Mission Statement

“The mission of the International Musicological Society

• is to connect every musicologist to the world community of musicology
• by embracing the study of music in all its diversity
• and advancing musicological research across the globe
• in a spirit of cooperation and collaboration.
Editorial: Environment

This edition of *IMS Musicological Brainfood* explores musicology’s relationship with the environment in two journeys. The first is led by Daniel M. Grimley as he takes us across the landscape of COVID-19. His short provocation, “Moving upon Silence,” should awaken our silence as musicologists. We have been advocating a global musicology, but to truly listen to the world around us, a global musicology should be as “earthy” as it is socially attuned to different cultures—the two, in fact, are inseparable, as Grimley reminds us. This is clearly demonstrated in the second journey. As with the first recipients of the IMS Guido Adler Prize, we asked the 2019 recipient, Margaret Kartomi, to write about her life and travels, and her perceptions of change in our discipline over the past sixty years. Her unique perspective, shaped by her upbringing in Australia, her studies in East Berlin, and her research in Indonesia, provides us with a view of musicology with open borders, and one that is never far from the political, social, and environmental issues. Her long career as a musicologist inspires us to be explorers.

Moving upon Silence: Music, Landscape, and Environment

Daniel M. Grimley

Among the most unexpected and disconcerting side effects of the COVID-19 pandemic has been the silence that has accompanied much of the lockdown. Despite the creative flowering of impromptu balcony concerts and online musical events that it has in some places provoked, the quietness of much of the pandemic has often seemed deafening. As countries emerge tentatively (or, in some cases, recklessly) out of the quarantine measures imposed to try to contain the global spread of the infection, there is an opportunity to reflect on the meanings and values of that silence. For some, it is indelibly associated with absence: the agonizing loss of friends and relatives or of patterns of work and sources of income that have sustained livelihoods and maintained well-being. For others, especially in the wake of the Black Lives Matter protests following the brutal killing of George Floyd, silence can only mean condonement or complicity, an act of amnesia or betrayal that perpetuates such violence rather than address its systemic and institutional origins. And for others, silence has been an opportunity to reconnect or reattune, to attend to environmental sounds and ambient noise in new and defamiliarized contexts, and to take stock in relation to surroundings that seem irrevocably changed and transformed: the sudden lack of aircraft or road traffic, the memory of a loved-one’s voice, or the mute response to historical injustice. Silence in the bewilderingly contradictory era of COVID-19 simultaneously signals despair, hope, isolation, and immersion.

The ambiguous quality of this silence has been captured by a number of initiatives and artistic schemes. The Dawn Chorus Project led by sound artist Bernie Krause, for instance, is exemplary in its acknowledgment of the human catastrophe caused by COVID-19 and its urgent call for environmental restitution. “The dramatic silencing of human activities that it has caused,” Krause writes of the pandemic on the project...
website, “is also making the voices of nature resound on an unprecedented scale. In this unique situation in the spring of 2020, the idea was born to make the birds’ voices heard.” Supported by the Bavarian Museum of the Life Sciences and Environment and the Nantesbuch Foundation, the Dawn Chorus Project has created a citizen science platform onto which users can upload sound recordings of the dawn chorus in their neighborhood, creating, Krause suggests, “a worldwide birdsong concert for the sciences and the arts.” Traced onto a global sound map, the inventory of recordings is a moving testimony both to nature’s resilience and to the virus’s international reach. As a contemporary record of habitat loss and biodiversity, it has particular scientific value: it offers an auditory snapshot of our current relationship with the natural world, the acoustic veil of the anthropocene. Yet the data also conceals the intractable realities of class and social inequality. The geographical distribution of recordings as of August 2020 speaks all too vividly of persisting asymmetries of power and human resource: the South African examples, for instance, are drawn almost exclusively from the protected areas within Table Mountain National Park, but there is nothing from the shanty settlements of Khayelitsha, Langa or Gugulethu. Listening to the dawn chorus in the sylvan surroundings of Constantia or Rondebosch assumes a very different social-political register from that of the Cape Flats.

