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The Dark Corner:

**a study of the dynamic dialectic between women
composers and the Australian orchestral milieu**

Volume One

by

Ruth Florence Lee Martin

B Mus Hons UNE

**A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of the
Australian National University**

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I certify that this thesis is my own work and that all sources used have been acknowledged.

[Signature]

Abstract

This thesis is an exploration of Australian women composers' interaction with their orchestral world. The purpose is to gain an understanding of the socio-cultural forces which impact upon women's participation as orchestral composers, and to understand the ways in which women composers impact upon their orchestral environment. It has also been my intention to draw attention to specific problems women composers encounter in the orchestral sphere, and to investigate the way in which the socio-cultural elements manifest within the musical works themselves. The methodology which forms the basis of this study draws on a wide range of theoretical and methodological perspectives, most specifically feminism and postmodern theory. The thesis relies on the basic presupposition that music is essentially a social construct, and as such, like language, it reflects the gender bias of our society on many levels and in many ways. The orchestral world is particularly susceptible to bias due to its longstanding associations with power and prestige.

The first part of the study examines the topic from a broad cultural basis beginning with an overview of women as orchestral composers and examining assumptions which have hindered their progress. In Chapter Three statistical data was used to indicate the situation of female orchestral composers within Australia and confined, for the most part, within the boundaries of Australian contemporary music. The second part of the thesis contextualises eight orchestral women composers and attempts to understand how they position themselves within the Australian orchestral context by documenting their individual methods of negotiating the orchestral milieu. A work was selected from each of the eight case studies and its progress was traced through the repertorial process, from inception to mediation and dissemination. In Part Three of the thesis there is a detailed study of three selected works. In this case the orchestral works were selected for analysis as socialised, cultural artefacts. The analyses tease out the composer's relationship to culture articulated within the work itself, and examine the

way in which the work can act as a cultural force by reflecting ideas back into the culture. In each of the works the three women composers, in a sense, authenticate themselves within the male dominated orchestral world of musical composition by writing works which are, in some way, strongly related to the 'feminine'. Finally, an original orchestral work *Gair Na Mara* completes the thesis. The writing of an orchestral work as a part of this thesis provided insights into the orchestral environment from a personal perspective.

Some of the findings to come out this study are that in building a composing career networking and self-promotion play crucial roles, yet these are areas in which women have been disadvantaged. Women composers have not (and still do not) have the same access to those with power and influence in the musical world, and due to gendered socialisation they are not well equipped, in some ways, to negotiate the orchestral world. It is of concern to note that under 20% of Australian composers are female, and that only 10% of Australian women composers are writing orchestral works. I argue that this is due, in part, to the fact that women composers have so few established role models.

In conclusion I argue that there is an onus of responsibility on males operating in the orchestral milieu to support and facilitate the entry of their female colleagues into a rich and full participation.

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This thesis is dedicated to
my mother Barbara Lee and my father Edwin Roughton Lee
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A sense of movement lies behind the dynamics of many of the strategies that musical women have devised to negotiate their contradictory and multiple positions within male society (Citron, 1993, p. 192).

Part One

Parameters, Methodology, Overview and Statistics

Introduction

This thesis investigates the place of women composers within the orchestral milieu in Australia. The purpose of such a study is three-fold: first, to gain an understanding of the socio-cultural forces that impinge upon women's orchestral participation, and to examine the ways in which women composers manage their orchestral environment; secondly, to outline the specific problems women composers encounter in the orchestral sphere; and thirdly, to investigate the way in which the socio-cultural trace manifests within the musical works themselves. The hypothesis of this study, based on empirical evidence and women's perceived experience, is that socio-cultural forces have marginalised the work of female composers in comparison to their male counterparts. This difference is manifested in relatively impoverished access to performance, commissioning and thus reception. At the same time, women have approached the field of orchestral composition in unique ways. This study examines how eight individual women composers have positioned themselves within the Australian orchestral context and documents their struggle to negotiate the 'dark corner' on an equal footing with their male colleagues. The way in which socio-cultural factors impact upon the music itself is also examined.

Chapter One

Methodology and Parameters

Methodology

a) Situating the thesis

There has been no study to date that specifically explores the engagement between female orchestral composers and the Australian orchestral milieu. Articles and reports have been written which address the perceived differences in terms of gender¹ from the viewpoint of the orchestral performer, such as Allmendinger, Hackman, and Lehman's *The more the better? A four-nation study of the inclusion of women in symphony orchestras* (1995) or, Rogers, Baldcock, and Mulligan's *What Difference does it Make? A Pilot Study of Women in the Performing and Visual arts in Western Australia* (1993). Books have been written which explore general aspects of orchestral life and work such as Charles Buttrose's *Playing for Australia: A Story about ABC orchestras and Music in Australia* (1982), or Phillip Sametz' *Play On! 60 years of Music-making with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra* (1992), but these writings are far removed from the focus of this study. There are studies that allude to the difficulties women composers have faced generally, and some with comments on the peculiar difficulties faced by women in the orchestral field generally, but the literature is scant and insubstantial. Jill Halstead's monograph *The Woman Composer: Creativity and the Gendered Politics of Musical Composition* (1987), however, has a most useful chapter on tradition and genre which explores women composers' position within society and their preference for specific, small-scale genres. Halstead explains with considerable insight problems that women composers have faced generally, with some reference to the symphonic genre, although within a British context. Sally Macarthur's PhD thesis 'Feminist aesthetics in music: politics and practices in Australia' (1997) investigates the ways in which gender differences position male and female composers differently within an Australian context. Macarthur examines policies and practises in

Australian Western-art music generally, while drawing on a broad range of cross-disciplinary theories and methodologies. Macarthur also pursues the idea that women's music is aesthetically different from men's. My thesis expounds upon some of the themes found within Macarthur's thesis although with an entirely different framework and focus. My study contributes to the general body of knowledge by redressing to some extent the astonishing lack of interest in Australian women orchestral composers in publications to date, and in their engagement with Australian orchestral life from a compositional perspective. This study thus fills a significant gap in scholarly and musical awareness.

Because of the absence of references to Australian women composers in the literature, I have drawn almost exclusively on primary sources and empirical data. Occasionally a woman composer's name has surfaced in an orchestral repertoire list, or her orchestral work may have merited a paragraph or two in a newspaper report, but apart from this women's orchestral contributions have been largely ignored within the academic world. Therefore, in order to provide basic material for the thesis, I undertook a series of interviews with eight Australian women orchestral composers. The bulk of the empirical data consists of these interviews. In addition there is material I collected from the repertoire lists of fourteen non-professional orchestras (1990-1996); a survey of six university music departments for figures on the percentage of female composition students; an interview with conductor Nicolette Fraillon; and three addresses by composers Mary Mageau, Miriam Hyde, and Caroline Szeto given at 'The Big Picture' Forum, the Australian Women's Music Festival (1997). Primary sources I have gathered include: repertoire lists from Symphony Australia² consisting of repertoire performed by the Australian Broadcasting Commission³ (ABC) orchestras from 1992-1998/9, personal communications (letters, email, or telephone conversations), program notes, flyers, newspaper reviews, newspaper articles, annual reports such as the Australia Council Annual Reports, data from the *Review of ABC Music Policy* known as the 'Waks Report' (Waks, 1992), and of course, the scores themselves.

b) Theoretical framework: postmodern feminism and the new musicology

The methodology that forms the basis of this study draws on feminism and postmodern theory. The application of postmodernist feminist theory and other socio-cultural theories within the discipline of musicology has gathered momentum since the nineteen-eighties. Much of this work relies on the basic presupposition that music is essentially a social construct, and as such, like language, reflects the gender bias of our society on many levels and in many ways. This is due to the fact that men have traditionally held control of the sphere of composition and of the musical canon itself. As in the visual arts, men have stood at the forefront and women have been relegated to a secondary position: the position of the 'other'.

This notion that a musical work is mediated by its socio-cultural context is central to a new trend in musicology espoused by musicologists such as Lawrence Kramer, Marcia Citron, Rose Subotnik, Ruth Solie, Susan McClary and Susanne Cusick amongst others: these ideologies have come to be known as the 'New Musicology' (Kramer, 1995, p. xiv). A key tenet in each of these writers' approaches is the repudiation of a musical work as being aesthetically autonomous, and that the understanding of music is impoverished by isolating it from its cultural/historical and creative framework. As Kramer notes, the New Musicology attempts to reintroduce 'human interest' into musical understanding (Kramer, 1995, p. 1).

Marcia Citron is prominent in this field and has carried out much groundbreaking research. As far back as 1983 she gave one of her first papers on gender issues in music at the American Musicological Society, and in 1993 published her book, *Gender and the Musical Canon* (1993b). One of the topics Citron raises in this latter work is that of music as a socially constructed and gendered discourse:

As to the composer, she or he is embedded in particular cultural circumstances and assumptions and these affect the way a piece is written. This indicates that meaning(s) imputed to a piece of music vary not only from one historical period to the next but within a given period, based on crucial factors such as gender, race, class, ethnicity, sexuality and nationality (Citron, 1993, p. 120).

Citron suggests that music is not written within a neutral sphere. Rather, the way we write, how we write, and who we are as composers, interconnect in a complex package of social conditioning which in turn is influenced by our biological sex.

The movement away from immanent musical analysis to the exploration of the relations between the music and its socio-cultural context has its roots in the critical theory of Theodore W. Adorno (1903 - 1969). Although Adorno himself was not concerned with issues of gender, his ideas on music's social basis have provided a fruitful foundation for subsequent feminist music scholarship (see Paddison, 1996, p. 18 - 25).

One of the pioneers of feminist musicology influenced by the theories of Adorno is Susan McClary, whose monograph *Feminine Endings* (1991) was a landmark in feminist musical theory, though not without its critics. McClary looks at the gender issue from various angles, and delineates what she sees as serious flaws within the structures of Western art music from a feminist perspective. McClary argues that people are generally unaware of the ideological traces that are encoded in our musical language and that women traditionally have had no voice: the discourse, she argues, is entirely male. McClary also argues that many women composers have taken pains to dissociate themselves from their femaleness, as they perceive it to be negative. Renée Cox is another woman working in this field of musicology. Drawing on French

postmodern feminism, Cox explores the idea of a female aesthetic within music. She postulates on what such a female voice might be like and the ways in which it might manifest itself within the musical materials. Cox states that musicology has been an area concerned mainly with the factual, the documentary, the verifiable, the analysable and the positivistic, while much of the cultural 'baggage' behind the writing of compositions has been largely ignored. Cox argues that, far from being a neutral and objective entity, music is encoded with extra meanings.

As this study's focus is largely within a socio-cultural context, the ideas presented by these musicologists and writers have provided an essential theoretical basis.

c) The repertorial process⁴

An examination of the issues that contribute towards the success or otherwise of an orchestral work portray complex and hierarchical relationships. Of course, this holds true for other genres as well, but in orchestral writing these relationships are particularly evident. Orchestral music is more time consuming to write, more expensive to rehearse and perform, and receives more exposure to members of the musical community and public due to sheer size and numbers. According to Citron, the consequential factors which subsume an orchestral work, or indeed any work, into the musical canon, are commissioning, circulation — which involves recording, publication and performance — written recognition which gives critical confirmation of the work and prompts repetition, the awarding of prizes and, if appropriate, the inclusion of the work into music pedagogy (Citron, 1993b). My approach draws upon Citron's framework of the socially contingent nature of musical canonicity.

Citron explores the ways in which gender issues insinuate themselves into music and examines the way in which the musical canon is formulated within society. She argues that music's ability to take on societal meaning has been denied for much of this century in the Western art tradition. Compositional genres and styles are, she believes,

very much affected by social values. Citron links male gender to a preference for 'largeness and non-functionality and the intellectual' as compared to femaleness which is expounded in functional, smaller forms which are devalued in the musical canon (Citron, 1993b, pp. 130 - 131).

By drawing on the above theoretical framework espoused by the New Musicology, and by taking up concepts of canonicity expressed in Citron's monograph, I have devised a model which I refer to as the 'repertorial process model'. This model (see diagram p. 82) amplifies Citron's ideas of the processes which are involved in determining whether or not a work is taken up into repertoire lists (and eventual canonicity); it considers the whole process from the work's creation, to its mediation and its dissemination in the public sphere. This study gives a finely detailed investigation into the repertorial process through a series of case studies. For this detailed approach I have used participant/observer evidence, qualitative evidence, and oral history evidence drawing substantially on my own observations as an active orchestral composer, and statistical data, as well as the experiences of the composers from the case studies. The first-hand accounts that have arisen through the creation of an original orchestral work as an intrinsic part of this thesis have provided invaluable insights into the repertorial process, and have enabled a full and extensive chronicle to be documented.

In developing the 'repertorial process model' I have also drawn, some extent, on ideas from Jean-Jacques Nattiez's *Music and Discourse: Towards a Semiology of Music* (Nattiez, 1990) particularly in regard to his ideas on the 'poietic' and 'esthetic' dimensions, and Paul Thom's *For an Audience: A Philosophy of the Performing Arts* (Thom, 1990) in which he considers the network of relationships which exist around the musical work if it is to act as a form of communication. A synthesis of ideas from Nattiez and Thom, along with Citron's concepts of canonicity and my own empirical evidence, has provided a unique methodological basis for this study. 'The Dark

Corner' examines the repertorial process embedded as it is in its socio-cultural context, and explores the implications for women composers as participants.

The 'repertorial process' model is divided into two main parts, the private sphere and the public sphere, bearing in mind that the two spheres often overlap, and the boundaries are diffuse. It is in the private sphere that the work's creation begins, to a lesser or greater extent, from ideas or concepts generated in the public sphere and then internalised. Within the private sphere a new work comes into existence as a socialised phenomenon. Philosophical, psychological, sociological and biological factors precipitate the generation of ideas, giving rise to a new work. Other practical factors are involved and have an influence on the end product, such as commissioning constraints which may delineate scoring, ranges, duration and so forth; the function of the new work, whether a fanfare, a requiem or perhaps some other functional piece; and the programmatic, symbolic, or abstract musical concepts embedded in the work. All these things help in providing the work with a structural framework and give rise to the actual musical elements as well.

From this 'creative process', a work, as a socialised phenomenon and with its embedded performance directive, (by which I mean indications for duration, scoring, ranges, techniques), passes (usually) into the 'mediation process'. This is the actual realisation of the work in performance (noting that there are a few works, for example those written to explore some aspect of compositional craft, that are never intended for public performance). The performance directive, which is the composer's direction to the performer in the score, is prescriptive (stating what should be included), proscriptive (stating what should not be included) and open (there is a 'grey' area which can be left to the performer's discretion). The performance directive creates the interpretation of the work by the performers. The interpretation of the work can be accurate or inaccurate according to criteria set out by the composer or the performers. The performance setting can also be an area in which the public/private boundaries are

blurred, for example, if the orchestral work is 'workshopped' in a semi-private setting as happened in the past with the ABC Composer Workshops. If the work is only workshopped semi-privately and never given a full public performance then the repertorial process is curtailed and the work sinks out of sight.

However, if an orchestral work progresses to the 'mediation process' by means of public performance, it is then open to the area of critical judgment and peer review. I have divided this area of critical judgment into two strands, the 'immediate reflective process' and the 'long-term critical judgment'. The immediate reflective process is one in which the work is aesthetically judged at the time of its performance by either the active participants, the performers and conductor, or by the active listeners (by which I mean the audience members). It is important to note that the judgment of the work is itself a socialised process informed by public knowledge of the composer, pre-concert interviews either by radio or newspaper, the title of work, the programmatic context of work, genre expectations, or stylistic expectations. For the majority of listeners some of this information can be gleaned from the programme notes. As for the conductor and performers, their knowledge of the composer and the score will generally be based on the above, plus a sense of the composer's craft gained from performing the work, with the possible addition of interaction with the composer at rehearsals (if an Australian contemporary work) and/or foreword in the score itself.

From the 'immediate reflective process' the work passes into the 'long-term critical judgement process' in which the work is judged within a longer time frame and broader context. For example, the work may be judged within the context of a composer's whole body of works, written over a substantial period of time. Overlapping this critical process is the 'dissemination process' in which the work may be recorded either privately — where it can then be used for self-promotion — or issued on CD where it will receive publicity; the work may be awarded a prize; it may be published; it may be taken into the academic world for analysis and comment; or be

included in repertoire studies. The dissemination of a work should then lead into a repeat of this repertorial process — for it is a cyclic process — giving rise to a repeat performance or to a new commission.

Within this thesis the repertorial process model is used as a template against which one work by each composer in the case studies is examined in detail in order to understand how the composers are placed within their orchestral environment. It should be mentioned that while the repertorial model is a useful tool for understanding the various factors involved in a work's creation and entry into the musical world the model has two limitations. First, it makes the repertorial process seem linear when it is not, and secondly, it makes the public and private boundaries seem distinct when there is a good deal of blurring between these two spheres. However, bearing these limitations in mind, the model is a helpful way of understanding the complexity of issues involved. The way in which the work impacts on its cultural environment and the impact of that cultural environment on the work itself are also discussed, as the work's conception, mediation and subsequent dissemination are traced.

d) Plurality of approach

This thesis takes uses a variety of approaches in examining this topic, and this plurality embedded into the framework allows for an investigation into the Australian orchestral field from the perspective of both insider and outsider. As both a musicologist and a composer I bring to this study a complex combination of approaches in relation to the insider/outsider position. As a composer I can, through the actual process of writing an orchestral work, project myself forward as an active participant, and this allows me insights into the orchestral milieu that would be denied me in a role purely as scholar. My position of scholar also impacts on my composing, informing and enriching the actual creative process itself on a profound level. Therefore the movement between these two positions within the boundaries of this thesis is fluid. As Citron remarks: 'Shunning fixity, subject positions tend to be dynamic, interactive, responsive, and

flexible...a composer can inhabit a range of positions on the insider-outsider spectrum, and can even be inside and outside at the same time' (Citron, 1993b, p. 191).

Although these positions, insider and outsider, are seemingly bi-polar recent studies in this area have shown that they can be more usefully viewed as existing as points on a continuum. As Herndon points out in her article, 'Insiders, Outsiders: Knowing the Limits and Limiting the Knowing', the insider/outside distinction is far from being clear cut and a complex combination of positions can be adopted at any one time (Herndon, 1993, pp. 63 - 80).

This plurality of approaches and the fluid movement between these positions permeates the thesis as a whole. The ideology behind the thesis is bound up with integration, inclusion and the breaking down of boundaries. Bi-polar approaches with their artificial, often elitist and mostly male constructs are rejected and instead an approach based on diversity and movement across boundaries is employed. The thesis takes a sociological, historical, feminist, creative, observer/participant perspective. This concept extends to the original orchestral work itself which cannot be separated from the body of the thesis and is an integral part of the whole. The autobiographical stance is emphasised by including myself as a case study with a reflection on personal experiences from within the orchestral environment.

e) Structure of thesis

The thesis is divided into four main parts. Part One consists of an historical overview of assumptions about women composers within the orchestral field generally, and then more specifically, within the Australian context. This overview exposes the issues that have proved problematic for women composers: for example, power relationships within orchestral music, stereotypical assumptions of femaleness and the private/public

sphere distinction. The thesis then examines repertoire and commissioning data to see how women orchestral composers have been positioned over the past twelve years or so. Included is data from the six ABC orchestras, a survey of fourteen Australian non-professional orchestras, and a small survey of five Australian music institutions.

Part Two consists of an examination of repertorial processes using eight case studies taken from a series of interviews with Australian women composers. One composition by each of the eight composers is traced as it undergoes the repertorial process in order to understand the unique approaches each woman takes in negotiating this repertorial process.

Part Three consists of hermeneutical analyses of three orchestral works from the case studies in order to examine the way in which the works function as cultural artefacts, and how they have arisen from specific socio-cultural conditions. The composers whose works are analysed include Anne Boyd and Mary Mageau (Chapters Thirteen and Fourteen). I have also included an analysis of my own work *Gair Na Mara* in Chapter Fifteen in order to gain personal insight into the ways in which composers can express themselves as socialised, politicised beings. The concept of authorial intention is thus examined from an insider's perspective. Included in this section is the final conclusion.

Part Four, in a separate volume, is an original orchestral work, *Gair Na Mara*. Included with this volume is a CD recording of the work's premiere.

The appendices have also been placed in a separate volume. They consist of transcriptions of the interviews and addresses, and other relevant raw data.

f) Boundaries of this study

While this study uses some statistical data in order to gain an idea of how women have been positioned as orchestral composers over the past twelve years in Australia, the emphasis in this thesis is not a quantitative one: the figures are intended to be indicative only. The thesis uses inclusively a range of method and data, mainly qualitative, to investigate the central problem of the 'dark corner': the focus is primarily on the interaction of composers and their orchestral milieu.

The choice of focus for a research topic is, as Macarthur points out, a political act (Macarthur, S. 1997, p. 33). Decisions on what is included or excluded are informed by our socio-cultural orientation. This thesis is no different. The choice of women as central to this study was driven, in part, by a political desire to illuminate an area that has long been neglected due to gender bias. The thesis is not intended as a comparative orchestral study between male and female composers, although such a study if undertaken could well be useful. Rather, in this study women occupy a foreground position. Comparisons between male and female composers can be found only in the statistical chapter in order to situate women within their orchestral environment thereby gaining an idea of how they are faring with regard to programming and dissemination. Furthermore, the reason for choosing only to investigate women is because, as an emerging female composer with an interest in orchestral music, I am profoundly aware of the absence of female role models within this field. Therefore it was felt to be important to investigate the ways in which specific women negotiate the orchestral canon in order to draw upon and learn from their experiences.

The main criterion for choosing the composers was diversity: diversity of background, influences, compositional styles, philosophies, compositional profiles and so on. Orchestral composers were included who had been commissioned and performed many times, as well as women who had only had their orchestral works workshopped, or recorded privately. The composers cover a wide spread of years.

Women of non-Australian background were included along with women of Australian background; young women were included, as were older women; women with Australian Music Centre⁵ (AMC) representation⁶ were included, as were women without AMC representation; emerging composers were included, as were women who were established as composers; women who write for non-professional orchestras were included, as were women who write for professional orchestras; prolific composers were included alongside women who have written one, two or three orchestral works. Composers were included who feel they have not encountered discrimination and others were included who feel they have experienced discrimination to varying degrees. Included in these case studies are women who have had a long, hard battle to be recognised as a orchestral composers and women who have found the process somewhat easier. The main criteria for choosing the composers has been diversity, drawing on the plurality which is the essence of feminism.

The pluralism of feminism has arisen from its repeatedly interrupted evolution, and is one of its strengths. The first thing a feminist learns is that women's experiences are extremely diverse...pressure to unify feminism under a hierarchy of values that reflect 'one truth' whether that be about what women are like, or what they should be like, or whatever, runs a grave risk not only of simple error but also of repeating oppression...a plurality of feminisms reflecting different aspects of female experience is best equipped to flexibly respond to and improve the lives of all women without making the mistake of merely imposing a new order (Reilley, 1994, p. 21).

The composers selected for the case studies are Helen Gifford (1935 -), Miriam Hyde (1913 -), Anne Boyd (1946 -), Dawn Nettheim (1943 -), Ruth Lee Martin (1957 -), Caroline Szeto (1956 -), Elena Kats-Chernin (1957 -), and Mary Mageau (1934 -). These women highlight the diversity of approaches to the repertorial process, and the

ways in which the orchestral world impacts upon them. Helen Gifford wrote two orchestral works in the 1960s and has had difficulty in getting these works performed, although she is arguably one of Australia's most respected composers. For a long period of time Gifford wrote in other mediums and it has only been since 1996 that she has returned to the orchestral medium. Particularly remarkable is Miriam Hyde, who wrote twenty orchestral works from the 1930s to the 1950s at a time when women's orchestral writing was not encouraged. She (and other composers working at this time such as Margaret Sutherland and Dulcie Holland) broke the ground for many women coming after, often struggling with a lack of recognition that in the end defeated her as far as orchestral writing was concerned. Anne Boyd's orchestral composing career makes an interesting case study. She has had a personal struggle since the early 1970s in overcoming negative feedback on the capability of women as composers in the orchestral field, and she is one of the few women to receive an ABC commission for an orchestral work. Dawn Nettheim has been included because of her approach in creating performance situations by writing for non-professional orchestras and by catering to specific needs of individual orchestras. I have included myself as an emerging composer. Caroline Szeto is one of the younger women composers actively involved in the orchestral field, having had international recognition in the form of a CD recording and performances overseas. Elena Kats-Chernin began writing in the late 1970s, and although certainly not the most prolific of women orchestral composers (seven orchestral works to date), she has received much attention from the ABC orchestras — the Sydney Symphony in particular — and she is another one of the few women to receive an orchestral commission from the ABC. Mary Mageau has been included not only because she is a prolific orchestral writer, and has been for some years, but also because of her pro-active approach to her orchestral environment.

The orchestral works included for detailed analysis of the repertorial process were chosen as they are representative of that composer's interaction with her individual orchestral environment. Another criterion for selection of the works was that sufficient

background details on the piece were available from the interviews, and other sources, with specific demonstrations of how the composer negotiated the repertorial process.

Three works were selected from the case studies for a detailed hermeneutic analysis. The scores are analysed with specific reference to their significance as cultural artefacts. These works by Boyd, Mageau and Lee Martin were selected because the extra-musical conception behind the works is tangible, and because of this, the specific relationship between composer and society (in terms of musical result) is more easily traced. I examine the way in which each composer channels her place in a specific cultural instance into the music to reflect a unique and personal approach. Boyd takes a socio-political event and makes this event, as narrative, inform the structure of the work. Mageau takes an Ancient Greek myth and uses that to create a work which makes a political comment on women. My orchestral work takes a more introspective perspective exploring the concept of identity, in terms of both ethnicity and gender. These three works are intrinsically linked to specific socio/political phenomena, making any understanding of them in terms of musical analysis incomplete without considering their interdependence with the larger cultural, historical and creative context. Furthermore, of particular interest to this study, these three works are all closely associated in some way with the feminine, thus, in a sense, validating the inclusion of the female in the orchestral world within the very musical materials themselves. It is demonstrated in these analyses how the culturally affected ideologies of the composers have functioned as catalysts in the creation of their works and how culture can, through the ideology of the composer, affect even musical structures and materials. The analyses draw upon the musical discipline and also from cross-disciplinary fields such as feminist philosophy, semiotics and hermeneutics.

All the orchestral works examined within the case studies have been selected on the basis that they have been written for performance by a symphony orchestra (see

Appendix 1). It is recognised that there is no absolute standard for the combination of instruments which make up a symphony orchestra. However, for the purposes of this thesis a symphony orchestra is defined as consisting, approximately, of three of each woodwind (including piccolo, English horn, bass clarinet or contrabassoon), four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, one tuba, two harps (optional), keyboard player (optional), timpani, three percussion players, twelve first violins, twelve second violins, ten violas, ten cellos and eight double basses (Randel, 1986, p. 574). The above definition gives a general guide only and for some compositions mentioned in this study the specific number of players may vary to some degree.

I have used concerti and shorter orchestral works such as symphonic poems, as these are the most common forms of orchestral writing for Australian women composers. Very few symphonies have been written by Australian women: to date, using records from the AMC, only five women have written symphonies (See Chapter Three).

Chapter Two

Women's Orchestral Participation: An Overview

At base, symphony orchestras are as much about people as they are about music. As *cultural institutions*, symphony orchestras preserve and promote the musical heritage of past, present, and future composers. As *performing arts organizations*, symphony orchestras' *raison d'être* is to perform for live audiences. As *social enterprises*, orchestral organizations depend on the people who work in them and who support them (Lehman, 1995, p. 37).

The complex structure of the orchestral world offers a fertile topic for study. The multi-layered relationships between orchestral participants are unique: from the creation of a musical idea by a composer and its subsequent communication to orchestral players, through to the work's re-creation in the hands of the performers and conductor, to the ultimate goal — the communication of the original musical idea, via the orchestra, to the audience. Orchestral writing has often been regarded within the musical world as the pinnacle of a composer's career: the ultimate proof that one is a 'serious' composer and not merely a 'dabbler'. For many composers, the experience has been, and is, rich and rewarding. However, for others, participation in the orchestral experience is problematic. The purpose of this chapter is twofold: to examine the issues which impinge on the full participation of women within the orchestral milieu, and to provide a context for the statistical chapter which follows this (Chapter Three).

The orchestral field, with its attendant orchestral genres such as symphonies and concerti, has not traditionally been one to which the majority of women composers

have been attracted. For this there are compelling sociological and psychological reasons. Women have been actively discouraged and sometimes actively prohibited from the musical institutes of learning, which has put the orchestral compositional craft beyond their grasp. The compositional constraints which have been placed upon women historically have also had a negative impact upon their self-confidence as composers (Citron, 1993b, p.9). This is highlighted within the orchestral field perhaps more than any other musical field. Writing an orchestral work, particularly a first orchestral work, is a difficult task. Instrumental ranges, instrumental timbre, texture and instrumental balance must all be juggled with large-scale gesture and structure. The gaining of orchestral writing skills is a long and arduous process, requiring a solid foundation in terms of composition and orchestration. If a composer begins the task with negative ideas about his or her ability in this genre, especially in the absence of gender role models, the repercussions can be serious in terms of the composer's ability to produce works.

Private/public distinction

One area that proved problematic in the past for the participation of women in the orchestral environment was the traditional view that a woman's place was in the home. Over generations women's music-making has generally been more associated with the private sphere, while men's music-making has tended to be more in the public sphere. Marcia Citron states that:

The home — the moral haven from the turmoils of the male (public) world — was linked with the feminine...Particularly injurious is the retention of the feminine with the 'lower' private and the masculine with the 'higher' public (Citron, 1993b, p.102).

For the female composer the domestic sphere, with its small audience of intimate friends, was the site for her musical activities, while the male inhabited the public world of the concert hall with its large audiences. In this way male composers works

were brought into the repertorial process and disseminated broadly in the public domain, being validated in reviews, by publishing, or by being taken into the higher institutes of learning. For female composers, however, there was effectively no repertorial process to which they had access. Added to this tremendous obstacle to their careers as orchestral composers was the fact that the private musical domain itself, through its close association with female performance, became subject to perjurification. Marcia Citron again notes that:

Since the middle of the nineteenth century the public domain has generally been viewed as the terrain of the professional, the private the non-professional...Certain assumptions about the relative worth of public and private have become a fundamental part of musical valuation and thus figure in canon formation (Citron, 1993b, p. 100).

Several years ago Miriam Hyde made some interesting observations on being a female composer within the orchestral milieu, touching on the distinction between the domestic sphere and the professional one. The ABC had decided that they would give Hyde's *Theme and Variations* a trial 'run through' in order to judge whether they wanted to proceed to a full-scale concert performance. Hyde comments:

...now I don't want to start sounding like a grumbling, disgruntled musician at all...but I do think there's a prejudice against women. Now, I'm sure if I'd [sic] been called John Smith, or something and submitted the same work, I think they might have had a different feeling for it. I somehow felt very conscious of the fact that I was a domesticated creature, trying to survive in the realm of creative music. I went there after some shopping, and I remember to this day, I had a big sort of shopping carrier bag, with a large bunch of celery sticking out of it...and they must have thought, "Oh, this looks awfully unprofessional." (Crews, 1987, p. 223)

The important factor here is that Hyde felt a keen sense of displacement within the professional sphere because she allowed her domestic life to cross over into the professional world. In this particular situation, Hyde, complete with shopping bags, was made acutely aware of the perceived dichotomy between the private and public musical boundaries. In her own words, she felt like a 'domesticated creature' suddenly thrown into a professional setting. She felt on a profound level that she did not belong; that she was basically a housewife in a creative world, and that the two worlds were at odds with each other.

In reality, however, the public/private division is not at all clear cut as Ruth Finnegan in her study, *The Hidden Musicians: Music-Making in an English Town*, points out in relation to local amateur music groups:

Unfortunately there is no simple answer, nor are the 'amateur' always unambiguously separated from the 'professional' musicians...the complex amateur/professional interrelations form one essential element in the work of local musicians...In local music, however, the interrelationship and overlap between these two is both highly significant for local practice and also of central interest for the wider functioning of music as it is in fact practised today (Finnegan, 1989, p. 13).

Finnegan perceives the differences between the private and public to be in the form of a continuum consisting of many overlapping and complex relationships. She argues that every musician's life is comprised of a mixture of both professional and non-professional elements in varying proportions and that in the course of musical life there is fluid movement between the two domains. However the persistent belief in a clear cut and artificial boundary between the musical spheres of amateur and professional has been another element which has worked to the disadvantage of female orchestral

composers, the orchestral world viewed as being unequivocally in the realm of the public.

Genre and orchestral prestige

A second problematic area for women composers is that of genre and accompanying issues of prestige. The power of orchestral music as a social force permeated the musical world to such an extent that entire musical histories were often bound up with an examination of the orchestral field alone. For example, Sir James Barrett asserted in 1940 that music history is fundamentally orchestral history: 'The history of music in Melbourne really resolves itself into the history of orchestral music, as no great work can be performed satisfactorily without the assistance of a competent orchestra' (Barrett, 1940, quoted in Covell, 1967, p. 110).

Orchestral music is a particularly interesting genre from a feminist perspective because it encapsulates — more clearly than any other genre, except perhaps opera — an essential difference in treatment between the genders. Orchestral music requires for its existence vast resources of people, time, and money. All of this not only equates with power but requires the composer to have some sort of power base, whether it be in the form of contacts or an established name as a composer, in order to have works considered for performance.

Another point is that a composer's choice of genre is not arbitrary, but is bound up with extra-musical as well as musical considerations. Composers tend to choose genres in which they can negotiate to procure a performance (this of course is a general statement, and not always the case, as one of the following case studies, in Chapter Four will illustrate). The 'choice of genre' equation is complex and reflects much about the composer and his or her place in the hierarchy of the musical world. Halstead, in her chapter 'Tradition and Genre', speaks of the way in which musical value is

intrinsically linked to those with authority and power while music is devalued if it is linked to those without such power and authority. She points out that genres themselves can be divided into binary opposites such as 'formal and informal, elite and popular, complex and simple, valued and devalued, public and private, large-scale and small-scale' (Halstead, 1997, p. 173). These binaries are not merely ordered opposites, but are also associated with a good/bad contrast and have value connotations. Drawing on this list of binary oppositions, women's music-making in the past has been confined mainly to the smaller, simpler forms and performed in the private, informal (domestic) sphere.⁷ The smaller forms, linked to those without power and authority, came to be devalued:

Musicologists have tended to treat with contempt those mass-produced and mass-consumed forms in which women have been surprisingly prolific, since purveyors of high art also treat these forms with contempt...Fewer women have produced opera and symphonies (Wood, 1980, pp. 290 - 291).

Not surprisingly, the very genre in which Australian women have been prolific, the drawing-room ballad, became subject to a process of perjorification and this prejudice has shown up in musical texts. Roger Covell clearly illustrates this attitude in the first major critical monograph on Australian music in 1967:

Shameful as it may be to have to say so, the drawing-room ballad must be counted as one of the major influences, if not the major influence until recently, on the bulk of Australian composition. The alacrity with which the drawing-room ballad naturalized itself and bred beckons parallels with the notorious fecundity of Australian rabbits (Covell, 1967, p. 23).

With the first wave of feminism in the nineteenth century, however, women composers had already begun to actively to challenge the status quo with regard to genre and the prestige attached to it. As a result, more and more women began to compose music in genres once considered to be the domain of male composers; indeed they:

...showed great determination in their attempts to get their large-scale orchestral works performed by a musical establishment that still felt that women were not capable of writing anything other than songs or piano music (Fuller, 1994, p. 19)

Another aspect of large-scale composition which has adversely affected the entry of women into the orchestral genres is its association with the Romantic ideal of greatness. We are still experiencing in many ways the aftermath of the Romantic period where the drive for the large-scale, the grandiose and complex musical forms became almost an obsession:

The symphony in particular, often took on gigantic proportions as either an absolute or a programmatic work, and through it many of the core musical values of the era were reflected. Everything about the symphonic genre was made larger and more complex. Examples of this can be seen in the symphonies of Bruckner, Mahler, Mendelssohn, Schubert, Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Berlioz and Liszt. The tonal and harmonic structure became more complex and challenging; the melodic lines became more extended, as did the overall length of movements, the size of the orchestra and the duration of the whole work: a massive musical entity came into being (Halstead, 1997. p. 188).

Due to this musical excess based on valued vastness and complexity, combined with the intrinsic physical largeness of forces required to realise orchestral compositions, these works, in particular the symphonic form, became conflated with power, prestige and the Romantic ideal of 'greatness'. Added to this was the association of the symphony with 'pure' music; an abstract entity on a high spiritual plane, symbolising the heights of male achievement and far from the lower forms of functional music with which women were often associated. This association of orchestral music with greatness along with the nineteenth century ideal of the 'transcending' composer — the individual male creative genius at the centre of the universe — has played a crucial role in the devaluing of women as large-scale composers:

The relative absence of women from symphonic and opera repertoires has often been cited as evidence of their inability to achieve 'greatness'. But as we have learned more about the implicit or explicit gendering of the music world, we have come to understand why women do not show up frequently in such repertory lists (McClary, 1993, p. 400).

These factors — prestige and the idea of 'greatness' — combine with the patriarchal and hierarchical structure of the orchestra itself, and together have the effect of further marginalising women. Allmendinger and Hackman point out in their international study of orchestras that orchestral leadership is usually provided by a figure of authority that is male, and that, institutionally speaking, orchestras are entrenched in a male tradition which has existed over a long period of time (Allmendinger & Hackman, 1995, p. 454). The majority of conductors, even today, are male, and women conductors have had to struggle to be recognised. Nicolette Fraillon, Director of the Canberra School of Music and a well-established conductor on both a national and international level, remarked that:

Certainly you're judged in a different way purely as being a woman. They are not used to authority figures who are female. I have had arguments with people as to why we couldn't do it — a female cannot be authoritative. Ridiculous things like, "you won't have the same physical stamina. How could you possibly conduct an opera, you won't have the physical stamina to get through". I mean completely absurd things when you look at what female athletes are doing, and what childbirth is all about (Fraillon, N. 2000, pers. comm., 30 March).

The orchestral environment is one to which greatness, prestige and hence power is attached. Power relations are very evident in orchestral music — power of course having the potential for causality as well as intrinsically relating the object with power to the object which is subject to the power (Reilley, 1994, p. 1). Orchestral music is given hegemonic status through its association with those in power in the musical world. Within the orchestra itself power relations are pronounced and the composer stands at the apex of this orchestral power structure, a figure of authority with the final word on the score itself. As Halstead points out, society has been resistant to having women at the very top, in the position of final authority. Due to social conditioning women composers have also found this a difficult position to be in (Halstead, 1997, p. 196). Nicola LeFanu states:

Our society is very slowly coming to terms with the idea, and practice, of men and women working together as equals but it has the greatest difficulty in accommodating itself to the next step: men and women working in an unequal relationship where the woman may be the boss and the man the subordinate...Consider the hierarchy of an orchestra: rank and file players, section leaders, all at the beck and call of a conductor and all, conductor included, submitting to the authority of the score — that is, all at the service of the composer. (LeFanu, 1987, p. 6).

In turning to genre it can be demonstrated that this area too has become loaded with gendered hierarchical connotations. Orchestral works, associated with the large-scale, the public sphere, the complex, and maleness, have been more highly valued within the musical world, in contrast to the other, 'lesser' forms associated with the small-scale, private sphere, simplicity and femaleness. The combination of large-scale resources, the attendant prestige and status, the ideal of 'greatness' and the patriarchal tradition form a complex web of power within the orchestral environment and, together with women's historical association with the domestic sphere, continues to be problematic for women participants. Thus women composers have been far less likely than their male colleagues to be taken seriously as orchestral composers due to their associations with devalued smaller forms. Consequently orchestral performing organisations have been less likely to include women's works, as the programming of these works would be perceived as being a much larger financial risk (McClary, 1993, p. 400).

Other inhibiting factors

So far the focus in this chapter has been on difficulties that women face in the orchestral world based on assumptions in regard to women's orchestral music-making and a recognition of the power base which is inherent in the orchestra. However, there are several other obstacles which women have to overcome. One factor, for example, which has proved problematic for orchestral women composers in the past has been the underlying assumption that women were essentially irrational and emotional creatures lacking a strong sense of logic. These associations with women go back into the ancient world. Genevieve Lloyd, for example, notes that:

In the Pythagorean table of opposites, formulated in the sixth century BC, femaleness was explicitly linked with the unbounded, the vague, the indeterminate, as against the bounded, the precise and clearly

determined. The Pythagoreans saw the world as a mixture of principles associated with determinate form seen as good, and others associated with formlessness, the unlimited, irregular or disorderly which were seen as bad or inferior (Lloyd, G. 1993, p. 3).

Determinate form, therefore, has been associated with the masculine and indeterminate form with the feminine. Historically society has essentialised male and female relegating maleness to a position associated with the mind — with logic, order and rationality — while women have been associated with the body — with the emotions, disorder and whim. Due to the magnitude of an orchestral work, both in terms of length and scoring, its creation relies particularly upon a compositional craft that in turn is heavily dependent on elements of order and unity. Since women have been associated with disorder and chaos, the orchestral medium — so dependent on form and order — has been viewed in the past by many within the musical establishment as an unsuitable one for women.⁸ The assumption that women struggle with large-scale forms, that there is something in their biological nature itself which makes them unsuited to writing large works, has had a significant negative impact on women composers, even those composers writing today (see Anne Boyd's case study, Part Two, Chapter Six).

Another factor that has worked to the disadvantage of women composers is that in the past many female composers found that the demands of motherhood and the time consuming task of orchestral writing were hard to reconcile, and this still holds true to some degree today. Orchestral writing is a substantial task requiring intense concentration, often for long periods of time, and any composers who are mothers find this almost impossible. In speaking of the combination of motherhood and her career as an orchestral composer Hyde states that:

I think that the great difficulty with children is not so much that your task as mother or housewife is difficult but that you get countless interruptions...It's very hard to embark on a large-scale work and get that continuity to bring your ideas to fruition (Lloyd, T. 1991 p. 18).

A further problematic area for women composers has been that of orchestral performance. Where a female composer did produce an orchestral work, it was difficult to secure a performance, given the prevailing assumptions about women with regard to large-scale writing. Yet an orchestral performance not only disseminates a composition and launches it into the repertorial process, but brings the composer's name to a large audience. It also confers tacit recognition and status on the composer by the musical establishment, especially if the performance is by a 'professional orchestra'. Furthermore, a performance is an essential ingredient in a composer's compositional growth, for unless composers hear their work in performance they will not learn where their compositional strengths are, or indeed where their technique might be lacking. As Andrew Ford notes:

It is important to understand that writing for an orchestra is a skill, like learning to drive. Neither skill can be picked up from books; you need actual experience. Writing an orchestral work demands a massive commitment of time, and only a fool or an incorrigible idealist would do it unless they were being paid or, at least, believed there was a strong possibility of performance (Ford, 1990c, p. 40).

The difficulties of persuading an orchestra to invest time and money in rehearsals and performance of a work by a female must have seemed especially daunting to women in the past, conditioned as they were to behave in submissive and conciliatory ways. Women found that the chance of obtaining a performance of their works was greatly increased by writing in genres which were easily accessible and relatively inexpensive

to perform, such as solo piano works, works for voice and piano, and works for small ensembles.

One way in which a women composer could be at a decided advantage was in the ability to both compose and perform (and this is as true as ever today). A minority of composers were performers in their own right within the public sphere and were therefore in the fortunate position of being able to promote their own works. Female composers of orchestral works in Australia, particularly those born in the early part of the twentieth century, frequently began their musical careers as performers, most often as pianists. It is interesting to note a parallel with Europe in the nineteenth century, where many women composers were pianists, or at least began their musical life as pianists, and consequently: ‘...we find that concertos and fantasies for piano and orchestra, which the composer herself could introduce, were among the most frequently performed orchestral works by women’ (Reich, 1991, p.113). The ability to both perform and compose was therefore (and still is) a distinct advantage. The ability to both perform and compose could be a significant contributor in launching an orchestral work into the repertorial process. Miriam Hyde is a good example. She performed the role of soloist in performances of her two piano concertos, first as an emerging composer, with the BBC Orchestra, the London Philharmonic Orchestra, and later with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and the Australian Youth Orchestra (Zierolf, 1991, p. 204). Margaret Sutherland, Dulcie Holland and Esther Rofe are also examples of women composers who have actively promoted their works through their own performances.

A further inhibiting point for women orchestral composers has been the fact that they have had trouble in making the ‘right’ musical connections, because they have lacked access to those in power:

All composers — male and female — needed (indeed, still need) connections to the men who held power in the musical world. This posed a special difficulty for women: they were less likely to know the right people and would, moreover, undoubtedly antagonize the influential conductors and managers if they stepped out of their traditional submissive female roles (Reich, 1991, p. 113).

This, too, left women at a decided disadvantage. Lack of connections and lack of access to power led to little or no performance, which in turn led to further marginalisation for women composers.

Artistic merit

A critical argument that has been, and still is, used to exclude women's participation in music making, particularly in the orchestral field, is the assertion that 'artistic merit' is the only criterion used in the selection of repertoire; thus (so it is argued) the absence of women from repertoire lists is in no way linked to gender prejudice. Artistic quality is perceived as measurable, quantifiable and objective, and the idea that subjective processes may play a part in the selection of works is strenuously denied. This argument was put forward as recently as 1996 by the second violinist of the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra to justify the orchestra's ongoing policy of excluding female performers: 'There is one common fight in the field...artistic quality. One wants to have music of top quality...All other interests...are of less importance' (Osborne, 1996).

The idea that there is a standard of excellence, based on purely objective criteria, is used as a common argument in justifying the exclusion of women. There is a belief in a high 'universal' standard against which compositions are judged. This argument has a built-in benefit for those who use it, in that it distances the discriminator from the discriminatory decision. It appears to take away personal preferences and appeals instead to a stated universal, aesthetic goal against which all are equally judged. The

fact that repertorial decisions are made through a filter of personal tastes and subjective ideas about what and who is 'good' in music is not acknowledged, and any overt or latent prejudice through the process of social conditioning is ignored. Nevertheless, aesthetic standards are not neutral, but are formed within cultures and reflect the interests of dominant groups. In music, aesthetic values reflect 'malestream' aesthetic values.

The claim to objectivity is a spurious one. Judgements are coloured by many things not least of which is sexism. The ability of musical organisations to judge a work objectively is a myth wrought by specific social constructs and bound inextricably with the aesthetic desires of those who wield power.

...all art, as all aspects of culture in the sense of 'whole way of life', has no choice but to be affected and shaped by the dominant relations of power which characterises a society... (Paddison, 1996, p. 35).⁹

This concept that a piece of music can be judged purely on its merit, drawing on 'objective criteria', is used as a common argument in justifying the exclusion of women. As recently as 1991 in Australia this ploy was used to publicly justify the invisibility of women composers from the orchestral world. Helen Mills, General Manager of the ABC Concert Department, when asked why no women had received an orchestral commission for Brisbane's Musica Nova Festival, announced that: 'The ABC's criteria (when awarding commissions) are primarily to do with talent. I think we would be doing a disservice to ourselves and to the cause of contemporary music if we operated under some crude equality rule' (Mills, as quoted in Mageau, 1992, p. 19).

