiri, is not going to be made up there, it’s just not going to happen. Completely different ways of putting jazz together and performing it.

Barker’s effort of “becoming” a non-Western practitioner has also shifted his performance style within the mainstream jazz idiom in which an immersion in Asian cultures has dramatically shifted his way of thinking and approach to playing jazz.

What I realised was that if you spend a lot of time really getting into Korean music and really letting it shape the way you play, it has effected me in such a way that the more traditional jazz part of my playing is definitely changed a lot in ways that I would never have expected in the past. So it felt like it’s great to do that, celebrate being here, and
really explore what’s available, but the flipside is you will change, and it has been a real positive change.

Barker’s thoughts here echo that of Keegan and Slater, who confer that influence of Asian aesthetic and process have changed the way they approach jazz. This conscious response to geographic and cultural contexts reflects jazz music’s ongoing global narrative and developing aesthetic. Matthew Keegan discusses his perceptions of a creative cultural climate in Australia: “One of our great strengths here, because we are multicultural and are trying to find our own identity, we have a chance to do something interesting and new.” Keegan reinforces the importance of a creative process based on ingenuity and self-reliance in creating individual imagination:

But here… we have this great template of like ‘what do we want to create’ and so we are forced into doing our own thing. I think we have to use that as a strength like Simon (Barker) has in terms of going and doing his own thing.

One of these ingenious conceptions was to attempt to disseminate the essentials of Asian traditional music, and as Phillip Slater explains, “recreate that feeling through the compositional techniques”. Slater’s exposure to this music was through his studies at Sydney University with composer Peter Sculthorpe. Slater’s comments here and others above suggest that the indigenising impulse and turn towards Asian cultures goes beyond seeking sonic marriages between the musical cultures but reinforces the concept of ‘becoming’ Asian, as suggested earlier. The interview findings in the previous section demonstrate jazz musicians seeking to indigenise their music through a conscious awareness and utilisation of their cultural, historical, temporal and geographical frames. The adoption of Oz Rock aesthetic, which aligns itself with the working class in the music of Wayland and the Alcoholicks was seen to facilitate connections between musicians and audiences that understand and affiliate themselves with such culture. The turn towards Asia can be seen in the light of an effort to ‘become’ Asian through adopting aesthetic and compositional methods borrowed from neighbouring countries. This was seen in light of a move against predictions, which would see Australians turning inwards for influence.

Such observations led me to consider my own perceptions of jazz music. Through the research period I continually assessed my musical upbringing, the songs that I learnt in my childhood, the classical repertoire of studies on classical piano, the move towards jazz in my teens and my more
recent experiences performing intercultural music. Despite forcing myself to ‘learn’ how to play jazz, including everything from free improvisation and bebop vernacular, I always had a strong affinity for other styles, and was in particular open to listening to all styles of music. Questions over what was jazz and what was not jazz never effected me and nor was it apparent in my colleagues and sphere of activity. Rather than trying to define what jazz was, I was attempting to find universal commonalities between musical styles and how I could apply what I had learnt through my jazz studies into those styles, suggesting a similarly perceived ‘universal competence’. I also considered the scene that I worked within, musicians that I had learnt from and those that had hired me, and we all seemed to share a similar sense of both reverence and irreverence towards jazz historiography. Instead of trying to identify with jazz memes, my circle of musician colleagues and friends sought to represent a compound of worldly influences, with the tools of jazz improvisation being the common thread.

2.3 Pragmatic Responses in the Sydney Jazz Scene

“Jazz performance is not, and cannot, simply be about itself.” Travis Jackson

Musicians navigate the interaction of network nodes, as suggested by Jackson, in which musical events are “ritualised,” taking place within settings of audiences, educational institutions, performance venues, the record industry, critics and the media, as well as responding to economic, cultural, historical, creative, aesthetic and temporal settings (Jackson 2012: 136). In establishing a sense of what is the same and what is different with approaches in the Sydney jazz scene, I discuss how creative decisions are often based on economic concerns, the pragmatic structure of the Sydney scene and, as in the case of some interview responses, a prioritisation of the music’s social function over artistic merit. These responses can be understood under both the themes of ‘pragmatism’ with ‘eclecticism’, suggesting that these themes are inter-related as well as containing several sub-categories

These findings confirm and build upon the observations made by Jackson’s investigations on the New York Jazz scene in which he suggests that musical events must take into consideration multiple frames, including the musicians’ aesthetic, the jazz scene (and related music), time, “space, tune and form” (Jackson 1998: 109, 150). Jackson puts forth a concept that through a “blues aesthetic and ritualized performance, shared viewpoints and strategies developed by

15 Jackson 1998: 239
African Americans for the negotiation of daily living are enacted musically” (Jackson 1998: 239). The interview findings similarly reveal a number of sub-categories affecting musicians’ negotiations of musical events that include economic circumstances, time management, public relations, artistic ambition, perceived technical facility (or lack of) and levels of experience. In the following section I suggest that Sydney musicians’ creative processes similarly enact their own pragmatic "improvisational aesthetic", a response to economic, political, cultural and temporal contexts unique to the Sydney experience.

In Chapter One, I present Johnson’s argument that “intermittent access” to recordings lead to the emergence of a pragmatic musical eclecticism in Australian circles (Johnson 200: 162). Strains of this eclecticism are discussed above and the pragmatic nature attached to themes such as “diversifying one’s audience” are plain enough, demonstrating the resiliency of this musical feature. Whilst musicians’ negotiations of musical events were found to be tied to responses to changing global music trends, other factors were more significant, such as economic, political and historical climates, paralleling Jackson’s findings in the New York City jazz scene. The Sydney interviews also raised issues affecting from working in a smaller industry than the larger jazz markets of Europe and the USA, whereby an absence of opportunities and hierarchical structure forces musicians to self-generate opportunities through individual entrepreneurship and collectivization.

2.3.1 Pragmatic Compositional Design

"Limiting the ingredients to try and maximise the possibilities." Phillip Slater\(^{16}\)

Jazz scenes around the world have witnessed a growing amalgamation of small clubs into “performing arts centers,” reliance on subsidies, breakdowns in the distinction between high culture and popular culture, as well as changing distinctions between culture and economic activity (Nicholson 2005: 223). Peter Rechniewski’s *The Permanent Underground: Australian Jazz in the New Millenium* (2008), for example outlines an increasing collectivisation of jazz music in Australia from the early 1980’s in Melbourne and Sydney, in which musicians formed their own co-operatives: The Melbourne Jazz Co-Operative (MJC) and the Sydney Improvised Music Association (SIMA), and later The Jazzgroove Association, representing how “non-profit presenting organisations utilising public funding would play an ever-increasing role in nurturing and sustaining contemporary jazz in Australia” (Rechniewski 2008: 15).

\(^{16}\) Slater 2013, interview
Moreover, as educational institutions, performance venues and the recording industry adjust to larger changes in the cultural and economic climate of the United States and the world, our understandings of jazz may undergo a kind of “paradigm shift”\(^{17}\) The following examples highlight how economic pragmatism is both an individual response to one’s context, and representative of the transnational nature of the music. The examples merely serve as anecdotes to frame a collage of experiences.

For me, it comes down to economics. I can’t ask someone to rehearse for 12 hours for a performance where they are not going to make much money. I just can’t do that. I don’t like being asked to do that. That affects a lot of my decisions. How can I put three hours of music together in the most efficient way?\(^{18}\)

‘Efficiency’ is a keyword in Slater’s creative process, and echoes of this notion can be found throughout my folio, discussed in Chapters Three and Four. As Slater continues this discussion of compositional methods, we see how an awareness of limited resources indirectly affects his aesthetic, leading him to curb away from pursuits of “perfection” towards music that is “modest in its means:”

I like that idea of things being appropriate, like economically appropriate and appropriate for the amount of time you’ve got to work on the music. It is pointless writing music that no one can play, or that I can’t play. I have never been attracted to that idea of virtuosic composition as the aesthetic thing that I am aiming for. My aim is to find out what the players can do really efficiently and present music that generates that.

Slater’s ingenuity lies in his motivation to make the most of prescribed limitations, and is what drives him as an improviser both in terms of how things are played in the music, and as a producer of cultural products. “Limiting the ingredients to try and maximise the possibilities,” claims Slater. This is a cornerstone of the “improvised aesthetic”, as suggested by Paul Grabowsky in Nicholson 2005, used to describe Australian jazz musicians as “true improvisers by nature”.

\(^{17}\) Kuhn 1996  
\(^{18}\) Slater 2013, interview
Musicians were also affected by non-musical influences such as Australian painting and architecture. Slater in particular was influenced by the Glenn Murcutt and Richard Leplastrier, whose worked has been shaped by the climate and landscape of Australia. Slater discussed the appropriateness of his music to the climate of his native Australia, explaining how his music was a pragmatic response to his geographic and historical context living in Sydney in the 21st century with an interesting analogy using architecture:

If I was an architect, I could technically build the Empire State Building in Wollongong.\(^\text{19}\) I could do that - you can get the plans. If you had the money and the labour you could do it. But is it appropriate? Is it appropriate architecture for the context? Those things are aesthetic choices, but they are also economic choices and environmental choices. So, I am attracted to architecture, I am attracted to the architects that take into account the environment and the context, and the carbon footprint. All of those factors that go into making a really well designed energy efficient, liveable house in Australia where we are now. Not 100 years ago, not 50 years ago, not in America, but here. So that is my starting point for everything that I do. What melody I write is not some random, it’s not even the flights of my imagination. It’s like: how much time have I got to rehearse. That will determine what sort of melody I will write. Who am I writing it for? Where are we going to be performing it? Is it going to be recorded? Is the room big, is the room small? Is there a piano? All those factors are in a sense just as important if not more important to me than sitting down at a piano and just writing something. It doesn’t work like that for me, it is all driven by the context.

These are important questions that are faced by all music producers, composers and performers but play out in ways that are unique to the Sydney context. This section outlines the way economic concerns embed themselves at the compositional level in addition to the choice of performers. In Chapters Three and Four I go to some length to explain how these pragmatic responses play out in my folio in the way that I utilise specific performers improvisation abilities to advance the narrative of the music in their own way whilst being guided by performance indications and other improvisational methodologies.

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\(^\text{19}\) Wollongong is a coastal town 80 km south of Sydney where Slater lives.
2.3.2 Aesthetic Kinship

“We (The Necks) still honestly believe it’s the process which is the product, and what comes out as a finished product is a kind of secondary thing.” Lloyd Swanton

The musicians I interviewed were generally optimistic about the state of the jazz scene in Sydney, commenting that despite its limits compared to the size and scale of North American and European scenes, Sydney had a lively jazz culture that fostered performance and composition opportunities. In this section I detail the findings of how interviewees came to terms with the Sydney scene’s limits through the strategic spreading of performances with an original project throughout the year and by staggering their activity between multiple projects so that they remained constantly active. I propose a notion of ‘aesthetic kinship’ that acts as a survival strategy to enable bands’ conceptions to sustain and evolve over periods of inactivity.

Simon Barker held the belief that a limited “official” industry was ultimately beneficial for creating music in Sydney, in which several underground venues operate throughout the week, providing space to perform original jazz music in a range of venues, from peoples’ living rooms to converted churches to warehouse spaces. Yet Barker was also quick to highlight how living as a professional musician brought with it many economic challenges, just as it does in any part of the world:

It has changed a lot recently. I think it’s pretty positive at the moment though. There is a bunch of venues putting on live music. There is a lot of energy from the young musicians. A lot of warehouse spaces that are really offering great alternative ways of hearing music. In some senses, it has never been this good in terms of variety of places to play. But for professional musicians, it is hard times for a lot of people. I think when I was about 18, the musicians that were my age then, were working every night. Like it was just normal to have at least 5-10 gigs a week. That was just a normal week for someone that was in their 40s.

David Theak in turn concurred with the idea that limited performance opportunities presented challenges of an economic nature:

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20 Swanton 2013, interview
21 Barker 2014, interview
Because Sydney is a great city, and it’s got a wonderful music scene, but your repeat opportunities are quite few and far between in Sydney. So if you play the major presenting organisations, you might be there if you’re lucky, once, twice maybe three times a year. And if there’s only two or three presenting organisations you are looking at eight or nine concerts over the course of a twelve-month period, which is hardly enough to get something good.²²

Despite limited access to regular high paying gigs, musicians suggested that Sydney musicians had become practiced at maintaining aesthetic visions across periods of hiatus. Slater comments:

I perform with Rick Robertson’s Baecastuff, maybe three times a year. We have gone through periods where we haven’t performed much. But every time we get together there is something that happens with that group. We are all better players and we have all done different projects. But it has a core chemistry to that and they are able to survive.²³

A notion of ‘aesthetic kinship’ in which ensemble members share similar artistic agendas is an important facet of the lifespan of ensembles in the Sydney scene. Lloyd Swanton commented on his experience in forming The Necks in which the shared core aesthetic of creating music for their own “private consumption” (Swanton, 2013) has remained intact for the band’s duration. Lucian McGuiness shared a similar aesthetic: “Part of that community thing in Sydney is that we are really creating music for each other here, as opposed to for a world market,” as did Phillip Slater: “The idea of the band I think is important. So the music that matters is less about an individual or an individual performer. It is about a bunch of guys or girls can do together as a group.” James Greening also commented: “I have many families. All the groups I am in feel like families, and their long term relationships.” The development of relationships and a notion of ‘aesthetic kinship’ in ensembles play a crucial role in maintaining artistic motivation and progression when there is little time to workshop ideas on the bandstand.