Sound artists, ethnomusicologists, and other music scholars have for many years insisted that it matters where we listen, and that the silence which might prevail is inevitably shaped and determined by particular cultural-historic legacies. Peter Cusack’s eloquent essay in acoustic journalism, Sounds from Dangerous Places, echoes this preoccupation with music, sound, landscape, and environment. Traveling through the ruins of abandoned Samosel villages within the Chernobyl evacuation zone in Ukraine, two decades after the disaster at the nuclear reactor which spread radioactive material over wide parts of northern and western Europe, for example, he writes: “the quiet is absolute. Traffic and planes are unthinkable. Only birds and wind can be heard. But there is a strong sense of absence too, of those who lived here, of the disaster that destroyed any continuity with past generations, and the disruptions faced since.” This uncanny absence strangely foreshadows the COVID-19 pandemic. As for Krause, it is the “passionate, species-rich dawn chorus” celebrated in Cusack’s recordings that becomes Chernobyl’s “keynote,” and which serves as one of the areas “definitive sounds.” For its former inhabitants, sound, and landscape are inextricably bound up with their experience of displacement and the legacy of enforced resettlement, even in cases where they have in fact returned to their original homes and dwellings. Their singing superficially suggests some form of Romantic idyll:

Oh my beloved village,
The silence of your marshes,
The breadth of your skies,
Your songs,
And your fields caressed by the sun.

But in the striking strength and richness of their voices, beautifully captured by Cusack’s microphone, there is a deeper undertone of fracture and loss. Such intensity ultimately points to a hollowness, the desolation and emptiness of what has been left behind: peeling wallpaper in a bedroom, broken glass, or a deserted kindergarten.

Perhaps such silence should not come as a surprise after all, since in some ways it has always lain at the heart of a particular western landscape epistemology. The emergence of a distinctive landscape aesthetic, or way of thinking about the culturally sedimented relationships between land, environment, and human agency, coincided in the early modern period with the invention of perspective as a visual means of social-political representation. In its elevation of a viewer’s privileged point of spectatorship, perspective encoded highly asymmetrical hierarchies of authority, control, and domination. It was preoccupied by boundaries, borders, mapping, and directionality. Yet despite its attempt to conceal or obscure less desirable or regulated elements of its scenic prospects, perspective has always hinted at or suggested precisely that which it has sought to dominate or remove. Music has responded intensively to such imperatives: the empty sounds and silences that answer Orfeo’s lamenting calls in Monteverdi’s epony-
amous opera, for example, are landscape’s shady acoustic mirror, the real sonic reflection of the sunlit Arcadian realm from which Eurydice has been erased. Though Orfeo can return from the underworld, his landscape is now broken and bereft. Musical enchantment merely belies the loss that lies within. It sounds what perspective seeks to exclude.

Similar moments of silence puncture or underpin later musical evocations of landscape. The hollow octaves that frame the final bars of Haydn’s F Minor Variations, Hob. XVII:6, for example, suggest precisely that same emptiness, as do the halting gaps between the musical oar strokes in “Die Stadt” from Schubert’s Schwanengesang and the strangely opaque bars that resound in the final number, “Lualá,” from Grieg’s Stemninger, op. 73. In each case, landscape appears not so much as a void or abyss, but as blank space, a series of vanishing points that might equally indicate infinite extension, convergence, disappearance, or departure. In the era of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is easy to hear those blank spaces only negatively, bound up with the collateral damage of a largely mishandled global crisis. But their ambivalence also permits alternative readings. As Holly Watkins has recently argued in her Musical Vitalities, it is possible to conceive of sound and music in holistic, ecocritical ways: “Musical beauty resembles that of leaves and flowers,” she suggests, “because it is, in its own way, a living thing, meaning that it also passes away.”

Positively embracing the fleeting contingency of musical events might, in other words, prompt a different way of relating to the environment, through landscape, by acknowledging our own transience, permeability, and interconnectedness. Hence, Watkins writes, music’s “acoustic manifestation of dynamic processes and patterns . . . finds meaning in beauty for no other reason than that it is here, now. The flower will soon wilt, the music someday go stale.”

Silence amid COVID-19 assuredly offers a place for solace, or a moment to grieve. But it is also an injunction, not merely to remember and record past histories of exclusion or loss, but to attend to and accept responsibility. Only then, in landscape, can we begin to hear again.

References
2 Ibid.
4 Ibid., 19.
5 Ibid.
7 Ibid.