The most obvious implications about women in Mills' argument is that, if the only criterion for choosing repertoire was talent and no women were chosen, it would mean that the women composing had little or no talent in comparison to their male colleagues. Mills use of the word 'cause' when speaking of contemporary music is an emotive appeal that adds a 'high' moral dimension to the argument against which, 'crude [my emphasis] equality rules' are placed in the light of being somehow inferior.

A couple of years before Mills' public statement there had been discontent felt by many women composers over their virtual exclusion from ABC concert programming. This discontent was given expression in a series of articles and letters published in newspapers around the country.¹⁰ Andrew Ford, in examining assumptions about women's ability to compose orchestral music, wrote to the *Sydney Morning Herald* to highlight the absurdity of the kind of arguments advanced by the ABC:

Anthony Fogg, head of programming at ABC Concert Music, says he is not concerned about gender; his only criterion in the commissioning of an orchestral work is whether the music is any good...if...there is no gender bias, if decisions really are made on the grounds of quality, this surely leads us back to the problem of breasts on the manuscript paper, to some gender-specific inability to compose orchestral music (Ford, 1990c, p. 40).

If commissions were indeed based upon the perception of talent, and if women did not receive any commissions, then surely it follows that those in positions of power believed, at the time, that Australian women composers were singularly lacking in compositional ability. Yet this includes women of the calibre of Margaret Sutherland and Helen Gifford, now generally recognised as composers of outstanding ability. The prejudice against women thus raises a number of critical questions: What aesthetic values are commissioning decisions based on? What are the criteria for judging talent?

Who are the people who make up the panels for these decisions? Are women represented on these panels?

There is another important underlying assumption in this equation. The inclusion of women composers is seen as a political act, one which would undermine the attainment of high, universal standards of merit. The selection process, if it were inclusive, would be perceived as digressing from 'high' non-specific, universal criteria to 'low' specific, political criteria. A loaded dualism is at work in this assumption.¹¹ Women's experiences are associated with the specific while men's are identified with the universal.

In this universality can be found a single paradigm against which all works are judged. There is one set of aesthetic values, intrinsically male, by which all works are judged. If new works don't conform to the established paradigm by which quality is judged they are seen as being inferior. This aesthetic value arising from the grand musical structures of the late romantic period has lingered in the relative conservatism of Australian musical life for much of the twentieth century. It is possible that women composers have been, and are, writing orchestral works of a different nature to their male counterparts: works that do not conform in terms of programmatic ideas, size, or indeed even in the way in which the musical materials are put together. This controversial and yet fascinating concept of a female aesthetic is one that is discussed further in this chapter (p. 50) and in detail in the analytical section of Part Three. For example Mary Mageau's *The Furies* demonstrates the way in which orchestral works subvert accepted norms in a variety of ways from the programmatic concept through to the working of the musical material (see Chapter Fourteen). These works which resist the accepted paradigm undertake cultural work by reshaping or extending the way in which quality is perceived. Therefore the standard or norms by which quality is perceived or judged is often challenged by works women (and also some men)

produce. If what women composers produce is seen as different because of gender then that becomes a political act.

The Australian context

As mentioned, the history of Australian women's orchestral music, or indeed of Australian women's music generally, is almost non-existent. As Jane Belfrage points out:

All but one of these accounts (that is, historical musical texts) amplify women's silences and men's musical achievements — as if this were natural, the way life really is, that Australian women haven't been and aren't involved in music. Women musicians haven't been heard; there really is a roaring, resonating, selective deafness to their music (Belfrage, 1993, p. 22).

Most of the major texts dealing with the history of Australian music list only male composers and confine themselves to men's participation. For example, in *Playing for Australia*, one of a few texts on Australian orchestral music, Charles Buttrose makes no mention of women composers at all. He observes that:

Musicians from Europe who for various reasons settled in all the Colonies (as they then were) brought with them the urge to start orchestras and choirs: these *men* [my emphasis] were impelled to make music even if the material on hand with which to make it was, let us say, undistinguished (Buttrose, 1982, p. 21).

In general terms, orchestral music has been a problematic genre in Australia, because of the large resources required and the relatively small pool of players and composers to choose from. The situation was compounded by prejudice, not only in regard to the female composers, but also in regard to any music that was associated with

colonialism. Early in the twentieth century, Australian taste was very much filtered through a European aesthetic and there was a body of anti-sentiment against anything Australian. As Thérèse Radic has pointed out:

Australia is not a young culture, it is a very old culture. It is an outcrop of British culture and there has been a strong continual flow of British migration. Our choice, here in Australia, was for German music, something we have learned from England (Radic, T. 1996, pers. comm., 11 April).

During the early part of the twentieth century, there was a strong feeling within musical circles, both here and overseas, that Australia was a cultural desert. Australian culture therefore clung to a Eurocentric outlook and consequently most composers and musicians, male or female, felt that their education was incomplete without at least some years spent refining their art in Europe. To the detriment of Australia, some decided to stay overseas for the recognition and greater opportunities available. There was a general feeling that any music composed by Australians was not of a high standard, a feeling that may well have had some justification. Thérèse Radic notes that: 'It would also be fair to say that there was not much in the way of composition training available at this time for anyone male or female' (Radic, T. 1996, pers. comm., 11 April).

Women in this period entered the conservatoriums in large numbers, having approximately 90% of the enrolments (Radic, T. 1996, pers. comm., 11 April), and then entered the field of music education which was poorly paid. A few resilient women struggled on to become composers in spite of many obstacles in their way. There were, however, occasional opportunities given to female music students by teacher/composers such as G.W. Marshall-Hall who thought it perfectly acceptable to teach women composition. Marshall-Hall taught at the Melbourne Conservatorium and Margaret Sutherland was one of his students (Radic, 1991).

Although women's orchestral participation to a large extent remained invisible, women, in fact, were active in the orchestral field as conductors, performers and composers over the entire twentieth century. As conductors and performers many women musicians, resisting social pressures, demonstrated a keen interest in the orchestral field. As early as 1895 a woman's orchestra, known as the Sydney Ladies Orchestra and consisting of twenty-five amateur players, supported a choir of 300 for the inaugural concert of the Sydney Ladies Musical Club (Dreyfus, 1999, p. 20). The Women's Work Exhibition held in Melbourne in 1907 celebrated the contributions that Australian women had made to society. There was a focus on music at this event which boasted an all-woman orchestra of over 120 players. The Women's Work Exhibition Orchestra was, in fact, basically a string orchestra consisting of over ninety violins, twenty cellos, three double basses and three organists.¹² After the exhibition finished the orchestra was disbanded. In 1911 a Miss Hume-Black assembled an all women's orchestra, the Southern Cross Women's Orchestra, to perform at the Australian Women's National League Empire Day Demonstration in Melbourne, and in 1913 the Magpies Ladies Orchestra was founded in Melbourne by pianist Cecilia Summerhayes, who conducted the orchestra along with her daughter (Dreyfus, 1999, p. 20). In Brisbane, Vada Jefferies, violinist and leader for many years of George Sampson's orchestra, founded the Brisbane String Orchestra in 1934 and conducted it until her death in 1952 (*Australian Musical News* 43:23 F, 1953). In Melbourne, once more, the Astra String Orchestra, also made up of women players, was founded in 1944 by female conductor Asta Flack (also a violinist). A review of one of the string orchestra's concerts conveys a lively level of enthusiasm and energy in a somewhat substantial programme.

Under the spirited conductorship of Asta Flack it [The Astra String Orchestra] presented such music as Bach's third 'Brandenburg' Concerto, Handel's Concerto Grosso in B minor, Opus 6, No. 12, and

three Purcell dances. Miss Flack left no doubt in the player's minds as to her intentions, so that there was admirable cohesion... (*Australian Musical News*, 1944, vol. 25, no. 3).

In 1951, Asta Flack founded the Astra Chamber Orchestra, which also consisted entirely of women. She conducted the chamber orchestra from its first subscription concert in Nicholas Hall until her resignation in 1957. Over the years these two orchestras enjoyed regular reviews in the *Australian Musical News*, many of them encouraging (*Australian Musical News* 1944 - 1957).

Despite the difficulties encountered by Australian music generally, and Australian women's music as doubly disadvantaged particularly, there was much activity by women composers. The Women's Work Exhibition Orchestra provided women composers of the time a rare chance to compose works for large forces. Women such as Florence Ewart, Mona McBurney and Georgette Peterson took advantage of this opportunity and had works premiered at this event (Wilson, C. 1996, pp. 441 - 442). McBurney was commissioned by the exhibition to write *Northern Ballad* which she also conducted, while Ewart's choral ode, *God Guide Australia*, was the prize winning work of the exhibition¹³ (Patton, 1989, p. 11). Ewart died in 1949 at the age of eighty-five without ever having a work published, and without hearing a full production of any of her operas (Sztar, 1983, video documentary). Mirrie Hill was very drawn to the orchestral genre, writing over thirteen orchestral works (being especially prolific in the early nineteen-seventies). Her best-known orchestral work, and the one she considered to be her most significant, was the *Arnhemland Symphony* (1954). Although some would argue that her work is more interesting than that of Alfred Hill, her composer husband, nonetheless it is Alfred's works which are by far the better known. As musicologist Radic comments:

Mirrie Hill's *Arnhemland Symphony* established her name, but she was married to Alfred Hill, a composer whose more robust and larger output and more respected position in Australian music history eclipsed her style (Sztar, 1983, video documentary).

In the early nineteen-thirties Miriam Hyde embarked upon her career as an orchestral composer, followed five years or so later by Margaret Sutherland and Peggy Glanville-Hicks. Margaret Sutherland was also attracted to large-scale works, writing twenty-two orchestral works in all, a remarkable achievement for a woman who never received any form of payment as a composer until she was in her seventies. Her career really only became established after she separated from her husband for during the twenty-two years of her marriage her composing virtually ceased (Sztar, 1983, video documentary). Radic relates the story of *Sutherland's Concerto for Strings and Orchestra* which Boosey and Hawkes had been interested in publishing – that is, until they discovered that the composer was a woman (Sztar, 1983, video documentary). Composer Miriam Hyde, as will be shown later in this study, was also an extremely prolific orchestral composer, writing over twenty orchestral works.

From the nineteen-fifties on, other women began writing orchestral works. Moneta Eagles wrote her first work for full orchestra in 1951, the same year in which her first film score was composed (Naphthali, 1994, pp. 49 - 52), while Dulcie Holland began her orchestral writing with *Civic Overture* (1957), requested by the North Sydney Symphony Orchestra. Holland went on in the early nineteen-sixties to write pieces for the ABC Light Orchestra.¹⁴ In the nineteen-sixties Ann Carr-Boyd began composing orchestral works, as did Helen Gifford and Mary Mageau, both subjects of further study later in this thesis. By the nineteen-seventies, there was an upsurge in the number of women composing for orchestra - composers such as Gillian Whitehead,

Betty Beath, Jennifer Fowler, Anne Boyd, Hellgart Mahler, Ann Ghandar and Barbara Woof. Since the nineteen-seventies the number of women writing for orchestra has increased substantially: women such as Moya Henderson, Elena Kats-Chernin and Caroline Szeto (the two latter included for detailed study later in the thesis), Becky Llewellyn, Mary Finsterer, Lisa Lim, Cathie Travers, and emerging orchestral composers Christine McCombe, Katia Tiutiunnik, Kate Neal and Roxanne Della-Bosca, to name but a few.

There is a period when women's orchestral writing in Australia seems to increase dramatically; this is in the first half of the nineteen-seventies and reflects a general upsurge in composition, with the rise of professional composition courses and lecturers in the academy. This was also the period in which composer assistance became established with the Australia Council for the Arts (given statutory authority in 1975) and state funding bodies. These figures will also reflect the fact that in the latter part of the century, manuscripts have been deposited with the AMC (established in 1974) where they are readily accessible

Nevertheless, despite the number of Australian women orchestral composers, and the number of orchestral works they have written, there is still a tendency for women composers to avoid the orchestral sphere and, as will be demonstrated in Chapter Three, women composers comprise only 10% of the total orchestral writing in this country. Although women have turned to orchestral composition in increasing numbers they are still lagging behind their male colleagues. This may be due, in part, to the legacy of negative assumptions about women's orchestral music-making, alongside the almost complete absence of female role models within the orchestral sphere. Also of significance is the fact that women's orchestral works have had greater difficulty in gaining performances than orchestral works by men, and women

composers have found it more difficult to obtain orchestral commissions from professional orchestral organisations.

As recently as 1988–1992, the absence of women from commissions and orchestral repertoire caught the attention of the Australian public, through a spate of articles to newspapers around the country (refer to endnote 10). The catalyst for this outcry was based on the fact that, for Australia's bicentennial celebrations, all seven major orchestral commissions were given to Australian male composers.¹⁵ Understandably, Australian women composers felt this was an affront to their status as composers.

Another important event which helped to raise levels of awareness of the problem in repertorial programming was the National Australian Composers' Conference held in 1988 at Sydney's Powerhouse Museum. A panel discussion was held with the title, 'Where are the Women Composers?', with issues such as prejudice and the invisibility of Australian women composers as the main topics of discussion. The participants hoped that by publicly airing the very real difficulties faced by women composers, more equitable levels of funding, commissioning and recording would become available (Mageau, 1992, p. 19).

However, one year later in 1989, Australian women composers were once again ignored when the Keating Artistic Fellowships were awarded. A letter was written to the editor of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, stating the dismay of the author (John Carmody) at the absence of women:

Whereas I was very pleased that the first winners of Mr. Keating's Artistic Fellowship have been chosen and announced (Herald May 13), I was amazed and incredulous that this list had not a single woman on it.

That represents inexcusable bias and insensitivity on the part of the (unnamed) selection panel (Carmody, 1989, p. 16).

1989 was not a good year for Australian women composers, as all four major orchestral commissions by the ABC also went to male composers.¹⁶

Around this period of time, another source of dissatisfaction felt by women composers and their supporters was that Brisbane's Musica Nova Festival in 1990 commissioned eighteen composers for its celebrations without one woman being included. Richard Mills, the festival's artistic director, justified the choice of programming on the grounds that the selection process was not entirely based on merit, but on other criteria such as the length and difficulty of works, program balance and instrumentation. *The Australian* quotes him as saying: 'I selected composers and music I thought was appropriate...It's not whether somebody is a woman or not. It's not my fault that no woman wrote a work that I thought should be included in the festival' (Kelly, 1990b, p. 14).

It was the exclusion of Australian women composers from important musical activities such as the Australian Bicentenary Celebrations, the Musica Nova festival and the selection of the ABC's Classic Compact Disc Collection that led to the formation of the Australian Women Composers' Network in 1990. The panel consisted of active women composers, sympathetic male composers and others working within the arts who shared their ideals. The organisation's aim was to agitate politically for policy change, particularly in regard to the equity of orchestral performance, commissioning and recording; for greater air time for women's work on the ABC radio and television; and for anonymous entries to ABC-sponsored contests. As Mary Mageau, the driving force behind the Australian Women Composers' Network, remarks:

It was felt that a reasonable and essential goal for 1991 must be to initiate a policy change within the ABC — a change that would reflect the present social climate which flows from existing equal opportunity legislation. Because so many previous attempts at dialogue with the ABC appeared to have failed, a stronger and more direct line of advocacy had to be found (Mageau, 1992, p. 19).

The Australian Women Composers' Network planned to effect this lobbying through equal opportunity legislation. In May 1991, a newspaper article in Brisbane's *Courier Mail* gave coverage to the plight of Australian women composers in their struggle to ensure equal standing in composer commissions and recordings. At this stage, the organisation had taken the fight to the Federal Parliament. A letter was sent to Australian Senators explaining that, while Australian women composers comprised a ratio of 15% of the composing body and had created a significant amount of music in diverse genres, many Australian women received more recognition overseas than in Australia; as a result, they were suffering from discrimination and a low public profile (Mageau, 1992, p. 20). The Network outlined in the letter three major policy changes needing to be implemented:

1. That the ABC Concert Department mounts an equitable program of commissioning, performing and recording the music of Australian women composers as soon as possible.
2. That the ABC Broadcast Department continues to broadcast the music of women composers in special features and to include women's music more broadly in mainstream programming.
3. That all ABC sponsored competitions require anonymous score submissions, thus ensuring that adjudication is based solely on the artistic

merit of each work rather than on a composer's reputation (Mageau, 1992, p. 20).

After receiving this letter, Senator Grant Chapman is quoted as asking during Parliamentary 'Question Time' why the ABC, "...continues to ignore Australian women composers" (Walker, 1991, p. 12).

The ABC Board, while on the one hand denying the claims that women were being ignored, also stated its intention to address the situation in several ways. In a letter from David Hill, Managing Director of the ABC, to Senator Margaret Reynolds, Hill addressed the second of the concerns regarding the lack of airplay:

...the Arts Programming Policy for Radio National and ABC-FM is to increase the number of contemporary women represented as creative artists, which includes composers...I am sure the Network will be pleased to learn that ABC Classics is about to release two discs featuring women composers...discussions are also taking place with a view to releasing an all woman composers disc of either orchestral, Chamber [sic] or instrumental music (Hill, see Mills, 1991).

A background paper from Helen Mills came with the letter from David Hill addressing the other two concerns. In this paper, Mills began first by justifying the choice of programming in the Musica Nova Festival. She stated that two parameters were used for choosing the works. These were 'to showcase Queensland work' and 'an exploration of recent attitudes to modernism' (Mills, 1991, p. 1). The absence of the Queensland composers, Mary Mageau and Betty Beath, is all the more surprising considering that their profile in Brisbane was reasonably high at the time. Mills also considered the question of whether or not ABC policies discriminate against women

composers and concluded, not surprisingly, with the claim that: 'Certainly there is no discrimination in ABC Concert music' (Mills, 1991, p. 1). She went on to argue that three Australian women composers had been performed in the past year or two. Mills then made the curious statement (not likely to endear her to Australian composers generally) that: 'It should be remembered that there are not very many accomplished orchestral composers in Australia, men or women' (Mills 1991, p. 2). It would be very interesting to have known her criteria for making this assessment, and whether this attitude was generally held within the ABC. Certainly Mills did not seem to have much sympathy with the older generation of female composers. On a radio program a month before the release of the above paper, Mills argued that: '...clearly the place to start is with a group of women who have not yet internalised any of the disappointment and defeat that may have held women of the older generation back' (Peters & Crawford, 1991).

That Mills knew little about the extant repertoire of orchestral works by Australian women — and that what she did know she did not rank very highly — is obvious in the following remarks:

One obvious place to start is with the emerging generation of composers. It may be that early recognition will encourage women composers to persevere with writing for orchestra. With the creation of a greater "critical mass" of women composers there is a greater likelihood of the emergence of the really talented (Mills, 1991, p. 2).

This begs the question: How many orchestral works does it take before women are thought to have persevered with orchestral writing? At the time of these comments, Miriam Hyde had written twenty-one orchestral works, Mary Mageau ten, there were at least twenty extant orchestral works of Margaret Sutherland's — to name but a few.

At the time there was a substantial body of orchestral works, over a hundred in fact, written by Australian women alone.

Mills argued that the ABC had addressed the issue by putting in place affirmative action for women composers. This consisted of one place of the four available in the Orchestral Composers School set aside for a woman; the commissioning of a series of orchestral fanfares to go to six women out of a total of fifteen composers. She added that the ABC hoped that this would help 'overcome the invisibility of women composers'. So while, on the one hand, the ABC denied any discrimination against women, it also acknowledged implicitly that there was a problem. As far as the commissions went, Mills stated that, due to pressure from the Australia Council¹⁷, the ABC agreed that affirmative principles would be undertaken when choosing the next two series of composer residencies. Mills also commented that:

Equity doesn't make sense as the organising principle in an area where the aim of public policy is to seek out, nurture and promote excellence...We have to choose very carefully; there is absolutely nothing to be said for recklessly setting up a commission which will be seen as a failure (Mills, 1991, p. 4).

If Mills' argument that the ABC is only interested in promoting excellence in orchestral music is accepted, alongside the statistics which showed a marked under-representation of women composers, then the conclusion that can be drawn from this is that women's orchestral writing (for unknown reasons) does not meet the standards set by the ABC. In other words, it is, by implication, inferior. Implicit in Mills' argument is the idea that, if a woman is given a commission, there is a likelihood that it will be a failure, and that in giving commissions which are not likely to succeed, the ABC is behaving in a reckless manner because the commissioning of a work by a woman is seen as a risk. Mills makes her case that the ABC must act in a responsible

manner, only mindful of the higher universals — the standard for excellence — and must not be swayed by political aims which, by implication, would detract from the quality of the body of orchestral work. Significantly, no commissions were given to women at this time at all, so the unstated implications are that the ABC felt women's orchestral writing to be substandard. These attitudes must have had an impact on the way in which Australian women composers perceived themselves in terms of self-confidence.

A female aesthetic?

Mills then pursued a rather curious line of argument. She stated that if women composers could demonstrate that their music was different from that of their male colleagues then women composers would have a case, as one of the tenets of ABC policy is diversity. However Mills doubted such an aesthetic in music, arguing that specific targeting of women's orchestral work in performance could only be justified if it could be clearly demonstrated, from the music itself. She stated that, while women have made such a case in the literary, visual and theatrical worlds, they have not done so in the case of music, since few women composers have made such a claim (Mills, 1991, p. 4).

Broader philosophical questions arise from this stance, particularly as to whether such a thing as a female aesthetic is either possible or desirable. The whole area of a female aesthetic is problematic for good reason. The sameness/difference gender issue (that is, women are the same as men therefore they should be treated equally, versus women are intrinsically different from men and difference enriches us as people) is a major ground for dispute even within feminism. It is not hard to understand why women composers, in vulnerable positions, would choose to ignore the concept of gender difference. Many women composers are afraid to make such an assertion, or even to acknowledge that their work is different from men's, because they feel that it leads to

further marginalisation (if their work is different then it could justifiably be treated differently). In any event, many would agree with feminist philosopher Janice Reilley who takes a position at odds with Mills. She concludes that in the current climate: '...emphases on difference are very dangerous to women while broad structural power imbalances between males and females exist' (Reilley, 1994, p. 17).

Many female composers prefer to remain silent on the subject, or are most likely to concur in the idea of 'sameness': that women's music does not differ substantially from men's and therefore should be treated in the same way.

Whether or not such a female aesthetic actually exists is a difficult question. Cox offers convincing arguments for the possibility of a female aesthetic, suggesting that a study of French feminists, Cixous, Kristeva and Irigary, and their exploration of *l'écriture féminine* is helpful, and comparisons to the musical world can be drawn. The idea of a female aesthetic is an attractive one, offering an holistic, integrated and meaningful model for female composers, that includes the body, and bodily experiences, as well as those of the mind: identification with the body being central to much feminist discourse.¹⁸ As a female composer and feminist I find the argument for a female aesthetic compelling, and the exploration into a female aesthetic within a compositional framework is an exciting one. However, the danger of essentialising women's experiences is one of the very real problems that surround this area of thought.¹⁹ By essentialising I mean imputing that all women possess certain innate characteristics, thereby limiting individual women's experiences to these characteristics and negating the richness of diversity. Citron, however, postulates that a gendered code (those elements of the music that represent femaleness), instead of being thought representational of individuals, can be more appropriately viewed as representational of societal ideals of femaleness, thus avoiding the problem of essentialism. In the musical world it is too early to say with certainty that a female aesthetic exists, for women's

voices have been not only rare, but steeped in a male tradition. We do not have our own female tradition within the musical Western art world, or if we do, we have not yet discovered it. However, in speaking of a female aesthetic, Nicola LeFanu advances a compelling argument:

Most people believe that music transcends gender...I know, however, that my music is written out of the wholeness of myself, and I happen to be a woman...Could there be a music which did not reflect its maker?
(LeFanu, 1987, p. 4).

Conclusion

This chapter has been concerned with assumptions about women's orchestral music-making, including a brief overview of the Australian scene with regard to women. An understanding of the extraordinary complexity of the orchestral field itself, in terms of power relationships and the way in which women composers, subordinate to that power, are positioned and position themselves, is crucial to understanding the question of why women's orchestral works have been under-represented. It is also crucial to an understanding of why women composers have not been ranked in the canonic formation process as 'great'.

As I have illustrated, power is not neutral, but rather is socially constructed out of the preferences and desires of those who wield it, advantaging those with whom it can identify, while ignoring those outside. Reilley makes an important point in the understanding of power relationships. She speaks of 'intentional coincidence' as the way in which individual interests, values and prejudices combine to produce combined group intentions and values. This group 'intentionality' operates on a large scale, a scale beyond that of the individual, and when one group exercises power over others, the individuals within that group are often not in a position to understand the full

effects of their decisions in terms of the whole group action. Group 'intentionality' can also be passive in that something can be allowed to take place that will benefit the power group by non-intervention. Reilley constructs a powerful argument that responsibility is part of the package of being in a position of privilege and that being a member of a power group involves privilege. 'The dependent advantage or privilege brings with it the responsibility, whether you choose to agree with that advantage or privilege or not' (Reilley, 1994, p. 4).

Expressed in terms of orchestral music, Reilley's ideas imply that many individual males within the musical world have not been aware of the full extent of their actions: actions which have led to the exclusion of women as orchestral composers. While this may well be true, adopting this position also means that males operating within the orchestral milieu from a position of privilege have a responsibility to support the entry of their female colleagues in those areas of music from which they have previously been excluded.

Attitudes towards women composers have certainly been changing, although the change has been slow and often painful. There has certainly been tremendous improvement in the participation of women composers, particularly in the last few years. However, assumptions about women composers, many of which have their roots in antiquity, are still having a negative impact on women, particularly in regard to large-scale forces. There is still some way to go before women orchestral composers are recognised as the true equals of their male counterparts.

Chapter Three

Representation Of Australian Women Composers: Statistical Data

This chapter consists of data on the repertoire of orchestras within an Australian context. Data was collected from the AMC; the *Review of ABC Music Policy* (1992) by Nathan Waks; Australia Council Annual Reports 1982 – 1995; repertoire lists sent to me by Symphony Australia; data I collected from 15 non-professional orchestras including: the Central Coast Conservatorium Orchestra; the Western Youth Orchestra; the Central Coast Youth Orchestra; the Strathfield Symphony Orchestra; the Orange Youth Orchestra; the Mosman Orchestra; the University of NSW Orchestra; the Balmain Sinfonia; the East-West Philharmonic Orchestra; the North Sydney Symphony; the Beecroft Orchestra; the Sydney Youth Orchestra; the Waverley Randwick Philharmonic Society Inc.; and the Hunter Orchestra; data from Helen Bainton's listing of first Australian concert performances by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra between the years 1939 and 1966 (Bainton, 1967); list of the ABC's Resource and Teaching Kits from the AMC; and data from the AMC's pamphlet on the Australian Composers' Orchestral Forum.

It is important at this stage to contextualise the data and the way in which it has been used. The data was collected in order that an approximate indication of the situation of women orchestral composers in terms of performances, commissions and other forms of dissemination could be assessed. It is acknowledged the data is not always comprehensive. Many non-professional orchestras for example have not kept extensive

records of the repertoire they have performed. This is due to the fact that many of the non-professional orchestras in Australia exist on very little funding, and consequently there are very few paid positions, work being done by volunteers. Often record keeping has been, particularly in the past, on an 'ad hoc' basis (Lucas, M. 2000, pers. comm., 26 April). However, I have indicated above the tables for each of the non-professional orchestras the periods in which the records were kept, and if the records within the time period indicated were relatively complete. I considered the data from the Central Coast Conservatorium Orchestra too incomplete to be of use, and this data has not been used in the overall non-professional orchestral statistics. Whilst statistical data has been gathered, the approach taken is qualitative rather than quantitative, and provides support to the qualitative argument that was outlined in Chapter Two. A purely statistical survey of orchestral data would be a monumental task and outside the bounds of this thesis. However, the following statistics giving a rough approximation of how women have been positioned in regards to the orchestral environment in Australia, providing a useful tool in understanding and extending the theoretical framework of the argument of Chapter Two within a practical orchestral environment.

To further contextualise this study within the framework of gender, it should be noted that in 1996 women composers' full representation at the AMC stood at 17% of the composer population, and at the end of 1999 there was an increase to 18.5%. A further factor which needs to be taken into account is that out of all the orchestral works represented at the AMC in 1996, women's orchestral works made up 10% of the total (Macarthur, S. 1997). At the end of 1999 the figure has grown slightly to 10.57% (Parker, A. 2000, pers. comm., 9 March) reflecting a very slight increase of women composers in the orchestral field.

For the majority of this study the data has been confined to Australian content. This in effect also means that the data is confined to the twentieth century, as Australian

orchestral works before 1900 are extremely rare. Australian women composers' representation therefore is judged within the context of the representation of Australian works generally. Macarthur's studies on contemporary performance practice in Sydney 1985 - 1995 have shown Australian women composers to be disadvantaged for two reasons: first, because their music is a sub-group of Australian contemporary music, which is in itself in an unpopular category; and second, as outlined in Chapter Two, because they are women (Macarthur, S. 1997).

Orchestral commissions by the ABC

Male	Female
17 composers	1 composer
94.5%	5.5%

Table 1. Gender distribution of composers commissioned by the ABC (1988 - 1992).

The following table shows the percentage of male and female composers in terms of ABC commissioning for the years 1988 - 1992. It can be seen that proportionately women were under-represented at this time with a representation of 5.5%.

Male	Female
34 compositions	1 composition
97.15%	2.85%

Table 2. Gender distribution of total number of compositions commissioned from the above composers by the ABC (1988 - 1992).

Low though the figures for female composers were at 5.5%, the figures became even lower when considering the total number of compositions commissioned from the 18 composers. 35 works in total were commissioned from the 18 composers and the total works commissioned by women remained at 1. This meant that the male composers

averaged 2 commissions to the female composers 1. This gave a representation of 2.85% in terms of actual works commissioned from women composers. The Sydney Symphony Orchestra was the only ABC orchestra in these four years to give a commission to a woman.

Orchestral commissions funded by the Australia Council

The following data was obtained from the Australia Council Annual Reports for composers' orchestral commissions over the years 1982 - 1995. The commissions are for orchestral works: professional or non-professional. The commissioned works include settings for: orchestra, orchestra and voice, orchestra and choir, concerti, or youth orchestra. Works for chamber or string orchestra were not included.

Year	Total commissions	Male commissions	Male %	Female commissions	Female %
1982/83	4	4	100%	0	0%
1983/84	10	10	100%	0	0%
1984/85	9	8	88.8%	1	11.2%
1985/86	4	4	100%	0	0%
1986/87	10	10	100%	0	0%
1987/88	4	4	100%	0	0%
1989/90	2	1	50%	1	50%
1990/91	12	12	100%	0	0%
1991/92	10	9	90%	1	10%
1992/93	11	9	81.8%	2	18.2%
1993/94	7	6	85.7%	1	14.3%
1994/95	9	9	100%	0	0%
Total	91	83	91.36%	8	8.64%

Table 3. Data on composers' Australia Council orchestral commissions for the years 1982 – 1995
(detailed data for 1988/89 is not available).

It can be seen from the above data that during 1982 - 1995 the overall percentage of female commissions is a low 8.64%²⁰. From 1992 to 1995, however, the trend shows an increase in commissions for female composers' rising from an average of 7.65% from the preceding years to an average of 10.6% in this three year period. This increase may well be accounted for by the increased awareness, at this time, of the plight of women orchestral composers through lobbying by the Australian Women Composers' Network, and the resultant media publicity.

ABC Orchestral repertoire

Data from the Waks report (Waks, 1992)²¹ has been used to give an indication of trends in both performances and commissions by ABC orchestras in the period 1988 - 1992 (see appendix 2 for detailed information). In examining the data it became evident that it was not enough to merely count the number of women composers represented in the programming, it was also necessary to look at such things as the number of compositions per composer (for some composers had two or more different compositions programmed, and the actual number of performances per work, (for some works received repeat performances). The addition of this type of data analysis showed some interesting trends.

	<i>Compositions</i>		<i>Composers</i>		<i>Performances (includes repeat performances)</i>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Male	256	96.25	53	89.84	318	94.65
Female	10	3.75	6	10.16	18	5.35
Total	266		59		336	

Table 4. Gender distribution of Australian compositions, composers and performances by ABC Orchestras (1988 - 1992) (These figures do not include short works or works for ensemble).

In the four year time span allotted to the data in the Waks Report, 59 Australian composers in total had works performed by one of the ABC orchestras. Of these 59

composers, 6 were women, which meant that women composers had a 10.16% representation.

A total of 266 compositions by the 59 composers were programmed (some composers wrote several works). The six female composers had between them 10 works programmed while the 53 male composers had between them 256 works programmed. This brought the women's representation, in terms of works programmed, down to 3.75% overall (refer to table below).

Performance figures which include repeat performances of a given work, also vary the figures to the detriment of women's performances. While women composers' representation stood at 10.16%, in terms of actual performances the percentage was almost halved. For example, the 6 women with their 10 works had a total of 18 performances, while the 53 male composers with their 256 works had a total of 318 performances. For women this meant that representation in regard to actual performances was 5.35% (refer to table above).

Australian compositions, composers and performances by ABC Orchestras 1994 – 1998

The following data has been taken from the ABC orchestral repertoire lists obtained from Symphony Australia and gives more detail within the individual orchestras than the data from the Waks Report.

	<i>Compositions</i>		<i>Composers</i>		<i>Performances (includes repeat performances)</i>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Male	37	86.04	22	84.61	43	96
Female	6	13.95	4	15.38	7	14
Total	43		26		50	

Table 5. Gender distribution of Melbourne Symphony Orchestra programming (1994 – 1998).

769 performances in total	167 composers in total
50 Australian performances in total	24 Australian composers in total

Table 6. Melbourne Symphony Orchestra programming of Australian content (1994 – 1998).

Australian content comprised 6.05% of the total performances and 14.37% of the total number of composers.

	<i>Compositions</i>		<i>Composers</i>		<i>Performances (includes repeat performances)</i>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Male	44	77.19	18	66.66	44	77.19
Female	13	22.80	9	33.33	13	22.80
Total	57		27		57	

Table 7. Gender distribution of Queensland Symphony Orchestra programming (1994 – 1998).

685 compositions in total	183 composers in total
57 Australian performances in total	27 Australian composers in total

Table 8. Queensland Symphony Orchestra programming of Australian content (1994 – 1998).

Australian content comprised 8.32% of the total performances and 14.75% of the total number of composers.

	<i>Compositions</i>		<i>Composers</i>		<i>Performances (includes repeat performances)</i>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Male	65	87.83	26	81.25	115	91.26
Female	9	12.16	6	18.75	11	8.73
Total	74		32		126	

Table 9. Gender distribution of Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra programming (1994 – 1998).

1505 compositions in total	268 composers in total
126 Australian performances in total	32 Australian composers in total

Table 10. Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra programming of Australian content (1994 – 1998).

Australian content comprised 8.37% of the total performances and 10.82% of the total number of composers.

	<i>Compositions</i>		<i>Composers</i>		<i>Performances (includes repeat performances)</i>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Male	14	93.33	9	90	14	93.33
Female	1	6.66	1	10	1	6.66
Total	15		10		15	

Table 11. Gender distribution of Western Australian Symphony Orchestra programming (1994 – 1998).

344 compositions in total	91 composers in total
15 Australian performances in total	10 Australian composers in total

Table 12. Western Australian Symphony Orchestra programming of Australian content (1994 – 1998).

Australian content comprised 4.36% of the total performances and 10.98% of the total number of composers.

	<i>Compositions</i>		<i>Composers</i>		<i>Performances (includes repeat performances)</i>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Male	30	88.23	17	85	34	89.47
Female	3	8.82	3	15	4	10.52
Total	34		20		38	

Table 13. Gender distribution of Adelaide Symphony Orchestra programming (1994 – 1998).

714 compositions in total	204 composers in total
38 Australian performances in total	20 Australian composers in total

Table 14. Adelaide Symphony Orchestra programming of Australian content (1994 – 1998).

Australian content comprised 5.32% of the total performances and 9.8% of the total number of composers.

	<i>Compositions</i>		<i>Composers</i>		<i>Performances (includes repeat performances)</i>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Male	46	95.83	24	92.30	68	95.77
Female	2	4.16	2	7.69	3	4.22
Total	48		26		71	

Table 15. Gender distribution of Sydney Symphony Orchestra programming (1994 – 1998).

786 compositions in total	136 composers in total
71 Australian performances in total	26 Australian composers in total

Table 16. Sydney Symphony Orchestra programming of Australian content (1994 – 1998).

Australian content comprised 9.03% of the total performances and 19.11% of the total number of composers.

	<i>Compositions</i>		<i>Composers</i>		<i>Performances (includes repeat performances)</i>	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Male	236	87.40	116	82.26	320	89.63
Female	34	12.59	25	17.73	37	10.36
Total	270		141		357	

Table 17. Total data of gender distribution for ABC Orchestras programming (1994 – 1998).

In this period, 1994 – 1998, Australian content overall in terms of performances was 6.9%, while representation of Australian composers was 13.3%.

dropped to a low 3.62%, while performances of women's compositions fell to a very low 0.77%.

The following table shows the ratios over the two 4 year periods (1988 - 1992 & 1994 - 1998) between male and female composers, compositions and performances.

	<i>Composers</i>	<i>Compositions</i>	<i>Performances (includes repeat performances)</i>
Male '88/92	1	4.83	6
Male '94/98	1	2.03	2.75
Female '88/92	1	1.67	3
Female '94/98	1	1.36	1.48

Table 18. Ratios between composers, compositions and performances in the two time periods, (1988 – 1992) and (1994 – 1998).

From the above table it can be seen that there has been a significant increase in the number of composers, both male and female, who have had an orchestral work performed by one of the ABC orchestras. Although on the surface this seems a positive trend there is a hidden aspect to these figures which is of concern.

From 1988 - 1992 a male composer, on average, could expect to have almost 5 different works performed, and to have 6 performances encompassing those 5 works. A female composer in the same time span could expect on average to have less than 2 compositions performed, with 3 performances encompassing those works. However, in the later figures, 1994 - 1998, although the number of composers is much higher, the number of compositions per composer has been reduced dramatically. For male

composers the figures have fallen from 4.83 to 2.03, while the total number of performances (which includes repeat performances of the same composition) has also more than halved from 6 to 2.75. For female composers the reduction has not been as dramatic as that for male composers, as there was very little margin for reduction in the amount of performances to begin with. However the figures for female composers show a reduction from 1.67 to 1.36 for the performance of compositions, while the average number of performances (which includes repeat performances of compositions) for each individual composer, has (like the male composers) more than halved for female composers, dropping from 3 to 1.48. This in effect means that although more composers are being performed (which makes many of the figures for Australian content look good), Australian composers, on average, are having fewer individual compositions played and less performances overall than they were 10 years ago.

It is interesting to compare the figures for male and female composers over these two periods of time (1988 – 1992 and 1994 – 1998) in terms of ratios. In 1988 - 1992 the ratio of the number of performances per composition by female composers was 1 : 1.8. In the 1994 - 1998 time period this ratio dropped to 1 : 1.09. For male composers, the 1988 - 1992 time period shows a ratio of 1 : 1.24, while in 1994 - 1998, it was 1 : 1.36 performances. This, in effect, means that in the earlier period, although there were very few female composers, those that were being performed stood a slightly better chance of having a repeat performance than their male counterparts of the same period. In the later period however the trend is reversed and although the number of women represented by the orchestras has more than quadrupled, the chances of repeat performances has dropped down to 1 : 1.09 performances, while a male composer's chances of repeat performances have risen slightly to 1 : 1.36. Thus the latest figures show that male composers are in a position of advantage when it comes to repeat performances of their works.

In terms of the breakdown of the orchestras individually it can be seen that the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra and the Queensland Symphony Orchestra are performing a reasonable percentage of Australian women's compositions. The Tasmanian Symphony orchestra is used by the AMC and Symphony Australia in their emerging conductor and composer programmes. They view this as being a useful role that will encourage and develop Australian orchestral writing, and of course, this increases their Australian content.

Composer Mary Mageau feels that orchestral performance opportunities for women composers exist in Queensland because of the Queensland Symphony Orchestra. She states:

Now I must say something very positive about the musical scene in Queensland. Since the middle 1980's there has been an active policy to include performances of music by contemporary Australian composers... We have a 'Meet The Composer Series', and it was a constant thing almost, to have at least one work by a woman included in a program. As of the last several years the Queensland Symphony Orchestra sponsors one full evening every year, in the 'Meet the Composer' Series', to 'Composing Women' (Mageau, 1997).

The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra data is somewhat low in the both the representation of women's orchestral music and in Australian content. However, in the past 18 months they have acquired a new conductor (Marcus Stenz) who is interested in contemporary music, so things may well change (Gilby, B. 2000, pers. comm., 6 May).²² The Western Australia Symphony Orchestra and the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra both had low figures for Australian content and under-represented women composers, particularly the Western Australian Symphony Orchestra. This could be due in part to their isolation of the Western Australian

Symphony Orchestra and the fact that it is expensive to bring composers to Perth (Gilby, B. 2000, pers. comm., 6 May). The Sydney Symphony Orchestra's statistics are surprising. Although they perform the most Australian content they also have the smallest representation of women's works. Why this should be remains a mystery. Although the Sydney Symphony Orchestra repertoire is very much 'audience driven' (Gilby, B. 2000, pers. comm., 6 May), they do perform Australian works and this could be assumed to boost the numbers of women represented.

An area of some concern is that Australia's professional orchestras are becoming more 'sponsor driven'. This in fact means that sponsors can dictate, to some degree, the sorts of works to be performed and the types of concert series or themes to be promoted, making the orchestral concerts more commercially accountable. This is unlikely to have beneficial repercussions on the programming of Australian orchestral music, particularly with regard to Australian women's orchestral music.

In returning to the idea of the importance of repeat performances, I have demonstrated that for both Australian male and female there has been a reduction in the chances of obtaining a repeat performance and this could well have serious ramifications. As Mageau points out:

Another thing too, is that some of these works do come to light, they do originate, they're given a first performance, but then they seem to sink to the bottom like a stone, never to resurface again. Its often been said that it's that elusive second performance and sometimes that third performance, that is the one that's more important to a composer than the premiere (Mageau, 1997).

It is simply not enough to have one performance of an orchestral work. For a composition to be a serious contender for inclusion in the canon, repeat performances are essential.

It is interesting to look at some of the older data with regard to women's orchestral music-making and compare that with data from the Waks Report. It should be noted that while this older data is not always comprehensive it still signposts trends.

In her book, *Facing the Music* (1967), Helen Bainton has a record of first Australian concert performances by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra between the years 1939 and 1966 (see appendix 3). Her data shows that in this period a total of fourteen Australian composers had at least one 'first concert' performance. Out of this group of fourteen composers, one was a woman, (Margaret Sutherland). This puts the women's representation at approximately 7.14%.

Male	Female
14	1
92.86%	7.14%

Table 19. Composers represented in the 'First Australian concert performances' by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra (1939 - 1966).

These 14 composers had 28 works premiered in total. However, Margaret Sutherland had only one composition premiered. This was in contrast to the male composers who averaged two compositions. This further reduced the representation of women's compositions by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra to 3.57%.

Male	Female
27	1
96.25%	3.75%

Table 20. Performances of Australian compositions in the 'First Australian concert performances' by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra (1939 - 1966).

It can be seen that once again women's representation percentage in terms of actual compositions and performances is lower than the percentage of female composers represented.

Repertoire of non-professional orchestras

In turning to Australian non-professional orchestras 21 were contacted in 1996 and copies of programming information requested. 14 non-professional orchestras participated, providing the following information which follows:

Central Coast Conservatorium Orchestra: repertoire lists unavailable

Written records for this orchestra were unavailable. Information on repertoire was given verbally (written records do not exist) by Bill Clarke, the Orchestral Manager and Director of Administration. Consequently the information was not verifiable and has not been used in the statistics below. However, in conversation the following information was conveyed: the Central Coast Conservatorium Orchestra has played a composition by Australian composer Michael Knopf in the past couple of years. The orchestra has not, as yet, played a work by an Australian woman composer, or indeed, by any woman composer. (Clarke, B. 1996, pers. comm., 30 July).

Compositions	Composers
16 total 0 Australian	14 total 0 Australian

Table 21. Western Youth Orchestra (the symphonic orchestra): repertoire from 1994 – 1996.

Compositions	Composers
26 total 0 Australian	23 total 0 Australian

Table 22. Central Coast Youth Orchestra: repertoire from 1993 – 1996. This is not a comprehensive list as some information has been lost (Brien, D, 1996, pers. comm., 30 July).

Compositions	Composers
55 total 3 Australian 2 Australian compositions by a female composer	32 total 2 Australian 1 Australian female composer (Miriam Hyde)

Table 23. Strathfield Symphony Orchestra: repertoire from 1991 - 1996.

Compositions	Composers
16 total 1 Australian 0 Australian compositions by a female composer	13 total 1 Australian 0 Australian female composers

Table 24. Orange Youth Orchestra: (no dates available).

Compositions	Composers
47 total 1 Australian 0 Australian compositions by a female composer	29 total 1 Australian 0 Australian female composers

Table 25. Mosman Orchestra: repertoire from January 1992 - August 1996.

Compositions	Composers
52 total 4 Australian 0 Australian compositions by a female composer	39 total 3 Australian composers 0 Australian by a female composer

Table 26. University of NSW Orchestra: repertoire from January 1992 - August 1996.

Compositions	Composers
62 total 1 Australian 0 Australian compositions by a female composer	32 total 1 Australian 0 Australian female composers

Table 27. Balmain Sinfonia: repertoire from April 1992 - June 1996.

Compositions	Composers
47 total 2 Australian 0 Australian compositions by a female composer	26 total 2 Australian 0 Australian female composers

Table 28. East-West Philharmonic Orchestra: repertoire from December 1994 - September 1996.

Compositions	Composers
31 total 0 Australian	22 total 0 Australian

Table 29. North Sydney Symphony: repertoire from October 1994 - September 1996.

Compositions	Composers
75 total 13 Australian 2 Australian compositions by a female composer	33 total 3 Australian 1 Australian female composer (Dawn Nettheim)

Table 30. The Beecroft Orchestra: repertoire from 1989 - 1995.

Compositions	Composers
131 total 13 Australian 3 Australian compositions by a female composer	66 total 9 Australian 3 Australian female composer

Table 31. Sydney Youth Orchestra: repertoire from 1990 - August 1996.

Compositions	Composers
84 total 0 Australian	44 total 0 Australian

Table 32. The Waverley Randwick Philharmonic Society Inc.: repertoire from 1989 - 1996.

Compositions	Composers
118 total 14 Australian 5 Australian compositions by a female composer	69 total 12 Australian 3 Australian female composer

Table 33. The Hunter Orchestra: repertoire from 1992 - 1996. This is not a comprehensive list as some information has been lost (Coombes, P. 1996, pers. comm., 17 October).

