Musical Islands

Musical Islands:
Exploring Connections between Music, Place and Research

Edited by

Elizabeth Mackinlay, Brydie-Leigh Bartleet
and Katelyn Barney

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Carolyn Philpott is currently completing a PhD at the University of Tasmania Conservatorium of Music. Under the supervision of Anne-Marie Forbes, she is researching the projection of an Australian identity in the music and persona of expatriate composer Malcolm Williamson. She has authored and co-authored a number of published articles, including the entry on Williamson in the most recent edition of *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, and has taught several music history and musicology units at the Tasmanian Conservatorium.

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PREFACE

HUIB SCHIPPERS
PRESIDENT, MUSICOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA

Welcome to our island! The program for the conference that inspired this publication looked somewhat like a travel brochure. The ambiguity was intentional. When we started planning the conference, we set out to design an adventurous program, acknowledging established and well-charted territories, but also seeking new perspectives and recognising emerging areas, in close partnership with our co-hosts, the Musicological Society of New Zealand.

This approach allowed us to accommodate the full range of music research Australia and New Zealand have to offer today. That is no accident. The Musicological Society of Australia has always prided itself on its breadth, being one of the few national bodies in the discipline that has never separated musicology and ethnomusicology, supports both established and emerging scholars, and embraces relevant new sub-disciplines through dedicated working groups, for instance on Indigenous music, gender studies, and music and technology.

The papers by music scholars in this volume resonate with this commitment to diversity. In the spirit of John Donne's reverberant phrase "no man is an island," the papers collected here (almost half of which explicitly honour the conference theme in their title) constitute reflections on connections and disconnections from culture to culture, time to time, island to island, person to person, between sub-disciplines of music research, and between musicians and audiences.

We wish the reader an inspiring journey.

BEGINNING THE MUSICAL VOYAGE: AN INTRODUCTION

ELIZABETH MACKINLAY,
BRYDIE-LEIGH BARTLEET
AND KATELYN BARNEY

Introduction

The image of a windswept palm tree swaying over a white sandy beach was the original inspiration for this book. Such an image immediately conjures up dreamy sensations of lazing on a tropical island far away from the hectic pace of our daily lives. However, this image goes deeper than the idyllic scene that first comes to mind. The island is a powerful metaphor in everyday speech which extends almost naturally into several academic disciplines, including musicology (Eriksen 1993). Islands are imagined as isolated and unique places where strange, exotic, different and unexpected treasures can be found by daring adventurers. The magic inherent within this positioning of islands as places of discovery is an aspect which permeates the theoretical, methodological and analytical boundaries of this book in ways that are both clear, subtle and innovative.

Australia is an island continent, affectionately termed the land "down under", and our unique geographical location similarly brings us distinctive relationships to and experiences of place, identity, music and culture. As inhabitants of a land bounded by sea, many Australians embody deep seated feelings of connection, fear, awe, and pride of the country and its places we call home. However, Eriksen (1993) suggests that the isolation of islands is presumed and incorrect, and that island societies have always migrated and been involved in extensive networks of communication and exchange with their neighbours. Increasingly Australia has become aware of and sought to strengthen our place as a nation within the Asia-Pacific region, developing links with countries such as Japan, China, Indonesia, New Zealand and Papua New Guinea whom are variously described as "close neighbours and true friends" (Sullivan 1998). In fact, much music research in the Asia-Pacific focuses on these

and near-by actual islands. There has been a long-standing tradition of ethnomusicological studies that have explored the lives and musical experiences of localised cultures in such settings. In these contexts, connections between cultural identity, music-making and a sense of place have often remained strong, despite the threats of submersion into the rising oceans around them. As Stokes suggests:

> The musical event…evokes and organises collective memories and present experiences of place with an intensity, power and simplicity unmatched by any other social activity (Stokes 1994, 3).

There has also been an enduring tradition of musicological studies that have examined developments in music composition and performance in major is/land areas such as Australia and New Zealand. Once again, connections between musicians' identities, musical practice and the uniqueness of geographical location and isolation have been at the forefront of such investigations.

