

2. Composers Looking Back: Late romantics and the nineteenth-century legacy

Alfred Hill (1870–1960)

If one reads *A Distant Music: The life & times of Alfred Hill 1870–1960*, by John Mansfield Thomson, one comes away with a sad realisation. The book certainly tells the story of the man and paints a likeable portrait of someone who was energetic and idealistic, and who produced vast quantities of music. But what of the music itself? Almost nothing is said about it. The fact is that, although everyone seems to acknowledge Alfred Hill as an important figure in Australia's early music, there is little of it heard and little has been written about it. It certainly would be a daunting task when one looks at the output. Even for the modest scope of this book, there would be at least 73 songs with piano to consider, a massive amount of chamber music, ranging from trifles to full-length sonatas, as well as trios with piano. After playing through a sizeable fraction of this totality, my head was spinning—not from the joy of discovery or the exhilaration of rediscovery, but rather from the awful realisation that, however much one dresses it up and extols it, the music is the same from beginning to end. Hill never shifted from his late-romantic stance; it is as though the major portion of the twentieth century that he witnessed had never happened. That is difficult to understand, as he was at least part entrepreneur, part educationalist, part arts administrator, very much a man of the theatre, a busy string player and conductor—and time certainly does not stand still in any of these fields. Perhaps part of the problem was artistic burnout; many pieces were recast, and sometimes quite surprising reincarnations happened—such as a string quartet becoming a symphony or a piano concerto becoming a solo piano piece. Some years ago, at a conference devoted to an early period of Australian music, there was an orchestral concert; it just happened that a work by Hill was followed by a composition of James Penberthy. It was obvious to everyone there that a major step had occurred in Australian music, amply demonstrated before us: what was comfortable, soft, post-colonialism with a dash of amateurism had suddenly moved into an international and professional arena. Maybe Hill—a dominant figure on our musical landscape for many years—had simply been left behind. I remember him from his last decade, as he was a presence in Sydney on the scene even then, and feel somewhat guilty writing this way, for there was no pretension to the man, certainly not a trace of arrogance—he was what he was, with no apology, but there was nothing self-righteous about his musical stance.

I began my playing marathon—just by chance—with his little *Humoreske*, for violin and piano, dedicated to Cyril Monk, who was a colourful character from Sydney's early days. The piece is copyrighted 1911 and illustrates my point very well. Two World Wars did not dislodge this world. The piece is well written, eminently playable, rhythmically staid, harmonically predictable, formally text bookish. It is genteel, Kapellmeister music, in the ternary form, which Hill continually utilised.

Hill was not a pianist, and although he knew what was available, it never stretches the possibilities. Even in the trios and the sonatas, the piano part is mainly supportive, with some dialogue occurring. In some of the songs, one does come across a quasi-operatic outburst now and then, just to remind us that Hill did compose a number of operas. But the overall piano parts are variants of rolled chords with an echo thrown in.

The songs fall into a number of categories. Most are parlour songs, expressing comfortable bourgeois emotions without going overboard—that would never do. There is a dreadful class of patriotic songs full of marching rhythms, hymn-like accompaniments, dotted figures and jingoistic sentiments. I used to collect these because the covers were by far the best part of the total production. Some have a faded charm to them, such as *An Old Remembered Song* (1952), written in memory of Dame Clara Butt. Some are almost pure music hall; a good example would be *A Brigand Am I*, extolling the virtue of being a brigand, but in a nice way, of course.

The vocal music that now seems the most valuable and probably the most interesting are Hill's excursions into ethnic song. He was interested in Maori music, as well as Australian Aboriginal music and music from New Guinea. The various songs drawing on these cultures are a mixture of Europeanised and ethnically more authentic types, just as sometimes he used legends or words *from* these cultures but provided the musical setting from his own world. For example, in *Maori War-Song*, he translates the original into English, but sets both languages; the song says 'arranged by Alfred Hill', so there are classes of mixtures, with the proportions varying. *Poor Fella Me* is a moving example of a successful synthesis between the music of the white man and that of the black man. We must remember that Hill's interest in ethnomusicology went back a long way, and did break new ground in Australia as well as demonstrating a compositional possibility to future composers. The collections are fairly readily available and the publications often contain background material and legends pertinent to the song setting.

The instrumental music contains a mass of pedagogic matter illustrating form and technique to student players; Hill even composed miniature chamber works demonstrating classical methods of construction. There was a market for such

material; I have my doubts about it as music. This is not *Mikrokosmos* in the making. I am afraid that the ‘serious’ sonatas—and there is even one for cornet (an instrument Hill used to play)—fall into the same trap of working to a well-worn formula. But my personal opinion is really of no import. What I am trying to propound here is a serious study, including a detailed catalogue of Alfred Hill’s output. No doubt some gems will be found; more fundamentally, it is a veiled part of our history, and we need to know about it in some detailed and scholarly way, even if there is some doubt about the ultimate value of much of the music. Hill died only 50 years ago, and already seems a distant and forgotten figure.