Daniel M. Grimley is deputy head of humanities at the University of Oxford and Douglas Algar Tutorial Fellow at Merton College. His books include Grieg: Music, Landscape and Norwegian Identity (2006), and Carl Nielsen and the Idea of Modernism (2010, both Boydell). In 2011, he was scholar-in-residence at the Bard Festival, for which he edited Jean Sibelius and His World (Princeton University Press). He has led a Leverhulme International Research Network, “Hearing Landscape Critically,” featuring conferences in South Africa and the USA, and his third monograph, Delius and the Sound of Place, was published by Cambridge University Press in 2018.
1940–60: Formative Experiences
Born in Adelaide in 1940, I fell asleep as a child every night to music played by my amateur violinist father and pianist mother and their musician friends. Not surprisingly I acquired a love of classical music, learning piano from age four. Our family never needed to buy a record player or (later) a TV, because we entertained ourselves making music at home.

To supplement my father’s meagre income as a post office clerk, my mother took in post-war migrants as house boarders, including the Yugoslav Imam of the Adelaide mosque who lived with us for twenty years, inviting us to all the feast days, where I met young Indonesian students and other fascinating people. I wrote an essay at school about the heritage mosque’s jewel-colored stained-glass windows, its grape vine and fig tree garden, its whitewashed walls, and four minarets built by Afghan camel drivers who initially came to the central Australian desert in the 1850s. When my essay was published in the 1955 Wilderness School magazine, I knew the thrill of seeing my first publication.

Adelaide society in the 1950s was still mainly white, insular, and conservative. However, our Quaker house was always open to visitors from around the world, including the Colombo Plan students from Indonesia and Malaysia who often came to lunch, sang Indonesian songs to my piano accompaniment, and introduced me to recordings of Javanese gamelan music.¹ At nineteen, my parents took me to Indonesia, and we fell in love with the emerald isles and their warm, hospitable people. Through our peace movement friends, we met president Soekarno in his palace and visited the homes of our Indonesian student friends, including my future husband, Hidris Kartomi (Dris for short). He used to play Indonesian (Sundanese) *calung* (bamboo xylophone) ensemble with his friends (figure 1).

The goal of gender equality in the 1950s was still a distant dream. My mother told me she was only allowed to attend primary school to age ten, even though she had won a gold watch in a state-wide essay writing competition. Conventional wisdom held that education was wasted on girls, for they were not very intelligent and their life task was just to serve their husbands and children. I decided to have a life beyond that of a housewife and become the first in my family to go to university, taking up a scholarship at the University of Adelaide that bonded me to teach secondary school for three years.

After graduating I taught music and geography at Adelaide High School, and was paid only two thirds of a male wage for equal work. This and other similar experiences growing up led me to reject gender inequality long before I knew the word *feminist*, and long before reading the eye-opening books by Simone de Beauvoir and Germaine Greer.

My first strong memory after marrying Dris in 1960 was being invited to accompany the famous Afro-American opera singer and political activist Paul Robeson on the piano at many gatherings during his and his wife’s visit to Adelaide. As he spoke to trade union rallies and others, he broke seamlessly into song in his incredibly rich
dramatic operatic voice. He sang lyrics about the struggle for racial and gender equality, workers’ rights, peace and disarmament at a time when everyone was terrified of atomic war, having read Nevil Shute’s post-apocalyptic 1957 novel, On the Beach, set in Central Australia. He sang stirring spirituals such as “Joshua fit de battle ob Jericho,” “Old Man River,” and other songs that met his political convictions.

1960–72: Early Research
Our daughter, Karen Sri, was born in 1962. Our family of three sailed to Europe in 1964 where I studied in the Department of Musicology at East Berlin’s Humboldt University. I was thrust into a unique intellectual landscape which helped lay the foundations of my life as a musicologist and intellectual, where the ideas of the Humboldt brothers, Herder, Hegel, and Marx contributed to the current debate about issues of global significance and intellectual activism; and the distinctively Berlin legacy of “comparative musicologists” and organologists Erich Moritz von Hornbostel and Curt Sachs influenced my search for new critical, cultural meanings in musical instruments. I was privileged to study under ethnomusicologists Doris Stockmann and Jürgen Elsner, systematic musicologist Reiner Kluge, and Austrian historical musicologist Georg Knepler (1906–2003; figure 2), who was a student of Guido Adler, one of the founders of musicology.

