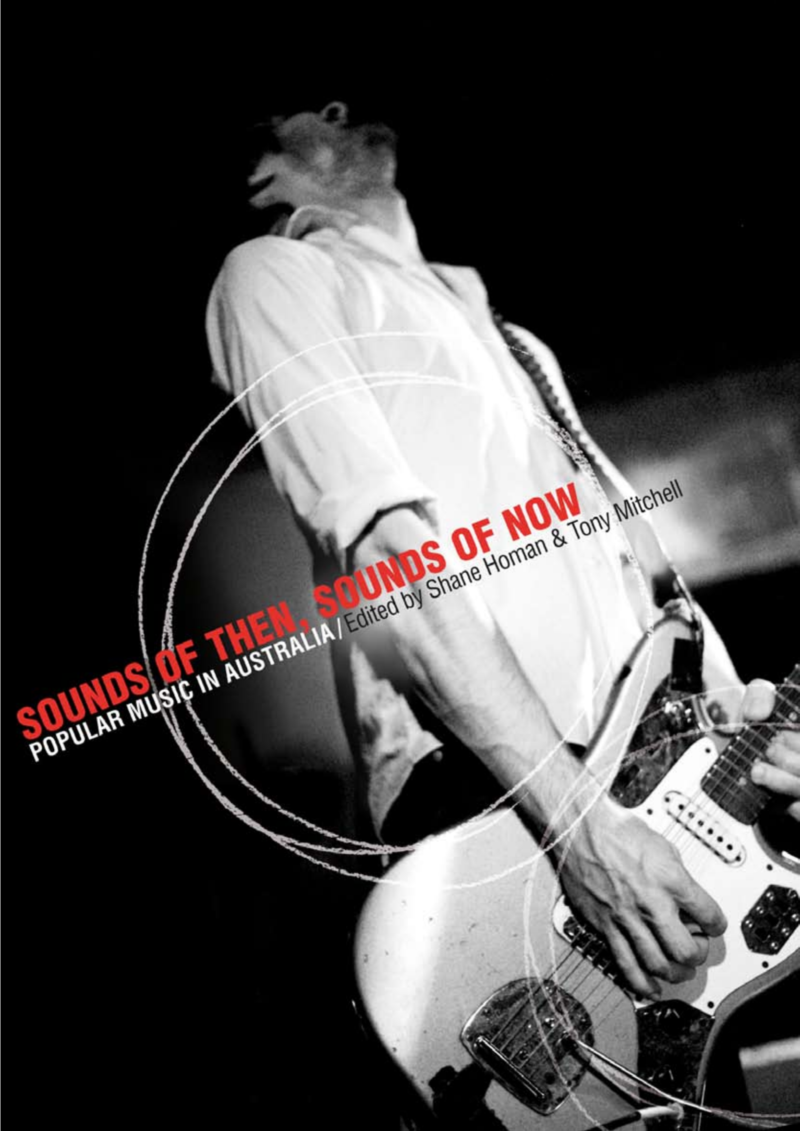
SOUNDS OF THEN, SOUNDS OF NOW
POPULAR MUSIC IN AUSTRALIA/ Edited by Shane Homan & Tony Mitchell

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgments V
Contributors VII

Introduction: Locating Australian popular music **1**
Shane Homan & Tony Mitchell

1
Playing to the thinkers or the drinkers? **19**
The sites and sounds of Oz Rock
Shane Homan

2
Improvisation and popular music **37**
John Whiteoak

3
The performance of Australian experimental music: **61**
From shattered glass to feedback instruments
Caleb Kelly

4
Localising global sounds: World music and **73**
multicultural influences in Australia
Aline Scott-Maxwell

5
Australian electronica: A brief history **93**
Ross Harley & Andrew Murphie

6
Australian jazz: An overview **113**
Bruce Johnson

7
Doof, dance and rave culture **131**
Susan Luckman

8
Folk music: Movements, scenes and styles **151**
Graeme Smith

9
'Ailan style': An overview of the contemporary music of Torres Strait Islanders **167**
Karl Neuenfeldt

10
Music and the internet: File sharing, the iPod revolution and the industry of the future **181**
Susan Luckman

11
Bastard country, bastard music: The legacy of Australian punk **199**
John Encarnacao

12
Metal 'Downunderground': Mapping the terrain of the 'Great southern wasteland' **215**
Michelle Phillipov

13
Australian hip hop's multicultural literacies: A subculture emerges into the light **231**
Tony Mitchell

14
Contemporary Aboriginal music **253**
Chris Gibson & Peter Dunbar-Hall

15
Top 40 in Australia: Popular music and the mainstream **271**
Alison Huber

Index **289**

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00/ **INTRODUCTION / LOCATING AUSTRALIAN POPULAR MUSIC /** SHANE HOMAN & TONY MITCHELL

> I think I hear the sounds of then,
> And people talking,
> The scenes recalled, by minute movement,
> And songs they fall, from the backing tape …
>
> GANGgajang (1985) 'Sounds of then (this is Australia)'

Trying to find a song title that to some extent epitomises developments in Australian popular music is a difficult task. There are a number of popular songs that have been referred to as "unofficial national anthems", yet none, with the possible exception of Men at Work's 1981 "white reggae" anthem 'Down under', which reached number one in Australia and on international charts, seems to refer in any distinctive or readily identifiable way to Australian social norms, icons, mores or even stereotypes. However, GANGgajang's 1985 song 'Sounds of then (this is Australia)', with its backing tape of songs soundtracking conversations and social scenes, evokes the sounds of Australia's past from the vantage point of a patio overlooking cane fields in Queensland. It was one of 20 songs included on Warner Music Australia's

Unofficial national anthems compilation released in 2003, which also included 'Down under', along with Cold Chisel's 'Khe Sanh', Daddy Cool's 'Eagle rock', The Easybeats' 'Friday on my mind', Hunters and Collectors' 'Throw your arms around me', Jimmy Barnes's 'Working class man', Paul Kelly's 'Leaps and bounds', Goanna's 'Solid rock', Yothu Yindi's 'Treaty' – the only song on the album by an Aboriginal group – and, perhaps contentiously, Split Enz's 'I see red'.

Most, if not all, of these songs are entrenched in the mainstream tradition of "Oz Rock", which is generally associated with crowded, sweaty pubs, raucous singalongs and drunken, Anglo-Australian masculinity. Not a single female artist is included on the compilation, nor indeed on the subsequent double CD *Unofficial national anthems 2* (2004), which includes curios such as Sherbert's 'Howzat' alongside tracks by The Screaming Jets, The Angels, Australian Crawl, Dragon, Rose Tattoo, Pseudo Echo, Redgum, Skyhooks, The Church, Crowded House and Little River Band. All were original releases from the 1960s through to the 1990s (with the bulk drawn from the 1980s). Not one expresses perspectives that fall outside mainstream male sensibilities, let alone represents the extensive cultural diversity or Indigenous dimensions of Australian music. Midnight Oil is a curious omission, as is Kylie Minogue, who is perhaps the most prominent example from a long list of female singers and performers who, arguably, warrant inclusion on these compilations. The list of non-mainstream and Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and multicultural artists who have been omitted is even longer.

Are these "anthems", then, the songs that most people associate with Australian popular music? What of the wide range of musical genres that flourish outside mainstream rock and pop, including jazz, folk, country, metal, electronica, dance music, experimental and improvised music, and hip hop, all of which have long and distinctive histories in Australia, even if they originated elsewhere? Given the wide diversity of Australian national identities – from Indigenous to postcolonial to migrant – one would expect varieties of music-making in Australia to express local and national identity as well as place and locality in important ways. It is, therefore, not surprising that much has been written about the different ways in which popular music does this (see, for example, Frith 1996; Street 1995; Mitchell 1996).

