
Editorial

What an extraordinary year it has been! As we breathe a collective sigh of relief and prepare to enter 2021, it is my great pleasure to welcome our readers to issue 46: a collection of articles and reviews produced against the backdrop of multiple lockdowns, extended periods of remote work, tightening budgets, and restricted access to libraries and archives. In spite of these and countless other challenges, *Context* has remained steadfast in its support of high-quality music scholarship from Australian and international contributors.

Our first article comes from John Whiteoak, who revisits the content of his seminal text *Playing Ad Lib* (1999) in consideration of the ever-expanding Trove database, still two decades away at the time of his original research. In addition to situating new findings within the field of contemporary jazz studies, Whiteoak makes a convincing case for treating digital search engines as a supplement to, rather than a replacement for, manual archival work.

Özgecan Karadağlı then takes us back to the nineteenth-century Ottoman Empire, to detail its promotion and performance history of Western art music, particularly opera. She shows how the Empire and its dynasty embraced Western traditions long before the formation of the Turkish Republic, and that it was common for composers of the period to combine Western and Ottoman elements in their work.

Third, Maria Mannone and Federico Favali remind us once again of the profound links that exist between mathematics and music. Their article investigates this relationship with reference to *Qwalala*, an installation produced by Pae White for the 57th Venice Biennale, whose structures Favali subsequently ‘translated’ into musical forms. By employing various mathematical transformations and techniques, the mathematician-composer duo shows how visual elements can theoretically be rendered as abstract musical ideas.

Context’s commitment to promoting Australian music research is again emphasised in our final article, in which David Irving and Alan Maddox urge us to reconsider the modes typically used to study Australian musical societies from the beginning of colonisation (1788) to Federation (1901). Having identified ten approaches favoured by scholars thus far, Irving and Maddox provide a critical overview of each, and call for an increased use of a reflexive paradigm in future studies. Such an approach has the potential, the authors argue, to open the study of music in colonial Australia to new directions, reinstate agency in marginalised groups, and incorporate the position of the researcher in twenty-first-century contexts.

These important issues are unpacked further in Philip Eames’s conversation with Paul Stanhope, who kindly agreed to be our composer interview subject for this issue. Stanhope discusses the inception of his *Requiem*, a recent commission from the Russell Mills Foundation that is still, at the time of writing, awaiting its premiere, postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions. In this new work, Stanhope juxtaposes the old with the new, and the sacred with the secular: as well as reworking material from earlier compositions, he weaves text from the Latin mass amongst poetry by Mary Elizabeth Frye, Neela Nath Das, and Oodgeroo Noonuccal, the latter of whose words also formed the epigraph of Irving and Maddox’s article. An extract from Stanhope’s *Requiem*—the Kyrie, or ‘The Rain of Merciful Cloud’—follows the interview.

Issue 46 concludes with five book reviews on a diverse array of topics, ranging from J.S. Bach in Australia to modernism in interwar Britain.

On behalf of the Editorial Committee, I would like to thank the authors who chose to publish their research with *Context*, and the MCM staff for their continued support. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the large number of anonymous, expert readers who assisted with advice to authors in order to ensure that this issue maintains the highest standards of scholarship. To offer your time and expertise in a year where academic work became more precarious than ever shows a commitment to music research that did not go unnoticed—thank you.

Madeline Roycroft