

## 16 | Diverse Musics: Shaping Music through Cultural Difference

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Post-war mass migration has fundamentally transformed Australia's population, society, culture and musical landscape over the last seventy-odd years. But flows of people from diverse non-Anglophone countries together with their distinctive music cultures trace back to colonial Australia. This less familiar 'multicultural' dimension of Australian pre-World War II music history coexisted with the pervasive influence of creatively exoticised stage and other representations of the music of so-called 'oriental', Hispanic and other peoples and places.<sup>1</sup> These dual musical strands involving both real and part-imagined cultural difference have continued to dilute and diversify Australia's British cultural and musical heritage in significant ways, while also enriching the panorama of Australian musical life.

While acknowledging the dauntingly kaleidoscopic span and complexity of influences on music-making, musical taste and musical life in Australia – and that all musics with the exception of Indigenous Australian traditions originated elsewhere – this chapter is limited to examining some selected ways that migration and migrating musics shaped Australian music and musical culture. It opens windows onto four periods of social, cultural and political foment from the pre-Federation colonial era (pre-1901) to the present that illuminate diverse musical encounters or engagements between 'minority' cultures and what has been, until recently, an Anglo-Australian majority. These examples also recognise the role of community in fostering musical diversity and generating self-contained music scenes.

Because the music of minority cultures tends to become articulated and defined through uneven power relationships with the majority and its mainstream culture and institutions, an important aim of this article is to provide a more nuanced view of this relationship. Therefore, various of our examples illustrate how the 'power', or value, of difference – whether the appeal of the mildly exotic to majority culture patronage, the power of being (rightly or wrongly) perceived as hailing from an ethnic group or region with particular music-related attributes, or the perceived 'authenticity' of performance by musicians with an 'ethnic' identity – has been

strategically deployed for professional or other advantage. These examples further demonstrate the shifting relationship and persistent tension between minority and majority whereby 'minority' musicians exploit opportunities provided by the mainstream which, simultaneously, shapes and can even redefine minority musics.

Two influential colonial-era groups of visiting and resident non-Anglo musicians were from German and Italian-speaking parts of Europe.<sup>2</sup> The first section of the chapter centres on the pre-WWI musical contributions of German-speaking residents and visitors, who eventually formed the largest non-Anglo colonial-era community. A key factor in their positioning and acceptance within the colonial community is that 'Germans were viewed as having a privileged relationship to music and this view was one that also came from the United Kingdom with the British settlers'.<sup>3</sup> The following section discusses Italian influence on musical entertainment in the interwar and post-WWII era alongside the role of Jewish resident, migrant and refugee musicians. These musicians shaped trends in mainstream popular musical taste through their expertise in Latin, so-called Gypsy ('Tzigane') and other music that was (or was perceived to be) widely popular in Europe, while also providing 'music of home' for their own ethnic communities.

Taking a historical musicology perspective, both sections emphasise minority musicians' creative and strategic channelling of ethnic 'difference' into professional success and their transformative impact on the Australian musical entertainment industry. They both draw on three concepts developed specifically to apply to migrant professional music-making within a 'pre-multiculturalism' musical entertainment industry where commercial and reputational success rather than, for example, identity construction through music formed the primary impulse. 'Assimilated ethnicity' refers to modes of cultural expression watered down through social and cultural assimilation, as illustrated below. 'Hyper-ethnicity' denotes the creative inflation, or burlesque, of actual or perceived ethnic characteristics into colourful stereotypes, including by musicians of another ethnicity. 'Ethno-mediation' involves an ethnically defined genre mediated via another ethnic group to the extent of blending or juxtaposing characteristics of both ethnicities.<sup>4</sup>

The remainder of the chapter shifts to an ethnomusicological focus on political, social and cultural developments from the later twentieth century and the related growth and diversification of music-making emanating from or associated with particular communities. We consider how, from the 1980s on, the twin forces of local multiculturalism and the new

globalised phenomenon of ‘world music’ intersected in Australia to foster a wealth of musical diversity including creative musical interventions and experimentations.

