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CHAPTER 51

MUSIC

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THE LITERATURE on music, both overseas and in Australia, tends to be historical or biographical, and to focus as much on the interpreter as on the composer. Indeed, Australia has not yet produced a composer whose fame equals that of some performers and consequently more has been written about, for example, Melba and Sutherland than about Sculthorpe and Meale.

The annotations to the books listed in the bibliography generally make some allusion to their style. Overall, it must be admitted that the level is not very high and that, in many cases, a book is included for its content—it is not the *best* book on a subject but the only one, and hence it must be listed. On this matter, a review article by Therese Radic in the *Australian book review* (58, Feb–March 1984, 32–3) makes some points with almost brutal directness. She begins ‘There is a long tradition in Australian music publishing that only the worst will do’ and ends as follows:

Has music publishing changed for the better? Not yet, but it’s because the right book manuscripts are not being offered, not because publishers are as uninterested in the field as they were before 1967 when Macmillan (Sun) first took up the cause with Covell. Our musicologists seem incapable of writing for the general market, which is why journalists are the writers of our better books on music. It is long past time for a change.

Despite some journalistic overemphasis in the article, the general accuracy of Radic’s charges must be admitted, and one can only hope that Australia’s Bicentenary will act as a stimulus for the change she so rightly sees as being needed.

The bibliography surveys monographs dealing specifically with music in Australia; however, an enormous quantity of supplementary material is to be found via other channels and, consequently, if a particular aspect is not covered by any of the books listed, the search should be extended with the help of the general reference tools listed in section II of this volume. In particular, the use of *APAIS* will help with locating articles in journals and magazines, and *ANB* should be consulted for books issued since the compilation of this bibliography. Other general tools which contain much supplementary material are the *Australian encyclopaedia* and the *Australian dictionary of biography*.

This literature survey is confined to music since European settlement; books dealing with Aboriginal music will be found with the other material in section IV on Aborigines. It includes publications on music and performers, both classical and popular, historical and contemporary,

creative and interpretative. In the field of 'music theatre', opera is covered, but ballet is dealt with in the following chapter on the performing arts.

There is an intrinsic problem in the bibliography of music, in that one is attempting to list writings about an artform which does not easily lend itself to the printed word. What is more, although music can of course be printed, comparatively little of it is, at least in Australia, and it will frequently happen that a listener to the radio will hear a performance of a composition which exists only in that performance—and in the manuscript by the composer. It is one of the permanent frustrations of the music librarian that a seemingly straightforward request by a client for, say, a piano piece by an Australian composer cannot be satisfied, as the work has never been published. Only by approaching the composer, his or her agent or estate, or an archive, can the music librarian offer any hope of success—and often the hope turns out to be illusory.

THE FIRST CENTURY

It is perhaps appropriate that the first identifiable composition to have been played in Australia was the 'Rogue's march'; the performance took place in February 1788, on the occasion of the drumming out of a sailor who had been caught in the tents of the women convicts.

Early music-making obviously reflected the nature of the settlement, with band music and traditional ballads being the most prominent genres; many of the ballads are still current. The main sources were of course British and Irish, and this 'reflective' quality of Australian music has remained a constant feature in that the only really indigenous music, that of the Aborigines, has had comparatively little influence on composers working in the traditional European genres, beyond the use of some themes or imitation of some of the styles.

The ballads reflect many aspects of life in the new colony: the plight of convicts, the exploits of bushrangers, the gold rush, the hardships of the early squatters, the shearers. As the colony grew in size and permanence, aspects of the musical background of the settlers were replicated around Sydney and the other large cities. Thus, the building of churches led to the commissioning of organs and the installation of bells. These two topics are extensively treated in the books by Matthews (1969) and Keating (1979). Similarly the growth of permanent settlements was accompanied by developments in the social forms of music. The nineteenth century was the century of choral singing, and many choral societies were established for the entertainment and improvement of both participants and audiences. An extensive history of one such society has been written by Carne (1954). Another social use of music is for dancing, and Andrews (1979) provides the reader with both a history and examples of the dances themselves.