This volume offers a range of views on a variety of existing practices and genres of popular music in Australia – from the conventional to the experimental, from chart popularity to the obscure outer limits of improvised music. In doing so, it acknowledges earlier studies of Australian popular music, beginning with Clinton Walker's *Inner city sound* (1982), which is a compilation of music journalism and photos surveying Australian punk and post-punk music from 1976 to 1981. In 1986, Wendy Milsom and Helen Thomas delivered the book *Pay to play: The Australian rock industry*, in which they interviewed key musicians and management figures from 1980s mainstream Australian rock music and provided a unique insight into discursive

battles between creativity and commerce taking place within the industry at the time. In 1987, Marcus Breen's edited volume *Missing in action: Australian popular music in perspective* provided a snapshot of Australian subcultural music experiences from church music to folk, country, rock, avant-garde and "women's music", as well as chapters on music and politics, public radio, the Australian recording industry and music journalism. The title is an expression of the editor's concern that "popular music is a commitment that has often become overwhelmed by trivia and commerce, thereby losing its potential active and progressive impulses" (Breen 1987, p.6). Consisting largely of a collection of essays and interviews with music practitioners, *Missing in action* was also a call for greater academic study into and debate about local music practices. This call was partially answered by Philip Hayward's *From pop to punk to postmodernism* (1992), an influential compilation of 13 essays that linked experiences of Australian popular music from the 1950s through to the 1970s with new contexts and genres that emerged in the 1980s and early 1990s, such as Aboriginal rock, changing music radio formats and music television, the recording industry and dance parties. It also included case studies of Kylie Minogue and Midnight Oil.

A number of prominent Australian musicians have also added to the literature with informative accounts of their own experiences in the local music industry; for example, Billy Thorpe (1996, 1998) Glenn Wheatley (1999) and Jim Keays (1999), while Damien Johnstone (2001) documented 1950s rocker and "Wild One" Johnny O'Keefe, and Craig Mathieson (2000) charted the machinations of independent bands and recording companies throughout the 1990s.

Clinton Walker's *Stranded*: *The secret history of Australian independent music, 1977–1991* (1996), Toby Creswell and Martin Fabinyi's *The real thing: Adventures in Australian rock & roll* (1999), Bruce Johnson's study of early Australian jazz, *The inaudible music* (2000) and Bob Blunt's *Blunt: A biased history of Australian rock* (2001) are other notable works that also depict both local and national sensibilities within Australian popular music. *Playing ad lib,* John Whiteoak's 1999 study of improvisatory music in Australia from 1836 to 1970, is an important historical account of improvised music in Australia in various contexts, such as circus, theatre, dance halls, cinema, church, forms of jazz, and experimental and popular music of the 1960s. Recording company histories have also been the subject of attention in works such as Ross Laird's *Sound beginnings* (1999) and the Powerhouse Museum's *Spinning around* (Cox 2001).

On a much broader scale, John Whiteoak and Aline Scott-Maxwell's *Currency companion to Australian music and dance* (2003) provides a comprehensive, encyclopedic overview of historical and contemporary practices and issues in all genres of Australian music, from Aboriginal traditional music to classical and art music, and jazz and popular music. Four decades of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander country

music received detailed attention in Clinton Walker's *Buried country* (2001) and its accompanying documentary film and CD, while Marcus Breen's edited volume *Our place, our music* (1989) provides material on a range of music by Aboriginal musicians, as does Peter Dunbar-Hall and Chris Gibson's more recent *Deadly sounds, deadly places: Contemporary Aboriginal music in Australia* (2004). Karl Neuenfeldt's edited volume *The didjeridu*: *From Arnhem Land to internet* (1997) examines this Australian "sonic icon" in the context of "Aboriginal, Australian and international music, culture and identity" (Neuenfeldt 1997, p.6). Tony Mitchell's 1996 book *Popular music and local identity: Rock, pop and rap in Europe and Oceania* contains a chapter on Australian music up to the mid-1990s that incorporates analysis of the music of Aboriginal artists such as Yothu Yindi, and chapters on world music, hip hop, dance music and Oz Rock.

In the late 1990s, the various "interventions" of local, state and federal governments into popular music practices began to be examined in print. Marcus Breen's *Rock dogs: Politics and the Australian music industry* (1999) assesses Australian government music policies and initiatives of the 1980s and 1990s, such as Ausmusic, the Victorian Rock Foundation, Creative Nation, various community music projects and the Prices Surveillance Authority. Shane Homan's *The mayor's a square: Live music and law and order in Sydney* (2003), provides a historical account of the changing governance of Sydney music venues and related night-time entertainment economies since the 1950s.

Graeme Smith's *Singing Australian: A history of folk and country music* (2005) provides a historical overview of these key genres from the bush ballads and hillbilly music of the early 20th century to contemporary figures such as Kasey Chambers and Paul Kelly. Jon Stratton's *Australian rock: Essays on popular music* (2007) offers a series of accounts of how national identity has been constructed in Australian rock music from the 1960s to the 1980s, along with three case studies of Western Australian rock groups: Dave Warner's From the Suburbs, The Scientists and The Triffids.

Other books offer more specialised accounts of particular local music scenes. For example, Tara Brabazon's *Liverpool of the south seas: Perth and its popular music* (2005) is an edited volume about Perth music, while *Pig city* (2004) is Andrew Stafford's journalistic overview of popular music scenes in Brisbane from 1971 to 2000 that covers artists ranging from punk pioneers The Saints to national rock icons Powderfinger and international pop stars Savage Garden. There are also numerous journalistic accounts of a broad range of individual Australian bands and recording artists, from Dave Warner's From the Suburbs to Midnight Oil, The Go-Betweens, Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds and silverchair, to biographies of recording artists such as Kylie Minogue and John Farnham. To varying degrees, all of these publications contain snapshots of the Australian popular music industry; however, what is arguably lacking

is an attempt to survey different genres of popular music as they have been practised in Australia both historically and in contemporary contexts. This is the objective of *Sounds of then, sounds of now*.

This anthology offers a wide-ranging examination of specific Australian music scenes and attitudes. It situates genres, locations and music subjects within broader debates and other social contexts. It is also a response to the proliferation of popular music studies both within and outside universities, especially in the UK and the US, but also increasingly in more "peripheral" areas of the globe where popular music has thrived, often without broader recognition (pop scenes flourish in places as diverse as Reykjavik and Dunedin, while different hip hop scenes can be found in Paris, Hamburg and Seoul). Earlier studies of Australian popular music were undertaken in times when governments, the higher education sector and the music industry itself showed little interest in taking popular music studies seriously. This is no longer the case; popular music studies is now available in universities across the nation either as a distinct degree or as an accepted specialisation within media and cultural studies, social science, music, (creative) arts, sociology and geography degrees. In addition, the TAFE sector has successfully introduced music industry, music business management and performance skills courses. This collection represents a response to the growing diversity within Australian music research contexts, and the increasing numbers of fans, journalists, students and musicians involved in Australian music.

'Popular' music

So what do we mean by "popular music"? In one sense, popular music encompasses "the forms of music and music-making that [are] most accessible to, meaningful to and enjoyed by large numbers of people" (Whiteoak 2003, p.529). This useful definition highlights the mainstream, commercial aspects of popular music. However, we argue that, for a number of reasons, such a definition of "popular music" cannot hope to represent the diverse range of music activities and attitudes found in Australia today. First, some Australian music activities remain forms of "unpopular culture" (Redhead 1995), as the examinations of dance, hip hop and metal music contained in this book clearly demonstrate. Whether investigating 1940s jazz, 1990s dance music or 1970s punk, similar tales emerge about popular music's capacity to rattle the foundations of Australian social life. The cyclical nature of the "shock of the new" (in terms of genres, audiences and technologies) means that any study of contemporary music must be placed within broader histories of both social and artistic change.

Second, there remain instances where notions of the "popular" are not that straightforward. For example, jazz "cannot be safely categorised as folk, popular or art music, though it shares aspects of all three" (Kernfeld, cited in Johnson 2000, p.19). This viewpoint is amplified in the examinations of different jazz and improvi-

sation scenes by Whiteoak and Johnson in this volume. In different ways, Australian folk music – encompassing "oral tradition, social commentary, participation, cultural democracy, and communal or national expression of historical continuity" – has nonetheless embraced "art" music discourses and niche sounds and markets to some extent (Smith 2003, pp.286, 288).

