

# ■ Abstracts

## of recently passed Australian Ph.D. theses

### *The structures and scribes of the Chansonnier of the Oxford Bodleian MS Douce 308*

Mary Atchison  
(Monash University)

The early fourteenth century *Chansonnier* of the Oxford Bodleian MS Douce 308 is unique among Old French *chansonniers* in its arrangement of texts according to genre. Because there are no melodies to any of the five hundred and sixteen texts the *Chansonnier* has been largely ignored by musicologists, despite the fact that a large proportion of the lyrics are known only from this manuscript. This study examines the texts in a way which is different from, yet complementary to, the examination of notated *chansons* and *chansonniers*. It examines the way in which the scribes of this lyric anthology have constructed a clear organizational framework for the exposition of the texts and in doing so have presented the poetic forms of the texts on the page. Manuscript examples and diplomatic editions of the texts provide evidence of the structural and scribal features examined in the study.

An understanding of the organizational principles and practices followed by the scribes comes from an analysis of the scribal presentation of all the texts of the genre sections and from the examination of these three aspects: the codicological structures, the scribal hands and the decoration of the *Chansonnier*. These features of scribal organization are examined in relation to the physical and conceptual framework of the complete MS Douce 308 in which the *Chansonnier* resides. The discovery of two scribal hands in the *Chansonnier* has led to a re-evaluation of past studies and descriptions of the *Chansonnier*. The implications of this discovery for our understanding of the relationship between the structures and the scribes of the *Chansonnier* are examined here. The study also demonstrates a methodology which is appropriate to the study of manuscript sources in general.

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### *An ethnomusicological study of music makers in an Australian military band*

Roland Bannister  
(Deakin University)

This dissertation reports on a participant observation study of music making in a band of the Australian Army Band Corps. The thesis of the dissertation is how the world views of soldier-musicians in the Australian Army Band, Kapooka, are constructed in the context of their work in military music performance. In arguing this thesis, the author provides a brief history of military music in Australia, and offers fieldwork reports which explore the nature of military rank and discipline, and the nature of soldier-musicians' work in military and civic ceremonial contexts, and in public entertainment. In the course of this exploration the author argues that while military music may have limited intrinsic interest, in certain ceremonial settings it may link with other visual and auditory symbol

systems to generate profound meaning both for the soldier-musicians themselves and for their audiences. The study explores the process by which the world views of soldier-musicians are shaped as they participate in the military music tradition which acts as a powerful agent in the shaping of Australian patriotic traditions.

The study is set in the disciplinary contexts of ethnomusicology and military sociology. Data in the form of fieldnotes and interviews were collected, analysed and interpreted according to the tenets of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), modified according to principles articulated by Eisner (1991) and, especially, Wolcott (1994).

Linda Kouvaras

(The University of Melbourne)

A study of the chamber opera, *Sweet death*, from feminist, postmodernist, contemporary musicological, and psychoanalytic perspectives. The heroine, Claudia, decides to eat herself to death on sweets by the time of her twenty-first birthday, in total rebellion against society's stipulations about the female form, imposed upon her by her Mother. In this endeavour she develops her voice, in the composer's words, to 'grow, abominate, triumph and directly challenge its immediate musical and social restrictions, and implicitly question restrictions presented to us daily that endeavour to control our reception of the female voice and body'. Tragi-comically, through the postmodern paradigms of complicit critique and valorisation of the mundane and the domestic, this opera presents many issues of significance for women (maternalism, body image, identity, eating disorders, and sexual abuse) and contemporary music (postmodernism, modernism, the female voice in contemporary operatic genre, and performance art). *Sweet death* raises psychoanalytic issues regarding femaleness, including myths of the maternal voice, Kristevan Semiotic and Symbolic orders, various applications of mirroring, Freudian personality-

development stages, and maternal reactive generosity. This thesis examines the extent to which Claudia's project is self-empowering, given that her actions and attitudes accord with severe psychological impairment as explicated by theories of the aetiology of eating disorders. It also examines the subsidiary characters, focusing on the manner in which the work uses these characters to offset Claudia's position, through theoretical and operatic perspectives.

Primary sources include: score, libretto, extracts from the Programme and video recording of a performance at the 1991 Melbourne International Festival of the Arts; quotations of the creators of the work from newspaper reviews and articles; and private conversations with the composer.