Fig. 2. The late historical musicologist Georg Knepler exchanging a book with me in his home in Berlin, 1991 (Photo: Dris Kartomi).

After I completed my doctorate in musicology and Southeast Asian studies, we were hoping to live in Indonesia, but we were unwelcome after we criticized the Suharto-led massacres as he came to power. So we returned home, and I taught briefly at the University of Adelaide’s Elder Conservatorium before joining Monash University’s young Department of Music as a research fellow under ethnomusicologist Trevor Jones in 1969. At first I did fieldwork among the First Nation Pitjantjara people at Yalata on the Nullabor Plain with Monash anthropologist, Isobel Mary (Sally) White, for the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies.

I was fascinated by the all-night adult ceremonies and the boys’ and girls’ ritual-style play ceremonies performed at select sites in this attractive salt and blue bush country. After the boys painted their faces with flour and donned branches to increase their height, they emerged from behind the bushes to dance in an elliptical circle in front of the girls, who were beating their thighs rhythmically and singing an ancestral story about a boy Wintaru. He dared to climb up a ladder to the sky, and just before he reached the brightest star, he was knocked by the mamu spirits all the way down to the ground. Though I loved the people at Yalata, I was shocked at the children’s pot-bellies, the alcoholic despair of some of the adults, and the almost total ignorance of their plight among terra nullius-believing Australians.

I remember the young, radical Monash University students’ anti-conscription demonstrations against the American-Vietnam war in the early 1970s, when we sometimes had to ring up in the morning to find out whether the campus was closed for the day. At this time, we in the music department—including Trevor Jones, Alice Moyle, and Stephen Wild—were introducing the radical new discipline of ethnomusicology into our hitherto historical and systematic musicological curriculum.

I published my findings on Pitjantjara children’s and women’s music cultures at Yalata and taught a wide range of Western opera, keyboard, and research methods, as well as ethnomusicology subjects, including a course on the music of Indonesia.

Convinced that one of the best ways to teach another culture’s music is to play it, I borrowed a gamelan orchestra from the Indonesian Embassy, and produced an annual series of concert productions of Indonesian music and dance performed by our students and directed by the Ja-
vanese musician on our staff, Poedijono. Our concert productions over the next few decades to audiences that included thousands of school students and teachers of music and Indonesian language raised enough money to buy Monash’s own gamelan.

From 1972 onward, I did fieldwork on Australian Research Council grants in Indonesia every year with Dris, at first in Java where he was born, and then in the little-known outer islands of Indonesia, especially the island of Sumatra (figure 3).

Meanwhile our colleagues and students were also bringing back valuable field recordings, musical instruments, books, pamphlets, textiles, and memorabilia that needed to be deposited somewhere; so we founded the Music Archive of Monash University (MAMU) in the 1970s. Over the decades we also received invaluable bequests and museum collections of music and music-related materials from Australia, Asia, Europe, and beyond. We did fieldwork in Baghdadi Jewish towns in South, Southeast and East Asia, and created the Australian Archive of Jewish Music, which focuses on Asian and Australian Jewish music, and produced CDs and publications.

1972ff.: Fieldwork in Sumatra and Beyond

Now to a few impressions of my field work in the wilds of Sumatra from the early 1970s onward, experiences which shaped the course of my research life over the decades.

My most vivid recollections of Sumatra’s still unspoiled beauty and natural environment are of towering volcanic peaks in the mountain ranges along Sumatra’s west coast; jagged ridges with white mist hanging over crater lakes; the fresh scented air after the rains while we walked along the forest paths; short rocky streams that cascade down the narrow west-coastal plains; and the magnificent long navigable rivers that flow eastward from the mountains and high lakes through the foothills, alluvial plains and coastal mangroves to empty finally into the Strait of Melaka. Sections of each river, ranging from the young and vigorous to the old and slow, have their own soundscapes, ranging from the brilliant bird sounds in the glittering upper and middle reaches of the rivers to the calm washing sounds downstream.

