Dick Donnelly: Songman Extraordinaire

A performance history of a Bundjalung singer

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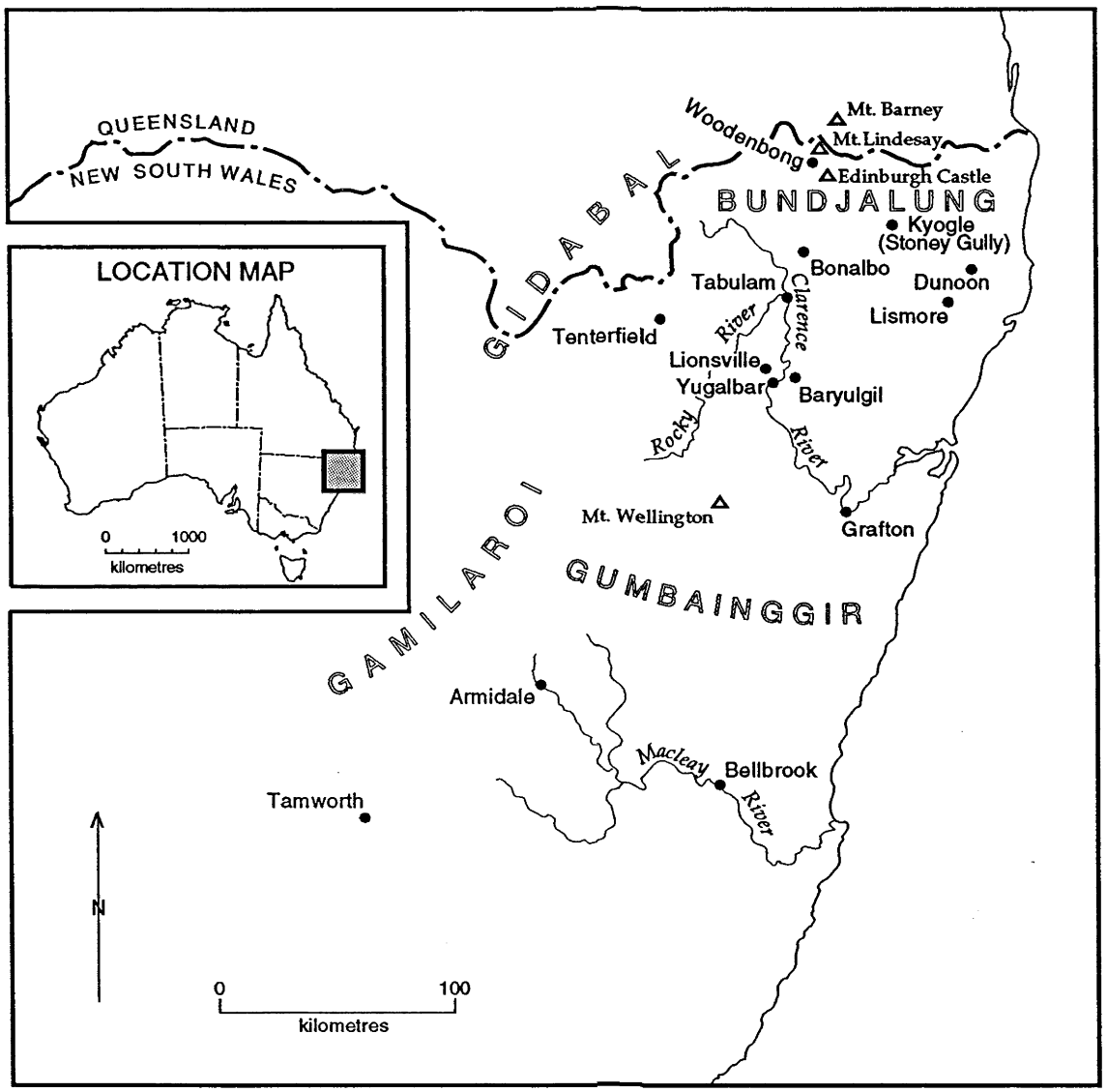
Dick Donnelly is glad to sing. His face, alive to all the colours of his gathered songs, radiates their energies, ironies, fun and the well remembered pleasures of their many tellings, across the barriers of language, time and habit.

(Willoughby 1977: 30)



Map: Places mentioned and approximate location of Aboriginal language areas.

Introduction

This thesis chronicles the performance history of a Bundjalung singer, Dick Donnelly. The main source is a series of recordings made by various recordists over a period of twenty-two years, and held in the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies archive.[1] Donnelly's song repertoire and musical style will be examined in respect to these recordings, taking particular account of the recording context, and examining the ways by which the context influences and directs his performance style. Donnelly's own life experiences and perception of himself as a songman and as a performer will also be considered in relation to which songs he chooses to present, and to musical style.

The main secondary source used is Margaret Gummow's PhD thesis 'Aboriginal songs from the *Bundjalung* and *Gidabal* areas of South-Eastern Australia' (1992). Gummow has documented Bundjalung music using fieldwork and archival recordings, and Donnelly songs constitute a large proportion of the recorded material. Some analysis of his songs has been undertaken by Gummow, in order to determine whether Bundjalung songs have a flexible structure, and whether cueing devices are used. This analysis relates directly to Tamsin Donaldson's study of Ngiyampaa song structure (1984 and 1987). Further reference will be made to Gummow's and two other relevant analyses in Chapter Three.

Other sources consulted were recording documentation and recordist's notes. This information was mainly supplied by the recordist's themselves, although there were cases where the recording was deposited and described by another person. These were the Andrew Willoughby LA4744

[1]Recordings will be referred to by their AIATSIS identification number, e.g., LA3392.

and LA4745 recordings, which were deposited by Marjorie Oakes, and the Malcolm Calley recording, LA1178, which was deposited by John Gordon. The documentation is held in the AIATSIS sound recording archive, and usually comprises recording place and date, and a general description of the songs. Some recordists, such as John Gordon, submitted more extensive notes, and these are held in the AIATSIS library. This type of documentation is listed in the references, but the recording documentation, held in the sound archive, is not. Recording documentation is referred to by the archive tape number, the recordist's name, and is identified as documentation.

As the thesis explores the relationship between the recording context and Donnelly's performance style, it was necessary to gather information on the recordists, and determine their reasons for making the recordings. Most recordings had been made in relation to the recordist's employment or research interests, which was ascertained by consulting relevant documents, articles and manuscripts. These included field reports, a thesis, journal articles, and unpublished manuscripts, and are listed in the references.

Other sources were consulted to document those performances which are not believed to have been recorded. These were lecture tours and presentations, and performances held at the Woodenbong reserve, where Donnelly lived. Information on these performances was gathered from the journal *Dawn*, which later became *New Dawn*, and from the autobiography of Roland Robinson, who toured with Donnelly. In some cases written sources provided good information regarding songs and performance style, which was a valuable supplement to the recorded material.

General biographical detail and song information was compiled mainly from the recordings. Wherever possible, this material is derived from Donnelly's own comments. In some cases the information was supplied by the recordists, but this was always checked against information given by Donnelly himself, with any discrepancies noted. Information given by Donnelly on a recording is referenced by the archive tape number. Information given by the recordist or another person on the recording is referenced by their name and the archive tape number. Some written sources were also consulted, including journal articles and recording documentation, but these were not always found to be accurate.

My reasons for studying Dick Donnelly are many and varied. Firstly, and of primary concern to this thesis, he has been recorded frequently. These recordings were made over a number of years, and because many songs have been recorded more than once, there is an opportunity to compare the various performances. This is of particular interest, as it will be demonstrated that musical structure varies considerably between performances of the same song, and that variation is an essential component of Donnelly's performing technique. It also brings to bear the issue of how accurately a song can be represented by a single recording. This has been frequently discussed with regard to how accurately a transcription can represent a performance (see for example Barwick 1988), and is also applicable to recordings. Whilst a recording is certainly a more accurate representation of a performance than a transcription, it is incomplete to the extent that it only represents one particular performance of a song, and not all its variants. Wild (1992) discusses this issue further. As this thesis will demonstrate melodic and structural variation within Donnelly's repertoire, it seems clear that a single

recording can only represent how he a performs a song at a particular point in time.

The second consideration was that Donnelly seems to occupy an unusual and very interesting position in regard to the study of Aboriginal music. He does not fit comfortably into a traditional classification, as ceremonial life had long since ceased in this area, and although many of the songs he sings had a traditional purpose in the past, a large proportion are concerned with events that postdate European arrival. Nor does he seem to fit into the category of 'fringe-dweller', as it is defined by Catherine Ellis (1964). Donnelly was certainly living in white society, but all of his songs are in Aboriginal languages, although a few include some English words, and the musical structure is definitely more Aboriginal than Western. He seemed to be a songman in the traditional sense, and yet performed almost exclusively within the confines of white society.

Related to this problem of categorisation, there is also the issue of how and under what disciplinary banner Donnelly might be studied. Ethnomusicology rarely deals with individuals, focusing instead on groups and cultures. Some studies have been made of single performers, but these are more often concerned with biography, and less often with musical analysis. See for instance, Bruno Nettl's 'Biography of a Blackfoot Indian Singer' (1968). Studies of art and folk music deal more frequently with individuals, often combining performance history, biography and musical analysis to demonstrate and explain a particular style. Edward D. Ives' *Joe Scott the Woodsman-Songmaker, a study of a folk musician* (1978), is an example. Adopting this approach seemed appropriate in Donnelly's case, although obviously he could not be termed a folk singer, at least by some definitions.

My fourth concern was with the nature of the main source material, the recordings. I was interested in determining the extent to which the process of recording could influence and shape a singer's repertoire and style, and how that might impact upon a study of Donnelly. Jill Stubington explored this issue in her PhD thesis, 'Yolngu Manikay: Modern Performances of Australian Aboriginal Clan Songs' (1978). Stubington studied recordings of Manikay made by herself and two earlier collectors, and concluded that apparent differences in musical style were directly attributable to individual recordist's aims and elicitation procedures. Likewise, it will be demonstrated in this thesis that certain performance elements, specifically, choice of repertoire, presentation, and musical style, are determined by the particular circumstances of the recording session.

Finally, I think it is interesting to consider to what extent Donnelly or any individual influences an entire music culture. Dick Donnelly was a prodigious performer, and the recordings of him represent the majority of recorded Bundjalung music. Therefore, not only would he have been an influential singer in his own time, but with the return of these recordings to the Bundjalung community, he will continue to have an influence, both today and in the future. Given this, one might speculate as to how much Bundjalung musical style may actually be Dick Donnelly style, and whether this situation applies to other areas of Aboriginal Australia. It is possible that in regions where individual singers assume some prominence, their influence on a community repertoire and musical style is very substantial. My thesis will not address this issue directly, although given that it will demonstrate Donnelly's high performance exposure and proficiency, it is certainly relevant, and perhaps requires further investigation.

Chapter Outline

Chapter One is a performance history, incorporating biographical information, and a description of the recordings. The circumstance of each recording session is outlined, and where relevant, a description of the recordist's elicitation procedure is given. Some brief background to each recordist is supplied, as this relates to their reasons for making the recording.

Chapter Two deals specifically with what songs were recorded and how they were presented. The relationship between choice of repertoire and each particular recording circumstance is examined with regard to Donnelly's personal relationship with particular types of songs. It is suggested that a combination of external factors and Donnelly's own performing preferences determined which songs were recorded.

Chapter Three incorporates musical analysis to determine stylistic similarities within the repertoire, and to establish whether or not there is a Dick Donnelly style. It is concluded that he differentiated individual performances through the employment of several variation techniques, and that by doing so, he was able to personalise and distinguish his repertoire.

Chapter Four is a summary of the previous chapters, and explores the extent to which these recordings represent Donnelly as a traditional songman, and as a performer within a Western context.

There are thirty-five transcriptions, one of each different song in the repertoire, totalling thirty, and five complete transcriptions made of repeat

performances. Texts which have been transcribed by other researchers are included. These are taken from Gummow (1992), and also appear in various other sources. A brief annotation to each song is given. This information is drawn mainly from Donnelly's comments on the recordings, but secondary sources have been consulted, and are noted where relevant. The transcription procedure is explained in a preface to the transcriptions.

Appendix One lists the songs by the title which I will use for identification throughout the thesis. These are presented in alphabetical order. This is not necessarily the title given on the tape documentation, but these alternative titles are also listed in the table. Donnelly does not give a title to most of his songs, but describes them by genre, composer, or background story. The title I have chosen takes into consideration his descriptions, and also the need to adequately differentiate individual songs. Each occurrence of the song is noted, with the archive tape identification number and tape position given. The performances which have been transcribed are marked with an asterisk. The title and text number given each song by Gummow (1992) is also noted.

Appendix Two lists the songs according to their appearance on each archive tape. The archive tapes are arranged chronologically. The recordist, place and date of recording is noted, and the songs recorded in each session are listed. The titles used here are my standardised titles, not as they are listed on the tape documentation. This is to enable cross referencing with Appendix One. Beside each archive tape the percentage of songs attributed to a composer is noted. This relates to the examination of song repertoire in Chapter Two.

Appendix Three summarises some features of the transcriptions, showing the starting, final note, and range of each song.

A map showing the places referred to in the songs and relating to Donnelly's life is included. This also shows some regional language areas. Not all places mentioned have been shown, as some could not be located. This might be because the names have changed, or they might be local names. The other possibility is that they are the names of missions or stations. Various spellings are used for language areas and place names. I have standardised these, adopting Gummow's (1992) spelling for language areas, and the *Gazetteer* (Department of Minerals and Energy 1975) spelling for place names.

A cassette tape containing the recordings which have been transcribed is included in the back of the thesis. The songs on the cassette appear in the same order as the transcriptions.

Chapter One

Biography, Performance and Recording History

Dick Donnelly was born at 'Millera'[2] on the Rocky River in northern New South Wales (*Dawn* 1969: 2; Sommerlad LA1957) around the turn of the century (LA1177). Some sources describe him as being Jucumbal (*Dawn* 1969: 2), but he describes himself as Bundjalung (LA53 and LA4744). The Geytenbeeks said that his father was Bundjalung and that his mother was Weervul (Geytenbeek documentation LA3392). At the age of fourteen he moved to Lionsville and then some years later to Woodenbong, where he worked at the sawmill for twenty years until retiring in about 1969 (*Dawn* 1969: 2). He married a Gumbangrio woman from Bellbrook (Geytenbeek documentation LA3392) and raised thirteen children (Gordon 1968; Oakes 1978).

Donnelly seems to have travelled a great deal before settling in Woodenbong, and knew many songs from other language areas. He said that he learnt these songs at the age of six or seven from his mother, or at inter-tribal corroborees (LA3392). He also describes how he would go and sit on the verandah with a songmaker, so that he could 'catch' and learn a song (LA4744). He occasionally expressed regret that his own people did not want to hear his songs, and that they were not interested in learning them (LA4745).

The earliest recording in the sample was made in 1955, by the anthropologist Malcolm Calley. Calley spent several years in Woodenbong

[2] 'Millera' might be a name used by locals, as it does not appear on maps. It also refers to an Aboriginal language.

researching his PhD thesis 'Bandjalang Social Organisation' (1959). Calley's reasons for making the recording are not known. He did not profess to have an interest in music, and the primary concern of his research was with social organisation, rather than with ceremonial or cultural phenomena. The most probable explanation would seem to be that these recordings were made at the instigation of Calley's supervisor, Professor Elkin, from the University of Sydney. Elkin was gathering together a collection of recordings which demonstrated the musical style of particular regions, and this recording eventually found its way into the collection as an example of New South Wales music.[3] Trevor Jones has analysed these recordings, including the Donnelly songs, in his article 'Australian Aboriginal Music: The Elkin Collection's contribution toward an overall picture' (Jones 1965).

The Calley recording is unusual in that it is the only one in the sample where Donnelly does not speak between or during the songs. Instead, Calley introduces each item with a short explanation of content and background, most of which tallies with what Donnelly says about his songs in later recordings. It is possible that Donnelly made no comments either between or during each item, but this would not be consistent with his later recordings. Calley may have edited out the spoken comments, or may have specifically requested that he confine himself to singing. The other possibility is that Donnelly adopted the style of explaining each song both before and during its performance only after experiencing lecture tours with Roland Robinson, in the early 1960s.

[3]The recording was deposited in the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies archive by John Gordon.

In Calley's introduction to each song item, he occasionally distinguishes between those songs which were composed recently and those which seem to have existed for much longer periods; for instance, he identifies one song as being 'pre-contact', and another as a 'corroboree proper'. He also uses Aboriginal terms such as Juwa to describe genres of song. However, given that Donnelly does not speak on the recording, it is impossible to determine whether this information came from him, or whether it was part of Calley's acquired anthropological knowledge.

Roland Robinson, a Jindyworabak poet,[4] visited Woodenbong in the early 1960s. He returned many times over successive years collecting stories and songs, and published several stories related by Woodenbong residents in his book *Aboriginal Myths and Legends* (1965). Two Donnelly stories, 'The Grave of the Buloogaan' and 'The Song of Darmunjura' (Robinson 1966: 184-9), relating to Blind Man's Song on tape LA3392 are included. Robinson speaks about his time at Woodenbong in the second volume of his autobiography, *The Shift of Sands* (1976). He got to know Donnelly very well, and took him on a lecture tour for the University of New England in the early 1960s.

Robinson's account of this tour is most enlightening. Whilst he makes it clear that Donnelly was an excellent performer, he also implies that it was his own knowledge of both Aboriginal and white society which made the tour a success. For instance, Robinson wanted to be sure that Donnelly looked authentic when performing and so encouraged him to use a set of clapping sticks.

[4]The Jindyworabaks were a group of Australian writers in the 1940s and 1950s who used Aboriginal stories, legends, songs and language as the basis for their work.

> I told Dick that we would have to get a couple of 'song-sticks' to make our appearance impressive. I took Dick to a hardware store in Armidale and we picked out from a tray of hardwood handles two which when hit together gave out a good 'tjong-tjong' sound. (Robinson 1976: 273)

Whether it could be said that a pair of hammer handles purchased from a hardware store is particularly authentic, they would certainly have looked more impressive to the white audience than the tobacco tin which, according to Robinson, Donnelly had used previously (Robinson 1976: 271). Robinson also makes the comment that Donnelly made himself two 'native song-sticks and painted them' after the tour (Robinson 1976: 274). However, the percussion accompaniment on the Howard Creamer recording, made in 1973, sounds like a stick on tin, and may well be a tobacco tin. It seems therefore, that Donnelly's choice of accompaniment instrument may not have been influenced by Robinson's preferences at all. According to Gordon, Donnelly was still using hammer handles for accompaniment during the 1968 recording session (LA1177 and LA1219), and he may even have used sticks well before the Robinson tour, as the accompaniment used in the Calley recording (made before Robinson came on the scene) does not sound like a tobacco tin, but more like wooden objects.

Robinson displays a degree of cynicism towards the white, university educated audience, which may explain his eagerness for Donnelly to appear authentic and knowledgeable. He gives an account of a performance, which is particularly revealing of his ability to manage and read an audience, and then to prime Donnelly accordingly:

> Our first performance was at the University...I knew how to get an audience 'in', and I knew how to get Dick going. I would give a brief introduction regarding the 'treat' awaiting the audience. I'd rub it in a bit about this material lying under the noses of Australian academics since the last century. I would 'lead Dick in' by giving a brief account of one of the Butheram and then ask Dick if he could sing for the 'Dugai', the white man, the song belonging to the tradition.
>
> Usually, when Dick got started, he received so much applause that he would keep going with his songs and spontaneous explanations of them. Dick had an extensive repertoire, ranging from strictly traditional songs to ones like his 'two-up' song, sung in the language but with recognizable words in it such as 'fair-play', 'boxer', 'ringleader' etc with its refrain of 'two-hup, two-hup'.
>
> If Dick showed any sign of drying up, or looking round to me for support, I'd hop in with, say, 'Remember how we were coming over the Range and you told me where the jurraveel go?' Dick would be off again. Usually, I had to stop Dick, telling him that I didn't want him to lose his voice as we still had a long way to go on the tour. (Robinson 1976: 273-4)

Robinson seemed keen to convey a picture of an authentic, active tradition. The use of Aboriginal words such as 'butheram' and 'dugai' would have helped confirm this image. I suspect their inclusion was Robinson's idea however, as Donnelly hardly ever uses these terms on any of the recordings.

As to any permanent influences on Donnelly's performance style, it is probable that the more conversant and explanatory manner he displays when discussing and singing the songs on later recordings is in part at least due to his experiences on the tour. However, some accounts of the tour say that Donnelly only sang the songs, and that Roland Robinson explained and translated them (*New Dawn* 1971: 9). I believe Donnelly played a much more active role than this would suggest, as Robinson includes a description of him telling 'the amused students how the tribal Aboriginals did not have any newspapers or radios' (Robinson 1976: 273). This sounds very much like his style on later recordings. There is also some evidence that Robinson preferred to let Donnelly and all his informants speak as much as possible for themselves. The published versions of 'The Grave of the Buloogaan' and 'The Song of Darmunjura' (Robinson 1966: 184-9) are very similar in construction and style to the way Donnelly relates these stories on tape LA3392, and are probably close to being a literal transcription.

I do not know of any recordings made of these performances, but it would seem from Robinson's description that, apart from the use of Aboriginal words, they were quite similar in content and performance style to the recordings made after 1964. A comparison of the later recordings to Calley's 1955 recording would seem to indicate that Donnelly's style and repertoire had changed markedly during this period. Whether this was due entirely or in part to Robinson's influence is impossible to tell, but it would seem that he had a significant effect on Donnelly, first by simply providing him with the opportunity to perform, and secondly by encouraging him to emphasise those aspects of his performance which would appeal to a white audience.

Robinson states that after the tour, Donnelly 'was taken up by the University academics' (Robinson 1976: 274). This is certainly true, as he was recorded and performed quite frequently over the next fifteen or so years. For instance, he performed at a concert held in 1967 to farewell Rev. Keith Ewin from the Woodenbong Reserve. *Dawn* reports that 'Dick Donnelly's singing of Aboriginal songs and legends, to the accompaniment of tapped sticks, fascinated everyone at the concert' (*Dawn* 1967: 15). In 1969 he performed for the Tenterfield District Historical Society (*Dawn* 1969: 2), and in 1971 he sang at a poetry seminar held at Macquarie University in Sydney (*New Dawn* 1971: 9). The Geytenbeeks, who recorded Donnelly in the mid-sixties, reported that he was preparing to sing in a Talent Quest to be held in Woodenbong (Geytenbeek 1973: 86).

The Geytenbeeks spent four years at Woodenbong Aboriginal Station (from 1962-66) collecting information for a dictionary of the Gidabal language (1971). They recorded Donnelly on three separate occasions, in 1964, 1965 and 1966. These recordings appear on LA3392 and the song texts from the 1965 session have been transcribed (Geytenbeek 1973: 84-6).

It is not always clear which songs were elicited in each session. No songs are repeated however, so it could probably be assumed that either the field tapes were edited, or that the Geytenbeeks requested the songs that he sang in each session. Brian Geytenbeek certainly demonstrates a degree of familiarity with Donnelly's song repertory, as evidenced by particular comments made during the session. For instance, when Donnelly says 'I better sing you about Duncan now', Geytenbeek replies 'Oh yeah, that's a good one'. Later Geytenbeek asks for 'the one about the cars coming down from Brisbane' (LA3392).

Donnelly was also recorded in 1965 by Barbara Gibbons (LA53), who collected songs and language from different regions in New South Wales. Gibbons may have been looking particularly for traditional or tribal songs to contribute towards a musical salvage operation (see Gordon's 'A Project in Musical Salvage' (1969)). In the accompanying documentation she said: 'Unfortunately the tape also contains hillbilly songs and mission hymns mixed with the Aboriginal songs' (Gibbons 1966).

The documentation for this tape states that it was recorded in Woodenbong, but Gibbons says in other documentation that she recorded Donnelly when he came to Sydney (Gibbons 1966). It is not known whether she is referring to a different occasion or whether the tape documentation is incorrect. However, this same session is also recorded on the Geytenbeek LA3392 tape, but is virtually indistinguishable as it was recorded with a low battery. Given this, it would seem probable that both the Geytenbeeks and Gibbons made recordings at this session, and that the recordings were made at Woodenbong.

In 1968 John Gordon, a musicologist and carillionist at the University of Sydney, recorded Donnelly and other singers during two visits to Woodenbong. Gordon collected songs and stories from various regions in New South Wales, and was pleased to find that the Bundjalung at Woodenbong were attempting to 'keep their language alive' (Gordon 1969: 136). He speaks highly of Donnelly, saying that he is 'in the tradition of all good songmen. He sings confidently in a number of aboriginal languages, is generous with his material; and is no stranger to the microphone' (Gordon 1969: 136).

Gordon referred to his collecting as a 'project in musical salvage' (Gordon 1969), and took a keen interest in musical characteristics and styles. He often asked about how a song was performed, particularly in the case of dance songs, and gathered information on language and song background. He also made encouraging comments during the recording sessions; for example: 'It has a beautiful rhythm' (LA1176) and 'That was most interesting' (LA1177).

The Gordon tapes (LA1176, LA1177 and LA1220) have been edited, either during or after the recording session. The tape recorder was frequently switched on and off. Occasionally Donnelly sings immediately after the tape is switched back on, and it is likely that there was some intervening discussion which was not recorded. This might have been done to conserve the tape or the batteries, as Gordon says that each of the two recording sessions was very long. He added however, that Donnelly's supply of songs was probably not exhausted (Gordon 1969: 136).

John Sommerlad recorded Dick Donnelly twice in 1970 (LA2141 and LA1957).[5] The second recording is of a lecture presentation given in Tenterfield, New South Wales. On the recordings Sommerlad appears to have a good knowledge of local Aboriginal communities, languages and customs. He was employed by the National Parks and Wildlife Service, and the recordings were probably made in connection with this organisation. He seems to have known Donnelly fairly well, and took an active part in the lecture presentation, answering questions and even joining in on one song.

[5]Gummow (1992: 280-1) mentions another recording of Donnelly made by Sommerlad in Tenterfield in 1968, and held in both the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies archives. However, this recording could not be located in the AIATSIS archive.

Sommerlad took a particular interest in customs and traditions as they were before the local Aboriginals were settled on the mission stations. In the lecture presentation, he distinguished between those songs made before the arrival of Europeans, and those made more recently. For example, in his introduction to the song Crow, he said: 'I'd like to introduce this one because this is a prehistoric song. This song was actually being sung before the arrival of Captain Cook...'. At the end of the next song, Mt Wellington Lookout, he said 'Ah they're both old- they're both sung before the coming of the white man'. He described the other songs as 'the more modern ones' (LA1957).

During the lecture presentation Sommerlad encouraged Donnelly to talk about pre-settlement days, presumably to give the audience an idea of local Aboriginal customs and practices. The songs were frequently used to illustrate particular aspects of tribal life; for example, Mundala and Djanggara (both dance songs) were sung during a discussion of dancing. The context and background to each song were given primary emphasis, rather than the musical content. In this respect the lecture presentation bears some resemblance to the lecture tour with Roland Robinson, or at least as it is described by Robinson. Both used the format of a presenter introducing each song, both presenters emphasised traditional customs and practices, and they both used Aboriginal words to discuss and explain the songs.

Howard Creamer recorded Donnelly in 1973 (LA5044). Creamer was employed by the New South Wales Aboriginal Sacred Sites Survey, which operated between 1973 and 1983. The broad aim of the Sites Survey was to identify sites that had some significance to the local people, and then to put

in place the necessary legal and physical protection mechanisms (Creamer 1976: 12).

Sites could have either a traditional (pre-European), historical (post-contact), or contemporary (very recent) significance. Creamer believed this rather broadminded approach to the classification of sites to be more sensitive to the ways in which cultural revival might be achieved.

> In the early years of the Survey, recordings were made with Dick Donnelly at Woodenbong keeping Aboriginal music alive by making up songs about motor car rides to Grafton, people who were around at the time and games of 'two-up'.[6] Clearly cultural revival as we are now seeing it, is but one aspect of change in Aboriginal society, a dynamic force which proves that the culture need not be fully traditional to be defensible and worthwhile. (Creamer 1984: 10.6-10.7)

There are only three songs on this recording but there are several discussions about local customs, and it is suggested that there may be a possibility of a land grant. Creamer does not make many comments during the song section of the recording, but he occasionally asks the language of songs and the tribal origins of people mentioned by Donnelly.

The last recording of Donnelly was made in 1977 by Andrew Willoughby (LA4744 and LA4745). Willoughby was employed by a local newpaper at the time, *The Bush Telegraph*, and this recording was followed up by an article on Donnelly published in the April issue. He is described in the article as

[6]It should be noted that Dick Donnelly did not make up these, or any of the songs which were recorded.

being 'the last songman' of the Bundjalung tribe (Willoughby 1977: 29). Donnelly died in a car accident on 15th March 1977, only one month after the recording was made (*The Bush Telegraph* 1977).

Chapter Two

Song Repertoire

Categorisation, Content and Presentation

The sample consists of eighty-one recordings of individual songs. There are thirty-one different songs, and fifteen songs have been recorded more than once. Of the songs which are repeated, fourteen appear in the sample at least three times.

The songs can be categorised into a variety of genres. These are: (as identified by Gummow 1992) Sing-you-down, Lullaby, Shake-a-leg, Yawahr, which means Corroboree, Burun or Shaking Chest, and Djingan, meaning sacred song-prayer. These categories have been determined on the basis of information given by Donnelly and other Bundjalung singers. Gummow also classifies the songs into categories based on their subject matter. These categories are Increase, Corroboree, Sorcery, Initiation, Public Events, and Sites and Dreaming. For the purposes of this study however, the songs will be arranged according to whether Donnelly identifies them as having been composed by a particular individual, or whether he makes no mention of a composer.[7] The songs which are not associated with a particular composer fall into the Yawahr (Corroboree), Lullaby, Shake-a-leg, and Burun (Shaking Chest) categories. Donnelly frequently refers to these songs by genre. For instance, he introduces Mundala as a corroboree song (LA3392). He is not always able to translate the texts, as some songs have been brought from other language areas, or use dialects with which he is unfamiliar. The songs which are attributed to a particular composer

[7]Donnelly does not actually use the terms 'composer' or 'composed'. He refers to the 'maker' of a song, and describes a song as having been 'made' by a particular person. I have substituted the terms 'composer' and 'composed' because they have a more specific and readily understandable meaning in the context of this thesis.

are predominantly topical in subject matter. Several songs from this group are classified by Gummow as Sing-you-down and Public Events songs. There is often a story associated with the composer identified songs, and in all cases Donnelly can either translate the text or give a general description of its meaning. The basic distinction between the two types of songs that have been discussed is that Donnelly usually identifies one group of songs by composer, and the other group by genre.

In making this broad distinction, I do not mean to imply that the songs cannot be further classified into discrete genres, nor that the genre classifications are meaningless to Donnelly. On the contrary, I believe he does recognise particular genres, as evidenced by his referral to 'corroboree', 'shaking leg' and 'lullaby' songs (LA3392, LA1220), and by his description of Sing-you-down songs (LA4744 and LA1219). However, it must be acknowledged that during the years these songs were recorded, Donnelly was no longer participating in any of the activities for which the songs were originally used. He says in 1977 that it is 'about forty odd years ago since they knocked off corroboreeing round here' (LA4744), and after singing Lullaby, he notes that his 'baby's about 21 now' (LA1957). Even the events depicted in the topical songs would probably have occurred at least one generation earlier. For instance, one song refers to its maker seeing a motor car for the first time (Mountains and Car). Given this, I believe that the significance of genre distinctions would have been greatly reduced by the time these recordings were made, and therefore would have had little influence on the composition of a song repertoire. Instead, I have tried to determine a classification which takes into account the particular circumstances of the recordings, and also the personal associations Donnelly has with each song.

As already discussed in Chapter One, there were a variety of reasons for why each recording was made. In common to all however, was the actual recording circumstance. In every case, Donnelly sang either for the purpose of making the recording, or so as to inform and entertain an audience. The performance context is therefore very different from that which a genre classification would imply, and it could be assumed that factors such as the choice and presentation of songs would depend on the individual performance or recording circumstance. Hence, assuming that Donnelly sees himself as a performer, his interaction with the audience or recordist must be taken into account when examining the dynamics of repertoire.

This performance interaction should be considered from both the performer's and the audience or recordist's perspective. For Donnelly, singing songs which were attributed to certain composers provided him with the opportunity to reminisce about former friends and his earlier life. These songs are almost without exception associated with particular events or stories, and Donnelly took great care to explain the meaning of each song before, during and after its performance. He knew most of the composers personally, and at the conclusion of a song would often say 'he put that together well'. He seemed to derive much pleasure from recalling these people and events, and from relating them through speech and song to the audience or recordist.

From the perspective of the audience or the recordist, the songs attributed to a composer were enjoyed because they were accompanied by interesting and often amusing stories, and because Donnelly presented them with such flair and ability. However, songs for which the composer was not identified were also sought after, particularly as these seemed to be

representative of an older music tradition, and therefore were perhaps viewed as being more authentic. They may have been considered more musically pure, or that they were untouched by European music traditions. They might also have been valued for the information they could provide on pre-contact Aboriginal languages, customs and ceremonies.

Particular recordists and audiences may have favoured different sorts of songs, depending on their background and on their reasons for making the recording. For instance, as noted in the previous chapter, John Sommerlad expressed a particular interest in 'pre-contact songs', and made a point of identifying these during a lecture presentation held in Tenterfield (LA1957). Donnelly made two recordings with Sommerlad; the first was LA2141 where he sang a large number of songs, and the second was made shortly afterwards, at the lecture presentation in which Sommerlad participated (LA1957). The first song performed at this lecture was Mt Wellington Lookout, which Sommerlad introduced as being about Donnelly's father's djurbil, or holy place. He added that it was sung before the arrival of white man. This description matches what Donnelly said about Mt Wellington Lookout in the earlier Sommerlad recording, with the exception of the comment about how long it had been sung. However, on the Geytenbeek recording made in 1966 (LA3392), Donnelly mentions that Jimmy Biggle was the composer of the song. Malcolm Calley also says this on the LA1178 recording. It is possible that Donnelly decided after 1966 that this information was incorrect, although this would seem unlikely, as the melodic structure of the song is almost identical to the other two Jimmy Biggle songs that appear in the sample. The other possibility is that Donnelly simply forgot to mention the composer to Sommerlad, but this would not be consistent with his usual presentation style. Also, he makes no attempt to correct Sommerlad's impression of the song as being 'pre-

contact'. I suspect that the more likely explanation for this discrepancy is that Donnelly detected Sommerlad's preference for songs of an older tradition, and therefore deliberately neglected to mention that the song had been composed within his own lifetime.

Sommerlad's interest in songs which were not identified with particular composers, and which therefore seemed to belong to an older tradition, may also have influenced Donnelly's choice of repertoire. By examining the relative distribution of composer identified songs on the two Sommerlad recordings, it can be seen that in the case of the lecture presentation Donnelly sang relatively fewer composer identified songs. Of the fifteen different songs which Donnelly sang for Sommerlad on the LA2141 recording, nine were identified with particular composers. In the lecture however, only two of seven songs were identified by composer. Not only was this an exceptional choice of repertoire in terms of the earlier Sommerlad recording, but it was also exceptional in terms of other lecture presentations. For instance, at a lecture given during the previous year, again in Tenterfield, Donnelly sang five composer identified songs out of a total of six. In 1964 Geytenbeek recorded Donnelly preparing songs for a talent quest, with four of the six songs being composer identified. It would seem likely therefore, that the unusually low number of composer identified songs presented at the LA1957 lecture is directly related to the recordist's, that is, Sommerlad's expressed preference for 'pre-contact' songs.

In the sample as a whole, eighteen of the thirty-one different songs are attributed to composers. Of the fifteen songs which appear more than once, ten are attributed to a composer. The higher prevalence of this category of song might be indicative of performer preference, but this is impossible to

determine without knowledge of Donnelly's complete song repertoire. (That is, it cannot be assumed that the recorded sample constitutes the entire repertoire of songs known to Donnelly.) It might simply indicate that Donnelly knew relatively more composer identified songs, or that these songs were easier to remember because of their personal associations. Overall, there does seem to be a tendency for him to sing more composer identified songs in each succeeding recording (excluding the Sommerlad lecture). See Appendix Two for further details.

This is particularly noticeable when comparing the first recording, made by Calley in 1955, with the last two recordings, made by Creamer and Willoughby in 1973 and 1977 respectively. In the Calley recording, six of fourteen songs are composer identified. In the Creamer recording, all three songs are composer identified, and in the Willoughby recording, seven of eight songs are composer identified. It is difficult to determine whether this is attributable to the particular circumstances of each recording session, or whether it represents a shift in preferences on behalf of Donnelly. He may have preferred singing this type of song later in life, or may simply have found them easier to remember. However, the influence of the recordist must also be taken into account. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Calley was studying traditional Bundjalung society, and might therefore have influenced the composition of the recording to include more songs which were not attributed to composers. It is impossible to know how these songs were elicited however, as the tapes have been edited to exclude dialogue.

To summarise, the sample exhibits a greater tendency towards composer identified songs in each succeeding recording. Some possible reasons for this might be:

- This type of song has more personal meaning to Donnelly as it reminds him of former happy times. This becomes particularly important as he gets older.
- Because of their personal associations these songs are easier to remember.
- Donnelly prefers to perform this type of song, as it usually has an interesting and entertaining background story.

A particular exception to this trend is the Sommerlad lecture (LA1957). It is suggested that Sommerlad's own preference for songs which were not attributed to a composer might have influenced the repertoire composition of this session. This is further supported by the identification of Mt Wellington Lookout as being 'pre-contact', when Donnelly had on previous recordings made reference to its composer. This also indicates that Donnelly was aware of performer/audience dynamics, and was adopting appropriate performance tactics.

Chapter Three

Musical and Performance Style

In this chapter the song repertoire is analysed to determine aspects of musical style. The analysed sample consists of thirty-five songs, which represents one performance of each different song in the recorded sample, and multiple performances of five songs. Transcriptions have been made of these songs. One song has not been included in the analysis, Shake-a-Leg (LA53). It could not be transcribed owing to the fact that it was recorded with flat batteries.

