

Stephen A. Wild: A Distinctive Voice in the Antipodes

Kirsty Gillespie, Sally Treloyn, Kim Woo and Don Niles

Stephen Aubrey Wild was born in January 1941 in Fremantle, the maritime heart of Perth in Western Australia. His mother remembered hearing the five o'clock steam siren of the Fremantle docks from her maternity bed in hospital when Stephen was born. This might explain his wanderlust in the earlier part of adult life.

Second among four siblings, Stephen grew up in the Perth suburb of Swanbourne. His love of music began as a child, both at home and at church. Music featured prominently in the Wild family. Grandfather Wild was choir master and church organist in a Melbourne Methodist church before his migration to Perth. Stephen's father played the harmonica, and two of Stephen's siblings also played the piano.

Encouraged by his supportive parents, Stephen won a Western Australia Department of Education scholarship to study music and history at the University of Western Australia (UWA). University life agreed with him, and not only was he exposed to a plethora of concepts and personalities, he also enjoyed a good range of musical activities on campus, including choirs and stage singing.

In addition, UWA student life brought him into contact with students from Asian countries, many of whom were studying under the Colombo Plan scholarship programme. The summer of 1964 saw him joining a student tour of some of the Colombo Plan countries—namely Indonesia, Singapore, and Malaysia—to sample the cultures of those lands. This tour whetted his appetite for learning more about non-European societies.

During his senior undergraduate years, Stephen discovered his passion for musicology and research. In 1963, he obtained a Teacher's Certificate from Claremont Teachers' College in Western Australia and he also submitted a BA (Honours) thesis on Stravinsky at UWA. He then went on to a Master of Arts study at the UWA School of Music in 1965–66, while also teaching at Applecross High School in Perth. He was to become the first higher-degree-by-research graduate from the School of Music.

Although Stephen was to complete his master's thesis on the English composer E. J. Moeran in 1967 at UWA (and published in 1973), his outlook on future academic studies changed before then when he encountered such inspiring academics as Wilfrid Mellers and Elizabeth May, both visiting lecturers at UWA at the time. Mellers in particular made him question the then common Eurocentric foci of musicological research in Australia, urging him to study Australian Aboriginal music as a future direction. Meanwhile, when he was a graduate student in historical musicology, May introduced him to ethnomusicology and collaborated with Stephen for his first research project on Australian Aboriginal music in 1965, resulting in his first academic publication (May and Wild 1967). Particularly inspirational for him was *The Anthropology of Music* by Alan Merriam (1964). With encouragement from Merriam himself, Stephen was eventually compelled to 'travel half way around the world to study ethnomusicology with its author' (Wild 1982: 91).

Such travel meant going by ship to the Panama Canal, followed by flights to Miami and Detroit, and finally by car, eventually arriving at Indiana University in Bloomington, USA, in late 1966. It was a financially challenging undertaking for him, but with steadfast support from his parents, he embarked on his grand journey. By working in Indiana University's Archives of Traditional Music (1966–67), he was soon able to support himself while undertaking preparatory study of anthropology there. During 1967–69, he became a Teaching Assistant in the Department of Anthropology at Indiana University.

The period between 1969 and 1973 saw Stephen travelling between the US and Australia for his doctoral research in Central Australia as well as a teaching stint at Monash University in Melbourne, where he was also on the Board of their Centre for Research in Aboriginal Affairs.

He began PhD studies at Indiana University in 1972, completing his dissertation in 1975 (Wild 1975). Between 1973 and 1978, he taught at City University of New York and Indiana University, and was also co-organiser of a conference at Temple University in Philadelphia in 1977—seemingly the first among many conferences that Stephen would help organise.