We trekked through the forests in the mountains and agricultural and fishing villages on the plains and sailed across lakes and down rivers with our sturdy Nagra tape recorder, reel-to-reel tapes and cameras, etc., staying in isolated villages and towns, explaining our purpose to wonderfully hospitable women and men in materially poor but culturally rich communities, and asking permission to record their music, dances, and theater to take back to neighboring negara kanguru (kangaroo land) as they called Australia. Later we recorded on Nakamichi MiniDiscs and various cassette formats, and most recently on our mobile phones.

I tried hard but never managed to meet a Sumatran tiger, elephant, or crocodile, or even a mischievous little squirrel, deer, or pig in the wild. However, I stepped over many snakes in the forest and learned to like the cicak geckoes who disapprovingly said “st–st–st” every time I undressed to go to sleep at night. I even grew to like the rather harmless spiders in the houses. I met several people who had befriended potentially dangerous tigers by turning into wertigers, and a number of art of self-defense (silat) performers whose forebears had learned to imitate the Sumatran tiger’s long stealthy steps and techniques of attack and defense. My first publication on Sumatra was about a series of rare mystical songs to praise and capture tigers by, sung by shamans in the forests of Solok, West Sumatra.

I remember some of our adventures on Sumatra’s great lakes. One evening after recording Toba Batak sigale-gale puppet theater, we were in a small boat during a violent storm. The thunder and lightning flashed and gusty winds blew...
the heavy rain in the wrong direction. The boat pilot uttered mantras over his offerings and asked for foreign cigarettes to appease the spirits of the lake so that they would calm the waves and give him confidence to steer safely between and around the rocks to Tomok on Lake Toba’s Samosir Island. As he confessed, without the intervention of the foreign cigarettes and spirits of the lake, we might never have made it.

I vividly remember listening to local legends sung to us under the stars before we fell asleep on sacks of copra on our all-night sea voyage from Sibolga to southern Nias, where we heard the soaring music of the powerful ho ho choirs, watched the ultra-slow female welcome dance, and saw young men jumping over a two-meter-high rock to show their manly fitness before they were allowed to marry.

One unforgettable river voyage took us all the way from the Muara Takus mountain temple complex on Riau’s Kampar River past the former Pelalawan palace and riverside villages to the islands out at sea. We canoed around a maze of rivulets where we recorded snake-skin covered bowed fiddle and jews harp music, passing under huts built on low bridges by semi-nomadic Peta-langan fisherfolk who prefer to live with the forest fairies (orang bunian) and enjoy their music and live in town only when necessary (figure 4). We met a honey-collecting shaman singing to the venerated spirit of a tall sialang tree for protection while his young partner shimmied up the tree to collect honey from the beehives.

Fig. 4. A ritual musician’s hut built over a forest rivulet near Betung, Riau, Sumatra, 1984 (Photo: Dris Kartomi).

Then before reaching the river mouth we saw a mighty four-meter-high tidal wave approaching. Twice a day it crashed thunderously on the river banks, destroying everything in its path except for the boats piloted by experienced navigators like ours, who knew how to wait in a shallow spot, throttle fast, and lurch furiously into each of the seven roaring walls of water that rolled in at us leaving a misty spray, and who finally brought us out safely through the ten-kilometer-wide river mouth to an island out at sea, where we recorded an itinerant troupe of Orang Laut (sea people) performing flirtatious joget couples dance songs set to Malay poetry with biola, gong, and drum music. Our boat pilot told us proudly that many colonial era Portuguese enemy boats and Dutch vessels had been destroyed because their pilots could not pass safely through the bono tidal waves.

Over the decades we recorded a cross-section of the music, dance, martial arts, theater, comedy, and vocal music in all ten of Sumatra’s large provinces and in many other parts of Indonesia and Malaysia, depositing them with annotations in the MAMU through the offices of its long-term archivist, Bronia Kornhauser, and donating copies of some to Jakarta’s National Library and Aceh’s Syiah Kuala University Library, hopefully for present and future generations to use.

1980s and 1990s: International Reach

Our field trips in out-of-the-way villages, former palaces and towns continued unabated. However, we saw that some communities were increasingly losing much of their musical and linguistic diversity and that illegal logging, forest burning, and expanding palm oil plantations were endangering many species of Sumatra’s flora and fauna. We were increasingly worried about the future viability of the vulnerable music cultures we saw around us.

