

Master of Arts by Project

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Abstract

This research project explores how I have found a musical voice in Cajun music and have created styles of fiddle –playing and composition which reflect an Australian experience.

The exegesis details the historical and cultural backgrounds of Cajun music and discusses questions of authenticity, the nature of tradition and problems associated with performance of the style in Australia. The work discusses my own search for a personal identity in the Australian music scene and presents original music for fiddle and percussion. I have included transcriptions and analysis of the tunes which describe technical aspects of the music and a commentary which illuminates the underlying sense of meaning in the music.

I have used several methodologies including autoethnography, professional practice-based research, and ethnomusicology. These approaches have enabled me 1) to situate my own personal journey as an artist in broader social and historical contexts; 2) to reflect on thirty years of professional music –making ; 3) to present knowledge of Cajun music as played in Louisiana; and 4) to offer insights into my sources of inspiration, both musical and extra-musical.

A field trip to Southwest Louisiana in July 2005 where I received lessons and shared tunes with many leading Cajun musicians has also informed and inspired the project.

In effect, this research project explores how music and culture from other times and places can be re-interpreted in a contemporary Australian setting.

Artifacts

1. CD 1, GULF COAST SPECIAL, a recording of 13 pieces of music composed in Lafayette, Louisiana, 2005.
2. CD2, POSSUM STOLE THE PUMPKIN, a recording of 15 pieces of music composed in Australia, 2006/7.
3. The exegesis contains transcriptions and analysis of the music.

Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

During the last thirty years I have taken elements of traditional Cajun music repertoire and performance techniques and created an Australian-Cajun hybrid style of music. My professional work has involved ‘claiming’ aspects of other people’s cultural heritage, adapting the material to suit my own needs, and presenting the music to Australian audiences.

My Master of Arts by project presents a selection of original fiddle compositions and performances which have been highly influenced by Cajun music. The exegesis examines the historical backgrounds and social contexts associated with the creation of this music. Taken together, the music and text explore the complexities of performing and composing Cajun-styled music in Australia. I have combined personal knowledge and a love of Cajun music with theoretical and scholarly insights.

In this study I raise questions related to how and why an Australian performer of popular music such as myself has gone about creating a new body of work out of a performative experience of playing Cajun music. In addressing these questions I negotiate problems associated with voice, authenticity, artistic expression, cultural identity, historical perspective, emulation of style, sense of place and distillation of meaning.

1.2 Cajun beginnings

In 1928, Joseph and Cleoma Falcon, rice farmers from the small town of Rayne in Southern Louisiana, made a sound recording for the Columbia Record Company (USA). It was a simple song called ‘Allons A Lafayette’, (Let’s go to Lafayette).¹ The plaintive singing was accompanied by guitar and accordion and the music had an earthy, homespun feel. The song itself was heartfelt and lyrical. It possessed a hypnotic quality which made it very catchy. The

¹ See discography for details of the recording.

recording sold well and became a local 'hit'. It introduced to the record-buying public a new sound and a new popular music genre called Cajun music.²

Fifty-eight years later in Melbourne, Australia, a band which I co-led known as The Dancehall Racketeers recorded a version of this same song.³ It became the first Cajun-styled song to be recorded in Australia, an event symbolizing the central theme of my project. That is how I have developed a Cajun music hybrid, made meaning from it and presented it to audiences in Australia.

As with other styles of regional music from the Southern states of the U.S.A., such as blues, jazz, and country, Cajun music burst fully-formed onto the world stage in the late 1920s, but, like these other styles, Cajun music had in fact experienced a long back-stage history. There was a considerable period of time in which the music formed and gathered together its main stylistic characteristics. I shall now look briefly at these beginnings.

The Falcons, whose music was captured on that first recording, were descendants of people whose history stretched back to the first French colony in North America. This territory (now Eastern Canada) was known as L'Acadie (Acadia) and was established in 1604. During the course of the seventeenth century French colonists arrived in the province, settled, and forged new lives for themselves in the wilderness. Over the next hundred years the colonists developed a cultural identity and came to be known as Acadians. They displayed great resilience and thrived on hunting, trapping, and farming on the Northern frontier but were caught up in the Colonial wars between Britain and France and were expelled by the British authorities in 1755.

Many of them found their way to Southern Louisiana, where, in the 1780s and 1790s, they regrouped and founded a variant of their Acadian culture along the bayous (water ways) and

² Ancelet, Barry Jean, *Grove's Encyclopaedia of Music, Cajun Music*, New York 2001. 'Lafayette', the first Cajun record by Joseph Falcon and his wife, Cléoma, was typical of the emerging style, featuring an accordion lead with percussive guitar accompaniment and high-pitched, emotionally intense vocals designed to reach back into the noisy dance halls before electrical amplification.'

³ The Dancehall Racketeers, *Allons a Lafayette*, EP, Preston Records, Melbourne 1986.

prairies of Southern Louisiana. Consequently, the term ‘Cajun’ is a phonetic contraction of the word ‘Acadian’ and refers to a person of Acadian descent.⁴ The music of these people became known as Cajun music. The stretch of bayous, swamps and prairies where they settled has come to be known as Acadiana, or Cajun Country. Its unofficial capital became the city of Lafayette.

The Cajuns displayed a remarkable ability to absorb cultural influences from others and successfully graft them onto their own culture. Their music became a hybrid style reflecting the traditions and histories of the peoples living in Southern Louisiana. French folk traditions, African rhythms, Creole songs, blues, chants, Spanish, colonial American fiddle music, Native American, Caribbean and a host of other influences mixed together were put, as it were, in a big pot, and stirred over a slow flame into a fine-tasting musical gumbo.⁵

Cajuns fashioned their unique style of music in a New World of frontiers where the old traditions of Europe and Africa met, clashed and re-formed. Cultural styles and habits were borrowed, copied and used as needed. By the end of the twentieth century the music had not only survived, but had become firmly established as one of the great regional folk traditions of America. It had also spread to other parts of the world largely due to its transmission through electronic recording. Today, there are Cajun-styled bands in Scandinavia, Britain, France, Italy, in many states of the USA, Canada, New Zealand and Australia. The music has been taken up with enthusiasm by anyone who wants to share in its expressiveness, rhythmic exuberance and sense of joy. Noted Cajun historian, Barry Ancelet, in writing an Epilogue to his book *Cajun and Creole Music Makers*, said:

Cajun music can now be heard at folk festivals and concert halls around the country and the world. Some who fall in love with it, decide to play it ... Back home many ponder the meaning of people playing music that is such an important part of the identity of a culture so

⁴ Similarly, ‘Indian’ became ‘injun’ on the American frontier. Both terms had derogatory connotations.

⁵ Brasseaux, Carl A., *The Founding of New Acadia—The Beginnings of Cajun Life In Louisiana, 1765–1803*, p. 134: ‘The emergence of gumbo in the Acadian culinary repertoire represented a new departure in Acadian cuisine, for it reflects the melding of cooking techniques developed by Franco-American, Indian, and African cultures.’ Cajun cooking is probably more well-known today than even its music with dishes such as ‘Cajun chicken’ being on the menu at Macdonald’s and other fast food chains. It usually denotes a kind of spicy sauce.

far removed from their own, in much the same way that many African Americans wondered what it meant when white boys started playing the blues. (Ancelet, 1999, p. 154)

Ancelet's observations identify one of the key problems associated with Non-Cajuns playing Cajun music in the modern world. Many people fall in love with the style and decide to play it, but what are ways in which these non-Cajuns make meaning from the music? This project aims to explore the ways in which I, as an individual Australian musician, have searched for and distilled meaning from Cajun music sources.

1.3 Personal journey

I fell under the spell of Cajun music in the 1970s in Melbourne, Australia, when I first heard it on re-issues of historical recordings. I went about learning how to play some of the tunes on the fiddle and thus began an apprenticeship in the style.

After a decade of learning from recordings and playing Cajun music in Melbourne I visited Louisiana, USA, in 1989 where I obtained first-hand experience of Cajun culture and met many keepers of the musical traditions. They included the notable fiddler Dewey Balfa, accordionist Marc Savoy, fiddler Rufus Thibodeaux and others. With their encouragement I deepened my interest in the music and its practice and began to think about how Cajun music might be received in Australia.

Upon my return to Australia in 1989, I began playing my own version of the music (apart from my 1986 recording mentioned above) in a way which I felt would fit into the Australian music scene as I knew it. I made links between Cajun music, country music, blues and rock'n'roll and attempted the same kind of hybridism which I had identified as a generative force in the Cajun traditions themselves. Throughout the 1990s, I continued to develop a Cajun-Australian style, releasing several CDs⁶ and composing tunes and songs which were directly inspired by my

⁶ Andy Baylor's Cajun Combo, *Tonight*, Independent release, Melbourne, 1991.
Baylor, Andy *The Bush is Full of Ghosts*, Independent release, Melbourne, 1995
Baylor, Andy, *Arcadiana*, independent release, Melbourne, 2000
Andy Baylor, *Melville Milk Bar Blues*, Melbourne, 2001
Andy Baylor and the West Melbourne All Stars, *Hometown Stomp*, Melbourne, 2003

Louisiana experience. I also toured the country performing and introducing the music to audiences throughout Australia.

In 2005 I was awarded a study grant from the Australia Council which gave me the opportunity to study violin in Louisiana with practicing Cajun masters and to spend time immersing myself in contemporary Cajun culture. This grant overlapped with my candidature and provided a great research opportunity. It was on this trip, in Lafayette, that I composed much of the music that I present in my project.

1.4 The project

The centerpiece of my research is a body of original musical compositions inspired by the music of the Cajuns. It is supported by a recording of the work and an exegesis which examines where the music has come from, how and why I have created it.

1.5 Rationale

In explaining how I have created a personalized hybrid style of Cajun-Australian music, I have placed my music and professional practice within a theoretical framework. I have studied a range of inter-related ethnomusicological topics including: the nature of culture, tradition and authenticity; the ways in which people relate to and learn from music that they are not directly culturally connected to; notions of cultural identity as they exist within Cajun culture and within Australian culture; and the ways in which recordings facilitate the transmission of musical and cultural ideas.

My professional performance practice as a musician has demonstrated how Cajun-inspired music can function in a new environment and I have considered ways in which audiences and musicians can make meaning from it. This research project presents new musical compositions and theoretical insights which contribute knowledge to fields of ethnomusicology and popular music studies in a number of ways.

Firstly, the project is a unique documentation of original music composed by an Australian in Louisiana. Secondly, the exegesis presents and discusses personal narratives

which reveal aspects of the ‘alternative’ music scene in Melbourne in the late 1970s as well as my own sources of inspiration.

Thirdly, the research details historical and cultural information about Cajun music and examines ways in which this body of knowledge has directly influenced my own music. Fourthly, the research gathers together material which can be used to further develop Cajun music in Australia.

Fifthly, I include technical analysis and description of music which provide valuable information for other musicians who may want to engage with the repertoire and style. Sixthly, the exegesis discusses issues of authenticity and cultural identity (both individual and group) which are pertinent to the playing of many folk styles in contemporary Australia. Seventhly, I explain extra-musical associations that I have made with Cajun music which connect it to a contemporary Australian experience. Lastly, I offer an in-depth portrait of my own personal artistic journey.

1.6 Reference sources

Sources of knowledge referred to include: a personal collection of sound recordings of Cajun music from the first recordings of the 1920s through to the present day⁷; a field journal which I kept on my 2005 study trip to Lafayette which contains interviews and conversations with several contemporary Cajun musicians; interviews with Melbourne musicians, friends and collectors who have had an interest in Cajun music; personal narratives which illuminate my experiences of listening to Cajun music and explain the extra-musical associations that I have made with the style.

I would like to note that there have been many informal, unrecorded communications which have informed this research project. In my professional life as a musician there have been countless late –night discussions with fellow musicians, members of the audience and artists of all kinds.

⁷ See discography.

1.7 Literature

I have referred to a broad body of literature which falls into the following categories:

1) Methodology: I based my auto-ethnographic approach to this project on the work of Professor Caroline Ellis. Her book, *The Ethnographic I* (2004), has been my primary source for the development of my methodology. The use of auto-ethnography has allowed me to reflect upon the individualistic nature of my involvement with Cajun culture.

For this reason it has been essential to connect this aspect of my research to broad contexts of social theory.

2) Social theory: In considering the philosophy of modernism and post-modernism and my place as an individual in contemporary Australian society I have made particular reference to Kellner (1992), Giddens (1991), Berman (1992) and Habermas (1983). I will speak briefly about how these scholars have contributed to my thinking.

Kellner elucidates theories of personal identity as they relate to 'traditional' and 'modern' societies and I have drawn upon his discussions in exploring my own search for musical identity and voice (See 2.2 below). He argues that in traditional pre-modern society an individual's sense of identity was largely a fixed, stable and known entity. It was a well-defined social role that was not questioned. Not only was an individual part of family/kinship, clan or tribal relationship, but also was subject to a set of social mechanisms including ritual, religion, myth and tradition which helped define one's place in the world. Personal trajectory through time and space was pre-fixed and personal identity was generally not subject to processes of self examination, reflection and subjective modification.

In a 'modern' society, such as Anglo-Australia in which I have lived and worked, a person's sense of identity is different. It is more fluid, and hence changeable. There can be many sides to an identity and it can be constantly self-regulated. Of prime ongoing importance are the social aspects of relationships forged with other identities. Mutual recognition of individuals leads to self validation and there is a constant sense in modern

life that anything is possible. Multi –aspectuality and multi-directional self - consciousness drive the search for identity and meaning. This process entails a requisite distancing from concepts of tradition so that a choice can be made out of many possibilities. The final authenticity of one’s identity comes down to the matter of recognition –firstly by oneself and then by others. The big questions arising out of this process are to do with the choices we make: How do we choose? How do we make the “right” decision? For Australian musicians it comes down to “what style shall I play?” The modern self is generally aware of how it constructs identity and how it can go down many paths. It is aware of the possibility of changing one’s mind, of changing direction and this, Kellner argues, is a primary source of anxiety. People worry about how their identity is to be recognised and validated by others in the society. I discuss this aspect of identity in relation to contemporary Australian society in chapter 3.11.

Kellner references his discussion with a quote from Berman, whose work I similarly draw upon.

“Modernity signifies the destruction of past forms of life values and identities, combined with the production of ever new ones” (Berman1982)...quoted by Kellner pp142.

I myself have referred to Berman’s commentary and analysis of what is known as ‘Modernism’ (see 2.1). Also in this chapter I have referred to Giddens. I have found his work in defining and analysing the processes of ‘modernism’ useful (see 2.1). His observations concerning the relationship between cultural activity and ‘place’ have been particularly pertinent to my thinking in relation to my own experiences of playing music which comes from other places. On this point he says:

In pre-modern settings time and space were connected through the situatedness of place (Giddens, 1991, p16).

He puts forward the notion that in the modern era we have seen the emptying out of time and space and continues by stating that:

Severance of time from space, provides the basis for their re-combination in ways that coordinate social activities without necessary reference to the particulars of place (ibid, p17).

I see my playing of Cajun –styled music in contemporary Australian settings to be a pure expression of the very social phenomenon that Giddens describes.

Habermas' discussion of time-consciousness (2.1) is also relevant to the fact that, as a contemporary Australian musician, I have developed my own voice by listening to recordings of historical styles of music. In effect this research project explores how music and culture from other times and places can be re-interpreted in a contemporary Australian setting.

3) Historical and cultural background: I have referred to the work of several scholars from Southwest Louisiana who have been pivotal in re-discovering and documenting the history of the Cajun people. These are Barry Jean Ancelet (1989), Carl Brasseaux (1992) and Ann Savoy (1984). Carl Brasseaux's work on the historical development of Cajun culture explores the evolution of Cajun music and culture from its colonial beginnings in Acadia to its subsequent re-location in Southern Louisiana. Ancelet is one of the most widely published authors on the subject of Cajun culture and music. I have made particular use of his publication, *Cajun Music- its Origins and Development* (1989). I have also learned much from Ann Savoy's *Reflections of a People* (1984), a collection of interviews with Cajun and Creole musicians.

These works provide cultural perspectives from within Cajun culture itself. Other authors such as Broven (1992), Tisserand (1999) and Stivale (2003) offer in-depth knowledge about different aspects of Cajun culture. Broven presents detailed history of the commercial development of Cajun music and Tisserand explores the related musical genre known as Zydeco. Stivale's work illuminates problems associated with concepts of authenticity in contemporary Cajun culture from the perspective of an outsider who, like myself, has fallen in love with Cajun music.

1.8 Methodology

Primary research question

At the heart of my research is the question: as a contemporary Australian musician inspired by traditional Cajun music, how have I learned from the style, adapted it to my own artistic needs, and found my own musical voice? This raises a second question: How have I made use of this (musical) voice in my professional practice?

I have explored my experience of composing and playing Cajun-inspired music using the following methods: 1) professional practice-based research, 2) auto-ethnography, and 3) ethnomusicology.

1) Professional practice-based research

In this study I have integrated scholarly work with my professional performance and compositional practice. This integration has enabled me to reflect deeply on a personal history of music performance and in this way my research is a cultural practice. That is, it is connected to the work of playing music for audiences.

To facilitate the voicing of both my academic and musical world in the exegesis I have consciously used different writing styles. This will be seen clearly when I move from scholarly discussion to the informal prose of my journal entries and personal narratives.

Art and research are two different forms of expression and as such the two occupations of performer and scholar inhabit different worlds. In the course of my study performance as 'life lived in the moment' has become the subject of scholarly research. The roles of performer and scholar have become integrated and contingent upon one another so that performance and scholarship have come to co-habit the same space and confirm each other for me as a musician/scholar. In the process I believe that there has been an integration of heart and mind, action and reflection, theory and practice.

Knowledge gained from the scholarly study of Cajun music is embedded in the composition, recording and performance of original music. Still other strands of knowledge which stretch back over three decades of engagement with performance of Cajun music have been collected and examined. I have analyzed and interpreted this knowledge in my exegesis but the way the listener reacts to the music is, ultimately, subjective and complex. I leave this aspect of my work open to the listener's subjective interpretation.

2) Auto-ethnography

Because of the subjective nature of my performance practice I have made substantial use of the methodology known as auto-ethnography. Ellis (2004, p. 9) defines the process of auto-ethnography as 'research, writing, story and method that connects the autobiographical and personal to the cultural, social and political'. She further states that 'Auto ethnographic forms feature concrete action, emotion, embodiment, self-consciousness.' (Ellis, 2004, p. 8).

These definitions resonate deeply in my own research. This is why my exegesis includes texts which connect my personal history to wider social, historical and cultural settings.

In effect, I have documented and analyzed my consciousness of self as it has engaged with the world of musical ideas and self-expression. To do this I have made extensive use of personal narratives which not only delineate theoretical and artistic influences, but also trace my personal thoughts and feelings at various stages of my involvement with Cajun music. For example:

As a guitarist and fiddle player with an already growing interest in string-band music of the 1920s and 1930s, I was ready for the sounds of Cajun music. I remember being strongly affected by the strong hypnotic rhythms, the unusual, melodious fiddle, the plaintive singing and above all the uncanny simplicity of the music.

