

# "Music - if so it may be called:" perception and response in the documentation of Aboriginal music in nineteenth century Australia

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"Music - If So it May be Called:"  
Perception and Response in the  
Documentation of Aboriginal Music in Nineteenth Century Australia

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Completed in partial fulfillment for the degree of  
Master of Music

Department of Music  
The University of New South Wales  
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## Statement of Sources

Apart from acknowledged borrowings from other sources, the work in this thesis, to my knowledge, is original. No part of this thesis has been submitted to any other institution for academic credit.

Nicole Saintilan

## Abstract

In 1901 Sir Walter Baldwin Spencer was amongst the first to make recordings of Aboriginal music with his documentation of central Australian speech and song. Since this time a substantial body of recordings has accrued providing a resource for an understanding of Aboriginal music in the twentieth century. But what is known of Aboriginal music in the time between white settlement and Federation?

For years, historians have held up a few nineteenth century notations of Aboriginal music as monuments of historical importance. Names such as Lesueur, Field, Lumholtz, Lhotsky, Nathan, and Torrance, are familiar to anyone who has read accounts of early music making in Australia, but the importance of their work has not yet been clarified. This thesis explores the significance of these early notations and addresses questions of how they could be viewed in light of nineteenth century Aboriginal music and the attitudes of the societies that produced them.

'Perception and response' refer to how coupled societies deal with cultural difference. Through notations, we see one society's perceptions of difference and the way they choose to express them. The works when viewed according to aspects such as method of observation and notation, date and reason for notation, and use of the finished product, form groups which highlight major trends in thought and attitude. Although after examination these works may show us very little about Aboriginal music, they are more than just the first notations of music in this country or fairly funny souvenirs of the past; they are significant as, through the changing styles of transcription, we can see the history of attitudes towards indigenous Australians in the nineteenth century.



## Table of Contents

	page
Statement of Sources	ii
Abstract	iii
List of Tables and Musical examples	vi
Acknowledgements	ix
Chapter One. Introduction: Australian Travel Writing	
1.1. Aims	1
1.2. Literature Survey	3
Chapter Two. Maritime Exploration	
2.1. Introduction	5
2.2. First Contacts	5
2.3. The Enlightenment	6
2.4. Baudin Voyage	11
2.5. G.L.D. de Rienzi	16
2.6. Compilations	21
2.6.1. Charles Wilkes	22
2.6.2. Louis de Fréycinet	25
2.7. Conclusion	27
Chapter Three. Interior Exploration	
3.1. Introduction - International Trends	30
3.2. Australian Inland Exploration	31
3.2.2. Mapping	31
3.2.3. Naming	32
3.2.4. Ambition and Fame	33
3.2.5. The Romance Novel	33

3.2.6. The Education of Explorers	35
3.3. Examples of Inland Notation	35
3.3.2. Barron Field	36
3.3.3. Carl Lumholtz	39
3.3.4. Tom Petrie	43
3.3.5. A.S.E. Rolfe	46
3.4. Conclusion	50
Chapter Four. Music in the Parlour	
4.1. Introduction -	51
4.2. Parlour Music	51
4.3.1. Johann Lhotsky and Messrs. Pearson, Josephson, and Sippe	53
4.3.2. Versifying from the Original	58
4.4. Isaac Nathan	59
4.5. Conclusion	71
Chapter Five. "The Music of the Natural Folk"	
5.1. Introduction: The rise of Anthropology	73
5.2. Expeditions	74
5.3. Societies and Journals	77
5.4. Compilations and Theses	83
5.5. Conclusion	90
Chapter Six. Conclusion	
6.1. The End of an Era: Movie Films and Wax Cylinder Phonographs	91
6.2. Perception and Response in Nineteenth Century Australia	92
Bibliography	95

## List of Musical Examples

	page
Example 2.1. Lesueur Notaton - Baudin Expedition (1800-1804)	13-14
a) Chant b) Air de Danse c) Cri de Ralliement	
d) Musique Malaise et Chinoise	
Example 2.2. G.L.D. de Rienzi Notation (1833)	18-20
a) Air des marios Bougois de l'Il Celebes(Malaisie)	
b) Koubayoung. - Le Prisonier, Air javan (Malaisie)	
c) Tsin Sa, Air des Chinoise habitant le nord da l'île Bornéo (Malaisie)	
d) Air chanté par une demoiselle metive Hispano Main danaise de Zamboanga (Malaisie)	
e) Air de danse des Iles Haoual (Polynésie)	
f) Air de l'île Gouap, dans les Carolines. (Polynésie)	
g) Chanson comique des Mariannais (Polynésie)	
h) Air original du ballet de Monterouma (Polynésie)	
i) Chant de Mort de Taiti. (Polynésie)	
j) Air des Papouas de la Nouvelle Guinée. (Mélanésie)	
k) Air des indigènes de l'île Traman, dan le groupe d'Arou (Mélanésie)	
l) Air Australien des Sauvages de la Terre d'Arnheim	
Example 2.3. Charles Wilkes Collection (1838-1842)	24
a) untitled b) "Merry dunbar aroa," c) untitled, d) "A bang a bang"	
Example 2.4. Louis de Freycinet Collection (1817, published 1839)	26
a) Danse du Kangeroo, b) A-bang a-bang (Field), c) Chant (Lesueur),	

d) Air de Peche, e) Kou-hi (Lesueur)

Example 3.1. Barron Field Notation (1822)	38
"A-bang a-bang"	
Example 3.2. Carl Lumholtz Notation (1888)	40-41
a) "La-la-la-la-la " b) "Mol-le-mom-bâ" c) "Wom-bon ma-rae-ry"	
Example 3.3. Tom Petrie Notation (1837-1904)	45
a) "Jabal-kan wad-li " b) "Mi-na "	
Example 3.4. A.S.E. Rolfe Song (c. 1840)	47-48
Little Boy Lost	
Example 4.1. John Lhotsky Arrangement (1834)	55-57
a) Song of the Women of the Menero Tribe	
b) Arranged in a more easy manner	
c) With lithographed flowers*	
Example 4.2. Isaac Nathan Arrangement (1848)	62
"Koo-ee"	
Example 4.3. Isaac Nathan Arrangement (1848)	65-70
Koorinda Braia	
Example 5.1. C. Hermann Beckler Notations (1868)	76
a) Corroberri I, b) Klage oder Todtenlied,	
c) Corroberri II, d) Corroberri III	



Example 5.2. C. Handley Notation (1897)	79
Burnett River Corroboree	
Example 5.3. G.W. Torrance Notations (1887)	81-82
a) Kurburu's Song b) Wenberi's Song c) Corroboree Song	
Example 5.4. John Mathew Notations (1887)	84
a) Corroboree I, b) Corroboree II	
Example 5.5. Philip Chauncy Notation (1878)	85
Example 5.6. Karl Hagen Collection (1892)	87-89
a) Beckler Notations b) Wilkes Notations (including Field),	
c) Lesueur Notations d) Field Notation e) Freycinet Notation (including Field),	
f) Chauncy Notation	



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## Chapter One

### Introduction

#### 1.1. Aim

In 1902 Walter R. Harper, the editor of a leading anthropological journal in Australia, *Science of Man*, was unsure if the word 'music' could be correctly applied to Australian Aboriginal songs. His comment "music - if so it may be called" capped a century of ethnological writings and notations rich in subjectivity and bias, as it was an accepted practice to apply Western assumptions to non-Western music. This thesis deals with nineteenth century notations of Aboriginal music, as they show the history of attitudes from cultural contact in Australia.

The concept of subjectivity in documentation has become a major concern for some scholars dealing with Australian history. Recent studies, such as those by Bernard Smith and Mary Louise Pratt, have looked at documentation from 'contact zones,' and traced the political and social personality of the documentor from biases inherent in the document. 'Contact zones' is explained by Pratt as:

social spaces are where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination - like colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today.<sup>1</sup>

Nineteenth century Australia was a bitter contact zone, the documentation which flowed from this clash illustrated two cultures totally ill-suited, and unable to adapt to each other. Although some sensitive observation came from this period, it was only to prove that indigenous culture was withering in the shadow of aggressive new settlers. A recurrent feature of nineteenth century notations is the belief that music was being saved from extinction. Barron Field writes, "I have been thus minute, because in a few years

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<sup>1</sup>Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992) 4.



perhaps, even the corrobory will be no more," Isaac Nathan also comments that "but for our timely arrival in this colony, [this music] might for ever have sunk into oblivion."<sup>2</sup> The sympathetic view of Lhotsky and his musical gentlemen can be seen in the text they chose, "unprotected people, unprotected why are we? and our children shrink so fastly, unprotected why are we?"<sup>3</sup> The motive of preservation mixed with popular genera of travel writing and parlour music produced an unusual response from non-indigenous Australians, which became a unique part of Australia's musical and social history.

Cultural contact and documentation was often motivated by personal ambition and commerce, and was carried out under the guise of preservation, science or exploration. This can be seen with the first European voyages to the Pacific, with commercial motives to name and claim and scientific motives to map coastlines and collect specimens for research. Towards the end of the century the rise of scholastic institutions and journals meant that methods of observation were examined by a wider public resulting in more documentation by informed observers. This thesis will explore a range of early notations and accounts of Aboriginal music in an attempt to highlight the transition in attitude and understanding of indigenous culture in the nineteenth century.

Notations of Aboriginal music are usually found in travel writings such as journals, letters, reports, oral texts, navigational narrative, survival tales, and among art works. Chapter two of this thesis deals with the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in Australia, when maritime expeditions carried scientists who were encouraged to document their contact with the new land and culture. Travel writing continued in Australia in the nineteenth century when inland exploration became fashionable, chapters three and four will deal with this. Chapter five deals with notations from the end of the nineteenth century, when interest in indigenous culture ripened and notations showing a

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<sup>2</sup>Barron Field, "Journal over the Blue Mountains of New South Wales, October 1822," *Fourteen Journeys Over the Blue Mountains of New South Wales 1813-1841*, ed. George Mackaness (Sydney: Horwitz, 1965) 126. Isaac Nathan, *The Southern Euphrosyne and Australian Miscellany* (London: Whittaker, 1948) 105.

<sup>3</sup>John Lhotsky, *Song of the Women of the Menero Tribe*. Mitchell Library: Sydney Q78.4/11.



sophisticated choice of symbols began appear. As well as in expedition narratives, notation from this period appeared in scholarly journals, compilations, and theses. Chapter six draws together major themes and styles of notation and makes some general conclusions on the hypotheses in the thesis.

## 1.2. Literature Survey

There is an abundance of documentation on Aboriginal music made in the nineteenth century. The treatment of all this material is well out of the scope of this thesis, so while it is advantageous to look at the large amount of written material, it is only done so in relation to the hypothesis made about notations. Notations have been chosen as the basis of the study because they are limited in number and hold a prestigious place in our written history. Also the act of notation in some cases extends the observation as a stylized response poses a further set of variables in the range of responses available: this can uncover additional biases or unconscious attitudes of the observer. The hypothesis of the thesis is that while these notations show us very little about Aboriginal music in the nineteenth century, through the changing styles of notation, we can see changing attitudes from the societies towards each other. Research questions when dealing with a notation have been: what does this notation show about the way the music was observed, what range of tools were used to document the music, did the observer wish to 'correct' the music or add to it, and if so what criterion did they use for corrections, and what possible use did the observer foresee for this notation.

The primary sources that have been consulted are: journals, diaries, published notes, facsimiles of artwork and notations. This includes accounts of maritime voyages (for example the atlas of Péron, and the journals of De Rienzi, Wilkes and Fréycinet), arrangement and notations by expeditionaries and composers (Field, Rolfe, Lhotsky and Nathan), diaries and reminiscences (Pietrie), compilations (such as those by Brough-Smyth, Curr, and Hagen), and early anthropological discussions and accounts of social behaviour (Lumholtz, Beckler, Torrance, and Haddon). Secondary material includes

studies of political and social movements in contact zones such as those by Smith, Plomley, and Pratt, also studies which deal with ethnohistory and cross-cultural evaluation such as those by McBryde and Pantaleoni. A number of Australian music studies have already dealt with these early notations, such as those by Covell, Moyle, Berzins, (Wenzel) Carboyde, and Glenon.

The travel literature and ethnological studies of the nineteenth century, along with related secondary studies provide a rich field for study of frontier contact history. More than just providing a single narrative of who went where and named what, it provides a clear look at the history of racial attitudes in Australia. For Australian music history, these examples of notated music are of paramount importance. During the nineteenth century in Australia two distinct types of music existed in Australia. They were so unmatched and the racial attitudes so strong that a fusion between them was limited.<sup>4</sup> Notations of this music show the first attempts at defining the cultural gap between the two. A sophisticated Australian ethnomusicology emerged, which, it must be remembered, had its roots in the notations and documentations of the nineteenth century.

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<sup>4</sup>Forms of acculturated music in Australia were not documented until well into the twentieth century. These forms were produced by the subordinate culture using musical forms and instruments from the dominant culture such as guitars in folk songs. Various Western art music composers have incorporated Aboriginal instruments and 'melodies' into their pieces but this has not been such a wide spread phenomena as the use of popular music forms by Aboriginal musicians.



## Chapter Two

### Voyages to the Pacific

#### 2.1. Introduction

Documentations of indigenous cultures of the Pacific in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century by maritime voyagers show the beginnings of a theory of observation. The scientific theories used for assessing the countries of the Pacific were developed for the sole purpose of having a true and accurate description of nature and conditions there. However, when documenting music, scientists (and many others to follow them) chose symbols and words to describe their experience which were more reflective of their own culture than the culture they were observing. In his study of European perceptions of Pacific cultures, Bernard Smith points out that as perception is conditioned by knowing, there is an inescapable relativity in most documentation.<sup>1</sup>

#### 2.2. First Contacts

Contact between Aborigines and people from other cultures seems to have started a very long time before 1788. Archeological remains and cultural traits and legends of the Aborigines of Northern Australia indicate that there must have been constant contact between the Macassans who came from the Celebes and also the Papuans and Torres Strait Islanders. It has also been suggested that a wide range of people visited Australia before the end of the eighteenth century:

It is known that Papuans visited Cape York but it also appears possible that Chinese, Indian, Malayan, Arab, Melanesian and Polynesian people could have visited northern Australia. They certainly had sufficient skills in seamanship to accomplish such voyages and in Aboriginal lore there are stories about various kinds of strangers who came to these shores.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Bernard Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific* (Sydney: Harper and Row 1984) vii.

<sup>2</sup>Baiba Berzins, *The Coming of the Strangers* (Sydney: Collins, 1988) 18.

European exploration of the Indian Ocean and South Pacific was led by Portugal and Spain. By 1497, the Portuguese navigated around South Africa and managed to sail to India and the East Indies, establishing trade in spices and materials. At this time the Spanish circumnavigated South America and the Pacific to reach the same region. The Dutch were interested in the East Indies for commercial reasons and were not interested in wasting money on "voyages of curiosity;" their desire to discover new commercial interests did mean they voyaged to Cape York via Indonesia in 1605.<sup>3</sup> In 1611 the Dutch changed their shipping routes so that after rounding the Cape of Good Hope they sailed 4000 miles east before turning north, which halved the time it took to sail to the East Indies. In strong winds they were blown very close to the Western Australian coastline where they met with Aborigines, but did not record any detailed observations. The Dutch made a few voyages to the south of the continent, then lost interest as there were no commercial incentives for continued exploration.<sup>4</sup>

### 2.3. The Enlightenment

In 1622, the British started voyages to this area. Their interests in the region were commercial and scientific although commercial interests were to eventually predominate and lead to the British colonisation of Australia. Another nation which displayed similar interests was France. So similar were their interests that by the end of the eighteenth century they were still considering whether to set up a colony in Australia alongside the British. At this time, both France and Britain were enduring a stage of intellectual change and academic enquiry. The rivalry between the clergy and developing organisations such as The Royal Academy" in London and the "Société des Observations de l'Homme" in Paris produced a number of conflicting views on how to observe people in their different environments. A developing form of anthropology was combined with theories of Neo-classicism, evolution and the Noble Savage to produce some advanced but symptomatic observations.

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<sup>3</sup>A.A Abbie, "First Encounter," *The Original Australians* (London:Muller, 1969) 18.

<sup>4</sup>Abbie 20.



The development of scientific anthropology in both Britain and France had a strong influence on the type of research that was being carried out on voyages to the Pacific. Ships' logs and seamen's journals were an established part of European maritime routine; the types of information they recorded were, for example, graphs of coastlines, maps, observations and written accounts of the voyage. The rise of anthropology meant scientists began developing theories which needed factual information to support hypotheses; the intellectual community of both countries, therefore, began to take a serious interest in the type and quality of data that was being recorded on voyages. Techniques of observation and documentation were developed to meet the growing need for information. As early as 1756, Charles de Brosses (1709-1777) wrote, in his *Histoire des navigations aux Terres Australes* [History of the Navigation of Terra Australis], that the navigator should concentrate on collecting scientific fact, rather than seeking wealth through the collection of valuable artifacts.<sup>5</sup> However, it was not until the third voyage to Australia by the French that they included any scientists among the crew. The English also took an important step in this direction when on Cook's *Endeavour* they included a variety of trained scientific observers.