Finally, popular music in Australia has not been immune from the imposition of "high" cultural values across a range of entertainment and media debates. Indeed, the legacy of a British influence on the definition of "proper" culture (ballet, opera, symphony orchestras, art galleries) has meant that, until recently, popular music has languished in the shadows of cultural policy and value (see Breen 1999; Stevenson 2000). Unlike more traditional approaches to cultural activity (e.g. Alexander 2003, pp.3-5), we do not segregate "popular music" from "popular culture"; instead, we argue that one constantly informs the other. The continual blurring of categories of "high" and "low" culture must also be acknowledged at a time when opera singers appear on *Australian idol*, and performers such as Katie Noonan bring jazz and classical sensibilities and training to their pop recordings.

Defining 'Australian': Situating the local

While the definition of "popular" remains inevitably complicated by particular cultural discourses and contexts, so too does the notion of "Australian" popular music. Fears that Australian rock and pop was at the vanguard of the dreaded "cultural cringe" (Phillips 2006) surfaced at periodic intervals from the 1960s to the 1990s, but have now receded. And other assertions that "mainstream [Australian] rock continues to kowtow to English and mostly American demands" (Walker 1982, p.5) also have less purchase. The (admittedly sporadic) global success of a variety of artists – including Men at Work, Midnight Oil, Kylie Minogue, Keith Urban, silverchair, Jet and Wolfmother – has made both fans and musicians less susceptible to concerns about cultural imperialism. Local music scenes now host an impressive array of sounds and genres that to some extent have made debates about influences of genre and place redundant. Wicked Beat Sound System, B(if)tek and The Herd are recent examples of innovative local music that has short-circuited the usual Anglo-American influences of the mainstream. Considered together, these arguments point to the internationalisation of influences and artist strategies in Australian popular music. In this sense, popular music in Australia has become part of a cultural shift:

> … in which cultural imperialism has been reconceived as a dialogical relationship between the nation and foreign influences upon it, with resistance and feedback, rather than simply being a one-way street of domination and control (Cunningham 1992, p.86).

This is not to say that ideas of cultural nationalism have become entirely redundant; however, a more sophisticated mix of contexts and interactions is now at play. The Free Trade Agreement signed between the Australian and US governments in 2004 is further evidence that the older foundations of Australian music production, based upon local content quotas, are under threat. What the integration of Australian music industries and global entertainment economies will look like in the future is a key issue as cultural and communications technologies (and audiences) continue to converge.

Our examination of Australian musicians, fans and policymakers must be considered in the context of this time of great change within global music industry structures and practices. Central to these changes are the various threats to recording companies' core revenue streams that have emerged with the development of digital consumption technologies. There is now a plethora of ways that a single song can be distributed across various media and cultural contexts: as film soundtrack, television advertisement, live concert performance, pub jukebox selection and mobile phone ringtone. This diversity not only points to the convergence of promotional cultures, but also underlines the difficulty in assessing pop music's place within popular culture, and popular culture's influence upon popular music. Australian music businesses and consumers continue to invest in a transnational music–media landscape, revealed in the swift, local adoption of iPods, global television music talent programs and Top 40 radio formats.

Many of the popular music practices examined in this volume will be familiar to musicians, fans and scholars in other regions and nations; clearly, various music scenes within Australian cities (for example, goth, metal and dance) draw upon scenes and practices from elsewhere. However, while acknowledging that Australians remain good global consumers and producers, we must also acknowledge the cultural specificity of practices and the nature of popular music's role within local cultural politics. All the authors represented in this collection have attempted to frame consumption, production and policy within particular frameworks of everyday Australian life and traditions. For example, the history of dance music cultures reveals particularly local scenes and contexts – such as the "bush doof" – that have in turn created very different forms of music communities, dance party regulation/censorship and wider political associations (see St John 2001). Similar "postcolonial" analyses may, for example, include the influence of successive waves of immigration upon hip hop and "world music". This revives older core–periphery debates (for example, Leyshon, Matless & Revill 1998) and the cultural politics of "central ideas in marginal places" (Turner 1993, p.4).

Youth, cultural value and politics

This collection also offers useful perspectives on recurring debates about what young people actually "do" with and through popular culture. At the very least, discussion

about a succession of "moral panics" (Cohen 1972) should provide a scholarly antidote to regular claims by politicians and community leaders that popular music and youth remain a volatile combination. Politicians continue to make explicit links between "questionable" music forms and their effects upon "impressionable" youth and have called for songwriters to be held accountable for the effects of their lyrics upon fans. For example, former federal treasurer Peter Costello once branded hip hop as a form of "moral decay" (see Huber's and Mitchell's chapters in this volume). Other commentators have sought to flex fading institutional muscles; for example, church leaders and politicians attempted to ban Eminem from entering Australia in 2001 (Parliament of New South Wales 2001), while in April 2007, Snoop Dogg was denied entry into Australia by the then minister for immigration, who deemed the rapper an unsuitable person to be granted a visa due to his criminal convictions (Welch 2007). Parent organisations have also repeatedly called for music television programs to censor film clips that have sexual themes (Lane 2001, p.11; Carne & Blake 2006).

These kinds of moral flashpoints reveal the continuing inability of many "outsiders" to examine youth music activity on its own terms and in particular contexts. This is despite the fact that numerous studies have revealed that popular music plays a deceptively large role in the everyday lives of young people (see, for example, Ramsay 1998). However, efforts have been made to place music-making and listening at the centre of child and youth education (Music Council of Australia 2007). While this attempt to more firmly position music education as a pedagogical and policy instrument is welcome, it requires further debate as to the appropriate mixture of "high" and "low" music in school curricula (see Green 2002 for debates about the wider benefits of music-making in UK contexts). Beyond primary and secondary schools, popular music is increasingly influential in arts strategies designed to aid the life skills and self-esteem of marginalised youth. This use of popular music is particularly evident in the hip hop workshops run by experienced practitioners throughout the country to provide opportunities for disadvantaged, refugee and recently arrived migrant youth to express themselves in public with confidence and skill through art forms such as rap and breakdancing (see Mitchell, chapter 13).

Chapters and themes

Sounds of then, sounds of now begins with Shane Homan's analysis of the various constructions and mythologies of Oz Rock, the largely pub-based genre that developed following the arrival of rock and roll in Australia in the mid-1950s. In his documentation of the rise of local stars such as Johnny O'Keefe, Col Joye and others, Homan examines the complex ways in which overseas (mainly US and UK) rock and roll influences blended with local practices of jazz, swing and boogie-woogie, and with

local subcultures such as the bodgies and widgies, to form the early rock and roll scene in Australia. In the early 1960s, a distinctively local but US-influenced surf sound emerged and held sway for a time, but was superseded towards the middle of the decade when Australian musicians (many of whom were young British migrants) began to forge a local rock music culture, which mutated into a heavier, more "progressive" sound in the 1970s and culminated in the simple but blistering heavy rock of acts such as AC/DC and The Angels. Homan then chronicles the growth of the "beer barn", with reference to the changes that have taken place in local music venues and licensing laws. He also examines the Anglo-Australian, working-class orientation of Oz Rock, which prevailed up until the time that Midnight Oil and others added the ingredients of political protest and Aboriginal activism into the Oz Rock mix. The elusiveness of a unifying "Australian sound" within the Oz Rock canon – and the fragmentation of the Australian music scene since the 1980s – is discussed, as well as the redefinition of the genre by more recent groups such as silverchair and Jet. Throughout its history, Oz Rock has interacted in shifting ways with trends in global rock music.