A related aesthetic pursuit is the strategy of developing multiple projects in various musical directions with performance and creative activity staggered throughout the year. This can enhance the aesthetic of artists, as they continually vary one’s creative application and allow for cross-fertilisation from one project to another. Slater uses a poignant analogy of a drought when

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²² Theak 2014, interview
²³ Slater 2013, interview
discussing this strategy, arguing that the pursuit of multiple projects provides a way for artists to develop their aesthetic by moving between staggered performances with each project throughout the year. The challenge for him is maintaining an “aesthetic criteria” with the one project and keeping “motivated” with a “core chemistry” and a sense of “cohesion.” Slater argues that in fact this can be a “good way to work” and that “Australian musicians are really good at that.” The conditions of the Sydney jazz scene appear to demand such a strategic response. Slater explains:

It’s that drought analogy – survive on not much water. In fact, it can be a good way to work. If you have five or six viable projects, they are staggered throughout the year and they have this kind of arc of three or five year lifespan. That’s a really nice way to work but you know sometimes when I have been involved with things that have had this very intense period of performance like an extensive tour, sometimes it feels like there are limits with what you can do with that I think.

There are of course some specific musical ramifications connected with a scene in which performances are forced to come together quickly and given little time to develop. In particular, the musicians in this study frequently spoke about being forced to find a balance between creating compositions easy enough to prepare in a limited amount of time yet sophisticated enough to satisfy artistic goals. Slater for instance discussed his compositional design having been influenced by pioneering Australian architects, whose residential design structures have been influenced by the landscape of Australia and are created in a pragmatic way that is appropriate to the context.

Thinking about the way that I work, those economic concerns, appropriateness is the paramount thing to me. And for me, architecture has always been a great metaphor for that and I’ve studied it a lot. I’ve met Glenn Murcutt and Richard Leplastrier, two architects whose work I really love, and I’ve been fortunate to meet them in situations where I could talk to them about architecture and appropriateness. And I think that that to me is my big thought about playing music and writing music is just keeping it appropriate for the audience, keeping it appropriate for the musicians, and then you can achieve really interesting things.

What this suggests is that musicians’ creative decisions are largely impacted by the economic concerns of a particular project. From my experience, in the context of Australia’s limited jazz
industry, musicians often make do with little or no pay for rehearsals for performances, unless funded by a major festival.

So what does “pragmatic writing” sound like? Finding evidence of pragmatic choices is not straightforward, as the best jazz works contain a simplicity in design nuanced with layers of complexity. David Ades’ album *A Glorious Uncertainty* (2012, Vitamin Records), embodies some of these ideas with a combination of nine compositions that feature ‘head’ arrangements with free blowing over loosely defined bass ostinato vamps, chord changes and free improvisations such as on *Dreaming in Colour*. Ades explains that pragmatic strategies of leading an improvising ensemble that had little to no time to rehearse was to compose music that allowed the musicians to interpret in many ways. He explains:

I have really cherished that because it has made me think about the tunes I’ve written in different ways. Whether they are flexible enough to be translated in a bunch of different ways.

The ensemble rehearsed and recorded Ades’ compositions in the studio in a mere four hours, an efficient way of making an album by any means. Ades’ pragmatic compositional approach allowed him to portray a rawness, spontaneous and playful character in the music. It was a similar situation in performing on interstate tours, in which the financial constraints forced him to use local musicians at each performance venue. In his anecdote he details how the rehearsals were limited to the sound-check before the show. He explains the ingenuity of the local musicians and how their ‘mistakes’ offered new perspectives on his music. His approach in this example is to “let go” of the music, accept technical inefficiencies and instead embrace the “spontaneity” of the music. This ethos is emblazoned in the title of his album *A Glorious Uncertainty* (2012, Vitamin) Ades explains:

It’s interesting because one of the things that I’ve learnt to do is not try and control the music. I have tried to control it how I think it should be. That everyone is going to have a different way of interpreting it, or, everyone fucks up differently and that has happened quite a lot. But the interesting thing is, because it is original music and unless people have heard it and really thought about it before, I am really the only one that knows it is fucked up. So what I need to do in that context is take my hands off the steering wheel and let it be what it is going to be. We are musicians, we can all play, let it sort itself out
of whatever it has gotten itself into. And that has happened a few times where the form is messed up or the head is messed up. You know and it’s like, ok we haven’t had the time to rehearse, we haven’t had the time to focus so much on the compositions, more like just being able to get the set together so that we can go out and play. But there is also such a huge element of surprise in that way of playing, which I really love. That to me is the essence of playing jazz, is that kind of level of uncertainty and spontaneity. And where things can rise out of unexpected situations that might not have the polish of being played 50 thousand times in the same way, but it is going to have a spark of invention that is really fresh and really new. So every performance that we have done has been really different.

Upon reflection of Ades’ comments, I would also argue that my strategy in writing jazz compositions involves a balance of complexity versus simplicity. The navigation of sophisticated rhythmic devices and complicated melodic inventions is a great idea if you have the right players who can play the material and feel free to improvise over it. However I have found that with a touring ensemble such as The Vampires, the compositions, or ‘tunes’ that stand the test of time are pieces that are easiest to memorise and perform with little rehearsal, whilst allowing the musicians to assert individualised improvised responses and adapt certain melodic and rhythmic components through improvised performance. Jazz compositions need to provide enough material to challenge a musician’s improvisational language in a distinctive way whilst allowing them freedom to advance the music in their own terms. Ades’ comments about embracing the “element of surprise” in managing individual interpretations of notated compositions also resonates with me. In the critical commentary I suggest an efficient way to navigate this phenomenon to achieve artistic goals of forging creative individual interpretations. These ideas will be discussed in Chapter Three.

2.4 Summary

Australian jazz identity has been shown throughout this chapter to be a complex and multifaceted topic, however several ideas were clarified while others were debunked. Musicians’ responses to questions about an “Australian sound” were generally ambivalent, yet many engaged more fully in discussions of how Australian culture might bear influence on individual musical practice. Phillip Slater for instance paradoxically suggested that many of the stereotypes were “silly myths that never existed in the first place” while at the same time suggesting that successful
artists in Australia embodied national characteristics, often propelled by the media, whether they like it or not: “When you think of the big figures in Australian jazz from the past, they have had to fit into that. And I think it’s true of a lot of art in Australia, it has to fit into that Don, the digger the drover myth. And I think that the successful soloists in Australia have always tried to be a bit of that. A bit of the larrikin. That has to come across” (Slater 2013, interview). James Greening expressed a similar notion of the jazz music adopting Australian cultural tropes: “[In the music] there’s the idea of irreverence, or maverick, or larrikin, which are things that have been talked about in Australia about Australian culture in general for a long time.” This chapter has sought to chart out how ideas about Australian jazz culture, through the themes of eclecticism and pragmatism, are reflected in the ideologies and practices of 11 jazz practitioners.

The interview participants’ naturally embraced an eclectic approach and musical outlook, facilitated through a notion of jazz music being a inherently innovative through borrowed and re-interpreted improvisational vernacular stemming from African-American music traditions. This clarifies similar studies from around the world, in which musicians seek authentication of their music in a response to hegemonic cultural forces. A “broad definition” of jazz music also allowed artists to avoid categorisation and the construction of stylistic limitations on their practice. However, whilst denying the existence of an “Australian jazz” sound, several interview participants simultaneously acknowledged differences in their playing style as being part of a local ‘dialect’, drawing analogies to the way we use language. This was confirmed through a reflection of other studies of glocalisation of jazz around the world, whereby legacies of local influence were combined with transnational influences.

Interviewees also discussed how eclecticism in performance and compositional design was motivated by economic motivations to diversify their practice to incorporate other styles, broaden their audience networks with the goal of being booked for performances outside styles other than their primary genre. This was cited as an example of how eclecticism and pragmatism are fused, in which artists responses to the economic challenges of creating a career pathway in the arts lead to an array of musical offerings in the hope of wider economic opportunities. The phenomenon of artists adapting jazz improvisation languages to suit other music traditions was discussed in light of a concept of “universal competence” however issues of authenticity point to the naivety of such cultural appropriation. However, points of difference in how diversification operates in Sydney were identified as being driven by personal loyalties in which choice of
personnel was influenced by sharing learning outcomes and developing musical techniques collectively.

Nationalist movements in jazz were discussed with an overview of trends in the Japanese jazz scene outlined by Atkins (2001), in which artists sought to create musical identities that included traditional instruments and melodic material. In comparison to the Sydney jazz, in which we would expect to see the adoption of Australian Aboriginal music, artists were instead observed to embed their music with the sounds and aesthetic of Oz Rock and a turn to the same traditional sounds as their Japanese and Korean counterparts. The exploration of Oz Rock in Sydney jazz was understood as an alignment with the social and cultural values of Oz Rock, which was identified by Cockington (2001) as championing against working class oppression. This was illustrated by examples by The Alcohotlicks and pianist Sean Wayland, but identified Oz Rock as having been little acknowledged as an influence on Sydney jazz music.

The artists’ intercultural music and turn towards Asia was discussed in light of examples of an eclectic approach and best understood as coming to terms with their geographic location (in proximity to Asia) and a desire to undertake new learning processes to continually shape the way they think about music. Artists’ efforts of ‘becoming’ a non-Western practitioner through adopting the aesthetics (Barker) and compositional techniques (Slater) of traditional Asian music can be appreciated as a way of authenticating their place within the scene and celebrating the diversity of individual experience, ultimately shifting their approach to playing traditional jazz music. This reflects jazz music’s ongoing global narrative and developing aesthetic.

In the interview findings I discussed how participants navigate ways of “pragmatic writing” in response to the economic, cultural, historical, creative, aesthetic and temporal context of Sydney. This was highlighted through comments by artists whereby creative decisions were based on economic concerns, the pragmatic structure of the scene, and for some, a prioritisation of the music’s social function over artistic merit. Upon reflection on studies on the New York Jazz scene by Jackson (1998) in which asserted a shared strategy for dealing with the negotiations of musical events, the “blues aesthetic”, I put forth a notion suggested by pianist Paul Grabowsky, an “improvisational aesthetic”, in which Sydney musicians enact their own pragmatic response to particular conditions unique to the city’s scene.
This chapter charts how “broad definitions” of jazz leads artists into contact with a wide variety of influences and art forms, and most importantly facilitate the adoption of such influences into their music. These examples of eclecticism serve as a frame for discussing my own works in the next two chapters in which I utilise instrumentation from traditional Indian music, adopt and reharmonise non-Western modal systems and integrate Australian folk song in my music. These influences are not motivated by conscious efforts to ‘sound’ Asian or Australian but can be understood as a way of using the creative tools of jazz music to forge new meanings and make these elements unique in my own way just as efforts by Barker and Slater were observed to reflect their individual experience through a turn to Asian aesthetic.

Asserting national characteristics on the locally produced jazz music has complicated issues of categorisation further. Including elements of locally produced rock music and the intercultural marriage of influences from Asia beckons to continually question – “what is jazz” and whether the question at this point even matters? The interviews suggest however, that perhaps this question does not matter as much as one thought. Issues of authenticity are often directly related to the motivations of the interpreter.

Non-American jazz stories are being told around the world by musicians, audiences and commentators. Efforts to categorise these stories risk running the same fate as commentators in America, which has resulted in essentialising the music and placing boundaries on ethnic authenticity. Through testing previously held concepts of eclecticism and pragmatism, the interview participants have demonstrated a creative spirit that is analogous to the very foundations that formed jazz in the first place, with the variety and inclusion of various influences paramount. In examples that exhibit national identity, the spirit of jazz remains the binding factor in determining these outcomes, with an openness to hybridity and innovation at its core.
Chapter Three: Improvisation

My compositional approach involves the pursuit of various improvisation platforms in jazz and contemporary Western classical music to achieve programmatic and aesthetic goals. These include highlighting the diversity of experience of the performers whilst simultaneously projecting a sense of unity. Improvisation plays a key role in achieving these objects by colouring notated ensemble sections with individual and collective improvised interpretations. In this chapter I discuss the various methods of composing for improvisers in my folio and how they act as strategies of “pragmatic writing” as outlined in the preceding chapter. These methods vary depending on the type of musician I am writing for. The performers in my recordings fall into several categories. Jazz musicians with a background knowledge in improvised art forms and an assumed improvisatory vocabulary within the style, Classical musicians with little or no experience in improvising, and Hindustani and Karnatik musicians who are adept at improvising within their tradition and yet have experience working in fusion contexts. Some of the broad philosophical underpinnings of these various approaches for writing for various musicians include using idiomatic writing that is appropriate for non-Western musicians and jazz musicians, as well as by varying the notation to create improvisation platforms with high degrees of specificity for classical musicians.

3.1 Improvisation in Jazz and Contemporary Classical Music

Improvisation is an important part of my composition process whereby ideas are fleshed out at the piano after experiencing moments of inspiration, or laboriously fleshing out musical ideas that have been circling in my head for some time. Improvisation in Western art music has undergone a revival during the last century due to an increased acceptance of jazz, non-Western music and the decentralization of compositional choices from the composer to the performer in aleatoric music and other improvised classical forms. Yet despite these recent developments, improvising is still not a core part of Western classical music training, hence writing for musicians with these backgrounds is challenging in various ways. The research results reveal that, compared to the jazz musicians, classical performers demanded to be dictated specifics about the improvisations, whilst some of the jazz performers tended to exert a higher degree of creative control over the music, particularly with any ambiguities in the score. Efficient ways to communicate with classical performers then was to frame improvised sections within certain
boundaries such as using tone rows, defining duration and performance indications for the use of extended techniques.

