

Welcome to Soundings!

Thank you to everybody who contributed to this edition.

The photo on the cover is of Lexine Solomon singing at The Factory Theatre, Sydney (photo taken by Iriaka Ross). Last year, Lexine was the first Indigenous Australian to present at an IASPM-ANZ conference with the support of the IASPM-ANZ Funding for Indigenous Presenters.

I hope you enjoy reading Soundings March 2011!

Katelyn Barney
Secretary IASPM-ANZ

Notes from the Chair

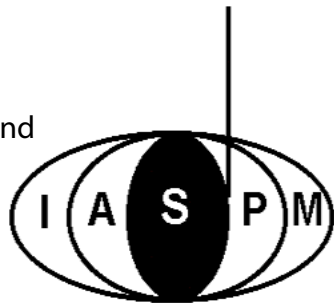
Hello IASPM-ANZites, and welcome to Soundings 2011!

Many thanks to our Secretary, Kate Barney, for compiling the news from our members and creating another action-packed issue. This edition shows the breadth and depth of our activities in the Australia/New Zealand region, from conference reviews to book reviews, and I thought I'd even throw in a photo essay based on my recent research activities in Japan for the televised "Red and White Song Contest".

I'd like to use this opportunity to once again thank the outgoing Treasurer, Jen Cattermole, who has provided many years of service to our organisation, and welcome Penny Spirou

who joined the Executive at the IASPM-ANZ AGM in Melbourne in November 2010. Penny has an introductory note on page 2 of Soundings. See you all in the North Island for the 2011 conference!

Happy reading,
Shelley Brunt
Chair IASPM-ANZ



Notes from the Treasurer

Hi everyone,

It was wonderful to catch up and meet new people at the Melbourne conference. I hope you all had a restful festive season and are now slowly getting back into the swing of things. Although I only just took up the position as IASPM-ANZ Treasurer in November 2010, it has already been quite fulfilling. My sincere thanks to those of you who've been prompt with paying your membership subscriptions. It's very much appreciated. If you are unsure of your membership status or would like to renew your membership, please email me at pspirou@gmail.com. I look forward to seeing you all in Wellington later in the year.

Best wishes,
Penny Spirou

Treasurer IASPM-ANZ



IASPM-ANZ Conference News

The next conference will be 23-25 November, 2011, at Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand.

Conference convenor, Geoff Stahl will be issuing a call for papers soon.

Hope to see you there.

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Recent Members' Publications

Barney, K. (2010). Gendering Aboriginalism: A performative gaze on Indigenous Australian women. *Cultural Studies Review*, 16(1). <http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/journals/index.php/csrj/index>.

Barney, K., & Mackinlay, E. (2010). "Singing trauma trails": Songs of the Stolen Generations in Indigenous Australia. *Music and Politics*, 4(2). <http://www.music.ucsb.edu/projects/musicandpolitics/archive/2010-2/barney-mackinlay.pdf>.

Brunt, S. (2010). Sounding out the streets: Performance, cultural identity, and place in Wellington's Cuba Street Carnival. In H. Johnson (Ed.), *Many voices: Music and national identity in Aotearoa/New Zealand* (pp. 39-49). Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Press.

Johnson, B. (Ed). (2010). *Earogenous zones: Sound, sexuality and cinema*. London: Equinox.

Johnson, B. (2010). Deportation blues: Black jazz and white Australia in the 1920s. *IASPM Journal: Journal of the International Association for the Study of Popular Music*, 1(1). http://www.iaspmjournal.net/index.php/IASPM_Journal, this article at http://www.iaspmjournal.net/index.php/IASPM_Journal/article/viewFile/297/502.

Montano, E. (2010). "How do you know he's not playing Pac-Man while he's supposed to be DJing?": Technology, formats and the digital future of DJ culture. *Popular Music*, 29(3): 397-416.

Members' news

Bruce Johnson is undertaking the William Evans Research Fellowship at Otago University, Dunedin in 2011.

Review 1: "Instruments of Change"

IASPM-ANZ Annual Conference, Melbourne, 2010

by Penny Spirou (Macquarie University)

As always, the annual IASPM-ANZ Conference attracts popular music academics from a wide range of research areas. From heavy metal to jazz, issues of copyright to masculinity, this conference did not fail to deliver in terms of variety. Set in the cultural capital of Australia, Melbourne CBD was the perfect location for such an event. During the breaks (and sometimes not) we strolled outside the Monash University conference centre for a quick peek into the chocolate shops, cafes and second-hand hipster clothing outlets. However, most of the time we sat inside the cool, quaint conference centre and enjoyed a great selection of sandwiches, sipped our tea/coffee and juices and revelled in the research findings of our colleagues.