The 'grandest' kind of music as entertainment is usually considered to be opera, and the colony was soon able to enjoy what was, under the circumstances, extensive and enterprising fare. Some information on the early history of opera in Australia may be found in John Cargher (1977), but a far more detailed, scholarly and fascinating account is provided by Harold Love (1981).

THE SECOND CENTURY

As the colony grew larger, more prosperous and more self-assured and, after Federation, became a nation ready to assert its independence and to provide for its population all the benefits of a modern society, Australian musical life correspondingly became more varied, complete and firmly based. Where music-making in the first century depended largely on the enterprise of an individual musician or impresario, the twentieth century has seen the rise of organisations which have as their sole or principal responsibility the provision of music. Most but by no means all of these organisations are government supported—the ABC orchestras and the Australian Opera, for example. The Australian Broadcasting Corporation was created in 1932 and by 1936 had set up orchestras in all six states. This is not to imply that there had been none before; there had, but usually semiprofessional and semipermanent. Buttrose (1982) is a lively history of the ABC orchestras but, despite the author's first-hand experience, there is still a need for a comprehensive and scholarly treatment of these orchestras whose performances in the concert hall and through broadcasts have brought music into the lives of so many Australians.

Another organisation which now looms so large in the perception of music-loving Australians that it seems it must always have existed is Musica Viva. It is, however, a relatively recently formed body (1945) and, like the ABC orchestras, it awaits a chronicler.

Until 1956, opera performances in Australia depended on ad hoc ventures and occasional tours, such as those of Dame Nellie Melba. The Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust Company was established in 1956, later to become the Australian Opera. Cargher (1977) provides a considerable amount of information about it, and some of the state companies, but no-one has been brave enough to walk through the minefield of operatic politics to write the real and complete story.

Australian singers—some biographies of whom are included in the bibliography—have achieved considerable fame, mostly overseas. The phenomenon is well known: the talented artist goes overseas in search of greater opportunities, greater challenges, greater fame. This is equally true of popular music, and the honour roll of Australian popular music stars is a list of emigrants to London, New York or Los Angeles.

Australian music is naturally influenced by worldwide trends and Australian performers, whether of opera or rock'n'roll, are part of an international pool of musicians whose national origins are irrelevant. Some continue to perform regularly in Australia and consequently exert an influence on the local scene. An example in the popular music field was Johnny O'Keefe; his biography by Bryden-Brown (1982) is an interesting account of the Australian rock'n'roll scene in the early 1960s.

A few accounts of popular singers, rock groups and popular music generally in Australia are listed in the bibliography. Unfortunately, much of the material aims at a mass audience and espouses the credo that 'one picture is worth a thousand words'. An intelligent analysis of the quite startling changes in popular music over the last fifty or more years is yet to be written.

Jazz in Australia has been much better served; Bisset (1979) is a good model of well-documented, interestingly written history. Similarly, Hayes, Scribner and Magee's encyclopaedia (1976), despite its unpretentious physical appearance, is a mine of facts about the extensive history of jazz in Australia.

Mention has been made of the effect of international trends on Australian performers and of the lack of difference attributable to national origin. Fortunately, this is less true in the world of contemporary classical composition. Australian twentieth century composers are of course aware of developments in music in Europe and elsewhere—many have studied and worked extensively overseas. But there is a marked interest in using these internationally based compositional skills to capture specifically Australian elements: the landscape, the indigenous population, the vegetation, the history. This aspect of Australian musical bibliography is well covered: Murdoch (1972) and the work edited by Callaway and Tunley (1978) provide excellent treatment of contemporary classical composition.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the Australia Music Centre compiled a series of reference books of enormous value to anyone interested in Australian music; unfortunately the centre has now considerably scaled down its undertakings. It would be a tragedy if at least some of these reference tools are not continued—most notably the series of *Catalogues of Australian compositions* (1976–78). If they cannot be issued in revised editions, they should be provided with periodic supplements.

The one important general work written about Australian music to date is by Roger Covell (1967). Ranging freely between history, evaluation of individual composers, analysis of specific works and prediction of the future, it is consistently illuminating and an excellent introduction for the non-specialist. However, it is now twenty years since the last edition, so recent important developments are not included.



REFERENCE WORKS

AUSTRALIA MUSIC CENTRE. *Catalogues of Australian compositions, 1–8*. Sydney, The Centre, 1976–78.

