Abstracts of Recently Passed Australian Doctoral Theses

Vertigo: Riccardo Formosa's Composition Technique
Michael Barkl DMus, Deakin University, 1995

Riccardo Formosa has been identified as being an important and widely recognised young Australian composer. Formosa's possession of a sophisticated composition technique is central to his approach to composition and to his reputation among contemporary composers.

The thesis aims to define the composition technique employed by Formosa. It does so by analysing the works from a number of clearly defined perspectives through the application of a model for analysis proposed by the anthropologist, Gregory Bateson.

The study proceeds firstly through a description of the works as a whole and their relationship to the composer's personal history. Secondly, the note-to-note operations Formosa has employed are reassembled through a detailed examination of the scores. Thirdly, an assessment is made of the function of the various techniques within the musical texture. Lastly, a number of comparisons are made between Formosa's work and the work of his compositional models.

The study concludes that Formosa's works show evidence of a composition technique operating effectively on different levels. The note-to-note processes, simple in themselves, are multiplied to form a complex counterpoint. On both the note-to-note level and the relationship between larger sections of the works, the controlling factor was found to be one of "binary expression" in the form of symmetry or complementarity, a compositional aesthetic also held by Formosa's teacher, Franco Donatoni.

Tonal ambiguity in Polyphony of the Josquin Generation
Garry Ekkel PhD, The University of Melbourne, 1997

Much analysis of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century music has sought to identify a tonal or modal coherence based on a single pitch centre, be that the tonic or the final. In a significant minority of Renaissance works, however, a second pitch centre may be just as prominent as the tonic or the final, challenging the assumption that Renaissance music is necessarily built on one pre-eminent pitch centre.

This study considers the relationship between two pitch centres in a range of works from the Josquin generation. The two centres chosen for investigation are A and E, because of their close but problematic relationship in works of this generation. The A-E tonal spectrum includes works assignable to modes 3 and 4, but is not restricted to works from these modes.

Chapters 3 to 4 offer several approaches to the analysis of music falling within the A-E tonal spectrum. The analyses reveal the ways in which different tonal implications may be juxtaposed, including the incorporation of an E-oriented *cantus firmus* within an A-oriented voice-leading structure and the amalgamation of voices which have different tonal orientations.

The chief difficulty associated with the A-E tonal spectrum is that works ending in E and works ending in A often have very similar voice-leading structures, and to label these works as being either 'in E-Phrygian' or 'in A-Aeolian' exaggerates the difference between the two types of works and masks their close interrelationship. To judge the tonality of a work principally by its final goal may distort the tonal relationships during the course of the work. In order to deal with this problem, I propose a modified voice-leading method which is primarily diachronic rather than end-oriented. The tonal centre in this approach is reviewed as the work progresses, following a detailed set of guidelines.

The diachronic analyses in Chapters 5 to 7 reveal the degree of prominence which both A and E have as pitch centres. This does not necessarily imply tonal ambivalence, drifting tonality or bitonality, which would be out of keeping with a *prima facie* listening of these works. Rather the alternation and juxtaposition of two pitch centres is more satisfactorily explained as the balancing of two poles of a fifth-axis. The analyses help to identify four strategies for the balancing of A and E as pitch centres during the course of a work. On a more specific level, the composers use a number of techniques to control the meeting-point between one pitch and another, including the use of overlap, the soft hexachord and the *mi* clausula.

Although the study is not in the first place a comparative stylist study, the analyses reveal some stylistic differences between the approaches of Compère, Josquin, Isaac, la Rue and Obrecht, and open up avenues for the comparison of works based on the management of the two poles of a fifth-axis.

The Symphonies of Malcolm Williamson:
A Study in Analysis

Belinda Kendall-Smith PhD, University of Queensland, 1994

Although Malcolm Williamson (b. 1931) has resided in England since the early 1950s, he is regarded as one of Australia's most successful composers. Amongst his large and diverse output, the seven symphonies constitute a substantial body of works that employ techniques typifying Williamson's compositional approach. This study not only identifies and explains these, but also reveals the philosophical impulses underpinning the compositional processes.

A self styled eclectic, Williamson, having studied serialism, has selectively extracted certain of its elements and combined these with compositional features distilled from such composers as Olivier Messiaen, Johannes Ockeghem, Josquin, and Richard Rogers (the successful Broadway musical composer) to create a peculiar serialism which operates "in tonal or modal context."

Since Williamson's idiom is a synthesis of such accessible characteristics as the "big tune" and advanced individualised serial-modal techniques, it has not been appropriate to employ any of the established analytical methods. Further, because Williamson adapts various stylistics features for his own purposes, apparent technical inconsistencies inherent in his music often preclude the application of established definitions.

Walter Bonwick and the Place of Music in the Curriculum of the National, Common and State Schools 1854–1883

Beverley Maclellan PhD, The University of Melbourne, 1996

This thesis is concerned with tracing the life and professional career of Walter Bonwick, a Victorian colonial educator, and the role he played in the place of music in the curriculum of the National, Common and State schools.

For more than a quarter of a century Bonwick was professionally engaged as a music teacher. His pioneering work spanned the decade of the National Board, its incorporation with the Denominational Board into the Common Schools Board, and finally, with the passing of the 1872 Education Act, the early years of the organisation which was to be known as the Education Department, with its provision for free, compulsory and secular instruction in State schools.

Published studies of this period in Victorian history have, quite rightly, concentrated on the issues of public policy associated with the struggle for the control of schooling and the politics of church and state. The value of the works of such writers as Austin, Gregory, Pledger, Grundy and Pawsey is well-known. What this study intends to do is to complement these investigations with what might be less well known, namely tracing the career of one man, Walter Bonwick, who was continuously employed as a singing master in the National, Common and State schools. While it is essential to understand the wider context of the cultural and political period, it is valuable to study the detail of Bonwick's experiences. The microcosm of his story, his experiences as an individual teacher who was living within the wider and significantly changing social context, helps to illuminate the major themes of the previous studies. It also reveals the significant role that an individual played in maintaining the teaching of music in schools.

While it is not a sociological study, it does have the characteristics of a case study. It is, in part, the story of a teacher's life as he often struggles through the turbulent yet exciting and challenging years. It is also the story of his success in his chosen vocation, achieved in a period which witnessed the virtual abandonment of church-based schooling in favour of the seemingly inevitable centralisation of educational control.