From the dependable musical structures of Oz Rock, we move on to explore the less cohesive "Other" of Australian popular music. In his chapter on improvisation and Australian popular music, John Whiteoak first offers various definitions of improvisation: on the one hand as "common practice" in most forms of live music, and on the other as "spontaneous composing" – associated with popular music's experimental margins and crossover points. Whiteoak, a jazz pianist, then charts the progress of jazz improvisation in Australia, including through dance music of the 1920s; the development of early music technology and early modern jazz; bebop; the free and experimental jazz of the 1960s; the rise of the Sydney jazz scene in the 1970s, associated with the venue The Basement; and the "new wave" of jazz improvisation, which emerged from the Sydney Conservatorium, the Victorian College of the Arts and the Melbourne-based Keys Music Association in the 1970s and 1980s. He then looks briefly at improvisatory practices in rock music, psychedelia, punk, post-punk and the "new music" of the 1970s and 1980s, avant-garde rock, noise music, and the influences of "world music" on Australian jazz before concluding with a case study of the genre-defying, minimalist, Sydney-based improvised jazz trio The Necks, who have established themselves as a leading musical force on the European experimental jazz scene over a 20-year period. In his coverage of a broad range of bases, Whiteoak reveals that Australian improvisatory music practices have, historically, been widespread and are still flourishing – from the "fills" of the 1920s to the laptop performers of the 21st century, with The Necks representing "one of the peaks of jazz expression today".

In chapter three, music producer Caleb Kelly provides an interesting counterpoint to the Whiteoak discussion in his account of the development of Australian

experimental music, a genre which has often provoked and challenged audiences in unexpected ways ranging from "intense, loud, erratic and sometimes violent performances" to almost silent, minimalist forms of sonic exploration. An under-researched genre of music in Australia, experimental music is difficult to define, but it is generally agreed that it is situated completely outside mainstream genres of popular music and either reacts against these genres or expands into new directions and territories. It sometimes overlaps with avant-garde rock, noise music and electronica as well as improvised music, and is often difficult and challenging to the listener. Kelly positions this musical subculture against the genres it challenges – such as Oz Rock – and outlines the festivals and venues it occupies, such as What Is Music?, a festival that initially shared pub venues with Oz Rock performers, but which has since moved into alternative venues that are more conducive to concentrated listening experiences, such as warehouse spaces, art galleries, squats, backyards and even caves and bunkers. Kelly then outlines the career of Sydney-based experimental guitarist Oren Ambarchi, arguably the leading figure in the current scene, and examines the conflicting practices of live performance and laptop-based sound production. While noting that the Sydney and Melbourne experimental music scenes, despite catering for a minority audience, are "as well-supported as those in most of the major international cities renowned for their thriving experimental music scenes", Kelly also describes an international focus, particularly through his acknowledgment of local connections with the Japanese noise music scene. He also emphasises the lack of funding support for experimental music in Australia, which forces it, like many other alternative music genres in the country, to adopt a DIY (do-it-yourself) approach.

Issues of funding and local contexts of international engagement are also evident in Aline Scott-Maxwell's discussion of "world music" in Australia, a term that is rather slippery, being at once hard to define and too all-embracing to make much specific sense. In Australia, it has been defined as the output of those migrant musicians who are referred to as culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) and who originate from numerous points around the world. This definition has also included Indigenous musicians in an often misleading way. Different forms of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music may provide distinctive points of identification for Australian music globally, but are surely the most conclusively local forms of music within Australia. Scott-Maxwell unravels some of the accepted definitions of "world music", delineating it as a hybrid genre that often involves traditional vernacular forms of music from non-Western sources. She also negotiates some of the debates that have surrounded the genre in terms of power relations; collaborations, appropriations and constructions of "Third World music"; and the polarised narratives of what Steven Feld (2000) has called "anxiety" and "celebration". Scott-Maxwell then moves on to examine the annual WOMADelaide festival and some of the smaller independent

festivals, events and institutions which have helped to define world music in Australia, both internally and externally. She also discusses various broad regional styles such as Latin, Bollywood, Middle Eastern, Indonesian, Pacific, Balkan, Gypsy and klezmer. Frequently referred to as multicultural music – a much-disputed term – world music in Australia has often involved collaborations between musicians from starkly different cultural and musical backgrounds. Scott-Maxwell focuses on three distinctively different case studies to delineate the parameters of the genre: the Tatar singer Zulya from the Central Volga region of Tatarstan, the South Asian percussionist Bobby Singh, who participates in a number of different musical projects, and the European-gypsy-klezmer dance music of Monsieur Camembert.

Electronica is a musical genre that frequently overlaps with dance music, techno and the classical genre of electronic music that first emerged in the 1940s. In chapter five, Ross Harley and Andrew Murphie's brief history of Australian electronica begins with Australian composer Percy Grainger, whose pioneering "free music" machines merged classical, jazz, folk and popular music, and then turns to two other Australian pioneers: Peter Vogel and Kim Ryrie, who invented the Fairlight CMI, the world's first sampler, in 1979. Murphie and Harley also examine the country's first dance music label, Volition, which was developed in Sydney in the context of other post-punk independent labels, and the group Severed Heads, whose underground audio-visual experimental music had an international impact and helped define Australian electronica in the 1980s and 1990s. The authors go on to chart the rise and fall of rave parties and dance music DJs in the 1980s and 1990s, and the following subsidence of these scenes into the closely-knit networks of the club scene. Key Australian electronica labels and collectives that have emerged since the mid-1990s are surveyed, such as Couchblip, Clan Analogue and Psy-Harmonics. Murphie and Harley's analysis draws on Henri Lefebvre's idea of "rhythmnanalysis" to connect electronica with the Australian inner-city environments that have spawned it. Deleuze's well-known concept of the "refrain" is also mobilised to demonstrate the way in which the territories of Australian electronica have opened out to the world.

Bruce Johnson confronts theories of cultural imperialism in his chapter on Australian jazz, arguing that local conditions shaped local sounds as part of an international "diaspora" of sounds which originated in the US. The arrival of jazz in Australia flagged a new modernity that was reinforced in new dance venues, dress codes, performance technologies and the emergent film industry. Johnson argues that race (acknowledgment of black US influences and sources) and gender (jazz's themes of liberation for and acceptance of female audiences and performers) were initially dominant issues for Australian jazz audiences. These issues were followed by unease with changing subgenres – epitomised by the diverging interests in "trad" and "bop" – and debates about whether jazz was "listening" or "dancing" music. In recent years,

jazz scenes have been more concerned about the differences in music training between older players' "apprenticeships" in pubs and clubs, and younger players' university training. Johnson canvasses the diverse range of musical and social influences displayed by contemporary performers, which reinforce the local jazz scene's ability to reflect upon social shifts and respond accordingly. Like Karl Neuenfeldt's chapter, Johnson's contribution is informed by his substantial career as a practising musician.

The sources of sounds have not been a preoccupation of dance music. Since the 1980s, Australian clubbers have proven to be willing and enthusiastic adopters of UK and US dance music scenes. Susan Luckman traces the emergence of "rave" subcultures within commercial night-time economies and the key international influences on them. It is argued that raves provided crucial alternatives to pub and registered club scenes where older music styles and attitudes, which were too rigid to welcome new music forms, predominated. Dance music sites, from the Reclaim the Streets movement to illegal dance parties, continue to be flashpoints for law and order policies at the local and state government level. For example, New South Wales police continue to target commercial dance nightclubs as sites of illegal drug activity, and employ controversial individual search procedures and sniffer dogs. Luckman shows how, for a variety of reasons, raves and dance parties have been made into one of popular music's most recent "folk devils" (Cohen 1972). The chapter also assesses the "bush doof" as a cultural space where the international codes of the dance party have been adapted to conform to Australian settings, individual narratives and politics.

Graeme Smith also posits interesting links between the rural and the urban in his analysis of Australian folk music. Perhaps more than any other genre, issues of authenticity remain important in folk, both in terms of the performer's intentions, the themes of songs and the choice of playlist. Folk has always seen itself as more than just a collection of songs, performers and audiences. As Smith points out, it is a "movement" which continually asks questions about the use of popular music to address contemporary social themes. Its various forms of social and political activism are underlined by a politics of appropriation, and debates about the extent to which traditional (bush/immigrant/workers') songs can resonate within contemporary settings. The chapter plots the interesting path undertaken by enthusiasts to ensure folk's place within arts funding structures, and also the emergence of the festival culture, which required a delicate balancing act between the various grassroots discourses within a genre that has struggled to maintain a presence in Australian sites of the everyday. Smith argues that the strength of contemporary folk lies in its flexibility and its ability to attract a range of artistic and political ambitions and subgenres.