Guides to music composed in Australia. Arrangement is generally under composers, including date of composition and whether published or recorded. Each number has a distinctive title.

AUSTRALIAN *directory of music organizations*. Sydney, Australia Music Centre, 1980. 156 p.

Embraces a great variety of some 3000 bodies, including jazz clubs, choral societies, libraries, orchestras, radio stations and so on. Addresses and contact people are given for all; histories for some. First published in 1978.

AUSTRALIAN *music directory*. Melbourne, Australian Music Directory, 1981–

Annual guide to the substantially popular music industry.

COVELL, R. AND BROWN, P. *Music resources in Australian libraries: a report prepared for the Australian Advisory Council on Bibliographical Services*. Canberra, AACOBs, 1970. 109 p.

Examines 'the accessibility of those materials of music that are essential to the maintenance of the Western tradition or of its blending with other traditions'.

CRISP, D. *Bibliography of Australian music: an index to monographs, journal articles and theses*. Armidale, NSW, Australian Music Studies Project, 1982. 260 p. (Australian music studies, 1.)

A key to publishing about Australian music and musicians. Subject index precedes the actual bibliography, which is arranged alphabetically by author.

DRUMMOND, P.J. ed. *Australian directory of music research*. Sydney, Australia Music Centre, 1978. 399 p.

A compendium of information about both research and researchers, consisting of an alphabetical who's who of scholars. Includes classified index, with abstracts to the scholarships.

GLENNON, J.A. *Australian music and musicians*. Adelaide, Rigby, 1968. 291 p, illus, music.

Outline histories of the different music forms in Australia, with 100 biographies and about 130 thumbnail sketches.

HILL, C. 'Directory for Australia', in R. Benton, ed, *Directory of music research libraries*. Kassel, Barenreiter, 1979, 4, 1–38.

Guide to major collections of music in Australia, arranged by the cities or suburbs where the libraries are located. Information about holdings and access is given.

MURDOCH, J. *A handbook of Australian music*. Melbourne, Sun Books, 1983. 158 p.

Contains over 1000 entries listing in one alphabetical sequence, people, compositions, places, organisations, books and awards.

HISTORY AND APPRECIATION

BIRD, J. *Percy Grainger*. Melbourne, Sun Books, 1982. 319 p, illus.

Grainger has attained a degree of notoriety, as much on the strength of his unusual psychology as his revolutionary musical genius. First published in 1976.

BREWER, F.C. *Drama and music in New South Wales*. Sydney, Government Printer, 1892. 95 p.

Music is dealt with in the second part of this interesting booklet.

BUTTROSE, C. *Playing for Australia: a story about ABC orchestras and music in Australia*. Melbourne, Macmillan; Sydney, ABC, 1982. 186 p, illus.

Not a history, but serves that need until one is written. The author's direct knowledge of conductors, musicians and ABC administrators gives the work a very personal flavour.

CALLAWAY, F. AND TUNLEY, D. eds, *Australian composition in the twentieth century*. OUP, 1978. 248 p, illus.

Essays on contemporary composers. Rich in music illustrations, with entertaining lists of works.

CARNE, W.A. *A century of harmony: the official centenary history of the Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Society*. Melbourne, The Society, 1954. 305 p, illus.

A chronological account of the activities of this long-established choral society.

COVELL, R. *Australia's music: themes of a new society*. Melbourne, Sun Books, 1967. 356 p.

A major history of music in Australia ranging from speculation about convict music through discussion of contemporary composers to evaluation of organisations such as the ABC.

GAME, P. *The music sellers*. Melbourne, Hawthorn, 1976. 345 p, illus.

History of the firm of Allans Music Australia which, because of its concert organising, piano sales and sheet music publishing, reflected the total range of musical activities in Australia from the 1850s onward.

HANNAN, M. *Peter Sculthorpe: his music and ideas, 1929–1979*. UQP, 1982. 235 p, illus, music.

Based on detailed research, this is a critical study of Sculthorpe's work.

HEWLETT, A. *Cause to rejoice: the life of John Bishop*. Adelaide, Rigby, 1983. 159 p, illus.

