

A.E. Floyd and the Promotion of Australian Music

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Alfred Ernest Floyd, who lived from 1877 to 1974, loomed large on the musical landscape of Australia for more than fifty years, enjoying what today would be described as iconic status. Floyd arrived in Australia from the United Kingdom in February 1915 to take up an appointment as Organist and Master of the Choristers at St Paul's Cathedral in Melbourne, where he maintained and sustained the role of organist with considerable skill and public acclaim for more than thirty years. Floyd was also successful in raising the profile of early music in Melbourne for over two decades, his primary interest being English choral music of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. At the same time he extended his reach into music criticism, broadcasting, music education and publishing.

Floyd devoted his professional life to the performance and promulgation of music. The focus of his promotion of music for all was education in the widest sense. This he undertook through the various media (press, radio and television) and through public lectures and music appreciation classes. As music critic for the *Argus*, a regular columnist for the *Radio Times*, and as a broadcaster for the ABC,¹ and commercial stations in Melbourne, Floyd established a significant following as a commentator and entertainer and he was influential in shaping public taste in music and attitudes towards music. Floyd's personal papers, now housed in the Grainger Museum at the University of Melbourne,² radio archives, newspapers, journals, and the reminiscences of those who worked with him professionally provided the material for this article.

¹ Originally the Australian Broadcasting Commission, a national radio broadcaster established in 1932, in 1983 it became the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

² Floyd Collection, Grainger Museum, University of Melbourne [hereafter Floyd Collection].

Accounts of Floyd and his work appear in all the major publications on Australian music; each testifies to or alludes to his influence, particularly as a music broadcaster.³ He is variously described as 'a man of immense influence on musical Australia' who 'attracted unprecedented response and affection from the Australian public,' 'a musical institution,' and a man who 'endeared himself to many listeners by his assumption of an elderly punctilio.'⁴ However, none of these publications mentions Floyd's promotion of Australian music and composers, which is the subject of this article.

In the *Radio Times* in 1945 A.E. Floyd wrote:

Support home industries; not a bad motto in commerce, provided that we remember to play the game, and respect rights of other peoples. And it's not a bad motto in music, if the same proviso is made. Supporting home industries in the sphere of music will include encouraging local composers and that can be done in two ways, by performance and by publication.⁵

Almost eighteen months later in an article advocating support of Australian composers of serious music, Floyd added two more ways of encouragement: radio transmission and recording.⁶ Floyd encouraged large-scale musical compositions while noting that financial considerations might inhibit their publication. In reporting an ABC transmission from the Sydney Town Hall of *Victory Overture* by Arnold Mote and *Mount Keira* by D.B. Arnott, he wrote:

The encouragement of our own composers, and especially perhaps of those who are brave enough to embark upon the writing of works on a fairly large scale (things which can hardly ever be what are called 'paying propositions') is a matter of the very first importance.⁷

Floyd saw the making of recordings as a practical proposition in view of the fact that radio stations were compelled to allot a certain amount of time daily to Australian content (initially 2.5 percent, then, from 1956, 5 percent),⁸ a policy with which he agreed. He supported and praised the ABC on more than one occasion for its encouragement of music by Australian composers and its activity in making permanent recordings.⁹ However, he noted that from his own radio listening there appeared to be only a small number of recordings of 'worthwhile' Australian works available.¹⁰ Floyd did not explain the term

³ See Isabelle Moresby, *Australia Makes Music* (Melbourne: Longmans, 1948); W. Arundel Orchard, *Music in Australia: More than 150 Years of Development* (Melbourne: Georgian House, 1952) 68–9; Roger Covell, *Australia's Music: Themes of a New Society* (Melbourne: Sun Books, 1967) 129–30; James Glennon, *Australian Music and Musicians* (Adelaide: Rigby, 1968); James Murdoch, *A Handbook of Australian Music* (Melbourne: Sun Books, 1983) 60; Kenneth S. Inglis, *This is the ABC* (Melbourne: MUP, 1983); W.F. Chappell, 'Floyd, A(lfred) E(rnest)' and A.-M. Forbes, 'Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC),' *The Oxford Companion to Australian Music*, ed. Warren Bebbington (Melbourne: OUP, 1997) 218–19, 32–33; John Whiteoak and Aline Scott-Maxwell, eds, *Currency Companion to Music and Dance in Australia* (Sydney: Currency House, 2003).

⁴ Murdoch, *Handbook of Australian Music* 60; Glennon, *Australian Music and Musicians* 90–1; Covell *Australia's Music* 130.

⁵ *Radio Times* 3 Feb. 1945: 5.

⁶ *Radio Times* 1 June 1946: n.p.

⁷ *Radio Times* 4 Aug. 1945: 5.

⁸ Inglis, *This is the ABC* 207–8.

⁹ *Radio Times* 3 Aug. 1946: 8; 30 June 1945: 5; 4 Aug. 1945: 5.