On the first day, after we greeted our long-lost comrades and made sure we were all officially registered for the next three days of intense debate, guest speaker Cath Anderson from the New Zealand Music Commission spoke to us about the importance of learning the art of making music in schools. We then launched into an epic day of parallel sessions running until 6:30pm. These talks included Katrina Loughrey's discussion on "moral panic" regarding media coverage of electronic dance festivals and violin performance in New York (1960 to 1968) by Adam Cadell. There were several panels covering the hot topics on music policy and organology, and the day concluded with music industry analysis from Philipp Peltz and Natalie Lewandowski.

The second day's festivities commenced bright and early at 9am. For those of us who didn't sleep in, we were treated to fascinating discussions on music scenes: Jodie Taylor raised the issue of reframing the queer music scene and Botond Vitos (who won best postgraduate paper – congratulations!) gave a fascinating paper on the Czech Psytrance scene. After lunch, we were delighted with a very entertaining ("engaging") panel on gender. Kirsten Zemke dazzled us with her beautiful voice during her paper on Jackie DeShannon, Catherine Strong took us inside the



Raphael Nowak, Ian Rogers, Geoff Stahl and Jodie Taylor at the conference dinner (Photo: N. McCoy)

colourful world of Courtney Love and Katharine Nelligan tackled the issue of women in popular music with a very impressive analysis of Katie Noonan's vocals. The fun and good times continued throughout the afternoon with unforgettable music videos from James Cox, Adrian Renzo's Spanish megamix dance moves and Mark Evans and Liz Giuffre's "groovy" tag-team performance.

"this conference did not fail to deliver in terms of variety"

That evening, the conference dinner was a time to cut-loose and shake our money-makers on the dance floor at Miss Libertines. We drank, ate and then kept drinking, making the dancing part a lot looser and funkier. After getting to know each other even more, some continued on to other venues to keep up the drinking momentum, while the rest of us crawled back to our hotel rooms to rest up in time for the final day.

The morning of third day commenced with Aline Scott-Maxwell's insight into early Australian constructions of China and concluded with John Scannell's inquiry into "authenticity". After a break Geoff Stahl and Ed Montano described various festival experiences in New Berlin and Sydney's electric dance scene, respectively. There was a particularly interesting paper on the history of IASPM-ANZ by Graeme Smith (that got a lot of us feeling nostalgic), a fresh new look at Bob Dylan by Mark Sutton and the oddities of Muslims and punk music by Nabeel Zuberi.

During lunchtime we had our AGM, where Jen Cattermole bid her farewell as Treasurer of IASPM-ANZ. We acknowledge all of her hard work over the last few years; her efforts made IASPM-ANZ continue to run effectively. And while on the thankyou thread our gratitude extends to the organisers and executive: Jen Cattermole, Shane Homan and Graeme Smith, Shelley Brunt, Kate Barney and Ed Montano. The IASPM-ANZ 2010 Conference was a roaring success and I know we are all psyching ourselves up for Wellington later this year as preparations are already underway.

Review 2: “re-Visions”

Musicological Society of Australia and New Zealand Musicological Society Joint Conference, Dunedin, 2010

by Natalie Lewandowski (Macquarie University)

“Re-Visions” was the theme of the 2010 Musicological Society of Australia and the New Zealand Musicological Society joint conference, hosted by the University of Otago, Dunedin. The conference theme embraced a wide range of topics and John Drummond’s promise of encouraging the exploration of new ideas, welcoming new interpretations, finding new colleagues and making new friends was certainly delivered. We started the conference in Marma Hall, a location full of character that played host to numerous insightful keynotes and social events throughout the conference. Conference chair John Drummond, in his keynote welcome speech highlighted the uniqueness of our field in a research context. This theme of music and artistic creation certainly not being a “one size fits all” area was further proven in the breadth of topics presented at this year’s conference.

From Katherine Nelligan’s paper on female performers and Raunch-Culture, to Anthony Linden Jones’s paper on the Jindyworobak movement, to Julie Rickwood’s paper on community singing the variety of topics allowed all attendees to find their niche or discover a completely new one. A major advantage of conferences like this is that those who are practically involved in the process of music creation are indeed presenters themselves, with Christopher De Groot and Anthony Ritchie being notable examples. Indeed, conference attendees were even treated to the musical delights of performances by these two performing academics. Such integration proves the progressive nature of the MSA and NZMS in recognising that being a researcher is not just about watching from the sidelines. Conference attendees were encouraged to come in off the sidelines and have a go from day one with the Gamelan ensemble workshop/performance led by conference organising committee member Shelley Brunt.