This authorised biography of the architect of the Adelaide Festival of Arts is based on archives and family papers and embraces his work at the Elder Conservatorium.

KEATING, J.D. *Bells in Australia*. MUP, 1979. 150 p, illus.

A detailed historical survey of bells and campanology in Australia.

MCCREDIE, A.D. *Musicological studies in Australia from the beginnings to the present*. SUP for the Australian Academy of Humanities, 1979. 38 p.

This short book looks at the present state of music as a research activity in Australia.

MATTHEWS, E.N. *Colonial organs and organ builders*. MUP, 1969. 277 p, illus.

Information about organs, mainly in Victorian churches, and a history of a firm of Melbourne organ builders. Data on other states can be found in John Maidment's *Gazetteer of pipe organs in Australia* (Melbourne, Society of Organists [Vic], 1970–).

MURDOCH, J. *Australia's contemporary composers*. Melbourne, Macmillan, 1972. 223 p, illus.

Gives details of training and professional achievement for 33 composers, a list of works, a discography and a photograph.

ORCHARD, W.A. *Music in Australia: more than 150 years of development*. Melbourne, Georgian House, 1952. 238 p, illus.

Half history, half topical survey of music in Australia, with individual chapters for 'Chamber music', 'Musical associations' and so on.

THOMSON, J.M. *A distant music: the life and times of Alfred Hill, 1870–1960*. OUP, 1980. 239 p, illus, music.

Biography of Alfred Hill, a legendary figure in Australian and New Zealand music, based both on friendship with Hill and archives held in Sydney. An introduction to the classical music world of first half of the twentieth century.

TUNLEY, D. AND SYMONS, D. eds, *The contemporary Australian composer and society: report of a seminar*. Perth, Dept of Music, University of WA, 1971. 88 p.

The theme of these papers was to consider methods of improving the professional status of the Australian composer.

OPERA AND SINGING

ADAMS, B. *La Stupenda: a biography of Joan Sutherland*. Melbourne, Hutchinson, 1980. 329 p, illus.

A 'semiofficial' biography, complete with discography and list of roles. It gives a detailed account of her life before and after the watershed of *Lucia di Lammermoor* in 1959.

CARGHER, J. *Opera and ballet in Australia*. Sydney, Cassell, 1977. 352 p, illus.

A popular history of operatic activity, profusely illustrated and well indexed.

DAWSON, P. *Fifty years of song*. London, Hutchinson, 1952. 239 p, illus.

Dawson was one of Australia's favourite singers, especially in the field of popular ballads. His autobiography is an interesting anecdotal account of his career.

HARRISON, K. *Dark man, white world: a portrait of tenor Harold Blair*. Melbourne, Novalit, 1975. 285 p, illus.

An informal biography of Blair, the first Aborigine to achieve celebrity as a singer, though his career was relatively short.

HETHERINGTON, J.A. *Melba: a biography*. London, Faber, 1973. 312 p, illus.

Many biographies (and an autobiography) of Melba exist, but this is probably the most literate. Melba was a phenomenon in the world of opera and had considerable influence on music in Australia, though not on Australian music. First published in 1967.

LOVE, HHR. *The golden age of Australian opera: W.S. Lyster and his companies, 1861-1880*. Sydney, Currency Press, 1981. 309 p, illus.

This account of the twenty years of operatic performances under Lyster's entrepreneurship is a fascinating social history, giving a colourful portrayal of theatrical life in that period.

MACKENZIE, B. AND MACKENZIE, F. *Singers of Australia: from Melba to Sutherland*. Melbourne, Lansdowne, 1967. 309 p, illus.

This biographical study of Australian (and New Zealand) singers is still excellent, despite its age. For each singer a photograph is provided and a sketch of his or her career.

WARREN-SMITH, N. *25 years of Australian opera*. By N. Warren-Smith with F. Salter. OUP, 1983. 180 p, illus.

There is an immediacy about Salter's transcription of tapes made by Warren-Smith shortly before his death, which communicates the facts and the atmosphere of the opera scene in Australia from the mid-1950s.

FOLKSONG AND TRADITIONAL

ANDERSON, H.M. *The story of Australian folksong* (rev edn). Melbourne, Hill of Content, 1970. 261 p, illus, music.