¹⁰ 'The trouble is that, judging by what they put across, they appear to have a very small stock of works which demand serious attention or command respect.' *Radio Times*, 1 June 1946: n.p.

'worthwhile,' but presumably he meant works that he personally liked and considered to have musical merit.

Floyd's definition of Australian music encompassed works by composers born in Australia and those born elsewhere, but who were active as composers in Australia, an interpretation apparently held by the ABC.¹¹ In one article he attempted to educate the public and promote Australian composers by urging any who cared about musical progress in Australia to read Henry Tate's *Australian Musical Possibilities*, which had been published in 1924.¹² However, the principal outlet for Floyd's promotion of Australian composers was his weekly ABC radio program, *The Music Lovers' Hour*.¹³ This program gave Floyd wide exposure: it was broadcast not only in Victoria, but also in New South Wales and South Australia and could also be received in some parts of Tasmania.¹⁴ In 1945 he wrote that Australian 'composers are not figuring quite so prominently at the moment. I try to do something about it on Sunday afternoons.'¹⁵

Although Floyd arrived in Australia when it was still considered part of the British Empire, and inhabited by people mostly of Anglo-Saxon origin, he did not view the country in colonial terms. He was not patronising and did not encourage the phenomenon of 'cultural cringe.' He included an increasing number of works by Australian composers in *The Music Lovers' Hour* as they became available on record. Among Floyd's personal papers are copies of lists of Australian compositions recorded by the ABC.¹⁶ These lists were compiled, typed and duplicated by the office of the Federal Director of Music in Sydney, in conjunction with the State record librarians, and distributed to music programmers and presenters in each State. They were updated every few years and cover the period 1942 to 1959. In the early years the works are of relatively short duration owing to the fact that the recordings were acetate and played at 78 rpm, each side lasting only about three minutes. With the advent of long-playing vinyl recordings in the 1950s, more substantial works began to appear. Floyd chose compositions from these lists; the composers represented in his programs were not only those who flourished in the first half of the twentieth century but also composers who were establishing themselves at the time that Floyd was broadcasting. Works by Roy Agnew, John Antill, Harold Badger, Edgar Bainton, Arthur Benjamin, Hooper Brewster-Jones, E.C. Burchett, John Carmichael, Clive Douglas, Lindley Evans, Percy Grainger, Raymond Hanson, Alfred Hill, Robert Hughes, Miriam Hyde, Dorian Le Gallienne, Arundel Orchard, Peter Sculthorpe, Margaret Sutherland, Robert Trumble, and Malcolm Williamson, some twenty-one composers, were included in the programs from 1944 to 1972. Table 1 shows the works and broadcast dates. The information has been compiled from the various notebooks containing details of *The Music Lover's Hour* between 1946 and 1972 and from scripts of the program from 1944 to 1946 held in the Floyd Collection in the Grainger Museum.

¹¹ See the ABC's lists of recorded music by Australian composers and the Australian Broadcasting Commission Act, 1942.

¹² *Radio Times* 3 Feb. 1945: 5.

¹³ First broadcast on 27 Feb. 1944, initially on Sunday afternoons at 4:15 and moved to Sunday evenings at 8:00 on 7 Mar. 1948. The final broadcast was on 30 July 1972.

¹⁴ Robert Trumble, who produced the program in 1952–53, when it was still broadcast live. Recorded interview with Ian Burk on 10 Feb. 2001.

¹⁵ *Radio Times* 15 Dec. 1945: 11.

¹⁶ Floyd Collection. The compositions are listed under the year of the recording, in alphabetical order by composer.

Table 1. Australian works included in *The Music Lovers' Hour*

Composer	Work	Instrumentation (dur. of major works)	Broadcast Date(s)
Agnew, Roy	<i>Drifting Mists</i>	Piano	27 Oct. 1946 27 Apr. 1952
	<i>Five Contrasts for String Orchestra</i>	Orchestra	19 July 1959 8 Oct. 1961 7 Apr. 1963 22 Mar. 1964 24 Mar. 1968
	<i>Poem Fantasie Sonata</i>	Piano	1 Apr. 1951 25 July 1954
	<i>Sonata-Ballade</i>	Piano	3 Feb. 1952
	<i>Two Poems</i>	Piano	26 Jan. 1958
Antill, John	<i>Singing Dust</i>	Narrator and Orchestra (19 mins)	23 Jan. 1955
Badger, Harold	<i>Concertante</i>	Piano and Orchestra	4 Sep. 1960
	<i>Sonata</i>	Piano	8 Mar. 1959
Bainton, Edgar	<i>An English Idyll</i>	Vocal (Baritone) and Orchestra	23 Jan. 1955
Benjamin, Arthur	<i>Light Music Suite</i>	Orchestra	10 May 1970
	<i>Overture to an Italian Comedy</i>	Orchestra	26 Jan. 1947 21 Sep. 1947 22 Jan. 1950 3 May 1953 29 Aug. 1954
	<i>Sonatina</i>	Violin and Piano	24 Sep. 1961 29 Sep. 1963
Brewster-Jones, H.	'I Arise from Dreams of Thee'	Vocal	21 Feb. 1954
	<i>Intermezzo</i>	Piano	26 Jan. 1958
Burchett, E.C.	'In Mid-ocean'	Vocal	5 Jan. 1947 30 Mar. 1947 27 June 1948 28 June 1953
	'Quietly as Rosebuds'	Vocal	5 Jan. 1947 27 Aug. 1950 22 June 1952
Carmichael, John	<i>Puppet Show</i>	Piano duet	2 Nov. 1958
Douglas, Clive	<i>Essay for Strings</i>	Orchestra	1 June 1958
	<i>Namatjira</i>	Orchestra	28 Sep. 1958
	<i>Sturt 1829</i>	Orchestra	22 Dec. 1957
	<i>Symphony</i>	Orchestra (31 mins)	20 June 1954