Stephen returned to Australia in 1978 to work at the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (presently, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)), succeeding Alice Moyle, the first Research Officer in Ethnomusicology. He would work there until 2000, holding various positions, such as Research Fellow, Deputy Principal, Director of Research, Editor of *Australian Aboriginal Studies*, and Director of Publishing (Koch 1999). These activities and his research on Indigenous Australian musics are highlighted below. During this time he also organised a number of conferences and events, including a *rom* ceremony in Canberra as part of an exhibition of art and craft from north-central Arnhem Land (1982). He also was on the organising committee for AIATSIS's 40th anniversary conference, held in 2001. Except for a visiting position at the University of Illinois in 1983, his work focused on Australia, particularly developing a long association with the Musicological Society of Australia: serving on the National Committee (1979–80, 1985–86, 1988–99) and as Chair of the ACT chapter (1982–87); editing its journal, *Musicology Australia* (1984–89); serving as President (1986–88, 1996–98); and convening annual general meetings (1980) and a conference (1987). Stephen held his first position at The Australian National University (ANU) in May–June 1985, when he was Visiting Fellow. He continued to serve on various committees concerning Aboriginal issues and the organisation of national and international conferences.

After serving as co-editor and then editor of the Society for Ethnomusicology's Special Series (1977–81), Stephen was elected as a member of its Council (1980–88). Following a visiting position at the University of Washington (1987–88), Stephen returned to Australia again. His involvement with ICTM increased significantly at this time, as described below. In 1990, he held a visiting position at the University of Queensland.

Stephen met his life partner, Kim Woo, near the end of 1990 in Canberra. Among their many shared interests, such as authors, cartoonists, and views on politics, it is their big common interest in traditional music that has enabled Kim to understand Stephen's passion for ethnomusicology. Since they began their life's journey together in 1991, Kim has been a staunch supporter of Stephen's active role in the promotion of ethnomusicology.

From 1990 to 2000, Stephen was a Sessional Lecturer at School of Music, ANU. After more than two decades at AIATSIS, in 2000 he then took up a full-time position at ANU, where he remained until his retirement in 2014. During this time he worked in various positions, such as Graduate Convenor, Visiting Fellow, Head of Musicology, and finally Senior Research Fellow. Between 2008 and 2010, he was a member of the academic committee of the Research Institute of Ritual Music in China at Shanghai Music Conservatory. In addition to his work at ANU, Stephen was also Honorary Associate at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney, 2011–13.

Stephen served as a Board Member for *Australasian Music Research*, the journal of the Centre for Studies in Australian Music at the University of Melbourne, 1995–2004, and he continued to be involved in the organisation of numerous national and international music conferences, such as that for the International Musicological Society (2004).

He was elected a Fellow of the Australian Academy of Humanities in 1996. In 2001, he was honoured with the Centenary Medal of Australia for services to Australian Indigenous Studies, and in 2011 received the Don and Joan Squire Award for Voluntary Services to Musicology in Australia.

The following tripartite division of Stephen's academic life corresponds well with some of the highlights he himself noted in a 2015 public lecture (Wild 2015).

Stephen Wild and Indigenous Australian music

From the earliest years of his career, Stephen Wild has made important contributions to the study of Australian Aboriginal music and the ceremonial and social contexts in which it is performed and made.

His primary research interests lie in musics of Central Australia and north-central Arnhem Land. His early fieldwork and study centred on the various public and ceremonial genres indigenous to Warlpiri peoples in the northwestern region of Central Australia. Distinguishing his work from that of Australian colleagues in the 1960s and 70s was the cultural anthropological lens, developed through his training under Alan Merriam and the USA school, with which he approached Warlpiri musical life. Blending his emergent anthropological understanding of musical activity with insights gained from processes of transcription and analysis, Stephen's doctoral dissertation (1975) and related articles made important contributions to understanding of the role of ceremony in the changing lives of Warlpiri peoples (Wild 1972), cosmology, social identity and meaning (Wild 1977–78, 1984, 1987, 1990, 1994), and land claims (Peterson et al. 1978). He continued this approach in his research into the ceremonial traditions of a musical world quite distinct from that of Central Australia: that of Anbarra clan peoples in north-central Arnhem Land, with a special focus on the Djambidj series (Wild 1986; Clunies Ross and Wild 1981, 1984). Stephen's blended approach has been pivotal in shaping an Australian ethnomusicology that is relevant to international developments in the field and that continues today to rely on the analysis of sound structures, sociocultural contexts, and underlying cosmological principles to understand Aboriginal musical worlds.