Ninety-one songs with extensive historical material arranged in topical chapters, with music for the first verse followed by the text of the whole song. First published as *Colonial ballads* in 1955.

ANDREWS, S. *Take your partners: traditional dancing in Australia*. Melbourne, Hyland House, 1979. 208 p, illus, music.

A history of dancing to the 1960s. Includes a manual of dances with tunes included. First published in 1974.

EDWARDS, R. *The big book of Australian folk song*. Adelaide, Rigby, 1976. 507 p, illus, music.

Music and verses of 300 songs, with brief collecting and historical notes. Appendix contains indexes of variant titles, places of publication and first lines.

MAGOFFIN, R. *Waltzing Matilda, song of Australia: a folk history*. Charters Towers, Qld, Mimosa Press, 1983. 101 p, illus.

Australia's most popular song has generated a small body of writing, of which this is a lively example.

MANIFOLD, JS. *The Penguin Australian songbook*. Ringwood, Vic, Penguin, 1964. 180 p, music.

Some 80 songs, grouped by subject (for example, 'Bushrangers', 'Pastoral Australia'). For each the compiler provides the melody for the first verse, the full text and annotations identifying sources and variants. See also Scott (1980).

MEREDITH, J. AND ANDERSON, H. *Folksongs of Australia and the men and women who sang them*. Sydney, Ure Smith, 1968. 300 p, illus.

The first half consists of songs from the Sydney area, the second from 'west of the Blue Mountains'. The music and texts of the songs are linked by a historical and biographical narrative.

SCOTT, W.N. *The second Penguin Australian songbook*. Ringwood, Vic, Penguin, 1980. 198 p, illus, music.

Similar in arrangement to its predecessor by Manifold (1964) and designed to complement it, including songs of a somewhat different style, parodies, topical ballads and music hall songs.

WOSITZKY, J. AND NEWTON, D. eds, *The Bushwackers Australian song book*. Melbourne, Nelson, 1978. 135 p, illus, map.

A genuine colonial entertainment mixture of music, dancing instruction and relevant snippets from books.

JAZZ AND POPULAR MUSIC

BISSET, A. *Black roots, white flowers: a history of jazz in Australia*. Sydney, Golden Press, 1979. 182, (9) p, illus.

This well-researched survey goes back to the tentative beginnings of jazz before World War I. Emphasis on the last 50 years and Australian jazz musicians.

BROWN, J.L. *Skyhooks million dollar riff*. Melbourne, Dingo, 1975. 160 p, illus.

Band history and individual biographies of the members of Skyhooks, Australia's popular rock'n'roll group of the 1970s.

BRIDEN-BROWN, J. *J.O.K: the official Johnny O'Keefe story*. Sydney, Doubleday, 1982. 183 p, illus.

This illustrated biography of the 'king' of Australian rock'n'roll draws upon first-hand accounts to tell its story, in journalistic style. Useful discography and index.

HAYES, M. et al, *The encyclopedia of Australian jazz*. Brisbane, Encyclopedia of Australian Jazz, 1976. 112 p.

This modestly produced book contains much information, mostly under the names of musicians, with substantial entries including lists of Australian jazz magazines and jazz conventions.

MCGRATH, N. *Noel McGrath's Australian encyclopedia of rock*. Melbourne, Outback Press, 1978. 376 p, illus.

Important for the discographies provided and the 'chart' ratings achieved by the artists listed. Includes some biographies.

ROGERS, R.B. AND O'BRIEN, D. *Rock 'n roll Australia: the Australian pop scene, 1954-1964*. Sydney, Cassell, 1975. 190 p, illus.

This profusely illustrated account of the birth and growth of rock'n'roll is addressed to the teenager.

WATSON, E. *Country music in Australia* (rev edn). Sydney, Rodeo, 1976. 172 p, illus.

Biographical chapters of the principal exponents of the country music idiom in Australia. The style, despite its American influences, has quite a following, and the discography of over 40 pages gives evidence of this. First published in 1975.

WILLIAMS, M. *The Australian jazz explosion*. A & R, 1981. 171 p, illus.

Biographies based on interviews with the principal Australian jazz musicians. The lack of overall assessment is counterbalanced by the insights offered by the musicians.