Frederick Septimus Kelly (1881–1916)

The music of Frederick Septimus Kelly has turned out to be somewhat of an embarrassment in musical circles. When the composer’s output was rediscovered in the National Library of Australia, as well as some written material such as a diary, there was a bit of a buzz, especially as it was revealed that Kelly had attended some important performances of early twentieth-century pioneer composers, and knew important figures in the world of music such as Tovey and Grainger. Regrettably, hearing music by Debussy and others seems to have had singularly no influence on Kelly’s own ultra-conservative style and outlook, even though in his writings he seems to admit the importance of the new music to which he was exposed. I have played through a number of manuscript works, of which the most substantial is a *Serenade for Flute and Piano*. This is Kelly’s own arrangement of a work originally for flute, harp, horn and string orchestra. The title page seems to be a preparation for publication by Schott, and is given as ‘Op. 7’. As soon as one begins to play, one realises that nothing very exciting is going to occur. The work is in five movements

- I. ‘Prelude’
- II. ‘Idyl’
- III. ‘Menuet’
- IV. ‘Air and Variations’
- V. ‘Jig’.

The first movement is textured very lightly and lives in a Mendelssohnian atmosphere. The second movement has some quite lovely moments, especially in the middle section, where the flute arabesques could have come out of a Chopin nocturne. The variations movement is very strict and classical, essentially elaborating the simple tune in a melodic manner, in the style of

a minor early nineteenth-century salon composer. The jig does not even try to develop counterpoint, which one would have expected. Overall, there was nothing in the score that would have made an early nineteenth-century composer blush! There were two violin sonatas in D minor—one complete and one breaking off in the middle of the first movement. The completed sonata has an adagio introduction before it launches itself into the usual three-movement format. The manuscripts are not easy to read, and the works would have to be published before a performance could take place. The model for the violin sonatas seems to be Beethoven more than anyone else, although ghosts of other composers do surface. There is also a piano trio in B-flat major, with a throbbing triplet accompaniment, for which the model is possibly Schubert, with a trio in the same key. The trio has two movements—perhaps, like Schubert and his symphony, Kelly did not live to complete this trio either. I also glimpsed a string trio from 1911, which turns out to be complete, and easier to read, in four movements. I mention it only since it manifested itself amid the Kelly material. There were no special surprises in it either. I must say, again, that though this very early Australian pianist/composer would have been an attractive founder of our music, especially given his sporting prowess at Olympic level, this was not to be. He comes across as a well-meaning amateur when one views the scores dispassionately.

Adolphe Beutler (1882–1927)

Beutler was a composer whom we came across very late in the production of the piano music book. His works are retrospective in style, but nevertheless form an interesting part of Sydney's musical history. Beutler was part of Normal Lindsay's 'revitalisation' movement. They very vocally opposed the encroachment of modernism, which they perceived as being detrimental to social order. Rather, they idealised the great romantic composers such as Beethoven and Brahms, seeking to create an Australian expression of romanticism, which they optimistically believed would enable the 'new world' to lead the 'old world' to a cultural renaissance.

Although we are aware of several relevant works by Beutler, including a *Sonata in C Major* and a *Sonata in D Major* for piano and violin and a *Septett in G Major* for two violins, viola, cello, double bass, flute and piano as well as a number of songs, we were not able to access a sufficient sample of this work to give an adequate analysis of the material.

Mirrie Hill (1892–1986)

Mirrie Hill, like her husband, Alfred Hill, still awaits thorough investigation and study. She probably suffered by being in her husband's shadow, which is ironic in a way, as most of the compositional fraternity think she was a far better composer than her husband. But she had to subjugate herself, the times being what they were, and word had it that she had to compose using the kitchen table (after clearing it and washing up, no doubt), whilst Alfred's study table was sacrosanct and could not be disturbed. Alfred no doubt helped her in the early days after their marriage in 1921. They were both on the staff of the NSW State Conservatorium of Music, so Mirrie would at least have had exposure to a wider world of music. She taught both piano and theory at the conservatorium. Most of her chamber music output consists of miniatures, both instrumental and vocal. Her piano writing is richer and more diverse than Alfred's, and she departs from using the keyboard as a mere harmonic accompaniment.

For example, if one plays through her *Bourée*, for flute and piano, there is immediately a sense of the neo-classic, with the keyboard participating in the active counterpoint. It might not have the cheeky insouciance of Prokofiev, but is not too far away from it. The *Sarabande* for the same combination possesses a stately charm. The miniatures that are more obviously of a romantic cast live in a world that has a richer palette than Alfred's ever did; a typical instance is *Come Summer*, for clarinet and piano, in which there exists not just a play of equal partners, but a glimpse into the world of the soloist in the form of a cadenza for the clarinet. *In a Moonlit Garden*, for violin and piano, is closer to a pedagogic piece, and is designated on the cover as of 'moderate difficulty'. *The Dancing Fawn*, for flute and piano, though light in mood, nevertheless has a sense of the exotic such as one might find in the music of the Russian exoticists such as Rimsky-Korsakov.

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The top staff is for Flute (Fl.) and the bottom staff is for Piano (Pno.). The Flute part begins with a dynamic marking of *sf* followed by *f*. The Piano part begins with a dynamic marking of *mf*. The music is in 3/4 time and features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes with some rests.

Example 2.1 M. Hill, *The Dancing Fawn*, bars 9–12

The *Four Songs for Medium Voice* gives us a glimpse into her vocal writing. The cycle consists of: 1) 'Sweet Wind that Blows' (Oscar Leighton); 2) 'Flowers Above' (Richard Howe); 3) 'My Star' (Robert Browning); and 4) 'Rest' (Anon.). The songs are delicate and understated.

A piece named *Abinu Malkenu. Ashkenazic Ancient Melody. Our Father, Our King* exists in a number of versions. I played through the one for violin and piano. It is a powerful two-movement work, drawing on Mirrie Hill's Jewish ancestry. The prayer is well known, and the modelling here would have been Max Bruch and possibly Ernest Bloch, though it does not quite have Bloch's high emotional temperature. Nevertheless, it does come from the same world.