Interest in the countries of the Pacific was kindled in the late eighteenth century by the voyages that were made by Cook to observe the transit of Venus. Scientists were trying to measure the distance between the earth and the sun and this involved observing a planet's transit across the sun, from different places on the earth's surface. This practise and its outcomes are discussed in Harry Woolf's *The Transit of Venus: A Study of Eighteenth Century Science*. The expeditions to observe the transit of Venus in 1761 and also 1769 led to a marked increase in the knowledge of the natural history of the Pacific.

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<sup>5</sup>N J B Plomley, *The Baudin Expedition and the Tasmanian Aborigines 1802* (Hobart: Blubber Head, 1983) 4.

An increase in the interest in botany and zoology also occurred because of Linneaus' methods of nomenclature, which enabled studies on the relationships between the species to be made. The study of humans was at first not thought part of the natural sciences, however by the time Cook left on his first voyage to the Pacific (1769) this type of contact was encouraged:

You are likewise to observe the genius, temper, disposition and number of natives, if there be any, and endeavour by all proper means to cultivate a friendship and alliance with them, making them presents of such trifles as they may value, inviting them to traffick, and shewing them every kind of civility and regard; taking care however not to suffer yourself to be surprised by them, but to always upon your guard against any accident.<sup>6</sup>

As the type of observation encouraged was mostly physical, no information on culture or social organisation was recorded. However by the time of D'Entrecasteaux's voyage (1791) his instructions included notes by Besson:

If among you travellers there are any who have a knowledge of music, it would be interesting to note the principal airs of the songs and dances of the people you meet. Much could be made of these kinds of observations, and also of enquiries concerning the important ways in which such societies divert themselves and pass the time.<sup>7</sup>

D'Entrecasteaux did not, however, study any Aboriginal music, but the scientists on the following voyage (led by Baudin) were also given Besson's notes. Also for this next voyage, the philosopher Degerando, prepared a memoir on what to observe to gain an understanding of the way of life of native people. To study man effectively, Degerando argued, one must live in that society and study the language.<sup>8</sup> The Degerando methodology for social anthropology was not put into practice on this voyage.

The observations that the French made were carried out on Australian Aborigines in areas not too affected by the presence of the British, as the French felt, for accurate observation they needed to observe the race in its pristine condition. They centred their study on

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<sup>6</sup>Plomley 7.

<sup>7</sup>Besson quoted in Plomley 9.

<sup>8</sup>Plomley 10.



areas in Australia, like Tasmania and Western Australia, which were not yet under English control. The observations they made were very much tied in with the developing theories; for example, the theory that 'civilization' had an effect on individual human strength. The hypothesis advanced by philosophers of the Enlightenment, such as Rousseau, was that:

Of all the benefits which the apologists of man in a savage state have brought forward in his behalf, his physical strength is that on which they insist most particularly and constantly.<sup>9</sup>

Françoise Péron, spent time on the Baudin voyage studying this subject and came to the conclusion that 'civilized' man was in fact stronger than 'natural' man. French scientists developed experiments which would prove the superiority of their own race, and this information under the heading of 'evolution' was eventually used as a reason for the subjugation of technologically weaker people. The theory of natural selection became a tool for Europeans to use in justifying their actions:

As soon as it was transformed from a biological to a social explanation of the history of life, and 'the survival of the fittest' became a popular slogan on tongues and minds of European settlers in non European regions, evolutionary theory became a powerful anodyne for the suppression of guilt when dealing with 'lesser' breeds without the law: an instrument for control, subjugation, and all too often - as with the case of the Tasmanians and Terra del Fuegians - extermination.<sup>10</sup>

As Smith also points out, it is interesting that in Europe the theory of evolution was strongly opposed by the Church because it did not correspond with the creation theory, where as in Australia the Church condoned the theory and its associated, 'survival of the fittest' slogan in rationalising the destruction of the Pacific cultures.

Another competing theory that effected the way the Europeans viewed Pacific cultures in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century was the Enlightenment notion of the Noble Savage. Plomley discusses the European attitude towards different races in the

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<sup>9</sup>Rousseau quoted in Berzins 24.

<sup>10</sup>Smith ix.



eighteenth century in relation to the idea of the noble savage. This doctrine was put forward by Jean-Jacques Rousseau in his essay, *Discourse on the origin of inequality* (1755). The idea of equality in the native society is contrasted to inequality in European society:

Thus, every man punished the contempt shown him by others, in proportion to his opinion of himself, revenge became terrible, and men bloody and cruel. This is precisely the state reached by most of the savage nations known to us: and it is for want of having made a proper distinction in our ideas, and see how very far they already are from the state of nature, so that many writers hastily concluded that man is naturally cruel, and requires civil institutions to make him more mild; whereas nothing is more gentle than man in his primitive state, as he is placed by nature at an equal distance from the stupidity of brutes, and the fatal ingenuity of civilized man.<sup>11</sup>

Plomley proposes that, as a result of a partial understanding of the Rousseau essay, it was assumed that the native peoples of the Pacific were living in the style of the original inhabitants of the earth - in harmony with nature in egalitarian and uncorrupted societies. Smith proposes that, in reality, the only thing in favour of the idea of the noble savage, was that it tended to make transactions of cultural contact 'civilized.'<sup>12</sup> For example, Péron's observations on the Baudin voyage included an account of the "happiness and simplicity of a state of nature, of which I had so often read, and enjoyed in idea."<sup>13</sup>

Yet another theory was a factor in this myriad of assumptions concerning the Pacific cultures: neo-classicism, which was concerned with the perfection of classical antiquity. The coexistence of neo-classicism, scientism and romanticism in late eighteenth-century thought can be seen when looking at the rival organisations in Britain at the time of Cook's first voyage to the Pacific. Smith points out that in 1768 the Royal Academy was established and the Royal Society promoted Cook's voyage.<sup>14</sup> The Royal Academy promoted neo-classical theories of Italian origin: nature was to be "rendered by the artist

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<sup>11</sup>Rousseau quoted in Plomley 12.

<sup>12</sup>Smith vii

<sup>13</sup>Plomley 8.

<sup>14</sup>Smith 1.

not with her imperfections clinging to her but in perfect forms."<sup>15</sup> These perfect forms were copied from ancient Greek and Italian Renaissance art works. The Royal Society, however, was more influenced by contemporary scientific thought and appealed to scientists and travellers to "observe carefully, record accurately and experiment."<sup>16</sup> The scientific developments that were a result of the society's views on the style and quality of observation and documentation in the Pacific were ultimately the downfall of neo-classicism.

#### 2.4. The Baudin Voyage

The French expedition led by Nicolas Baudin was an example of a voyage which made observations of indigenous cultures of the Pacific and documentations of their speech and song. There is a wealth of written material dealing with the Baudin voyage of 1800-1804. Primary sources that are useful are the journals of Baudin translated by Cornell, the facsimile of the artwork of the expedition edited by Bonnemains, Forsyth and Smith, and of course the narrative of the voyage produced by Françoise Péron and Louis de Fréycinet published in three volumes and an "Atlas" under the title *Voyage de découvertes aux Terres Australes*. Secondary sources that are particularly useful are Plomley's *The Baudin Expedition and the Tasmanian Aborigines 1802* and Smith's *European Vision and the South Pacific, 1768-1850*. Smith and Plomley deal with the politics and methodologies of the time and how they influenced documentation such as journals and visual art work.

The Baudin expedition included 239 crew and 23 scientists and artists in two ships. As Nicolas Baudin died in Mauritius on the return voyage the narrative of the voyage was written up by Péron and Fréycinet. The narrative creates the impression that the voyage was the order of Napoleon, however, Marchant disputes this and points out that by looking at the manuscript records, it is clear that the Baudin mission was planned by the

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<sup>15</sup>Smith 1.

<sup>16</sup>Smith 1.



preceding government, before Napoleon achieved power.<sup>17</sup> Moore also points out that by the time Péron came to writing up the journals, ideas about the uses of anthropological investigation had changed. During the nineteenth century, political and economic pressures combined with the surfacing 'survival of the fittest' theories meant that the French began taking their own interests more seriously than the rights of Pacific natives. The sort of information provided by the Baudin voyage was only of interest in assessing the advantages that could be gained from the native people.

The notations of Aboriginal music from this voyage appear in Péron's *Atlas* and include no documentation as to who produced them. However, the journal of the later French voyage to Australia made by Fréycinet reproduces the notations and cites them as the artist Charles-Alexandre Lesueur's work. As Fréycinet was co-editor of the narrative of the Baudin Voyage, it is fair to assume that he knew the correct authorship of the notations.<sup>18</sup> The three sketches are described as "Music des Naturels -1. Chant- 2. air de danse- 3. cri de ralliement."<sup>19</sup> Also included in Péron's *Atlas* are notations made in other countries they visited in the Pacific.<sup>20</sup> The notation stands as an observation rather than a piece of artwork as it is not arranged for performance with an accompaniment. This shows that the observer was aware of the need for accurate observation rather than the production of artifacts.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Christine Cornell, *Questions Relating to Nicolas Baudin's Australian Expedition, 1800-1804* Diss. (Adelaide: Libraries Board, 1956) 69. Leslie R Marchant, *France Australe: A Study of French Explorations and Attempts to Found a Penal Colony and Strategic Base in South Western Australia 1503-1826* (Perth: Art Look, 1982) ix.

<sup>18</sup>Louis De Fréycinet *Voyage Autour du Monde Entrepris (1817-1820)* vol. 2 part 2 (Paris: np, 1839) 774.

<sup>19</sup>François Péron "Atlas" *Voyage de Découvertes aux Terres Australes* (Paris, De l'Imprimerie Impériale, 1807-1816) np.

<sup>20</sup>While the 'Timor' notations will not be analysed, they have been included for completeness, as a characteristic of maritime voyages was that the information collected in each country was compared as a means of assessing the cultures.

<sup>21</sup>It could possible be argued that the juxtaposition of the three notations shows more about the French traditions of tripart forms 'Andante, adagio, presto' than of Australian Aboriginal performing traditions.

Example 2.1. Lesueur Notations from the Baudin Expedition (1800-1084)  
"Music des Naturels"

1. *Chant*



2. *Air de Danse*

*Femmes*

*Hommes*

*Femmes*

*Hommes*

3. *Air de Rallissement*

2. *Chant*

2. *Chant*

NOUVELLE-HOLLANDE : N<sup>re</sup> Galles du Sud.

MUSIQUE DES NATURELS.



Exemple 2.1.d. Lesueur "Musique Malaise et Chinoise"

*1*  
Ronde  
des jeunes filles

*Largo*  
Solo Chorus

*2*  
de l'Amour

*3*  
de l'Amour guerrier

*4*  
Chœur  
des Chanteurs

*5*  
Même Chœur  
en prouant la mesure

*6*  
de l'Enlèvement

*7*  
de l'Amour Chinois

*Fin*

TIMOR.

MUSIQUE MALAISE ET CHINOISE.



The first 'Chant,' is a beautiful downward falling melodic line. It is barred in 2/2 but the extensive use of pauses suggests that the observer might have understood the irregularity of the rhythm and that this was the most accurate way of notating this difference using familiar symbols. The repeat is significant as it shows that the observer felt the material did not change in its repeat, or that if it did, the alteration was not worth notating. No attempt was made at transcribing the words of the song. It would have to be assumed that the observer did not spend a long time with the performers trying to take down the text or understanding the function of the song, but did use the symbols that he knew to describe the melodic movement of the line and the irregularities in rhythm, seeing these as elements that could be separated from the overall cultural content.

The title of the next notation again shows the observer's assessment of the function of the piece: 'Air de Danse' suggests that it was a song that was danced to. ('Air' in French opera and ballet of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was an instrumental piece designed to accompany dancing.) Although we are told the song had two parts, one for "femmes," the other for "homme," we are not told who sang and who danced. Nor are we told what the words "é é Con gô Lanmba Lanmba" or "pouhé pouhé," mean. One might question the use of French acutes in the transcriptions of Aboriginal words, but it is important to remember that it is exactly the same with music notation: the observer is choosing the symbols that will best describe what they are hearing, and in each case the range in choice of symbols will probably differ. The 'Air de Danse' is notated on the pitch E in octaves. The notation is very short - eleven bars, which apparently repeat: although the unevenness of the phrases is interesting, the observer does not bother to transcribe the words under the second line to show how text underlay would have fitted the shortened phrase. Again there is a repeat sign at the end of the notation which suggests that the piece continues with apparently no alterations. Either the observer is concerned about fitting all the examples onto one page to have a neat three part artifact, or does not feel the need to make a detailed investigation.

"Cri de Ralliement," the third example, is a notated cooe or "couhé." As this is placed in the bass clef, the observer is inferring that the call was made by males. The fact the cooe has been notated as song is itself worthy of comment. Traditionally the cooe was used both in speech and song, however, the observer did not remark on its use. He chose rather to notate it as music as this was the best way he could describe the unusual vocal range and timbre of the cooe. The notation of the second note a fourth above the first is also interesting as later notations of the call place the interval much further apart.

The three notations made on the Baudin expedition raise a number of points. Without a doubt, they show that the French were interested in making accurate observations of the cultures of the Pacific. However no background material was supplied with the notations. The observer was also concerned with ironing out inconsistencies in pitch and repetition but did try to notate irregularities in rhythm with the use of pauses. The total lack of information concerning the text, meaning and function of the music shows that the observers on the Baudin expedition ignored Degerando's methodology for social anthropology which was specifically written up for the members of this voyage to follow. Moore blames Péron for this as he was the one who had been included on the voyage to carry out these requirements. Marchant gives the likely reasons for this failure: as many of the scientists abandoned the expedition at Mauritius, Péron had to cover many more duties than was originally planned, also as Péron was on Baudin's ship he did not have many chances to go ashore.<sup>22</sup>

## 2.5. G.L.D. de Rienzi

Another voyager who made notations of music of Pacific cultures was the French scientist and explorer Domeny de Rienzi. De Rienzi had much the same influences as the scientists on the Baudin expedition: he was a member of a number of scientific organisations such as the "Société de Géographie" the "Académies de France et D'Italie"

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<sup>22</sup>Marchant 116.



and the "Asiatiques de Paris et de Bombay."<sup>23</sup> The objectives of his voyage, in 1833, would have therefore included the study of humans in their natural environment. Notations made by De Rienzi show that, as in the Baudin voyage, he was interested in the collecting of 'melodies' from each country he visited. Each of the twelve De Rienzi notations, are set out beside each other in his publication so comparisons between them can be made.<sup>24</sup>

All twelve notations use the same types of symbols. Time signatures used are all common (2/4, 3/4, C, 6/8), and De Rienzi notates all of the melodies strictly within these signatures. Key signatures and tessituras used reflect De Rienzi's desire to fit all the melodies neatly on the treble stave. The highest note of each transcription is nearly always an E or F (with the notable exception of notation number 2.2.e). Italian tempo indications are given for each notation which range from 'Tempo giusto' to Andante Cantabile' and 'Largo flebile.' Only a few notations have texts given, and these are not translated. The accompanying information for the notations talks briefly about the types of instruments used in these countries and gives a detailed description of the Javanese gamelan. De Rienzi considered Java to be the country of 'riches' because of its instruments and music.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>Domeny de Rienzi, *Histoire et Description de tous les Peuples Oceanie*, Vol. 2 (Paris:Didot, 1836) i.

<sup>24</sup>As this format seems to be important in the journal of De Rienzi, all twelve notations have been reproduced in this thesis to comply with this.

<sup>25</sup>De Rienzi 78. "Les Javannais sont plus riches."



## Example 2.2. Notations - De Rienzi (1833)

Air des marins Bretons de l'île Célèbes. (Moderato)

*Tempo giusto.*

N° 1.

This musical score is written on three staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 2/4 time signature. The melody is composed of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some rests. The second and third staves continue the melody in a similar rhythmic pattern.

Seuhayoung. — Le Prisonnier. Air Javan (Moderato)

*Andante.*

N° 2.

This musical score is written on five staves. It begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 2/4 time signature. The melody is characterized by a slower tempo, indicated by the 'Andante' marking. It features a mix of eighth, sixteenth, and quarter notes, with some longer rests. The notation includes various musical symbols such as slurs and ties.

Trio - Sa. — Air des Chinois habitant le nord de l'île Bornéo. (Moderato)

*Moderato.*

N° 3.

This musical score is written on three staves. It starts with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 2/4 time signature. The tempo is marked 'Moderato'. The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes. The third staff ends with a double bar line and a 'Fin.' marking.

Air chanté par une demoiselle native Hirano-Matadanaise de  
Zamboanga. (Malaisie.)



Air de danse des Iles Heanal (Polynésie.)



Air de l'île Goup, dans les Carolines. (Polynésie.)



Chanson comique des Mariannais. (Polynésie.)

N° 7. *Allegro.*

Has-nou, gôf--dja pa-la ou an--ho, nga ho si.

di goui mi na---he; le-sou ou-mi ngo ma ma--o.

REFRAIN.

ngou fies pi : d'ou dan pou pou a--ou. Ba-dja---ou, lo...

ma: Di---hou, di---hou, di-lu ou-li---ho.

## Air original du ballet Le Mortesouma,

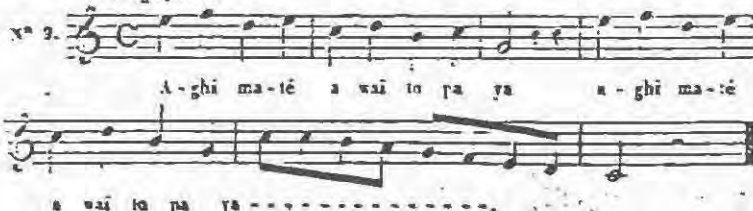
autrefois en usage à Mexico et par les Indiens (Polynésie.)