Our archive kept acquiring valuable deposits. Actually, much of our research data in the MAMU still amaze me. The fact that we happened to bring the unique prison-camp made gamelan Digul (figure 5) to our music archive in 1981 resulted not only in the telling of its incredible story to the whole world in a book and its Indonesian translation, but also in its restoration by expert museologists funded by the Australian government’s Department of Foreign Affairs, its formal public recognition as the musical symbol of the beginnings of Australian-Indonesian friendship, and its prominent display in several museums over the decades.
The international conference that the MAMU organized later about a totally unique duck-herds’ zither (bundengan) that I brought back from Java’s Wonosobo area in the 1970s and was later researched by Rosie Cook and interdisciplinary teams of Australian and Indonesian museologists, engineers, organologists, sociologists, and ethnomusicologists had a lasting effect in Java—many more instruments have been hand-made, and they are now being played by hundreds of school children and adults who are composing new music for the duck-herds’ zither.

I spent the American academic year 1986/87 as visiting professor in the University of California at Berkeley’s Department of Music. I taught ethnomusicology and used UC Berkeley’s magnificent library to finish writing my book *On Concepts and Classifications of Musical Instruments*. I likely would not have written it without my organological and other musicological training in East Berlin and the formative experience of building the instrument collection in the MAMU.

On returning home from UC Berkeley, I convened the IMS Intercongressional Symposium in Melbourne in 1988. Scholars and graduate students from around the world presented papers on historical and systematic musicological topics current at the time as well as on diverse ethnomusicological topics, jazz, and popular music, and some were illustrated by concert performances at the event.

Universities in the 1980s were relatively well-funded for musicological research on a range of fundamental, systematic, and historical musicological topics. Promising young graduates obtained university positions relatively easily throughout Australia, Asia, the Americas, Europe, and beyond. We did not employ teams of academic managers then as we did from the early 2000s.

After my experience of UC Berkeley’s integrated music curriculum, I felt it was time to expand our gamelan performance units and introduce Western music performance and composition streams at undergraduate and postgraduate levels on being appointed professor and head of the Monash Music Department. So the staff and I spent well over the next decade establishing a new Monash symphony orchestra, choirs, double degree programs, and a full bachelor of music degree while continuing the bachelor of arts music major, and postgraduate degrees in performance, composition, musicology, and ethnomusicology, with equal prominence given to all four streams.

**The 2000s to the Present Time**

Musicological meetings such as the IMS Intercongressional Symposium held in Melbourne in 2004 were inspiring events, with presenters discussing a range of papers about traditional research topics, and more than ever before about musical expressions of indigenous peoples such as Canadian Indians and Australian Aborigines, and about increasingly important social issues such as the effects of human-induced climate change, and other aspects of the existential crisis state that many perceived our societies were in.

Meanwhile universities in many countries were becoming very different places, with continuing budget cuts by governments. Enrollments of many full-fee-paying international students and increased links with overseas universities gave us a greater international feel and scope for our activities, but they also brought new language problems and increased an over-reliance on international student fees used to finance research. Technology allowed us to work more efficiently. Our campuses and buildings became more beautiful, and our campus cafes and restaurants more diverse. The tertiary environment for females, LGBTQ cohorts, people of color, and other people of difference became more favorable, though there was still a long way to go. Increasing social inequality inspired more research into their experiences and musical expressions.
Some of us argue that our universities are now more like corporations than traditional centers of learning, with all the consequences that that brings. Many younger research and teaching academics live on annual contracts in uncertain employment conditions with punishing workloads, or are forced to move careers every time their short-term grants run out. Until the COVID-19 pandemic struck in early 2020, many of us who were in employment were too busy even to have lunch with colleagues—though I hasten to add, we at the MAMU regularly had lunch together at least twice a week!

In addition, the fragmenting political intrigues of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries have led to culture wars and threats to diminish or even abolish some humanities subjects in favor of business, commerce, management, IT, engineering, and science studies, with an increasing trend to substitute narrow skills training for courses that develop students’ critical thinking, reading, writing, and intercultural skills—the very skills that musicologists teach so well, and that new graduates will always need if they are to contribute fully to a healthy society.