The analysis is confined to musical, rather than textual features, as only a proportion of the song texts have been transcribed. Margaret Gummow worked on texts with Linda Barwick and the linguist Margaret Sharpe, and many Donnelly song texts have been transcribed and are reproduced in her thesis (Gummow 1992). The Geytenbeeks also transcribed several texts (Geytenbeek 1973). The texts which have been transcribed are included with the music transcriptions.

Some Donnelly songs have previously been analysed. Gummow's analysis of Bundjalung music focused on the flexibility of song structure, and examined several Donnelly songs (Crow, Grandfather and Two Girls, Quail and Flying Squirrel, Mundala and Maringgu). This analysis is approached through the examination of textual phrases. Trevor Jones (1965) analysed the 1955 Calley recording of Donnelly songs (LA1178), in his discussion of the Elkin Collection. His analysis focuses mainly on scale structure. Margaret Kartomi has analysed one Donnelly song, Lullaby, in an article discussing lullaby style (1984).

My analysis will focus particularly on melodic structure. Some general musical characteristics of the repertoire will be discussed, and stylistic similarities between different songs noted. Repeated performances will be examined to show melodic variation.

General music characteristics

Starting Note

The starting note of each song is most often F, F sharp, G, or A flat. Shaking Chest and Barara Abanji on the Calley (LA1178) recording have a starting note of E and C sharp respectively, which is unusually low. In the case of Barara Abanji, the lower starting note may be due to the fact that Donnelly performed this song with another singer, Tom Clareson. The starting note is usually in the middle to upper range of the song.

Range

The range of most songs is at least one octave. The exceptions to this are Quiet Place, and Leaving Sydney, which both have a range of a major 7th, and Bill Parkins, and Long Johnny's Song, which both have a range of a minor 6th.

Final Note

The final note is usually in the middle to low range of the song, and is generally no more than a major third below the starting note. In most cases the last note is repeated. When this is not the case, the last note is sustained.

Melodic Structure

Melodic structure consists of phrases descending from a high note to a low note, followed by a leap back up to a high note. Descents usually move by steps of a tone, but there are occasional leaps up of a third or a fourth within a larger descending phrase. The size of each descent varies, but the first descent is not usually the largest, as the starting note is generally in the middle range of the song. The largest descent is usually commenced with the highest note of the song. Repeated notes are common, particularly at the end of a descending phrase. Alternatively, the final note of a descent may be sustained.

Metre

Metrical patterns are either compound or simple. Triplets and duplets are used frequently, so it is difficult to make generalisations about the overall metrical tendency within a single piece. Time signatures and bar lines have not been used in the transcriptions as the accents are not always consistent with a metrical division.

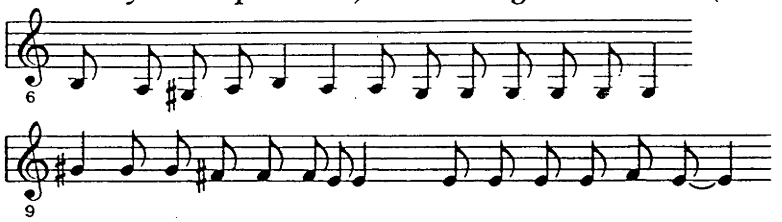
Accompaniment

Wooden sticks were used in most recordings, except LA5044, which sounds like a stick on tin. The beats are usually evenly spaced, although in some songs beats are left out or doubled at certain points. These are marked in the transcriptions. See for instance Long Johnny's Song (LA2141) and Mt Wellington Lookout (LA1178). The melody sets the tempo for the accompaniment, as on some recordings where the accompaniment starts before the singing, it is adjusted at the commencement of the melody.

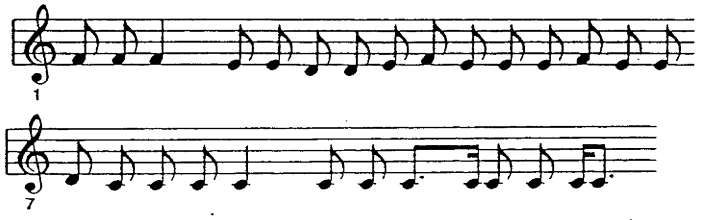
Rhythm

Patterns of quavers and crotchets make up the most common rhythmic groupings. For example:

Ex. 1 Rhythmic patterns, Mt Wellington Lookout (LA2141).

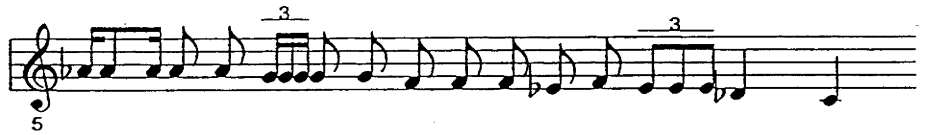


Ex. 2 Rhythmic patterns, Maringgu (LA2141).



Some songs have a more elaborate rhythm and fast tempo.

Ex. 3 Rhythmic patterns, Djanggara (LA3392).



Triplets and duplets are frequently used.

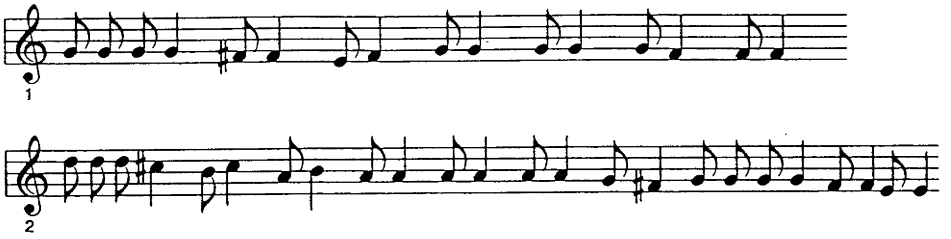
Musical Similarities Within Genre and Composer Groups

In some cases, there are musical similarities between songs which were composed by the same person, or which fall into the same genre classification.

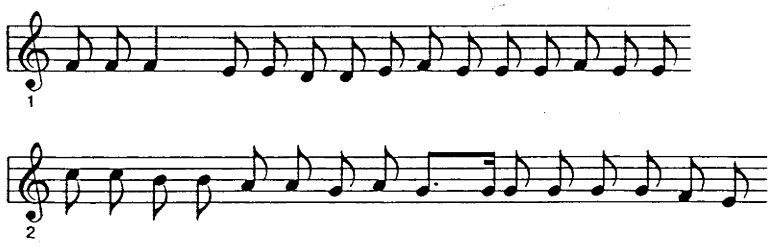
Dance or Corroboree Genre

Mundala and Maringgu, variously identified as dance and corroboree songs, have a very similar melodic structure. Compare the opening of each:

Ex. 4 Extract of Mundala melodic structure (LA2141).



Ex. 5 Extract of Maringgu melodic structure (LA2141).



The main musical difference between them is that Maringgu uses simple metre and Mundala uses compound metre. See Gummow (1992: 200-220) for further analysis of these songs.

Donnelly seems to associate Mundala and Maringgu together. He sings them consecutively on recordings LA3392 and LA1219, and identifies them both as Gungari songs. On the second of these recordings, he blends the songs together by starting to sing Mundala halfway through Maringgu. On the LA3392 recording of Maringgu, he sings the first two lines using a compound metre (as Mundala would be sung) before changing to the more usual simple metre.

Donnelly refers to both as dances and also as corroboree songs. He says after singing Maringgu on LA1219 'I danced in that corroboree when I was a young man', and on LA3392, before singing Mundala, he says 'a good corroboree this, I danced in this'. He also interrupts both songs to explain when the dancers would change step.

The similarity in musical structure between these two songs is most likely due to their having come from the same region. The fact that they are both corroboree and dance songs might further explain the similarities, although Donnelly never says that they come from the same corroboree. He does perform them consecutively on two occasions, but this association might be due to their similar musical structure, rather than because this was how they were performed in the past. Donnelly certainly recognised the musical similarities, as evidenced by his blending of the two songs on LA1219. It is equally likely therefore, that he performed these songs consecutively because he associated their musical structures, and not simply because that was the way they would have been performed in their original context.

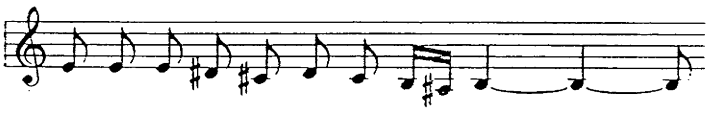
Corroboree Songs

Juwa and Barara Abanji, which are sung on LA1178, also have similar melodic structures. In this case, they are part of the same corroboree (at least according to Calley). Barara Abanji is identified by Calley as being the third part of the corroboree Juwa. Gummow says the word 'juwa', or 'yawahr', is used by the Bundjalung to mean 'corroboree' (Gummow 1992: 75).

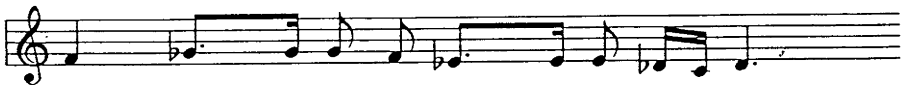
Barara Abanji is one of only two songs in the sample performed by more than one singer. Tom Clareson sings this song with Donnelly.

Both songs use this phrase:

Ex. 6 Barara Abanji extract showing melodic structure (LA1178).



Ex. 7 Juwa extract showing melodic structure (LA1178).



Although each is slightly different, the phrase retains its fairly distinctive melodic and rhythmic shape. There is a musical connection between the two songs then, which would seem to confirm Calley's assertion that they are part of the same corroboree.

Jimmy Biggle Songs

There are three songs in the sample said to have been composed by Jimmy Biggle. These are Mt Wellington Lookout, Quail and Flying Squirrel, and Grandfather and Two Girls. Donnelly identifies Biggle as the composer of Quail and Flying Squirrels on LA4744, and Calley identifies him on LA1178. No composer is mentioned on the other four recordings. On two of the four recordings of Mt Wellington Lookout (LA1178 and LA3392) and on three of the four recordings of Grandfather and Two Girls (LA1178, LA3392, and LA5044) Biggle is named as the composer. No composer is mentioned on the other recordings.

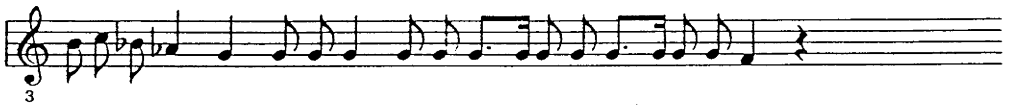
The musical structure of each of these songs is virtually identical, as can be seen from a comparison of the transcriptions.

One slight difference occurs in Mt Wellington Lookout. Whereas in this line the other two songs drop down a tone, Mt Wellington Lookout stays on the same note.

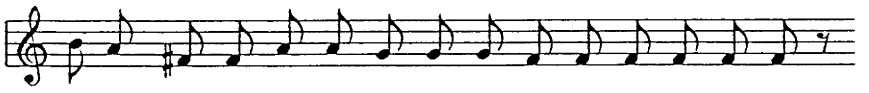
Ex. 8 Quail and Flying Squirrel melodic structure extract (LA2141).



Ex. 9 Grandfather and Two Girls melodic structure extract (LA3392).



Ex. 10 Mt Wellington Lookout melodic structure extract (LA2141).



Gummow suggests that this drop of a tone in Grandfather and Two Girls, and in Quail and Flying Squirrel, may be a cueing device designed to show that the singer is commencing a new section (Gummow 1992: 231).

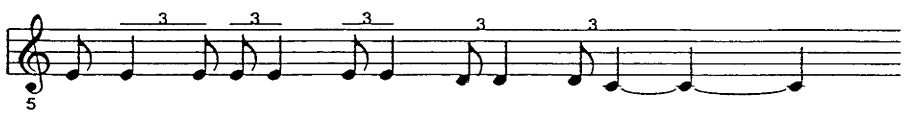
Aside from this difference, the three songs are almost identical in musical structure, which would seem to confirm that they were all composed by the same person. This is further supported by Donnelly's comments on some recordings that the composer of each was Jimmy Biggle.

Raymond Duncan Songs

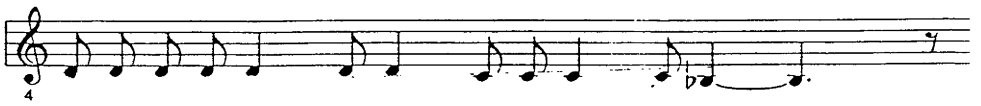
Raymond Duncan and Mountains and Car were both composed by Raymond Duncan. Donnelly identifies Duncan as the composer on all but one recording (LA2141, Mountains and Car).

The overall structure differs somewhat between the songs, but there are many sections which are melodically and rhythmically similar. For example, this rhythmic and melodic pattern:

Ex. 11 Mountains and Car melodic and rhythmic pattern(LA2141).

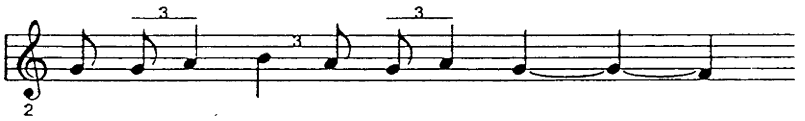


Ex. 12 Raymond Duncan melodic and rhythmic pattern(LA3392).



Another example is the rising and falling a major third then dropping a tone:

Ex. 13 Mountains and Car extract, melodic structure extract (LA2141).



Ex. 14 Raymond Duncan extract, melodic structure extract (LA3392).



The rising and falling a major third is quite distinctive in the repertoire, as most songs exhibit a descending melodic pattern. Whilst ascending leaps occasionally occur, ascents in stepwise motion do not. These particular melodic and rhythmic patterns would therefore seem to be characteristic of the composer Raymond Duncan.

Long Johnny Songs

Two songs on LA2141 are identified as having been composed by Long Johnny. These songs are Long Johnny's Song and Bill Parkins. They are sung consecutively.

The musical structure of each song is not identical, but the songs are unique in the sample for consisting of only one melodic descent. The descent follows a similar pattern in both cases. (See transcriptions.)

The character of these songs is also rather unusual. They have many sustained notes, and short breath phrases. The accompaniment patterns for each are distinctive, with beats on the first of every group of six quavers for the opening lines, which double to become beats on the first of every three quavers for the remainder of the song.

Shaking Leg

This is a type of dance. There are three songs identified by Donnelly as such in the sample, Djanggara, Shaking Leg and Shake-a-Leg. There is no apparent musical similarity between them, except for a recurring call of 'brrr', which Donnelly says on LA1176 is used to mark off song sections. The 'brrr' occurs in every shaking leg song except Djanggara on LA1178.

This characteristic is not unique to songs classified as Shaking Leg however. It also occurs in King Bobby's Song to Tom Bissetti, and Gumbainggir Song with Swear Words. Donnelly does not describe either of these as Shaking Leg songs, although he does interrupt King Bobby's Song to Tom Bissetti to say after the 'brrr' that 'King Bobby is shaking leg here' (LA4744). Possibly then, the 'brrr' signifies not only the end of a musical section but also a particular dance movement. See Gummow for further explanation of Shaking Leg songs and dances (1992: 94).

It can be seen then, that musical correlation is evident between songs composed by the same person and between songs that are classified in the same genre. These musical similarities indicate a common origin, and in each case this supports the information given by Donnelly.

Musical correlation is not apparent in the rest of the sample however. For example, the four songs by King Bobby share no musical similarities.

Neither do the two Jack Baron songs, Two Up and Stoney Gully. The texts of the Baron songs however, do have some features in common. Both use occasional English words such as penny, money, notes, broke down and two up, and both are about gambling.

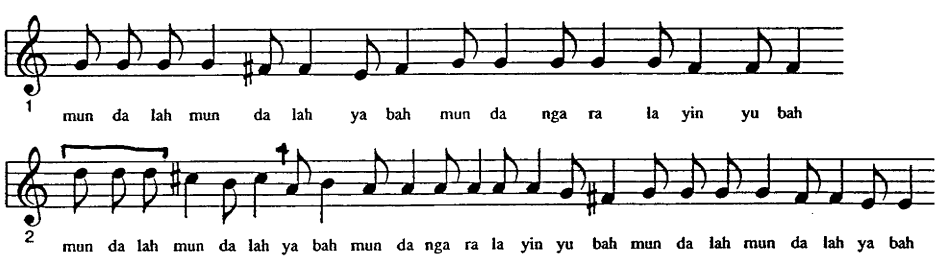
Stylistic Factors Attributable to Donnelly

There does not seem to be one overall musical feature or characteristic which unites every song in the sample, and could be said to be peculiar to Dick Donnelly. Although there are some basic features in common, such as descending melodies, stick accompaniment etc., these are typical of Bundjalung music (see Gummow 1992), and are not therefore unique to this song repertoire. Certain songs exhibit similarities, but as shown, this can be attributed to their compositional and genre origins and not necessarily to Donnelly himself.

Donnelly does individualise his performance of the songs however. In particular, he consistently uses one technique to vary the melodic structure. This technique will be referred to as octave displacement.

Octave displacement is where some notes of a melody are sung at a higher or lower octave, whilst retaining their actual pitches. For instance, in this example from the song Mundala, Donnelly sings the notes as marked in a high octave on the LA2141 recording:

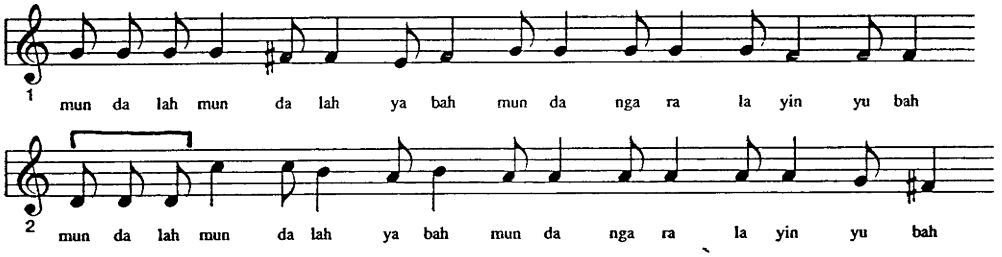
Ex. 15 Mundala extract showing octave displacement (LA2141).



On the LA1176 version of Mundala however, he sings the same section but transposes these notes down one octave.

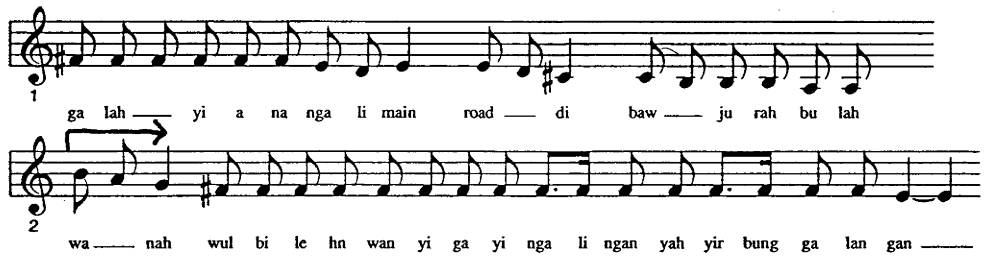
Ex. 16 Mundala extract showing octave displacement (LA1176).

[This example has been written one semitone below actual pitch, and on two lines to enable comparison between the performances. It should be written on one line, as it is only one breath phrase.]



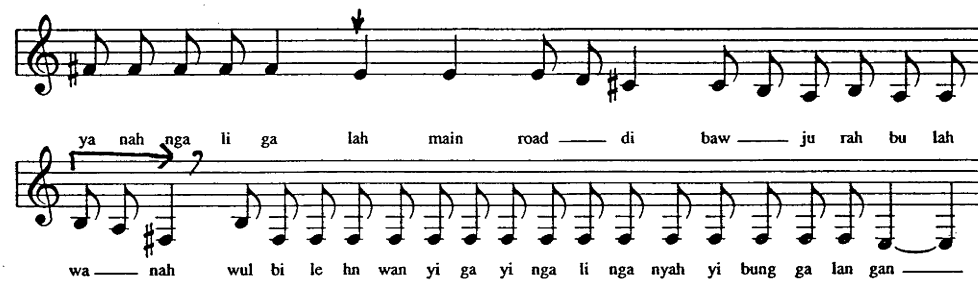
Another example provides further illustration. This is taken from Quail and Flying Squirrel as sung on LA2141. The octave displacement is marked.

Ex. 17 Octave displacement, Quail and Flying Squirrel (LA2141).



This is the same section of Quail and Flying Squirrel as it is sung on LA1178.

Ex. 18 Octave displacement, Quail and Flying Squirrel (LA1178).

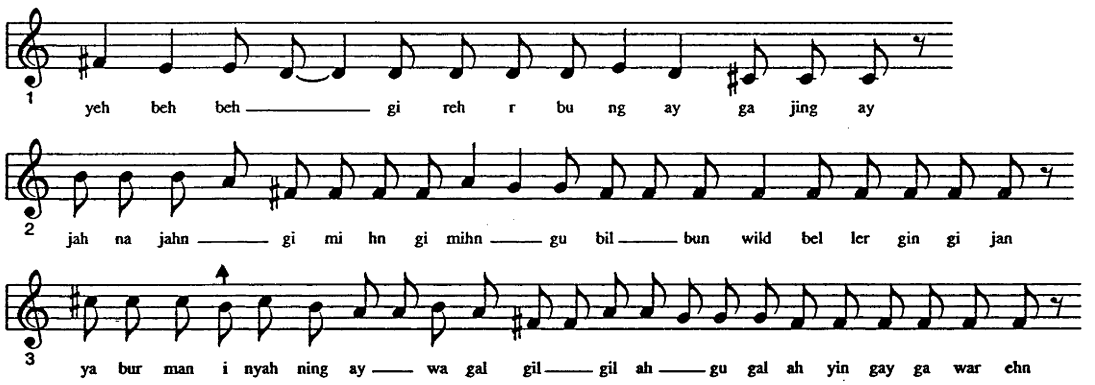


These are not isolated examples. It has been aurally observed that of the fifteen songs which appear more than once in the sample, Donnelly uses

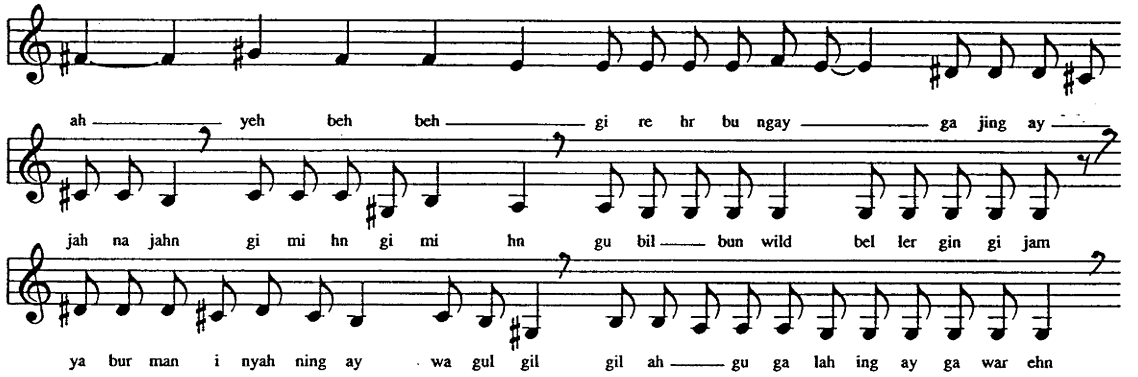
this technique in every case. Not every repetition exhibits octave displacement, but it occurs at least once for each repeated song.

The examples given above show only minor alterations in melody. Other songs use this technique more extensively, which alters the performance of the song substantially. For instance, compare these two performances of Mt Wellington Lookout. The first is a transcription of the performance on LA3392. The second is transcribed from the performance on LA2141.

Ex. 19 Mt Wellington Lookout extract, octave displacement (LA3392).



Ex. 20 Mt Wellington Lookout extract, octave displacement (LA2141).



The octave displacement significantly alters the melodic structure, affecting aural perception of the song. Although relative pitch relationships are maintained (except at the actual point of displacement) the LA2141 version sounds quite different to the LA3392 version, as it is generally lower in range.

The number of melodic descents in each song is also affected by the octave displacement. In the LA2141 version, there are two descents in this section of text, but in the LA3392 version, there are three descents for the same section of text, as a new descent is commenced with the jump to a higher octave on the word 'jahnajahn'. In the example taken from the song Quail and Flying Squirrel (music examples 17 and 18), the LA2141 version consists of two melodic descents for the given section of text, but the LA1178 version, discounting the leap of a fourth to the B at the start of the second line, has only one descent for the same section of text. The leap of a fourth is not considered to be the start of a new descent because the melody immediately drops back down a fourth, to continue on the low F sharp.

In music examples 15 and 16, the number of melodic descents for the given section of text is the same, but the start of the second melodic descent in the LA1176 version is three notes later than the LA2141 version. In the LA1176 version, the second melodic descent commences on the repetition of the word 'mundalah', whereas in the LA2141 version it commences on the first statement of this word. Therefore, melodic descent and text aligns differently in each case.

Hence, it can be seen that in different performances of the same song, melodic descent and text alignment is variable. This would seem to imply that the relationship between text and melodic descent is not a significant structural feature of Donnelly's music. Rather, the relationship between relative pitch and text is emphasised, without regard for the actual octave placement. Further, this indicates that Donnelly perceived his songs in terms of melody, rather than in terms of melodic descent. The primary concern is with pitch values and text, which are preserved from one

version of a song to the next, and not with the relationship between text and large scale melodic movement such as descents.

Two other techniques are used to vary song structure. The length of a song is changed occasionally by adding or subtracting sections of text, and in some songs the order of the musical phrases is rearranged. When lengthening songs, Donnelly repeats the whole song or substantial sections of it. For example, in the LA1178 version of Two Up he sings the entire text through only once, whereas in the other versions he sings it twice. See the transcriptions of Stoney Gully (LA2141 and LA1219) for an example of rearranging musical phrases.

Gummow has identified these two variation techniques in some of Donnelly's songs, and notes that Bundjalung songs in general have a flexible structure which allows them to be expanded, contracted or varied as required. She posits that this was important in a traditional context, as the songs needed to be adapted to accommodate particular dances. She also identifies cueing devices which may have been used to signal to the dancers or other singers that particular changes would occur.

Whilst it would seem likely that formal structures would need to be modified under the circumstances outlined by Gummow, this does not adequately explain why there might need to be melodic variation. Changing the melodic outline does not alter the formal or textual boundaries of the song, and so would not accommodate different dances or steps. It may have been used as a signalling device to indicate that formal structure will vary, but there does not seem to be any evidence of this in Donnelly's songs. For instance, it has been aurally observed that in three versions of the Two Up song particular phrases are sung at a higher octave than in the other five

recordings. However, the textual and formal structure of these versions is no different to four other recordings. The only version which is formally different is the LA1178 recording, where the song is sung only once. In this case though, there is no evidence of octave displacement in relation to the songs where the text is repeated. It would seem unlikely then, that there is a relationship between octave displacement and variation of formal structure, at least in Donnelly's repertoire.

The fact that there is no evidence of such a relationship in Donnelly's songs is not sufficient to generalise about the whole of Bundjalung music or about earlier musical practice. It is possible that there may have been a relationship between these variable elements in the past, and that Donnelly has either forgotten it or considers it irrelevant in the present context. In Gummow's analysis of the song Crow (Gummow 1992: 246), she notes that whilst Donnelly varies song structure throughout the recordings, he does not use some cueing devices in the later recordings. This may have been because the song was not being danced to, and therefore the cueing device was redundant. Alternatively, Donnelly may have simply forgotten to include the cues on these recordings. Whatever the reason, it increases the probability of there having also been a relationship between octave displacement and structural variation in the past, which Donnelly perhaps forgot or discarded before his songs were recorded.

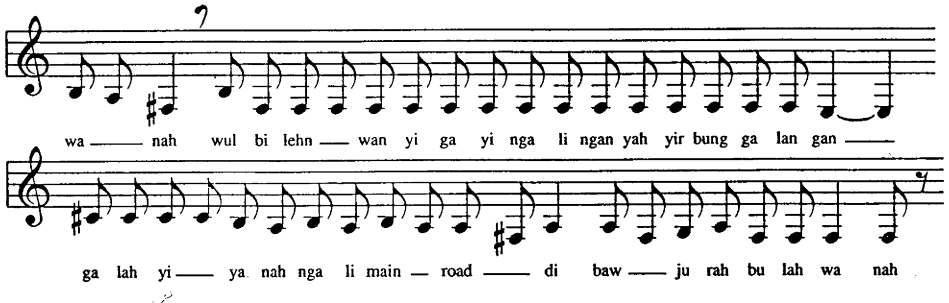
Given that the octave displacement seems to have no active role within the variation of formal structure, there arises the question of why it occurs so extensively throughout Donnelly's songs. It is possible that he uses it to accommodate his voice range in a particular session, although this would seem unlikely. For instance, in the LA2141 recording session, where he

sings the very low version of Mt Wellington Lookout, he sings other songs which are quite high in range. This might be understandable if it was the first song in the session and his voice had not warmed up, but in fact it was performed in the middle of the session.

It could also be that the starting note of the song, and therefore the overall relative range, is connected to use of octave displacement. If the starting note were unusually low, some phrases might need to be taken up an octave. This does not seem to be the case with the Two Up songs however. For instance, the starting notes of LA1177 and LA5044 are both A, but a particular phrase from each song is sung at a different octave in each case. Also, the LA1178 version of Quail and Flying Squirrel starts on an F sharp and uses a low octave for certain phrases in the first half of the song. In the second half of the song, which is a repeat of this melodic material, these same phrases are sung in a high octave. This also occurs in the LA1957 version of Two Up. Therefore, there would seem to be no connection between the relative range of a song and octave displacement.

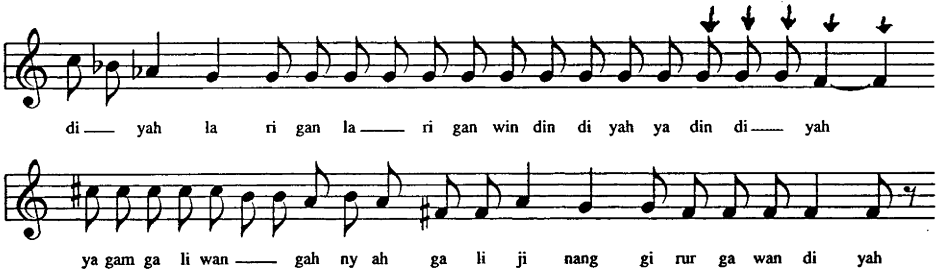
The more likely explanation for Donnelly's use of this technique is that it serves the purpose of varying performance. In the LA2141 session he sings Quail and Flying Squirrel and Mt Wellington Lookout. As discussed earlier, both these songs were composed by Jimmy Biggle, and their musical structures are almost identical. In this version of Quail and Flying Squirrel, he sings most of the song in a high octave. This distinguishes it markedly from Mt Wellington Lookout, which he sings later in the session in a low octave. Another example of this occurs on the LA1178 recording, where he sings all three Jimmy Biggle songs. The song Grandfather and Two Girls is differentiated from Quail and Flying Squirrel by an octave displacement:

Ex. 21 Quail and Flying Squirrel octave displacement (LA1178).



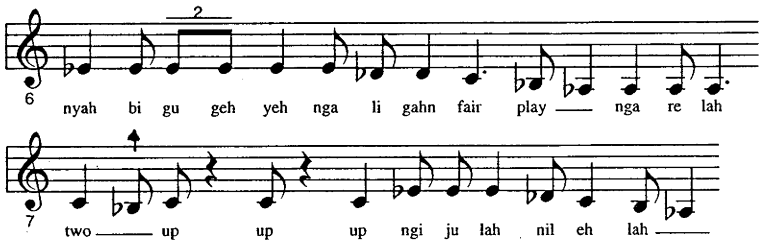
Ex. 22 Grandfather and Two Girls octave displacement (LA1178).

[Notated a major 2nd above actual pitch to facilitate comparison.]

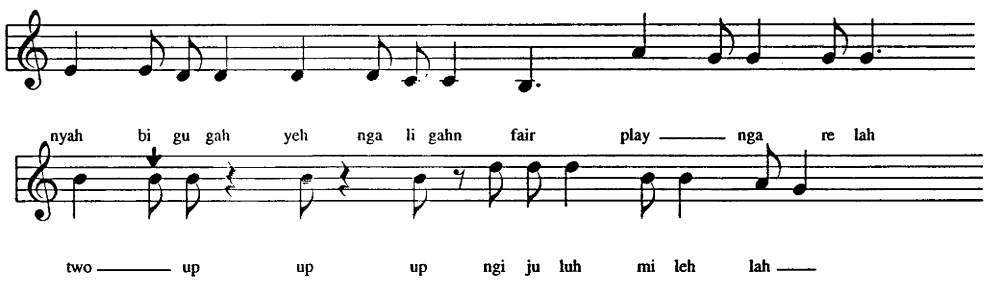


This technique is also used to vary the same song sung at different sessions. For instance, compare this section of the LA1178 recording of Two Up with the same section of the LA1957 version.

Ex. 23 Extract from Two Up showing octave displacement (LA1178).



Ex. 24 Extract from Two Up showing octave displacement (LA1957).



It can be seen that the octave displacement substantially alters this section of the piece, and clearly differentiates the two performances.

It should be noted that the employment of this technique does not effect a progressive change in the performance of each song. For instance, the last recording of Quail and Flying Squirrel is substantially the same as the first recording, and yet the performances in between are notably different. It is simply used to vary the musical material, and is not part of what could be considered a compositional development process. The octave displacement significantly alters the melodic contour, but the essential melodic patterns of the song remain intact. In fact, Donnelly says that he has never composed any songs himself (LA3392), and it is therefore unlikely that he would regard this variation technique as a compositional procedure.

Donnelly does not seem to differentiate between whether a song is composer identified or not in terms of performance variation. He uses all three techniques to vary performances of both types of song. The most extensive octave displacement occurs in the Jimmy Biggle songs, but there are smaller sections of octave displacement in Mundala, Maringgu, Crow, Djanggara and Lullaby. He also rearranges phrases and repeats sections in various performances of these songs.

In short, whilst the sample does not exhibit musical features peculiar to Donnelly, he does personalise his performance of the repertoire through the means of variation techniques. These techniques can significantly change the melodic structure and character of a song, but are never used to effect permanent alterations. Variations occur within their performance contexts, and there is no sense of compositional development or

progression. There does not seem to be any connection between the amount or type of variation and whether the piece is attributed to a composer. There is some evidence however, that variation is used to distinguish songs which have similar musical structures, particularly when they are performed in the same recording session.

Chapter Four

Summary and Conclusion

It has been demonstrated in the previous chapters that there is an intrinsic relationship between Donnelly's song repertoire and style as it is presented on these recordings, and the recording context itself. The reasons why and how a particular song is performed have been shown to be related to which other songs were sung in the session, the recordist's and/or audience's preferences, and the purpose of the performance. Donnelly's response to these external factors and to his own performer preferences determine the content and style of the song repertoire, as it presented on any one particular recording, and as it progresses over time.

It has been shown that understanding the reasons for making the recording, the recordist's bias, and how the songs were elicited can help explain musical features and performance elements which might otherwise be misinterpreted or overlooked. For example, there are several instances of particular songs being performed at the prompting of the recordist. Donnelly sang Mountains and Car on LA3392 after Geytenbeek asked for the 'one about the cars coming down from Brisbane', and sang Maringgu on LA2141 at Sommerlad's suggestion, after a discussion about whether they had already recorded it. In these cases, the recordist's interest in a particular song determined whether it was performed. Therefore, it is clear that the recordist's stated preferences would need to be taken into account when considering the composition and size of the entire song repertoire and of each individual session.

This display of interest might also have influenced the way in which the song was performed. Donnelly might have felt inclined to extend the musical material by repeating certain sections of the text, in order to satisfy and indulge the recordist. In fact, this did not happen in either of the recordings discussed above. Nevertheless, it is conceivable that such expressions of interest on behalf of the recordist have determined the musical style of other songs in the repertoire, and this should be considered when examining the occurrence of certain musical features. Unfortunately however, this is not always possible, as many of the recordings were edited to exclude dialogue and elicitation comments.

The dynamics of a recording session may also determine which songs are sung and how they are performed. As noted, octave displacement was used extensively in Mt Wellington Lookout, when that song was performed in the same session as Quail and Flying Squirrel (LA2141). It is suggested that because these two songs have a very similar melodic structure, Donnelly was attempting to differentiate them through the use of this technique. Also, the choice of songs may depend upon how the session progresses. For instance, Donnelly occasionally performed songs composed by the same person consecutively, e.g., Long Johnny's Song and Bill Parkins (LA2141) and Grandfather and Two Girls, and Mt Wellington Lookout (LA3392). The association between these songs, which could be either musical or contextual, determines their performance. Hence, the inclusion of a particular song in a session may be related to what was performed before it.

Aside from the circumstances of the recording session itself, there is also the issue of which songs Donnelly preferred to sing. It is suggested that the personal associations he had with each song would have been a significant factor in determining his own preferences, and that certain

types of songs were favoured. In particular, songs which are attributed to a composer form a substantial part of the repertoire, and increase proportionately with each recording occasion. This can perhaps be best explained by examining their personal significance, rather than the performance context or their inherent musical qualities. It is likely that Donnelly preferred to perform this type of song as it enabled him to reminisce about former friends, stories, and events from his younger days. Therefore, factors such as whether he knew a particular songmaker personally, the circumstances in which he learnt a song, or memories associated with its performance should all be taken into consideration when assessing the formation of the repertoire.

The extent to which Donnelly had a personal relationship with each song is probably of more importance in terms of explaining his choice of repertoire than is an understanding of each song's traditional performance context. Although the songs may be classified into traditional performance genres, these would perhaps have less meaning for Donnelly in later years, as their original performing contexts became more remote. Whilst he was fully aware of how each song had been performed in the past, and had even participated in these performances, the song's traditional purpose and meaning had lost its immediacy. This might explain why there was a tendency for Donnelly to sing fewer songs which were not attributed to a composer on each succeeding recording, and why on the earliest recording, made by Calley, there are a large number of songs not attributed to composers which are never recorded again, i.e., Juwa, Barara Abanji, Pigeon Call on One Note, Shaking Chest, and Gumbainggir Song with Swear Words.