N° 8. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119. 120. 121. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610. 611. 612. 613. 614. 615. 616. 617. 618. 619. 620. 621. 622. 623. 624. 625. 626. 627. 628. 629. 630. 631. 632. 633. 634. 635. 636. 637. 638. 639. 640. 641. 642. 643. 644. 645. 646. 647. 648. 649. 650. 651. 652. 653. 654. 655. 656. 657. 658. 659. 660. 661. 662. 663. 664. 665. 666. 667. 668. 669. 670. 671. 672. 673. 674. 675. 676. 677. 678. 679. 680. 681. 682. 683. 684. 685. 686. 687. 688. 689. 690. 691. 692. 693. 694. 695. 696. 697. 698. 699. 700. 701. 702. 703. 704. 705. 706. 707. 708. 709. 710. 711. 712. 713. 714. 715. 716. 717. 718. 719. 720. 721. 722. 723. 724. 725. 726. 727. 728. 729. 730. 731. 732. 733. 734. 735. 736. 737. 738. 739. 740. 741. 742. 743. 744. 745. 746. 747. 748. 749. 750. 751. 752. 753. 754. 755. 756. 757. 758. 759. 760. 761. 762. 763. 764. 765. 766. 767. 768. 769. 770. 771. 772. 773. 774. 775. 776. 777. 778. 779. 780. 781. 782. 783. 784. 785. 786. 787. 788. 789. 790. 791. 792. 793. 794. 795. 796. 797. 798. 799. 800. 801. 802. 803. 804. 805. 806. 807. 808. 809. 810. 811. 812. 813. 814. 815. 816. 817. 818. 819. 820. 821. 822. 823. 824. 825. 826. 827. 828. 829. 830. 831. 832. 833. 834. 835. 836. 837. 838. 839. 840. 841. 842. 843. 844. 845. 846. 847. 848. 849. 850. 851. 852. 853. 854. 855. 856. 857. 858. 859. 860. 861. 862. 863. 864. 865. 866. 867. 868. 869. 870. 871. 872. 873. 874. 875. 876. 877. 878. 879. 880. 881. 882. 883. 884. 885. 886. 887. 888. 889. 890. 891. 892. 893. 894. 895. 896. 897. 898. 899. 900. 901. 902. 903. 904. 905. 906. 907. 908. 909. 910. 911. 912. 913. 914. 915. 916. 917. 918. 919. 920. 921. 922. 923. 924. 925. 926. 927. 928. 929. 930. 931. 932. 933. 934. 935. 936. 937. 938. 939. 940. 941. 942. 943. 944. 945. 946. 947. 948. 949. 950. 951. 952. 953. 954. 955. 956. 957. 958. 959. 960. 961. 962. 963. 964. 965. 966. 967. 968. 969. 970. 971. 972. 973. 974. 975. 976. 977. 978. 979. 980. 981. 982. 983. 984. 985. 986. 987. 988. 989. 990. 991. 992. 993. 994. 995. 996. 997. 998. 999. 1000.



## Chant de Mort de Taïti. (Polynésie.)

Largo flebile.



## Air des Papous de la Nouvelle Guinée (Mélanésie.)

Allegro moderato.



## Air des indigènes de l'île Tréman, dans le groupe d'Aron. (Mélanésie.)

Allegretto giusto, Tremblotté et mystérieux.



## Air australien, des sauvages de la terre d'Archeim.

Andante.





The "Air Australien des Sauvages de la Terre d'Arnheim" (2.2.1) is a two line song, although no text is given. The piece is placed in the key of E major with a flattened sixth, as the conventions of the day would not have permitted De Rienzi to omit the C sharp from the key signature. Pitch variation and vocal timbre are not documented. Rhythmic variation is also not indicated in the piece, it stands simplistically in an Andante 2/4. It is interesting that De Rienzi includes no repeat signs in this notation: it can be seen in examples 2.2.b, 2.2.c, 2.2.d, and 2.2.g that he uses da capo signs and writes out repeats where he feels they are important, but never includes repeat signs at the ends of pieces. Either there was no repeat of the phrase or he felt that repeats were not important.

No documentation accompanies "Air Australien" to explain where and when it was performed or for what purpose, how it was accompanied, if there was dancing, if it was part of a larger form. The De Rienzi obviously felt that there was no need for accompanying information, rather that the most important thing was the melody, and that by comparing melody lines from different countries, some information about the differences in culture could be obtained. De Rienzi's notation shows he considered only a few aspects of the music important such as melody, key, and speed. Rhythm is important in "Air Australien" only as a single line; it is not explored as part of a larger pattern which includes rhythms of accompanying instruments and changes through repeats. Aspects which are totally ignored include words, meaning, function, timbre, pitch and accompaniment and in this, De Rienzi's notations show his concern for notating aspects which are important in his own culture rather than the one he is studying. His inclusion of these notations without accompanying material is typical of maritime exploration where sketches and notations were meant to stand as objective evidence, like photographs.

## 2.5 Compilations

Later journals of maritime voyages such as those of Charles Wilkes and Louis de Fréycinet show a remarkable change in research methodologies as they relied heavily on second-hand materials instead of collecting their own. Voyagers at a new port of call would not only collect sketches of flora and fauna (more often than not from the Sydney Botanical Garden), sketches of coastlines and settlements, but would also collect information on the history and politics of that country. As the types of information that needed to be collected was so varied, the voyagers relied on research already completed. The inclusion of second-hand source material in their journals meant that they were reproducing the biases of the original documentor. Information concerning indigenous culture was reproduced in this way, and included a notation from each country, a small discussion about the performance and the types of instruments used. The voyagers, because of their methodologies, were limited to answering a set of predetermined criteria and gaining that information from secondary sources.

#### 2.6.1. Charles Wilkes

Charles Wilkes was the leader of the United States Exploring Expedition 1838-1842. He published the narrative from the expedition which included a number of collected notations from each country visited.<sup>26</sup> His narrative is a good example of maritime compilations as the journal includes details of everything from sketches of the landscape and settlements, to average rainfalls and temperatures, and notes on natural science and Aboriginal culture. The researchers from this expedition relied heavily on second hand sources and dubious primary sources for their information. It is not surprising therefore to see the Field notation (which will be examined in chapter three) reproduced among the examples of Aboriginal music. Field's accompanying information has been omitted, which highlights the compilers attitude that aspects of the music such as melody and

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<sup>26</sup>Charles Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition (1838-1842)* Vol. 2 (London: n.p. 1845) 189-190. As the notations published in this narrative did not originally appear together, it has not been considered necessary to reproduce all the notations but rather only those collected in Australia.



rhythm could by themselves characterise the music. Wilkes says about the rest of the notations:

In their music they do not sound any common chords, and only the accompaniment was a kind of bass, written below, which was in fact only a very deep-toned grunt, sounded, as ho, ho, ho, very deep in the throat. At the end of each dance they finished with a loud whoo, or screech, an octave above the key-note. The above [2.3.a] is thought by Mr Drayton [a member of the expedition] not to be entirely native music, but the following he has no doubt of; the words are given as he heard them. The above [2.3.b] as well as those which follow [2.3.c and 2.3.d], were obtained from a native who was on his way with a new song to his tribe.<sup>27</sup>

Obviously this information has been collected from different sources and synthesized. Wilkes says that a characteristic of Aboriginal music is that at the end of each note they finish with a loud "whoo, or screech, an octave above the key-note," although this is not notated in any of the examples. Also it is stated that the last three notations were taken from "a native who was on his way with a new song to his tribe," which can not be entirely true as the last notation was made by Barron Field at least sixteen years earlier. Only the first notation has any reference to the accompanying material in that it includes a bass line "ho, ho, ho;" the melody line, however, is thought by the authors to be of dubious origin.

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<sup>27</sup>Wilkes 189-189.



Example 2.3. The Charles Wilkes Collection (1838-1842)

The musical score is divided into four systems, each with piano accompaniment and vocal lines.

**System 1:** Piano accompaniment in G major, 2/4 time. The vocal line consists of two staves.

**System 2:** Continuation of the piano accompaniment. The vocal line includes the following lyrics:

Merry danber a - ron Merry danber a - ron  
 O man gw merry own danber ron man gw.

**System 3:** Continuation of the piano accompaniment. The vocal line includes the following lyrics:

Abang abang abang abang abang abang abang abang a  
 gumbe - ry jah jūm gun relah gumbe - ry jah jūm gun relah  
 bang abang abang abang abang abang abang abang a.

The form and types of symbols chosen to represent the music, are similar to those of Lesueur and de Rienzi. All notations fit into simple time signatures and key signatures (with the exception of the Field notation). The first notation's key is not so simple as by bars 4 and 5, the bass note is forming a dissonance with the treble note; G with F sharp, then F sharp with E (something which would be unlikely in simple nineteenth century harmony). Either this is what the notator heard, or the bass notes are to be taken as unpitched and are as Wilkes says, "in fact only a very deep-toned grunt." No other signs are used to qualify speed or dynamics and he does not discuss the meaning of the words or music.

#### 2.6.2. Fréycinet

Another collection of notations in the same style as the Wilkes collection was made by Louis de Fréycinet on his second voyage to Australia in 1819. Fréycinet's journal from this expedition, *Voyage Autour du Monde Entrepris (1817-20)* includes substantial amounts of material from secondary sources including the reuse of material from his earlier voyage with Baudin. Of the five notations included in this journal, Fréycinet only claims numbers 1 and 4 as new material, "L'air no.2 a été noté par M. Field, et les nos. 3 et 5 par M. Lesueur, à l'époque du voyage de Baudin aux Terres Australes."<sup>27</sup> He does not name the notator of the new material. A curious characteristic of Fréycinet's reuse of material is that in each instance he transposes the notation: the Field notation (2.4.b) is taken up a major third, the first of Lesueur's notations (2.4.c), down a major second, and the last of Lesueur's notations (2.4.d), down a perfect fifth. Fréycinet also adds Italian speed markings, changes the spellings of the text and adds explanations such as: "On recommence et l'on poursuit *ad libitum*" and "Cri pous se reconnoitre de loin."

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<sup>27</sup>Louis de Fréycinet 774.



Example 2.4. The Louis de Fréycinet Collection (1819 published 1839)

Andante. ✕

N<sup>o</sup> 1. 

Danse  
du Kangaro.




(On recommence et l'on poursuit *ad libitum*.)

Andante. ✕

N<sup>o</sup> 2. 

Air de danse.

A - bang, a - bang, a - bang, a - bang, a - bang, a - bang, a - bang, a - bang,



goun-be-ri dlah, dja-goun ve - lah, goun-be-ri dlah, dja-goun ve - lah, a - bang, a-bang, a -



bang, a - bang, a - bang, a - bang, a - bang, a - bang, a - bang, etc.

(On recommence et l'on poursuit *ad libitum*.)

Larghetto.

N<sup>o</sup> 3. 

Air





Adagio.

N<sup>o</sup> 4. 

Air de pêche.

E - ya Wan-djé - oia, Tchi-an-go Wan-dé - go (1).

Cri pour se reconnoître de loin.

N<sup>o</sup> 5. 

Kou - hi, Kou - hi, Kou - hi.



The two new notations that appear in this publication, "Danse du Kangaroo" and "Air de pêche," display many of the same features as the previous examples. They are notated neatly on the treble stave (the first example having an accompanying bass pulse), fit into accepted time and key signatures, have Italian speed markings, and have no indication of meaning, vocal qualities, rhythmic or pitch fluctuation, accompanying instruments or movements. The text is given to "Air de pêche," but, it is not translated. The accompanying information is brief and provides no further insight into the music. It would have to be concluded that Fréycinet pushed aside the theories of observation that had been developed in France expressly for these voyages, in favour of producing compilations of second-hand interpretations.

## 2.7. Conclusion

Although French and English theory was pushing towards the ideal that the native view was important, voyagers still refused to acknowledge this and acted like superior assessors of the cultures with which they came into contact. Their documentation was shrouded in a scientific theory which claimed that drawings and notations could stand as reliable objective evidence, and did not need large amounts of accompanying material. Therefore, the research that was done on indigenous music was carried out according to individual conceptions of what aspects needed to be documented to provide a characteristic representation. Without consulting the people who owned the music about what was important in their music, the notators could only document their own interpretations. Later journals of maritime voyages such as those of Wilkes and Fréycinet, show that native concept grew even further from the minds of documentors, who relied on secondary sources with their inherent biases. Members from 'The United States Exploring Expedition,' might not have had access to these theories of observation, but Fréycinet would have been familiar with the notes on social anthropology that were written for the Baudin voyage.

All of the early expeditioners showed no awareness of native concept, adopting instead the role of assessor and superior. They were given information about the kinds of sounds that Aborigines considered 'good,' but they chose to ignore this and instead passed judgement:

We knew already that these savages had little taste for the violin; but we flattered ourselves they would not be altogether insensible to its tones, if lively tunes, and very distinct in their measure, were played. At first, they left us in doubt for some time; on which our musician redoubled his exertions; . . . but the bow dropped from his hand, when he beheld the whole assembly stopping their ears with their fingers, that they might here no more.<sup>29</sup>

Only one enlightened voyager considered for a moment what the other side might have been thinking. Lieutenant Philip Gidley King on the 18th January 1788 wrote in relation to the Aborigines of Botany Bay: "I think it is very easy to conceive the ridiculous figure we must appear." <sup>30</sup> However none of the scientists stopped to consider this, and King himself even left this line out of his journal when he wrote it up in 'fair copy.' It was to be many years before the native concepts of music became important to ethnomusicologists.

It is also true that French maritime voyagers observing indigenous culture did so without the application of Degérando's methodology for social anthropology. His theory that successful cross-cultural observations can only be made by someone who lives with the new society, learns the language, and realises their own subjectivity, was never taken seriously by voyagers. Preparing notes for the members of the 'Société des observateurs de l'homme,' who were joining the Baudin voyage in 1800, Degérando included the following note on the hazards of commerce, ambition, and prejudice. Such an ardent statement on the failures of previous voyages should have prepared the scientists for the obstacles which lay in wait for them, and perhaps it did to some degree, but not to the extent that Degérando visioned.

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<sup>29</sup>La Billardiére quoted in H. Ling Roth, *The Aborigines of Tasmania* (Halifax: King, 1899) 134.

<sup>30</sup>Berzins 18.



. . . divided by other concerns, and with a great impetus to discover new countries than to study them, constantly moving when they should have stayed at rest, biased perhaps by those unjust prejudices that cast a slur in our eyes on savage societies, or at least, witness of our European indifference for them, they did not sufficiently devote themselves to bringing exact and complete observations; they have met the invariable end of those who observe in a precipitate and superficial manner - their observations have been poor, and the imperfection of their reports has been the penalty of our carelessness . . . the main object . . . would be the careful gathering of all means that might assist him to penetrate the thought of the peoples among whom he would be situated and to account for the order of their actions and relationships.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup>Joseph-Marie Degérando quoted in Isabel McBryde, "Ethnohistory in an Australia Context: Independent Discipline or Convenient Data Quarry?" *Aboriginal History* 3:2 (1979) 128.



## Chapter Three

### Inland exploration

#### 3.1. Introduction - International Trends

In the late eighteenth century, inland exploration started to become more popular than maritime exploration; this shift was caused by new scientific theories and literary styles. Scientific expeditions were still being mounted to search for and name 'new' species of plants and animals according to the Linnaeus system, however by the end of the century scientists had become interested in the changes in flora and fauna according to geographical terrain. Pratt writes that in 1822, Alexander von Humbolt affirmed, "it is not by sailing along a coast that we can discover the direction of mountains and their geological constitution, the climate of each zone, and its influence on the forms and habits of organized beings."<sup>1</sup> The naming of species and the desire to map inland terrain developed hand in hand.

Once extensive maps of sea routes and the world's coastlines had been made, maritime exploration became obsolete as the excitement of 'new' discoveries by inland exploration began to emerge. Von Humbolt again summarises these feelings:

In general, sea-expeditions have a certain monotony which arises from the necessity of continually speaking of navigation in a technical language. . . .The history of journeys by land in distant regions is far more calculated to incite general interests.<sup>2</sup>

It was the excitement of exploration rather than scientific endeavour which seemed to make inland exploration appealing to a large majority of people. Journals and diaries recording these explorations were often published with racy and untechnical language in newspapers.

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<sup>1</sup>Alexander von Humbolt quoted in Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992) 24.

<sup>2</sup>Alexander von Humbolt quoted in Pratt 24.

Another reason for the rise of inland exploration was political. In European tradition, with exploration and mapping comes naming, and naming (as in Aboriginal culture) is considered part way to ownership. This was the case in maritime exploration and continued into the inland exploration. Pratt argues that by the last years of the eighteenth century, naming and therefore claiming had become a major concern for European governments: "interior exploration had become the major object of expansionist energies and imaginings."<sup>3</sup>

### 3.2.1. Australian Inland Exploration

In Australia, inland exploration reflected a combination of all of these factors. For Australian explorers the main reason for inland exploration was political, but the other factors certainly influenced the type of documentation that was produced. Inland exploration began after the establishment of a penal colony in Sydney and was a practical response to the geographical terrain as the settlers needed land suitable for agriculture so that they could provide for themselves and become less of a financial burden to England. Fitzpatric says of this "the demand for good pastoral land was undoubtedly the most important single motive impelling the colonists to finance exploration beyond the frontiers of settlement and to find practical routes from the back country from which wool was exported."<sup>4</sup> After the gold rush of 1851, the exploration for precious metals became a major reason for exploration and this continues today.