Evans, Lindley	Idyll	Two Pianos and Orchestra	9 Jan. 1949 29 Apr. 1951 26 Jan. 1958
Grainger, Percy	<i>Shepherd's Hey</i>	Orchestra	21 June 1970
Hanson, Raymond	<i>Procrastination</i>	Piano	22 Apr. 1951
	Trumpet Concerto	Trumpet and Orchestra	26 Nov. 1961
Hill, Alfred	<i>As Night Falls Come again Summer</i>	Piano	15 Apr. 1951
	<i>Highland Air</i>	Piano	27 Apr. 1947
	<i>Linthorpe</i>	Orchestra	22 Nov. 1953
	<i>Retrospect</i>	Piano	22 Dec. 1946 28 Dec. 1947 26 Dec. 1948 1 Jan. 1950 11 Feb. 1951 4 Jan. 1953 30 Dec. 1956 29 Dec. 1957 28 Dec. 1958 27 Dec. 1959 31 Dec. 1961 30 Dec. 1962
	Septet for Wind Instruments	Flute, Oboe, 2 clarinets, Horn and 2 Bassoons (18'30")	23 Jan. 1955
	'The Dream' (slow movt), String Quartet No. 2	String Quartet	4 July 1948
	String Quartet No. 11 in D minor	String Quartet (14 mins)	26 Sep. 1948
	Two Gaelic Sketches	String Quartet	25 Apr. 1948 26 Jan. 1958 9 Apr. 1950 6 May 1951 18 Nov. 1951 16 May 1954
	Viola Concerto	Viola and Orchestra	6 Sep. 1959
Hughes, Robert	<i>Lento from Suite in A minor</i>	Orchestra	20 July 1947 2 Dec. 1951
	<i>Masquerade Overture</i>	Orchestra	31 Aug. 1969 6 June 1971
	<i>Serenade for Small Orchestra</i>	Orchestra	17 Jan. 1960 30 Oct. 1960 12 Feb. 1961

Hughes (cont.)	Sinfonietta	Orchestra (16'40")	3 Apr. 1960 24 May 1964 14 Apr. 1968 18 May 1969 7 Feb. 1971 19 Sep. 1971
	Three Sketches	Clarinet and piano	3 July 1949 26 Nov. 1950 9 Nov. 1952
	<i>Xanadu</i> (Ballet Suite)	Orchestra	26 Jan. 1958 26 July 1959 25 Nov. 1962 24 Oct. 1965
Hyde, Miriam	Three Pieces	Flute and Piano	17 Sep. 1961 25 Oct. 1964 12 Dec. 1965
	<i>Lyric; Heroic Elegy</i>	Orchestra	13 Sep. 1959 15 Apr. 1962
Le Gallienne, Dorian	Nocturne	Piano	15 Oct. 1944 12 Dec. 1948
	<i>Othello</i> , Suite of Stage Music	Oboe and Guitar	20 Mar. 1949 2 Oct. 1949 16 Nov. 1952 30 May 1954
	Sinfonietta	Orchestra	11 Feb. 1962 26 Oct. 1963 2 Jan. 1966 3 July 1966
	Sonatina for Four Hands	Piano	30 Apr. 1944 2 Feb. 1947 20 Aug. 1950 18 Nov. 1951
	Symphonic Study	Piano	7 May 1944
	Symphony in E	Orchestra (29'30")	9 Sep. 1956
	<i>Three Divine Poems of John Donne</i>	Vocal	10 July 1949 7 May 1950 3 Feb. 1952
Orchard, Arundel	Fantasie-Ballade	Violin and Piano	8 Apr. 1951 22 Mar. 1953
Sculthorpe, Peter	<i>The Fifth Continent</i>	Orchestra (32'30" mins)	26 Jan. 1964
Sutherland, Margaret	'Break of Day' 'Green Singer'	Girls' Choir (two-part) and Piano	26 Jan. 1958
	<i>Dithyramb</i>	Orchestra	26 Aug. 1962 19 July 1964 6 Sep. 1970