Adagio con molto espressione ♩ = c. 58

Example 2.2 M. Hill, *Abinu Malkenu*, bars 1–4

Hill is not reticent about quite grinding semitones when the music has worked up and needs release.

Example 2.3 M. Hill, *Abinu Malkenu*, bars 28–31

The two movements proceed without a break. *Abinu Malkenu* is a strong contribution to the violin repertoire of Australian music. We know that Mirrie Hill was very involved in Alfred Hill's ethnomusicological pursuits and aided him in those, as well as composing a number of works herself using Maori and

Australian Aboriginal themes. Some listings of her output mention two student works: a piano trio and a piano quartet, both from 1914. We do not know whether they are extant.

Arthur Benjamin (1893–1960)

The highly respected Arthur Benjamin spent most of his time away from Australia; like so many of his generation, for him, there was not enough *work* back home. His story is another still waiting to be told in full, with special reference to his musical techniques and his distinguished output for the operatic stage and for film. His attachment to working with folk songs is well known, and although most of this interest seems to have been directed towards the Caribbean, there is also his *Five Negro Spirituals* (1929), for violin and piano. The original spiritual melodies are preserved, and the words are given after each setting. They are

1. 'I'm A-Travellin' to the Grave'
2. 'March On'
3. 'Gwine to Ride Up in the Chariot'
4. 'I'll Hear the Trumpet Sound'
5. 'Rise Mourners'.

It appears that the famous violist William Primrose was somehow involved in the publication project (perhaps editing the violin part), for my copy of this score, after the title, has 'Arranged by Arthur Benjamin' followed by 'Transcribed for Violin by William Primrose'. These settings used to be heard in solo recitals but have now dropped out of favour. Benjamin's other folk-song activities include instrumental and vocal versions of folk material. The *Negro Spirituals* were set in a straightforward manner, but some of the settings added colour as in, for instance, *From San Domingo* (1945), for violin and piano, dedicated to William Primrose.

Violin

Piano

dolce e tranquillo *ritmico* *languido*

p

r.h. *l.h.*

Sea

*On wood of piano

Example 2.4 A. Benjamin, *From San Domingo*, bars 1–4

This is a fairly full setting, with a rich, contrasting middle section. The piano parts in these settings are rarely simple. Here is the opening of *Linstead Market*, dedicated to the then famous singer Jennie Tourel:

Tempo di Rumba

Piano

p *leggiero*

Example 2.5 A. Benjamin, *Linstead Market*, bars 1–4

Sometimes Benjamin credits the folk singer who gave him the tune; the famous *Song of the Banana Carriers* carries above the title ‘Taken down from the singing of Miss Louise Bennett’. This is the tune later immortalised by Harry Belafonte. Benjamin’s original songs also tend towards a folk-like simplicity, although we did not collect all of them. But in *Three Songs* (1935), for voice and piano, we certainly found this to be the case (I. ‘Shepherd’s Holiday’, II. ‘Wind Song’, III. ‘Wind’s Work’). His instrumental chamber music is the most substantial of the works for this book. *Le Tombeau de Ravel. Valse-Caprices* (1958) exists for either clarinet or viola and piano. The title has two associations. First, the name is an obvious reference to Ravel’s own piano *Noble and Sentimental Waltzes* as well as the orchestral and piano versions of *La Valse*. As a pianist, Benjamin would have also known and probably played the Schubert–Liszt *Valse Caprices*, which, like the Ravel work, collects a series of short waltzes and combines them into a larger composition. Benjamin begins very softly and eerily, much like the orchestral Ravel piece.

Introduzione. Allegro molto

Clarinet in B \flat

Piano

staccato secco
pp

due mani

p

8 \flat

Example 2.6 A. Benjamin, *Le Tombeau de Ravel*, bars 1–6

After this introduction, Benjamin gives us six separate waltzes, all running into each other, and rounds off the work with a finale containing reference to the opening material. Near the end, the piano thunders out a harmonically saturated version of one of the melodies—again imitating the Ravelian gesture.

25

Cl.

riten.-----*subito a tempo*

f

Pno.

ff

mf

Example 2.7 A. Benjamin, *Le Tombeau de Ravel*, Figure 25

Benjamin’s largest contribution in the genre—once again dedicated to Primrose—is his *Sonata for Viola and Piano* (1947). Benjamin writes in the score: ‘This work can be performed with orchestra as a Viola concerto. The title in a concert programme should be, in this case, “Concerto for Viola and Orchestra”.’ The composer does not call this score a rehearsal score, or a reduction from the orchestral score. It is quite possible that he composed the piece originally as a sonata and orchestrated it later, rather than the other way around. Even though the music is essentially the same, the piano part of this viola sonata is completely pianistic. The work is important in the world of the violist especially, since it is one of the pioneer attempts to give the instrument a standing comparable with its flashy partner, the violin. Indeed, Benjamin writes for it in a quite uninhibited manner.

Un poco stringendo

Example 2.8 A. Benjamin, 'Elergy', from *Sonata for Viola and Pianoforte*, p. 8, second system

The movements all have subtitles: I) 'Elegy'; II) 'Waltz'; III) 'Toccatà' (this last preceded by a short adagio introduction partially serving the function of a traditionally located slow movement; but of course, Benjamin in this work had already begun with a slow movement). The second movement, which opens with a piano solo announcing quick quaver figurations, is set out like the *Valse-Caprices*—that is, a series of five waltzes and a reprise. At one point the viola takes over the piano figurations, with the keyboard playing a counter-theme. Note the quasi-orchestral instruction in the piano part. Benjamin appears to be already thinking of the orchestral version.