Lastly, we address the many multifaceted music ‘scenes’ found in Australia today that revolve around diasporic and/or genre-based communities and encompass both participatory and presentational music, amateur and professional activity, while variously projecting ethnic or musical identities and linking into musical domains beyond ‘community’. Employing a case-study approach, this section hones into the local world of Indonesia-related music-making to exemplify the complex dynamics of individual scenes.

### **A German Musical Presence in Colonial-Era Australia**

Music traditions associated with German-speaking migrants had begun to reach colonial Australia by 1838, with the establishment of a Lutheran community in South Australia and a largely Moravian community in Victoria in 1849. Later migration was more often for economic or political reasons, boosted by the monetary attractions of the Victorian and New South Wales gold rushes. A notable feature of German-speaking society in Australia was its propensity to rapidly form clubs and cultural societies, or ‘German Unions’, which also provided platforms for musical performance, the formation of choirs and instrumental ensembles, the organisation of festivals and engagements for resident or touring musicians. A primary example was the *Liedertafel* (song table) male singing-society tradition that became immensely influential in late nineteenth-century Australian choral music. *Liedertafels* were established in both Adelaide and Melbourne by the 1850s and, later, in numerous other large and small population centres. They represent a cogent example of ‘assimilated ethnicity’ in the sense of increasing Anglicisation. The Melbourne Deutscher Liedertafel (1868–), for example, was re-established in 1879 as the Melbourne Liedertafel with many non-German choristers and orchestra members, female concert artists and a change of formal club language from German to English. In 1905 it combined with the rival Metropolitan Liedertafel as the Royal Victorian Liedertafel and, in 1980, became the Royal Victorian Choir.

German-speaking instrumentalists were the backbone of Australian opera orchestras ‘partly due to the migratory habits of the graduates of German conservatoria [*sic*], which were then the world’s primary sources of skilled instrumentalists’.<sup>5</sup> Resident and touring German-speaking

classical musicians were a significant presence in colonial concerts, and one especially colourful example is violinist and composer Miska Hauser, who thrilled colonial audiences with his virtuosic improvisations and intriguing novelty showpiece 'Bird on a Tree'.<sup>6</sup> German-speaking immigrants had a traditional association with the guitar and zither, and colonial-era tours of costumed 'mountain singers', yodellers and traditional instrumental ensembles, such as the very popular Jungfrau Kapelle Swiss Band and Singers, popularised the zither with guitar accompaniment. German-speaking music teachers often taught both zither and guitar. Zither virtuoso Joseph Pflieger, for example, established a zither studio in 1880s Melbourne and formed a large mostly female Zither Club (zither orchestra) that presented 'Grand Zither Concerts' at Athenaeum Hall.<sup>7</sup>

The term 'German band' may conjure images of the 'hyper-ethnic' music and costumes of oom-pah band musicians at *Oktoberfests* or the numerous Bavarian-style cabaret restaurants that appeared from the late 1950s.<sup>8</sup> But brass (and reed) band music (*Blasmusik*) was an important Lutheran tradition and German community brass bands eventually became integrated with the Anglo-Australian brass band movement. The German-settled town of Tanunda in South Australia (with its own notable town band since the 1850s) became an important national championships site for the movement immediately after WWI. To fully appreciate the significance of German brass band influence it must be understood that brass band music was mainstream popular musical entertainment before Australia's 1920s Jazz Age.<sup>9</sup>

Numerous itinerant 'German' or 'Bavarian' brass (and reed) street, concert and dance bands flocked to the colonies from the beginning of the Gold Rush and, besides street-playing, are thereafter documented in the colonial press as having been hired in their distinctive uniforms for a remarkable range of functions. These included picnics, circus parades and ring accompaniment, dance competitions, colonial celebrations, German club functions, German National festivals, German *Biergarten* entertainment, indoor classical concerts, stage accompaniment, race track entertainment, regattas, ploughing races, church and funeral services, roller skating-rink music, hotel entertainment, aquarium, zoo and botanical garden entertainment, ship voyages and ferry cruises, all manner of public processions, charity fundraising events, temperance meetings, political rallies and protest marches.<sup>10</sup>

Various German band musicians were deeply respected within the Australian band movement, and some were already leading local bands by the end of the 1850s. They include the Wirth musical family (of Wirth's