The challenges of writing for improvisers from different musical traditions revolve around finding methods of limiting improvised materials with an eye towards shaping performance in a certain direction. My personal goal has been to try to balance this “shaping” with the freedom and space for a performer to still be themselves and ‘say something’. My compositional approach allows this balance to emerge through varying the degrees of specificity, using descriptive notes to suggest the nature of a given improvisation such as density, level of energy, dynamics and dramatic shape such as climaxes and sudden endings. These approaches work well for improvisers from a range of backgrounds, as compared to using jazz nomenclature such as chord symbols and drum ‘feels’ where prerequisites require performers to be schooled in stylistically appropriate drum patterns. Through using varying degrees of specificity, these approaches have also helped achieve broad aesthetic goals (and related “coherence” goals) of a particular piece while being open enough for musicians to be idiomatic.

I also believe that performer selection is an important part of the composition process, particularly for improvised music. My compositions were directly based around the strengths of a particular performer, even featuring improvised collaborations between specific groups of people with a history of performing together. With this in mind, my use of platforms of improvisation has been led by my knowledge of the performer’s improvisational capabilities. For example in Iron in the Blood, I feature alto saxophonist Scott McConnachie in a freely improvised sections with an agenda of utilising his use of extended techniques and intense frenetic free improvisation to depict certain parts of the narration, such as the dark character of Mvt 1 Time Immemorial, and the underlying pain, suffering, anger and anguish of the lament in Mvt 4 An Indelible Stain. In the four part suite Oneirology I feature a free improvisation duet guided by narrative from the film Inception, composed specifically for pianist Jackson Harrison and myself, who have a shared history of free improvisation, having performed regularly in my ensemble The Jeremy Rose Quartet and in duo format. This can also be said of tenor saxophonist Matthew Ottignon and sitarist Sarangan Sriranganathan in River Meeting Suite, in their duo improvisations in Movement 3 Nocturne and Movement 4 Indian Boogie, who have a history of performing together in percussionist Ben Walsh’s project.
3.2 Improvisational Methodologies

3.2.1 Writing for Jazz Musicians

For much of my works I place a priority on using improvisation to provide contrast and colour to sections of notated ensemble passages. In generating this effect my artistic goals require me to exert some elements of control over the performance however still maintaining a level of spontaneity and creative input from the performer. I create platforms for improvisation for jazz musicians in a number of ways, most notably through notation and by guiding the performer through performance indications and cues. The following section outlines examples in both *Iron in the Blood* and *Oneirology* in which the application of this approach achieves certain compositional goals whilst maintaining the integrity of the improviser’s voice.

When creating improvisational platforms for jazz musicians, one must consider the expertise of the musician. This includes facility in rhythmic and melodic improvisatory skills, knowledge of jazz repertoire (although not a necessity), and one’s ability to interpret and improvise over jazz chord nomenclature. A simple and efficient way to generate individual responses from musicians whilst maintaining the balance of artistic agenda is to notate parts for the performers and invite them to improvise using the material. This is indicated frequently in *Iron in the Blood* through the performance indications *play it your own way*. This is a pragmatic way to create variety and embellishment of a notated part via improvisation in performance. This harnesses jazz performers’ sonic individuality to come out in the music in which they are able to paraphrase melodic material as well as spontaneously respond to other musicians in real time. This strategy can often be more effective than using a notating score with each performer’s part spelled out exactly how it should be played. From experience, this can be unproductive as it can limit a jazz performer’s individual voice and would most likely prefer to embellish notated parts themselves. An example to illustrate this is in *Iron in the Blood* Mvt. 2 *Time Immemorial*, bar 1 (Figure 1), where the piano part is indicated to *arpeggiate freely against tremolo, repeat ad lib with added ornaments*, with a notated arpeggio using large intervals including 5ths and major 7ths, whilst the left hand plays an E tremolo pedal. Originally I had provided more information in the part in bars 2-8 but after the preliminary performance of the work I found that it was easier to let the piano player simply *continue ad lib arpeggio idea*. By infusing freedom in the work the performer was able to embed the performance with their individual response and help advance the narrative of this section of the work, which depicts the arrival of Europeans in Australia.
In Mvt. 2 *Time Immemorial* bar 9-10, the rhythm section creates a soundscape, loosely inspired by the piano style of Chris Abrahams in The Necks (joined by bassist Lloyd Swanton and drummer Tony Buck). Their first album *Sex* (1989, Fish of Milk) features a 56-minute improvisation on a moderate tempo bass ostinato and swung open hi-hat beat with bass drum pattern. The piece slowly develops with overdubbed high register arco double bass, repetitive piano ‘comping’, overdubbed percussion and other effects. Abrahams’ meditative gentle improvisations in the high register of the piano include arpeggiations, descending glissandi and the development of several sparse motifs. I have referenced this sonic landscape in *Time Immemorial* through various indications for the piano, double bass, drums and guitar: *rhythm section takes a while to establish pulse*. For the piano part I utilised Abrahams’ style of descending glissandi: *start high (from anywhere) and play all white keys, play it your own way, and freely ad lib*. The referencing of this album was subtle and allowed freedom for the performers to create their own interpretation of the music. I purposely avoided telling them about the musical reference to facilitate their own responses.
The concept of ‘aesthetic kinship’ as discussed in Chapter 2.3.2 was an important factor in choosing ensemble members for the projects. In forming the Earshift Orchestra for the *Iron in the Blood* recording project, I made an effort to choose players that had a shared history of performance collaboration. This was particularly evident in the selection of Melbourne musicians Callum G’Froerer, Scott McConnachie, Joseph O’Connor and trombonist James Macaulay.

Another example is seen in *Oneirology* in the piano cadenza in Mvt. 1 *Daydreamer* bars 98-109 (bars 98-105 shown in Figure 3) which directs the piano player to *continue ascending idea in free improvisation, daydream-like*. Indications also include the trajectory of the harmony to be used – *harmony can go free but eventually bring it back to A7+*. The backgrounds played by the saxophones enter on cue, approximately 1” after the cadenza, and the part indicates to *respond to saxophone b.g.s, playful, childlike, sentimental*. Utilising performance indications is both an efficient way to generate spontaneous and individual responses from the performers using limited material whilst balancing specific artistic goals.
Figure 3 Oneirology, Mvt. 1 Daydreamer, bars 98-105

3.2.2 Writing for Non-Western Musicians

In creating platforms of improvisation for non-Western musicians I exert artist control in similar but slightly different ways to writing for the musicians in the categories above. These include the use of several strategies including call and response passages and through interchanges between notated ensemble passages and improvised sections.

A major challenge in writing for non-Western musicians is familiarisation with western music notation, and in this particular project, River Meeting Suite, I was aware that the tabla, voice and sitar parts would all have to be learnt by ear. The non-Western musicians featured on River Meeting Suite, scored for saxophone quartet, tabla, voice, sitar and iphone include tabla player Bobby Singh and vocalist/sitarist Sarangan Sriranganathan. My strategy was to therefore create call and response patterns in which I would compose melodies in which the sitar’s role was to respond to the ensemble, rather than lead the group. The tabla part was in turn developed during rehearsals in which Singh utilised traditional drum patterns.

A similar strategy was employed through an open improvisation section in which the performers were provided freedom to enact idiomatic improvised cadenzas. The opening of both Mvt. 1 First Light and Mvt. 5 Day of Rest, feature alaps, in which only the duration, Mela (scale) and movement title is given to guide the performance. Mvt. 1 features the vocalist Sarangan Sriranganthan and Mvt. 5 features myself on alto saxophone with Sriranganathan on sitar. Both alaps are...
accompanied by a drone provided by the application *tanpura* on iphone.\(^{24}\) The cadenzas were guided by suggestive titles that help create mood for the piece. I used a similar strategy to promote improvised dialogue in Mvt. 4 *Indian Boogie* bars 64-99, in which the tenor saxophone and sitar exchange improvisations in decreasing duration, from 4 bars, 2, 1, then two beats, 1 beat and then to quavers (Figure 4).

**Figure 4 River Meeting Suite, Mvt. 4 Indian Boogie** bars 64-99

![Diagram of improvised dialogue between tenor sax and sitar](image)

I demonstrated further control over improvisations of the tabla in Mvt. 2 *River Meeting*, bars 95-110 (Figure 5) where the tabla improvises over a *Lebra*, also known as *Nagma*, in which the sitar and tenor saxophone repeat an ostinato pattern with gradual accelerando. When the tempo reaches approximately 216 bpm the soprano, alto and baritone saxophones enter with backgrounds played under the tabla improvisations and ostinato pattern, using three-four bar phrases using long notes, gradually slowing the tempo to a pause at bar 110. The guided

\(^{24}\) This app was recommended by both Sriranganathan and Singh, who use a similar app in their own performances.
Improvisation of the tabla in this context serves artistic goals through creating an increased energetic trajectory in the solo, as well as utilising aspects of Hindustani music that are familiar to both Singh and Sriranganathan.

Figure 5 *River Meeting Suite*, Mvt. 2 *River Meeting*, bars 95-110

The use of call and response patterns between notated ensemble passages and improvisations by Singh and Sriranganathan also creates a guided dialogue that simultaneously exerts compositional control whilst promoting the performers individual voice through improvisation. In Mvt. 1 *First Light* bars 76-111 (Figure 6), I have utilised an interchange between notated saxophone ensemble sections and improvised tabla. The ensemble passages provide material for Singh to elaborate and develop within his improvisation.
The philosophy underpinning these compositional strategies in writing for performers from non-Western backgrounds is to adapt musical contexts that they are familiar with, create platforms for improvisation using call and response patterns and interchange between notated ensemble passages and improvised instrumental sections. These ideas demonstrate ways of maintaining control over the work whilst allowing improvisational colour to emerge and simultaneously achieve broader artistic goals.

3.2.3 Writing for Classical Musicians

From my perspective as a jazz musician I found that including improvisation using aleatoric music techniques for classical musicians needed to be highly specific in order to get the players to appropriately respond and meet artistic goals. A particular experience I had while assembling this PhD portfolio helped me draw such a conclusion.

As part of developing Iron in the Blood, I re-orchestrated Mvt. 2 Time Immemorial for the Sydney Conservatorium of Music’s Modern Music Ensemble, a classical orchestra with one string player per chair, conducted by Daryl Pratt. A video documentation of this performance can be found on the supplementary DVD for this project, Appendix 3. During rehearsals of the work the performers asked questions about the aleatoric notation in the opening sections in which the duration is indicated and cued by the conductor. Within each bar, the players were given various instructions. Bird calls in the piccolo part for example were to be played freely, with the performer entering at will. This proved uncomfortable for the piccolo player and the performer
asked for direct guidance from the conductor. The result of this negotiation was a direct cue from the conductor after four seconds. Bird calls referencing the Australian bush were simultaneously required from other members of the ensemble who required more specific detail in order to work together as a whole.\(^{25}\) The string parts use a box with diamond noteheads and a diagonal arrow pointing out of the note to create birdcall sounds, with the instructions \textit{liberamente}, quite literally ‘freely’. These had to be verbally described during rehearsals as replicating birdcalls, referencing Australian composer Peter Sculthorpe’s work to give them guidance. Lessons learnt during this experience showed that classical performers require an increased specificity to guide aleatoric sections that utilise elements of improvisation.

An agenda of increased specificity, learnt from the experience above, is avidly applied in \textit{Between Worlds} in which the use of explicit aleatoric notation exerted greater control over the performance whilst allowing improvisational colour to emerge. At bar 40, violin I features a notated cadenza using \textit{bird like} melodic material (Figure 7).

Figure 7 \textit{Between Worlds} Mvt. 2 bar 40

The bar lines are removed and the part is indicated with performance directions: \textit{cadenza – ad lib.} The accompaniment includes Violin II playing triple stops on G, E and B, with downward arrows indicating for the player to \textit{expressively} arpeggiate downward, \textit{liberamente}, with a wavy horizontal arrow along the staff to indicate the part to be repeated as desired. The viola is indicated to play an ascending and descending D major arpeggioso motif with the notes surrounded

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\(^{25}\) One must take into consideration the relative little experience of the student performers in this context.
by a box, with indications to play *dolcissimo* and *molto rapidamente, pp*, indicating to repeat as desired. At bar 41 this texture is continued with a viola cadenza in the same fashion, with the viola accompaniment part moved to violin. At bar 42 the strings play bird sounds by moving their fingers up the fourth string *ad lib* with the marking *liberamente*. This moves to a weeping sound using descending semitones using harmonics, then joining the viola playing arpeggios *molto rapidamente, cresc.*. In contrast to writing improvisation platforms for jazz musicians, who mostly appear to instinctively fulfill ambiguity in their own way and non-Western performers who were provided material to respond to in call and response patterns, writing for classical musicians required an increased specificity to efficiently generate individual spontaneity and improvisational colour in notated compositional design.

### 3.2.4 Harnessing Free Improvisation

Utilising free improvisation in my composition in which the performer is given liberties to spontaneously determine elements of rhythm, melody, harmony and timbre of their instrument requires compositional strategies to harness the performance. The atonality of free improvisation warrants other elements of control in order to achieve artistic goals. This is illustrated in the following examples from *Oneirology* and *Iron in the Blood*, which includes the use of narrative as a guide for mood and character and the use of performance indications.

Initially developed as a culmination of experimental classical music and free jazz of both Europe and America, improvised music was associated with groups such as the AACM and the Spontaneous Music Ensemble and performers such as Evan Parker, Derek Bailey and Cornelius Cardew (Samson 2001: 29). Framed with descriptions of narrative, duration, trajectory and aesthetic, composers can harness the possibilities of free improvisation in effective ways, uniting composition and performance in a unique fashion. Samson (2001) describes free improvisation as having “creative activity, encompassing its artistic agenda on the one hand and the process-based dynamic of its production on the other” (Samson 2001: 29).