Stephen's impact extends beyond the examination of musical and ceremonial traditions. At the then Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (AIAS) in 1976, Stephen applied his expertise in sound archives gained through his time as a graduate student at Indiana University's Archives of Traditional Music and his insight into Australian Aboriginal song and dance to promote ethnomusicological research at the Institute until his move to ANU in 2000. Following on from Alice Moyle as Research Director and then Member of AIATSIS, he both cemented the public significance of ethnomusicological research in Australia and promoted Australian Aboriginal music and musicians through extensive recording and documentation, the publication of multiple major journal articles, numerous important book chapters, reviews of major works, encyclopaedia entries, and as editor or co-editor of three books and three journals. His activities and outputs raised awareness of not just Aboriginal Australian musical traditions, but also opened critical discourse about the role of archives and public institutions in preserving them.

Stephen mobilised knowledge of Indigenous Australian musical worlds beyond traditional scholarly audiences. He harnessed knowledge of the social and diplomatic power of Aboriginal song and ceremonial action to impact the broader Australian public and our appreciation of the significance of both Aboriginal creative forms and archives. Notable is his facilitation of the four-day *rom* ceremony of diplomacy by Anbarra people, said to be the first performed outside of Arnhem Land, at AIAS in Canberra in 1982, at which several thousand people were in attendance (Wild 1986). Such a legacy continued through his career at AIAS/AIATSIS, and in his role as member of the steering committee for the National Recording Project for Indigenous Performance in Australia.

Through his work with leading academic organisations and his many presentations and publications, Stephen promoted recognition of Australian Aboriginal music, and the state of ethnomusicology in Australia, on the international stage paving the way for new generations of scholars. His commitment to encouraging emerging researchers in the field of study was unerring, offering generous and enthusiastic support to young scholars—his students and those of others—at international conferences and meetings. This extended to his ensuring intergenerational continuity of research engagement with Warlpiri communities in particular, through his role in supporting the appointment of Wanta Jampijinpa Pawu-Kurlpurlurnu (Steven Patrick) (son of Stephen's key Warlpiri collaborator in the 1970s, Jerry Jangala) as a Discovery Indigenous Fellow at ANU and ensuring that a new generation of ethnomusicologists were trained to continue his work.

Reflecting on his early student life, Stephen has always felt grateful to his parents for their strong support to pursue higher education, and to his alma mater, the University of Western Australia, for giving its students an excellent but free education. In 2014, in honour of his late parents he made a donation to the university to establish the Eileen and Aubrey Wild Music Research Travel Scholarship (www.music.uwa.edu.au/students/prizes/the-eileen-and-aubrey-wild-music-research-travel-scholarship) to enable graduate students in the UWA School of Music to travel for research purposes. The first award of this scholarship was made in March 2015, coincidentally to a graduate student in Aboriginal music research.

Throughout his career, Stephen ensured that ethnomusicologists in Australia and the national institutions to which they subscribe apply a critical reflexive gaze to their respective engagements with Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander peoples. As an active member and President of the Musicological Society of Australia, he instituted important ethical instruments of recognition of Australia's first peoples and reconciliation in the operation of the Society, achieving the mandating of the Welcome to Country and forming the Indigenous music think tank. His contributions to understanding the sociocultural significance of Aboriginal music, the place of Australian ethnomusicology in the international arena, and the ethical responsibilities of researchers, archives, and public ethnomusicology, leave a legacy that will serve the field into the future.

