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May | 2006

THE E-NEWSLETTER OF THE  
AUSTRALIAN-NEW ZEALAND BRANCH  
OF IASPM



# IASPM-ANZ *Soundings*

## Welcome to the May 2006 edition of Soundings!

*My sincere thanks go to the contributors for their patience in waiting to see their articles, reviews and news in print. The delay in producing this edition was due to my 'Ph.D. thesis-polishing,' and I'm pleased to say that it has now been submitted! My thoughts are with the many other IASPM-ANZ postgrads who are still writing up. You know who you are. Hopefully we will see a few more 'completions' come the time of the Sydney conference...*

*The cover photograph for this edition of Soundings features Australian hip hop group Local Knowledge (pic courtesy of Kathryn Holloway). This photo accompanies Tony Mitchell's recent article in Melbourne's The Age, titled 'The New Corroboree'. See: [www.theage.com.au/news/music/the-new-corroboree/2006/03/30/1143441270792.html](http://www.theage.com.au/news/music/the-new-corroboree/2006/03/30/1143441270792.html)*

*Happy reading and musicking!*

— Shelley Brunt, Secretary and Soundings compiler

## Notes from the Chair

Hi all,

Hardly seems like Wellington is over and the abstracts are pouring in for the Sydney conference in June. Organisation of the conference is going well, and the range of contributors and papers looks interesting. It seems inevitable that we will have some parallel sessions, but will ensure a plenary each morning. Print copies of the 2004 proceedings are in press at the moment, and work is underway on the 2005 proceedings. The list has been pretty active recently,

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which is a healthy sign (although my habit of bellicose comments late into the night and red wine need curtailing...). Keep posting, and send any useful results of searches/discussions to the list so that its value as a research tool increases. Membership is healthy, and the financial situation is pretty reasonable thanks to the ever-Reserved Governor of the IASPM Treasury, John Scannell. Congrats to Shelley who has managed to administer IASPM with great efficiency while completing a PhD — huge effort! Looking forward to seeing you all in Surry Hills (or Strawberry Hills as Dan Bendrups refers to it — obviously part of a complicated pub related cultural geography project he is working on).

Denis

Denis Crowdy  
Chair, IASPM-ANZ

## Notes from the Treasurer

Hi Folks

First of all – I just wanted to thank all those who keep up with their dues. In fact, some of you are so diligent about getting them to me in a timely fashion, that it is truly heart warming and helps to restore my faith in the world. On the other hand...

For those without the scruples of our more upstanding members...I will catch up with you in June. In fact, if you attended Wellington AGM then you will be no doubt aware that without valid, paid up status, you cannot present. So there. So if you think that is you....[iaspm@ihug.com.au](mailto:iaspm@ihug.com.au)  
I have a database, I will confirm suspicions.

Before you write and abuse me, I am quite happy to catch up with all membership payments at Sydney conference. Even if you are...well...a little behind on payments - if I am in sight of a chequebook - I will personally call of the hoods. (Denis is not that scary anyway)

I know a couple of people have posted and said 'How does one know when they are due'? Can we be reminded? I was thinking to myself the other day – there must be a way that I can put the membership status in the profiles of Yahoo list. I have yet to investigate this, because I have been so very busy of late. If anyone knows of a good system, I would be happy to hear and implement. Otherwise keep your receipt...and I will be gentle with you.

That said - because of the relatively short space of time between Wellington and Sydney conferences, a lot of you are paid up and will remain generally free from my panhandling. Otherwise feel free to avoid me...

John Scannell  
Treasurer IASPM-ANZ

# Conference Review

## 'Contemporary Popular Music Studies'

ANNUAL IASPM-ANZ CONFERENCE, VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON  
WELLINGTON, NEW ZEALAND 3-6 DECEMBER 2005

—MEGAN EVANS (Sydney Conservatorium of Music) and SOPHIE PUSZ (Macquarie University)

Well **It's a Long Way to the Top** if you wanna go to Victoria University. Especially first thing on a Saturday morning. (Still, it must be good to **Climb Every Mountain** there - did anyone else notice the lack of obese people in Wellington?) Met up with all **The Beautiful People** of IASPM-ANZ, some of whom had already met the previous night at Murphy's — many thanks to Geoff Stahl for organising that and all the other social events throughout the conference. To **Get it Started** the keynote speech was delivered by Andy Bennett from Brock University, Canada, who gave us a fresh look at 70s Glam Rock and its position of neglect within the broader field of Popular Music Studies. He raised many interesting points and his discussion of the use of sampling technology in 10CC's **I'm Not In Love** was particularly illuminating.