Circus fame) and the legendary cornet virtuoso, arranger, composer and Fitzgerald's Circus bandleader Herr (Henry) von der Mehden, who inspired amateur bandsmen wherever he travelled.<sup>11</sup> The 1907 fantasia 'Le Cirque' was dedicated to him by the 'Sousa of the Antipodes', Alex Lithgow, and two of his own compositions, 'Bucephaleon' and 'Tarador', entered the Australian amateur brass band repertoire. WWI hostility towards Germany ended the era of German bands as popular public entertainment and diminished German influence on Australian banding. But for more than six decades, 'German' or 'Bavarian' bands had provided the colonies with an impressive and influential model of highly disciplined, popular wind-band music that was 'strong and sweet', good to listen and dance to and had the mildly exotic attribute of being 'from the Continent'.<sup>12</sup>

### Italian and Jewish Musicians and 'Continental Music'

Vigorous importation of American popular entertainment culture continued immediately after WWI as the prime impulse of Australia's Jazz Age (c. 1919–28) and provided little cultural space for Continental European migrant or visiting musicians. By the 1930s, however, a seismic shift in Australian popular taste foregrounded new ethnic musical dimensions. Industry reports that Britain and 'the Continent' were usurping America's hegemony in popular and light musical entertainment<sup>13</sup> were accompanied by an Australian craze for rumba and tango dancing and music and the formation of costumed radio and restaurant 'tango', 'Gauchotango', 'Tzigane'<sup>14</sup> ('Gypsy' or 'Gypsy-tango') and 'rhumba' bands. The popularity of Latin dance music, Tzigane and other music perceived to be popular on 'the Continent' was boosted by sound movies like *Flying Down to Rio* (1933) and *The Blue Danube* (1932), which brought the exotic sights and sounds of real or imitative Hispanic and Tzigane (European Romani) music performance to Australian cinema audiences. The notion of 'Continental music' as sophisticated, romantic and imbued with European charm and, if possible, 'Latin' ethnicity was reinforced by *The Gay Divorcee* (1934) and its sensual rumba song hit 'The Continental', which became the Australian 'Dancing Sensation' of 1935.

A German 'Continental Orchestra Club' had been established in Sydney by 1933 to meet the new demand for 'Continental music' band scores. Overseas artists such as the world-famous Jewish-German Weintraubs Orchestra were also able to exploit the Australian popularity of this music.<sup>15</sup> Increasing demand for European-venue cuisine, service and

atmosphere created a corresponding demand for Continental-style musical entertainment.

An *Australian Music Maker* article titled 'Continental Style Pays Big Divs!' defines the music that was to give Continental European musicians a transformative foothold in the entertainment industry: 'The basic principle of [Continental music] is the playing of Latin music in its original style, which, coupled with their playing from table to table of Gypsy melodies, creates an atmosphere of the Continental cabaret.'<sup>16</sup> In this field of employment almost any type of perceived foreignness in appearance, accent and presentation offered a professional advantage over Anglo-Australian dance and cabaret musicians. However, Italian-Australians and Italian migrants became especially notable in Latin music performance, while Jewish-Australians and Jewish migrants and refugees were prominent in both Latin and Tzigane music.

Despite Hispanic origins, tango music became widely associated with Hungarian, Russian and other European Romani as Tzigane or 'Gypsy-tango' music. Many European countries had their own popular tango songs and dance music (such as the 'Yiddish tangos' of Poland). In Australia, the tango became strongly identified with the stereotype of the soft, romantic music of 'old world' Gypsy cafés and cabaret-restaurant orchestras of 'Old Vienna', Budapest, Moscow, Paris, the 'Blue Danube' or similar places of part-imagination, when played expressively 'in the Gypsy manner'. Sweet and melancholic Gypsy-tango songs like 'Play to Me Gypsy' or 'At the Balalaika' (the antithesis of manic 1920s jazz) epitomised the genre and became 1930s global hit songs. A 1930s article, 'Play to Me Gypsy', describes how music at Sydney Continental restaurants was presented 'in the Gypsy manner'.<sup>17</sup>