I didn't know where it came from, who the Cajuns were, or what their history was. I just heard the music and thought that I would like to play music like that. It was a bit

like falling in love—it came out of nowhere, felt right, and I wanted to be swept up by it.
(Baylor, personal narrative, 2005)

This personal narrative recounts my reactions to hearing Cajun music for the first time. It also describes the phenomenon of being affected by music on sound recordings without knowing anything of their cultural context. The narrative excerpt isolates a moment of discovery, a moment which not only describes the raw power of music as being inspirational, but also acknowledges my own curiosity, readiness and willingness to be inspired by it.

The use of such personal narratives, as well as journal entries, chronicle ideas, feelings and action in a direct autobiographical manner which complement a scholarly, reflective voice informed by the reading of a wide range of literature. In a similar way, the following chorus from my song ‘Arcadiana’⁹ speaks of a desire to be part of a musical culture.

*Arcadiana, the fiddle and bow
the ramshackle blues, the spicy gumbo
Arcadiana, take me away to that happy place
where the music does play*

‘Arcadiana’ is a reference to Cajun country and the song expresses a romantic yearning for an Arcadian ideal, for ‘otherness’. This lyric, as well, describes the starting point of my research in poetic terms.

From this point all journal entries and personal narratives will be identified by an italics font. The change of font makes overt the deliberate change in writing style from the academic to that of personal narrative. Excerpts from personal narratives are referred to by the abbreviation ‘pers. narr.’, journal excerpts with ‘Louisiana Journal’ and ‘pers. comm.’ refers to interviews which I conducted with various colleagues.

⁹ Baylor, A., Langton, N., ‘Arcadiana’, title song from independent CD release, Melbourne, Australia, 2000. The entire lyric for this song is to be found in Appendix A; also see discography.

3) Ethnomusicology

My study involves the description, history and critical analysis of Cajun music as it has influenced my own music-making. I have used methods associated with ethnomusicology such as field research, transcription, notation and analysis of traditional music. The project compositions themselves are original pieces which involve a synthesis of musical styles. Transcriptions of the music are included in the exegesis.

I refer to a journal kept on my study field trip to Louisiana in 2005. The journal contains references to conversations with Cajun musicians which provide insights into the social settings of the music. It also contains personal observations which trace my own attitudes and responses to Cajun culture. I also refer to conversations between myself and musicians and music enthusiasts in Louisiana and in Melbourne.

Form of the exegesis

The exegesis presents theoretical backgrounds to the project and deals with aspects of historicism, modernity, identity, culture, tradition and authenticity. I explore each of these concepts so that I can present the musical component of my project within a contemporary scholarly framework. I also examine the nature of my inspiration and reflect upon my personal journey as an artist. After a discussion on Cajun performance practice, I present my own compositions with analytical notes. I conclude with a summing up and discuss future directions.

In the following chapter I shall discuss theoretical backgrounds and relate them to my desire to find a voice in Cajun music.

Chapter 2

Theoretical underpinnings

2.1 Modernity and self

Concepts of ‘modernity’ and ‘self’ have underpinned the *raison d’être* of my activities as a musician in contemporary Australia in several important ways. Firstly, the times in which I have created music and functioned professionally have been delineated by a belief in a liberal individualism which has emerged out of ‘modernity’. Secondly, the ways in which I have listened to and learned from music have been made possible by the technologies and media of the so-called ‘modern’ era and lastly, the music which I present in this project is an expression of my concept of ‘self’ as it has developed in a ‘modern’ society from a space outside Cajun culture.

It is important to note that Cajun culture, as well, is the result of ‘modernity’ in the sense that its history is bound up in the discovery of the ‘New World’ by Columbus in 1492 and the subsequent colonization processes that occurred in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Cajun culture cannot be seen as a ‘pure’ pre-modern traditional society but has developed within the borders of the United States of America, the archetypal ‘modern’ society. Cajun culture is a fluid, hybrid culture which has been shaped by the mechanisms of ‘modernism’. I shall now describe the key facets of ‘modernism’ to indicate how it has influenced my thinking.

Giddens (1991, p. 14) defines ‘modernism’ in terms of industrialization and capitalist free enterprise. ‘Modernity’ he says: ‘can be understood as roughly equivalent to “the industrialised world”’. Berman (1992, p. 33) locates ‘modernism’ as a period of history which: ‘emerged in what is generally considered its classic age, from the 1840s to the aftermath of the First World War’ and qualifies his definition with the following excerpt from *The Communist Manifesto*:

All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their venerable train of prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is

solid melts into air all that is holy is profaned, and man at last is forced to face with sober senses his real conditions of life and his relations with his fellow men (Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* p. 10, quoted Berman, 1992, p. 34).

One of the great themes of modernism for Marx and Engels was that it was a liberating force capable of bringing about social change, but Giddens points out that modernism also created a sense of individual powerlessness. For him the capitalist nation-state with its industrialism and concomitant addiction to progress has created a 'runaway world' (Giddens, 1991, p. 15) which has driven modern social life away from the hold of tradition. One of the most all-pervading effects of this deep social change is what he calls 'the separation of time and space' (Giddens, 1991, p. 16). He says: 'Severance of time from space provides the basis for their recombination in ways that coordinate social activities without necessary reference to the particulars of place' (Giddens, 1991, p. 17).

An Australian such as myself, playing music learned from recordings, must be seen in this context.

Giddens further postulates that 'Modernity is an essentially post-traditional order' (Giddens, 1991, p. 20) and Paul Heelas (1996) uses the term 'de-traditionalization' to describe this social phenomenon. He suggests that this entails a shift of authority from 'without' the individual to 'within':

As a working definition, de-traditionalisation involves a shift of authority from 'without' to 'within'. It entails the decline of the belief in pre-given or natural order of things. Individual subjects are themselves called upon to exercise authority in the face of the disorder and contingency which is thereby generated, 'Voice' is displaced from established sources coming to rest with the self (Heelas, 1996, quoted in Giddens, 1991, p. 15)

This idea has become one of the touchstones of my aesthetic practice.

My practice as a musician in contemporary Australia has been (and continues to be) an exercise in individualism rooted in modernist existential experience. My artistic voice is

essentially that of an individual and my musical expression 'rests with the self' as Heelas suggests above. This is precisely why I have chosen an auto-ethnographic model of methodology for this research. It is a way of investigating individual motives, inspirations and ways of thinking. One disadvantage of this methodology is that it does not (cannot) illuminate collective experience. On this point, I would emphasise that I have linked my own experiences to the wider social and historical contexts. In my professional practise as a musician I have made it a priority to present music in a fully functional social context. This, I might add, has never been easy in Australia.

Another aspect of 'modernism' which connects it to the variant 'post-modernism' is the way it engenders an obsessive 'time consciousness' (Habermas, 1983 p. 5). The *Macquarie Dictionary* (p. 734) defines the word 'modern' as: 'having to do with present and recent time; not ancient or remote'. Habermas (1983, p. 3) confirms this definition in the following statement: 'From history we know the phrase: "the Ancients and the Moderns",' (Habermas 1983, p. 2) and concludes: 'the term "modern" again and again expresses the consciousness of an epoch that relates itself to the past of antiquity, in order to view itself as the result of a transition from the old to the new' (Habermas, 1983, p. 3). In this way 'modernism' has become a prism for a way of looking at history and our place in it.

How can 'progressive', expansionary elements of modernity with its forward motion keep going forever? How can we respond to this philosophical dilemma? Many writers have defined a period called 'post-modernism' to describe the kind of cultural environment that we have been experiencing for the last fifty or so years. There is not scope within this study to go into this area fully but I will say that the concepts of cultural hybridity and re-combination which are associated with post-modernism are crucial to my work.

Modernism has allowed many of us to have a romantic, individualized relationship with the past and with cultures other than our own. Technologies of the modern world, such as recordings, films, photographs as well as books have consolidated this process and since

the 1970s there has been interest in popular musical circles in the forms of the past. This has underlined the desire for many musicians and artists to learn from the past. For folk musicians, the place in which the past resides and expresses itself most eloquently is in traditional forms of music. I shall discuss the meaning of ‘tradition’ below.

Modernity and post-modernity are the cultural inheritance of contemporary Australian life and it is out of this often confusing intellectual background that we are free to construct our own personal identities.

2.2 Personal identity

In pre-modern times and cultures musicians sang the songs of their fathers and mothers. In a modern society such as Australia, a person’s sense of identity is different. It is fluid and changeable. The authenticity of one’s identity comes down to the matter of recognition—firstly by oneself and then by others (see Kellner, 1993, p. 143).

As a musician in a modern society I have an appreciation that my artistic activities lie outside the great traditions of the world. Specific styles such as ‘pre-war country blues’ from Texas, ‘New Orleans jazz’, the country ‘honky-tonk’ sound of 1950s Nashville, or Cajun string band music of the 1930s co-exist as recorded material which I have referred to in constructing my own style. The question of what is ‘old’ and what is ‘new’ has been laid open to re-interpretation. Personal involvement in the great musical traditions of the world has been dominated by being geographically removed from the place where the music originated. Euro-centricity in the arts has, for me, become neither tenable nor desirable. Boundaries between ‘high’ art and ‘low’ art, have become blurred or non-existent and I have made myself open to musical influences from any period, style, culture or country in order to find my own personal identity and voice.

Within this framework, I explain my interest in Cajun music in the following way: Modern life has confronted me with infinite choice in terms of creating a personal musical identity. A result of this is that I have felt the need to focus on the particularities of a small, specific part of human music-making. By looking at the music of a traditional

culture with defined stylistic practices I have found inspiration and learned much about the playing of music.

2.3 Culture, tradition and authenticity

I shall now discuss notions of authenticity and tradition as they relate to Cajun music, my project compositions and my professional performance.

Within today's global society cultural phenomena are traded and transmitted across international borders at lightning digital speed. Notions of culture, tradition and authenticity in music are open to interpretation and, in considering these; I have referred to several scholars including ethnomusicologists Aubert (2007), Briggs (1992), Bottomley (1992), Ancelet (1999) and Stivale (2003).

My starting point is that the concept of culture is an organic, fluid process. This idea is integral to my work. Briggs observed that: 'The concept of culture has an agricultural origin: it first referred to the tending or "cultivation" of crops. In the later stages of its history the concept has retained within it the sense of process' (Briggs, 1992, p. 3). Bottomley echoes this theme: 'In talking about cultural forms, there is a risk of solidifying what should be seen as a process' (Bottomley, 1992 p. 7).

2.4 Cajun culture

Cajun culture, with music at its heart, is an example of a 'fluid' culture. It is worth quoting Ancelet at some length here as he lists the different cultural influences which have gone into making up Cajun music. It is an impressive inventory which presents an image of Cajun musical culture as being extremely versatile and adaptable. One is left wondering what indeed Cajun was to begin with and what is Cajun today. Cajun music is an example of a 'take what you need [musical] approach'. It is driven by a desire to express oneself through music. Ancelet observed:

Cajun music is a Louisiana hybrid, a blend of cultural elements that combined to influence the original western French music brought to North America by those who eventually became the Acadians in the early to mid-seventeenth century and who came to

Louisiana after they were exiled from their homeland (now Nova Scotia) by the British in 1755. Before instruments were available, unaccompanied ballads and drinking songs were the only music heard, and the details of these songs from French tradition began to shift to reflect the new American frontier. Later, the traumatic effects of the exile were sublimated in songs about frustrated courtship, lost love and broken families. As the Acadians became the Cajuns in Louisiana, they learned wailing, terraced singing styles from the native Indians. From Africans, they learned about syncopation, percussion, improvisational singing, and how to express their own blues. When they began to acquire instruments, they chose the familiar and popular fiddle and developed techniques, such as a self-accompanying drone, to approximate the sounds in their collective memory from their western French origins which had included flutes and pipes, and they played ancient tunes that had been preserved by humming and whistling. From the Anglo-Americans, they learned new tunes to drive reels, hoe-downs and square dances. The Spaniards contributed the guitar and a few folk tunes. Refugees and their slaves who arrived from Saint-Domingue at the turn of the nineteenth century brought with them a syncopated Caribbean beat. Jewish-German merchants began importing diatonic accordions not long after its invention in Vienna in 1828. These elements blended to create a new music that came to be called Cajun music. (Ancelet, 2001, Grove's Dictionary of Music)

This lengthy description of the evolution of Cajun music is one historian's attempt to itemize the great diversity of pre-colonial and colonial influences with which the Acadian settlers in Louisiana came into direct contact. This, of course, all occurred before the era of sound recordings and the commoditization of folk music and could therefore be called 'organic' process. With so many influences it is surprising to find that Cajun music has maintained its own sound. Cajun musicians borrowed a little from here, and a little from there: some rhythm from Africa, some fiddle technique and repertoire from Anglo-America, some syncopation from the Caribbean, and so on, but always managed to become Cajun. These adaptive tendencies continued right through the twentieth century with the addition of influences from the commercial styles of swing, rhythm'n'blues, country and western, and rock.

It is impossible to know who, or what authority, in these early days, made decisions about which influences were allowed in and which influences were kept out. Did the Cajuns

accept and ‘borrow’ any music that came their way? The processes of the formation of Cajun musical culture are, in these respects, obscure. Once the music had been recorded (after 1928), and there appeared a fully formed style, it becomes easier to discern and evaluate the absorption of outside musical influences. On this point, I will emphasise that the recordings themselves became cultural artifacts which contributed greatly to Cajun music becoming aware of itself. Furthermore, it is not until the 1960s and 1970s that we find commentators and historians, such as Ancelet, discussing and re-discovering the past of the music.

If ‘culture’ and thereby ‘music’ is a collection of fluid, changeable processes where material is borrowed, changed, and then re-constructed, it follows that concepts of ‘tradition’ and ‘authenticity’ must be flexible and open-ended.

2.5 Tradition

Laurent Aubert maintains succinctly that ‘Tradition is culture’ (Aubert, 2007, p. 20). The term ‘tradition’ defines a process of transmittance of cultural material. The word comes from the Latin *trado* which has multiple meanings: to hand down to posterity, to report events, and to teach. In a military sense it can mean to surrender or hand over cultural inheritance (Cassell’s Latin English Dictionary, 1969, p. 225). It represents a set of knowledge, practices and musical repertoires of a society and is an expression of cultural identity. It is something which connects the past to the present.

Today, as music crosses borders and is merchandized as folkloric, nationalistic or is highly arranged for commercial presentation, we must ask ourselves how do we make decisions on what is traditional and what is not? There are several criteria of traditional music that are widely held by ethnomusicologists and musicians themselves. Firstly, the music must be of ancient origin and connected to sources of culture. This gives the music an ancient lineage from which it gains its power and depth of expression. Secondly, the music must be based on oral transmission of repertoire, technique and rules. Thirdly, the music must be connected to a place, a setting, a geography, and 4), it must have a social function either as ritual, dance music, laments, lullabies, feasting songs.

Aubert comments:

Far from constituting fully preserved survivals of old times, the arts we consider today as traditional—those adorned with the most archaic appearance as well as those that appear to reveal modernity—are (thus) the products of multiple contacts and events, of convergent influences whose fusion was achieved through long periods of assimilation; and all this in proportion and according to modes determined by the particular needs of each culture at each period in its history. (Aubert, 2007, p. 20)

Traditional music carries with it a set of values. In the case of Cajun music, these are: simplicity, roughness, emotional honesty, conviviality, a strong relationship with nature, earthiness and cultural integrity, for example. Meaning in the music is drawn from a set of practices, beliefs and rituals including dance, feasting and celebration.

As we have seen, historical development of a culture is normal and there is no music without an historical context. Traditional music is always an expression of the present.

2.6 Authenticity

I shall now discuss notions of authenticity as they relate to contemporary Cajun culture.

Who is it that judges what is traditional and what is not? This is the question which leads us to the concept of ‘authenticity’. A tradition needs to be validated as such but who are the authorities which set themselves up as trustworthy experts on a culture to determine what is authentic and what is not? For instance, who decided what musical influences to include in the early years of the formation of Cajun music traditions?

The music of tradition must be assigned genuine origin and the power of the music hinges on the guarantee of authenticity. The music must therefore be the product of musicians who are part of an uninterrupted chain through time. These musicians must be part of a line of masters and disciples that stretch back through time, bringing the old into the present and extending the music into the future. This is the organic nature of tradition which presents a living form and the expression of an inexhaustible artistic potential.

Younger artists take inherited material and develop it according to personal taste and current trends. In this way there can be scope for individual creativity. This is especially true of Cajun music and contemporary musicians such as Michael Doucet, Steve Riley, David Greeley and others have been doing this. Questions of authenticity, however, are a vexed issue in the contemporary Louisiana scene with some younger bands trying to break out of tradition being alienated for being inauthentic. Problems arise for musicians who perceive tradition as a great weight which can crush individual artistic freedom. Most of the older Cajun musicians only play in the style that they grew up with and learned from their elders. Younger musicians try to find new ways to express themselves which incorporate elements of rock, blues or funk. This can lead to controversy amongst the 'hometown' audiences and debates about authenticity.

I believe that musicians in Australia who want to engage with Cajun music are somewhat removed from these controversies because they are operating from a space outside Cajun culture. Australian musicians should take an active interest in continuing debates about authenticity and interpretation of tradition but should be mindful of unique problems encountered in the contemporary Australian experience (see 3.10 below).

In the following discussion I refer to Stivale, who maintains that Cajun music, in performance, demonstrates an inspired hybridism which negotiates problems associated with authenticity and cultural identity. According to Stivale, Cajun identity and tradition inhabit a

hybrid in-between zone along shifting and variable lines that vary according to different venues and contexts (e.g., club or restaurant; city or country; within Louisiana or outside the state) and agents (e.g., musicians, fans, dancers, spectators). (Stivale, 2003, p. 76)

He illustrates this point by drawing attention to the musical approaches of three leading Cajun musicians. He cites Zachary Richard, who has followed a contemporary singer/songwriter path. Richard says this:

Musicologically I'm probably closer to Bob Dylan than Aldus Roger, but listen to the songs, I've never repudiated anything about my heritage. I'm very proud of it (Stivale, 2003, p. 29).

Marc Savoy, on the other hand, uses a definition of tradition which is very specific and carefully delineates the borders of Cajun tradition. He does this, according to Stivale, as a tactic to defend authenticity and tradition against outside threats. To describe Savoy's appeal to tradition and authenticity Stivale quotes De Certeau: saying that Savoy's definition

postulate[s] a place that can be delimited as its own and serve[s] as a base from which relations with an exteriority composed of targets or threats can be managed (Stivale, 2003, p. 29).

The third musician Stivale discusses is fiddler Michael Doucet, who

with his group Beausoleil, ... has helped to develop a musical sound that magnificently interprets the music from the traditional Cajun repertoire, yet that reaches out with an eclectic mix of compositions and instrumentation that diverse audiences can enjoy ... (Stivale, 2003, p. 30)

These three musicians have differing approaches to questions of tradition and authenticity. Richard, through his songs, is looking for a way of contemporizing the Cajun song and expressing himself as an individual in the manner of the American singer/songwriter. He has taken a highly individualistic approach. Savoy, the traditionalist, is happier to stay at home, build accordions and play strictly traditional music to smaller audiences, and Doucet has ambitiously sought out an international career as a touring Cajun dance-band leader.