A politics of appropriation is also evident in Karl Neuenfeldt's overview of contemporary Torres Strait Islander music. As a guitarist who has co-produced albums with Seaman Dan, Neuenfeldt brings an insider's knowledge to the chapter. Three case

studies are offered – Seaman Dan, the Mills Sisters and Christine Anu – and all these musicians draw upon older music styles and have adapted these styles for contemporary use, often in a playful way (cf. Crowdy 2006). These illustrations demonstrate the importance of knowing the historical development of the Torres Strait in order to understand the astonishing diversity of its peoples and music influences. For example, Neuenfeldt explains that the postcolonial mix of music styles includes Christian hymns, European dances, military music, hula and rock and roll. For all artists in the region, the "mainstream" is articulated in very different terms, represented by the commercial and geographical distance between the artists and the Australian mainland. As Neuenfeldt reminds us, popular music can be a compelling form for expressing and reinforcing social and cultural difference for those who live well away from white Australian suburbia.

In her outline of the global trends in digital music production and consumption, Susan Luckman situates repeated challenges to existing copyright structures (and therefore recording industry profits) in Australian contexts. The pace of technological change has been such that the authority of the industry has been challenged by amateur labels, musicians and consumers, and alternative distribution models. The rise of music consumption through the internet has also encouraged "genre hopping" and the partial disintegration of distinct genre communities. Luckman assesses local examples of the "litigate and destroy" model adopted by multinationals faced with digital file sharing. Some of the most infamous cases of file-sharing litigation have occurred in Australia, including the court action brought against the Kazaa file-sharing network. The chapter also outlines belated attempts by Australia's federal government to change outmoded copyright laws, particularly in regard to the uses of legitimate CD purchases. Amid polarised debate about file sharing (seemingly black-and-white discourses of "theft" or "promotion"), the chapter provides further evidence that, of all the entertainment industries, popular music is always at the forefront of changes in consumer habits and intellectual property law. Luckman argues that the ubiquity of the Apple iPod is the clearest technological evidence of the music industry's failure to acknowledge shifting consumer desires.

We now live at a sufficient historical distance from the punk era to allow the formation of an Australian punk canon. In chapter 11, John Encarnacao documents the influence of this canon, which is usually considered to include the 1970s bands The Saints, The Birthday Party, Radio Birdman and X, among others. Ignoring the more stereotypical ways in which punk was coded, he argues that definitions and genre remained beside the point for these Australian bands, who often wrote and performed in splendid isolation from – and ignorance of – emerging punk scenes in the US and UK. Nonetheless, Encarnacao documents how bands such as The Saints and Radio Birdman were required to navigate definitions and perceptions of

Australian punk forced upon them by others overseas. The chapter focuses upon the shared sense of dislocation felt by "outsider" bands, which has often found expression in genres and compositions that could not be defined within a punk aesthetic. With more recent bands like The Drones and Kiosk, Encarnacao argues that the 1970s commitment to unpolished ferocity in song themes and sounds continues.

Sonic attack, in both lyrical and musical forms, is also assessed in Michelle Phillipov's chapter on Australian metal. Rather than acknowledging only local aspects of heavy metal and hard rock scenes, Phillipov argues that metal scenes in Australia remain tied to global histories and understandings. Like punk, metal bands have suffered from a lack of performance venues and recording company interest, which has ensured that the genre has remained "underground" within Australian cities. This situation has resulted in an emphasis on individual agency: self-produced tours, recordings, promotion and websites. While few metal acts have experienced direct censorship, other forms of intervention (the use of federal classification codes, customs seizures of albums) have been documented. Phillipov raises important questions about connections between music content and the performer's intentions. The lyrical content of some metal songs, deemed offensive by mainstream standards, is often argued to be satirical in nature. As Australian satirist Pauline Pantsdown argued in defence of his musical parodies of Australian MP Pauline Hanson (see Hunt & Stratton 2000), metal fans and performers similarly argue that literal readings of recordings miss the point.

As we have contended at the beginning of this introduction, global music influences must always be assessed within specific, local contexts. The benefits of such an approach are evident in Tony Mitchell's examination of Australian hip hop, particularly when tracing the many ethnic groups which have found in hip hop a means for the formation of individual and group identities. Mitchell also discusses the recent "discovery" of hip hop by mainstream youth audiences and the accompanying commercial success of acts such as The Herd and Hilltop Hoods. The genre has proven to be highly adaptable to a range of multicultural expressions. MC Trey, for example, has woven her Fijian background into hip hop's four elements. However, the success of Trey highlights the general lack of women in local scenes, and the need to add different forms of gender politics to class and race as elements that must be considered to understand Australian hip hop. Following on from the country and reggae influences of the 1970s and 1980s, Mitchell argues that hip hop has become the pedagogical and expressive instrument of choice for contemporary Aboriginal youth. Finally, his chapter concludes with local evidence of the ongoing demonisation of hip hop, which ignores the many cultural and educational benefits of hip hop for Australian youth.

In the penultimate chapter, Chris Gibson and Peter Dunbar-Hall trace earlier Indigenous music histories and their effects upon contemporary Aboriginal music,

including music hall, gospel and country traditions. They regard Jimmy Little as an important conduit between performance cultures that existed before World War II and postwar performances and recordings. In the mid-1970s, bands such as No Fixed Address and The Warumpi Band represented a new determination to enunciate a politics of dispossession and racism through the media of reggae and rock. This era was important in laying the groundwork for Yothu Yindi, the international act that found commercial success with their "fusion" rock in the 1980s and 1990s. Gibson and Dunbar-Hall assess the many challenges still confronting Aboriginal performers, including ongoing racism at venues and recording company unease in terms of distribution and promotion. They also point to popular music's role in Indigenous health campaigns and the maintenance of local languages. Land rights and reconciliation have, until recently, diminished as issues for national debate. However, contemporary Aboriginal artists continue to write and sing about these issues. In 2007, the Howard government used housing, health and law and order policies to justify the implementation of a series of controversial "interventions" in Aboriginal communities as part of its "practical reconciliation" strategy. In 2008, the Rudd government issued an apology to the Indigenous people of Australia. These actions have, to some extent, revived national debate about reconciliation.

Concepts of "core" and "periphery" are evident throughout this collection, and Alison Huber directly addresses the implications for local industries of these concepts in her analysis of the popular music "mainstream". Her chapter highlights popular music studies' consistent attention to the marginal at the expense of mainstream sensibilities. She argues that Top 40 music is not just a loose genre or marketing category, but represents a discursive formation about the "popular". Nowhere is this clearer than in music radio where, as the chapter outlines, a circular rationale of "giving the public what they want" ignores music radio's fundamental role as "gatekeepers" of music tastes. Despite its continuing influence in bestowing stardom, Huber argues that the authority of the Australian Top 40 is now seriously threatened by digital consumption technologies that undermine a traditional emphasis upon retail stores, the hit single, and television and radio promotion.

While the book explores many past and current debates about popular music in Australia, we acknowledge that the limits of space have meant that we have not been able to explore several genres (for example, country music, reggae), various industrial contexts (recording industries, live performance) and related music–media industries (radio, cinema and television). Similarly, local contexts of policy and fandom practices, while discussed in different contexts throughout the collection, have not received specific attention. In one sense, this book reinforces the fact that many gaps remain in local popular music studies. To further our understanding of what it means to be a fan, musician or policymaker in Australia in the new century, we need to conduct

research in areas such as federal government music export schemes, recording industry structures, music radio, the role of networking sites such as MySpace in the lives of fans, and histories of local music journalism. We hope that this book encourages readers to situate their own personal investments in popular music within historical and contemporary formations of identity, locality, taste and industry structures. There is much to listen and dance to – and talk about.