The Jewish factor in Australian Tzigane music connects with a historical tradition of Jews in central Europe as professional performers (*klezmerim*) of Romani and other music for weddings and also with the Australian klezmer revival discussed below. A remarkable proportion of reputed Tzigane band leaders were of Jewish heritage, including violin virtuosi Mischa Dobrinski, his brother Sasha (or Sascha) as 'Sasha Berlina', Gregory Sisserman (as Gregory Ivanoff), Alex (or Alec) Burlakov and Philip Cohen, whose music library includes handwritten notated examples of his violin embellishments 'in the Gypsy manner'.<sup>18</sup>

Profound Jewish affinity with Latin music in Australia is demonstrated by the number of significant bandleaders associated with Latin music between the 1930s and 1950s who were of Jewish heritage, representing examples of ethno-mediation and hyper-ethnicity.<sup>19</sup> They included the

1930s ABC National Tango Band leader Harry Bloom, late 1940s–early 1950s Sydney ‘Orquesta Tipica’ leader, Leo ‘White’ (Weiss, formerly of the Weintraubs), his even more Latin-dedicated Sydney broadcasting, recording and nightclub rival Ernest Rittie, who led his Cuban-costumed Latin orchestras as ‘Ernesto Rittez’, and Russian-Australian Abe Walters, whose remarkable career eventually took him to London as the celebrated Latin band leader ‘Don Carlos’.<sup>20</sup>

Italian names punctuate colonial-era classical music performance and teaching, and the influence of Italian opera and late nineteenth-century visiting Italian opera companies was immense. Furthermore, musicians from itinerant Italian street bands from the 1850s formed Italian orchestras for classical concert-giving, functions and popular entertainments. By WWI, Italian bands for hire in Melbourne alone included Di Gilio’s, Alberti’s, Allietti’s, Labataglia’s, Ricco’s, Briglia’s, Curcio’s and Cerbasi’s. Italians had a traditional affinity with the mandolin, guitar and harp, and were considered masters of the archetypal Continental musical instrument, the piano-accordion, at the peak of its mainstream Australian popularity.<sup>21</sup> They could sing in Spanish without difficulty, and their Latin music was ‘ethno-mediated’ and not simply delineated, interpreted or modified Hispanic music. Numerous Australia-recorded examples reveal it as a genre in its own right, exhibiting a distinctive *liscio* (smooth) sonority albeit with variation between individual ensembles and practitioners. It was later promoted as ‘Italian-Latin’ or ‘Italo-Hispanic’ music to distinguish it from the music of Latino-Australian musicians.<sup>22</sup>

Costumed all-Italian so-called ‘Argentino tango bands’ became a prominent feature of Australian popular entertainment, with an early high-profile example being the Argentino Tango Band formed in late 1932 to broadcast *Rio Nights* weekly from 3LO Melbourne and led by the tango composer and bandoneon player Dom Caffaro. A network of all-Italian or mostly Italian tango, rumba or ‘cosmopolitan’ bands, including most of the best-known Italian-Australian commercial musicians of the day, can be traced from the personnel of Caffaro’s 1932 band.<sup>23</sup> Partly inspired by the success of the ‘Argentino’ bands, Anglo-Australians and other European migrants also formed costumed tango and rumba bands for radio and Continental cabaret work.

WWII brought internments and other restrictions for Italian-Australians, but European post-war migration opened a new chapter for their ethno-mediated Latin music. Latin dance music experienced a surge of popularity in Australia from 1949 and, by then, included samba and mambo, followed a decade later by the cha-cha-cha, an immensely popular genre



that Italian-Latin bands particularly excelled in. The popularity of their Latin music is illustrated by the band names that many adopted, such as Cubana, Cumbachero, El Bajon, Duo Moreno, Los Amigos, El Combo Tropicale or Mokambo.