Whilst it would seem clear that Donnelly's style and repertoire was influenced to some extent by all these factors, there remains the question of whether he made a conscious attempt to adapt his performing style to suit each performance context. It would seem from the recordings that he did. The John Sommerlad lecture has already been cited as an example of performance tactics, but there is other evidence that Donnelly was aware of appropriate performance conduct. For instance, the Geytenbeeks recorded him preparing for a talent quest, using the recording session as a trial run (Geytenbeek documentation LA3392). At the end of the session Donnelly made the comment that he is unsure if he will sing those particular songs in the quest (LA3392). It is clear then, that Donnelly was actively preparing for the performance, by deciding on suitable repertoire, and by practicing with an audience prior to the event.

This suggests that Donnelly perceived his singing of the songs for the recordings as being a performance, in the sense that he was aiming to entertain, rather than just being a documentation. Roland Robinson's description of the lecture tour testifies to Donnelly's skills at presenting and singing his songs to a large audience, and it is clear that this performance attitude carried over into the recordings. Even when singing for just a single recordist he took great care with presentation style, explaining the background to the song, and interrupting frequently to translate particular phrases. The interruptions never seemed to have affected the musical structure however, and Donnelly always seemed certain of how the song continued. He entertained and impressed the recordists, responded to their requests courteously, and always seemed to be in control. As John Gordon said, Donnelly 'is no stranger to the microphone' (Gordon 1969: 136).

Understanding and accepting Donnelly as a performer in this sense, does not in any way negate the fact that he also operated in the tradition of a songman. Undoubtedly, many of the skills which he employed in the recordings would have been learnt in a more traditional setting, from the people who made the songs, and whilst participating in ceremonial life. These skills would then have been adapted to suit the new performance context, of the recording session, of the talent quest, and of the lecture presentation. To what extent people such as Roland Robinson influenced his style is difficult to tell, but there seems no doubt that Donnelly's performance expertise was acquired long before his arrival.

Therefore, it can be seen that not only is it necessary to consider the songs in their respective recording contexts, but it is also necessary to understand how Donnelly perceived of himself as a singer, and how he perceived each individual recording situation. For instance, if Donnelly considered these recordings to be a performance, rather than just a documentation of his songs, it is highly likely that octave displacement was used as a performance variation technique. Whether it had been used as such in the past cannot be determined, but given that it served no structural purpose, at least within the confines of Donnelly's repertoire, and given that Donnelly adapted his performance style to suit the performance context, it can probably be assumed that this technique was consciously utilised to provide stylistic variation. Moreover, it might be said that the other variation techniques, that is, extending and rearranging song structure, were also used in this manner. Even though they served a quite different purpose within a traditional context, the fact that this context had altered radically by the time of the recordings, and the evidence that Donnelly was disregarding essential elements of this variation structure in the later recordings, seems to indicate that he used

these techniques to vary and distinguish individual performances, thereby personalising his repertoire, and affirming his position as a performer.

While it is possible to draw some conclusions as to why certain stylistic elements present themselves in these recordings, it is very difficult to make definitive statements about all aspects of musical style and presentation. To come to a more complete understanding of Donnelly's songs, it would be necessary to unravel the various layers of meaning which shaped and determined each recording and performance context. This could probably only be accomplished by asking the singer, which in this situation is not possible, as Donnelly is no longer alive.

Further research could be made in the area of biographical details, which might help to explain the personal significance of the songs, and provide more information on performing and performance contexts. This could be supplemented by interviewing the recordists, in order to get an idea of how they viewed themselves in relation to Donnelly and the recordings. Also, an extensive study of other Bundjalung singers, particularly those who know the same songs as Donnelly, might give some clue as to the origin of certain musical characteristics. Unfortunately, time and resources have so far prevented the carrying out of further research.

In this thesis I have attempted to present and analyse the work of Dick Donnelly as an example of an Aboriginal person who has adapted traditional culture to a contemporary context. Dick Donnelly was undeniably an excellent, accomplished and versatile performer, who used his knowledge and skills acquired as a traditional songman to inform and entertain a largely white audience. These recordings are an invaluable documentation of his career, his life, his people and the local area, both

from an historical and a contemporary perspective. Given the significance of Dick Donnelly's life and work, his recordings deserve to be better known to a wider audience.

Transcriptions and Song Annotations

The transcriptions are arranged in alphabetical order by title, as they appear in Appendix One. Following each transcription there is a brief annotation describing the background story of the song.

One transcription has been made of each different song in the recording sample except Shake-a-Leg on LA53, which could not be transcribed as it was recorded with a flat battery. Multiple performances which were used in the analysis have also been transcribed.

There were a number of criteria affecting the decision of which particular performances to transcribe. In the case of each different song, I looked first for performances which did not any recording problems. That is, the song was not cut short by the recordist or the recorder (as happened in Quail and Flying Squirrel LA4744), and there were no other apparent technical problems. Two songs which did have recording problems were transcribed anyway, as there was only one performance of each. These were Pigeon Call on One Note (LA1178), which is interrupted by the announcer, and Lost Man (LA1178), where the tape cuts out and then comes back on shortly before the end. These were able to be transcribed almost completely even with these problems. The song Shake-a-Leg, which was recorded with a flat battery on LA53, could not be transcribed as it is difficult to tell how the pitch was affected by the recording problem.

After taking into consideration the recording quality, I then chose performances which did not have too many spoken interruptions, as these demonstrated musical structure more clearly. However, a performance without spoken interruptions is not necessarily typical, as interrupting the

song to explain text and story was a feature of Donnelly's performing style. This fact was taken into account, and I believe the performances transcribed are musically representative of other performances, though not necessarily representative of performing style.

Transcriptions of multiple performances were made to demonstrate aspects of my analysis, and therefore, these have been chosen on the basis of musical structure.

As Donnelly does not have titles for the songs, there were some problems of identification, and in particular, of determining whether one song was the same as another song. I determined which songs were the same by comparing musical structure, and information given by Donnelly such as background story, composer, and genre. This was supplemented by examining text transcriptions given in Gummow (1992).

As mentioned in the Introduction, the title I have given each song is not necessarily the title given on the recording documentation. My titles take into account the information given by Donnelly, and also the fact that there is a need to differentiate songs. For instance, several songs are identified as Shaking Legs, but these are not all the same song. I have called one Djanggara, as it is identified as such on one recording, one Shaking Leg, and the other Shake-a-Leg. Alternative titles which appear on the recording documentation are listed in Appendix One.

The annotation to each song is compiled mainly from information given by Donnelly. This information is not necessarily given on the recording from which the transcription has been made, but may be derived from several performances of that song. The information is referenced to its recording

source. Donnelly has given the information himself unless otherwise noted. For example, on the LA1178 recording, Malcolm Calley gives all the song information. Secondary sources are listed if they provide further information on the song. The annotations are cross referenced to each other when information on one song supplements or is relevant to another song.

The transcriptions are arranged in breath phrases. That is, one line represents one breath phrase. At the end of the line Donnelly either draws breath or makes a spoken comment. Comments are indicated in square brackets and quotation marks. Round open brackets indicate that I could not determine what was said.

All transcriptions are notated one octave higher than actual pitch. The use of the treble rather than the bass clef is to facilitate reading.

No key signature is given or implied. Accidentals are added, and apply for an entire breath phrase (line). The decision to use either sharps or flats does not have any tonal implications, and was made on the basis of melodic direction, and ease of reading.

No time signatures are given. The songs usually have a fairly regular pulse, but the metrical stress is not always consistent with a time signature.

An approximate metronome tempo is given at the start to each song. In most cases this is the speed of the accompaniment beat. This tempo does not always apply throughout the whole song, as small sections may be faster or slower. Significant alterations in tempo over larger sections of a song are indicated.

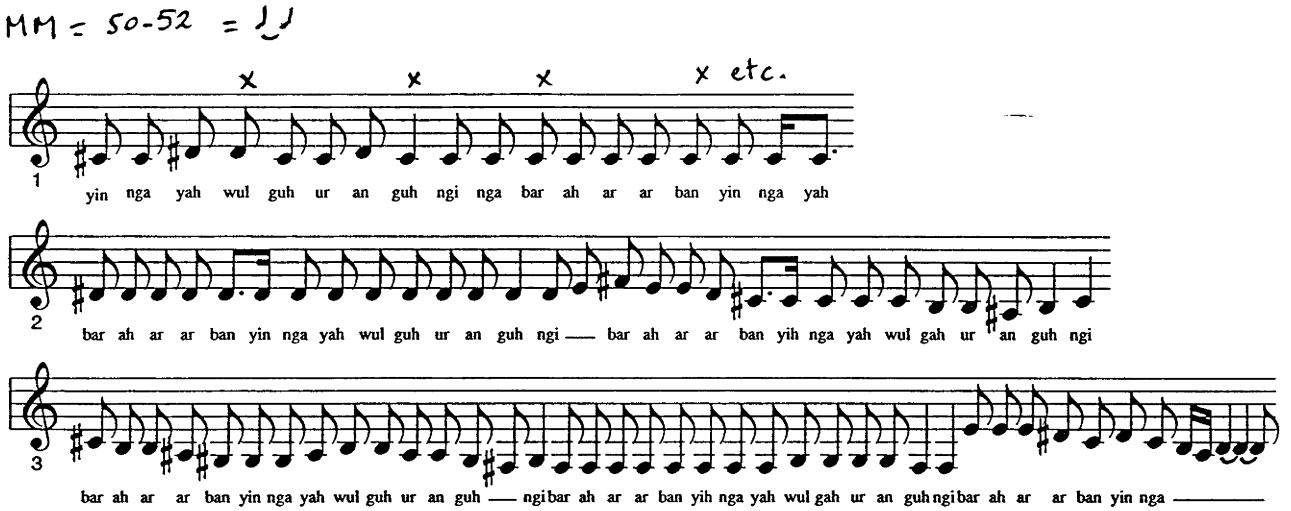
If the accompaniment beats are regular throughout the song, the accompaniment is indicated for the first line only, with 'etc.' written at the end of that line. If the accompaniment is not regular, it is given for the whole song. Rests between accompaniment beats are not given, as the accompaniment follows the melodic tempo and pulse, and does not have a separate rhythmic pulse of its own.

As stated in Chapter Three, some texts have been included. These have been transcribed by other researchers and appear in Gummow (1992). In the case of Stoney Gully LA2141, the first half of the text has not been transcribed, as it differs from the other versions of this song.

Symbols Used

	slightly above or below the pitch indicated
	accompaniment beat
	held for slightly longer than notated
	'brrr' vocal call (no pitch given)
	a quickening of the rhythm indicated
	breath mark (indicated for some music examples in Chapter Three)

Barara Abanji LA1178



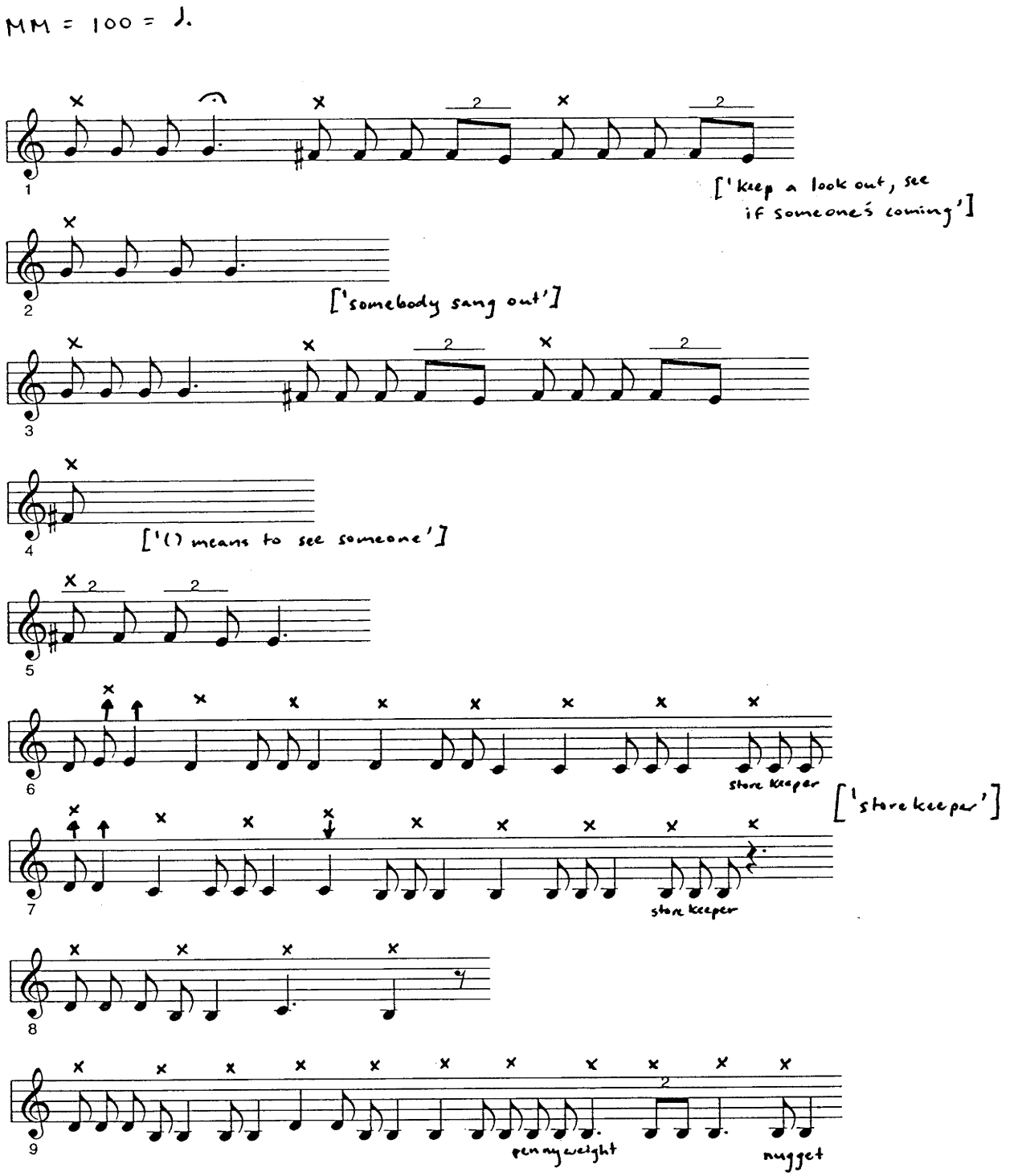
Barara Abanji

Calley says this is the third part of the corroboree Juwa, which he identifies as 'a group dance in the Bundjalung language' (LA1178).

This song is sung by Dick Donnelly and Tom Clareson together. The transcription follows Donnelly.

See also Juwa.

Text in Gummow (1992), Text 4, transcribed by Linda Barwick.

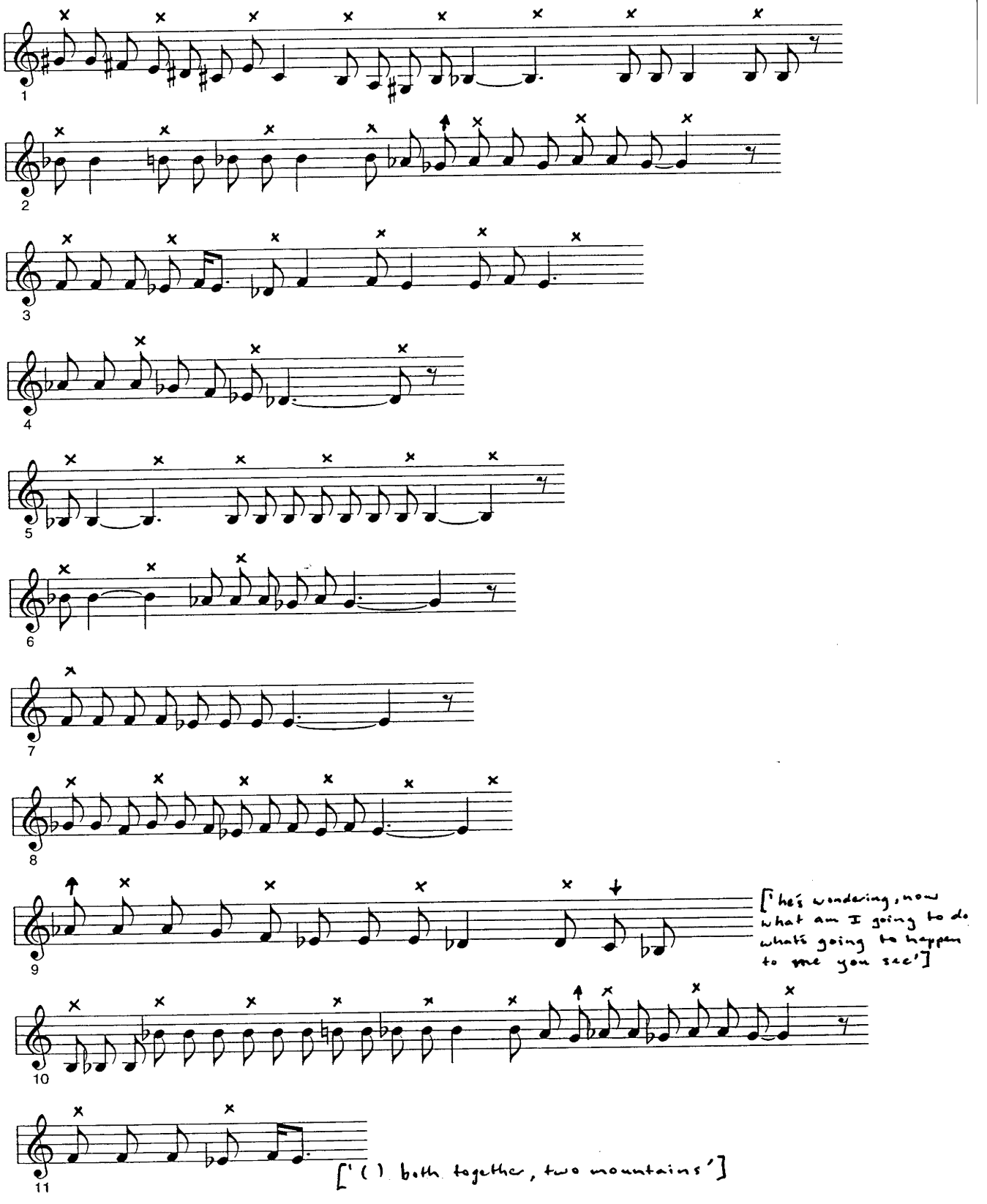


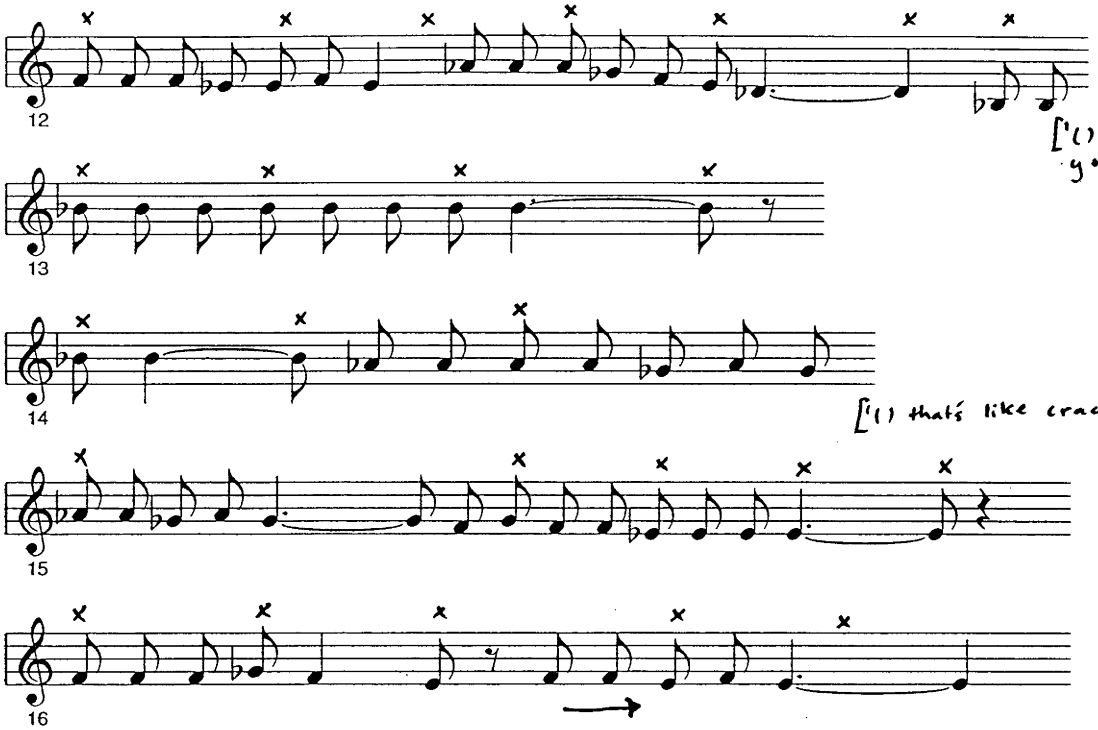
Bill Parkins

Long Johnny made this song about a white storekeeper, Bill Parkins (LA2141).

Blind Man's Song LA3392

MM = 63 = ♩.

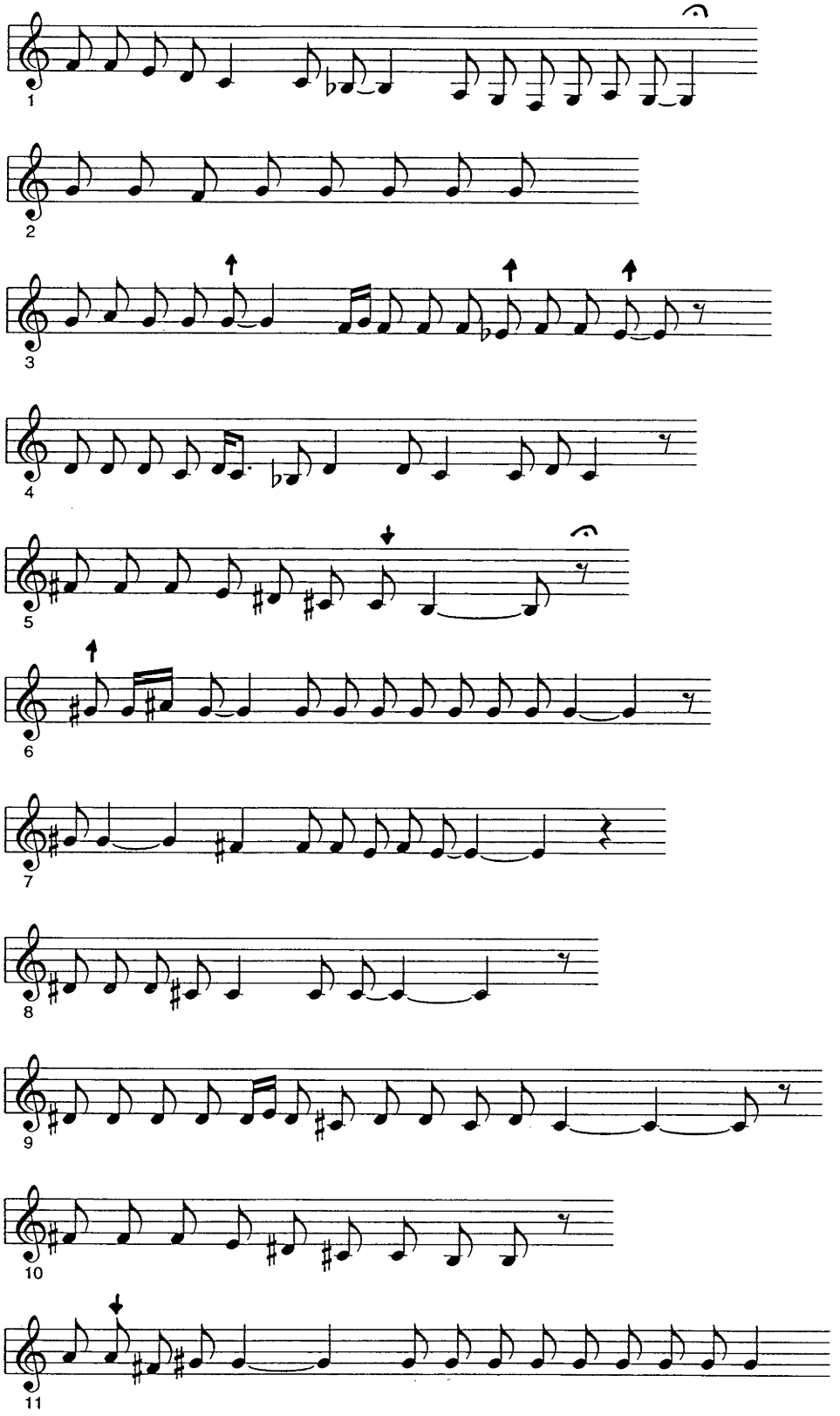


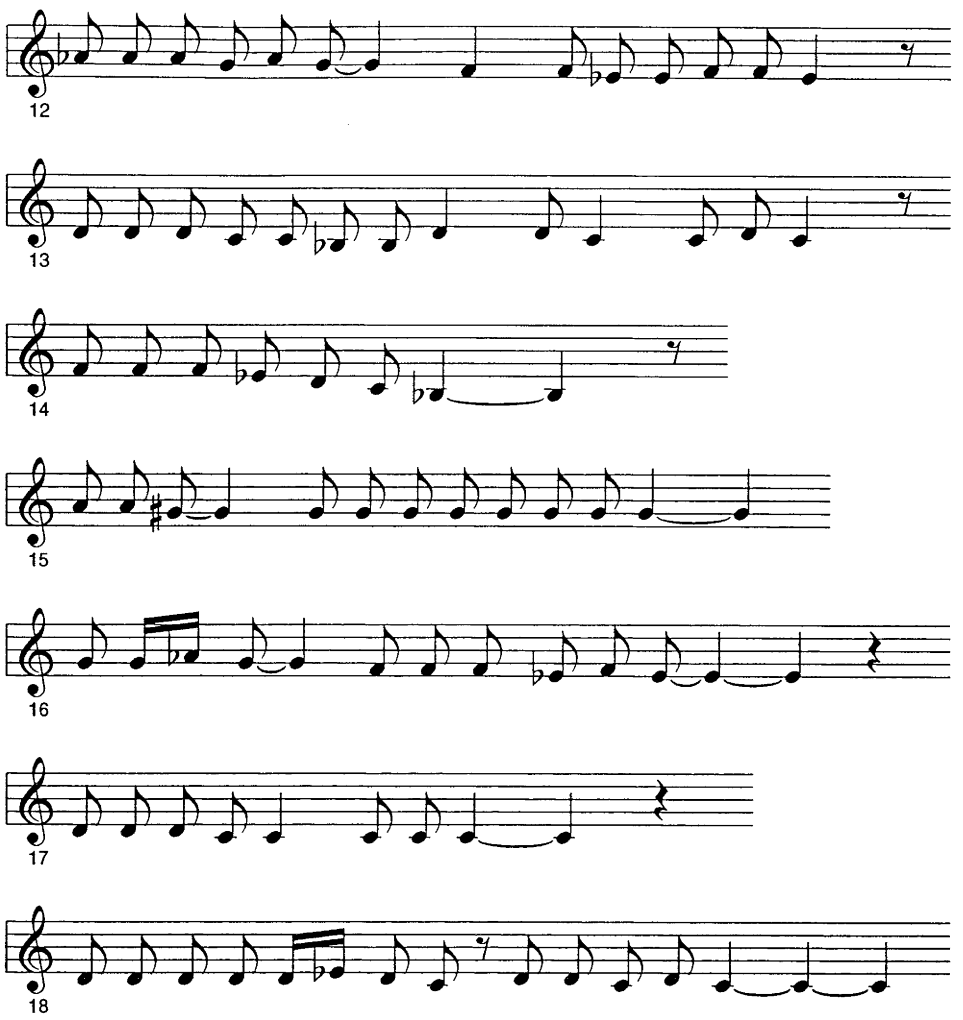

12
['() means pulling you see']
13
14
['() that's like cracking']
15
16

Blind Man's Song LA3392 [version two]

No Accompaniment

MM = 48 = ♩♩




12
13
14
15
16
17
18

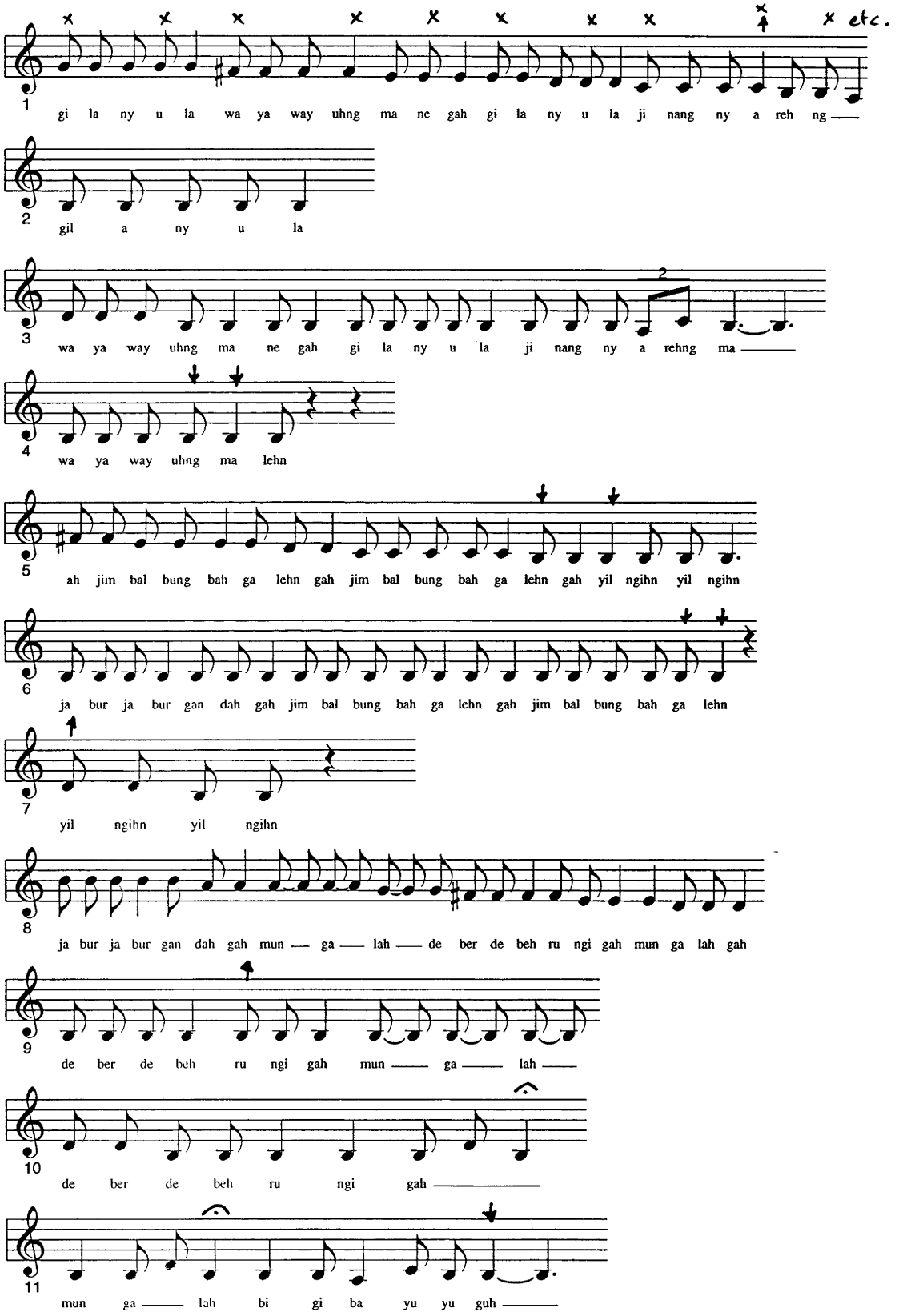
Blind Man's Song

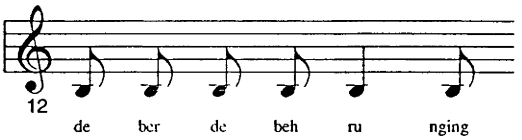
A man from the south came up to the camp, and eloped with two women. They camped out in the bush, but the man took sick and died. The women buried him with a boomerang left to mark the grave. Billy Nichol had been shown where the grave was by King Bobby, and he decided to dig it up. As soon as he started to dig, he heard a funny noise, and saw lots of kangaroos coming towards him. He tried to shoot them but couldn't hit any. He was very frightened and returned home. Soon afterwards he went blind because he had interfered with the djurbil. He shouldn't have gone to the grave without someone who'd been through the law. He made this song about the incident and sang it to Donnelly (LA3392).

See also Lost Man.

For further background to song see 'The Grave of the Buloogaan' and 'The Song of Darmunjura' in Roland Robinson's *Aboriginal Myths and Legends* (1966).

MM = 96 = ♩.


etc.
1
gi la ny u la wa ya way uhng ma ne gah gi la ny u la ji nang ny a reh ng
2
gil a ny u la
3
wa ya way uhng ma ne gah gi la ny u la ji nang ny a rehng ma
4
wa ya way uhng ma lehn
5
ah jim bal bung bah ga lehn gah jim bal bung bah ga lehn gah yil ngihn yil ngihn
6
ja bur ja bur gan dah gah jim bal bung bah ga lehn gah jim bal bung bah ga lehn
7
yil ngihn yil ngihn
8
ja bur ja bur gan dah gah mun ga lah de ber de beh ru ngi gah mun ga lah gah
9
de ber de beh ru ngi gah mun ga lah
10
de ber de beh ru ngi gah
11
mun ga lah bi gi ba yu yu guh



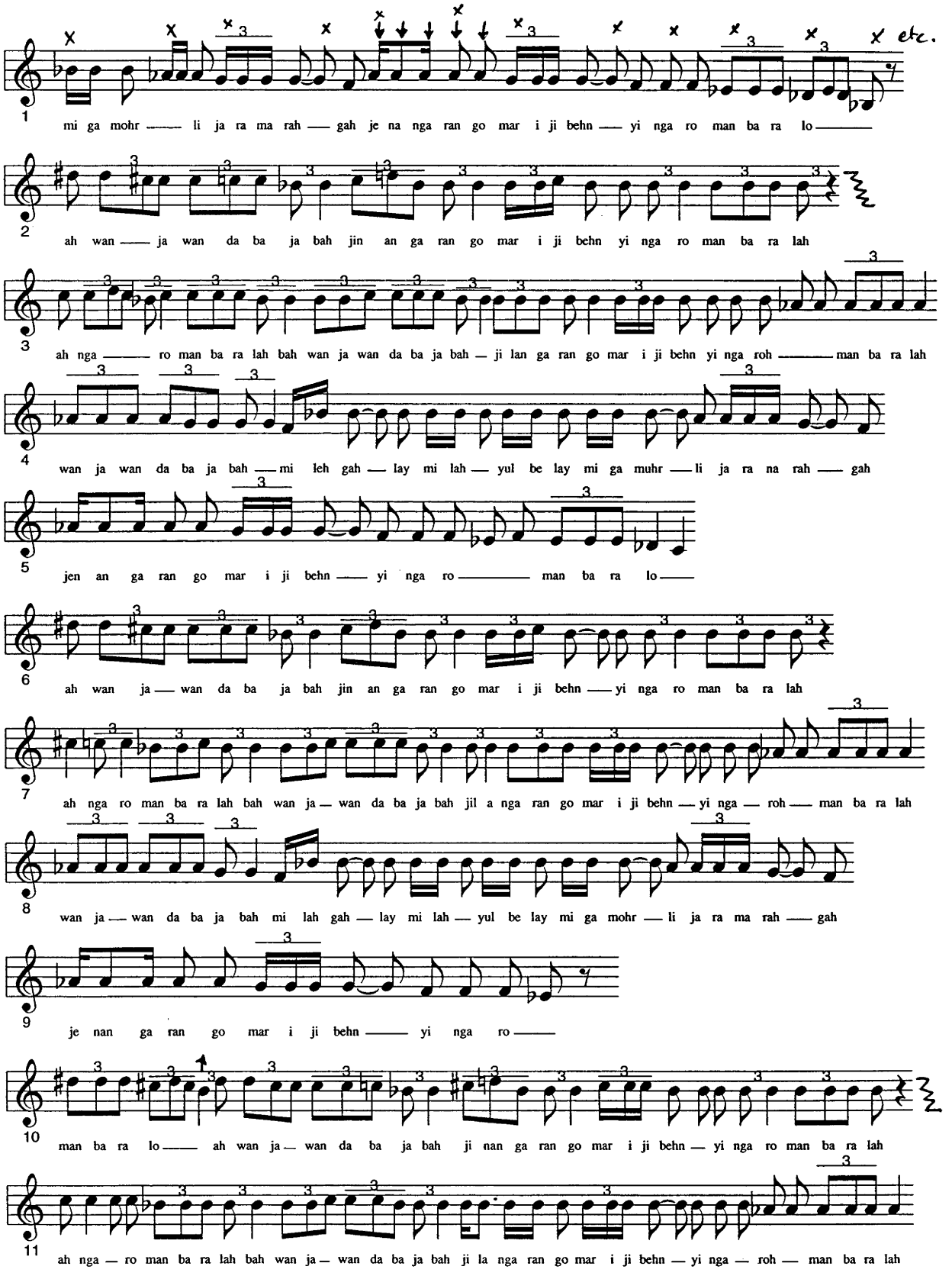
Crow

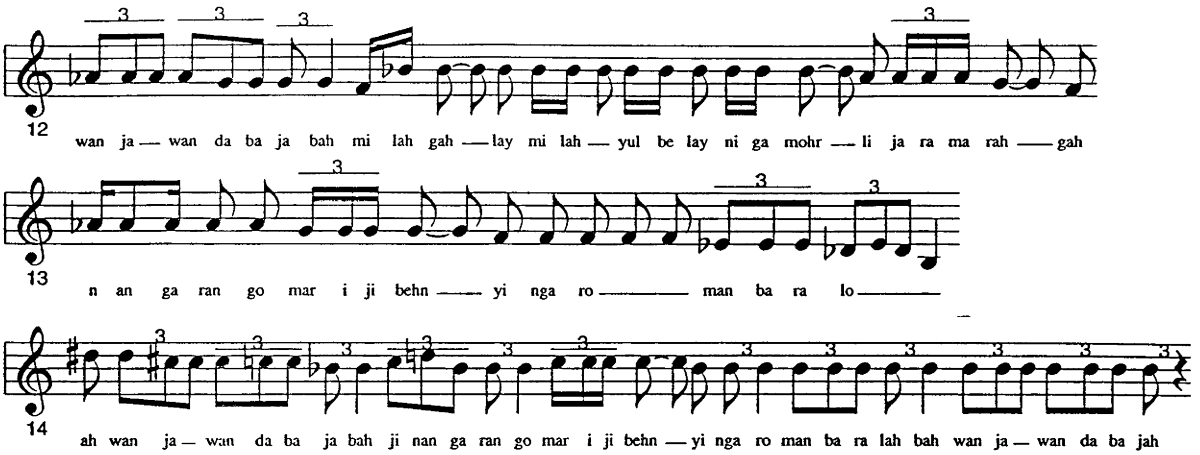
Donnelly learnt this song from his mother when he was six or seven years old (LA3392). It is in the Bundjalung language (LA1177).

