

7 *A survey of traditional south-eastern Australian Indigenous music*

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Abstract

This chapter comprises a discussion of south-eastern Australian traditional Aboriginal music, based on the evidence of features that have been described by observers and researchers since the beginning of European occupation in the late eighteenth century.

The accounts canvassed cover subjects such as instrumentation, dance forms, song types, song creation, and musical education. An examination of recorded musical forms follows this survey, with the results of selected scholars' analyses summarised in order to determine if stylistic homogeneity can be discerned within the sample.

Further discussion contends that the attempt to isolate regional styles for Australian Indigenous musics is hampered by the fact that much of the data around south-eastern practice and production were gathered well before similar work began in other areas of the continent, by which time European attitudes and scholarly technologies and methodologies had undergone considerable and significant development. On the other hand, where south-eastern studies have been undertaken more recently, it is not known how far the music recorded has been modified by protracted European influence.

Keywords: regionalism, instrumentation, performance styles, composition, education.

Introduction

This chapter originally formed part of a much larger study examining change in south-eastern Australian Aboriginal music between 1830 and 1930 (McDonald 2001; see also McDonald 1996a, McDonald 1996b). Its purpose there was to provide a foundational description of Aboriginal music from which the direction, quality, and extent of subsequent change in the south-east could be discerned. The study found that, while musical structures altered radically in response to European innovation, various important, essential, Indigenous elements endured.

The present, revised, version of the chapter retains the focus on the early records but, by and large, omits discussion of the nature of the musical changes that took place in the colonial period and subsequently. Nonetheless, it casts light on the predilection of many early researchers for the collection and analysis of 'unadulterated' musical expression. It is argued that this was a consciously cultivated political attitude that ignored the actual historical situation, where Aboriginal

music was already developing in significantly interesting ways in its continuing relationship with the European mainstream.

The chapter opens with a discussion of the problems inherent in defining regional styles in the music of Indigenous Australia (section 1). This is followed by an examination of available evidence for musical features of the region known as ‘the south-east’ (section 2). The argument moves on to consider the formal analyses of song texts and musical data, and provisionally explores the stylistic relationship of the south-east with other Australian regions (section 3). The last major segment deals with musical meaning systems and includes an investigation of the aesthetics of sound and tone and an overview of melodic, rhythmic, gestural, and visual performance languages (section 4). The chapter concludes with a brief sketch of the musical features that the south-east clearly shares with other parts of Australia, then provides some pointers for future research into those aspects of the regional comparison that remain obscure.

1 Issues regarding regional identity

In compendia of traditional Indigenous musical styles, the Australian continent is typically divided into the following regions: Arnhem Land; the central desert; the Kimberley; the south-west; Cape York; and south-eastern Australia and Tasmania (Jones 1972, 1980; Moyle 1966, 1992). While there are special musical characteristics that do partly distinguish some of these areas, others may be largely classifications of convenience. Logically, it is necessary to demonstrate that two conditions obtain in any argument for regionality: that the area in question is essentially culturally homogeneous; and that it presents recognisably different characteristics to other divisions. Furthermore, these premises require that evidence drawn from the different regions will be directly comparable. There are impediments to meeting all these conditions in any assessment of pre-contact cultural regionality for south-eastern Australia; these are summarised below.

The musical region dealt with here is, unlike the others, essentially an historical categorisation, rationalised chiefly on the ground that Indigenous performance traditions in the south-east had ceased to operate by the time the more remote geographical areas were being studied in depth. As a consequence, the broad thrust of comparative research into the region’s Indigenous music has been historical, rather than taking recent or current performance into consideration. The picture that such an analysis presents has of course been determined by the available evidence, which mainly comprises scattered European-settler observations and analyses, the musical products of cultural ‘salvage’ operations undertaken systematically here since the mid 1950s, and the rare and recently elicited musical reminiscences of Aboriginal people themselves. In turn, the nature of this pool of evidence reflects, to a large degree, both the theoretical leanings of those who elicited it, and the state of development of contemporary musical research methodologies.

Nineteenth-century mainstream approaches to ethnological research were informed, as Russel McGregor has convincingly demonstrated, by the various tenets of what he terms the ‘doomed race theory’ (McGregor 1998). This is seen to have dictated both the selection of information considered relevant, and the way in which it was collected and presented. Furthermore, much of the evidence was gathered by non-experts using research tools that are now considered insufficient for the accurate recording and analysis of Indigenous song. Combined with a typically non-relational, ‘objective’ approach to interlocutors, these conditions ensured that many of the more subtle technical and meaning-based aspects of south-eastern Aboriginal music escaped coherent European documentation.

Ironically, given the core research programme’s exclusive focus on the collection of ‘pure’ Indigenous music of a pre-contact nature, it is quite possible that by the time more reliable recording techniques such as the gramophone were introduced, much south-eastern Indigenous expression was already significantly modified by European influence. To the extent that such influence may well have pervaded Indigenous musical systems in the most fundamental ways, some of its original

features are probably now quite indiscernible. This methodological confusion has particularly affected analysis of the Indigenous south-eastern tonal system, eroding confidence in the ability of nineteenth-century research results to accurately reflect the south-eastern musical situation. This not only renders comparison with other regions very difficult, but also hampers any attempt to chart more recent local developments, as Aboriginal music has continued to respond to European innovation. Thus, differences between the empirical methodologies employed in the south-east, and the more sophisticated techniques used in localities only later intensively occupied by Europeans, have resulted in the former region presenting as indeed discrete – but perhaps for reasons related more to changing European styles of cultural analysis than to any particular mode of Indigenous expression.

Not only do doubts shadow the question of the south-east exhibiting unique musical characteristics, it is uncertain whether cultures within the region were sufficiently homogeneous to suggest it was ever a true cultural entity. Some justification for questioning regional homogeneity lies in the following example of local language distribution, which shows that significant cultural discontinuities could occur within a restricted geographical area, while at the same time similarities obtained between widely dispersed and isolated communities. This concerns the central New England language Anaiwan, which is superficially so different to the languages surrounding it that for many years it was considered by European linguists to be an essentially non-Australian tongue (Crowley 1976:23). Terry Crowley demonstrated that Anaiwan is in fact related to its neighbours, but had been modified to a point of near-unrecognisability by the application of what he describes as a set of extreme phonological rules (Crowley 1976:41). Interestingly, while very similar rules have ‘altered’ such widely separated languages as Anaiwan, the Mbabaramic group of Cape York (Crowley 1976:23), and the Arandic languages of Central Australia (Crowley 1976:45), most of the languages lying between these regions have remained unaffected. The Anaiwan case is typical of other evidence used to question the concept of ‘culture regions’ in Australia. Les Hiatt’s study of themes in Australian anthropological discourse highlights considerable and significant cultural diversity amongst Aboriginal groups within geographical regions (Hiatt 1996), and Bob Reece asserts that the assumption of cultural homogeneity before the European era was largely an invention of nineteenth-century scholarship (Reece 1996:29).

Any examination of regionalisation is of course a discussion about sameness and difference, two fundamentally relative concepts. As seen below, there are coherent objections to the proposition that the south-east showed marked musical differences to other regions, and also to any assertion that it did not. As one might expect, close musical analysis has produced results which could be used to support either position, negating the possibility of a simple conclusion.

2 Instruments, song and dance

2.1 Introduction

There are a number of possible approaches to the analysis of early south-eastern Indigenous music, their selection depending largely on the understandings one wishes to elude. Two of these are suggested by the following comment:

A large task for the future is to correlate a synthesis of what diverse early observers have to say about Aboriginal song and dance with the results of recent research into extant traditions (Clunies Ross 1987:3).

One of the suggested paths (interpreting ‘extant traditions’ to mean only those of north, west, and Central Australia), involves the descriptive survey of characteristic south-eastern features such as musical form and content, performance contexts, and the nature of composition and instrumentation. Overall findings could be used for comparison with those for other regions, to determine stylistic similarities and contrasts across the continent, and to perhaps flesh out the historical picture with modern evidence. A second strategy (interpreting ‘extant traditions’ to include those of the south-east itself), is more complex, and seeks to reveal in greater depth the meaning that music has had for

Aboriginal people in the south-east, the relationship between music and other Aboriginal cultural/spiritual entities there, and the dynamic procedure of Indigenous musical practice through its continuing relationship with non-Aboriginal innovations. This strategy presumes a quite different treatment of the historical material (much of which is *prima facie* unsupportive, having been designed for the first approach), and is based on the proposal that Aboriginal musical history displays significant continuity between older and more recent formal expressions. The ideal approach to analysis would combine these suggested treatments, and to some extent this is what is attempted below. After presenting a brief survey of the documented evidence concerning older south-eastern Indigenous music, some details of the less-visible aspects of music-making will be discussed, with reference to the findings of modern scholars in other parts of the continent.

Commentators generally agree that when Indigenous Australian Aboriginal music is spoken of, what is meant is predominantly vocal music. In fact, Trevor Jones and other scholars consider that there was no performance of strictly instrumental music in 'old style' Aboriginal society (Jones 1965:368). This seems to be borne out for the south-east, sound instruments probably being used in an integrated role only. Following a short historical survey of instrumentation, examination in this section will be made of musical contexts, types of song, composition, and learning.

2.2 Musical instruments

The foremost musical instrument of the south-east comprises a pair of hand-held clapsticks, struck together to provide a highly percussive accompaniment to singing. These sticks were often 'purpose made' in a variety of slender cylindrical shapes, although boomerangs, clubs, and other wooden implements were also commonly pressed into service. Hardwood seems to have been the favoured material of manufacture, Leonard de Silva saying that in his area on the mid-north coast of New South Wales, sticks were made of ironbark or bloodwood. 'Easy wood' was also used however, with newly cut sticks being placed in a fire to 'take the dead sound out and put the (right) sound into them' (de Silva 1994). Leonard said that it was important to have each member of the clapstick pair sounding the same: loud and resonant (de Silva 1994; also Gummow 1992:171). It seems that clapsticks were generally played either solo or *ensemble* for corroboree dancing, and provided performers with some opportunity to display instrumental virtuosity (McKenzie 1961; Gummow 1983:204). Gumbaynggirr musicians gathering at Corindi Beach in northern New South Wales customarily accompanied singing with yellow-bean war-shields, which produced a deep, hollow, powerful tone when struck together, and sometimes used small rocks and unworked driftwood sticks for percussion, these latter apparently in preference to manufactured items (Perkins 1998).