“being a researcher is not just about watching from the sidelines”



Kirsty Gillespie, IASPM-ANZ Chair Shelley Brunt, Monique Proud and IASPM-ANZ Secretary Katelyn Barney in Dunedin (Photo: M. Hade)

The Dunedin organising committee provided a vibrant programme which included plenty of music participation and performance opportunities. Performances by conference attendees encouraged networking amongst MSA/NZMS members providing an positive environment for both early and progressed researchers alike. The conference dinner, hosted at Otago Poly Technic training restaurant Technique, allowed us all to sample the fine food which New Zealand has to offer and mingle in a relaxed environment. The organising committee ensured that there was plenty of sustenance and assistance on hand with John Drummond even recruiting his son to be available to help. With engrossing panels on technology (Knopoff and Strahle) and sustainability for music cultures (Schippers, Hayward and Drummond) continuing to provide us with more questions as well as the sound of recitals ringing in our ears it is with eager anticipation we look forward to the next conference to be held at The University of Western Australia in 2011.

Review 3: “Revise: the Art and Science of Contemporary Remix Cultures”

Revise/Remix Conference, Woollongong, 2010

by Raphael Nowak (Griffith University)

Organised by Katie Freund and Andrew Whelan, the first edition of the Revise/Remix conference took place at the University of Wollongong. Alongside the PhD students and academics, three artists performed at the end of the second day at the uni bar for our pleasure and to accompany our well-deserved end of day drinks: Slapsista read her rhythmic prose and two breakcore artists – DJ Rainbow Ejaculation and Buttress O’Kneel – came to play a live performance and present their artistic work and vision during the conference. This review aims to transcribe the collegiate mood of the conference and cross-disciplinary diversity of research presented about remix practices, but it will only highlight some of the papers, following the sessions chronologically, despite the wealth of all the material presented.

Siobhan McHugh (University of Wollongong) opened the conference with a paper discussing oral history, aesthetics and interpretation. She argued that transcription of oral history consists of a form of remix, as it dwells on translating from what is said to what is read, with the risk of interpretation or misinterpretation. Generally speaking editing involves reshaping and therefore reinterpretation: for instance, radio stations deliberately embellish and enhance the sound of voices in order to reach a “higher truth”. So do academics, artists, producers or journalists really respect the voice of the ones they are supposed to represent? Still during the first panel, Jenn Phillips (University of Wollongong) presented a paper about the American TV satirist and host Stephen Colbert parodying the TV show O’Reilly by underlying and enhancing some of the traits/features of both David O’Reilly’s personality and show. However the boundary between satire and real-life show remains very thin and Colbert himself crossed it by being interviewed by O’Reilly in his show. Colbert subsequently showed how close he could be to his source material. On the other hand, O’Reilly acknowledged the existence of the satire by inviting the person who personalises it.

Sarah Attfield (University of Technology, Sydney) and Patrick Doherty then

stepped up to interrogate the role of detritus in culture and propose a dub-step remix of a mainstream piece. Indeed through collage, some artists use bits created for commercial purpose and describe their whole pieces as underground ones. The usual process of taking the obscure to make it mainstream is therefore turned the other way around with the process of taking top-charts songs and remixing them into dub-step tracks. The meaning of the sounds is consequently adapted to and by a new audience. In an always-entertaining presentation, Adrian Renzo (University of Auckland) climbed a chair and held a wooden stick to show us how notes makes a megamix what it is. Focusing on the Spanish megamixes from the 1980s, he pointed to the practices of sampling usually regarded as “cheesy” but which have been the source of Italian disco’s emergence for instance. This technique of magnetic tapes’ collages has been intensively used in megamixes and gave birth to new musical genres and conventions, until becoming a specific “school” of remixing.



Adrian Renzo presenting (Photo: R. Nowak)

Relying on a statistical inquiry he conducted with the participants of remix contests, Philippe Peltz (Macquarie University) revealed a glimpse of the struggle happening between the organisers and the contestants over the ownership of the remixes. His data illustrated a high concentration of male contestants who want to be noticed by industry in order to become professional remixers/DJs but who are nonetheless not completely optimistic about their chances to make it. Michael Park (Macquarie University) followed and questioned the notion of multiculturalism in Australian society by mobilising some of the footage he made for his forthcoming documentary about the Hard-Ons. Indeed the multi-ethnic Australian punk band offers an alternative vision of what multiculturalism can be: they don’t focus on their cultural origins nor exploit them, but rather remix racial origin-based notions



Michael Park presenting (Photo: R. Nowak)

of ethnicity in creating a syncretic form of non-white cultural identity within the discourses surrounding Australian national identity and globalised punk identity.