Stephen Wild at ANU

After a brief period as Visiting Fellow in 1985, Stephen Wild's substantial career at ANU started in 1990 when he began working as a Sessional Lecturer at the School of Music (i.e. engaged just for a 'session' or semester of teaching at a time). During this time, Stephen was based at AIATSIS nearby, where he held a number of senior positions, as described above. Stephen was to maintain this sessional lecturing arrangement for 10 years; until 2000, when he finished at AIATSIS and moved across to ANU on a more permanent basis. He took on a number of roles, firstly as Graduate Convenor (2000–01, 2006–11), briefly as Acting Head of Musicology (May–December 2002), Visiting Fellow (2001–11), Senior Research Fellow (2012–14), and finally Associate Professor and Distinguished Artist in Residence in the School of Music of the College of Arts and Social Sciences.

At an undergraduate level Stephen taught the long-standing course 'Music in Indigenous Australian Society', a course Kirsty Gillespie was to take with Stephen in 1997 (when it was known as 'Music, Culture and Society A (Aboriginal)'). It was, for Kirsty, her first introduction to ethnomusicology as a potential career, one she went on to embrace (she was to return to tutor this course for Stephen in 2006, almost 10 years later, while a PhD student). Stephen's gentle and thoughtful manner of teaching this course fostered a great respect amongst students for the traditions of ancestral Australia, while at the same time challenged students' perception of a white Australia, its history and their place in it. The 1990s was a time of great progress (and in some quarters, fear) around native title in Australia, and class time with Stephen was a place in which students could ask frank questions and raise concerns about how such developments could affect

them and their world as they experienced it. His teaching went beyond music to its intersection with critical contemporary issues—learning with Stephen was a true university education.

At the postgraduate level Stephen made a significant contribution as Graduate Convenor, co-ordinating the graduate student seminar and managing the interests of the graduate student cohort. His supervision in principal and associate supervisor roles was broad and extended across the campus and in a number of cognate disciplines such as anthropology and history. In total, from 1993 until 2016, Stephen supervised 26 Honours, Masters, and PhD theses. His willingness to work with students from a variety of academic backgrounds and different parts of the university was testimony to his collaborative spirit and support of students. As a research thesis supervisor or co-supervisor, he would provide his students not just academic guidance but often pastoral support. The latter is particularly important for his international students. In Stephen's view, academic life is not just about one's own study, it also entails the advancement of scholarship in the field through mentorship and personal support to the next generations.

It was Stephen's commitment to Indigenous Australian music, however, particularly to the Warlpiri people with whom he worked over a lifetime, that was his academic home, and towards the end of his time at ANU he was finally able to engage a student, Yukihiro Doi, who would work with the Warlpiri and continue his legacy (and who has contributed photographs to this volume).

During his time at ANU, Stephen championed the disciplines of musicology (and ethnomusicology) in an environment that was predominantly and historically performance-focused. At the time of his appointment as a Sessional Lecturer, the Canberra School of Music was (with the Canberra School of Art) one half of the Canberra Institute of the Arts; by the time he retired, the School of Music had become fully integrated with ANU, as part of the College of Arts and Social Sciences. These years were a time of considerable upheaval within the School, and Stephen's continuous presence throughout this time was marked by his characteristic grace and diplomacy. His appointment as ICTM Secretary General, bringing the ICTM Secretariat to Canberra and to ANU, was a triumph in the promotion of music scholarship in Australia.

Stephen Wild and ICTM

Stephen Wild began his ICTM membership in 1969, the year he also started doctoral research in Central Australia. But it would not be until he returned to Australia from overseas studies in 1988 that his serious involvement with ICTM would begin. This engagement can be divided into two periods of increasing intensity, 1988–98 and 2001–15.

This first period began when Stephen became the first Chair of the newly established ICTM National Committee for Australia in 1988. Alice Moyle had been the Liaison Officer for Australia (1975–88), but the Musicological Society of Australia (MSA) then became ICTM's National Committee for Australia. The MSA designated a committee to liaise with ICTM with Stephen as Chair. Stephen had just concluded his first term as MSA President and was joined on the committee by Alice Moyle, Allan Marett, and Linda Barwick (*Bulletin of the International Council for Traditional Music* 73 (October 1988): 7). He served as Chair until 1997.