There is reason to believe that the stick-pair was predominantly a man's instrument (Gummow 1992:171), women using possum-skin 'bundles' for idiophonic (percussive) expression:

When the possum skin is rolled into a bundle the hair surface is turned inwards, and, of course, the tighter the bundle, the better the sound it makes. The bundle is struck with the hand, and is solely a women's instrument (Kennedy 1933:148).

Apparently small shells were sometimes included in these bundles, so that when struck, 'they made a jingling sound' (Kennedy 1933:148). Closely related was an instrument Jimmy Barker described as a 'pillow made of kangaroo skin and stuffed with possum fur' that was 'used as a drum' in western New South Wales corroborees (Barker & Mathews 1977:37). In later years, ordinary kapok pillows and blankets were adapted for the same purpose (Gummow 1992:174). Evidence from the north coast of New South Wales indicates that a further type of pillow-drum was used there, consisting of a woven reed covering stuffed with grass (Margaret Somerville 1998: pers. comm.).

The use of shell-string rattles has been inferred from the examination of rock engravings in the Sydney region (Kennedy 1933:153), and rattles made of small bunches of leaves seem to have been widely used, either held in the armpit, tied around the ankles of dancers, or shaken by hand (Fraser 1892:n.p.; Kennedy 1933:154; Meston n.d.:n.p.; Oates 1985:118.).

Body percussion was common in Indigenous society, mainly taking the form of thigh-slapping and hand-clapping. In both cases, the character of the sound produced could be varied, cupped hands resulting in a hollow ‘thud’, the flat of the hand eliciting a ‘crisper’ tone (Maggie Morris 1994; Kennedy 1933:148). John Hunter of the First Fleet made particular note of the use of body percussion in the Sydney region:

he was assisted by several young boys and girls who sat at his feet, and by their manner of crossing the thighs, made a hollow between them and their belly, which they beat time with the flat of their hand, so as to make a kind of sound which will be better understood from the manner of its being produced than from any verbal description (Hunter 17/2/1791, quoted in Egan 1999:227).

Tony Perkins details another form of body percussion where, in his youth, seated Gumbaynggirr men would tap their feet against the ground while singing certain ceremonial songs (Perkins 1998).

The integration of instrumental- and body-percussion techniques has also been documented, and seems to have been a technique used by both men and women:

Their music consisted of two sticks of very hard wood, one of which the musician held upon his breast in the manner of a violin and struck it with the other in good and regular time . . . (Hunter 17/2/1791, quoted in Egan 1999:227).

This example is extremely interesting, in that it most likely demonstrates the appropriation of the chest cavity as a resonating chamber, in precisely the same manner as did old-time country fiddlers. A similar approach to percussive resonance can be seen to inform a practice employed by women throughout the south-east, the following instance recorded from the western fall of New England in the 1850s:

The women sat round in an admiring circle, chanting in chorus a sort of wild recitation, all the singers beating time, and admirable time too, with their ‘paddy melon’ sticks on a sort of drum made by a fold of their opossum skin cloaks, which was stretched between their knees (quoted in Gummow 1992:81; see also Kennedy 1933:148, and Mundy 1852, vol. 1:216).

While the drum proper is considered by scholars to have had no pre-contact Australian distribution outside Cape York, there is some evidence for its use further south, although this may indicate European influence. Part of Harry Buchanan’s description of a Gumbaynggirr corroboree contains the following information: ‘One man and one woman singer sit at each of the two end fires, and a drummer sits at the middle fire’ (Eades 1979:346).

Mr Buchanan gave the Gumbaynggirr lexeme *buljurr* for ‘drum’, neither the word nor its components apparently having any other meanings in the language (Steve Morelli 1995: pers. comm.). Indeed, Gumbaynggirr elder Leonard de Silva considered the drum, which he also called *buljurr*, to have been an Indigenous instrument, describing it as a possum hide stretched over one end of a small hollow log (Emily Walker and Steve Morelli 1994: pers. comm., also see Morelli 2008:25). In the second half of the twentieth century, Keith Lardner inherited from his old Yarrowarra people the art of manufacturing drums by forming a circular resonator from stripped bark and then stretching a kangaroo skin over one of its ends (Lardner 1998). Keith did not know how venerable this practice was, however. Other more-or-less supportive evidence exists – Victorian pioneer John Bulmer translates the word *boorinya*, drawn from a Gippsland creation myth, as ‘beat the drum’ (Campbell & Vanderwal 1994:41), Gummow records the Bundjalung word *bulbing*, normally glossed as ‘drum’ (though it may refer exclusively to the possum-skin pillow), and Bell cites Taplin’s *tartengk* as a Ngarrindjeri word for drum (Gummow 1992:172; Bell 1998:177).

There is also considerable uncertainty about whether the ‘bush leaf’, a reed aerophone (blown instrument) commonly played by Aboriginal people in recent times, was used in Australia before European invasion. The evidence seems to be so far fairly evenly balanced (Bradley 1995:10). Dick

Donnelly and other Bundjalung people (Gummow 1992:176, 177) considered that corroboree music was played on the instrument by Aboriginal people in pre-European times, as did Tony Perkins (1998), Leonard de Silva (1994), and Maisie Kelly (1994).

Residents of the Oban district of New South Wales have described the local performance of Aboriginal music, heard at a distance, as a drone-like ‘humming’ (Ellis 1984; Newbury 1995). Of course this may have been the sound, not of the leaf, but of the bullroarer, that most sacred initiatory instrument whose name in south-eastern Aboriginal languages is often cognate with the term for ‘God’ or ‘the first man’. It is doubtful that the *yuludarra*, to use its Gumbaynggirr name, was ever used musically, *sensu stricto* (Berndt & Berndt 1988:371).

2.3 The corroboree

It appears that the south-eastern Aboriginal musical occasion *par excellence* was the corroboree. This word entered Australian English very early via the language of the Dharuk people of Sydney, for whom *ca-rab-ba-ra* signified ‘dance’ (Donaldson 1987:20). Although a more incisive semantics is probably no longer possible, the word has a long pedigree of subsequent use, amongst both Aboriginal and white people, as referring to chiefly non-sacred Indigenous dance gatherings (Donaldson 1987:20). The Victorian ethnologist A. W. Howitt describes the situation succinctly:

The songs and dances of the Australian Aborigines are usually spoken of by our own people as ‘*corroborees*,’ and this word is also even frequently applied to any of their social gatherings. This application is, however, not correct, for the songs, the song and dances, and the assemblies for social and other purposes have each their own distinctive name. The word ‘*corroboree*’ has been adopted by the settlers from some tribal dialect in the early settled districts, probably of New South Wales, and has been carried by them all over Australia. It may now even be regarded as an addition engrafted upon the English language. The word ‘*corroboree*’ probably meant originally both the song and the dance which accompanied it, as is the meaning of the word ‘*gunyeru*’ in the Kurnai languages (Howitt 1887:327).

Typical descriptions of corroborees portray men dancing and clapping sticks, with women providing vocal and percussion accompaniment (White 1934:226). Most other possible permutations of this organisation have been recorded, however (Eades 1979:346; Oates 1985:117; Barker & Mathews 1977:36, 37; Mathews 1985:105), and both women and men had their own closed ceremonies which featured music and dance (Mathews 1901:62; Maggie Morris 1994). Detailed descriptions of these closed ceremonies are, by definition, either non-existent, unavailable, or their discussion respectfully suppressed.

It seems to have been common for a ‘song leader’ to direct corroborees in the south-east. This was no doubt necessary, given the recorded complexity of Indigenous music in performance. According to Catherine Ellis, a song leader in Central Australia would undergo many years of rigorous training, not only in the manipulation of musical structures, but also in the proper understanding of mythology associated with the songs (Ellis 1997b:75). One description of a Victorian song leader in action is here provided from the experience of William Buckley:

The man seated in front appeared to be the leader of the orchestra, or master of the band – indeed I may say master of ceremonies generally. He marched the whole mob, men and women, boys and girls, backwards and forwards at his pleasure, directing the singing and dancing, with the greatest decision and air of authority (quoted in Hill 1993:32).

Another observer wrote that:

the dancers . . . are arranged in one or more lines at a suitable distance, their bodies

ornamented by designs in pipeclay . . . In front, and facing them stands a man called the 'fiddler,' who acts as conductor or leader. He keeps the most admirable time by beating his boomerang with a piece of stick . . . (Mann 1885:42, 43).

A trait commonly ascribed to corroborees by both white and Aboriginal commentators was theatricality (Donaldson 1987:20; Gardner 1854; Gummow 1992:82, 92), a characterisation that underlined both the close connection between music and dance, and the programmatic nature of the performances. Song and dance were often said to be organised 'act by act', each one presenting a stage in the event or process described. Margaret Gummow cites singers who state that corroborees from the north coast of New South Wales might contain up to 13 such acts (Gummow 1992:92). Taking an alternative view in his critique of persistent European failure to respond sensitively to Aboriginal communication, Paul Carter regards white observers' theatrical analogies as an intentional trivialisation of the corroboree's political meanings (Carter 1992a:166).

Occasions for 'getting up' a corroboree were no doubt sometimes politically motivated, but their functions, individual characters, and group composition appear to have exhibited great variety. Although corroborees might involve a quite localised gathering of individuals or family camps within the one language group, commentators often emphasised their 'inter-tribal' nature. This aspect is well supported by the following paraphrased origin story from the Richmond River:

Long ago there were three brothers, all influential men, who had a difference about their sway in those parts. They were named Birrung, Mum-mor-ni, and Yab-brine. Having had a dispute, Birrung went north, Mummorni south and Yabbrine west. The latter introduced the corroboree and it was the means of uniting them all again (Hewitt 1936:24).

What Hewitt's account of the myth fails to mention is that the initial separation of the brothers represents, for the Bundjalung, the creation of Australian tribal groupings – the institution of social difference (also see Gummow 1992:30, 31). It is significant that the corroboree is described there as having been created at the same time as the tribal unit, to provide a site for future productive relations between the groups. That corroborees were generally considered integrative is suggested by the following description, from the *Northern Star*, of a dance performed in northern New South Wales in 1910:

It may be interesting to those who were present last evening that the man depicted was a representation of Yabbrine, who, according to aborigines' tradition, introduced the corroborees. He was the youngest of three brothers, the others being named Birrung and Mummoonie, among whom a better end arose. Yabbrine, by introducing the corroborees, brought all the people together in harmony. Hence, it is always a meeting of goodwill, and when, in old times tribal fights were engaged in, and disputes were settled, the corroboree was the finale, and then all dispersed in peace, so the meeting yesterday signified more than a mere performance . . . (quoted in Gummow 1992:87).