### 3.2.2. Mapping

The inland explorer of Australia was primarily interested in mapping and the discovery of plants and animals; the observation of indigenous people was not a great concern but in some cases the inclusion of this sort of information made 'interesting reading.' This is most obvious when looking at the maps of explorations: explorers travelled in straight lines across the country, no matter what the conditions were like, whereas Aboriginals

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<sup>3</sup>Pratt 23.

<sup>4</sup>Kathleen Fitzpatric, *Australian Explorers: A selection of their writing* (London: Oxford UP, 1958) 2.



travelled only where there was enough food and water. Fitzpatric notes the explorer Strzelecki's comments on this:

the Aborigine lived 'in perfect harmony with nature,' but it was the business of the explorer to strive with nature and overcome it. The Aborigines were nomads; they went where food was . . . . But the explorer went - as far as water allowed him - in the direction of his objective, which often took him into hungry lands.<sup>5</sup>

This accounts for the many tragic outcomes of overland exploration in Australia. The observations that were made of Aboriginal people were not scientific but rather casual observance and speculation. This was in contrast to the maritime expeditions whose scientists were instructed on how to observe and document indigenous cultures.

In the early nineteenth century considerable speculation surrounded the nature of the continent's interior. Myths of a fertile interior became a great source for travel writing. Explorers such as Sturt were searching for an inland sea:

I had adopted the impression that this immense tract of land had formally been an archipelago of islands, and that the apparently boundless plains into which I had descended on my former expeditions were or rather had been at one time separated one island from the other, it was impossible indeed to transverse them as I had done, and not feel convinced that they had at one period or the other been covered by waters of the sea.<sup>6</sup>

While searching for the residue of this sea, Sturt had a lot of contact with Aboriginal people, but his education was such that all he could report was personal speculation which was sensitive but uneducated.

### 3.2.3. Naming

Explorations overland were primarily to assess the landscape for commercial reasons, but also to explore for the purpose of mapping and naming. The act of naming was important as in the explorers' consciousness, a place did not exist (or exist with a history) until it had been named. The act of naming was the act of claiming and imagining, as the

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<sup>5</sup>Fitzpatric 6.

<sup>6</sup>Fitzpatric 20.



names used were Euro-Christian names, the places became transferred into European knowledge and history. Paul Carter, in *The Road to Botany Bay* considers that history begins not in a particular year nor place, but in the act of naming; by this act : "space is transformed symbolically into a place, that is a space with history."<sup>7</sup>

#### 3.2.4. Ambition and fame

Personal ambition also played a part in exploration. Mitchell and Sturt confessed to the motive of ambition - of fame in a new country and also to the love of adventure. Fitzpatric quotes Sturt as remarking that he had explored the country "not without a feeling of ambition, I am ready to admit, for that feeling should ever pervade the breast of a soldier, but also with an earnest desire to promote the public good."<sup>8</sup> In their journals, explorers wrote themselves as the hero of an adventure: overcoming great hardship for the good of the country. The explorer Ernest Giles wrote:

No work of fiction can excel, or even equal, in romantic and heart-stirring interest, the volumes worthy to be written in letters of gold, which recorded the deeds and the sufferings of these notable toilers in the dim and distant field of discovery afforded by the Australian continent.<sup>9</sup>

The wild charm and exciting desire that induce an individual to undertake the arduous tasks that lie before the explorer and the pleasure and delight of visiting new and totally unknown places are only whetted by his first attempt. I have called the book *The Romance of Exploration*; the romance is in the chivalry of the achievement of difficult and dangerous, if not almost impossible tasks. An explorer is an explorer from love, and it is nature not art that makes him so.<sup>10</sup>

#### 3.2.5. The romance novel

The wide acceptance of the explorer as hero meant that accounts of inland travel became very sentimental. Narratives were formed by the day by day happenings and thoughts and emotions of the explorer. It was written largely as an adventure using racy unscientific language which would appeal to the public. Because the narrator's actions and thoughts became an important part of the plot, the type of documentation of

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<sup>7</sup>Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay* (London: Faber, 1987) 190.

<sup>8</sup>Fitzpatric 12.

<sup>9</sup>Fitzpatric 12.

<sup>10</sup>Fitzpatric 12.

indigenous culture was personal reflection. As these explorers were not educated in methods of observation, often their reflections were not very useful. They range from Sturt's sympathetic response to Aboriginals in traditional life styles to Arthur Bicknell's comments on a corroboree that the "whole affair is childish and weak."<sup>11</sup> The Romance novel existed not so much in a particular time, but was a style that continued to be used from the 1840s well into the 1900s.

Whereas the scientists on the maritime explorations were briefed before voyages on what should be studied and how to document it, inland explorers wrote their explorations as adventures because this type of literature was popular at the time. The sale of their stories to journals, newsletters, newspapers or publishers, would finance the return of the explorer to Europe or perhaps a new exploration as the readership of these tabloids were keen for sentimental dramatisations of the contact zone. Travel writing like this, drew on what Pratt calls 'survival literature' - first hand accounts of shipwrecks, castaways, mutinies, abandonments, and "(the special inland version) captivities."<sup>12</sup>

Although the journals were written as adventures, they were not fictional. Carter says that the readers of this literature understood that:

the journal narrative might resemble the plot of a novel but it was not fiction. The narrators adopted a distinct persona similar to that of a hero in a romance; but more importantly, what is being told is the biography of the journey.<sup>13</sup>

Notations of music made by these kinds of explorers were rare and although not fictional they are usually of dubious origin. Most notations were not made in the field but were collected from a different source and inserted into the texts when they were being prepared for publication. They were used to add authenticity, interest, and scientific dimensions to the narrative.

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<sup>11</sup>Arthur Bicknell, *Travel and Adventure in North Queensland* (London: Longmans, 1895) 39.

<sup>12</sup>Pratt 86.

<sup>13</sup>Carter 72.



### 3.2.6 The education of explorers

The excitement of inland exploration often hid the lack of education of the explorers. Their awkward prose was excused in the preface of their journals with comments such as:

These notes were not at first intended for publication and coming from a hand more accustomed to the rifle than the pen, doubtless are wanting in much of the gloss and finish that insure success; but with all their faults I leave them to the public, and hasten westward to gather fresh materials for a work more worthy of them, should this effort meet with their approbation.<sup>14</sup>

A number of Australian explorers were ex-military including: Major Thomas Livingstone Mitchell, Captain Charles Sturt, and George Gray.<sup>15</sup> With no prospect of active service in Australia in the first half of the nineteenth century these soldiers had no opportunities for promotion or adventure, so they took up offers of finance from geographical societies to go on expeditions, and also worked as surveyors for the government.

Maritime exploration was done in very large groups with specialised jobs allocated to people with expertise, which meant that documentation was likely to be scientifically based. Overland expeditions had to be small and move fast because of the lack of water—too many people in a party meant excessive water consumption. Therefore, documentation was carried out by one person, and that person was often selected because of physical stamina rather than educational background.

### 3.3. Examples of inland notation

Four examples of the notation of Aboriginal music which fit into the category of interior travel writing are those by Barron Field, Carl Lumholtz, Tom Petrie and A.S.E. Rolfe. Although it will be seen that these four notations were made at different times, and in different styles and by men with divergent educational backgrounds, they all display a

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<sup>14</sup>Frederic de Brébant Cooper, *Wild Adventures in Australia* (London: Blackwood, 1857) iv.

<sup>15</sup>Fitzpatrick 10.



'sentimental' approach to the constructing of the narrative rather than a 'scientific' approach.

### 3.3.1. Barron Field

The first example comes from Barron Field's *Geographical Memoirs of New South Wales* which includes a number of geographical reports, journals of exploration and survival tales from different people. The "Journal of an Excursion Across the Blue Mountains of New South Wales, October 1822," is an attempt at plant and animal naming, in the Linnaeus tradition:

The notes of the birds of New Holland are rather cries than song . . . Some are harsh and vulgar, like . . . the laughing jackass (a series of kingfisher) . . . to which I would have given the name of *alcedo onocrotalus*; but am informed it is the *dacelo gigantea* of Dr Leach . . .<sup>16</sup>

However, the journal also includes personal observations on land formations, the weather, English settlement and history, and the unsuccessful contact zones of Australia. He notes the diminishing number and culture of Aboriginal people and uses this as the basis for a lengthy speculation about their worth and plight.

When all thy simple race is extinct, thy name, gentle and well-bred Harry! shall be recorded, at least, in the pages of this journal. Our courtiers say all's savage but at court. But of this, at least, I am sure, that thou were the most courteous savage that ever bade good-morrow.<sup>17</sup>

Field refers to Australian Aboriginals as "creatures," "simple natives," and "savages" echoing the view of the time. Field had no education in observing other cultures - he trained in law in England and obtained an appointment as Judge of the Supreme Court of New South Wales between 1817 and 1824. His writing of Aboriginal culture was therefore mainly a combination of personal opinion and information from second hand accounts. For example, it was his opinion that while Aborigines "are not without the

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<sup>16</sup>Barron Field, "Journal of an Excursion Across the Blue Mountains of New South Wales, October, 1822," *Fourteen Journeys Over the Blue Mountains of New South Wales 1813-1841*, ed. George Mackaness (Sydney: Horwitz, 1965) 130.

<sup>17</sup>Field 129.

stamp of their Maker's image . . . perhaps it is better that their name should pass away from the earth."<sup>18</sup> Describing a corroboree he says "in a few years perhaps, even the corrobory will be no more," and gives a notation which he describes as an "Australian national melody." Field did not notate this melody on his journey across the Blue Mountains, but includes it in his journal for 'colour and authenticity.' It is likely that the notation was not even made in relation to a specific corroboree, as he says of it, "I took down the following Australian national melody from Harry, who married Carangarang, the sister of the celebrated Bennilong." This suggests that Harry was one of the small group of Aborigines who had cultural contact with urban white settlers.

The notation is twelve bars long which repeat. It is a one octave descent which Field notates in the transposed phrygian mode, "it begins with a high note, and gradually sinks to the octave, whence it rises again immediately to the top."<sup>19</sup> The inclusion of "&c" instead of a repeat sign would suggest that the piece is repeated more than once. It is placed in the treble clef but this does not indicate voice type as Field notes that it is "sung by a few males and females who take part in the dance."<sup>20</sup> The words of the notation are of dubious origin: the rhyming of 'gum-ber-ry jah' with 'jin-gun-ve-lah' seems to be more within a European tradition. No translation is given of the text which suggests that Field did not work with the performer on the text.

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<sup>18</sup>Field 127.

<sup>19</sup>Field 126.

<sup>20</sup>Field 126.



Example 3.1 Barron Field Notation 1822

A-bang, a-bang, a-bang, a-bang, a-bang, a-bang, a-

bang, a-bang, gum-be-ry jah, jin-gun ve-lah, gum-be-ry jah,

jin-gun ve-lah, a-bang, a-bang, a-bang, a-bang, a-bang, a-

bang, a-bang, a-bang, a-bang, &c

Field gives a detailed account of the dance steps, accompaniment, and body painting which usually was not commented on. In the maritime tradition, sketches were made that would stand as objective evidence, whereas in the inland travel tradition the authors were given more scope to speculate and describe their impressions in words. For example Field writes on the corroboree "the . . . night dance still obtains. This festivity is performed in very good time, and not unpleasing tune. . . .the glare of the fire gives a picturesque effect to the savage scene, and the dance works the performers up to a sublime enthusiasm."<sup>21</sup> Field here is the romantic interpreter. His notation, was not made at the site of the corroboree and is surrounded by information which reflects the literary freedom of the genre.

### 3.3.3. Carl Lumholtz

Carl Lumholtz's study was written much later than Field's (in 1881) and was not an account of an exploration but rather a four year stay with North Queensland Aborigines. Lumholtz places himself as the hero in the narrative and conforms to other stylistic qualities of the romance novel including accounts of 'scandals' such as cannibalism, sex, and murder. Lumholtz says of this:

In August 1881 I entered upon my first journey of discovery, in the course of which I penetrated about 800 miles into Western Queensland, the results nowise corresponded to the hardships I had to endure. . . . and there I lived among a race of people whose culture - if indeed they can be said to have a culture what ever - must be characterised as the lowest to be found among the lowest of the *homo sapiens*.<sup>22</sup>

Lumholtz gives three notations apparently sung by indigenous people from the Herbert River.<sup>23</sup> The first two notations, however, were sung by people who were very much influenced by European contact: by Aborigines on a 'station' and by "'civilized' blacks" in Rockhampton.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup>Field 126.

<sup>22</sup>Carl Lumholtz, *Among Cannibals: An Account of Four Years Travels in Australia and Camp Life with the Aborigines of Queensland* (London: Murray, 1989) ii.

<sup>23</sup>Lumholtz 46-47, 171-173.

<sup>24</sup>Lumholtz 172.



## Example 3.2. Notations made by Lumholtz

*Tempo di marcia.*

Mol-le-mom-bâ va-ri-nâ (2) mombâ va-ri-nâ

Kat-su-bu - râ in-dan-gô gân-go-

ril - la mol-le-mom - bâ va - ri - nâ mom-bâ

va - ri - nâ kat-su-bu - râ in - dan - go gân-go-

ril - la mol - le - mom - bâ va - ri - nâ mom-bâ

va - ri - nâ kat - su - bu - râ in - dan - gô gân-go-

ril - la

*Andante.*

Wom - bon ma - ræ - ry! Wom - bon ma-

ræ - ry! mo - ri - dan ko - by bee - bon bindalgoh!

## Example 3.2 Notations made by Lumholtz

*Tempo di Valse.*  
*Allegro.*

La - la - la - la - la La - la - la - la - la

La - la - la - la - la La - la - la - la - la

La - la - la - la - la La - la - la - la - la

La - la - la - la - la La - la - la - la - la

La - la - la - la - la all to - ge - ther

yarn a - way all to - ge - ther yarn a -

way all to - ge - ther yarn a - way. Bahl

bood'gry Bo - ran - do Bahl bood'gry Bo - ran - do.



The first notation is placed firmly in A major, and is essentially a one octave drop repeated. The tempo -'*tempo di Valse*', and the upwards rising phrases are not perhaps representative of the original, but the repeated low notes at the end of each section show some development in knowledge concerning indigenous music. Lumholtz says of this:

The song was as usual a ceaseless repetition of a couple of strophes, each one which ended in a long monotonous series of deep tones by which the strophe was repeated. To be able to hold the last tone very long is a sign of ability to sing well.<sup>25</sup>

This was said about the second notation which also ends with a repetition on a low A. The use of the pause on the last note in both of these notations reflect Lumholtz' observation on the singing of the last note. The use of tempo marking '*tempo di marcia*' and the placing of the piece in bars of four beats show Lumholtz is working within the European tradition, however the rhythmic complexity of the whole piece, and the use of triplets, ties, accents and unbeamed quavers and semiquavers show he is trying to notate the complexity of the music. Lumholtz says of the second notation that it is accompanied by sticks, however he neglects to notate this, but does comment on the clatter caused by using a boomerang for an instrument: "the singer produces this by hitting a boomerang against a nolla nolla, the former hitting the latter with both ends, but not quite simultaneously."<sup>26</sup> He gives no translation of either text, but comments on the extensive use of English in the first notation and the inability of the performers to be able to explain the text of the second notation as it was a song that had been taught to them from people from a different language group. The third of Lumholtz's notations is completely different in style, it is described as a "war song."<sup>27</sup> It is short compared to the first two, has a smaller tesitura, does not show any rhythmic complexity, or include a long last note. It is interesting that Lumholtz includes a key signature of four flats, as the notation does not include two of the pitches that are meant to be flattened: it can be assumed that he is instead trying to place the piece in a European 'tonality.' Lumholtz comments of the

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<sup>25</sup>Lumholtz 171.

<sup>26</sup>Lumholtz 173.

<sup>27</sup>Lumholtz 173.

"hoarse" vocal timbre used, and also notes that the songs are not sung in a chorus, but rather by one or two singers at a time.<sup>28</sup>

Lumholtz as the observer-hero emerges when he makes judgmental remarks on the music and how he felt because of it:

The natives have a better ear for rhythm than for melody. Still I learned from them a few tolerably melodious songs [emphasis added], as for instance the one above quoted. They took no interest whatever in my songs. There was but one of them they could appreciate at all, and this was strongly accentuated, namely, Erik Bögh's: "I have sailed around the world, and I have walked many a mile." But I did not often attempt to entertain so unappreciative an audience.<sup>29</sup>

This shows quite succinctly Lumholtz' observations and attitudes: that the music he was notating was rhythmically complex, and that in the tradition he came from, melody was equally if not more important than rhythm. Lumholtz was so concerned with melody he did not bother to notate accompanying stick patterns. He repeatedly made subjective remarks about the timbre and "monotony" of the songs when what becomes obvious through his notation of the rhythms, is that in each repetition the rhythm is changing slightly (examples 3.2.a and 3.2.b) and this might have been where the real interest lay for the performers.