Sutherland (cont.)	Fantasy Sonata	Piano and Saxophone	7 Sep. 1947 4 Apr. 1948 9 Apr. 1950
	Oboe Trio	Oboe and two Violins	30 June 1957 13 Feb. 1966
	Quartet in G minor	Clarinet, Viola, Horn and Piano	6 May 1951
	Sonata	Clarinet and Piano	4 Feb. 1951
Trumble, Robert	Elegy	Oboe and Piano	17 Sep. 1961 17 Feb. 1963 25 Oct. 1964 12 Dec. 1965
	Four Pieces	Oboe and Piano	11 Sep. 1960 25 Aug. 1963 20 Dec. 1964
	Four Songs without Words	Oboe and Piano	22 Aug. 1965 4 Sep. 1966 17 Mar. 1968 31 Jan. 1971
	Introduction and Allegro	Flute and Piano	19 Apr. 1970
	Sonata	Violin and Piano	7 Dec. 1958
Williamson, Malcolm	'Elevamini' Symphony	Orchestra	26 Jan. 1964

When the broadcast date fell on Australia Day it was Floyd's custom to include works by Australian composers. In 1958 and 1964 the entire program was devoted to Australian works.

Table 2. Australian works included in *The Music Lovers' Hour*, 1944–1971, by category (total number of works is 67)

Category	Percent
Orchestral	33%
Chamber	25%
Piano	24%
Concerto	9%
Vocal	6%
Choral	3%

Except for concertos, this is consistent with the frequency of genres for standard repertoire by non-Australian composers in *The Music Lovers' Hour*.¹⁷ The percentage for concertos can

¹⁷ See Ian Burk, 'The Influence of Dr A. E. Floyd as Music Critic and Broadcaster on Musical Culture in Australia 1915–1974,' MMus thesis, University of Melbourne, 2001, 65–8.

be explained by the scarcity of such compositions by Australian composers. The majority of the works presented were relatively short. Availability of recordings aside, this is in keeping with Floyd's policy of including, where possible, a variety of composers and music in each program. However, substantial works lasting more than fifteen minutes were included from time to time. Antill's *Singing Dust*, Douglas's Symphony, Hanson's Trumpet Concerto, Hill's String Quartet No. 11 in D minor and Viola Concerto, Hughes's *Xanadu* and Sinfonietta, Le Gallienne's Symphony in E and Sinfonietta, Sculthorpe's *The Fifth Continent* and Williamson's 'Elevamini' Symphony fall into this category. Apart from Hughes's *Xanadu* and Sinfonietta and Le Gallienne's Sinfonietta, each of these works was broadcast on one occasion only. Hill's *Retrospect* was the most frequently played work. It was often Floyd's practice to play this work in the last program for the year or the first program early in the new year. Next in popularity were Hill's *Two Gaelic Sketches* and Hughes's Sinfonietta.

Table 3. Frequency of works by select Australian composers broadcast on *The Music Lovers' Hour*, 1944–1972

Composer	Works
Alfred Hill	25
Robert Hughes	20
Dorian Le Gallienne	18
Robert Trumble	13
Roy Agnew	11
Margaret Sutherland	11
Arthur Benjamin	8
E.C. Burchett	7

As can be seen from Table 3, Alfred Hill's music was played most frequently. However, it is interesting to note that as time went by his music was programmed less and less and, apart from Roy Agnew and E.C. Burchett, Floyd promoted a younger generation of composers. Of the composers broadcast, many were based in Melbourne and were acquainted personally with Floyd. This raises two questions. Did he favour his friends and colleagues at the ABC who were composers? Did these composers use him to promote their work? The apparent absence of hard evidence and conflicting circumstantial indicators leaves these questions open to conjecture. When put to Robert Trumble, ABC Supervisor of Music in Melbourne from 1952 to 1982, he dismissed such suggestions, adding that it would have been uncharacteristic of Floyd to promote music by any composer unless he personally liked it and deemed it worth listening to, no matter what the demographic of his audience.¹⁸ This view is certainly supported by the fact that Floyd did not promote the music of the new breed of Australian composers that emerged in the 1950s. The music to which Floyd responded was rooted in functional tonality; he disliked atonal music and dissonance.¹⁹ His age may have been a factor here. Already set

¹⁸ Recorded interview with Ian Burk on 10 Feb. 2001.

¹⁹ See *World Record News* July 1961: 14 and Jan. 1962: 24; and a script for *The Music Lovers' Hour* (Floyd Collection). The script is dated 16 June, but no year is given. The most likely years are 1957, 1963 or 1968.

in his ways and opinions he was perhaps no longer open to the latest trends in the progress of musical composition.