My applications of free improvisation follow Samson’s notion, taking the individual artistic agendas of the players into account, as well as their strengths and weaknesses, and my compositional agenda in the other. My goal has been to frame the free improvisation within certain limits to shape the boundaries of the performance in order to achieve compositional design goals.
In *Oneirology*, Mvt. 3 *Dream within a Dream* bar 52-54 (Figure 8), the alto saxophone and piano enter into a free improvisation. The soprano, tenor and baritone saxophones are indicated to *repeat* (note) *until cued, grad. dim*, whilst the alto saxophone repeats 2x before moving to a free improvisation. This forces the players to continue the notated part whilst the free improvisation emerges. The indications for the piano part are: *Respond to saxophones repeated chord and begin duo improvisation with alto*. I also included narrative guidelines for the free improvisation which is discussed in the following section. The free improvisation is indicated to continue for a duration for 2”.

Figure 8 *Oneirology* Mvt. 3 *Dream Within a Dream* bars 52-54

In *Iron in the Blood* I have guided free improvisation predominantly through performance indications in which the trajectory of the improvisation has been directed, the duration and the ending. The improvisations are also guided by the narrative which outlines a particular mood for a section. These indications allow the performer to undertake significant liberties in their improvisation whilst following the development of the composition. In Mvt. 4: *The Indelible Stain*, the alto saxophone at bar 57 indicates *solo creeps in*. From bar 61, it indicates *free improvisation – mournful, crying, weeping*. Then at bar 71 I have indicated *alto solo – 30"*. Solo builds, suddenly stopping as if interrupted.
In Mvt. 1 *The Marauder Within*, I have used a free improvisation at bars 94-99 between the alto saxophone and guitar. Although I originally provided harmonic framework C/C# chord symbol and expressive marking to play *fff* with a decrescendo and performance indications to *play dirty* – *use vocal sounds + play off guitar* in the saxophone part, the recording shows how players reacted contrarily upon hearing the narration. Alto saxophonist Scott McConnachie and guitarist Ben Hauptmann found it better to start soft and creep in with a sonic improvisation exploring timbre and atonally rather than a language dialogue based off jazz chord symbols. After development in the rehearsal stages of the work this was found to be musically appropriate for the context.

3.2.5 The Use of Improvisation to Serve Programmatic Composition

Programmatic goals in the folio are enacted through the role of improvisation within the works in which performers are called on to assert creative control and individual voices to project the narrative of the music yet do so on their own terms. This is discussed in the following section by illustrating examples found in *Iron in the Blood* and *Oneirology*. I also discuss how narrative also informs compositional choices in *Between Worlds* and *Border Control*.

Robert Hughes’ *The Fatal Shore* is a seminal book detailing the early colonial history of Australia which helps demystify some of the reasons for Britain colonising Australia whilst detailing the incomprehensible hardships of the convicts and the near destruction of the indigenous population. The book presents an amalgamation of characters and secondary sources depicting a history filled with ‘a strange lottery’ of severe suffering and good fortune. Told through a myriad of characters including doctors, judges, soldiers, and the convicts themselves, the book presents an oral history of the cultural experience of early settlers in Australia. *Iron in the Blood* adapts this narrative by highlighting the diversity of experience within Australia’s colonisation period through its array of soloistic individual improvisational voices within the ensemble. The score in fact calls on these individual voices to advance the musical work in a particular direction using improvisation as a means of co-creation. Yet whilst differing characters are presented in the book, there also appears to be a call for a collective sense of self that follows the history of Australia’s quest for national self-hood. The music follows this narrative as the performers improvisations become increasingly collectivised. The solo textures predominantly feature individuals (Mvt.’s 2, 4, 5) and duo improvisation (Mvt.’s 3, 6, 7) however works towards a point of climax in Mvt. 9 *We Be The Aristocracy Now*, in which there are numerous instruments improvising collectively. At bars 17-32 the piano, drums and bass provide an accompaniment to a
collective improvisation by tenor saxophone 2, bass clarinet, trumpet 2, trombone 2 and guitar. These instruments are provided with jazz chord symbols and performance indications – *group solo* – *slowly build*. This idea is furthered in bars 68-82 in which the same performers have performance indications – *group ad lib as before*, however accompanied by the brass section. The section rapidly builds in texture, melodic contour and rhythmic density. The use of individual voices is furthered at bar 78 (Figure 9) in which the alto saxophone 1, trumpets 1, 3 and 4 use improvisation platforms with performance indications – *ad lib fast ascending line then hold long note*. This section is compounded at bars 83-87 in which the ensemble holds a chord for four bars at an expressive level of **ff**. In this narrative example we observe the end of the system of convictry, signaling freedom for the convicts and a more towards national selfhood. This point serves as a climax of the work and illustrates how improvisation plays a key role in achieving programmatic goals whilst advancing an aesthetic of notated ensemble passages with improvisational colouring.

*Figure 9 Iron in the Blood, Mvt. 9 We Be The Aristocracy Now, bars 78-82*
In *Iron in the Blood*, I wanted to achieve a sense of stifled and constricted voices, informed by a narrative of the tyrannical experiences of the convicts and indigenous population at the hands of the British soldiers. I also wanted to allow the individual voices of the players to emerge, albeit in a limited way to suggest that they are being restrained, tied down and even choked. This is achieved in several sections where instruments are provided with a row of pitches and are instructed to *repeat ad lib*, whilst each note has a small glissando or ‘scoop’. With each performer playing their notes with slightly different lengths it creates a blurring effect of the pitch. In Mvt. 4 *An Indelible Stain*, bars 57-61 (Figure 10), this is used to particular effect to portray the suffering of the Tasman Aborigines, which were sadly wiped out by the colonial invasion.

Figure 10 *Iron in the Blood*, Mvt. 4 *An Indelible Stain*, bars 57-61

![Figure 10](image)

The role of improvisation in creating narrative is also reflected in *Oneirology*. *Oneirology* takes impetus from Christopher Nolan’s film *Inception* (2009). The four-movement work adapts the themes of Nolan's film, reflected in the movement titles: *Daydreamer, Entering the Subconsciousness, Dream within a Dream* and *Deja Vu (reality check?)*. Structurally the movements connect through a narrative of an increasing departure from reality into the unconsciousness, or ‘dream within a
dream’ state, as the harmonic, rhythmic and melodic material become increasingly spatial and dissonant. The final movement recapitulates the material in a convoluted fashion to suggest an altered state of reality. In Mvt. 3 Dream Within a Dream in which the narrative suggests a departure from reality, improvisation is used to achieve such artistic goals. In bar 52 there is a free improvisation duo between the alto saxophone and piano with performance indications that read: *let previous section inspire a duo improvisation with piano. Imagine you are delving deep into the layers of your sub-consciousness*. The free improvisation achieves artistic goals through the use of a-tonal harmony and rhythm, depicting a sense of departure from reality.

The work also uses more limited fields of improvisation to achieve artistic and narrative goals, such as through the use of ordered pitch collections. In Mvt. 2 Entering the Sub-consciousness bars 68-73 (Figure 11 Oneirology Mvt. 2 Entering the Sub-consciousness bars 68-73), I used rows of ordered pitch collections in the saxophones in which the performers choose their own rhythms. The narrative here is analogous to the film’s scene in which the characters infiltrate the mind of a CEO to undertake ‘inception’ – the planting of an idea into a person’s subconsciousness without them realising. In order to achieve this, the team led by Dom Cobb (Leonardo DiCaprio) must penetrate several layers of dreams of their victim, following a descent into their subconsciousness. The programmatic goal of this section is to create a sense of departure from reality through a destabilisation of the tempo whilst the saxophones are provided with an ordered pitch collections allowing the players to determine elements of rhythm. The performance indications are to *play pitch row using own rhythm, create the effect of time standing still*. Each bar finishes with a rest using a fermata while the piano continues a descending whole tone scalar run. The use of the whole tone scale in this section also serves to help achieve narrative goals through its scalar arrangement of whole tones and subsequent loss of a sense of a strong tonal centre.
The use of improvisation in *Border Control* is limited since the piece is scored for contemporary classical performers with non-improvising backgrounds from the group Ensemble Offspring. The compositional structure and underlying aesthetic of the work is however informed by narrative of two similar concepts, both related to the idea of *Border Control* - the crossing of musical stylistic borders and the ongoing movement of people over national borders.
This narrative informs the programmatic goals of conveying a shifting sense of rigidity through the three movements, personifying the physical and mental control of border crossings. In Mvt. 1 the vibraphone and bass clarinet are locked into a repetitive ostinato pattern in 7/4 that has slight variations in the time signature every several bars, either dropping a quaver (13/8) or adding a quaver (15/8). The piccolo and trumpet part play a theme from bar 19 that creates a sense of restriction and rigidity through its limited range of pitch and use of microtonal shadings in the piccolo and half-valve notes in the trumpet. The second movement appears to break apart the rigidity through the contrast of two distinct sections: the use of homophonic texture provided by accompanying vibraphone and canon-like descending figures in muted trumpet, flute and bass clarinet. This is juxtaposed against sections that become freer in tempi and cadenza like figures in the flute and vibraphone. The third movement returns to a heightened sense of rigidity through its descending melodic passages played in rhythmic unison, adapting the Balinese Selisir scale. The shifting textures and dynamics throughout the movement move towards increased dynamics and a thickening of the textures. The structure of the movement is informed by the narrative outlined above and moves towards a heightened sense of rigidity.

The use of improvisation in the work, however limited, is used to represent movement and a momentary disentanglement of compositional control towards the performer. This is created at Mvt. 1, bars 58-60 (Figure 12), through a duo between piccolo and trumpet with aleatoric methods using an ordered pitch collection. Instructions include \textit{Play long notes using the tone row with timbral variations (repeat if necessary)}. The performer is provided with a series of unbeamed notes in the first bar, followed by slashes in the second and third. Dynamic indications are \textit{p / mp} and \textit{mf}, with a \textit{grad cresc}. The objective is to reference the opening theme, played by the trumpet and piccolo bars 19-26, transformed through aleatoric methods which deconstruct the rhythmic rigidity. This is also symbolic of the dismantling of control, one of the underlying themes of the work. It also allows a musical dialogue to emerge between the performers in real time. The use of ordered pitch collections here helps to serve the narrative of a shifting sense of rigidity whilst achieving artistic goals of flavouring the notated ensemble parts with improvisation.
Figure 12 *Border Control* Mvt. 1, bars 58-60

### 3.3 Summary

The recording portfolio highlights a variety of individual voices and sonic identities, affirming the notion that the Australian sound is really best conceived as a community of voices. This can be understood to reflect the findings of the interview participants in Chapter Two, who rejected an “Australian Sound” and suggested that the scene was an amalgamation of individual voices seeking divergent artistic trajectories. My portfolio champions this notion through the use of improvisation to allow a diverse range of voices to emerge from the music whilst exerting control over the compositional design. For example, the recording portfolio features players on the same instrument with distinct individual voices, such as the playing of pianist Jackson Harrison (on *Oneirology*) to Joseph O’Connor (on *Iron in the Blood*), or the playing of saxophonist Scott McConnachie (on *Iron in the Blood*) to myself (on all recordings except *Between Worlds* and *Border Control*). The utilisation of these players’ strengths to advance programmatic and narrative goals is also evident in the works.

Methods for creating improvisational platforms when writing for jazz musicians reflects ideas of pragmatic compositional design as described in the interviews. These can be understood in the context of comments by Phillip Slater, whose efforts to “limit the ingredients to maximize the possibilities” stood as a philosophical underpinning of my works. These were achieved through idiomatic writing utilising specific performers and performance indications to exert levels of compositional control over the improvisers whilst simultaneously allowing freedom. In contrast
to the classical musicians, the jazz musicians responses could be understood through the notion of being embedded with an ‘improvised aesthetic’ in which the musicians intuitively enact personal decisions to fulfill ambiguity (intended or not) in the notated score, even challenging performance indications that they did not agree on. These issues arose during the development workshops where they were verbally discussed with myself in open collaborative dialogue.

The aesthetic of these works are grounded by a quest to highlight the diversity of experience of the performers whilst simultaneously allowing the emergence of a sense of united self. The concept of ‘aesthetic kinship’ as discussed in Chapter 2.2.2 was an important factor in choosing ensemble members for the projects. In forming the Earshift Orchestra for the Iron in the Blood recording project, I consciously chose players that had a shared history of performance collaboration and players whose aesthetic resonated with mine. For example I chose four musicians that had a history of collaboration and performance experience together such as trumpeter Callum G’Froerer, saxophonist Scott McConnachie, pianist Joseph O’Connor and trombonist James Macaulay. These players all have distinct improvisational voices and have a shared history of collaboration, as well as common influences and aesthetic. This could also be said in regards to the collaboration of myself with Jackson Harrison in Oneirology, and Bobby Singh with Sarangan Sriranganathan on River Meeting Suite.

In this chapter I discussed how performers’ backgrounds play an important role in considering what improvisation methodologies will be effective in the compositions. The challenges of writing for improvisers from different musical traditions revolve in turn around finding methods of limiting improvised materials with an eye towards shaping performance in a certain direction. My personal goal has been to try to balance this “shaping” with the freedom and space for a performer to still be themselves and ‘say something’. A player’s knowledge and ability to improvise on jazz chord nomenclature is important for writing conventional jazz solos. Creating soundscapes using jazz musicians requires specific performance indications to limit the number of options available to them in order to shape the music to achieve artistic goals. When composing for classical musicians, this is even more important, and the more information provided the better. This can be seen throughout my works in which use aleatoric methods.