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01 / PLAYING TO THE THINKERS OR THE DRINKERS? / THE SITES AND SOUNDS OF OZ ROCK / SHANE HOMAN

[CHAPTER EXTRACT]

A number of additional factors make the conceptualisation of Oz Rock as a straightforward framework of suburban, working-class audiences and performers even more difficult to sustain. These include the overlap between fan bases and musical genres, the variety of sounds, skills and motives contained within the Oz Rock style, and the exploitation of Oz Rock as a form of cultural nationalism. The Oz Rock aesthetic was sometimes contrived: for example, The Angels abandoned their country rock roots in favour of a variation of Oz Rock based upon overseas styles, a sound described by bassist Chris Bailey as "AC/DC riffs at Sex Pistols speed" (cited in Homan 2003a, pp.97-98). Similarly, the anthemic 'Working class man', Jimmy Barnes's claim to speak for and to his Australian working-class audiences, was actually written by US session musician Jonathan Cain. Nonetheless, a qualified homologous argument that some structures "are more easily articulated to the interests of one group than are some others" (Middleton 1990, p.10) remains true about the 1970s and 1980s Oz Rock pub, tied closely to suburban "westie" audiences on the outskirts of cosmopolitanism. Feelings of disenfranchisement may not have always been clearly enunciated, but were embodied in key moments such as fans' demolition of the Stagedoor Tavern upon its closure in Sydney after a Midnight Oil performance and the 1979 Star Hotel "riot" in Newcastle.[3] Such incidents were provoked by real and imagined feelings of exclusion from decisions taken to close popular venues (see Homan 2003a, pp.102-08).

02 / IMPROVISATION AND POPULAR MUSIC / JOHN WHITEOAK

[CHAPTER EXTRACT]

The Necks often appear at conventional jazz venues and are generally able to adapt their music comfortably to whatever acoustic and social conditions prevail. However, since they play music for serious objective listening and/or deep subjective savouring, their preferred performance environments have good acoustics, minimal extraneous noise and patrons who are prepared to sit, lie or stand still for nearly an hour at a stretch and just listen. Unlike typical jazz concerts, where the ebb and flow of audience approval noise is part of the musical soundscape, The Necks' audience behaviour often resembles that of avant-garde concert patrons, their primary patronage in Europe. Talking during the performance is dissuaded by nearby patrons who know the rules and rituals of attending a Necks concert. One of these rituals is that the improvisation is framed before and after in total silence. Audiences are generally responsive and obedient to this requirement. At the start of a concert, The Necks wait until the audience is quiet, then enter unobtrusively and commence playing.

On stage performative behaviour is very minimal, as are announcements. The Necks' body movements during performance are rhythmic and repetitive, but do not resemble the performative theatrics of jazz or rock performers. They play almost as if performing in a trance-like state. Verbal and eye contact cues are also avoided, enhancing the impression that all musical development is unfolding intuitively. When the resonance of their last sound subsides, the players are barely named before quickly and unceremoniously melting out of sight. Their unusually low-key entry and exit ritual further enhances the mystique of their act and the overall absence of overt theatricality helps to make a Necks concert a unique "theatre of life" experience.

03 / **THE PERFORMANCE OF AUSTRALIAN EXPERIMENTAL MUSIC** / FROM SHATTERED GLASS TO FEEDBACK INSTRUMENTS / CALEB KELLY

[CHAPTER EXTRACT]

Lucas Abela (aka Justice Yeldham or DJ Small Cock) is standing on a small stage at the front of a warehouse-style, artist-run space in Sydney called the Frequency Lab. The space itself is messy; people slouch in low couches in the corner or sit on the wooden floor. Abela is well known to this audience; a year earlier in 2002 he had spun records at some 2700 revolutions per minute, sending shards of vinyl into the walls of the gallery. Tonight, the veteran noise musician will perform with an instrument that will prove to be his most successful thus far. In typical theatrical style, he squeezes a tube of K-Y Jelly over his face and then picks up a sheet of glass which has a contact microphone attached to its corner. When he draws the glass across his face, a massive noise is emitted from the PA. Abela has an array of effects boxes strapped to his waist and uses these to modify the sounds picked up by the microphone. As he rubs his face across the glass he also blows on it, sending out huge sheets of noise during the course of this sub-10-minute performance, which ends when Abela snaps the glass on his head, having become overexcited by his own actions. As it starts to shatter, Abela smashes the plate glass over his head. This performance is obviously risky, and Abela has on occasion done himself serious harm with the glass, evidenced by the sale of a framed, blood-soaked t-shirt available for purchase online (Dual Plover 2005).

04/ **LOCALISING GLOBAL SOUNDS** / WORLD MUSIC AND MULTICULTURAL INFLUENCES IN AUSTRALIA / ALINE SCOTT-MAXWELL

[CHAPTER EXTRACT]

Much of the debate about world music revolves around the power relations and equity politics behind the West's seemingly hegemonic control over what of the rest of the world's music is made available to the global market and in what form. This control is achieved through, for example, record companies and producers, festival organisers or individual musicians' collaborations or appropriations. Both the emergence and the extraordinary rise of world music as a category of popular music are the direct result of three phenomena of the late 20th century that have contributed to the breaking down of boundaries between peoples, cultures and music traditions: globalisation, postcolonial migration and postmodernity. Transnational media companies, markets and information networks, especially the internet, have exponentially increased cultural flows through the production and global distribution of products, information and ideas. The postcolonial migration of peoples from former colonies in, especially, Africa and Asia to the countries that colonised them has provided opportunities for musicians to move to the major centres of music production and access the resources of the music industry. And the postmodern aesthetic allows ready, eclectic borrowing or sampling of cultural materials and styles which, largely stripped of their original cultural meanings, can be re-contextualised and juxtaposed, or blended, in new hybrid works or forms.

05 / AUSTRALIAN ELECTRONICA / A BRIEF HISTORY / ROSS HARLEY & ANDREW MURPHIE

[CHAPTER EXTRACT]

> Like now, there's virtually nothing on, but there's heaps and heaps of people making tracks (Seb Chan cited in *Sounds like techno* 2003).

As the large events lost their punch throughout the 1990s, local forms of electronica found their own voices once again, in parallel with the rise of techno and its spread beyond the inner cities to a much wider community. Local clubs, which had always been present alongside the larger and higher profile dance events, became more prominent in this period. These included the Commerce Club, the first techno club in Melbourne, which featured DJs such as Jason Rudeboy, another export from the British Summer of Love (*Sounds like techno* 2003). Clubs also became much more diverse as electronica matured and its many subspecies found their own microecologies. Clubs also began to be found in more unlikely places – more recent examples of this include Mad Racket, a DJ collective formed in 1998, which soon began running events at the suburban Marrickville Bowling Club, and the establishment of the Frequency Lab in a privately-run studio warehouse space in Sydney's Redfern district. From the beginning of the 1990s, DJs began opening their own record shops, such as

06 / **AUSTRALIAN JAZZ** / AN OVERVIEW / BRUCE JOHNSON

[CHAPTER EXTRACT]

The traditional/modern dichotomy survived as the dominant line of cleavage within the Australian jazz community until a tectonic shift began to open a new fissure. This was largely generational and coincided with what might be called the cultural institutionalisation of jazz in Australia. Tertiary diploma jazz courses were inaugurated at the NSW Conservatorium following a suggestion in 1973 by reed player Don Burrows, who later served as the program director. The initiative was rapidly duplicated across the country to the point where, by the end of the century, there were few young musicians active in the jazz scene who had been untouched one way or another by formal jazz education. Nationally, the courses overwhelmingly foregrounded US-centred, post-traditional styles. This development has not only produced a kind of cultural displacement among Australian students which radically distinguishes the situation from that in US jazz education, but it has also flooded the job market at the expense of an earlier generation of modernists. This in turn has broken down the performance distance between the graduates and their more traditionally oriented contemporaries.