#### 3.3.4. Tom Petrie

The third notation comes from the reminiscences of Tom Petrie which date from 1837.<sup>30</sup> This was written in the style of the captive, Petrie eventually becoming hero, protector, and interpreter. He apparently grew up in close contact with a group of Aboriginal people and learnt their language and customs. Two notations included in this account, arranged by W.A. Ogg, were apparently tunes that Petrie was taught while he was a

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<sup>28</sup>Lumholtz 173.

<sup>29</sup>Lumholtz 173.

<sup>30</sup>Constance Campbell Petrie, comp., *Tom Petrie's Reminiscences of Early Queensland* (Brisbane: Watson, 1904) 25 and 28.



child. Because Petrie was able to speak the language he is able to offer information on native concept:

. . an old Morton Island man, a great character, head of that tribe, who was a good hand at making corroborees. He would disappear at times to a quiet part of the island (the others saying he had gone into the ground), and when he reappeared he had a fresh song and dance to impart. . . One night the man already mentioned belonging to the pine was supposed to have a dream, in which a corroboree came to him descriptive of the event.<sup>31</sup>

This shows Petrie's interpretation of how the songs were being created, but also the indigenous view of receiving corroborees. He also discusses the meaning of the songs, why they were composed and how they were taught. The first of his notations is about 'Bobbiwinta' who drowned while turtle hunting; he explains the text as:

My oar is bad, my oar is bad; sent me my boat, I'm sitting here waiting, and so on sung slowly. Then quickly, 'dulpai-i-la ngari kimmo-man' (jump over friends) and so on to the finish.


Petrie notes that only the "first proportion" of the song is given. The notation is three lines: the first line is the start of the slow section, the next two lines the start of the fast section. Both sections of the song have had Italian marking attached to them to show this speed change and are placed in the C minor - E flat major key-signature, although neither section uses A or B flat. The use of the key signatures shows the notator's desire to show the 'tonic' of the piece.

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<sup>31</sup>Petrie 25.


## Example 3.3. Songs by Tom Pietrie

*Andante*

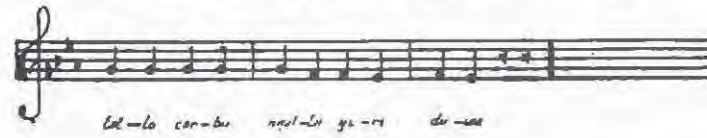


Tah-lan-ka: uad-li Tah-lan-ka: uad-li Tah-lan-ka: uad-li

*Allegro*



nga kum-dal nga-ri mas-gar nga-la in-en in-nga



lal-la car-bu nga-la ya-ri du-sa

*Moderate*



Mi-en lo-ran-da lo-ran-da mi-en ma-ma-ma-da-gar-ni



ma-ma-ma-da-gar-ni ka-ka-je-ké-ni da-ma-da-dan Wa! Wa!



The second of his notations is a song that was taught by a man from Manila.<sup>32</sup> Petrie comments that the 'Turrbal' Aborigines did not understand the words or the meaning but adopted the song as a lullaby (he therefore includes no translation). It is notated in the same style as the first, including Italian speed marking, time signature and bar lines. Apparently the whole song is given ('here is the song') - either it is a very short song or the notator has neglected to include a repeat sign. There is no attempt at describing vocal timbre, pitch fluctuations, accompaniment, or rhythmic irregularities (other than the two accent markings in the last bar of notation two, and phrase markings in bar two of the first notation).

The sensitivity of Petrie's notations and comments on indigenous culture was probably the result of his ability to understand the language. The choice of notational symbols which were reflective of European culture was the contribution of W.A. Ogg, but the style of Petrie's narrative - the combination of useful, sensitive observations, with 'exciting' events and personal thought, characterises the narrative as Romantic.

### 3.3.5. A.S.E. Rolfe

The fourth example is a folk song attributed to A.S.E. Rolfe.<sup>33</sup> This notation can be found in the library at the *Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies*. No accompanying information is supplied with the notation, it is therefore not possible to assess where and when the notation was made. A line from the text hints that the composer of the piece was taught an "Aboriginal chant" in 1840, "he told the story of eighteen forty." The chant is reproduced in the third verse of the song.

<sup>32</sup>This is the notation that the composer Clive Douglas used in his symphonic work *Carwoola*.

<sup>33</sup>A.S.E. Rolfe, "Little Boy Lost," Canberra, AIATSIS pms 2552. The end of the piece is signed N.L.Rolfe as opposed to A.S.E.Rolfe at the top of the piece; perhaps a relative has notated the piece.

Example 3.4. "Aust. Song" by A.S.E. Rolfe  
"Little Boy Lost"

LITTLE BOY LOST

*Semplice.*

"When I was wear - ding Red - nee - ker - o - gang with War - adger -  
 fleecies on the knee - ray, The Songs They would sing, They would sing in my mem'ry, I  
 nev - er for - got. We ate gum - nuts, we ate rep - tilis They centred in the fire - mounds: They  
 cared for the white child they found in the bush. When night would come, they would  
 dance in the fire light and sing their songs in the bush."

*Plaintive.*

*Lento*

*p* ah - a - a - u wein bra - bra wee wee Ben - gam - bin - yah Th' longa' la  
 Jung - er mek - el boom - i - er - ah - a - a - wein  
 bra - bra wein bra - bra Ben - gam - bin - yah Yel -  
 er - yan - bay Gum - ring Yea, Gum - ring Yea Ben - gam - bin - yah Born -



-ma qul - ar Boon - mar - a - i Boon -

-mar - a - i The child grew old, & his head grew hoary; he

told the story of eight - een forty; - and nev - er forgot he the

dark, wild or - rel - ree and sorrow - ing Song.

Rolfe A.S.E.  
DMS 2552

MELODY LINE FOR

"AUST." SONG WITH

ABORIGINAL chant INTRODUCED

{ WORD GERY 1845 }  
UPPER MURRAY 1840.

[ N.B. "WEN" pronounced "We-in"

"Th'longo 'la" : G. NOT PRONOUNCED; WORD GLUED.

JUNEAB. : G. NOT PRONOUNCED ]

BY 1013  
N.L. ROLFE 1845

The text to the song is:

When I was wandering lost near Gerogary  
with Woradgery blacks on the Murray,  
The songs they would sing, They would sing in my mem'ry  
I never forgot.

We ate grubs, we ate reptiles they cooked in the fire mounds  
They cared for the white child they found in the bush  
When night would come they would dance in the fire light  
and sing the songs in the bush.

*Ah-a-a-a wein brabra wie wie Bungambinyah Th'longa'la*  
*Jungar methel boom'ery ah-a-a wein brabra wein brabra*  
*Bergan yelar yelar yanlay Gunning yea, Gunnung yea*  
*Bergan yelar Bornmar yelar Boonmar-r-r Boonmar-r-r*

The child grew old, and his head grew hoary  
he told the story of eighteen forty  
and never forgot he the dark, wild corrob'ree  
and sorrowing song.

This can be classed as inland travel writing as the information that is conveyed is in keeping with the normal types of travel writing from this period. It is not the medium but the content of the song which makes it similar to the other examples included in this chapter. In these lyrics it can be seen that the song is meant to be an exciting tale: the child was lost in the bush, he ate grubs and reptiles, and watched "dark, wild" corroborees.

The piece has been notated at a later stage. The notation is just the melody line with no accompaniment, which is usual for a folk song. The whole piece is in F major; the chant sounds very similar to the rest of the folk song, which may mean that the folk song was based on the material from the chant or that the chant was based on the material from the folk song. However, the fact that the piece is entitled "'Aust." Song' with 'Aboriginal Chant Introduced,' seems to suggest that the chant should be taken as real. Differences between the folk section and the Aboriginal chant includes time signature changes from 6/8 time to a simple 2/4, expression changes from 'semplique' to 'plaintive.' The chant is also to be sung slower and softer than the folk section, this might therefore be the "sorrowing song" rather than the "wild corroboree." No translation is given for the



Aboriginal words, nor is an explanation given, other than it was something the performer learnt as a child.<sup>34</sup> Notes on pronunciation are given at the end of the notation. Similarities in notational symbols between the folk and chant sections, signifies both sections are to be sung in the same style. For example, there is no changing of vocal timbre for the chant. Notational symbols for pauses, accents and stresses, are used in both sections. It is interesting that Rolfe ends both the chant and the folk song in the same manner, with a drop in dynamics and a slowing in tempo. This shows that the European and indigenous material are being treated by Rolfe in the same manner. To put the material into a form that would act as a carrier of information, Rolfe had to subject the material to the expressive conventions of *rallentandos* and *diminuendos*.

### 3.4. Conclusion

It can be seen that these four examples display characteristics which reflected the current trends of travel writing. They are all intended to be illustrative of indigenous music, and were included in journals or other accounts of travel or adventure. The notators placed themselves in the role of hero and interpreter. Consequently, the notations are accompanied by large amounts of detailed but subjective speculation. The notations are affected by European traditions, for example Italian tempo and expression markings. Also concepts that were not important to European composition were not considered in the observation of indigenous Australian music. For example, Lumholtz remarked that rhythm was important to indigenous performers but he failed to notate the accompanying stick rhythm or notate a piece through more than two repeats to see how the rhythms changed, when clearly he suggests that they did. Other concepts that were not considered important were vocal timbre, pitch fluctuation and notes of less than a semitone. In all cases a text was given but it was rarely explained. These four notations show that there was interest in indigenous Australian music but that it was used only for what the notator could gain from it.

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<sup>34</sup>It is interesting to note the similarity between the Rolfe song and the songs of contemporary bands such as Yothu Yindi. Aboriginal text is used, without explanation, to maintain a link with Aboriginal culture.

## Chapter Four

### Music in the Parlour

#### 4.1. Introduction

Half way through the nineteenth century, attitudes towards Aboriginal culture changed quite remarkably from those of the eighteenth century Enlightenment. Ethnological research dwindled, even though there was a vast amount of contact between Aboriginal groups and overland explorers, farmers, and missionaries. The push inland of farming and European habitation created extreme conflict between the two cultures, in many cases resulting in war. The destruction of the Aboriginal was seen as a necessary and unavoidable accessory to the clearing of the land: this was rationalised with the formation of laws about land ownership and other pseudo-scientific theories. Responses from different social groups towards Aborigines varied greatly. The attitudes of urban middle classes, who had relatively little contact with Aboriginal culture, were not so fervent as the rural groups. Unfortunately, however, the amount of negative writing being produced, far outweighed any of the less bigoted approaches.

#### 4.2. Parlour Music

The middle of the century also saw a boom in parlour music, as it became fashionable for women to spend their days participating casually in music making and needlepoint. Occupations like this were thought to show a family's wealth and the women's eligibility for marriage. Because of this, there was an increase in imported pianos and they were distributed widely. To cater for the development in numbers of people wanting to learn singing and piano, music schools started up and there was an increase in the number of travelling tutors.

James Hall in a series of articles on nineteenth century music making in Australia, traced the music advertisements, reviews, and articles in the *Sydney Gazette* to paint a clear



picture of parlour music in Sydney. From this series it can be seen that advertisements for the sale of pianos began to appear in 1815, but it was not until 1824 that the first music shop opened in Sydney.<sup>1</sup> Music tutors had been advertising in the *Gazette* since 1814, but schools of Music began to open in the 1830s. An advertisement in 1833 promoted the newly formed 'Philharmonic Society of Sydney,' which would provide music lesson to members of the Sydney Mechanics.<sup>2</sup> In 1834 Mrs Boatwright opened a "School for instruction of young ladies. . . . lessons in Singing, Music, Drawing and the various branches of polite accomplishments."<sup>3</sup>

Members of these types of societies were also responsible for the development of public concerts in Sydney. The 'Amateur Concerts' of 1826, the Barnett Levey concerts at the Royal Hotel of 1827, and the Philharmonic Society's concerts of 1833, stimulated music activity in Sydney and provided the public with the chance for polite social outings. A review of the first 'Amateur Concerts' expresses this attitude:

The concert on Wednesday evening last, went off with the greatest eclat. Many fashionables were assembled on the occasion, and not a few of the fair sex. The Music was delightful . . . It seemed as if Apollo himself had condescended to pour his melodies into the souls of our Australian graces. The ladies were particularly gratified, and all appeared spell-bound by the admirable exertion of the harmony.<sup>4</sup>

The demand for sheet music caused by the boom in parlour music and amateur concerts created an opportunity for composers to publish sets of small vocal pieces with pianoforte accompaniment. The pieces were often written with the technical abilities of amateur musicians in mind, and were polite, frivolous in nature, and dealt with 'Australian' culture as a novelty.<sup>5</sup> As this was such a widespread and enduring fashion, a great number of composers were economically successful working in this medium. Parlour music of this kind can be traced from the 1840s through to the songs of Henry Tate and

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<sup>1</sup>James Hall, "A History of Music in Australia" *The Canon* 2 (1950) 336 and 374.

<sup>2</sup>Hall 519.

<sup>3</sup>Hall 565.

<sup>4</sup>Hall 422.

<sup>5</sup>Culture here, is used to mean anything identifiably Australian: flora, fauna, geographical place names, Aborigines and Aboriginal Languages.

May Brahe in the early 1900s. Early examples of nationalistic works in this genre can be seen in the arrangements of Johann Lhotsky and the English-born composer Isaac Nathan.<sup>6</sup> When looking at the arrangements and descriptions of Aboriginal Music by Lhotsky and Nathan, a Romantic view of the plight of Aborigines, and also of an 'Australian' culture, becomes evident.

#### 4.3.1. Johann Lhotsky and Messrs. Pearson, Josephson, and Sippe.

Lhotsky received a grant from the King of Bavaria, in 1832, to do scientific research in Brazil and Australia. His area of research was mainly geography and medicine, leading him to explore the southeast of New South Wales, 'the southern Monaro,' (with four convicts and a cart with one horse) notating geological features of the Snowy River and the 'Kernbery' plains and presumably studying 'natural science' in the form of Aboriginal music. He published his findings in the manuscript, *A Journey from Sydney to the Australian Alps* (1835). In this journal Lhotsky claims that he notated a song which he had heard at a corroboree, and says of the song "the music . . . would not dishonour a Beethoven or a Handel."<sup>7</sup> 'The Song of the Women of the Menero Tribe' appeared in a lithographed form in 1834, and was reviewed in the *Sydney Gazette* by "the most competent judges" as "very pretty; by others, even as a sublime production."<sup>8</sup>

The song was arranged and set to an accompaniment by the Sydney musicians "Messrs. Pearson, Josephson and Sippe."<sup>9</sup> Josephson arranged the text for voice, Pearson arranged the pianoforte accompaniment, and Sippe arranged the piece 'in a more easy manner.' Pearson, Josephson, and Sippe were all members of the Philharmonic Society and were well known musicians in Sydney at the time. Sergeant John Pearson had been conducting and arranging performances of sacred music at St Phillips church in Sydney since 1818 and was the first performer of the organ installed at St James in 1831. He

<sup>6</sup>Lhotsky could have been included in the inland exploration group only that he chose to arrange his transcription as parlour music with the help of Messrs. Pearson, Josephson and Sippe.

<sup>7</sup>Johann Lhotsky, *A Journey from Sydney to the Australian Alps*. (Sydney: n.p., 1835) 157.

<sup>8</sup>Hall 568.

<sup>9</sup>Hall 569.



was also a well known Piano tuner in Sydney at this time.<sup>10</sup> Mr Sippe was originally a conductor of one of the Regimental bands in Sydney, he also seems to have taught and performed in a number of capacities, for example, as a composer, singer, pianist, violinist, and cellist.<sup>11</sup> Sippe was Josephson's flute teacher, Josephson later became a well known performer on flute, piano, and bugle.<sup>12</sup>

The appearance of the 'Song of the Women of the Monero Tribe' without documentation means it stands more as a piece of 'music' rather than a scientific observation.<sup>13</sup> That it is meant to be performed can be seen from the piano accompaniment, the English and German versions of the text, and the arrangement of the piece in a 'more easy manner.' Another interesting feature of the Lhotsky composition was that it also appeared in a later version surrounded by flannel flowers, and in this form it stands as an artifact expressing an emerging nationalism.

Symbols used to document the Aboriginal music show more about the performing traditions of parlour music than Aboriginal music. The notation includes Italian tempo, dynamic and expression markings, for example "con espressione", which seem to be addressed to the performer rather than as a record of how the piece was originally sung. The melody is notated in a strict triple time, the only use of pauses being at the end of phrases, the phrase structure does not fall into the regular four bar phrases, rather it alternates between three and four bar phrases which might be indicative of the original performance. The added harmonies which are not indicative of the original piece, act as dominants to each other (D minor, G minor, C minor). In the 'virtuosic' arrangement, the melody is repeated in the right hand of the piano while the left hand plays a highly ornamented line giving a theatrical effect.

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<sup>10</sup>Hall 335 and 517.

<sup>11</sup>Hall 427, 471, 423, 472 and 521.

<sup>12</sup>Hall 565.

<sup>13</sup>Mitchell Library: Sydney Q78.4/11.