The song is about an Aboriginal who is cooking a possum that he caught, when a crow sees the smoke from the fire and flies over to have a look. The Aboriginal sees the crow and makes a song about it (LA53). He 'sings' the crow, as the crow is disturbing him (LA4744). Donnelly mentions on one recording that the crow could sometimes be an enemy in disguise (LA3392).

Text in Gummow (1992), Text 20, also in Sharpe (1985a: 1-2, 19; 1985c: 4-6 and 1987: 2) and Geytenbeek (1973: 84).

Djanggara LA3392

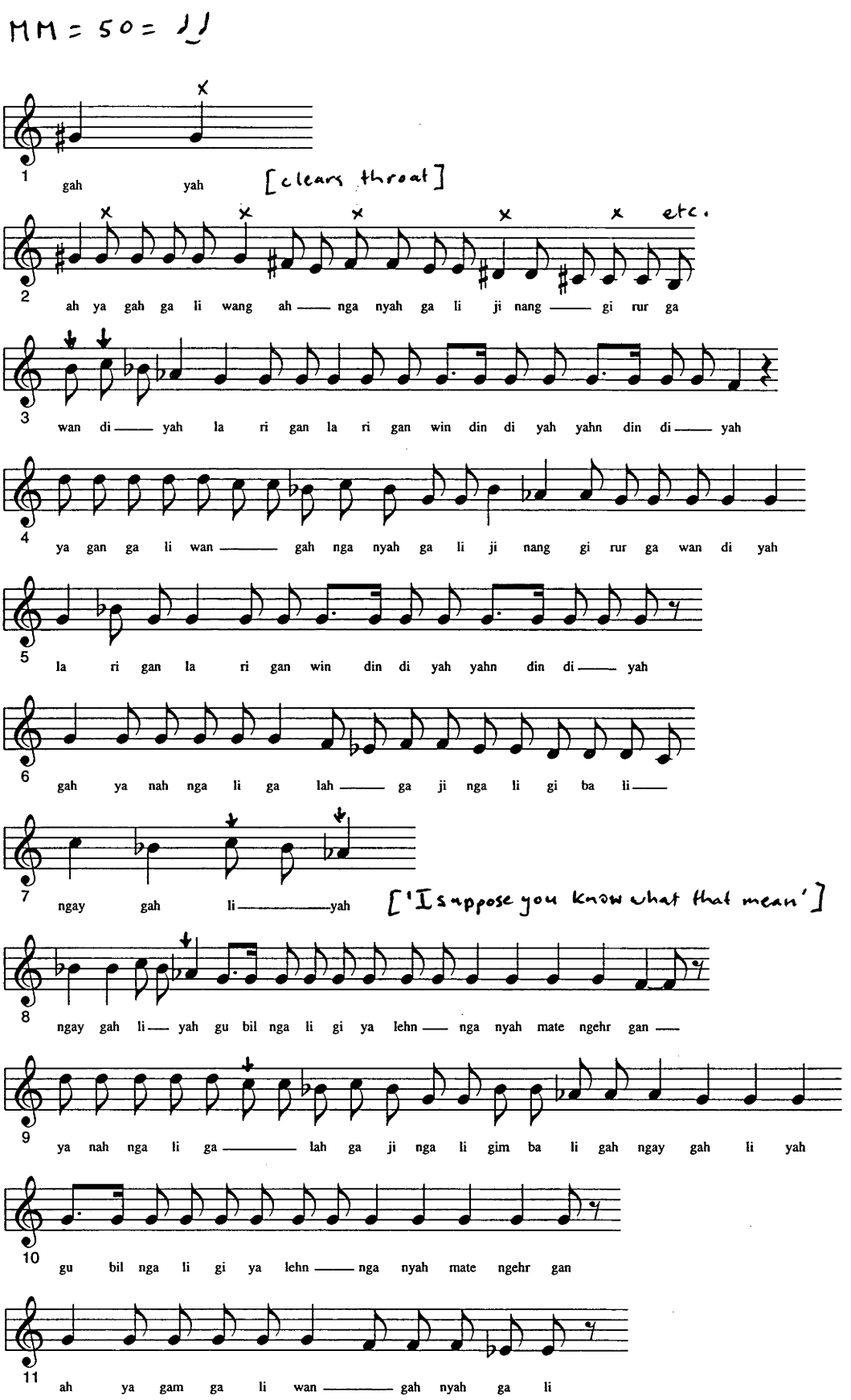


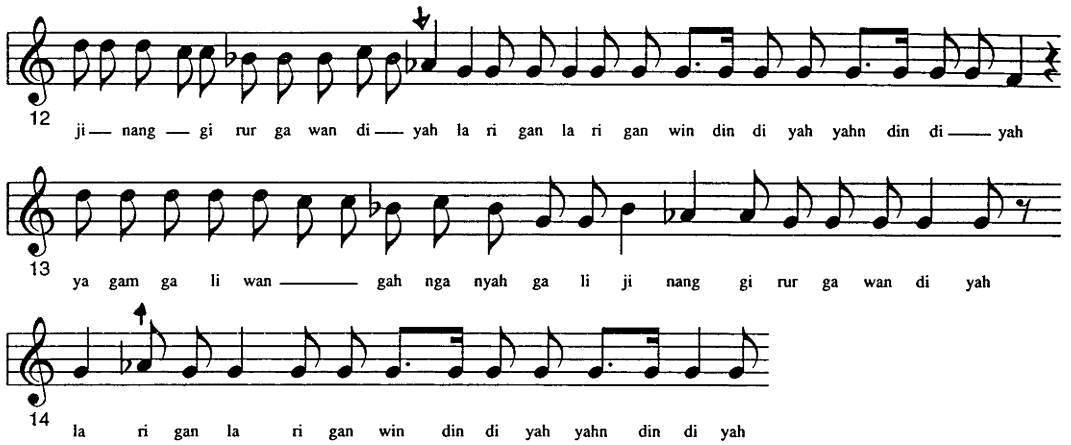


Djanggara

A Gamileroi shaking leg song. Donnelly 'caught' this song when he was with his mother (LA53). He describes it as 'a quick one' (LA1957). The 'brrr' signifies the end of a section, and would liven up the dancers (LA1176).

Text in Gummow (1992), Text 1a, transcribed by Gummow and Linda Barwick.


MM = 50 = ♩♩
1
gah yah [clears throat]
2
ah ya gah ga li wang ah — nga nyah ga li ji nang — gi rur ga etc.
3
wan di — yah la ri gan la ri gan win din di yah yahn din di — yah
4
ya gan ga li wan — gah nga nyah ga li ji nang gi rur ga wan di yah
5
la ri gan la ri gan win din di yah yahn din di — yah
6
gah ya nah nga li ga lah — ga ji nga li gi ba li —
7
ngay gah li — yah ['I suppose you know what that mean']
8
ngay gah li — yah gu bil nga li gi ya lehn — nga nyah mate ngehr gan —
9
ya nah nga li ga — lah ga ji nga li gim ba li gah ngay gah li yah
10
gu bil nga li gi ya lehn — nga nyah mate ngehr gan
11
ah ya gam ga li wan — gah nyah ga li



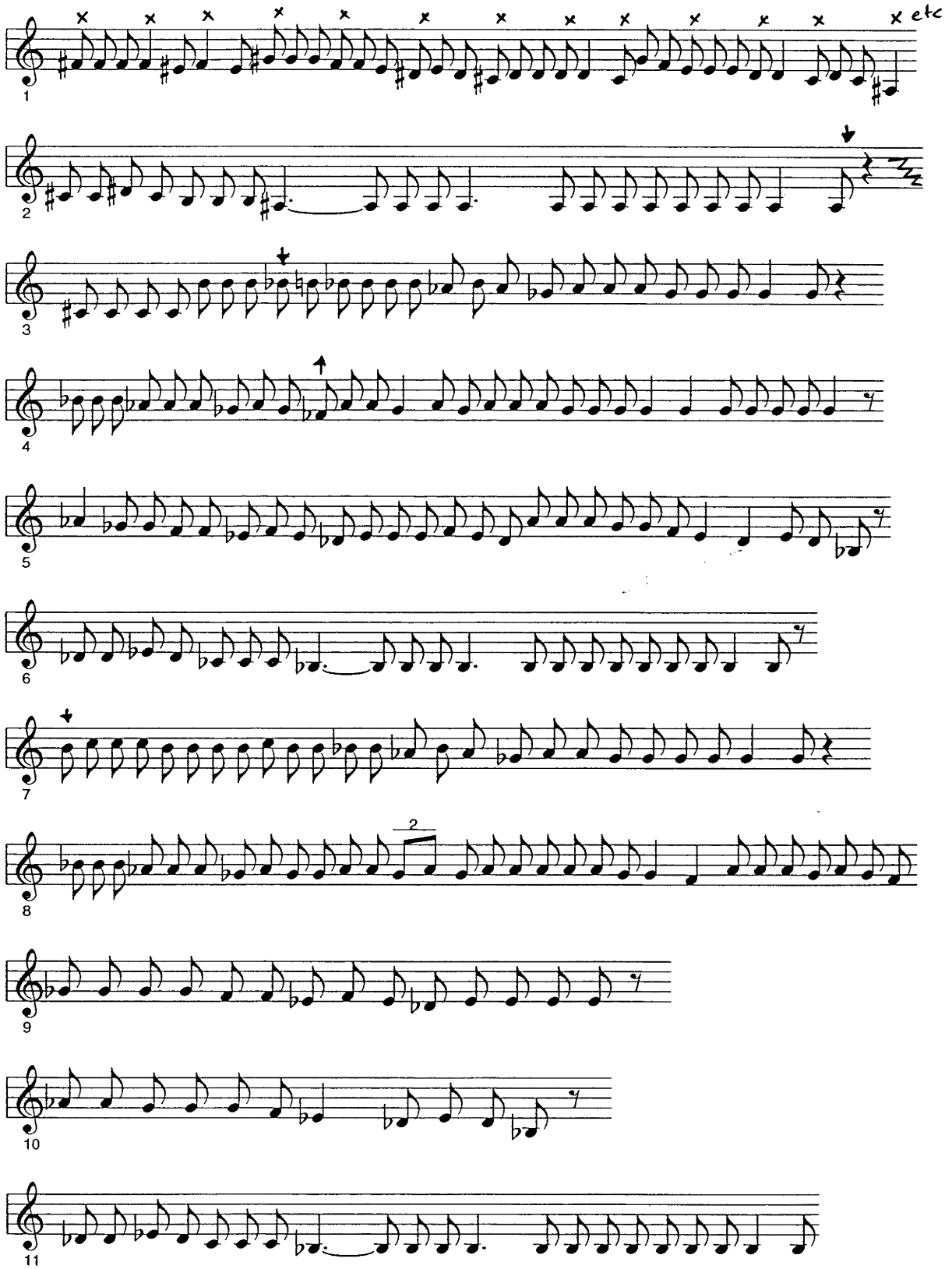
Grandfather and Two Girls

Jimmy Biggle made this song to 'sing' his two grand-daughters, who were always going out to dances at night. Biggle would tell them that they couldn't go out every night, but they would answer 'I've got my own feet Grandfather, I can go wherever I want' (LA5044). He'd let them go, but would sing this song about them (LA3392). The song was made at Tabulam, and is in Bundjalung (LA5044).

Text in Gummow (1992), Text 7, transcribed by Geytenbeek (1974: 85).

Gumbainggir Song with Swear Words LA1178

MM = 104-108 = ♩.

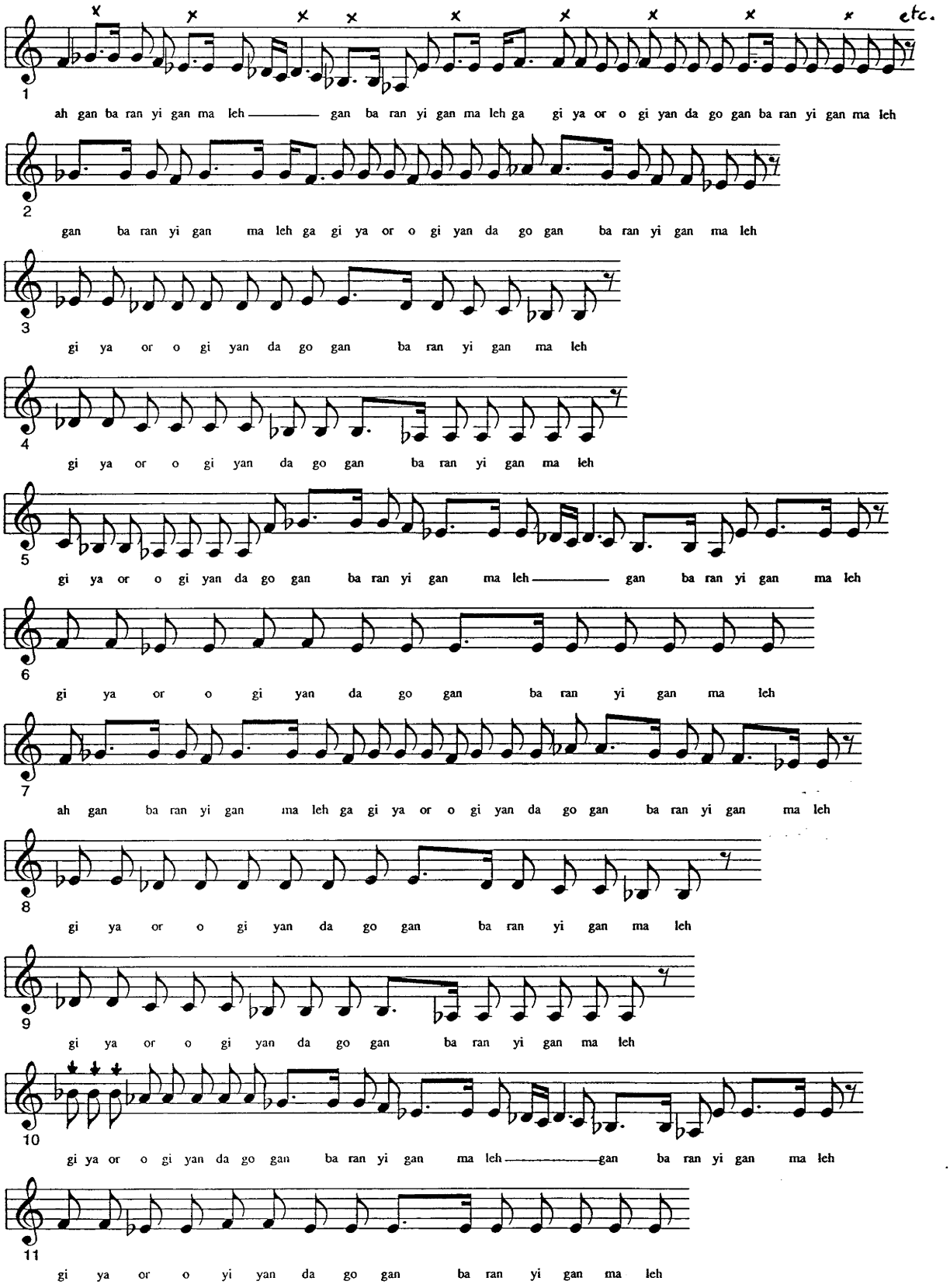


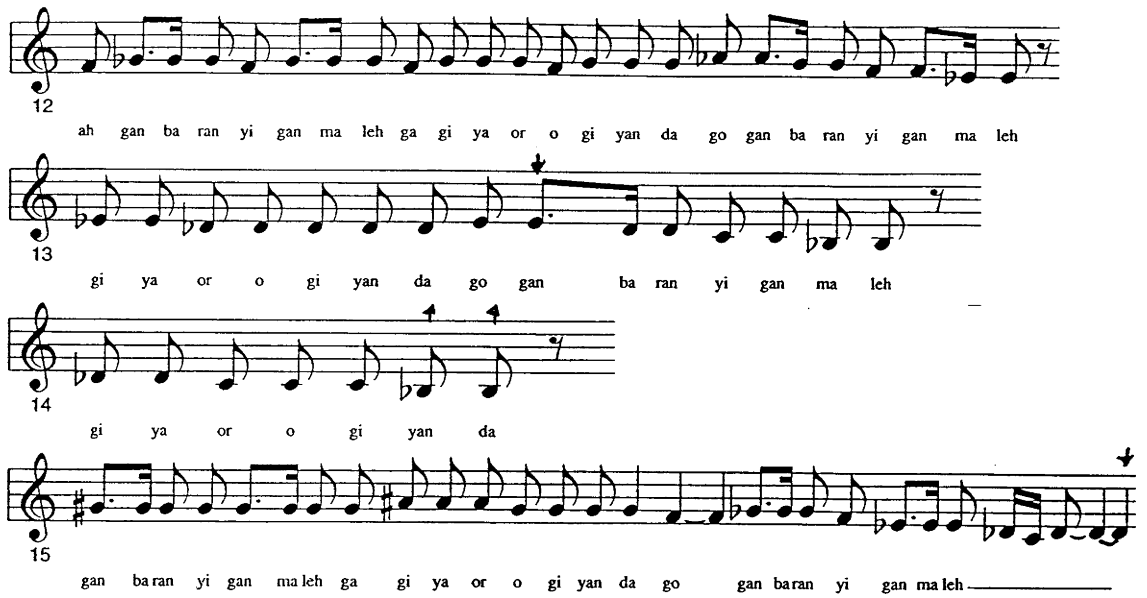
Gumbainggir Song with Swear Words

Calley gives no further information.

Juwa LA1178

MM = 52 = ♩





Juwa

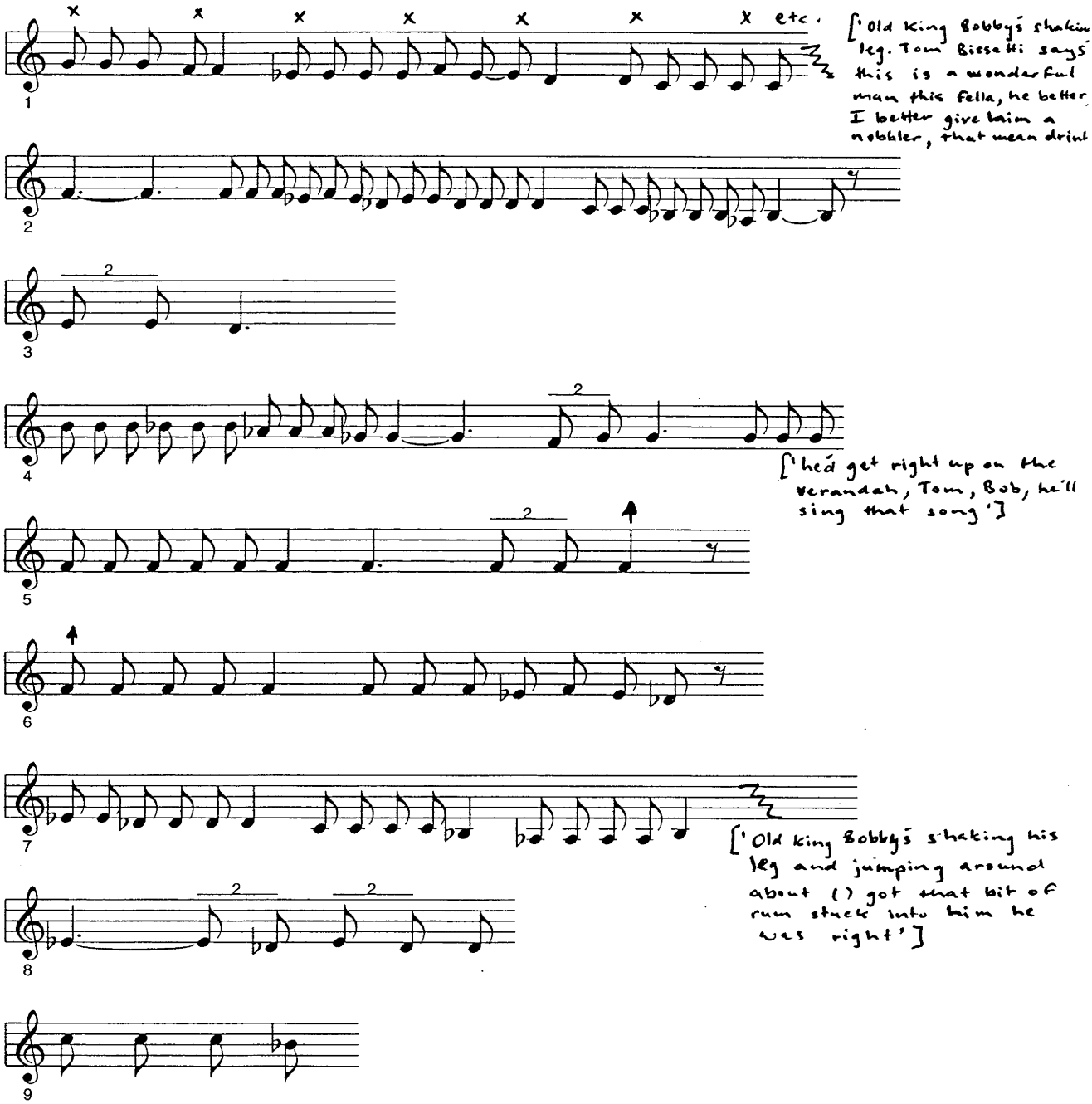
Calley describes this as 'a corroboree proper, a group dance, in the Bundjalung language' (LA1178).

See also Barara Abanji.

Text in Gummow (1992), Text 3, transcribed by Linda Barwick.

King Bobby's Song to Tom Bissetti LA4744

MM = 92 = ♩.

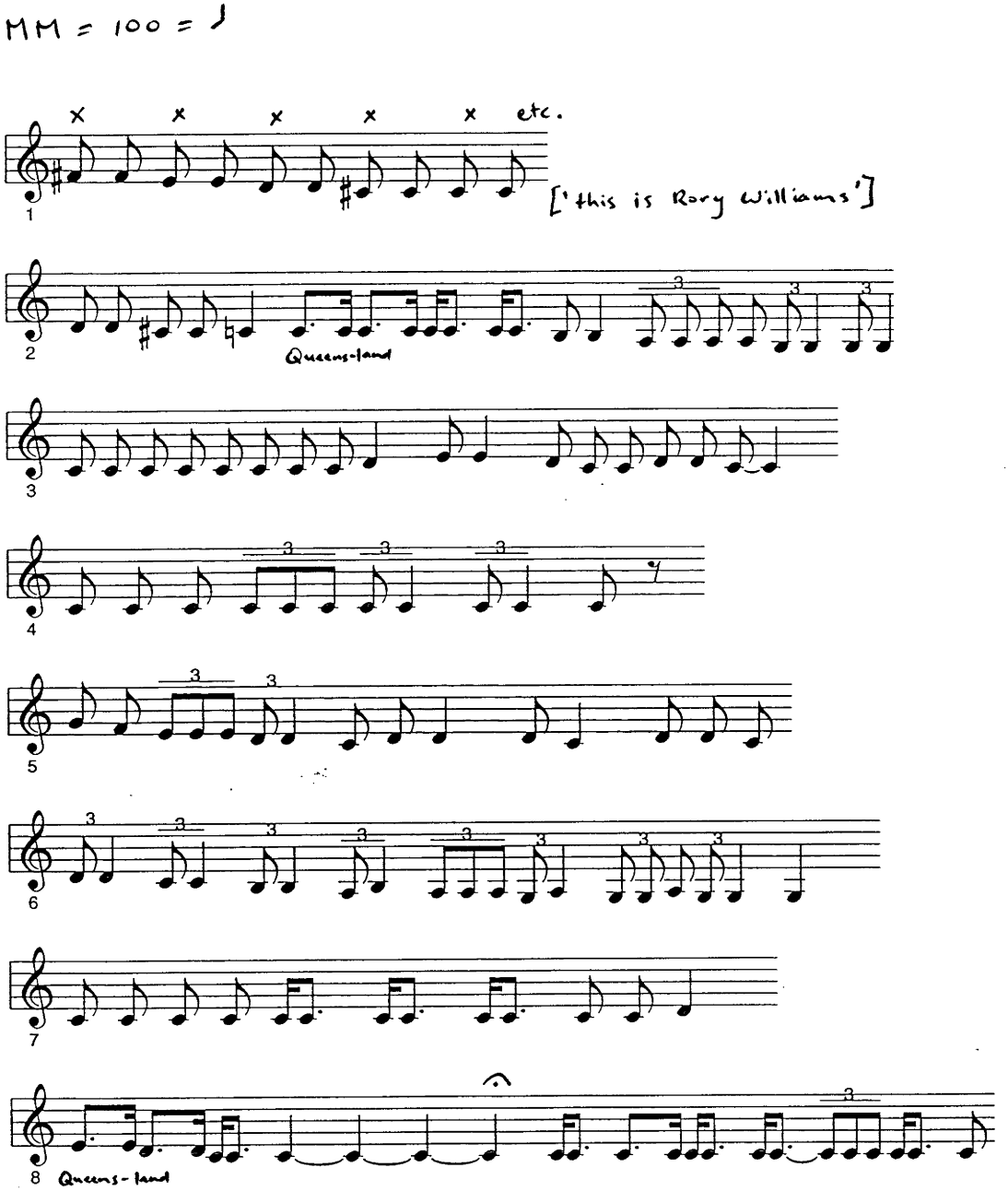


King Bobby's Song to Tom Bissetti

King Bobby was a stockman for Ogilvie, the first white man to take up land at Yugalbar. Ogilvie ran sheep, and used the local Aboriginals as labour (LA4744). Bobby became friends with Tom Bissetti, the publican at Lionsville, and would 'spin good yawahr (corroboree) song' to him (LA3392). Eventually, Bobby and his people moved to Lionsville from Yugalbar, and set up camp around the pub. Ogilvie was not pleased that all his workers and head stockman had moved away. Bissetti was very impressed by Bobby, and learnt to sing this song himself (LA4744). He 'used to sing that song beautifully, just like King Bobby used to sing it' (LA3392).

See also Old Mrs Bissetti and Mr Ogilvie.

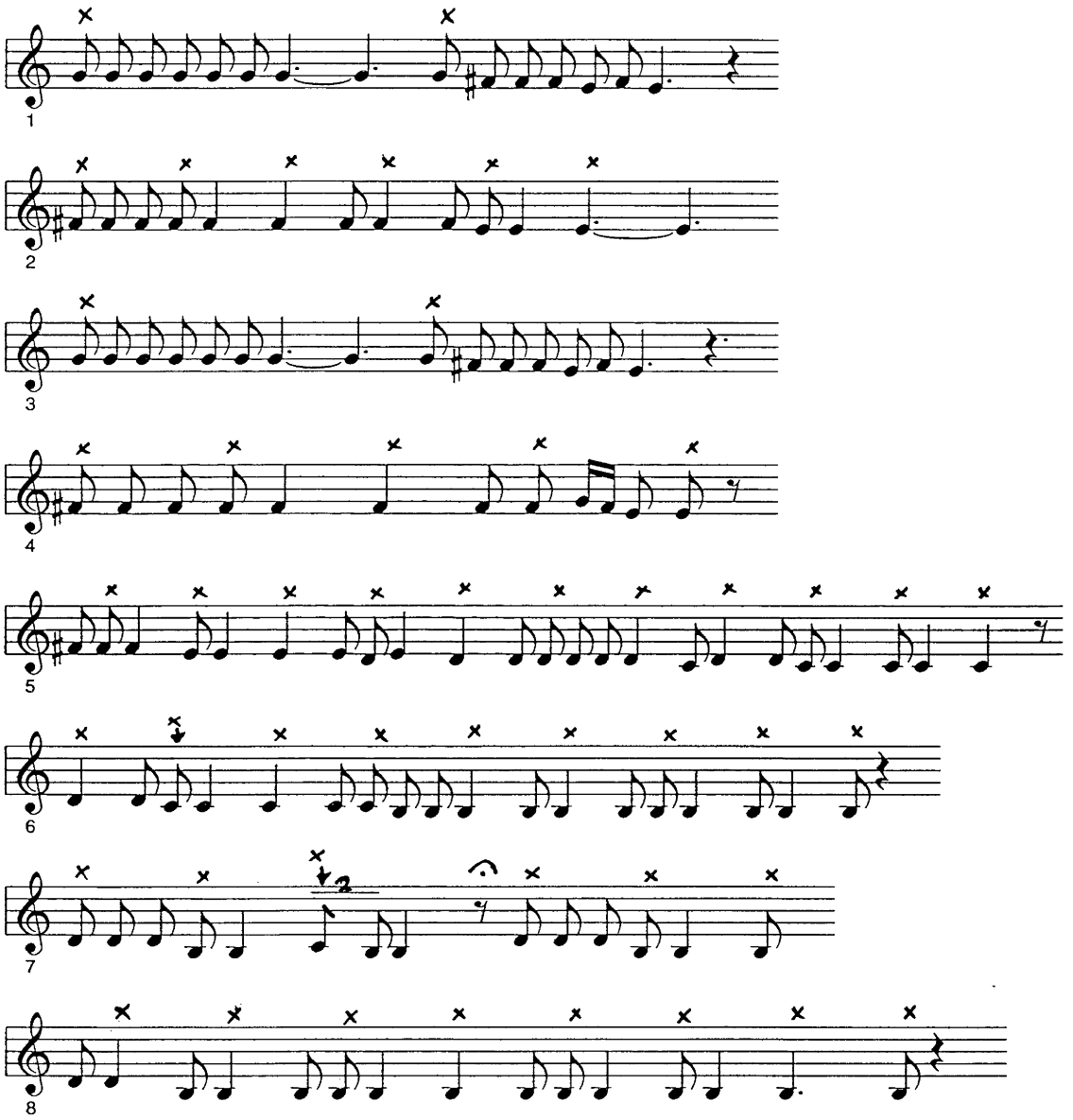
Leaving Sydney LA2141



Leaving Sydney

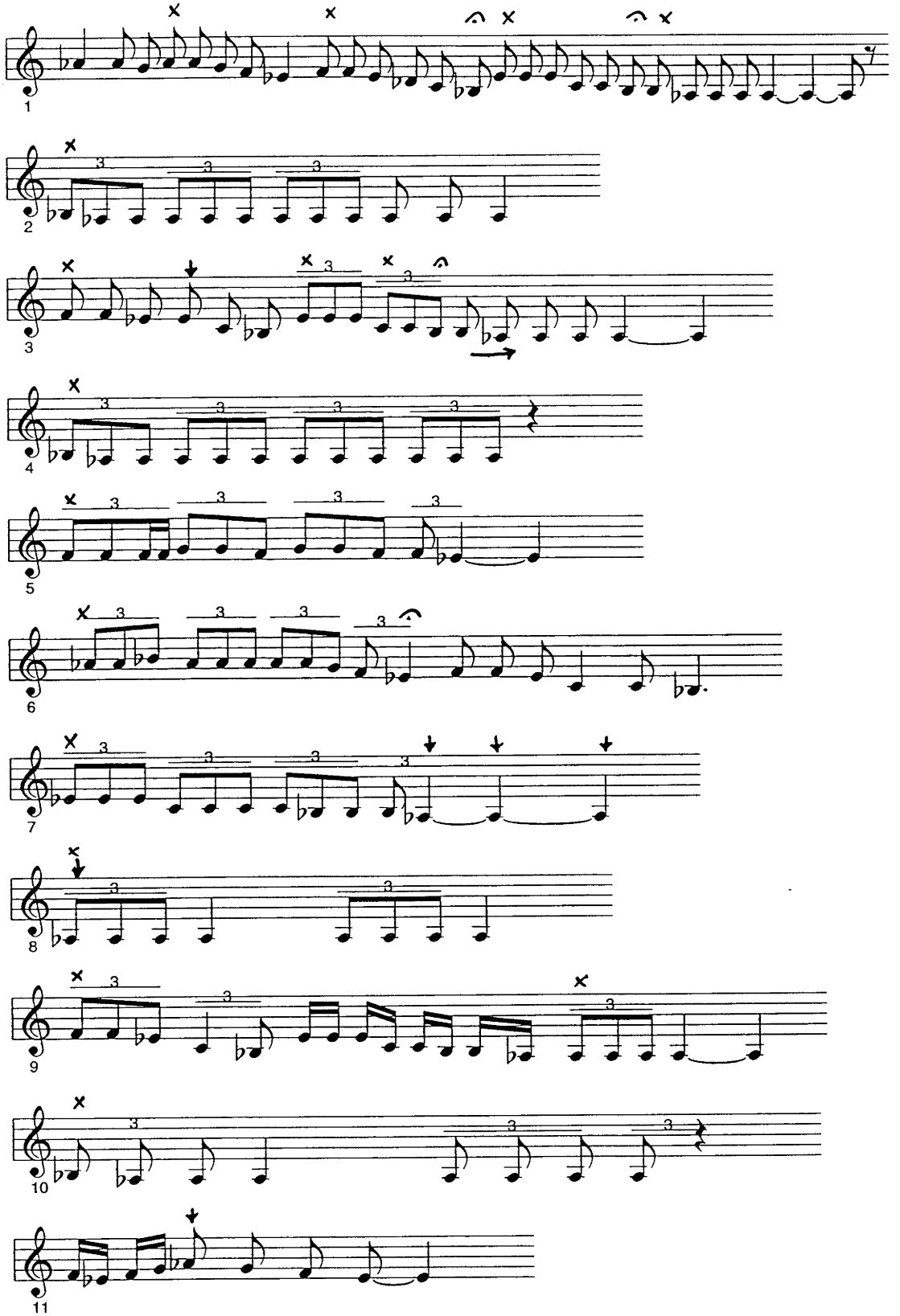
Rory Williams made this song while he was in Sydney, feeling lonely. He won 800 pounds in the Stawell Gift and decided to go home. 'I'm going to leave this place now, go home to Queensland' (LA2141).

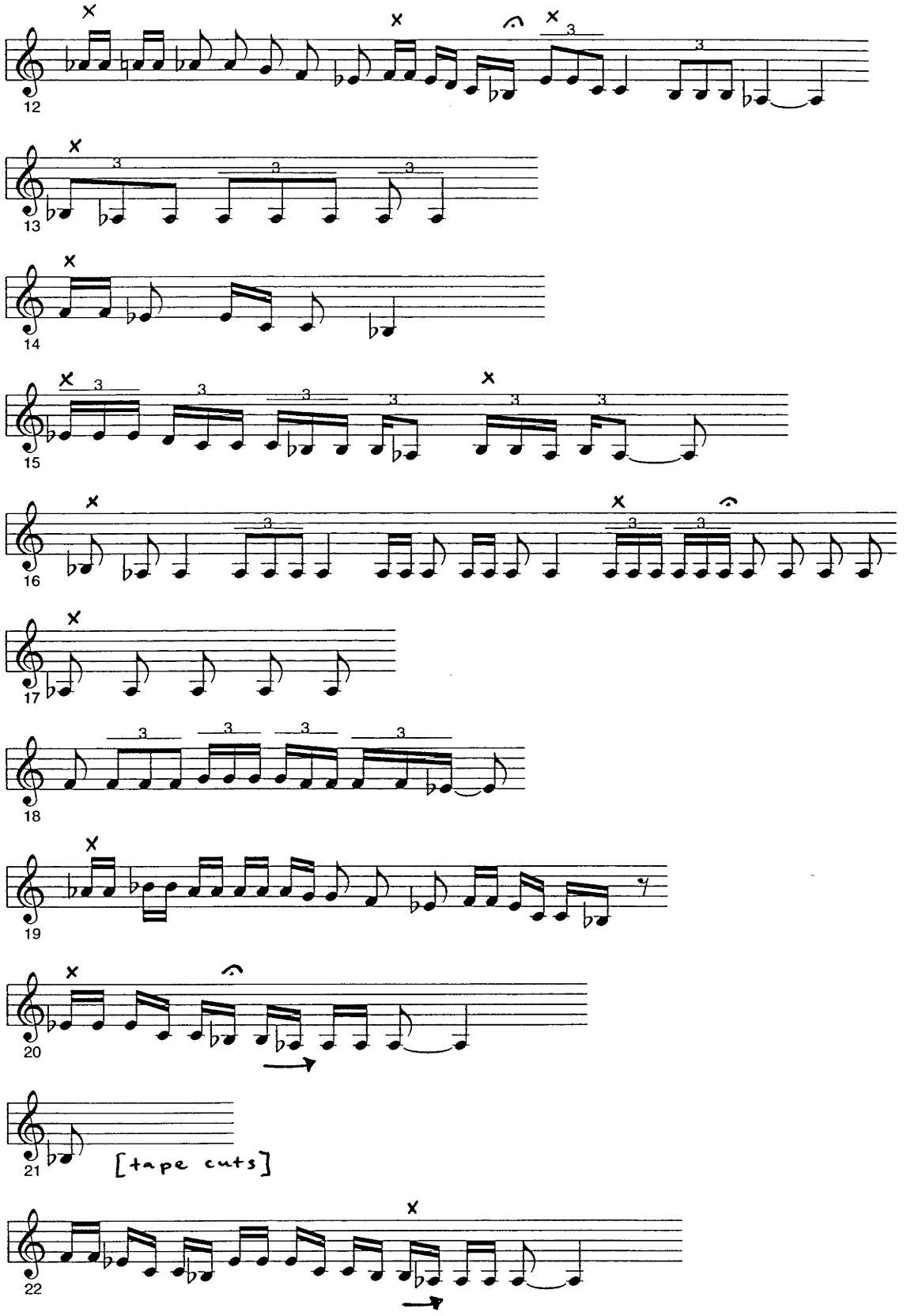
MM = 104 = ♩.