These ideas are also furthered in the section on writing for non-Western musicians. This reflects the findings of the interviews in which there was a noticeable turn towards Asia best understood as an ‘indigenising impulse’ (see section 2.1.3) in which I sought to integrate improvisation from
non-Western performers into chamber music contexts. Pragmatic compositional design strategies used for this writing included the use of call and response patterns, idiomatic writing referencing non-Western music traditions and guided improvisational platforms between notated ensemble passages and improvised non-Western sections. The idea of ‘universal competence’ discussed in 2.1.2 was not a conscious paradigm however efforts to collaborate with non-Western musicians could be more effective after further study of Indian musical language traditions.

Narrative was also an important part of shaping performers’ improvisations in my works as well as playing a role in compositional design. *Iron in the Blood* followed the narrative of Robert Hughes’ *The Fatal Shore* through its use of improvisation of individual performers to highlight the diversity of experience within Australia’s colonisation period whilst also calling for a collective sense of self that follows the history of Australia’s quest for national identity. The score in fact calls on these individual voices to advance the musical work in a particular direction using improvisation as a means of co-creation. Other sections included performance directions such as intensity, style, articulation and dynamics. In other works evocative titles were used to suggest improvisation styles to convey moods and feelings that inspired the work. In combination with verbal instructions during rehearsals, notated explanatory notes and evocative titles, the use of narrative provides an effective way to utilise improvisation in composition. Rows of ordered pitch collections were also explored with improvisers choosing notes to play using their own rhythms. This method allows pitch material to remain defined by the composer whilst creative control of duration and intensity is transferred to the performer.

This chapter provided an insight into the role of improvisation in my portfolio spanning the context of jazz, contemporary classical music and inter-cultural music. Some of these methods were influenced by aleatoric methods, others were more directly influenced by jazz, including performance indications that invited musicians to advance the music on their own terms whilst simultaneously exerting compositional control. Performer selection played an important part in the philosophical underpinnings of these various approaches, which included writing idiomatically for different performers, using performance indications in improvisational platforms and ‘pragmatic writing’ in which the compositional design includes a personal approach in response to the individual players developed through the rehearsals and workshops. In all, improvisation played a key role in achieving programmatic and aesthetic goals which highlight the diversity of experience whilst allowing a constellation of united self.
Chapter Four: *Iron in the Blood* and the Integration of Influences in Other Works

This thesis contextualises my folio by examining how the ideology and social forces of the scene play out in my music through a case study of its use of improvisation and integration of folk and non-Western material in an effort to highlight the diversity of individual experience. This chapter provides further insight into the major work *Iron in the Blood*, which is underpinned by a theme of exploring a rich fabric of perspectives analogous to the depiction of the character's voices in *The Fatal Shore*. This is carried out by a diverse range of individual performer’s voices from within the ensemble, often aided by the use of improvisation, to advance the work on their own terms, yet guided by a pragmatic compositional design. I examine the transformation of cyclic themes throughout the work to depict the shifting narrative of the convicts’ journey from slavery to freedom and Australia’s quest for a sense of unified self. I examine the use of Australian folk song to depict cultural tropes whilst transforming them through the use of reharmonisation and juxtaposition in an effort to make them original. I then compare these methods with similar techniques in other works such as the harmonisation of Indian *melas* in *River Meeting Suite* to engage musicians from varying backgrounds in improvisational platforms, and the transformation of the Greek folk melody *Mirkovčoček* in *Between Worlds* as an example of ways to utilise non-Western and folk material in an effort to reinvent it with individual harmonic significance. In a similar way, I discuss the application of Sheehan’s Number Diamonds in my works in an effort to create rhythmic structures in *Iron in the Blood*, and to create new ways of how we ‘hear’ non-Western modal material in *Border Control*.

4.1 Case Study of Eclecticism: *Iron in the Blood*

*Iron in the Blood* is an extended work of 70 minutes duration for 17 piece jazz orchestra and two narrators inspired by one of the best known books on Australia’s founding, Robert Hughes’ *The Fatal Shore* (1987). The work is concerned with my feelings about this country - its dark history, its conformist yet highly sceptical people, its unforgiving landscape, and its timelessness. Reading

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26 The title ‘Iron in the Blood’ was taken from the quote: “‘The rubbing of the leg-rings on their flesh’, Port Macquarie men used sardonically to say, ‘put plenty of iron in the blood’.” (Hughes 1987: 438). The title seeks to remind us to not neglect the fact that 80 years of convictry left an indelible mark on Australia’s cultural identity. Australian society has inherited a range of cultural characteristics, both strengths and detriments.
The Fatal Shore in 2012 had a profound effect on me, undoubtedly changing the way I viewed Australia. I felt that I had been denied the real truth of Australia’s history, which had often been romanticised during my schooling years and in particular, was denied much of the cultural experience of Australia’s early settlers. The work was motivated along similar lines to Hughes’ desire to explore the origin of cultural tropes in Australian culture, and to revisit Australia’s colonial history, in effect to explain it to myself and convey it through music. In many ways, The Fatal Shore provided an apt narrative to explore the themes presented in the interviews in Chapter Two. The work set out to embrace an eclectic compositional approach that not only highlights a variety of jazz styles and approaches to music making within the jazz spectrum, but also brings together an eclectic combination of musicians sourced from my networks in Sydney and Melbourne.

The work was not intended to have an Australian ‘conscience’ but one that would resonate with both Australians and the greater international community, just as the book is widely known around the world. The work follows the convicts’ narrative from slavery towards freedom and the incredible brutality and genocide of the Tasmanian Aborigines. Apart from reinvigorating the rich tapestry of Australia’s colonial history, the work also serves as a continuing call for Australia to reinvestigate its origins and build a future that embraces and builds on its own cultural history and identity.

The work uses Hughes’ engrossing narration and the voices from a variety of primary sources, including convicts letters, doctors, magistrates, captains, soldiers and many other characters, creating a rich fabric of perspectives, and an oratory history that follows the convicts difficult path from Georgian England to labour camps on the other side of the then known world. Iron in the Blood adapts this concept of diverse perspectives into musical terms through calling on individual players to advance the music in their own terms through improvisation and the use of cyclic themes that develop with the underlying narrative just as the characters seek to create a sense of unified self in a new nation.

Iron in the Blood was loosely inspired by Wynton Marsalis’ Blood on the Fields (1997, Sony Music), a three-hour oratorio for jazz orchestra and three vocalists. Marsalis’ work is based on his fictional story depicting the couple Leona and Jess moving from slavery to freedom. Ironically, I found an interview with Marsalis discussing Hughes’ The Fatal Shore as an inspiration to write his work,

commenting on how it inspired him to convey a similar narrative from the perspective of the African-American slavery experience. It is therefore fitting that *Iron in the Blood* highlights the Australian convict’s perspective and brings the story to life through jazz music. However I was motivated to explore the jazz orchestra using musical influences that were unique to my experience of being Australian and reflective on my temporal context.

The other influences on the work included Guillermo Klein, whose album *El Minotauro* (Candid, 1997) displayed a blending of sounds from his native Argentina with cutting edge harmonic sophistication, a broad range of non-jazz influences, timbral variations and clever use of subtle dynamics. Similarly, Maria Schneider’s album *Sky Blue* (2007, Artist Share) develops subtle and often beautiful timbral explorations in a contemporary jazz harmonic sound world. Darcy James Argue’s *Secret Society* and his release *Brooklyn Babylon* (2013, New Amsterdam Records) was another important aesthetic influence. The album incorporates everything from Balkan, Latino, funk, free jazz and more. Finally, the intent and political chart of Charlie Haden’s Liberation Orchestra was influential in the way his music successfully carried a political message without sounding forced or the music being contrived, such as the album *Not in Our Name* (2005, Verve Records). These are but a few of the influences on the work but point out the transnational nature of the music in which adopts sources of influence that are particularly poignant to my experience.

### 4.2 Cyclical Themes and Re-inscribing Folk and non-Western Material

I have explored ways of composing and performing material that references folk traditions in a number of ways. This is underpinned by an aesthetic purpose of making the material my own in an effort to authenticate the music relevant to my individual experience. This can be reflected in the way that, in most cases, I avoided direct quotation in an attempt to extend the melodic language of these melodic traditions and create unique interpretations of old material. I have also attempted to integrate these melodic references in a holistic way into my compositions with other elements such as reharmonisations, melodic development and rhythmic developments. Other methods include using idiomatic musical elements from other traditions, referencing their use of contour, texture, mode, form and use of embellishments.

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4.2.1 Adaptation of Australian Folk Music

The moments I have used direct quotations are to attain a certain effect, including the transcribed melody of a field recording of Sally Sloane singing her version of “The Wild Colonial Boy”29 in *Iron in the Blood*, Mvt. 10 *The Melancholy Bush (The Wild Colonial Boy)* (Figure 13). In this context I have reharmonised the melody and inserted vamp sections featuring piano improvisations. There is also a return of the *Remembrance Theme* (bars 19-22), one of the most memorable themes of the work, helping to create a sense of unified self, analogous to the narrative in which depicts an Australian consciousness attempting to come to terms with its identity inclusive of its dark convict history. This evidence illuminates the broader artistic goals of authenticating the music through telling a unique Australian story imbued with a desire to personalise the material through compositional design and harmonic reconstruction, and by highlighting the diversity of experience through calling on the musicians to advance the music using their own individual improvised language.

Figure 13 *Iron in the Blood* Mvt. 10 *The Melancholy Bush (The Wild Colonial Boy)*

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This is also evident in the adaptation of other folk themes such as *Botany Bay*, used throughout *Iron in the Blood*. This is a well-known Australian folk song depicting the voyage and hardships of life as a convict bound for Botany Bay – the first point of settlement in Australia. The first of many appearances of the theme appears in trombone 2, Mvt. 1 *The Marauder Within* bar 154, where the quotation enters amidst a saxophone solo, using harmony from Handel’s *Chaconne in G Major*. The theme enters in the key of B major whilst the ensemble is in the key of C Major with performance indications to play in a *pretentious* style. The trombone has performance indications to play *in the style of a drunk larrikin*, of which trombonist James Macaulay does with remarkable cheerful readiness with the use of molto rubato and glissandi. The adaptation of the Australian folk song in a dissonant (‘wrong’?) key and ‘loose’ rhythm style is an attempt to personify the drunk larrikin of Irish descent, a stereotype garnered from the numerous anecdotes in the book. This also acts as a way of appropriating the Australian folk music reference to serve narrative goals and facilitate individual interpretation through improvisation. The performance directions exert both freedom whilst retaining levels of compositional control that steer the performance to achieve artistic goals.

Throughout *Iron in the Blood* I also use cyclical themes that are repeated and transformed in an effort to achieve the storytelling goals of presenting Australian tropes and ideas that speak to many whilst simultaneously transforming them – often through the aid of individual improviser and unique iterations. The repetition and transformation of the themes follows the narrative of the convicts’ arduous journey from slavery to freedom and the nation’s quest to find a sense of unified self. It would be arduous to list all the appearances of these themes in their various forms however I list the most significant themes and how they have been developed in the work.

In *Iron in the Blood* Mvt. 6 *Bunters Mollies and Sable Brethren*, the *Give me Rum* theme (Figure 14) is first played by the alto clarinet, depicting the cultural life of the early colonial settlement which found many turning to liquor as a way of escaping the hardships of everyday life, and as a form of social enjoyment. This is best displayed through the following anthem in the “Rum Song”, of which the theme takes its name:

Cut yer name across me backbone,
Stretch me skin across a drum,
Iron me up to Pinch gut Island
From Today till Kingdom Come!

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30 The song also has personal significance, as it was the favourite song of my grandfather, Bruce Rose.
I will eat your Norfolk Dumpling
Like a juicy Spanish plum,
Even dance the Newgate hornpipe,
If you'll only give me rum!³¹

Figure 14 *Give Me Rum* theme

The theme is loosely inspired by *Lisbon* from Lincolnshire Posy (1937) by Percy Grainger and a 2008 composition *Melting River*, performed by The Vampires on the album *South Coasting* (Jazzgroove Records, 2008). The melody is similarly lilting, in a brisk 6/8 time, and is simplistic in its use of harmony. The character of the theme personifies whimsical, playful, fanciful, mischievous, waggishness and facetiousness, all characteristics thought to personify the “children of the convicts”, of which this movement depicts. The narrative of this chapter of the book (of the same name) explores the make up of the convict population and their cultural inheritance.

The English authorities inaccurately predicted that the children of the convicts were expected to be criminals just as their parents, and the society would be a “sink of wickedness” (Hughes 1987: 355). These comments were ironic given that Australia rapidly became one of the most law abiding countries in the world, debunking notions such as crime runs in the blood. During the recording the performers added their own improvised embellishments to this theme referencing the style of Irish folk music, demonstrating ways in which the musicians lead the music and narrative on their own terms through the use of improvisation in an effort to make the material their own.

The theme appears several times with varying orchestrations and harmonisations to convey a sense of changing perception of the colony’s new generation, from a motley crew of convicts and the emergence of their children, to a growing sense of self awareness and search for a unified self in a new nation. The transformations of the melody include sections with two soprano saxophones playing the theme with added improvised embellishments, bars 42-50, two sopranos

³¹ Hughes 1987: 292. The poem was sourced from Russel Ward, *Australia Since the Coming of Man* (Sydney, 1965).
with two tenor saxophones at bars 54-61 playing the theme harmonised with parallel voicings. In Mvt. 7 A Strange Lottery, this theme reappears in a new form, having been transformed through rhythmic, harmonic and orchestration (Figure 15). The underlying harmony played by the rhythm section is in F sus4. The theme is played first by two soprano saxophones at bar 1, using chromatic notes on the #4 and #2, suggesting G and D triads. The rhythm adapts 4:3 crotchet tuplets and notated embellishments in a swing feel.