Example 4.1. a) Song of the Women of the Menero Tribe - Lhotsky

# SONG OF THE WOMEN OF THE MENERO TRIBE.

*Andante con espressione.*

VOICE (M. Pearson)

Non-gi kawel-go yue-re con-gi kawel-go yue-re Kuma

PIANO (M. Josephson)

FORTE

gi ko-ko kawel-go kuma-gi ka-ba ko-ma

gi ko-ko koma-gi ko-ko kawel-go Koma

gi ka-ba ko-ma-gi yue-re

*diminuendo*

*diminuendo*



## Example 4.1. b) Arranged in a More Easy Manner

185<sup>-</sup>

*Arranged in a more easy manner* (M. Sippa)

Unprotected race of people,	(German.)	Unbeschütztes Volk der Erde.
'Unprotected all we are;		'Unbeschütztes ja sind Wir;
(And our Children shrink so fastly,		'Unsre Kinder schwinden schnelle,
'Unprotected why are we?		'Unbeschützt warum sind Wir?

Example 4.1. c) With Flannel Flowers

**SONG**  
**WOMEN OF THE MENERO TRIBE,**  
*from the*  
**Australian Alps.**  
*ARRANGED*  
*with the assistance of several Musical Gentlemen*  
*by*  
**Fanny Doro,**  
*most handsomely illustrated as the first specimen of*  
**Australian Music.**  
*Her Majesty's Stationery Office*  
**ADELAIDE.**  
*Queensland Great Britain & America*  
*Printed by J. B. McLeod & T. P. McKee.*

**SONG OF THE WOMEN OF THE MENERO TRIBE**  
*Arranged by Fanny Doro*

**Voice**  
**Piano**  
**Fort**

*Transcribed from the original manuscript of the Menero Tribe, as preserved in the collection of the National Museum, Sydney.*

*Published by J. B. McLeod & T. P. McKee, Adelaide.*



The text of the piece shows the sympathetic reaction of Lhotsky to the horrific loss of life that the Aboriginal people were enduring. The key images in the texts that arouse sympathy are that the population is "unprotected" and that it is the children who are dying. The documentation does not exist to tell us whether Lhotsky wrote down the words from an Aboriginal performer or how the translation of the words was achieved. Whether these were the original sentiments of the song or not, the fact remains that Lhotsky's choice to translate and publish this version shows his concern.

Kongi kawelgo yuere kongi kawelgo yuere  
 Kurnagi koko kawelgo kurnagi kaba komagi koko  
 Kurnagi koko kabelgo kurnagi kaba komagi yuere

Unprotected race of people, Unprotected all we are,  
 And our children shrink so fastly, Unprotected why are we?

Unbeschützt Volk der Erde, Unbeschützt ja sind Wir  
 Unsre Kinder schwinden schnelle, Unbeschützt warum sind Wir?

#### 4.3.2. Versifying from the Original

Additions were thought to enhance the original and, therefore, to make it more worthy of retention. This was done with the music, as has been seen, and also with the language and poetry. A good example of this interference with verse can be seen with Isaac Nathan's arrangement of the same piece. In his publication *The Southern Euphrosyne and Australian Miscellany*, Nathan writes that his arrangement entitled "The Aboriginal Father," has been set to new words by Mrs Dunlop, which were "versified from the original:"

The shadow on thy brow, my child,  
 Like a mist o'er the clear Lagoon:  
 Steals on with presage dim and wild-  
 Of the *death-clouds* direful gloom.

Our tribes, droop by each native stream,  
 Where the founts that have fed them lie;  
 And white man's fire sends forth its gleam,  
 O'er the *Batwan* where they die

And thou my boy! the last - the first  
 Green leaf of a smouldering tree!  
 A stranger's eye will crush the burst  
 Of a Warrior's lament o'er thee.<sup>14</sup>

It is obvious that this level of addition was thought to make the item worthy of preservation. Cultural purity was not considered an important feature, rather the item had to take on qualities that would ensure its acceptance into middle class society. It had to become something that the society would desire, so in the case of music, parlour pieces with a nationalistic flavour were created.

#### 4.4. Isaac Nathan

Additions and changes, as a form of enhancement, was a characteristic of the arrangements of English born composer Isaac Nathan. Nathan migrated to Australia in 1841 on the frigate York; arriving in Melbourne at the end of March and then travelling to Sydney.<sup>15</sup> In the first few years of his stay Nathan wrote a number of pieces for voice and pianoforte which he claimed contained a sufficient amount of Aboriginal material to function as a medium for music preservation. Most of these are published in his volume *The Southern Euphrosyne and Australian Miscellany*.<sup>16</sup> Nathan was interested in studying and arranging Aboriginal music as a means of preserving it, this can be seen through his comment that nations "write their autobiographies in three manuscripts - the book of their deeds, the book of their words, and the book of their art."<sup>17</sup> However, a study of Nathan's works shows that he believed in preserving the culture in a bastardised form.

A number of his arrangements were apparently based on notations made by the clergyman, the Reverend Henry Tincombe, who lived in the Monaro area and witnessed

<sup>14</sup>Isaac Nathan, *The Southern Euphrosyne and Australian Miscellany* (London: Whittaker, 1948) 105. "Death Clouds -The unseen power many names and forms; and is a spirit of evil only, living in the Wheegun-eura Fire Clouds. Batwan mian - The water of the Creek."

<sup>15</sup>Harold Hort, "An Aspect of Interaction between Aboriginal and Western Music in the Songs of Isaac Nathan," *Miscellanea Musicologica* 12 (1987) 207-211.

<sup>16</sup>These works can also be found in bound volumes (of Nathan's songs) in Mitchell Library.

<sup>17</sup>Charles Bertie, *Isaac Nathan: Australia's First Composer* (Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1922) 18.



first hand performances. It is clear that Nathan was aware of the possibilities of corruption through European interpretation as he wrote a lengthy chapter on the Lhotsky arrangement:

We were favoured with a lithographic copy of this beautifully pathetic melody, so deformed and mutilated by false rhythm, so disguised in a complete masquerade, by false basses and false harmony, that we cast it from us with no small share of regret at the poor chance thus afforded of adding anything in favour of the claim of the aborigines, to the pages of musical history.<sup>18</sup>

However, although Nathan realised Lhotsky's arrangement of the piece was not a fair representation, it becomes clear that Nathan's objection was not that it was set in the style of a Victorian parlour piece, but rather the compositional technique of Lhotsky (and his musical gentlemen) was not perceived to be of a good quality. Nathan believed that the addition of harmony in a European idiom (presumably by a composer with a developed technique) was justified:

It may be here necessary to remark that the Aborigines throughout Australia have no musical instruments of any description, not even that instrument of concussion, the drum so generally used by every other uncivilized nation in the world: our Piano Forte accompaniment, therefore, must be considered as an effort on our part, to convey to the unskilled some faint notion of the energetic style of aboriginal music . . .<sup>19</sup>

Nathan must have assumed that clapping sticks were used as a metronome and not as an instrument: "they then continue beating and marking time with rhythm and accuracy not to be surpassed by the best musicians in the Italian Opera."<sup>20</sup> It is also clear that Nathan is only guessing at the style of music 'throughout Australia,' as there are quite a number of accompanying instruments in traditional Australian music. Nathan also says of the *Song of the Women of the 'Monero' Tribe*, that stripped of the additions of its first arrangers, the "purity and simplicity" of the melody struck him as having: "excellent scope for good basses, rich transitions, and progressions of harmony."<sup>21</sup> This is a

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<sup>18</sup>Nathan 104.

<sup>19</sup>Hort 210.

<sup>20</sup>Nathan 107.

<sup>21</sup>Hort 208.

blatant example of how Nathan felt the music could be 'improved' and therefore become worthy of retention.

The cooe, which the French found characteristic enough to notate on their voyage of 1804, also fascinated Nathan. "Kooee" is an interesting example of how Nathan took some item of Aboriginal culture and arranged it for middle class European consumption. The piece was written as parlour music, it therefore had to be arranged for voice with pianoforte accompaniment, technically undemanding, and nationalistic in a frivolous way. Nathan comments himself on the kind of performers he had in mind for the piece; "Ladies, who have no 'Bills' to look after may pass a few leisure moments in 'kooing,' after the fashion of the antipodes."<sup>22</sup>

Nathan wrote a lengthy chapter on the cooe in *The Southern Euphrosyne*, where he claims that the traditional use of the cooe is to "call a person from far off" but that it can be carried "to much greater distance than our hallo."<sup>23</sup> He claimed to have made a study of the differences in the cooe call in different regions of the country, and the piece 'kooee' is a setting of some of these. His desire to make the chapter dramatic and therefore interesting, shows itself when he describes the "wailing Koo-ee of distress" in dramatic terms.

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<sup>22</sup>Nathan 103.

<sup>23</sup>Nathan 102.



## Example 4.2. "Koo-ee" - Isaac Nathan

*Beat two to each Measure.*

Koo - - - - ee. Koo - - - - ee.

Maelzel's Metronome (60)

ADAGIO.

*Beat four to each Measure.*

Koo-ee. Koo-ee. Koo- - - - ee.

Maelzel's Metronome (66)

ADAGIO

*Larghetto.*

(88)

Koo- - - - ee. Koo- - - - ee. Koo- - - - ee.

*Largo.*

Koo-ee. Koo-ee. Koo- - - - ee. Kooee. Kooee, Kooee, Kooee.

(72)

The musical score is divided into four systems. The first system is marked 'ADAGIO' with a tempo of 60 Maelzel's Metronome and a note value of 'Beat two to each Measure'. The second system is also marked 'ADAGIO' with a tempo of 66 Maelzel's Metronome and a note value of 'Beat four to each Measure'. The third system is marked 'Larghetto' with a tempo of 88 Maelzel's Metronome. The fourth system is marked 'Largo' with a tempo of 72 Maelzel's Metronome. Each system consists of a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (grand staff). The vocal line includes the lyrics 'Koo-ee' and 'Kooee'. The piano accompaniment features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests.

Nathan chose notational symbols for "Kooee" which again showed more about the performing traditions of his culture than Aboriginal music. The combination of the calls into a piece of music touches again on the concept of whether the calls functioned as music or language in the original culture. Nathan does not deal with this concept, but rather uses the calls for his own purpose, as a nationalistic flavour for his music. His arrangement of these with piano accompaniment, is only for "the entertainment of the curious," as they were obviously unaccompanied when originally delivered.<sup>24</sup> The addition of the piano, no matter what sort of harmony was being added, would completely corrupt the timbre of the call. The vocal techniques which were employed by the performers would also have been completely feral. Nathan sets out six different varieties of cooees in the piece, each of the six is supposedly indicative of the calls of different districts, and while he does include a variety of tempo markings, each of the sections still sound similar because of the reuse of material in both the vocal and accompaniment lines. The only definite characteristics of the cooe that can be gained from Nathan's arrangement are that they existed, were an effective means of communication across large distances of land, and that there were varieties of calls in different districts of Australia.

"Koorinda Braia" shows Nathan's extension of the use of the cooe. The first version of the piece published in 1843 includes cooe calls in fine print over one repeat of the melody. Nathan says of the calls in this piece:

"Cooley," which I have introduced into the 4th page, to small notes, may be either sung or omitted. Neither the word nor the notes have any connexion whatever with the original melody; and the only apology I can offer for its introduction is the singular use of the word, so particular throughout the whole colony of Australia, a word unknown in any part of the world.<sup>25</sup>

Nathan realises that his combination of the melody with the calls is preserving the culture in a altered state, but apparently feels that this is justified - along with the addition of an

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<sup>24</sup>Nathan 103.

<sup>25</sup>Nathan, *Koorinda Braia: A Genuine Aboriginal Native Song Sung by the Maneroo Tribe of Australia*. (Sydney, Nathan, n.d.) n.p. Bound with other of Nathan's songs.



accompaniment, the arranging of the melody into a 'quintetto,' and (in the second version of the piece) the arranging of cooe calls into a six part interplay. His proclamation at the top of the piece "put into modern rhythm, harmonised and arranged, with pianoforte accompaniment," would seem to suggest that the only feature representative of Aboriginal culture is the melody.<sup>26</sup> However, as Nathan presumes that the "energetic" quality of Aboriginal music is produced solely by voices, and as the amateur musician of the parlour - "the unskilled" - is unable to cope with this energy, it must be transferred to the accompanying part, one must ask where the material for the transcription's vocal line came from. Nathan seemed to believe that it was more important to convey the energy of the piece than its original medium.

Nathan's attitude to preservation of Aboriginal culture is also evident in the performance practice of his pieces. Although he wrote accompanying notes on how these pieces were traditionally performed they were never recreated in this way:

Before they commence the Koorinda-Braia which is in 2/4 time, they first by Sticking two pieces of stick against each other beat two or three bars in perfect measure to triple time, seemingly as if trying to excite inspiration; they then continue beating and marking time with rhythm and accuracy not to be surpassed by the best musicians in the Italian Opera, of the melody which is sung with equal correctness, repeating the song several times; each repetition with increased energy and animated gestures - until the singers become completely exhausted by their enthusiasm.<sup>27</sup>

Nathan recognises the accompaniment of the stick beating, but in his arrangement of the piece Korinda-Braia, he arranges this rhythm in the piano part: "in the accompaniment the idea of the stick beating of the Gins is most cleverly introduced."<sup>28</sup> Unfortunately this sounds more like a Victoriana 'omm-cha omm-cha' than clapping sticks. The reproduction of other characteristics of Aboriginal performance practice are not attempted and his own public performances were in the European tradition:

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<sup>26</sup>Nathan 103.

<sup>27</sup>Hort 209.

<sup>28</sup>"Sesqui Diary" *Sydney Morning Herald* 30 May 1842, Reprinted 30 May 1992: 3.

## Example 4.3. Koorinda Braia - Isaac Nathan

127

**KOORINDA  
BRAIA.**  
**BENMARCATO**  
**CON SPIRITO**  
**OSSERVANZA.**  
**I. NATHAN.**

Koorin—da Brai-a Koorin—da Brai-a Koorin—da Brai—a

Koorinda Braia Koorinda Braia Koorinda Brai-a

Koo-rin-da Brai-a Koorinda Braia Koo-rin-da



128

The musical score is written for a vocal melody and piano accompaniment. It consists of four systems of staves. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The lyrics are 'Koorin-da brai-a'.

System 1: The vocal melody begins with the lyrics 'bai-a Koorin-da brai-a Koo-rin-da brai-a'. The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes.

System 2: The vocal melody continues with 'Koorin-da brai-a'. The piano accompaniment includes a section with a 3/4 time signature change.

System 3: The vocal melody repeats 'Koo-rin-da brai-a Koo-rin-da brai-a Koorinda brai-a'. The piano accompaniment continues with a similar rhythmic pattern.

System 4: The vocal melody concludes with 'Koorin-da brai-a Koorin-da brai-a Koorind-a brai-a'. The piano accompaniment ends with a final chord.

These Koo-ees are all to remain constant during the first time singing the Galietta.

**SOPRANI.**

Koo-ee koo-ee

Koo-ee koo-ee

Koo-ee koo-ee

**TENORI.**

koo—ee Koo—ee koo—ee

koo—ee Koo—ee koo—ee

**BASSI.**

koo—ee Koo—ee koo—ee

**SOPRANO PRIMO.**

Koorin—da Brai-a koorin—da brai-a koorin—da

**SOPRANO SECONDO.**

Koorin—da Brai-a koorin—da brai-a koorin—da

**TENORE PRIMO, E SECONDO.**

Koorin—da Brai-a koorin—da brai-a koorin—da

**BASSO.**

Koorin—da Brai-a koorin—da brai-a koorin—da

**PIANO-FORTE.**



131

koo--ee koo--ee koo--ee koo---ee  
 koo--ee koo--ee koo--ee koo--ee koo---ee. koo--ee  
 koo--ee koo--ee koo--ee koo--ee koo--ee koo--ee  
 koo--ee koo--ee koo---ee koo--ee koo--ee  
 koo--ee koo---ee koo---ee koo--ee  
 ---ee koo--ee koo---ee koo--ee  
 brai-a koorinda brai-a koorinda brai-a koorin-da brai-a  
 brai-a koorinda brai-a koorinda brai-a koorin-da brai-a  
 brai-a koorinda brai-a koorinda brai-a koorin-da brai-a  
 brai-a koorinda brai-a koorinda brai-a koorin-da brai-a

12 staves of musical notation. The first seven staves are vocal parts with lyrics:   
Staff 1: kooee kooee kooee kooee   
Staff 2: kooee kooee kooee kooee   
Staff 3: kooee kooee kooee kooee   
Staff 4: Koo-ee koo-ee kooee kooee   
Staff 5: koo-ee koo-ee kooee   
Staff 6: Koo-ee koo-ee kooee kooee   
Staff 7: koo-ee koo-ee kooee kooee   
Staff 8: Koo-ee koo-ee kooee kooee   
Staff 9: Koo-rinda brai-a Koo-rinda brai-a Koo-rinda brai-a   
Staff 10: Koo-rinda brai-a Koo-rinda brai-a Koo-rinda brai-a   
Staff 11: Koo-rinda brai-a Koo-rinda brai-a Koo-rinda brai-a   
Staff 12: Koo-rinda brai-a Koo-rinda brai-a Koo-rinda brai-a



[illegible]

Mr Nathan's Concert. The Hall of the Sydney College was a scene of much gaiety on Friday evening: His Excellency the Governor and Lady Gipps and most of the leading families in Sydney were present . . . A temporary orchestra had been erected on the south end of the room and the number of corps harmonique presented an appearance of order and raised expectations of efficiency, which their subsequent performance fully realised.<sup>29</sup>

The bastardisation of aspects of Aboriginal culture was entirely justified to Nathan, as it seemed to be the only way that aspects of the culture would become interesting to white society and hence preserved. He observes the disappearance of Aboriginal culture and says of the music, "but for our timely arrival in this colony, might have for ever sunk into oblivion."<sup>30</sup>

#### 4.5. Conclusion

Nathan and Lhotsky were serious in their intentions that by arranging Aboriginal music as parlour pieces they would be preserving them. Their interest in the preservation of Aboriginal culture, however romanticised, was genuine, but their commercial and compositional interests combined with the attitudes of the day meant that the pieces were all too often reduced to a parody of Aboriginal culture. The pieces were greeted with differing responses, some with humour at "Mr Nathan's cleverness," and others with contempt at the romanticising of Aboriginal culture. This can be seen in a review of Nathan's piece, "The Aboriginal Mother:"

We had seen the verses in the public prints; we had also seen Gins, and from our acquaintance with the gyneocracy of Australia, we could regret that these thrilling touching lines should have been so misplaced. Disconnect them, however from their present black heroine - fancy her anyone else, and a treat awaits you.<sup>31</sup>

Unfortunately, the need to make Aboriginal culture palatable for middle-class consumption meant that most, if not all, of the original characteristics of the music were disguised. Nathan and Lhotsky's arrangement can stand only as examples of the

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<sup>29</sup>"Sesqui Diary:" 3.