A cup of coffee later and it was straight into session 1 which opened up with Marj Kibby sharing her experiences of teaching music in hybrid mode at Newcastle Uni. The interaction of face-to-face and online tutoring certainly points one way forward in this time of economic "rationalism" at tertiary institutions. Megan Evans then argued the case for a reappraisal of the role of formal analysis within Popular Music Studies by presenting her analysis of Nirvana's **Smells Like Teen Spirit** only to have her case smacked down in the opening statements of the following paper by John Scannell. (You'll keep!) He certainly did not **Believe In Miracles** in his dissection of musical nostalgia within a Deleuzian framework which was sparked by being forced to listen to Hot Chocolate on a bus one day. Nabeel Zuberi wrapped up the session with a discussion of the **Toxic** blend of cultural interaction in the meeting of Indian and Western (esp. African American) musics.

After a lunch that could only be described as **Mm mm mm mm** we said **Hooray for Hollywood** as Cory Messenger put forward his (very convincing) thesis that the development of the movie soundtrack helped provoke the development of Rock 'n' Roll and David Baker explored how changing social attitudes to Rock 'n' Roll were represented in film throughout the 1950s. Peter Doyle then examined the use of audio space in early popular song recordings and finally Rebecca Coyle looked at the evocative use of music in documentary filmmaking, analysing "Surviving Shepherd's Pie" in some depth.

The final session for the day had a Pacific Regional focus with Philip Hayward starting off with an exploration of the development of cultural identity in a community as insular as that on Norfolk Island, providing the case study of Death Metal artist Cactus. Kirsten Zemke-White then examined the culture and industry forces at play in the development of independent indigenous and Islander record labels in NZ. The day finished with Denis Crowdy illuminating us about interactions between local and international music industries in PNG and the processes through which international music is indigenised.

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Totally exhausted, it seemed unfair after having crawled back to our hotel rooms and fallen asleep, to then **Wake Up at 10:15 on a Saturday Night**. Fortunately, it was possible to track down many others who were still out partying and kept on going through the night. Have to say, **I Love the Nightlife** in Wellington!

Very much appreciated the 1pm start on Sunday, although was still a **Zombie** even after a huge breakfast with some fellow conferencers beforehand. Mark Evans opened up the day with a **Slice of Heaven**; a look at gender issues in contemporary congregational music as epitomised by Hillsong. Then it was **Time For a Change** and the focus turned to "World Music" and how minority cultures maintain and recreate their identities within a global market, with Henry Johnson focussing on the Nenezu music of Okinawa and John Whiteoak on Italian immigrants in pre-multiculturalism Australia.

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*...This was followed by Matthew Bannister's interpretation, through song, of the main theme for his discussion on "Adorno, Negation and 80s Alternative Rock". Proving a point with guitar on knee to the tune of "American Idiot" certainly gets people's attention...*

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**Common People** were the focus of the second (and final) session for Sunday with three papers on folk and country music. Idena Rex helped us **Step Back in Time** to 1960s Sydney and the folk scene that was nurtured by the PACT cooperative. Community was also the focus of Graeme Smith's paper, this time within the broader context of folk and country music scenes in general. Finally Allan Thomas explored the importance of **Haere Ra** in the NZ psyche, which he described as being in a state of "cheerful misery."

The only business left for the day was to go to dinner at Kopi restaurant. Although it was a very long **Wait** for the vegetarian food to be served (and to be honest, it was a bit average when it finally arrived) it was a very loud, boisterous and fun evening that provided us with a chance of **Getting to Know You** other IASPM-ites outside a conference setting.

**Blue Monday**, rather than **Manic Monday** best describes day three of the conference. With attendees slowly staggering in to the first session "Musical Creation" (Phillip McIntyre and Kate Galloway) things were a little quiet.

**The Power and the Passion** of hip hop were explored in the second session for the day: "Aotearoa Hip Hop and Indigineity". Sarina Pearson, April Henderson and Tony Mitchell each decided to bring bling to the ring for their discussions of hip hop music and dance.