Live from Canada and presenting his paper from his bedroom via Skype, Steven James May (Ryerson University) used Deleuze's idea of "new weapons" to describe the way online websites were used during the 2010 G20 in Toronto. For example internet videos are seen by May as "new freedoms" within digital control societies. In the case of the G20 summit, the protestors' aim was to reveal the politics organised by the government in terms of security, resulting in a hijack of the official speech. Greg Wadley

(University of Melbourne) told us the story of his music band New Waver and of the free, photocopied magazine entitled *Loser Magazine*. Both projects stood on parodies of mainstream magazines and music album: the *Loser Magazine* remixed and parodied the same content of mainstream magazines, but under the banner of the losers. The music band released a series of albums, which feature "corrections" of popular songs; the last one untitled *Bohemian Suburb Rhapsody*, examines the relationship between consumption and production. A musical release lacking the usual artefacts (CD, vinyl, artwork etc) has to face issues related to production and legality.

James Meese (Swinburne University) introduced a different way to look at digital piracy by discussing the construction of the author. He reinscribed the topic within both a historical and a geographical context and argued that our current conception of copyrights is a legacy of the former copyright laws from the 18th century. Also, he considered piracy by the different accesses to media and compared projected costs in different countries: books may at first

sight seem cheaper in India, but when all sorts of incomes and expenses are considered, they actually become too expensive to afford for the population.

Finally Christopher Moore (Deakin University) and Graham Barwell's (University of Wollongong) paper concerned the project they established with their Digital Communications' first year class. Their students made up what is usually described by the neologism "machinima" with the video game World of Warcraft. Using the images, characters and animations from the video game with voice-over narration, this was a study into how students used "machinima" as a means of retelling short stories from "The Canterbury Tales". Moore and Barwell divided the process in three parts: preparation, process and review in order to measure the collaborative work of the students.

What emerged from the remix/revise conference is mainly the wealth of researches and of the breadth of the topics associated with remix practices: indeed, remix surrounds us in our daily life and sometimes remains hard to distinguish. Some common themes covered by many of the papers presented included discussions about digital narratives, the idea of the process, the authenticity and the identity of both the text and authors, levels of engagement, affects and aesthetics. The conference also represented a success in terms of the synergy created by the interactions between practitioners and academics, between political interpretation of the text and the affect of the text, and also between the process and the final product. All forms of remix indeed have in common to reshape, rephrase, transform and mainly transcend the original text into a personalised, contextualised one. Hopefully, this inaugural edition of "Revise: The Art and Science of Contemporary Remix Cultures" will be the first of many conferences to further explore the questions and implications of remix culture across a wide range of disciplines.

Photo Essay

IASPM-ANZ Chair Shelley Brunt was recently in Tokyo for the "61st Annual Red and White Song Contest", a New Year's Eve televised festival that features the cream of Japan's popular music industry. Performers are divided into women's and men's teams, which are named "Red" and "White" respectively: colours that are typically used for teams that battle in contest situations, but are also the colours of Japan as seen on the national flag. Soundings is pleased to present a photo essay of some of Shelley's fieldwork experiences at the event.



The rehearsals inside the broadcast hall, featuring 1960s surf-rock crooner Kayama Yuuzo



Press photo session with selected members of the all-girl manufactured vocal group AKB48. With around 48 members, the group holds the title of the largest group in the world, according to the Guinness World Records



Photo frenzy at the press conference



Soloist Gou Hiromi poses for one of his trademark enthusiastic battle gestures



Crowds gather on the Tokyo streets where a TV screen has been set up especially to display the live song contest



Costumes worn over the past few decades are on display at a retrospective exhibition



Extreme right-wing protesters wave national flags outside the TV network's concert hall. They are protesting about various matters ranging from the tv network's lack of balanced reporting about China, to making the contest's audience stand out in the cold winter night for hours before the show begins

Book Review 1:

Priest, G. (ed.) (2009). *Experimental music: Audio explorations in Australia*. Sydney: UNSW Press.