Example 2.9 A. Benjamin, 'Waltz', from *Sonata for Viola and Pianoforte*, p. 14, second system

The 'Toccatà' movement brings to mind dance music from the Caribbean. It is a relentless rush in semiquavers, with cross-rhythms and accents, leading to some difficult moments in the piano part.

Example 2.10 A. Benjamin, 'Toccata', from *Sonata for Viola and Pianoforte*, p. 29, second system

Two shorter works remain. The 1924 *Sonatina for Violin and Pianoforte* is almost of sonata proportions. It, too, seems to have a French feel to it, with a suave harmonic flow. The solo and piano parts are sometimes barred independently. The second movement, titled 'Scherzo—Di Stile Antico', is in the favoured 3/4 and has the sound of a fast waltz. Both instruments in this example are treated staccato and leggiero.

Example 2.11 A. Benjamin, 'Scherzo', from *Sonatina for Violin and Pianoforte*, p. 13, third system

The last movement is a brilliant 'Rondo'. We get some idea of Benjamin's pianism and the size of his stretch—noticeable in much of his piano writing.

Example 2.12 A. Benjamin, 'Rondo', from *Sonatina for Violin and Pianoforte*, p. 21, third system

The *Sonatina for Cello and Piano* (1939) is a much less taxing work. As noted by the composer, it was written for a thirteen-year-old player. The movements here carry subtitles as well: I) 'Preamble'; II) 'Minuet'; and III) 'March' (with a performance instruction 'allegro grottesco').

Linda Phillips (1899–2002)

This long-lived (Linda Phillips died at the age of one hundred and three) and prolific composer is another creator waiting for her story to be told. Her work falls into various categories, and we could examine only a small percentage of her output. A few things were published in her lifetime, and some were very popular; many remained in manuscript. The Keys Press has only recently issued for the first time in print what we consider to be some of the more important works. She was, at heart, a miniaturist and a songwriter, often setting her own words, since she was interested in writing poetry all her life.

Her shorter art songs are probably the least weighty of her output. Unless indicated, they are all for voice and piano. We looked at

A Ship, An Isle, A Sickle Moon (James Elroy Flecker)

Cherry Blossom (Kathleen Dalziel)

Tell Me, Thou Soul of Her I Love, sixteenth-century air (Old English), arranged for voice, piano and cello

Orchard Zephyr

Plum Tree (Kathleen Dalziel)

Cradle Song

What Secret Hath the Rose?.

These songs, though evocative, tend to also be somewhat sentimental and seem to belong more to the drawing room than the concert hall. Phillips was a natural melodist, so singers find her vocal music lies well. The instrumental backing is generally less important, and merely provides a harmonic backdrop—quite often merely arpeggios, sometimes with voice doubled, rarely with any sense of counterpoint.

Her songs devoted to the Australian bush have a more passionate voice. She seemed to regard the bush itself, as well as the characters populating it, with an almost mystical awe, so the settings, though meant to be simple, do take on a life of their own. Whether purely instrumental, such as *Bush Evening*, for violin and piano or vocal, there is a richness of feeling and harmony sometimes absent in her 'domestic' songs. She wrote the words for her *Bush Lyrics*, which comprises the following four songs

1. 'Wattle Tree'
2. 'Bird Call'
3. 'Bracken Brown'
4. 'Where the Coloured Parrot Flies'.

At the head of the second song, the composer writes: 'The treble figure in the accompaniment represents the actual notes of a bird call from the hills around Emerald, Victoria.' The fourth song was very popular and one heard it sung by many singers in concerts and competitions. There is a similar set named *Songs of the Outback*

1. 'The Settlers'
2. 'Rail Workers'
3. 'Droving Song'.

Phillips' many instrumental works are mostly for soloist with piano. Possibly the most ambitious of these is a *Rhapsody Sonata*, for violin and piano. This, together with *Two Moods*, for clarinet and piano, finally achieved publication with the Keys Press in 2009. The sonata is in one movement, and highlights Phillips' weaknesses as a composer in this genre: an over-reliance on sequences and a dependence on modulations and seventh chords to achieve colour, with little work on the formal aspects, or the interplay between the instruments. The solo instruments are treated above all like a voice with an accompaniment. There are plenty of shorter works, and we looked only at a *Serenade*, for violin and piano, which was more successful, and had a joyousness about it, with the piano imitating guitar plucking, coupled with a sense of dance that is present in the piece. This has also recently been published in our Heritage Series.

I would rate the various settings from James Joyce as the next important group of pieces in Phillips' output. We have published all 11 of Phillips' settings. It is unknown whether these were meant to be a cycle or not; nor do we have any idea as to the correct order, if they were meant to be sung as a group. So, since they all come from Joyce's collection of poems *Chamber Music*, we have published them in the order in which they appear in that collection. Singers will no doubt have different ideas about this. I think that now it is important to hear these settings as a group. The words are powerful, and seem to lift Phillips' music that extra notch. The songs are

1. 'Strings in the Earth and Air'
2. 'The Twilight Turns from Amethyst'
3. 'Golden Hair'
4. 'Apple Trees'
5. 'Who Goes Amid the Greenwood?'
6. 'Winds of May'
7. 'Bright Cap and Streamers'
8. 'Go Seek Her out all Courteously'
9. 'Arise, My Dove'
10. 'Monotone'
11. 'The Charioteers'.