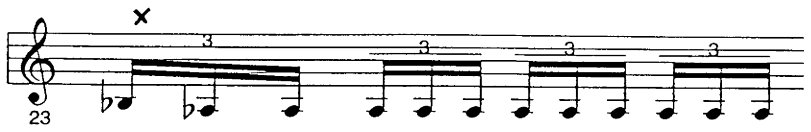


Long Johnny's Song

Long Johnny made this song (LA2141).




12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
[tape cuts]
22

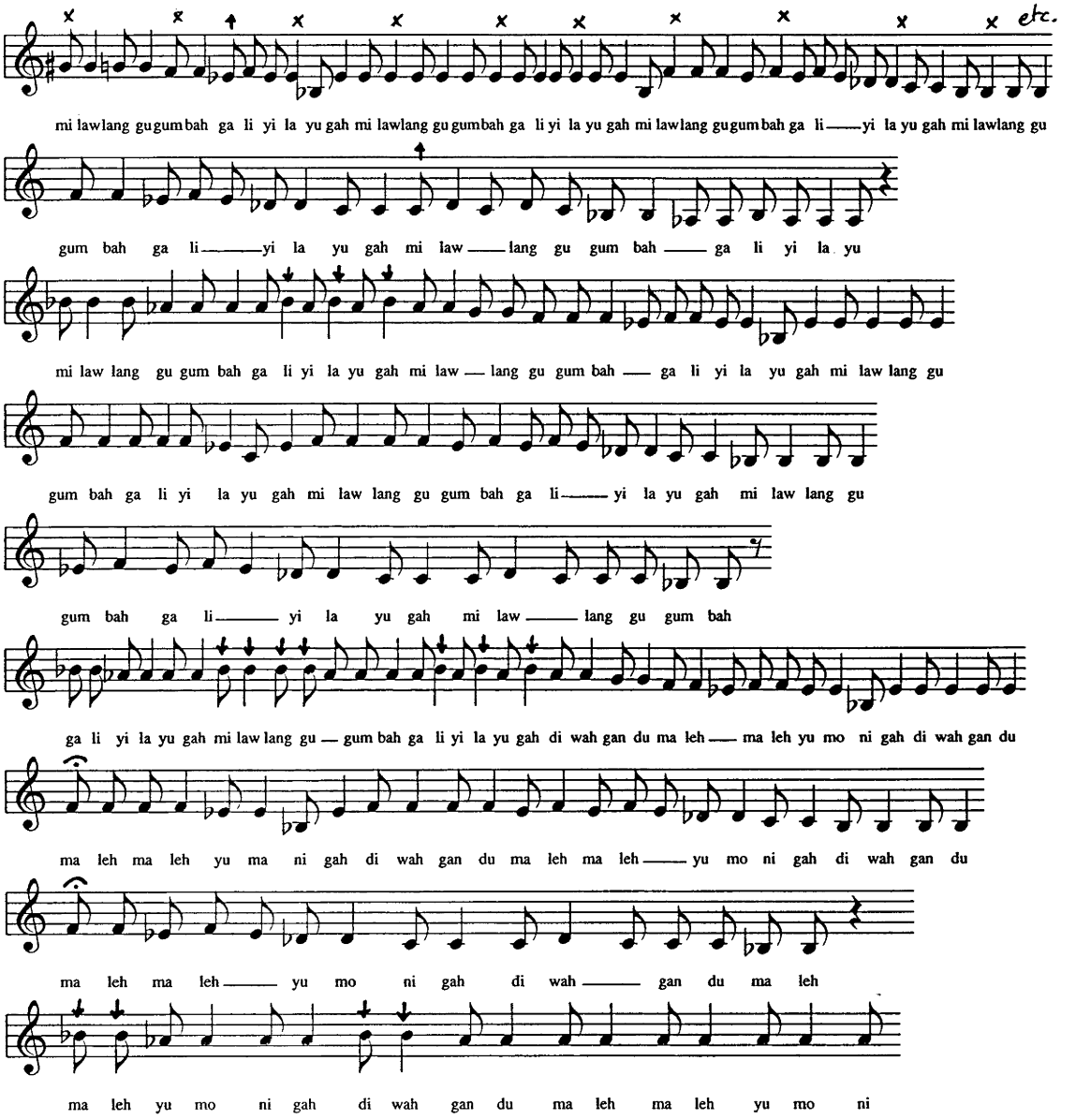


Lost Man

Calley: 'Noel Cavanaugh went to visit his son-in-law, Harry (), outstation manager at 14 mile. On the way back he went off his head and took to the bush. His son-in-law offered 30 pound reward to the man who found him dead or alive. Billy Nichol, though half blind, found him but refused the reward. He composed the following song to commemorate the incident' (LA1178).

See also Blind Man's Song.

MM = 52 = ♩. ♩.

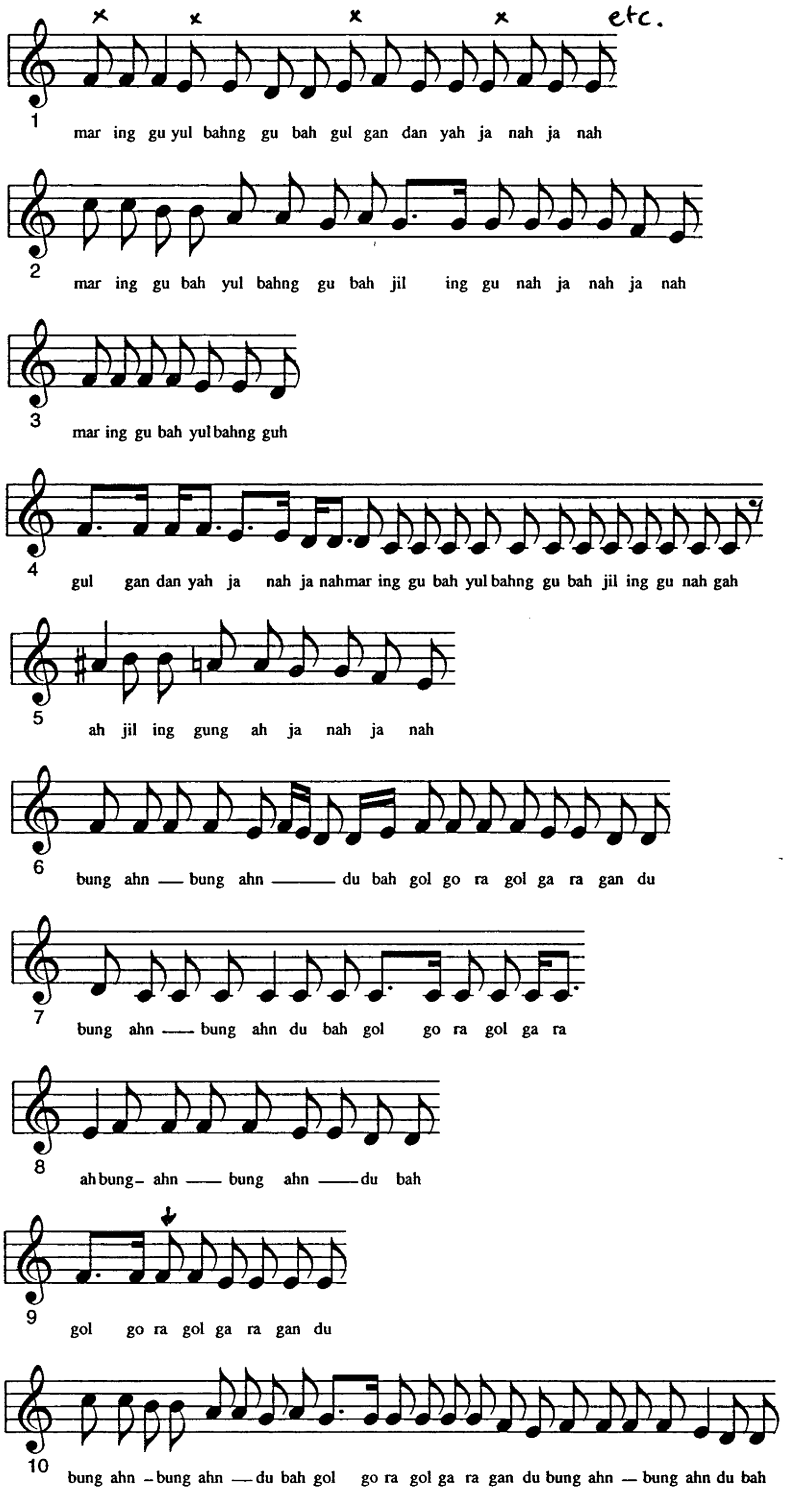

etc.
mi lawlang gugumbah ga li yi la yu gah mi lawlang gu gumbah ga li yi la yu gah mi lawlang gugumbah ga li——yi la yu gah mi lawlang gu
gum bah ga li——yi la yu gah mi law——lang gu gum bah——ga li yi la yu
mi law lang gu gum bah ga li yi la yu gah mi law—lang gu gum bah—ga li yi la yu gah mi law lang gu
gum bah ga li yi la yu gah mi law lang gu gum bah ga li——yi la yu gah mi law lang gu
gum bah ga li——yi la yu gah mi law——lang gu gum bah
ga li yi la yu gah mi law lang gu—gum bah ga li yi la yu gah di wah gan du ma leh—ma leh yu mo ni gah di wah gan du
ma leh ma leh yu ma ni gah di wah gan du ma leh ma leh——yu mo ni gah di wah gan du
ma leh ma leh——yu mo ni gah di wah——gan du ma leh
ma leh yu mo ni gah di wah gan du ma leh ma leh yu mo ni

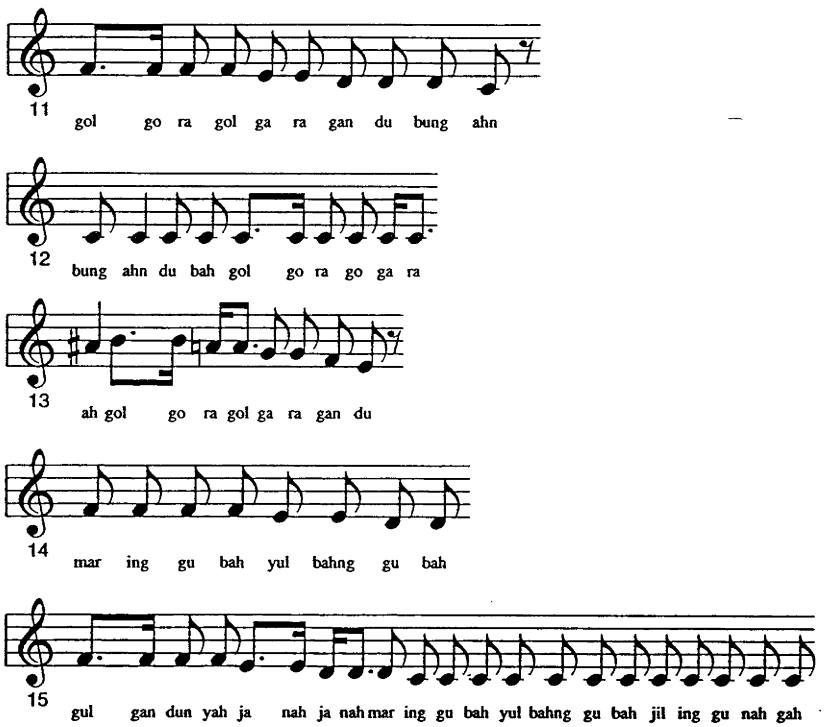
Lullaby

Donnelly would sing this lullaby to his children when they were babies. 'Many the time I walk round the fire nursing my baby singing this song' (LA1957). Donnelly learnt the song from his mother. Meaning of words not known (LA1220).

Maringgu LA2141

MM = 52 = ♩ ♪





Maringgu

Donnelly says this is a Gungari song on LA3392, but on LA1177 and LA1219 he says it is a Gamileroi song . It comes from the same place as Mundala (LA1219). The meaning of the words is not known (LA3392).

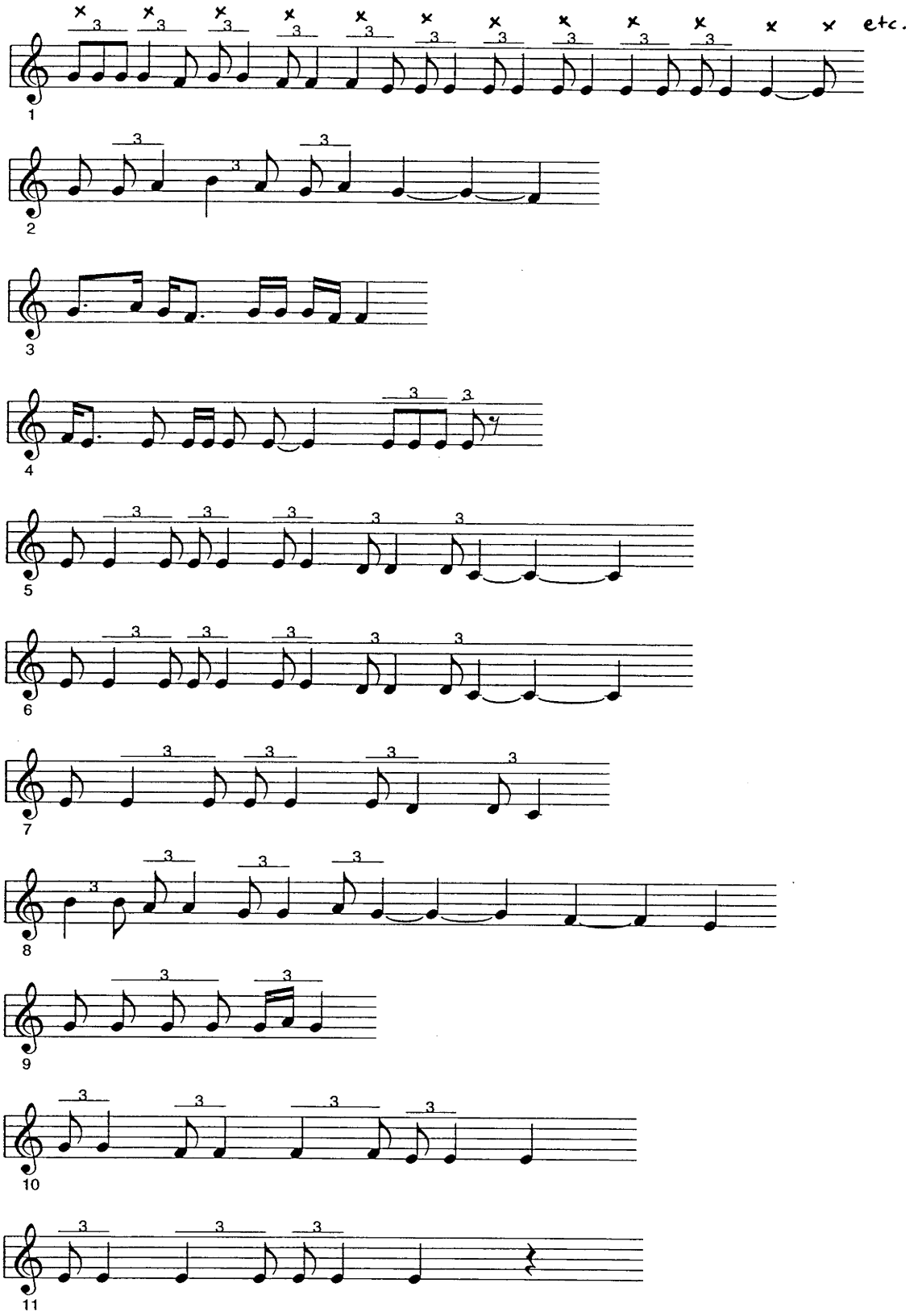
Donnelly describes Maringgu as a dance song (LA1219, LA1177) and a corroboree (LA1219). He danced it when he was a young man and says that it is a beautiful dance (LA1219).

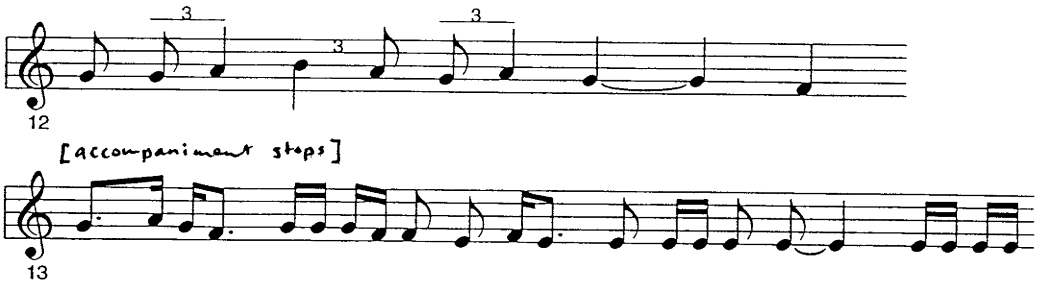
Mundala comes from the same area.

For further information and analysis see Gummow (1992: 200-220)

Text in Gummow (1992), Text 28, and Sharpe (1985a: 2 and 22).

MM = 100 = ♩.
No Accompaniment on last line





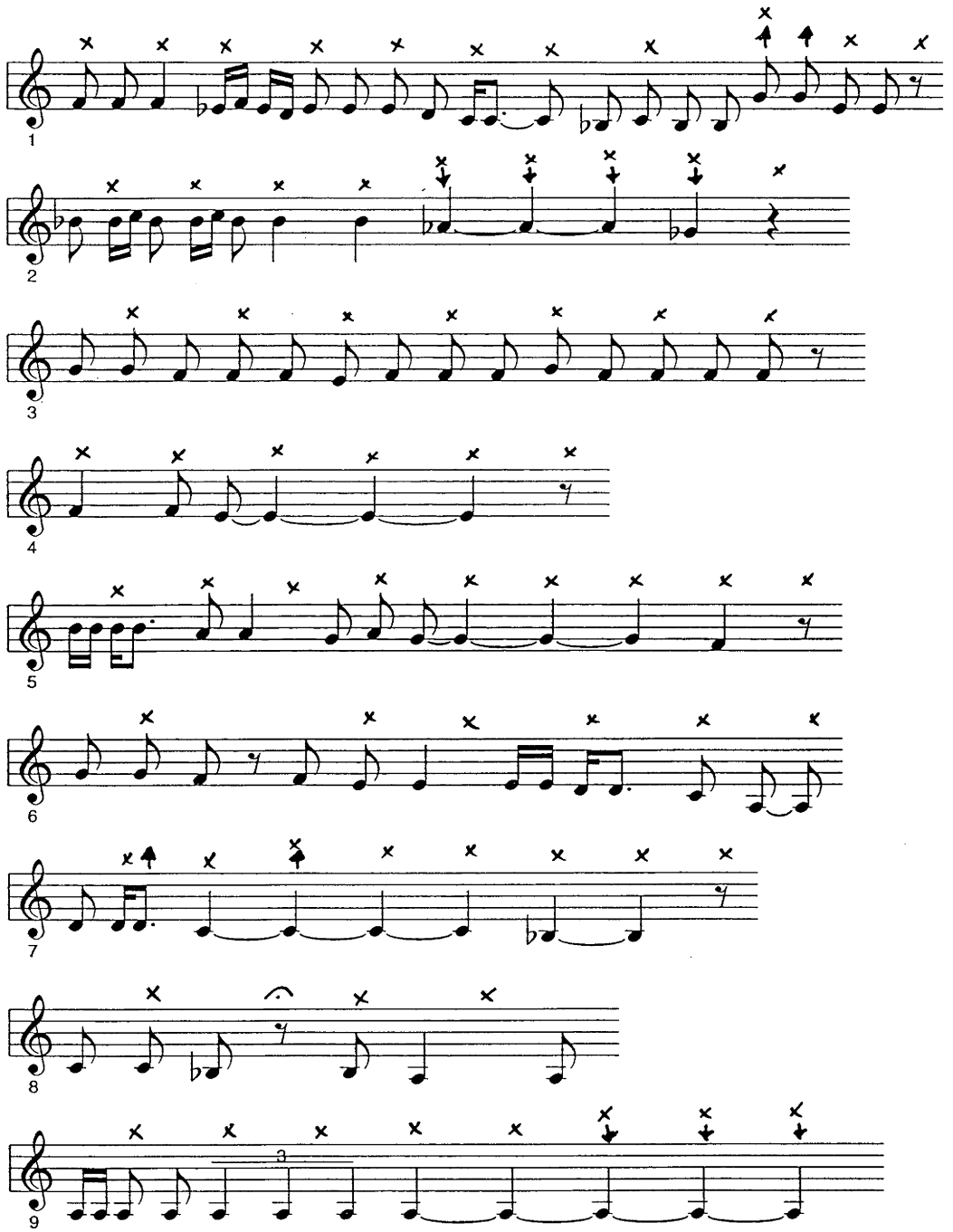
Mountains and Car

Raymond Duncan was in Grafton when he saw a motor car for the first time. Four mountains are named in this song, including Mt Barney, Edinburgh Castle and Mt Lindesay. Duncan saw the cars coming and going from these mountains (LA1220).

Another Bundjalung singer, Jim Morgan, says the song is about seeing Grafton after gas lighting was introduced. The lighting cables run to the mountains in the north and the west (Sharpe 1988).

Mourning Song LA2141

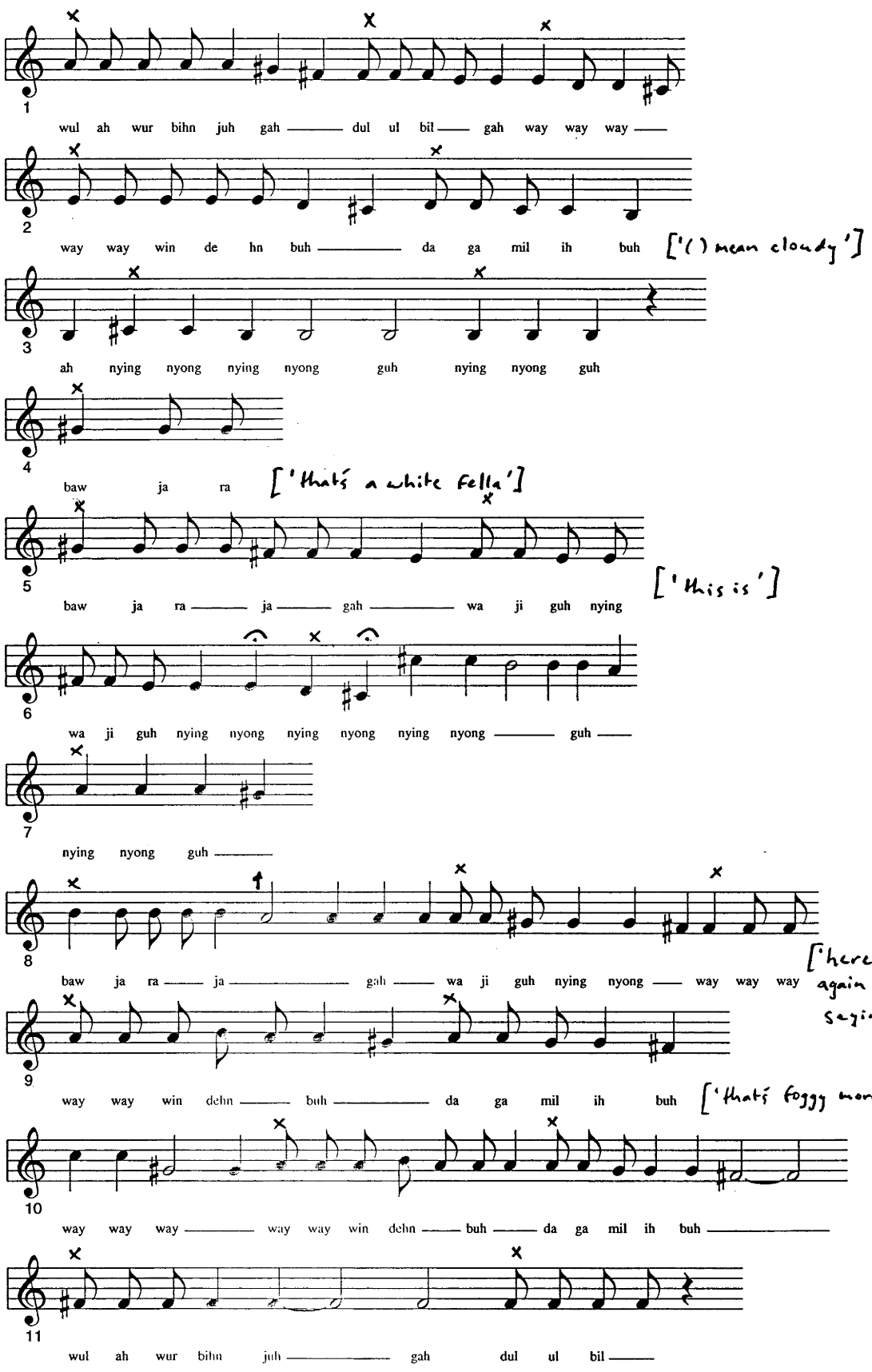
MM = 104 = ♩

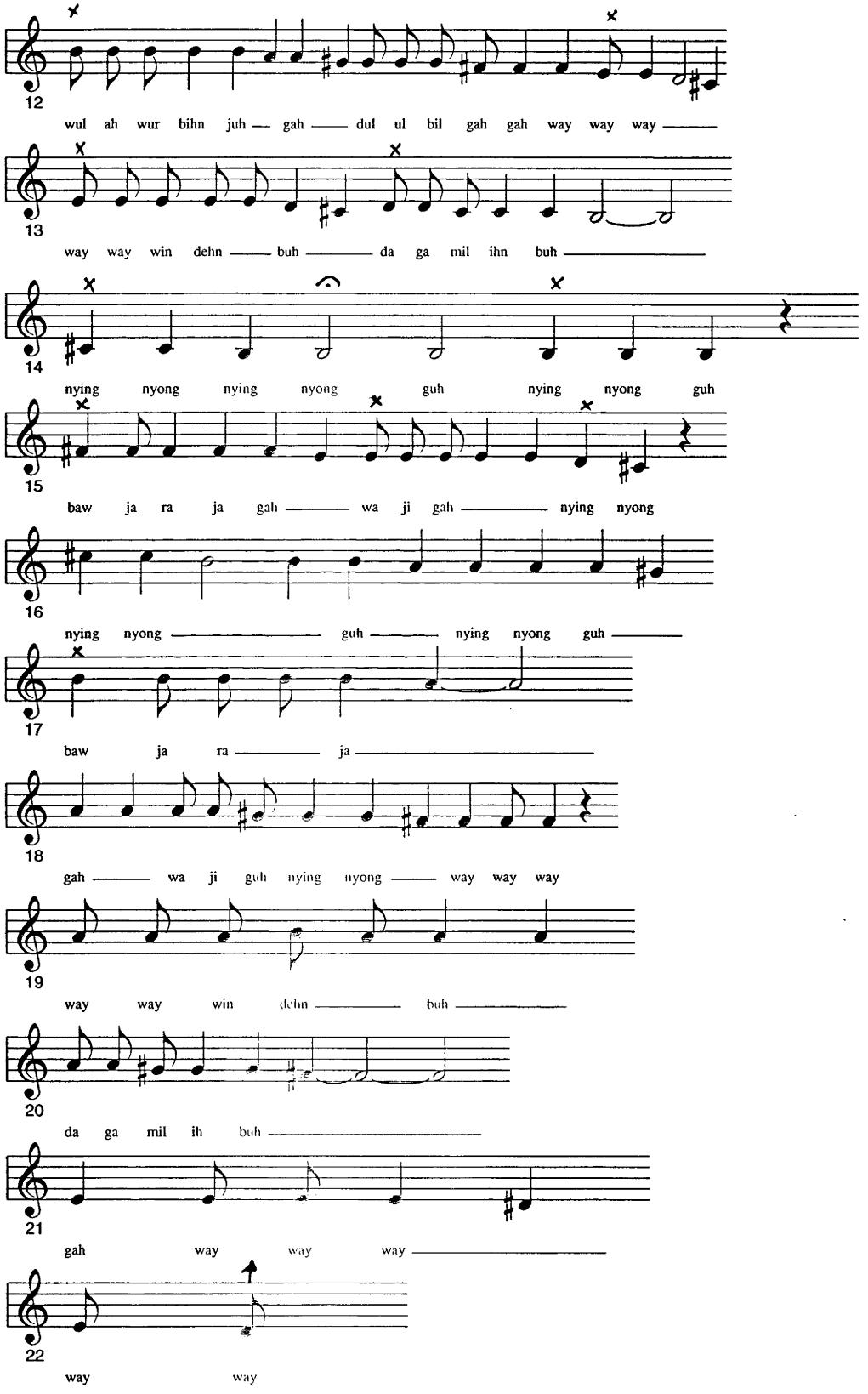


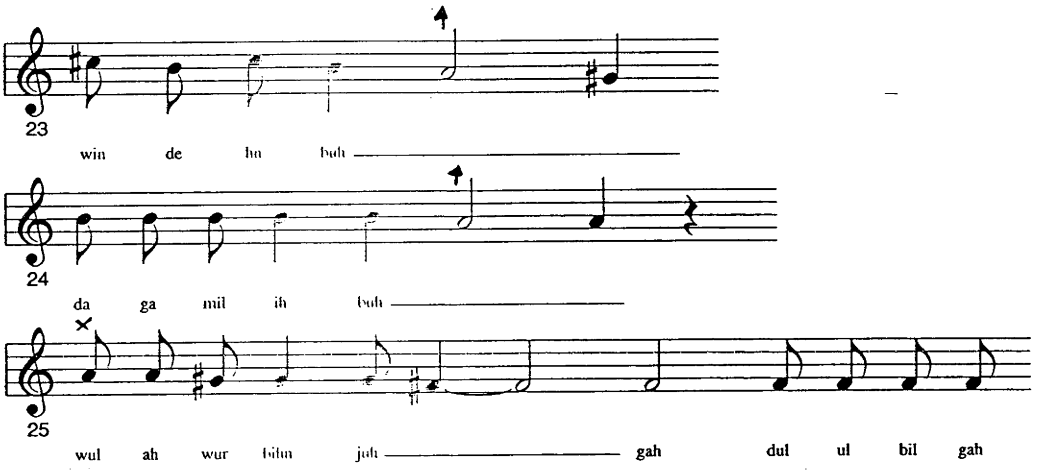
Mourning Song

Donnelly says this song would be sung when you were feeling sorry. 'Made you feel bad when you sing that' (LA2141).

MM = 56 = ♩♩


1
wul ah wur bihn juh gah dul ul bil gah way way way
2
way way win de hn buh da ga mil ih buh
['( ) mean cloudy']
3
ah nying nyong nying nyong guh nying nyong guh
4
baw ja ra
['that's a white fella']
5
baw ja ra ja gah wa ji guh nying
['this is']
6
wa ji guh nying nyong nying nyong nying nyong guh
7
nying nyong guh
8
baw ja ra ja gah wa ji guh nying nyong way way way
['here he come again they saying']
9
way way win dehn buh da ga mil ih buh
['that's foggy morning']
10
way way way way way win dehn buh da ga mil ih buh
11
wul ah wur bihn juh gah dul ul bil


12
wul ah wur bihn juh — gah — dul ul bil gah gah way way way —
13
way way win dehn — buh — da ga mil ihn buh —
14
nying nyong nying nyong guh nying nyong guh
15
baw ja ra ja gah — wa ji gah — nying nyong
16
nying nyong — guh — nying nyong guh —
17
baw ja ra — ja —
18
gah — wa ji guh nying nyong — way way way
19
way way win dehn — buh —
20
da ga mil ih buh —
21
gah way way way —
22
way way



Mr Ogilvie

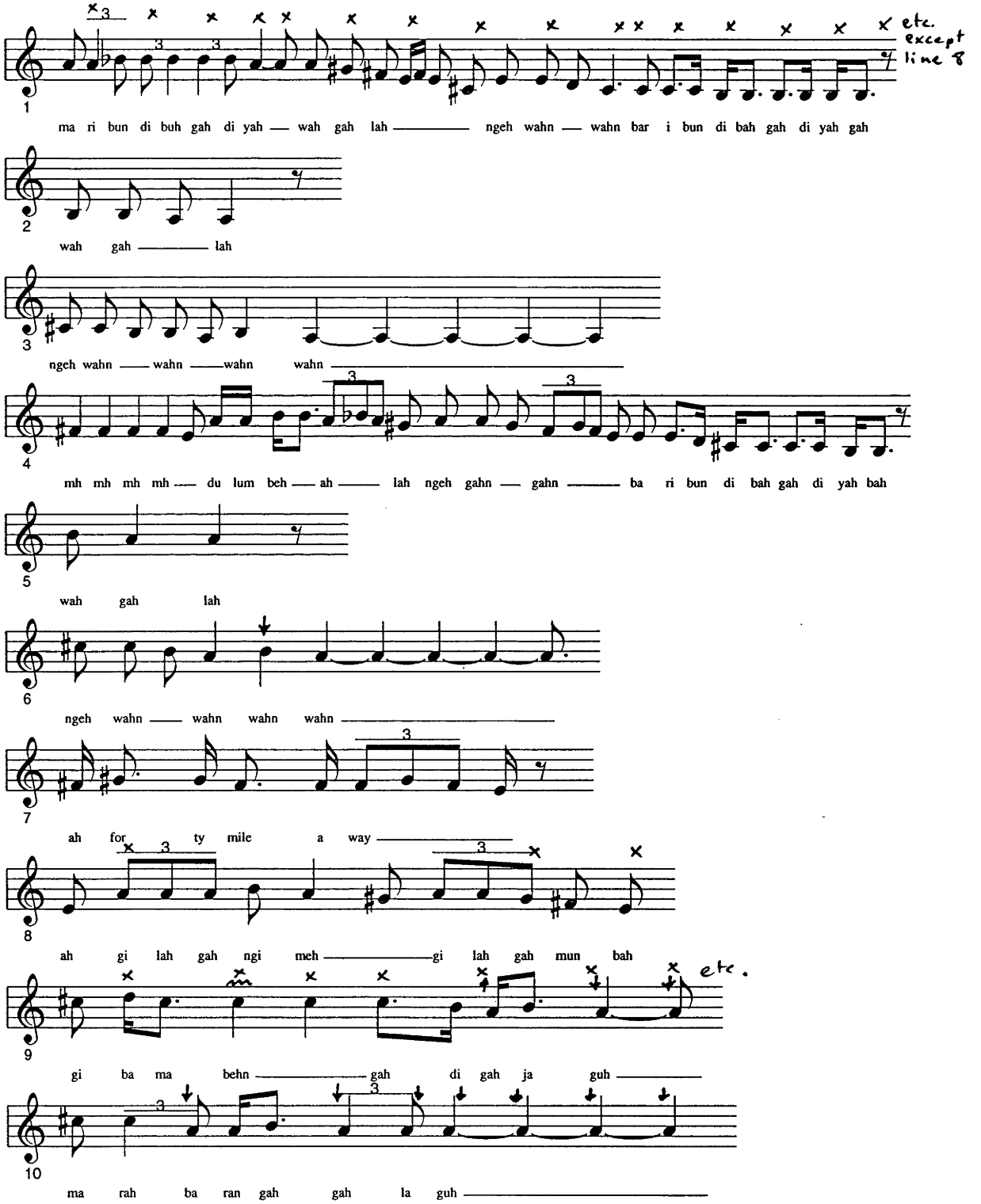
Mr Ogilvie was the first white man to take land at Yugalbar. The song describes an incident in which Ogilvie shot some Aborigines in retaliation for killing some of his sheep. King Bobby, one of the survivors, made the song. Donnelly says: 'Beautiful man this Ogilvie was to some people, but that what he done' (LA1219).

See also King Bobby's Song to Tom Bissetti and Old Mrs Bissetti.

Text in Gummow (1992), Text 61, transcribed by Sharpe (1985a: 23) and Gummow.