Reviewed by Dean Biron

For me, the defining image of *Experimental Music: Audio Explorations in Australia* is the photograph on page 188 of Perth musician Ross Bolleter sitting at a "ruined piano". Abandoned in a garden setting, its keyboard clogged with dirt, twigs and leaves, the playing of such an instrument reinvigorates Walter Benjamin's notion of culture emerging from the detritus of capitalist society. One look at this picture and all the ritual and hierarchy of the Western musical tradition is immediately rendered dubious, up for grabs. To hear Bolleter playing one of these ruins – apparently each is situated somewhere on a continuum that stretches from neglected to devastated – is even more exciting. Notes hang rotting in the air as the listener is overcome by the kind of desolate-yet-invigorating melancholy usually reserved for the best of John Cheever's short stories.

Brisbane musician John Rodgers (quoted on page 141 of Jim Denley's chapter on improvisation) goes even further in disrupting convention: a one-time violin prodigy, it is said that he eventually came to write off institutionalised classical music as an "enormously uncreative activity". Even musical autodidacts are likely to squirm a little at such sentiments. Listening to either of Glen Gould's famous recordings of the *Goldberg Variations*, to take but one example, could it be possibly be argued that he was not engaged in an act of creativity? Surely not, but then Gould himself was able to drift from tradition to esotericism when it suited him: his *Solitude Trilogy* series of Canadian radio documentaries (1967-1977) were compiled from excerpts of conversations, environmental recordings and samples of recorded music.

If experimental music is on one level about upending or diverging from the past, then it is useful to recall the words of Charles Ives. Alex Ross, in his 2007 book *The Rest is Noise*, cites a statement the American composer made in the context of the early onset of modernism: "Why tonality as such should be thrown out for good, I can't see. Why it should always be present, I can't see". That so many since have been unable to sensibly contextualise the greatest



Shelley stands with posters advertising the "61st Annual Red and White Song Contest", and showcasing the male and female hosts

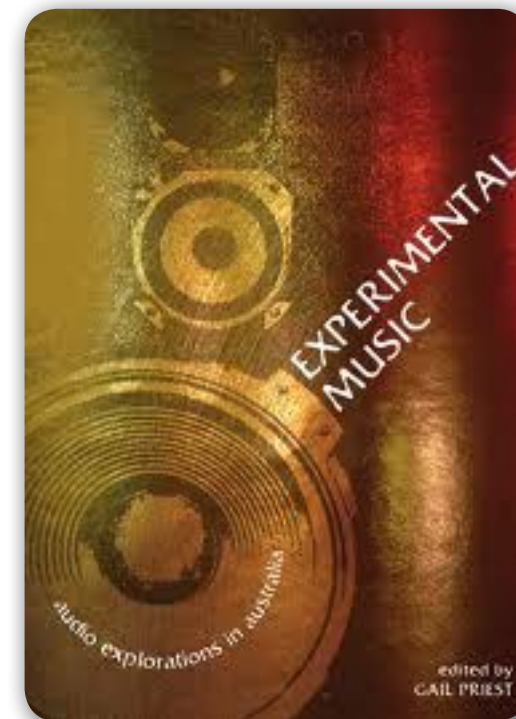
aesthetic rupture in human history seems to get to the heart of the experimental music conundrum, particularly as it is articulated by way of the stereotype of new music often being considered fundamentally ugly. The fact is that as an aesthetic moves into new territory one can always follow its tracks backward to get a sense of whence it emerged.

But what is experimental music anyway? Brian Eno, one of the most innovative and intelligent composers of the twentieth century, has suggested that any attempt to distinguish between classical and experimental music will likely obscure the fact that virtually any musical work contains aspects that are both traditional and innovative. Defining experimental music with certainty is a difficult task, one which Gail Priest and the various contributors to *Experimental Music: Audio Explorations in Australia* sensibly skirt around. Rather, a number of different, not necessarily compatible, takes on the term are suggested, helping to reinforce it as one which evokes unpredictability – unexpected liaisons, surprising interventions, non-linear progressions. The book does well to delve deeply into recorded music, live performance and other points between and beyond (beyond being exemplified by another fabulous picture on page 187 of Jon Rose and Hollis Taylor “bowing a dune fence” in the middle of the South Australian desert).