In the end, Stivale suggests that when the instruments are pulled out and are played debates about authenticity and tradition fall by the wayside as topics that mainly interest 'outsiders' (cultural commentators and musicians from other countries). In other words,

the joy, power and excitement of actually playing music relegates these debates to the background. Opposite views often dissipate in the actual day-to-day musical performance of Cajun music. Apparent opposites are brought together in the moment. Citing a musical collaboration between Marc Savoy and Micheal Doucet, Stivale concludes that in Cajun musical performance hybridity conjoins with authenticity in the moment of musical inspiration and interplay (Stivale, 2003, pp. 32–33).

It is through the act of playing music that the musician has the power to create his/her own authenticity, but how can this ‘authentic voice’ travel across cultural borders?

2.7 Translating authenticity

As in the world of literature, the idea of an ‘author’ as an originator of a work is distinguished from the role of a translator, editor, or copyist. So, where does someone in Australia who plays Cajun music stand in relation to notions of authenticity? Unless connected by blood to Cajun society and culture, no claim of authenticity through this means can be exercised. Only through a process of respectful learning, cultural absorption and continued contact can a valid relationship with cultural authenticity be fostered.

Further steps can be taken by composing one’s own music in the style, as I have done in this project. This is an act of creating your own voice, much the same as a literary writer would do. The sense of authenticity which I have invoked reflects my own involvement with the style and combines it with my own personal expression. Such efforts, I would argue, represent a natural outgrowth from inherently organic traditional patterns of playing and learning music. Whether the keepers of tradition like it or not, their family is being extended beyond their control, aided and abetted by the fecundity and creative potential encoded in their musical artefacts which have been bought and sold around the world. I will make the point here that, on my first trip to Louisiana in 1989, I was most warmly encouraged to pursue my own path in playing Cajun music by Cajun musicians themselves.

Through my involvement with Cajun music, I have learned to appreciate that the idea of 'culture' is not a fixed or rigid concept but rather a set of organic processes which are carried out within a defined milieu. For Cajuns, such as Dewey Balfa, 'culture' is an important marker of identity and something to be proud of. He says this about his culture:

My culture is not better than anybody else's culture. My people were no better than anybody else. And yet I will not accept it as a second-class culture. It's my culture. It's the best culture for me. Now I would expect, if you have a different culture, that you would feel the same about yours as I feel about mine (Ancelet, Morgan, 1989, p. 119).

For Cajun people generally, their cultural identity is most strongly, though not exclusively, expressed through musical expression and therefore the role of the musician is as an interpreter of this culture. Contemporary fiddle player and band leader Michael Doucet comments on this:

What a musician does is translate cultural ideals into appropriate sounds. Words and music reach people and communicate feelings which provide a common denominator in a cultural society. The musician is not necessarily a sequined star. He is an interpreter, a spokesman for cultural values (Ancelet, Morgan, 1989, p. 149).

For Doucet, the musician acts as a conduit through which knowledge and ideas can flow. In my own experience as an Australian musician, I have found that one of the most common characteristics of our own cultural values, which are inherited from a Western intellectual traditions, is the great readiness we have to appreciate other people's culture. We do this with an attitude of respect, from a position of knowledge and with innovative flair.

The musician in contemporary Australian society must be, as it were, a 'chimera' or some sort of musical polyglot, a mythical animal like a dragon made up with the head of a lion, the body of a snake, the tail of a fish: a mythical creature with shamanistic potential. He/she must develop the ability to translate culture from elsewhere, interpret it and cross over into other worlds. He/she needs to have a highly developed psychological and

cultural fluidity and flexibility. In Australia, we have to be able to re-interpret other people's culture in ways meaningful to ourselves.

In the following chapter I shall look at my personal journey as an artist and how I have made meaning from Cajun music.

Chapter 3

Inspiration, learning, adapting and finding an individual voice

In this chapter I shall discuss the four stages of personal discovery as embodied in my research question, namely, inspiration, learning, adapting and finding one's own voice.

3.1 Initial inspiration

I first heard Cajun music in a suburban brick house in North Balwyn in 1977. It was a collection featuring historical recordings of traditional Cajun music from the 1930s and 1940s.¹⁰ I didn't really know anything about it, where it came from or who played it. I just liked it. The music spoke to me with its vibrant rhythm, its straightforward harmonic structure and its bluesy fiddle improvisation. I took note of these recordings and quickly found out more about Cajun music from reading the liner notes on the records. I remember that we learned a piece called the 'French Two-step' from a group called The Hackberry Ramblers and performed it in the bars of Fitzroy and Carlton in a band called the Autodrifters—people enjoyed it and danced to it. This was my first experience of playing Cajun-style music in Australia—it was 1978. (Baylor, pers. narr., 2005)

This narrative describes my first contact with Cajun music in Melbourne in the late 1970s. My ears were opened to the music through the purchase of historical recordings. The music was heard, appreciated and learned with no contact with the parent culture or the people who made it. The purchased recordings were cultural artefacts removed by distance in time and space, but the power, beauty and expressiveness of the music inspired me to want to learn about it, play it and express myself in a similar way.

I was part of a small group of musicians in inner-suburban Melbourne who felt that there was nothing strange, harmful, unnatural or inappropriate in trying to play a few Cajun tunes in Melbourne. We had bought the record and therefore owned the music encoded in its grooves. It was ours to listen to and play. We learned and enjoyed new kinds of music

¹⁰ Louisiana Cajun Music, Vol. 3, *The String Bands of the 1930s*, Old-Timey/Arhoolie, OT110.

and presented it to young inner-city audiences. We also made a statement about who we were by interpreting the music of others, and turned away from the mainstream commercial hard rock and pop music of the day. We drew inspiration from historical recordings of ‘minor’ styles. Today the term to define what we were doing is ‘roots’ music.

The process of identification with styles of music from other times and places was facilitated by an avid and obsessive interest in recordings. Musicians amassed very large collections of recorded music and became authorities on all kinds of musical styles. One renowned collector, Rick Milne, told me how he was so moved by a Cajun-styled record that he and his wife decided to go there to hear the music for themselves:

But the ‘Drunkard’s Dream’¹¹ thing really took my imagination, I just loved that. It was slow and it was heartfelt. I had learned French at school and I was good at French at school and I understood a fair bit of the lyrics. So I thought, I have to go there. I have to go there. (Milne, 2007, pers. comm.)

Rick and Margaret went to Southwest Louisiana in 1964 and provided an early important Australian link to Cajun culture.

Import record shops in Melbourne such as Discurio, Thomas’, Readings and others sold the latest releases from American companies. My favourite, Hound Dog’s Bop Shop, a record store in West Melbourne, specialized in blues, rhythm ‘n’ blues, rock’n’roll, rockabilly, country, western swing, plus the more obscure regional southern styles of Cajun, Zydeco¹² and Tex Mex¹³.

My impressions of this period are described in the following personal narrative:

¹¹ Cleveland Crochet and the Sugar Bees, *Drunkard’s Dream*, Goldband, see discography.

¹² Zydeco music is the name given to African American rural dance music from Southwestern Louisiana

¹³ Tex Mex music is the name given to Mexican American dance music from the Texas borderlands region

If you stopped to listen, you could hear strange sounds spilling out of the half-open door of an old shop in West Melbourne and onto the footpath of Victoria Street.

Infectious rhythms mixed with traffic noise in the late afternoon sun created an unexpected and exotic soundscape. The c-chanka-chank-a-chank of the de-tuned fiddles clashed against the screech of brakes. The soulful, high-pitched voice with its 'eerie-cheerie' melody cut through the low rumblings of big, old trucks. The hypnotic ringing of the triangle blended with the high-pitched bell of the passing trams.

Most people just walked on by, on their way to the pub, the train station, or the markets. They were completely disinterested in musical sounds and their minds were filled with the worries and concerns of the day. Some like me, just couldn't wait to push open the door, forget the world outside, and get a closer listen to the music.

Hound Dog's Bop Shop was open for business. Rhythm was its business, rhythm and blues, rhythm and country, rhythm and rockabilly, rock'n'roll rhythm, bluegrass, western swing, be-bop, funk, gospel, old-timey, hillbilly, and Cajun.

It was 1976, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia. The sixties had livened things up a bit, and we were still rolling along in the wake of that huge wave. Music was on the agenda. Pop music, blues, swing, cool be-bop, hip country music of days gone by, exotic regional styles, you name it, there was interest in it. Historical recordings of American music had become, for the first time, readily available on LP and a group of crazy young musicians, ratbags, music lovers, artists and rockers regularly jammed into the Bop Shop for the latest update on what was new, or should I say, what was old.

Most of us were already disillusioned, or just plain bored with mainstream popular music. It was packaged, stylized, emasculated. We were looking around for other sounds. We looked back to a time before the mass marketing of popular music, back when the music was raw, regional and exotic. When it was still free and expressive like an uncaged beast, untamed, rich and vital. We were Romantics. Like some modern-day Antipodean Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood we wanted sounds that were pure and pre-Beatles. We didn't know anything about post-modernism, but somehow the recordings that brought the music to us made time stand still. (Baylor, pers. narr., 2005)

There are several points to make about this narrative. Firstly, I heard these recordings of Cajun music in West Melbourne . This is also where the music for this Masters project was recorded some thirty years later. Secondly, there is an acknowledgement that the music sounded strange. It was exotic and unusual. Thirdly, the opening of the door into the record shop was like stepping into another world. A world of music, where, through historical recordings, the past came to life. Fourthly, I refer to the belief that older styles of music were pure and strong and that contemporary music culture was somehow contaminated by commercialism.

Such ideas about art are not new and my reference to the British Pre-Raphaelites equates the Beatles (my childhood musical heroes) with Raphael. The premise for the Pre-Raphaelites was that great art ended with Raphael. For the 'Bop-shoppers', great music ended with the Beatles. Similar ideas have held sway in music circles ever since to the point where emulation of the past is, in itself, a mainstream, commercial style of the present.

Professional musicians on the Melbourne scene who pursued this path, in 1976, were seen as bold and uncompromising. They distanced themselves from commercial opportunities and in some ways threatened the popularly held beliefs of the pop music establishment.

In the 1970s the exotic music of the Cajuns with its hypnotic rhythms, its innocence and joy presented itself as an alternative to the dominant rock culture of the day.

3.2 Recordings

I shall now discuss how listening to these recordings influenced my professional practice and that of other musicians in Melbourne. I note that this discussion is based on my own personal experience of collecting recordings and using them as a source of musical and cultural knowledge.

Sound recording technology enables us to listen to a vast array of diverse musical genres. In the context of human history recording technology is still relatively new. By the 1960s and 1970s it was a dominating cultural influence. There are important differences between listening to live and electronically recorded music. Most importantly, when we listen to electronically recorded music we are disconnected from the music's cultural source. We can listen to music originating from all over the world but are not connected to the original cultural context of the music-making.

As listeners to recorded music we engage in, as it were, a lonely experience. That is, we engage in a non-social activity to the extent that the single listener receives messages stored in an electronic format. But does the music's electronic storage mean that we are totally cut-off from human communication since the recorded sound was originally made by humans? How do we find ourselves in the music? How do we make the change from being 'alone' with the music to being part of another culture, especially as performers of musics from cultures we do not belong to?

The same questions relate, to some extent, to other forms of media such as books, movies and radio. We are presented with images, sounds, stories and the like which are not part of our immediate environment. Musician, Rick Dempster, expressed his thoughts on this subject:

I think I always had this feeling of being disconnected. I can tell you that living in North Balwyn, I remember thinking that nothing I saw in books and movies, iconic things, seemed to be visible around me. I was, you know, suburbia. If you were lucky you may have had some vacant land that you could play in, but you didn't seem to be connected with the world of books and the radio.
(Dempster, pers. comm., 2007)

I believe the most important thing we do is to invent our own connections. Music allows us to do this. It is the language of the unspoken, the sound of the emotional life and it triggers all sorts of unexpected responses in people. Recorded music, whilst lacking the lived-in, social (interpersonal) transactions present in live musical performances, nevertheless involves the listener in intrapersonal responses. These responses involve emotional feelings or musings about the socio-cultural context of the recorded sounds and they reflect the listener's processes of making meaning from the music. On another level the responses and questioning help connect the listener to a musical performance they originally had no part in.

These connecting processes are associated with a huge range of musical styles present in Australian today: reggae, country music, blues, folk styles, jazz, rock and even European (classical) art music. These musical styles had their origins in other lands and cultures but have all found their way into the contemporary Australian scene via recordings. These recordings were an important learning resource.

3.3 Processes of learning

In Melbourne of the 1970s and 1980s, I learned blues, western swing or Cajun from the records of the great artists in each style. I was not alone. There was a small group of similarly –minded musicians who were interested in blues, early forms of jazz and folk styles. We listened to the recordings and mimicked the performance styles.

I remember using the following techniques: playing along with recordings and trying to catch musical phrases; playing a song over and over again to focus on the one performance; stop/start involving lifting the needle and writing down the words and also

copying directly, phrase by phrase, instrumental passages; taping records onto cassettes and slowing down the tape onto a player equipped to do so. In this way we could catch the subtleties of fast passages. Musicians who had some degree of formal musical training transcribed with the use of standard musical notation and then learned from the transcription. Nearly all of the music we were interested in was not written down but was improvised, traditional and orally passed on. This is especially true for blues and Cajun music. These days there are many publications of musical notation of blues, fiddle music and even Cajun music, but we must ask whether these kinds of music can be accurately notated since musical notation is mostly an aide-memoire.

Once we had learned the music in some form from the recording it was a matter of finding and playing with other people. The objective was to play in public and present the music to an audience in the busy Melbourne pub scene. There were varied approaches to performance and the musical success of the band project ultimately depended on how the people in the band got along and worked together. When learning from recordings every individual heard the music differently. This often led to arguments about how to play certain things. While there was always a common appreciation of recorded music the listening process and the subsequent interpretative approach to the music was very subjective. People often listened to records in isolation and there were interpretive problems associated with coming together to play well as a group. It was also very difficult to capture the 'feel' of the original recording. Some would learn very closely what was on the record. Phrasing and nuance of performance would be closely copied and the song would not be performed until the musician was satisfied that it sounded 'like the original'. Indeed some individuals were more skilled at this process than others and built their reputations upon it. It was, and still is, in certain circles, the highest of compliments to say that an Australian musician 'sounds black' when playing blues, soul, gospel, funk, and jazz. In these styles, generations of Melbourne musicians have dedicated their careers to 'sounding black', to emulating their heroes and get close to 'the real thing'.

In a recent interview (Mojo Collection, 2000) with Keith Richards from the Rolling Stones (a group who based their whole career on re-interpreting blues and other forms of American popular music), Richards mused over the fascination with blues:

It amazes me. We were 17-year-old English kids who thought we came from the Mississippi Delta. Eventually I think I got there. But why? What's the attraction of this music from one small backwater?

He continues:

It's because we all come from Africa. That's why people respond to certain rhythms, pulses and tones. They can't do nothing about it. We're all from Africa, 'cept that some of us left and turned white (Richards, 2000).

3.4 Mimicry and mimesis

After a period of learning from records and immersing myself in the Melbourne music scene of the 1970s to which I have referred above, I became aware of the shortcomings of copying from records. The following discussion explores some of the problems associated with mimicry.

According to Dorak:

Mimicry is the resemblance of one organism (mimic) to another (model) such that these two organisms are confused by a third organism (receiver). The model and mimic are not usually taxonomically related (Dorak, html.2007)

Bhabha (1995) uses the following quotations from Lacan in his discussion of mimicry:

The effect of mimicry is camouflage ... It is not a question of harmonizing with the background, but against a mottled background, of becoming mottled—

exactly like the technique of camouflage practiced in human warfare (Lacan, quoted Bhabha, 1995, p.85).

He qualifies this by again referring to Lacan:

As Lacan reminds us, mimicry is like camouflage, not a harmonization or repression of difference, but a form of resemblance, that differs from or defends presence by displaying it in part, metonymically (Bhabha, 1995, p.128).

The first definition, if applied to musical mimicry, as it is practiced in Australia, points to the idea of fooling the audience into thinking that ‘on-stage’ you are something other than what you are ‘off-stage’. The suggestion that Dorak makes is that it is possible to do this even if the model and the mimic are initially completely different from one another. This is a basic tenet of much show- business and professional music-making. If, for instance, you want to play Cajun music in Australia, you have to camouflage, as Bhabha suggests, your real self. You must become something special so that the obvious is not seen. As Lacan puts it, you must ‘resemble’ and incorporate the ‘presence’ of the ‘other’ (see Richardson below). This directly contrasts with the performance practices which occur in traditional and folk music. These kinds of music are about revealing exactly who you are. Most Western pop/rock music is about creating an extraordinary event around the music, where most folk music celebrates the ordinariness of everyday life.

The question for me is, does the practice of mimicry suppress or reveal one’s own identity? Or does it, in some way, offer a blend (harmonization or synthesis?) of the mimed and model. Can a strong sense of personal identity emerge from a history of mimicry?

3.5 Mimicry in Australia

In Australia, Asia and the Pacific there is a recognizable tradition of mimicry. Australian Aborigines have great skill at mimicry—animal sounds and movements—birds, frogs,

kangaroos, and so on. It is part of traditional music.¹⁴ Aboriginal people have also been known to have great skill in their ability to imitate, mimic people's speech and mannerisms. A friend of mine recently recounted an experience in a restaurant in Singapore where a Philippine band was employed to go around the tables and play national songs, popular hits and anything that was requested. The band could switch from pop songs from the latest US hit parades, old jazz standards, Hawaiian songs, country, hymns, national anthems, blues, rock 'n' roll and even satisfied the Aussies with their version of 'We've got some bloody good drinkers in the Northern Territory'.¹⁵ In Japan there are bluegrass bands who specialize in playing Bill Monroe on authentic instruments and I remember at Bob Barnard's jazz party in Melbourne in 2003¹⁶ a visiting Japanese band stunned local musicians with note-perfect renditions of King Oliver, Jelly Roll Morton and Louis Armstrong classics.

At a recent country music festival in Singapore I was on the bill with several Asian bands who played the country songs of such artists as Willie Nelson, Merle Haggard and Johnny Cash with complete authority including vocal nuance, accent and instrumentation.

We all learn the language of music from somewhere. But what is the difference between mimicry and mere imitation? What do we want the music to mean to us? What story do we want to tell? Are we content to copy and tell another person's story or do we want to tell our own?

Perhaps musicians could learn from martial arts teachers who teach the Tai Chi form as a movement to be copied. They teach that beginners must make the shape even if they do not understand exactly what it means. Learners must copy an action and remember the movement.

¹⁴ Examples of this are to be found on *Songs from the Northern Territory*, recorded and edited by Alice Moyle, see discography.

¹⁵ A beer-drinking song popularized by Ted Egan.

¹⁶ Bob Barnard is one of Australia's most well-known jazz trumpeters.

Learning a musical instrument involves a similar process. We copy the placement of fingers to make the notes, practise and wait until we can play the music. It is the same with learning from records. We copy the sounds we hear and over time learn to understand the meaning of the music by a process of translating, interpreting, mediating and creating. In this way we find our own meaning.