Mt Lindesay LA1220

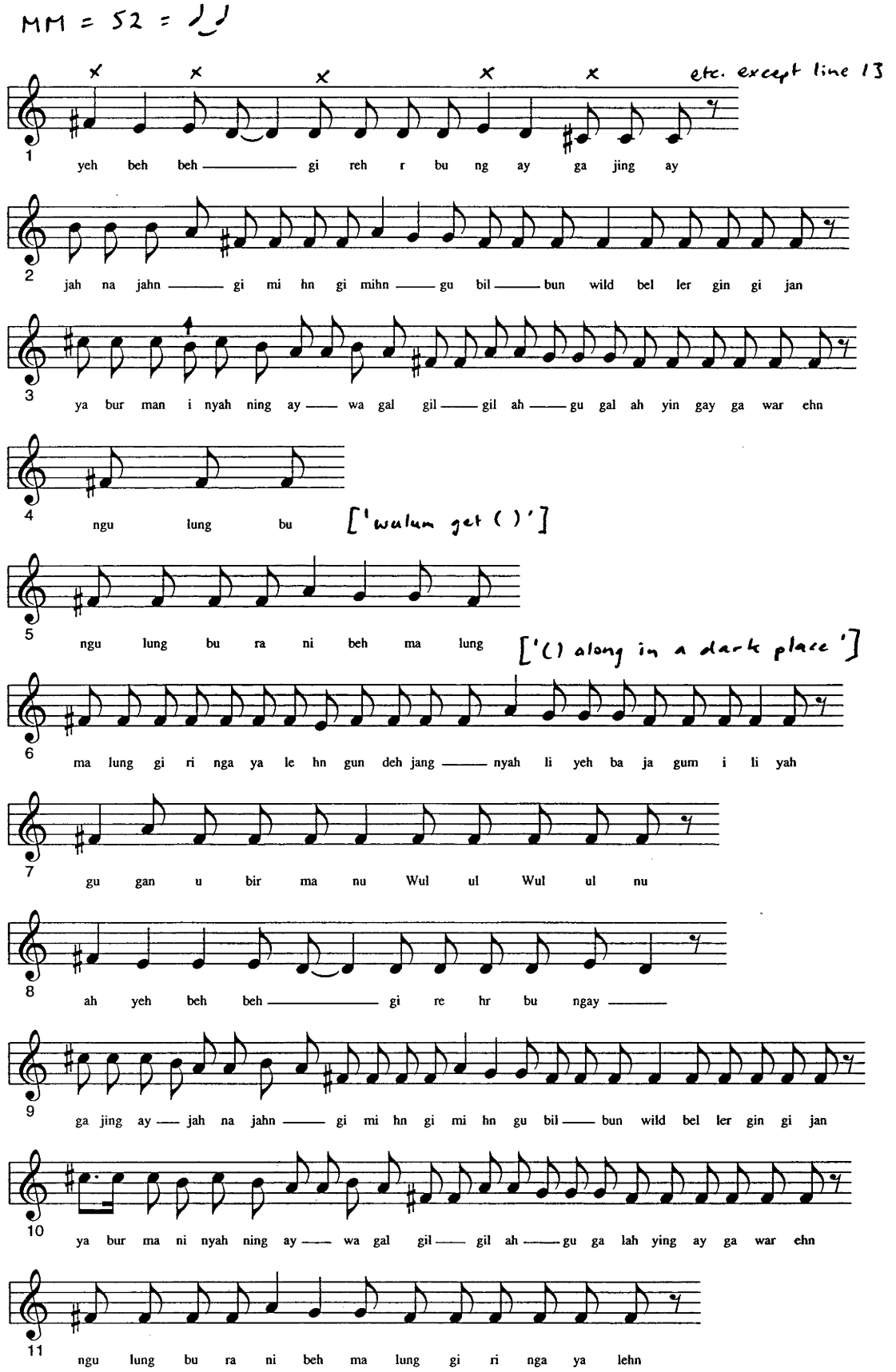
HM = 104 = ♩

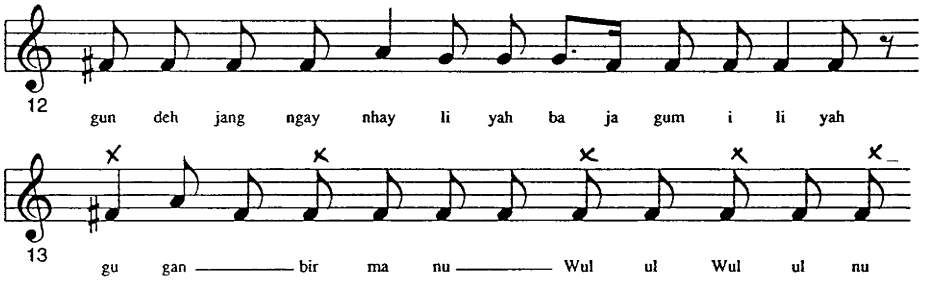


Mt Lindesay

Alec Bond took a mob of bullocks to Queensland. He got some distance away and looking back, started to feel lonely. Mt Barney is also mentioned in the song. (LA1219)

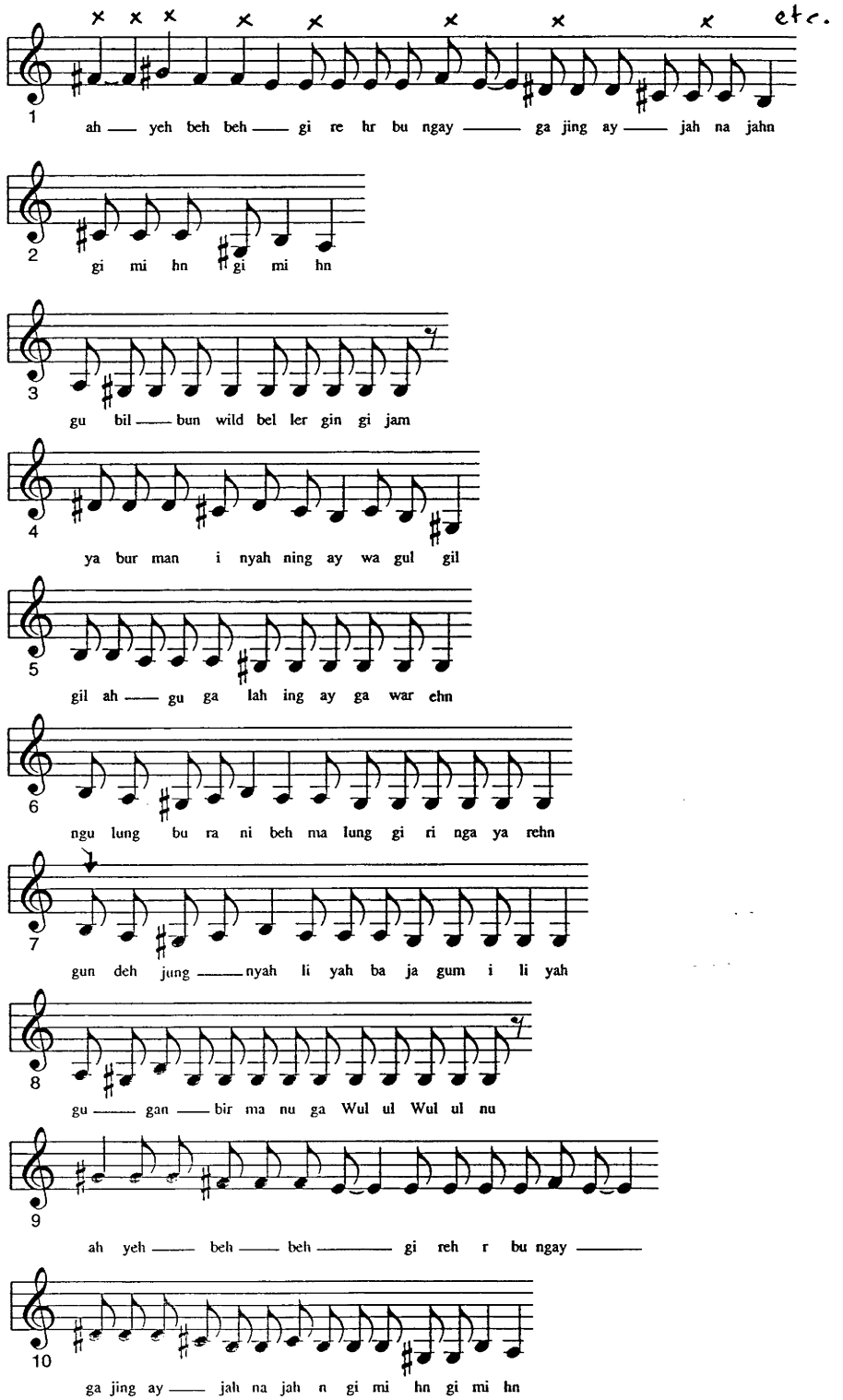
Mt Wellington Lookout LA3392

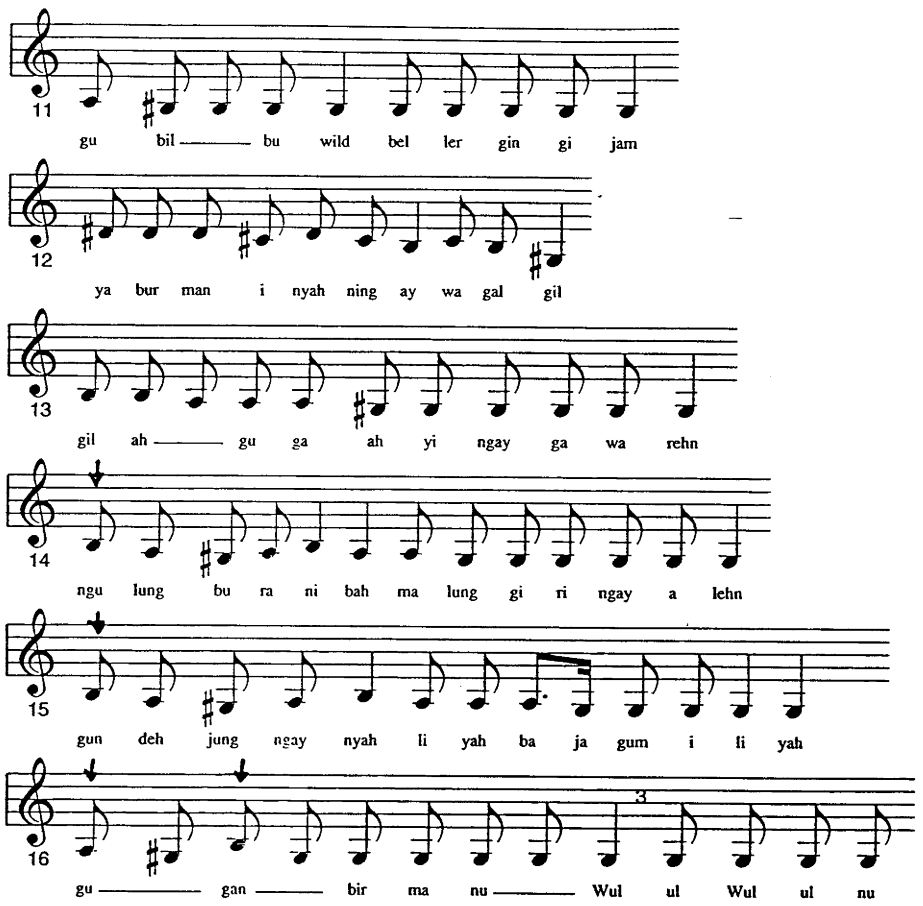



12
gun deh jang ngay nhay li yah ba ja gum i li yah
13
gu gan bir ma nu Wul ul Wul ul nu

Mt Wellington Lookout LA2141

MM = 52 = ♩♩





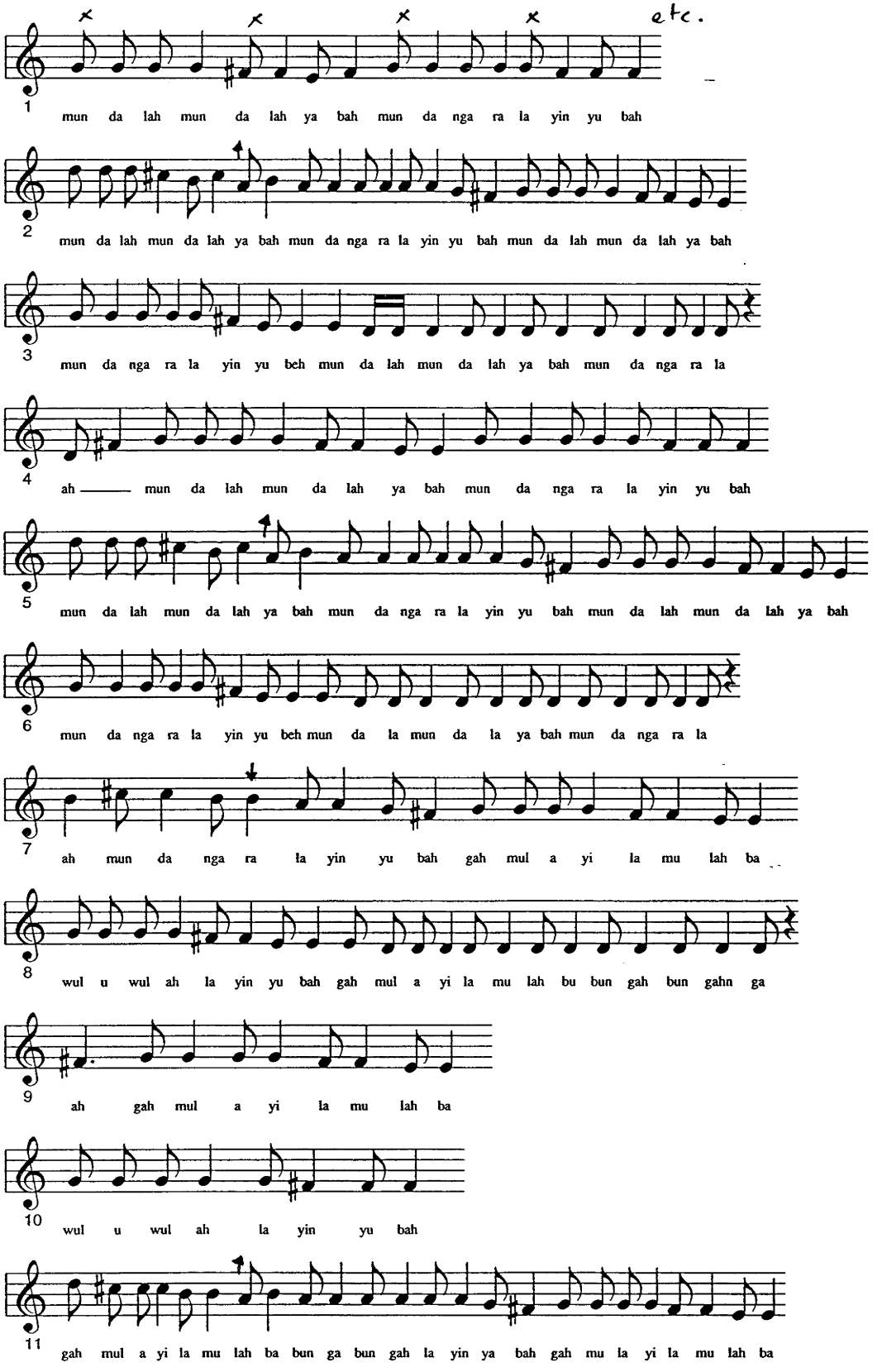
Mt Wellington Lookout

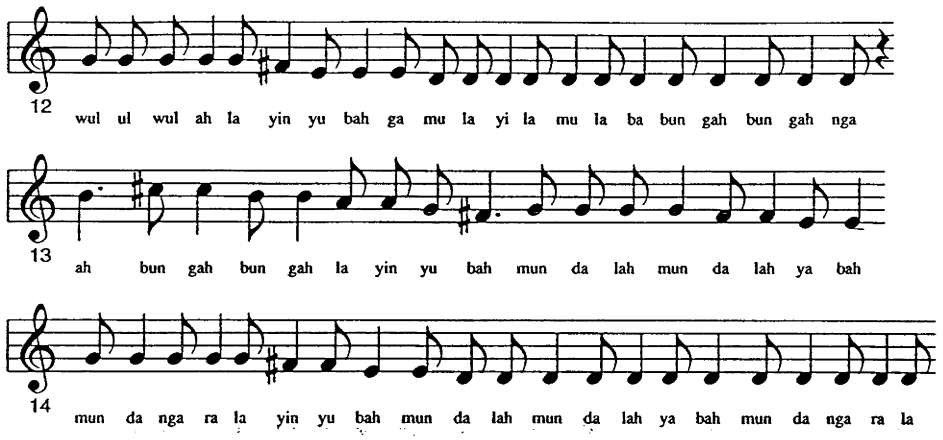
Made by Jimmy Biggle, this song is about Donnelly's father's djurbil, or holy place (LA3392). The djurbil is a big granite rock balancing on top of another rock. The Aboriginal word for Mt Wellington Lookout is Wulul Wululnu (LA1957).

Text in Gummow (1992), Text 10, transcribed by Geytenbeek (1973: 85).

Mundala LA2141

MM = 52 = ♩. ♩.





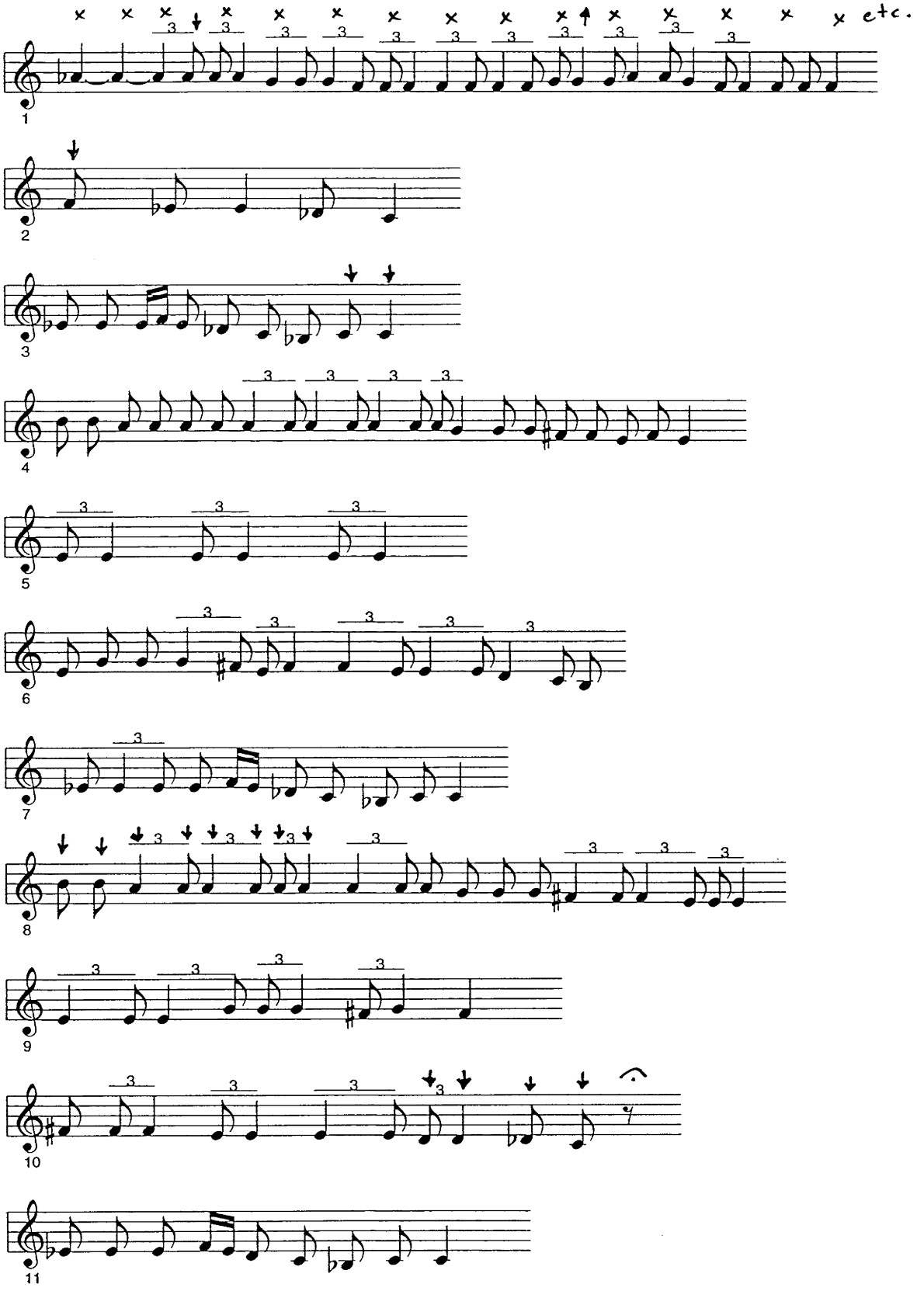
Mundala

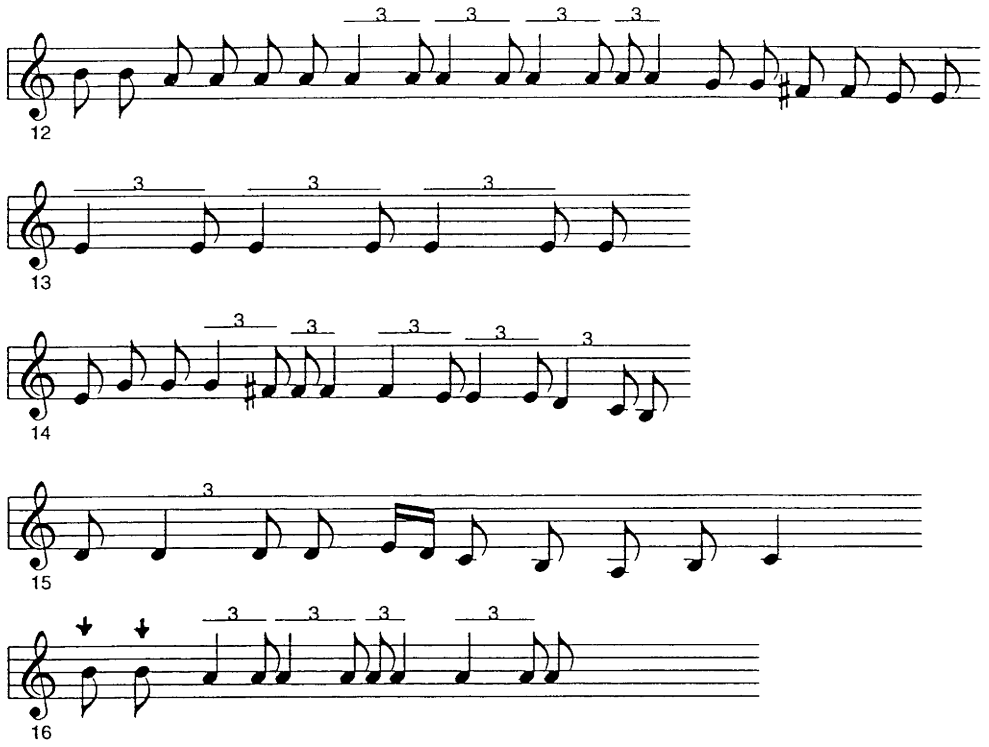
On LA3392 and LA4745 Donnelly identifies this as a Gungari song. He says it is a Gamileroi song on LA1176 and LA1219. It was brought into the area by a woman named Bessie (LA4745). Calley refers to this woman as Bessie Comet (LA1178). Mundala is a dance song and a corroboree song. Women, men and children would dance, and would listen to the song and watch the leader to know when to change step. Donnelly danced in this corroboree, and says it is a beautiful dance (LA1176).

Maringgu comes from the same area.
See Gummow (1992: 200-220) for further information and analysis.

Text in Gummow (1992), Text 5, also Geytenbeek (1973: 84) and Sharpe (1985a: 21).

MM = 104 = ♩





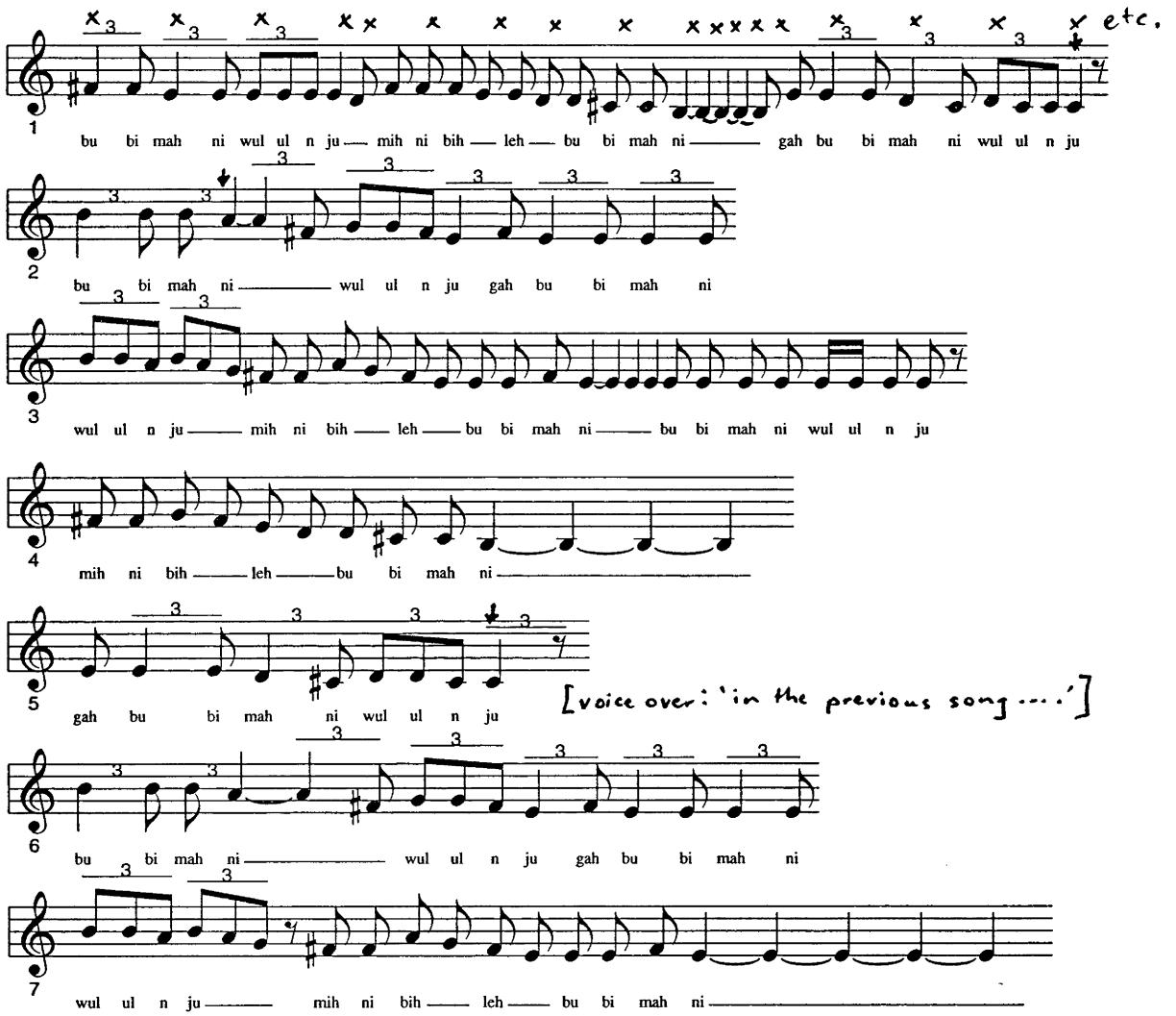
Old Mrs Bissetti

Tom Bissetti built a pub at Lionsville during the goldrush. King Bobby became good friends with Bissetti, who would give him free drinks. One day when Bobby went to the pub, Mrs Bissetti, Tom's wife, came out and told him to go away, as he wasn't going to get any more free drinks. King Bobby went back to the camp and thought to himself 'well she done me harm, I'm going to sing her now, I'm going to sing old Mrs Bissetti' (LA4744). Mrs Bissetti is run down in the song (LA1957).

See also Mr Ogilvie and King Bobby's Song to Tom Bissetti.

Pigeon Call on One Note LA1178

MM = 104 = ♩

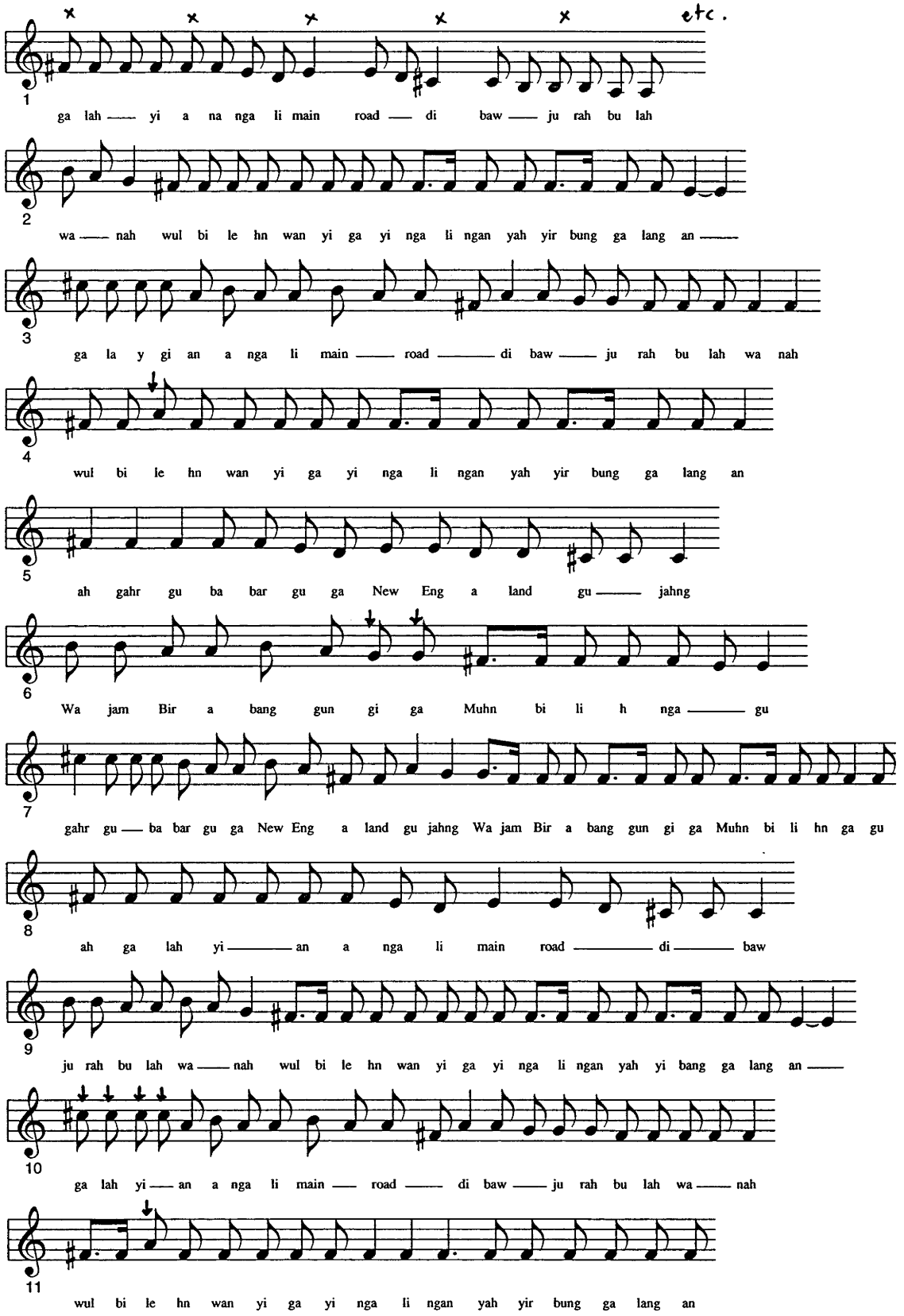


Pigeon Call on One Note

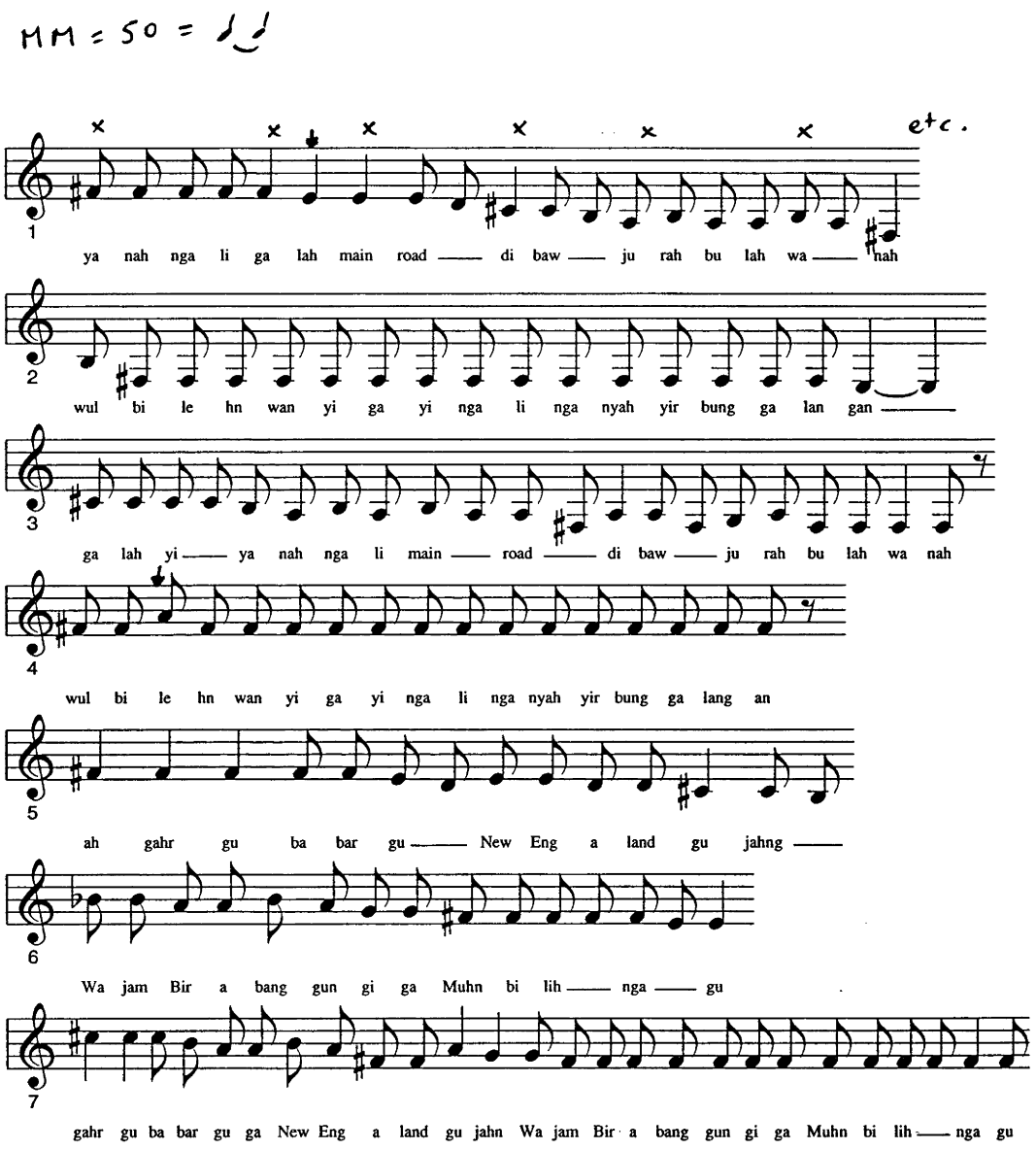
Calley: 'This song was sung by the women around the campfires while the young men were away in the bush undergoing the tests associated with the Kibura degree of initiation. Wululun is the wonja pigeon. "Boybimonyi" means getting sick of it. In the spring, the wonja pigeon calls incessantly on one note and the song refers to the monotony of its call. Minibaloi is the name of a place' (LA1178).

Other Bundjalung singers who know this song give it several other quite different interpretations. See Gummow (1992) for further details.

MM = 52 = ♩ ♩


etc.
1
ga lah — yi a na nga li main road — di baw — ju rah bu lah
2
wa — nah wul bi le hn wan yi ga yi nga li ngan yah yir bung ga lang an —
3
ga la y gi an a nga li main — road — di baw — ju rah bu lah wa nah
4
wul bi le hn wan yi ga yi nga li ngan yah yir bung ga lang an
5
ah gahr gu ba bar gu ga New Eng a land gu — jahng
6
Wa jam Bir a bang gun gi ga Muhn bi li h nga — gu
7
gahr gu — ba bar gu ga New Eng a land gu jahng Wa jam Bir a bang gun gi ga Muhn bi li hn ga gu
8
ah ga lah yi — an a nga li main road — di — baw
9
ju rah bu lah wa — nah wul bi le hn wan yi ga yi nga li ngan yah yi bang ga lang an —
10
ga lah yi — an a nga li main — road — di baw — ju rah bu lah wa — nah
11
wul bi le hn wan yi ga yi nga li ngan yah yir bung ga lang an

Quail and Flying Squirrel LA1178



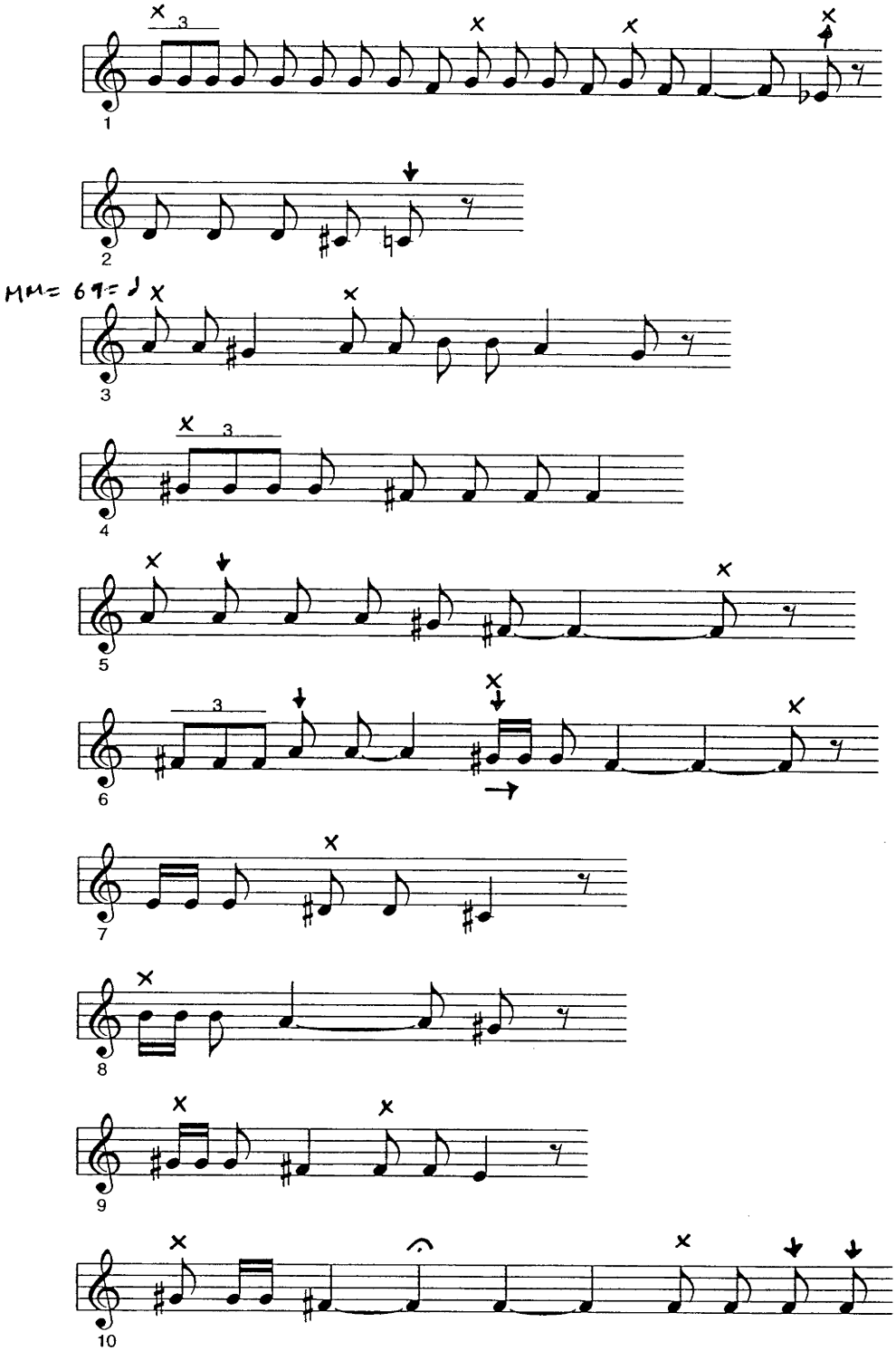
Quail and Flying Squirrel

Jimmy Biggle made this song about a place between Armidale and Tamworth where there are lots of black quail and flying squirrels (LA4744).