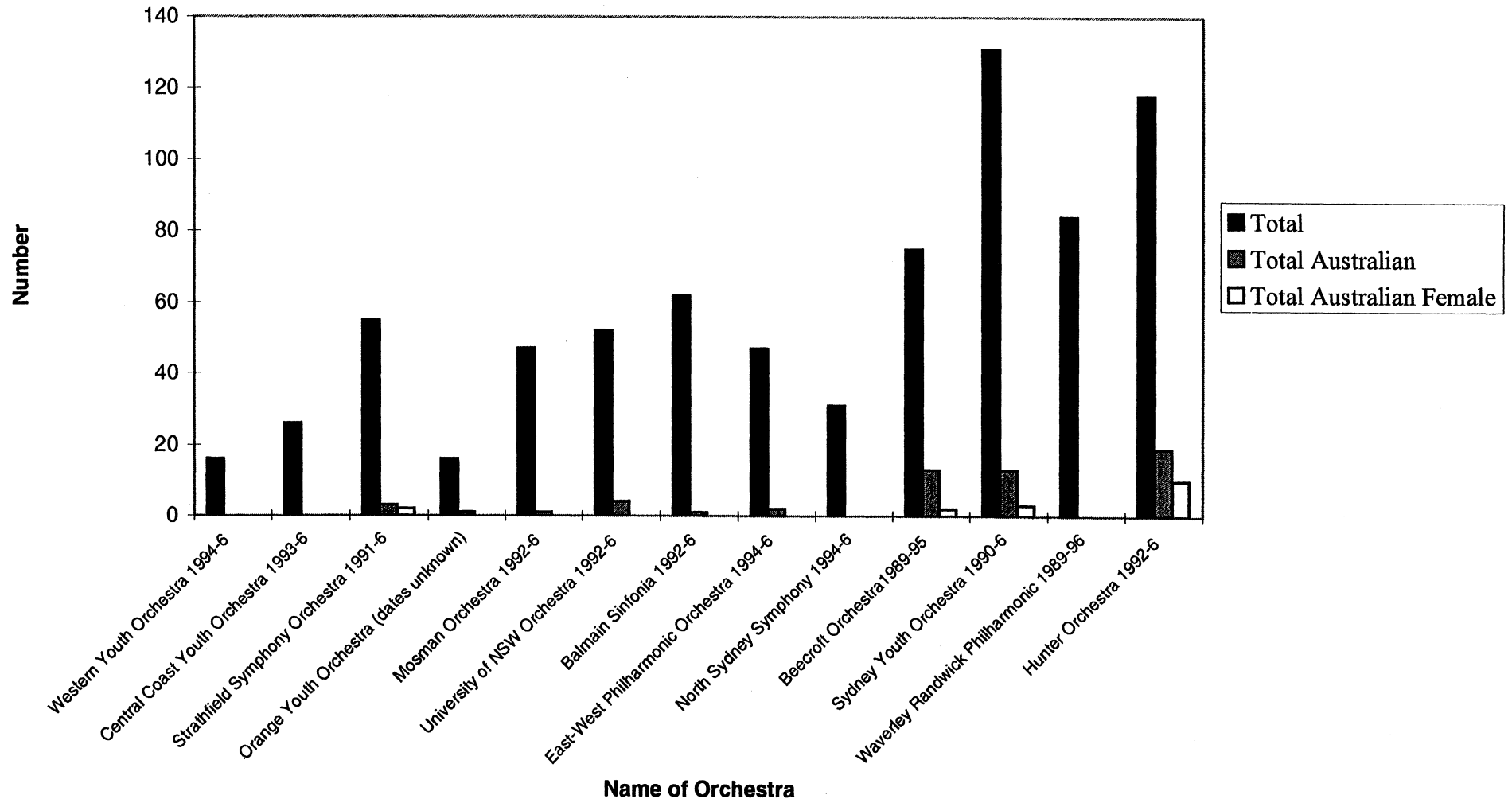
	Compositions			Composers		
	No.	Total %	Australian %	No.	Total %	Australian %
Non-Australian	707	93	0	388	91.95	0
Australian Male	40	5.29	75.47	26	6.16	76.47
Australian Female	13	1.71	24.53	8	1.89	23.53
Total	760			422		

Table 34. Combined information for all non-professional orchestras: repertoire from 1989 –1996. (N.B., while the various orchestras time periods overlap as they all have the same end date, they do not all start in the same year).

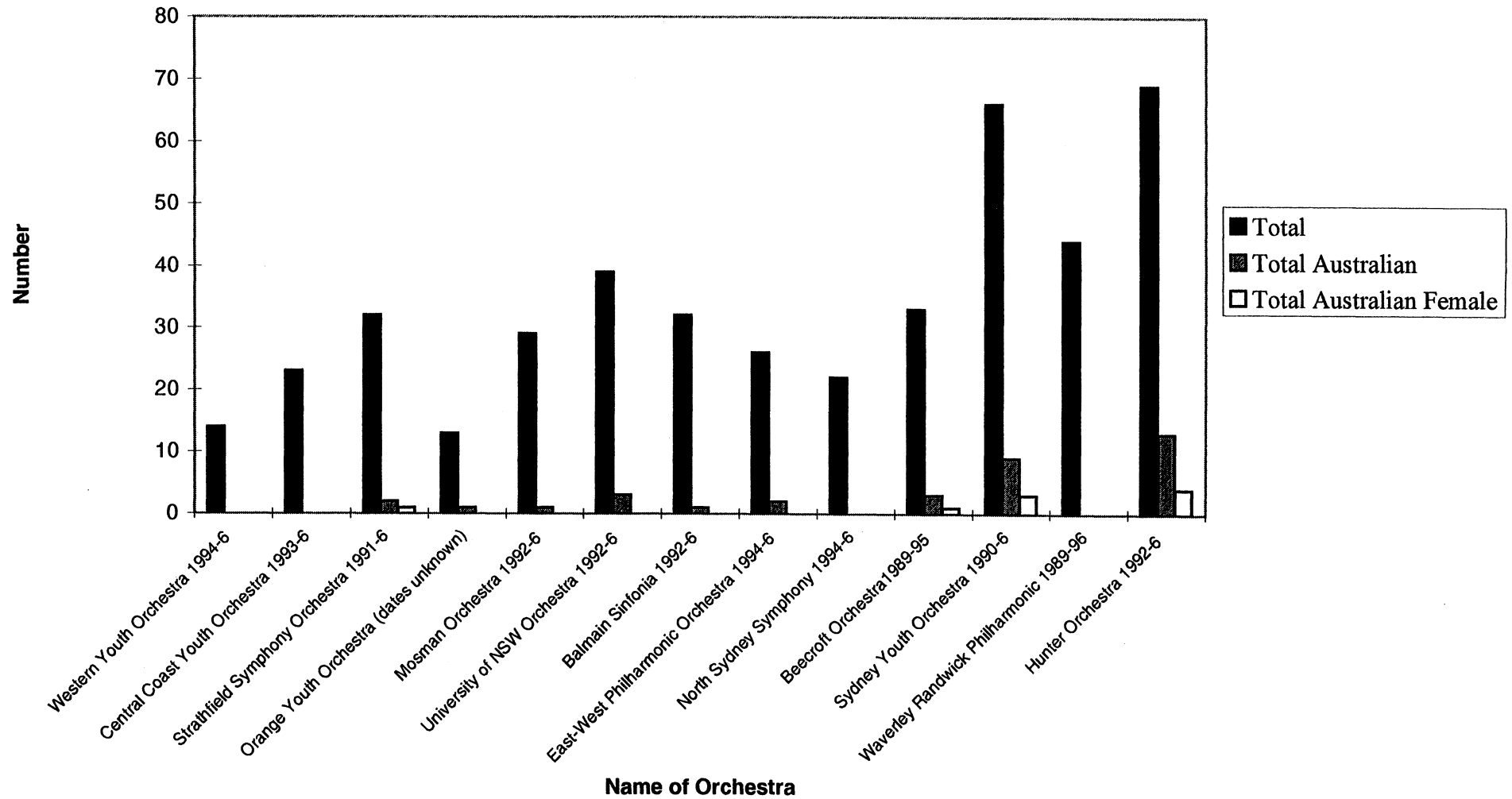
It is interesting to note that two orchestras in particular stand out in terms of female composer representation. These are the Sydney Youth Orchestra and the Hunter Orchestra. Between them, these two orchestras have performed 13 compositions by 7 Australian women composers.

The following two graphs summarise the data. The first graph shows the gendered content of *works* performed by non-professional orchestras in Australia. The second graph shows gendered weighting of *composers* whose works are performed by non-professional orchestras in Australia.

**Summary of the content of works performed
by non-professional orchestras.**



**Summary of composers whose works are performed
by non-professional orchestras.**



Other forms of dissemination of orchestral works in Australia

Women's representation in terms of orchestral teaching and resource kits show a much better representation than do the figures on commissioning or performance. Orchestral resource kits have been made available by the ABC and, to date (1997), 28 Australian Composers have at least one Resources Kit (see appendix 4). There are 5 Australian women composers who have works represented. Women's representation as composers stands at 17.85% , while men's representation stands at 82.15%.

Male	Female
23	5
82.15%	17.85%

Table 35. Composers with Resource Kits for study purposes.

There are 48 different works by the above composers represented in the Resources Kits. 41 of these are compositions by Australian male composers and 7 by Australian female composers. In terms of percentages of actual works, men's representation is 85.4%, while women's representation is 14.58%.

Male	Female
41	7
85.4%	14.6%

Table 36. Number of works represented in the Resource Kits.

There are 5 Australian composers whose works are presented to school children in teaching kits (see appendix 5). There is one woman whose work is represented. The representation for women composers is 20%. The representation for men composers is 80%.

Male	Female
4	1
80%	20%

Table 37. Composers who have a Teaching Kit.

In these Teaching Kits, 10 works are used in total. 9 works are by Australian men composers (90%) and 1 work by a woman (10%).

Male	Female
9	1
90%	10%

Table 38. Number of works used in Teaching Kits.

Australian Composer's Orchestral Forum

The Australian Composer's Orchestral Forum has been in existence for twenty years. Its function is to provide emerging composers with the opportunity to have an orchestral work performed by a professional orchestra. Up to six applicants²³ are selected by a panel of established composers and the participants then attend a three day work shop where their work is rehearsed, and discussed, with the conductor and a tutor. If it is required, works are then revised before performance in a public concert. The works are also recorded and broadcast. The AMC and Symphony Australia jointly administer the forum (Parker, A. 2000, pers. comm., 28 March).

Male	Female
84	15
84.85%	15.15%

Table 39. Male and Female composers participating in the Australian Composers' Forum 1980 – 2000

Male	Female
27	1
96.42%	3.58%

Table 40. Male and Female tutors teaching in the Australian Composers' Forum 1980 – 2000.

These statistics of women's participation in the Australian Composers' Orchestral Forum illustrate an ongoing problem. While women composers are increasingly being included as participants within the orchestral world at a grass roots level, there is still a resistance to women in higher positions. For example, although women's representation as participants stands at 15.15%, only one female composer (Elena Kats-Chernin) has ever been a tutor. This is despite the fact that there are women capable of filling the role of orchestral tutor, thus providing the emerging female composers with female role models.

The Symphonic Form

Using data collected from the AMC it is interesting to note that women composers do not seem to be attracted to the symphonic form. Out of the 72 symphonies in their holdings, only five have been written by female composers. This places women's representation at 6.94%.

Commentary on the data presented. Is only women's music under-represented?

Although it can be seen from the above data that Australian women's orchestral music (or indeed women's music generally, regardless of race or historical period) is for the most part under-represented in comparison to their male counterparts, it must also be noted that Australian music in general is under-represented, particularly amongst the non-professional orchestras.

In the ABC orchestras a much larger percentage of women obtained a performance in the 1994 - 1998 period than in the previous 1988 - 1992 period. Overall there was a significant improvement across the board for women within this later period in terms of composers represented, compositions and actual performances, although this trend occurred in only three out of the six orchestras. The Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, and the Queensland Symphony Orchestra in particular, must be applauded for the initiatives they have taken in bringing women's orchestral music to the fore in performances. When the overall figures are broken down, it can be seen that women composers are still lagging behind their male counterparts, especially in terms of the number of compositions per composer that are being programmed (males are more likely to have more than one composition performed), and in the overall number of performances that each composer receives (males also have a better chance of receiving a repeat performance of a composition). It might be expected that the professional orchestras figures for female composer representation would be higher than non-professional orchestras as they have political pressure to ensure a more equitable representation of male to female.

When women composers' representation is examined on a larger scale (taking into account a world view and an historical one), women generally are still showing an extraordinarily low percentage of representation: 3.62% of composers and .77% of total number of performances by professional orchestras, alongside 1.8% of composers and 1.71% of total number of performances by the non-professional orchestras. A recurring trend in both the professional and non-professional orchestras is the complete absence of any orchestral repertoire from overseas women composers, with the exception of one work by Sofia Gubaidulina performed by the Hunter Orchestra. The fact that only one overseas female composer has shown up in the performance statistics is of concern and raises the following questions: are Australian orchestras performing works by Australian women only because there is political pressure, particularly on the government funded professional orchestras? If there was a

genuine interest in orchestral works by women, surely at least a few women composers from overseas would be represented? The fact that there are more Australian women composers represented in the latter period of this study is due to complex factors. There has been pressure for more Australian works to be programmed generally, as the changing Australian social climate has begun to value the Australian arts, and consequently affirmative action has been put in place. The result of this has been to increase Australian content overall, and through this women composers have benefited, not because they are women, but rather, because their writing falls into the Australian contemporary music category.

The non-professional orchestras showed a higher percentage in the representation of women composers compared to the professional orchestras. This is no doubt due to the history of women's role in music education as composers, and the acceptance of women in non-professional musical spheres. Nevertheless, it should be kept in mind that the improvement in women's representation by the non-professional orchestras was greatly boosted by 2 orchestras out of the total of 14 surveyed (The Sydney Youth Orchestra and the Hunter Orchestra), and that the figures for women on a broader scale than the Australian context was very low. The figures for Australian content by the non-professional orchestras was very poor overall, standing at 7.69% for compositions and 6.97% for composers.

In the Teaching and Resource Kits women's representation seems fairly substantial when looking solely at the composers. However, when the compositions themselves were counted the representation for women dropped and once again a hidden trend appeared. Data that only takes into account the number of composers represented misses the significant fact that women composers are more disadvantaged in terms of the number of compositions per composer being programmed, and in terms of the

number of performances per composition. This hidden trend showed across all orchestras, commissions, and teaching and resource kits.

The fact that women composers are not as attracted to the symphony is well worth noting. Australian women composers are primarily writing either concerti or symphonic poems, which generally tend to be shorter than the symphony. It seems that the symphony, to some degree still regarded as the epitome of the Romantic ideal of transcending, absolute music, and with its grandiose connotations, is a form which many women composers find unappealing, and perhaps even intimidating.

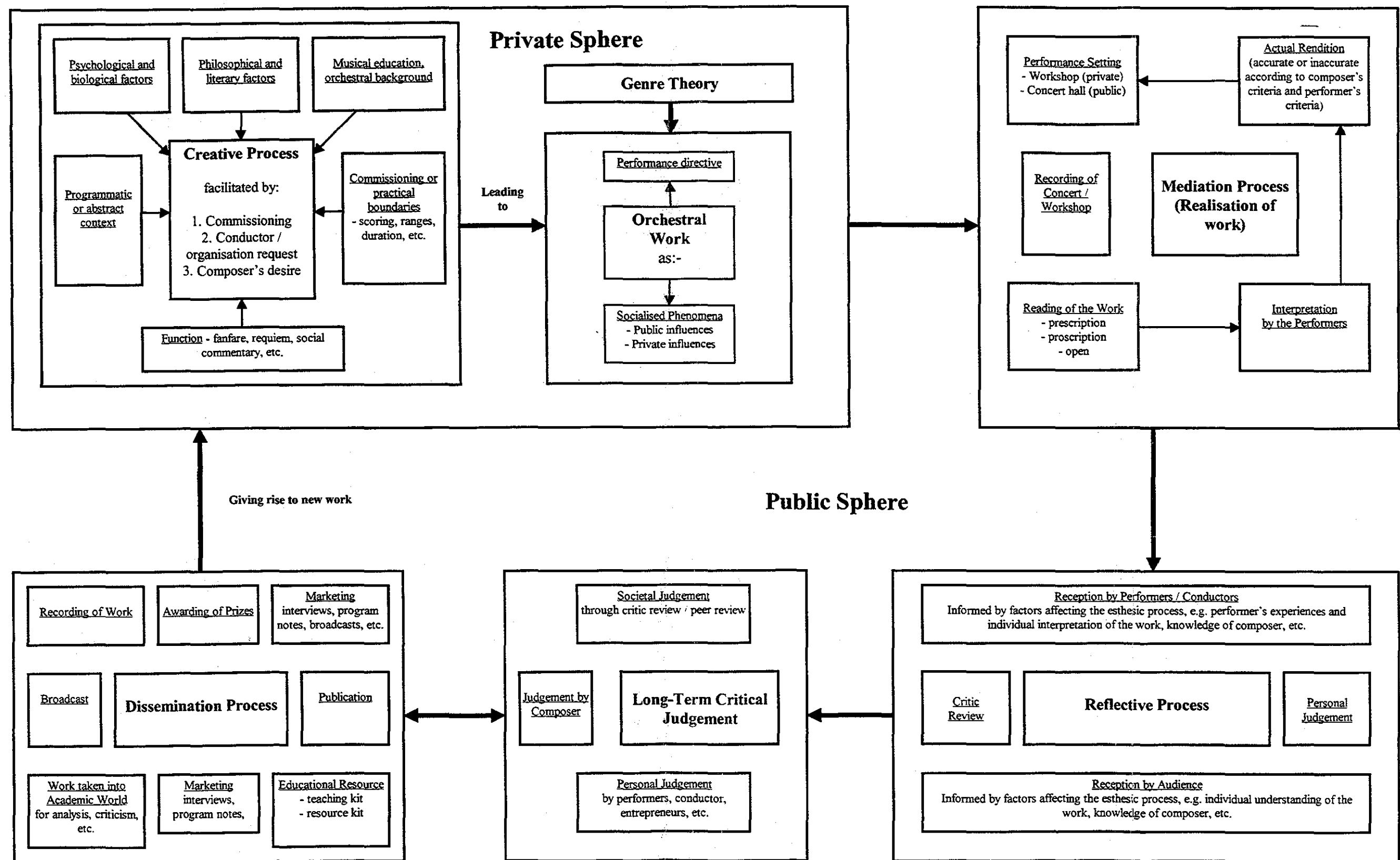
Statistics from the Australian Composers' Orchestral Forum suggest that women are still finding it difficult to work their way up into the higher orchestral ranks as teachers and role models for younger or emerging female composers. This means that there is little effective way of providing young and/or emerging women composers with female orchestral composer role models. This, potentially, is a very important way of encouraging women composers into the field, and for those female composers with perhaps one or two orchestral works already completed, it is a way of reassuring them that it is possible to participate in the orchestral field at a high level. The following graph refers to a summary of all the different orchestral contexts outlined above (next page).

INSERT GRAPH 3 HERE!!!

It is interesting to note that from 1992 the representation of women composers improved not only in orchestral programming, but also in commissions. Women's inclusion in the professional orchestral environment has increased dramatically since 1992. There is no concrete way of telling whether this rise stems from the efforts of the Australian Women Composers' Network, or from other factors, but it would appear that the Network made a significant and positive impact on the Australian orchestral environment. Certainly awareness of the plight of women composers increased at this time with the commencement of parliamentary lobbying.

In terms of canonicity the outlook is not good for Australian composers in general, and even less so for Australian female composers. Repeat performances of compositions are less likely than they were ten years ago, so that although previously, fewer composers were performed, those that were being performed had more works disseminated through repeat performances. This trend away from repeat performances by the ABC orchestras may well have serious implications for Australian contemporary music now and in the future.

Repertorial Process



...the first time I ever heard it [Village Fair] performed was a couple of years ago by the Strathfield Orchestra. You will be amused when I tell you that as it concluded a lady came to my row in the audience and said, 'Oh I just want to tell you how much I enjoyed your work. And who did the orchestration for you?' Apparently women composers are only expected to hum the tune and somebody else does all the major part of the work (Hyde, 1997).

Part Two

The repertorial process: evidence collected from interviews with eight Australian women composers

Introduction

Part One focused upon aspects of institutional and societal positions with regard to orchestral composition by women composers. The following chapter focuses on eight case studies of Australian women composers in order to study their individual methods of engagement with the repertorial process. After contextualising each composer within their orchestral history, one work by each of the composers is then selected for a detailed examination and its development is traced through its repertorial process. The work is followed from its conception in the private sphere through to its dissemination in the public sphere. Of course, the distinction between the public and private is never clear cut. The creation of a work in the private sphere is sustained by processes operating in the public sphere, such as intellectual ideas, commissioning restraints, intended function and, of course, the success of other works. The repertorial process does not have any true beginning, since it is a dynamic process. However, for the sake of clarity, the repertorial process will be discussed in a linear fashion.

The primary consideration in selecting the composers for this study was that they had written at least one work for full symphonic forces. With this in mind, I aimed to choose a range of composers that represented diversity in relation to background, influences, compositional styles, philosophies, and orchestral compositional profiles. This allowed for a broad, representative cross section of the Australian orchestral composer community. I have included women who have been repeatedly commissioned and performed. I have also included women whose orchestral works have not been publicly performed. The composers' ages span many decades, from Miriam Hyde (b. 1913) to Elena Kats-Chernin (b. 1957). The diversity covers such factors as: women of non-Australian background and women of Australian background; women with AMC representation and women without; emerging composers and established composers; professional orchestral writers and non-professional orchestral writers. Prolific orchestral composers are included as well as women who have written one, two or three orchestral works. In these case studies are women who have struggled to be recognised as orchestral composers, and others who have had a relatively smooth path through the orchestral repertorial process. Practical considerations in the selection of the composers were that they were still living, and that they were available to be interviewed.

Helen Gifford is a well-established composer in her sixties with three orchestral works behind her, none of which have been commissioned. Miriam Hyde is one of Australia's most senior composers with a large orchestral oeuvre of twenty-one works. Surprisingly she has never received an orchestral commission. Anne Boyd is also an established composer in her sixties, and one of the few women composers working full-time in an Australian university (she is Professor of Music at the University of Sydney). She has written three orchestral works and two of these are commissioned works. Dawn Nettheim, who is in her fifties, began her studies as a mature-age

student and currently writes for non-professional orchestras. Although she has had two orchestral commissions, she is not a represented composer at the AMC. Caroline Szeto, a composer whose career is fast becoming established, is undertaking postgraduate study, and is of Chinese background. Szeto has written five orchestral works to date and has had one orchestral commission. Elena Kats-Chernin is of Russian background, and is a well-established and popular composer with six orchestral works written to date, three of which were commissioned by professional orchestras. Mary Mageau is of American background and is an established orchestral composer with an impressive fourteen orchestral works behind her, and at least nine orchestral commissions. I have included myself as a case study in a coda to this section in order to provide insights into the repertorial process from a personal perspective. I am an emerging mature-age Scottish/Australian composer, studying composition at postgraduate level. I have not received an orchestral commission, to date, and I have written one orchestral work. I have only recently (March, 2000) been awarded full composer representation status at the AMC.

As far as the compositions themselves are concerned, I have selected to study in detail those that highlight the diversity of approaches of each composer, while at the same time being reasonably representative of how a composer negotiates the orchestral repertorial process. Another criterion for selection of the works was that sufficient background details on the piece were available, along with illustrations of how the composer set about negotiating the repertorial process with the particular work under scrutiny.

Initially I was going to order the case studies by composer's age. However, having chosen the composers on the basis of their diversity, it became obvious after some deliberation, and after analysis of information collated through oral interviews, that the composers actually fell into three main groups: a) those that found negotiating the repertorial process frustrating and disheartening; b) a group of emerging mature-age

composers who are in the initial stages of an orchestral composing career; c) and those that had a relative degree of success in negotiating the orchestral repertorial process. Somewhat paradoxically, although diversity was the initial criteria for selecting the composers, similarity seemed to be the most appropriate method of sorting the composers. Therefore the case studies have been kept within the similarity groupings beginning with those composers who have had mainly negative experiences overall, followed by the emerging composers, and then, finally, the group that has had relative orchestral success.

The first two composers, Helen Gifford and Miriam Hyde, are similar in having composed orchestral works some decades ago, but both have since experienced the repertorial process as discouraging and inhibiting. Miriam Hyde wrote many orchestral works in the 1930s to the 1950s at a time when women's orchestral writing was not encouraged. Helen Gifford wrote two orchestral works in the 1960s and has had difficulty in getting these works performed although she is arguably regarded as one of Australia's most respected composers. Although Gifford returned to orchestral writing in 1996 with *Point of Ignition* — recently rejected by Symphony Australia (Gifford, H. 2000, pers. comm., 31 January) — Hyde has ceased writing orchestral compositions entirely. Anne Boyd is in a similar position to Hyde, having had early orchestral successes that have not been sustained, and in fact, her latest orchestral work, a commission from the ABC, has proved disappointing in terms of the number of performances (Boyd, A. 1998, pers. comm., 23 July).

The second group consists of emerging composer Dawn Nettheim whose utilitarian approach to orchestral composition positions her slightly outside the mainstream repertorial process. She has carved out a niche for herself within the orchestral environment, by providing scores to suit the capabilities of orchestras who have specific requirements in terms of scoring, instrumental ranges and technical difficulty.

Included in a coda is my own case study, in which the repertorial process is documented as it impacts upon me as an emerging composer.

The other three composers in this study also share similarities, in that they are relatively successful orchestral composers. Although Caroline Szeto's first two orchestral works have not received a full public performance, her later works, *Energy* and *ABC Fanfare*, in particular, have each received several performances, by major orchestras. They have also been recorded on an international CD label. Elena Kats-Chernin has been especially successful in terms of performances by professional orchestras within Australia and she has also been the recipient of several prestigious orchestral commissions. She has received much attention from the ABC orchestras — the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in particular. Her orchestral works, with two exceptions, have all had performances by major orchestras, many of the performances being repeated several times. Mary Mageau has been included, not only because she is a very active orchestral writer and has been for some years, but also because of her strategies in negotiating the orchestral environment. These make her a particularly interesting case study.

Chapter Four

Helen Gifford 1935 -

Helen Gifford has approached orchestral composition in a spirit of inquiry, and her exploration of the orchestral sound world has been very much linked to her own personal progress in terms of compositional craft. Gifford has had, in many ways, a difficult time within the Australian orchestral environment.

Gifford's background as an orchestral composer

Gifford has had a long-standing interest in orchestral works, her earliest orchestral influences formed, at least in part, by the music of the Diaghilev ballets. She took up formal music studies in the early nineteen-fifties. As there was no formal composition course available at the University of Melbourne, she studied harmony with Dorian Le Gallienne. In the early nineteen-sixties she travelled to England and Europe, becoming increasingly aware of the possibilities for exploring the rich musical textures available in orchestral writing. Before she attempted orchestral writing, she concentrated on an exploration of musical texture in many of her chamber works. She also embarked on a period of intense personal study, analysing the orchestral scores of composers such as Ligeti and Lutoslawski (Gifford, H. 1998, pers. comm., 4 January), both in full score and piano reduction.

In 1963, Clive Douglas invited Gifford to write a work for the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. The resulting piece, *Phantasma* for string orchestra, was written shortly after she returned to Australia, at a time when she was influenced by twelve tone music. Gifford now describes *Phantasma* as being a rather immature work:

I see that still as a very young work...*Phantasma* could reflect...the Second Viennese School. Alban Berg's style of atonalism. Webern and Berg and certainly the early Schoenberg existed well and truly for me (Stevens, 1985, p. 35).

Unfortunately, due to time constraints in the orchestra's program, the work was never performed by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, although it received a performance in 1965 by the Pro Musica Society Orchestra, at the University of Sydney, under conductor Professor Donald Peart (Murdoch, 1972, p. 97).

In 1968²⁴ Gifford wrote *Chimaera*, her first orchestral work for full symphonic forces, harpsichord and six percussion players (Gifford, H. 1996, pers. comm., 22 July). *Chimaera* was concerned with an exploration of timbre and texture, and, like many Australian orchestral works of the nineteen-sixties, this interest led to the employment of large orchestral percussive forces:

...there was a concentration on percussion...I remember I had six percussionists in *Chimaera*, and a harpsichord. So timbre was definitely big then...The *Chimaera* sound was more accentuation on timbres and textures (Stevens, 1985, p. 36).

Gifford acquired her interest in musical texture from the school of the Polish Avant-Garde. Ligeti's *Atmospheres* was one work in particular to which she spent time listening, along with Lutoslawski's *3 Poems of Henri Michaux*. Gifford found these works to be a great influence on her writing and they were a major source of inspiration for her own orchestral works (Gifford, H. 1998, pers. comm., 4 January).

Chimaera was also inspired by a trip Gifford made to India in 1967. India was to have an enormous impact on Gifford and she was to say later that it was 'the place of her

dreams' (Gifford, H. 1998, pers. comm., 4 January). *Chimaera* was not an attempt to express directly the Indian sounds she heard there, but rather to portray in a general sense an atmosphere of exotic colour (Stevens, 1985, p. 35), played on western instruments (Gifford, H. 1998, pers. comm., 4 January).

In 1969 Gifford wrote what was to be her last orchestral work for twenty-seven years. *Imperium* is scored for full orchestra, piano, and percussion for seven players. Gifford describes this work as being more attuned to the Romantic style, and more retrospective, than *Chimaera*. The concept behind *Imperium* is the clashing of two cultures which results in the assimilation of one of them. On a fundamental level it represents the conflict between Western and Eastern cultures (Stevens, 1985, p. 36) and the obvious power play of imperialism. However, *Imperium* is also concerned with the subtle transformation that India had, in turn, on the British: '... that's just what fascinated me, the slow transition from European to Eastern and the resistance to it. So it's a pull against and yet a sucking in' (Gifford, H. 1998, pers. comm., 4 January).

Imperium has never been given a public performance, although it was workshopped at the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra's studio in the early nineteen-seventies, and conducted by composer, pianist and educator, Keith Humble, who held the position of lecturer at the University Of Melbourne at the time (Whiteoak, 1997, p. 285).²⁵ Again, like *Chimaera*, this work too was recorded and released on the ABC Australian Composers Series.

In the 1970s Gifford became involved in writing music for theatre, and found she did not have the time for writing concert music. She felt despondent about writing for orchestra and was critical of *Chimaera* and *Imperium*.

...I now look at those works as being limited and unsatisfactory. I haven't been terribly interested in writing for orchestra since; there's so much to be resolved as a composer now in orchestral techniques, making the best use of an orchestra and writing for orchestra... (Stevens, 1985, p. 36).

It was not until seventeen years later in 1996, the same year in which *Chimaera* was finally premiered, that Gifford wrote her next orchestral work, *Point of Ignition*, for mezzo-soprano and orchestra. This work is a setting of six poems by Jessica Aldridge (Gifford, H. 1996, pers. comm., 22 July). As Gifford wrote these six settings, she thought of Kate Sadler, an English-born mezzo-soprano now living in Australia, as a potential performer. Gifford prefers to set texts for specific voices (her monodrama *Regarding Faustus* was written for Robert Gard). Gifford can then modify the work to bring out the singer's strengths (and of course, avoid their weaknesses) and also explore unusual vocal techniques with the knowledge that they can be performed. When she began writing *Point of Ignition*, Gifford believes she was motivated by the words themselves, drawing extensively on her dramatic background in theatre music composition. For example, she describes one of the settings, *Gothic Guns*, in these terms:

... I thought here's my chance to do the defining Australian music and it ended up being just one chord from start to finish, one sustained chord. In fact, book-ended by A flats in the top and bottom and that's just strings, and then there's a glissandi on the chimes with successive triangle beaters, with the lorikeet in the gums suddenly appearing (Gifford, H. 1998, pers. comm., 4 January).

With *Point of Ignition* Gifford had to work within the confines of the human voice, and consequently she does not consider this latest orchestral work to be very experimental stylistically. She also has doubts whether the work will be performed,

due to funding cuts in the arts in Australia and the reorganisation of the ABC orchestras into separate companies with central administration through Symphony Australia (Gifford, H. 1996, pers. comm., 22 July). Gifford sent this score to the score reading panel at Symphony Australia, who select orchestral works for performance by the ABC orchestras. On 24 November, 1998, she received a rejection letter from them regretting the fact that *Point of Ignition* was not recommended for performance (Gifford, H. 2000, pers. comm., 28 January).

***Chimaera*: a detailed study of Gifford's engagement with the repertorial process**

A representative example of Gifford's orchestral work is *Chimaera*. Its history is somewhat more interesting than *Imperium's*, as although it had to wait thirty years for a performance, it did finally obtain one. *Chimaera* illustrates clearly the problems Gifford has had in negotiating the orchestral repertorial process.

Factors affecting the creative process

The impetus for the creation of *Chimaera* came from Gifford's own desire to write an orchestral work. It was something she had personally wanted to do for a while, and was not the result of an orchestral commission:

...none of the orchestral pieces were commissions. You were lucky and you needed to live in Sydney to get orchestral commissions, I think. They weren't bandied around at that stage before the Australia Council of the Arts... Anyhow they weren't commissioned, they were just written because I wanted to write them... (Gifford, H. 1998, pers. comm., 4 January).²⁶

It was Gifford's intrinsic interest in, and experimentation with, texture, colour and timbre that led to a desire to investigate these elements within large-scale works. Her need to explore these elements, as a composer, overrode more practical considerations such as procuring a commission, or obtaining at least a show of interest by a conductor or orchestra before she began writing.

Chimaera is a programmatic work that draws on Gifford's travels in India. It depicts the fire-breathing dragon, known for its capricious and whimsical nature. The work is also bound up with the way in which the imagination contributes to the mystery and romanticised ideas that surround the legend of the Chimaera:

Chimaera, my first orchestral work, was written not long after a visit to India. The harpsichord and substantial percussion part reflect the concerns with textural effects that was prevalent in the 1960s. The music is about the theatrical posturing and whimsicality of the fabulous winged and dragon tailed monster of ancient law — the fire breathing Chimaera — as well as with wildly improbable fancy and mystery which surrounds the legend (Gifford, H. 1998, pers. comm., 4 January).

The title refers to ancient Greek mythology, the Chimaera being a she-monster with the head of a lion, the body of a goat, and the tail of a serpent (Bulfinch, 1994, p. 153), with its origins in oriental cultures.

For Gifford, *Chimaera*'s function lies in the communication of a synthesis of compositional influences drawn from diverse backgrounds: the integration of musical and philosophical ideas gleaned from a rich mixture of cultural influences; stylistically European — French, Russian and Polish — and yet also Indian. Gifford felt that through this multi-cultural synthesis a voice could be found that was uniquely Australian:

[*Chimaera* and *Imperium*] could be seen as an attempt to get it all together: European style but Asian ornamentation, with a nod to the impressionist palette of the French and Russian ballets for the Diaghilev Company, structured according to Polish theories of in-determinacy, while heavily involved in percussion and the whole area of timbre and indefinite pitch. The scenario for an Australian composition in a time of plenty — Australian synthetic: or the new orthodoxy? Being in a multi-cultural coat though, an expansive view of the world's music may be more a characteristic of composers in Australia than those in other parts of the world (Gifford, 1982, pp. 191 - 192).

The orchestral work

Chimaera's performance directive specifies that the instruments lie within the non-professional range (Adler, S. 1989, pp. 615 - 624), making the score accessible, on this level at least, to a large range of orchestras, both professional and non-professional. The scoring is larger than the standard orchestral set-up (Adler, S. 1989, p. 605), and requires 1 piccolo, 3 flutes (3rd flute doubles piccolo), 2 oboes, 1 cor anglais, 1 bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, 3 horns in F, 3 trumpets in B flat, 3 trombones (2 tenor, 1 bass), percussion for 6 players (timpani, snare drum, bass drum, 1 suspended cymbal, tam-tam, tambourine, wood block, triangle, glockenspiel, xylophone, maracas, tom-tom), harp, celeste, harpsichord and strings. The extended percussion section stems from Gifford's fascination with instrumental colour and texture. In Australia in the nineteen-sixties there was a strong emphasis on timbre and texture, and along with this came an investigation into the way in which various instruments could combine to provide new and unusual sounds. Gifford was particularly concerned with the ways in which percussion could add colour and interest to her work.²⁷

...there was just a general sort of exotic sensation of colour — harmonic colour and instrumental colour — that I was interested in expressing (Stevens, 1985, p. 36).

The duration of *Chimaera* is ten minutes, which is considered by Australia's professional orchestras to be an 'ideal' programming length (Lidbetter, K. 1999, pers. comm., 20 May).²⁸

Mediation process

When Gifford finished writing *Chimaera*, she sent it to the ABC in Sydney in the hope that they would programme the work in one of their concerts. This was standard procedure in the late nineteen-sixties:

...when I finished the orchestral works there was only one way of getting them done. You sent a score to the Sydney Head Office. The Federal Music Department, the State ABCs, had the money to do nothing. All the money came from Sydney if anything was to be done (Gifford, H. 1998, pers. comm., 4 January).

Gifford sent the score of *Chimaera* to the ABC and received a letter from conductor Patrick Thomas, who held the position of Assistant Conductor with the South Australian Symphony Orchestra at the time (Langford, 1997, p. 550). Thomas told Gifford that he would record *Chimaera* at the Norwood Studios in Adelaide (1969). For Gifford the event marked such an important stage in her orchestral writing, that she travelled to Adelaide to be present at the recording. While she was there, she found Thomas to be very encouraging of her work (Gifford, H. 1998, pers. comm., 4 January). Nevertheless, although *Chimaera* was recorded by the ABC and released on their Australian Composer Series, the work did not receive a public concert performance until almost thirty years later.

Despite Gifford's action in sending her score to the ABC and subsequent recording, *Chimaera* was not programmed for a public performance. This was to prove disastrous for *Chimaera*, in terms of the repertorial process, for with its extended instrumentation, particularly the large percussion section, it required an orchestra that had the capacity to

produce the extra resources. When the professional ABC orchestras declined to programme the work this greatly limited its scope for performance in Australia. Gifford had to wait for twenty-nine years until *Chimaera* finally received its premiere on 6 March 1996, by the Queensland Symphony Orchestra. The work was programmed in a 'Meet the Composer Series' on a full programme of women's orchestral works.

Critical judgement

Chimaera has received one review. This review was positive. 'She [Gifford] combined this [the programmatic background] with an electrifying array of orchestral colours and sound textures, driving the rhythm one moment, setting a taut drama the next' (Kelly, 1996, p. 21).

Dissemination process

As demonstrated, *Chimaera* was recorded in 1969 on a non-commercial recording, but to date has not been recorded for issue on CD. As far as publishing goes, Gifford has never tried to get a publisher for any of her orchestral works:

I haven't ever approached a publisher...I used to feel a bit envious of composers who had gone overseas and got foreign publishers, but then they told me themselves later that the works were just sitting in the show room, nothing done (Gifford, H. 1998, pers. comm., 4 January).

The score and parts in facsimile format are available through the AMC hire library.

As *Chimaera* has neither been published nor recorded it is unlikely that university music departments have had contact with it. Very little orchestral repertoire written by women is being studied at university level and one reason for this may well lie in the fact that so few women composers have orchestral publications and recordings.

Summary

The fact that *Chimaera* was written as an expression of the composer's desire to explore an element of orchestral music and was not commissioned has worked against it in the repertorial process. Although Gifford was initially active by sending the score to the ABC soon after it was finished, she had to wait twenty-nine years for the premiere. For many years this work was denied the opportunity of passing through the repertorial process, where it might have brought recognition to the composer as an orchestral composer. It is likely that this is one reason Gifford has never received an orchestral commission to date, despite receiving many commissions for works in other genres.

Chimaera has a mixture of elements working both for and against it, in terms of its attractiveness for programming. Its programmatic background with its multi-cultural perspective has a particular empathy in Australia. The incorporation of Asian elements in music, and other arts, has increased in Australia since the time *Chimaera* was written and this may well have been a contributing factor to its eventual programming in 1996. The range of the instruments is non-professional which is helpful for professional orchestras, often running on tight budgets and with hectic orchestral schedules to maintain. However, the fact that the percussion section is large and requires extra players does make it unsuitable for many orchestras, due to financial restraints. Although this did not prohibit the work's performance by the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, other orchestras may well have difficulty in finding the resources to perform it, both in terms of players and money.

Despite the lack of performance for twenty-nine years, Gifford was fortunate that the work was recorded and some effort must have gone into the recording, as Gifford mentions that it was recorded in '118 takes'. Although the recording was only available in a limited way, being part of the ABC's Australian Composers Series,

Gifford nonetheless, welcomed the opportunity of hearing the work since it enabled her to hone her orchestral craft.

From this study of Gifford, I have demonstrated some of the problems which can beset an orchestral work when it is written from the point of view of a composer's desire. Whether *Chimaera* has the potential to gather momentum after its premiere in Queensland is somewhat doubtful because of its limited dissemination, and has little to do with the merit of the work itself.

Gifford's participation in the orchestral milieu has been unsatisfactory, if using only the criterion of performance. She has certainly made worthwhile contributions in this field, but unfortunately her works have not had the chance to move through the repertorial process due to lack of commissioning, lack of connections within the ABC orchestral power base, and, almost certainly, a reluctance to push herself forward. Self-promotion is not something which comes easily to Gifford. When asked if she promotes her works she replied: 'No, no. That takes a terrific amount of energy²⁹ and I think it's a bit pointless' (Gifford, H. 1998, pers. comm., 4 January). Like many composers she views self-promotion as a time-consuming process that takes up valuable composing time.

Although the orchestral milieu has been a place in which Gifford has struggled to find a position for herself, her experiences have not embittered her. She remains optimistic about the prospect of writing more orchestral works in the future.

Chapter Five

Miriam Hyde 1913 –

In comparison with Gifford, Miriam Hyde's career as an orchestral composer begins much more positively and constructively. Although her story to date is perhaps in some sense more frustrating, she nonetheless achieved, in her early years, considerable recognition as an orchestral composer.

Miriam Hyde's background as an orchestral composer

Miriam Hyde's life as a composer for large-scale forces is remarkable in many ways, not least of these being the writing of her first orchestral work, circa 1930 - 31, when she was only seventeen or eighteen years of age. This early work was the first movement of a symphony written while she was studying for a Bachelor of Music at the Elder Conservatorium in Adelaide. A study of orchestration formed part of the third year course, although at the time there was no Conservatorium orchestra with which to play student works (Hyde, M. 1998, pers. comm., 19 September). Hyde describes this symphony as being 'very immature' (de Berg, 1975b, pp. 11 & 206).

Shortly after writing this work, Hyde was offered a workshop with William Mallinson, the conductor of the Malvern Symphony Orchestra in Melbourne. In the difficult task of preparing the score for performance, Hyde was assisted by her mother, who did a great deal of the part copying, an essential support in the days before photocopying (Hyde, M. 1998, pers. comm., 19 September). The experience of hearing her first orchestral composition was to have a significant effect on the young Hyde, one that was both stimulating and encouraging, and was something she would later recall as 'wonderful' (de Berg, 1975b, pp. 11 & 206).

Not long after this, Hyde won an Elder Scholarship for further music study overseas, and this scholarship opened up a new life for her as both a composer and pianist. Hyde's orchestral writing was to reach a high point at the Royal College of Music in London, while her skills as a pianist (piano was her first study) gave her the opportunity of many orchestral performance opportunities (Hyde, 1997). Hyde had written a movement for two pianos before leaving Australia and, under the direction and encouragement of R. O. Morris at the Royal College of Music, this movement became the seed from which her *Piano Concerto No. 1 in E-flat Minor* grew. In this London period, Hyde found her orchestral writing greatly influenced by Rachmaninov and she went to several concerts of his performances. One concert in particular, when Rachmaninov performed his *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini*, was to have a significant impact on her:

...Rachmaninov's works, particularly the *C Minor Concerto*...made a tremendous influence on me. And I know from then on, for a period of some years, I was very strongly influenced by him and I also had the remarkable good fortune to hear him in person in four concerts during my studies in London. I was at the first London performance, probably a world premiere I think it was, of the *Rhapsody on a Paganini Theme* — the most electrifying concert I've ever attended anywhere. I could hardly keep in my seat it got so exciting (Hyde, M. 1998, pers. comm., 19 September).

While at the Royal College, Hyde received, in addition to her scholarship, a small grant of money for the purpose of obtaining a copyist. This was an important consideration, as Hyde did not have the time to spend copying parts, with piano practice taking up much of her time (Hyde, M. 1998, pers. comm., 19 September). Her first mature orchestral work, *Piano Concerto No.1 in E-flat Minor*,³⁰ received its

premiere at a Patron's Fund Concert, a series of concerts set up to promote young composers and performers (Hyde, 1991, p. 54), with the London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Leslie Heward and with Hyde as soloist, in February 1934 (de Berg, 1975b, pp. 11 & 198). Hyde found the experience in London particularly stimulating in terms of orchestral writing:

Oh, it was absolutely magical and it was an absolute surprise to me that it would happen so quickly to me in my studies over there...well, I hadn't written much for orchestra of course before I left Adelaide — but the thought of having my work performed by an orchestra was something sort of magic that I didn't think would ever happen... (Hyde, M. 1998, pers. comm., 19 September).

Her years in London were exceptionally busy with both performing and composing. During this London period, 1932-5, Hyde also wrote *Lyric* for small orchestra, based on the memory of an evening attending the Regent's Park Open Air Theatre. At the suggestion of R. O. Morris, Hyde also studied at the Royal College of Music with Gordon Jacob, who gave her much encouragement (Crews, 1987, p. 221) and helped her complete the scoring of *Lyric*, the writing of which had lapsed for some time (Sitsky, 1990, p. 27). When Hyde finally finished *Lyric*, it was performed by the BBC Empire Orchestra, with conductor Eric Fogg (Hyde, M. 1998, pers. comm., 19 September). In 1933, at Morris' suggestion, Hyde extended her orchestral scoring by writing *Symphonic Overture in F-sharp minor*, incorporating into her previous orchestral scoring bass clarinet, double bassoon and tuba, and some additional percussion (Hyde, M. 1998, pers. comm., 19 September).

Hyde began work on her second piano concerto, *Concerto No. 2 in C-sharp Minor*, soon after the completion of the *Symphonic Overture in F-sharp minor*. Shortly after

beginning this composition, however, Hyde had a mental breakdown due to overwork.

Of orchestral works, I think I feel closest to the second movement of my second piano concerto — the slow movement. That movement was written in London after I'd been through a very traumatic time. I had a very bad nervous breakdown in London, with my studies, overwork and the pressure I felt as the recipient of the scholarship...The slow movement is a particularly serene sort of work. Perhaps it was coming through that, that made me feel I had some sort of grasp of a serenity that I hadn't experienced previously (Myers, 1988, pp. 48 - 49).