Isabel McBryde demonstrates that songs and dances were indeed customary articles of inter-tribal trade in the south – often exchanged for material goods – and that corroborees were important and prominent features of trading occasions (McBryde 1984:135,143; see also Clunies Ross 1986:232; Wyndham 1889). R. H. Mathews attests to their use whenever tribes met at initiations (Mathews 1898:58), and frequent mention is made of corroborees occurring at large gatherings arranged for feasting, fighting or the settling of disputes (White 1934:227; Gardner 1854). Dick Donnelly describes how such a gathering might be conducted in northern New South Wales:

Well, different tribe would show their corroboree you see, we finish ours first, tonight say. Oh, we'd show ours, *Bundjalung*. Well, *Gungari* tomorrow night, see? Somebody else next night. They might be there a month putting all these dances through. That's the way it was . . . Anyway, very fond . . . I am of a few of these dances I'd seen, and I learnt some of these songs belongin' to them (Gummow 1992:189).

In this fashion, individual songs and song-styles could travel right throughout the south-east, often over very long distances. Howitt instances the spread of one song between South Australia, Victoria and the far north coast of New South Wales, involving a journey of perhaps thousands of kilometres (Howitt 1904:414). It is clear that the trade aspect of corroborees endured for many years after white contact, and there are numerous reports of south-eastern Aboriginal people holding public corroboree performances to which admission was charged, and of performing for whites at the annual government blanket distribution, an important event in the cold south of the continent (de Silva 1994; *Armidale Express*, 28-2-1874:4; *Glen Innes Examiner*, 17-5-1881:6, 29-5-1888:3). This exchange dimension to the corroboree is positively identified in Carter's portrayal of an incident involving the Victorian squatter John Cotton:

He observed how, shortly after he gave one of the Devil's River tribe a suit of European clothes, 'One of the tribes performed a corroboree or native dance' (Carter 1992b:169).

2.4 Types of Indigenous song

They are numerous, and vary both in measure and time. They have songs of war, of hunting, of fishing, of the rise and set of the sun, for rain, for thunder, and for many other occasions . . . (Tench 1999:262, 3).

While there has been a great deal more collection than analysis of the songs of south-eastern Australia, the occasions on which songs were performed and the uses to which they were put have been reasonably well recorded. Diane Bell provides a handy introduction to this general discussion in saying:

Music, Cath Ellis . . . contends, is the main intellectual medium through which Aboriginal people conceptualise their world. She writes:

Through song the unwritten history of the people and the laws of the community are taught and maintained; the entire physical and spiritual development of the individual is nurtured; the well being of the group is protected; supplies of food and water ensured through musical communication with the spiritual powers; love of homeland is poured out for all to share; illnesses are cured; news is passed from one group to another (Ellis 1985:17, quoted in Bell 1998:180).

The following outline of song types, which reinforces Ellis's view by demonstrating just how pervasive singing was in south-eastern Aboriginal life, does not attach great importance to any putative taxonomic scheme. In this regard, Diane Bell discusses typologies of Ngarrindjeri music, commenting that while different researchers have identified different categories:

all the . . . researchers admit that their typologies of Ngarrindjeri songs are less than satisfactory, that there are variations within areas, and that they are frequently contradicted by their informants (Bell 1998:177).

Whilst also acknowledging deficiencies in any attempt at constructing an accurate and multi-purpose taxonomy, Margaret Gummow does take the process further in recording eight categories of Bundjalung songs which are recognised more-or-less consistently by the singers themselves:

Yawahr, Shake-a-Leg and *Burun* songs are all identified by their dances; Sing-You-Down, Blessing for Babies and Lullaby are identified by the functions for which they were performed; Djingan is identified by the content of the songs; and Jaw Breaker is identified by the language of the song (Gummow 1992:74ff.).

Norman Tindale was another researcher who divided the songs he gathered (from South Australia) into eight categories, none of which corresponds to Gummow's examples, however (Berndt & Berndt 1988:369).

Given below is a summary – comprehensive but not exhaustive – of the recorded evidence for south-eastern song-types. It must be said at the start that this outsider's grouping-by-function fails to adequately consider essentially opaque levels of meaning in either the songs themselves (Gummow 1983:205), or their performance contexts (Ellis 1980:725). That particular topic will be discussed in greater detail in section 3, below.

Corroboree-singing was only one aspect of Aboriginal group musical activity, and as a category represents a cover-all description masking a number of distinct genres. Some of these primarily action-type pieces include: songs composed to describe and celebrate significant events such as frontier conflict with Europeans (Vale 1996; Norton 1907:101); the first sightings of horses (Horton 2000:47), sailing ships (Armitage 1933:96), or railway locomotives (Archibald 1964, Dixon 1980:53; Bell 1998:179; Hercus and Koch 1996:148); songs to make white men go away from Aboriginal country (Goddard 1934:245; Carter 1992a:166; Swain 1993:124); songs composed with a didactic social aim (especially McKenzie 1961, where a corroboree song depicts the unlawful actions of killing game after sunset); songs related to the dance itself, such as the many 'shake-a-leg' or 'shivery-legs' songs (Gummow 1992; Archibald 1964; de Silva 1994); and drinking and gambling songs (Gummow 1983:249; de Silva 1994).

A rather more difficult genre is that of the song-series or mythical song-cycle, celebrating the creation and re-creation of life and landscape by animal or human ancestors (Ellis 1980:722). Strictly speaking, one should not assume, merely by analogy with cultures from elsewhere on the continent, that mythical cycles or 'songlines' must have been performed in the south-east. However, Radcliffe-Brown's evidence that mythical landscape creation was an Australia-wide phenomenon (Radcliffe-Brown 1929b:415) is salient here, and is supported by the present author's happening upon references to creation stories that seem to cross tribal boundaries in northern New South Wales (Cohen 1980; Laves 1929:1250).

Isolated songs about significant animals, unfortunately without helpful Aboriginal exegesis, have certainly been collected in the region (Gordon 1968b:14; Howitt 1887:333; Gummow 1983:205). While these may be interpreted as generally pertaining to totemic or ancestor relationships, they need not imply song-cycles, and could instead represent rituals for species increase, totem assignment at initiation (Radcliffe-Brown 1923:440-443), or a number of alternative forms. However, Jones (1965), Gummow (1983), and Donaldson (1987) have all argued that the propensity for 'cycle-building' towards longer accretions, typical of songlines, is inherent in the structure of southern music, and the admittedly slender record of mythological story-cycles for the region can be seen to at least provide occasion for its utilisation.

In the absence of clear evidence, it is of course possible to conclude that south-eastern Aboriginal society sang no mythological series. On the other hand, there is ample reason to consider that their existence had been entirely overlooked by early researchers. A parallel situation concerns Radcliffe-Brown's apparent failure to discover convincing local evidence for increase-singing (Radcliffe-Brown 1929b:409), while other more relationship-oriented researchers were to fare much better in the region 50 years later (Gummow 1992). Tellingly, Radcliffe-Brown made so bold as to assert at the time that, while he did not discover certain determining particulars pertaining to totemism in his lightning survey of north-east New South Wales:

it is of course possible that an intensive study of the mythology (which it is now too late to carry out) might have revealed some connection (Radcliffe-Brown 1929b:414).

The irony here is that Gerhardt Laves was canvassing for mythological data, with considerable success, in the very same general area and at the very time that Radcliffe-Brown wrote (Laves 1929). Radcliffe-Brown's failure in the field seems due, in large measure, to his commitment to a personal version of the Doomed Race Theory:

It must be remembered that these researches can now cover only a part of the continent.

There are many tribes which it would have been possible to study twenty or even ten years ago that are now forever lost to us, all memory of their former customs having gone (Radcliffe-Brown 1929b:415).

The failure to record the occurrence of recognisably mythological singing should not be ascribed merely to ignorance or prejudice of course. R. H. Mathews made no specific mention of it in his researches into New South Wales ceremonials 30 years earlier (Mathews n.d., 1897, 1898, 1899, 1900a, 1900b, 1902, 1903), and while this may well have been caused by oversight, it is conceivable that, even by his time, the performance of local song-cycles had effectively ceased. Evidence from Central Australia shows that for these to be properly performed, there is a need for the relatively peaceful and uninterrupted occupation of land by a lineage of hereditary ceremonial managers. The process is therefore extremely sensitive to social disruption. One consequence of the 1928 Coniston massacre in the Northern Territory was that the murder of ceremonial managers left gaps in kinship lines that continued to confound ritual observance for many decades thereafter (Vaarzon-Morel 1998:44; C. Ellis 1993: pers. comm.).

The phenomenon of social singing without dancing – in the form of inter-tribal song ‘competitions’ – has been recorded for the south-east by Radcliffe-Brown and Bootle (Radcliffe-Brown 1929a, notebook 6:148; Bootle 1899:4-5). Other ‘non-corroboree’ social genres include: funeral and mourning songs (Martin 1961; Howitt 1904:418; Gunson 1970:47); marriage songs (apparently used to keep relations between celebrating families ‘calm’ – Laves 1929:1269; Medhurst 1895; Holmer 1969:63); songs sung in connection with ‘feasting’ (especially the *widji-widji* or ‘grace’ songs of the New England tablelands – Jay 1995); songs sung during initiations by ceremonial managers (Mathews 1899:69; Gummow 1983:90; Gunson 1970:52; Perkins 1998); songs sung by mothers and other relatives during the process of separating from initiands (Mathews 1901:62; Morris 1994); entertainment songs, including ‘gossip’ songs and others composed to pillory or provide social comment (Martin 1961; Dixon 1980:85; Clunies Ross 1986:244; Hercus and Koch 1996:148; Berndt & Berndt 1988:369); songs of pleading used during ‘judicial hearings’ (Gunson 1970:58); and finally, songs which express some form of group solidarity or identity (Buchanan 1973; Gummow 1983:26).