Finally, we come to a section of Linda Phillips' output that I consider the most important and individual. Yet, they were precisely the ones that were never published (until now) and seem to have attracted no attention. I speak of her 'Jewish' pieces. She was not a fervently religious person, but did have an abiding interest in Jewish music, mostly sacred or traditional song. We do not know enough about her to definitively say something about her knowledge of Jewish music, but she certainly seems to have had memories of and access to it in some shape and form. Using Jewish melodies as a basis inspired her to attempt larger-scale pieces, and imbued the pieces with a passion and strength. *Exaltation, Chassidic Air and Dance* (1939), for oboe, violin, cello and piano, is the most impressive of the Jewish pieces. In all of these, she quotes authentic materials without subjecting them to change or development, using reinforcement and dynamics to build towards the big moments.

Ob.

Vln.

Vlc.

Pno.

pizz.

pizz.

33

Example 2.13 L. Phillips, *Exaltation*, bars 280–3

Near the end of the piece, the oboe is asked to imitate the sound of the shofar (ram’s horn), which is sounded unaccompanied in the synagogue once a year during the celebrations attending the New Year. Phillips calls this, in the score, ‘[t]he clear sound of the shofar’.

Ob.

Pno.

"The clear sound of the shofar"

mf

pp

Example 2.14 L. Phillips, *Exaltation*, bars 349–53

Other similar works include *Purim* (1935), for violin, cello and piano—a more joyous rather than solemn work, in keeping with the meaning of this particular festival. The sound here achieved has now become commonplace, in that it is related to *klezmer* music that seems to have arrived at international popularity. Comparisons with the music of Ernest Bloch are inevitable; but Phillips’ compositions—unlike Bloch’s very personal and often complex treatment of such materials—are more direct and straightforward. *Lamentations* (1935), for piano trio, has, as a feature, a string of solo cadenzas reminding one of the unaccompanied cantorial singing that is a common experience in the synagogue

service. Interestingly, the recently published *Two Hebrew Songs: Ash trees (Oronim Yerukim)*, words by Elisheva Bichovsky, translated by Linda Phillips, and *The Golden Bird (Tayas z'havi)*, words by Hayyim Nahman Bialik, translated by Linda Phillips, display a curious trait: stylistically, they are closer to her normal songs than to her Jewish instrumental music. Here, both the Hebrew and the English are set to more or less the same melodic lines. There are more such pieces that are still awaiting publication: *Yigdal*, for violin and piano; *Trio (Festival)* (1939), for flute, cello and piano; and *Trio (Feast of Weeks)* (1934), for violin, cello and piano. I hope that there will be renewed interest in this composer, especially in this group of works, which occupies a unique place in early Australian music.

Alex Burnard (1900–71)

Burnard belongs to a generation of Australians who were, to some extent, eclipsed by the vicissitudes of trying to function as composers during World War II. Even if they had desired to go abroad, they were stuck in Australia. Burnard spent most of his professional working life teaching harmony and counterpoint at the NSW State Conservatorium of Music. In those days, it was the closest one could come to being taught composition. Burnard, who was the author of an excellent textbook on harmony, taught and composed in a language that was most familiar to him and from which he could quote copiously from memory: Peter Warlock (Philip Heseltine), Percy Grainger, Frederick Delius, as well as any number of Bach works. His songs, therefore, use Warlock more than anyone else as a role model, both in the use of the voice and in the writing of the accompaniment. Grainger's rather thick chordal settings of folk music were another source, and we often see Burnard's piano parts following the same path. He had large hands, and among his manuscripts there are 'simpler' versions of some of the piano parts, probably requested by pianists who could not cope with the demands he made in the realm of stretching chords.

Sadly, during Burnard's lifetime, Australian composers were hardly ever published, nor were they taken seriously in their native country. Burnard was a pupil of Ralph Vaughan Williams and a fine pianist—evidenced by the chords and textures found in his songs and instrumental works. Like so many of his generation, he looked to England as the mother country in more ways than one—not just for guidance but also for performance and publishing opportunities. The fact that his music never made it into print is no reflection of their innate musicality and sensibility; Burnard had a high sense of taste and style, and the very belated publication of some of his works will bring a new fount of repertoire for musicians everywhere, particularly those interested in the traditions of the English art song.

Although the Alex Burnard archive is kept in excellent order in Newcastle, much work needs to be done to issue a comprehensive catalogue and begin to analyse the music itself. I would like to list the songs that we gathered

The City Child (Tennyson) (1924), Op. 1, No. 1

Birdie and Baby (Tennyson) (1925), Op. 1, No. 2

Three Somerset Folk Songs (1926)

‘The Brisk Young Widow’

‘Early, Early’

‘Oh Sally My Dear’ (No. 3 is missing at this juncture. The accompaniment is for violin, viola, cello and piano.), Op. 3.

Three Songs for Voice and Piano (1927–28), Op. 5 (words from Fellowes’ *English Madrigal Verse*)

‘Poet’s Plaint’

‘Philosophics’

‘I Know a Bank’.

Three Songs for Voice and Piano (1929), Op. 17

‘Ghosts’

‘Clown’s Philosophy’ (our copy is marked Op. 17b, dated 1934)

‘Weathers’.