From the 1970s on, many music departments around the world realized the need for their students and future music teachers to be exposed to music cultures other than just the Western tradition. Yet ethnomusicology subjects are being sidelined in some universities today, as the focus is diverted to the acquisition of practical skills. We need to keep arguing that studies of other music cultures remain important, not only because they broaden students’ minds and ears and satisfy their intellectual curiosity but because they help build and maintain a tolerant, peaceful multi-cultural society, and—surprisingly to some—they even foster greater understanding of the logic and history of the Western music repertoire and tradition. Intercultural studies are particularly important now, just seventy-five years after our great losses in the world war against fascism, given the increasingly blatant expressions of racism and religious extremism in our midst today, including by some heavy metal bands, one of which has a 100% national socialist membership, as Benjamin Hillier discovered after some exhaustive research.⁵

But what, you might ask, can we musicologists do about these problems?

It seems clear at least that if our discipline is to survive, some of our research and teaching activities have to be made more relevant to the problematic world we live in, while continuing and building on our extremely valuable historical and systematic research achievements and promoting our orchestras and other cultural institutions.

Musicologists can work with musicians, composers, community organizations, NGOs, government departments, and corporations to research the musicological implications of such systemic problems as the shocking effects of climate change leading to the unprecedentedly wild bush fires and floods in Australia and California in recent times. Some of us are continuing to research the musical results of human-induced global warming, including rising sea levels and inundated islands that are already causing the loss of whole music cultures among people who live on houseboats at sea or on low-lying islands in South and Southeast Asia and the Pasifika, leading to forced mass migrations to higher lands, where they are often rejected rather than being welcomed. Others are researching the musical results of the endemic discrimination against women in our societies, and the implications of the current COVID-19 pandemic recovery and future crisis response.

In the past two decades, more musicologists than before have been asking penetrating questions about the state of the music cultures of indigenous peoples such as the Romani in Europe, the Indian nations in North America, and forest dwelling peoples in Southeast Asia. According to the International Labour Organization, there are approximately 476.6 million indigenous people in the world who belong to 5,000 different groups in ninety countries worldwide, yet we know very little about many of their music cultures.

Some of us in Australia have been asking whether we can do more to help establish a First Nations Voice in the current discussions and National Commission tell the truth about our so-called terra nullius colonial history in Australia. Can we support First Nation composers wanting to expose their works to the public, such as a recent oratorio by Yorta Yorta woman Deborah
Cheetham that aims to correct the false claim that pre-colonized Australia was a *terra nullius* when Captain Cook "discovered" it in 1770? I believe we can, by the subjects we choose to research and the publications we produce.

A few Australian First Nation musicians have begun researching their fragile music cultures in collaboration with non-First Nation musicologists. The National Recording Project for Indigenous Performance in Australia has supported indigenous Australians’ efforts to record, document, archive, and revitalize their music and dance traditions for application to business, information technologies, the arts, education, research, governance, and health.

At our next interdisciplinary conference at Monash in December 2020 (if the pandemic allows), we will address important issues regarding the preservation and future development of Indonesia’s formerly neglected Lampung province’s traditional, new, and popular music, dance theater, bardic, martial, and visual arts (see figures 6 and 7), including their role in communal life, museums, archives, libraries, the education system, festivals, tourism, and youth cultures.

**Concluding Thoughts**

I confess that in the few years that may remain to me, I want to finish digitizing our field data, which cover decades of social and musical change. I also want to comply with requests to publish Indonesian translations of my publications, to help my students publish their research, and to try and finish my self-imposed task of publishing on the performing arts of all of Sumatra’s ten provinces and the fascinating historical and theoretical issues that arise from this task—still three provinces to go!

No rest for the wicked, as they say. It’s better to expire, when the time comes, thoroughly worn out and proclaiming—wow, what a ride! As Jeffrey Cheah says, “I’ll perspire to inspire before I expire!”

**References**

1 The Colombo Plan was founded in 1950 as a framework for international cooperation among countries in Southeast Asia.


4 Our daughter, Karen Kartomi Thomas (PhD, UC Berkeley), an Indonesian theater researcher, carried out fieldwork with me in Indonesia’s Riau Islands province and Lampung province in the 2010s, and published articles on various forms of Sumatran folk theater.

5 Jeffrey Cheah is the foundation chancellor of Sunway University in Malaysia.
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