Most other attested song categories indicate solo performances, characterised in the main by their potential to directly influence people, events and processes (Ellis 1993). Chief among these are songs or incantations used by ‘clever fellers’, the Aboriginal ‘doctors’ found throughout the Australian continent. Their performance highlights the Indigenous transitive use of the verb ‘to sing’, and types include: songs to cure wounding, disease, disorders, or to ensure future health (Elkin 1977:39; Laves 1929:1239; Howitt 1887:334; Gummow 1992:134-135; Perkins 1998); songs for ritual killing (Elkin 1977:152; Gummow 1992:138); songs ‘to make dead men rise’ (Laves 1929:1246); songs to put individuals or whole groups to sleep (Laves 1929:1243); songs to change from human form to that of an animal or bird for the expedition of travel (Perkins 1998); songs to communicate directly with spiritual ancestors (Elkin 1977:129; Donaldson 1987:26); songs connected with the sacred and very powerful quartz crystals (Laves 1929:1222); and songs to start or stop wind and rain (Gordon 1968b:14; Barker & Mathews 1977:32). Rain-making songs could sometimes have been sung by whole groups directed by the ‘clever feller’ (Enright 1934:240), while associated songs to hasten the advent of spring may have been sung chiefly by women (Goddard 1934; Milson 1840; Moyle 1960). Further solo songs represent a seemingly random variety of categories, some perhaps used only for personal expression, while others retained powers similar to ‘doctors’ songs, but were presumably accessible to a wider group.¹

One very important song-class is that for species increase. Although Radcliffe-Brown, in his published survey of south-eastern totemism, denies the occurrence of increase-singing there (Radcliffe-Brown 1929b:409), his own field notes seem to contradict him (Radcliffe-Brown 1929a), as does evidence collected by Laves (1929:1123), W. J. Enright (1934:241), Tindale (Berndt

¹ It should be noted here that it is unlikely that power resided solely in songs themselves, but in the relationship between country, spiritual Ancestors, singer, song and ‘sung’.

& Berndt 1988:369), Callaghan (Martin 1961) and Margaret Gummow (1992). Increase songs were said to be like ‘hymns’ to totem creatures (Radcliffe-Brown 1929a, notebook 6:37), normally sung only by the individual to whom belonged both the creature and its increase site, and who was accordingly responsible for their management. Remaining song types include those to stop a thief (Laves 1929:1223; McDougall 1901:63); songs to stop a kangaroo (or duck) while hunting (Perkins 1998; Radcliffe-Brown 1929b:409); songs to cause dolphins to herd fish into shallow waters (Perkins 1998); songs to paralyse a man being pursued (Gummow 1992:139); ‘love magic’ songs (Laves 1929:1225); lullabies (Kartomi 1984:70); and love songs ‘to sweethearts’ (Laves 1929:1225; Howitt 1887:334). Bill Cohen speaks of one such love song composed early in the twentieth century by his father Jack:

He then started to sing an Aboriginal song in Aboriginal language. The understanding of this Gumbangarri song: a young Aboriginal lad courting an Aboriginal girl and lifting her, with her long black hair dangling, onto a saddle and taking her home to his tribe (Cohen 1988:10).

Also recorded are songs rejecting a suitor (Laves 1929:1274; Gordon 1968b:24); songs sung to express emotional or religious states, including songs to ‘God’ (Goddard 1934 246; Howitt 1887:331; Eades 1979:346; Hoddinott n.d.; Thomas 1905:50); songs inviting tribes to initiation (Radcliffe-Brown 1929a, notebook 6:141); and songs celebrating the coming home to one’s people (Martin 1961; McKenzie 1961).

2.5 Song creation

Most modern researchers involved with Indigenous Australian tribal musicians record the bequest of new material, by Ancestors, to living song-makers via dreams (see Stubington 1979 and Ellis 1985). This is also well documented for the south-east, perhaps representatively so by A. W. Howitt:

The makers of the Australian songs, or of the combined songs and dances, are the poets or bards of the tribe and are held in great esteem . . . the songs . . . are obtained by the bards from the spirits of the deceased, usually their relatives, during sleep in dreams . . . The bard who composed this song came of a poetic stock. His father and his father’s father before him are said to have been ‘makers of songs which made men sad or joyful when they heard them’ . . . There are other poets who composed under what may be called natural influences as distinguished from supernatural. Umbara, the bard of the Coast Murring told me that his words came to him ‘not in sleep as to some men, but when tossing on the waves in his boat with the waters jumping up round him’ (Howitt 1887:329-31).

Margaret Gummow provides several instances of such dream composition from the Bundjalung area, and cites similar accounts from elsewhere in northern New South Wales (Gummow 1992:181- 182). Howitt also notes the complementary process of composing under more mundane circumstances, and this is again supported by Gummow, who details how Raymond Duncan and Jack Barron composed Bundjalung songs in the ‘ordinary’ way (Gummow 1992:179). This apparently sometimes involved the composer lying on the ground, which may have an analogue in the compositional technique of Milerum of the Ngarrindjeri who, ‘by lying on his back on the land . . . could make contact with the power of his country’ (Bell 1998:193).

An interesting variation to composition-through-Ancestors – that of songs being given by God – intersects with discourse relating to the existence or otherwise of a pre-contact south-eastern belief in a Supreme Being. Archdeacon Gunther of the central-western New South Wales Wellington mission made the following observation early in the nineteenth century:

Nor must I omit to mention that there has been from time to time, *i.e.* every three or four years, a curious ceremony performed among the blacks, several tribes being assembled, which appeared to be a remnant of some religious rites. A song was sent for the occasion

by Baiami or his son, which was sung by those assembled; a solemn procession took place, certain mysterious figures painted on pieces of bark of men and other objects were displayed at the time (quoted in Thomas 1905:51).

The mention of Baiami indicates that this may have been an early example of a *bora* ceremony, which the historian of religion Tony Swain regards as a post-contact phenomenon (Swain 1993). It may therefore be interesting to speculate whether Gunther's observation could illustrate the subtle re-fashioning of compositional protocol (or its discourse) in response to the European presence. On the other hand, the learning of songs following the visitation of 'God' was also documented by A. C. McDougall for Gumbaynggirr culture, which seems to have left no analogous record of *bora*. Speaking of the Gumbaynggirr *ngulungurr* or 'clever men', McDougall explains that they were visited by Yuludarra when it was necessary for them to learn certain healing songs:

The Ulun-garras leave camp and retire to the tops of the mountains at certain seasons of the year . . . They are believed to actually swallow the bingi-burra (quartz stone) given to them by Uli-tarra, who visits them in their retirement and teaches them how to use the stone and to chant the necessary songs . . . (McDougall 1901:64).

Another way that new songs and corroborees could be composed in south-eastern Aboriginal society involved the composer either travelling, or being taken to a special place to be 'shown' the song by spiritual beings. The following shorthand account was found in R. H. Mathews' field notes, and relates to the Wiradjuri of New South Wales:

The Wah-wee ^{and songmakers} – little creature lives in deep waterholes. Clever man can go and see him and get a new song. First must paint himself all over with red ochre. He follows after the rainbow some day when there's a shower, and the end of the rainbow rests over the waterhole in which is the wah-wee's abode. He contacts wah-wee who sings him a new song for the corroboree. He repeats the song after the wah-wee until he has learnt it sufficiently and then starts back to his own people. When they see him coming, painted red all over and singing, they know he has been with the wah-wee. This 'doctor' ^{bard} then takes a few of the other headmen with him into the bush and they strip pieces of bark off trees, and paint different devices on them with coloured clays. These pieces of bark, ornamented in this way are then taken to the corroboree ground and all the men dance and sing the new song. This is how new songs and corroborees are obtained (Mathews, field-notebooks Series 3 Folder 13; original emphasis and superscript; cf. Mathews 1905 [1904]:162).

In another instance, the composer is taken under the sea to be taught the song and dance:

my old man, grandfather, made a corroboree song there, you know . . . he was sort of a clever man, he was . . . Yeah you see, he was under the sea for a week . . . They come down here lookin' for him. They didn't know where he went, but, when they come back to Evans Head . . . they're feeding him on brandy . . . he was cold . . . They were feeding him on brandy, when he come back, and he got all right then and he made that song . . . You see, he seen 'em corroboreeing, all the women . . . he must have been under the sea – they must have took him – all the witches from the seaside like – under the sea (Gummow 1992:115).

That this basic situation could be further ramified is shown by the following example of alternative practice in the Hunter Valley, which seems to combine all the previously discussed elements of dream-visits, God, and travelling to a special place to learn a song:

Wallatu was the god who presided over poetry. He also composed music. He came in

dreams and transported the individual to some sunny hills, where he inspired him with supernatural gifts (Goddard 1934:244, condensed from Dunlop 1848).

It is clear from the evidence given above that song-makers occupied a special place in Aboriginal society, and may have had powers akin to those of ‘clever fellers’. Such an exalted status probably extended to song-owners generally, although this subject remains obscure for the south-east. It is quite possible that the local situation paralleled that obtaining in Central Australia, where profound song-knowledge brought with it ‘private wealth, supreme social prestige, and political power’ (Ellis 1997b:60).

2.6 Musical education

Unfortunately, very little is known of Indigenous music education in the south-east, beyond the Wah-wee’s evidence that the most fundamental mechanism involved in learning songs was probably imitative. However, it would be mistaken to characterise musical education as merely mimetic, and Ellis argues that while rote learning might characterise the earliest steps in a Pitjantjatjara child’s musical education, the overall learning process:

is not one of memorising innumerable individual items and learning their appropriate groupings, but it is one of knowing the structural principles that are being deliberately and creatively manipulated in order to produce a living and energised performance (Ellis 1997b:61).

Ellis emphasises that this process takes many years of sustained effort, often lasting into advanced adulthood. The well-attested role of song-leaders in south-eastern musical practice highlights the importance of correct performance, and suggests that the learning of music was complex and protracted there also. The following description of musical skill in modern Anbarra society seems to fit very well with the observations recorded above of south-eastern corroboree song leaders:

These performers are real specialists. First they have to keep in mind all the customary song words and melodic phrases appropriate to between twenty and thirty song subjects. Then they must be able to perform them, often for long periods, improvising their choice of customary phrases, rather like a jazz singer does, in short verses of set structure . . . Another skill the singer has to master is the creation of a continuous but variable rhythm for each subject, which he beats out on a pair of hardwood clapsticks . . . In some situations these singers may also be directing a group of dancers (Clunies-Ross 1994:76).

The lack of detailed information regarding music education in the south-east is due chiefly to the structural shifts local Aboriginal society has experienced over the last century. However, it can be inferred, from the abundant evidence of music’s significance in Aboriginal social life, that learning must have been a most important social process there. Something of the nature of that process might be gleaned by examining stated reasons for its presumed cessation. Diane Bell flags this heuristic strategy in her analysis of Ngarrindjeri history:

The attacks on language and the attack on ceremonial life struck at the core of certain sorts of knowledge in an oral culture. While the songs were sung, the places and their stories were secure. But it was a long process by which one learnt the songs, and gained sufficient status to be able to sing them. It required time spent with the old people, time on site at sacred places, time in the country learning while doing (1998:182).