Between the late 1950s and mid 1970s these bands were in great demand for the endless Italian community cabaret-balls, Continental cabaret-restaurants, Italian sporting and social club functions as well as Jewish community functions. If a Continental venue proprietor wanted to feature 'Latin American' music, the obvious choice was to hire an Italian band. By the late 1970s, however, Australia's Latin-Italian era, which had substantially shaped Australian perceptions of 'Latin American' music, was largely at an end. Practitioners from Latin America were already reclaiming the music as their own and the vast Continental cabaret scene of previous decades was in decline with the proliferation of discos and Asian and Middle Eastern restaurants and the growing support for 'folkloric' forms in new regional community clubs, among other factors.

## Multiculturalism Meets World Music

Ethnic communities and organisations formed by the burgeoning post-WWII migrant population created an environment for the maintenance or renewal of country-of-origin musics. Ranging from traditional to popular forms, music supported social, cultural and religious life and also affirmed ethnic, national and/or regional identities. Vernacular migrant musics lacked visibility in mainstream Australian society,<sup>24</sup> but from the 1980s on, two major interconnecting strands of influence provided a public platform for musical diversity, including the music of migrant Australia.

The new government policy of multiculturalism from the 1970s brought recognition of the rights of post-war migrants to equal participation and representation in Australian society and aimed to both support and celebrate Australia's increasingly diverse population, languages and cultures. This brought about a different social and cultural positioning of migrant musical expressions, which began to gain appreciation and endorsement within mainstream society without regard to their specific entertainment or commercial value.

Nevertheless, some continuities from the previous era became apparent in relation to the styles or genres of music that yielded opportunities for musicians, specifically, those carrying visual and sonic markers of their 'ethnic' character. Notably, government funding for 'multicultural arts'



included direct support for public forms of so-called multicultural music that conspicuously flagged 'difference'. This was in contrast to, say, the vernacular pop and other seemingly less authentic forms that dominated the music played for dances and other types of entertainments within migrant communities.<sup>25</sup> However, groups successfully availing themselves of funding mainly comprised Anglo-Australian musicians with a folk background who, in bands such as Sirocco, brought together a culturally eclectic repertoire in what Smith describes as 'polyethnic fusion'.<sup>26</sup>

Riding on the back of multicultural policy, these 'multicultural music' groups fortuitously tied in with the new 'world music' movement that swept the Western world from the late 1980s. 'World music' in Australia encompasses both music culturally and ethnically linked to migrant communities and the hybrid musical fusions that, regardless of performer identity, are nevertheless validated by reference to Australian multiculturalism. As argued elsewhere, 'the interplay and tension between musicians with . . . post-War migrant backgrounds who engage with musical traditions from their own cultures and . . . Anglo-Australian musicians who engage with the musical traditions of others represent arguably the most distinctive aspects of Australian world music development'.<sup>27</sup>

Nevertheless, musicians with a migrant background, significant entrepreneurial and networking competencies and a willingness to trade on their 'authentic' ethnic identity are particularly well placed within the world music arena. Melbourne Jewish violin/fiddle player Ernie Gruner, for example, has long been a virtually full-time professional musician, playing in or forming and leading multiple bands simultaneously and/or successively since the early 1990s, from *Flirting Mazurkas* ('jazz, French, Latin, Russian, Gypsy . . .'), *Melisma* (Greek, Sephardic) and *Yalla* ('Middle-Eastern') to *Bohemian Nights* (aka 'Gypsy') and *Saray Iluminado* (Sephardic and Bosnian *Sevdah*), among others.<sup>28</sup> Though trained as a classical musician, Gruner's core practice has been klezmer music and he has been a central figure in the Australian klezmer revival through his trio, *Klezmeritis*. With subsequent global and local world-music trends privileging the nebulous catch-all of 'Gypsy music', Gruner's musical activities have similarly adjusted to incorporate klezmer within this broader frame. But he also brings his musicianship in Jewish vernacular musics to Melbourne's large Jewish community as a klezmer or Jewish professional musician. Whereas *Klezmeritis* targets and mainly appeals to an audience for world and 'multicultural music', Gruner's other Jewish band, *Klezmer Trio*, caters for Jewish weddings, bar mitzvah and other Jewish celebrations requiring a much wider range of music.<sup>29</sup>