After recovering, Hyde finished this second piano concerto, which received its premiere performance on November 15th, 1935 by the London Symphony Orchestra, with well-known conductor Constant Lambert (Hyde, 1991, p. 75). Shortly after, Hyde also performed Beethoven's *Piano Concerto No.4*, with Sir Malcolm Sargent conducting, and had the opportunity of including her own cadenzas in the performance. Hyde was awarded two prizes for composition while studying at the Royal College of Music (Williams, 1997). In the four years that she was in London, Hyde wrote five orchestral works.

In 1936 Hyde returned to Australia. Before leaving London her friends, the Simnetts, suggested she write something for Adelaide's centennial celebrations and so she began work on her *Adelaide Overture*, drawing on the influences of composer John Ireland (Hyde, M. 1998, pers. comm., 19 September). Arriving in Adelaide, Hyde immediately became involved in the orchestral preparations for Adelaide's centenary year, 1936. She was asked to provide incidental orchestral music to a large pageant which was to be staged in the Tivoli Theatre as part of the celebrations. The incidental music that Hyde provided for 'Heritage' comprised: *Australian Bush Rhapsody*,

Phantom Explorers, Romance of Industry, Wheatfield, Fantasia on Waltzing Matilda, Oranges and Lemons, and Wine Waltz, all scored for small theatre orchestra and performed under conductor John Horner (Hyde, 1991, p. 81). The small Adelaide studio orchestra was augmented to fifty or sixty players for the ABC-sponsored centennial concerts and became the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra (McCredie, 1988, p. 185).

Hyde had some difficulties with the programming of her overture. Although *Adelaide Overture* had been accepted verbally by the ABC, an advance programme omitted all mention of it. Hyde recollects that it was only her intervention by writing a letter to Charles Moses, General Manager of the ABC, that the work was reinstated on the program (Hyde, M. 1998, pers. comm., 19 September). The performance of *Adelaide Overture* took place in the new Centennial Hall (Williams, 1997) with conductor Sir Malcolm Sargent on the 22 October, 1936 (Hyde, 1991, p. 83). During her short time in Adelaide Hyde came to the realisation that the chances of obtaining orchestral performances would be rare (Hyde, 1991, p. 86), so in 1936 she made preparations to move to Sydney:

Towards the end of that year (1936), in spite of the fact that Sir Malcolm Sargent was going to perform my *Adelaide Overture* at the State Centenary Concert, I began to feel that the scope in Adelaide was rather limited... (de Berg, 1975, pp. 11 & 211).

Hyde had moved to Sydney by the time *Adelaide Overture* was premiered and consequently she only ever heard this work performed once, and that was by radio broadcast.

At this time Hyde had a profile as an orchestral composer and received a degree of support from the orchestral community. The conductor, Sir Bernard Heinze, conducted her *Concerto No. 2 in C-sharp Minor* with the Melbourne Symphony

Orchestra (Hyde, M. 1996, pers. comm., 5 June) and he included in other concerts her *Symphonic Overture* and *Lyric*. A year later her second piano concerto was once again performed, this time by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in a celebrity concert conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent (Hyde, 1991, p. 91).

While she was living in Sydney, Hyde became friends with the Bainton family — Helen Bainton the daughter of the family was of a similar age. This acquaintance was to reap not only the rewards of friendship, but also for Hyde professional rewards. Dr. Edgar Bainton was, at that time, the Director of the NSW Conservatorium of Music and he conducted the Sydney Conservatorium Orchestra. Consequently a performance of two of Hyde's orchestral works was organised: *Piano Concerto No. 1 in E-flat Minor*, which received its Australian premiere in an all Australian concert on the 2nd of March, 1938, and *Heroic Elegy*, premiered on the 30th October 1940 (Williams, 1997). *Heroic Elegy* (1933) draws its influences from the music of Elgar (Hyde, M. 1998, pers. comm., 19 September) and was written for a friend whose husband had been killed in an accident in London.

In the meantime, on the 25th May 1940, Hyde had travelled to Adelaide in order to perform her *Piano Concerto No.1 in E-flat Minor* as part of an effort to raise money for the Red Cross. She notes in her autobiography that: '[t]he War gave me the first opportunity to perform my *No.1 Concerto*...[in Australia]' (Hyde, 1991, p. 99).

From the time of her marriage in 1939, and up until the birth of her first child in 1950, Hyde wrote two works for mezzo soprano and orchestra, re-scored part of the original music for *Heritage* into *Fantasia on Waltzing Matilda*, and wrote three more large scale works, *Fantasy Romantic*, *Village Fair* ³¹ and the tone poem, *The Symbolic Gate*. These works draw on the influence of Rachmaninov (Hyde, M. 1998, pers. comm., 19 September).

It was during this period that Hyde began to experience problems in obtaining orchestral performances. Hyde's tone poem, *The Symbolic Gate* (1945), was rehearsed once with an ABC orchestra, but never received a public performance, although Hyde believes it is on a par with her other orchestral works. Her *Village Fair*, originally scored as a ballet, was never choreographed, possibly due to lack of funds during the war, was for many years subjected to a similar fate as *The Symbolic Gate* (Hyde, 1997). Although the ABC made a recording of this work in the 1970s it was not until 1995, fifty-two years after it was written, that it received a public performance, by the Strathfield Symphony Orchestra, Sydney, conducted by Dr. Solomon Bard (Hyde, M. 1998, pers. comm., 19 September).

In 1957 Hyde's second piano concerto was performed by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Joseph Post, and received its first recording. Post suggested to Hyde that she extend the slow movement of the concerto and bring the main theme in again, but Hyde felt the work was long enough as it was. She was also deterred by the thought of copying all the parts again at a time when photocopying had yet to be invented (Hyde, M. 1998, pers. comm., 19 September). While her children were young, between the years 1951 and 1959,³² Hyde wrote a work for mezzo-soprano and orchestra, *Thoughts at Dusk*, and three works for full orchestral forces: *Happy Occasion Overture*,³³ *Orchestral Theme and Variations* and *Kelso Overture*. *Happy Occasion Overture* was written at the request of composer and pianist Lindley Evans, who asked Hyde if she would write a work for the Australian Youth Orchestra. Rehearsals were due to start within a number of days, so Hyde wrote this work over a weekend (Hyde, 1991, pp. 123 - 124). Hyde says of this piece that: 'It was conceived in a spirit of recreation and aims at giving all players a "say", while avoiding unnecessary complexities of technique and ensemble' (Hyde, annotation, n.d.).

The ABC gave her orchestral work, *Theme and Variations*, a 'run through' at a rehearsal, but for reasons unknown to Hyde they declined to place it in a concert program. Hyde remarked in an interview with Rita Crews that:

I really felt very frustrated by that, when I heard certain other trivial things that were coming over the air. So I thought, why bother putting all that time into sitting writing pages and pages of orchestral music if it's not going to be performed? I feel sure it's as good as a lot of music that is performed (Crews, 1987, p. 223).

In 1959, to celebrate the family's move to Kelso Street in the Sydney suburb of Burwood Heights, Hyde wrote her *Kelso Overture*. Although *Kelso Overture* has never received a public performance, it was recorded by the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, conductor Rudolph Pekarek (Hyde, M. 1998, pers. comm., 19 September).

In 1970, five Australian composers who had known Alfred Hill were each asked to contribute one movement to an orchestral work, to commemorate the centenary of his birth. Hyde contributed the third movement, 'Lento', based on a theme chosen by Andrew McCredie from the slow movement of Hill's *Symphony in E minor* (1956).³⁴ *Lento* is Hyde's last orchestral work to date.

The general disinterest in her later orchestral works, *Symbolic Gate* and *Orchestral Theme and Variations*, which were never to receive a performance, had a disastrous effect on Hyde. She dealt with an increasing sense of frustration as she heard other composers' orchestral works being performed, while her own works went unperformed. She began to feel more and more that orchestral writing was not worth the enormous effort required, particularly with the demands of family to cope with as well (Crews, 1987 p.223):

...it was pretty disheartening when you get a rehearsal and they don't tell if they like it or they don't, or whether it will ever be performed and that discouraged me and I thought, 'well I may as well be writing more piano works or chamber music or something with a chance of being published and performed'. And I think it's like a language, if you don't keep on at it, you know, the instinct and the technique get away from you. So I haven't written for orchestra since (Hyde, M. 1998, pers. comm., 19 September).

Hyde felt that these later works were of good quality and has never understood why they did not receive performances.

Piano Concerto No. 2 in C-sharp Minor: a detailed study of Hyde's engagement with the repertorial process

Hyde's *Piano Concerto No. 2 in C Sharp Minor*, an early work, has been chosen for detailed study as it is from the period when her orchestral works were being performed with some frequency. Being a piano concerto it is also a work in which Hyde has been able to contribute towards performances as soloist. Of all her orchestral works, it is the one which Hyde describes as being closest to her (Hyde, M. 1998, pers. comm., 19 September).

Factors affecting the creative process

The impetus to write a second piano concerto was stimulated in part by the success of Hyde's first piano concerto, which had received two performances in London, one with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, and the other with the BBC Orchestra. The work had received praise in the prominent newspapers such as *The Times* and *The Daily Telegraph* and the piano concerto was a favourite orchestral medium for Hyde, in that it allowed her to be both performer and composer. As I have already mentioned, *Piano Concerto No. 2 in C-sharp Minor* was written at a time when Hyde had suffered

a nervous breakdown. As she began to recover she felt impelled to express her new sense of serenity through musical means (Hyde, M. 2000, pers. comm., 24 January). Not surprisingly she felt herself drawn to the piano concerto. Hyde recalls with some amusement how the idea for the opening of this piano concerto came to her.

I was attending a performance of a Brahms concerto and during it I thought of the opening of this concerto [laughs]. It's not a great compliment to poor Brahms I'm afraid, that I was so sidetracked from his concerto (Hyde, M. 1998, pers. comm., 19 September).

The orchestral work

Piano Concerto No. 2 in C-sharp Minor's performance directive specifies 2 flutes (piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets in A, 2 bassoons, 4 horns in F, 2 trumpets in A, 2 trombones, bass trombone, timpani, piano, and strings. Scoring is, if anything, on the smaller end of the standard orchestral setup (Adler, S. 1989, pp. 615 - 624) and, with the exception of Violin I, all instruments fall within the non-professional range. (In the 3rd movement of the concerto the Violin I briefly ascends to F, seven ledger lines above the staff). The work is substantial in that it consists of three movements and is approximately 25 minutes duration.³⁵

The score is held at the AMC and can be borrowed through their hire library. The score is a facsimile of the composer's autograph.

Mediation process

Hyde's *Piano Concerto No. 2* received its first performance in the same way as her *Piano Concerto No. 1*, that is, through the Patron's Fund at the Royal College of Music in London where she was studying. There orchestral works were submitted by the composition lecturers, and then suitable pieces were selected to make up an orchestral concert.

Hyde's second piano concerto has been successful in terms of performances, having had at least six performances to date, although this is over a period of nearly 60 years. Five of those performances have been by major orchestras: the premiere by the London Symphony Orchestra, two by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, and three by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, the latest being in 1993 as a tribute to Hyde on her eightieth birthday.

Hyde's ability as a pianist has been particularly important to the promotion of her orchestral works, greatly facilitating the premiere performances and helping sustain repeat performances. She has performed all of her piano concertos with major orchestras, as well as youth and non-professional orchestras, both nationally and internationally and under such notable conductors as Malcolm Sargent and Constant Lambert.

Critical judgement

The reviews of Hyde's *Concerto No. 2 in C Sharp Minor* present this work, for the most part, in a very positive way. Hyde's pianistic execution of her work is particularly praised, typical comments being that she was 'a fluent and graceful executant' (*The Argus*, n.d.)³⁶ or that she played 'exceedingly well' (*The Morning Post*, 1935, 16 November). The composition itself is also acclaimed: characteristic comments state that the work has 'variety and an animating spirit' (*The Age*, n.d.), that it is 'ambitious and accomplished', or that it 'shows conspicuous talent' (*The Daily Telegraph*, 1935, 16 November). The only negative criticism, mentioned in almost half of the reviews, addresses Hyde's perceived lack of originality in composition and her use of nineteenth-century idioms.

Dissemination process

Piano Concerto No. 2 was recorded by the West Australian Symphony Orchestra in 1975, conducted by Geoffrey Simon. It was released on vinyl in the ABC's Australian Composers Series. This recording was then reissued in 1995 on the CD *Australian Composers, Vol. 1*, 446 285 - 2.

Summary

The creation of this work arose from the composer's desire, during Hyde's time as a student (and a student with a successful profile as an orchestral writer). The Patron's Fund of the Royal College provided the infrastructure to enable orchestral performances of student works. This was an important pathway for emerging composers, and, combined with Hyde's substantial skills as an orchestral piano soloist, made a vital contribution to this concerto's movement through the repertorial process. Since its premiere in London, the *Piano Concerto No. 2 in C-sharp Minor* has been performed by major professional orchestras in both Australia and London, and Hyde has been soloist for many of the performances. The newspaper reviews have also contributed to the repertorial life of this work, presenting to the public a very positive picture of Hyde both as a competent orchestral writer — albeit if somewhat unoriginal — and an accomplished pianist.

It is interesting to note that *Piano Concerto No. 2 in C sharp minor* follows the trend of other orchestral works written by Hyde. Generally there are several performances of the work that take place in the nineteen-thirties and even into the nineteen-forties. After this the performances fall dramatically until the nineteen-nineties, when there is a marked revival of interest probably due to an increasing interest in Australia's cultural heritage, and consequently a re-evaluation of its older composers.

Hyde's orchestral experiences are perplexing. In the first part of her orchestral career she was relatively successful, and yet her middle years were difficult — so much so, that in the nineteen-fifties she ceased to write orchestral works altogether (with one

exception: 'Lento' from the *Variations on a Theme by Alfred Hill*). Hyde began very strongly in the orchestral field as a young female composer, writing nine orchestral works in the nineteen-thirties alone and obtaining many performances of her works. Although her orchestral works were not commissioned (to date she has not received an orchestral commission), she managed, in part, by being a concert pianist as well as a student, to obtain at least one, and often more, performances of all her early works while she was in London. However, the move back to Australia limited her opportunities somewhat in terms of orchestral performances. Despite her friendship with the Bainton family, her orchestral performances began to taper off.

It is difficult to explain the general lack of interest in Hyde's orchestral career in the nineteen-fifties, sixties and seventies. Perhaps one reason could lie in the fact that, at the time, she was a mother juggling a compositional career and two children. Orchestral writing was difficult for Hyde at this time due to the constant interruptions and demands made upon her as a mother. Perhaps this made the smaller forms seem more attractive and manageable. In this decade Hyde showed a marked preference for writing songs, and for many of these she also wrote the words. These songs brought Hyde much success, for in this period of time she won no fewer than ten song composition prizes (Williams, 1997). They may well have led, however, to Hyde becoming associated more and more with the domestic sphere (especially as she was now a wife and mother), and with utilitarian forms of music, rather than, as previously, with the 'high-art' concert forms. Another important factor may well have been the rise of an 'avant-garde' set of young professional male composers around this time embracing new, international styles. Works by composers such as Hyde whose writing was based on a conservative English style were often dismissed in perjorative terms.

At the beginning of her orchestral career, Hyde was well-positioned to establish herself as an up-and-coming orchestral composer. Her prolific orchestral writing, her

frequent high profile performances, and the positive reviews she received, generated further interest in her existing orchestral works and a demand for new ones. Other circumstances, however, such as the war and family commitments, impeded her ability to negotiate the repertorial process and she faded from public view as an orchestral composer. However, interest in her music, including her orchestral music, has revived in the nineteen-nineties as a result of a general increase in awareness of Australia's musical heritage — a heritage to which Hyde has made a significant contribution.

Chapter Six

Anne Boyd 1946 -

Boyd has had a mixed degree of success within the orchestral field. Although her orchestral output is much smaller than Hyde's, there are some similarities. Although she began as a strong contender, her orchestral participation has lost its early momentum. She is also a composer who has been made acutely aware of discrimination through her personal experiences.

Anne Boyd's background as an orchestral composer

Anne Boyd has composed three works for full orchestra (*Voice of the Phoenix*, *Black Sun* and *Grathawai*), as well as a number of works for children's orchestra, children's orchestra and brass band, and string orchestra.

Boyd's interest in orchestral writing stems from her childhood flute studies, begun when she was thirteen or fourteen years of age, which stirred an awakening interest in the orchestral medium. Boyd recalls that after only two or three flute lessons she found herself playing second flute in Smetana's tone poem, *The Moldau* (Boyd, A. 1998, pers. Comm., 23 October). In 1966 she spent a part of the year as a performer on tour with the orchestra of the Australian Ballet (Cohen, 1987, p. 102).

As a composition student Boyd had always felt an affinity with orchestral music. Debussy's use of tritones, whole tone scales, pentatonicism, and love of the orient, was a profound influence on her, as was the music of Penderecki and Ligeti. Although Boyd had felt the urge to write an orchestral piece for some time, the difficulties of obtaining an orchestral performance in the nineteen-sixties, particularly for a woman, deterred her from writing in this genre. She also felt that her young male colleagues

were being given chances often denied their female counterparts (Boyd, A. 1998, pers. comm., 23 October).

Anne Boyd was also discriminated against when the male students of her generation received all the opportunities to write for the ABC Orchestra. She said, 'I am just as sure as I am sitting here, that it was the direct result of sheer prejudice against women writing music' (LePage, 1988, p. 41)

During her studies at the University of Sydney, Boyd received tuition in composition from Peter Sculthorpe. Although Sculthorpe was to have a tremendous impact on Boyd's compositional style, particularly with regard to ethnomusicological studies and the resulting exploration of non-European sounds, he was also discouraging in terms of women writing large-scale works. This attitude, however, merely strengthened Boyd's resolve to prove herself:

.... when Peter Sculthorpe said to me, 'Oh, but Anne, you must know that women can't write music. I mean there are no great women composers – show me the great women composers.' I sort of swallowed that hook, line and sinker and I thought, well I'm determined that I'm going to prove him wrong (Boyd, A. 1998, pers. comm., 23 October).

Boyd's first orchestral writing had to wait for several years until 1969 when she was granted a Commonwealth Scholarship for overseas study (Cohen, 1987, p. 102). She then went to the University of York in England to undertake PhD studies in composition with Wilfrid Mellers and Bernard Rands (Boyd, n.d.). At the time Bernard Rands was conducting the university orchestra and, at Boyd's persistent requests, he gave her the chance to have her orchestral work performed.

....there were a lot of composers and of course there was competition for the orchestra and it took me quite a lot of persuasion, I imagine, to get Bernard to conduct this work for me (Boyd, A. 1998, pers. comm., 23 October).

Voice of the Phoenix was performed on the 11th June 1971 by the University of York Orchestra, conducted by Bernard Rands. It was through hearing this performance that Boyd knew she had finally found her own compositional voice (Boyd, A. 1998, pers. comm., 23 October). Significantly, it was with this first orchestral work that Boyd felt able to communicate her own inner soundscape to the outside world (Ruff, 1978-79, pp. 121-122).

Another important repercussion the premiere had was to give Boyd the support of established composers Morton Feldman and Harrison Birtwistle (LePage 1988, pp. 44-45). These were both composers Boyd admired, particularly Feldman for his soft sounds and creative use of orchestral colour (Boyd, A. 1998, pers. comm., 23 October).

Voice of the Phoenix is scored for a large symphony orchestra, expanding the standard instrumentation in the winds, and adding to the percussion (ten players), and the keyboard section, amplified piano, guitar, harpsichord and synthesiser. For inspiration Boyd, rejecting the European tradition (Crisp, 1978, p. 17), looked to Asia and more specifically to Japan's ancient court music, 'gagaku', which she had studied five years earlier with Sculthorpe. Boyd's passion for Asian culture and specifically for Japanese music was not based in experiential reality, but was more a Romanticised ideal; it was the Japan of her imagination that was the potent force behind her work:

I was immediately fascinated by the strange, centuries-old, yet somehow timeless, static quality of this music; by the weirdly beautiful and exotic sonorities of an orchestra comprised of wind, string and percussion

instruments which, unlike the instruments of our Western symphony orchestras, have remained in a non-evolutionary state in some cases for thousands of years (Boyd, 1971b, p. 1).

For Boyd, gagaku music somehow seemed to resonate with her childhood memories of life in the vast outback of Australia, and it was symbolic of the elemental struggle for existence that takes place in harsh and remote landscapes (Boyd, A. 1998, pers. comm., 23 October). The mythical phoenix that arises from its own ashes symbolised for Boyd the life and death drama between nature and humankind's ability to achieve harmony with it (Boyd, 1971b p. 2) and, as Crisp suggests, the phoenix could well be symbolic of Boyd's own quest for the birth of a new musical language (Crisp, 1978, p. 17).

The title of the work comes from the 'sho', a type of Japanese mouth organ whose shape and sound is said to resemble the mythical phoenix. As a compositional basis, Boyd used melodic material from the 'sho' in the traditional gagaku work, *Etenraku*, and, in fact, all the melodic material in this work is derived from *Etenraku* melodies. The rhythms are derived from the general gagaku genre (Boyd, 1971b, p. 2).

Black Sun, written in 1989, was Boyd's next large scale work for full orchestral forces, although for a somewhat more modest orchestra than *Voice of the Phoenix*. *Black Sun* was commissioned by The Women's Philharmonic in San Francisco. In the years 1981 - 1990, Boyd lived in Hong Kong, as she had been appointed founding Head of the Music Department at the University of Hong Kong in 1981 (Radic, 1994b, p. 81). At the time she really wanted to return seriously to composition, interrupted through the birth of her daughter several years before, and, although she had written smaller works in that time, no major commissions had materialised. The Women's Philharmonic, based in San Francisco, was looking for works with a Pacific theme, and because Boyd drew on Asia as a source of inspiration, she was

commissioned to write a work (Boyd, A. 1998, pers. comm., 23 October). The programmatic context of *Black Sun* was inspired by the student uprising that took place in China's Tiannamen Square in 1989. Boyd felt strongly that she could give her support to the students, and protest the actions of the Chinese government, through her work as a composer.

The writing of *Black Sun* was not only intended as a commemoration of the students who had died but also as a literal portrayal of the events surrounding the massacre. On a technical level Boyd found the compositional elements of *Black Sun* easy to work with, and yet, because of the programmatic context, on an emotional level she found the writing difficult and painful. She comments that, while writing this work,

....I was with the spirits of the those children in this one section in the work, for the violins and the piccolo and harp and glockenspiel, and it's literally the spirits leaving the earth and I could hear the voices, I could hear the voices of the youngsters who were so recently massacred as I was writing that part of the piece particularly (Boyd, A. 1998, pers. comm., 23 July).

The Women's Philharmonic premiered *Black Sun* in March, 1990, conducted by JoAnn Friletta, with Nan Washburn as Artistic Director and Associate Conductor. Boyd, who attended the premiere, found the experience of being surrounded by an orchestra of women who played women's music to be profoundly moving (Boyd, A. 1998, pers. comm., 23 July). *Black Sun* is a versatile work which has been performed by many orchestras from the ABC orchestras to youth orchestras to school orchestras.

Boyd's next work for orchestra was *Grathawai* (1993), a three movement work. For this piece Boyd looked closer to home for inspiration, and the title of the work is taken from the name of a property in NSW where she often stayed:

It's [Grathawai] an Aboriginal word meaning flowing water and there's a creek that goes through the property and that presumably is where the name comes from. And I knew I wanted to write an orchestral work about my feelings on this property and the connection with Aboriginals. (Boyd, A. 1998, pers. comm., 23 July)

The opening movement of *Grathawai* draws on a melodic section from Boyd's children's opera, *The Beginning of the Day*, the theme being an Aboriginal creation myth. The central idea is that darkness and depression become transmuted through energy into ecstasy:

...there is all darkness on the earth, there is no possibility of the sun. It's all darkness so every one is very miserable, so they decide to push the sky with sticks and as they push the sky with sticks, it shoots up and opens and then the beauty of sunlight is revealed for the first time (Boyd, A. 1998, pers. comm., 23 July).

In this work Boyd uses the dominant seventh chord to symbolise masculinity, energy and activity. Embedded in this score are other elements which refer to Boyd's ongoing Asian influences, such as a gagaku chord and sections that use pentatonic scales. Although this work has been issued by the ABC in a teaching and resource kit, Boyd feels that the ABC did not think the standard of writing in *Grathawai* was as good as *Black Sun*. There has been no interest from the ABC in further performances since its premiere by the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra on 16 September, 1993, with conductor Janos Furst. Boyd acknowledges the power of the critic in the following comment:

Somebody somewhere, some little reviewer probably, has written something derogatory about it and so the ABC have decided, 'oh well, it's not worth doing'. Australians are so unsure of themselves, it only

takes one negative remark to suppress a new work (Boyd, A. 1998, pers. comm., 23 July).

***Black Sun*: a detailed study of Boyd's engagement with the repertorial process**

Black Sun has been chosen as the work to be studied in detail for two reasons: first, this is a work with an interesting and rich history, from the initial commissioning concept to the many performances it has received; and secondly, this work is essentially a political commentary and, as such, its role as a receiver and transmitter of cultural concepts can easily be traced.

Factors affecting the creative process

Black Sun was Boyd's first orchestral commission and came originally as an invitation to write an orchestral work for The Women's Philharmonic. This invitation came as a complete surprise to her:

[It came] out of the blue! It was heaven sent. The gods have been very kind to me in my creative lifetime. I was sitting in Hong Kong at the time, ...so this invitation to write this piece for the San Francisco Bay Area came out of the blue and it was absolutely extraordinary (Boyd, A. 1998, pers. comm., 23 July).

Boyd thinks that possibly there was a connection between the invitation to write an orchestral work and an interview she did with the American researcher Jane Weiner LePage. LePage had interviewed Anne Boyd in Hong Kong and they had spoken about Boyd's compositional work, her strong sympathies with Asian cultures and the compositional inspiration she drew from Asian cultures.

The Women's Philharmonic wanted to put on a concert which had a Pacific region theme and Boyd, as an Australian with a longstanding interest in Asian culture, was an obvious choice. According to Pamela Wilson, the Marketing and Development Coordinator for the women's orchestra:

They [Washburn and Faletta] were particularly attracted to the idea of her music's 'East meets West' flavour, and the concert theme was, in fact, 'Pacific Dreams: Music from the Pacific Rim' (Wilson, P. 1999, pers. comm., 26 May).

She goes on to say that the idea of turning the invitation into an actual commission was presented to the orchestra in a letter by Boyd to Washburn (Wilson, P. 1999, pers. comm., 26 May). So, although the initial idea of writing an orchestral work came from the orchestra through a personal recommendation by a colleague, the actual commission itself was presented to the orchestra by Boyd who took the initiative.

Black Sun has a programme that draws on the Beijing student massacre of 1989. Chinese students, protesting the slow pace of democratic change within the communist system, were killed in Tiannamen Square by government forces. It was an event which held special significance for those living in Hong Kong, shortly to be passed back into Chinese hands and, at the time, Boyd was working as Head of the Department of Music there (LePage, 1988, p. 51). Some of the students from the University of Hong had been in Tiannamen Square for the protest and gave first hand accounts of the violence. Boyd sympathised with the students and felt the best way she could express her support and commitment to their ideals was through her compositional work (Boyd, 1989b).

Three important elements combined to form *Black Sun*. The first was a newspaper article by one of the Chinese students, Wu'erkaixi, in hiding from the Chinese authorities. He wrote an article that was published in the *South China Morning Post*,

'A black sun over my motherland' (Boyd, 1992). The second element was a newspaper picture of one of the bereaved mothers of the student protesters, in great distress at the loss of her child. The third element was a Chinese song, *Ancestor of the Dragon*. Boyd had been to her daughter's school the day after Wu'erkaixi's article appeared, where this song was sung by the school children, and it was also a tune heard frequently during the May hunger strike, following the massacre. This simple folk tune had a profound effect on Boyd: 'the tune haunted me for weeks and it was from this source that the musical ideas for *Black Sun* germinated and grew' (Boyd, 1992). Boyd decided to commemorate the students who had died through the writing of *Black Sun*. The dedication on the score reads:

It [*Black Sun*] is dedicated to the memory of the Beijing student martyrs who gave, and continue to give up their young lives in the cause of honesty, democracy and freedom in their Motherland. May they always be remembered with respect and dignity and may their dreams one day be realised (Boyd, 1989b, 25 November).

She remarks that the work is 'unashamed in its intention as political allegory' (Boyd, 1992). So in effect, *Black Sun* performs two functions: first, it is a memorial to the dead, and secondly, it makes a political comment through musical means. *Black Sun* is Boyd's tribute to the dead students; it is her way of protesting against what she perceives as political injustice.

Boyd was also hopeful that *Black Sun* would prove to be prophetic and to this end she manipulates the compositional material, resolving the work in a way that symbolises her hopeful projection of the future: 'Purity and radiance are thus seen to triumph over tyranny and repression' (Boyd, 1992).

The orchestral work

All instruments lie within a non-professional range (Adler, S. 1989, pp. 613 – 620) which means that the work can be accessed by non-professional and professional orchestras. The instrumentation is standard for a full symphony orchestra (Adler, 1989, p. 605) and consists of piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets in Bb, 2 bassoons, 4 horns in F, 2 trumpets in Bb, 2 tenor trombones, 1 bass trombone, 1 tuba, timpani, 2 percussion players (glockenspiel, vibraphone, xylophone, side drum, tenor drum, claves, large suspended cymbal with double bass bow, large pair of cymbals, tam tam), harp, and strings. This standard scoring is helpful for the performance of the work. The work is fifteen minutes in length, so that although substantial, as befits the theme, it still falls within the preferred guidelines for the ABC orchestras.³⁷

Mediation process

Black Sun's premiere was on March 3rd 1990 by The Women's Philharmonic (Wilson, P. 1999, pers. comm., 26 May), in a concert with a 'Pacific Rim' theme. As this was an important event in Boyd's compositional career, she flew to San Francisco to be at the performance. Boyd found the orchestra's female focus to be particularly stimulating: 'That was such an exciting experience because here were these very strong women all banded together in this orchestra playing music quite exclusively by other women' (Boyd, A. 1998, pers. comm., 23 July).

Black Sun was programmed alongside *Ongaku* by Henry Cowell, inspired by a trip to Japan, and works by Chinese composers Chen Yi and Liu Weishan (programme notes for *Black Sun's* premiere). On 10 December, 1998, *Black Sun* was performed again by The Women's Philharmonic, this time in a concert tribute to Eleanor Roosevelt which commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. All works on the programme had a 'human rights' theme and consisted of: *Preamble for a Solemn Occasion* by Copland, written for the first anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Chen Yi's *Eleanor's Gift*,

commissioned especially for this particular concert; *Black Sun*, whose full title on the programme states', "*Black Sun 'In memory of the Beijing students'"*; and *Exile Symphony* by Hovhaness, written to commemorate Armenians persecuted in the 1930s. (Wilson, P. 1999a, pp. 1 & 4).

Although *Black Sun*'s programmatic context has led to its inclusion in orchestral concerts, its context has also proved to be politically embarrassing. In 1992 when the Sydney Symphony Orchestra performed *Black Sun*, the performance coincided with the third anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre, a coincidence from which the ABC was anxious to distance itself. According to ABC orchestral management, the timing was purely accidental, and they emphasised that the performance was not political (Cochrane, 1992, p. 2). The ABC, a government funded body at the time, was no doubt anxious to keep a distance from any political controversy that had the potential to embarrass the government, and possibly undermine future funding.

Black Sun has had many performances by orchestras, both professional and non-professional, in Australia. According to Boyd, *Black Sun* has been performed by most of the ABC orchestras and many youth and school orchestras:

It's done all the symphony orchestras now — I think every one of them in Australia has played it — the ABC symphony orchestras. It's been played by all the youth orchestras including a number of school orchestras even, because it is very user-friendly...(Boyd, A. 1998, pers. comm., 23 July)

Critical judgement

Black Sun has received a series of positive reviews, and has been described as mature, emotionally engaging, powerful, compelling, graphic, restrained, and intelligent. Two negative comments, both referring to the same perceived problem in *Black Sun*, was

that the political sub-text sometimes hampered musical concerns (Whittington, 1991, p. 7 and Cary, 1991, p. 12).

Dissemination process

Although *Black Sun* has been performed many times, and some of those performances have been recorded non-commercially, the work has never been issued publicly on a CD recording. The AMC holds a tape recording which was recorded on the 12th July, 1991 by the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, Jorge Mester conducting. The quality of this tape is very poor and the recording is much to the work's detriment.

Black Sun has been published by University of York Press. Faber was originally Boyd's publisher but in the early nineteen-nineties, due to economic factors, they made a decision to discontinue their association with her (along with other composers they had been representing). This event has stayed with Boyd as a very painful memory:

Faber were my publishers until they dumped me. We didn't have a divorce either really — it was very painful — they just suddenly decided that I was not a good investment so they just threw me out of the house. That was very upsetting because I was a professor and head of a music department and I'll never recover from that I don't think (Boyd, A. 1998, pers. comm., 23 July).

Since that time Boyd has had her work published by the University of York Press, who took on many of the composers released by Faber and other music publishing houses who were struggling in difficult economic times. Although Boyd can have any of her works published through the University of York Press, she comments that they have limitations as publishers, being very small and not in a position adequately to promote an Australian work nationally (Boyd, A. 1998, pers. comm., 23 July). The

role of an important international publisher is significant, providing not only status, but also advocacy and promotion for a composer.

Black Sun is accessible to a younger generation of Australians through a teaching resource kit, 'Meet the Music. Teaching Kit 2', issued by the ABC.

Summary

Anne Boyd has had a somewhat mixed reception in the repertorial process, although *Black Sun* has been a relatively successful work. She was fortunate to obtain the original invitation to write *Black Sun*, and quick to turn this invitation to her advantage by writing to the orchestra and suggesting it become a commission.

By using a topical, political event as a basis for the work, Boyd has enhanced its performance chances to some degree and, as has been shown, this has led to the work's inclusion in a human rights concert in America. The work has become, in some ways, synonymous with the fight for, and triumph of, democracy. *Black Sun* has had many performances in the ten years since it was written and its political context is still relevant.

The score is accessible in terms of performance directive to a wide range of orchestral standards. The positive reviews should feed into the long-term critical judgement of the work in a very positive way. The work will be disseminated to a new generation of orchestral players with its inclusion in the ABC Teaching Kit. However, the fact that it has never been distributed on CD is of some concern, as it would then reach a much broader audience, both nationally and internationally.

Boyd has enjoyed a relatively successful passage through the repertorial process with her work *Black Sun*. However, the success of this work has not been enough to sustain interest in her later orchestral work *Grathawai* which was performed on 16, 17

and 18 of September by the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra in 1993, with conductor Janos Furst. Despite being commissioned by the ABC it has received no further performances. This experience has been frustrating and disappointing for Boyd.

Chapter Seven

Dawn Nettheim 1943 -

Dawn Nettheim came to orchestral composing as a mature-age student, not the easiest time in life for a woman to enter into a predominantly male domain. However, due to Nettheim's unique approach, she has made a place for herself, inhabiting a space that is somewhat on the margins of the mainstream orchestral world.

Dawn Nettheim's background as an orchestral composer

Dawn Nettheim, a Sydney-based composer, took up formal music studies as a mature-age student. As a child she found the orchestral sound an attractive one, thinking of it as 'a kind of aural colouring in' (Nettheim, D. 1998, pers. comm., 20 October). Nettheim's first involvement in orchestral writing started when a school training orchestra was begun at Mount Erin High School in Wagga Wagga. The school found it difficult to find music that was easy enough for the young players, and as Nettheim had a musical background, although at the time a teacher of History and English, she was asked to make simple orchestral arrangements. Nettheim found the work interesting and satisfying, and when a local musician asked her to write a concerto for didgeridoo, she readily agreed:

...shortly after that another person in Wagga, he was an Englishman but he had lived in Arnhem Land for many years and had mastered the didgeridoo and he was very keen to enter the Peter Stuyvesant Concerto Competition and of course there was nothing written for didgeridoo. So he came and asked me, 'would I write a concerto for the didgeridoo,' just so that he could enter that [laughs], and being a sort of crazy person

I said, 'yes!'. So I did that and that was a lot of fun too (Nettheim, D. 1998, pers. comm., 20 October).

As her involvement in orchestral writing increased, Nettheim felt a need to undertake formal music studies, and so enrolled for a Bachelor of Music at The University of Sydney in 1985. She felt it was important for her composing to be able to understand orchestral writing both from a position of composer and performer, so she began a practical study of an orchestral instrument.

Nettheim's next orchestral work, based on 'The Wife of Bath's Tale' from Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, was a ballet (untitled) written for a South Australian interschool company. It was designed for performance by a school orchestra and the intention was that the performance be funded through an Arts Council grant. Unfortunately the grant was not successful, and consequently this work was never performed.

In 1992 Nettheim was approached by Barbara Stackpool, a percussion player with the Early Music Society, who wanted an orchestral work that featured castanets. Nettheim used some of the dance movements from the unperformed ballet work and arranged them as a suite. This work, *Dance Suite*, was performed in 1992 by the Beecroft Orchestra. It has also since been performed by the Kevinwood Orchestra. Both of these orchestras are non-professional orchestras based in Sydney, and along with the many other non-professional orchestras around the country are a potential major network for orchestral composers.

Shortly afterwards, in 1993, the principal oboist with the Beecroft Orchestra was leaving, and to mark this event he requested a work from Nettheim which could highlight his skills as an oboist. She wrote the oboe concerto, *Pacific Legends*, tailored to the oboist's performing specifications, highlighting his strengths and playing down his weaknesses.

In 1997 Nettheim was once more approached by a member of an orchestra, who had specific requirements in regard to an orchestral work. Rabbi Samuel Tov-lev was a member of the Strathfield Orchestra at the time and wanted an orchestral work composed using some Jewish tunes as a basis. *Hebraic Overture* was the result.

Hebraic Overture: a detailed study of Nettheim's engagement with the repertorial process

Hebraic Overture is the work that was chosen for detailed study. It is representative of Nettheim's negotiation of the repertorial process, and it also has the most detailed history.

Factors affecting the creation of the work

Hebraic Overture was commissioned specifically to be included in the programming of the Strathfield Orchestra's concert series (Nettheim, D. 1999, pers. comm., 17 September). Rabbi Tov-lev, who on occasion conducted the orchestra, had written several tunes for Jewish religious services and asked Nettheim if she could make them into an orchestral suite. Nettheim chose two contrasting melodies and worked them into an overture (Nettheim, D. 1999, pers. comm., 17 September). The context of the work is an abstract musical one. The idea behind the work was to produce a piece that had a strong Jewish flavour in all facets of the musical materials: harmonic, melodic and rhythmic (Nettheim, D. 1999, pers. comm., 17 September).

The orchestral work

The work is written to be performed by players commensurate with high school level (Nettheim, D. 1999, pers. comm., 17 September). Consequently the instrumental ranges all fall into the area of the non-professional, with the exception of Violin I whose top range lies in the professional range. Scoring is for standard symphonic forces, comprising 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets in B flat, 2 bassoons, 3 horns in F, 2

trumpets, 2 tenor trombones, 1 bass trombone, 1 tuba, timpani, percussion (cymbal, tambourine and triangle), and strings. *Hebraic Overture* is a short work of four and a half minutes' duration.

As Nettheim is not a represented composer with the AMC, the score is not held in their hire library and therefore is not readily accessible and must be requested from Nettheim. This means it has little chance of being known about outside the network of non-professional orchestras.

Mediation process

Hebraic Overture has been performed twice: the premiere was performed by the Strathfield Orchestra, on 28 November 1998, conducted by Rabbi Samuel Tov-lev (Nettheim, D. 1998, pers. comm., 20 October). It has also been performed by the Beecroft Orchestra. The work has been taken to Israel by Rabbi Samuel Tov-lev with a view to further performances (Nettheim, D. 1999, pers. comm., 17 September). Nettheim's performances of her orchestral works have been facilitated by the fact that she plays bassoon, performing with the Strathfield Symphony Orchestra for some years before joining the Beecroft Orchestra (Widmer, G. 2000, pers. comm., 3 May)³⁸.

Critical Judgement

Hebraic Overture has not been reviewed (Widmer, G. 2000, pers. comm., 3 May).

Dissemination process

Hebraic Overture has never had a professional recording, although the premiere was recorded privately. Neither has it been disseminated by prizes, marketing, or media.

Summary

The commission to write *Hebraic Overture* was through personal contact, being the direct result of Nettheim's previous work as a composer, and as a performer with non-professional orchestras. The fact that she was a performer 'certainly gave her a leg-in' (Widmer, G. 2000, pers. comm., 3 May). The scoring and range, suited to non-professional orchestras, means that the work is accessible to the large pool of non-professional orchestras in Australia. Despite the fact that the work has not had a review or been disseminated in any way other than through the performance itself, it has had another performance by the Beecroft Orchestra. This is the orchestra for which Nettheim had already written two earlier works — again through personal contact. As the work has been taken overseas by Rabbi Tov-lev, in a position of influence as both a religious leader and an orchestral player, there is the distinct possibility of it receiving further performances overseas.

Nettheim has positioned herself within the orchestral environment in a utilitarian way, by adapting her skills as a composer and arranger in order to fulfil the needs of specific orchestras. She has made a place for herself within the non-professional orchestral sphere, where there are many opportunities for a composer who can adapt their craft to the needs of specific orchestras, such as school orchestras and non-professional orchestras who require unusual combinations of instruments, due to the resources at their disposal, or who require parts to be simplified. Nettheim's philosophy as an orchestral composer is: '... you have to be on your toes and ready to do it, like a proper craftsman, for whatever you're asked ...'. (Nettheim, D. 1998, pers. comm., 20 October). It is this functional attitude that lies at the basis of Nettheim's interaction with the orchestral environment.

Chapter Eight

Caroline Szeto 1956 -

Caroline Szeto is a composer who has perceived the orchestral world as an especially important one in which to make her mark as a composer. She has deliberately set out to exploit the potential inherent in the orchestral field as a means of launching her career, with a relative degree of success.

Caroline Szeto's background as an orchestral composer

Caroline Szeto has written five orchestral works to date. She believes that, in many ways, orchestral writing can be regarded as the pinnacle of composition and, as such, can provide important opportunities for emerging composers. She makes the point that orchestral works can play a crucial role in promoting an emerging composer's career:

...when I'd done the first one and had discussions with my teacher, he felt that it was like the pinnacle of composition really, and so that idea stuck in my mind. I'd never thought that this medium was supposed to be, you know, the pinnacle... and that's true, because it doesn't matter what you do, you don't get the launching pad like you do with an orchestral work (Szeto, C. 1998, pers. comm., 23 July).

Szeto's musical training took place at the University of Sydney where she studied composition with Eric Gross and Peter Sculthorpe. During this time she won the Ignaz Friedman Memorial Prize (1985) and the Donald Peart Memorial Prize (1986) (Szeto, n.d.b). Szeto's first orchestral work, *On a Crest*, was written in 1986 when she was chosen to attend the Australian Composer's Orchestral Forum (then known as the

Young Composers' School) as an observer. Generally it is the participants who have their orchestral work showcased, but the conductor, Frank Dobbs, had informed the observers that they would also be given the opportunity of having a work played through by the orchestra if they wished. Szeto felt that this would be a great learning experience and so she wrote *On a Crest*. She found the orchestral school very helpful in gaining first-hand experience of the way in which orchestras operate, and also in learning about orchestral balance between the large instrumental sections. Szeto also found that going as an observer, rather than a full participant, allowed her to explore aspects of the orchestral world as an emerging composer, without too much pressure (Szeto, C. 1998, pers. comm., 23 July). *On a Crest* was workshopped by the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra in 1986.

Szeto views *On a Crest* as a somewhat immature work, composed within the framework of a large ensemble piece, rather than a full orchestral work. This is in part due to the fact that the inspiration, drawn from Percy Grainger's setting of a Chinese folk melody, *Beautiful Fresh Flower*, had already been used by Szeto in an ensemble piece before she reused it in the orchestral setting (Szeto, C. 1998, pers. comm., 23 July).

Szeto's next work for orchestra, *Sheng* (1986), written for a competition and never performed, draws its inspiration from the Chinese instrument the 'Sheng', a type of Chinese mouth organ. Although of Chinese parents, Szeto was born and raised in Australia, and consequently has always felt more Australian than Chinese. Her interest in Chinese music only developed gradually and was greatly encouraged by her composition teacher Peter Sculthorpe (Szeto, C. 1998, pers. comm., 23 July):

I suppose now I see my Chinese heritage more as a springboard into the kind of music I am interested in composing. It is the concepts within the

music, even more than the sound, which interest me (ArtForce, 1994, p. 5).

Szeto's next orchestral work was *Energy*, written in 1990, a work which has been programmed many times by both Australian and overseas orchestras. It was also written as part of the requirements for the Australian Composers' Orchestral Forum (known at the time as the National Orchestral Composer's School) after Szeto had been selected, this time as a participant. When Szeto wrote *Energy* she set out to write something energetic and it was important to her that she write something that she felt the audience would find enjoyable. Like her other orchestral works, *Energy* derives its inspiration from Chinese sources:

Energy was inspired by 'yue', which is the Chinese word for music and is also synonymous with that for happiness. The title is intended to reflect the energetic and festive character of the music, which is suggestive of yue (Szeto, n.d.a).

Energy was premiered by the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra. It has also been issued on CD by the Vienna Modern Masters label (1997).

In 1992 the ABC decided to commission ten short fanfares, (five by male composers and five by female composers) for their 60th birthday celebrations. Szeto was invited to submit a recording and score to the ABC for the auditions. She was one of the composers in the final selection and was commissioned to write *ABC Fanfare*. This was to be her first orchestral commission and in accordance with the commissioning requirements, the work is short and the tone celebratory (Szeto, n.d.b).

ABC Fanfare is based on a quasi-pentatonic chord, a musical idea that Szeto had been slowly developing in her compositional work, and which also provided a basis for *Energy*. As *Energy* had been so successful a work in terms of performances, Szeto felt

a desire to continue exploring the style's potential. It was *ABC Fanfare*, in particular, that taught Szeto how important a conductor can be in obtaining a performance which lives up to the composer's idea of the work. The premiere performance of this work by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra caused her to question her compositional skills, as she felt that one section of the work had instrumental balance problems (Szeto, C. 1998, pers. comm., 23 July). Shortly after this, however, the work was performed once more, this time with Isaiah Jackson and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, and Szeto was surprised to hear that the problem she had perceived in the instrumental balance with the previous performance was no longer there.

ABC Fanfare was issued on the same Vienna Modern Masters CD as *Energy* in 1997 (Szeto, C. 1998, pers. comm., 23 July). *ABC Fanfare*, like *Energy*, has received many repeat performances, by non-professional orchestras as well as by the major ABC orchestras.

In 1994 Szeto was again chosen to be a participant in the Australian Composers' Orchestral Forum,³⁹ and for this she wrote *Energy II* (Szeto, C. 1998, pers. comm., 23 July). In this work Szeto continued to explore elements of compositional style she had employed previously (Szeto, n.d.b). *Energy II* uses as a basis the same quasi-pentatonic chord that was used for *ABC Fanfare* and *Energy*, although the chord is employed in different ways. Szeto believes that although *Energy II* is a better work in terms of craft, it lacks the vibrancy of *Energy* (Szeto, C. 1998, pers. comm., 23 July). The premiere performance was given by the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra as part of the Australian Composers' Orchestral Forum in July 1994.