Curiously, in spite of the availability of recordings, Floyd did not program the musically accessible compositions of William James, the Sydney-based ABC Federal Director of Music from 1936 to 1958, with whom, like Alfred Hill, also from Sydney, he got on well. Professional connection, mutual admiration and geographical location did not necessarily lead to musical promotion.

Lindley Evans, John Antill, Clive Douglas, Robert Hughes and Robert Trumble were variously employed by the ABC and this connection may have facilitated the availability of their music on record. Yet it may have been at Floyd's instigation that recordings of works by certain composers were made. According to John Nicholls, this was most probably the case with songs by the amateur composer, E.C. Burchett:

E.C. Burchett, yes, I remember him as a thin, elderly, rather aesthetic type of man. He was not a professional musician but a good amateur who had some kind of office job. He wrote some quite pleasant songs in the vein of Michael Head, and was reasonably friendly with AEF, who promoted his music. Some of his songs were recorded by Bill Herbert, probably at the suggestion of AEF.²⁰

William Herbert was another well-known pupil of Floyd and a leading tenor of his day. In 1946 Floyd wrote:

I note some recent activity on the part of the ABC in the matter of making permanent recordings of songs by local composers. Home-grown in every respect, and in every way commanding respectful attention, are two songs by E.C. Burchett. 'In Mid-Ocean' ... and 'Quietly As Rosebuds.'²¹

It was these two songs that Floyd occasionally played in *The Music Lovers' Hour*. On an earlier occasion he drew his readers' attention to 'a notable example of contemporary Melbourne writing; "In Mid-Ocean" is a sensitive and thoughtful setting by E.C. Burchett.'²² Previous to this comment he wrote of:

a composition for violin, with piano accompaniment, written by the Melbourne musician, E.C. Burchett of Camberwell. 'Changing Moods' is the title, and the music has the poetical and deeply thoughtful character which much of Mr Burchett's writing so clearly possesses.²³

This work was not included in Floyd's radio program because no recording was available.

Floyd had a special regard for the music of Roy Agnew, whose music he promoted on air and in the press:

Roy Agnew demands attention by reason of his frequent use of a large canvas, as well as a number of other works of considerable dimensions. The work played in the

²⁰ Personal comment to Ian Burk, 22 Oct. 2000. John Nicholls was Floyd's assistant at St Paul's Cathedral, 1931–1936, Organist and Master of the Choristers of St David's Cathedral, Hobart (1940–1980), Hobart City Organist (1940–1981), and a frequent broadcaster as conductor, recitalist and music presenter. As the music advisor to the Tasmanian Government he was active in the establishment of the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra under the auspices of the ABC.

²¹ *Radio Times* 3 Aug. 1946: 8.

²² *Radio Times* 9 Dec. 1944: 5.

²³ *Radio Times* 12 Aug. 1944: 5.

course of my recent session was his third excursion in the field of sonata-writing, and it challenges attention by its seriousness of claim and by the extent of its achievement.²⁴

On another occasion, Floyd commented that Agnew's compositions

found ready acceptance with some of the best London publishers. What is more, they deserved it. They were genuinely pianistic and combined reasonable modernism with an acceptance of the classical ground plan.²⁵

Floyd also championed the music of Percy Grainger whom he knew well and with whom he had some collaboration in 1926 when a group of boys from Floyd's choir at St Paul's Cathedral had been drawn in at the last moment to assist in the performance of 'Marching Song of Democracy' and had distinguished themselves by their facility in singing the music at sight.²⁶ In 1944 he wrote of Grainger that:

Australia and Melbourne have abundant reason for being proud of this unique personality. A very intelligent observer has declared that everything he says, writes, or does is different from what anyone has said, written or done before; also that the 'open-air' influence can be felt in all his work, in other words that no musician has ever less suggested the atmosphere of either the drawing room or the study.²⁷

In 1965 Floyd took part in a television program called *A Tribute to Percy Grainger*.²⁸ Here he spoke of Grainger's interest in folk songs and folk dances. It is therefore surprising that he only once, on 21 June 1970, included music by Grainger in *The Music Lovers' Hour*. On this occasion Floyd presented *Shepherd's Hey*, a work that he himself had conducted in the Melbourne Town Hall in 1919.²⁹

In another sphere, Floyd regularly programmed Fritz Hart's Evening Service (settings of the Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis) in E flat for the choir of St Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne. Scored for unaccompanied SATB choir, this was written in March 1931, specifically for Floyd and Cathedral choir.³⁰ Apparently Floyd considered this setting to be 'the greatest thing of its kind since Orlando Gibbons.'³¹ Apart from Floyd's own compositions, it was the only work

²⁴ *Radio Times* 1 July 1944: 5.

²⁵ *Radio Times* 26 Jan. 1946: 2. Agnew's compositions were published by Augener in London and Arthur P. Schmidt Co. in New York.

²⁶ 'Musicians I Have Known,' recorded 19 July 1964 and broadcast 9 Oct. 1964. ABC radio archives 72/10/528, MU 39. Script in the Floyd Collection. See also letter of appreciation from Grainger to Floyd dated 3 Nov. 1926 (Floyd Collection).