The intersection of multiculturalism and world music has also provided a nexus for some of Australia's most high-profile 'world music' artists, such as Egyptian-Australian oud player Joseph Tawadros, Hindustani musician and tabla player Bobby Singh, and Japan-born koto player Satsuki Odamura. Musical 'authenticity' is not only underlined by their ethnically marked cultural relationship to the instrument they play and musical traditions they represent. The artistic profile each has achieved also derives from their status as exponents of highly complex art music traditions and their versatility in collaborating and experimenting with other musicians in diverse styles, thus achieving recognition across multiple music genres. In addition to performing with fusion groups, Odamura has diversified into contemporary repertoire and received many commissions from Australian composers.<sup>30</sup> Singh – as well as being the 'go to' tabla player for visiting Indian classical artists – has played with groups ranging from Dha and ARIA-award winning Djan Djan to electronic dance group The Bird.<sup>31</sup> Multiple ARIA award winner Tawadros – also internationally recognised – has collaborated with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, classical guitarist Slava Grigoryan and American and European jazz musicians, among others. As Keogh observes, Tawadros demonstrates agency in the construction of plural identities and in strategically positioning himself within different fields of music.<sup>32</sup>

Drawing on Tony Bennett's three-stage model of policy development in social and cultural diversity, Graeme Smith proposes that Australia has entered the third stage whereby the music that benefits from government policy and support is understood not as linked to community and tradition but to a valorisation of cultural diversity and fluidity where 'Hybridity and fusion become the marks of a new form of Authenticity'.<sup>33</sup> Identities can be constructed through, variously, ethnicity, an assumed and contingent musical persona, or even a generalised musical cosmopolitanism. Nevertheless, in a sign that musical representations of diversity derive their authority from multicultural Australia, Anglo-Australian world musicians sometimes claim disadvantage and even reverse racism due to the reification of 'difference'.<sup>34</sup>

Alongside hybridity and fusion, intercultural collaboration, which validates participation by 'non-ethnic' musicians as collaborative partners, is increasingly the mode by which cultural diversity is expressed in Australia. The Australian Art Orchestra (AAO)'s decades-long exploration of 'the meeting points between cultures and disciplines',<sup>35</sup> demonstrated through its many and varied intercultural collaborative projects, including with Arnhem Land musicians Daniel and David Wilfred, provides a cogent

example. Since the AAO's first such project in 1996, 'Into the Fire' with South Indian *mridangam* drummer Kaaraikudi Mani, AAO has partnered with Balinese musicians, South Korean singers and local *guzheng* player Mindy Meng Wang among many others. These mainly jazz-framed and jazz-inflected projects are enriched musically and culturally through non-jazz instrumental and vocal colours, scales, rhythmic structures and modes of compositional and improvisational interplay. They belong to the 'inter-cultural turn' in Australian jazz that, according to Webb and Robson, represents 'the conscious pursuit of creating a locally meaningful form of jazz'.<sup>36</sup> While undoubtedly highly collaborative in their musical processes, they are initiated by, funded through and, ultimately, controlled by the AAO. Moreover, notwithstanding outstanding musicians and compelling musical outcomes, these intercultural ventures overall represent something of an AAO brand involving the seeming pursuit of ever new cultural sources and sounds: almost a cultural shopping expedition.

### **Micromusics in Diaspora: the Indonesian-Australian Musical World**

Collaborative jazz and Asia-related hybridisations in Australia take place within a broad nationwide panorama of musical activity that incorporates a myriad of 'micromusics' and subcultural scenes, many of them linked to diasporic groups as well as broader platforms of world music and/or cultural institutions that bring Australia's musical diversity to wider audiences. Diaspora groups are often multi-generational, heterogeneous and interconnected in various ways into the cultural mainstream. The multiple music scenes revolving around them are nevertheless unique and mostly narrowly visible 'musical worlds', each distinct in their social, political, cultural and demographic dynamics and in the way they interact with broader Australian society. The widely but loosely used term 'migrant community' can give the impression of a self-contained, internally homogeneous social and cultural entity, but ethnicity or ancestral background are not necessarily determinants of connectedness to a community of people of similar background, let alone its cultural activities, nor is its culturally marked music-making necessarily the exclusive product of a diasporic community. Slobin's interlocking concepts of subculture, superculture and interculture are useful in understanding the interplay of cultural forces within and across diasporic music scenes.<sup>37</sup>