***Energy*: a detailed study of Szeto's engagement with the repertorial process**

Energy is the work that was chosen for detailed study as it is typical of the way in which Szeto negotiates the repertorial process. Detailed background information on this work was also available.

Factors affecting the creative process

Szeto wrote *Energy* in 1990 as part of the requirements for the Australian Composers' Orchestral Forum. As I have mentioned, *Energy* is based on an abstract musical concept: Szeto wanted to write a work that conveyed a sense of energy and fun to the audience, drawing on the Chinese idea of 'yue' (Szeto, C. 1998, pers. comm., 23 July).

The orchestral work

The instrumental ranges all lie within the non-professional range. *Energy* is scored for 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets in B flat, 2 bassoons, 4 horns in F, 2 trumpets in C, 3 trombones, timpani, I percussion player, and strings — a fairly modest scoring for standard symphonic forces. The work is eleven minutes in duration which makes it well suited to ABC programming. The score is readily available from the AMC.

Mediation process

Energy has proved to be a popular work with orchestras and has attracted many performances by both professional and non-professional orchestras. The premiere performance by the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra took place in 1990. Other performances have taken place by the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra (1991); the University of Sydney Symphony Orchestra (1992); the Kur-ring-gai Philharmonic Orchestra (1994); the Sydney Youth Orchestra (1994) and the Canberra Youth Orchestra (1998), where it was part of the programme for an orchestral tour of Italy.

Critical judgement

Energy has attracted mixed reviews, although on balance the negative aspects seem somewhat stronger than the positive. Typical of the positive comments are: 'Caroline Szeto's *Energy* had a certain attractive ebullience about it...' (Whittington, 1991, p. 7); 'It bounces along, fulfilling the promise of its title...' (Cary, 1991, p. 12). Typical negative comments refer to the work's overly strong 'Stravinsky' influence, although this influence in the work is something Szeto says was not deliberate. For example, one reviewer found the work to be '...a backward look at Stravinsky's *Sacre du Printemps*' (Blanks, 1994, p. 23).

Dissemination process

Szeto has been active in obtaining a CD recording of this work. She had heard that the Vienna Modern Masters CD label had put out a call for scores.

Previously they'd wanted large works, but this time they just wanted works under ten minutes, or thereabouts, and I decided to send *Energy* and the *ABC Fanfare* to Vienna. They were all anonymous entries by the way...which is very gratifying... (Szeto, C. 1998, pers. comm., 23 July).

Both *Energy* and *ABC Fanfare* were chosen by the Vienna Modern Master label and issued on the *CD Music From Six Continents* (VMM 3041).

Summary

Szeto has shown herself to be reasonably active in promoting her orchestral works, yet paradoxically, she does not see herself in this way. 'I don't do any promotion whatsoever. I know that if I don't then no-one else will...but what can I do really to promote it? I just don't know. If I knew there were certain things I needed to do to get things done then I would do it...' (Szeto, C. 1998, pers. comm., 23 July).

In speaking with her, Szeto gives the impression of being uncertain how to negotiate the repertorial process, and yet, her actions within the orchestral field, to some degree, belie this. At the beginning of her orchestral career, she received opportunities through attending the Australian Composers' Orchestral Forum. This in itself required effort on Szeto's part, preparing scores and recordings, and sending them off, in order to be in the selection process. The Australian Composers' Orchestral Forum gave her the 'launching pad' she desired and Szeto has since found that her efforts have been rewarded with commissions, and offers for performance opportunities have come her way. It is interesting that Szeto, following her teacher's (Peter Sculthorpe) advice, identified the potential to be found in orchestral works very early in her composing career and actively sought the opportunities out at the same time as building her orchestral catalogue to five works written over an eight year period. Consequently her later works *Energy* and *ABC Fanfare*, in particular, have had a great number of performances and both are on international recordings:

Now back to the National Orchestral Composers School. This opportunity probably opened other doors for me. It was followed by a commission for an orchestral fanfare for the ABC's sixtieth anniversary and later another orchestral work followed. So this demonstrates that not only did one opportunity lead itself to another it also gave opportunities to people who selected work for concert programs to include a work of mine should they choose to do so (Szeto, 1997).

It is interesting to note that, although the reviews for *Energy* have been mixed, they do not seem to have affected the view, by some in the orchestral field, that the work is a thoroughly enjoyable work to play (Harvey, D. 2000, pers. comm., 1 May). It may well be that *Energy's* inherent sense of vitality and festiveness, combined with its accessibility in terms of performance standard, makes it a work that is fun to perform making it particularly suitable for youth orchestras, and this may counteract the negative reviews to some degree.

Szeto has positioned herself within the orchestral repertorial process in the hope that this may well lead to further success in terms of performance for her existing works, or, more likely, to further orchestral commissions.

Chapter Nine

Elena Kats-Chernin 1957 -

Elena Kats-Chernin has had, to date, an orchestral career which is in many ways remarkable. More than any other female composer in this study, she has enjoyed a relatively easy passage through the repertorial process with her orchestral works. This is not to undervalue Kats-Chernin's role in her own success. She has been fortunate within the orchestral world, but she has also been active in seeking opportunities out. She has been the recipient of many orchestral commissions and performances and is an established composer with a high profile.

Elena Kats-Chernin's background as an orchestral composer

Elena Kats-Chernin became interested in the orchestral medium because of 'a fascination with the range of sounds available and the endless possibilities in terms of instrumental choices'. Kats-Chernin studied composition with Richard Toop at the NSW Conservatorium of Music (Kats-Chernin, unpublished auto-biography, n.d.a) and her first orchestral work, *Piano Concerto*, was performed by the NSW Conservatorium Orchestra in 1979 as part of the degree requirements for her final exams. Kats-Chernin was the soloist for this performance. The scoring for the *Piano Concerto* is somewhat unusual, being for a double string orchestra, plus three trombones and three percussionist and harp, with no other brass or woodwind. At the time of writing this work, Kats-Chernin was greatly influenced by works which featured trombones – particularly, Stockhausen's *Hymnen*. Her *Piano Concerto* won the Frank Hutchens Composition Prize (Kats-Chernin, n.d.b).

Shortly after the premiere of her *Piano Concerto* Kats-Chernin was chosen to be a participant in the Australian Composers' Orchestral Forum organised by the AMC. It

was while she was a participant in the orchestral forum that *Bienie* (1979), meaning 'heartbeat' in Russian, was written. Kats-Chernin found that being a participant in the orchestral school, with the opportunity of hearing her work, helped her learn orchestral craft:

That piece basically got me going really because I heard the orchestra play what I wrote, and I realised my mistakes too, and I knew that I had to do better the next time. It wasn't a bad piece ... I made a lot of mistakes in that piece I think, from a balance point of view...I had, at some point, strings doing the same thing after the brass had done it, thinking it would be the same sound, but it was obviously a total flop down – nothing! And of course the brass is so much stronger. If you have eight brass – and even fifty strings can't get over them – the brass is still so much stronger. One brass is as strong as twenty violins. But this is something that you learn at the time (Kats-Chernin, E. 1998, pers. comm., 22 July).

During the rehearsals for *Bienie*, Kats-Chernin was included in a documentary about Australian composers. This gave her the opportunity to speak about her work and her orchestral experiences.⁴⁰

In 1983, a competition organised by the ABC inspired Kats-Chernin to write *Introduction to a Dance*. Kats-Chernin felt that it was important to write a work that was visually pleasing. She says that she '...wrote a very beautiful score. I thought at least for the competition it had to look good' (Kats-Chernin, E. 1998, pers. comm., 22 July). Despite this, the work was not placed in the competition and has since been withdrawn from the composer's list, without receiving a premiere.

As a result of participating in the Australian Composers' Orchestral Forum, Kats-Chernin received a commission from the Australian Youth Orchestra just as she was

leaving for Germany in 1980. This commission took a long period of time and it was not until January 1984 that *Stairs* was finally finished (Kats-Chernin, E. 1998, pers. comm., 22 July). Kats-Chernin, as with most of her works, looked to abstract musical ideas as a starting point:

It developed out of a mixture of aspects, tasks, and associations such as – a walk up or down from nowhere to nowhere – in time and place; looking for new sound pictures; understanding an orchestra as an extension of a single instrument or vice versa; using whole tone scales as the basic material (Kats-Chernin, 1990b).

Stairs employs chromatic and whole-tone scales (Williams, G. 1994) and the work has been generated by Kats-Chernin's interest in exploring fresh orchestral sounds and colours. *Stairs* was premiered in 1985 by the Australian Youth Orchestra, conducted by Christopher Seaman, and it has also been performed by the Sydney and Adelaide Symphony Orchestras (Kats-Chernin, 1993a). In 1991 it was released on the CD *Nexus•Nocturnes*, performed by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra (Kats-Chernin, E. 1998, pers. comm., 22 July).

Between the years 1985 and 1989 Kats-Chernin ceased writing concert music altogether. At the time she was making a regular income writing for music theatre and she felt that she had nothing to say as a writer of concert music. In 1989, however, she received a phone call from Anthony Fogg (Kats-Chernin, E. 1998, pers. comm., 22 July), who was the head of orchestral programming with the ABC (Bebbington, W. 1997d, p. 219), asking her to write an orchestral work for the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. Although she felt that she was not really ready to undertake such a large work, she nonetheless began work on *Transfer* while on holiday in Majorca. When she arrived back in Germany, with nine pages of the new work committed to paper, she received a phone call from Anthony Fogg requesting the new work within a month. Kats-Chernin frantically finished the work, having to fax the score from

Germany. Because *Transfer* was written in such a short time, Kats-Chernin feels a certain dissatisfaction with parts of it, particularly the second half, and feels it needs a certain amount of revision. *Transfer* is influenced to a certain extent by the piece *Quasi Una Fantasia* written by Geörgy Kurtag (Kats-Chernin, E. 1998, pers. comm., 22 July). *Transfer* was premiered by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in 1990 (Kats-Chernin, 1993) as part of their 'Meet the Music' series, conducted by John Hopkins (SSO, 1990).

Kats-Chernin's next orchestral work, *Retonica*, was the result of a commission by the AMC in 1993, as Richard Letts, then Chief Executive of the AMC (Bebbington, 1997b, p. 338), had organised an exchange program with the Swedish Ministry of Cultural Funding (Davis, J. 1999, pers. comm., 7 January). Curiously enough, although a commissioned work, *Retonica* was never performed by the commissioning body, Stockholm's Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. In 1994 the work was finally premiered by the Sydney Symphony orchestra in a concert conducted by Edo De Waart, which was held in support of people living with HIV/AIDS. *Retonica* has had several performances by ABC orchestras since its premiere.

In 1994 Kats-Chernin wrote *Lamento the Gestures*. This work, written for a competition, suffered a similar fate to *Introduction to a Dance* and has never been performed. Kats-Chernin feels, however, that these two unperformed works have been important to her compositional development, providing her with a resource of ideas that she has used for other works (Kats-Chernin, E. 1998, pers. comm., 22 July).

***Retonica*: a detailed study of Kats-Chernin's engagement with the repertorial process**

Retonica was chosen for study because it is one of three key pieces in which Kats-Chernin felt she was finding her own voice as a composer (Davidson, 1997-98, p.

18). She regards this piece as a seminal work (Kats-Chernin, E. 1998, pers. comm., 22 July).

Factors affecting the creative process

Retonica was created when the AMC decided to commission an orchestral work for an exchange program with the Swedish Ministry of Cultural Funding (as mentioned previously). Kats-Chernin was chosen as the recipient for this commission:

[The commission] is still a mystery. There was some kind of exchange program with Sweden. I got this phone call from the AMC saying they had chosen me out of many, many people. I kept in touch with the AMC. I was there just prior to that, about half a year before, just to visit. The piece was already a year and a half old — it was literally lying in a cupboard and in the Australian Music Centre cupboard, but somebody, and again it was Tony Fogg, he looked it up. I don't know what it is, but he said he looked it up and it was a quirky piece (Kats-Chernin, E. 1998, pers. comm., 22 July).

Retonica draws on abstract musical concepts in which Kats-Chernin investigates the ways in which traditional musical material, using one idea — such as a chord, scale, or note — can be exploited. *Retonica* is based on a C-minor chord. The title means 'rethinking the tonic' and explores more traditional compositional materials (Kats-Chernin, n.d.). Kats-Chernin's interest in the sparse use of compositional material can be seen in the *Retonica's* compositional style, which is scored for full orchestra and two button accordions, and draws on the European tradition of accordion playing. As a basis for the work, Kats-Chernin used an idea from one of the sketches she had written earlier for a violin concerto for Ensemble Moderne, and consequently found *Retonica* easy to write (Kats-Chernin, E. 1998, pers. comm., 22 July). After writing *Retonica*, Kats-Chernin branched out in a new compositional direction.

...it is clear to me that *Retonica*...was the last of a series of pieces concerned with particular archetypal melodic-harmonic elements...a C minor triad whose component parts are scattered around...Later it shifts to C-sharp minor and A minor, becoming a sort of 'a-tonic'. Hence the title: *Retonica* — rethinking the tonic (Kats-Chernin, n.d.).

The orchestral work

Retonica is best suited to performance by a professional orchestra due to the extended ranges and scoring. The ranges of the instruments are somewhat mixed some being suitable for non-professional performers, others being within a professional range. All instruments are in a non-professional range with the exception of bassoon, horns in F, and viola where ranges lie somewhere between the non-professional and professional. The bass clarinet and violins I & II all lie in the professional range in the higher part of their range. *Retonica* is scored for 3 flutes (flute 1 doubling piccolo), 3 oboes, 2 B flat clarinets, bass clarinet in B flat, bassoon, contrabassoon, 4 horns in F, 3 trumpets in C, 3 trombones, tuba, percussion 1 (temple blocks, tubular bells, snare drum, sandblocks), percussion 2 (anvil, metal chimes, darabukka, crotales, stones, tam-tam), percussion 3 (marimba, vibraphone, bell tree), harp, harpsichord, piano (prepared), 2 button accordions (now played with electric keyboard), and strings. This orchestral setting is larger than standard and requires extra players for percussion, harpsichord and electric keyboard.

The scoring of *Retonica* is unusual as it was written for two button accordions. Kats-Chernin says that she wanted a European sound, and that she had specific performers in mind:

...I wrote all these interesting things for two button accordions. This is very European. People play button accordion everywhere, on every street. It's taught as an instrument in the conservatoire in every city, whereas here it is not an instrument for study. It's not something you

can do an exam on with Bach, but in Germany and Europe it's a standard instrument and really seriously taken ...I knew friends of mine who would have played it then. She's a professor actually. She plays a lot of premieres and her husband also is an accordion player. So I had them in mind somehow (Kats-Chernin, E. 1998, pers. comm., 22 July).

Trying to find two button accordion players in Australia for the premiere proved to be difficult, so button accordion sounds were sampled and the parts played on keyboard. Although initially unsure about doing this, Kats-Chernin has found it easier to obtain performances in this way. It also makes it possible to facilitate the balance between the button accordion sound and the rest of the orchestra (Kats-Chernin, E. 1998, pers. comm., 22 July). This has now become standard practice for this piece.

Retonica is twelve minutes long, which many Australia orchestras would find an ideal programming length. The score and parts are at present available from the AMC hire library. Boosey and Hawkes (Kats-Chernin's publisher) do not have plans to publish *Retonica*. (see heading 'Publication' below).

Mediation process

When Anthony Fogg decided to program *Retonica* in the Sydney Symphony Orchestra AIDS concert, Kats-Chernin found the idea stressful and was, at first, reluctant to have the work programmed at all. She found returning to the orchestral field after being immersed in music-theatre for many years caused her a great deal of stress and anxiety, and she felt unsure about the quality of her orchestral writing. However, after hearing *Retonica* rehearsed, and after receiving positive feedback from some of the orchestral players, she decided to let the performance go ahead (Kats-Chernin, E. 1998, pers. comm., 22 July).

Retonica has since had several other performances with ABC orchestras. The second performance of *Retonica* was in 1996 in Brisbane, with the Queensland Symphony

Orchestra, conducted by Lyn Williams. It was an all women's concert which also featured works by the Australian composers Mageau and Gifford. *Retonica* was also performed two more times, in 1996 at the Sydney Opera House, and by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra conducted by Ron Spigelman (Kats-Chernin, E. 1998, pers. comm., 22 July).

Critical judgement

Retonica has been well received by reviewers. Roger Covell wrote two of the reviews (its premiere by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in 1994 and a performance by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in 1996). Both these reviews were positive with comments such as: 'some of the best moments...came in a recent piece *Retonica*', or '...a composer whose sensibility turns the grammar of music into the stuff of poetry' (Covell, 1994, p. 14).

Retonica was also reviewed after its performance by the Queensland Symphony Orchestra in 1996, in a review by Patricia Kelly of the *Courier-Mail*. This review does not make an aesthetic judgement, but is descriptive. 'Kats-Chernin's *Retonica* made a bold mechanical statement, its incessant clock-beat combining synthesised and orchestral sound to propel its imagery with inexorable and ominous precision' (Kelly, 1996, p. 21).

Dissemination process

In 1998 Boosey and Hawkes, New York, became Kats-Chernin's publisher. However publication of *Retonica* is unlikely as Boosey and Hawkes are only publishing her works on a 'need to use' basis, and they recommended the AMC hire library for anyone interested in this score (Latham, C. 2000, pers. comm., 23 March). *Retonica* has not been commercially recorded.

Summary

Retonica is a work which has had some positive things working for it, and some things working against it. The reviews have probably been helpful in promoting further interest in the work, which may have some impact on the work's dissemination. Boosey and Hawkes however, do not seem particularly interested in promoting this work by Kats-Chernin. The scoring, which is not only somewhat extended and also includes some professional ranges, may well prove restrictive in future performances. Added to this of course, is the fact that the orchestra must have access to a sampled button accordion keyboard sound. These factors could potentially exclude *Retonica* from performances by non-professional orchestras.

As demonstrated, Kats-Chernin has been fairly active on some levels in negotiating the orchestral field, through sending out works and becoming involved in the Orchestral Composers' Schools. The fact that she kept in contact regularly with the AMC, even when she was overseas, no doubt led to her inclusion in the selection process for the orchestral commission *Retonica*.

Kats-Chernin has also been fortunate, often being 'in the right place at the right time', such as when she was filmed for the documentary. She was also fortunate in having the support of the AMC and the influential Anthony Fogg at a crucial point in the development of her compositional career. When asked if she sets out actively to promote her orchestral work, Kats-Chernin responded in the negative; she finds she does not have the time, and needs instead to focus on the next work at hand.

Chapter Ten

Mary Mageau 1934 –

Despite the difficulties for women in the orchestral field, many are actively engaged as participants. One of them, Mary Mageau, has forged a place for herself as an orchestral composer who has been commissioned, performed, recorded, reviewed and awarded prizes. From the beginning of her orchestral career Mageau developed a deliberate strategy to position herself in the musical world as an orchestral composer:

In 1986 I took a firm decision to devote the next ten years of my life to writing orchestral music...I felt that I should do this because large scale works were under-represented in my catalogue and because opportunities for orchestral performance existed in Queensland (Mageau, 1997).

Mary Mageau's background as an orchestral composer

Mageau is an American/Australian composer and harpsichordist. Of her diverse and prolific output, sixteen works use the medium of the orchestra in a variety of symphonic and concerted genres. Mageau has had all of her orchestral works performed by orchestras from Australia, America and Europe. In Australia, five of her orchestral works have been performed by the Queensland Symphony Orchestra and five works have been released on CD, on both Australian and international labels. Two of her orchestral works have received international prizes and one orchestral work was awarded a 'special commendation' from the international jury in the Vienna Modern Masters' first recording award (Van de Vate, 1996, p. 3).

It was in the late nineteen-sixties that Mageau became seriously interested in composition (Mageau, M. 1998, pers. comm., 20 October), taking an elective in the subject with Leon Stein, after the completion of her Bachelor of Music degree (LePage, 1988, p. 165). She was drawn to the orchestral genre because of the large range of sound and colour possibilities, and her decision to study at the University of Michigan was in response to their Masters' degree requirement which called for the submission of an orchestral work. As an emerging orchestral composer Mageau felt that this was one certain way of obtaining an orchestral performance (Mageau, M. 1998, pers. comm., 20 October):

...I chose the University of Michigan because the thesis requirement for the Masters degree which I was going to do was an orchestral piece and I felt, you know, if I didn't come at it through some means like this that you can't just walk into an orchestra and say, 'I'd like to write a piece for you.' There has to be steps that are climbed in that process (Mageau, M. 1998, pers. comm., 20 October).

At the University of Michigan, Mageau studied with Ross Lee Finney who, through his encouragement and nurturing, was to become an important mentor to Mageau. Also important to her orchestral development was Leslie Barrett whose strength, for Mageau, lay in the way he taught compositional craft (LePage 1988, p. 167). The orchestral work she wrote for her thesis, *Variegations* (1968), was performed by the University of Michigan Symphony Orchestra and conducted by the staff conductor Theo Alcantara. In *Variegations*, Mageau felt she could experiment with a combination of lyricism, contemporary gestures, controlled rhythms and freely improvised rhythms, while gaining a feel for the use of orchestral colour. Although Mageau believes that she learnt a good deal about the art of writing an orchestral work with *Variegations*, she also feels this first orchestral work had some problems:

I felt that the piece was rather a failure. Your first orchestral piece is never, never right. You don't really feel good about an orchestral work until perhaps the second or third one. I mean it is such a huge thing to cope with. You don't get it right the first time, you just get your feet wet. You jump in the water, you splash about and you climb out and look at what you've done and that's about the extent of it (Mageau, M. 1998, pers. comm., 20 October).

Despite Mageau's reservations about this work, *Variegations* went on to win a silver medal in the Gottschalk International Competition in 1970 (LePage, 1988, p. 167).

In 1970, Mageau, on staff at the Duluth Campus of the University of Minnesota, decided to write a work for the local city orchestra (Mageau, M. 1998, pers. comm., 20th October), known as the Duluth Symphony Orchestra (LePage 1988, p.168). *Montage* was inspired by a visit to the Minnesota Art Gallery where Mageau saw a montage by artist Robert Rauschenberg who used the technique of overlaying images. Mageau was interested to see if this technique could translate into the overlaying of orchestral colour and experimented with this idea in *Montage*. Mageau showed the work to the conductor, Joseph Hawthorne, who programmed it on the subscription series for the coming year. *Montage* was subsequently taken on tour by the Minnesota Orchestra (Mageau, M. 1998, pers. comm., 20th October), conducted by Henry Charles Smith (LePage, 1988, p. 168), and was also performed by the Des Moines Symphony Orchestra in 1973, and the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Brisbane, conducted by Patrick Thomas, in 1976 (LePage 1988, p. 168).

In 1974 Mageau moved permanently to Australia. In 1976 after attending a concert by the Australian Youth Orchestra, and being impressed with the standard of performance, she approached the conductor, John Curro, to see if he was interested in performing *Montage*. Instead, he asked her to write something new for the orchestra

that would be a little longer. As it was the year of the American Bi-Centenary, Mageau decided to write a work with an American flavour and *Indian Summer* was the result. John Curro conducted the premiere and also programmed this work again, a few years later, with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra. The performance was broadcast live by the ABC. In 1986 Mageau revised *Indian Summer* in order to make the structure clearer (Mageau, M. 1998, pers. comm., 20th October):

...the original work was in four movements — I felt that one of the movements didn't work...the architecture, let's say, of that movement wasn't as strong and as obvious as I thought it should be. So I removed that movement and I kept the three movements — the first and final movements I didn't touch — and I added just a little bit of material to the middle movement... and I felt it really worked very nicely that way and I've left it like that (Mageau, M. 1998, pers. comm., 20 October).

Mageau's *Concerto Grosso* for harpsichord, cello, flute and orchestra was written four years later, in 1982, and premiered by the Queensland Theatre Orchestra with the Brisbane Baroque Trio (Mageau was the harpsichordist in this group).

Pacific Portfolio followed soon after, in 1983, and is scored for young or emerging performers. She was commissioned for this work by St Margarets College in Brisbane who were preparing for their annual music festival. The policy of the school was to commission an Australian composer for a work every year. Mageau felt that it would be appropriate to write a work with a strong programmatic basis, as it would have greater relevance to the young performers. She chose four sea ports in and around the Pacific Basin — Acapulco, Hong Kong, Jakarta and Sydney — and used folk elements from those four places as a basis for the work (Mageau, M. 1998, pers. comm., 20 October).

In 1990 Mageau wrote one of her most substantial orchestral works, *Triple Concerto* for piano trio. (Hair, G. & Hair, G. M. 1994c, pp. 304-305). This work was commissioned by the Darling Downs Trio who were in residence at the University of Southern Queensland in Toowoomba. Mageau had previously performed (as harpsichordist) with the cellist of the ensemble, Gary Williams, in the Brisbane Baroque Trio. At the time the Darling Downs Trio had been performing Mageau's piano trio and were keen to perform a contemporary triple concerto. As there were so few in existence, they asked Mageau if she would consider writing one. She agreed. Mageau's *Triple Concerto* has subsequently been performed by the Darling Downs Trio with the Murray State University Orchestra in Kentucky, USA. Mageau also entered this work in the first Vienna Modern Masters recording award where it received a commendation. She was then offered a recording contract with the Vienna Modern Masters label, and the work was recorded onto compact disc in Bratislava, Slovakia with the Slovak Radio Symphony Orchestra.⁴¹ For the raw musical materials, Mageau drew for inspiration on her earlier piano trio. It was with the writing of the *Triple Concerto* that Mageau gained a sense of having a real grasp of orchestral craft:

... I really felt I had command and from that point on I've never done any revisions on orchestral pieces. So I just felt by that stage that I had gotten where I wanted to be in terms of feeling secure about the craft of orchestral writing (Mageau, M. 1998, pers. comm., 20 October).

Mageau's next orchestral work, *Variations on a Ground in Gamut*, written in 1992, was premiered by the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Richard Mills. Mills had begun a series of two concerts a year called, 'Meet the Composer' at the Ferry Road Studios in Brisbane, and he approached Mageau and asked her if she would write a piece for one of the concerts. Mageau decided to write a set of orchestral variations based in G — the scale of the gamut — but using an artificial eight-note

scale as a ground. *Variations on a Ground in Gamut* was recorded and broadcast by the ABC (Mageau, M. 1998, pers. comm., 20 October).

In 1993 Mageau wrote what was to be one of her most popular orchestral works in terms of performance, *An Early Autumn's Dreaming*.⁴² This work was commissioned by the Queensland Philharmonic Orchestra, a smaller than standard orchestra with double winds, two horns and two trumpets (Mageau, M. 1998, pers. comm., 20th October):

... I just got a call from them and they just said, 'would you write us a piece? We'd like to commission you. You know the fee will be such and such and we would like to have about a ten minute work' — this was in 1992 — 'we'd like to have it for our 1993 season.' So I said, 'yes, yes, yes,' [laughs] (Mageau, M. 1998, pers. comm., 20 October).

Mageau decided that a nostalgic, pastoral style would best suit the orchestra's smaller and particular sound quality (Mageau, M. 1998, pers. comm., 20th October).

Of all her orchestral works, the one that Mageau feels closest to is her concerto for piano and orchestra, *The Furies*, written in 1994. *The Furies* was commissioned at the instigation of pianist-in-residence Wendy Lorenz by the University of Southern Queensland and the Toowoomba City Council's Regional Arts Development. Lorenz approached Mageau and asked that a piano concerto be written specifically for her (Mageau, M. 1998, pers. comm., 20th October). The premiere was performed by Lorenz with the University of Southern Queensland Sinfonia, conducted by Peter Rorke, and took place at the University of Southern Queensland in August 1995.

Celebration 100, a work for young or emerging performers, was Mageau's next large scale work, written in 1994. This work too was a commission, again from St. Margarets School in Brisbane. As it was the school's centenary celebrations that year,

the school decided to commission a number of composers who had previously been commissioned (Mageau, M. 1998, pers. comm., 20th October).

In 1996 Mageau received another commission and wrote *Symphony of War and Peace*. This commission arose because Mageau had sat on a panel for two years reviewing orchestral scores for the ABC concert department. At the end of this time, in recognition of her services, the ABC asked her to accept a commission to be premiered on the Queensland Symphony Orchestra's fiftieth birthday celebrations. Mageau decided to set the work for voice and orchestra as this was something she had not done before. The war and peace theme was chosen as she wanted to write something very dramatic and contrasting, and as she had been very active in the peace movement, she thought this would be an ideal opportunity to explore some of her ideas and feelings on the subject (Mageau, M. 1998, pers. comm., 20th October). *Symphony of War and Peace* was premiered by the Queensland Symphony Orchestra with soloist Joanna Cole and conductor Vladimir Verbitsky.

Mageau's latest work to date and perhaps her last orchestral work for some time, as she does not feel that she has the energy required for writing more orchestral works, is *Overtures with Fanfare*. This work, written in 1998, was commissioned by the Strathfield Symphony Orchestra in Sydney. The Strathfield Symphony Orchestra approached Mageau with the commission, having heard some of her other works. The idea of a fanfare to open the concert was suggested by Eva Griffiths, the oboe player, who was handling the commission (Mageau, M. 1998, pers. comm., 20 Oct). The premiere took place on 1 May, 1998, at the Strathfield Town Hall (Parker, A. 2000, pers. comm., 5 May).

***The Furies*: a detailed study of Mageau's engagement with the repertorial process**

Mageau's orchestral work, *The Furies*, was chosen for detailed study, as it illustrates in detail Mageau's active management of the repertorial process. It also demonstrates an interesting link to gender representation which is explored in Chapter Three.

Factors affecting the creative process

If Mageau's engagement in the whole orchestral experience as an active participant is examined, several interesting factors emerge, beginning with the commissioning process. As previously mentioned, commissioning enables a composer to devote more time to the project than would otherwise be possible. Mageau views the obtaining of a commission as essential, particularly when weighed against the immensity of the task of orchestral writing:

Before I got started on writing an orchestral work I would get a commission, as orchestral writing eats up so much of your time. The orchestral medium is a very difficult medium to be working in and requires much concentration and emotional energy. I didn't begin to write orchestral works until my children began school. You work on it, alone and it takes months — it is a very lonely task. The scoring is immense and there are numerous corrections to deal with — it is very detailed work (Mageau, M. 1997, pers. comm., 29th August).

Mageau sees the commissioning process as something which can be of great benefit, not only to the composer, but also to the performer. The composer can be paid for their time and efforts, while the performer receives a work that is tailored to showcase their particular talents. Mageau says she came in to the orchestral milieu through soloists, and by showcasing their skills they, in a sense, could advance their career in the performing milieu through her.

As mentioned, *The Furies* was commissioned for pianist Wendy Lorenz. The fact that Mageau is a performer, as well as a composer, assisted her chances of gaining this commission through a network of performers. The pianist of the Darling Downs Trio is Lorenz and it was she who approached Mageau with the idea of a piano concerto. Lorenz says:

The cellist in our group knew Mary Mageau well. Also the Darling Downs Trio have played some of her works and I have always liked Mary's piano writing. I thought a commission from her would be good (Lorenz, W. 1997, pers. comm., 30th August).

When Mageau received the commission for *The Furies* she decided to make the work a 'strong women's statement' (Mageau M. 1997, pers. comm., 29 August). In this orchestral work she provides us with a potent image of female power drawing on the ancient Greek imagery of The Furies consisting of Alecto (the one who is unrelenting), Tisiphone (the avenger) and Megaera (the jealous one). These three goddesses represent, in female form, humanity's developing conscience. (Bulfinch, 1994, p. 11). *The Furies* is in three movements and each movement represents the character of one of these powerful goddesses. This work functions on a political level and sets itself up as a showcase for female power. Perhaps this may be the reason that the work has not really generated momentum in terms of repeat performances. When first interviewed in 1997 Mageau viewed *The Furies* as 'my best work so far' which was 'very well received' (Mageau, M. 1997, pers. comm., 29 Aug). Yet in 1998 she seemed somewhat puzzled by the fact that *The Furies* had not been taken up and performed more often. She comments that '... it's the one that's had the least exposure and [yet] it's also on compact disc. It's funny' (Mageau, M. 1998, pers. comm., 20 October).

The orchestral work

All instruments lie within a non-professional range (Adler, S. 1989, pp. 613 - 620) which should be helpful in gaining performances of the work. The instrumentation is standard (Adler, S. 1989, p. 605) and consists of 1 piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets in Bb, 2 bassoons, 4 horns in F, 2 trumpets in B flat, 2 tenor trombones, 1 tuba, timpani, 1 percussion player (large suspended cymbal, tam-tam, 3 tom-toms, snare drum), piano, and strings. The work is a piano concerto and as such requires a pianist of a high standard, although the piano writing is not overly virtuosic.

The Furies is twenty minutes in length. This duration may well be somewhat long for the performance criteria of the ABC orchestras (Lidbetter, K. 1999, pers. comm., 10 November). It would not be satisfactory to perform independent movements as the work is dependently conceived, both programmatically and musically.

Mediation process

Mageau's connection with pianist Lorenz was crucial in obtaining both the commission and the performances, and since *The Furies* was written in 1995, it has received two performances. The premiere took place at the University of Southern Queensland, and the work was later performed in Brisbane at a Composing Women's Concert by the Queensland Symphony Orchestra. Lorenz was soloist on both occasions and, importantly, she found the experience very rewarding.

I enjoy performing *The Furies* because her [Mageau's] style is idiomatic. It lies easily with the piano and is well written. Mary Mageau's writing is also imaginative from the point of view of sound. She offsets the capabilities of the piano against the orchestral instruments very well and her use of orchestral colour is a real talent (Lorenz, W. 1997, pers. comm., 30th August).

Critical judgement

The Furies has had two reviews — one in the *Toowoomba Chronicle* and the other in the Brisbane *Courier Mail*. Both reviews concentrated on Lorenz's playing as much as the composition. The *Toowoomba Chronicle* described the music as 'moody. Delphic with flashes of fire. It is unashamedly histrionic and perfectly tailored to Wendy Lorenz [sic] style and vigorous attack...The concerto will undoubtedly startle and stir up other audiences in the future' (Wadham, 1995, p. 7). The *Courier-Mail* stated that 'Wendy Lorenz commissioned Mageaus' [sic] concerto with its wonderful programme...and was right at home as its soloist. She delivered this furious, gutsy music from memory with a firm, clear technique' (Kelly, 1995, p. 21).

According to these reviews, Lorenz's performance ideally suited the mood of *The Furies*. In tailoring a work to suit the performer, Mageau seems to have succeeded very well.

Dissemination process

The Furies was recorded the day after the Composing Women's Concert in Brisbane for the international label, Vienna Modern Masters. This is a very positive step for the work as it is now disseminated on CD both nationally and internationally.

Mageau has not tried to have *The Furies* published as she does not think that the publishing of orchestral works is viable in Australia. She perceives the hire libraries as taking over the function of publisher when it comes to orchestral works. 'You don't get an orchestral work published any more. That is dead. What you do is to try and get an orchestral work into a hire library where they will promote it' (Mageau, M. 1997, pers. comm., 29 August)⁴³

Summary

At the Australian Women's Music Festival held in Sydney in 1997, Mageau gave a public address on her attitude towards the orchestral field, and on specific strategies she has used to enable her to reach the goal of orchestral performances:

...in eighty-six I conceived my core musical identity as a symphonic composer. And whenever anybody asked me what are you working on, I always told them 'ten years of orchestral music'. I am convinced that because I believed in myself in this way...I attracted orchestral opportunities to myself...Initially I wrote concertos and I did this by cultivating and creating interest in good quality soloists who were themselves attached to musical organisations or universities. Therefore I made every piece a win, win situation. My music featured their skills and included their input in the compositional process (Mageau, 1997).

Mageau has been single-minded in her engagement with the orchestral field. She has analysed the orchestral world and then developed strategies in which she can propel herself successfully through the repertorial process. She has taken on the orchestral world, with its patriarchal power structures, determining by sheer hard work, intelligent strategy and single minded focus, to be an orchestral composer of some standing.

In the examination of Mageau's participation it can be seen that she has positioned herself where she can manipulate the factors that lead to the success of an orchestral work. She has been, and is, an active participator in every sense. In the case of *The Furies*, an important factor was Mageau's networking with fellow musicians through her role as a performer. This, combined with her reputation as an orchestral composer of merit through the awarding of prizes, and through the fact that Lorenz had a respect for Mageau as a composer, has been a key factor in gaining the all important

commission. The commission and the performances led in turn to the reviews and the international recording.

Whether *The Furies* can be deemed a success or not in canonic terms will need the passage of time. Whether, however, the work can be judged to be a success in the short-term is a matter for some debate and depends on our criteria for success. If success means a performance or two and a recording, then *The Furies* has provided this. However there is cause for some concern. The fact that one of the performances was at a Composing Women's Concert still shows the need for orchestral gendering and although the Queensland Symphony Orchestra has played this work (and several others by Mageau), the other major orchestras have shown a decided reluctance to take it up. The female imagery of *The Furies* potentially characterises it as a gendered work of art and may work to its detriment in a dominant male environment.

Ultimately, *The Furies*' aesthetic power as a piece of orchestral writing, complimented by Mageau's success in networking the orchestral environment, renders it a highly potent challenge to the essence of male hierarchy and encoded values in the orchestral world.

Chapter Eleven: Coda

Ruth Lee Martin 1957 -

The multi-dimensional approach and resulting plurality embedded in this study is evidenced in this section in which my own experiences as composer and musicologist, insider and outsider, observer and participant, are explored within the scope of this thesis. The boundaries between the two dimensions are, of course, blurred so that movement between the stances will inevitably be fluid.

Background as an orchestral composer

Gair Na Mara is a first orchestral work. Undergraduate studies included regular weekly lessons in orchestration in which selected piano works, Satie's *Gnossiennes* and several piano etudes by Scriabin, were scored for orchestra.

***Gair Na Mara*: a detailed study of Lee Martin's engagement with the repertorial process**

The original impetus for this work was composer's desire, and *Gair Na Mara* was written for several purposes. First, it seemed that a study of Australian women orchestral composers would benefit greatly from an orchestral work written by its author and researcher, given that I am already an Australian woman composer. This was in the interest of finding an holistic methodology, incorporating both written thesis and composition, so that the two elements would be integrated. As the thesis gradually developed and the repertorial process became the main focus of study, it began to seem possible to site myself as a participant in negotiating the orchestral milieu and to gain

invaluable insights by drawing on personal experience. Therefore the orchestral work stands not as an adjunct to this study, but as a coherent component of it.

The other reason for writing *Gair Na Mara* was bound up with the development of compositional craft. It provided an opportunity to explore the enormous potential, in terms of sound colour and texture, that can be found within orchestral writing. With these interests, the possibilities presented by the orchestral medium were particularly attractive. There comes a time when a composer feels ready to face the challenge of writing a substantial work for large forces. As Szeto points out, an orchestral work can be a significant stepping stone in an emerging composer's career. An orchestral performance attracts a lot of attention. A large group of performers become familiar with a composer's work, it exposes a composer's work to a large audience, and it is likely to be reviewed. There is also the fact that an emerging composer who has written an orchestral work is often taken more seriously as a composer.

The writing of this orchestral work gave the opportunity not only to investigate the physical, intellectual and musical aspects of orchestral writing, but also to explore aspects of personal identity. Two concepts from Celtic culture were relevant to the work, both relating to the sea. In the first place, powerful female figures, often deities, feature regularly in Celtic mythology (Ellis, 1995, p. 26), and the sea itself is portrayed as Mother Goddess. *Gair Na Mara* draws on this ancient mythology of the sea as a female symbol of power and creativity:

The belief in the sea as mother of all life has survived into our own times. Its mystery and depth made it the supreme feminine symbol and as patriarchal ideas gained prominence its secret and forbidden aspects were increasingly stressed. It contained strange creatures, hidden palaces and hoarded treasures: only exceptional divine beings were able to live in it. But endless taboos came between sea and man. It was dangerous to probe its depths and only in particular cases were faultless heroes

allowed to travel through the marvellous universe of that lost paradise
(Markale, 1976, p. 25).

Secondly, *Gair Na Mara* draws on the belief that the sounds of the Western Sea of Scotland are portentous. For the inhabitants of the islands and highlands of Scotland, the sea is the harbinger of life and death: the people owe their existence to the sea, it gives life, and yet it can also exhort a terrible price. They also believe that the sound of the sea portends life and death and can be understood by the traditional inhabitants.

For an emigrant Scot, *Gair Na Mara's* function provides an opportunity to articulate and express the symbols of this Celtic cultural background. *Gair Na Mara* may also perform this function for those members of the audience with a similar Celtic background to the composer.

The orchestral work

The ranges of the instruments all fall into the non-professional category and the instrumentation is for a standard symphony orchestra: 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 B flat clarinets, bassoon, 4 horns in F, 2 trumpets in C, 2 tenor trombones, 1 bass trombone, 1 tuba, timpani, 2 percussionists, harp, celeste, and strings (divided). The ranges were deliberately kept non-professional and the scoring standard, in the hope that this would increase the work's potential for performance, by both professional and non-professional orchestras.

The work is twenty-one minutes in duration, somewhat longer than some orchestras would prefer.

Mediation process

Six months before the premiere of *Gair Na Mara*, the Canberra Youth Orchestra decided to workshop orchestral works by postgraduates at the Canberra School of

Music, as they felt that the experience would be beneficial for both the orchestral performers and composers. This proved an excellent opportunity to workshop *Gair Na Mara* before the forthcoming performance, so that the score could be refined, if needed, and indeed, a few minor changes were made afterwards.

The premiere itself was not something offered, but had to be actively sought out. At my request, the Director of the School of Music (Professor Nicolette Fraillon — also a conductor) agreed to look at the score, to see if it was suitable for performance. Some weeks later she then agreed to perform the work with the Canberra School of Music Symphony Orchestra. Before the premiere took place, time was spent going through the various parts with the performers. In a few places the percussion writing needed adjustment, as insufficient time had been allowed for the changing of sticks. On 26 July I attended the first full rehearsal of the work. Such an experience is always stressful for the composer. In this situation s/he is the final arbiter of the score, the voice of authority amongst peers and colleagues. A composer must remember her/his intentions throughout every part of the score, and this is not always easy, particularly if a work has been written some time before. In reflecting upon her orchestral experiences, for example, Mageau comments:

Orchestral rehearsals can be tense experiences. You may have minor corrections to be made, or have made a small mistake and on the spot you have to be able to clearly state your intentions as a composer, or you can end up looking foolish in front of a large gathering of musicians. There is immense pressure placed on the composer particularly if the conductor or performers are not friendly (Mageau, M. 1997, pers. comm., 29th August).

Gair Na Mara received four rehearsals. Over the week leading up to the rehearsals student performers frequently approached with questions about the work: how a certain phrase might be bowed; how certain notes should be phrased; or how the

programmatic background related to the work itself. The level of enthusiasm on the part of the players balanced the more stressful aspects of the orchestral performance. After the third rehearsal one of the student performers asked me to come and talk to the orchestra about the work. He said the players wanted a chance to do more than just play the notes: they were interested in knowing what the work meant to me, as the composer. I readily agreed to this suggestion, and with the conductor's assent, gave a short talk on this work to the performers.

Gair Na Mara received its premiere performance by the Canberra School of Music Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Richard McIntyre, on 30 July, 1999 in the Llewellyn Hall, Canberra. The work was programmed into a concert of contemporary Australian music during one of the Canberra School of Music's 'Special Activities' weeks, alongside works by Richard Meale, Gordon Kerry, Carl Vine and the premiere of Larry Sitsky's *Violin Concerto No. 4*.

The delight of hearing one's work performed with enthusiasm and intelligence is offset by the sudden acquisition of power which can seem at first overwhelming to the composer. Many women, for reasons of female enculturation, do not feel comfortable with this kind of power, as they lack the experience (and role models) of being in a position of authority in a milieu that history has shown to be a dominant male culture (see Part One, Chapter Two).

From a personal perspective, the orchestral experience was both thrilling and, at times, overwhelming. It was a very intense experience. There were many expectations placed on me, as the final figure of authority on the score, and to be suddenly placed in this position was not a comfortable feeling. The rehearsals became periods in which I felt a great deal of pressure to express myself succinctly, and to give clear indications of my intentions within the score, at a moment's notice, to a group of over 80 musicians, plus conductor. The performance itself, perhaps paradoxically, was not stressful. To

finally hear my ideas, performed by a large orchestra, albeit somewhat roughly, was a memorable and moving experience.

Critical judgement

Amidst all the post-concert excitement I received positive acclaim from various members of the audience. The audience members consisted of my peers and colleagues of the Canberra School of Music, friends and relatives of both myself and Larry Sitsky (who also had a work premiered in the concert), members of Canberra's arts grants funding board (ArtsACT), the ABC, and interested members of the community. The general feeling that I perceived was that many members of the audience found the work very enjoyable. I also received positive feedback from some of the performers (keeping in mind that few, if any, members of the audience or orchestra would be likely to approach a composer to say they disliked the work).

In the days following the concert critical feedback was sought from my mentors (including the conductor). In particular, the work's structure was commented upon with the view that the climactic point did not seem to be where it was expected to be (interesting from the point of view of a female aesthetic), and that the work would benefit from shortening part of the middle section.⁴⁴ However, another mentor did not agree with the comments, and after some deliberation, I left the work as written. Ultimately the judgement (subjective) was my own, but I felt that the overall structure based on the internal balance of the sections within the work would suffer from editing. While there is a lessening of the overall drive and a dispersion of tension at one point in the mid section (bars 216 - 244), as the texture becomes quasi-pointillistic (particularly in winds and brass), my intention in lessening the forward motion was to provide a moment of calm before the large climactic section which follows, thus giving greater emphasis to the climactic points. In reflecting on this section however, I made some changes, removing the bagpipe ornaments from the brass instruments.

It is difficult to know how much the performance itself contributed to the feeling that the work needed editing, as the performance was not always representative of what was marked in the score. The Canberra School of Music Symphony Orchestra, which does not rehearse regularly, had only one week in which to rehearse a very substantial programme of contemporary works. The performance of *Gair Na Mara* (and other works on the programme) would have benefited substantially from more rehearsal time.

The performance of *Gair Na Mara* received one review by the local Canberra newspaper *The Canberra Times*. The critic places this work and Sitsky's together, commenting that 'both these pieces exploited orchestral colour to the full, and drew on interpolations from all sections of the orchestra to achieve desired results' (Tapscott, 1999, p. 12). The review is non-committal. Although *Gair Na* is acknowledged as making good use of orchestral colour, the reviewer does not make any real aesthetic judgement.

Dissemination process

The premiere of *Gair Na Mara* was recorded, for archival purposes only, onto CD by Michael Grafton-Green, the recording engineer at the Canberra School of Music. Although the performance was problematic in some areas, the recording should still prove useful for self-promotion. To procure an orchestral performance and recording in the first place means that there is some faith in the abilities of the composer. The recording can be used for purposes such as grant applications, and is, therefore, a useful tool in negotiating the compositional field. The premiere of *Gair Na Mara* was also filmed by documentary film maker Gary Kildea, of the Australian National University.