²⁷ *Radio Times* 12 Feb. 1944: 5.

²⁸ Recorded 6 June 1965 and replayed on 24 Oct. 1965 at 4:40 p.m. by Station ABV2. Part of the script and the broadcast advice in the Floyd Collection: Grainger Museum.

²⁹ Third Orchestral Concert given under the management of the Lady Northcote Permanent Orchestra Trust Fund on 28 June. Program in the Floyd Collection.

³⁰ The first performance was expressly noted by Floyd in his cathedral music diary for that year (Floyd Collection). See also Repertoire Book 3. A newspaper article noted that the first performance was conducted by Hart and that the work proved 'striking in harmony, dignified, and, at times, poignant in expression and admirably varied in colour.' See 'New Cathedral Music,' *Argus* 15 Aug. 1931: 22.

³¹ Quoted in Geoffrey Cox, 'Church Music in the Anglican Diocese of Melbourne, 1847–1997,' *People of the Past?* ed. Colin Holden (Melbourne: University of Melbourne History Department, 2000) 79. The source given is an unidentified newspaper clipping among the personal papers of A.E.H. Nickson in the Grainger Museum, University of Melbourne.

by a composer resident in Australia to be introduced into the St Paul's repertoire. However, composers of the time seemed to have shown little interest in composing church music.

Two Australian composers were promoted for almost the entire life of the *The Music Lovers' Hour*. Floyd drew attention to them in 1945:

It's good to know that there are increasing signs of interest in works of our own local composers. Some have had plenty of publicity, with numerous hearings. Others are only now beginning to get proper acknowledgment, and among these may be numbered two Melbourne musicians, Dorian Le Gallienne and Robert Hughes.³²

As far as can be ascertained, Dorian Le Gallienne was the first Australian composer to be included in Floyd's program. Introducing one of his compositions in a subsequent program, Floyd said:

Mr Le Gallienne's music lives in time rather than space—instead of attaching to it a geographical label I think I'd make bold to call it music-of-the-20th century—adding perhaps this proviso, that alongside of an unforced originality it has sanity which some other 20th century composers do not always achieve!³³

In a radio program called *Musicians I Have Known*, broadcast in 1964, he said of Le Gallienne:

We were geographically, as well as intellectually and spiritually very close, and we saw a good deal of each other. Moreover, when he was still an unknown name in the field of composition, and I had just begun to do my Sunday evening sessions, one of the very intelligent young women in the ABC record library played me some short piano pieces composed by Dorian. These I began to include in my programs. My carefully kept records tell me that one was a Nocturne and the other was a Symphonic Study.³⁴

Another composer well known to Floyd was Robert Hughes, who worked for the ABC in Melbourne from 1946 to 1976 as music arranger and orchestrator. As well as broadcasting some of his works, Floyd also drew his readers' attention to Hughes's *Diversions on an Original Dance Theme*, played and presumably broadcast direct by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in 1947.³⁵

In 1945, in advising his readers of forthcoming radio listening opportunities, Floyd promoted Horace Keats as the 'premier Australian song-writer' of the time,³⁶ and a few months later he reviewed favourably a work by Noel Mewton-Wood:

Scene 1 of a ballet entitled *Persephone* ... struck me as being full of ideas, abounding in knowledge of orchestral effect, and rich in evidences of the happy results of having been, in recent years, in close touch with developments and activities in the world's great centres.³⁷

³² *Radio Times* 27 Jan. 1945: 5.

³³ 15 Oct. 1944. Script in the Floyd Collection.

³⁴ 'Musicians I Have Known,' recorded 19 July 1964 and broadcast 9 Oct. 1964.

³⁵ *Radio Times* 4 Oct. 1947: n.p. It was a statutory requirement of the ABC that all concerts by its state orchestras be broadcast.

³⁶ *Radio Times* 30 June 1945: 5.

³⁷ *Radio Times* 27 Oct. 1945: 7.

From his broadcast comments and writing, it is clear that Floyd looked favourably on works by contemporary composers which exhibited certain qualities: immediate appeal, 'reasonable modernism,' satisfying architectural design, 'poetic' and 'romantic' feeling, imaginativeness and individuality. Characteristically, Floyd did not explain what he meant by the term 'reasonable modernism,' but most likely he meant music that was not atonal. He looked less favourably on what he called music of an academic or drawing room nature, that is, music inhibited by adherence to what he saw as arbitrary rules, and sentimental music. With regard to the former, Floyd asserted on various occasions that musical training in academic institutions harmed musical progress and stifled composers' originality and desire to experiment.³⁸ In an article entitled 'New Musical Education' he wrote:

The courses of study prescribed in many a college, or conservatorium, or university, are calculated to break and spoil the musical spirit of all but the most resilient students. One of the greatest living theorists told the present writer that his degree work (he was a graduate in music of an ancient and honourable university) had killed his originality.³⁹