The third session for the day ought to have come with a warning; certainly the question "**What's Goin On?**" would not have been out of place. The first paper for the afternoon gave everyone the chance to **Walk On The Wild Side** with Liz Giuffre's exploration of the obscene in Australian music. There were possibly one or two blushes in the room, as song content best kept from one's mother was on the agenda for discussion. This was followed by Matthew Bannister's interpretation, through song, of the main theme for his discussion on "Adorno, Negation and 80s Alternative Rock". Proving a point with guitar on knee to the tune of "**American Idiot**" certainly gets people's attention. **Unforgettable**. Any more of this malarkey during one session would undoubtedly have been considered **Too Much Monkey Business**, so thankfully, Roy Shuker brought things back to some semblance of normality with his discussion on "Gender and the Record Collector".

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## CONTEMPORARY POPULAR MUSIC STUDIES

After some **Black Coffee**, it was time for the day's final session "(Re/De) Constructions of Nationality" Shelley Brunt's paper on "Performing for Japan: Preserving and Transforming National Identity Through Popular Song" was **Flawless**. Following on from this, Joanne Smith's look at Crowded House in her paper "Farewell to the World: Popular Music in the Antipodes" avoided any **Stuff and Nonsense**. The final paper for the session was Geoff King's look at the Australian music industry in the 1970s and 1980s.

It was still too early to say "**The Long Day is Over**", as we headed down the hill. At the **End of the Road** was the triple book launch at **Good Luck Bar**. Plenty of **Red Red Wine** was involved, but knowing there was a final day to get get through, many people left before or **In The Midnight Hour**, while a few made the **One O'clock Jump**.

**The Long and Winding Road** up the hill to Victoria University was attempted for the last time on Tuesday morning. The final day kicked off with platform shoes and sequined flares as Ian Chapman discussed glam rock, authenticity and Suzi Quatro. The rest of the session was **Fun, Fun, Fun**, and continued "Questioning Celebrity". Ian Collinson, Hyunjoon Shin and Catherine Strong discussed Billy Bragg, Rain and Kurt Cobain respectively.

The penultimate session "Cutting Across Cultures" looked at various elements of music access and ownership in Newcastle (Shane Homan), Easter Island (Dan Bendrups) and New Zealand (Karen Neill). After the final session, "Hearing High and Low" and the general meeting, we were left wondering such eternal questions as **Who Knows Where the Time Goes?** and **Do you Know the Way to San Jose?**

Official business out of the way, it was time to **Bust A Move**, to **Let the Music Play**, **Get the Party Started**, and hope that everyone was able to answer the question with a **Yes Sir I Can Boogie** as the focus became **A Little Less Conversation Little More Action**. The most memorable part of the conference was undoubtedly Graeme Smith's 2am karaoke rendition of "**Last Night The Bottle Let Me Down**". Surely there's something in that for all of us.

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### 2006 IASPM-ANZ Sydney Conference Funding

'Whose Music?:  
Popularity, Industry  
and Property'

JMC ACADEMY  
Surrey Hills  
23-25 June

Postgrads who are presenting a paper at the 2006 Sydney conference are eligible for a \$100 conference grant to assist with expenses

Please contact John Scannell (treasurer) to discuss your eligibility or to ask for further information:

iaspm@ihug.com.au

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## News from Members

- **Helen O'Shea** has just taken up an appointment as a postdoctoral research fellow in the Faculty of Education at Monash University. Her project is to research the processes involved when musicians learn the music of another culture and will focus on Australian, Japanese and American musicians learning Irish traditional music.
- **Karl Neuenfeldt**: Seaman Dan's fourth CD, 'Island Way' is completed and will be released at Easter on his own label, *Steady Steady Music*, distributed in Australia by MGM. It focuses on music from Oceania and musical connections with his Melanesian and Polynesian heritages. It includes a track recorded in Fiji with The Churchward Chapel Rotuman Choir, a link to the influence of Rotuman music of Torres Strait music and dance. Also included is a track by Toofie Christian from Norfolk Island, 'Rhythm of the Hula', first recorded on his CD with Denis Crowdy.

If anyone has been involved in producing or aware of recording projects with 'teenagers at risk', could they contact Karl Neuenfeldt [k.neuenfeldt@cqu.edu.au](mailto:k.neuenfeldt@cqu.edu.au). I am trying to get some examples for a local community group interested in such a project.