Future publication of *Gair Na Mara* is doubtful. As mentioned before, it is very difficult to have an orchestral work published in Australia, as the potential market is so

small. The work is accessible to orchestras through the AMC's hire library as recently full composer representation at the AMC was awarded.⁴⁵ This process entailed sending in three scores and recordings (and three copies) for assessment to the AMC — *Gair Na Mara* was one of these scores. All scores were then sent to three established Australian composers for critical comment and a recommendation on whether full representation as a composer made.

Gair Na Mara has been taken up into the academic world. As noted previously, the work was workshopped by the Canberra Youth Orchestra and premiered by the Canberra School of Music Symphony Orchestra. In addition, I gave a paper on this work at a postgraduate conference at the Canberra School of Music, and this conference included academics from a range of universities in Sydney and Melbourne.

Gair Na Mara was sent to Mageau for a personal assessment, as she is a composer whom I admire, not only for her orchestral writing but also for the approach she has taken to the orchestral field. In many ways Mageau fulfils the role of mentor and role model. She replied with suggestions for dissemination as well as improvement:

... *Gair Na Mara* is a fine work, filled with interesting motivic patterning at the micro level. The architecture is strong and will carry the work along as its attractive and evocative sound world unfolds. It's lyrically poetic and dramatic. One small detail, the double passports at the end of bar 111 crossing into the down beat of bar 112, would this passage have been better and more sharply focused played by the cellos? The register is extremely high for double bass here... (Mageau, M. 1999, pers. comm., 3 April).

Acting on advice from Mageau, *Gair Na Mara* was sent to the score reading panel of Symphony Australia. However, the panel regretted that they did not wish to program the work. No reasons were given for this decision. This was a frustrating experience

as five scores, photocopied double-sided and bound, plus five recordings were required for the submission, and this took time and money. Some feedback on the work itself would have made the process more worthwhile from an emerging composer's point of view.

These two responses, the one positive from Mageau, and the other negative from Symphony Australia, illustrate the subjectivity, of the repertorial process.

Summary

Clearly there has been active promotion of *Gair Na Mara*. The premiere performance was not part of the general infrastructure of composition study, but had to be sought out. The score was also sent to Symphony Australia for assessment. *Gair Na Mara* can be further promoted by sending it to non-professional orchestras for consideration and the recording from the premiere will be useful for this purpose. With full AMC representation, *Gair Na Mara* can now be placed in the AMC hire library making it more easily accessible to Australian orchestras.

This is a crucial time for *Gair Na Mara* at this stage in the repertorial process. Further performances, at this point, are essential for the work to gain momentum within the repertorial process, for, as discussed, repeat performances not only give life to the particular work, but also impact upon the composer's reputation as an orchestral composer.

On the whole I was heartened by the extent of discussion and commentary that *Gair Na Mara* aroused, and the degree of interest generated in my work by performance staff, which has resulted in several commissions for instrumental works.

Upon reflection of the repertorial process and my interaction with it, there are two things that could possibly have made my negotiation of the repertorial process easier. It

may have been better to have written a concerto. At the Canberra School of Music there are several fine performers with a high profile in Australia who are willing to play works written by post-graduate students. If a concerto was written for one of them, and if they enjoyed performing it, this would lead to promotion by the performer — a very important and useful tool in negotiating the repertorial process. It may also have been better to have written two shorter works for orchestra, as works of ten to twelve minutes seem to be preferred by orchestral programmers. This is especially relevant advice for an emerging composer.

Chapter Twelve

Overall Summary and Conclusion

Overall Summary

From the case studies it has been shown that each woman's experiences within the orchestral environment is unique and dependent on many complex and inter-linking factors. As I have shown, the creation of music is not an aesthetically autonomous act, but is subject to the needs, whims, fancies, desires, and prejudices of the composer and/or the commissioning body, or other institutional processes. The composer, in the private domain, brings to the creation of a work cultural 'baggage' (all internalised from the public sphere), and biological factors (including the possibility of a female aesthetic), and these combine with physical boundaries from the public domain — such as, commission requirements, instrumentation, instrumental ranges, and duration of work. It is in this highly complex and multi-faceted ferment of social, biological, and physical responses that the germination of a new work takes place.

As demonstrated, there are generally three factors that may act as an impetus in the creation of an orchestral work, the first two arising essentially from the public sphere and the third from the private, although these two spheres are not mutually exclusive. These three factors are: a commission; a less formal arrangement such as an invitation from a conductor, orchestral organisation or performer; and the desire of the composer to write for large forces.

Mageau views a commission as an essential part of orchestral writing, and indeed, would not write an orchestral work without one. She believes that commissioning is important for several reasons. A commission grants a composer the time that is essential for orchestral writing. An orchestral work can take months or even years to write. Once the actual creative task has been done — the large-scale form and long gestures mastered, along with the numerous instrumental ranges and balances — there is still the final fair copy of the full score to make, along with the copying of parts with their appropriate transpositions, the insertion of cues, page turns and so on. All of this is extremely time consuming. On a purely practical level a commission allows the composer to spend large periods of time on the orchestral work.

Mageau has had at least eight orchestral commissions; some of these commissions, such as *The Furies* commission, were acquired by following a deliberate strategy of networking with performers of a high standard. In return, she created works which were tailored to demonstrate that particular performer's capabilities and strengths, thus creating a situation which was of mutual benefit. As shown with Mageau's *The Furies*, this is exactly what she did. She wrote a concerto to commemorate a significant event in the pianist Lorenz's life, tailoring the work to suit her capabilities and highlighting her strong points, so that the commissioned work became, in effect, a showcase for Lorenz's particular talents.

Networking with fellow musicians can play a crucial factor in the commissioning process. In Mageau's approach to the orchestral world, she has endeavoured to network and make connections with fellow musicians in situations that have been mutually beneficial. Networking is a factor which has impinged on women composers' participation, for in the orchestral world it has been difficult for them to make the right connections.

All composers — male and female — needed (indeed, still need) connections to the men who held power in the musical world. This posed a special difficulty for women: they were less likely to know the right people and would, moreover, undoubtedly antagonise the influential conductors and managers if they stepped out of their traditional submissive female roles (Reich, 1991, p. 113).

A commission is generally a guarantee that the work will receive at least one performance (Kats-Chernin's *Retonica* is one of the rare exceptions), and this in itself is crucial, as orchestral performances are often difficult to procure. As previously mentioned, performances of orchestral works not only enable the composer to hone her craft, but they also disseminate the work to a large section of the musical community in one performance. Commissioning, therefore, forms a bridge between the composer and the orchestral world, making available to the composer time, money, and performing resources.

Another way in which a composer may approach the writing of an orchestral work is by an invitation from a conductor or orchestral society. Generally this is the result of the composer actively seeking out the opportunity, for example by showing existing orchestral works to a conductor, orchestral society or concert manager as Mageau did when she showed *Montage* to conductor John Curro. She was then invited to write a new work for the orchestra, which she agreed to do (Mageau, M. 1997, pers. comm., 29 August). The invitation that Boyd received to write a work for The Women's Philharmonic is interesting with regard to the way in which she turned the invitation into a commission by writing to the orchestra and suggesting that they apply for funding through the Australia Council.

Generally speaking, most composers would prefer the advantages inherent in a commission. Yet there may also be a period in a composer's career when s/he does not

want the added restraints of a commission, such as the composer's own desire, or need, to explore some aspect of writing for large forces. It may be that by writing an orchestral work a personal compositional goal is reached. Certainly the writing of an orchestral work can have a significant impact upon a composer's craft, and the very fact of writing an orchestral work often engenders a sense of respect amongst peers and colleagues. This in itself can be very useful in the case of an emerging composer, allowing them to be perceived as 'serious' about composition. In my own case I certainly found this to be true. Similarly, in her experiences with *Voice of the Phoenix* Boyd found that through the writing of an orchestral work, and its subsequent performance, she gained the support of well-established composers.

Although writing an orchestral work because of a desire to do so can have definite advantages in terms of the advancement of compositional craft, it can also have disadvantages in terms of performances. It is extremely difficult to have an unsolicited orchestral work performed, as I have shown with Gifford's three orchestral works. Even if the composer is well-established it can still be difficult to procure a performance, and again, Gifford's *Point of Ignition* is a good example of this, being rejected only last year (1999) by the score reading panel of Symphony Australia despite the fact that she is a well-established Australian composer. If a composer is emerging and has no reputation behind her, the chance of gaining an orchestral performance is difficult, although not impossible. For example, Mageau showed *Montage* to the conductor of the Minnesota Orchestra, John Hawthorne, and it was subsequently programmed in the following year's subscription concert series.

Probably the most reliable way of obtaining an orchestral performance as an emerging composer is as a student negotiating the existing infrastructure of a college or university. This was the case with Hyde's *Piano Concerto No. 2*, Boyd's *Voice of the Phoenix*, and my own work *Gair Na Mara*. Indeed Mageau deliberately chose to study

at the University of Michigan, as an orchestral work and resultant performance was a part of their official requirements (Mageau, M, 1998, pers. comm., 20 October).

Performers themselves are major contenders in the canonicity stakes and can exert a considerable amount of power in deciding what is to be performed. Therefore it makes sense for a composer to network amongst performers. The concerto can be a particularly useful genre, for it can provide rich rewards for both composer and performer alike. The prestige and publicity of the orchestral world can be drawn on, while giving the soloist the chance to display their prowess. Mageau realised the potential of this genre and exploited it: 'A guaranteed performance would be essential in writing an orchestral work. The best way to get started is to make friends with a fine soloist' (Mageau, M. 1997, pers. comm., 29 August). As demonstrated, Hyde launched her orchestral career with two piano concerti which she herself performed with major orchestras both in England and Australia.

As discussed previously, another way in which an Australian composer can have access to an orchestral performance is by submitting scores to the Australian Composers' Orchestral Forum, where a selection process takes place to choose four composer participants. Both Kats-Chernin and Szeto found this experience to be a beneficial step in their careers. Kats-Chernin was commissioned to write a piece for the Australian Youth Orchestra after participating in the Forum. Szeto has been selected for the Forum three times. Although the first time she was selected it was officially as an observer, she was also given the opportunity to have an orchestral work 'run through', an opportunity which she followed up with *On a Crest. Energy* and *Energy II* were also written as part of the Australian Composers' Orchestral Forum. This forum was certainly helpful in establishing Szeto as an orchestral composer and it is likely that the invitation from the ABC to send in a score and recording as part of a selection process for a commissioned work (*ABC Fanfare*) was the result of her participation in this Forum. The Australian Composers' Orchestral Forum, with its policy of anonymous

selection, has provided emerging women composers in Australia with an opportunity — without prejudice — of writing for, and rehearsing with, an orchestra, as well as having their work recorded.

The context of a work can have a significant bearing on whether the work is performed. Orchestral concerts sometimes consist of works that are thematically linked, and, if a work's programmatic context suits the theme of the concert, or relates to a particular celebration or extra-musical association, it may be included in the programme. *Black Sun* is a good example of this. At its premiere it was programmed into a concert with an 'East Meets West' theme, and later, it was programmed into a concert with a 'human rights' theme.

The context of a work is a sociologically loaded phenomenon: whether it be programmatic or abstract, it tells much about the composer's political beliefs, philosophy of life, literary interests, education, spirituality, musical influences, and theoretical musical outlook. This context can be determined by either the public sphere (what a commissioning body or orchestra prefers), or it may arise from the private sphere — the composer's own interest in a particular subject, or a combination of both. The programmatic context itself can look outward to the public sphere, such as Boyd's political commentary in *Black Sun*, or it can be introspective and draw on some aspect of the emotions — the private sphere — as in Hyde's *Piano Concerto No. 2*. A work can also have a more abstract context and draw on purely musical elements as in Kats-Chernin's *Retonica*, but, even here, in so called 'absolute music', the composer's socialisation, enculturation and biology are brought into the act of composing.

The orchestral work

In turning attention to the work itself and the work's performance directive, it has been seen that there are three elements, in particular, that can have an impact on whether a work is performed or not: instrument ranges, instrumentation, and duration.

Instrumental range can be an important consideration in whether a work is taken up by an orchestra and given a performance. 'Professional' ranges that extend the capacity of the performers may require extra rehearsals, depending on the standard of the orchestra, whereas 'non-professional' ranges may be suited to performance by both professional and non-professional orchestras, thus greatly enhancing its performance chances. This can be a particularly important consideration in a country with a relatively small population such as Australia. Many orchestras require that the instrumentation be reasonably close to 'standard' for economic reasons. If the score calls for instruments that are obscure, the hire of these could well add to the orchestral budget. If the score calls for extra instruments, this would require the orchestra to hire more players at greater cost. Boyd's *Black Sun* and Szeto's *Energy* are two works that illustrate this ability to cater to a wide range of orchestras, due to their non-professional ranges and standard scoring. They have each been performed several times by both professional and non-professional orchestras. Kats-Chernin's *Retonica*, with moderately extended ranges and scoring, has been performed several times, by professional orchestras. In order to facilitate the performances Kats-Chernin has had to adapt the instrumentation of *Retonica*, which originally called for two button accordion players. Gifford's *Chimaera*, however, reflecting the late nineteen-sixties and nineteen-seventies emphasis on texture, requires extended scoring with large percussion forces, thus limiting its chances of performances, particularly in the light of current economic factors.

The duration of a work is also a consideration in whether it is performed. For some professional orchestras in Australia the preferred duration of a new orchestral work is approximately ten minutes, and works longer than fifteen minutes are less likely to be

performed (Lidbetter, K. 1999, pers. comm., 20 May). Many orchestras prefer shorter contemporary works that can be placed in a programme between larger, more traditional works. Once again this is due to economic factors. Orchestras are very concerned with their ability to bring in good box office returns, and contemporary music is considered by some orchestral organisations to be a financial risk.

The physical accessibility of the score is another factor influencing performance for the ease with which a score and parts may be acquired from a publisher or hire library is a significant issue. Of concern to orchestras — particularly small, non-professional orchestras — is the music hire costs. Alan Stiles, Musical Director of Sydney's Beecroft Orchestra commented: 'There should be ease of access to the parts. Also, parts should not be expensive to hire as many small orchestras have very little money (Stiles, A. 1996, pers. comm., 31 July). In the case studies all scores, with the exception of Nettheim's *Hebraic Overture*, are easily accessible through the AMC hire library.

The copyright fee that contemporary music is likely to incur is of significance for the small, low-budget orchestras, but it is not this alone that prompts the non-professional orchestras to avoid contemporary music. Contemporary music appears to have something of an image problem amongst some non-professional orchestras surveyed. The conductor of the Orange Youth Orchestra, John Gould, believes that much contemporary music is overly difficult and can frustrate the players. The orchestral members are looking for 'catchy rhythms and tunes and these just aren't perceived as existing in much contemporary music' (Gould, J. 1996, pers. comm., 30 July). When asked if the North Sydney Orchestra plays contemporary works Oliver Adis stated: 'They wouldn't do it. They'd say they didn't like the music' (Adis, O. 1996, pers. comm., 30 July).

Mediation process

As has already been discussed [p. 179], an orchestral work moves from the private sphere of the composer, as a socialised object, into the public sphere, where it is subjected to an additional socialised layering through the 'cultural baggage' of the performers and conductor. Within the mediation process, an accretional process of 'cultural layering' is set in motion, beginning with the composer, through the conductor to the performer, and out to the audience. Citron mentions this process in describing how works come to have canonic status:

Canonic works come to be canonic not through some abstract notion of quality, but largely through the accretion of value systems the work encodes and endorses (Citron, 1993b, p. 223).

Such factors as the title of a work can be an important element in deciding whether it is chosen for inclusion in a performance or not, the choice itself being a product of the conductor's enculturation. It is certainly a possibility that titles which contain a blatantly female gendered image may be disadvantaged when it comes to programming. A male conductor may feel, at a subconscious level, emotionally distanced from the image presented by the title and so may discard the work. Mary Mageau's orchestral work, *The Furies*, written as 'a strong women's statement' (Mageau M. 1997, pers. comm., 29 August) is a gendered image and this could work to its disadvantage.

Another factor in the choice of a work is the conductor's knowledge of the composer and, here again, gender may be part of the equation. A conductor is more likely to choose a work by a composer with whom she/he feels some sense of identification. As most conductors in Australia are, at the present time, male, this could work to a woman composer's disadvantage.

One of the significant consequences of the fact that Australian women composers have had less chance to have their works performed is the impact upon their orchestral craft. It is essential that composers are able to hear a reasonable representation of their work in performance, for it is only through hearing a work, particularly for younger or emerging composers, that the difficult orchestral craft can be grasped. Kats-Chernin pointed this out when speaking of the premiere of her first orchestral work, *Piano Concerto*, particularly with regard to instrumental balance. A performance, or workshop at the very least, is of critical importance in an orchestral career. Feedback from experienced performers and conductors is invaluable, particularly for emerging composers. In being denied access to these crucial learning experiences, the older generation of women composers in particular have found themselves in a 'catch 22' situation, unable to hone their orchestral craft due to lack of opportunities, while at the same time being criticised for works which are perceived as sub-standard.

As demonstrated by the case studies, a composer who is also a performer has a great advantage. Not only can the composer perform their own work, but their reputation as a performer can also facilitate entry into the orchestral world through networking with other performers. This was the case with Mageau, who came to know the performers who eventually commissioned her through her role of harpsichordist in a group of which they were members. In Hyde's case study, the ability to perform the dual function of composer and performer has had significant benefits in terms of the orchestral performances of her piano concerti.

In this section I have looked at some of the elements which contribute to a work's performance. A crucial element in the mediation process is the issue of repeat performances, for it is with repeat performances that a work begins to generate momentum in the repertorial process, and is taken up into repertoire lists. Mageau recognises the importance of repeat performances:

...some of these works do come to light, they do originate, they're given a first performance, but then they seem to sink to the bottom like a stone, never to resurface again. It's often been said that it's that elusive second performance and sometimes that third performance that is the one that's more important to a composer than the premiere (Mageau, 1997).

It is with repeat performances that a circulatory effect is set in motion, creating interest in the composer and their works, thus generating further performances and commissions.

Immediate reflective process and critical judgement

There are two related factors in critical reception: the immediate reflective process and the long-term critical judgement. The immediate reflective process is the critical reception or response immediately following a concert. This reflective process involves the personal judgements made by the conductor, performers and the audience (and also by the composer him/herself). These judgements all lie in the private sphere. However, the reflective process also involves the public sphere in the form of critical reviews. In the case of women orchestral composers, however, movement through the repertorial process is aggravated and complicated by gender factors that intrude into aesthetic judgements. This makes the women composers' task more difficult, and the role of assessing the aesthetic value of a work more fraught and complex. Subjectivity is still present, even when critics think they are being most objective.

Perhaps the most important work that reviews do is to give a composer recognition. It could be argued that for a composer, a 'bad' review is better than no review, for if a work had no significance then it would not be reviewed at all. A review can be viewed as a semiotic symbol for the importance of a composer. There is also the point that a review has less to do with the opinion of the reviewer, than the fact that it keeps the composer's works and name in the public arena. If this occurs continually — even

negatively — it can have the paradoxical effect of attaching importance to the composer or work, despite the best (or worst) intentions of the reviewer.

Although reviews are perceived by an immediate public as being authoritative, and occasionally as definitive judgements of a work, this is often far from being the case, for critics promote their own aesthetic values.⁴⁶ Citron, in commenting on the role of the critic, remarks that they are in positions of power, for their opinions are able to be disseminated to a broad cross section of the population through newspapers, specialist music magazines, or radio. She goes on to say that the public, in general, views a critic as a musical expert, who speaks from a position of authority:

The professional music critic has wielded considerable power...Critics have had enormous influence through the sheer numbers of people they reach and their ability to shape taste and “make or break” a composer, work or performer. They seem to stand inside and outside the public at the same time... (Citron, 1993b, p. 180).

While the above comments may well hold true for American society, there are factors operating in Australia which mitigate, to some degree, the impact and power of the critic. For example, Australia’s relatively small size, particularly in the contemporary music field, means that many in the audience know, or at least, know of, most of the composers and performers. This small, somewhat insular grouping gives enormous power to ‘word of mouth’, and this factor has a significant impact on the success or otherwise of a work, often rivalling the power of the critic.

Another source of influence in Australia is through the presenters and producers of two national ABC radio programmes⁴⁷ that are based on the presentation of contemporary music. These programmes have a reasonable following with the contemporary music sector, and they are presented by two people (both male) who are generally respected within the musical community and whose opinions are valued. Although these radio

programmes don't review musical works, inclusion in the programmes is a sign that the composer's works are judged worthy of air play. The radio broadcasts are national, so consequently the exposure is relatively high.

From the case studies it seems that the critic's power is indeed moderated by other factors. Hyde's negotiation of the repertorial process involved a number of positive reviews, yet these were not enough in themselves to prevent a subsequent fading of interest in her orchestral repertoire as she became a wife and mother. Conversely, Szeto's *Energy* has had mixed reviews and yet still enjoys a popularity amongst the orchestral community, particularly the amateur or youth orchestras. Mageau's work *The Furies* received positive reviews after both of its performances. Despite one critic predicting that: 'The concerto will undoubtedly startle and stir up other audiences in the future', this has certainly not been the case, and the work has not been performed since its two performances in 1995 and 1996.

The judgement of critics and the judgement of individuals in positions of power (such as conductors, artistic directors, orchestral panel readers, performers, and radio presenters) help form the long-term critical judgement from the immediate receptive process. This long-term judgement evolves slowly over time and includes not just the judgement of one work and that work's reception, but rather the combined judgement of a composer's body of works, and consequent body of performances. Whereas a particular work by a composer may receive 'bad' reviews, the long-term critical judgement takes into account the overall judgements over a range of works, which are likely to be a mixture of both 'good' and 'bad' reviews. It is with long-term judgement that Mageau's persistence in concentrating primarily on building a body of orchestral works has paid off. Although her work *The Furies* was not particularly well received, this has not prevented her from receiving other orchestral commissions from professional and non-professional orchestras. This then suggests that the overall, long-term judgement of her orchestral oeuvre is positive.

Dissemination process

The dissemination process examines the ways in which a work taken up by organisations, societies, recording companies, promoters, publishers and so on, producing an action on the part of others such as: recording, publication, inclusion of the work in an educational kit, inclusion in the academic world, the marketing of a work by an agent, the awarding of a prize, or inclusion of the work in media forms such as radio, television and newspaper articles. It is important to understand that the dissemination process feeds back into the long-term critical judgement and plays a significant role in influencing this long-term judgement.

The recording process is a significant factor in the repertorial process. Recordings preserve temporal events and allow these events to become repeatable — important in canon formation. The very physicality of a recording makes a work accessible to a far wider audience than would otherwise be possible, both on a national and international level. The issuing of a recording also bestows a status on the performance and the people involved in the recording, from composer, to conductor, to players. Furthermore, a recording can be used by composers to promote themselves, thereby generating future commissions, grants and scholarships. It should be noted that there is a hierarchy in the different kinds of commercial publication and release. For example, releases or publications by established companies have far greater impact than self-recorded and self-issued products.

The fact that women are vastly under-represented on commercial recordings is a significant factor in their marginalisation as composers. In browsing the racks in record shops it is rare to find a work by a female composer on CD, particularly a disc devoted to one composer. Because recordings are such powerful tools in the canonicity stakes, this lack of representation has a significant impact on women's inclusion into canonicity. The international record label, the Vienna Modern Masters, has a policy of equity and equality in the representation of the music selected for inclusion on their

CDs. Both Mageau and Szeto have benefited from their inclusion on this label: Mageau with *The Furies*, and Szeto with *Energy* and *ABC Fanfare*. These works are now being disseminated both nationally and internationally.

Publication is a very important factor in the complex layering leading to the success or otherwise of a work. Publication, like a recording, gives a musical work a tangible quality — a sense of permanence. It enables a work to be taken into the world of academia, where it can be analysed and discussed. In Australia, publishers have always been reluctant to publish orchestral scores, because of obvious limitations in terms of sales due to the relatively small population. Since the 1970s composers have depended upon the facsimile service provided by the AMC hire library. As is the case with recordings, a hierarchy exists in the presentation of scores. For example, a commercial publication has greater cultural value than a home published, or handwritten, score, and as shown in the eight case studies none of these women's orchestral works are being actively promoted by any major publisher. Boyd was 'dropped' by Faber, and Boosey and Hawkes do not seem to consider Kats-Chernin's *Retonica* as commercially viable. John Davis, General Manager of the AMC, notes that publishers, within the Australian context, play a vital role in the promotion of a composer. He cites as an example a major publishing house that actively lobbies the people who make programming decisions, such as festival directors, orchestral managers, and so forth, in order to have the composers they represent chosen for major works. This, of course, is ultimately in the publishers' interests as they receive a share of the royalty income (Davis, J. 2000, pers. comm., 3 April).

As many orchestral scores in Australia are reproduced through the AMC facsimile service, the ability of a composer to typeset their scores in computer software is becoming more and more essential. The importance of a legible score that is correct, thus saving valuable orchestral rehearsal time, cannot be overestimated. A score

containing errors can have a serious impact on the perception of a composer's professionalism.

With regard to other forms of dissemination, both the ABC and the AMC have released a series of educational kits for use in schools. These 'kits' feature an Australian orchestral work, giving a description of the work and a way in which students can interact with it. As I have demonstrated (Part One, Chapter Three), women are better represented in this area. Boyd's *Black Sun* is only one of several orchestral works by women available in an educational teaching kit.

Another important factor in the dissemination of a work is whether it is taken up into the academic world. The academic world imbues the work with the authority of the discipline of musicology with hundreds of years of tradition behind it:

The academy and the field of musicology are interrelated structures with considerable power in canon formation. Immersed in received value systems, scholars, who are typically academics, make choices on whom and what to study, and which pieces to analyse and to prepare for publications. These decisions are shaped largely by disciplinary traditions, which also fashion the decorum on *how* [Citron's emphasis] topics are studied (Citron, 1993b, p. 196).

Choices of works taken up into the academic world are also subject to the same cultural layering process that affects every step of the repertorial process. Academic institutions, in particular, are historically bastions of male authority that have exhibited a reluctance to include the female composer in repertoire studies and musicological texts. A common argument is that there is hardly enough time for students to learn about the 'great masters' and the 'standard repertoire', and that there is simply no time to include a study of secondary composers (in which category female composers are generally deemed to belong).

The fact remains that in academic institutions women composers are not often accorded the same status as their male colleagues and, generally, courses that do concentrate on women composers are taught by women. Works by female composers are simply not regarded as 'mainstream'. In the light of this prevailing attitude, it is hardly surprising that contemporary female composers' works are still under-represented in the academic world, both in terms of analysis and musicological essays. In my recent small survey of Australian academic institutions⁴⁸ (December 1999), only Wollongong University included any orchestral works by Australian women in their repertoire studies.⁴⁹ Brenton Broadstock, at The University of Melbourne has included orchestral works by composers, Sofia Gubaidulina and Ellen Zwillich.⁵⁰ The fact that Anne Boyd is Professor of Music at the University of Sydney suggests that her work would be taken up within the music department.⁵¹

Another important factor in the dissemination process lies in the awarding of prizes, for this can have an enormous impact on a composer's career. Of the eight women included in the case studies only Mageau has won any orchestral awards: *Variegations* (1968) was awarded a silver medal in the Louis Moreau Gottschalk Centenary Competition, 1970, and her *Triple Concerto* (1990) was given a 'special commendation' in the Vienna Modern Masters First Recording Award. The awarding of prizes not only gives a composer publicity and visibility, it also validates the composer's work within orchestral circles. A problem which affects female composers in particular is the fact that many composer opportunities, competitions and prizes have an age limit. This means that for women who have delayed their careers in order to bring up their children, these important means of gaining status as a composer are denied them. This factor, combined with generally reduced performance opportunities and limited recordings, places women at a decided disadvantage.

All these processes — review, recording, publication, academic study, and awarding of prizes — confer status on the work. As I have shown, as a work passes through the repertorial process it accretes cultural value along the way. It also becomes known to a wider section of the musical community, thus generating interest in the composers and leading to new commissions and requests for works, as well as generating an interest in the composer's existing body of works. The women included in the case studies have not fared very well with regard to these criteria, and this area of dissemination, so crucial to the ongoing life of an orchestral composer, is decidedly problematic for them.

Self-promotion

As a composition becomes ready to leave the private sphere of the composer and engage with the public sphere, much depends not only upon the work itself, but also (in Australia at any rate), upon the composer's ability to self-promote. This is partly because of the above factors. In fact, John Davis of the AMC believes that it is 'as important to be able to promote a work as it is to write it' (Davis, J. 2000, pers. comm., 3 April). Factored into the self-promotion equation are such determinants as personality, available time, efficient strategy, and, to a degree, luck. This means that a composer needs to have obtained a reasonably professional level of orchestral compositional craft, and have the ability to 'sell' their work to conductors, performers, orchestral organisations and administrators, record companies, publishers, and the media as well. The media is, of course, a very powerful agent in the dissemination of a work, with potential broadcasts, newspapers, magazine articles or even television interviews generating public interest in a composer and their works.

As discussed, a powerful tool in the self-promotion of a composer is a recording, preferably a professional recording released commercially. The fact that women composers are under-represented in the professional recording field greatly hinders their ability to promote themselves and their works. Archival recordings of live

performances are useful, to a degree, although they often have problems with balance, (particularly with large ensembles and orchestras), obvious performance errors due to lack of rehearsal time, and audience noise. A personal recording can even work to the detriment of a piece by representing it in a way that is far removed from the score and the composer's original intentions, as is arguably the case with the recording of Boyd's *Black Sun*.

Self-promotion does not come easily to many composers, male or female. Self-promotion requires confidence, the ability to plan an effective strategy, and access to those who hold power. As I have shown, concert managers, conductors, and performers are particularly important in the mediation process, while the dissemination process requires access to radio programmers, record companies, and publishers. However, due to the different ways in which male and female children have been socialised, particularly in regard to the way in which women have been perceived as inferior to men on a professional basis, it is more difficult, generally speaking, for female composers to self-promote than male composers:

...women do not have as much access to the major determinants of power use – status, concrete resources, expertise, and confidence. This lowers the power of women. In addition, even if women possess one or more of these determinants, they often face difficulty in using them effectively (Frieze et al., 1978, p. 308)⁵².

This, in effect, means that on a number of levels women are disadvantaged. They are less likely to be equipped with the physical and psychological qualities that determine successful power use – power here meaning a person's ability to influence others; or in other words, to have others do what you want them to do. Therefore the way in which a female composer negotiates the repertorial process seems less likely to be successful than that of male composers for several reasons. Interaction with the orchestral milieu

certainly requires that a composer present, to this critical environment, confidence in their work. The orchestral environment is not a nurturing environment – it is an environment based on power; it is competitive, and it is judgemental. For an emerging composer, whose confidence may only be in embryonic form, it can be especially difficult. Due to a complex combination of factors, which were examined in Part One, women have often lacked access to those in positions of power in the musical world and this has proved to be a significant disadvantage as far as the mediation and dissemination processes are concerned. Furthermore, women who are assertive in their self-promotion have found that they have often been labelled as aggressive (Cartwright, J. 2000, pers. comm., 3 April). What is acceptable behaviour for a male does not translate into acceptable behaviour for a female.

A variety of responses to the task of self-promotion have been demonstrated in these case studies. Mageau has a carefully planned strategy for promoting her works. She believes that a vital aspect of her success is her decision that she would be identified as an orchestral composer. As I have shown, before embarking on the writing of an orchestral work, she employs a deliberate and organised strategy with which to approach the writing of the work, to optimise her chances of success. A large amount of time and energy is put into the task of obtaining a commission. Szeto too, has had a strategy of sorts in negotiating the repertorial process, although not nearly as well-defined nor yet as effective as Mageau's.

The other six composers all answered in the negative when asked if they promote their orchestral works. The main reason given for this by Boyd, Kats-Chernin, Nettheim and myself was a lack of time. Kats-Chernin has been fortunate in being in the unusual position of having other people such as Anthony Fogg to promote her works in the past. Boosey and Hawkes have recently become her publisher, they are likely to carry out the task of her promotion, both nationally and internationally.

Hyde and Gifford seemed somewhat defeated by the idea of self-promotion. Gifford commented that she does not know anything about it, while Hyde said that she would not be any good at it. This may well be a response to their difficulties in negotiating the orchestral repertorial process.

Conclusion

It can be seen from the above description of the repertorial process that it is an extremely complex and iterative process. There is a web of factors that contributes to the promotion of works and their subsequent success. A work can be swept up into the repertorial process, thus generating a sort of 'kinetic' energy that feeds back into the cycle, producing new commissions or requests. A work can also enter the repertorial process and be cut off at any point: it may never be performed, or it may receive only a workshop; it may receive a performance and review, but then sink into obscurity; it may gain a good review or two, which leads to enough interest to generate repeat performances, but this may not lead on to more tangible opportunities in the dissemination process (e.g. CD recordings, publications, prizes, and marketing); or it may be taken up by a performer and extensively promoted — particularly in the case of a concerto. The orchestral repertorial process is an extremely significant one, for it is through the inherent large-scale nature of the orchestral medium that a work can be disseminated to a large number of the public at one time. It is also a medium that has the potential — again due to its nature — to attract a large amount of media attention, far more than many other forms.

It is of importance to note that the composers used as case studies have fared better in negotiating the mediation process than in negotiating the dissemination process. This is due to a complex combination of factors, but ultimately the mediation process seems to be one with which they are to some extent familiar with as composers. On the other hand, the dissemination process seems more elusive; it requires effective marketing

skills, knowledge of how dissemination forms operate, and, often, a network of contacts. This is particularly true in the orchestral world where the publication and recording of an orchestral work requires a significant financial outlay.

For Gifford, the repertorial process has been difficult partly because her basis of writing has been composer's desire, rather than commission or invitation by an orchestral body. For Hyde, despite initial success in orchestral composition, the repertorial process became more difficult, partly because married women with children, in the nineteen-fifties, were not taken seriously outside the domestic sphere, and partly because of her compositional style. Netthiem's utilitarian stance, in contrast, has placed her somewhat outside the mainstream repertorial process. She does not write primarily under the inspiration of composer's desire, but rather, she writes at the initiative of the orchestra. She tailors orchestral works to suit individual non-professional orchestra's requirements. This gives her a measure of success, but it is unlikely (although not impossible) that she will be able to enter the professional repertorial process. The professional and non-professional dichotomy discussed in Chapter One has enormous implications for the way a composer is perceived, as is demonstrated clearly in both Hyde's and Netthiem's careers.

The last three of the eight composers occupy a more prominent place in the Australian orchestral world than the first five. Szeto has had relative success with two of her orchestral works. She has exploited to the full the potential of the orchestral world to launch her career, finding it a challenging and rewarding experience. This may have been caused in part by her relative youth in comparison to the other three who have had to negotiate a far more hostile environment in an earlier generation. Similarly, Kats-Chernin, of the same generation as Szeto, has negotiated the repertorial process with great success. Although she has found it daunting at times, her orchestral composing has been, on the whole, a positive experience. She has been aided by the support of one or two powerful figures within the professional orchestral environment within

Australia, and by several fortunate coincidences. Mageau has approached the orchestral world with a definite plan and although this strategy has been of significant help in her negotiations of the repertorial process, there have still been some elements of the repertorial process which puzzle her. *The Furies*, for example, which she felt to be one of her best works, has received only two performances. Despite her best efforts this work has failed to generate any sort of performance momentum.

It is clear from this study that negotiation of the repertorial process is easier for women composers today than it was even ten years ago. However, this assertion needs to be qualified. The older generation of women composers, still active in composition, seem to experience more discrimination, not only than their male contemporaries, but even than their younger female colleagues. It is also a difficult field for older, mature-age emerging composers, many of whom have spent years rearing young families before finding the time to embark upon a career in composition. When they finally do manage to begin composing, they find that many of the competitions are closed to them. These competitions and the subsequent awarding of prizes are often an important way of making a name as a composer. There are also many performing opportunities, including orchestral opportunities, aimed at young composers that are closed to mature-age emerging composers. As mentioned, this emphasis on 'young', rather than 'emerging' composers, works very much to the detriment of female composers, as even today women are more likely than men to be the ones who delay their careers due to child rearing.

The repertorial process has been traced through the works of eight women composers in order to gain a deeper understanding and insight into the complexity of the process, and the ways in which individual female composers engage with the repertorial process within the Australian context. In the next part of the thesis there will be a detailed focus on three selected works as socialised, cultural artefacts.

It will not be surprising, however, to find that the text bears the traces of those historical processes in which it originates... (Wolff, 1987, p. 7).

Part Three

The creative process and hermeneutic analyses

Introduction

Previously in this thesis I have drawn on that part of the repertorial process model (see p. 88) that illustrates the interaction between the composer, the completed work, and the public sphere. I have examined the ways in which specific composers interact with their orchestral environment and the ways in which that environment has impacted on them. In this section of the thesis I focus on that part of the repertorial process model concerned with the private world of the author and the work itself as an aesthetic object — a socialised phenomenon. It is, after all, the work which remains as artefact in the end, not the repertorial process. The work — the aesthetic object — is created out of a specific cultural environment and this, in effect, means that it cannot be fully understood alone. Joseph Kerman acknowledges the importance of a work's cultural context, reminding us that '...by removing the bare score from its context in order to examine it as an autonomous organism, the analyst removes that organism from the ecology that sustains it' (Kerman, 1985, p. 72, quoted in Shepherd and Wicke, 1997, p. 8).

The notion that a musical work is sustained by its specific socio-cultural context is one of several themes central to this thesis. When Citron states that a musical work is a 'comprehensive notion that includes the idea of the composer as well' (Citron, 1993,

p. 120), she is referring to a model of integration where the concepts of author, work, and society overlap and interact. The idea of the coherence of the musical work and its author means that a study of a musical work is impoverished if it ignores the idea of author. Conversely, a study which is based on the concept of author alone is also impoverished if it does not also include an examination of the author's works in their socialised sense. Writer David Malouf makes the interesting point that author and work are engaged in a dynamic dialectic, 'for in the creation of a work the author is in a sense creating him/herself through a process of growth and discovery' (Malouf as quoted in Hefner, 2000, p. 3).

This approach — situating the analysis within a cultural framework — will lead to a richer understanding of the works to be studied. In speaking of Dalhaus' and Rosen's formalist analytical approach to Schumann's music, Kramer observes that:

...they forego the opportunity to consider Schumann's music as a dynamic part of culture, an instance of cultural practice. They forego, in particular, the possibility of understanding a musical work as a concrete effort to affect the cultural forces, both material and ideological, amid which it is produced and received (Kramer, 1993, p. 305).

Kramer is suggesting here that a musical work not only reflects culture, but is an active participant in a dynamic dialectic between composer and culture. In other words, a musical work can be understood as both a reflector and generator of cultural ideas and attitudes. A work undertakes 'important cultural work', to use Citron's terminology, through the dissemination of social commentary — from the private sphere of the composer, through the performance and out into the public sphere.

At this point, it may be helpful in this context to introduce Nattiez' concepts of the 'poietic' and 'esthesis' processes. Nattiez explains the 'poietic' process as the process by which a work is created, and the 'esthesis' as the process by which a work is

received and subsequently interpreted by the listener. The intended meaning that is embedded within the score (or symbolic form) and arising from the 'poietic dimension' forms a 'trace' from which meaning is constructed through the 'esthesis dimension' of the receiver, for meaning cannot be conveyed directly through the music itself. Musical sound does not convey commonly understood semantic content, so ultimately any meaning which is derived from the music is likely to be unique to each listener. Nattiez, however, retains the idea that the trace forms an important part of the construction, or reconstruction, of meaning for the receiver, and that the musical materials cannot be given just any meaning (Shepherd & Wicke, 1997, p. 17). The following analyses illustrate the importance of the authorial trace in creating the musical meaning which establishes the dialectic between the author and the reader/listener.

Within this section of the thesis two elements will be examined:

- 1) the composer's relationship to culture articulated within the work itself; and
- 2) the work itself as a cultural force (i.e. the way in which the work can act as a cultural force by communicating ideas back into the culture (see p. 212)

The works selected for detailed analytical study are: Anne Boyd's *Black Sun*, Mary Mageau's *The Furies*, and my own composition *Gair Na Mara*. These works were chosen from those examined in detail in Part Two because the extra-musical conception behind each is tangible and therefore the specific relationship between the composer and society (in terms of the musical result) can be more easily understood. Cox makes the point that: 'What is still needed in this stage of music research is more attention to the relationships of personal, social, and cultural conditions of the composers to the nature and structure of the musical compositions' (Cox, 1991, p. 332). The following analyses attempt to do this by investigating the ways in which each of the three composers relate their extra-musical world to the actual music materials.

Boyd, for example, takes a political event in the form of a narrative, which is then translated into the musical content of the work. She creates music which is a literal representation of an event so that the extra-musical ideas become the actual music. Her work *Black Sun* can be seen as intrinsically linked to a specific socio-political phenomenon, making any understanding of the work impossible without considering its connection to the larger cultural, historical and creative base. The integration of this work with its larger cultural context is further demonstrated by the fact that the composition not only represents, but also perpetuates, the composer's own particular socio-political and ideological position.

Mageau's intention in creating her work, *The Furies*, was to make a 'strong women's statement'. To do this she took a cultural artefact — a myth — as a symbolic basis from which the musical materials arise. Mageau's use of extra-musical ideas in *The Furies* functions as an impetus for the creation of musical material, and occurs at a more abstract representational level than Boyd's direct application of narrative.

My own work, *Gair Na Mara*, uses an image — that of the sea — with which to explore intensely personal, introspective concepts which are embodied through musical means. The form and the content of the music is, to some extent, a literal representation of the sea image, but the use of a specific Gaelic folksong also embeds extra-musical ideas symbolically within the work. *Gair Na Mara* explores concepts of identity and the search for a sense of place.

The idea that '[a]rt and society converge in content...not in something external to the work of art' (Paddison, 1996, p. 62) is explored through these analyses. My reading of the following three works focuses on the convergence of art and society and the way this is conveyed through musical means within each composition. The composer's intentions function as the starting point in each analysis. For the Boyd and Mageau analyses these intentions serve as a basis by which I, as reader, participate in

the creation of a meaning that is comprehensive because of the unity of author and work. This is a stance that accords equal interpretative status to both author and reader. It attempts to bring a democratic approach to musical analysis, favouring neither author nor reader. In this way, a work can take on a multiplicity of meanings, as each reader will bring to the authorial intentions their own ideas and preferences based, of course, upon their own enculturation. In a coda to Part Three of the thesis I explore the concept of authorial intentionality from an insider's perspective through my own work *Gair Na Mara* examining the ways in which I authenticate my socialised self through the actual compositional process.

Nattiez cites the semiologist Jean Molino who redefined the poietic dimension in terms of poetry, asserting that the poietic consisted of:

1. a study of the techniques and rules
2. analysis of strategies of production
3. study of the intentions of the author
4. reconstructing the expressive meaning, conscious or unconscious, which may be found in the work (Nattiez, 1990, p. 13).

Molino's definition of the poietic is useful in understanding the elements that make up the relationship between composer and work, particularly with regard to his view that authorial intention is an integral part of understanding a work within its social context. Given the emphasis in this thesis upon the composer, authorial intention seems an obvious starting point for the following analyses.

Before embarking upon the following analyses, the role of authorial intention within the context of this thesis requires definition. While authorial intention serves as a basis, the approach taken is not one which derives from the concept of the author as final

arbiter of meaning in a text. According to Barthes, 'a text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the message of the Author-God)' (Barthes, 1977, p. 146). This idea of author as sole authority is an historical construct arising from complex philosophical ideas emerging from the Middle Ages and culminating in the Romantic period, with the idea of author as transcending and original genius. Barthes maintains, however, that with the death of the author comes the birth of the reader — and through the birth of the reader a multiplicity of meanings are born.

This flexible, multi-dimensional approach, drawing on a collaborative effort between author, text and reader, promotes a deeper understanding of each of the chosen works within the context of this thesis. The author/text/reader position is complex, but Wolfgang Iser's idea that author, text and reader, although separate, come together in the creation of meaning, is an important notion within the context of the following analyses. The meaning that is found in a work, therefore, is offered as only one of several possibilities. As Juhl notes:

...it would appear that the proper model of confirmation in literary interpretation is not truth and falsity, but rather plausibility and implausibility...The same holds true if we believe with Iser that the meaning of a text depends on the reader's creativity and imagination in filling in the so-called gaps in the text — in filling in, that is, what is left open or unspecified in a text. For if these gaps can be filled in a number of different and equally legitimate and possibly inconsistent ways, then again one could not say of an interpretive statement that it is true or that a certain interpretation is the correct reading of the text (Juhl, 1980, p. 198).

The 'gap' in music — that which is left 'open' or 'unspecified' — is greater than the 'gap' of a text, and it is this 'gap' in music which the authorial trace attempts to fill. Although it is acknowledged that there is a fundamental difference in the way that text

and music are comprehended by the receiver for reasons outlined (see p. 213), nevertheless the literary parallels, drawing the reader into the creation of a plausible meaning are still helpful. It should also be noted that with the analysis of a musical work the hermeneutic approach is more complicated than author, text, reader, for a third party — the performer — is also drawn into the process. An analysis therefore may draw on two artefacts, the score itself and the rendition of the work documented as a record of the moment as a sound recording. In undertaking this musical analysis I have relied not only upon the score, but I have also been influenced by the recording, which has itself been subjected to an esthetic process by the performer. Therefore in the following analyses, author, text, reader, and to a lesser degree, performer, all come together in the creation of meaning. As the analyses are based on authorial intention and my encultured, creative reaction to those intentions, each analysis will be unique, having its own particular focus. These analyses are not intended to be holistic musical analyses. Rather they serve to highlight the cultural layering that takes place not only in the *creation* of a work, thus affecting the handling of the musical materials themselves, but also in the subsequent *interpretation*, or reading, of the work.

Chapter Thirteen

Detailed study of Anne Boyd's

***Black Sun*: the**

use of symbolism and bodily

metaphor

In the previous part of this thesis Boyd's orchestral work *Black Sun* was included as one of the case studies, and its progress through the repertorial process was examined. Once again this work will be subject to scrutiny, this time with a focus on Boyd's relationship to the cultural milieu as articulated within the work itself in order to understand the work as a cultural force. In this reading, Boyd's intentions are combined with the creative interpretation that I, as reader, bring to the work.

The idea for centering this analysis on the body evolved as I considered Boyd's starting point for the creation of this work. The three important elements consisted of: a statement from one of the Chinese students in hiding; the newspaper photograph of a bereaved mother whose child was killed in the massacre; and a Chinese folksong. For me, as a woman and a mother, the newspaper photograph had great emotional impact, particularly in light of Boyd's statement that: '...it shows you the shape of the tune. It's a mother with her arm upraised covering her face...' (Boyd, A. 1998, pers. comm., 23 July). It seemed intriguing, from an analytical perspective, to trace the way in which this bodily gesture insinuated itself within the work. For in the creation of

Black Sun, Boyd uses the body as signifying medium. She takes an embodied gesture of grief and despair, transforms the gesture into musical material and uses it as a linchpin for this entire work. Thus she communicates grief and despair, as it is expressed in the body, by a complex process of signification throughout the work.