Musical activities affiliated to the medium-size migrant grouping of Indonesian-Australians illustrate how Slobin's framework can be applied to an individual 'micromusic'.<sup>38</sup> Australia's diverse Asian diaspora has rapidly grown to include two major heterogeneous groups, ethnic Chinese migrants and those from South Asia. As the largest overseas-born migrant populations, their collective musical activities cannot be defined as 'micromusics'. But the musicking of smaller lesser-known Asian-Australian diaspora groups, such as the Indonesian diaspora, can more appropriately be described this way.<sup>39</sup> Of particular significance is Indonesia's proximity to Australia, which has resulted in extensive and long-term cross-border engagement, including pre-contact cultural connections with north-coast Indigenous Australia. But this diaspora group also illustrates a micromusic that is a locally inflected distillation of the musical richness of Indonesia's huge multilingual, multi-ethnic, majority-Muslim population and span of genres from 'high art' forms to countless local traditions and home-grown and globalised popular musics.

Consequently, this migrant grouping provides the core of a highly diverse micromusic. The field of music represented as Indonesian or Indonesia-related is identified with and to some extent emanates from Australia's local diaspora but also crosses into communities of interest and connects to other musical and cultural networks as well as having institutional links. It includes activity directed within and/or beyond the community, amateur and professionally inclined musicians, Indonesia-originating and non-Indonesian participants, and diverse subgroups or sub-communities. And it projects diverse identities and ways of relating to music from Indonesia. Demographic factors that impinge on the scene include a diaspora profile that now includes many Chinese-Indonesians and transient international students from Indonesia. Within the local diasporic community (described by Slobin as an "involuntary" subculture<sup>40</sup>), community-wide events organised by various community organisations provide an important forum for presentations by amateur community performing groups. These range from bands performing national vernacular genres such as *kroncong* or *dangdut* or else Indonesian-language pop through to ethnic-specific groups such as, say, a Batak (North Sumatra) choir, a Sundanese (West Javanese) *calung* (bamboo xylophone and rattle) ensemble or a Balinese dance group. These groups tend to form around 'activists' or individuals with particular skills and knowledge. International students from Indonesia, who represent a distinct 'sub-community', organise their own large-scale Indonesian pop culture events, such as Monash students' annual Soundsekerta concerts in the Melbourne

Town Hall.<sup>41</sup> All this activity connects participants to their cultural roots and affirms Indonesian or ethnic identities both to those engaged in it and others, while also strongly emphasising sociality. This ethos is exemplified in a Melbourne group called Orkes Jawi Waton Muni, comprising a fluid collective of up to twenty people performing Javanese or other Indonesian songs with an eclectic mix of Western and occasionally traditional instruments and prioritising participation, getting together and enjoyment – including by the audience.

Another domain of local Indonesian musical activity comprises the various gamelan ensembles that have formed in all Australian cities. Indonesia's spectacular gong-and-drum percussion orchestras from Java and Bali attract many non-Indonesians, who join groups that accommodate differing levels of knowledge and skill. Gamelan's collective dimension is intrinsic to the music's structure and practice and, as with the above community groups, involves both participatory and presentational performance.

Gamelan in Australia mostly entails a 'superculture'-type infrastructure: overarching structures that control or impact on micromusics and subcultural activity.<sup>42</sup> This comprises the institutions that own sets of instruments, host performing groups and to some extent regulate their activity, in particular, Indonesian consulates and university music schools with ethnomusicology programmes. While gamelan music-making may include Indonesian performers and performances at community events, it is mostly not Indonesian-community-based. It thus represents a cross-cutting 'interculture', that is, linkages connecting with, but not within, a migrant community. Gamelan groups are essentially affinity groups, 'charmed circles of like-minded music-makers drawn magnetically to a certain genre that creates strong expressive bonding' and that creates music identities through it.<sup>43</sup> The mostly musical focus of these groups, which may extend to gamelan-based composition and experimentation, contrasts and can create tensions with Indonesian community-based gamelan groups, whose primary goal is social and cultural rather than performative as such.