3.6 Learning from Cajun

Whilst many enthusiasts of Cajun music take a mimetic approach to the music in that they present a learned representation of the style, I have worked at creating a model of self-expression.

Rather than only immersing myself in the repertoire of Cajun music for the sake of performance practice, I have taken key facets of the style as the basis for my own compositions and re-interpretations. These style elements include the characteristic dance rhythms of the Cajun waltz, the two-step, the use of pentatonic scales, the driving rhythms, the lyrical qualities of melody, forms, odd bar lengths, tunings, and instrumental techniques. I have also adopted an aesthetic that celebrates simplicity and a rough finish. This I would describe as a ‘down-home’ quality. This term is partly associated with the fact that Cajun music is literally played in people’s homes. It is ‘home music’. There is a personal, intimate quality to the music which is special to the style and fixes it in a specific place. It is also a reference to the ‘unschooled’ nature of the music which appeals to me. In short, Cajun music is ‘real’.

3.7 Transcendence

In Louisiana I took a lesson with accordionist Joe Hall and asked him about learning Creole music. He talked about studying, learning, emulating and finished on a note which describes an act of transcendence, of going beyond the boundaries of national identity. This is part of our discussion:

Baylor: What do you think of people from other counties trying to play, say, Creole tunes? How’s it going to work?

Hall: *It'll work ... It will work ... but the thing about it is ... it'll depend on who you're learning from ... who you're learning from ... how much time you spend with that person ... you know what I mean? You have to get it from that person you're learnin' from more than just one way ... you know what I'm sayin' ... just one way ... you can't just scratch out a tune and go back to Australia ... ah Joe Hall taught me this tune ... people who know me ... man that don't sound like Joe Hall taught him that tune ... It's not nothing that can happen ... not nothing that can happen in two weeks ... listen to the recordings, you have to develop the drive that the musicians on the recordings have ... you know, you have to develop ... almost emulate that person ... I notice when I play with Mitch [Reed] ... the Canray [Fontenot] stuff ... he closes his eyes ... and what he's doin' is he's transcending ... he truly believes he's Canray when he's playing those tunes ... It's what everybody else has to do too ... (Baylor, pers. comm., Joe Hall, Louisiana, 2005)*

I follow this conversation with a journal entry where I reflect on what Joe said to me:

I had a very interesting lesson with Creole musician Joe Hall. He is an accordionist who sings and plays traditional Creole music. He is one of the few who knows the style well and is very serious about his music. He took me through a tune and talked a lot about music.

The most important point that he made is that you have to get the feeling into it. He rightly claims that Creole and Cajun must have that 'feeling' or it just doesn't work. It's not technique that's important. You can't play the same because you've got different backgrounds (culturally speaking). We're all human beings and we all feel emotion, so that's what we've got in common, but we're not all going to sound the same. To play the music really well, to get the feeling into it, you must 'transcend' as Joe puts it. He explained this by example, saying that when he and Mitch Reed play the old Creole style, Mitch actually transcends and becomes Canray Fontenot. You must become the

person you are emulating. To do this you must have intimate knowledge of the person, style, history, repertoire, recordings etc. (Baylor, Louisiana Journal, 2005)

and further

Because the songs are about people's lives, people telling of things that have happened to them, you somehow have to become part of that experience and you have to somehow understand the experience. Emotion and feeling is the key to this process. It's universal. (Baylor, Louisiana Journal, 2005)

Music as an emotional language has the power to transcend the limits of culturally defined borders. It can work across time and space. Through its ability to place us in an emotionally reflective state and by combining it with our own willingness to change we can 'become' whoever we want. Joe Hall suggests that one must study recordings of past masters, learn from them and develop one's musical abilities with diligence. Recordings are seen as artefacts which contain deep cultural and personal material which can be tapped into. In the end, after a studious apprenticeship, with eyes closed and an intense concentration on an inner life, one can 'transcend' and become someone else.

3.8 Extra-musical associations

In the musical learning process we come to associate different meanings with the musical sounds; that is, extra-musical associations. Horn (2000) asks:

What is the relationship between musical sound and extra-musical associations which arise in the minds of musicians and audiences? It may seem hard to relate musical sound and extra-musical associations and yet once sound has been constructed in such a way that it is thought to be musical sound, it is linked with multiple extra-musical associations related to past and present human experiences within the relevant music culture (Horn, 2000, pp. 7–8).

Crucially, my learning of Cajun music involved acknowledging extra-musical associations made with the sounds of Cajun music. At this point, I emphasize that the extra-musical

associations with Cajun music are my own. They are not (cannot be) necessarily the same as those made by a Cajun musician. For example, as someone who has studied Classical Literature from an early age, I identified the music of the Cajuns (and other folk music) with notions of the classical Eden of the Greeks and Romans, Arcadia. This may be fanciful but nevertheless it was (and still is) an important conceptual cross-reference in my own mind, which relates to the way I made meaning from the music in Melbourne in the 1970s. I made connections between my intellectual upbringing and the 'Arcadian' music. I shall now discuss further this extra-musical association by referring to personal narratives of 2005 which describe how I relate to the Roman poet, Virgil's ideas about simplicity, the power, and loss of power, of song and art in his own time and how this association has influenced my playing of Cajun music and informs my compositions in the style.

3.9 Arcadia and the idealization of folk music

When I was a student at Monash University in the mid-1970s I studied Virgil's Eclogues. This work was a series of songs sung by shepherds reclining in the shade of olive groves and dealt with subjects ranging from dispossession, love, spirituality, politics and state, identity and simple pleasures. It was Virgil's Roman version of the Greek poet Theocritus and was a work in the pastoral tradition. This was a style of poetry in which learned poets attempted to mimic the simple, heartfelt songs of shepherds and other rural folk.

Intellectuals and artists recognized and admired the inherent genius in the arts of so-called 'simple' people. They appreciated qualities such as emotional directness, power and vitality, uncluttered form, humanity, wit and humour, rhythm and metre. They also saw before them a well-developed sense of natural beauty and, above all, a direct simplicity which reflected an intimate relationship with nature.

All of these qualities were prized and imitated by poets such as Theocritus in Greece and later, Virgil in Rome. These poets created a bucolic or pastoral tradition. They, in turn, influenced many poets, artists and writers.

When I read the Eclogues I was intrigued by the world that Virgil created. It was an Arcadian ideal where simple, rustic people possessed an elegance of expression and who prized song above all else as a form of communication. It was a powerful way of controlling their environment.

As an aspiring musician I became very interested in the idea of the transformative power of song and art.

These shepherds could affect the world with their songs. They could put a spell on a lover, affect the weather, communicate with Gods, improvise in contest with each other. They had sad laments, celebratory wedding songs, powerful rhythmic chants used for dancing. They had all kinds of magic songs, dirty, coarse ditties, and a host of other songs up their sleeve. To me, they were, in fact, like the Afro-American bluesmen of the 1920s, 1930s, 1940s and 1950s that I was listening to regularly on record. They were like the Cajun singers and fiddlers whose music entranced me. Song was a potent, living art and, in Virgil's case, a central component of an idealized world removed from the one we live in.

I was very interested and motivated by his ideas about the power of art, poetry and song. These ideas have fuelled my own efforts in trying to make music which has power, vitality and meaning. (Baylor, pers. narr., 2005)

My teacher of Classical Literature at Monash University, A.J. Boyle, broadly defined the pastoral tradition in this way:

A pastoral poem in Greek and Roman literature is one which concerns itself ostensibly with the behaviour and activities of shepherds and herdsmen and the general events of their life; it is relatively short (maximum of, say, two hundred lines), part descriptive and part dramatic in form (soliloquies, dialogue, songs, especially singing competitions, abound, sometimes joined or introduced by short narrative passages), and employs a dactylic hexameter—the metre used by the genre's founder, Theocritus. The most

common themes and motifs in the genre are concerned with unhappy love, the absence or death of friends, the ideal nature of rural life and rural environment, the making of music with voice and pipe, the values of peace, leisure, simple contentment, love, affection of man and man, and the concomitant interrelation of the fortunes and behaviour of the natural world and the fortunes and behaviour of man. (Boyle, 1976, p. 5)

Boyle's definition of the genre resonates with my own observations about folk music as heard on recordings. In the blues, jazz, country and folk music of the USA, the ballads, songs and tunes of Ireland, Scotland and England, the rebetika of Greece, the myriad styles of Africa, and particularly Cajun music, I hear the simple art of vernacular, simple styles of music speaking through time and across space with great poetic and emotional power.

For me, the pastoral tradition echoes through the ages in the music, songs, poems and stories of the peoples of the world. I believe folk traditions of the world are a real representation of the 'pastoral tradition'. As an Australian artist/musician, I have become emotionally and intellectually involved with these traditions and have attempted to fuse my own human need for expression with them. In the process, I have attempted to resolve the clash between romanticized, ideal mythology and a sense of reality. I have tried, in my music, to create a voice firmly located in this time and place—to re-discover and re-create a lost Eden.

Having been inspired by recordings of Cajun music and contextualizing my musical activities in a philosophical framework which involved referencing classical ideals of Arcadia and a Western European intellectual relationship with a pastoral tradition, I reflected on issues concerning personal identity and the nature of culture. Inspiration created in me not only the desire to make music, but also made me aware of my cultural limitations. I came to understand that other cultures have long and celebrated musical traditions and that, in Australia, I was on the outside of a personal sense of musical tradition.

3.10 An aesthetic impulse born of ‘not belonging’

This project has explored the ways in which individuals ‘outside’ of a cultural group, make meaning from the music of a distinct, identifiable cultural group, in this case, Cajun culture. In theoretical terms, this is a meeting of a single individual with ‘the other’. Laurel Richardson observed that: ‘In writing the Other, we can (re) write the Self’ (Richardson, 1992, p. 136). She suggests that by looking intently into another culture we learn about ‘what we don’t have’ and attempt to create our own version. This is an artistic response to a sense of ‘not belonging’. It would be useful at this point to discuss this idea of ‘not belonging’ and how we use our position outside the boundaries of traditional culture as the starting point for creating our own cultural voice.

I shall begin by referring to a personal narrative:

Music is the voice of Cajun Culture and it has spoken to me as a contemporary Australian musician. Cajun music has become for me a prime example of post-colonial syncretism. It is a model of how different cultural phenomena can merge to form something new or hybrid. In Australia, I would argue that this process involves making something new out of ‘not belonging’, out of ‘being on the outside’ of other cultures. One must learn how to take elements that one needs and graft them onto a core mode of expression which resonate with your emotions. You must find your own voice, dance in the face of hardship and offer your appreciation of life to the world as a gift. (Baylor, pers. narr., 2005)

In creating hybrid forms of Cajun music we must ask: how does an individual musician with no direct connections to Cajun culture relate to the music and what is the nature of the relationship? The simplest and most profound answer is: through the music itself. If musicians listen long and hard enough to the music and try to play it, they will be drawn in to new levels of understanding.

I have picked up technical data on how to play Cajun music by listening intently to it. I have learned tunes and songs and worked out how the music works. I have taken note of how to

create certain effects and have become aware of the fact that Cajun music is a social music with a casual, down-home feel. I have developed these elements and placed them in my own music. I have asked: What do the Cajuns have that I (we) do not? On a purely musical level, I would have to answer: rhythm and African influence in its many forms. In social terms, I would say: a musical culture which revolves around the making of music for dancing and pleasure. Cajun music provides not only a backdrop for life's activities but also empowers society by providing a shared form of expression.

Cajun accordionist Marc Savoy said this about Cajun culture: 'To me, these Cajun people represented a way of life that was like a big, soft warm blanket on a winter night' (Ancelet, Morgan, 1999, p. 129).

Savoy's image poetically expresses a feeling of cultural belonging through a cozy image of being safe and warm on a cold night, relaxed and at home. Australian musicians of my generation rarely express feelings of ease and identification with what has long been considered their inherited musical traditions: Australian convict balladry, bush songs about droving, Gold rush era ballads or colonial dancing and even pub rock. Mostly, contemporary musicians have been drawn to twentieth-century American popular music (jazz, blues, country, folk) and British variants thereof (rock, pop), as well as Irish folk music and more recently 'world music' styles. For every Australian musician of note, it seems, there is a model in another place and another time.

Even though there is a growing awareness and recognition of indigenous Australian music by European/Australian musicians, it still remains a difficult area for them to penetrate and identify with in a meaningful way. I make this statement having performed extensively with Indigenous musicians and find it ironic (perhaps tragic) that while many of us search for cultural identity, we live in a country which has one of the oldest living cultures in the world.

In Cajun music I have identified characteristics which appeal to my musical (and cultural) curiosity. Cajun's sense of identity and history root it in time and place, and its

ability to change keeps it alive as a tradition. Musically, the fusion of rhythmic ‘funkiness’ with fiddle-playing ‘folk-iness’ is unique, and the way in which it has been able to incorporate other musical languages into its repertoire and keep the essence of its own sound is impressive. As a cultural phenomenon the music has been fluidly re-created. The Cajuns have grafted outside influences onto the trunk (traditional core style), and announced themselves joyously to the world as a blueprint for musical hybridism and cultural integrity.

For me, the study of Cajun culture, and the learning of Cajun music has involved the inter-connecting and inter-referencing of the ‘self’ with the ‘other’. In my experience I have found that Australian musicians’ efforts to create their own voice out of mimicking styles of music from other cultures are experiments in seeking explanation and expression of the processes of the self in terms of the other.

For me, as an outsider, one of the most important aspects of Cajun music is that it presents itself as a blueprint for musical hybridism.

The Cajuns themselves have responded to their own sense of ‘not belonging’ by taking bits and pieces of other people’s culture and making it their own. This is evident in their music. As I commented in my 2005 journal:

Marc Savoy has a theory (one of many) about cultural identity and development. He believes that people create culture out of what they don’t have. Cajuns had very little when they settled in the area. They created their music out of bits and pieces. Musical memories, other cultural influences, whatever they liked and appealed to them. They had a knack for putting together disparate elements in their own way. Just as they made ‘roux’ out of burned flour. Similarly the Cajun language is a pidgin or patois made up over the years. (Baylor, Louisiana Journal, 2005)

Savoy also made this observation about the Australian experience:

When I suggested that in Australia we don't have a defined musical tradition as such, Marc pointed out 'you learn to appreciate what you don't have' i.e. if you don't have musical culture, you learn to appreciate other peoples' culture.

(Baylor, Louisiana Journal, 2005)

3.11 Australian identity

Commenting on a perception of a whole society Kellner notes: 'only in a society anxious about identity could the problems of personal identity, or self-identity, or identity crises, arise and be subject to worry and debate.' (Kellner, 1992, p. 193)

I believe Australia is such a society. It has a long history of debate and differing opinions about its cultural identity. How do musicians deal with this problem?

Some contemporary Australian musicians spend their creative lives feeling distanced, both in time and in space, from the great musical traditions of the world and go about redressing this sense of isolation by becoming skilled in playing musical styles from other cultures. For example, blues, tango, reggae or gypsy styles. This process is facilitated by the ready availability of the world's music culture and the unabashed credo of 'anything is possible'. In this way, our visions of cultural traditions have been seen through the lens of technology. We are connected by an umbilical cord of modern, technological artifice—books, records, films, TV and radio and all forms of digital media. Our seeming lack of attachment to any traditions of our own leaves us hungry, and ready to identify with whatever musical styles we choose. Our artistic freedom is both intoxicating and liberating but it can have a down side. For example, we can feel as though we are not grounded and not in control of our musical expression, certainly not in the way that musicians and artists who belong to strong cultural traditions are. Even though Australian musicians have, in my opinion, made great efforts in learning all kinds of musical styles from scratch, we all still crave a taste of 'the real thing'. Our concert halls and festivals are packed with people who want to see visiting exponents of 'the great traditions'

It is as if musicians in Australia are often overwhelmed by the weight of history and confused by the plethora of cultural styles which they are exposed to and of which they are not directly a part. This can lead to a sense of what I call 'cultural vertigo'. That is, the feeling that you are unable to play any kind of music partly because there is too many styles to choose from and partly because the depth of musical expression in musical styles from other parts of the world is impossible to duplicate. A similar situation expressed by A.A. Phillips in his coining of the term 'cultural cringe'

We cannot shelter from invidious comparisons behind the barrier of a separate language ; we have no long-established or interestingly different cultural tradition to give security and distinction to its interpreters; and the centrifugal pull of the great cultural metropolises works against us. Above our writers—and other artists—looms the intimidating mass of Anglo-Saxon achievement. Such a situation almost inevitably produces the characteristic Australian cultural cringe. (Phillips, 1950)

This influential statement, made over fifty years ago, has been with us ever since. We are still self-conscious about our artistic efforts but have found new confidence and inspiration in the recognition of our indigenous history and the increasing cultural diversity of our society. We are free to do whatever we like and can combine art/music styles from anywhere and from any time and weave a new cultural fabric that is meaningful to us.

As a contemporary Australian musician, I have done this by taking what I need in order to create a home-grown musical culture. I have tried to 'make the song my own' and have set about solving problems of authenticity, meaning and personal expression along the way. In short, I have adapted a musical style from elsewhere to find my own voice.

3.12 Musical hybridism

The concept of hybridity in culture and music is central to processes of cultural growth, change and fluidity (see Briggs and Bottomley, above). The Macquarie Dictionary defines 'hybrid' as: 'Anything derived from heterogeneous sources, or composed of

elements of different or incongruous kind' (Macquarie Dictionary, p. 554). I have used the term to describe the music that I have presented in this research study.

Bottomley refers to Eric Wolf's assertions that culture is fluid and these provide us with a starting point for discussing hybridism:

Once we locate the reality of society in historically changing, imperfectly bounded, multiple and branching social alignments, however, the concept of a boxed, unitary and bounded culture must give way to a sense of fluidity and permeability of cultural sets. (Wolf, 1982, p. 387, qtd Bottomley, p. 11)

He continues:

In the rough and tumble of social interaction, groups are known to exploit the ambiguities of inherited forms, to impart new evaluations or valences to them, to borrow forms more expressive of their interests, or to create wholly new forms in answer to changed conditions.

And he concludes:

A 'culture' is thus better seen as a series of processes that construct, reconstruct and dismantle cultural materials, in response to identifiable determinants. (Wolf, qtd Bottomley, p. 11)

Of all different cultural phenomena, music is, perhaps, the most easily transferable and fluid. One could in fact substitute the word 'music' for the word 'culture' in the above quotes without diminishing their meaning.

Musical hybridism is not a random process. An innovation or change in style has to prove itself worthy of success. As Cajun musician David Greeley observed:

Cajun culture is conservative and that's what made the music great i.e. Cajun people would not accept anything 'for art's sake' or as a personal statement, it had to be either a

good song or a good dance tune. It somehow had to pass the tests of time and style.
(Greeley, pers. comm., Baylor, 2005)

One of my research objectives has been to explain why and how I have used Cajun music as a model for creating my own music. Firstly, the strong sense of cultural identity and history which Cajun music expresses has inspired me. The identification with home, and the feeling of having a place in the world, of having a strong identity are embodied in Cajun music and they are features which I have wanted to similarly express in my own music. They relate to the idea of having a cultural identity. As well as these elements, there is a musical hybridism at work which is the style's essential feature. I saw in the flow of Cajun music history that there was an organic mechanism of adaptation at work within the style. Many stylistic features outside the tradition such as blues, country, swing, the use of electric instruments, new rhythms and unusual repertoire had been brought into the Cajun core tradition and had been 'Cajun-ized'.