One important function of experimental music, not really articulated in any of the definitions given in this book, is that it enables past feats in music to remain palatable: the shock of the

new invigorates what came before, whereas a steadfast adherence to tradition only leads to staleness and a bogged-down conservatism. I thought as much recently when, over lunch at a suburban cafe, I was confronted for the umpteenth time with the opening notes from Miles Davis’ 1959 album *Kind of Blue*. This music, assuredly once new in the best sense of the term, has (for this listener, at least) been rendered disagreeable through endless repetition and universal embracement. Oh, for a cafe or bookstore to shake up its patrons with some early-70s electric period Davis (*Dark Magus*, maybe, or *Big Fun*), or at least to enthrall them with one of his lesser-known early triumphs (such as the soundtrack to the 1958 French film *Ascenseur Pour l’Echafaud*). The sound worlds traced in here have a crucial role in helping partially disperse the fug of familiarity choking modern consumer society. As such, most readers should certainly enjoy the book for the many new perspectives it opens up. The text comes with a sampler CD containing excellent work by the likes of Severed Heads, the Loop Orchestra and instrument builder and electro-acoustic composer Rod Cooper.

Inevitably, there are omissions to be debated. From a (very roughly) “rock” perspective, I was left wondering why Essendon Airport are barely mentioned in the book (though a quote from the liner notes to their *Sonic Investigations of the Trivial* compilation – that the band distinguished themselves by “resisting and subverting anything that could be even remotely construed as “sophisticated” – may provide a hint as to why). Also absent are rock-inflected



artists like Matthew Nicholson (whose 2006 recording *Secret Miracle Fountain*, appearing under the moniker of *Function*, was one of the best Australian albums of the decade), Brothers of the Occult Sisterhood, Laughing Clowns, Hungry Ghosts, Grey Daturas and others that would qualify as both experimental and notable in many people’s estimations. From a “jazz” angle, there is barely any crossover between this edition and John Shand’s 2008 book *Jazz: The Australian Accent*, also released by UNSW Press. One finds only a couple of brief references to Chris Abrahams and the Necks (arguably the most important experimental group in Australia today) and nothing of the excellent Triosk (a Sydney group which, as Tony Mitchell notes in his review in the *Transforming Cultures* journal,

could justifiably have been included by either Priest or Shand). The question as to where experimental music ends and these other traditions begin remains unanswered, perhaps unanswerable. Another overlooked composer is Cathy Peters, whose *Sonata #5: A Climate of Violence* (a combination of instrumentation, vocal improvisations and radio samples) gets my vote as the creepiest piece of music ever made in this country, while Alan Lamb, much acclaimed for his field recordings of abandoned outback telegraph wires, receives only a passing reference.

Mention might also be made of the overall standard of the prose. Fair call that the emphasis is on offerings from actual musicians (or musical non-musicians, as the case may be) but it is obvious that for a few of them, despite having acquired academic postings, writing is a long way behind music as their primary skill. It is possible to be accomplished at both, the New Zealander Bruce Russell and the Australian Philip Brophy being textbook examples. Having said that, chapters like those of Ian Andrew and John Blades on 1980s post-punk and Shannon O'Neill on sampling are enjoyable reading if only because the authors are so infectiously enthusiastic about the artists and scenes they are describing.

It is certainly heartening to know that there are so many different people making exciting and unpredictable new sounds in Australia today. Some would argue that exploratory audio in this country has long been overshadowed by the version emanating out of New Zealand, home to such internationally renowned exponents as the Dead C, Roy Montgomery, Sandoz Lab Technicians, Alistair Galbraith, Greg Malcolm, Nova Scotia and Birchville Cat Motel, to list but a few. Perhaps so, but I know that whenever the mood strikes I can put on Oren Ambarchi's *In the Pendulum's Embrace* (2007), Carl Dewhurst and Simon Baker's *Showa 44* (2005), Lawrence English's *For Varying Degrees of Winter* (2007), or even Priest's own *Imaginary Conversations in Reverberant Rooms* (2006), and be reassured that Australian "out there" music too is in fine shape.

Book Review 2:

Meehan, N. (2010). *Serious fun: The life and music of Mike Nock*. Wellington: Victoria University Press.

Reviewed by Tony Mitchell (University of Technology, Sydney)

This book arrived just in time for Mike Nock's 70th birthday celebrations, which took place in September and October in Wellington, Dunedin, Sydney and Melbourne, and coincided with the release of his latest double CD, *An Accumulation of Subtleties*, with his current trio of bassist Ben and drummer James Waples – his 22nd album as leader, according to Norman Meehan's extensive discography. Over a 50-year period, there are eight further recordings as co-leader, including his first album *Move*, with the 3-Out Trio, recorded in Sydney in 1960, three as composer, and a further 21 as sideman – including three with Yusef Lateef – although this number is not complete. Like all the research in this book, by Wellington-based jazz pianist and lecturer Norman Meehan, whose 2008 album *Modigliani* was nominated for a New Zealand jazz award – these statistics are far-reaching, exhaustive, and impeccable. Meehan lists 32 interviewees in the USA, the UK, Australia and New Zealand, all of them prominent figures in jazz with whom Nock has played or associated throughout his long and diverse career, and none of whom has a bad word to say about him. Meehan has also exhumed reviews, some of them from publications such as *Down Beat* (for which he is a correspondent) and the *San Francisco Chronicle*, of every Nock album, which is critically examined with a musicologist's ear in the course of the narrative. In New Zealand, Meehan also produced six one-hour radio programs for Radio NZ based on the book, and including lots of rare Nock music, which will hopefully be acquired by the ABC.