Gummow says much the same thing when she canvasses reasons for what is described as a decline in old-time Aboriginal cultural expression:

Singers often need to be at specific sites or places to perform the . . . songs that they . . .

remember. Performance prerequisites and contexts for performances are, however, constantly changing as European influence increases . . . suitable performance contexts are becoming increasingly difficult to arrange, and this may be one factor in the decline in performances (Gummow 1995:130).

Given the orality of Aboriginal musical culture and its orientation towards place and purpose, certain conditions must have been absolutely necessary for effective education to continue relatively unchanged. As Bell and Gummow both suggest, these would presumably have included some security of tenure in or near one's own country, the opportunity for repeated hearings of particular performances, and most importantly, sufficient reason to perform music, whether for ceremonial or other purposes.

3 Formal analysis

3.1 Texts

The main published textual work for south-eastern songs has been carried out by Tamsin Donaldson, who has explored both the nature of language-change in selected Ngiyampaa songs from western New South Wales, and the structural variation experienced by these songs during the process of their transmission. Donaldson has identified textual cues for dancers in songs from the far-west of the state (Donaldson 1987:36ff), while Margaret Gummow has done the same for the east (1985, 1992). The latter has also isolated rhyme and rhythm patterns in New South Wales Aboriginal songs, including those with macaronic texts, and demonstrates that similar patterns were applied to lines in both English and Aboriginal languages (Gummow 1983:99, 249). This indicates that English textual elements were able to be incorporated smoothly into basically Indigenous musical structures, a reverse of the better documented process whereby purely Aboriginal texts have been set to common European airs (Donaldson 1984a:231; Buchanan 1973; Donaldson 1995). 'Macro' textual structures have also been examined by Donaldson and Gummow, and both researchers identify the two-section form as being typical of south-eastern Aboriginal song. Singers have been shown to sometimes manipulate certain textual mechanisms, so that these typically short verses may be extended, by repetition, according to the demands of performance (Donaldson 1987:36; Gummow 1987).

From the time of first European contact in south-eastern Australia, singers have told researchers that they do not understand the words to some of their songs (Dixon 1980:54; Howitt 1887:329; Gordon 1968b:13). This textual opacity may be attributed to a number of factors. As already mentioned, the wide diffusion of songs throughout the region must have resulted in their performance by 'foreign' language speakers (Gummow 1992:89). On the other hand, some songs are considered to employ archaic words from the home language (Dixon 1980:54) or a special song-language whose meaning is purposely obscured from the uninitiated (Ellis 1980:725; Clunies Ross 1986:242). R. H. Mathews posits a further possible cause, based on a proposition popular with researchers up until quite recently. In presenting the transcriptions of several songs noted from performers on the south coast of New South Wales, Mathews comments that:

It may be mentioned that the words of these chants possess no meaning to the present natives, having been handed down from one generation to another. They were probably in the language of conquering tribes in the past (Mathews 1901:63).

In addition, it should be emphasised that the typically abbreviated and highly allusive expression of Aboriginal songs must rely, for effective communication, on a very closely shared cultural experience (Clunies Ross 1986:242; Radcliffe Brown 1923:440). Over the course of time, factors relating to transmission may introduce enough variation into a text – or social circumstances might

change sufficiently – so as to reduce the transparency of an otherwise-plain meaning, even to members of the same or a very closely related language group (Donaldson 1984a:240ff.).

On the other hand, because meaning in songs could possibly have been conveyed by tone-production, gesture, pitch and rhythm (subjects which will be dealt with below) as well as by words (Ellis 1997b:59), perhaps there was a greater intuitive understanding of foreign-language songs than has been commonly supposed. In spite of a general tendency towards obscurity, there is evidence that the language of imported songs was sometimes knowingly modified to accommodate local dialects, perhaps even investing them with a new and invigorated meaning (Jones 1965:289; Donaldson 1984:247; Howitt 1904:414).

3.2 The relationship of song and dance

Regarding the relation of song to dance here, it is not known how far the immediate demands of the dance influenced song composition itself. It has been said that dancers, at the level of the individual step, took their immediate rhythmic cues from percussionists, not the singers (de Silva 1994). While this would make sense when it is taken into account that sung melodic rhythms were normally much more complex than the single-beat rhythm of women's percussion, the patterns produced in Willie Mackenzie's recorded performances show that clapstick rhythms may at times have been quite intricate (Mackenzie 1961).

The case could have been different, however, from the perspective of the subject-matter and structure of the dances, which may have, to some extent, directed the technical aspects of the making of songs (this observation of course does not apply to situations where songs and dances were given together in dreams or other circumstances). For example, just as Aboriginal languages contain names for birds and animals constructed on principles of onomatopoeia (Dixon 1980:106; Ellis 1985:68-70), so might song-texts and melodies reflect, in their technical (including rhythmic) construction, local perceptions of creatures they portrayed. There is at least one recorded example of a south-eastern corroboree song known to contain onomatopoeic allusions to dance steps (Gummow 1987:3), while this and other songs are recognised as utilising verbal and musical cues related closely to the *structure* of the dance they accompanied (Donaldson 1984:37, Gummow 1992:92-94). In this way, dancers may well have taken their cues from singers, but presumably only at the structural level.

3.3 Music

The oldest accounts of contact suggest that it was occasionally possible for the first Europeans to appreciate and to a limited extent understand the differentiated structures of south-eastern Aboriginal music. The following description, by New South Wales Judge-Advocate David Collins, must surely comprise the earliest published English-language musical analysis of Australian Indigenous singing:

A party who went to the eastern shore to procure fire-wood, and to comply with the desire the natives had so often expressed of seeing them land among them, found them still timorous; but being encouraged and requested by signs to sing, they began a song in concert, which actually was musical and pleasing, and not merely in the diatonic scale, descending by thirds, as at Port Jackson, the descent to this was waving, in a rather melancholy soothing strain. The song of *Bong-ree*, which he gave them at the conclusion of theirs, sounded barbarous and grating to the ear: but *Bong-ree* was an indifferent songster, even among his own countrymen. These people, like the natives of Port Jackson, having fallen to the low pitch of their voices, recommenced their song at the octave . . . their singing was not confined to one air; they gave three (1789, quoted in Gummow 1992:78, 79).

There has since been a moderate amount of musical analysis undertaken of south-eastern songs, the main works being those of Torrance (1887), Moyle (1960), Jones (1965), Kartomi (1984) and Gummow (1983, 1985, 1987, 1992). After each of these studies is considered in its turn, some comparison will be made of their findings. It must be said at this point that, as there is no consensus

as to whether the use of fixed pitches operated in old-style Aboriginal society, and as Ellis considered Jones and Moyle to have assumed an adherence to a western-style tonal system, references to scale organisation in the following analyses should be treated with caution.

While Margaret Gummow's major opus comprises a detailed analytical survey for the Bundjalung group of northern New South Wales (1992), the work most relevant to the present context concerns her close study of 69 separate song-performances recorded from four widely separated areas of New South Wales (1983). After analysing her material, Gummow made certain broad conclusions, summarised briefly as follows.

Melodies were found to be generally descending, exhibiting definite tonal plateaux and regular 'intoning' of the final keynote. Pentatonic, heptatonic and hexatonic scales predominated. Melodic progression was basically by step – both ascending and descending – and although some leaps of as much as an octave were found, these were typically placed between, rather than within phrases. Two types of tonal organisation occurred, one where the tonic was the lowest and final note of the song, and the second – considered by Gummow to be a special feature of the sample she examined – where material was arranged centrically around the tonic. Songs were found to adhere to two basic structures, the 'varied repeat' and strophic forms, while a minority appeared to be through-composed. Rhythmically, the sample was described as predominantly syllabic, occasionally isorhythmic, and as containing numerous documented examples of both isometre and heterometre. Gummow noted the occurrence of some rhapsodic, melismatic, highly ornamented material from the Bundjalung area, which she believes may represent a women's style. Otherwise, the most common rhythmic types found were simple- and compound-duple, simple- and compound-triple, with additive rhythms occurring occasionally (Gummow 1983:270ff; see also Gummow 2001).

Margaret Kartomi's analysis of one Bundjalung lullaby produced features agreeing in principle with Gummow's findings. This song displayed a stepwise-descending melodic contour, followed a heptatonic scalar progression, but had no distinct tonic. Rhythmic organisation was isometric and isorhythmic (Kartomi 1984:70-73).

Alice Moyle has analysed the music of two Tasmanian songs recorded from the singing of Mrs Fanny Cochrane-Smith in 1899 and 1903. Moyle recognised each as belonging to a different genre, distinguished by her as 'corroboree' and 'legato' styles. The former she found to have a melody which first ascended before descending to a 'reiterated ground tone', with an anhemitonal pentatonic scalar structure set within the compass of an octave. Rhythm was syllabic and isometric, and notated in triple time. The legato song she analysed as having a basically downward-pushing ornamented melody, though organised centrically around the tonic, and bearing the same scalar structure as the corroboree. Its rhythm was found to be rhapsodic and melismatic. Moyle compared the two Tasmanian songs with corroboree songs recorded along the southern coasts of South and Western Australia, and found significant difference in the area of melodic procedure: where the Tasmanian examples both ascended and descended, the mainland songs all exhibited descending melodies. After briefly surveying early historical descriptions of Tasmanian music, including James Bonwick's comment-in-passing that 'songs do not exceed the compass of a third', Moyle carefully concluded that:

Tasmanian song styles were widely varied. It seems that they ranged from monotone reiterations to songs of a relatively sophisticated nature, such as the 'legato' or 'Spring' song (Moyle 1960:75).

In 1887, G. W. Torrance conducted a cursory analysis of the performances of William Berak (or Barak), a Victorian Aboriginal singer. Torrance found that melodic compasses in Berak's songs rarely exceeded a third, minor intervals predominating in a step-wise descent to an intoned keynote tonic. A brief melodic ascent was noted for one song in his sample. Rhythm was strongly marked and apparently heterometric, alternating 'suddenly' between 'duple and triple' times. Some explanation for the preponderance of narrow compasses noticed by Torrance (and perhaps by others,

for example Bonwick in Tasmania) occurs in the following note appended to two of his transcriptions:

This song was repeated . . . a third lower, and sung through to the same sound . . . This drone or chaunt is repeated *ad lib.* as long as the ceremony lasts, a tone lower each time, and accompanied throughout with clapping of hands and stamping of feet (Torrance 1887:339).