Even more significant for his increasing involvement in the governance of ICTM, Stephen was elected as an Ordinary Member of the ICTM Executive Board in 1989, and served two four-year terms until 1997. During this period, he was a member of the Programme Committee for the 1993 World Conference in Berlin and convened the 1995 World Conference in Canberra, which featured a *rom* ceremony. He then guest edited the 1995 *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, which focused on the themes of that conference.

The year 2001 began the second period of his involvement, which increased at a dizzying pace. He became the third Chair of the Study Group on Musics of Oceania, as it was called at the time, and hosted their fourth symposium at AIATSIS. In the same year he was elected ICTM Vice President and became General Editor of the *Yearbook for Traditional Music*, coinciding with his move to ANU. He concluded as Chair, Vice President, and General Editor in 2006, however, when he succeeded Anthony Seeger as ICTM Secretary General, undoubtedly the most active and demanding ICTM role there is.

Stephen served as Secretary General until 2011, with Lee Anne Proberts as ICTM's Executive Assistant. This period saw the establishment of a number of new study groups, the first two Regional Committees, the ICTM Archive at the National Library of Australia in Canberra (see online guide

at: nla.gov.au/nla.ms-ms10017), and ICTM's involvement in JSTOR's Current Scholarship Program. During this time, Stephen also convened in Canberra the seventh symposium of the Study Group on Music and Dance of Oceania (2010) and was co-convenor of the 21st ICTM colloquium on the musical expression of loss and bereavement (2011), the last conference he hosted in Australia as Secretary General. Stephen oversaw three world conferences as Secretary General: Vienna, Austria (2007); Durban, South Africa (2009); and St John's, Newfoundland, Canada (2011), when the Secretariat was officially transferred to Ljubljana, Slovenia, with Svanibor Pettan as Secretary General. From 2011 to 2015, Stephen was elected to the Executive Board as a Vice President.

Stephen continues to contribute to the governance of the ICTM through his membership on various Executive Board committees, including chairing one concerning a planned publication series. Because of his long involvement at the highest level of the management of ICTM, Stephen is frequently consulted on all manner of issues concerning the Council. His broad knowledge of Council matters and individuals, calm intellect, and concern and respect for the well-being of all involved continue to make him an invaluable consultant, confidante, colleague, and friend of anything to do with ICTM affairs.

Stephen and Kim now reside in Sydney, where they continue to be active connoisseurs of the arts and to travel the world, enjoying all the cultural—musical—diversity it has to offer.

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Stephen as an infant in the 1940s

Source: Kim Woo



Whittaker Cameron and Stephen at Laverton, Western Australia,
1969–72

Source: AIATSIS: WILD.S05.CS - 000007525



Alan Merriam, Stephen, and Elizabeth May, May 1972

Source: William Malm, Society for Ethnomusicology



With Elizabeth May, 1977

Source: William Malm, Society for Ethnomusicology



Recording during a *rom* ceremony at Maningrida, Northern Territory, 1982

Source: AIATSIS: WILD.S01.CN - N02828_02



Stephen, Eric Wilmot, and John Mulvaney at a performance of a *rom* ceremony in 1982

Source: AIATSIS: AIAS.015.CS - 000081291



Stephen making a presentation to Anbarra people at a *rom* ceremony in Canberra, 1995

Source: AIATSIS: AIATSIS.036.CS - 115749



Stephen at the launch of Gedda Aklif's *Ardiyooloon Bardi Ngaanka: One Arm Point Bardi Dictionary* (1999) at Acton House, Canberra, 18 March 2000

Source: AIATSIS: AIATSIS.063.CS - 126850



Participants in the ICTM Study Group on Music and Dance in Oceania symposium in Canberra, 2001: Barbara Smith, Jane Freeman Moulin, Raymond Ammann, Don Niles, Helen Reeves Lawrence, Stephen, Steven Knopoff, Grace Koch, Peter Toner, and Dan Bendrups