<sup>30</sup>Nathan 105.

<sup>31</sup>Hort 210.



attitudes of European Australia towards its indigenous culture at this time. These attitudes were that it was a small tragedy that the indigenous population would not survive the 'civilization' of Australia, that the indigenous culture could be used to express Australian nationalism, and also that when all else failed they were fair game for ridicule.

## Chapter Five

### "The Music of the Natural Folk"

#### 5.1. Introduction: The Rise of Anthropology

The study of anthropology flourished in the late nineteenth century, and scientists in Australia began to realise that far from living in a backwater, they were in a country that was rich in possibilities for anthropological and biological study. To their colleagues in Europe, the music of other cultures was an exotic subject, the study of which required expensive field trips overseas. A number of German and English scholars visited Australia to carry out studies on Aboriginal music, among them were Hermann Beckler, A.C. Haddon and Karl Hagen. Australians realised that Aboriginal culture was a fundamental part of their own country which was becoming increasingly important among European ethnologists. Sir Walter Baldwin Spencer noted:

when one has been out of England for some years, and travelled at all one gets to feel that after all England is not the only country in the world and that it is quite possible to work in Australia where there is so much that is new.<sup>1</sup>

A variety of stimuli guaranteed the growth of this area including, greater communication through scientific societies and their journals and the gathering together and publishing of large compilations of Aboriginal studies. Anthropological expeditions also generated new interest as never before had expeditions been mounted with the sole purpose of studying the culture and societies of indigenous Australians. Past expeditions had always had commercial, political or other scientific motives as their main objectives; with these aside, research was usually more carefully carried out. The documents were to be published and assessed by others in the same field so the information had to be secure.

#### 5.2. Expeditions

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<sup>1</sup>Baldwin Spencer to Henry Balfour, 18 August 1898, quoted in D.J. Mulvaney and J.H. Calaby, *So Much that is New: Baldwin Spencer 1860-1929* (Melbourne: U of Melbourne P, 1985) v.



An account of the early anthropological expedition by German ethnologist Hermann Beckler was published under the name "Corroboree, A Contribution to the Knowledge of the Music of the Australian Aborigines" in the 1868 volume of the journal *Globus*.<sup>2</sup> Beckler was in Australia and documenting Aboriginal culture in the mid-nineteenth century when travel writing was still in fashion; however, while his study includes a few biased remarks, it is not written in the style of a personal narrative. Beckler does not make himself the hero of the narrative and it is not written in racy or untechnical language. The observations, while they might be from dubious sources, appear to be detailed and significant.

Beckler's four notations are made in Queensland in and around the area of the Darling Downs. He attended a large corroboree where almost 200 Aborigines were present and also a number of settlers.<sup>3</sup> The presence of the settlers casts doubt on the authenticity of the corroboree, especially as Beckler notes that as the performance progressed:

The performers started to lose seriousness and to make bad jokes - probably because the settlers had brought brandy to the corroboree, the night finished up as a drunken orgy, followed by violence.<sup>4</sup>

The notation made from this corroboree is 'Corroberri I' (example 5.1.a). 'Klage oder Todtenlied' (5.1.b) was a song that was composed for a man hurt in fighting after the corroboree. 'Corroberri II' (5.1.c) is the "first verse of a corroboree heard on the Upper Darling," and the last example 'Corroberri III' (5.1.d) was a notation made by a German sheep station overseer in Queensland.<sup>5</sup>

Beckler's notations display the normal features of nineteenth century notation including: the use of time signatures; key signatures (5.1.b 'E-moll'); placing all of the pieces neatly

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<sup>2</sup>Hermann Beckler, "Corroberri: Ein Beitrag zur Kenntniss der Musik die den Australischen Ueinwohnern," *Globus* 13 (1886) 82-84. [Catalogue notes and translation] Canberra: AIATSIS, 1 page.

<sup>3</sup>Beckler 1.

<sup>4</sup>Beckler 1.

<sup>5</sup>Beckler 1.

within the scope of the treble clef (for example all of Beckler's notation start on g); the notation of only very short bits of the music (he writes that the music "is repeated for hours" but only supplies five lines of music); not indicating any accompanying instruments in the notation; and, limited texts with no translations. Unusual aspects of the notation include metronome markings, octaves, chromaticism (5.1.a), dynamic markings, and a large amount of corresponding written material.

Beckler's use of dynamic markings show the contrast between chorus and solo sections (fourth stave in example 5.1.a and second and third stave in 5.1.b) and his accompanying written information confirms this.

Women's singing is plaintive half-singing whispering. The men's chorus shouts and stamps and the women slap their opossum-skin rugs or bare thighs, all the noise suddenly dies away leaving only the plaintive whispering of the women. . . . the octaves of the women's and children's singing are enchantingly pure.<sup>6</sup>

Previous practices of collecting notations second hand meant that very rarely did written information correspond to the notation. While Beckler does notate the octaves and dynamics of the chorus singing he neglects to add the rhythms beaten out on the "opossum skin rugs." Beckler also takes an interest in the timbre of the voice commenting that "all notes are sung during expiration, after strenuous inhalation," and that the music is "a piece of untamed primitive creatures, comparable to the buzzing of insects, the murmuring of water, the rustling of wind and the howling of the storm."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Beckler 1.

<sup>7</sup>Beckler 1.



## Example 5.1. Notations - Hermann Beckler.

## Corroberri I. Darling Downs.

 $\text{♩} = 160$ , später 150 und mehr.

Wa'h! Wa'h! Wa'h!

## Klage oder Todtenlied. Darling Downs.

 $\text{♩} = 60$  oder noch langsamer. E-moll.

## Corroberri II. Upper Darling River.

Meninder.  $\text{♩} = 84$ . E-moll.

Bai in di Bai in di  
ba-le ma ba-le gna on bai  
in di bai in di gna on ba-le

## Corroberri III. Gayndah, Kneemland.

 $\text{♩} = 120$ .



### 5.3. Societies and Journals

Australia in the 1880s was a country interested in science. The scientists were not located - as might be expected - in the universities, but were associated instead with the Royal and scientific societies. The Royal Society was founded in the 1850s, its publication, *The Royal Society Proceedings*, published many important ethnological articles. *Science of Man*, another journal appearing at this time, was instrumental in providing a platform for ethnologists or the general public wishing to publish their work and have it assessed.

Information about Aboriginal music that was printed in the *Science of Man* journal included the lengthy discussions of Aboriginal song texts, and various discussions on instruments. Notations were published and became increasingly important towards the end of the century. This sudden dramatic interest in notations may have prompted Spencer and Gillen to take a phonograph into Central Australia. In 1902 the editor of *Science of Man*, Walter R. Harper, called for the submission of more notations to the journal but outlined what he considered to be 'worthwhile' music:

Recently Mr J.M. Thompson sent to this society a corroboree song, with music noted by one of his friends. Our anxiety to obtain these songs (particularly if they are accompanied by a translation) led us to refer the matter to a leading authority in the Australian music world, Mr G. Rivers Allpress. And here we wish to record our sense of his kindness in so much as he has promised to examine all similar music sent to us and, when in the opinion of the executive, certain music is worthy of being printed, to prepare the notations for the lithographer. Under these circumstances we invite our country members who are sufficiently well acquainted with the art to send us the music - if so it may be called - of any corroborees they may have heard.

Mr Allpress' note, endorsed by the executive of this society follows: After careful persual of the corroboree music you placed in my hands, I have arrived at the conclusion that it is not genuine, as it appears to me to have too much resemblance to a civilized tune. I do not wish to infer that the person who noted it down, did so otherwise than in good faith, but would suggest the possibility of the aborigines having picked an old tune from some settlers and afterwards turned it to account for corroboree purposes.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Walter R. Harper, "A Corrobore Song," [Policy on Printing Notations] *Science of Man* 5.2 (1902) 175.



The journal published song texts without their notations, as presumably this was less time consuming and was thought to be less of a responsibility in case the information was not completely accurate. An example sent by Captain Sheafe of Yatteyatah, who took down the 'tune' with his flute, shows editors of this time were prepared to publish notations which had little or no significance over notations which seemed too "civilized:"

Tshe-	mer	bur-	ra	bu-	na	ny	too	na	oo	na
g	g	g	g	g	g	g	e	e	e	e
Tshe-	mer	bur-	ra	bu-	na	ny	too	na	oo	na
g	g	g	g	g	g	g	e	e	e	e
Darm	wate									
A	C									

'Historical' notations were sometimes reproduced such as the Barron Field notation (1822) in the 1887 volume of *The Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*.<sup>9</sup> This journal also printed new material such as the "Burnett River Corroboree" notated by Charles Handley and the three songs notated by George William Torrance.<sup>10</sup> An interesting feature of the Handley Corroboree tune is the inclusion of the Boomerang part, ". . . signifies the beat of the boomerangs, nulla nullahs, etc while the gins pad the opossum skins."<sup>11</sup> Usually this beating was considered as a tempo support, in Handley's notation it is treated as an accompanying instrument. The piece starts off with a 'call' without any accompanying beating and then the song begins, it consists of a number of decorated falling phrases. Other features of Handley's notation comply with nineteenth century ideas of notation.

<sup>9</sup>H. Ling Roth, "Australian Tunes" *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Journal of Great Britain and Ireland* 16:4 (1887) 425.

<sup>10</sup>See pages 79 and 81-82 of this thesis.

<sup>11</sup>Charles Handley, *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Journal of Great Britain and Ireland* 26:4 (1897) 436.

## Example 5.2. Burnett River Corroboree - Handley 1897

**Burnett River Corroboree.**

CALL.

The musical score is written on five staves. The first staff starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The music is in 2/4 time. The first staff begins with a 'CALL.' marking. The music consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some measures containing triplets. The score ends with a double bar line.

\* Signifies the beat of boomerangs, nullah nullahs, etc., while the gins pad the opossum skins.



Torrance's notations, made ten years before this, are interesting in terms of rhythmic notation. The songs were notated from a single interview with "a native bard" (William Berak) and Torrance says because of this "the particulars notated are of necessity imperfect and superficial."<sup>12</sup> While he may make biased remarks ("rude attempts at melody") he does show an awareness of the rhythmic complexity of the music.<sup>13</sup>

Much of the character of the music depends upon the rhythm which, while strongly marked, is also most irregular, changing suddenly, and alternating frequently between duple and triple; the changes moreover, being sometimes introduced by a slackening of the time, and a curious sliding of one sound into another.

The immediately noticeable characteristic of his notation is the avoidance of placing the music within a strict pulse. The continual changing of the key signature, using unbeamed notes, and a variety of accents, show this. Also the use of *rit.* and *tempo* markings add to the rhythmic complexity.

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<sup>12</sup>George William Torrance, "Music of the Australian Aborigines," *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Journal of Great Britain and Ireland* 16.3 (1886) 335.

<sup>13</sup>Torrance 335.

Example 5.3. Notations - Torrance (1887)  
a) Kurburu's Song b) Wenberi's Song

KURBURU'S SONG.

Sounded as if in the Key of B minor.

*Tempo Moderato.* M. ♩ = 100.

*mf* > *rit.* > *tempo*

ō - - - na gar - é - a nung ngalúrma báreng

gūr - - uk ba mirnín mirnín nga búrun bángan bódha¹

to - - léro muringá : ō yam yam mūdhan gūrú bai wirgengū - rák.

¹ German ð; dh = sound of "th" in "this".

WENBERI'S SONG.

No particular key suggested. Pitched first on D $\sharp$  then changed abruptly to C $\sharp$ , D $\sharp$ , and B.

*Tempo Moderato.* M. ♩ = 100.

*mf* > *rit.* > *tempo*

'ñē - - - d ū a g é a - ngála nung bāw ñéllng ba ngaluk ba e

dēá nung ngga wartēin¹ ² dhúllar wílúit wá-wandūn nung Būngil ō yā māmengáta

ba yāwa lúlluk ō yern-ngen dhúllarmūeik¹ nga wáru - ngáluk gūeik

¹ ū = ny. ² The "t" in "wartēin" apparently inserted or omitted at pleasure (N.B.—ci="ai" in "rain.") ³ dh = sound of "th" in "this" ⁴ Mueik = mweik. So also gweik.



Example 5.3. Notations - Torrance (1887)  
c) Corroboree Song

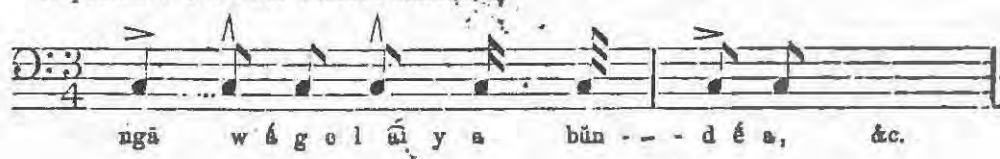
CORROBOREE SONG.

Sung on D, with nasal "intonation" preceding, and no change of note till repetition.

M. ♩ = 100.



Repeated a tone lower without intonation.



#### 5.4. Compilations and Theses

Within the space of nine years during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the Victorian Government printed two large volumes of material on Aboriginal culture. The secretary of the Mines Department, R Brough Smyth, compiled the massive volume *The Aborigines of Victoria*, in 1878. Edward Micklethwaite Curr, compiled *The Australian Race* printed in four large volumes in 1887.<sup>14</sup> Both works, were completed collecting information from many sources, including papers from notable ethnologists, reprinting 'historical' material, and using recollections, stories and notations of people in contact zones.

Curr's *The Australian Race* includes a paper by the Rev. John Mathew entitled, "Mary River and Bunya Bunya Country." Mathew who wrote a number of articles and books on Australian Aborigines, had interests in 'religious cults' (including ceremony) and language. His article in *The Australian Race* focuses mainly on the ceremonies of the *Kabi* people. He gives two notations, the first of which is reproduced here (example 5.4). Written information accompanying the notation is mainly concerned with the text although he does say that:

A string of words often runs to the one note. All parts are variations of one tune, sung in different kinds of time, and at various rates of speed. There is a particular tendency to slide in semitones from one key to another . . . A favourite practice is to raise the pitch suddenly an octave, and in order to effect this it is sometimes necessary to allow it to slide to a low pitch . . .<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Mulvaney 95.

<sup>15</sup>John Mathew, "Mary River and Bunya Bunya Country," *The Australian Race* Comp. Edward Micklethwaite Curr, Vol 3 (Melbourne: Government, 1886) 169.



## Example 5.4. Kabi Notation (1887) - John Mathew

## CORROBOREE I.

*Andante.*

Mi - lo lon - go wom - bo lai - li lai - ya, Mi - lo lon - go wom -

bo lai - li lai - ya, Mi - lo lon - go wom - bo lai - li lai - ya. *ritard.*

*Allegro.*

Mi - lo lon - go wom - bo lai - li lai - ya, Mi - lo lon - go wom - bo lai -

li lai - ya, Mi - lo lon - go wom - bo lai - li lai - ya, Mi -

lo lon - go wom - bo lai - li lai - ya, Mi - lo lon - go wom - bo lai -

li lai - ya, Mi - lo lon - go wom - bo lai - li lai - ya.

Gu - vai a - lin - ge, gu - vai a - lin - go, gu - vai a - lin - ge,

gu - vai a - lin - go, gu - vai a - lin - ge, gu - vai a - lin - go, ya lun - go.

Throughout the nineteenth century many notations of Aboriginal music showed the common trait of a downwards melodic movement followed by a jump back to the starting note. Mathew's notation confirms this and uses much the same notational material as others used. He does display the characteristic late nineteenth century observation of the importance of rhythm, using time signature changes and unbeamed quavers to show this. Although Mathew's notes that there is a sliding from one note to the next he does not attempt to notate it, nor the lap slapping of the women:

During the whole representation the women beat time. Each sat with her thighs close together, and beat upon the hollow thus formed with both her hands open, the fingers of the one passing obliquely over the other.<sup>16</sup>

The notation is also interestingly long (eight lines), as a feature of previous notations had been their brevity. Mathew noted that the corroboree lasted hours and says of the notation "only a portion is given, but is sufficient to indicate the character of the whole."<sup>17</sup>

The notation contain in the R. Brough Smyth volume *The Aborigines of Victoria* was made by Philip Chauncy. It displays many of the characteristics that were common in earlier nineteenth century notations. It includes the downward fall and repeat but includes pitched notes during the rise back to the top and also a rise in the 'fino.'