Figure 15 transformation of *Give me Rum* theme in *Iron in the Blood* Mvt. 7 A Strange Lottery

Other cyclic themes include *The Marauder Within* (Figure 16). This is the opening musical statement of the piece played by the piano at bar three. The theme is a simple five note motif with harmonisations of a four note minor add 2 and major add 2 close voicing, also referred to as “close structure” or “four-way close,” voicing that moves in parallel motion. This theme appears numerous times throughout the work, often in canon, and serves to depict the shallow reason for initiating the convict system – the notion that England’s society was being dissolved by its own people, the so called ‘criminal class’. At Mvt 9. *The Aristocracy Be We* bar 52-65 the theme reappears in a canon-like figure in the saxophones, echoed by the piano, serving to enact the narrative of the breaking down of the convict system following the discovery of gold (Figure 17).

Figure 16 *The Marauder Within* theme

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Another theme that serves narrative goals is the *In Remembrance* theme (Figure 18). This is first played by the harpsichord in Mvt. 2, *Time Immemorial*, bars 188-191 and consists of a series of parallel diatonic 6ths moving in two note motifs utilising the mixolydian b6 scale. This mode is described by Ron Miller as “romantically hopeful,” best understood through its modal interchange between I major and iv minor, creating a sense of both hope and a sense of melancholy (Miller 1996: 35). This theme serves the narrative by calling on the audience to reflect on the rich fabric of perspectives of Australia’s history and to come to remember the brutality and hardships inflicted through the 80 years of convictry and the ill treatment on indigenous population. This theme returns in Mvt. 10 *The Melancholy Bush*, now played by trombones and tenor saxophones and features an improvised solo by pianist Joseph O’Connor. The change in orchestration from harpsichord in Mvt. 2 to improvised piano in Mvt. 10 serves to suggest a transformation in character of the nation, from Georgian England (signified through the use of harpsichord) to 21st century Australia (signified through O’Connor’s piano improvisations).
4.2.2 Referencing non-Western Melodic Material

The use of melodic material to service artistic goals of embracing eclecticism and highlighting the diversity of individual experience is also evident in the adoption of Indian Hindustani music in River Meeting Suite. The use of call and response patterns to promote dialogue between performers from different backgrounds acts as a means of authenticating the music within both Indian and Western music traditions. This is highlighted in Mvt. 2 River Meeting, in which the main theme at Bars 25-40 (Figure 19) is played by soprano saxophone, repeated by the sitar two beats later. The melody uses a repeating rhythm of a three-quaver pickup leading into each bar. The first half of the melody (8 bars) uses a descending sequence and is predominantly diatonic, highlighting the ‘colourful’ notes of the mode such as the b6 and the added #4 (bar 30). The second half of the melody ascends to the b2 by rhythmic development of repeated crotchet triplets accompanied by the alto, tenor and baritone saxophones playing a chromatic modal harmonic accompaniment. The melody moves towards a climax at bar 35 when the soprano and sitar join in unison on the 5th and the raised 4th. These melding of the two melodic voices can be understood as symbolic of the two musical traditions coming together. The backgrounds played by the saxophone section also serves to provide a contemporary harmonic context for the non-Western inspired melodic material, contextualising it within jazz harmonic frameworks.
Figure 19 *River Meeting Suite*, Mvt. 2 *River Meeting*, bars 25-40
In *Between Worlds* I adapted melodic material from a Greek folk melody, Mirkovčoček (Figure 20), in an attempt at making the non-Western material unique to my experience and to convey narrative. The narrative of *Between Worlds* for string quartet and saxophone draws impetus from the experience of second generation immigrants - commonly described as ‘being caught between two worlds’ - as they face challenges of an ever shifting sense of self whilst facing pressure to conserve their country of origin’s culture. The work was also inspired by a diversity of personal experiences travelling, performing and studying in Greece, Germany, Norway, Cuba and The Dominican Republic in 2012-14. My background as a jazz saxophonist and familiarity with the instrument combined with my compositional skill set to create a work for the saxophone that was virtuosic and improvisatory. The work expands my exploration of the potential interactions between art music and world music paradigms, informed by my studies of Balkan Brass music at a week-long workshop in northern Greece in August 2013 that helped shape cross-cultural/genre issues in the music such as improvisation, rhythmic vitality and folk melodic invention. The cross-cultural significance of the work stems from melodic material adapted from Mirkovčoček however is shifted and expanded to encompass a new context of contemporary harmony and melodic dexterity, essentially making the folk material ‘my own’.

![Figure 20 Mirkovčoček, transcribed by author](image)

The theme first appears in the saxophone and violin 1 in Mvt. 1, which includes a harmonic departure from the mode of E mixolydian that utilises chromatic and triadic superimposition (Figure 21). In Mvt. 2 the theme is developed in a slower tempo with reharmonisation (Figure 22) utilising modal chromatic material. In Mvt. 3 I simply used motifs from the theme (Figure 23). I undertook these transformations of the original Greek folk material in an effort to authenticate the material and create new meaning, celebrate a diversity of experience and conveying the narrative suggested through the title *Between Worlds*. 

80
I utilise harmonisations of non-Western modal systems in my compositions for the purposes of authenticating the music and imbuing traditional forms with new harmonic languages that reflect my temporal, historical, cultural and aesthetic context. Through the harmonisation of this material and juxtaposition of rhythmic material adapted from Sheehan’s Number Diamonds, the music makes a conscious effort to speak to people of different backgrounds and cultures whilst at the same time transforming them relevant to my individual experience. This section outlines a case study of harmony in *Iron in the Blood* before examining other works.
The first movement, *The Marauder Within*, predominantly uses Olivier Messiaen’s diminished scale, Mode 2, sometimes referred to as auxiliary diminished scale or diminished blues scale. Harmonisation of this scale allows us to derive various chords based on dominant chords, major triads, and minor sixth chords. Messiaen described the possibilities of this harmonisation as a “parallel succession of chords” (Neidhöfer 2005). This mode is particularly used in Mvt. 1 *The Marauder Within*, such as at bars 5-76 in which the bass pedals on E and the saxophones play a combination of dominant and diminished rapid ascending scalic runs from bar 26, often dovetailing between the altos and tenors. The solo backgrounds at bar 95 also utilise this scale with the alto 1 and tenor 1 playing an ascending line using a dominant #11 and a straight diminished 7th chord (Figure 24). The dissonance created by the close intervals in the first half is unpredictably offset by the unison Bb note at the height of the line. This is similarly echoed by tenor 2 and baritone saxophone two bars later, with an ascending G dominant chord and Bb dominant b9 chord, respectively. These parts coalesce into an improvised ‘soup’ of dominant and diminished sounding arpeggios. Aleatoric devices are employed here, calling on the players to play the descending lines at their own pace with a grad accelerando, indicated through feathered beams. This aleatoric compositional material compliments the free improvisations of alto saxophonist Scott McConnachie and guitarist Ben Hauptmann and serves to highlight their individual improvisational voices in the context of composed aleatoric material.

Figure 24 *Iron in the Blood* Mvt. 1 *The Marauder Within*
In Mvt. 1 *The Marauder Within* bar 77 I use my own version of Stravinsky’s ‘Stomp Chord’ from *The Rite of Spring* (Figure 25). The chord similarly uses pandiatonicism with an Eb and E triad superimposed against each other. This is extended at the end of the movement from bars 251-256, in which half the ensemble stays on the Eb/E chord, whilst the saxophones and trumpets ascend in parallel motion in whole tones, achieving ever greater levels of intensity and dissonance. This chord and its accompanying rhythmic material utilising Sheehan’s Number Diamonds, is used as a motif throughout the work and serves to remind the audience of the shock of the experience of transportation for the convicts, who were forcibly transported to an unknown, unchartered land on the other side of the world, as well as the shock of invasion for the Australian Aborigines, who had never before been invaded.

**Figure 25 Iron in the Blood, Mvt. 1 The Marauder Within, bars 77-79**

4.2.3 Further Reharmonisation

The reharmonisation of themes throughout my folio serves to add increased harmonic tension and depth to the music, helping fulfill narrative and programmatic goals. This has been achieved through utilising modal contour, a term that is outlined by Ron Miller (1996) as the increasing ‘darkness’ of a mode as the result of the effects of altering by flattening or shifting of the semitones from right to left (Miller 1996: 28). Miller explains:
The resolution tendencies of modes are affected by the momentum (desire of the root to resolve to the root of Ionian), modal resolution (desire of a modal chord to release its tension by becoming the Ionian mode with the same root), and stability (the lack of any need of the modal chord to resolve) (Miller 1996: 28).

The use of modes can also be guided by a harmonic contour, providing a “map” for the modes to create movement from tension to release. *Iron in the Blood, Mvt. 7 A Strange Lottery* bars 129-140 (Figure 26) illustrates the employment of this concept where I reharmonise the *Children of the Convicts* theme, first heard in Mvt. 6 *Bunters Mollies and Sable Brethren* bars 177-200. The reharmonised melody is accompanied with a notated bass figure in double bass and LH piano.

Figure 26 *Iron in the Blood, Mvt. 7, A Strange Lottery*, bars 129-140, harmonic contour map indicated by dotted lines

4.2.4 Harmonisation of Non-Western Modal Systems

Aside from *Iron in the Blood* I have integrated various non-Western influences into my other compositions, including modal systems of Indian, Greek and Balinese for the purposes of re-inscribing the music with a new significance that is reflective of my temporal, historical, cultural and aesthetic contexts. In the context of the comments made by Sandy Evans and Simon Barker, whose work collaborates with non-Western performers in an embracing of eclecticism and
celebration of their individual experience, this is done in an attempt to authenticate their music within the scene, forging sounds that are new, distinct and unique to them. My work can be best understood within this context, in which the harmonisation of non-Western modal systems and adaption of rhythmic material from Sheehan’s Number Diamonds represents a conscious effort to speak to people of different cultures whilst at the same time imbuing them with relevance and meaning faithful to individual temporal, cultural and geographic contexts.

This idea is further understood through an analysis of the use of harmony in the work *River Meeting Suite* in which the harmonisation of traditional Indian scales or *melas* creates a transformation that simultaneously celebrates a myriad of traditions. One challenge of working with tabla was that the instrument is often set to one pitch during performance. My informed pragmatic strategy to grapple with this facet of the instrument was to design harmonic content of the five part suite around one note - C so that the performer would not have to spend time retuning between movements during performance. The modes were also chosen to reflect the different moods suggested by the evocative titles (Figure 27). For this purpose I consulted an informative text, *An Introduction to South Indian Music*, Charlie Mariano (2000), and its presentation of the 72 “Melakartas”. Mariano explains the melas as being “7-note scales like our western 7-note scales, ascending and descending with the same notes. We do have in Western music scales with less notes and more notes than seven, but the melas are the parent scales from which the ragas are constructed.” Mariano continues, “Westerners usually think a raga is an Indian scale, this is partly so, but to explain this further I’d like to quote Prof. P. Sambamoorthy: ‘Raga: literally that which creates passion or rasa, melody mould or melody type. Every raga is an aesthetic entity and has a tonal personality, and is capable of being recognized by a trained ear’” (Mariano, 2000: 7).

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33 A tabla is usually tuned between pieces but it takes longer to change the pitch altogether.
Figure 27 modes used in River Meeting Suite

Mv. 1 First Light
Mela: Sarasangi

Mv. 2 River Meeting
Mela: 8 Hanumatodi

Mv. 3 Nocturne
Mela: 29 Dhrasankarabharani

Mv. 4 Indian Boogie
Mela: 22 Kharharapriya

Mv. 5 Day of Rest
Mela: 65 Mechakalyani

An example of a Western transformation of the mela can be found in Mvt. 1 First Light in which a harmonisation of the mela creates the chord changes for the duo improvisation between alto saxophone (myself) and tenor saxophonist Matthew Ottignon. The form of the solo section from bars 122-149 utilises material from the theme from bars 4-75. Figure 28 shows a harmonisation of the Sarasangi mela and the form of the solo (Figure 29). This example highlights the notion of making these non-Western elements my own through creating improvisational platforms that adopt harmonic structures that are understood by both traditions.

Figure 28 Harmonisation of Sarasangi mela
Another example of this can be found in Oneirology Mvt. 2 Entering the Subconciousness in which I harmonise and adapt a mode popularised through the Ethiopiques Series. This series compiled various singles and albums from Amha Records, Kaifa Records, and Philips-Ethiopia during the 1960’s and 1970’s in Ethiopia and received wider recognition through its use in the soundtrack to the film Broken Flowers (2005) and sampling in the Hip Hop Reggae collaboration by Nas and Damien Marley As We Enter (2010, Universal Republic). The choice of this mode was designed to feature Compass Quartet’s tenor saxophonist Matthew Ottignon, who has considerable skill and experience performing within that style. Ottignon regularly performs and records with Ethiopian singer Dereb Desalegn, aka ‘Dereb the Ambassador’ in Sydney and has toured both Ethiopia and Japan. Ottignon also performs regularly with his own project Mister Ott and his album Drop it Like its ‘Ott (2015, Earshift Music) features the use of Ethiopian inspired melodic material with 1970’s funk style clavinet and drum feels. I wanted to feature this scale and Ottignon’s adaption of the Ethiopian performance style, with its use of wide and rapid vibrato and sweeping melodic phrases. The scale uses a harmonic minor scale with a raised fourth and is adapted from the 4th
mode of Anchihoye scale.\textsuperscript{34} I harmonised this scale by creating a 7/4 ostinato pattern and by using jazz idiomatic piano accompaniment voicings from bars 3-7. In bars 34-35 I use this scale again, calling on Ottignon to improvise over the ostinato pattern (Figure 30).