07 / DOOF, DANCE AND RAVE CULTURE / SUSAN LUCKMAN

[CHAPTER EXTRACT]

Despite its overuse and subsequent misunderstandings within mainstream culture, the term "doof" resonates in Australia with subcultural kudos; it is a signifier of "subcultural capital".[1] Doof events draw upon sites within the contemporary Australian dance music milieu which are constructed as "alternative" or "subcultural" either through their actions (political activism), generic character (psy-trance) or by means of their self-promoted connections to non-urban locations (large-scale bush events). Many doof events occur outside urban areas. Onomatopoetic in nature, the word "doof" hails from inner-city Sydney. While the exact origins of this term are not clear, the most widely accepted story traces it to a 1992 Non Bossy Posse/ Vibe Tribe gathering in the inner-Sydney suburb of Newtown. A woman who lived nearby is now famously quoted as having knocked on the door of the house where the gathering was being held to ask: "What is this Doof Doof Doof all night long? … This is not music", in reference to the sound the bass made on the other side of the bricks (Strong 2001, p.72). The term now has a currency outside of free and/or community-based events in Sydney (Gibson & Pagan 1999). Indeed, it is now just as likely to refer to a bush party as an indoor event. However, its subcultural use is in part sustained by its ongoing connection to events underpinned by a welcoming community spirit; the quasi-proprietorial links between "doof" and political activism are strong.

08 / **FOLK MUSIC** / MOVEMENTS, SCENES AND **STYLES** / GRAEME SMITH

[CHAPTER EXTRACT]

Since the 1960s, most popular music, including folk music, has been produced in small band formations. Folk-rock groups are generally characterised by electric-acoustic instrumentation, with a structuring bass and percussion rhythm section. The west coast rock models of the mid-1960s, led by The Byrds, inspired the British group Fairport Convention, and they and other British groups such as Steeleye Span provided one model for presenting traditional musical styles (Laing et al. 1975). Bush bands were one parallel Australian manifestation of this trend. At the same time, musicians inspired by progressive rock models were also becoming interested in more exotic musical material and began experimenting with folk-influenced forms and material (O'Toole 1998, pp.23-24). Others influenced by early music enthusiasts were interested in incorporating ethnic, folkloric and historical instruments into band formats. A general awareness of European and Middle Eastern musical traditions was increasing within the folk movement, particularly around the research and public presentations of the singer and scholar Peter Parkhill, and the forays of such players as Linsey Pollack into Macedonian Gadja (bagpipe) playing (Parkhill 1983). All these influences came together in various ethnic folk–fusion bands in the 1980s.

09 / **'AILAN STYLE'** / AN OVERVIEW OF THE CONTEMPORARY MUSIC OF TORRES STRAIT ISLANDERS / KARL NEUENFELDT

[CHAPTER EXTRACT]

Since colonial times the Torres Strait region has been a complex socio-cultural, religious and musical crossroads due to its mix of Indigenous and multicultural populations and the mass movements of immigrants and emigrants. It has generally been on the margins of the "Australian" experience and thus has remained an "exotic" locale with an "exotic" people and history. This view is still prevalent in the numerous television productions that feature it, such as travel, cooking and fishing shows. Arguably, the Torres Strait region is a bit of homegrown exotica, similar to Broome and Darwin, and music is an integral part of that exotica. Seaman Dan, the Mills Sisters and Christine Anu certainly do not consider themselves or their music exotic. Their music is rooted in, and reflective of, their culture. Thus it is ironic – but perhaps explicable in the context of the influence of aesthetic and marketing categories such as "world music" – that Islanders' geographical, cultural and musical marginality is now central to the integration, through their music, of their experiences and perspectives into the mainstream. They have become role models by revealing that musical success is possible through hard work, luck and innate talent.[5] However, it is important to note that for many Islanders musical success remains centred on local and possibly regional recognition, not national or international recognition. Living in a remote locality means that interaction is more often face-to-face and is informed by features of small communities everywhere. In the case of small Indigenous communities in Australia, there are other levels of interaction to consider. These are often defined by degrees of relatedness: defined through family, clan, island or religious affiliations. Realistically, it is beyond the dreams of most local musicians to attain wider acclaim. The successes of a few Islanders serve to point out how difficult it is for the majority to move beyond the local, if they even desire to do so. Islander music may be a miniscule subset within a micromusic (Slobin 1992); nonetheless, it helps recount and chronicle a distinct Australian culture that is unique and worthy of attention as one way of expressing "Australianness" through music.

10/ **MUSIC AND THE INTERNET** / FILE SHARING, THE IPOD REVOLUTION AND THE INDUSTRY OF THE FUTURE / SUSAN LUCKMAN

[CHAPTER EXTRACT]

While most of the publicity generated about music distribution online has been concerned with MP3 "piracy", it is also important to acknowledge the legitimate use of the internet by many artists who, in their own way, have been working to realise the early, cyber-utopian, democratic promise of the internet as a "level playing field". When CDs can be burned and packaged at home, advertised via the internet and posted anywhere in the world, digital technology promises new business models that directly link producer and consumer. The possibilities of what has come to be known as 'Long Tail' distribution, that is the effectively limitless possibility to reach niche markets and make even low-turnover material available online (Anderson 2006), have been seized upon by many music producers. The website MP3.com, established in 1997, was originally intended to perform as a hub for the distribution of the work of unsigned artists. However, in 2000 a commercial buyout meant that the site went in search of more users and hence entered into the bigger game of unregulated MP3 file distribution (Leyshon 2003, p.547).

There are some obvious limits to this democratic digital sphere for electronic music artists. As Paul Théberge argues, enhanced expectations within the commercial industry raise the bar for entry, to the point where "the former luxury of producing a competitive, professional-sounding demo tape [becomes] a necessity" (cited in Hesmondhalgh 2002, p.250). Such general professionalisation can also mean that artists have to become producers, managers, distributors, sound designers and engineers, with a possible negative impact upon their art. In addition, the high cost of promotions within markets to ensure enough sales to break even – let alone make a profit – means that it is still almost impossible to make a living from music in this way.

11/ BASTARD COUNTRY, BASTARD MUSIC/ THE LEGACY OF AUSTRALIAN PUNK/

JOHN ENCARNACAO

[CHAPTER EXTRACT]

Cut to 2005 and an *Australian idol* contestant who was described by one of the show's hosts as an "unbridled bundle of punk energy".[4] This description seemed to have been based on the contestant's tufts of streaked hair, couple of facial piercings and his tendency to stick his tongue out. Despite these important attributes, Lee Harding's rendition of Hunters and Collectors' 'Holy grail' was about as punk as the notion of taking part in a television talent quest, the winner of which is owned lock, stock and barrel by an international recording conglomerate.

In this chapter, the rejection of assimilation is presented as a definitive characteristic of punk, one which can be identified in some Australian rock music even though the artists themselves may take pains, in interviews and recordings alike, to distance themselves from the "punk label". This characteristic finds expression in the musical waywardness and lyrics that accentuate displacement, the convict and the criminal, and the obliteration of identity, in the recordings of The Saints, The Birthday Party and X, groups which are increasingly canonised in the history of Australian rock. Recent explorations of these characteristics have found contrasting modes of expression in two 21st-century groups. While The Drones' music harkens back to raw blues and folk, its fury and directness connect with punk, as do the vocals of singer Gareth Liddiard, who is more like an idiot savant drunk at the local than any traditional notion of a singer with a recording deal. Their songs, like those of The Birthday Party, connect with Hodge and Mishra's stereotype of the "Australian outsider" (Hodge & Mishra 1991, pp.xv-xvi), a shady male forever at the margins of society. In contrast to The Drones, pre-punk music traditions are not really found in the sound and songs of Kiosk. Kiosk's sound is brasher and younger. They tap into punk's negation with life-affirming vigour, connecting to American hardcore and punk traditions which include the Riot Grrl bands and Black Flag.