Text in Gummow (1992), Text 13, also Geytenbeek (1973: 84).

Quiet Place LA2141

MM = 88 = ♩

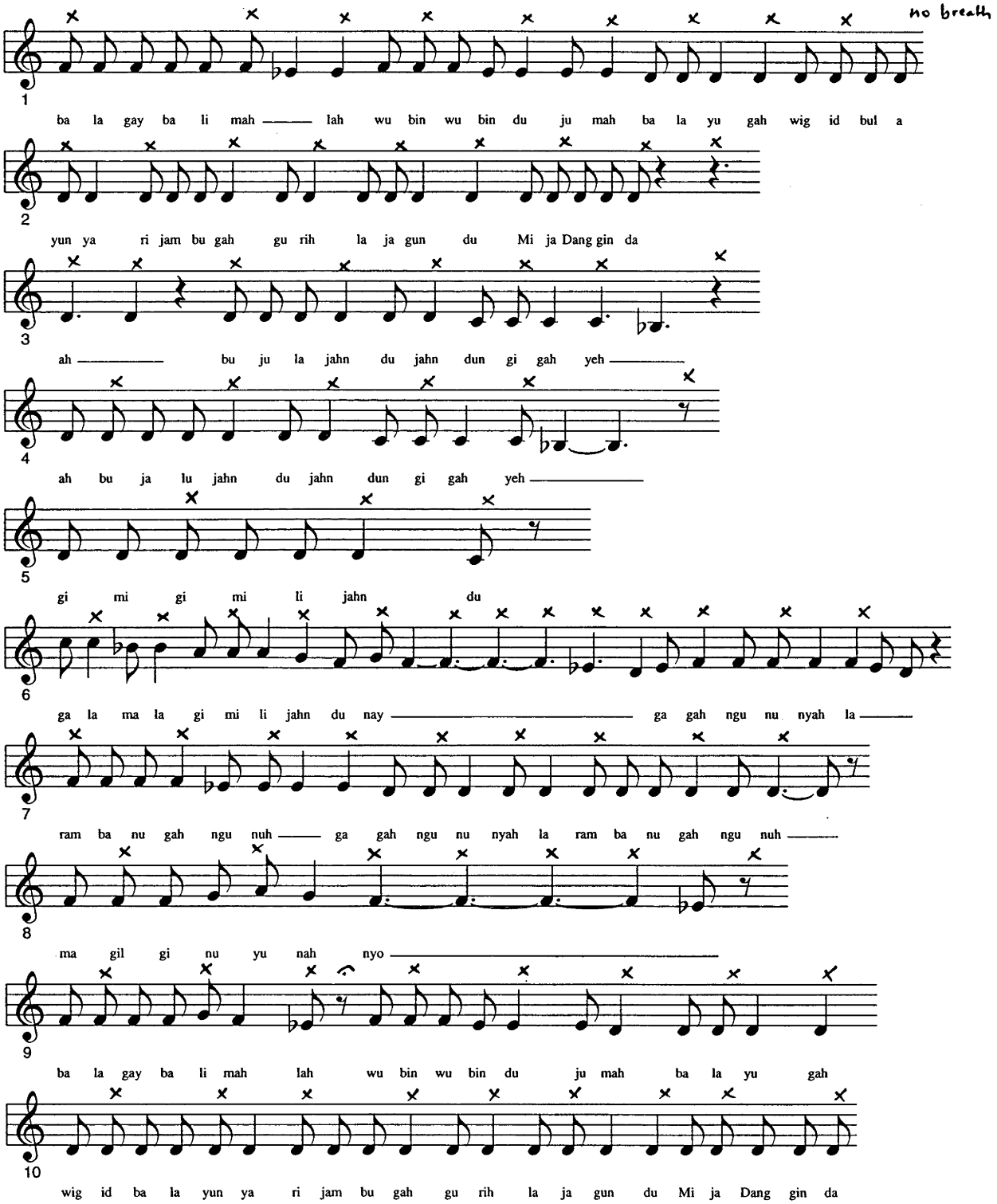


Quiet Place

King Bobby said to himself, 'I left this good home of mine, quiet place'. Donnelly says he must have been drunk, and that Mrs King Bobby might have been trying to fix him up and get him home. According to Donnelly she was 16 stone and lived to be 107 years old (LA2141).

Raymond Duncan LA3392

MM = 104 = ♩.

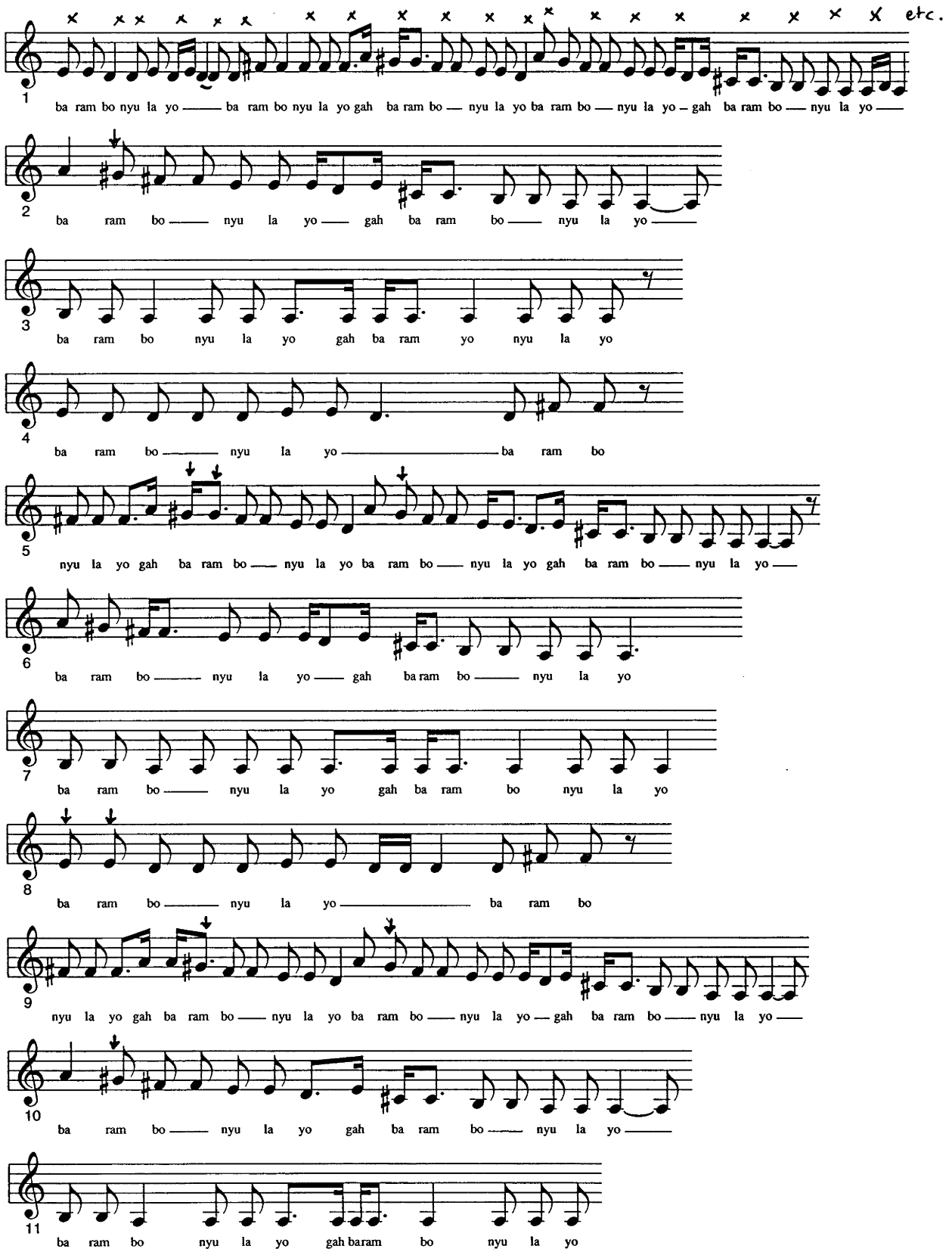


Raymond Duncan

Duncan often made songs about other people, but he composed this song about himself. The song mentions the country where Duncan grew up (LA4745). He 'praises himself up' in the song (LA1219).

Shaking Chest LA1178

MM = 104 = ♩

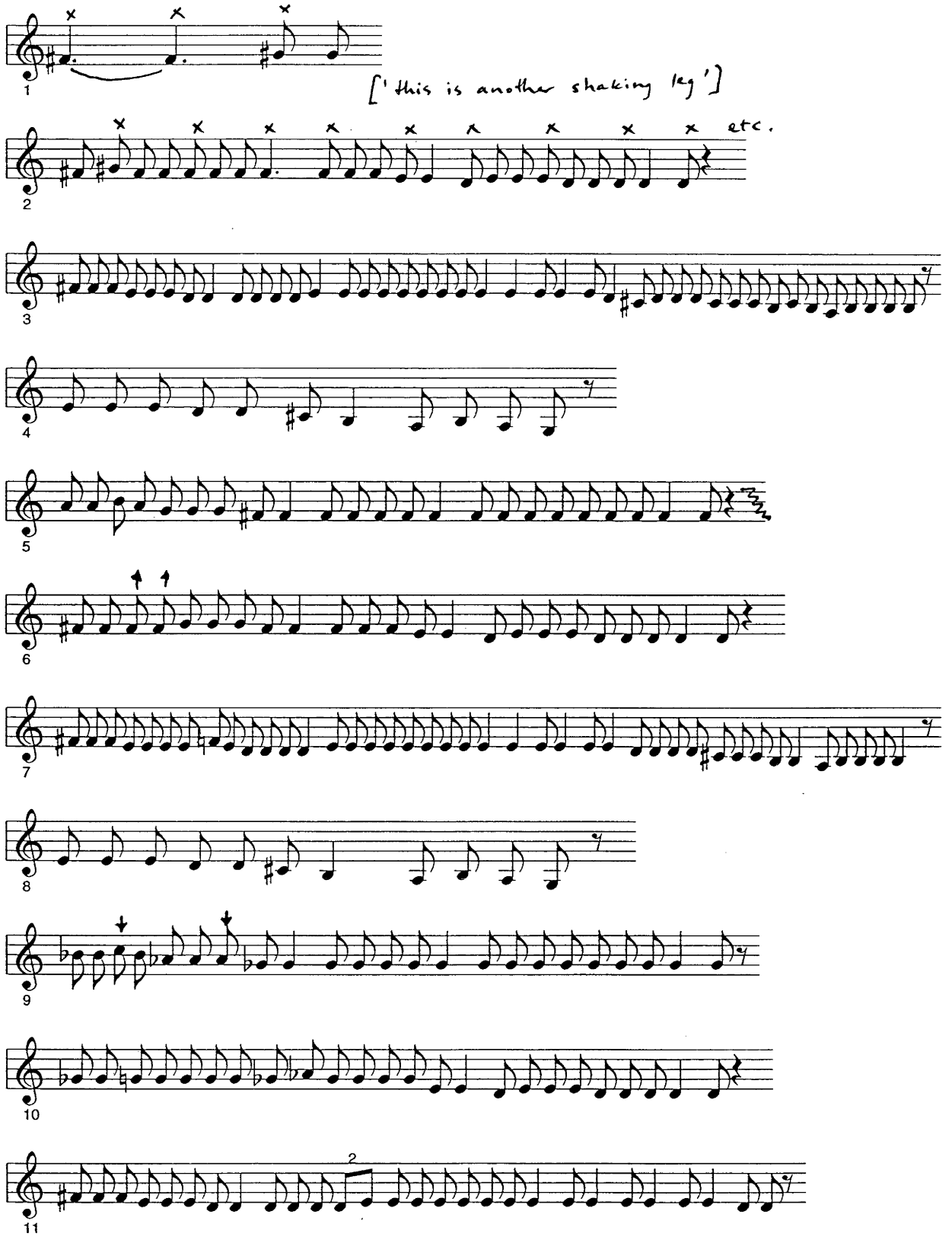


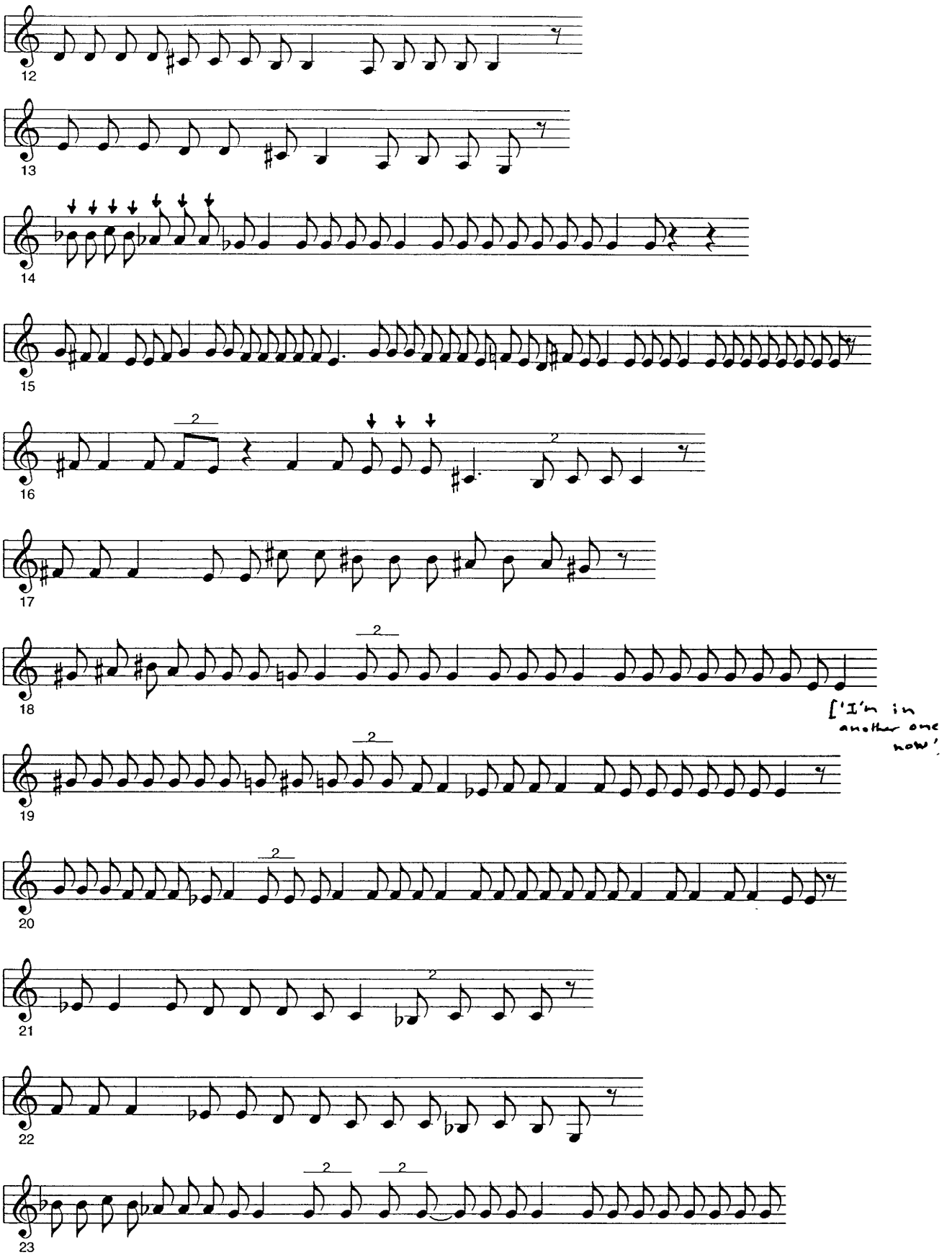
Shaking Chest

Calley: 'Shaking chest, burun, in the Bundjalung language from round about Woodenbong' (LA1178).

Shaking Leg LA3392

MM = 108 = ♩.

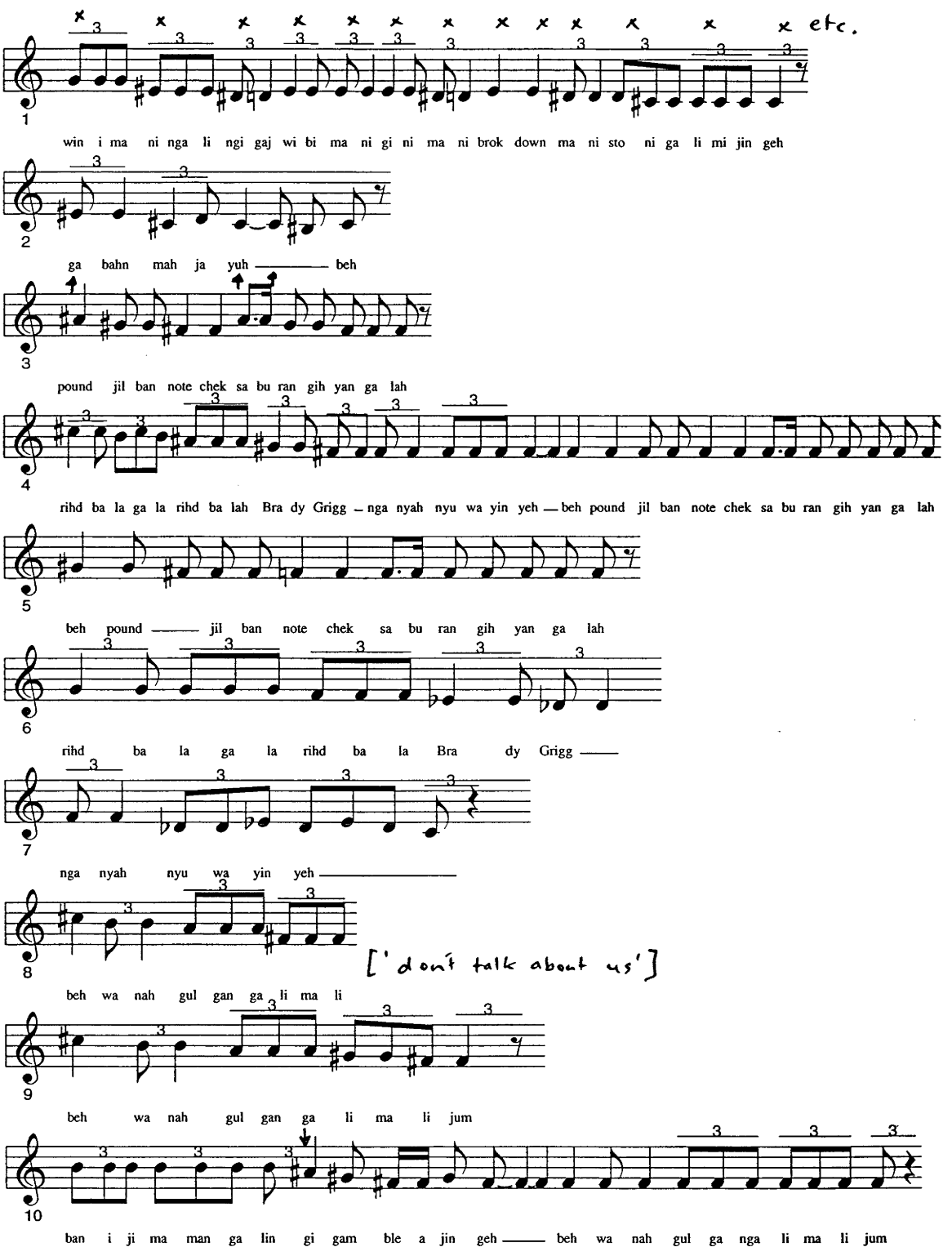


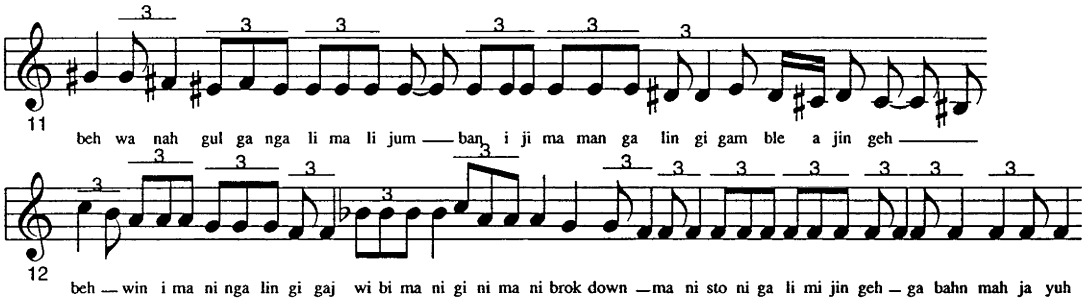

12
13
14
15
16
17
18
['I'm in another one now'
19
20
21
22
23

Shaking Leg

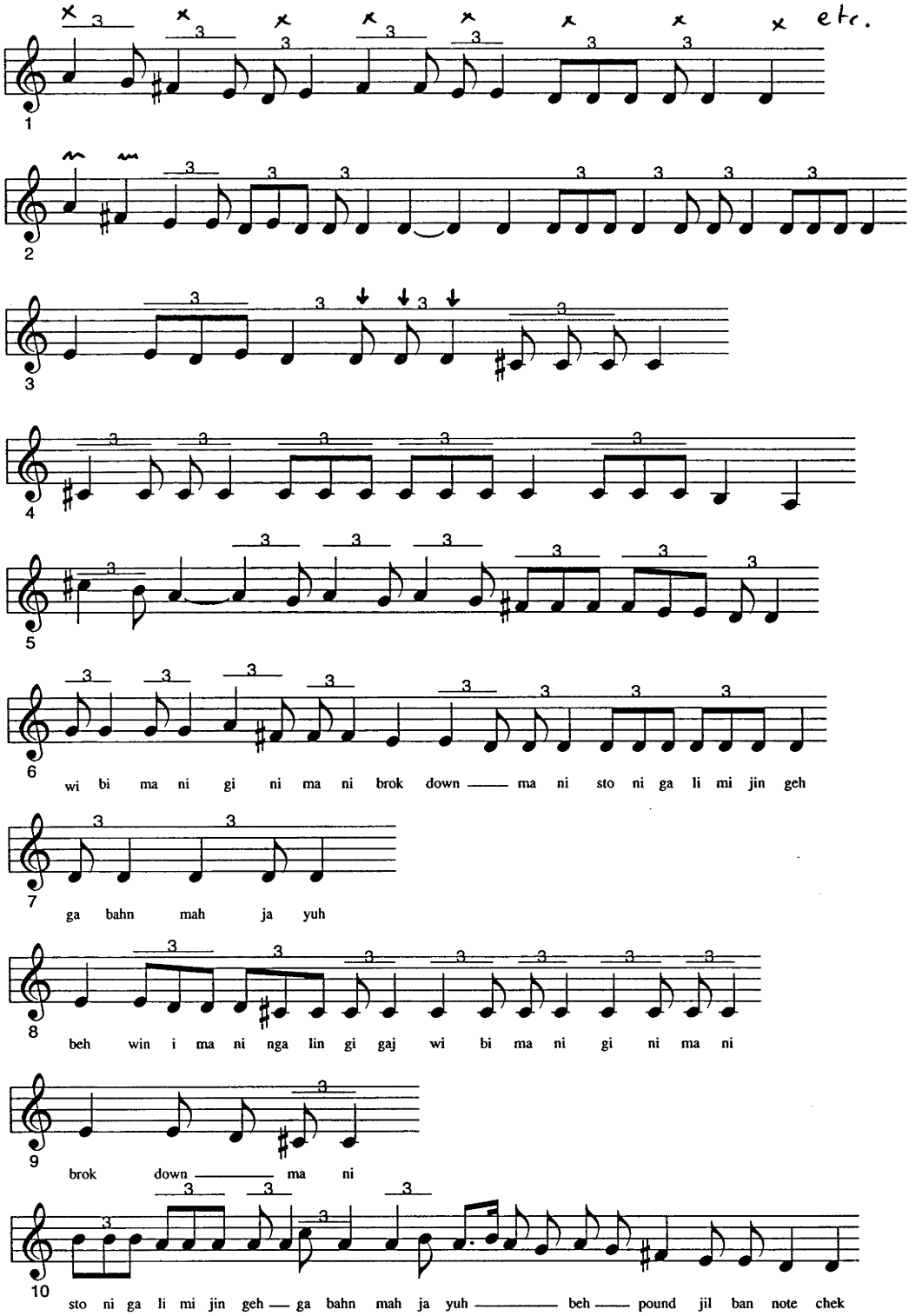
This is a shaking leg song in the Bundjalung language (LA3392).

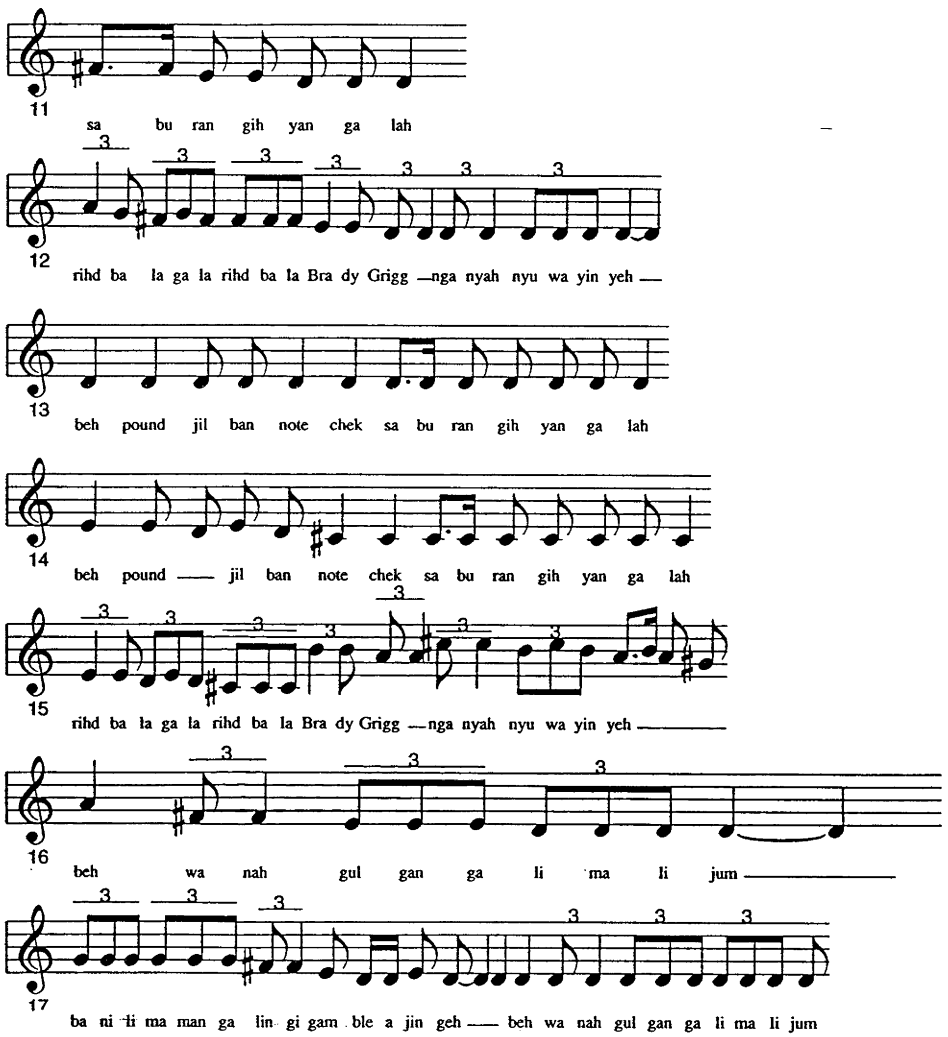
MM = 100 = ♩


etc.
win i ma ni nga li ngi gaj wi bi ma ni gi ni ma ni brok down ma ni sto ni ga li mi jin geh
ga bahn mah ja yuh ——— beh
pound jil ban note chek sa bu ran gih yan ga lah
rihd ba la ga la rihd ba lah Bra dy Grigg — nga nyah nyu wa yin yeh — beh pound jil ban note chek sa bu ran gih yan ga lah
beh pound ——— jil ban note chek sa bu ran gih yan ga lah
rihd ba la ga la rihd ba la Bra dy Grigg ———
nga nyah nyu wa yin yeh ———
['don't talk about us']
beh wa nah gul gan ga li ma li
beh wa nah gul gan ga li ma li jum
ban i ji ma man ga lin gi gam ble a jin geh ——— beh wa nah gul ga nga li ma li jum


11
beh wa nah gul ga nga li ma li jum — ban i ji ma man ga lin gi gam ble a jin geh —
12
beh — win i ma ni nga lin gi gaj wi bi ma ni gi ni ma ni brok down — ma ni sto ni ga li mi jin geh — ga bahn mah ja yuh

MM = 100 = ♩.


etc.
1
2
3
4
5
6
wi bi ma ni gi ni ma ni brok down ma ni sto ni ga li mi jin geh
7
ga bahn mah ja yuh
8
beh win i ma ni nga lin gi gaj wi bi ma ni gi ni ma ni
9
brok down ma ni
10
sto ni ga li mi jin geh ga bahn mah ja yuh beh pound jil ban note chek



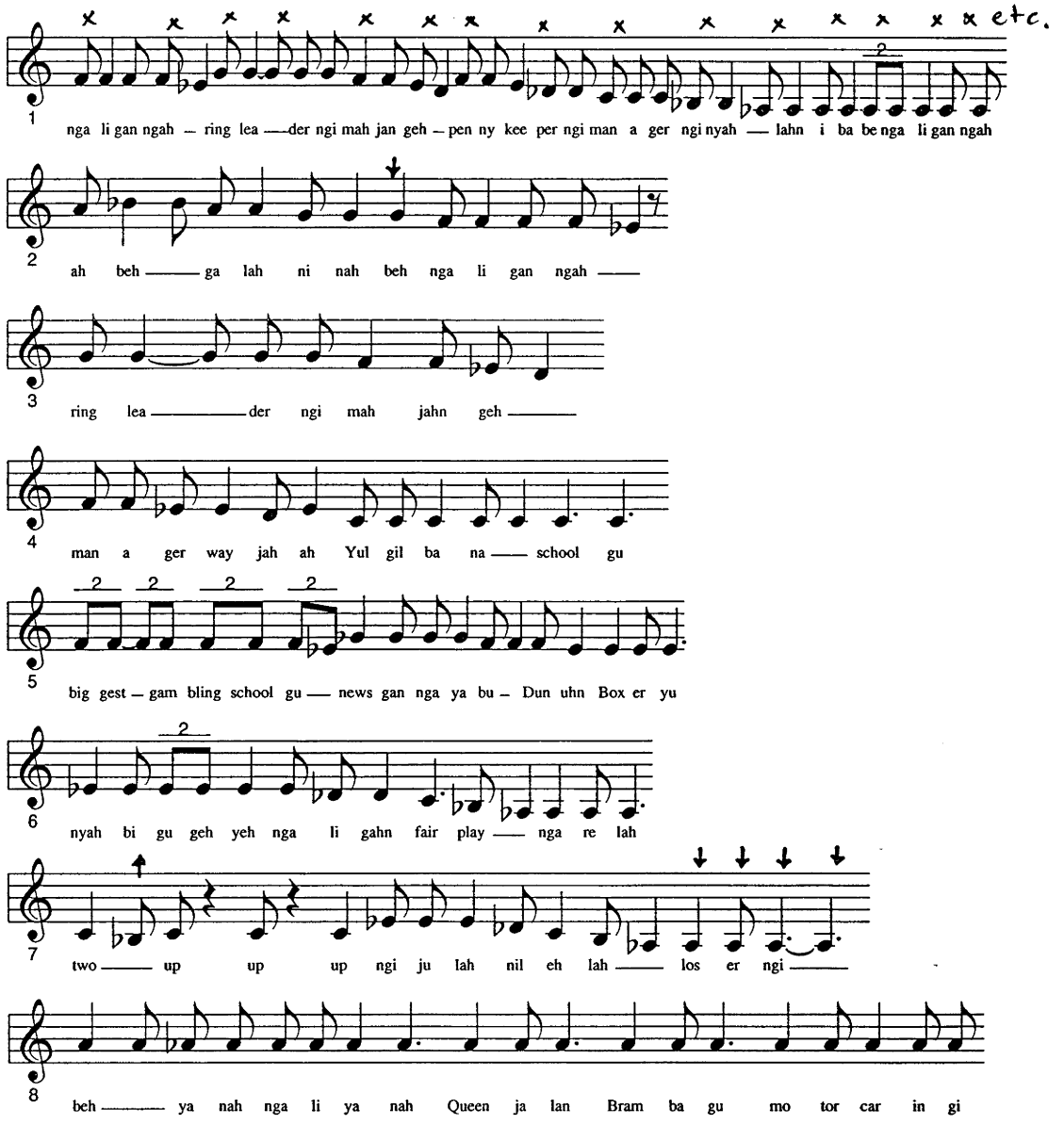
Stoney Gully

Jack Baron made this song about the white manager of the mission at Stoney Gully. There was a lot of gambling going on at the mission, and Baron warns in the song: 'We can't do what we like anymore, we mustn't do things wrong in this home anymore. White man is watching over us' (LA2141).

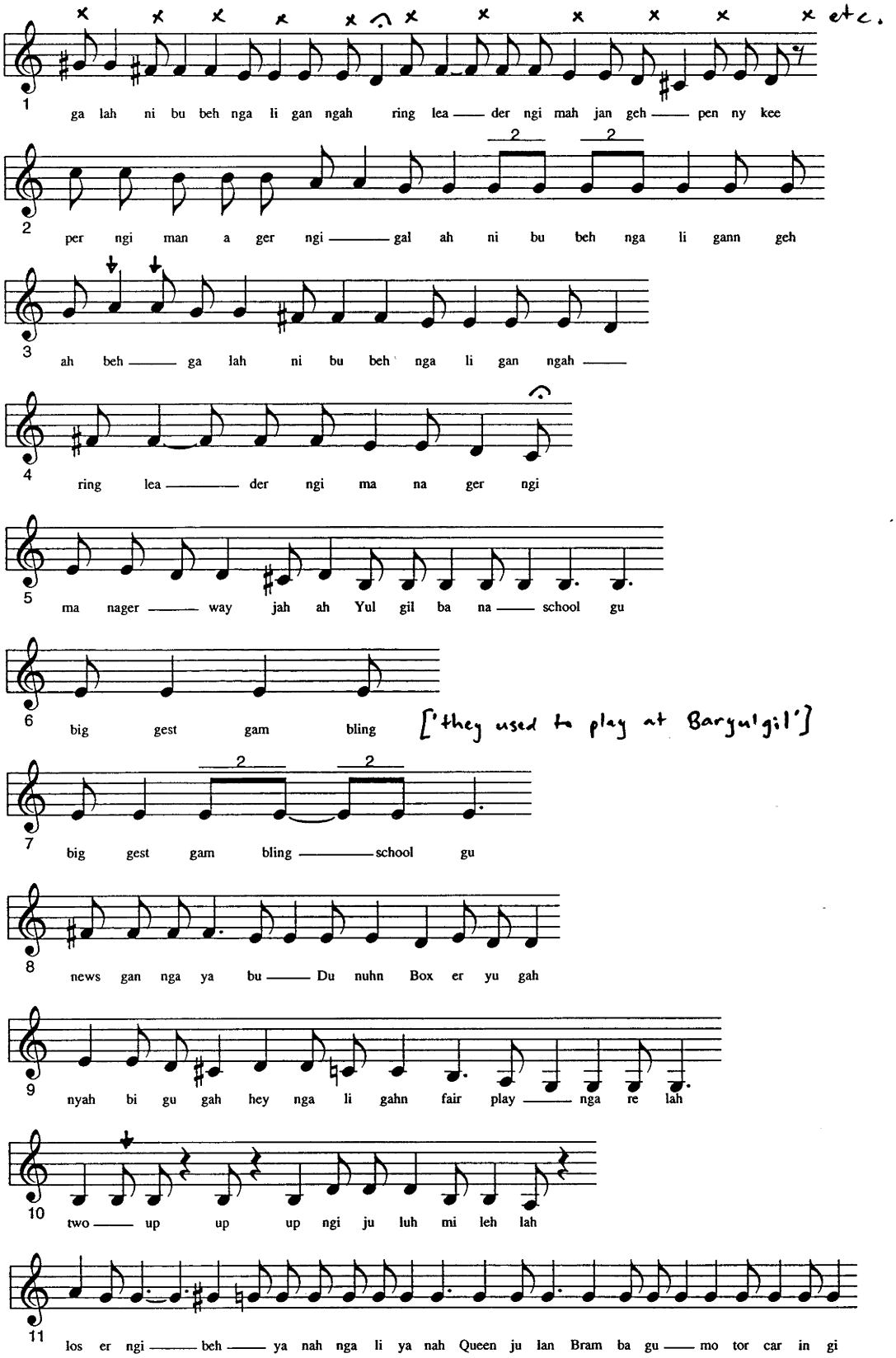
See also Two Up.