![Figure 30 Oneirology Mvt. 2 Entering the Subconsciousness, bars 34-35]

The use of aleatoric methods are used for the backgrounds, which are provided by the soprano and alto saxophone. These players are provided with a pitch collection and invited to choose own rhythms – staggered entry. The use of the scale in this contemporary classical and jazz context serves to authenticate the use of non-Western elements to proclaim the diversity of individual experience. In this example the composition exploits the eclectic range of experience of Ottignon in adapting Ethiopian scales and performance styles at the same time harmonising the mode to imbue it with relevance to the context of jazz and classical music.

4.3 Rhythmic Structures Using Sheehan’s Number Diamonds

My folio utilises a number system first developed by Australian composer and performer Greg Sheehan as a way of shifting the way we hear traditional forms and scales, as well as inscribing the music with local significance. Sheehan’s music is highly influenced by his exposure to Asian-

Pacific music traditions, and has developed a personal approach to creating number series called ‘number diamonds’ that can be used in a number of ways. It has become widely known throughout the Australian music community.\(^{35}\)

Sheehan has influenced a generation of musicians in Australia through his work as a percussionist and educator. His discography includes hundreds of recordings and is widely known for his work with Circle of Rhythm (*Metrical* 2008, Groovelands), with percussionists Bobby Singh and Ben Walsh. Sheehan is also an active exponent in music education and has conducted workshops and masterclasses throughout Australia. His ideas stem from South Indian Karnatik Music, and the Cook Islands that combine with his own personal musical idioms and ideas about generating number patterns and variants.

Number diamonds are a set of variants of a single row of numbers. Typically, the final number in the sequence is moved one step backwards through the row to create variations. The number of different variations equals the total amount of numbers. The numbers in the sequence represent groupings of rhythms, not subdivisions. Figure 31 shows the number diamond used throughout *Iron in the Blood*. The numbers should be read in the following order: 223 / 232 / 322. The diamond contains three diagonal numerical sequences, each adding up to seven.

![Figure 31 Sheehan’s Number Diamond](image)

I chose to start with 232 instead of 223 for the series since it provides a series of 2+3 followed 2+3, creating the appearance of groupings of 5’s. The number diamond 232 322 223 was used in a number of ways throughout the work. In Mvt. 1 *The Marauder Within* the number diamond was used to prescribe time signatures at bars 8-16 then 17-26. It is used as a rhythm with each

\(^{35}\) Little has been written on Sheehan in academia except for Simon Barker’s recent PhD exploring Sheehan’s process and its utilisation and adaptation in the context of Korean drumming vocabularies (Barker 2010: 65), and a Master’s research paper by guitarist/composer Luke O’Neill which analyses three of Sheehan’s compositions and explores ways in which he has applied the system to his own work (O’Neill 2013).
number representing a semiquaver, as played by the snare drum at 69. Figure 32 shows bar 85-92. The number diamond is played in rhythmic unison by the ensemble in the following sequence: 232 322 223. The pattern is repeated three times, indicated in brackets.

Figure 32 Iron in the Blood, Mvt. 1 The Marauder Within, bars 85-92.

Number diamonds can also be used as a launch pad for embellishment. In Mvt. 1 The Marauder Within, bars 135-145 (Figure 33) the number diamond develops to quaver triplets and a metric modulation (crotchet triplet = crotchet) at bar 146. At bar 245-256 the diamond is similarly used as a launch pad for embellishment and utilises other rhythms. At bar 245 and 248 the number diamond is played in rhythmic unison by the ensemble with the drums indicated to improvise solo with ensemble hits. From bar 251-256 the rhythm is embellished to create a heightened dramatic effect.
The adoption of Sheehan’s Number Diamonds in an effort to reshape the way we hear non-Western scales is illustrated in Border Control. Through the harmonisation of the Selisir scale (Figure 34) from Balinese Gamelan music, the work uses Sheehan’s Number Diamonds as a process to create rhythmic layers of descending scalar figures. The shifting harmony (adapted from Mvt. 1) and rapidly changing orchestration, in turn, changes how we ‘hear’ the Selisir scale by creating new contexts for the Balinese material. The significance of the scale is outlined by Colin McPhee in his book *Music in Bali: A Study in Form and Instrumental Organization in Balinese Orchestral Music* (1996), who describes the Selisir scale as being “so commonly employed by the gamelans in Bali that it may be considered the most representative form of Balinese five-tone pelog. It is the one scale of the gambuh system which appears to be known everywhere, both instrumentally and vocally” (McPhee 1966: 47). I wanted to avoid using the scale in a way that was aimed at merely replicating the sound and conjuring Balinese sentiment. Employing the rhythmic
process of Sheehan’s Number Diamonds was a way to engage with the non-Western element and create new stories through an expression of individual agency.

**Figure 34 Selisir Scale**

![Selisir Scale](image)

These ideas outline the broad philosophical ideas and narrative of the work. Suggested in the title, *Border Control*, the work serves as an investigation of the control of movement of people over national borders and the deconstruction of peoples’ perceptions to musical cross-fertilisation of traditions. The work is underscored by a sense of shifting rigidity in which these narrative elements undergo transformation towards an increasing sense of tension through the exertion of compositional control and rhythmic limitation.

**Figure 35 Border Control, Mvt. 3 bars 7-8 Integration of Sheehan’s Number Diamond using the Selisir Scale**

![Border Control, Mvt. 3 bars 7-8](image)

The adaption of the *Selisir* scale through employing Sheehan’s Number Diamond is most evident in Mvt. 3 where I used an 11 11 11 3 diamond borrowed from Korean percussionist Min Young and Melbourne bassist Christopher Hale, with whom I spent time at the 2014 Australian Art Orchestra Creative Music Intensive in Cairns. The movement is structured into 12 sections, each section using a sequence of 36 semiquavers, repeated three times. The rhythmic groupings are played in two parts that are grouped as follows: part 1- piccolo and vibraphone, part 2 – bass clarinet and C trumpet. The orchestration varies throughout, with changes being distinctly made between sections. The melodic material uses ascending lines from a repeated top note and varying harmonic material. The aesthetic undercurrent of this movement is a move towards a
heightened sense of rigidity through adherence to the process based composition structure, dictated through the employment of Sheehan’s Number Diamond.

The breakdown of the number patterns is shown in Figure 36. Section 1 serves as an introduction to the movement, played by trumpet and vibraphone. The number diamond pattern starts at the end of section 1 with the pattern 11 11 3 11. At each new section the number 3 moves forward through the sequence. The 11 is divided into a number of different subdivisions of 2’s and 3’s, often employing a retrograde pattern or some personal variation. The structure is loosely repeated from section 7, with the number diamond sequence starting again from section 8, 11 11 11 3, and moving through the sequence for each subsequent section. Sections 1, 6, 7, and 12 utilise the number 36 in a different way, combining the 2’s and 3’s in the order 333333222333. These sections serve as both an introduction, interlude and coda section. In turn the adaption of Sheehan’s Number Diamonds in this work has served to fulfill aesthetic goals of the work of highlighting diversity of experience in a world that often challenges the movement of people over national borders.
Figure 36 Border Control Mvt. 3 - use of number diamonds

Section 1 bars 1-6
3333333222333
333333222333
11 11 3 11 : 3332 2333 3 22223

Section 2 bars 7-12
11 11 3 11 : 3332 2333 3 22223
11 11 3 11 : 3332 2333 3 22223
11 11 3 11 : 3332 2333 3 22223

Section 3 bars 13-18
11 3 11 11 : 23222 3 23222 22232
11 3 11 11 : 23222 3 23222 22232
11 3 11 11 : 23222 3 23222 22232

Section 4 bars 19-24
3 11 11 11 : 3 23222 23222 2333
3 11 11 11 : 3 23222 23222 2333
3 11 11 11 : 3 23222 23222 2333

Section 5 bars 25-30
11 11 11 3 : 22223 22223 22223 3
11 11 11 3 : 22223 22223 22223 3
11 11 11 3 : 22223 22223 22223 3

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4.4 Summary

This chapter argues that eclecticism in my work is deployed in service of celebrating the multiplicity of individual practice in musical terms, and in turn, adapting these various musical elements in an effort to make them my own. The interviews in Chapter Two reflected how artists celebrate diversity of experience in their music through collaborations with non-Western musicians and adopting local influences. The integration of an Oz Rock aesthetic was understood as a strategy to indigenise artists’ music, demonstrated through examples by Sean Wayland and The Alcoholicks. This notion connects to my work in the way I synthesise local influences such as number sequences developed by percussionist Greg Sheehan and transform and reinvent Australian folk music in *Iron in the Blood*. I presented a theory that jazz artists frequently turn to non-Western and local influences as a way of highlighting their own individual experience and authenticating their place within the scene in Chapter Two. Within this context we can better understand connections with what they do to my reflections on my own works.

This chapter presented a case study of eclecticism through a discussion of the background and analysis of *Iron in the Blood*. The embracing of musical eclecticism is evident throughout the ten movements which displays references to a broad spectrum of jazz styles such as swing, contemporary, free jazz, ballad, traditional big band, drum and bass, minimalism, orchestral music, freely improvised music, Afro-beat, a ballad, exploration of odd meter time signatures and poly-meter rhythms. The repetition and transformation of cyclic themes throughout the work served programmatic goals depicting the journey of the convicts from slavery towards freedom, and the quest for Australia to form a sense of unified self. The work is also innovative in its reinvention of Australian folk themes using juxtaposition harmonic and rhythmic elements in an effort to characterise Australian cultural tropes in musical terms. Other compositional methods in the work included the referencing of folk and non-Western material, referencing of contour, texture, mode, form, harmonisation and use of embellishments, often aided through the use of improvisation.

Other ways of authenticating the music were explored in *River Meeting Suite*. The utilisation of call and response figures to promote dialogue between performers from different backgrounds served to promote dialogue between performers from different backgrounds as well as acting as a pragmatic compositional design that aided musicians to efficiently learn melodic material by ear. The harmonisation of the Indian modes in the work illustrated methods of generating material
for both the saxophonists and the Indian musicians to engage with in improvisational platforms. Similar transformation of melodic material was illustrated in *Between Worlds*, in which the reinvention of the Greek folk melody Mirkovčoček served to depict the narrative of the work, being caught between two worlds. The melody undergoes transformations throughout the three movements, shifting and expanding as it enters varying contexts of harmonic, textural, rhythmic and melodic constraints.

The idea of control is also explored in *Border Control*, in which explored the rigidity imposed on the flow of people over national borders and the dissemination of musical style in an increasing post-modern hybridised world. The utilisation of Sheehan’s Number Diamonds on applications of the Balinese *Selisir* scale served to shift how we ‘hear’ the non-Western material by applying it in new harmonic and rhythmic contexts. The referencing of folk and non-Western music is not in an attempt to ‘sound’ distinctly non-Western, or Australian for that matter. Rather, this chapter documents the creative process and accumulation of various influences from around the world just as any curious and tenacious individual artist/composer would do. I am interested in a pan-optical world view that does not distinguish or limit music to stylistic, cultural or national boundaries. These ideas are laid out in the following chapter, which summarises the findings of this research.
Chapter Five: Summary of Research

“Just as the jazz aesthetic would have it, the individual voice conquered all attempts to essentialise or classify it.”

Taylor E. Atkins

The re-inscribing of jazz music’s hegemonic connections with an array of influences significant to an artists’ individual experience is evident throughout this thesis and composition portfolio. The pragmatic embracing of eclecticism by interviewed artists is best understood as a way celebrating diversity and an expression of agency in musical terms. This notion aligns with commentators on the glocalised nature of jazz such as Atkins (2001, 2003) and Nicholson (2005), which reflected the music’s transnational nature whilst simultaneously acknowledging patterns of local influence and glocal dialects in non-American scenes. This evidence is made apparent within this study of the selected participants from the Sydney scene, as jazz artists were observed to turn to non-Western and Oz Rock influences as a way of highlighting their individual experience and in turn authenticating the music with temporal, cultural, geographic and aesthetic significance. The diversity of the artistic trajectories of the scene participants highlights evidence of how artists embrace eclecticism as a pathway towards finding originality for themselves in the scene and to forge new identities. In turn, this has manifested a paradoxical musical landscape that is heavily networked yet simultaneously ultra-diverse. These findings contextualise my portfolio and provide a deeper understanding of how the social and ideological energy plays out in my compositions. The works seek to present a rich fabric of perspectives, often through the use of improvisation by individual performers, and integrate non-Western influences in an effort to personalize these elements and effectively exploring the crossovers of jazz music, contemporary classical music and world music lexicons.

The literature on Australian jazz highlights the challenges of assessing jazz music purely on its sonic content. The studies undertaken by Shand, Whiteoak and Johnson revealed an eclectic assemblage of influences and individual voices but struggled to identify any common ground between the musicians. The employment of ethno-musicological methodologies in investigations by Jackson (1998), Monson (1996) and Berliner (1994), undertook a deeper examination of the cultural forces behind the production of jazz music in New York City. These studies provided a framework for this study to adapt to my context of Sydney. Chapter One outlined how extracting

36 Atkins 2001: 262
two significant themes from comments on the Australian jazz scene, eclecticism and pragmatism, served to provide focus for this study on testing broad conceptions using ethnographic methods. The scene participants for the interviews were selected by my informed decisions on significant participants from a pool of several generations of musicians.