This kind of 'natural selection' process enables the music to stay the same and change all at once. It is a way of negotiating the past (history and tradition), and the future,(new trends and tastes), in the present in a way that can be mutually enjoyed by the Cajun community.

This ability of Cajun music culture to change has deeply impressed me and contributed to my ongoing determination to use Cajun music as a kind of blueprint for my own musical experiments.

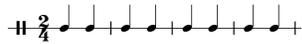
3.13 Cajun-izing

'Cajun-izing' a song or tune involves rhythmic and vocal style characteristics.

In general terms, Cajun musicians employ a more insistent, driving rhythmic approach than country musicians. Cajun rhythm has been described as 'driving', 'cooking', 'hypnotic', 'hot and spicy', and underlines one of the main functions of the music. That is, it is irresistible dance music.

In the case a 2/4 country song from the Carter Family tradition of the 1930s, or the Hank

Williams honky-tonk style of the 1950s, the basic 2/4 meter would remain the same, but the well-worn ‘boom/chuck’¹⁷ of the 2/4 (1 and 2 and) would be chopped up into a driving, staccato-like sixteenth rhythm, so that



becomes



This rhythmic concept provides the framework for a syncopated statement of the melody and creates a more driving, lively feel. The melody then can be delivered with strong blues colouring and phrasing. These two elements together create a typical Cajun flavour.

The energetic rhythms of Cajun music are related to African-American rhythms used in blues and Creole folk music of Louisiana and also Caribbean and island styles heard in the Gulf of Mexico and the general region. This influence dates back to the late 1700s when Acadian refugees spent time in Haiti and Jamaica and reflects a general regional influence. On this point, Ancelet says this:

Refugees and their slaves who arrived from Saint Dominique (Haiti) at the turn of the nineteenth century reinforced the African influence with a syncopated West Indian beat (Ancelet, 1989, p. 17).

Haiti played a part in Arcadian history as early as 1764 when Arcadian refugees, seeking a new home attempted to re-locate to the island without success (Brasseaux, 1987, p. 32).

Also, in order to ‘Cajun-ize’ a country song, English/American lyrics were re-cast in Cajun French. Singers often mixed up the two languages at will. They referenced the English version or sometimes just felt more comfortable with American-isms such as ‘blues’, ‘baby’, ‘mama’, and musical expressions such as ‘rock and roll’, ‘boogie’. In this way country songs entered into the Cajun tradition. There are many examples such as the traditional country songs, ‘Hand me Down my Walking Cane’ and ‘Bury Me Beneath the

¹⁷ ‘Boom chuck’ is an onomatopoeic expression which is often used to describe the 2/4 guitar rhythm of country music. The bass note is the ‘boom’ and the ‘chuck’ is the strum of the chord.

Willow’, or more modern songs such as Merle Haggard’s ‘Lonesome Fugitive’, Sam Cooke’s, ‘Another Saturday Night’, Joe South’s ‘The Games people Play’, and Neil Sedaka’s ‘Another Sleepless Night’.¹⁸ Collectors and aficionados have invented the term ‘Swamp Pop’ for this variant of Cajun music.

Add to these songs the instrumentation and sound of Cajun music with its fiddle, accordion and steel guitar and we have something quite different from country and western or blues.

A generally held argument is that such examples are American-ized Cajun music and therefore do not represent a ‘true’ tradition. I see this music as Cajun-ized American music as it is played within the boundaries of Cajun cultural territory. Cultural material is brought into the mix from outside influences. It is of the most recognizable characteristics of the style, that of borrowing something outside the tradition, bringing it in, adapting it and making it your own.

3.14 American-izing

The famous song, *Jambalaya (On The Bayou)*,¹⁹ (Williams) became a top-ten hit for country star Hank Williams in 1954. The song is a commercial country-pop song about a romanticized life on the bayou. It is clearly a case of American-ized Cajun music in that it takes a Cajun melody and style and transforms the song. The song also uses stereotypical cliché’s and Cajun-isms such as ‘bayou’, ‘pirogue’, ‘filet gumbo’. Its lyrics, penned in Nashville, imitate the Cajun patois: ‘good bye Joe, me gotta go, me oh my oh ...’. The song caused a stir amongst Cajun musicians at the time. There were no royalties paid and no credit given. Even though the song was a celebration of Cajun life it was perceived as a ‘novelty’ song with a traditional Cajun melody (Grand Texas).

¹⁸ Joseph and Cleoma Falcon, Louisiana Cajun Music, Volume 2, *The Early 1930s ‘Hand me down my walking cane’*, Arhoolie/ Old Timey OT109 Hackberry Ramblers, ‘*Bury me beneath the willow*’, Volume 3, *The String bands of the 1930s*, Arhoolie/Old Timey 110;

Belton Richard, *Cajun Fugitive, Un autre soir d’ennui*; Clint West, *Another Saturday Night*, *Another Saturday Night*, 16 Cajun and Louisiana Juke –Box hits, Swallow/Oval OVLP 506.

Nathan Abshire, *Games People Play*, Arhoolie, see discography.

¹⁹ Hank Williams, *Greatest Hits*, MGM SE4755-2.

As to how familiar Hank Williams the musician was with traditional Cajun music, is not known but similarities in melody, style and general approach to music-making particularly in the raw delivery and hard-hitting emotional content of many of his songs can be identified. Today, a song like ‘Jambalaya’ would undoubtedly create controversy concerning questions of authenticity and cultural appropriation.²⁰

I will now explain how I have developed a personal relationship with the Cajun sound as a white Australian musician.

3.15 Individual-izing

My professional work has involved individual-izing Cajun music. I have, in essence, developed a voice of my own in the music which I have used to express ideas about the function and style of musical performance. I shall now discuss the main features of this process.

Firstly, I used recordings of historical performances to familiarize myself with traditional repertoire and Cajun fiddle playing. Of particular importance in this area were the work of the fiddlers Harry Choates, Dewey Balfa, Rufus Thibodeaux and Leo Soileau and others. All of these fiddlers to some extent successfully merged their Cajun backgrounds with the wider arena of Southern American country fiddling styles. I explored these stylistic crossovers by making extensive use of blues fiddle playing and western swing influences in the manner of Harry Choates and Rufus Thibodeaux. I also incorporated country bowing techniques in the manner of Dewey Balfa and Leo Soileau.

Secondly, I learned how to ‘cook up’ the Cajun rhythmic style on the guitar and conveyed this information to Australian drummers, percussionists, bass players, and guitarists.

²⁰ This account of Hank Williams music and the song “Jambalaya” has been gleaned from various unrecorded conversations with musicians which I have had over the time I have spent in Cajun music circles. I believe it is open to conjecture.

Thirdly I adapted repertoire from Cajun, Country and blues sources to create a playable repertoire which functioned successfully in the atmosphere of the Australian pub scene. Finally, I began writing, recording and playing tunes and songs which referenced Cajun style and content.

Where possible, I Anglicized the lyrics of Cajun songs and used only a few Cajun French expressions. I rarely sing a song completely in Cajun French preferring instead to sing blues and country songs in English.

All these processes have culminated in the music I present in this project. I have, however, chosen to focus on an intimate, instrumental dance style rather than song forms.

I have adopted a 'naming' practice learned from the Cajuns. That is, tunes are named after a place where the tune was written or the place where you were born or even just where something important happened. Tunes are also named after the composer. For example, 'The Baylor Waltz' is a way of identifying myself with the tradition. Tune names can also be changed at any time to reflect changed localities as a way of relating to the people of a particular town or a particular pub or club at which you are appearing. 'The Rainbow Stomp' can become the 'Lomond two-step' (two pubs in Melbourne).

This kind of 'regional affiliation' (Stivale, 2003, p. 44) has the effect of rooting the music in a specific place and this contributes in a small but significant way to a shared sense of identity. I am saying: 'Yes, I am playing a style of Cajun music mixed with blues and American country influences, but I am playing it here, tonight, for you people.'

In the following chapter I shall present an overview of Cajun performance techniques. The tunes I present in Chapter 5 involve a re-casting of Cajun performance practices and musical techniques within an Australian social and personal context

Chapter 4

Cajun performance and playing techniques

I shall now discuss performance techniques learned from recordings and through direct contact with Cajun musicians who I met in Southwest Louisiana in July 2005. Some of these musicians I actively sought out because I knew their work from recordings. Others I met by chance and through personal associations formed in the Cajun music community. I have included passages from my Louisiana Journal which offer relevant observations.

4.1 Cajun rhythm

The rhythm of Cajun music is the style's most distinguishing feature. Whether the piece is a song, a blues-styled stomp, a waltz or a two-step, the music is always carried along with a strong, insistent rhythm.

Accordianist Ray Abshire²¹ made these comments on Cajun rhythm:

The rhythm in Louisiana is the core of the music—strong, steady, hypnotic. The rhythm drives the music. It is simple yet driving, no frills. There are waltzes, fast and slow, Two-steps, medium and fast, Blues, Boogies, and rock'n'roll. Every tune has its correct rhythm and tempo and that it must be played just right for the tune to work. (Baylor, Louisiana Journal, 2005)

Ancelet, in his statement about the hybridism of Cajun music, cites three sources from which the Cajuns took their rhythm:

From Africans, they learned about syncopation, percussion, improvisational singing, and how to express their own blues ... From the Anglo-Americans, they learned new tunes to drive reels, hoe-downs and square dances ... Refugees and their slaves who

²¹ Ray Abshire is a contemporary Cajun accordianist whose career stretches back to the 1970s when he played briefly with the Balfa Brothers. I met him in 2003 at the National Folk Festival in Canberra where I played fiddle in his band. He subsequently became my good friend and mentor when I travelled to Louisiana in June 2005. He introduced me to many Cajun musicians.

arrived from Saint-Domingue at the turn of the nineteenth century brought with them a syncopated Caribbean beat (Ancelet, 1989, p. 17).

According to Ancelet, therefore, Cajun rhythms feature a combination of African syncopation, Anglo-American reels and country fiddle dances and a Caribbean beat. There is no doubt that these kinds of influences sit side-by-side in Cajun music but the Cajuns were very selective on what they drew on and used for their own music. For example, whilst there is the drive and groove of African rhythms, there is not the complexity, diversity and sophistication that can be found in other styles, such as the neighboring New Orleans jazz, blues and funk traditions. Nor are there the more complex melodic and harmonic structures of jazz and ragtime. The Cajun model is distinctly rural, 'homespun' and simple. On this point, it is important to note that there is not a single style of American popular music which has not been influenced by African rhythms, pentatonic scales and the blues. African rhythm, in my view, is the force which drove virtually all American popular music of the twentieth century.

The Cajuns developed a light, driving, and uncluttered rhythmic style by taking 'just enough' from African rhythms. The main function of Cajun music is as a dance style and consequently Cajun music employs a strong foot stomp, or backbeat, with a bass drum beat in 2/4 time, or 3/4 in the case of waltzes, with a lighter eight- and sixteenth-note percussion riding on top and propelling the music. The rhythmic sound is similar to that produced by performers of shakers, rattles, and handclaps in much African tribal music. In Cajun music the triangle is used in traditional home music. The drum kit is used for the dancehalls and bars.

Cajuns phrase their music in an unusual way with the extensive use of what we would call 'extra' measures. These are added bars of melody so that the standardized forms of four-, eight- or twelve-bar phrases often become uneven groups of five, seven, or nine and sometimes eleven or thirteen. This is not uncommon in early blues and country music.

The rhythmic form follows the demands of the melody, or, as in country music, the lyric. This is the most challenging aspect of trying to play Cajun music as an individual player or as a group. The predominance of ‘extra’ bars and unusual lengths of tunes make it difficult for enthusiasts to follow the music. What appears to be a simple style of music suddenly becomes a challenge and requires a level of musical involvement which only a few can achieve. This rhythmic irregularity is, for me, one of the most appealing aspects of the music.

In my 2005 Louisiana Journal I noted the following after a lesson with fiddler David Greeley:

We also talked about various rhythmic aspects of Cajun music, i.e. the irregular length of tunes, added beats and turns. David suggested that Cajun musicians just let the music ‘take its time’. He described some traditional Cajun tunes as ‘unhurried’—tunes that don’t fit neatly into eight-bar phrases. He says that the musicians just play naturally and wait for the tune to play itself. (Baylor, Louisiana Journal, 2005)

In another lesson with David we discussed what has come to be known as ‘crooked music’.

There followed a discussion about rhythmic patterns and the habit of adding bars. David explained: ‘Crooked music is not necessarily French - ness.’ Cajun music, like the fiddle music of England, Scotland and Ireland, is closely linked to dancing. In the latter traditions there is set dancing and the tune follows the dance. The music conforms to the steps of the dance (square dance). The Cajun tradition is based on the two-step, where two beat patterns are repeated. It is a freer tradition where extra two-beat sections can be easily added.

'Pickup' bars are added and 'Ramping up' bars were explained as leading into the beginning of a tune or leaving room at the end of the tune to turn it around. David suggested that musicians just didn't feel like forcing the music into neat eight-bar sections. (Baylor, Louisiana Journal, 2005.)

The rhythm of Cajun music is one of its strongest features. All instrumental techniques are employed in ways which enhance rhythmic effects and the musical structures themselves are left open to rhythmic variation. Bars of music can be added and dropped at will and the effects of odd or 'crooked' forms are exploited. The music is the heart and soul of an enthusiastic dance culture in which musicians and the wider Cajun community regularly conjoin in a celebratory, ritualistic dance.

4.2 Dance forms in Cajun music

The rhythm of Cajun music is bound up with forms of dance. The predominant forms are the waltz and the two-step. Various blues forms are also used as are country songs and ballads in 2/4.

Earlier Cajun music included mazurkas, schottisches, polkas and other folk dances. Harry LaFleur suggested that it was the introduction and increasing popularity of the accordion which narrowed down the dance forms. I have paraphrased his comments:

He railed against the fact that the accordion had taken over in Cajun music and he felt that the fiddle music had suffered as a consequence. He said that Cajun music was much more fiddle-oriented in the old days with waltzes, schottisches, mazurkas, songs and old dance tunes. He commented that the accordion has limited the style because it only has ten notes and cannot change keys. It is also so loud. Not that he's dead against the instrument, having enjoyed playing with Iry Le Jeune, Nathan Abshire, Austin Pitre and others. The fiddle is too often relegated to 'secundo' or seconding-droning accompaniment to the accordion. (Baylor, Louisiana Journal, 2005)

Ancelet confirms this standardization of Cajun music:

Until the turn of the twentieth century there was a wide variety of dance styles which included Old World waltzes, contredanses, varsoviennes, polkas, mazurkas, and cotillions, as well as two-steps, one-steps, baisse-bas, la-las and breakdowns developed to accompany the contemporary musical styles. The simplification of musical styles brought on in part modernization and the accordion simplified dance styles as well, leaving the waltz and the two-steps as the major steps (Ancelet, 1989, p. 22).

(1) The two-step, a dance form with a strong two-beat feel (2/4) has become the standard up-tempo dance form in Cajun music. Some two-steps are also called ‘Specials’ which are features for instrumental prowess. Two-steps can be fast or medium paced but always exhibit lively, rhythmic energy for dancing. The mood is always celebratory and joyous.

(2) The waltz, a dance in 3/4 time is a feature of many fiddling traditions including old-timey and Texas traditions, bluegrass, country and western and can be found in jazz and blues. Triple dance rhythms are found in musics from many cultures. The rhythm has become a standard form in Cajun music for dancing and at the same time a vehicle for the expression of sadness. In Cajun waltzes the three beats per bar are often played with the first and third beats emphasized. The dance form represents the other side of the *joie de vivre* of the two-steps. Joy and sorrow are expressed through the music and, through the dancing, the experience becomes communal. Together, the waltz and the two-step present the dualism of Cajun music culture.

(3) Blues forms: The rhythms, inflexions and forms of blues music inform all kinds of Cajun music. Not only are the notes of melodies bent and slurred to create a bluesy feeling, but the strong dance rhythms of the blues such as the shuffle, the backbeat, the boogie woogie, the stomp and others have found their way into the music. On the blues influence in the melody, Ancelet comments:

One result of the blues influence in Louisiana French tradition occurs in the transformation of gay, lilting European melodies to soulful, plaintive tunes (Ancelet, 1989, p. 15).

It is reasonable to consider that the same processes applied to Cajun rhythm. That is, square, delicate and formalized European rhythms and dance forms became syncopated, tougher, looser and more driving.

4.3 Cajun melody

Cajun melodies, like Cajun rhythms, come from many sources. Some have an ancient French lineage. Ballads handed down from the early days of Acadian settlement have become part of modern Cajun repertoire and these tunes possess an archaic European flavour. Others have been borrowed from early country music and the blues and use pentatonic scales and 'blue' notes. Ancelet has researched the origins of Cajun melodies and songs. Of the European tradition, he says this: 'Their songs began to include bawdy and humorous songs as well as the traditional ballads brought from France. Some of the oldest songs reflected the settler's European origins' (Ancelet, 1989, pp. 1 and 2).

I would describe Cajun melody as 'lean', simple and direct. Whether sung or played on the fiddle, Cajun melodies provide musical material which can be improvised upon to express an individual's personal style. Everybody can play their own version of a tune. Simplicity of melody also means that musical material is comparatively easy to learn and remember, and therefore can be passed on orally.

A strong melody can also be used in different settings. There are many instances of a song, two-step or waltz using the melody of another well-known piece.

4.4 Cajun harmony

Harmony in Cajun music is very rudimentary with the use of tonic, dominant and subdominant chords. Minor keys are employed with the same straightforward harmony.

Nevertheless, the way that Cajun music employs these harmonies is highly individual and refined. The structure of the harmony is idiosyncratic, with chords changing in unexpected and unusual places in the structure of the tune. This aspect of Cajun music is linked to the looseness of the forms and the extra bar lengths. It is as if the harmony ‘comes out’ of the rhythm.

4.5 Cajun instrumentation

The sound of Cajun music is an ensemble sound. As accordionist Ray Abshire commented:

The Cajun sound is a strong ensemble style where everyone plays all the time in a strongly rhythmic way. Too much technique can hinder the emotional flow of the music. The music must have strong emotion as its focus—happy or sad, or maybe bitter-sweet. (Baylor, Louisiana Journal, 2005)

Traditional combinations include fiddle, accordion, acoustic or electric guitar, triangle, steel guitar, bass, drums. Accordion and fiddle usually lead with support from the rhythm section. Steel guitar, or slide guitar is also added and occasionally a piano or mandolin is used. Within this basic instrumentation there are several combinations which are used to great effect. Twin-fiddling duets have a venerable tradition as does the duet of fiddle and accordion. Trio settings can include either of the above with triangle. These settings offer great freedom for improvisation and have only a sparse, implied harmony. With the addition of guitar, the harmony becomes more defined. The string band traditions of the 1930s and 1940s made extensive use of the steel guitar both as a solo instrument and as an ensemble sound with the fiddle. This period was strongly influenced by western swing and country music.