- **Shane Homan's** book *Access All Eras: Tribute Bands & Global Pop Culture* is to be published by Open University Press in October. Several IASPM-ANZ members have written on imitation and cultures of copying (including Denis Crowdy, Tony Mitchell, Guy Morrow) and the book also contains chapters by other IASPM members (Lutgard Mutsaers, Ian Inglis, Andy Bennett, Holly Tessler, Jason Oakes, Shuhei Hosakawa). Shane is also to be interviewed for a BBC 2 Radio four part series on tribute bands, with comedian Bill Bailey commissioned as scriptwriter for the series.

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## Book Reviews

Over the next few pages, we are pleased to present four book reviews for this edition of *Soundings*:

***Songs, Dreaming, and Ghosts: The Wangga of North Australia***

Allan Marett  
Reviewed by Åse Ottosson

***Wired for Sound: Engineering and Technologies in Sonic Cultures*** Paul D. Greene & Thomas Porcello, Eds

Reviewed by Geoff King

***Guitar Style, Open Tunings, and Stringband Music in Papua New Guinea***

Denis Crowdy  
Reviewed by Karl Neuenfeldt

***Stranded in Paradise: New Zealand Rock and Roll 1955 to the Modern Era***

John Dix  
Reviewed by Tony Mitchell

## **Songs, Dreaming, and Ghosts: The Wangga of North Australia**

Allan Marett.

2005. Middleton, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press.

— reviewed by ÅSE OTTOSSON (Ph.D. Candidate in Social Anthropology, Australian National University)

It is always a pleasure to read a work that seems to be a labour of love, regardless of the subject. The subject of Marett's book—the *wangga* genre of song and dance in Aboriginal Northern Australia—is, however, just as fascinating as his intimate knowledge is admirable. Marett has studied, been moved by, and participated in the performance of *wangga* over 15 years. From the Daly River region, *wangga* is a genre of music and dance that is associated with death and regeneration. It can thus express and mediate many forms of significant change (political, intercultural and inter-generational) in the course of a person's life. Through analysing the musical conventions of *wangga*, Marett's project is to explore how this genre not only articulates relations between the living and the dead, and between people and country, but also broader social meaning and change.

The chapters investigate the formal musical elements of *wangga* (Chapter One), processes of composition (Chapter Two) and of ceremonial performance (Chapter Three), and the musical conventions that *wangga* performers can manipulate in enacting social and mythical themes. In four case studies (Chapters Five to Eight) Marett then takes the reader into the (male) world of *wangga* composers and performers in four different *wangga* repertoires, before summarising the shared elements through which these repertoires are used to articulate social meanings (Chapter Nine). While originating in the Daly River region, the *wangga* genre has spread to other indigenous groups and the last chapter (Chapter Ten) looks at the role of the genre in Barunga/Beswick and in the Kimberley region.

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*The wangga repertoires that Marett explores  
are not fixed objects from an ancient, ancestral past  
that can be "lost" or "maintained".  
The currently strongest repertoires of these expressive forms  
were in fact established in the early 1960s.*

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In the preface, Marett explains his motivations in terms that tend to place this book in the tradition of "salvage" studies (in which much ethnomusicological work still hovers, not least in relation to indigenous Australians), in responding to the warning that Aboriginal musical traditions are "now in danger of being lost forever". To me, this book is first and foremost a testament to how such calls, and the "salvage" responses they produce, are fundamentally mistaken. The *wangga* repertoires that Marett explores are not fixed objects from an ancient, ancestral past that can be "lost" or "maintained". The currently strongest repertoires of these expressive forms were in fact established in the early 1960s. As Marett makes abundantly clear, too, the dynamic strength of these repertoires has been intimately associated with the particular life experiences and social positions of individual composers, such as Tommy Bartjap and Bobby Lambudju Lane.

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The men, music practices, values and life worlds Marett intelligibly introduces us to thus demonstrate people's continuous creative and productive use of musical traditions for articulating and expressing complicated and turbulent social, political and personal history and change. In the process, musical traditions, conventions and elements also change and new ones emerge, as they presumably always did as people's lives and circumstances have evolved over time. It is precisely such insights about the creative inventiveness of social practice, including the practice of music, that becomes the lasting value of Marett's work.