Chapter Two outlined the findings of the interviews which suggested that artists embraced eclecticism as a way of finding their own unique position within the scene, and that the theme was multifaceted. Whiteoak (1990) presented the term ‘eclecticism’ as indicative of Australian musicians’ ingenuity in dealing with limited primary sources of influence at a geographically removed distance from jazz music’s vanguard of the United States. In later periods of activity during the 1960’s he asserted that the music’s diversification was influenced by jazz musicians circulating in a number of new music cooperatives which led to the adoption of electronics, the influence of experimental art, non-Western influences and cross-overs with contemporary rock.

My findings paint a similar picture underscored by a deeper perspective of the musician’s broad conception of what jazz is and can be, which was identified as embedded with an innovative spirit within limits. Eclecticism was also driven by motivations of economic diversification, in which a musicians’ ‘universal competence’ enabled the exploitation of jazz improvisatory skills in related music contexts, serving to be enacted as a survival strategy of building a career in a limited and pragmatic scene. In a unique way, the economic diversification was also found to be driven by personal loyalties akin to concepts of ‘mateship’. The embracing of eclecticism was also evident in the way that artists adopted the sounds and aesthetic of Oz Rock, aligning their music with the cultural climate of the working class in an attempt to authenticate their music and as a sign of being or ‘becoming’ Australian. The break from expectations of indigenising their music with Australian Aboriginal music, instead turning towards Asian traditional music, was seen as a way of reshaping the way artists think about making music, as well as responding to personal significance and attraction to new sounds and fusions.

Musicians’ creative decisions were found to be based on factors unique to their experience, a response to economic, cultural, historical, creative, aesthetic and temporal settings. The second half of Chapter Two discussed the findings of the interviews in relation to these issues, revealing how musicians utilise pragmatic compositional design in order to generate music within efficient means and how bands are formed based around ‘aesthetic kinship’ which acts as a survival strategy during periods of inactivity. This is made more poignant given the pragmatic nature of the scene, whereby limited opportunities and absence of hierarchical structures motivates
musicians to create their own industries through entrepreneurship and collectivisation. I presented the notion of an “improvised aesthetic” in which musicians enact their own pragmatic response to circumstances unique to their experience, which they can subconsciously adhere to or ignore.

Based on the findings of Chapter Two, the analysis of my compositions serves to reveal how the social and ideological energy from the scene plays out in my compositions. Through the pursuit of improvisational platforms, my works achieve programmatic and aesthetic goals as outlined in the discussion of each work. The aesthetic of using improvisation to colour notated ensemble sections with individual and collective improvised interpretations of notated passages allows a fabric of rich perspectives to emerge. The works in turn embrace the paradoxical nature of the scene in which highlights the distinctive voices of a number of musicians whose performance styles span a wide spectrum of jazz music. In turn, the compositional design reflects this, with its adaption of numerous influences and styles, and the presentation of numerous tropes and ideas that speak to many whilst simultaneously transforming them. This is heightened through the utilisation of individual performers’ improvisations who are called upon to advance the music on their own terms.

*Iron in the Blood* served as an exemplary case study of eclecticism, given that the impetus draws upon the numerous sources of oratory history within Robert Hughes’ *The Fatal Shore*. The work explores in musical terms the narrative of the convicts’ difficult path to freedom, and the eventual dismantling of The System through the repetition and transformation of cyclic themes and the exploitation of individual and collective improvisations. The use of narration also serves to create a case study of how musicians interact with narrative through improvisation, asserting their idiosyncratic musical language whilst being guided by performance indications and aleatoric methods. An underlying theme of the work appears to be an exploration of unity and disparity, suggested through the increasing collectivisation of improvisations and melodic materials, and the celebration of diversity, personified through the embracing of eclecticism in terms of musical styles, transformation of cyclical themes and use of disparate individual performers’ styles. The work also presents tropes and ideas of Australian culture such as the ‘drunk larrikin’ personified through the adaptation of Australian folk song *Botany Bay*, the lament of the suffering and near destruction of the indigenous population, and the debunking of the idea that crime is genetic and runs in the ‘blood’. These ideas are simultaneously transformed, often through the aid of individual performers, into unique iterations.
I wish to continue to explore Australian folk material in some capacity in my future work. I was fascinated with the discovery of the online archive of the National Library of Australia, where I found the field recording and transcription of Sally Sloane singing her version of *Wild Colonial Boy*. As discussed earlier, this melodic material was reharmonised and arranged in Mvt. 10 *Melancholy Bush (Wild Colonial Boy)*. Rediscovering Australian folk music offers unique insight into a folk history that appears to be under utilised. I would also like to continue to write for the Earshift Orchestra, with its eclectic and unique combination of Sydney and Melbourne musicians.

The aesthetic motivations for turning towards Asian traditional music can also be understood as a way of artists’ highlighting the diversity of experience and adapting non-Western elements into their music in an attempt to make it their own and authenticate their practice. This is evident in *River Meeting Suite*, which utilised certain melodic, structural, textural, motivic and rhythmic aspects typified in Indian Karnatic and Hindustani Music with harmonic devices from jazz. The reinscribing of non-Western elements was highlighted in the harmonisation of non-Western modal systems, facilitating the interpretation of the composition by performers from both jazz and Indian backgrounds. Compositional design and improvisation platforms that utilise call and response patterns promoted exchange between the musicians and highlighted a pragmatic way of learning notated material during rehearsals. I felt that after completing this project I was only starting to grapple with the concepts of Indian music. As they say, I was at the ‘tip of the iceberg’, and have much to learn in order to consider myself a student of Indian music.

Similarly to *River Meeting Suite*, *Oneirology* highlighted the various approaches taken to composing for performers from different backgrounds and levels of improvisational skills. Framed within the context of jazz and contemporary classical music, the work touched many cross-idiomatic issues such as notation and improvisation, group interaction, orchestration and classical composition structures. *Oneirology* connects to the other works in the portfolio, particularly *Iron in the Blood* in the way improvisation plays a central role in achieving programmatic goals. Whilst *Iron in the Blood* follows the path of the convicts from tyranny and imperial slave labour to freedom, experienced through the diversity of individual improvised responses to the narration, *Oneirology* is underpinned by an aesthetic goal of departure from reality through the narrative of the study of dreams and corporate espionage through inception, as played out in Christopher Nolan’s film *Inception*. These programmatic goals are achieved through increasing spatial and dissonant
harmonic, rhythmic and melodic, and through the juxtaposition of earlier themes in Mvt. 4 Deja Vu (reality check?). The use of improvisation plays a central role in highlighting these concepts through performance indications that guide their improvisations to serve artistic goals whilst allowing freedom for the performer. The work is innovative in its use and adaptation of Nolan’s film, its utilisation of improvisation in a classical context, and its cross-genre applications.

The transformation of non-Western material is also evident in Between Worlds for string quartet and saxophone in three movements. The work highlights the referencing of ‘Mirkov čoček’, a Greek folk melody that is reinvented with contemporary harmonic and melodic dexterity and moves through a series of transformations and shifting orchestration. The new context of the melody serves narrative and programmatic goals of the work, which present the idea of being ‘caught between worlds’. The work presented certain challenges of creating improvisation platforms for musicians from classical backgrounds, however through an increased specificity, players’ improvisations were suitably garnered to achieve narrative goals whilst still allowing them to exert individual interpretations. Aleatoric devices were used in the second movement in an attempt to create a shift in mood and explore further the notion of being caught between two musical lexicons – notated and improvised music, to efficiently create unique soundscapes.

Border Control also draws on similar themes to Between Worlds, which is underpinned by a shifting sense of rigidity in which the use of melodic and rhythm material becomes increasingly restrained and controlled. The work served as a response to the Australian government’s unnecessarily hard-hearted asylum seeker policy, the ongoing attempt to control the movement of people over national borders, as well as changing perceptions and acceptance of a diversity of musical styles. The adaption of the Balinese Selisir scale through the employment of Sheehan’s Number Diamonds highlights the way that I effectively reshape the way that we hear the Balinese Selisir scale.

The general eclecticism highlighted in my composition portfolio is congruent with the interview participant’s comments about living in an eclectic age (Mike Nock), the importance of variety of styles (James Greening) and how jazz musicians use styles as vehicles to develop different artistic, learning and social outcomes (Lucian McGuiness). Similarly, it reflects a broad definition of jazz and a turn to Asia through both direct collaboration with Indian musicians in the work River Meeting Suite, and the reinvention of non-Western material such as the harmonisation of Ethiopian and Balinese scales in Oneirology and Border Control, in an effort to personalise it. I tend
to agree with comments by Phillip Slater, that the overlap of jazz with other under utilised influences is what makes the music most interesting. I prefer my music to not be judged in terms of ‘jazz’ but ‘new music’ or ‘creative music’. My practice has never been overly concerned with defining jazz music as a style in itself, rather moving forward with a panoptical worldview that reflects the multicultural city that I live in – Sydney.

My motivations for exploring a wide range of musical styles is driven by artistic rather than economic reasons. However, increased activity in a broad range of musical styles has broadened my network in many ways. In light of Phillip Slater’s drought analogy, whereby projects make the most of having limited performances throughout the year with a life span of about five years, it makes sense to diversify original composition opportunities to provide a range of outcomes. Driven by a natural curiosity for exploration and collaboration with musicians beyond the jazz idiom, I undertook a number of excursions and engagement with non-Western music throughout the research period and the influences on the music have been discussed throughout this thesis.

The eclecticism of the portfolio highlights the challenges and perhaps how it is impossible to formulate a cultural, national or uniform approach to compositional and performance practice in jazz music. An artist’s musical voice, their style, and their creative practice, are not and should not be bound by national borders. Often the most interesting musicians are the ones that embrace and seek out diverse sets of influences to combine with the familiar. How is it possible to draw similarities and claim that the following musicians are distinctly Australian: The Necks, Bernie McGann, Allan Browne and Paul Grabowsky, or for US artists such as Wayne Shorter, Pat Metheny and Jason Moran.

Whilst the scope was to test themes through the interviews and critical commentary on the folio, approaches to cultural identity in music could be even broader in scope and inclusive of the production of the folio into CDs, imagery and language used in marketing and promotional campaigns, local and international reviews of the albums and audience responses. These questions will help create a more inclusive response to the way artists create authenticity and national identity through music. The debate continues in jazz circles around authenticity, and through answering these questions we will go one step further to its wider acceptance. Through an acceptance of jazz music’s origins in diversity of influence and hybridity, a horizontal transgression of musical styles, then it will follow that cultural and national boundaries will be less of an issue.
I perceive this folio as only the beginning of my composition and performance practice in many respects. I am fortunate to have undertaken such a journey of deep reflection, self-discovery, a broadening of horizons and opening of new possibilities in my practice. I hope to continue to expand my oeuvre in integrating elements of improvisation and non-Western music into jazz and contemporary classical music. There are numerous points raised in this thesis that warrant further examination. These include experimentation with writing for different instruments and vocals, larger ensembles (orchestras), and electronics. Also mixed ensembles with more diverse backgrounds would provide broader findings.

The folio is a direct manifestation, response and reaction to my national, temporal, cultural and social frames. Whilst a so-called ‘jazz’ musician composed the compositions, they prove that an artist is perfectly capable of transcending such stereotypes and creating a portfolio that exists beyond stylistic and national boundaries. My inspiration behind the works has been to engage musicians in new ways and for audiences to perceive the world through my perspective. I consider myself a pluralist, someone with a pragmatic interpretation of music’s humanistic qualities: its innocence, its spirituality and playful motivations, its quest for story telling and relaying new perspectives of the world, its depth of interconnectedness, its investigative science and its inherent ability to create responses in the listener (forced or indirect). I believe that composers should endeavour to be themselves, that individuality should be fostered, that one should avoid unnecessary national, stylistic and cultural boundaries and pursue an individual voice not only for themselves, but for the diversity of the human legacy.

The folio therefore is best viewed as a picture in time of my creative response to the diversity of my experience living in Sydney, Australia in the 21st century. The themes of the thesis manifest in ways both cognizant and incongruently in my creative practice, and resembles both an ineradicable national identity and a pluralist transnational identity. These ideas are reflected in Phillip Slater’s comments about music and history in being a “snapshot” in time of our various influences, experiences and individual process. The folio is a reflection and distillation of my perception of the universe through a lens of cultural, educational, social interactions, professional practice, and individual critical thinking, abstractly broadcast through the medium of music. Through analysis, critical commentary and personal reflection, this type of interpretation becomes all the more apparent.
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Appendix

1. Ethics Approval Letter

   Mvt. 2 *Time Immemorial*,
   performed by the Sydney Conservatorium of Music Modern Music Ensemble,
   conducted by Daryl Pratt,
   with guest soloists Michael Cullen – voice,
   Jeremy Rose – soprano saxophone,
   Steve Barry – piano and harpsichord,
   Peter Koopman – guitar.
Dear Dr Coady

Thank you for your correspondence dated 14 January addressing comments made to you by the SCM Low Risk Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC).

On 14 January the Chair of the HREC considered this information and approved your protocol entitled “Australian Jazz Identity and Creative Practice: Local cultural and creative processes in the Sydney Jazz scene”.

Details of the approval are as follows:

Protocol No.: SCM0008
Approval Date: 14 January 2013
First Annual Report Due: 13 January 2014
Authorised Personnel: Dr Christopher Coady
Mr Jeremy Rose
Professor Matthew Hindson

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 protocol including changes to research personnel must be approved by the HREC by submitting a Modification Form before the research project can proceed.

**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 me should you require further information or clarification.

Yours sincerely

Dr Helen Mitchell  
Chair  
SCM Low Risk Human Research Ethics Committee  

cc: Mr Jeremy Rose  
jros7415@uni.sydney.edu.au

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.