4.6 Cajun fiddle techniques

The following journal passage describes the fiddle technique of Clarence Denais. The text provides an interesting starting point for a discussion of Cajun fiddle playing.

Clarence didn't play a lot for me but what he did sounded very beautiful and old fashioned. He displayed the most unorthodox fingering that I have ever seen. He was a self-taught three finger player and played mostly with his first two fingers. This meant long stretches and slides between notes, both up and down, and facilitated the use of quartertones, bluesy slides and pull-offs, creating exactly the appropriate feel for the music. He was taught to play by his father and never had any formal lessons. Watching him play made me fully realize just how 'homespun' Cajun music and instrumental technique was—self-taught, simple, 'primitive', rough. Certainly not slick or commercial or mass-produced. To try to play like Denis is not easy. He was very steady in his rhythm and played beautiful melodies. I think I got a glimpse into the archaic, unorthodox, old style of fiddle playing—forget about classically correct fingering, forget about how to hold the bow. Fiddlers like Clarence invented their own techniques. This is true of all folk traditions. Clarence's style certainly did account for all the slides and drones that are heard in Cajun music. He slides through the 'blue' notes, both up and down and creates a haunting, 'eerie cheerie' sound. (Baylor, Louisiana journal, 2005)

My sources in this section include references to a Dewey Balfa recording entitled *Cajun Fiddle, Old and New*²² in which he demonstrates various Cajun fiddle techniques. I learned many techniques from the fiddling of Harry Choates, whose stylistic mix of Cajun with western swing influenced my own playing. I also refer to lessons received in 2005 in Louisiana from Courtney Granger, David Greeley, Mitch Reed, Tony Thibodeaux and others.

I shall now list the main techniques of Cajun fiddling.

²² See discography, Balfa.

4.6.1 Tuning practices

Similar to most folk music, there is variation in pitching and tuning in Cajun music. Indeed, Cajun music has a reputation for being ‘out of tune’ or ‘strange’. The use of ‘blue’ notes, bends, drones and slides incorporating quartertones further affects tuning and pitch. The particular tuning practices of Cajun musicians, particularly the fiddle players, help create the uniqueness of the sound and give the music its characteristic soulfulness.

Cajun fiddle styles involve distinctive tuning practices. Most, but not all, Cajun fiddlers tune their instrument down a whole tone from the standard tuning. That is, they tune their instrument to FCGD rather than GDAE. This practice is known as ‘de-tuning’ and I use that term to denote the lowering of the pitch of the fiddle. In the company of an accordion the pitch is taken from its fixed notes, which usually correspond to the standard Western European practice of tuning to A=440, but this is not always the case. When a fiddle is de-tuned by a tone the fingering will be in A even though the actual key of the piece is G. Similarly, D fingering will sound in C, and G fingering will sound in F.

4.6.2 Drones

Cajun fiddlers make extensive use of drone strings. Of the beginnings of this practice, Ancelet observed:

When they began to acquire instruments, they (Cajun fiddlers) chose the familiar and popular fiddle and developed techniques, such as a self-accompanying drone, to approximate the sounds in their collective memory from their western French origins which had included flutes and pipes, and they played ancient tunes that had been preserved by humming and whistling (Ancelet, Grove’s Dictionary of Music, 2001)

Tracy Schwarz defines drones as:

a string played open (untouched) at the same time as the one next to it. This second string is where the melody is being played, while the first one, the drone, always stays the same. (Schwarz, Folkways FM8362)

The use of drones means more volume as well as potential for solo playing, self-accompaniment and rhythmic variation.

4.6.3 Unisons

Unison playing involves the same note played on two adjacent strings involving a doubling of a note which adds to volume and tone. In addition, the use of slides can be used to create a dissonance.

An outgrowth of the use of drones on the open strings is the technique of doubling notes in octaves. This is used extensively in Cajun and Creole fiddling to create volume, power and added tonal colour. In the hands of a Cajun fiddler sliding octaves become a strongly expressive technique. Cajun is one of the few folk traditions that makes use of this difficult technique.

4.6.4 Ornamentation

The following fiddle techniques are used in the ornamentation of Cajun music.

Trills: Commenting on trills in Cajun music, Tracy Schwarz said:

The Cajun trill is where three notes are played in the time slot where usually only one is played. Like F-G-F, real quick. It is a thing of perfect beauty when done right, and is heard so much in Cajun fiddling that it is considered an essential technique. (Tracy Schwarz, Folkways FM8362)

Slides: Slides involve a finger sliding up to a note or down from a note. Both directions are used in Cajun music.

Rolls: Cajun fiddlers use a fingering technique involving rolling on to notes or off from notes in various ways. A fiddler can roll up to a note with three or four fingers, or roll off similarly. This ornaments melody notes in a florid way, making simple tunes sound fancy and expressive.

Bowing: The most common Cajun bowing technique is the Cajun shuffle consisting of a longish bow followed by two shorter bows. Rhythmic bowing is a subtle aspect of the Cajun style. Indeed, great skill in syncopation is a feature of good Cajun fiddling. Long even bowing is often employed in waltzes. Generally speaking, bowing techniques vary greatly amongst players. Bowing grips vary and rhythmic approaches are highly individualized.

Twin fiddles: ‘Twin fiddles’ refer to the use of two fiddles playing either in unison or harmony. The term is used throughout Southern USA in Texas swing, bluegrass and country music as well as Cajun. Cajun music employs a looser approach to this form of playing. In the duets of Dennis McGee and Sady Courville, one fiddle plays rhythmic back-up while the other plays melody. There is little note-for-note harmonizing of melody in this style. This kind of duet is considered an archaic way of playing typified in early pre-accordion Cajun music.

4.7 Influence of Anglo-American fiddling

I use the term “Anglo-American fiddling” as a general reference to styles of fiddling in North America which have direct links back to England, Ireland and Scotland. These include, Old-time Appalachian fiddling, Bluegrass, Texas fiddling styles and old-time Country. I use the term to highlight the fact that Cajun fiddling has a different lineage and a different repertoire.

Ancelet (1989) suggests that Cajun fiddlers may have been directly influenced by the rhythms of American country fiddlers but it is extremely rare to find any actual fiddle tunes from the country/bluegrass/old-timey traditions played regularly in the Cajun repertoire. The Cajuns may have borrowed some of the rhythmic ideas and devices, especially bowing styles, but not the repertoire. They have their own. Joe Hall made an interesting observation about Dewey Balfa’s fiddle style:

Dewey went to Houston ... he spent a lot of time in Texas ... with those fiddlers in Texas ... he had a yodelling note in his fiddle which is not Cajun at all. You know it’s closer to country and western. (Baylor, pers. comm., 2005)

Dewey Balfa, the archetypal Cajun fiddler of the 1960s and 1970s, was undoubtedly influenced by Texas-style fiddle playing but always maintained his traditional Cajun sound.

The forms of the Anglo-American fiddle traditions are rarely heard in Cajun music. Perhaps an occasional reel or an archaic jig is played. The waltz, as has been discussed, is common to both and, in the hands of the Cajuns, has become a high art form and the mainstay of their repertoire. It seems most likely that waltzes are a part of a Cajun musical inheritance dating back to colonial times. There appear to be no rags or 'breakdowns' as are found in bluegrass and old-timey traditions, but various rhythmic patterns belonging to these other traditions are employed in the bowing, most notably the syncopated bowing of three against four.

4.8 Learning Cajun fiddle

Cajun fiddling has found its way into the mainstream of American fiddle styles. It holds its place amongst bluegrass, old-timey, western swing, and blues fiddling as a recognizable, venerable and highly individual style. There are several fiddle tutors and DVDs available, most notably Micheal Doucet's *Learn Cajun Fiddle*, available on Mel Bay publishing (Bay, 1993). With the use of musical notation, many traditional tunes, fiddling techniques, ornamentation, slides, bow shuffles can be learned. I have been aware of Doucet's tutor and other similar books for some time and have, on occasion, referred to them. As I stated above, most of my own fiddle style has been learned from recordings, my own transcriptions, and in person from Cajun fiddlers.

4.9 Cajun vocal style

Traditional Cajun singing involves a high-pitched, nasal style which includes spontaneous wails, cries, yells and the like. It is designed to cut through noisy dances and social gatherings. The moans of sadness, exuberant outbursts of joy and enthusiasm, casual asides and comments offer encouragement to fellow musicians or present some sort of extra commentary on the lyrics for the audience. The general character of Cajun vocals is one of casualness and emotional honesty, and lyrics can be made up on the spot.

As well as having their own style, Cajun musicians have been influenced by blues singers, country and western and rock'n'roll singers.

4.10 Cajun accordion style

Even though the fiddle is the older traditional instrument in Cajun music, has become the lead instrument. This instrument was introduced into Southwest Louisiana in the 1890s by German immigrants. Ancelet notes: 'The diatonic accordion favored by Cajun musicians was invented in Vienna in 1828 and was introduced into South West Louisiana by German Jewish immigrants towards the end of the nineteenth century' (Ancelet, 1989, p. 17).

Different kinds of accordions are used. The one favoured by Cajuns is a single row diatonic model. In the first recordings in the late 1920s, the accordion featured heavily in duet with fiddle or sometimes with guitar accompaniment. The early accordion pioneers included Joseph Falcon, Amede Ardoin, Adam Fontenot and others. The music these men played was spirited, rough and raw and it displayed a mix of blues, two-steps, waltzes and country tunes. In the 1930s and 1940s the fiddle and the steel guitar took over in popularity and made Cajun music more 'countrified'. This period is known as the 'stringband' era. Iry Le Jeune, inspired by the early work of Amede Ardoin, Nathan Abshire, Austin Pitre and many others who flourished as working Cajun accordionists was pivotal in reintroducing the accordion as the leading voice of Cajun music in the 1950s. Since those days the Cajun accordion has had many masters and has been the driving force of Cajun music. It typifies the rollicking, rambunctious dancehall sound of Cajun music. In the right hands, it is capable of running the gamut from raunchy blues through to tender waltzes and exciting two-steps. Cajun accordionists exhibit great virtuosity including blues effects, triplet rolls, pedals, trills, and bends. All these techniques are executed over a left-hand tonic, fifth drone which anchors the music and adds a tonal depth with a big 'bottom end'.²³ Many Cajun bands do not include a bass guitar for this reason.

²³ This is an expression commonly used for the bass frequencies.

At this point, I am reminded of Harry La Fleur's comments (see p.61) which point to a recognized tension between fiddle players and accordion players. The accordion became the lead instrument in Cajun dance music influencing repertoire, tempo, volume and style.

Marc Savoy offered this on the subject:

He then explained to me that when the Germans introduced the accordion into the region, it took a little while to catch on with Cajun musicians because they were not in the right key. This meant that the fiddlers could not easily play with them. They got all the odd keys: B, E, Eb, and fiddlers could not tune to them. It was only when they got the C, F and D accordions that the musicians warmed to them. Such observations make you realize that you're hearing about a musical tradition that is very self-contained and where musicians are completely self-taught. Most people had little formal education and all musical education came from uncles, grandfathers and word-of-mouth. It was an oral tradition. (Baylor, Louisiana Journal, 2005)

Cajun accordionist, Ray Abshire spoke to me about accordion players that he had known:

He has stories about his cousin Nathan, Octa Clark, Lawence Walker, Aldus Roger, and many others. He says that Amede Breaux was the most outstanding accordion player that he ever heard. His fingers were so fast and darted all over the accordion. He says that Amede was even more of a virtuoso than Marc Savoy, who he considers the best accordionist around today. He says that Nathan Abshire was brilliant but more of a feel player—his playing was packed with emotion. (Baylor, Louisiana Journal, 2005)

4.11 Cajun percussion style

The inventory of Cajun percussion instruments includes the triangle, handclaps, standard American drum kits, rub boards (a feature of Zydeco bands), spoons and foot stomping. The primary percussion instrument of traditional Cajun music is the triangle whereas in

the dance band arena, it is the drum kit. In reality, all instruments used in Cajun music become percussion instruments in the way that they are played. Fiddles are strummed with the fingers, or vigorously bowed in rhythmic accompaniment. On occasion they are ‘drummed’ with pieces of wood, a technique known as ‘fiddlesticks’. Accordions are played with rhythmic drones in the bass and a strong attack on the right-hand melody notes. Guitars are strummed in a strongly percussive way. Energized, steady rhythm is the main ingredient of style on all instruments.

There are, as Ancelet asserts (see above, p59), many Cajun tunes that exhibit an undeniable Caribbean flavour not only in the light bubbly percussion of the triangle but also in the melodies themselves. Many tunes sound as though they have come from the calypso traditions of Jamaica. This is, for me, another appealing aspect of the music.

4.12 Cajun song themes

Cajun songs usually deal with the joys and sorrows of love. This is not unlike blues material or country songs. There are songs about having a good time as the well-known Cajun-ism attests: *Les Bon Ton Roulet—Let the Good Times Roll*²⁴. Likewise, party songs tell of working hard all week and going out dancing on the weekends. There are songs about feasting, drinking and loving. Local place names are always featured in songs, and instrumental two-steps and waltzes are named after places where musicians come from. As previously discussed, this naming creates a strong sense of place and territory in Cajun music. Songs are mostly sung in Cajun language, a patois of old-style French, Creole, English and even Indian expressions. Occasionally English is included in the mix but rarely in traditional circles.

4.13 Cajun and gender performance

Both men and women have always shared the music in the coming together for dancing. However, with Cleoma Falcon being a notable exception, women have not played as big a part in the profession of Cajun music until recent years. Today many women are playing an important role in traditional Cajun music, most notably, Christine Balfa with

²⁴ Clarence “Bon Ton” Garlow, *Bon Ton Roulette*, Flyrite, 1982

the band Balfa Toujours, Jane Vidrine with the Magnolia Sisters, and Ann Savoy. As well as being a guitarist and singer, Ann has published many articles and, most notably, an important collection of interviews with Cajun and Creole musicians (see Savoy, Ann, in bibliography). She has been pivotal in producing recordings in which Cajun musicians collaborate with well-known, mainstream rock and country performers such as 'Evangeline Made'.²⁵ She has also made albums with Linda Ronstadt under the name of The Zo Zo Sisters. Her work, in particular, has brought Cajun music to the attention of the wider public.

In my own experience as a performer and teacher of Cajun music in Australia, I have been aware of great interest shown by Australian women fiddle players in Cajun music. Two of my students, Sophie Dunn and Heather Stewart, have taken an active interest in playing, and in teaching Cajun tunes to their own classes.

Having outlined the key characteristics of Cajun musical style elements, in the following chapter I shall refer to them as they relate to the project compositions.

²⁵ See discography.

Chapter 5

The project compositions

5.1 My intentions to write music in Lafayette

This morning I practised violin in my room at the Blue Moon Saloon for several hours preparing myself for a period of learning and writing. I intend to write tunes in the Cajun style. I have many ideas floating around and I need to get them down on paper. It's a matter of making up music that is influenced by traditional Cajun music without sounding like a bad copy. The music must sound good to me and stand on its own merits.

A quiet morning practising the fiddle and transcribing tunes. Also writing down a few notes for tunes using ideas that I have heard and various influences that have touched me. I'm not trying to write 'Cajun' tunes but am letting the atmosphere and the local music guide and influence my own ideas. I also get ideas from classical violin tutors which I have with me—Mazas, Wolfhart, Kreutzer. I seem to filter all kinds of different music and grab little bits and pieces that I like and try to fashion something new out of it. (Baylor, Louisiana Journal, 2005)

I have presented my music with a notated version of the tune and have followed this with technical information concerning the playing of the tune. The notation offers a plain statement of each piece. The recorded performances include constant improvisation and ornamentation. This is as it should be. Each piece that I present is accompanied by comments which provide insights into the style of the tune, musical and extra-musical influences, inspiration and intent.

5.2 DISC 1 GULF COAST SPECIAL

The music presented on Disc 1 was written in Lafayette, Southern Louisiana, 2005, at the start of my candidature. Cajun country stretches along the coast of the Gulf of Mexico into Texas and I have therefore chosen 'Gulf Coast Special' as the title. It also references tune number 5.

1. Lowdown Two-step

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is labeled 'Violin' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Vln.'. Both staves are in 4/4 time and D major (two sharps). The Violin part is divided into two sections, 'A' and 'B'. Section 'A' is marked with a repeat sign and a double bar line. Section 'B' is also marked with a repeat sign and a double bar line. The Vln. part starts with a '6' above the first measure, indicating a sixteenth note. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some double-stopped octaves in the Violin part.

Scale/mode: B major pentatonic (B C#D#F#G#)

Tuning: A minor third down from the standard western fiddle

GDAE to EBF#C#. The tune is notated in the key of D major to facilitate the fingering patterns on the fiddle but is sounded in B major.

Dance form/rhythm: Cajun two-step with extra beats used freely in the B section.

Instruments: Fiddle and percussion including triangle, scrapers and shaker.

Performance techniques: Double-stopped octaves; the second fiddle is strummed for rhythmic effect.

Recording details:²⁶ Andy Baylor, fiddles, Denis Close, percussion.

Comments: The opening melody is a rustic-sounding dance piece. It is a two-part tune with a loose, insistent feel based on Creole and Cajun dance music and Zydeco tunes. The title refers to the low tuning of the fiddle as well as to the 'down-home' style. That is, the music is spare, rhythmic, unadorned and relaxed. It is 'unschooled' dance music that is rough, vibrant, loose, lowdown and is made for the back verandah or a small social gathering rather than the concert hall.

The A section uses a repeated figure on the low strings of the fiddle capped with a two-note octave ending; the first octave is open ending on the fifth of the tonic 'A', and the second ending on the tonic 'D'. The B section features higher octave phrases of syncopated and different lengths with the same octave endings. Once again the use of added bars is used freely to spice up the music.

²⁶ All tunes were recorded at Fatsound Studios, West Melbourne, between 2006 and 2009. They were engineered by Barry Stockley.

This is a Creole-sounding tune which references the practice of some fiddlers in Southern Louisiana who tune their instruments to the fixed tuning of an accordion tuned to C. This practice is referred to as ‘C’ tuning. Not all fiddlers use it but most do. The fiddle sound produced offers a darker tone which facilitates droning, slides, bends and octaves. The sound of the de-tuned fiddle creates a haunting sound. Many musicians and commentators call it ‘funky’. I have taken this process a step further and dropped the fiddle a semi-tone lower.

The tune is based on a pentatonic mode and uses only five notes. The music produces a hypnotic effect with repeated melodic and rhythmic patterns. It is in essence an African-style tune which reflects the fact that Southern Louisiana has historically been a crossroad for African and Western culture.

2. Breaux Bridge Bells

The musical score for 'Breux Bridge Bells' is presented in five systems. The first system is for Violin, starting at measure 1. The second system is for Violin (Vln.), starting at measure 6 and including first and second endings. The third system is for Violin (Vln.), starting at measure 11. The fourth system is for Violin (Vln.), starting at measure 16. The fifth system is for Violin (Vln.), starting at measure 21. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4.