It seems obvious that what Torrance classed as entire melodies, merely repeated a tone or a third lower, modern analysts would likely regard as verses or sections of a larger whole. Berak's material is therefore likely to have exhibited wider tonal compasses than Torrance allowed for, bringing them into line with other southern Australian examples.

The present author has undertaken summary analyses of the music of some Gumbaynggirr songs, for the sole purpose of increasing slightly the available south-eastern analytical sample. While his findings did not vary from those described above, the songs of Granny Florence Ballengarry of the New South Wales central-north coast were interesting in the light of previous descriptions of a 'legato' style of singing (Ballengarry 1974). Granny Ballengarry's songs are sung slowly, in free rhythm, and their melodies, ornamented by portamenti and single and double grace notes, proceed melismatically. Considering the comments of Moyle and Gummow *supra*, it may be that the suggestion of a characteristic south-eastern women's style can be further supported, although the evidence for it remains slight. Again, while her seemingly European-influenced melodies may not render much further assistance on this point, the songs of another Gumbaynggirr woman, Junie Mercey, suggest the possible existence of a discrete and integrated women's repertoire (Mercey n.d.). It seems a short step only from the recognition of a women's repertoire, to the confident consideration of a women's style of performing it.

Trevor Jones has analysed the bulk of the sound recordings housed in the archives of the University of Sydney as 'The Elkin Collection' (Jones 1965). Like Gummow, he arranged his sample according to geographical area, and of the 12 'micro-regions' he examined throughout the continent, two occur in the south-east. Jones' results do not differ materially from those of his fellow analysts, although something further will be said of his comparison of south-eastern with other Australian styles.

A very basic picture of the most general technical features of south-eastern Australian song can be traced from the foregoing descriptions. Although there is some evidence for micro-regionalisation within the south-east, particularly in the occurrence of certain isorhythms in songs from the Corner Country of New South Wales (Gummow 1983:274), it seems to be suggestive only, and, as Ellis comments, regional stylistic unity is perhaps the more dominant feature: 'tribal music has broad similarities through a region where there are many differentiations of style' (Ellis 1980:727).

Generally speaking, most south-eastern melodies have been characterised as descending step-wise, through intoned tonal plateaux, to rest on an extended final tonic. Scales used are described as predominantly pentatonic and hemitonal diatonic, the latter consisting mainly of six or seven tones. Melodic compasses were perceived as typically moderately-wide (mostly around an octave), and melodic rhythm as primarily syllabic. Syncopation was noted to have been achieved through the use of various technical components (including glottal-stopping), and isorhythm and isometre seem to have been stable features. Simple times were most commonly transcribed – in two, three or four – with compound two and three occurring less frequently. Percussion accompaniment was characteristically 'four-square', with some evidence of stick-beating styles that employed considerable rhythmic variation. Songs normally comprised short sections, most often two, that were presumably extendable to form longer cycles. Vocal styles may have varied widely. Features of a sub-genre that might be considered special to, without necessarily defining the south-eastern region, comprise centric tonal organisation, heterometre, and a 'legato' singing-style characterised by free-rhythm and a melismatic, ornamented melodic procedure.

3.4 Comparison between the south-east and other Australian regions

The basically comparative results of Trevor Jones' survey found that diatonic hemitonal scales predominated in the south-east and in many other areas, particularly in the north of the continent. Overall, Jones found six- and seven-note scales to be reasonably well dispersed throughout, as were melodic compasses of around an octave. A generally descending contour was found in all 166 melodies analysed, the vast majority finishing on the tonic, with a few showing centric tonal organisation. In common with areas all over Australia, Jones found that the south-eastern region used duple and quadruple metres, with triple times (especially compound triple) being rare everywhere. Australian songs were classed as overwhelmingly isometric, with heterometre occurring only once in his sample, in north-central Australia. Rhapsodic rhythm was also found to be very rare, while isorhythm predominated in all areas. Sectionalised structures were the universally found norm, and Jones interpreted the predominant structural type to be strophic, assuming a tendency in even short sung examples towards repetition and 'cycle building'. Finally, Jones observed that there appeared to be little difference in vocal quality or technique demonstrated from one area to another (Jones 1965:285ff).

After Jones published his findings, Alice Moyle prepared a general map of Australian song-features which illustrated significant stylistic similarities for the whole continent, really isolating only Cape York in the north-east (Moyle 1966:xv-xvii). This seeming homogeneity could reflect methodological problems in research such as the lack of a unified 'micro' analytical approach sensitive enough to pick up more subtle differences, the difficulty in obtaining Indigenous taxonomies for all regions, or the bias of dominant analytical techniques towards eliciting stylistic similarity rather than difference (Nettl 1983:320). It is clear, however, that there are also non-technical continuities, such as those relating to performance contexts, the circumstances regarding song composition (Stubington 1979:20; Howitt 1887:330), and the 'power-laden' qualities of songs throughout the country (Ellis 1993). The comparative situation is probably accurately described by Gummow when she says:

the music of New South Wales has general characteristics in common with music from the rest of Aboriginal Australia (Gummow 1983:277).

4 The context of musical meaning

4.1 Introduction

As mentioned throughout this chapter, some undoubtedly important aspects of south-eastern Aboriginal music-making either escaped the attention of early European observers, or were recorded with little understanding of their possible significance. This deficit can be made somewhat good by referring the more simplistic European observations to the findings of researchers, most notably Catherine Ellis, who have worked with modern Aboriginal musicians in northern and Central Australia. Although this type of comparative research runs a risk of drawing uncritical or careless analogies, there is some justification for its limited use here, given both the lack of directly relevant local evidence, and the provisional conclusions arrived at above regarding Australian musical homogeneity.

In the earlier discussion of the opacity of song-texts, the idea was mooted that language may not have been the sole medium through which music imparted its 'message' to south-eastern Aboriginal people. Catherine Ellis here characterises the Pitjantjatjara experience of musical communication as a complex layering of meanings:

The music cannot be fully understood without reference to the meaning of the extramusical information with which it is related . . . In this way many pieces of

information are presented simultaneously. The rhythmic pattern and songtext can refer directly to one event in the story, and to others by implication. The body design on the dancers can signify a different aspect of the story. The dance step, which is tied to musical structure through the beating accompaniment, may depict yet another piece of information, while the dancers themselves represent the personality attributes and characteristics of those whom they portray. Melody, as well as indicating the nature of events taking place in the ceremony (painting, dancing etc.) acts as a constant reminder of the essence, the ‘taste’ of the ancestor (Ellis 1985:92-94).

This description may well apply to an historical south-eastern situation only dimly perceived by nineteenth-century European observers. Before moving on to a fuller discussion of aspects of south-eastern musical meaning-systems, something should first be said of local Aboriginal aesthetic attitudes to sound.

4.2 The aesthetics of sound

There is very limited evidence available for how south-eastern Aboriginal people may have perceived musical sound. Almost nothing is known of the singing styles, tone production or aesthetic preferences of south-eastern Aboriginal corroboree singers, although Leonard de Silva stated that it was important for performers to be well synchronised, and that the singers make a good, strong, unified sound (de Silva 1994; see also sub-section 4.3 below). The situation is a little clearer for sounds produced by musical instruments. Many published vocabularies include words for particular sounds of all sorts, and Margaret Gummow has abstracted those that relate to musical percussion from various Bundjalung glossaries. These include: words for the noise made by hitting two hard objects together; knocking sounds; clapping sounds; rhythmic sounds (e.g. of footsteps or boomerang-tapping); and rattling sounds (Gummow 1992:172). It is not clear whether these Bundjalung words were formed on onomatopoeic principles, but that Bundjalung people did possess an acute appreciation of percussive sound and its production is suggested by Charlotte Page’s description of the pillow-drum of Gidabal women:

the sound it used to make – the sound used to go a long way. You wouldn’t think it was a pillow, but they just knew how to do it. They clap that see – they held it like that and they hit it with their hand and it used to make some lovely noise. *A real sound you know* (Gummow 1992:174, emphasis added).

The overwhelming importance of percussion to south-eastern Aboriginal musicians is evident from the discussion of instruments at the start of this chapter. These could produce a sophisticated array of percussive sounds that, working in concert, would evoke richly-layered rhythmic and tonal textures. In the basic attested musical organisation of a south-eastern ceremonial occasion, combined percussion would be provided by the stamping of the dancers’ feet upon a specially-hardened earth ‘dancing-floor’ (Gummow 1992:176), by stick-players, and by pillow-drum beaters. Add to these the ensemble singing of men and women, the optional sounds of rattle and body-percussion, and – all these practices contributing their own unique qualities – an impressive sonic picture results.

4.3 The language of sound

Elder Tony Perkins has considerably expanded the available core of evidence for an Aboriginal sound aesthetic in his discussion of the meanings of non-percussive tone in his own Gumbaynggirr society. Mr Perkins spoke of the different relative emotional valencies borne by high-pitched and low-pitched tones: the former typically engaging with feelings of fear, worry, grief or despair; the latter evoking reassurance, peace and a feeling of control. Further, Mr Perkins instanced the always-negative connotations of the death-bird’s ‘high screech’, and told of being taught never to throw a pipi shell, as the high-pitched whistle that resulted could generate harmful consequences (Perkins 1998).

That south-eastern Aboriginal women sang in a significantly higher register than men was remarked by John Currie, a pioneer settler in Bundjalung country, in a description of a corroboree he witnessed in 1875:

First of all the men lead off with sonorous tones. Then the women, with their shrill voices, joined in at intervals (quoted in Gummow 1992:168).

While there is no necessary correlation being made here between women's vocal range and intense emotional states, it may be the case that women were especially well equipped to express these when required. Consider the following incident from Central Australia recorded by Catherine Ellis, where she describes the women's 'keening' that accompanied the death of a member of the group with whom she was working:

It sounded unlike any other Aboriginal vocal production that I had heard. The pitch was very high . . . and great prominence was given to the top note of the wail . . . two years after the original incident, this wailing occurred during [a] . . . totemic ceremony. In the midst of a thrilling performance . . . one woman began to wail. I could hardly continue recording, so great was the shock I felt (Ellis 1985:66).

Further emphasising his point that there were messages or meanings in the quality of sounds, Tony Perkins told of witnessing his elders singing to dolphins from a headland, directing the creatures to herd sea-mullet into shallow waters to render the fish easily caught. He stated that when this occurred, it was obvious to him that the communication's power and meaning resided in the *sound* of the singing, and that the words, if merely recited, would not have had the required effect (Perkins 1998). In another case, Sylvester Ellis, who shared close relationship with Aboriginal people in eastern New England, stated that he knew there was some sort of 'signal' in the sound of the bull-roarer (S. Ellis 1984).