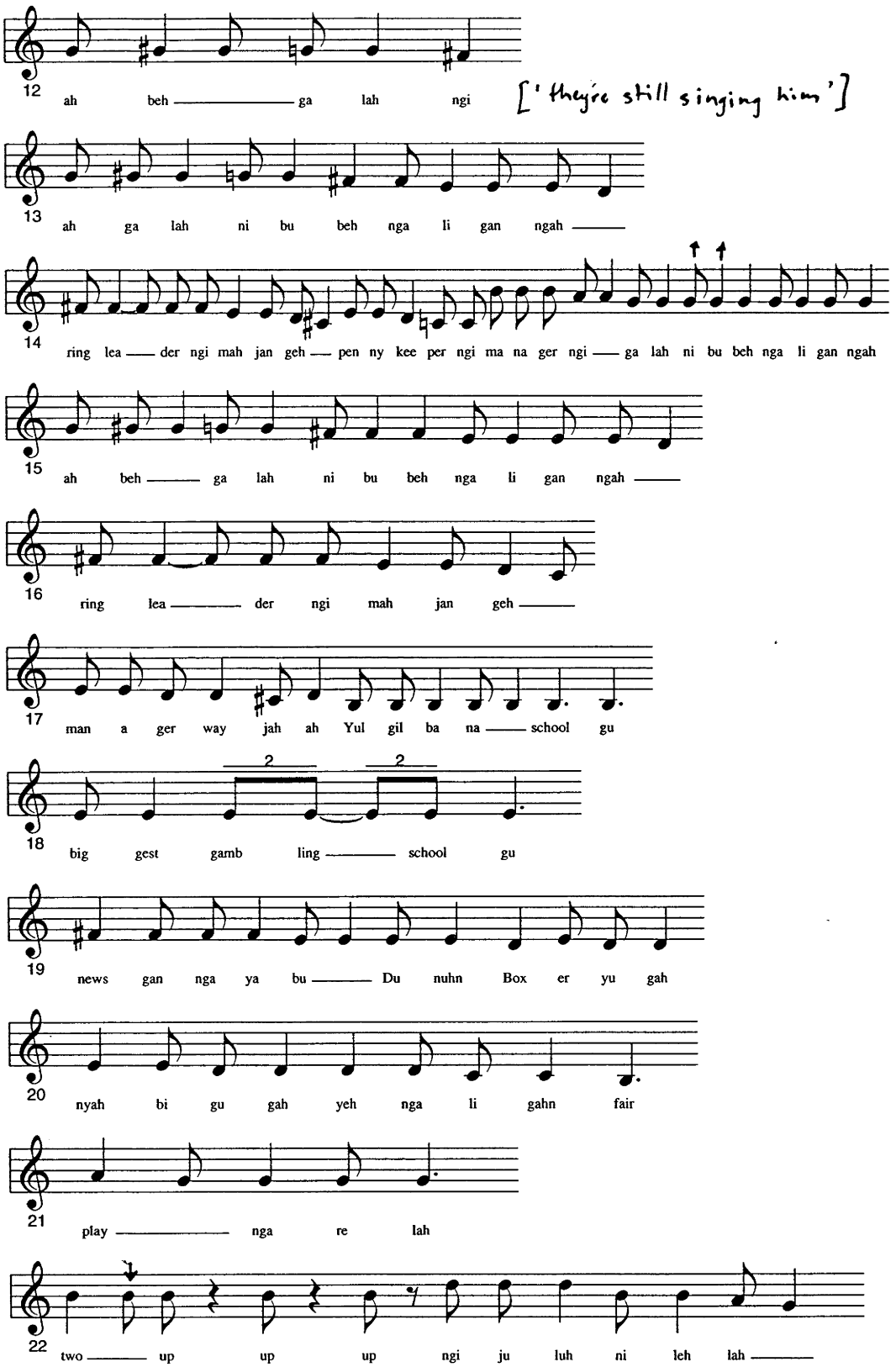
Text in Gummow (1992), Text 62, transcribed by Sharpe (1985a: 28).

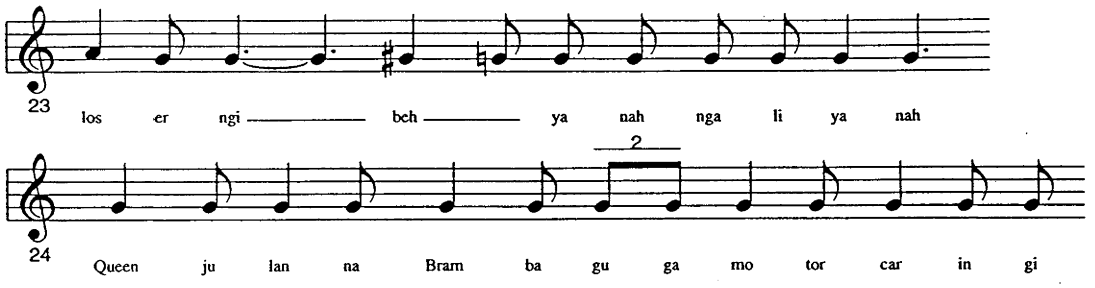
MM = 100 = ♩.


etc.
1
nga li gan ngah – ring lea – der ngi mah jan geh – pen ny kee per ngi man a ger ngi nyah – lahn i ba be nga li gan ngah
2
ah beh – ga lah ni nah beh nga li gan ngah –
3
ring lea – der ngi mah jahn geh –
4
man a ger way jah ah Yul gil ba na – school gu
5
big gest – gam bling school gu – news gan nga ya bu – Dun uhn Box er yu
6
nyah bi gu geh yeh nga li gahn fair play – nga re lah
7
two – up up up ngi ju lah nil eh lah – los er ngi –
8
beh – ya nah nga li ya nah Queen ja lan Bram ba gu mo tor car in gi

MM = 88 = ♩.


etc.
1
ga lah ni bu beh nga li gan ngah ring lea — der ngi mah jan geh — pen ny kee
2
per ngi man a ger ngi — gal ah ni bu beh nga li gann geh
3
ah beh — ga lah ni bu beh nga li gan ngah —
4
ring lea — der ngi ma na ger ngi
5
ma nager — way jah ah Yul gil ba na — school gu
6
big gest gam bling
['they used to play at Barqul'gil']
7
big gest gam bling — school gu
8
news gan nga ya bu — Du nuhn Box er yu gah
9
nyah bi gu gah hey nga li gahn fair play — nga re lah
10
two — up up up ngi ju luh mi leh lah
11
los er ngi — beh — ya nah nga li ya nah Queen ju lan Bram ba gu — mo tor car in gi


12
ah beh — ga lah ngi
['they're still singing him']
13
ah ga lah ni bu beh nga li gan ngah —
14
ring lea — der ngi mah jan geh — pen ny kee per ngi ma na ger ngi — ga lah ni bu beh nga li gan ngah
15
ah beh — ga lah ni bu beh nga li gan ngah —
16
ring lea — der ngi mah jan geh —
17
man a ger way jah ah Yul gil ba na — school gu
18
big gest gamb ling — school gu
19
news gan nga ya bu — Du nuhn Box er yu gah
20
nyah bi gu gah yeh nga li gahn fair
21
play — nga re lah
22
two — up up up ngi ju luh ni leh lah —



Two Up

The Aborigines camped around Lismore were moved onto a settlement at Dunoon, about 6 miles away. They would play two up in the settlement. One man, George Slaven kept two pennies in his pocket, and would always bring them out whenever anyone wanted a game. He was the 'penny keeper', known as the Dunoon Boxer. Jack Baron, a great songmaker from Woodenbong, watched Slaven, because he wasn't giving anyone a chance to box. Donnelly said:

> Anybody do wrong to the people that time, they used to sing him. Jack Baron said, 'I'll quieten him down (Slaven), I'll sing about him' (LA5044).

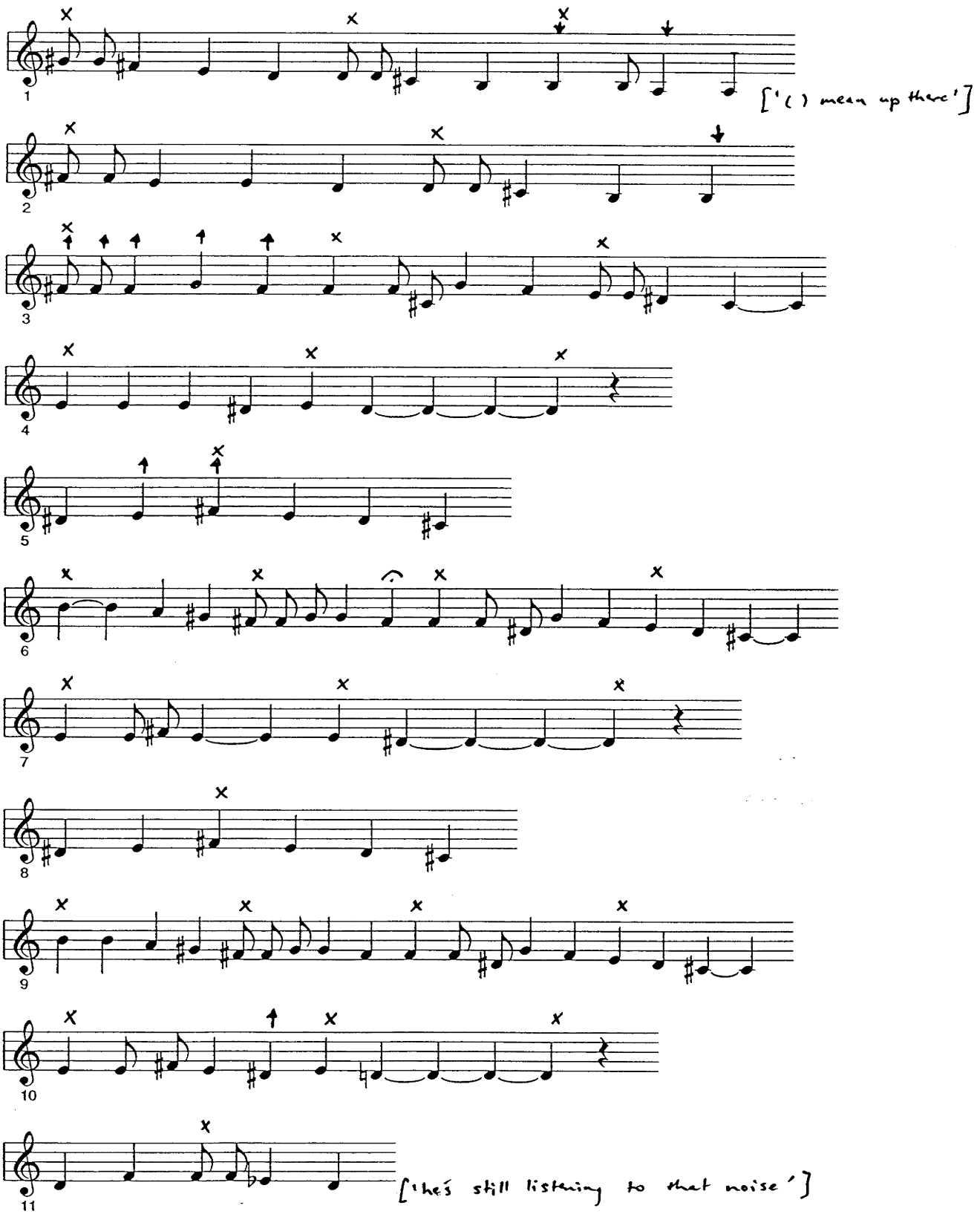
Baron sang this song right in the middle of the camp one night. Donnelly caught this song and sang it in different places so that everyone would know about Slaven (LA4744).

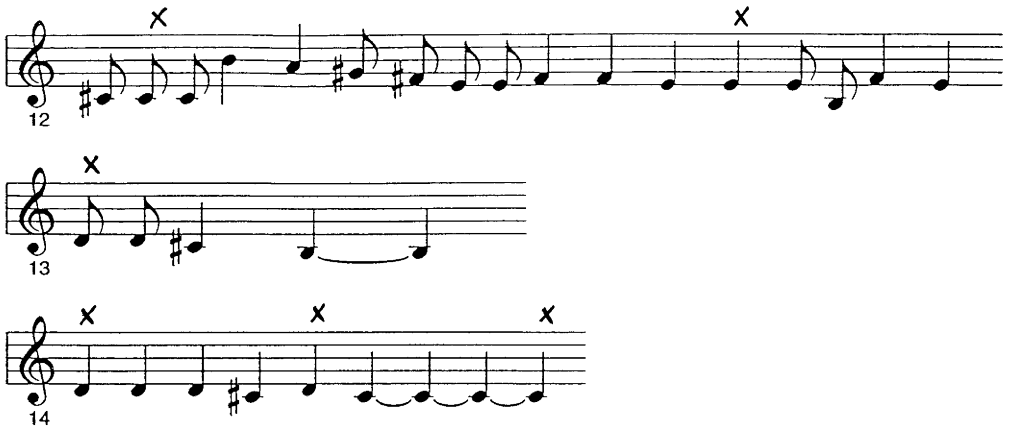
See also Stoney Gully.

Text in Gummow (1992), Text 6, transcribed by Geytenbeek (1973: 86).

Unyoke Bullocks LA4744

MM = 63 = ♩♩





Unyoke Bullocks

Donnelly used to dance to this song at Baryulgil. He learnt the story of the song from Alec Vesper one Sunday at church. The song is about an Aboriginal bullock driver whose bullock wagon was bogged on the track outside Kyogle. He started to flog the bullocks, but stopped when he heard a noise from heaven telling him not to do that, as the bullocks couldn't pull the wagon out of the bog. He (the bullock driver) made a song about the incident. (LA4744)

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1977 'A songman dies' May: 25.

Appendix One: Details of recordings arranged by song title.

Title of Song	AIATSIS tape number and position	Title as given on tape documentation	Gummow reference: title and text number
Barara Abanji	*LA1178 04:42	Barara abanji	Barara Abanji Text 4
Bill Parkins	*LA2141 29:58	Bill Parkins	Bill Parkins Text 67
Blind Man's Song	*LA3392 57:03	Balukahn's Grave	Blind Man's Song Text 11
	*LA3392 39:52	Djurbil	
	LA1178 16:18	Blind man's song	
Crow	*LA2141 08:36	Crow	Crow Text 20
	LA53 11:26	Crow	
	LA1177 00:15	Crow	
	LA3392 01:17	Crow	
	LA1957 03:13	Crow	
	LA4744B 25:46	Crow	
Djanggara	*LA3392 14:54	Kamilera Shaking leg	Shaking Leg Djanggara Song Text 1a
	LA1178 00:20	Shaking-leg song, Djanggara	
	LA1176 22:30	Shake-a-leg	
	LA53 08:57	Song in Gumbayngir	
	LA1957 47:53	Shake-a-leg	
Grandfather and Two Girls	*LA3392 19:45	But grandfather	Grandfather and Two Girls Text 7
	LA1178 07:55	2 cheeky girls	
	LA1177 07:44	Grandfather and two girls	
	LA5044 09:29	Two women	
Gumbainggir Song with Swear Words	*LA1178 20:04	Gumbaingga song with swear words	Gumbaingga Song With Swear Words; Text 14
Juwa	*LA1178 02:58	Juwa	Juwa [Yawahr] Text 3
King Bobby's Song to Tom Bissetti	*LA4744 12:06	Shake-a-leg song	King Bobby's Song Text 31
	LA3392 37:24	King Bobby's Song	

Title of Song	AIATSIS tape number and position	Title as given on tape documentation	Gummow reference: title and text number
Leaving Sydney	*LA2141 25:40	Leaving Sydney	Rory William's Song Text 65
Long Johnny's Song	*LA2141 25:40	Long Johnny Song	Long Johnny Song Text 66
Lost Man	*LA1178 17:22	Lost man	Lost Man Text 12
Lullaby	*LA2141 01:22	Unidentified	Lullaby Text 64
	LA1220 05:35	Lullaby	
	LA1957 12:42	Lullaby	
Maringgu	*LA2141 14:45	Unidentified	Maringgu Text 28
	LA3392 13:29	Bungaln	
	LA1219 17:18	song in Gamilaroi	
	LA1177 09:48	Gamilaroi Song	
Mountains and Car	*LA2141 16:43	Four places	Light From Mountain Text 22
	LA1220 02:05	Mountains and Car	
	LA3392 30:27	On the main road	
Mourning Song	*LA2141 35:50	Mourning Song	Lament Text 68
Mr Ogilvie	*LA1219 19:23	Mr Ogilvie	Mr Ogilvie Text 61
Mt Lindesay	*LA1220 00:50	Mt Lindsay	Mt Lindsay Text 63
Mt Wellington Lookout	*LA2141 09:36	Wellington Lookout	Mt Wellington Lookout Text 10
	LA1178 14:40	Old man sees two lovers	
	*LA3392 24:01	Wayal wayal	
	LA1957 06:07	Balancing Rock	
Mundala	*LA2141 14:43	Unidentified	Mundala Text 5
	LA3392 11:53	Mundala mundala	
	LA1176 24:40	Corroboree	
	LA1219 14:43	Mundala mundala	
	LA1178 (twice) 05:21 11:00	Mundala mundala	

Title of Song	AIATSIS tape number and position	Title as given on tape documentation	Gummow reference: title and text number
	LA1957 42:18	Mundala mundala	
	LA4745 23:27	Mundala mundala	
	LA4745 23:27	Mundala mundala	
Old Mrs Bissetti	*LA2141 13:25	Old Mrs Bissetti	Old Mrs Bissetti Text 19
	LA1220 04:42	Old Mrs Bissetti	
	LA53 07:22	Old Mrs Bissetti	
	LA1957 10:57	Old Mrs Bisseti	
	LA4744 16:07	Old Mrs Bissetti	
Pigeon Call on One Note	*LA1178 10:02	Pigeon call one note	Pigeon Call One Note Text 8
Quail and Flying Squirrel	*LA2141 00:03	Unidentified	Going to New England Text 13
	*LA1178 19:10	Going to New England	
	LA3392 06:11	Journey to Wagam Birbang	
	LA53 13:52	Travelling Man	
	LA1176 26:43	Quail and Flying Squirrel	
	LA4744B 29:36	Quail and flying squirrel (incomplete)	
Quiet Place	*LA2141 30:52	Quiet place	[No text number]
Raymond Duncan	*LA4745 04:48	Raymond Duncan	Raymond Duncan Text 30
	LA1219 22:53	Raymond Duncan	
	LA3392 29:30	Donkey	
Shake-a-Leg (not transcribed)	LA53 16:13	Shake-a-leg	Shake-a-Leg Text 21/Text 32
Shaking Chest	*LA1178 01:42	Shaking chest, burun	Shaking Chest, Burun Text 2
Shaking Leg	*LA3392 14:54	Shaking leg	Shaking Leg Wayal Wayal Text 29
Stoney Gully	*LA2141 04:25	Stony Gully	Gambling Song, Goverman Song; Text 62
	*LA1219 26:03	Gambling song	
	LA5044 00:31	Be careful	

Title of Song	AIATSIS tape number and position	Title as given on tape documentation	Gummow reference: title and text number
Two Up	LA53 03:54	Two Up	Two-Up Text 6
	LA1177 02:57	Two-up	
	LA3392 27:19	Gambling	
	*LA1178 06:54	Two-up	
	LA1177 02:57	Two-up	
	LA2141 11:06	Gambling/Dunoon Boxer	
	*LA1957 38:37	Dunoon Boxer	
	LA5044 05:19	Two up	
	LA4744B 14:38	Gambling	
Unyoke Bullocks	*LA4744 05:34	Unyoke bullocks	Unyoke Bullocks Text 70

Appendix Two: Details of recordings arranged by archive tape number.

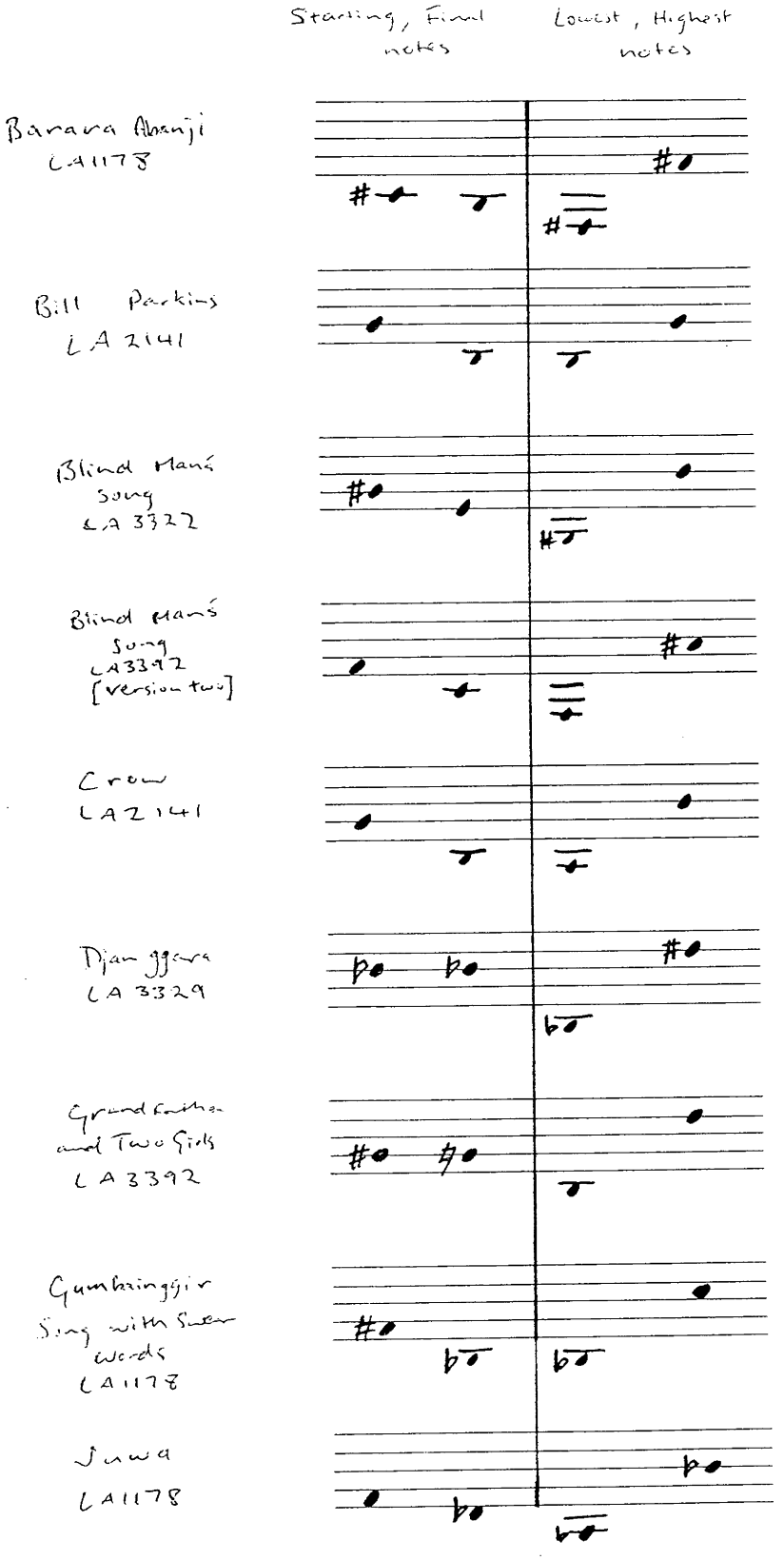
AIATSIS archive tape	Recordist	Place and Date of recording	Songs recorded	Percentage of composer identified songs
LA1178	Malcolm Calley	Woodenbong, NSW; 1955	Djanggara	43%
			Shaking Chest	
			Juwa	
			Barara Abanji	
			Mundala	
			Two Up	
			Grandfather and Two Girls	
			Pigeon Call on One Note	
			Mundala	
			Mt Wellington Lookout	
			Blind Man's Song	
			Lost Man	
			Quail and Flying Squirrel	
			Gumbainggir Song with Swear Words	
LA3392	Brian and Helen Geytenbeek	Woodenbong, NSW; 25/7/64;12/4/65; 8/2/66	Crow	64%
			Quail and Flying Squirrel	
			Mundala	
			Maringgu	
			Djanggara	
			Grandfather and Two Girls	
			Mt Wellington Lookout	
			Shaking Leg	
			Two Up	
			Raymond Duncan	
			Mountains and Car	
			King Bobby's Song to Tom Bissetti	
			Blind Man's Song	
			Blind Man's Song	
LA53	Barbara Gibbons	Woodenbong, NSW; 7/65	Two Up	50%
			Old Mrs Bissetti	
			Djanggara	
			Crow	
			Quail and Flying Squirrel	

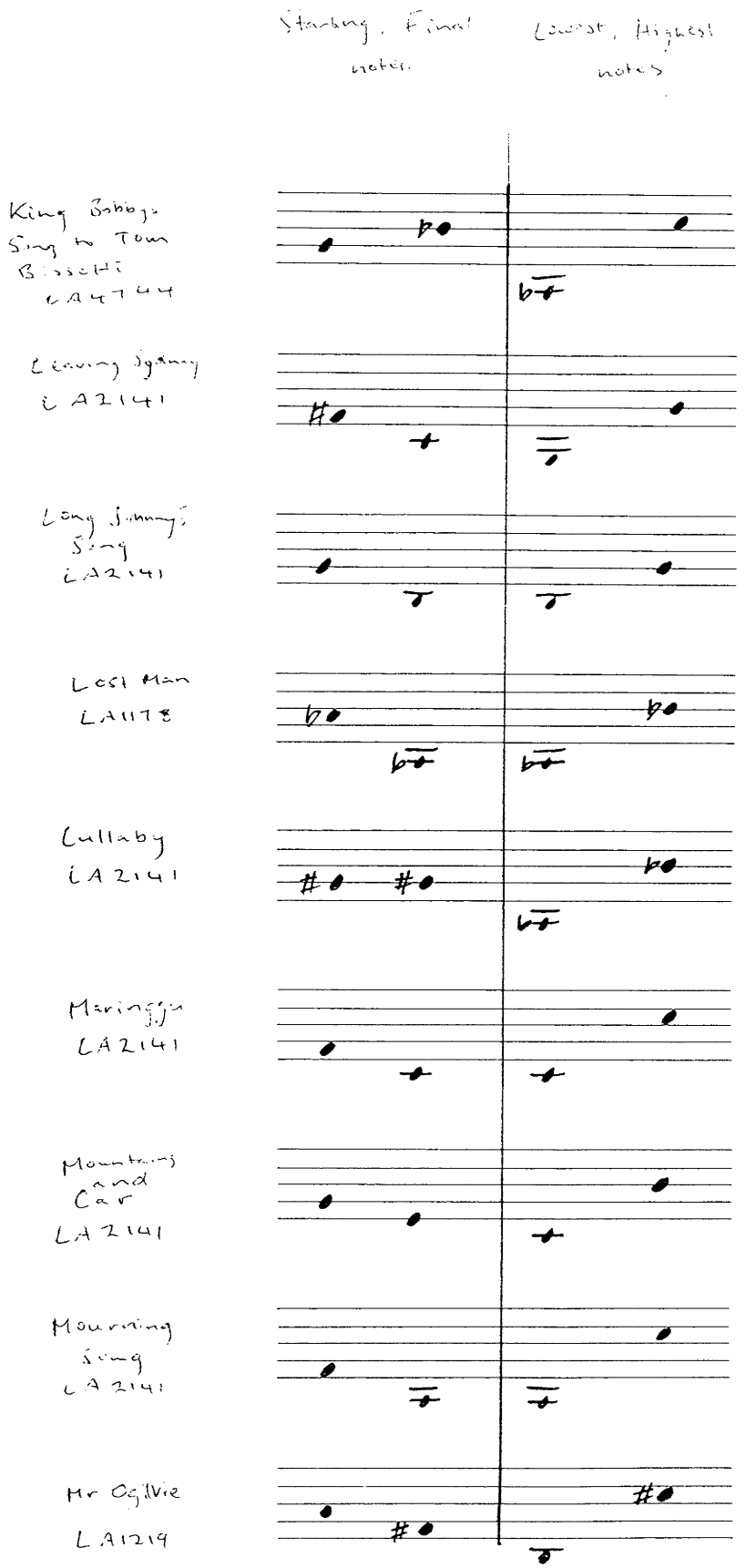
AIATSIS archive tape	Recordist	Place and Date of recording	Songs recorded	Percentage of composer identified songs
			Shake-a-Leg	
LA1176	John Gordon	Woodenbong, NSW; 18/5/68	Djanggara	33%
			Mundala	
			Quail and Flying Squirrel	
LA1177	John Gordon	Woodenbong, NSW; 19/5/68	Crow	50%
			Two Up	
			Grandfather and Two Girls	
			Maringgu	
LA1219	John Gordon	Woodenbong, NSW; 3/8/68	Mundala	67%
			Maringgu	
			Mr Ogilvie	
			Raymond Duncan	
			Stoney Gully	
LA1220	John Gordon	Woodenbong, NSW; 3/8/68	Mt Lindesay	
			Mountains and Car	
			Old Mrs Bissetti	
			Lullaby	
LA2141	John Sommerlad	Heathcote State Park, NSW; 11/4/70	Quail and Flying Squirrel	67%
			Lullaby	
			Mundala	
			Stoney Gully	
			Crow	
			Mt Wellington Lookout	
			Two Up	
			Old Mrs Bissetti	
			Maringgu	
			Mountains and Car	
			Leaving Sydney	
			Long Johnny's Song	
			Bill Parkins	
			Quiet Place	
			Mourning Song	
LA1957	John Sommerlad	Tenterfield, NSW; 1970	Crow	43%
			Mt Wellington Lookout	
			Old Mrs Bissetti	
			Lullaby	
			Two Up	
			Mundala	
			Djanggara	

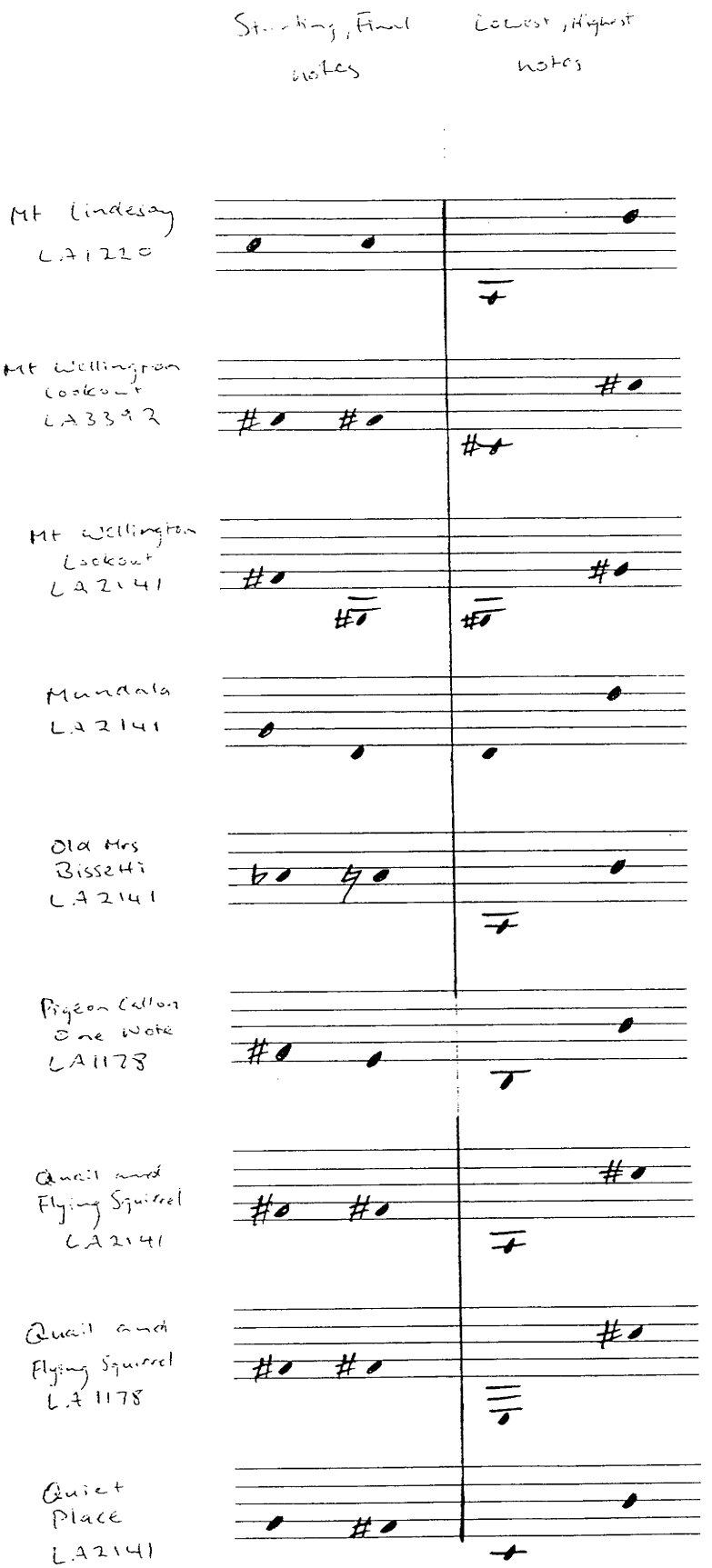
AIATSIS archive tape	Recordist	Place and Date of recording	Songs recorded	Percentage of composer identified songs
LA5044	Howard Creamer	Woodenbong, NSW; 12/73	Stoney Gully	100%
			Two Up	
			Grandfather and Two Girls	
LA4744	Andrew Willoughby	Woodenbong, NSW; 2-3/77	Unyoke Bullocks	75%
			King Bobby's Song to Tom Bissetti	
			Old Mrs Bissetti	
			Two Up	
			Crow	
			Quail and Flying Squirrel (incomplete)	
LA4745	Andrew Willoughby	Woodenbong, NSW; 2-3/77	Raymond Duncan	
			Mundala	

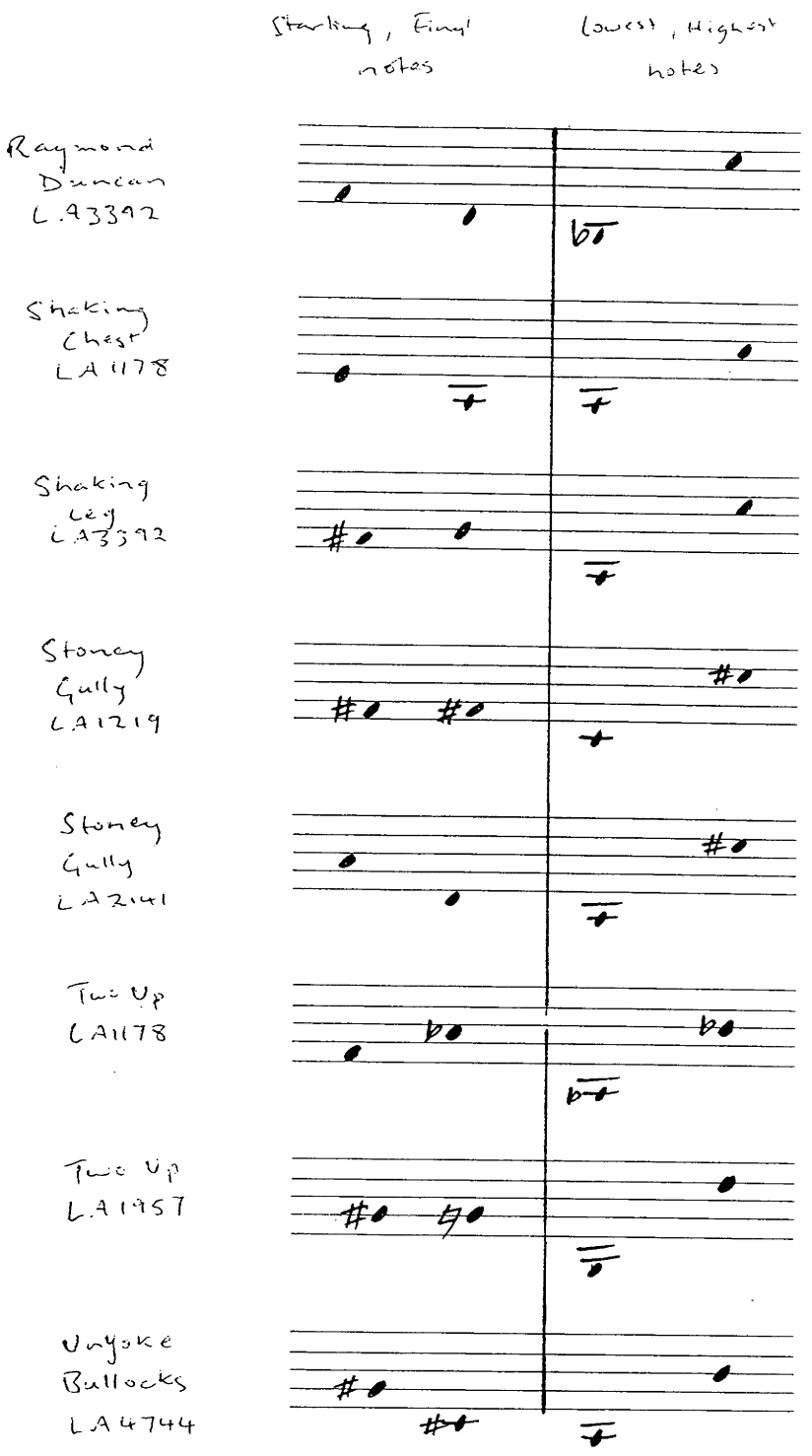
Appendix Three: Starting, final notes and range of songs.

All notes are written in the treble clef.




Starting, Final notes.
Lowest, Highest notes
King Bobby's Song to Tom Bissetti LA4744
Leaving Sydney LA2141
Long Johnny's Song LA2141
Lost Man LA1178
Lullaby LA2141
Maringgu LA2141
Mountains and Car LA2141
Mourning Song LA2141
Mr Ogilvie LA1219


Starting, Final notes
Lowest, Highest notes
Mt Lindesay
LA1220
Mt Wellington Lookout
LA3392
Mt Wellington Lookout
LA2141
Mandala
LA2141
Old Mrs Bissell
LA2141
Pigeon Callon One Note
LA1178
Quail and Flying Squirrel
LA2141
Quail and Flying Squirrel
LA1178
Quiet Place
LA2141


Starting, Final notes
Lowest, Highest notes
Raymond Duncan LA3392
Shaking Chest LA1178
Shaking Leg LA3392
Stoney Gully LA1219
Stoney Gully LA2141
Two Up LA1178
Two Up LA1957
Unyoke Bullocks LA4744