Another area of culturally linked musical activity that can also be categorised as a cross-cutting 'interculture' comprises independent semi-professional artists who use their engagement with Indonesian culture and music as a springboard for funded creative projects that sometimes have cross-cultural aspects. Melbourne-based musician Ria Soemardjo, who has Indonesian heritage and training in traditional Javanese vocal practice, creates and performs diverse work often in collaboration with contemporary dancers or theatre-makers – tapping into the multi-artform dimension of much Indonesian performance. In the world-music ensemble Fine Blue Thread

(also including tabla and baroque cello), Ria Soemardjo's original vocals draw on Javanese traditions and aesthetics in their delicately minimal and meditative quality.<sup>44</sup> In other contexts she supplements her voice with Javanese gongs or other traditional instruments. Her creative projects are pitched to contemporary art audiences, but as a traditional *pesindhen* singing in *wayang* shadow-puppet plays with Melbourne Community Gamelan, her exceptional skills receive acclaim from audiences that include or have connections with the Indonesian community. Other, differently positioned Melbourne-based independent artists, such as heavy-metal experimental vocalist Karina Utomo and jazz pianist Ade Ishs, draw in different ways on their Indonesian backgrounds but are firmly situated within the wider Australian musical milieu.

These diverse fields of culturally informed music-making – ranging across a wide variety of genres, performer backgrounds and relations to the diaspora group – come together at events facilitated by the institutions that form the superculture. They include Indonesia-related events run by universities and events such as Independence Day or trade fairs presented by Australia's Indonesian consulates.

## Conclusion

This 'micromusic' case study illustrates how the dynamics of a specific migrant grouping can shape the activation of its musical expressions within its broader Australian environment as well as underlining how the complexity of present-day musical diversity resists generalisation. It further highlights the importance of identity construction and of community – where music speaks for groups rather than individuals – as factors in creating meaning through cultural difference or in shaping the way musical diversity is expressed. The preceding European migration examples show, among other things, how perceived musical and 'ethnic' attributes and varying degrees of exotic 'difference' became (and in some cases continue to be) a professional advantage for non-Anglo musicians and even enabled them to influence Australian popular entertainment development.

Over the sweep of Australian history, musicians and musics from the margins have intersected professionally, commercially, collaboratively, cross-culturally or in other ways with mainstream audiences, institutions and other structures. Whereas such encounters sometimes lead to a co-option of the margins by the majority, musicians also demonstrate their agency by shaping and transforming majority music consumption and music-making through the paradigm of difference.

## Notes

1. See, for example, A. Scott-Maxwell, 'Oriental Exoticism in 1920s Australian Popular Music', *Perfect Beat: The Pacific Journal of Research into Contemporary Music and Popular Culture*, 3(3) (July 1997), 28–57.
2. Before 1871, German-speaking migrants or visitors to Australia, including Austrians and Swiss, mostly thought of themselves as, for example, Prussians, Bavarians, Hanoverians or Moravians.
3. K. Murphy, "'Volk von Brüdern": The German-Speaking Liedertafel in Melbourne', *Nineteenth-Century Review*, 2(2) (2005), 55–76.
4. J. Whiteoak, *'Take Me to Spain': Australian Imaginings of Spain through Music and Dance* (Melbourne: Lyrebird Press, 2019), pp. 3–4.
5. H. Love, *The Golden Age of Australian Opera: W. S. Lyster and His Companies 1861–1880* (Sydney: Currency Press, 1981), p. 95.
6. H. Anderson (ed.), C. Roderick (trans.), *Miska Hauser's Letters from Australia 1854–1858* (Ascot Vale, Victoria: Red Rooster Press, 1988).
7. 'Grand Zither Concert', *Lorgnette* [Melbourne] (23 November 1886), p. 3.
8. J. Whiteoak, 'Making Gemütlichkeit: Bavarian-Style Music and Dance in German-Speaking Community and Commercial Popular Entertainment' in D. Bendrups (ed.), *Music on the Edge: Selected Papers from the 2007 IASPM Australia/New Zealand Conference* (Dunedin: IASPM Australia/New Zealand, 2008), pp. 181–8.
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