Scale/mode: G major diatonic (GABCDEF#G); G major pentatonic (GABCDEG)

Tuning: Standard fiddle tuning G,D,A,E

Dance form and rhythm: Cajun two-step, four sections AA, BB, CC, DD

Instruments: Two fiddles, acoustic guitar, percussion including scraper, triangle, conga drum and foot-stomping

Recording details: Recorded June 22, 2006

Performers: Andy Baylor, Sophie Dunne, fiddles; Denis Close, Harry Lye, percussion; Andy Baylor, acoustic guitar

Performance techniques: Rubato introduction, percussion break in the middle of the tune, combination of major diatonic and pentatonic melodies, use of octaves on the violin, twin fiddles in unison and harmony, singing with the fiddle

Comments: Breaux Bridge Bells has four sections inspired by hearing the church bells while walking around Breaux Bridge, a small town outside Lafayette. The slow introduction is not a typical device in Cajun music. In imitating the tones of the bells a musical motif is suggested.

Pentatonic passages combine with a Western diatonic major scale in the B section. The C section presents a lower sounding rhythmic pentatonic passage leading into the higher D section, which once again imitates the bells with the sound of octaves. Towards the end of the recording this phrase is doubled with falsetto singing.

3. Valse de la Lune Bleu (Waltz of the Blue Moon)

The musical score for 'Valse de la Lune Bleu' is presented in four staves. The first staff is for Violin, starting with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. It begins with a slow introduction marked 'A' and contains measures 1 through 6. The second staff is for Violin II, starting at measure 7 and containing measures 7 through 13. It features two first endings (1. and 2.) and a section marked 'B'. The third staff is for Violin, starting at measure 14 and containing measures 14 through 18. The fourth staff is for Violin II, starting at measure 19 and containing measures 19 through 24. The score concludes with a double bar line.

Scale/mode: D major, D major pentatonic (DEF#ABD)

Tuning: Standard fiddle tuning, GDAE

Dance form/rhythm: Cajun waltz

Instruments: Two fiddles, mandolin, guitar, triangle

Recording details: Recorded August 17th, 2006.

Performers: Andy Baylor, fiddles, mandolin, guitar; Denis Close, triangle. I have used overdubbing techniques to create an ensemble sound.

Performance techniques: Harmony fiddles, addition of mandolin, asymmetrical measures heard in the use of 4/4 bars and 3/4 bars as follows:

A section /123/123/123/1234/

Answering phrase /123/123/123/123/ 8 bars

B section /123/123/123/1234/

/123/123/123/1234/

Answering phrase /123/123/123/123. 12 measures

This creates an unusual twenty-measure tune. The melody is comprised of diatonic phrases answered by major pentatonic phrases. A drone is used throughout on the fiddle which is contrasted with lively bowing and a staggered, short bow.

Comments: This tune was named after my lodgings in Lafayette, the Blue Moon Saloon and Guesthouse. I stayed there for about four weeks while I ventured out into the countryside to hear music and acquire some fiddle lessons. This Blue Moon Saloon runs live music five nights a week and has become a focal point for the latest renaissance of traditional Cajun music. They host a Wednesday open-night jam session as well as put on well-known Cajun acts.

The waltz tune was recorded with Denis Close on triangle with an old time traditional Cajun flavour. Melodically, it is a little more florid, or fancy, than traditional Cajun waltzes. It has a slightly 'parlor' or European melody that derives from Western European classical violin music (I had various classical collections with me). This is especially noticeable in the first four bars of the A section and the slightly longer B section. This 'pretty' or sweet melody is answered by a more Cajun-sounding repeated pentatonic-style phrase. This feature of the tune could be interpreted as a metaphor for Western, 'schooled' music meeting and joining with 'unschooled' pentatonic folk music.

A distinguishing feature of this tune is the added beats in some bars. Even though it is a waltz, there are some 4/4 bars which sound quite natural to my Cajun-ized ear. This is a very common feature of Cajun and Creole tunes. I feel that this pretty melody has a bitter-sweet touch.

4. A Long Ways From Home

Scale/mode: G major; D major

Tuning: Fiddle tuned to standard tuning GDAE

Dance form/rhythm: Cajun two-step

Instruments: Two fiddles

Recording details: Recorded March 2008

Performers: Andy Baylor, fiddles; overdubbing has been used

Performance techniques: Two-measure phrases are repeated in the A section. The melody is played against open string drones in the key of G. The B section uses four-bar phrases in the key of D.

Comments: This tune references the unaccompanied twin fiddle style of Dennis McGee and Sady Courville.²⁷ The recordings of these musicians offer a glimpse into the world of

²⁷ See Discography.

pre-accordion Cajun music. The two fiddles together create a driving sound with one focusing on melody and the other staying on rhythmic accompaniment. The playing is loose and improvisatory.

5. Gulf Coast Special

The musical score for "Gulf Coast Special" is written in 4/4 time and E minor. It consists of five staves. The first staff is for Violin and contains the first section, labeled 'A', with a measure rest at the beginning and a triplet of eighth notes in the third measure. The second staff is for Violin and contains the second section, labeled 'B', starting at measure 6. The third staff is for Violin and contains the third section, labeled 'C', starting at measure 11. The fourth and fifth staves are also for Violin and continue the 'C' section, starting at measures 17 and 21 respectively. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4.

Scale/mode: D minor pentatonic: (DFGACD)

Tuning: Fiddle de-tuned FCGD. The notation is written in the key of E minor but is played a tone lower in D minor

Dance form/rhythm: Two-step

Instruments: Fiddle, tenor guitar, Brazilian hand drum, rattles

Recording details: Recorded June 2007

Performers: Andy Baylor, fiddle, tenor guitar; Denis Close percussion

Performance techniques: The use of octaves in the left hand of the fiddle adds strength to the key melodic features of the piece and creates a ‘spooky’ mood. The notation written in E minor facilitates appropriate fingering in the left hand. The bowing consists of short, rhythmic strokes.

Comments: This tune has three sections: AA, BB, CC.

The A section presents a strong melodic statement; the B section, a rhythmic staccato feel and the C section introduces a variation with emphasis on the third note of the scale. A ‘floating’ or suspended tonality is created in the C section by the emphasis on an ‘A’ note.

The tune is modelled on the pentatonic Creole styles of dance music that have become the staple for many Zydeco and Cajun tunes. The prime influence I discern in this style is African music. Once again, as in tune 1, Lowdown Two-step, and tune 8, Walkin’ Down Johnston Street, hypnotic, pentatonic melodies are set over strong rhythm.

The tune has de-tuned fiddle FCGD with rattles and Brazilian hand drum and the drone of a 1930s Dobro tenor guitar tuned DGBD. The effect is, to my ears, an example of a real Australian hybrid of influences ranging from Cajun, Creole, and Old-timey Appalachian to West African. It was recorded in West Melbourne in 2007.

The simple pentatonic melodies combine with an exotic, insistent rhythm to become an endless trance-like dance. The tune was named after the Southern Gulf Coast which stretches along Louisiana and Texas.

6. Crooked Waltz

The musical score for 'Crooked Waltz' is presented in three staves. The first staff, labeled 'Violin', contains measures 1 through 6, marked with a section letter 'A'. It begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/4 time signature. The melody starts with a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) followed by quarter notes (C5, B4, A4, G4). The second staff, labeled 'Vln.', contains measures 7 through 12, marked with a section letter 'B'. It starts with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter notes (G4, A4, B4, C5) followed by a triplet of eighth notes (B4, A4, G4). The third staff, labeled 'Vln.', contains measures 13 through 18. It starts with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a 3/4 time signature. The melody begins with a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) followed by quarter notes (C5, B4, A4, G4).

Scale/mode: C major pentatonic: (CDEGAC)

Tuning: Fiddle de-tuned FCGD; the notation is written in D to facilitate left-hand fingering but sounds in the key of C.

Dance form/Rhythm: Cajun waltz

Instruments: Twin Fiddles

Recording details: Recorded November 2007

Performers: Andy Baylor

Performance techniques: This waltz has an added 4/4 bar which makes the tune irregular or ‘crooked’. Two fiddles are used in the classic Cajun style and the addition of C natural in the B section makes for a bluesy sound. Octaves are employed on the cadences of the A section.

Comments: In Louisiana I discussed aspects of Cajun music such as the irregular length of tunes, added beats and turns. David Greeley (2005, pers. comm.) suggested that Cajun musicians just let the music ‘take its time’. He described some traditional Cajun tunes as ‘unhurried’ tunes that do not fit neatly into eight-bar phrases. He suggested that Cajun musicians just play naturally and ‘wait for the tune to play itself’.

‘Crookedness’ is an aspect of Cajun music which I have explored in my own tunes. By ‘crookedness’ I refer to uneven length of form. It is not only musically challenging but also an example of the hidden complexity (as opposed to simplicity) which one can discover upon close examination of the style. It is also a feature of the music which harks back to a world that existed before the standardizing processes of commercializing and commoditization of folk styles of music circa mid 1930s.

Other examples of uneven length of form can be found in early blues and early country music, especially in the work of Bob Wills and Jimmie Rodgers. For me, ‘crookedness’ also resonates with aspects of the Australian landscape and some traditions of Australian art.

7. Andy's Creole One-step

Violin ^A
Vln. ⁵ ^B

The image shows the musical notation for 'Andy's Creole One-step'. It consists of two staves. The top staff is for Violin and the bottom staff is for Violin (Vln.). Both staves are in the key of A major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. The top staff starts with a double bar line and a repeat sign, followed by a measure with a fermata and the letter 'A' above it. The bottom staff starts with a double bar line and a repeat sign, followed by a measure with a fermata and the letter 'B' above it. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests.

Scale/mode: A major pentatonic (ABC#EF#A)

Tuning: Standard fiddle tuning GDAE

Dance form/rhythm: Cajun/Creole one-step

Instruments: Two fiddles, guitar, percussion includes scraper, conga, foot stomp and triangle

Performers: Andy Baylor, Sophie Dunn, fiddles; Denis Close, Harry Lye, percussion; Andy Baylor, acoustic guitar

Performance techniques: Twin fiddles lead over a percussion ensemble with guitar chords added to round out the performance.

Comments: This tune was written in Louisiana in July 2005 after I had a lesson with Creole accordionist, Joe Hall. He taught me a tune called 'Cher la se Cher la Bah' and I wanted to create a similar sounding piece. This is what I came up with.

8. Walking Down Johnson Street (five-note tune)

Violin ^A
Vln. ⁷ ^B
Vln. ¹²

The image shows the musical notation for 'Walking Down Johnson Street (five-note tune)'. It consists of three staves. The top staff is for Violin and the bottom two staves are for Violin (Vln.). All staves are in the key of A major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. The top staff starts with a double bar line and a repeat sign, followed by a measure with a fermata and the letter 'A' above it. The bottom two staves start with a double bar line and a repeat sign, followed by a measure with a fermata and the letter 'B' above it. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests.

Scale/mode: C major Pentatonic: (CDEGAC)

Tuning: De-tuned fiddle FCGD. The notation is in D to facilitate left-hand fingering but sounds a tone lower in C.

Dance form/rhythm: Two-step, AA,BB

Instruments: Fiddle, percussion

Performers: Andy Baylor, fiddles; Denis Close, percussion

Performance techniques: Use of octaves; six measures of four beats and one measure of two beats in the A section makes for an unusual length with accents falling across a bar line. The B section settles down into a repeated four-bar figure.

Comments: I composed this tune walking down Johnson Street, the main street in Lafayette, in June 2005. The rhythm of the piece came out of my walk and is in the style of Creole fiddle/accordion duets. The repetition and pentatonic melody create a hypnotic, easy-to-remember piece.

9. Squirrel on the fence

The musical score for 'Squirrel on the fence' is written for Violin and Violin (Vln.) in D major, 4/4 time. The score is divided into two sections, A and B. Section A begins at measure 3 and ends at measure 6. Section B begins at measure 10 and ends at measure 14. The score features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some triplets and double stops. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4.

Scale/mode: D major, Diatonic (DEF#GABC#D)

Tuning: Standard fiddle tuning GDAE

Dance form/rhythm: Cajun two-step

Instruments: Fiddle

Performers: Andy Baylor, fiddle

Performance techniques: Solo fiddle performance makes use of double stops, drones and choppy, staccato bowing.

Comments: I watched the squirrels running up and down the fence through my window at the Blue Moon Saloon. The way they flitted around and their general movements suggested a musical motif to me which I developed into this tune. It has a light feel and tries to convey a sense of the busy-ness of these animals. The B section brings in a C natural which creates a modal effect.

10. Fatsound Stomp

Scale/melody: F major pentatonic; (FGACDF) also with added Bb

Tuning: de-tuned fiddle FCGD. The tune is written in G to facilitate left hand fingering, but sounds in F.

Dance form/rhythm: Two-step

Instruments: Fiddles, drums, electric guitar

Performers: Andy Baylor, fiddles, electric guitar; Denis Close, snare drum, triangle. Double tracking has been used to create an ensemble sound.

Performance techniques: Use of twin fiddles in harmony and unison; use of octaves to strengthen the melody in the B section

Comments: The tune is a dance-style tune named after the recording studio in West Melbourne. Electric guitar alternates with twin fiddles creating a hypnotic dance tune. The harmony in this tune alternates between the fourth chord, in this case, Bb, and the Tonic F.

11. In The Mountains Where I was Born

The musical score is written for two violins (Vln.) in G minor, 4/4 time. It consists of five staves. The first staff is labeled 'Violin' and contains measures 1-5, marked with a section letter 'A'. The second staff is labeled 'Vln.' and contains measures 6-11, marked with a section letter 'B'. The third staff is labeled 'Vln.' and contains measures 12-16. The fourth staff is labeled 'Vln.' and contains measures 17-20, marked with a section letter 'C'. The fifth staff is labeled 'Vln.' and contains measures 21-24. The score includes various musical notations such as treble clefs, key signatures (two flats), time signatures, and dynamic markings.

Scale/mode: G minor pentatonic (GBbCDFG)

Tuning: De-tuned fiddle

Dance form/rhythm: Old-timey Appalachian-style reel

Instruments: Fiddle, percussion, guitar

Performers: Andy Baylor, fiddle, acoustic guitar; Denis Close, percussion. Double tracking has been used.

Performance techniques: Use of rubato introduction featuring blues-style fiddle passages; shorter, choppy bowing is used in an 'old-timey' style.

Comments: This is a minor tune with twin fiddles, guitar and shakers written in Louisiana in July 2005. At times I was homesick and thought of the mountains surrounding Healesville where I grew up and the idea of mountain music such as Appalachian fiddle music. In my mind I contrasted this with the flatness of the Louisiana landscape with its prairies and watery bayou regions. Cajun country is the land around the Mississippi delta. This tune is influenced by the 'old-timey' music which has a rich history in the Appalachian mountains. This style is quite different to Cajun music but shares some similarities with 'old-timey' traditions with common links to a Colonial musical heritage.

/1234/1234/1234/1234/12

13. Zula's Waltz (Leavin' Louisiana)

Violin 1

Vln. 1

Scale/mode: G major pentatonic (GABDEG) added C

Tuning: Standard

Dance form/rhythm: Cajun waltz

Instruments: Fiddles, percussion

Performers: Andy Baylor fiddles; Denis Close, percussion

Performance techniques: Use of octaves, triplets and double stops on the fiddle

Comments: This waltz was written in Lafayette in July 2005. I have named it after fiddler Leo Abshire's wife, Zula. Leo was a well-known fiddle maker and player who I was to have lessons with. He unfortunately died in early 2005. He is a cousin of accordionist Ray Abshire who I played with in Australia in 2003 and subsequently mentored me in Louisiana. The music on this disc is dedicated to Leo.

5.3 DISC 2 POSSUM STOLE THE PUMPKIN

I have chosen the title *Possum Stole the Pumpkin* for Disc 2, which presents tunes composed in Australia (with the exception of the last one). The title is also the name of tune number 3 as well as the project as a whole. The significance of this title lies in the

reference to ‘stealing’. It alludes, in a light-hearted way, to the idea that I have stolen ideas, music, and culture.

1. The West Melbourne Waltz

The musical score is written for three Violin (Vln.) parts in 3/4 time, with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The score is divided into two sections, A and B. Section A begins at measure 1 and ends at measure 6. Section B begins at measure 7 and ends at measure 12. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Scale/mode: A major pentatonic (ABC#EF#)

Tuning: Standard fiddle tuning GDAE

Dance form/Rhythm: Cajun Waltz

Instruments: Fiddle, percussion

Performers: Andy Baylor, fiddle; Denis Close, percussion

Performance techniques: Sliding Octaves, drones

Comments: This waltz was composed at home in East Brunswick in the spring of 2006 and recorded with solo fiddle and shaker. The tune came to me fully formed after my sojourn in Louisiana. Octaves feature in the statement of the melody in the old Creole style and the B part echoes the standard Cajun waltz ‘Jole Blon’. The waltz is related to a tune that I learned from Ray Abshire in his home in Lafayette known as ‘La Valse De Oberlin’ (The Oberlin Waltz). Ray learned the piece from Canray Fontenot²⁸ who learned

²⁸ Born in L’Anse aux Vaches on October 23, 1922, Canray was a living bridge between turn-of-the-century musical styles and today’s younger musicians. His father, ‘Nonc’ Adam Fontenot, was a legendary accordion player and contemporary of Amédée Ardoin. Orphaned at a young age, Canray did manual labor all his life, yet traveled the world and won such prestigious awards as the National Heritage Award from the NEA. Canray’s unique style was bluesy, yet melodic. His wild slides and gravelly vocals were always accompanied by his mile-wide grin. Canray originals such as ‘Joe Pitre a deux femmes’, ‘Les Barres de la prison’ and ‘Bonsoir Moreau’ have become standards in the Cajun and Zydeco repertoires. He and his wife, Artile, raised six children, four of whom went to college and one of whom is a lawyer. Canray played and

it from his father, Adam, himself a colleague of the legendary Amede Ardoin. Through the learning and re-interpretation of tunes like this I feel as though I am connected to the musical lineage which exists in Louisiana traditions. Having sought out the music, lived with it and studied it with respect and diligence, I created my own variations and personal expressions of the style in Melbourne, Australia.

2. Amede Played Accordion

traveled to the end, teaching and performing with long-time partner Bois-Sec Ardoin at Port Townsend, Washington, shortly before he died. One of my first recollections of Canray was trying to find his house out in the country near Welsh, Louisiana, in 1973. His instructions were, ‘Turn right on the first gravel road and go on a bit until you get to another one then take a left near Mr. Martell’s, then take a right after you pass the oak tree that got hit by lightning then a left and then you’ll see my house because it’s the one that has only one tree in the front yard.’ Remembering Canray’s directions was crucial since he didn’t have a phone in his house until 1990. I can still remember the overwhelming warmth upon entering his home. That night, Canray played old Creole fiddle tunes, waltzes, mazurkas, string-band numbers, New Orleans jazz numbers, blues, original songs on fiddle, guitar, harmonica and jaw harp. Then he began singing unaccompanied ballads in French that sounded so ancient but so natural. He could make his fiddle cry, then he could make it laugh with trilling double stops! Perhaps the most amazing aspect of Canray’s talent was how he could blend ancient French songs with his own Creole rhythms to create his own recognizable style in new songs. For example, his ‘Bonsoir Moreau’ was unusual to Louisiana French music in that it was played in a minor key. Canray played it effortlessly in third position with so much emotion, and the bluesy context of the song really set it apart. Humorous neighborhood stories like ‘Bee de la Manche’ were put to music and told the story of how Bee resorts to stealing sheep and is eventually jailed, all because the widow Adelina is costing him a great deal of money. Canray Fontenot, sitting in his favorite rocking chair with fiddle in hand, singing and tapping out the rhythms on his hardwood floor with his bare feet, smiling and passing on forgotten songs whose poetry he lived through. His life was not easy, but he expelled his troubles through his music, a gift which he shared with his neighbors and the world. We mourn not just the man and his talent, but a soulful eyewitness to our musical history. His voice has left us, but his soulful songs remain to remind us of what his grandfather used to tell him: ‘If you remember my song, you’ll remember me.’ (Taken from Michael Doucet’s interview with Arhoolie productions.)