In Floyd's own case, it is interesting to note that in a letter from his supervisor at Oxford, Professor C.H. Kitson, dated 30 May 1906, Floyd was encouraged to 'write good modern stuff,' basing his work on 'the best models of Parry, Stanford, Brahms, Dvořák, Schumann etc.'⁴⁰ Although pastiche was not required, the implication here is that any originality and experimentation should be bound by already accepted music in the Western tradition. Obviously Floyd found this restrictive and empathised with composers whose originality had been restricted by academic or other artificial impositions. Much later, for example, he was critical of 'Soviet State Ideology' thwarting the creativity of composers such as Prokofiev and Shostakovich.⁴¹

In reviewing *Victory Overture* by Alan Mote, one of the winners of the ABC Composers' Competition in 1945, Floyd wrote:

Mr Mote shows signs of having valiantly thrown off the shackles imposed by his early training ... Mr Mote's Overture gave evidence of his acquaintanceship with recent movements in the realm of music, and had individual touches of an attractive and intriguing kind.⁴²

Yet despite his apparent encouragement of originality, the composers promoted by Floyd belonged to the immediate post-colonial period of Australian composition and reflected English trends and the European neo-classical styles. Music of these composers was generally conservative in style and could be said to be accessible to the general listener. It is surprising, therefore, that works by Frank Hutchens and Peggy Glanville-Hicks were not included in Floyd's programs, although Glanville-Hicks worked in the USA in the 1940s and '50s, and recordings of her works do not appear in the ABC lists.

³⁸ Dorothy Ford, 'Says Dr A.E. Floyd,' *Australian Musical News and Digest* 38.16 (1 July 1947): 16.

³⁹ Undated article. Given its typographical style it was probably written for the *Argus*. The black proof is in the Floyd Collection.

⁴⁰ Letter in the Floyd Collection.

⁴¹ *World Record News* May 1962: 29.

⁴² *Radio Times* 4 Aug. 1945: n.p.

Floyd sometimes mentioned positive feed-back that he had received for his promotion of Australian music:

Much favourable comment has reached me with regard to the Sonatina for piano duet by the young Melbourne composer, Mr Le Gallienne, played in the course of my weekly session last Sunday afternoon. I definitely feel that the work is remarkably satisfactory and pleasing, both in its architectural design and in its actual musical content.⁴³

On another occasion, Floyd noted that his playing of a Lento from a Suite by Robert Hughes 'has attracted very favourable attention.'⁴⁴

It is perhaps of some significance, that Floyd did not include in his programs music by Australian composers who came into prominence in the 1950s and 1960s: James Penberthy, Felix Werder, Don Banks, Eric Gross, Keith Humble, Richard Meale, Colin Brumby, Larry Sitsky and Nigel Butterley. Music by these composers marked a departure from neo-classical and the English pastoralist styles. Composers such as Werder, Humble and Sitsky were influenced by modernist avant-garde European trends, and others were consciously striving to develop an independent Australian style. For Floyd, who was already in his eighties, the music of these composers may well have been incomprehensible or, because of its dissonance, unacceptable. In spite of his openness to fresh ideas, originality and experimentation in composition in his early years, Floyd was prejudiced against 'avant-garde' music in general and against much of the music of the 1940s, '50s and '60s, which he simply disliked. Extreme dissonance may well have been a deciding factor.⁴⁵ According to Robert Trumble, Floyd's interest in modern music stopped at Bartók and Shostakovich.⁴⁶

He did play a movement of Felix Werder's String Quartet at one of his music appreciation classes at Hawthorn on 14 August 1961,⁴⁷ and in 1964 he included Sculthorpe's *The Fifth Continent* in an Australia Day edition of *The Music Lovers' Hour*. However, these were exceptions. George Nicholls, ABC Record Librarian, observed:

There were some Australian composers he did like...but as for the more modern and avant-garde people, — oh, he was very polite about it — all he used to say was 'Well, it's different' but that's all. He wouldn't touch them at all.⁴⁸

There is a certain inconsistency here in that Floyd previously admired and promoted composers who demonstrated individuality, experimentation and originality. However, it clearly had to be a certain type of experimentation. He had rejected the music of the Second Viennese School that came to prominence when he was still a relatively young man.⁴⁹ Not

⁴³ *Radio Times* 6 May 1944: 5.

⁴⁴ *Radio Times* 27 Jan. 1945: 5.

⁴⁵ Shirley McLean who worked in the ABC record library in Melbourne, recalled listening with Floyd to a work by Tippett. After a while Floyd said, 'It's like toothache, isn't it?' Letter from Shirley McLean to Ian Burk, 9 Feb. 2001.

⁴⁶ Recorded interview with Ian Burk 10 Feb. 2001.