Like Suzanne Cusick, who argues a case for including the body itself in the framework of musical analysis, I too, wanted to include the body within this analysis as the central point of focus. This idea of including the body was a combination of the composer's and my own reading of the work as a feminist. The inclusion of the body is a central tenet in feminist thinking. As Grosz points out, it is not that historically bodies have been ignored, but rather that they have only recently 'come to be understood as more than an impediment to our humanity' and that feminism has rethought the female body in the positive terms of wonder, pleasure and desire, rather than in the terms of 'regulation and control' (Grosz, 1995, p. 2). In her analysis of Fanny Hensel's piano trio, Cusick explores the possibilities of an approach to analysis based on the body, stating that:

The composer is masculine *not because so many individuals who live in the category are biologically male* [Cusick's emphasis] but because the composer has come to be understood to be *mind - mind* that creates patterns of sounds to which other minds assign meanings. The relationship of notes to each other, because susceptible to apprehension as mind by mind, could not contain Hensel's story as I hear it, the story of a biological and metaphorical woman seeking entry into masculine discourse. Nor could music theory as I have known it help me tell the story I thought I heard, because it is a discipline that identifies nearly totally with the composer as mind, and which identifies music as mind...Music, an art which self-evidently does not exist until bodies make it and /or receive it, is thought about as if it were a *mind-mind*

game... We end by ignoring the fact that these practices of the mind are nonpractices without the bodily practices they call for — about which it has become unthinkable to think (Cusick, 1994, p . 15 -16).

In expressing her desire to site the body within the context of musical analysis, Cusick rejects the notion of music as a purely intellectual pursuit and draws to the reader's attention the fact that, without the body, music cannot exist. She argues that the body has been excluded from compositional thinking because composers are seen to be male, and that historically males have been associated with the intellect, and she asks: where does this leave the female composer seeking entry into this male discourse? In her approach to an analysis of Hensel's work Cusick explores ways of including the body — for Hensel is after all a 'biological and metaphorical woman' — and in doing so she contextualises Hensel. This, she argues, brings a deeper understanding of the works themselves. In the same way I argue that the centering of the Boyd analysis around the body will give a reading that is not only plausible, but one that leads to a greater understanding of the work, and in so doing, also tells something about the author in the process.

In *Black Sun* Boyd attempts to imbue her musical figures with semantic content by tapping into medieval notions of equating grief with descending semitones and the tritone as the 'devil's interval' (Randel, 1986, p. 874). She also uses direct quotations in this case from Chinese folk music, which is another means of signification in music.

Programmatic musical context

The musical materials of *Black Sun* closely follow a programmatic narrative based on the Tiannamen Square massacre. Four different motives, representational of one aspect of the narrative, are woven throughout the piece, and it is the use of these motives in the various sections of the work that define its overall structure. The motives are as follows:

1. The grief motive (fig. 1). This symbolises the grief of the mother of one of the students killed during the massacre. On a broader and more profound level it also represents the grief of humanity at the abuse of human rights.



Fig. 1. Grief Motive (Flute, bars 1-2).

2. The dragon motive (fig. 2). This is taken from the Chinese folk tune 'The Ancestor of the Dragon' and symbolises all that is positive about the ideals of Chinese culture.



Fig. 2. Dragon Motive (piccolo, bars 24 - 26).

3. The tanks/guns motive (fig. 3). This symbolises the machine guns and tanks used in the Tiannamen Square massacre.



Fig. 3. Tanks/Guns Motive (trumpet, bar 35 - 36).

4. The death motive (fig. 4). This symbolises the death of the students in Tiannamen Square (Boyd, A. 1998, pers. comm., 23 July).

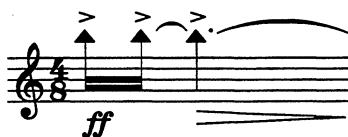


Fig. 4. Death motive (violin I, bar 52).

An understanding of the significance of these symbols, and the way in which they are manipulated and combined to form the work, is necessary in order to attain what Juhl would refer to as a plausible interpretation of the music: an interpretation which is based, in part, on the composer's intentions.

There are eight major sections within *Black Sun*, each section receiving its particular character from the melodic motives which are attached to rhythmic motives. The following diagram illustrates motivic usage within the sections which gives rise to the overall form:

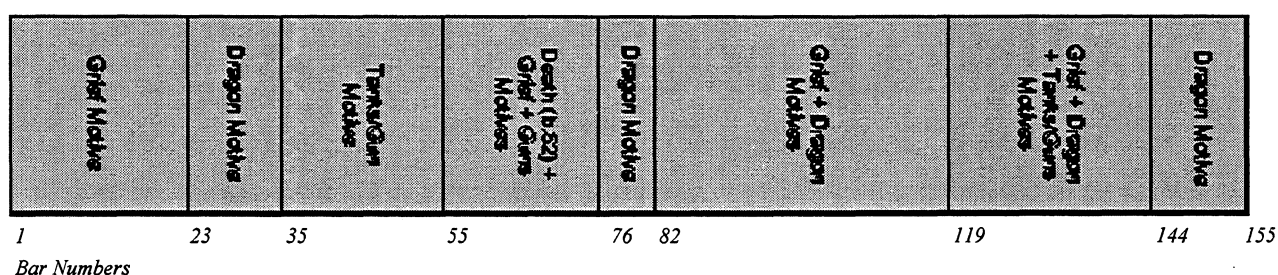


Fig. 5. Diagram of *Black Sun*'s structure.

As can be seen from the above diagram, the work, as it unfolds, becomes more complex in its motivic usage. The first three sections are basically mono-motivic. These sections are then followed by two sections that use combinations of the motives, followed by a third section which is the work's climactic point. This climactic section contains the most complex mixture of elements: static tutti chords, a triplet figure of semitones taken from the inverted and fragmented grief motive, and much use of static clusters in seconds, drawn from the tanks/guns motive. In this section of the work can be found the fastest tempo of the piece, the greatest increase in harmonic rhythm and the longest use of tutti, although the dynamics do not attain their maximum.

The climactic section is representational of the struggle between good and evil (Boyd, 1989b) and, as the work moves towards its conclusion, all dissonances are resolved as the work ends with material drawn from the dragon motive, in the symbolisation of the

triumph of goodness. The overall design of the work is therefore completed with a return to this mono-thematic concept.

The grief motive

One of the most significant musical elements of this work is the grief motive, which dominates much of the piece. It can be found in various permutations in just over half of the work. As mentioned, the idea for the grief motive came from a newspaper photograph of the mother of a dead student dissident. In Boyd's own words:

There's another picture — a mother with her arm upraised covering her face...it shows you the shape of the tune. The woman has clearly lost her only child, probably a son, in the massacre and the gesture says it all, doesn't it? She's being supported by these wonderful young people in her grief and that's where the grief motive came from, that gesture of the arm — see that arm and the hand (Boyd, A. 1998, pers. comm., 23 July).

It is of profound significance that the gesture of the arm and hand of the bereaved mother is taken up into this work and is used as the dominant material. In the photograph (front of score), the bereaved mother, in a state of collapse, is being supported by two young people. Her right arm, the arm from which the grief motive is taken, is supported by a young male who seems almost helpless at the mother's anguish, while a young female supports the mother's body as it seems to sink towards the ground in a gesture of utmost despair. The hand itself is a gentle curve that descends, followed by the more angular downward slope of the arm. Boyd takes this gesture of the arm, with its distinctive contour, and through musical representation places it as the centre piece of the work which is a memorial to the dead.

Musically the work begins with a grief motive, a sigh built from the intervals of three falling semitones plus a tritone — intervals which in themselves express utter darkness and despair (Boyd, 1989b).

Boyd is consciously blurring boundaries. She substitutes one element for another — bodily gesture for musical gesture; the visual for the aural. In doing so, she brings the physical body itself as a dominant force into the work. She subverts, in a sense, the traditional focus of the orchestral world on the mind and the intellect, and places instead the body, a female body, squarely within the framework of the orchestral genre. Through a process of signification, Boyd represents the agony of a bereaved mother through this gesture of the arm, which in turn is represented musically by the contour and intervals of the grief motive. She chooses as musical material descending semitones — intervals which historically represent sorrow: a musical representation that is still familiar to many within the Western art musical aesthetic even today. These descending semitones are followed by a leap downward of a tritone, or ‘devil’s interval’. It is of interest to note that Boyd speaks of the ‘embodiment’ of the mother’s grief through the music itself: ‘First the cry of grief and then...the translation of the embodiment of the agony of this woman through music as though remembering the death’ (Boyd, A. 1998, pers. comm., 23 July).

To Boyd then, the depiction of the mother’s grief through music gives this grief a sense of the tangible, that is, substantiality. In a curious process of signification, bodily gesture (belonging to the physical world) generates musical material (from the temporal world) to express grief (the emotional world), thereby giving the grief substantiality (the physical world). In tracing the use of this motive throughout the work, an understanding of the significance of its use, its relation to other musical material, and its relation to the narrative program becomes apparent. Through this process an understanding of the motive’s importance compositionally and symbolically within this work, both on a macro and a micro level, can be reached.

Boyd uses the grief motive in a variety of ways (see Figures 6 - 9 inclusive). In the opening section of *Black Sun* the grief motive, a descending figure of semitones and a tritone combined with a rhythmic motive, begins in flutes followed by three staggered

entries of the grief motive taken by the winds. Accompanying figures in the strings, providing some sense of stability as a foil to the descent of the grief motive, are slow-moving stacked thirds which outline complex chords. Perhaps these accompanying figures could be likened to the young people from the newspaper photograph who support the bereaved mother in her grief. And yet these accompanying figures provide an 'uneasy' stability. The stacked thirds add dissonances — sharp 9ths, sharp 10ths, sharp 11ths, and 13ths — and there is a great deal of tension in the overall sound. As the piece unfolds, the uneasiness — the tension — increases and the grief motive is taken from the wind and given to the strings, while the woodwinds take over the static accompanying chords from the brass.



Fig. 6. Grief motive (flute, bars 1 - 2).

Boyd subjects the grief motive to a variety of treatments, sometimes extended, augmented, or inverted. Throughout the work the grief motive grows from the short 6 note phrase of the opening bar to phrases consisting of up to 17 notes which are cycled as they are subjected to transposition.



Fig. 7. Grief motive extended (violins I, bars 15 - 21).

When the grief motive is inverted, it symbolises the ascent of the student souls to heaven and, through this musical gesture, Boyd projects a glimmer of optimism into the work (Boyd, A. 1998, pers. comm., 23 July).



Fig. 8. Grief motive inverted (vibraphone, bars 92 - 94).

The pitch, rhythmic, textural and timbral elements of the grief motive are developed and extended as the work progresses. Each time the grief material is restated, it is subjected to a variety of treatments: extension by oscillation; extension by pitch repetition; and extension by repetition of the tritone leap.

Flute, bar 1:
Original motive.



Violin, bars 100-101:
Extension by oscillation between semitones.



Vibraphone, bar 84:
Extension by pitch repetition.



Violoncello (solo), bars 117-118:
Extension by repetition of tritones.



Fig. 9. Diagram of ways grief motive is extended.

Textural development of the grief motive also occurs. For example, at bar 1 the grief motive (2 - 3 bars in length) begins in solo flute. The other instruments join in with

staggered entries; at bar 2 the oboe begins, followed by the bassoon at bar 3 and the clarinet at bar 4. Because of the short length of the motive the staggered entries produce a texture which is very sparse, and this, combined with the score prescription that all instruments are to be played 'solo', produces a very thin texture. At bar 15, when the grief motive is given to the strings, the texture thickens to 4 heterophonic lines in violins 1 & 2, viola and cello (the double bass maintains an A flat pedal). By bar 58, when the grief motive section returns, the motive is passed back to the woodwinds (divided) and there are now 9 heterophonic lines which cycle the grief motive. At bar 83 the grief motive again returns, and although there are still 9 heterophonic lines the orchestral colour has become much more complex with the use of piccolo, flutes (divided) glockenspiel, vibraphone, harp, violin, viola and cello.

The grief motive also develops extensively on a rhythmic level, mostly through the use of embellishment on the original pitch material. The first time the grief motive is stated it is as a simple rhythmic idea.

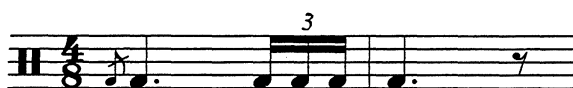


Fig. 10. Diagram of opening rhythmic material (flute, bars 1 - 2).

With every restatement there is a rhythmic variation through extension and embellishment. The rhythmic elements of the grief motive progressively become more complex.



Fig. 11. Diagram of extended rhythmic material (violin I, bars 15 - 21).

The sections which contain the grief motive are heterophonic and have a distinctive contour — either descending, as in the first part of the work, or ascending as in the

The second time the dragon motive is heard is in a quasi-aleatoric section. Here the dragon motive, augmented but not harmonised, cycles as each instrument playing the same version of the dragon motive is introduced one at a time, until the whole orchestra is involved. This quasi-aleatoric section is broken up by loud tutti chords that hammer out repeated notes taken from the beginning fragment of the dragon motive.



Fig. 13. The Dragon motive augmented (double bass, bar 75)

The work finally comes to rest on a chord made up of all the notes of a pentatonic scale taken from the dragon motive — A, B, D, E, F sharp — on the dynamic 'fff'. Thus the work ends with the dragon motive, which functions as a symbol of beauty and hope.

Purity and innocence are thus seen to triumph over tyranny and repression. The students have not died in vain (Boyd, 1989b).

Yet there is no any true sense of development in the dragon motive and only one variation (augmentation). With the staggering of the entries of each instrument in the second of the dragon motive sections there is some textural build-up, but it is a textural build-up that utilises only one idea from many possibilities.

The tanks/guns motive

As the first of the dragon motive sections draws to a close, abrasive semitone clusters employing static pitches begin suddenly at dynamic 'f' in the trumpets. These clusters, according to Boyd, 'remind of tanks and machine-guns.' This motive, utilising the brass and percussion section of the orchestra, is tossed around amongst the instruments. There is a staggered build-up of the instruments, so that some textural

thickening occurs, although, as before, it is not a true textural development. Within each instrumental line there is no rhythmic or pitch development of the motive.



Fig. 14. Tanks/guns motive (trumpet, bar 35 - 36).

The death motive

The death motive comes in at bar 52, after the build-up of tension in the preceding tanks/guns motivic section. The death motive consists of the highest possible note, played by all strings, and begins as two semi-quavers, the second of which is tied to a minim and sounds over 18 bars, after which it glissandos downwards. Here again the pitch is static. The death motive is sustained over many bars, acting as a high pedal note against which the grief motive gradually descends. After the descent of the glissando the death motive is followed by a 'Long Pause' — a moment of silence in remembrance of the dead.

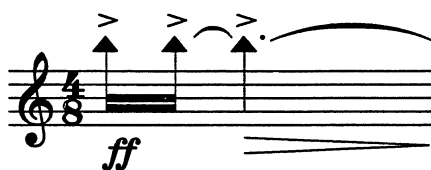


Fig. 15. Death motive (violin I, bar 52).

Appropriately enough within the programmatic context the death motive is inert: quiescent.

It is somewhat paradoxical that it is the grief motive — based on intervals of 'utter darkness and despair' — that provides the work with motion, fluidity, development and organic growth. These are attributes associated with life — with living bodies — against which the limited development of the dragon motive, the static quality of the tanks/guns motive, and the death motive are juxtaposed. The grief motive provides

Black Sun with a sense of the vital and viable. With processes akin to the body — growth, development and so forth — the grief motive represents or symbolises intrinsic qualities of the body, and through this symbolic representation motion and organic growth are embedded and disseminated throughout the work. The grief motive with its strong associations with the body, from which it was originally taken, supplies *Black Sun's* sense of inherent motility and thus provides a generative compositional element within the work.

Summary

It is through the grief motive that Boyd (herself a mother) projects her empathy with another mother's grief, and it is through empathy that Boyd comprehends the anguish of the bereaved mother. In a sense, through this empathetic process, Boyd herself takes on some of this anguish, which in turn finds expressive outlet in the creation of this orchestral work, and Boyd projects herself into the framework of *Black Sun*. It is perhaps significant that Boyd begins the work with solo flute, the instrument that she has played since she was a girl, and one that has been a powerful instrument of cross-cultural meaning in her entire oeuvre.

It is interesting therefore to note the power of this work as a political statement. Responses by two different orchestras highlight the power of this work's trace. We have seen that in the first instance *Black Sun* was taken up and used in a programme celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in America. In the second instance, this time in Australia, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra took pains to make public the fact that the performance of *Black Sun* on the third anniversary of the Tiannamen Square massacre was purely coincidental. The Sydney Symphony Orchestra were not keen to be perceived as endorsing a statement against the Chinese government, and went to some pains to distance the programming of this work from political comment. Both orchestras recognised the significant potential for political commentary that a work can make.

Through *Black Sun*'s use of musical allegory and metaphor, Boyd propels into the public sphere a complex web of ideologies and stances. With the creation of *Black Sun*, she creates a temporal memorial to the dead. Importantly, through the way in which the musical materials themselves are manipulated, *Black Sun* projects a glimpse of hope in the midst of despair, hope that is symbolised in the inverted, ascending grief motive and the resolution of dissonance into material drawn from the dragon motive. *Black Sun* is also the vehicle through which Boyd is prophet: 'This composition is unashamed in its intention as political allegory — I profoundly hope that as prophecy it will also be fulfilled' (Boyd, 1989b).

It is the complex combination of elements discussed here that forms the 'trace' by which Boyd's intended meaning is carried within the musical materials. This intended meaning, as discussed, is responsible for the construction of meaning in the public sphere, but only in part. As Nattiez argues, the author's trace, with its genesis in the poietic dimension, is an important contributor to the construction of meaning for the listener. Yet, for the listener, meaning is constructed through the esthetic dimension which is heavily dependant upon the lived experience of the listener (see pp. 212 - 213). This factor of unique experience results in a 'gap' between the poietic and the esthetic; the poietic sphere cannot be immediately perceived or understood by the listener, so a means must be found to bridge this gap, whereby the author's intended meaning can be brought into the esthetic dimension. This may be, as in the case of *Black Sun*, through detailed program notes on the score itself, through the photograph of the bereaved mother on the front of the score, through the title, or in the form of a pre-concert talk or interview. So it is, in a sense, through a dynamic dialogue between composer and listener that the meaning that *Black Sun* contains will be subjected to a rich and diverse re-creation according to each listener.

Chapter Fourteen

Detailed study of Mary Mageau's *The Furies*.

Alecto: on the wings of the wind

A detailed study of the first movement of Mageau's *The Furies* demonstrates the ways in which Mageau's cultural concerns and interests are drawn into the creation of a new work. Mageau's representation and characterisation of her ideas that give rise to the actual musical materials on both macro and micro levels is investigated. Mageau's intentions in writing *The Furies* as a 'strong women's statement' have also provided me, as analyst, with the idea of exploring the notion of a female aesthetic, and to propose possibilities of the way in which a feminine mode of writing may be encoded within this work. Two features are the focus of this study: the characterisation of the main protagonist depicted by musical means, and the exploration of a female aesthetic within the music.

The creation of this work demonstrates Mageau's concern with several factors. First, it illustrates the desire to create a work as a showcase for the commissioning performer, Wendy Lorenz. Lorenz had recently been promoted in the Music Department at the University of Southern Queensland and she felt it was now time to perform as a soloist rather than a member of a group. This work by Mageau marked this event for her (Mageau M. 1997, pers. comm., 29 August). Because this concerto was to become a focal point marking the transition from chamber player to soloist, Mageau wanted a program behind the work which was worthy of the occasion. She says:

The programmatic idea appealed to me...I wanted something strong — that had a sense of drama. It had to make a big statement. There's a soloist in front of a huge orchestra and it's a big occasion. I wanted a programme to give me lots of drama. I like Greek mythology and I thought that the mythology would give me what I wanted (Mageau, M. 1999, pers. comm., 28 October).

Stuart Collins, in his programme note on *The Furies*, suggests that the title of this work 'acknowledges Mageau's longstanding and deep-seated concern with moral issues' (Collins, n.d.), thus proposing that the work itself acts as a vehicle for Mageau to comment on social and moral issues by musical means. It is interesting to note that the programmatic background for *The Furies* is based on the ancient Greek drama of Aeschylus, and portrays the Furies, or Erinyes, as not merely the avengers of society in general, but more specifically, of women (notably Clytemnestra, whose daughter is sacrificed by Agamemnon). Mageau has a long-standing concern with issues that affect women. In the past she has shown a deep and committed interest in problems concerning women composers — most particularly the dearth of performances and commissions of works, a concern which caused her to form the Australian Women Composers' Network. She states that: 'I wrote *The Furies* as a strong women's statement and the three women involved, conductor, performer and composer, worked together beautifully' (Mageau, M. 1997, pers. comm., 29 August).

With this work, Mageau proceeded to make a 'strong women's statement' by choosing a programmatic background based on images of female power. This potent programme, with its vigorous and vivid portrayal of the female as an active force, became the basis, or springboard, for the creation of musical ideas. Why Mageau at this time felt she wanted to make a 'strong women's statement' is unclear, but she may well have simply wanted to make the point that the concerto genre, traditionally bound up with a virtuosic stance — often the domain of the male — could be dealt with

successfully by a female team of composer and performer (and conductor with the second performance). Through the programmatic context of *The Furies*, Mageau publicly positions herself as a female composer to be reckoned with in the orchestral environment and projects, through artistic representation into the genre and medium itself, a representation of female power. It is a profound, symbolic gesture that prods the slowly evolving orchestral conscience, as it is forced to acknowledge the full participation of women.

Background to first movement

The first movement of this concerto is centred on Alecto one of the three Furies. Alecto is triumphant. Known as 'the unrelenting', she has pursued Orestes, who is guilty of the murder of his mother Clytemnestra (Bulfinch, T. 1994, pp. 11 & 287). The killing is in revenge for the murder of Orestes' father, Agamemnon, by Clytemnestra and her lover. An important point is that Alecto does not pursue Clytemnestra for the murder of Agamemnon, but relentlessly hunts Orestes for the murder of his mother, hounding him from one place to another until at last he is not only exiled but driven to madness with a song that destroys his mind (Lefkowitz, 1986, p. 122). Alecto is exultant at her success in punishing Orestes (Bulfinch, T. 1994, pp. 11 & 287).

This then is the background program to the first movement. This movement, and indeed the following two movements, operate on a poetic rather than a literal representation, consisting of characterisations of each of the Furies rather than the unfolding of the myth's narrative. Mageau attempts to project an image of the character of the Furies through a temporal medium, using the composer's impression as a basis.

General overview

Mageau describes her intentions in the opening movement in these terms:

The first movement was *Alecto* and according to some readings she would pursue evil doers. So I wanted an active, busy opening giving a sense of Alecto flying around searching for evil doers; like the goddess of the hunt, but not quite as vicious (Mageau, M. 1999, pers. comm., 28 October).

Her intention of creating an 'active, busy' opening in the first movement of this concerto manifests itself in the ways in which she works the musical materials. The orchestra provides the musical framework for Alecto who is, not surprisingly, represented by the piano. Both orchestra and soloist have clear roles to play and these roles are defined by use of distinctive musical materials for each. The piano is the protagonist and uses musical gesture as a basis in characterising much of the nature of Alecto, while the orchestra carries the harmonic and thematic material. The orchestra thus provides the structure within which the restless and relentless nature of Alecto is portrayed.

It is important to note that a characteristic feature of this first movement is a thwarting of expectation on the listener's part; the listener's expectations or desires are never fully realised and some degree of anticipation is maintained throughout. This is consistent with the interpretation of the work as a character study, rather than a musico-dramatic narrative involving plot and resolution, and can also be tied into Mageau's desire to make this a strong female statement, as I will demonstrate later.

The depiction of Alecto

Mageau portrays Alecto musically as incessantly restless, continuously in motion, never settling long in any one place. The octatonic scale (using a regular pattern of consecutive half and whole steps) provides the basis for all pitch material such as the gestures, the melodic motives, and the harmonic elements of the movement. Messiaen referred to this octatonic scale as the 'Second Mode of Limited Transpositions' as it is

transposable only three times before repetition of notes occurs (Messiaen, 1956, p. 59).



Fig. 16. Example of octatonic scale (1) and transpositions (2,3).

It is the extensive use of the octatonic scale with its inherent sense of ambiguity which greatly contributes to the representation of the unsettled and restless nature of Alecto. Messiaen, for example, observes that the octatonic scales:

...are at once in the atmosphere of several tonalities, with polytonality, the composer being free to give predominance to one of the tonalities or to leave the tonal impression unsettled (Messiaen, 1956, p. 58).

For much of the work, within each instrumental line, the octatonic scales are used relatively strictly, with little mixing of the transpositions. Between instruments, however, there is mixing of the three scales, although most parts of the work one particular transposition dominates. The following diagram illustrates the dominant octatonic transpositions used throughout the work.

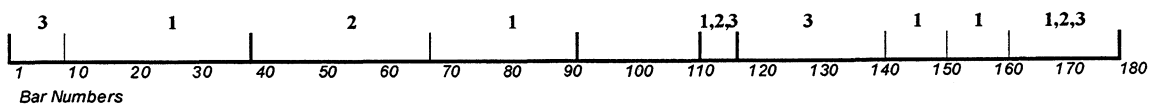


Fig. 17. Diagram of dominant octatonic transpositions using octatonic scale (1) and transpositions (2,3). (Refer to Figure 16).

The effect of using a mix of transpositions in the octatonic scale is to provide, at appropriate times, a rich chromatic saturation of the pitch material. If two octatonic scales are used simultaneously, then the full 12 chromatic pitches are made available.

Parts of this work use a pure octatonic sound with the use of one particular scale in a section, while other parts use a mixture of scales which provide a greater sense of tension and instability.

Mageau manipulates the octatonic scale to give a variety of effects within this first movement. The opening section begins with rapid scalar runs which sweep up and down in an undulating profile over the octatonic scale. Harmonic and motivic elements then accrue in such a way as to build musical tension in anticipation of Alecto's arrival at bar 21. The nature and function of this introductory section is to set the scene for Alecto's arrival. Mageau's choice of musical materials, in particular the octatonic scale, contributes significantly to the music's steadfast refusal to settle or resolve. The instability and ambiguity inherent in the octatonic scale is compounded by the many combinations of major thirds, minor thirds and diminished triads present within the scale itself, with the result that the ear tends to hear vestiges of functional harmony which are never satisfied. Tonal 'anchors' are used in the piece to function as harmonic reference points, achieved by repetition of notes or groups of notes and by the use of pedal notes. These reference points, however, are never stable for very long and like everything else are in a constant state of flux. As the movement unfolds the musical materials are manipulated to intensify the unsettled effect.

A closer look at bars 1 - 20 will illustrate more fully some of these ideas. The octatonic scalar runs, repeatedly running up and down, comprise the first four bars, first in clarinet and then oboe. These scalar gestures form the core of the subsequent piano material, but also serve to introduce or lead into the harmonic ideas which are also derived from the octatonic scale. For example, the following diagram outlines the harmonic framework of the opening four bars in the clarinet. This diagram shows a succession of diminished chords which, because of their unstable nature, seem to float without a tonal centre or a reference to a tonic. This shows from the start the ambiguous nature of the material used, in keeping with the idea of creating instability

in the music. As shown, the harmonic framework moves from G diminished, to F sharp, to G, to F, therefore eluding any sense of tonal centre.

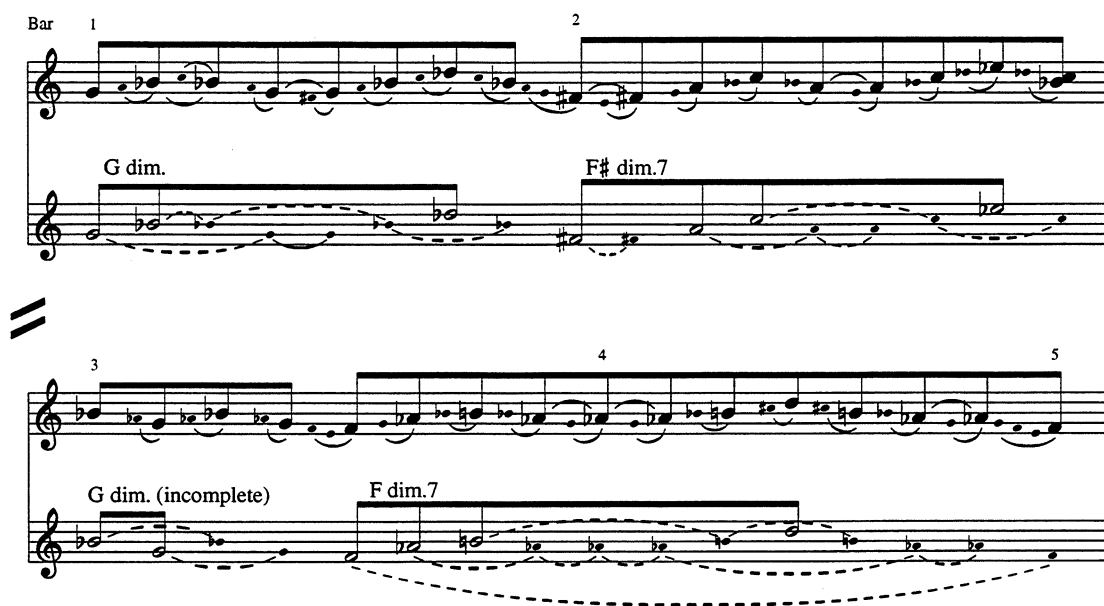


Fig. 18. Graphical reduction of the harmonic framework of the opening 4 bars.

Mageau is adept at building tension throughout this opening section before the arrival of Alecto. F in the strings starts the piece and a single F ponticello in the viola joins in at bar 3, which leads to the first chord of the piece at bar 5. The chord is held until bar 8 where it is extended by the addition of the lower notes B and F, as shown in the diagram below.

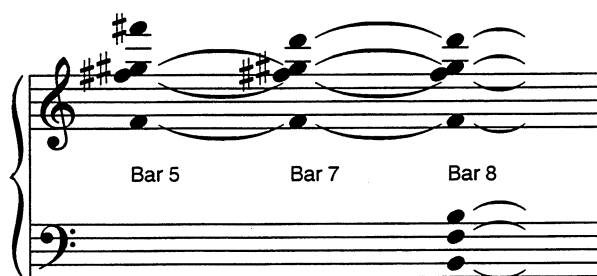


Fig. 19. Harmonic reduction of bars 5-8 of 'Alecto'.

Rather than constituting a change in harmony, the effect is more like a process of organic growth; the second grows from the first and is heard as an extension of the first. This technique of harmonic growth is the basic principle of harmonic prolongation used in the piece.

At bar 9 the brass enters more prominently with both harmonic and motivic material. The undulating scalar runs continue in the woodwinds, while the strings play a very high orchestral pedal of F, C sharp, D. Like the previous bars, 5 - 8, these chords also illustrate a process of prolongation by growth. The lower part of the chords is based on a B flat major triad which provides the sonic stability of the passage, especially as the chords become increasingly rich. The upper parts of the chords are unstable, but do show some degree of continuity, being based upon common notes between the chords illustrated in the diagram below.



Fig. 20. Harmonic reduction, (brass, bars 9 - 19).

It is through the gradual increase in musical tension that Mageau prepares us for the sudden arrival of Alecto 'on the wings of the wind'. She achieves this by a combination of harmonic tension, textural density, tessitura, and dynamics. It is these elements that combine to build the feeling of tension in the music until bar 16, where the undulating runs are replaced by an rushing, upward swoop in woodwinds. This upward gesture, as I will show, is a precursor of the characterisation of Alecto, and is passed to the strings which come to rest on B flat, with the exception of the viola which de-stabilises the sound with a B natural. This de-stabilisation is further emphasised two beats later with the B natural being taken by clarinet while the viola slips to an A, which is itself reinforced four beats later by the cello. The sound, now

almost unbearably tense, is held as a short pedal until Alecto finally arrives in a whirlwind of sound in the piano, entering with an anacrusis quaver on E that sweeps quickly upward to rest tentatively and momentarily on F. Interestingly, it is this momentary arrival on F, following the orchestra's emphasis on B flat which signals the first oblique reference to tonic/dominant relationships found in tonal harmony, although once again it is a reference that is never fully satisfied for the listener.

Gesture

A fundamental element in this work is the use of gesture, which provides the musical material that represents Alecto:

I use gestures more than motifs. I use gestures (such as a three-octave scale) to give a sense of going somewhere. Gesture conveys things in a subtle way. I rely on gesture a lot. Gesture can be developed or embellished or used with different colours in a process of organic growth (Mageau, M. 1997, pers. comm., 29 August).

Gesture is used for two main purposes: to express the character of Alecto — it is hardly surprising to find that the gesture is found for the most part in the piano — and to articulate the structure of the work.

The gesture, a scalar figure, can be found in three forms: ascending, descending and undulating. Of the 125 bars which contain this gesture, 75 bars use it in its ascending form, 41 bars in its undulating form and only 9 bars in its descending form. The diagrams below show these three forms of the gesture:



Fig. 21. Upward gesture, (piano, bars 58 - 59).

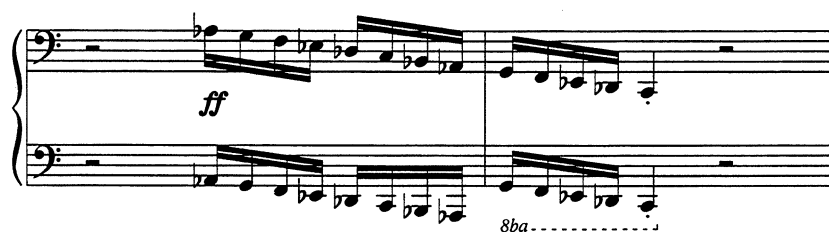


Fig. 22. Downward gesture, (piano, bars 65 - 66).



Fig. 23. Undulating gesture, (clarinet, bars 1-3).

Each gestural variation has a different purpose in the characterisation of Alecto. The ascending form, with its rushing upward sweep of up to three octaves, provides the work with a distinct sense of motion on a micro level (the orchestra, slowly unfolding the harmonic material around it, provides a sense of motion on a macro level). The undulating form, which often has an ambitus of an octave, builds a strong degree of tension and anticipation as the gesture almost seems to ‘hover’ around its starting note. The descending gesture gives the listener a sense of slowing and settling, although this is a temporary device, which never lasts for very long and is used infrequently. To the listener this incessant use of the gesture occurring in 125 bars out of the total 180 bars seems, in itself, relentless. Therefore, one aspect of Alecto’s character, the unremitting

nature, is realised musically through the persistent use of one particular compositional element.

The use of the gesture, while expressing the character of Alecto, also performs an essential role in contributing to the articulation of the overall structure of the movement. The introductory section, from bars 1 - 20, consists of the hovering, undulating gesture for the first 16 bars, which performs the function of building tension before Alecto's grand entrance. The gesture, beginning in the clarinet alone, is two bars long. Other instruments, also using the gesture, are gradually added to thicken the texture and increase musical intensity; at bar 9 two wind instruments take the gesture and by bar 11 it is taken by three wind instruments. At bar 16 the gesture, still in winds, is transformed into an upward sweep over almost two octaves which is then repeated in the strings. In the repetition, the range of the gesture is extended to three octaves, creating an atmosphere of urgent, rapid motion. The highest note of the gesture is then sustained as a 2 bar pedal on unstable B flat and B natural, creating a moment of tension and suspense, before Alecto, represented in double octaves in the piano, suddenly arrives on 'the wings of the wind'.

At bars 65 and 88 the gesture is inverted into the rare descending form and is used to flank each side of the slow section. At bar 65 the gesture, in solo piano, assists in restraining and curbing the energy of the fast second section, as the movement settles into the third section, the slowest section of the movement. At bar 88 intensity in the orchestra is decreased by a thinning of texture, a slowing of rhythmic activity, and the descending gesture which augments its rhythm as it descends. The descending gesture of the piano is taken up in imitation by the solo bassoon, before the fourth section begins at its original lively pace and serves to provide a momentary sense of repose, as if Alecto is preparing to settle, at least temporarily.

In each of the following three sections, the overall form continues to be articulated by the gesture. The structure is clearly defined by a high concentration of the upward sweeping gesture as each section nears its end. This upward gesture, in the piano, is generally found as a solo, or in a very thin orchestral texture where it can be clearly heard. At these ending sections there is also a slowing of rhythmic activity by the use of sustained notes and a gradual paring back of the orchestral texture.

Finally, as this movement drives towards its end and final climactic point, the texture increases dramatically, as do the dynamics. Again the upward form of the gesture is found in high concentration in these last few bars. At bar 173 the gesture, still in piano, has been subjected to variation and is now in arpeggiated form. It leaps upwards in triplets over two-and-a-half octaves only to be followed by a semibreve rest. This figure then repeats four times and on the fourth time it is transposed up an octave. The effect of the arpeggiated leap followed by the substantial rest is to create a feeling of tension and suspense before the final gesture, once again taken by the piano, rapidly and urgently ascends over almost three octaves to rest on D just over three octaves above middle C. The use of the gesture here within its dramatic climactic setting creates a strong feeling of expectation, thus preparing the way for the commencement of the following movement.

The gesture performs an essential function in terms of articulating the structure by signalling the closure of one section and anticipating the beginning of the next. It is an important point that the piano, characterising Alecto as it does, is given a prominent position in articulating the structure by becoming the vehicle for the gesture, usually in a solo role, or combined with a thin orchestral pedal. It is only at the beginning of the work, before Alecto's arrival, that the gesture is given to instruments other than the piano.

Subversion of expectation — a female aesthetic?

I have shown how Alecko has been represented through musical means. The focus will now shift to incorporate the notion of a female aesthetic, and whether a reading which draws on a feminist perspective can add anything to an understanding of the work.

Cox, in considering the idea of a female aesthetic, asks, '...in what sense could...writing be considered feminine?' (Cox, 1991, p. 334). The theoretical basis for work undertaken in this area is drawn from the French postmodern feminists, Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, Hélène Cixous and Monique Wittig, who although maintaining different strategies for struggling against the patriarchal paradigm, share common ground in viewing Western culture as essentially phallogocentric (Jones, 1985, p. 87). Cixous and Kristeva argue that '...the feminine...refers to a mode that disrupts and explodes conventional culture and meaning and can be found in the writing of either sex' (Cox, 1991, p. 334). Although this 'mode of disruption' can occur in either male or female writing, Cixous and Kristeva claim that it is more likely to be found in women's work. According to psychoanalytic theory, the source for such writing stems from '*jouissance*', which is the 'rhythmic, pre-symbolic play of mother-infant communication'. As the female child identifies with the mother and does not have to develop a different gender identity, it is argued that this *jouissance* lasts for longer in the female child, and therefore is more easily accessible to females (Cox, 1991, p. 33). 'Cixous then, presents this nameless pre-Oedipal space filled with mother's milk and honey as the source of the song that resonates through all female writing' (Moi, 1985, p. 114). In order to understand Cixous' position it is necessary to understand that her ideas are related to Derrida's concept of *différance* whereby meaning in language is not derived through closed binary oppositions (male/female, black/white and so forth), where one term gains its identity through the negation of the other, but through a process described as a type of 'free play' between the signifier and the absence of others. Cixous believes that feminine texts 'strive in the direction of difference' and 'struggle to undermine the dominant phallogocentric logic...' (Moi, 1985, p. 106).

I am going to relate this concept of disruption - of the 'undermining of the dominant phallogocentric logic' - to the subversion of expectation, a compositional device that Mageau deploys frequently within *The Furies*, whereby the musical material subverts conventional musical forms.

There are two ways in which a sense of subversion can be linked with a female aesthetic within the first movement of *The Furies*:

1. in the non-adversarial function of soloist and orchestra; and
2. in the distribution of climaxes.

One of the ways this work disrupts, or subverts, expectations lies within the genre of the work itself. Traditionally, at least from the nineteenth century onwards, the concerto has been viewed as a vehicle for virtuosic display, the soloist pitted against the orchestra in a competitive struggle for musical supremacy. In *The Furies*, the soloist is not pitted against the orchestra; the soloist and orchestra are mutually dependent on each other. This is not an antagonistic stance; rather, the piano is the protagonist in a series of tableaux that represent the character of Alecto and functions within the supportive role of the orchestra. The genre expectation of the concerto form as a dramatic confrontation, or a 'pitting against', is thwarted, and Mageau instead provides a model of interdependence: of cooperation, where both orchestra and soloist work together. Soloist and orchestra are complementary rather than adversarial.

From *The Furies*' beginnings, Mageau deliberately steered away from the normal conventions of concerto form. She notes that: 'Wendy Lorenz was the commissioning artist and she wanted a concerto that did not follow the traditional form' (Mageau, M. 1999, pers. comm., 28 October).

As a concerto *The Furies* does not have much in common with the concepts of virtuosity and dramatic confrontation drawn from the Romantic period. Even though the twentieth century has seen a radical freeing-up of the genre, there are still strong vestiges of these Romantic ideas at work in terms of expectations. Indeed *The Furies* seems more akin to an earlier historical form from the Baroque period. In speaking of the terminology of the concerto Arnold states that:

The etymology of the word has been discussed at length as to whether it derives from *concertare* (to 'consort together or form an ensemble') or from *concertare* (to compete)...there is little evidence for the idea of 'striving' or 'competition' in the earliest pieces so entitled (Arnold, 1983, p. 462).

It is probable that Mageau — who is a harpsichord performer and has played extensively in groups performing Baroque music (notably the Brisbane Baroque Trio) — has been influenced by the style of the music with which she is familiar as a performer, and that this influence is reflected in her music. This argument might in itself be sufficient for explaining the particular form chosen by Mageau. However, as a feminist reading the work, I argue that this is only a partial explanation. In her goal of providing us with a 'strong women's statement', I believe Mageau deliberately chose not to use an adversarial model as the vehicle with which to convey her ideas, choosing instead a paradigm based on ideals which are cooperative and complimentary — a paradigm which could be viewed as feminine.

The Furies also defies conventional musical paradigms in the movement's climactic point, or points. There is no push towards a single climactic goal at the two-thirds point where it may be conventionally expected;⁵³ instead, there are five climactic points in all, scattered throughout. The placement of the first climactic point, just before the arrival of Alecto, occurs very early in the work at bars 17 - 18. As I have

demonstrated, Mageau regards Alecto's appearance as a moment of great significance and marks this through increasing musical intensity on a number of levels: dynamics, texture, and tessitura. This initial climactic point is followed only 40 bars later with another climactic point. Coming so soon after the first climax (bars 56 - 64, the end of the second section) and so early in the work, it gives an air of expectation. There is certainly no sense of arrival.

The next climactic point occurs at bar 99, just over half-way through the movement. Again, because the climactic point follows so soon on the heels of the preceding one it has a preparatory feeling. The fourth climactic point begins to build from bar 125 at the beginning of the fifth section, and reaches a peak at bar 141 on *fff*. At bar 142 the texture and dynamics are pared right back, only to begin building once more from bar 157 and pushing through to the end of the work (bar 180), concluding on an *fff* dynamic in a very thick texture (17 instruments). This fourth climactic point, more intense than the preceding ones, also leaves the listener with a sense of expectation, and acts as a precursor for the final and most substantial climactic point of the movement.

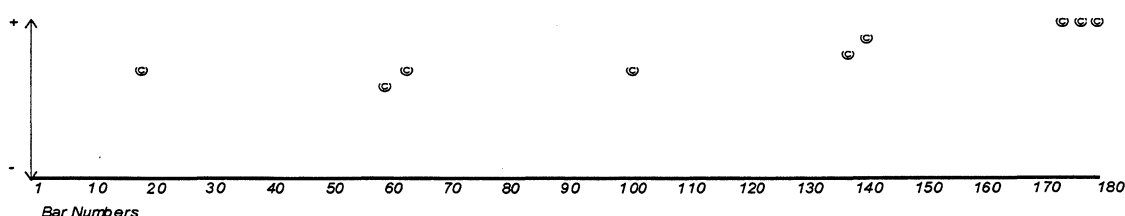


Fig. 24. Diagram showing climactic points in Movt. 1.

Even in this final part of the movement with its double, surging climactic points, utilising thickened texture, wide tessituras, intense rhythmic activity, chromatic saturation, tempo acceleration and gestural urgency (and while the sense of triumph that is Alecto's is realised dramatically through musical means), Mageau still creates the sense that there is more to follow; that the work is boundless. Throughout this movement, instead of a continual drive towards a single climactic point, the movement

seems to proceed in cyclical waves of renewed momentum with each climactic point. There is no sense of ending, or closure: only a sense that there is more to follow, and it is in this aspect of the work that a female aesthetic is most strongly projected. Singularity is replaced by multiplicity, and single-minded goal orientation with cyclical momentum. In commenting upon the work of Luce Irigaray, Cox notes that 'the continuity and openness of feminine writing also reflects women's sexual experiences' (Cox, 1991, p. 336) and this idea can be extended to the writing of music. If, as LeFanu argues, music has the ability to reflect its maker, to reflect the wholeness of being a woman (LeFanu, 1987, p. 4), then surely one of the ways it can do this is to reflect women's sexuality: it can reflect patterns of desire and pleasure that are unique to women's experiences.

Summary

We have looked at the ways in which Mageau has manipulated various musical elements in the representation of Alecto, and the ways in which she has subverted traditional expectations. What are the implications of this work as a 'strong women's statement' and what might this possibly mean within the music itself?

The most obvious way in which Mageau has made this work a 'strong women's statement' is her choice of a programmatic basis that portrays three very strong and powerful women: the Furies. These women are avengers of other women and active seekers of justice, and by a process of signification the whole work is thus imbued symbolically with the idea of strength and power through their musical characterisation. The matter does not rest there, however, for this process works both ways: first, by the composer taking cultural ideas and working them into the music; and secondly, by the music making a cultural statement and thereby impacting back upon the culture itself.

The fact that *The Furies* was written for another woman at a significant moment in her life as a professional musician is also highly relevant. This work acts as a focal point, a means of marking or signalling to the world a woman's success in the professional musical milieu. The three Furies themselves can be equated with the image of 'professional' women, in the sense that they have work to do, and it is work to which they apply themselves diligently.

It has been seen that the creation of *The Furies* draws on vivid and potent female imagery from Greek mythology in order to make a powerful statement about women, and the subsequent reading of this work from a feminist perspective serves to highlight this vital aspect of the work. Mageau has taken the characteristics of The Furies — in this particular study, Alecto's characteristics — and, through means of musical representation, has symbolically endowed the work with a concept of female power. Concepts symbolically implanted in the work portray the female as an strong, active force, refuting the traditional model of the female as weak and passive. Mageau portrays the female as a vehicle for the carrying out of justice and maintaining social order; the female as avenger and protector of other; the female as unrelenting, never giving up, persistent; as boundless; and finally, and significantly, the female as triumphant. The trace that this composition carries is thus, like Boyd's, a political one.

Chapter Fifteen

Coda: The personal creative process.