This island image can also be interpreted in a more metaphorical way. Musical subcultures may be viewed as solitary islands, or as points of connection with their surrounding cultural landscapes or seascapes. Likewise, explorations into musicians' subjectivities and creative practice can be examined for their individual idiosyncrasies as well as their connections to their broader environments. The metaphor stretches even further when we look at the music industry and the emerging sea of challenges and possibilities it currently faces. Indeed, the musicologists that inhabit and investigate these metaphorical islands also travel between states of isolation and population in their musical voyages.

The book features revised versions of a select number of papers that were originally delivered at the Combined Conference of the Australian and New Zealand Musicological Societies in Brisbane, Queensland from 22-25 November 2007. Like this book, the conference was entitled "Islands," and papers were invited under a range of themes, including: music in Australia and New Zealand Torres Strait Islander and Pacific Islander music; studies in gender and sexuality; reflections on institutions and society; and research in popular music; performance practice; history and analysis. The select papers that are included in this book touch on many of these themes, and provide novel and insightful reflections on the concept of musical islands. The papers have been peer-reviewed by a host of national and international readers. It is hoped that this collection will give a sense of current musicological research in Australia and New Zealand, both in established and well-charted territories, as well as new and emerging areas.

Literal islands: Localised contexts and musical journeys across cultures

Part one of the book features a broad range of studies that explore literal islands, in terms of current perspectives in ethnomusicology and the musical traditions of different cultural contexts in Australia and the Pacific. Authors open up a conversation about the centrality of performance to Island life, experiences and culture, and its resonances across the water. Deborah Wong begins by exploring an ethnomusicology of hope in a time of trauma. Drawing on critical pedagogy theory and her own ethnomusicological research on Taiko, Wong investigates the shared sensibilities between ethnomusicologists and activists and calls for the lines between research, advocacy and cultural work to become increasingly blurred in the future. Kirsty Gillespie and Richard Moyle both examine ethnomusicological research in a specific island nation—Papua New Guinea (PNG). Gillespie considers the past, present and future of ethnomusicological research in PNG in terms of where the discipline has historically been situated, current perspectives, and where ethnomusicological research in PNG might be heading. Moyle focuses on a specific category of song called *lluu* from Takuu, a Polynesian Outlier 200 kilometres from the east coast of Bougainville, PNG. Changing cultural contexts, Sum Suraweera then analyses traditional drumming from the Low-Country of the island of Sri Lanka. An exploration of this unique tradition, within the context of the drum and dance piece known as the *Yahan Dhakma,* is the focus of this chapter.

Looking towards Australia and the Asia Pacific, Katelyn Barney and Lexine Solomon reflect on a collaborative research project that they undertook with Torres Strait Islander women who perform contempoary music. They consider the possibilities of collaborative research to rethink relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and draw on the experiences of three mainland Torres Strait Islander women contemporary performers to explore some of the key issues which frame their research project. Also focusing on mainland based Torres Strait Islander music, David Salisbury examines songs produced by Torres Strait workers employed as fettlers on the railways of North Queensland. Analysing two specific songs, Salisbury illustrates how Torres Strait Islander performers use music for expressions of culture, identity and connection to place. Moving to another island in the Asia Pacific, Jon Fitzgerald and Philip Hayward explore Futunese (instrumentally augmented) stringband music in Vanuatu by providing a historical introduction to the style and discussing the principle styles represented in

its recorded repertoire. They also examine how the style has come to represent an important identity marker for contemporary Futunese communities of Vanuatu. Linda Kouvaras then explores Australian composer Stuart Greenbaum's work *Ice Man*. Her chapter uncovers a range of compositional devices that Greenbaum uses to portray what she sees as a typical dualistic attitude harboured by city dwellers: namely, one of simultaneous yearning for, and repulsion in abject horror toward, the outback.

Carolyn Philpott discusses the media representation of Malcolm Williamson, one of many Australian creative artists who relocated to England after World War II. Drawing on collections of Williamson's papers held in archives, her chapter focuses on the media's role in fabricating a rift between the composer and the Royal family, and the implications of such damaging speculation on his career and experiences as an Australian expatriate. Anne-Marie Forbes documents renowned violinist, Fritz Kreisler's only concert tour of Australia and New Zealand in 1925. Her chapter paints a vivid picture of how Kreisler held Australia's concert halls captive, providing his audiences with an inspirational first-hand experience of European musical culture.