We begin in Ngaruawahia, south of Auckland, where Nock's family moved to a farm after his birth in Christchurch, and where as a 10 year old he formed a neighbourhood band influenced by Spike Jones, with piano, cornet, guitar and "noisemakers" such as alarm clocks, no tunes, but lots of ingenuity. Rural Ngaruawahia, as he told Meehan, had a big impact on him: "I was surrounded by the green hills and two rivers and I was aware of the open space. Growing up in that definitely affected my attitude toward music making ... I love the thought of writing slow music making that really reflects the landscape, those

rolling hills that just go on and on". He later got an opportunity to do this in his soundtrack for Geoff Steven's 1983 film *Strata*, about a volcanologist on the remote White Island, a permanent volcano, and a group of refugees from a quarantine station. The film was (unjustifiably) panned, but Nock's surprisingly lush soundtrack was released on vinyl in New Zealand (now a collector's tem, like many of his other early releases), and contextualises the film's stark, rugged, landscape and its mystery, isolation and menace. A year earlier, what many regard as his best album, *Ondas*, released on Manfred Eicher's ECM label, and recorded in an astonishing two hours with bassist Eddie Gomez and drummer Jon Christensen, also recalled his roots, especially in a track entitled "Land of the Long White Cloud". Although Nock has lived and Sydney since the mid 1980s, and continues to teach at the Conservatorium, he makes frequent visits to his native country and maintains a strong musical contact there which includes playing with Richard Nunns, a restorer of pre-European Maori musical instruments, the taonga puoro. He has also acted as a mentor to numerous New Zealand jazz musicians who have moved to Sydney (his 'little big band is sometimes referred to as "the Anzacs") – most notably saxophonists Roger Manins and Tim Hopkins, and Con graduate bassist Cameron Undy, who plays with Nock on the excellent DVD documentary accompanying this book, Geoff Cawthorn's 1993 *Mike Nock: A Film*.

Of course it is Nock's extensive experience in the USA which gives him his extensive "cred" as a jazz pianist, first in Boston at Berklee, which led to his gigs with Leteef and the influence of Cecil Taylor, then in San Francisco in the late 1960s with the ground-breaking jazz fusion group the Fourth Way (his 'new ager' period), and later in New York and New Jersey with John Abercrombie, Dave Liebman (sometime Miles Davis cohort) and others. Meehan omits reference to the famous "I hear you're a genius" phone call from Miles Davis, letting Nock's considerable achievements largely speak for themselves, with extensive quotes from the man himself and many of his cohorts. What emerges is a modest but intense character, who was accepted on his own merits in often threatening African-American jazz circles, continually driving himself (and sometimes others) like an athlete to achieve more, a stylistic polymath, an inspiring teacher, a generous collaborator, and still, at 70, "a man on a mission".

Book Review 3:

Milliken, R. (2010). *Mother of rock: The Lillian Roxon story*. Melbourne: Black Inc.

Reviewed by Tony Mitchell (University of Technology, Sydney)

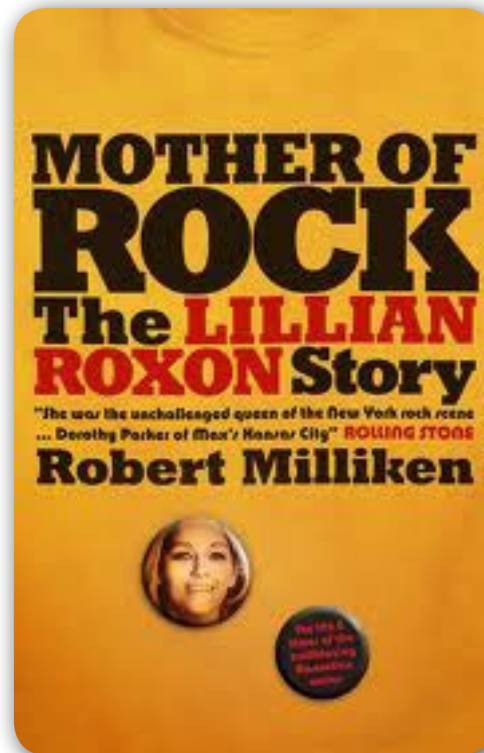
One advantage Lillian Roxon has over peers such as Germaine Greer, Clive James, Robert Hughes, Barry Humphries, and their ilk is that, due to her early death at 40 in 1973, she has not been subjected to the same degree of tall poppy opprobrium. She dished out a lot of it publically to Greer and others, despite the latter's dedication of *The Female Eunuch* to her, and apparently desperate wish to be liked by Roxon. She was also an unofficial New York ambassador for many Australian visitors, such as Helen Reddy and the Easybeats, spruiking them to her coterie at the round table at Max's Kansas City, where Greer received her well-publicised spray.