Detailed study of Ruth Lee

Martin's *Gair Na Mara*: creating a sense of identity

The main focus for the following analysis will be to examine from the perspective of insider the ways in which authorial intention can function within a work. By an analysis of my own work I explore the ways in which I, as a socialised being, struggle to authenticate my ethnicity and gender within a predominantly male orchestral environment. As the following analysis shows, my search for identity as a female and as an emigrant Scot is embedded in *Gair Na Mara* and this provides an opportunity to examine the representation of ideas through the process of signification within the actual musical materials. An important observation regarding authorial intention that has arisen from my experience in analysing my own composition regarding is that the analysis reveals features of the musical structure and design of which I, as composer,

was not aware of when composing. This validates Barthes' reasons for questioning the sole reliance upon the author as the authoritative voice in understanding the work, but the notion that 'the author is dead' needs also to be resisted, for reasons that will soon become clear.

Authorial intention

As composer of the orchestral work *Gair Na Mara*, my intentions in the act of creation seemed to be clear. *Gair Na Mara*, as already briefly noted in Part Two, draws on two Celtic concepts relating to the sea. What these concepts represent to me, as composer, will now be explored in more detail.

The first idea drawn upon was that the sound of the sea has a profound significance for the Celts as a premonitory entity and powerful emotive force. As Kennedy-Fraser describes it in *Songs of the Hebrides*:

In *Eilean a' Cheo*, the Isle of Mist, the sounds of the western sea foretell good weather and bad, birth and death, the drowning of dear ones. The sea has given to Hebridean song its fiercest joy and its most passionate sorrow...The sea-sounds voice the power of the elements in the raging sea, or in the quiet evening they fill the listener with a longing which is hope born in pain. Perhaps other seas have voices for other folk, but the Western sea alone can speak in the Gaelic tongue and reach the Gaelic heart (Kennedy-Fraser, 1922, p. 124).⁵⁴

The second idea is bound up with the Celtic concept of the sea as the supreme symbol of female power: the sea as the great mother, giver and sustainer of life. The sea has, over many centuries and cultures, provided an image which is closely associated with the feminine. In speaking of Cixous' use of oceanic imagery in *l'écriture féminine* Moi comments:

...for countless mythologies, water is the feminine element *par excellence*: the closure of the mythical world contains and reflects the comforting security of the mother's womb (Moi, 1985, p. 117).

The sea has a special significance in my life as an immigrant Scot who came to Australia by ship as a child. The sea was the medium by which the old life ended and the new began. For me, and doubtless for many other migrants, the sea becomes charged with emotive meaning, representing feelings of longing and home-sickness, juxtaposed with feelings of fear and uncertainty, as well as excitement at the unknown future.

Therefore the representation of the sea in this work is used symbolically to express feelings bound up with identity and the desire for a sense of place. The portentousness of the Gaelic concept of the sea, its ability to foretell the future, relates to the feelings of uncertainty, experienced as a migrant, and the need for assurance about the future. My sense of identity as a female is expressed through the Celtic idea of the sea as a powerful female entity. *Gair Na Mara* gives voice to these ideas and emotions encapsulated through the imagery of sea, while the exploration of my Celtic music and culture offers me a sense of belonging, of having a place within a culture. In her article on the diversity of styles and influences on current Australian composition, Australian composer and musicologist Linda Kouvaras speaks of 'the rehabilitation of ethnic memory as a vital part of personal identity' (Kouvaras, 1998, p. 55). This is certainly the case in my writing. Perhaps to the 'rehabilitation of ethnic memory' could also be added the rehabilitation of female memory which, in my case, also plays a significant role in constructing personal identity. The expression of these concepts through the medium of music has been both profound and satisfying for me as composer.

In order to use musical means symbolically to express these concepts of identity and sense of place, a musical means needed to be found which could, in its turn, represent the sea. I felt this could best be done by using a Gaelic folksong as the musical medium. The traditional Hebridean folksong from South Uist *The Mermaid's Croon* (*Cronan na Maighdinn-Mhara*) has a strong connection with the sea, and has strong female imagery, and so seemed to fit the extra-musical requirements well. Musical considerations were also important. It was important to have a melodic phrase that was distinctive and memorable, and that also had some inherent sense of contrast. The opening phrase (8 bars) of *The Mermaid's Croon* again seemed suitable. The first four notes sweep upwards — m3, M3, P4th, outline a minor triad — while the next 4 notes consist of 3 repeated notes, followed by an interval of a 2nd. The first 8 bars of this folksong thus provide the essential pitch material for the work.



Fig. 25. Original *The Mermaid's Croon* folksong (opening phrase).

The Mermaid's Croon accorded with both the extra-musical and the musical requirements and became the symbolic means of expressing the cultural concepts and interests outlined above. The following analysis examines the way in which *The Mermaid's Croon*, as symbolic carrier and quintessential element, provides the work with the musical materials on both a macro and a micro level, thus saturating the work, on a symbolic level, with my original concepts. Specific references to compositional ideas relating to my sense of identity as a Scot and a female are embedded within the work and will be noted.

Engagement with the music

Gair Na Mara is basically tripartite in form and within these 3 major sections there are 9 inner divisions (labelled (a), (b), (c) etc). Material from *The Mermaid's Croon*, motivic, rhythmic, and harmonic, is used in all of these sections and permeates the

entire work. Each of the 9 inner sections has a distinctive motif drawn from *The Mermaid's Croon* and these motives play an essential role in articulating the form and structure of the entire work.

Gair Na Mara

Section 1		Section 2					Section 3	
Modal	Modal	Bi-Modal		Atonal	Bi-Modal	Atonal	Modal	Modal
'Gapped' mode on E	Dorian mode on D	Dorian on E & Mixolydian on F			Lydian on G & Aeolian on G	Pedal note C#	Locrian mode on A	'Gapped' mode on B
(a)	(b)	(c)		(e)	(f)	(g)	(h)	(i)
Bar 1	48	112	201	210	250	267	284	333

Fig. 26. Structural diagram of *Gair Na Mara*.

The opening of Section 1 (a) draws its basic pitch and motivic material directly from *The Mermaid's Croon* in that the main motive has been drawn from the intervallic resources and contours of the first eight notes of the original opening phrase. These eight notes have been subjected to slight modification, the first note being repeated and the penultimate note having one less repetition than the original.



Fig. 27. Example of motive from Section 1 (a), (double bass I, bar 15).

The motif then undergoes various permutations, both melodic and rhythmic, such as elision (where notes are subtracted), retrograde, augmentation and inversion.



Fig. 28. Example of two instances of fragmentation from Section 1 (a), (double bass I, bar 18, & double bass II, bar 18).

While *The Mermaid's Croon* has been used to generate motivic material, the scale of the song itself, a 'gapped' or hexatonic mode, is also drawn upon and generates an harmonic field for the opening section, which in the case of *Gair Na Mara* is centred upon E. The mode can be usefully compared to either a Dorian or Aeolian mode with the sixth missing, making it somewhat ambiguous (the intervals between the fifth, sixth and seventh notes are what distinguishes Dorian from Aeolian, hence the ambiguity if the sixth note is missing). A 'sound-mass' created in the divided strings, where each part uses the notes of the 'gapped' mode, stressing the interval of a 3rd (the opening intervals of *The Mermaid's Croon*) provides the harmonic basis of the work. Within this harmonic environment, the motive of Figure 25 is tossed around between the strings.



Fig. 29. 'Gapped' (Hexatonic) mode.

The sound mass that is generated represents to me, almost on a visual level, the vast deepness of the sea through which small motifs dart about. This opening section also has a feature in which I consciously try to represent femaleness. The piece begins with Violin IIb and Viola I each playing the interval of a minor 2nd within the same register. This interval slowly begins to expand and the resultant wedge shape represents symbolically, for me, the openness of the female body.

The transition into Section 1 (b) is taken by a drone in the double basses on D and A (a reference to bagpipe music). This is followed by a new motive taken from *The Mermaid's Croon* which uses all the notes of the opening phrase of the original tune in their exact order, with the exception of repeated notes which are discarded. D is now the new tonal centre and the sixth note of the scale (C) is added thus affirming the Dorian mode.



Fig. 30. Main motive from Section 1 (b) (Violin I, bars 48 - 49).

This motive is cycled in woodwinds and strings, while a countermelody based on intervals of a 3rd (a reference to *The Mermaid's Croon*) begins in violins Ib and IIb.



Fig. 31. Countermelody to main motive of Section 1 (b) (violin Ib, bars 63 -64).

In Section 2 of *Gair Na Mara* the materials are less closely related to the original opening phrase of *The Mermaid's Croon*. The basic motifs for each section are still drawn from this folksong, but the relationship is more tenuous as the material undergoes a progressive process of chromatic saturation. Section 2 (c) uses bi-modality: a Dorian mode on E combined with a Mixolydian mode on F. The original opening ascending phrase of *The Mermaid's Croon*, outlining the minor triad, is now subjected to harmonic modification to give a minor 2nd followed by a diminished triad, and new material in the form of a short ascending run of minor 2nds is added. As the pattern begins to descend, three notes drawn from *The Mermaid's Croon* are modified

to form a minor 3rd followed by a diminished minor 3rd. These 3 notes are then followed by more new material in the form of descending 2nds (minor and major).



Fig. 32. Scalar motive from Section 2 (c), (double bass I, bars 119 - 120).

Against this scalar motive a counter motive uses the interval of a 6th (inversion of the 3rd) and a 7th (inversion of the 2nd), beginning in double basses.

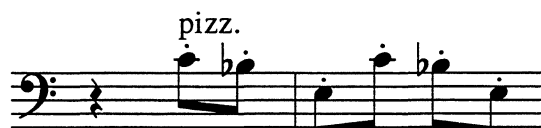


Fig. 33. Countermelody for Section 2 (d), (double bass I, bars 160 - 161).

The next part of Section 2, Section 2 (d), also uses bi-modality. The main motive begins in the bassoon, and once again is built on the interval of a 3rd. Other musical material unrelated to *The Mermaid's Croon* also starts to be introduced.



Fig. 34. Main motive for Section 2, (d), (bassoon, bar 201).

Section 2 (e) still maintains for a time the bi-modality of Section 2 (d). However, the notes E and B are gradually added to make the last part of this section atonal. One of the principal motives in this part of the work is a small repeated-note motive based on bars 3 and 4 of the original folksong.



Fig. 35. Repeated note motive used in Section 2 (e), (oboe, bars 216 - 217).

This repeated-note motive is subjected to various permutations:



Fig. 36. Permutations of repeated note motive (bassoon, bar 223).

The repeated-note motive and its permutations are then combined with actual bagpipe ornaments (the Taorluath and the Crunluath) in the woodwinds.

Section 2 (f) is the climactic point of the composition. The pitch material here is constructed from a combined Lydian mode on G, and an Aeolian mode on G, and makes use of stacked tutti chords. These chords are constructed mainly from a mixture of tritones and 3rds; once again the use of 3rds is a reference to *The Mermaid's Croon*. As Section 2 progresses to the climactic point of the work, the texture becomes thicker, the dynamics increase, the subsection durations decrease and the material becomes more dissonant and less related to *The Mermaid's Croon*. The climactic point begins to build approximately 13 minutes into the composition, which is just over halfway through the duration of the piece. It is at this section of the work in particular that I believe a female aesthetic is functioning, for it has been expressed that the climactic point seems to be in the 'wrong' place (Holmes, R. 1999, pers. comm., 30 July). The climactic point — or rather the climactic points, as there are three in this extended climactic section — are followed by a concluding section, or coda to the climax, which maintains the dissonance and feeling of tension, and the score is marked 'with a vague unrest'. It could be argued that this extended climactic point and the 'unrest' which follows is part of a female aesthetic reflecting the female experience of sexuality on a

symbolic level. This section of unrest, Section 2 (g), maintains the use of the combined Lydian and Aeolian modes, and is the section that bears the least relation to *The Mermaid's Croon*. The most prominent motif is a small, three-note chromatic motive which refers back to material used in Section 2 (c); the use of this small chromatic motive both opens and closes Section 2.



Fig. 37. Chromatic motive (flute, bar 271).



Fig. 38. Chromatic motive extended (flute, bar 269).

Motivic references to *The Mermaid's Croon*, however, can still be found in this section, although the relationships are much more oblique. A fragment in the viola I, uses an oscillating motif consisting of 3rds, and a motive consisting of 3 repeated notes in winds and strings; both references to *The Mermaid's Croon*. They also refer back to Section 2 (e).



Fig. 39. Repeated note motive from Section 2 (g) (violin IIb, bar 276).

The penultimate section, Section 3 (h), is based on a mirror of Section 1 and the material, although new, is related to Section 1 motivically, texturally and modally. This section moves back to modality with a Locrian mode on A. Two motives are used in

Section 3 (h); first, a motive based on *The Mermaid's Croon*, with some modification to give a diminished flavour; and second, an oscillating motive.



Fig. 40. Diminished motive Section 3 (h) (trumpet, bar 293).





Fig. 43. Statement of *The Mermaid's Croon* from Section 3 (i) (cello II, bars 342 - 347).

Summary

To summarise, then, the material with which the work starts is directly drawn from *The Mermaid's Croon* but as the work progresses through to its climactic point in Section 2 the reliance on this material is lessened and the language becomes more tense and dissonant. The form is completed with a return to a more direct relationship between the pitch material of the closing sections and the original tune. This is combined with a relationship between Sections 1 and 3 based on rhythm, texture, modality and motivic ideas. Besides the use of *The Mermaid's Croon* as a symbolic carrier of my concepts of identity, embedded in the work are other aspects which contribute to the idea of my female and Scottish identity. These are: the wedge shape of the opening; the thwarting of expectation with regard to the position of the climactic point; and the fact that the climactic point is greatly extended and followed by a section which still maintains some of the tension.

As shown, the motives drawn from *The Mermaid's Croon* are found throughout the work, creating the fundamental melodic and harmonic material. They not only provide the work with an inherent sense of unity but, along with the changing modes and scales, differentiate each section of the work and thereby contribute to the articulation of the overall structure.

Critical Stance

In the creation of *Gair Na Mara*, it was not obvious that the intervallic and motivic material was of such consequence in the articulation of the form of the work as it has just been described. Possibly a kind of ‘musical intuition’ was occurring while composing: an intuition of which I was not fully conscious, but which subsequent analysis has revealed. It was surprising to find that the analysis revealed something about this work of which I, as composer, composer was not cognisant. There was no conscious awareness of the significance that the original folk tune was to have on the overall structure and design of the work.

Examining my authorial intention has challenged earlier conceptions of the use of programmatic ideas in my work. I have never thought of myself as using literal representational concepts, thinking this approach somewhat naive. Yet the two ‘sea’ motives both occur as literal portrayals of the sea. These two motives, with only a tenuous relationship to the ‘*The Mermaid’s Croon*’, are the glissandi that are used mostly in the opening and ending sections of this work, and a rocking, oscillating motif that can be found throughout and which is often an important transitional device when closing one section and beginning another.



Fig. 44. ‘Sea’ motive 1, Section 1 (a) (violin IIa, bar 4).



Fig. 45. ‘Sea’ motive 2, Section 1 (a) (clarinet, bar 93).

In hindsight, the glissandi represent, to me, the sea sighing. This refers back to the sea-sounds from Kennedy-Fraser’s text that provoke the feeling of ‘longing born in

pain'. The oscillating motif, based on intervals of a 3rd or 2nd (these intervals are found in the first few bars of *The Mermaid's Croon*), represents the literal rocking motion of the sea and can be found in abundance throughout the work.

The use of the two 'sea' motives demonstrate that, while the musical similes are not a driving conceptual force in the work, they contribute to the foreground, adding an audible layer of meaning in the work, despite the earlier assumption that these motives were working only on an inspirational level. Also surprising to me was the fact that I have never thought of myself as a composer who uses symbolism in music and yet it is clear that *Gair Na Mara* is full of symbolism. The Mermaid's Croon phrase is used as a vehicle to endow the work with a symbolism which is active on every level. This symbolism operates both at the level of aural imagery and at a more profound level, in representing a strong connection with issues of identity and the sense of place. The fact that I was not consciously aware of some important aspects of the work as I was engaged in its creation provides plausible evidence that the composer's authority forms only one perspective in the comprehension of the work. However even though the analysis reveals layers of meaning and representation which were unconscious at the time of writing, this does not mean that the author is irrelevant to an understanding of the work. In this case it is clear that there is symbolic meaning embedded in the work, through the significance of *The Mermaid's Croon* and the two 'sea' motives. These factors operate as the genesis of the work. In revealing these embedded, 'invisible' ideas, one reveals something about oneself as author, as well as about the music, and in so doing draws the role of the author back into the author/text/reader dialogue. Moving from Barthes' concept of the death of the author to a position akin to Iser's idea that a collaboration between author/text/reader creates meaning, allows for a much more dynamic and open dialogue.

What then is the trace that *Gair Na Mara* carries? As a composer my intention has been to explore and express issues that are deeply personal and introspective, using both

poetic and literal musical means. Like *Black Sun* and *The Furies*, *Gair Na Mara* is, in a sense, a political statement bound up with identity. *Gair Na Mara* is the vehicle by which feelings of displacement and identity, inadequately expressed through words alone, are expressed and explored. My Scottish identity and my female identity are reiterated throughout the work symbolically by use of the folksong and are drawn out into the public sphere through performance.

It is difficult to identify what this work may signify to others, but hopefully *Gair Na Mara's* trace will resonate with those who have shared similar feelings of displacement and loss of identity.

Summary

These three orchestral works have been examined from the perspective of the social context in which they are embedded. The composer's intention in the creation of each of the works has been unique, and yet the works share an essential commonality: all reflect through the orchestral medium and back into the culture itself an aspect of the female. It is significant that the orchestral world, in many ways so essentially male, has been chosen by these women composers as the vehicle for the projection of the female on a symbolic level. Yet, the orchestral medium, as discussed previously, is in many ways the ideal disseminator of cultural ideas due to its position of power and prestige, and the consequent attention it attracts and the possibility certainly exists for this world to become an inclusive one.

The three works, in a sense, do important political work. Not only are they the reflectors of culture, but as Kramer has pointed out they are participants in a dialogue between composer and culture. By the symbolic projection of the female these works creatively validate a place for the female within a traditionally male domain, thus actively facilitating, over time, women's entry into the orchestral discourse.

Chapter Sixteen

Conclusion

This thesis has been an exploration of Australian women composers' interaction with their orchestral world. The orchestral field has proved to be a fruitful area for an examination of the issues which impede women's acceptance as composers (and conductors and performers), as it is one to which power, prestige, and the concept of the 'great composer' — vestiges of an earlier musical paradigm dominated by a male aesthetic — still cling tenaciously. This study began with a three-fold purpose: to understand the way in which socio-cultural forces impact on women's orchestral participation and to examine the way in which the women in the study impact on their orchestral environment; to investigate problems for women that are particularly evident in this environment; and finally, to investigate the way in which the socio-cultural trace manifests within the musical works themselves. Central to this thesis is the idea that gender plays an important role in determining many practical aspects of the orchestral milieu such as commissioning, performance and reception.

The thesis structure is, in a sense, cyclical: the focus began with a broad sociological context, then narrowed to incorporate the experiences of real women as they encountered the orchestral environment. The form of the thesis was completed with a further narrowing of the focus onto the music itself as it is experienced within the broader sociological context.

In Part One I set up the parameters of the study and its methodological and theoretical basis. In an attempt to understand why women orchestral composers have largely been confined to the margins Chapter Two examined the enormous complexity of issues that

have impinged, and still impinge, on the full participation of women in this area. Assumptions about women's ability as orchestral composers, and orchestral power relations were examined within a historiographic framework and deconstructed to show that power itself is socially constructed out of the preferences and prejudices of those who wield it. It is acknowledged that while attitudes towards women composers are undergoing a process of change, this change is slow and there is some resistance to be overcome. Political correctness does not change people's views, it merely pushes the prejudice underground. It is a significant point that is brought to our attention by Frieze et al. in their study on women and sex roles, when they note that 'prejudiced views are inflexible and not readily changed, even in the face of new and contradictory information' (Frieze et al. 1978, p. 280).

In Chapter Three statistical data was used to indicate the situation of female orchestral composers contextualised within Australia and confined, for the most part, within the boundaries of Australian contemporary music. As this chapter shows, Australian contemporary music as a whole is under-represented in orchestral repertoire, particularly amongst the non-professional orchestras. It was in this section that the changing attitude towards women orchestral composers became evident from the comparison of repertorial lists of the professional orchestras over two, five-year time periods, 1988 - 1992 and 1994 - 1998 inclusive. While there was improvement across the board for women within the 1994 - 1998 time frame in terms of composers represented, compositions and actual performances, the improvement was facilitated mainly through the efforts of only three of the six Australian professional symphony orchestras. This was also an area of concern revealed by these figures. On the surface women composers' representation now appears to stand at an equitable level in terms of composers represented by the professional orchestras: women composers constitute 18.5% of composers at the AMC with full representational status, while overall representation of women composers by professional orchestras stands at 17.7%. However welcome this positive trend may be, when the figures are subjected to further

analysis, a hidden factor emerges that shows that women composers receive fewer repeat performances than do male composers. This is no minor matter, and has the potential to exert a negative effect on the careers of women orchestral composers because as previously discussed, repeat performances are often more crucial to a composer's career than the premiere itself. In terms of the question of canonicity, the prognosis for Australian composers in general, and for Australian female composers specifically, is not a happy one, with repeat performances of compositions being significantly lower than they were ten years ago. Furthermore, owing to the ease with which the statistics can be read superficially, there is a tendency to complacency and it is easy to be lulled into thinking that representation for women is equitable. However, the important questions in urgent need of answering, are why women still make up only 18.5% of the total number of professional composers in Australia, and amongst these women composers, why so few are attracted to writing for orchestras? These facts alone seem to suggest that there is a long way to go, and that many of the assumptions outlined in Chapter Two are still having a negative impact on the way young and/or emerging female musicians view composition. The figures seem to suggest that professional composition is still viewed as an essentially male domain, the orchestral genre itself being still significantly more attractive to males than to females.

It cannot be emphasised enough that what is really lacking in Australia are strong female role models in positions of authority in the compositional world generally, and in the orchestral world particularly. Forums such as the Australian Composers' Orchestral Forum would be one place in which to start. The statistics from the Australian Composer's Orchestral Forum, in which to date, only one woman has been nominated in the role of orchestral teacher, is of great concern. Providing young and/or emerging women composers with female orchestral role models should be a priority and may help in increasing the number of women composers attracted to the orchestral milieu, because, as shown, success as an orchestral composer is, in part at least, about an ability to effectively negotiate the orchestral environment.

Another point to be raised from the statistics of Chapter Three is that when women composers' representation is examined on a worldwide level and not confined to Australian contemporary works, women's representation plummets to an extraordinarily low percentage of representation: 3.62% of composers and 0.77% of the total number of performances by professional orchestras. This compares with 1.8% of composers and 1.71% of the total number of performances by the non-professional orchestras. These figures bring us back to the questions I raised in the conclusion to Chapter Three: it appears that performances of women composers' orchestral works have increased, but this increase appears to be because of the changing political spectrum which has called for affirmative action for Australian content, and affirmative action for the inclusion of women. It is hard to say how much genuine interest there is in expanding the Australian orchestral repertoire by including women's works, but it suggests there is not much if the system has to rely on government enforced affirmative action policies.

Are women's works being included because of political correctness? Why are there not more performances of overseas orchestral works by women? I believe that the answer to the first question, demonstrated by my analyses of the statistical data, is a qualified yes. Laws do not in themselves change people's attitudes, and indeed, sometimes the laws merely drive the discrimination underground where it is harder to counteract. I believe a contributing factor to a sense of reluctance to incorporate more women's orchestral works into the repertoire may well be purely pragmatic: with the decreasing amount of funding available to arts bodies in Australia, the orchestral world is an extremely competitive one and the more composers that can be kept out of the funding pie the better. While this may affect some emerging male composers, females are far more vulnerable owing to the reasons and ideas discussed in Chapter Two, which illustrated how ingrained negative assumptions about women composers have operated

(and still do to some extent). As to the second question, if things were truly becoming more equitable, and if there were a genuine interest in opening up the orchestral repertoire to a whole range of 'others' (including ethnicity as well as gender) I believe more overseas works by women would be showing up in our orchestral repertoire. There are some very well-known and accomplished female orchestral composers whose works are rarely, if ever, performed in this country: women such as Sofia Gubaidulina, Thea Musgrave, Elizabeth Maconchy, Gloria Coates and Elisabeth Lutyens to name but a few.

An interesting fact, and one of the few positive ones to come out of the comparative time period data, is that it is possible for individuals and groups to have an effect on the status quo. Although it cannot be proven that the Australian Women Composers' Network was wholly responsible, it nevertheless seems to have been a significant factor in the dramatic increase in commissions and performances for women in the following year. This is something from which women composers and those that support them can take heart. The enormous energy and organisation required to lobby for change was not wasted, and at the very least, there was a significant increase in awareness of the plight of women composers from the resulting media coverage. According to the data, this heightened awareness seems to have been sustained.

Part Two consisted of eight case studies of Australian women composers and work from each selected in order to trace its progress through the repertorial process, from inception to mediation and dissemination. The repertorial process was examined as it impacted upon the work and the lives of the composers themselves. This led, for some women, to a growing confidence as orchestral composers, while for others the process defeated them. Mageau came to this essentially male domain with a clear strategy which has been amply rewarded with the numerous orchestral commissions she has received over the years. Szeto began with a strategy, but a certain lack of confidence

and lack of direction may yet prove to have some negative consequences. Some women came to the orchestral world without a strategy, their desire to enter this environment being simply one of compositional exploration. This stance has proved problematic, and I believe will become increasingly so as arts funding undergoes a further paring back. It is not enough for a composer to just compose any more; it is not even enough for the composer to pass through the first stage of the repertorial process, the mediation process. Those days are gone. A composer must also have the ability to effectively negotiate within the dissemination process; the composer must have marketing strategies.

Yet a significant factor that has emerged from the case studies is that while most composers seem to be able to negotiate the mediation process, even within the orchestral environment, it is the dissemination process in particular that is problematic for composers. Most composers were either commissioned, or actively sought out an orchestral performance, and generally they were able to procure at least one performance. However, when it came to negotiating the dissemination process it became clear that very few of the orchestral works had been recorded, none had been published, very little orchestral music written by women had been taken into academia, and only Mageau had been awarded any orchestral commendations or prizes. It is the dissemination process in particular that has the potential for being a potent cultural force in the musical world. It is here that a work can be projected to a wide musical public, and not merely as an ephemeral event, but, in the case of recordings, as a tangible, repeatable product. In the case of publication, a score is given the status of a text, and as Citron points out, 'scores are often considered first and foremost the pieces themselves' (Citron, 1993b, p. 37). In the academic world the score (the visual) is privileged over the performance (the aural), thus making publication a powerful force.

However, as noted earlier, in order to negotiate the dissemination process successfully, most composers in Australia need to self-promote. Unfortunately self-promotion does not always come easily to a woman composer, particularly those women from the older generation who have been conditioned to think of themselves as mothers and wives first and foremost, and composers second. They have been immersed and enculturated in a society in which a negative image of the capabilities of women has been projected most forcibly (see Frieze et al. 1978).

An important point to remember here is that the individual experiences of women composers are diverse and vary with age since the prevailing attitudes towards women in society generally, and in the orchestral world specifically, are in a constant state of flux. For the older generation of composers, things have been particularly difficult and have necessitated a resilient, determined spirit to break through the barriers of discrimination. While it is especially painful to see two of our older, most prominent composers defeated by the orchestral environment, they have, despite the difficulties, produced a rich legacy of orchestral music.

The generation of younger women now, in their late thirties and forties, have not experienced such overt prejudice as the older generation, and yet they too have been enculturated in negative attitudes towards women and their abilities. How much of this is internalised is hard to say, but certainly in the mammoth and essential task of self-promotion it is bound to have some effect. Studies from the 1970s,⁵⁵ when these women were just beginning to establish themselves as composers, have shown:

...women tend to share men's feelings that women as a group are inferior...Many more masculine than feminine traits were valued by subjects. Men and women seemed to agree both about what men and women are like, and that men are better. Other studies...also showed that women rated the work of women as inferior to that of men (Frieze et al. 1978, p. 289).

If women have internalised gender stereotyping about themselves as women, what has that done to their confidence? It is extraordinarily difficult to embark on an effective strategy of self-promotion if you are lacking in self-confidence. Self-confident people expect to be successful, and consequently they choose effective ways of influencing people based on these expectations. Women are likely to be less confident in promoting themselves within the public sphere, and consequently they are likely to have lower expectations of success. They are likely, therefore, to use ways of influence which may be less effective than a more direct and assertive approach.

Women's self confidence in the role of composer has been affected by a complex interconnecting web of factors, many of which were examined in Part One, Chapter Two, and again in the summary of Part Two. The assumptions that have been held about women as orchestral writers have been significant inhibiting elements, impacting severely on women's confidence in their orchestral writing. For in the past (and to some degree today), women have not only had to overcome the difficulties of the actual orchestral craft, but have also had to battle the stultifying negative connotations that have surrounded their orchestral participation. As demonstrated in Part One, Chapter Two, these negative connotations and restrictions, with their basis in the ancient world and evolving insidiously over centuries, are manifold, complex, and far-reaching. These include: the fact that a woman's place was perceived as belonging to the private sphere, rather than the public sphere, and the consequent attraction of the social acceptability of the smaller musical forms for women composers; women's association with the body, rather than the mind and consequently, their perceived inability to compose large scale works; women's lack of access to those in power, and subsequent difficulties in making useful orchestral connections. In the past, contributing factors were women's prohibition from the academy, thus denying them the opportunity of learning the orchestral craft; the orchestral composer as a figure of musical authority, authority being perceived as male; the Romantic ideal of 'greatness' which excluded the female. It is small wonder then that women have been discouraged

from orchestral participation. These assumptions about women as orchestral composers are still having repercussions, for as I have shown, few women are attracted to composition, and of these very few are attracted to the orchestral medium.

The role of composer has changed remarkably over the past twenty years or so. It is no longer enough for a composer to sit in a room and write; s/he must become involved in the whole orchestral process. As John Davis of the AMC commented:

Composers must become active participants. They must build networks. The days when you could write an orchestral work and send it off to an orchestra for performance is gone. Composers have to go out and meet people; they have to become involved (Davis, J. 1997, pers. comm., 3rd September).

But the question remains — is it enough for women to participate, for women to engage actively with the orchestral world, to write orchestral works and self-promote? The orchestral milieu is not a neutral social construct, but has been, and still is to some extent, an environment hostile to women. As Frieze et al. point out: 'an ambitious assertive man is admired by all. The same traits in a woman are viewed less positively: she is aggressive rather than assertive, and castrating rather than ambitious' (Frieze et al. 1978, p. 280).

This, in effect, means that women have a double hurdle to overcome. They have to overcome the assumptions about themselves as composers, and then, when promoting themselves, they have to overcome ingrained attitudes that are likely to interpret their actions in a negative light.

Another factor that discriminates against women lies in the important area of competitions and prizes. For many women, family considerations have had to be given first priority while a composing career may have had to be postponed for some years.

By the time these 'mature' women composers begin to emerge, these important avenues are likely to be closed to them due to age restrictions. As pointed out already, competitions and the awarding of prizes are often an important way of making a name as a composer. Perhaps it is time that more thought was given to the implications of the age restrictions placed on composer opportunities, competitions and prizes.

Finally, in Part Three of this thesis there was a further narrowing of focus to a detailed study of three selected works. In this case the orchestral works were selected for analysis as socialised, cultural artefacts. The analyses tease out the composer's relationship to culture articulated within the work itself, and examine the way in which the work can act as a cultural force by reflecting ideas back into the culture. These three works can be viewed, in a sense, as a way in which the three women composers authenticate themselves within the male-dominated orchestral world of musical composition. They do this by writing works that are strongly related to women in some way. Boyd's use of the 'grief motive' symbolises intrinsic qualities of the body — and importantly a female body — a mother's body — to provide a sense of motion and organic growth throughout the work. In *The Furies* Mageau uses a programme inspired by the vivid and powerful female imagery of the Furies from Greek mythology in order to make a 'strong woman's statement'. Mageau symbolically endowed this work with a potent image of the female as powerful, as active, as unremitting, and, ultimately, as triumphant. Thus through musical representation *The Furies* forcibly counters the traditional cultural model of the female as weak and passive.

In *Gair Na Mara* the concept of intentionality was examined providing an opportunity to explore the premise of authorial authority from an insider's perspective. Using both poetic and literal musical means *Gair Na Mara* is the vehicle which gives voice to feelings of displacement and identity, yet in the concept of identity lies my identity not only of being Scottish but also of being female — a displaced 'other'. My Scottish

identity is reiterated throughout the work symbolically by use of the folksong, and expressed publicly through performance. I place myself in the male orchestral world through identification with the sea as the supreme figure of female power and in a sense this is my own 'women's statement'. As suggested previously, all three works are political statements reflecting the composers' socialisation that not only reflect the culture but actively engage in the making of culture.

In conclusion, some of the key findings which have emerged from this study are:

- that the orchestral environment is not a neutral field, but is subject to gender bias;
- that networking plays a crucial role in the building of a composer's career;
- that women's social conditioning has left them ill-prepared for the daunting task of self-promotion as composers, particularly in this difficult orchestral sphere;
- that there are so few established female role models in the orchestral world from which emerging women can draw a sense of identity and self-confidence as orchestral composers;
- the problem of complacency — of having a sense that women are further advanced on an equality basis within the orchestral milieu than a less superficial analysis of the data would lead us to suppose;
- that only a small percentage of women are attracted to composing, and of these, so few are writing in the orchestral medium;
- that despite all the difficulties, women are indeed attempting, in various ways, to authenticate themselves within the orchestral world through the portrayal of the feminine within their orchestral works.

With all the difficulties that beset women in their negotiation of the orchestral field, it may well be asked why women bother to write orchestral works at all. Mageau made the answer to this question abundantly clear when she remarked:

I'm addicted to it. A performance takes only minutes, but when the orchestra comes through with your ideas it's absolutely wonderful! It's also a very spiritual experience that feeds the soul. There is a greater impact with the performance of an orchestral work than any other genre (Mageau, M. 1997, pers. comm., 29 August).

It is true. Despite all the difficulties there is something extraordinarily exciting about the orchestral world; the infinite compositional possibilities in the orchestral sound palette; the stimulation of grappling with an immense force in terms of compositional craft; the intense excitement of the performance as an extraordinary occasion in itself; all these things make this medium a most engaging one despite the inherent difficulties it presents.

This thesis has attempted to understand the complexity of issues that have operated within the Australian orchestral milieu, as women composers increasingly seek entry into this stimulating and attractive sound world. It says much for this medium's ability to engage that so many women composers have written for it, with so little chance of hearing their work at all — never mind in terms of orchestral 'success'.

This thesis has been a journey that has ranged over and through a wide range of methodologies, theoretical stances and approaches in order to gain a holistic understanding of the issues. I have employed strategies grounded in the concepts of plurality and diversity, for fundamentally that is what feminism means to me. This plurality, an underlying theme throughout this study, is reflected on many levels. I have engaged, with a variety of perspectives as an insider/outsider, and as a musicologist/composer who is female: for as the musical work reflects something of its creator, so to, on a profound level, does this thesis.

To conclude, I would like to return to the concept of 'intentional coincidence' — that is, as previously discussed, the way in which individual interests, values and prejudices combine to produce combined group intentions and values. Reilley's argument that there is an onus of responsibility on the members of the privileged group is compelling. Put simply, and placed within a musical context, in practical terms it means that males operating within the orchestral field from a position of privilege have a responsibility to support the entry of their female colleagues into these previously excluded areas. This responsibility requires more than a superficial glance at statistics to see if things are roughly equitable. It requires a deep sense of commitment to the inclusion of women as orchestral composers, for in so doing, the richness and abundance that diversity brings is ours. It is only with a cooperative, inclusive approach between male and female composers, musicians and other orchestral institutions and organisations that female composers will at last be able to fully emerge from the 'Dark Corner' and take their rightful place alongside their male colleagues.

Endnotes

¹ I understand the term 'gender' to mean the social and psychological aspects of female identity, whereas 'sex' refers to the biological condition (Halstead, 1997, p. 215).

² Symphony Australia is one of seven subsidiary companies of the ABC, the other six companies being comprised of the ABC orchestras. Symphony Australia services these orchestras, its duties being: to maintain the central music library for all the orchestras; to prepare the programme booklets; liaise and undertake administration for all international artists; administer general artistic information related to emerging artists; maintain computer networks and administrate the financial and payroll systems; liaise with the ABC and with the funding authority. Symphony Australia also directs and manages an Artistic Development program, the aim of which is to encourage new artists and support Australian repertoire (Watt, D. 2000, pers. comm. 15 February).

³ The Australian Broadcasting Commission, known as the ABC, is the Government statutory authority for providing national radio and television. It is also a concert organisation. Australia's first professional symphony orchestras were formed in Sydney and Melbourne in 1932 by the ABC, orchestras in the other states being formed soon after. Until recently the ABC has had the control of Australia's professional orchestras. The ABC orchestras have had an enormous impact on the musical life of Australia, not only through their concert performances, but also through marketing of CDs, books and paraphernalia, radio and television broadcasts.

The ABC orchestras have been financed through government funding. At the moment the orchestras are going through a significant process of change, as they are being formed into independent subsidiary companies of the ABC. Although independent of the Government, the ABC has been criticised for political interference in programming (Forbes, 1997, pp. 32 - 34), orchestral mis-management and lack of interest in the promotion of Australian music. See articles such as: 'ABC attitude to contemporary music is absolutely pathetic' (Mitchell, 1988, pp. 8 - 9): 'ABC whips out the make-up to cover its orchestral mess' (Hoad, 1985b, pp. 70 - 72): 'All is not sweet music in Australia's orchestras' (White, 1986, p. 47); 'Independent orchestra plan hits a

discordant note with Aunty' (Hoad, 1985a, pp. 77 - 78); 'Playing it safe: why the ABC is losing friends' (Carmody, 1988, p. 12); 'Chaotic Concerto: Aunty lands in a musical nightmare' (Ward, 1985, p. 9).

⁴ The term 'repertorial process' denotes the totality of a composer's engagement with the orchestral environment, from the creative act of writing through to the mediation process (performance) and dissemination of the work by publication, recording etc.

⁵ Australian Music Centre: The AMC was formed in 1974 and is the major channel for promoting and encouraging interest in Australian composition, not only nationally but also internationally. The centre provides a centralised resource on Australian composition, maintaining information on Australian composers - publications, newspaper clippings, articles, analyses, programme notes - and is the repository for scores which are sold through the AMC Shop or borrowed through the AMC Library. The AMC actively promotes composers' works through newsletters and its quarterly magazine, *Sounds Australian*. The AMC is also involved in competitions, forums, and other activities which promote Australian composers.

⁶ In order to become represented by the AMC a composer must submit three scores for assessment by an independent peer group of composers. If successful, representation can take the form of full representation which allows a composer to place copies of their scores in the centre, or associated status, in which case they can lodge five scores with the AMC.

⁷ For a good part of the twentieth century much of women's music-making was focused upon the education of the young. It was expected that women musicians would become teachers, and that they would nurture young students' musical talents. As the students became more advanced however, they moved away from their female teachers and into the conservatoria - the province of males (Geitenbeek, M. 1995, p. 194).

⁸ Peter Sculthorpe discusses his view that women have difficulty with large scale form on the video *Australian Women Composers* (Sztar, 1983). There have also been many writings on this point of view such as 'Why women cannot compose music', (Ladd, G. 1917); 'A great woman composer? When?' (Maier 1893); Andrew Ford's article, 'Tangled up in the old boy's network' also deals with this issue, and argues a case in support of women (Ford, 1990c).

⁹ Paddison is commenting here on Adorno's Hegelian-Marxian philosophy of history (Paddison, 1996).

¹⁰ Such as: 'They're not composed about ABC Treatment' (Walker, 1991, p. 12); 'Women playing the lobby tune' (Kelly, 1990b, p. 14); 'Women's music needs push to performance' (Crawford, 1992, p. 8); 'Men call tune' (Macarthur, 1988, 13); 'Not a single woman again?' (Carmody, 1989, p.16); 'Women composers prove they know the score' (Baum, 1991, p. 8).

¹¹ By 'loaded dualism' I mean a binary opposition that has value on one side while the other is devalued.

¹² As Catherine Wilson points out in her article on the Women's Work Exhibition, wind and brass instruments were absent from the orchestra as they were considered to be 'masculine' instruments, mainly due to the distortion of the face required to play them, and women were discouraged from learning them. The cello, too, was considered 'unladylike' due to the posture it required (Wilson, C. 1996, pp. 441 - 449).

¹³ McBurney was, in fact, the first woman to graduate with a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Melbourne in 1896.

¹⁴ In his book, *This is the ABC: the Australian Broadcasting Commission 1932-1983*, Inglis defines ABC 'light' music, as music which 'covered a range on record and live, from the not-quite-classical to vaudeville, from the Comedy Harmonists to community singing' (Inglis, 1983, p. 52).

¹⁵ Two commissions went to Brenton Broadstock, and one commission respectively to Ross Edwards, Brian Howard, Richard Mills, Michael Smetanin and Carl Vine (Waks, 1992, p. 62).

¹⁶ These were: Brenton Broadstock, Ross Edwards, David Lumsdaine and Peter Tahourdin.

¹⁷ The Australia Council is a Commonwealth statutory authority created under the Australia Council Act 1975 and is the main national arts funding and advisory agency. It exists to encourage active participation in the arts by supporting emerging and established artists and arts organisations in the creation and presentation of their work through a variety of grants programmes. There is an assessment process which relies on peer assessment by artists in the community. The Australia Council also advises the

Commonwealth Government on matters connected with the arts (Australia Council, 1998).

¹⁸ See Cox, 1991.

¹⁹ For a very useful, concise and in-depth critique of French Feminism, see Jones, 1985.

²⁰ Australian female composers who were commissioned for orchestral works over this period were: Anne Boyd (twice), Elena Kats-Chernin, Barbara Woof, Mary Mageau, Liza Lim.

²¹ The 'Waks Report' was a review undertaken by Nathan Waks of the ABC's music policy. There had been concerns raised publicly about the ABC's Concert Music Department by a number of Australians working as professionals in the music industry. The concerns were about the commissioning and performance of Australian music by the ABC's orchestras and musicians. There was also some concern over the appropriate selection of Australian soloists and conductors (Waks, 1992, attachment A). Waks was appointed director of the ABC Concert Music Department in 1993, shortly after undertaking the review (Bebbington, 1997c, p. 574).

²² Barbara Gilby is Lecturer in Violin at the Australian National University. She was formerly Concert Manager for the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra.

²³ In the two earliest forums, 1980 and 1981, there were seven and ten participants respectively.

²⁴ Not 1969 as Radic suggests in her biography of Helen Gifford (Radic, 1994c, p. 187).

²⁵ Keith Humble was, until his death in 1995, Professor of Music at LaTrobe University.

²⁶ This perceived attitude to the difference in funding between geographical centres in Australia would be a fruitful area for future research.

²⁷ Gifford has her own collection of percussion instruments from around the world which she has picked up in her travels (Ruff, 1978-79, p. 119).

²⁸ Kate Lidbetter is the Artist Development Manager for Symphony Australia.

²⁹ I wonder if Gifford's state of health may account, at least in part, for her attitude. In the past few years she has had heart surgery. She also suffers from asthma.

³⁰ Released on CD *Australian Composers Vol. 1*, ABC Classics, ABC 446 285-2, 1995.

³¹ Since released on the CD *Australian Composers Vol. 1*, ABC Classics, ABC 446 285-2, 1995

³² Hyde's son Robert was born in 1951.

³³ Released on the CD *Australian Light Classics*, ABC Classics, ABC 442374-CD

³⁴ The other composers were John Antill, Raymond Hanson, Dulcie Holland and Clive Douglas, and the work was performed during the 1970 Perth Composers' Workshop.

³⁵ Hyde's Piano concerto is 24' 56" minutes in length. The 1st movement is 9' 27" minutes; the 2nd movement 6' 28" minutes; and the 3rd movement 9' 01" minutes.

³⁶ These reviews are all held in Miriam Hyde's file at the AMC.

³⁷ The full score and parts for *Black Sun* are readily available through the AMC hire library.

³⁸ Geoffrey Widmer is the Vice-President of the Strathfield Symphony Orchestra.

³⁹ The Australian Composers Orchestral Forum has been through several name changes over the years. The Summer School for Young Composers is one of the earliest. It was also known as the National Orchestral Composer's School.

⁴⁰ *Notes on a Landscape* by Film Australia.

⁴¹ Available on CD *Music From Six Continents* Series, 1991, VMM 3001.

⁴² Available on CD *Music From Six Continents* Series, 1994, VMM 3029.

⁴³ The score for *The Furies* is currently held in the hire library of the AMC.

⁴⁴ It was interesting that there were discussions in the Canberra School of Music in the days following the concert concerned with the idea of editing *Gair Na Mara*. Some felt that it would benefit the work, while others (in the majority) were opposed to my shortening the work. In the end I went with my own compositional instincts and left the length of the work untouched. However, I removed some ornaments from the middle section that I had placed in the brass section, bars 210 - 244. These were bagpipe ornaments, and while I liked the effect in the wind instruments, I did not think they were effective in the brass instruments.

⁴⁵ When a composer applies for representation at the AMC they can either be offered full representation status, associate representation status, or nothing at all. Full representation means that the AMC accepts all of a composer's works into their collection and they are then publicised through the Music Centre's promotional channels. The AMC produces facsimile copies of works for sale and for hire, as well as having composer biographies and lists of works available on the Internet and hard copy. They also keep program

notes, press clippings, articles, analyses, and other information on the scores in their collection on file, and these are accessible to the general public.

⁴⁶ It is interesting to note that in Australia the overwhelming number of critics are male.

⁴⁷ These programmes are *New Music Australia* with John Crawford, and *The Music Show* with Andrew Ford.

⁴⁸ Of ten universities surveyed, only six responded.

⁴⁹ The Australian women composers studied 'from time to time' include Liza Lim, Mary Finsterer and Elena Kats-Chernin (Ingham, 1999, pers. comm. 13 December).

⁵⁰ The replies came from the University of Melbourne, the University of Adelaide, the University of Queensland, Wollongong University, and Monash University.

⁵¹ The University of Sydney Music Department did not reply to my survey.

⁵² Although the study by Frieze is by now 22 years old, I feel it is still very relevant to this thesis as all of the women composers studied were affected by the conditions of this time period.

⁵³ Susan McClary suggests that the conventional climactic point is three-quarters of the way through a piece of music (McClary, 1991, p.112).

⁵⁴ This is not an exact quote. For the purposes of drawing inspiration from the Celtic concept of the sea for the writing of *Gair Na Mara*, I took the liberty of changing some words slightly (although the meaning was retained), and omitting others.

⁵⁵ More recent studies on women in the workforce have shown that very little has changed for women over the past twenty years despite 'the consciousness raising of the 1970s, the equal opportunities legislation, the changes made in ...our language' (Firth-Cozens & West, 1991, p. 192).

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