Metaphorical islands: Connections between research traditions, musicians and musical voyages

Part two of the book features a diverse array of studies that explore metaphorical islands, through contemporary perspectives on gender, sexuality, musicians and the music industry, and historical outlooks on music traditions and music making. Narelle McCoy examines the central role of women in Irish keening (*caoineadh*) or ritual lamentation. Her chapter explores its "submersion" through the eventual suppression of the rite and its subsequent "de-ritualisation." Jodie Taylor investigates the culture of queer punk and the aesthetic sensibilities queer punks use to articulate queer lives and desires via musical composition and performance. Her chapter calls for the need to give a voice to queer Australian music and to contribute to the beginnings of queer musicological discourse in Australian music academies. Elizabeth Mackinlay engages in a feminist reading of the musical island of motherhood. Drawing on her own personal experiences and conversations with other mothers who sing to their children, her chapter reveals the biases which work to sustain mothers' absences from musicological discourse and reflects upon the role that singing plays as relationship, experience, pedagogy and identity in the lives of mothers.

Hugh Brown theorises recent changes to the music business and explores the ways in which independent musicians are using New Media to assist them to build a sustainable musical living. His chapter reports on an international survey of self-described "independent" musicians, whose careers are benefiting from these industry changes. Steve Dillon examines the virtual island of music research as applied to a suite of generative software called jam2jam. His chapter highlights the value of musicological research methodologies within software development for music education. Craig De Wilde's chapter explores the relationship between the music industry and Starbucks Coffee Company. He discusses how Starbucks has branched out from selling coffee to owning its own record label called, Hear Music, and he highlights the shift that is occurring in the music retailing industry.

Linda Kouvaras discusses the ways in which Nick Cave's "Song of Joy" subverts the usual positioning of the murderer as someone Other and pathological. Her chapter shows the "normal," non-violent male as potentially inhabiting the psychic "island" of the sociopath—to the extent that Cave writes *himself* into the narrative. Kheng K. Koay investigates the music of Daniel Bernard Roumain and his fusion of hiphop and art music. Koay argues that Roumain is working his way towards a new musical language and shows how the hybrid nature of Roumain's compositions serves as an example of the development of musical language in twenty-first-century music. John Napier ponders on the question of how single themes might unite the rather diverse repertoires of music he engages with. His chapter draws on three disjunct works to explore the manner in which particular musical events, both within works or as discrete works themselves, become assimilated and therefore lose, to some extent, their isolated particularity.

Stephanie Rocke explores how the hybrid musical Mass has manifested itself in a number of different models. Her chapter examines those masses which include some liturgical texts but intersperse them with other texts from disparate secular, religious and quasi-religious sources. She also looks at those masses which use non-liturgical texts and which use the word "Mass" and sometimes liturgical movement names, and those which partially de-Christianise the liturgy in order to create a sacred work that has ambiguous religious affiliations. Michael Halliwell considers Thomas Adès's operatic version of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* and focuses on the depiction of two characters in the play, Ariel and Caliban. Drawing on examples from the opera, Halliwell suggests the depiction of these two characters in Adès's opera expands and intensifies the Island trope in its interpretation of the play. Alan Maddox examines the role of

timbre in Italian recitative. He suggests that an understanding of, and responsiveness to, the sonority of early modern poetic language emerges as an important resource for performers in the declamation of Italian recitative.

Imogen Coward looks at the late quartets of Beethoven. Her chapter takes a new cross-disciplinary approach to studying these works, offering fresh insights and a more detailed contextual understanding of style in the composer's late String Quartets through situating these musical islands in their surrounding sea of art history and theory of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Marian Poole analyses the musical perspectives that three men—Arthur Jacobs, Richard Hoffmann and Peter Platt—and their influence on the New Zealand music public in 1957. Her chapter explores the extent to which their cultural imperatives led them to disregard the sense of cultural identity that was emerging amidst New Zealanders.

Conclusion: The voyage begins

This collection of papers not only raises creative and insightful reflections on concepts of musical islands, both in a literal and metaphorical sense; it also reflects the current interests and concerns of musicians and music researchers amidst a sea of constant change. In many respects, this book deliberately draws upon Australia's unique status as an island continent to highlight contemporary music research practices which are performed and travelling in novel and challenging ways, daring in their commitment to chart new routes, and courageous in their will to cross into places rarely if ever visited within the academic discipline of musicology. The musicological island we have imagined here does not exist in isolation however. The waters between Australian music research and other islands in the Asia-Pacific are constantly ebbing and flowing towards and away from each other, reflecting the intricate yet powerful ways our musics, research practices and relationships as academics continue to nourish and enhance one another. Yates (2009) wisely commented that "The larger the island of knowledge, the longer the shoreline of mystery" and we hope you enjoy this musical voyage along this exciting and ever-changing coastline of music research in Australia and New Zealand.