This book is a revised edition of a volume originally published in 2002, and it is interesting to lay it alongside Paul Clarke's 2009 documentary, also entitled *Mother of Rock*, which was screened on the ABC in January, and is available on DVD (The expression "mother of rock" is difficult to source, and is not explained in Clarke's film or this book). Milliken, a Sydney journalist whose one personal encounter with Roxon took place in London shortly before her death, when she was bloated and moon-faced by the cortisone she took for her asthma, has meticulously accumulated the details of her life from her private journals, unpublished writings, and interviews with friends. He only gets a 20-second soundbite in Clarke's film, where far more famous figures such as David Malouf, Greer, Iggy Pop, Alice Cooper, and US photographer Lee Black Childers receive pride of place.

Craig McGregor is quoted by Milliken comparing Roxon to Oscar Wilde: "what she writes is but a pale imitation of what she says" (p. 4). Despite its ludicrously grandiose claim, there is probably some truth in this, given the hyperbolic speed-writing of her rock journalism, which really does not stand the test of time. She may have published the first encyclopedia of rock in 1969, excerpts of which are included here, but this genre of writing has since

become a scourge, with the 10 volume EPMOW, the encyclopedia of popular music of the world, probably its most grandiose folly. Her description of folk rock, for example, completely ignores developments in the UK, and describes the Byrds as “mystic and holy. The Byrds could do no wrong. The rock they played wasn’t Tin Pan Alley but music from another planet. They could have rocked the bible and gotten away with it (and they did)” (pp. 270-271). Perilously close to what today would be described as “new age drivel”, she tended to describe female artists as “lady singers” of “which there are two kinds – the angels and the devils” (p. 308). Apart from her description of the Rolling Stones “full slummy English lout barrow-boy gutter-rat routine” (p. 306), her remarks on British Invasion groups are particularly weak. Pink Floyd are reduced to “San Francisco-style psychedelic rock ... pure electronic sound, freaky electrical piano and an ethereal organ” (p. 299). No mention of Syd Barrett or Dave Gilmour’s guitars and vocals, surely the most distinctive feature of Pink Floyd’s music. Of The Kinks “there is little to say because there is no spectacle, no drama, no intrigue – just that music” (p. 286). Forget their distinctive music hall influences, already emerging in the late 1960s, clearly what Roxon was after was all “spectacle, drama, and intrigue”, which she found in the Sydney push – we get a lengthy description of how she orchestrated the loss of her virginity – and in her salon at Max’s where she held court as resident hipster and scenester. She acquired the pretentious habit of recording her phone calls from Andy Warhol and his Factory coterie, and

her achievements in penetrating the hard core of New York hegemony and indifference were clearly admired back in Sydney, where her weekly reports for the *Herald* were read avidly. More of these would have been welcome here, but all we get is a lacklustre piece on – of all people – Creedence Clearwater Revival, and her breathless front page story about “the women’s liberation ladies” protest march in 1970 – “this isn’t a fad like the hula hoop” – which is more about herself than any of the issues at stake.



According to Milliken, Roxon have a privileged childhood: “Travelling with her family between Italy, Poland and Vienna planted in Lillian the seeds

of sophistication that made her stand out later in Australia and America, an instinctive worldliness that some of those around her associated with European culture” (p. 11). After becoming a denizen of the Pink Elephant Coffee Lounge and future British arts administrator and author Charles Osbourne’s Ballad Bookshop in Brisbane in the 1940s, “the more intense bohemian and counterculture cauldrons at the Lincoln Inn coffee shop in Sydney and Maxis Kansas city nightclub in New York” seemed a natural progression in the 1950s and 1960s. Milliken describes these milieus well, but his subject is someone who will be largely remembered for the gossip and anecdotes she promulgated, and were in turn promulgated about her.