Despite Trevor Jones' conclusion that Indigenous vocal production demonstrated uniformity across the country, historical descriptions indicate that it may have varied between language groups and even amongst individuals within groups. While this evidence is fragmentary, individual south-eastern vocalisations have been variously described as soft and musical (Tench 1999:98), harsh, grating, soothing (Gummow 1992:168), sonorous, and finally, shrill (Gummow 1992:168). Ben Cherry enjoyed the 'soft' quality of Aboriginal singing on New England (Cherry 1987), while Watkin Tench demonstrates that Bennelong was capable of producing a variety of vocal timbres:

It was observed that a soft gentle tone of voice which we taught him to use, was forgotten, and his native vociferation returned in full force (Egan 1999:198).

In applying all this information to what was said earlier in regard to the learning of songs by Aboriginal people – despite a frequent lack of understanding of their texts – it is likely that the sound of the song itself may have resonated across language boundaries. George Taplin offers strong support for this view in his observation that:

The Narrinyeri are skilful in the utterance of emotion by sound. They will admire and practise the corrobory (ringbalin) of another tribe merely for the sounds of it, although they may not understand a word of the meaning. They will learn it with great appreciation if it seems to express some feelings which theirs does not. They may not be able to define the feelings, but yet this is the case (quoted in Carter 1992b:36).

That the semantics of south-eastern Aboriginal languages may have been generally mediated by context and pitch-production, is suggested by the following nineteenth-century account from the New England region:

The various expressions conveyed by the peculiar 'Ay, ay,' so constantly used by the natives in speaking, is perfectly indescribable. It is used doubtfully, positively, interrogatively, or responsively, as the case may be, and contains in itself a whole vocabulary of meanings, which a hundred times the number of words could not convey in writing (quoted in Carter 1992b:34).

This observation is extended specifically to musical situations by the opinion of Mrs Eliza Dunlop, who glossed her translations of the texts of a number of songs she collected at Wollombi, in the Hunter Valley, in the early 1840s, with these words:

Very much more is contained in the few words they repeat so often than I can properly explain. I understand them, but it is impossible to convey their full meaning (Goddard 1934:245).

4.4 Melodic and rhythm languages

Although there is no record of specific melodic or rhythm languages existing for south-eastern Australian music, their use has been marked in research with certain Central Desert cultures. Catherine Ellis points out that there, particular melodies or rhythmic patterns may retain an unvarying meaning even though sung to different language texts (Ellis 1985:106). The example given below explains this in more detail, and incidentally demonstrates the difficulty with which such insights are elicited, even for the experienced scholar:

Rhythm may carry factual information. I have gathered, from field experience, that performers may learn the specific meaning of a song from the rhythm of the text so that either the text or the rhythm can convey the same information. The suggestion that this is possible arose when I was recording a long Dreaming songline which crossed a number of tribal boundaries, and I was playing back a recording of an earlier portion of the song to a singer who lived in a more northern area and who did not know the dialect of the recorded performance. He constantly maintained that a particular small song on the recording was about a claypan and that he knew it quite well. It was only careful analysis of his version which determined that he was drawing his conclusions on rhythmic and not linguistic grounds (Ellis 1985:103, 4).

There is no reason to reject the possibility that specific rhythmic patterns had certain meanings for south-eastern Aboriginal people also, especially given the sophistication of the rhythmic dimension to their musical culture. Tony Perkins certainly allowed for this possibility when he described a special foot percussion used to accompany particular Gumbaynggirr ceremonial songs, and which he said indicated rhythmically that initiands had now passed into manhood (Perkins 1998).

4.5 Gestural and visual languages

Gesture was a commonly used means for conveying musical understandings to an audience. From the following, and other known descriptions, it is clear that south-eastern Aboriginal singing was very often accompanied by a parallel gestural expression, which, as Howitt demonstrates, was learned together, with or without dance, as part of a whole-song 'package':

With some songs there are pantomimic gestures or rhythmical movements, which are passed on from performer to performer, as the song is carried from tribe to tribe . . . A very favourite song of this kind has travelled in late years from the Murring to the Kurnai. It was composed by one Mragula, a noted song maker of the Wolgal, describing his attempt to cross the Snowy River in a leaky bark canoe during flood. The pantomimic action which accompanies this song is much fuller than the words, and is a graphic picture . . . (Howitt 1887:330-332).

It appears that even the newly arrived Europeans could sometimes glean meaning from Aboriginal singing, and David Collins' account shows his sensitivity to communication by both tone and gesture in a reasonably volatile contact situation:

These people, like the natives of Port Jackson, having fallen to the low pitch of their voices, recommenced their song at the octave . . . which was accompanied by slow and not ungraceful motions of the body and limbs, their hands being held up in a supplication posture, and the tone and manner of their song and gestures seemed to bespeak the goodwill and forbearance [*sic*] of their intentions (quoted in Gummow 1992:78, 79).

Lending support for the assertion that gesture was indeed important in local Aboriginal society, Adam Kendon attests to the currency of sophisticated sign languages in much of south-eastern Australia in the nineteenth century. He cites relevant historical references that include most of the New England language groups, one white resident of Tenterfield saying: 'They also spoke on their fingers similar to the deaf and dumb' (quoted in Kendon 1988:41).

But musical gesture should be given an extended definition here, one not restricted to the upper-body movement that presumably comprised sign language. John von Sturmer makes the claim for the whole-body significance of Aboriginal dancing in the north of Australia: 'Here the body speaks – directly and in its totality' (quoted in Carter 1992a:183), and Watkin Tench describes the passion of Indigenous dance movement closer to home:

Some dances are performed by men only, some by women only, and in others the sexes mingle. In one of them I have seen the men drop on the ground and kiss the earth with the greatest fervour, between the kisses looking up to Heaven. They also frequently throw up their arms, exactly in the manner in which the dancers of the Friendly Islands are depicted in one of the plates of Mr. Cook's last voyage (Tench 1999:263).

G. C. Mundy was similarly alive to the vibrant communicative potential of the dancers' movements in a corroboree he witnessed in Sydney in 1846 (Mundy 1852, vol. 1:216ff). The fact that gesture interacted there in a particularly dynamic fashion with designs painted on the performers' bodies, introduces the last category of 'musical' communication I wish to discuss, that of painted decoration. Ellis and others have documented the close relationship of song to body paint for Central Australia, and both the Wah-wee and Wellington Mission stories related above describe designs for painting on bark being given to the songmaker along with new songs and dances. Illustrations and photographs of south-eastern ceremonial occasions overwhelmingly attest to the importance of body design to music (Sayers 1994), but there is unfortunately very little other information to which one can refer this evidence in order to gain a deeper understanding. It would be reasonable to assume that the dramatic dimension to the use of paint and other decoration was of prime significance. It has been often recorded that once painted-up, performers could no longer be recognised as their former selves. The transformative potential of body painting may well have enhanced the power of ceremonies to transcend the mundane constraints of the present, to cement identification with Ancestors and their stories, and to otherwise generate maximum emotional effect. Watkin Tench's description of the richness of dancers' body decoration captures some of that ambience:

I have already mentioned that white is the colour appropriated to the dance, but the style of painting is left to everyone's fancy. Some are streaked with waving lines from head to foot; others marked by broad cross-bars, on the breast, back and thighs, or encircled with spiral lines, or regularly striped like a zebra. Of these ornaments, the face never wants its share, and it is hard to conceive anything in the shape of humanity more hideous and terrific than they appear to a stranger – seen, perhaps, through the livid gleam of a fire, the eyes surrounded by large white circles, in contrast with the black

ground, the hair stuck full of pieces of bone and in the hand a grasped club, which they occasionally brandish with the greatest fierceness and agility (Tench 1999:263).

This section has hopefully provided positive evidence that tone, melody, rhythm, gesture, and design all combined to support song-texts in presenting multi-layered meanings in south-eastern Australian Aboriginal musical performance. One important dimension to the analysis of these meaning-oriented aspects resides in its potential to cast light on how south-eastern Aboriginal music, right up to the present, has developed in response to European influence. Where textual and musical characteristics have undergone great change over time, it is in these more subtle areas that significant continuities could be discerned, and where consequently, a 'truer' regional Indigenous musical identity might be found to lie. This however, is a subject beyond the scope of the present examination.

Conclusion

The foregoing survey has attempted to provide a broad yet reasonably detailed picture of late eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and early twentieth-century Aboriginal music-making in south-eastern Australia. It has suggested that this culture, while diverse, exhibits many similarities with Indigenous Australian music generally. Music and dance were seen to occupy the very core of Aboriginal social existence, the integration of various meaning systems into the musical paradigm resulting in a cultural experience of considerable subtlety and complex richness. Unfortunately, political bias, defective methods of enquiry, and a lack of research interest in certain areas have resulted in serious gaps in this musical narrative. Many of the less concrete and more sophisticated dimensions of music-making escaped the often very limited notice of European observers altogether, and even some major musical entities such as song-cycles remain unrepresented. This partial obscurity will perhaps be illuminated to some degree by subsequent research. Catherine Ellis' assertion that any understanding of Indigenous Aboriginal music must refer to both musical and integrated extra-musical information, seems to be well borne-out for south-eastern Australia, and this approach perhaps offers the best prospects for future studies in the historical ethnomusicology of this region.

Glossary of musical terms and concepts

(all websites last viewed on 2 August 2015)²

Ad lib. An abbreviation from Latin meaning 'as much and as often as desired, freely'

(https://www.google.com.au/search?q=glossary+of+musical+terms&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&gws_rd=cr&ei=L8a-VePXIKS3mAWw_5WIBA#q=ad+lib.+definition).

Additive rhythms: Additive rhythm is much used in folk music, especially in Africa and Eastern Europe, and has been standard in Western concert music since the beginning of this century. In music using non-additive rhythm, or 'divisive rhythm' (which is the most common form used in Western music) the rhythm is the product of binary or ternary divisions of a larger unit of time. (A waltz, for example, makes rhythmic patterns based on groups of three equal beats repeated regularly, with the main accent on the first beat; in 'common time', the main accent occurs on the first of every four equal divisions or beats.) In additive rhythm, by contrast, instead of large time-units being subdivided into regular beats, the beat, metre and melodic rhythm are all fashioned from multiples of the smallest unit

(<http://www.encyclopedia69.com/eng/d/additive-rhythm/additive-rhythm.htm>).