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PART ONE:

LITERAL ISLANDS: LOCALISED CONTEXTS AND MUSICAL JOURNEYS ACROSS CULTURES

IA. Current Perspectives on Ethnomusicology

AN ETHNOMUSICOLOGY OF HOPE IN A TIME OF TRAUMA

DEBORAH WONG

Introduction

In this essay, I explore shared sensibilities between politically progressive activists and researchers who do ethnographic research (e.g., folklorists and ethnomusicologists). Some ethnomusicologists self-identify as activists but most don't, yet I have come to think our research is predisposed for advocacy if we care to take it there. My ideas are deeply informed by the critical pedagogy movement, a lively area founded by theorist and teacher Paulo Freire. I will make my argument through several case studies, including a recent position statement issued by the Society for Ethnomusicology addressing music and torture and my own research on Japanese American drumming (*taiko*).

I aim to connect two observations: (1) we live in a time of trauma, and (2) a generalised, often unspoken commitment to social justice marks most work in ethnomusicology. Let me try to put these matters together; I will use language and rhetoric in an unabashedly idealised way to try to move us, as ethnographers, into a more explicit relationship with our own inclinations. I am not trying to say that all ethnomusicologists must share the same profile, nor am I presenting a manifesto. Rather, I hope to sharpen up and articulate certain trends that are already out there. I have no desire to force-fit all ethnomusicologists onto the same bandwagon, but ethnomusicologists are often too content just to "hang out" on the front porch (or in the nightclub) and to leave it at that. I think we could take it further. My purpose is to move us into a different framework.

In context

North American cultures of commemoration are pervasive. There is so much trauma and so many efforts to commemorate it even as we commence new horrors. Last week at the time of this writing, network television in the U.S. was full of anniversary documentaries about the

death of Princess Diana and very little, really, about the Iraq war. Last week I woke up in a hotel in New York City on September 11, 2007 and the names of the dead were already being read in a commemorative ritual broadcast live on TV; by 11am, they were only up to the "Ms." We commemorate the deaths of celebrities, the holocausts of here, there, and then, and everyday deaths in traffic accidents. As folklorist Holly Everett puts it, commemorative roadside crosses are part of a cultural landscape of liminal space that are deeply polysemic and "commemorate the unthinkable" while "crossing religious, cultural, and class lines" (2002, 118-19).

In Riverside, California where I live, a curb-side altar commemorated the death of Joseph Hill, a young African American man killed by police officers in 2006 during a routine traffic stop. The informality, ephemerality, and recognisability of this altar was a troubling indication of both its function and its quotidian recognition of how violence is everywhere and nowhere. Several weeks later, the altar was gone and at the time of writing, two years later, the case has yet to be addressed by the local police review commission.

Consider the CNN-produced documentary titled *Firehouse 54-4: A Larry King Special* on the station in New York City that lost fifteen men on 9-11. This documentary exemplifies mediatised commemoration. The presentation, framing, and performance of commemoration relies on deeply-established and deeply commercialised tropes of national pride, sacrifice, and militarised hero-making. Indeed, almost all quotidian memorialising is presented through these formulas—through practices deployed by real people, and the media representation of those practices. Firehouse 54-4: A Larry King Special is marked by strong genre conventions: a relentlessly hushed tone, a dramaturgical emphasis on personal connections to the men, a hagiographic attention to the representation of personal items, a music score of long sustained pitches over a drone that creates a sense of timelessness and suspension. We are given access to the most intimate details of grief: the stepmother's tears, the family members' notes on the firehouse bulletin board.

People in every era believe that their horrors and injustices are the most notable. Perhaps we're always living in Kali Yuga, the final era in the Hindu Buddhist universe that always ends in fire, destruction, and the inevitability of starting over again. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, we've made commemoration into a banal gesture, at once pervasive, channelled through mediatised kitsch, and sharpened through a dull language of victimhood.