Australian Song of Festival (1937), Op. 22

Four Australian Songs

‘Song of Brotherhood’ (the manuscript says ‘words and music by Andrew Aguecheek’)

‘Australia Felix’ (the manuscript says ‘words and music by Toby Belch’)

‘To Thee, Beloved Land’ (the manuscript says ‘words and music by Robin Goodfellow’)

‘Rise, Australia’ (the manuscript says ‘words and music by Launcelot Gobbo’). [Burnard had a well-developed sense of humour, and these pompous words and settings brought out the worst of it. We do not yet know what prompted the composition of these songs.]

Three Songs of Farewell (1970), Op. 50

‘To Daffodils’ (Robert Herrick)

‘Come Away, Death’ (Shakespeare)

‘Fear No More the Heat o’ the Sun’ (Shakespeare).

This last song is marked ‘R. V. W.’—obviously meant for Ralph Vaughan Williams.

Maestoso, solenne, no bilmente.

Voice *f* Fear no more the heat of the sun, Nor the furious

Piano *mf* *f*

Example 2.15 A. Burnard, 'Fear No More the Heat o' the Sun', from *Three Songs of Farewell*, op. 50, bars 1–7

The Heritage Series of the Keys Press has now brought into print *The Answer, for Soprano and Piano* (Maurice Maeterlinck, translated by John Wheeler), Op. 30.

Here is a good example of the harmonic richness of Burnard's song settings:

V. ask what you be fell, What shall I tell? What shall I tell? (p) Give this

Pno. (p)

Example 2.16 A. Burnard, *The Answer*, Keys Press, p. 3, second stave

The Heritage Series also now includes *A Cycle of Six Songs for Baritone and Pianoforte* (John Wheeler)

1. 'The River'
2. 'Night Piece'
3. 'Berceuse'
4. 'There's Snow on the Mountain'
5. 'Magnolia'
6. 'Carol'.

The songs sometimes suggest canonic and other imitations—not really surprising given Burnard's training and teaching expertise.

The image shows a musical score for a voice and piano. The voice part is in bass clef and has the lyrics: "haunt - ed land, Be--yond the shad--ow--y front -tiers ___ of dream, ___". The piano part is in bass clef and includes a section marked "pp" and "ruminando". The score is for bars 10-13 of the piece.

Example 2.17 A. Burnard, 'Berceuse', from *A Cycle of Six Songs*, bars 10–13

The few instrumental compositions that we studied include

Rhapsody for Pianoforte and Two Violoncelli (this was originally titled a sonata)

Suite for Piano and Violin (1940–41), Op. 25

1. 'Overture'
2. 'Reverie "Rapt in Thought I Wander"'
3. 'Village Merrymaking "On a Sunday Holiday"'
4. 'Corydon to His Cruel Phillida: His pipe plaineth of her flontings & inconstancy'
5. 'Walking Piece (Fantasy) Happy Through the Hills I wind along the Winding Byroad'.

In the Preface to his book *Harmony and Composition* (1950, Angus and Robertson, Sydney), Burnard makes clear an important point concerning the modern style:

For three reasons, I abandoned my original intention of including a section on modern harmony and methods: lack of space, the existence of several excellent books on the subject, and the fact that those who have the itch to compose are invariably keen enough to make the acquaintance of works likely to influence their writing. Such enthusiasts will find in this book continual urgings to prosecute their search. Similarly, those of a more sedate and philosophical bent who wish to write chorale-preludes will be helped best by the perusal of living models, and they will know where to seek for such models. I have stopped at the chorale itself.

Burnard himself was so imbued with folk song and with the folk song-based works in the music of the composers he admired most (named above) that his own compositions owe much to this love, and much sounds like quasi folk even when he perhaps had not consciously desired it. We found this to be the case

in many bars of his vocal and instrumental music. But at his best—such as the songs that we selected for publication, and in some of the solo piano folk settings and chorale-preludes—Burnard is in the front rank of Australian composition.

Song Composers¹

Ernest Wunderlich (1859–1945); Arundel Orchard (1867–1961); Una Bourne (1882–1974); Lindley Evans (1895–1982); Horace Perkins (1901–86); Esther Rofe (1904–2000); Percy Grainger (1882–1961)

Until the formation of orchestras and ensembles, the first generation of Australian composers was severely limited in their possibilities. The amount of music for solo piano was vast, closely followed by the composition and publication of songs. We have, of necessity, looked only at songs that had at least some claim to be related to the European art song, and thus have avoided the thousands of parlour songs meant for home consumption—often sentimental or plain sappy, often patriotic, if that was what sold well. Every household with any sense of being cultured boasted a piano, so songs had a ready market of performers and amateurs. Some composers produced only a handful of vocal compositions, so it was convenient to group them together in this section. The first generation also saw much traffic; some composers had limited opportunity at home, so pianist/composers such as Boyle, Hutchison and Grainger spent much of their professional life out of Australia; in due course they could be found listed in various reference books as American composers. We begin our short survey with a composer who came to Australia from Europe: Ernest Wunderlich. From him, we have a setting of a poem of Uhland translated into English verse by Catherine M. Bradley. *The Minstrel's Curse* (1936) is quite a long balladic narrative, and is set in a late-romantic, Wagnerian style, with a rich texture from the piano and continuous modulation. In one section you can even hear the minstrel playing his harp. The work is really a kind of concert aria rather than a short art song. In contrast, we next look at some songs from an English composer who spent some time in Australia. Arundel Orchard thus represents an English traditional approach to the voice, and his songs are simpler, more direct and more stable tonally. Good examples of his approach are contained