121 musical examples, bibliography, preface, including biographical information about Chamber Made Opera Company, the composer and the librettist, and two appendices comprising relevant critical articles written by myself and published while researching this thesis, entitled: 'Operatic Snuff?: Gender Matters in Music Criticism', and 'Postmodern Temporalities'.

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*'A terrible honesty': the development of a personal voice in musical improvisation*

Ros McMillan

(The University of Melbourne)

Courses of study in musical improvisation are to be found in every state in Australia mostly with a focus on the performance of African-American music or jazz. In the majority of these the emphasis is on the performance of those styles which were conceived and developed up to the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the free jazz era.

However, there is one course which, although it is rooted in African-American music, promulgates the notion that Australian students in the 1990s should endeavour to develop a personal musical 'voice'. This is Improvisation Studies, a three year degree program at the Victorian College of the Arts in Melbourne, Australia.

This study sought to clarify what was meant by a personal voice by monitoring the development of selected students. Given that the notion of a personal

voice as an outcome is a novel one, the study adopted an investigatory discovery-based approach. This required intensive study of selected students on the grounds that the development of a personal voice manifests itself in different ways.

A second major purpose of the study was to investigate factors which affected the development of the personal voice. Key factors included the ways in which the VCA course encouraged the development of this voice, as well as the characteristics that students brought to the course and which possibly reflected their musical, educational and cultural background.

A review of the limited literature in this field suggested that characteristics of a personal voice were a lack of dependence on past styles and the ability to take artistic risks, while close musical relationships often played a part in the development of new styles. These

three factors were the basis by which the development of the participants of this study was examined.

A case study approach was used to investigate 10 students throughout the three years of their Degree of Bachelor of Music (Performance). Data were collected by observation, interview, and journals completed by the participants. Observation was carried out on weekly Ensemble Workshop classes as well as the three end-of-year recitals at which their musical voices were heard.

It was found that five of the ten participants had developed a personal voice as defined by the study, while three had not and two others had withdrawn from the VCA. The personal voices of the participants were manifested through their instrumental sound as well as the material they performed, in all cases original music. There was some evidence that those who developed a personal voice had undertaken some tertiary study prior to entry to the VCA, and were older

and had been improvising for longer than those who did not develop a personal voice. The effects of musical, educational and cultural background appeared to be a factor in the development of a personal voice but the evidence was not substantial.

The results of the study showed that the development of a personal musical voice can occur when people are free from a dependence on conventional jazz styles and are able to take artistic risks in seeking their own sound. Musical relationships also assist musicians to develop a personal voice, although even those in the study who were deemed to have not developed such a voice sought kindred spirits with whom to perform. The study showed that improvisation provides a means of assisting people to realise their own personal expressivity, while the production of new and original material contributes to the growth of the musical language in general.

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### *A semiotic model of musical time*

*Thomas Reiner*

(The University of Melbourne)

This dissertation investigates the link between musical time and signs. A semiotic model of musical time is developed on the basis of Ferdinand de Saussure's signifier-signified pair, Charles Sanders Peirce's concept of the interpretant, and Jean Molino's and Jean-Jacques Nattiez's semiological tripartition. The model employs a three-way distinction among physical objects and occurrences that have the potential to function as signs of musical time (traces), process that result in potential traces of musical time (poietic dimension), and interpretative responses that actualize traces of music time (esthetic dimension).

The theoretical framework of the proposed model includes a synthesis of relevant sign concepts, an investigation of physical signifiers of time, the identification of semiotic properties of Henri Bergson's concept of inner time, an examination of sound's potential to function as a trace of musical time and as a symbol of time, and an identification of constituents of the poiesis and the esthesis of musical time.

Inherent and recognizable temporal features are identified and examined in the Gregorian chant *Puer*

*natus est nobis* and John Cage's 4'33". Igor Stravinsky's concepts of ontological and psychological time and Karlheinz Stockhausen's morphology of musical time are studied as representative examples of the poiesis of musical time in composition. Poietic strategies and esthetic responses are examined in the case of the interpretation and performance of irrational note values.

Claude Lévi-Strauss's notion of music's obliteration of time is discussed with respect to the relevance of an awareness of time in the act of listening. The introduction of a principal distinction between hearing associated with perception and listening associated with cognition provides the basis for the proposition that musical time is both unheard and imperceptible. The role of concepts and the designations as interpretants are investigated to demonstrate that consciousness of musical time involves semiosis. A concluding collation and intergration of semiotic properties and constituents consolidates the semiotic status of musical time.