Source: AIATSIS: AIATSIS.084.CS - 000129224



Stephen, John Mulvaney, and Patricia Stanner at the launch of the W. E. H. Stanner display and finding aid, Canberra, 2001

Source: AIATSIS: AIATSIS.093.CS - 000131857



At home with Kim Woo in Canberra, 2001

Source: Don Niles



ICTM Executive Board meeting in Wuyishan, China, June 2002:
(back row) Krister Malm (President), Egil Bakka, Kelly Salloum
(Executive Assistant), Stephen (Vice President), Allan Marett, Svanibor
Pettan, Anthony Seeger (Secretary General); (front row) Tilman
Seebass, Tsukada Kenichi, Patricia Opondo, and Marianne Bröcker

Source: Trần Quang Hải



Stephen chairing a session at the ICTM World Conference in Fuzhou,
China, 2004, with Raymond Ammann, Jane Freeman Moulin, Michael
Clement, Ricardo D. Trimillos, Brian Diettrich, and Mohd Anis Md Nor

Source: Don Niles



Kirsty Gillespie and Stephen study the programme at the ICTM World Conference in Sheffield, UK, 2005

Source: Kirsty Gillespie



Jonathan Stock, Ho Ching-fen, Hwang Chiung-Hui, Anthony McCann, Chou Chien'er, Claudia Krueger, Mohammad Reza Azadehfars, Andrew Killick, and Stephen in Sheffield, UK, 2005

Source: ICTM Online Photo Gallery

A DISTINCTIVE VOICE IN THE ANTIPODES



Launching of the ICTM Secretariat at The Australian National University, Canberra, 2006

Source: Lee Anne Proberts



With Jerry Jangala at Lajamanu School, 2008

Source: Yukihiro Doi



With Jerry Jangala in Lajamanu, 2009

Source: Yukihiro Doi



With Wanta Jampijinpa Pawu-Kurlpurlurnu (Steven Patrick) at Charles Darwin University, during the 8th Symposium on Indigenous Music and Dance, 2009

Source: Julie Fairless



Wanta Jampijinpa Pawu-Kurlpurlurnu (Steven Patrick), Jerry Jangala, and Stephen at Lajamanu Longhouse, 2011

Source: Yukihiro Doi



Discussing old crayon drawings with Warlpiri Elders at Warnayaka Art Centre, 2011

Source: Yukihiro Doi



Checking the time with Lee Anne Proberts before leaving
Lajamanu, 2011

Source: Yukihiro Doi



Adrienne Kaeppler, Masaya Shishikura, Stephen, Aaron Corn,
and Gisa Jähnichen, St John's, Canada, 2011

Source: Don Niles



The transfer of the ICTM Secretariat: Lee Anne Proberts (Executive Assistant) and Stephen (Secretary General), from the outgoing Canberra Secretariat; Adrienne Kaeppler (President), Svanibor Pettan (Secretary General), and Carlos Yoder (Executive Assistant), from the incoming Ljubljana Secretariat, St John's, Canada, 2011

Source: Don Niles



Stephen with ICTM President Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Branco,
Shanghai, 2012

Source: Don Niles



Three ICTM Secretaries General in Brisbane, Australia, 2013:
Svanibor Pettan, Stephen, and Anthony Seeger

Source: Svanibor Pettan



Stephen, Naila Ceribašić, Xiao Mei, Jean Kidula, J. Lawrence
Witzleben, Ricardo D. Trimillos, Anthony Seeger, Salwa El-Shawan
Castelo-Branco, Colin Quigley, and Svanibor Pettan in Shanghai, 2013

Source: Svanibor Pettan



ICTM Secretary General Svanibor Pettan, Vice President Stephen Wild, and Vice President Don Niles in Astana, Kazakhstan, discussing arrangements for the following year's World Conference, 2014

Source: Trần Quang Hải



In a selfie with Trần Quang Hải, Astana, 2015

Source: Svanibor Pettan



At the ICTM World Conference in Astana, Kazakhstan, 2015

Source: Trần Quang Hải

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