¹ Horace Keats (1895–1945) would also belong in this category; however, he has not been included here as his voluminous output is discussed extensively in his biography. See Keats, Brennan 1997, *A Poet's Composer: The biography of Horace Keats, 1895–1945*, Publications by Wirripang, Culburra Beach, NSW. Wirripang has also published his music. Further information is available at <<http://www.australiancomposers.com.au/authors/horace-keats>>

in his *Troubadour Songs*—twelfth-century texts translated by Jethro Bithell. These were published in England, but his *Two Songs* from the comic opera *The Emperor* (words by W. J. Curtis) come from John Sands (374 George Street, Sydney). On the title page, it says: ‘These songs may be Sung in Public without Fee or License except at Theatres & Music Halls.’ These are, naturally, lighter, as are *Two Elizabethan Lyrics* (1. ‘Echo’s Lament of Narcissus’, from *Cynthia’s Revels*, words by Ben Jonson; and 2. ‘What Should I Say?’, words by Sir Thomas Wyatt). These have not yet arrived at a notion of pastiche or some attempt to give an archaic atmosphere to the settings; they are simply quite mild romantic songs. The pianist and composer Una Bourne—who also spent much time out of Australia—contributes here *A Cloudless Night* (1925), which is rather poor melodically, but nevertheless was included by Dame Nellie Melba in her programs, or so it proclaims on the cover.

Lindley Evans was very well known in Australia as an accompanist; he accompanied Nellie Melba on some of her tours, as well as many other famous soloists; it is not surprising that he composed some songs himself. We found *The Tale of a Fairy* (words by A. T. E. Blanks) as well as *The North Has My Heart* (words by William Watson). The harmonies have now become more cloying, and augmented chords appear in the harmonic flow. The suave harmonies, ironically, also seem to have diminished the role of the piano to a background, merely supporting the voice—maybe that is how Evans viewed his role? And of course there is the ubiquitous *Australia, Happy Isle* (1937, words by Jessie M. G. Street), a two-part song that was heard everywhere, with a pompous, hymn-like accompaniment, somehow elevating it to an almost religious experience. It begins: ‘O God of ours and all that we command, Who gave to us Australia happy isle.’

Horace Perkins’ idiom has moved on somewhat and includes references to what was perceived as impressionism; this suggested being fashionable, maybe even daring, and it allowed a return to a more lush and full piano role, with longer pedal effects. Generally, the piano filled in the gaps between verses by echoing the last phrase sung, imitating it or unashamedly filling in the silence with various species of rolled chords. Perkins had a taste for high literature and his vocal settings include *The Prelude* (William Wordsworth). The title page has: ‘The words are from THE PRELUDE (Childhood and Schooltime) showing “how Nature by extrinsic passion first peopled the mind with forms sublime or fair... in that tempestuous time”.’ The scenes from Wordsworth are: I) ‘The River’; II) ‘The Vale’; III) ‘The Lake’; and IV) ‘The Cottage’. The second, third and fourth songs require narration of some of Wordsworth’s texts before the song commences. Perkins also set Charles Kingsley’s *Young and Old*, Edgar Allan Poe’s *Hymn* and Tennyson’s *A Farewell*. The songs are all timed, suggesting that they were broadcast in the early days of the Australian Broadcasting Commission (now

Corporation; ABC), where Perkins worked for many years. Another composer who worked within the ABC was Clive Douglas, who was predominantly an orchestral composer; we found a tiny song by him called *The Road*, set to his own text, with a simple piano accompaniment in A minor.

Esther Rofe died a short time ago, almost reaching the age of one hundred. Most of her career seems to have been tied to the theatre, but we, to our shame, know very little about this composer, and, playing through her songs, I was painfully aware that I knew nothing about the context of these settings. Were they part of a theatre show? An extract? *Dinah's Song* (lyrics by Tom Rothfield) certainly has the atmosphere of a musical. But recently an Esther Rofe songbook was published, which suggests that there were songs written outside the theatrical context. Witness, for example, her very fine atmospheric settings from Walter de la Mare. These five songs (1936, 1940) comprise *Clavichord*, *The Horseman*, *As I Went to the Well-head*, *Wild are the Waves* and *Hi*, and are obviously designed as a cycle. The songbook also includes some other songs such as two settings from William Blake for mezzo-soprano and flute, *The Winds of Change* (words by Frieda Jonsson, Esther Rofe's pen-name); *Curtain* (1930s, words by Grant Uden); *Somebody Ask (A Spiritual for the 1990s)*, words and music by Esther Rofe composed in 1996–98; and *The Tired Man* (1935, revised 1994, words by Anna Wickham). Esther Rofe was obviously functioning as a composer till the very end. Her story is waiting to be written, and could well be fascinating.

I must admit that I could not face the task of wading through all of Percy Grainger's arrangements, transcriptions and rehashes of his various folk songs and quasi-folk songs. John Bird's excellent book lists all the works; most of the material was folk music from 'Nordic' countries, and the use of the piano in them is often of a secondary level—that is, an arrangement of an arrangement. Folk-song settings were never part of this book's plan anyway. I freely admit that I have a problem with assigning Grainger—fine pianist as he was—a patriarchal role in Australian music, for many and varied reasons. I think we have people whose personality—musical and personal—was far less flawed to assume such a mantle.