12/ **METAL 'DOWNUNDERGROUND'** / MAPPING THE TERRAIN OF THE 'GREAT SOUTHERN WASTE-LAND' / MICHELLE PHILLIPOV

[CHAPTER EXTRACT]

By the late 1980s, almost all of the influential bands embraced a similarly "purist" aesthetic – if not necessarily in generic terms, then at least ideologically. In the international arena, Australian bands were becoming increasingly renowned for an uncompromising "brutality", a reputation further bolstered by the emergence of death metal in the latter part of the decade. While Canberra's Armoured Angel were probably the first to combine the verse-chorus catchiness of thrash with the density and intensity of death metal, Sydney's Sadistik Exekution were the most iconic and influential of the early death metal progenitors. As the best-known Australian extreme metal act overseas, Sadistik Exekution garnered an international cult following for a style of raw death metal renowned for being as violent and chaotic as the group's live performances (guitarist Rev. Kriss Hades was infamous for on-stage self-mutilation, while physical attacks upon the audience were legendary). No Australian extreme metal band before or since has dedicated itself so thoroughly to "living out" the hostile sentiments of its music through a consistently abusive attitude toward its fans, other bands, members of the metal media, and each other. While this attitude has meant that Sadistik Exekution has spent most of its career in disarray, the group is widely regarded as a pioneering act in Australian death and black metal scenes. One subgenre of extreme metal that can be linked directly to Sadistik Exekution's early innovations is the death/black offshoot loosely known as "war metal". War metal bands extended Sadistik Exekution's rather primitive expositions of violence and torture to more sophisticated themes of warfare, paganism and occultism, while combining death and thrash musical influences with an image and lyrical themes indebted to early black metal. It is a combination renowned worldwide as a particularly "Australian" one, with war metal acts such as Bestial Warlust and Destroyer 666 among some of Australia's best known metal exports. In many ways, this international recognition has helped to ensure the continued dominance and prestige of a "brutal" aesthetic in the Australian metal scene.

13/ **AUSTRALIAN HIP HOP'S MULTICULTURAL LITERACIES** / A SUBCULTURE EMERGES INTO **THE LIGHT** / TONY MITCHELL

[CHAPTER EXTRACT]

Australian MCs are sometimes divided into "ockers", "falafels" and "wogs", as George Stavrias pointed out in his 2003 study of aspects of Aboriginal hip hop in Sydney and Melbourne (2003, p.25). "Ockers" are predominantly Anglo-Australian MCs who insist on using a broad Australian accent complete with frequent swearing and "ockerisms" and decry MCs who rap with an American accent as "wack" (ridiculous). Their music often celebrates aspects of Anglo-Australian working-class culture, such as barbecues and beer. Prominent exponents include the Adelaide-based Hilltop Hoods, Brisbane's Lazy Grey and Perth-based Layla (another subgenre known as "beer hop" is sometimes referred to; this would include groups such as the Sydney-based, comedy-inflected Two Up, who celebrate sport, RSL clubs and the like). "Falafels" is the colloquial term for "conscious" rappers who generally express a left wing or anti-government perspective in their lyrics. They are sometimes characterised as "hippies" for their espousal of a critical, oppositional and even intellectual view of Australian issues such as refugees and the war in Iraq. Sydney group The Herd is perhaps the most distinctive example of this subgenre, along with Melbourne-based ecological hip hop sound system Combat Wombat. "Wog" rap denotes MCs of non-Anglo descent who mobilise a reverse identification with the discriminatory term "wog", a practice which arose after the stand up comedy show *Wogs out of work* became widely successful throughout Australia in 1989. Prominent practitioners of "wog" hip hop include Lebanese-Australian MC Sleek the Elite, multicultural Melbourne crew Curse ov Dialect and TZU, fronted by Eurasian MC Joelistics, as well as Koolism from Canberra and Perth crew Downsyde. The music of some groups and individuals, such as pioneering Sydney crews Def Wish Cast and Brethren – who are also exponents of a Christian ethos – overlaps a number of these categories.

14/ **CONTEMPORARY ABORIGINAL MUSIC /** CHRIS GIBSON & PETER DUNBAR-HALL

[CHAPTER EXTRACT]

In his exploration of Aboriginal rock music, Breen (1994) is unequivocal in his interpretation of this repertoire as a form of musical protest. The title of his discussion, 'I have a Dreamtime', clearly links contemporary Aboriginal music of the 1970s and 1980s to emergent agendas of black power in Australia. While this is a regular reading of contemporary Aboriginal music, and certainly a valid interpretation of much of this repertoire, there are other aesthetic positions on which this music is based (Knopoff 2003). Apart from their uses as expressions of politically driven agendas addressed to the general Australian community, especially on issues of land rights and the conditions of Indigenous Australians as a marginalised sector of the Australian polity, songs by contemporary Aboriginal musicians have significant roles within Aboriginal communities. These roles remain opaque for the many Australians who have little or no contact with Indigenous people. Three issues are of particular interest here: contemporary songs as statements of information about health and wellbeing; songs as a form of language reclamation and reinforcement; and songs about Aboriginal beliefs in the power and importance of land.

15/ **TOP 40 IN AUSTRALIA** / POPULAR MUSIC AND THE MAINSTREAM / ALISON HUBER

[CHAPTER EXTRACT]

There are many misconceptions about Top 40 music. Sometimes it is envisaged to be a genre of music. Tony Bennett, Michael Emmison and John Frow's investigation of Australian musical tastes in their *Accounting for tastes* study, published in 1999, assumes this to be the case, encouraging their survey's respondents to describe their taste preferences using a range of generic descriptors. "Top 40 pop" is one option, which is in context with a range of other generic classifications including rock, classical, blues, folk, modern jazz, heavy metal, soul and so on. However, as Lawrence Grossberg (1999, p.114) points out, the Top 40 is more accurately described as representing a kind of hybridity which "[brings] together in a statistical sample the disparate tastes of various taste cultures … it does not set classic rock, rap, country, etc., in opposition but embraces at least selected examples of each".[1] In other words, the Top 40 is a pastiche of genres rather than a genre of its own. Grossberg (1999, p.114) describes the eclecticism of the Top 40 as somewhat "jarring": listening to a current Top 40, hits can range across all genres, thus eschewing the strict aesthetics or exclusivity of what he calls "rock purism" (p.114). Grossberg's assertion here also argues against another common misconception about Top 40 music: that it is homogeneous. While there may be an apparent generic or other kind of similarity among the songs appearing on the charts, Top 40 is most often characterised as a diverse and eclectic mix of songs, whose similarities lie in their status as culturally dominant rather than in their "sound" or "look".[2] Top 40 music, along with most "mainstream" cultures, is frequently charged with the crime of "inauthenticity", or of being "derivative" versions of "grassroots" or subcultural musical styles. While I do not wish to embark upon a defence of Top 40, or mainstream culture in general, in these terms in this chapter, I would argue strongly that these cultures are not devoid of authenticity, or do not find authenticity unimportant, but rather their logic works in different ways – and perhaps in different terms – in these spaces (see, for example, my argument in Huber 2004).

SOUNDS OF THEN, SOUNDS OF NOW charts recent innovations in music consumption and production and reflects upon the growth and diversity of Australian music genres, including jazz, rock, folk, metal, electronica, dance music, experimental music and hip hop. It also examines how popular music has expressed, reflected and influenced Australian society through debates about youth, nationalism, censorship, local identity, contested spaces and enduring mythologies about 'Australianness'. Chapters on Aboriginal, Islander and world music offer new perspectives on local and transnational relationships between music, geography and culture. Each chapter is informed by global debates and themes, including nationalism, cultural imperialism, globalisation, authenticity, appropriation, subcultures and the impact of new media.

At a time when Australian popular music is enjoying increasing international critical and commercial success, this lively, wide-ranging collection offers an important revision of popular music's place in Australian society. *Sounds of then, sounds of now* is an excellent reference for use in media, popular music, sociology, musicology and cultural studies courses.

Cover images Front: Gareth Liddiard (The Drones) © Sean Fennessy, top left: The Necks © Tim Williams, bottom left: Foreign Heights © Titus Pengelly

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