Example 5.5. Notation from Western Australia (1841-53) - Philip Chauncy



The notation does not show any of the rhythmic complexity that began to be an outstanding feature of late nineteenth century notations; it is very short, and is not accompanied by any written material. Chauncy's information was collected from contact

<sup>16</sup>Mathew 168.

<sup>17</sup>Mathew 169.



he had with Aboriginal people while he was 'Assistant Surveyor in Western Australia,' from 1841 to 1853. His observations are intended as "a record of such incidents as I happen to remember, and of facts I have thought noteworthy."<sup>18</sup> The type and quality of observation in these two compilations by Curr and Brough Smyth, were of a different standard. Rather than one being good and the other not so, it points to the fact that both volumes include a variety of information from a multitude of sources.

Another compiler was the German, Karl Hagen who wrote his Doctoral thesis in 1892 on "The Music of the Natural Folk; Australia, Melanesia, Polynesia."<sup>19</sup> Instead of doing field work and notating his own musical observations, he compiled large amounts of historical information. He managed to look at most of the nineteenth century sources and compile a large collection of notations, including those of Beckler, Wilkes, Lesueur, Fréycinet, Field, and Chauncy (Brough Smyth). While it can be seen that Curr and Brough Smyth compiled a information from various sources and finished up with large volumes of diverse material, they were responsible for bringing an abundance of new material to light. Hagen and a number of others including Wallaschek preferred to summarise the information thus far gathered. Wallaschek in his book *Primitive Music* (1893) includes two notations, the "Todtenlied" of Beckler and the Fréycinet version of the Barron Field notation.<sup>20</sup> In both the Hagen and Wallaschek compilations, information from various sources is often placed together creating often curious insights into the history of Australia's cross-cultural observations. For example, the reproduction of the Field notation (1822) three times in the Hagen compilation shows the extent to which this notation was borrowed by other voyagers and explorers.

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<sup>18</sup>Philip Chauncy, "Notes and Anecdotes of the Aborigines of Australia," *The Aborigines of Victoria with Notes Relating to the Habits of the Natives in Other Parts of Australia and Tasmania* Comp. R.Brough Smyth, Vol. 2 (Melbourne: Government, 1887) 266.

<sup>19</sup>Karl Hagen, *Über die Musik Einger Naturvölker (Australier, Melanesier, Polynesier)* Diss. Hamburg U. n.d. (Hamburg: Schlothe, 1892) 1-35.

<sup>20</sup>Richard Wallaschek, *Primitive Music* (London: n.p.,1893).

## Example 5.6. Collection by Carl Hagen (1892)

1.

**Corroboree I. Darling Downs.**  $\text{♩} = 160$ ,  $\text{♩} = 180$  *moder.*

**Corroboree II. Upper Darling River (Menindee)  $\text{♩} = 84$ . *pp.***

*Wah! ff Wah! ff Wah! ff*

*Klage- oder Totenlied. Darling Downs.  $\text{♩} = 60$  od. noch langsamer*

**Corroboree III. Gayndah, Kneemland (Nord-Queensland)  $\text{♩} = 120$ .**

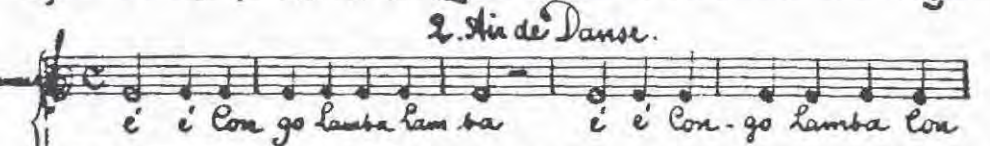
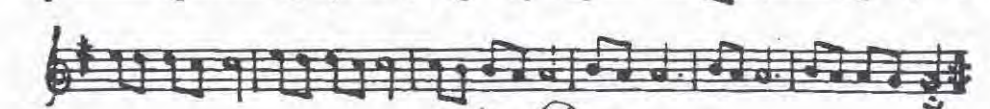
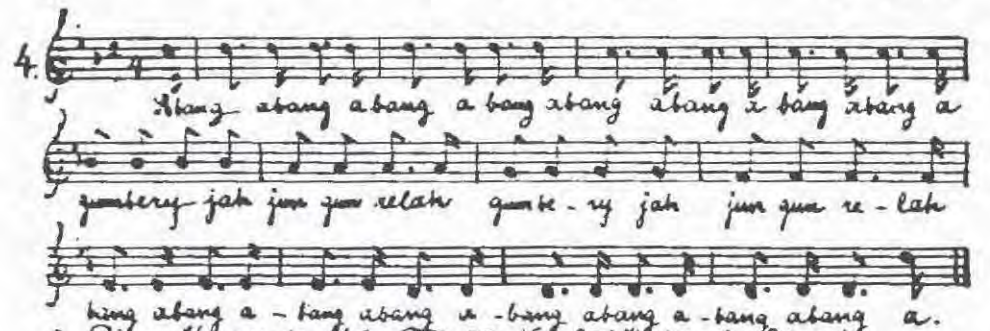
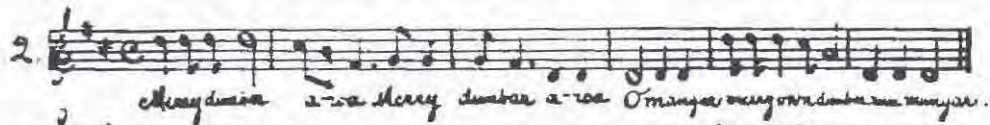
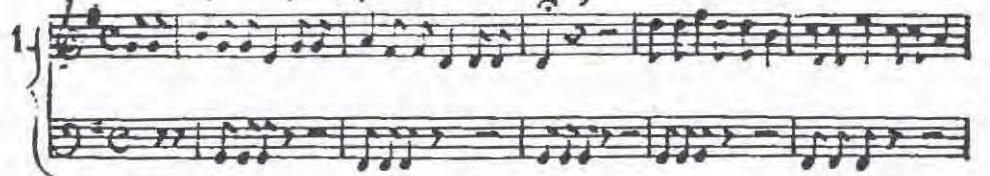
*Bai -- in -- di -- Bai -- in -- di -- ba --*

*ma -- ba -- le -- qua on -- -- bai --*

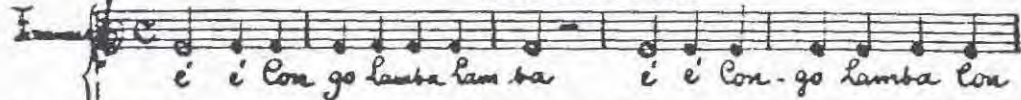
*in -- di -- bai -- in -- di -- qua on -- ba -- le --*



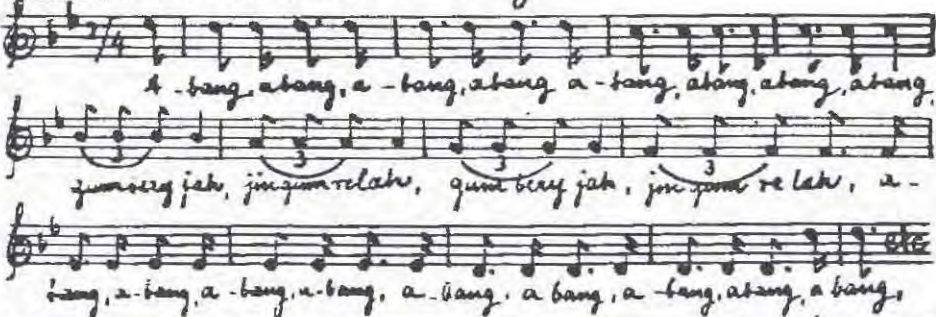
Wilkes Expl. Exp. III p. 189. Corrobory. New South Wales.



2. Air de Danse.



*Field. New South Wales. Corroboree.*

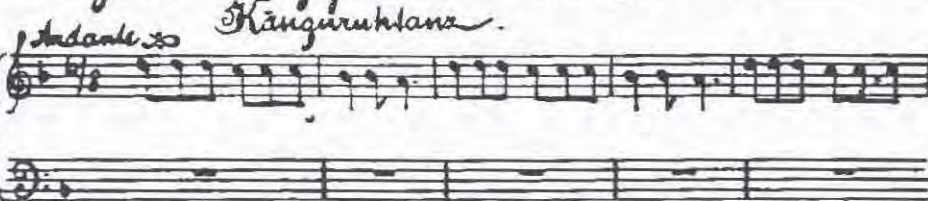
1. 

*a - bang, a bang, a - bang, a bang, a - bang, a bang, a bang, a bang,*

*jumung jah, jumung relah, jumung jah, jumung relah, a -*

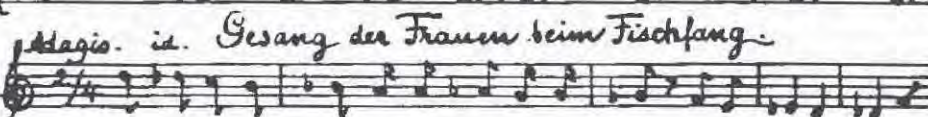
*bang, a - bang, a - bang, a - bang, a - bang, a bang, a - bang, a bang, a bang,*

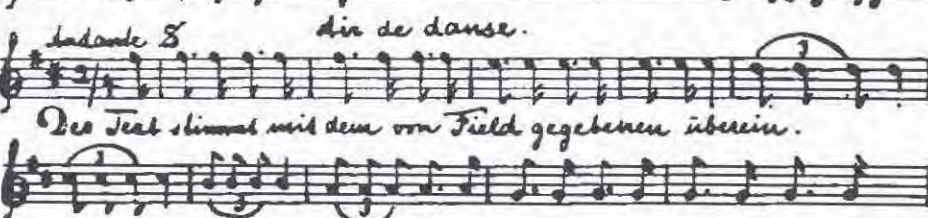
*Freigezeichnet. Umgegend von Port Jackson.*

2. *Andante* 

*Kanguruhlans.*

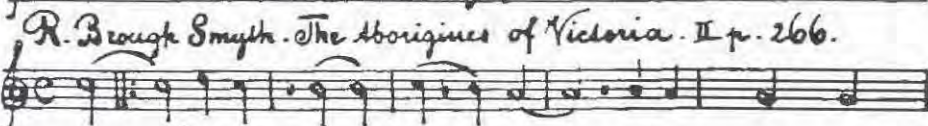


3. *Adagio.* *id. Gesang der Frauen beim Fischfang.* 

4. *Andante* *8* *dir de danse.* 

*Des Text stimmt mit dem von Field gegebenen überein.*



5. *R. Brough Smyth. The Aborigines of Victoria. II p. 266.* 

*Va Capo* 

*Fine.*



## 5. 6. Conclusion

Notations from the late nineteenth century displayed characteristics which reflected the careful methodical observation that was being carried out. Whereas previously, accompanying notes and notations were often collected from different sources (making it unlikely that they would complement each other), observation in the late nineteenth century was technically more sound. Hence commentary began to correspond more closely to the notations. Accompanying instruments such as boomerangs became accepted as real instruments and not just metronome beats, and their lines were notated. The rhythmic complexity of Aboriginal music became an increasingly noted feature, as transcriptions showing bars of different duration as well as unbeamed quavers and a variety of accent markings demonstrate. Arguably, these changes are directly related to the formation of a serious interest by Australians in their indigenous culture.

## Chapter Six

### Conclusion

#### 6.1. The End of an Era: Movie Films and Wax Cylinder Phonographs

Sound recording techniques were first applied to Aboriginal music with the songs of Fanny Cochrane Smith in Tasmania in 1899, and then by Spencer and Gillen as they went into the field in 1901. Spencer was influenced by the ethnologist A.C.Haddon who took movie photography to the Torres Strait in 1898 during the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition.<sup>1</sup> Spencer wrote to Gillen that they should use movie sound-recording equipment to which Gillen promptly replied, "cinematography idea is good if the funds will run to it but I think phonographic records of corroborees etc., even more important."<sup>2</sup> It is perhaps ironic that the recordings were given to the composer and performer Percy Grainger to notate - as if to suggest that the sound recordings had no status in and of themselves but could take on importance through their translation into a Western form of encoded expression. Grainger listened to the wax cylinders at Spencer's home one evening in 1909.

What lies stored in the musical histories re Australian native music, that it moves over a few notes only & is mere repetition of primitive phrases; not at all! Generally *over* an octave in compass, a tune is often made up of 4 or 5 distinct phrases, & is *no less complex* than many European tunes.<sup>3</sup>

Transcription was, arguably, not just a means of preservation but also a means of adding cultural 'weight' to the music. Whilst Spencer was probably concerned about the permanency of the cylinders and was anxious to get the information onto a safer carrier he might also have thought that the examples would reach a larger audience if they were notated and published. Possibly, the notation might have been meant as a way of

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<sup>1</sup>Mulvaney 197.

<sup>2</sup>Mulvaney 197.

<sup>3</sup>Percy Grainger quoted in Mulvaney 200.



'understanding' the music as, through notation, Grainger was analysing and defining what - in European terms - was important in the sounds. His choice of key signatures, time signatures, and phrases, would affect how the information was viewed and help to shape opinions as to its authenticity and value.

Whatever the reason for making these notations, Spencer's cylinders and their transcription by Grainger, mark the end of an era in which politics, commerce and personal biases were not just an inescapable, but also, an unacknowledged part of cross-cultural documentation. Significantly, the Grainger notations also ushered in a new generation of notations made from sound recordings. Since this time a substantial body of recordings has accrued providing a primary resource for an understanding of Aboriginal music in the twentieth century. The quality of recordings and the possibility of copying and distribution has limited the need for notations as it is now possible to approach Aboriginal music, with our own biases combined with the filter of recording technologies, but without the added personal biases of the original researcher.

## 6.2. Perception and Response: Nineteenth Century Documentation of Aboriginal Music

It is perhaps inevitable that knowledge of Aboriginal music prior to the invention of recording technologies will be limited by factors such as the quality and biases of transcribers and the prevalent social attitudes regarding indigenous cultures. Indeed, for years, writers from Berzins to Moyle have held up a few nineteenth century notations of Aboriginal music as monuments of historical significance. Whilst some may argue that such transcriptions are of limited 'ethnomusicological' value, the notations made prior to about 1900 do - both intentionally and unintentionally - reveal an enormous amount about cultural interaction and prevalent concepts of music and culture in the nineteenth century.

'Perception and response' refers to how coupled societies deal with cultural difference. Through notations, we see one society's perceptions of difference and the way they



choose to express them. The works contained in this thesis, when viewed according to aspects such as method of observation and notation, date and reason for notation, and use of the finished product, form groups which show trends in thought and attitude and hence, are of social and musical significance. It is perhaps too easy to forget that music is a vital and, in Australia's context, an underestimated index of cultural change. In the case of the notations presented in this study, many do reveal a unique moment of cultural interaction. Although after examination these works may show us little about Aboriginal music, they are more than just the first notations of music in this country or oddities of the past; they are significant as, through the changing styles of transcription, we can see the history of attitudes towards indigenous Australians in the nineteenth century and the emergence of concepts to do with Australia's uniqueness.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, cultural contact and documentation was often motivated by personal ambition and commerce and carried out under the guise of preservation, science or exploration. This can be seen with the first European voyages to the Pacific, with commercial motives to name and claim and scientific motives to map coastlines and collect specimens. Towards the end of the century the rise of scholarly institutions and journals meant that methods of observation were examined by a wider public resulting in more documentation by informed observers. A number of changes in political and social attitude in Australia meant that reports and notations from the late nineteenth century changed in style from previous notation. Exploration became freer of commercial and political restraints. Ethnologists could now choose to travel to the indigenous population rather than around the coastline or in straight lines across the country. The wide circulation of scientific journals and the change in the interests of readers from 'exciting' travel writing to anthropological observation meant that careful, methodical observations were more likely to be published and rewarded financially.

Walter R. Harper's off-hand description of Aboriginal song, "music - if so it may be called," capped a century of ethnological writings and notations rich in subjectivity and



bias. Whereas, the concept of subjectivity in documentation has become a major concern for some humanities scholars dealing with Australian history (for example, Bernard Smith or Mary Louise Pratt) the documentation of 'contact zones' in musical terms has been seldom studied. This study is a first attempt to bring together a significant number of such musical artifacts and to provide some context for their origins and analysis of their nature.

Nineteenth century Australia was a bitter contact zone, the documentation which flowed from this clash illustrates two divergent cultures. Although some sensitive observation came from this period, it unfortunately showed that indigenous culture was withering in the shadow of aggressive new settlers: many notators, including Field, Lhotsky and Nathan, saw their role in terms of 'saving' a music from extinction. This motive of preservation mixed with the emerging ideas of travel writing, the musical souvenir and a scholarly notion of cultural study produced an unusual series of responses from non-indigenous Australians, which deserves to occupy a special place in Australia's musical and social history.

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