I need to end this survey of the song repertoire with reference to Horace Keats. I first came across his music when I was earning money as a student at the NSW State Conservatorium by being studio accompanist to that very fine baritone Harold Williams. This was in the 1950s, and all the singers sang Horace Keats; I played dozens of songs by him. Williams was very proud of having an orchestral setting of Keats' *La Belle Dame sans Merci* dedicated to him by the composer. A recent biography published by Wirripang, *A Poet's Composer*, gives a fine overview of Keats' work as a composer as well as showing how much Australian poetry he set to music. I recommend this to interested readers. Keats was a very important song composer in Australia.

Other Instrumental Works

Edgar Bainton (1880–1956); Frank Hutchens (1892–1965); Iris de Cairos-Rego (1894–1987); Clive Douglas (1903–77); Esther Rofe (1904–2000); Marjorie Hesse (1911–86); Charles Edgar Ford (1881–1961); Franz Holford (1909–94); Henry Krips (1912–87); Rees Morgan (dates unknown)

Just as we gathered an array of songs with piano, so here is a selection of instrumental works by various composers, drawing attention to forgotten repertoire in most cases, with quite a number of these works still unpublished and including one or two exciting ‘discoveries’. Edgar Bainton’s *Sonata for Cello and Piano* (1953) is in four movements. Bainton is not a composer who pushed boundaries, so the first movement is in sonata form, with a scherzo, lento and gigue allegro forming the rest of the piece. The solo part is, by today’s standards, only modestly pushing the solo part, with the pianist adding most of the sweep to the totality of the work. The cello is never too high or too fast, and these days, this sonata would be a good student work. Frank Hutchens has a number of violin and piano pieces. One, *Always Afternoon*, is, in its manuscript form, entitled *A Summer Evening*, but the idea is a lazy, indolent atmosphere, which prevails in other Hutchens violin works (and many solo piano works). There is a published *Elegy*, but I am also aware of pieces such as *Fairy Ships*, *Fairy Tales*, *Vision*, *Legend* and *Syrinx*. Some of these works are arrangements of piano works, with the melodic line extracted to make a violin line. Hutchens also composed and arranged many works for two pianos because of his long-lasting partnership with Lindley Evans. Evans was not a prolific composer, although there is a waltz for two pianos, which was much performed by them and others. But Hutchens was quite industrious, and, as well as arranging music by Bach, Handel, Grieg, Mendelssohn, Couperin, Hummel and Chopin for two pianos, his compositions for this genre include *Christmas Bells*, *Seascape*, *Interlude Promenade*, *Phantom Dancer*, *Croon*, *Lullaby for Three Blind Mice*, *Toccata*, *Serenade*, *Vision*, *At the Bathing Pool*, *Ship Ahoy* and *Connie at the Con*. Most of these are still in manuscript. Both Hutchens and Evans were influenced by the two piano transcriptions of Maier and Pattison, who toured Australia and whose concerts the two attended whenever possible. I heard Hutchens and Evans a number of times, and remember their two piano sounds as mellifluous and suave, rather than brilliant.

Iris de Cairos-Rego wrote a piano trio in A minor. This seems to be an early work and was never published. Despite some attractive harmonic progressions,

the writing is rhythmically stodgy and the instruments never seem to depart from a predominantly vertical way of thinking. Clive Douglas is represented here with a *Pastorale and Ritual Dance* from the symphonic suite *Namatjira*. Douglas was an ABC conductor, and wrote *Namatjira* when the fashion began to be 'Australian'. At the head of the score of this extract arranged for violinist Harry Hutchins, Douglas wrote:

In the land of the Aboriginal painter Albert Namatjira, the Red Centre of Australia, there occurs the most remarkable of the continent's phenomena, not duplicated in any other country. A land of vast distances and grim remorseless desolation of sandy desert and gibber plain, contains incredible mountain formations and geological wonders unique in the world. In this dramatic setting of fiery cinnabar mountain ranges, stone-age man still enacts the savage rites of his race.

Douglas was an expert orchestrator and here the piano has to do the bulk of the colouration; one misses the orchestra here and there. It is somewhat amusing that despite everything, Douglas still manages to be more adventurous than some of our more recent composers!

Esther Rofe wrote a *Lament* for alto flute and piano in 1924. This is really a 'song without words', with the flute carrying all the argument and the piano playing underneath in minim chords. There is also apparently a flute sonata from 1929, but only the scherzo from it was available. This is in standard ABA form, with the trio in andante tempo and the outer sections sprightly and colourful. If the rest of the sonata proves to be as attractive, it could add to the repertoire. On its own, the scherzo is a snippet of film music, and out of context.

We now have some very light and lightweight music from some composers. Marjorie Hesse wrote her *An Irish Croon* (1939) for the violinist Phyllis McDonald, who used to play light music on air for many years. This is a melodic and undemanding piece in every respect. Edgar Ford was a prolific composer from Perth, and here we looked at his *Echo and Narcissus* as well as *Thalia*, both apparently possible on either violin or clarinet. These are in simple ternary form and strike one as rather amateurish in execution. Franz Holford wrote a good deal of oboe/piano music and some clarinet/piano music too. I confess to being bored by it; my harmony professor, Alex Burnard, used to refer to such harmonic progressions as we find here as 'slops'. Need I say more? Holford was very active in the 1970s and had a strong connection with Albert & Son, who published all the music that we saw by Holford. There are at least four sonatas for oboe and piano; we played through Number 4, which was dedicated to Ian Wilson, a lovely lyrical player from the Sydney Symphony. Henry Krips's *Southern Intermezzo* (1956), for alto saxophone and piano, is really a rather schmaltzy cabaret piece whilst Rees Morgan's *Romance* for his friend the clarinetist Gabor Reeves is in a similar genre.