My only reservation about this book is its first paragraphs, where Marett makes some problematic generalisations about non-ancestral indigenous music in order to explain why ancestral song is marginalised and not valued in non-Aboriginal realms, while, he states, popular Aboriginal music has been embraced. He backs up this statement by referring to a survey among undergraduate students in which the only piece of Australian music they all recognised was Yothu Yindi's song "Treaty". In explaining this discrepancy of wider recognition for ancestral and non-ancestral music, he suggests that part of the answer lies in the fact that popular songs are easily commodified, while traditional songs are not, and that the latter is sung in unfamiliar languages and about unfamiliar places, cosmologies and ways of being.

Yothu Yindi's "Treaty" is probably the *only* indigenous popular song that all of these students could recognise, too. Most non-ancestral indigenous Australian music making is not commodified, either. Apart from a few years in the more activist 1980s and early 1990s, there has been scant interest in the music industry for this music, and only limited sectors of a wider Australian society would know much about it. Moreover, indigenous country, rock and reggae music in Central Australia, as in the Top End, the Kimberleys and elsewhere in the country, is often sung in local languages, about intensely local indigenous issues, places and ways of being. In the region I know best, Central Australia, some indigenous country music traditions are also older than some of the *wangga* repertoires that Marett explores, and this music has become another core expressive traditions in many indigenous settings. But that is another book. Marett's work should be read by anyone who is interested in the intimate and fascinating details of the interrelated dynamics of music and social change in local life worlds. And the accompanying CD also lets us enter the soundscape of such change.

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## **Wired for Sound: Engineering and Technologies in Sonic Cultures**

Paul D. Greene and Thomas Porcello, Editors.

Middleton, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press. (soft cover, 288 pages)

— reviewed by GEOFF KING (RMIT)

In the 'winter' edition of *Frets* magazine there were some observations made by a couple of musicians about their recording process. The first was by Atlanta-based singer /songwriter Ashton Allen who set out to make a stripped-down live-sounding acoustic record but his producer wanted to put a big production behind it. Apparently they reached a happy compromise treating the studio as a paintbrush rather than a

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production house, but in this world of click-tracks, auto-correction and digital tuners, Allen sometimes felt he had to detune his guitar slightly so that everything didn't sound too perfect.

In contrast, sitar/keyboard player Anoushka Shankar revealed that when she tried to add keyboards to a mohan vina and a duduk, both recorded separately in two different studios, the clash of the western tempered scale with the Armenian and Indian tunings resulted in the painstaking use of auto-tuning software to bring the flatter 3rds and 7ths up to western pitch. One man's poison is another woman's meat, as it were... Music and technical magazines have been full of this stuff for donkey's years but its really only been in the last decade or less that academics have turned their attention to it in a systematic way. As we all know, cultural activities are sites of tension and this collection, centred as it is around the recording studio, reveals how all those familiar tensions (and some unfamiliar) play out in the real and virtual worlds of recording practices.

This is an excellent collection of writings in very many ways. For a start, it's trans-continental as the authors cover recording practices in South Africa, Brazil, Australia, the U.S and Canada, Indonesia and Nepal with a consequent range of musics. As becomes evident, good quality recording technology is ubiquitous and while never neutral, the recording studio is, as one author suggests, the quintessential transcultural instrument.

There is an underlying logic to this book that's really admirable. Good academic writing as this is brings previous research, the necessary cultural theory and the debates to the foreground so it provides an overview and resource, but it also enables the chapters to bleed into each other and give the book greater unity.

Most of the work is ethnographic but Chapter Eight is about timbre in Ambient and Techno music. I initially thought this was something of a disruption, but it was followed by the same author, Cornelia Fales, co-writing on perceptions of heavy metal timbres, both of which, in a sense, offer the pre-conditions for further ethnographic study, possibly through listening tests with genre-based fans. Following that is a chapter partly on heavy metal in Nepal, then one on Nepalese radio, then a chapter on the rise of radio in 20's America. The Introduction and Afterword by Greene and Porcello respectively are equally useful in bringing together the strands of thought within and without the book. Smoothly done, Eds. As the blurb says, this anthology really is required reading for anyone interested in the global character of contemporary music technology.