² A good source of definitions for terms that have been used for rhythmic analysis of Aboriginal music is Ellis (1968).

- Air:** an instrumental tune, or, more commonly, the melody of a song (See also https://www.google.com.au/search?q=glossary+of+musical+terms&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&gws_rd=cr&ei=L8a-VePXIKS3mAWw_5WIBA#q=air+in+music).
- Anhemitonal:** Musicology commonly classifies note scales as either hemitonic or anhemitonic. Hemitonic scales contain one or more semitones and anhemitonic scales do not contain semitones (https://www.google.com.au/search?q=glossary+of+musical+terms&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&gws_rd=cr&ei=L8a-VePXIKS3mAWw_5WIBA#q=anhemitonic+scale+definition).
- Centric tonal organisation:** Where the tonic or keynote occurs in the middle of a melody rather than at the end, and where typically the tune, through its progression, moves both below and above the tonic.
- Compass (or range):** In music, this word describes the interval between the lowest and highest note of a melody (See <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/compass>).
- Diatonic:** In music theory, a diatonic scale...is a scale composed of seven distinct pitches. The diatonic scale includes five whole steps and two half steps for each octave, in which the two half steps are separated from each other by either two or three whole steps, depending on their position in the scale (See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diatonic_scale).
- Drone:** In music, a drone is a harmonic or monophonic effect or accompaniment where a note or chord is continuously sounded throughout most or all of a piece (https://www.google.com.au/search?q=glossary+of+musical+terms&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&gws_rd=cr&ei=L8a-VePXIKS3mAWw_5WIBA#q=drone+in+music).
- Fixed pitches:** Pitch can be understood here as another name for 'note'. 'Fixed pitch' in this sense refers to a system that follows the Western practice of using recognisable, predictable, and stable tones in melody, tones more likely to be separated by Western-style intervals of a tone or semitone than by micro-intervals. When early European observers wrote down the Aboriginal melodies they heard, standard Western notation was used. This is a very clumsy tool for the purpose, and one which presupposes the utilisation of Western pitch in performance. No-one knows whether the Aboriginal singers from whom the melodies were taken really sang like this, or sang microtonally (Also see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pitch_%28music%29).
- Glottal-stopping:** The glottal stop is a type of consonantal sound used in many spoken languages, produced by obstructing airflow in the vocal tract or, more precisely, the glottis. In English, the glottal stop is represented, for example, by the hyphen in uh-oh! (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glottal_stop).
- Grace notes:** Grace notes are ornaments, embellishments, or musical flourishes that are not necessary to carry the overall line of the melody, but serve instead to decorate or 'ornament' that line. Many ornaments, particularly grace notes, are performed as 'fast notes' around a central note (See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ornament_%28music%29).
- Heptatonic:** A heptatonic scale is a musical scale that has seven notes per octave (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heptatonic_scale).
- Heterometre:** A mixed metre; a metre that combines different elements, like triple and duple time (See https://www.google.com.au/search?q=glossary+of+musical+terms&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&gws_rd=cr&ei=L8a-VePXIKS3mAWw_5WIBA#q=heterometre+in+music).
- Hexatonic:** A hexatonic scale is a scale with six pitches or notes per octave (https://www.google.com.au/search?q=glossary+of+musical+terms&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&gws_rd=cr&ei=L8a-VePXIKS3mAWw_5WIBA#q=hexatonic).
- Intervals:** In music theory, an interval is the difference between two pitches. An interval may be described as horizontal, linear, or melodic if it refers to successively sounding tones, such as two adjacent pitches in a melody, and vertical or harmonic if it pertains to simultaneously sounding tones, such as in a chord. In Western music, intervals are most commonly

differences between notes of a diatonic scale. The smallest of these intervals is a semitone. Intervals smaller than a semitone are called microtones (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interval_%28music%29).

Isometre: In music theory, isometre indicates the use of pulse without recognised metre. Some scholars referenced here (e.g. Gummow) seem to have used the term in this strict sense, while others (e.g. Jones) seem to have employed it to characterise melodies that proceed with a regular pulse that, once discerned, may or may not be able to be subdivided into discernable rhythmic patterns. In other words, Jones seems to have used it in contradistinction to ‘free’ or ‘rhapsodic’ rhythm (See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isometre>).

Isorhythm: (From the Greek for ‘the same rhythm’) is a musical technique that arranges a fixed pattern of pitches with a repeating rhythmic pattern (https://www.google.com.au/search?q=isorhythm&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&gws_rd=cr&ei=suS-VancK6G0mAXSgoWoCQ). Alternatively, Merriam-Webster defines isorhythm as: a single fixed rhythmic pattern ... that is reiterated throughout the whole of a sung voice part (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/isorhythm>).

Keynote: The keynote is the main note of a musical scale; the note upon which a musical key is based. It has the same meaning here as the word ‘tonic’ (Also see http://piano.about.com/od/musicaltermsa1/g/GL_keynote.htm).

Legato: In music performance and notation, legato (Italian for ‘tied together’), indicates that musical notes are played or sung smoothly and connected. That is, the player or singer transitions from note to note with no intervening silence. (See https://www.google.com.au/search?q=glossary+of+musical+terms&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&gws_rd=cr&ei=L8a-VePXIKS3mAWw_5WIBA#q=legato+in+music).

Macaronic: A song text using a mixture of languages (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Macaronic_language).

Melismatic rhythm: Melisma (Greek: μέλισμα, melisma, song, air, melody; from μέλος, melos, song, melody), plural melismata, in music, is the singing of a single syllable of text while moving between several different notes in succession (https://www.google.com.au/search?q=glossary+of+musical+terms&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&gws_rd=cr&ei=L8a-VePXIKS3mAWw_5WIBA#q=melismatic+in+music).

Melodic progression: A melody (from Greek μελωδία, melōidía, ‘singing, chanting’) also tune, voice, or line, is a linear succession of musical tones that the listener perceives as a single entity (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melody>).

Monotone reiterations: Monotone refers to a sound that has a single unvaried tone, here repeated (See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monotone>).

Octave: Many Western musical scales are typically written using eight notes, and the interval between the first (lowest) and last (highest) notes is an octave. (See <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Octave>).

Onomatopoeia: is a word that phonetically imitates, resembles or suggests the source of the sound that it describes. Onomatopoeia (as an uncountable noun) refers to the property of such words (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Onomatopoeia>).

Pentatonic: A pentatonic scale is a musical scale or mode with five notes per octave in contrast to a heptatonic (seven note) scale such as the major scale and minor scale (https://www.google.com.au/search?q=glossary+of+musical+terms&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&gws_rd=cr&ei=L8a-VePXIKS3mAWw_5WIBA#q=pentatonic+scale).

Portamento (plural portamenti): In music, portamento is a gradual slide in pitch from one note to another (https://www.google.com.au/search?q=glossary+of+musical+terms&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&gws_rd=cr&ei=L8a-VePXIKS3mAWw_5WIBA#q=portamento+in+music).

Reiterated ground tone: The repeated final note (often the tonic or keynote) of a melody.

Rhapsodic rhythm: Rhapsodic rhythm is non-metric or irregular rhythm. Unlike metric rhythms where the rhythm can be counted, rhapsodic rhythms are often random (<https://sites.google.com/site/thredgolddance/word-of-the-week/schadenfreudeshah-dn-froiduhnoun>).

Scale organisation: In music theory, a scale is any set of musical notes ordered by fundamental frequency or pitch. A scale ordered by increasing pitch is an ascending scale, and a scale ordered by decreasing pitch is a descending scale (https://www.google.com.au/search?q=glossary+of+musical+terms&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&gws_rd=cr&ei=L8a-VePXIKS3mAWw_5WIBA#q=scale+in+music).

Simple and compound time signatures: Time signatures are the rhythmic patterns that any song or tune is cast in. The terms duple, triple, and quadruple refer to the number of beats in a measure. The term simple means that each of these beats can be broken into two notes. For example, 2/4 time is classified as simple duple. ‘Duple’ refers to the two beats per measure, and ‘simple’ states that each of these beats can be divided into two notes. 3/4 time is classified as simple triple. ‘Triple’ refers to the three beats per measure. Again, ‘simple’ states that each of these beats can be divided into two notes. 4/4 time is classified as simple quadruple due to its four beats which can be divided into two notes. While beats in simple metre are divided into two notes, beats in compound metre are divided into three. 6/8 time can be used to demonstrate this. Where six eighth notes make up a measure, they can either be grouped into two beats (compound duple) or three beats (simple triple). Since the simple triple pattern already belongs to 3/4 time, 6/8 is compound duple. (See <http://www.musictheory.net/lessons/15>).

Step: In music, a step, or conjunct motion, is the difference in pitch between two consecutive notes of a musical scale. In other words, it is the interval between two consecutive scale degrees. Any larger interval is called a skip (also called a leap), or disjunct motion (https://www.google.com.au/search?q=glossary+of+musical+terms&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&gws_rd=cr&ei=L8a-VePXIKS3mAWw_5WIBA#q=step+in+music).

Strophic Form: (also called ‘verse-repeating’ or chorus form) is the term applied to songs in which all verses or stanzas of the text are sung to the same music. The opposite of strophic form, with new music written for every stanza, is called through-composed (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strophic_form).

Syllabic Rhythm: Song music in which each syllable of text is matched to a single note. This is the opposite of melismatic rhythm, which describes the singing of a single syllable of text while moving between several different notes in succession (See https://www.google.com.au/search?q=glossary+of+musical+terms&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&gws_rd=cr&ei=L8a-VePXIKS3mAWw_5WIBA#q=melismatic+in+music).

Syncopation: In music, this indicates the displacement of the usual rhythmic accent away from a strong beat onto a weak beat (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/syncopation>).

Through-Composed: The term through-composed means that the music is relatively continuous, non-sectional, and/or non-repetitive. A song is said to be through-composed if it has different music for each stanza of the lyrics. This is in contrast to strophic form, in which each stanza is set to the same music (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Through-composed>).

Tonal Plateaux: Tone here can be understood as another name for ‘note’. A tonal plateau is where a note will rest for a while before the melody starts moving again (Also see https://www.google.com.au/search?q=glossary+of+musical+terms&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&gws_rd=cr&ei=L8a-VePXIKS3mAWw_5WIBA#q=tone+in+music).

Tonic: In music, the tonic refers to the main note of a melody, the tonal centre or final resolution tone. (See https://www.google.com.au/search?q=glossary+of+musical+terms&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&gws_rd=cr&ei=L8a-VePXIKS3mAWw_5WIBA#q=tonic+in+music).

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