⁴⁷ Notebook containing plans for CAE classes, Floyd Collection, 30. From the 1940s to the 1960s Floyd gave classes in music appreciation for the Workers' Educational Association which later became the Council for Adult Education.

⁴⁸ 'Prospect: ABC colleagues talk about Dr Floyd, broadcaster,' 19 Jan. 1974. ABC radio archives 74/10/85.

⁴⁹ *Music Lovers' Hour*. Script dated 16 June, year unknown.

surprisingly, this music never made an appearance in Floyd's programs, although this had nothing to do with anti-German sentiment as a result of the first and second world wars. From the time of his arrival in Australia in 1915, Floyd defended the inclusion of German music in concert programs, maintaining that music was a universal language which transcended political events.⁵⁰ For a composer to be totally individual and to explore ways of musical expression that were not a development of earlier European traditions was possibly outside Floyd's parameters of acceptance and enjoyment. Twentieth-century Western music that remained in the tonal tradition was promoted by Floyd; music outside that tradition was not. Floyd's aim was to stimulate his listeners emotionally, but not to challenge them with music that he himself did not enjoy.

Floyd represented a disappearing world of certainty and comfort and an attachment to European heritage of the early twentieth century; the aforementioned composers represented a new world of national self-examination and identity. Many began looking to Australia's own geographical region, Asia, for their inspiration, as well as to Europe. It is possible that Floyd contributed to the general non-acceptance of the music of these composers. One could speculate that over a long period of time Floyd had influenced the taste of a listening public not to be open to the appreciation of such music. However, it would be unfair to lay the blame for this state of affairs entirely at Floyd's feet. His influence may have been but one of many factors.

With regard to Australian music, Floyd did not neglect the music of the Australian Aboriginal people. He presented their music descriptively and with political awareness. Scripts exist of a series of programs called *Music Makers* produced in 1952 for the Queensland branch of the ABC.⁵¹ It was rather similar to the ABC schools' program *Discovering Music*, which ran from 1941 to 1951. One was entitled 'Australian Aboriginal Songs.' This would appear to be Floyd's only brief excursion into the realm of non-Western music. In the opening paragraph, Floyd expounded rather enlightened views for the time regarding the plight of the Aborigines. Today, over fifty years later, his introductory comments are still pertinent:

There's an old question 'Am I my brother's keeper?' and it means 'is it my duty to be kind to him, and help him in every possible way,' and the answer is a big loud 'Yes', especially if the brothers we're thinking of are the Australian Aborigines (men and women and children — boys and girls). We've taken nearly all their land, and now it's our duty to take care of them and learn something about them.

He went on to play some Aboriginal songs in a version 'altered and made to sound like ordinary songs that people sing at concerts.'⁵² He then played recordings made by Adolphus Elkin and Harold Davies in Central Australia between 1926 and 1929 of 'real' Aboriginal songs, pointing out to his listeners how Aboriginal melodies differ from the tonal melodies of Western Music.⁵³ Earlier in 1942, in a *Discovering Music* program entitled 'Music in Australia,' Floyd included some records of singing by Australian Aborigines as examples of 'a very early and primitive kind of music' but worthy of 'very careful and respectful attention.' He drew

⁵⁰ 'New Organist for St Paul's,' *Australian Musical News* 4.8 (Mar. 1915): 235.

⁵¹ This schools' program was broadcast in Queensland on Mondays between 2:45 and 3:00 p.m.

⁵² This was most likely Arthur Loam's arrangement of the Aboriginal songs 'Jabbin, Jabbin' and 'Maranoo Lullaby,' recordings of which appears in the ABC lists of Australian compositions dated 1952.

⁵³ Scripts in the Floyd Collection.

the listeners' attention to 'intervals not clearly defined' and 'an element of repetition, a matter of very great importance.'⁵⁴

Aboriginal music aside, which Floyd included only in his schools' program, his promotion of music in the Western tradition by Australian composers, though selective, was significant. He not only encouraged these composers publicly in his writing and broadcasting, but included their works in his broadcasts alongside those of the musical canon, thus placing them in a wider context than the 'local product.' According to the composer Robert Trumble, Floyd played an important role in encouraging and promoting Australian composers at a time when life for a composer was even more difficult than today.⁵⁵ There was little in the way of financial assistance and opportunities for performances and recordings.

In his later years, Floyd may have appeared old-fashioned, conservative, and out of touch with the latest developments in music and culture: even quaint, perhaps. However, he had a large following, and as a popular music writer, commentator and broadcaster he had a significant influence on the development of musical taste, and possibly contributed to the general non-acceptance of music of more avant-garde music, including such music by Australian composers. Although the range of Australian compositions broadcast by Floyd over the years did not reflect the increasing availability of recordings, his attempt to educate the public to accept and support Australian composers was commendable.

⁵⁴ Friday 4 Dec. 1942. Script in the Floyd Collection.

⁵⁵ Recorded interview with Ian Burk, 10 Feb. 2001.