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## **Guitar Style, Open Tunings, and Stringband Music in Papua New Guinea**

Denis Crowdy

2005. Apwithire: Studies in Papua New Guinea Musics, 9 Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies Boroko. ISBN 1027-4707

— *reviewed by* KARL NEUENFELDT  
(Central Queensland University)

Within the broader category of 'stringband music', Denis Crowdy explores the guitar styles and tunings that add musical nuances to notions of locality and regionality—and ultimately identity—in Papua New Guinea. His exploration is based on the basic premise "that there is a set of common instrumental riffs that are constantly reiterated throughout the song repertoires of particular bands that contribute significantly to notions of instrumental style. Though they are

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modified and developed, the basic underlying harmonic, melodic, and rhythmic features are retained". Consequently, the interplay of instruments "utilising these features combine to create particular musical textures that form part of the differentiation made between regionally described styles" (21). Thus notions of regionality include nuanced local musical elements that are nonetheless recognisable as linked to a shared aesthetic sensibility.

The book is informed throughout with the insights of a musical and cultural insider/outsider. Crowdy is a classically trained Australian guitarist, studio musician and producer and such training complements the ethnomusicological ethos that permeates the book. Those formal skills however are tempered by what Keil (1994) describes as "participatory discrepancies": Crowdy making mistakes and being corrected until musically conversant if not fluent in different styles/tunings. Importantly, he has lived and worked in Papua New Guinea for many years and speaks both Tok Pisin and Tok Plas. As a lecturer in the Creative Arts Faculty of the University of PNG he collaborated with or helped train a generation of musicians and music educators. Such diverse skills and life experiences made the stringband tunings project not only do-able but also a logical and serendipitous convergence of curiosity, passion and persistence combined with analytical and musical skills.

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*Crowdy illustrates comprehensively how songs are constructed and performed.  
Of particular interest is how the tunings themselves  
dictate some of the stylistic options  
for the stringbands.*

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A key component to such an encompassing outlook is the goal to provide the academic, socio-cultural and political contexts for the musical particularities. Each chapter deals with a different context. The book's Introduction defines clearly the academic context such as the terminology used throughout. It avoids hanging the analysis on a particular canonical theoretical framework, although the PNG research of Steve Feld, Don Niles and Michael Webb are particularly cogent and appropriate points of reference. Crowdy also signals early on that his analytical and methodological tools combine the literacy of Western training and guitar tablature with an appreciation that transcending artificial geographical boundaries helps him understand how local micromusics such as village-based stringbands engage with national and international media.

Chapter Two provides a succinct historical survey of some of the major influences on the evolution not just of string-band music but also PNG music in general. Colonialisation, missionisation, World War 2 and Independence all impacted on how and why PNG music adopted and adapted so many diverse influences. Crowdy maintains 'traditional' music has had a role in that evolution. However, the combination of an emerging—albeit at times problematic—nationalism and economically driven structural changes meant low-tech music such as stringband music had a socio-cultural role even though higher-tech musics such as power bands competed for status.

Chapter Three provides detailed description and analysis of representative samples (from Hood Lagoon, Central Province; East New Britain; Madang) contained on an accompanying CD (IPNGS 015). By using various types of visual representations (standard notation, guitar tablature and graphs) Crowdy

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illustrates comprehensively how songs are constructed and performed. Of particular interest is how the tunings themselves dictate some of the stylistic options for the stringbands. That is, how instruments (e.g. guitars or ukuleles) are tuned contributes to their recognisability as aesthetic expressions of locality and regionality. Tunings such as 'Samoan' and 'faiv ki' each have limitations based on what the instrumentalist's left and right hands can readily accomplish in particular playing positions. There are certainly degrees of instrumental virtuosity but tunings have an abiding influence on what can be played and how.

Chapter Four updates the current scene and provides anecdotal 'sketches' of Crowdy's fieldwork for the project. An insightful anecdote concerns a local Madang stringband (using bamboo instruments also) performing at a resort. Crowdy suggests: "Stringband has been used here as a form of identifying, or marking, something that is perceived to be appropriately indigenous and which can act as more effective background music than traditional music, due to its musical accessibility... Stringband therefore forms part of the soundscape of hotels wishing to selectively indigenise their habitat for the consumption of a tourist market" (11). Thus stringband can be perceived as a tradition that has reached a certain iconic status even though it may no longer be 'cutting edge' music.

Overall, *Guitar Style, Open Tunings and Stringband Music* admirably substantiates the premise that there are stylistic differences yet similarities in regional PNG stringbands. As well, Crowdy's work is an excellent example that 'best practice' ethnomusicology combines musical and socio-cultural analysis to explore the object of its desire.

*References:*

Keil, Charles 1994 "Participatory Discrepancies and the Power of Music." In *Music Grooves*, Charles Keil and Steven Feld, pp.96-108 Chicago: University of Chicago press.

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**Stranded in Paradise:**

**New Zealand Rock and Roll 1955 to the Modern Era**

John Dix

Auckland: Penguin Books 2005 ISBN 0 14 301953 8

— reviewed by TONY MITCHELL (UTS)

I still remember the shock of amazement when I first discovered John Dix's massive, encyclopedic history of New Zealand rock and roll in the now late and lamented Rhino Records in Westwood, Los Angeles, in 1992. Published in A4 in an edition of 10,000 copies in 1988 by the one-off imprint Paradise Publications, weighing two kilos (in paperback – there was also a hardback version) it contained a continuous stream of vivid historical photographs of a plethora of Kiwi bands and musicians from the 'Maori cowboy' Johnny Cooper in 1955 to Flying Nun's international push in 1988. Also containing dense historical commentary and analyses of most of three decades' worth of important gigs, hits and recordings, it was an extraordinary achievement, not just in musical history but in social history as well. No

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one has ever succeeded in producing anything remotely like its equivalent in Australia, and it has inevitably become a cult item across the Tasman, with second hand bookshops selling copies for over \$200.

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*Dix's historical updates from 1988 to the present are largely perfunctory overviews of an admittedly diverse and complex range of musical history...*

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This 'fully revised and updated' reissue of 'the original classic', released to mark 50 years since the release of Johnny Cooper's version of *Rock Around the Clock* in 1955, is very welcome, especially for younger readers, but alas, a pale shadow of the original. The photographs - many of them still unknown and uncredited - are pallid, lacklustre reproductions of those in the original edition (which was on glossy paper), some of which are missing, others reduced in size. The wonderfully vibrant full page shot of Johnny Cooper playing his guitar together with one of his band members, for example, is reduced to two-thirds of its original size and a flat finish. Dix's historical updates from 1988 to the present are largely perfunctory overviews of an admittedly diverse and complex range of musical history, from the phenomenal rise of Maori and Polynesian hip hop and R&B, to successive waves of independent rock, pop singers such as Bic Runga, and internationally successful groups like the D4, the Datsuns and Evermore, and lack the rich detail and the sense of being there that emerged from almost every page of the original book. In his introduction, Dix offers no apologies, offering his close observation of the rise of Che Fu as evidence: "My finger may no longer be on the pulse, but I haven't been totally out of touch... if the original was an attempt to paint the big picture then the second edition is even more so... The new chapters at the end of the book are not as detailed as the earlier chapters, and, in effect, this is very much the story, highly subjective at

times, of the growth of the New Zealand music industry before the advent of NZ on Air and government assistance" (p.11). He opens with a moving description of the launch of the original book at the Gluepot, Auckland's most famous music pub which was demolished shortly afterwards, MC'd by the late Bruno Lawrence, with Chris Knox performing his abrasive attack on the New Zealand music industry 'Statement of Intent' to an industry who's who, challenging them to get their act together. This has since happened, and Dix points to the 52 albums and 56 singles which have topped the NZ charts, most of them since 1988 - documented in an appendix - and more than 20 books have appeared on different aspects of New Zealand popular music. These include David Eggleton's 2003 historical overview *Ready to Fly* (Craig Potton Publishing), which followed in Dix's footsteps both in format and concept, but focused in more detail on post 1980s developments.

Eggleton and Dix inevitably give pride of place to Split Enz, Crowded House and Neil Finn, with both ending with a quote from Tim Finn's *Six Months in a Leaky Boat* (which of course had the distinction of being banned on radio during the first Gulf war) 'Aotearoa, rugged individual/Glisten like a pearl/ At the bottom of the world/ The tyranny of distance/ Didn't stop the cavalier/ So why should it stop me' ... Dix retains this from his original volume, updating his epilogue with a list of obituaries including Phil Fuemana and Paul Hester of Crowded House, and a list of rock progeny such as Liam Finn of Betchadupa. Arguably the tyranny of distance is no longer such a constricting factor, and the success of New Zealand musicians around the world is testimony to supportive government policies, radio and television airplay, and above all staunch listeners who have kept the faith.

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*That's it for another edition! Any feedback is welcome: [shelley.brunt@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:shelley.brunt@adelaide.edu.au) cheers, Shelley.*