Scale/mode: G major pentatonic (GABDEG)

Tuning: Standard fiddle tuning GDAE

Dance form/rhythm: medium tempo song

Instruments: Two fiddles, double bass, two acoustic guitars, percussion includes a snare drum played with brushes and a triangle

Performers: Andy Baylor, fiddle, vocals; Sam Lemann, guitar; Peter Baylor, guitar; Leigh Barker, double bass; Denis Close, percussion

Performance techniques: Singing unison with the fiddle; song form with an extra two-measure tag; the setting of a poem to music; the use of a double bass and two guitars in the backing.

Comments: This song is a setting of a poem written after returning from Louisiana in 2005. It refers to Amede Ardoin,²⁹ the legendary Creole accordionist. The piece exemplifies the process of finding music on recordings, imitating it and eventually making it your own. The poem refers to the idea of ‘transcendence’ in music and refers to a definitive moment when a musician moves from copying a style to becoming a creator in his/her own right.³⁰

I include the poem with commentary here.

The opening verse introduces Amede as a historical musician of great ability:

Amede played accordion

Down in old Louisian’

Played it sweeter than

Any other man

Down in Louisian’

²⁹ Ardoin, Amede, see discography. Amede (pronounced Ama-day) Ardoin was one of the first Creole accordionists to be recorded in New Orleans in the 1920s. He is a recognised virtuoso and his recordings have been very influential.

³⁰ See Interview with Joe Hall, ‘They feel it and you feel it—that’s how it works’, Appendix C.

The second stanza refers to how I came to hear Amede's music in Australia. Recording technology has allowed the musical message to travel across time and space. Not only that, but the record was found in an opportunity shop—a junk shop. It was music that no one else wanted. By paying for the record and bringing the music into my home, I am, in effect, encountering a piece of musical culture and welcoming it into my life.

The reference and rhyme between 'old Louisian' and 'old Australian' reminds us of a shared colonial past.

*I heard the song that Amede sang
Down in old Australi-an³¹
Bought the record
In an old 'opportunity',³²
carried it home with me
Down in old Australi-an*

The music is powerful and I fell in love with it. Even today, the more I listen the more the music affects me. But I am keenly aware that I am not part of the culture. The songs are 'of faraway' and I am here in my hometown. As the sun goes down over Melbourne, a new day has dawned in Louisiana. The music comes from the other side of the world.

*Now I listen all day
To Amede
Singin' his songs of faraway
I love to sit
And hear him play
As the sun goes down*

³¹ 'Australi-an' ... a rhyme with 'Louisi-an' ... poetic license.

³² 'Opportunity' ... opportunity shop, junk shop.

Over Melbourne town (alternative lyric: my hometown)

Finally, one day, I transcend the barriers of distance, time and culture and just play the music. The music transforms my sensibilities and allows me to enter other worlds.

*Then I pull out my fiddle
And I pull out my bow
Play some music, rockin' to and fro
Close my eyes and drift away
I'm playin' a tune
With old Amede*

3. Possum Stole The Pumpkin

A

Violin 1

7

B

Vln. 1

12

Vln. 1

18

C

Vln. 1

23

Vln. 1

Scale/mode: A major pentatonic (ABC#EF#A)

Tuning: Standard fiddle tuning GDAE

Dance form/rhythm: Cajun two-step or country dance with three parts. AA, BB, CC

Instruments: Two fiddles, guitar, percussion

Performers: Andy Baylor, Sophie Dunn, fiddles; Denis Close, Harry Lye, percussion; Andy Baylor, acoustic guitar

Performance techniques: Twin fiddles playing in loose unison; a tonic pizzicato note is played on the first beat of measure one as a rhythmic device (it kicks the tune off); an extra measure; driving acoustic guitar accompaniment.

Comments: The Cajuns play a tune called ‘Rabbit Stole a Pumpkin’. There is also a totally different tune played in old-timey music traditions of the Appalachian areas with the same name. This caused me to reflect on the way that a lot of fiddle music is borrowed and passed around. Irish and English tunes and names find themselves re-cast in various American traditions. The same processes are to be found in the old Australian bush traditions. Even within a tradition, names and tunes have multiple identities.

I wrote this tune with this in mind. It’s part old-timey Appalachian, part Cajun and has a touch of ragtime thrown in. An important feature of this tune is its odd length. It has a nine-measure section with the extra bar being remembered by singing the phrase ‘and the possum stole the pumpkin’. This is an old trick common to American old-timey fiddle traditions.³³

4. Charley’s Waltz

Violin

8 Vln.

³³ An example of this is Lowe Stokes’ recording of Billy in the Lowground; (see discography).

Scale/mode: written as D major pentatonic (DEF#ABD) (played as C major pentatonic (CDEGAC))

Tuning: De-tuned fiddle FCGD, notation written in D to facilitate left-hand fingering but played in C

Dance form/rhythm: Waltz

Instruments: Fiddle, Bodhran

Performers: Andy Baylor, fiddle; Denis Close, percussion

Performance techniques: Use of drones, slides and trills with Irish hand drum

Comments: Charley's Waltz, a seven-bar waltz, was written in a motel room in Gympie, Queensland, in 2007 and named after my son. The loss of one bar has the effect of 'tripping' or jumping the tune into the next section before you know it. In this way the tune has its own momentum. The use of the bodhran, a drum usually associated with Celtic traditions, creates a Cajun/Celtic hybrid atmosphere.

5. Tambourine Two-step

The musical score for 'Tambourine Two-step' is written for Violin (Vln.) in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff, labeled 'A', contains measures 1 through 5. The second staff, labeled 'B', contains measures 6 through 10 and includes a key signature change to F major (no sharps or flats) and a time signature change to 2/4. The third staff contains measures 11 through 14, and the fourth staff contains measures 15 through 18. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Scale/mode: A major pentatonic (ABC#EF#A)

Tuning: Standard fiddle tuning GDAE

Dance form/rhythm: Two-step, hoedown, reel

Instruments: Fiddle, tambourine

Performers: Andrew Baylor, fiddle; Denis Close, tambourine

Performance techniques: Use of unisons and drones on the fiddle; short, staccato bowing in the A section; smoother bowing in the B section

Comments: This tune was composed in Canberra, Easter 2008, and references Cajun two-steps as well as Texas hoedown fiddling in the style of Eck Robertson.³⁴ As in the previous tune, the choice of percussion instrument defined the character of the piece. In this case, Denis Close chose a tambourine and played it in a fashion specifically used in Brazilian music. The result is a hybrid sound. Cajun elements include the added 2/4 bar in both sections, drones and the pentatonic tune. The result is an energized dance tune with elements of Brazilian folk music, old-time Texas hoedown fiddle and Cajun dance tunes.

6. French Island

A



Violin 1

B



5

9



Violin 1

Detailed description: The image shows three staves of musical notation for the piece 'French Island'. The first staff is labeled 'Violin 1' and contains the notation for section A, starting with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 2/4 time signature. The second staff is labeled 'Violin 1' and contains the notation for section B, starting with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 2/4 time signature. The third staff is labeled 'Violin 1' and contains the notation for section C, starting with a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and a 2/4 time signature. Each section ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Scale/mode: D minor (DEFGACD)

Tuning: Standard fiddle tuning GDAE

Dance form/rhythm: Country dance

Instruments: Fiddle, guitar, mandolin, hand drum

³⁴ See Eck Robertson in discography.

Performers: Andy Baylor, fiddle, guitar, mandolin; Denis Close, hand drum.

Performance techniques: The melody line is played on the fiddle and doubled on the mandolin; rhythm is provided by finger-picked guitar and hand drum. The minor, modal tune is repeated with minor variations in phrasing and ornamentation.

Comments: This tune was written on French Island in Westernport Bay, 2006. It has a delicate medieval flavour which is not overtly Cajun or Celtic. I describe it as an archaic sounding modal piece. The atmosphere it conjures up is lyrical and other-worldly. French Island is named after a French colonial outpost was set up on the island in the late eighteenth century. It reminds us that the French were interested in exploring Australia and colonizing the country.

7. Portland Two-Step

The musical score for 'Portland Two-Step' is written for Violin and Violin. It consists of five sections, labeled A through E, each with a double bar line and repeat dots. Section A (Violin) starts at measure 1 and ends at measure 4. Section B (Violin) starts at measure 5 and ends at measure 8. Section C (Violin) starts at measure 10 and ends at measure 13. Section D (Violin) starts at measure 15 and ends at measure 18. Section E (Violin) starts at measure 19 and ends at measure 22. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The score includes various musical notations such as stems, beams, and slurs, as well as first and second endings in sections A and B.

Scale/mode: G major pentatonic (GABDEG)

Tuning: Standard fiddle tuning GDAE

Dance form/rhythm: Cajun two-step; five sections AA, BB, CC, DD, EE

Instruments: Fiddle, guitar, percussion

Performers: Andy Baylor, fiddle, acoustic guitar; Denis Close, triangle, hand percussion

Performance techniques: Extensive use of string crossing, octaves, double-stops on the fiddle to create a powerful dance sound. The guitar is strummed in closed position which adds a driving swing to the piece. The ringing metal of the triangle is contrasted with the use of a wooden scraper.

Comments: This rollicking tune was written in a motel room on a visit to Portland, the sight of the first European settlement in Victoria in the 1840s. It is a five-part Cajun-styled tune and indicates my penchant for writing a tune in, and for, every place I visit on my musical journey around Australia. I would describe this as a similar creative process to that which a landscape artist experiences.

8. Amamoor Waltz

The musical score for 'Amamoor Waltz' is written for Violin in 3/4 time. It consists of five staves of music, each starting with a measure number. The first staff (Violin) begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features a series of eighth notes, followed by a repeat sign and a melodic line. The second staff (Violin) starts at measure 6 and includes a triplet of eighth notes and first/second endings. The third staff (Violin) starts at measure 13 and continues the melodic line. The fourth staff (Violin) starts at measure 20 and includes first/second endings and a section labeled 'C'. The fifth staff (Violin) starts at measure 26 and includes a triplet and first/second endings. The piece concludes with a final cadence.

Scale/mode: Written in A Dorian mode (ABCDEF#G), played in G Dorian (GABbCDFG)

Tuning: De-tuned Fiddle FCGD. Notation is in Am to facilitate left-hand fingering

Dance form/rhythm: Waltz

Instruments: Fiddle, mandolin, African hand drum

Performers: Andy Baylor, fiddle, mandolin; Denis Close, percussion

Performance techniques: The melody line is doubled with the fiddle and the mandolin and set against the rhythm of the African hand drum with a rattling string attached. It is a kind of precursor of the modern snare drum.

Comments: Amamoor is the Aboriginal name given to a state forest just outside of Gympie, Queensland. This is where I was playing at the annual Gympie Music Muster with my band Cajun Combo. I wrote the tune in the motel room as floodwaters rose around us. The tune, a nine-bar waltz, conjures up an atmosphere of solitude, sadness and mystery with echoes of Celtic and Cajun sounds.

9. Creole One-step (solo version)

Violin

5 A

Vln. 5 B

Scale/mode: A major pentatonic (ABC#EF#A)

Tuning: Standard fiddle tuning, GDAE

Dance form/rhythm: One-step

Instruments: Twin fiddles

Performers: Andy Baylor, fiddles

Performance techniques: The first fiddle plays melody in a loose improvisatory manner with variations including slides, double-stops, trills and rolls. The second fiddle plays drones and double-stops in a rhythmic manner.

Comments: Having recorded this tune on Disc 1 with a small band, I wanted to try a version with two fiddles at a faster tempo. This version is a charged, energetic version in the classic Cajun style of unaccompanied twin fiddles.

10. Motor Boat Stomp

The musical score for 'Motor Boat Stomp' is written for Violin in G major pentatonic. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff is labeled 'Violin' and starts with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. It contains the first five measures of the piece, marked with a repeat sign and a first ending bracket labeled 'A'. The second staff is labeled 'Vln.' and starts with measure 6. It contains measures 6 through 11, marked with a repeat sign and a first ending bracket labeled 'B'. The third staff is labeled 'Vln.' and contains measures 12 through 14. The fourth staff is labeled 'Vln.' and contains measures 15 through 17, ending with a double bar line and repeat dots. The piece concludes with a 2/4 time signature change in the final measure.

Scale/mode: written in G major pentatonic (GABDEG), played in F major pentatonic (FGACDF)

Tuning: De-tuned fiddle: FCGD, notation is in G to facilitate left-hand fingering

Dance form/rhythm: Cajun two-step

Instruments: Twin fiddles, acoustic guitar, triangle

Performers: Andy Baylor, fiddles; Denis Close, triangle

Performance techniques: The melody is carried by two fiddles playing loosely together in unison and harmony or, at times, an octave apart. The guitar is strummed in a swinging chordal style and combined with triangle to create a light, strong dance rhythm.

Comments: Motorboat Stomp is a dance tune named after the Cooks River Motor Boat Club in Tempe, New South Wales, where I have played shows with the Cajun Combo over the last few years. I would describe this establishment as a funky club down by the water on the southern side of Sydney in an industrial part of town which reminds me of similar dance clubs in Louisiana.. I have always played to enthusiastic crowds of country music fans who enjoy dancing to the Cajun-flavoured music I present. That is why I have called it a 'Stomp'.

11. Uncle Bill's Old Hat

Violin

6

11

16

21

Vln.

Vln.

Vln.

Vln.

Vln.

A

B

C

D

Scale/mode: D major pentatonic (DEF#ABD)

Tuning: Standard fiddle tuning GDAE

Dance form/rhythm: Two-step

Instruments: Fiddle, shaker

Performers: Andy Baylor, fiddle; Denis Close, hand percussion

Performance techniques: Use of octaves, double-stops and drones on the fiddle; light, buoyant rhythmic accompaniment on a maraca-like shaker

Comments: This tune has four sections and is named for the smart Akubra hat, which I inherited from my wife's uncle Bill. I wear it often.

12. Rosalie's Mazurka

The image shows a musical score for 'Rosalie's Mazurka' in 3/4 time, F major. It consists of three staves. The top staff is labeled 'Violin' and contains measures 1-8, with a section labeled 'A' starting at measure 1. The middle staff is labeled 'Vln.' and contains measures 9-13, with a section labeled 'B' starting at measure 9. The bottom staff is labeled 'Vln.' and contains measures 14-18, with a section labeled 'C' starting at measure 14. Each section (A, B, and C) includes first and second endings. The key signature has one flat (Bb), and the time signature is 3/4.

Scale/mode: F major; (FGABbCDEF)

Tuning: Standard fiddle tuning GDAE

Dance form/rhythm: Mazurka

Instruments: Fiddle, body-slapping

Performers: Andy Baylor, fiddle; Denis Close, body-slapping

Performance techniques: The tune features string-crossing and short bows and is played in a loose, improvisatory style.

Comments: I wanted to write a mazurka after hearing how they were once part of early Cajun and Creole music as well as early Australian bush traditions. It is fascinating to realize that these dance forms were once part of the repertoire of pre-modern colonial emerging folk traditions both here and in the Americas. The piece is named for my daughter.

13. Sophia's Two-step

The musical score is written for three parts: Violin, Vln., and Vln. It is in the key of D major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The Violin part starts at measure 1 with a triplet of eighth notes (D4, E4, F#4) and continues with a melodic line. The first Vln. part starts at measure 5 with a triplet of eighth notes (D4, E4, F#4) and continues with a melodic line. The second Vln. part starts at measure 8 with a triplet of eighth notes (D4, E4, F#4) and continues with a melodic line. The score includes first and second endings for the Violin and Vln. parts.

Scale/mode: D major (DEF#GABC#D)

Tuning: Standard fiddle tuning GDAE

Dance form/rhythm: Cajun two-step

Instruments: Twin fiddles, mandolin, guitar

Performers: Sophie Dunn, fiddle; Andy Baylor, fiddle, acoustic guitar, mandolin

Performance techniques: Overdubbing was used to create a string band sound. The fiddles play a loose unison and make use of triplets and octaves. The B section features a Cajun shuffle rhythm with double-stops.

Comments: This tune was named for my friend, fiddler Sophie Dunn, who has played several of these tunes. With the addition of mandolin and guitar the sound is of a country string band.

14. Wombutta

Violin

7 Vln. 1. 2. B

13 Vln. 1.

18 Vln. 2. 3

Scale/mode: written as G major (GABCDEF#G) to facilitate left-hand fingering; played as F major (FGABbCDEF).

Tuning: De-tuned fiddle FCGC

Dance form/rhythm: Country Dance

Instruments: Fiddle, acoustic guitar

Performers: Andy Baylor, fiddle and acoustic guitar; overdubbing has been used.

Performance techniques: The melody is repeated with little variation, making use of double-stops, drones and unisons. The special tuning employed make for a unison on the top two strings which creates an eerie quality. The B section is in the relative minor key. The acoustic guitar employs a solid country strum with appropriate bass notes.

Comments: This tune is named after a small farming settlement just north of the Murray River, near Echuca. It was written in a motel room in August 2008. It is an old-timey-sounding fiddle tune written for fiddler Heather Stewart, who has a strong interest in Cajun music and old blues. Her family has a farm at Wombutta, where we played an engagement in the community hall.

Musical influences range from Cajun music, Blind Ed Haley³⁵ (an old-time West Virginia/Kentucky fiddler), and old-time Australian fiddling from Charlie Batchelor.³⁶

³⁵ See discography, Blind Ed Haley.

³⁶ See discography, Charlie Batchelor.

15. Kipps Horn's Favourite Two-Step

The musical score is written for Violin and Violin (Vln.) in G major, 4/4 time. It consists of four sections: A, B, C, and D. Section A (measures 1-4) is the main melody, featuring a pentatonic scale (GABDEG) with a first and second ending. Section B (measures 5-8) is a rhythmic accompaniment for the fiddle. Section C (measures 9-12) is another rhythmic accompaniment. Section D (measures 13-16) is a final rhythmic accompaniment. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#).

Scale/mode: G major pentatonic; (GABDEG)

Tuning: Standard tuning for fiddle GDAE

Dance form/rhythm: Two-step, four sections; AA, BB, CC, DD

Instruments: Fiddle, acoustic guitar, snare drum, triangle and double bass.

Performers: Andy Baylor, fiddle, vocals; Sam Lemann, guitar; Peter Baylor, guitar; Leigh Barker, double bass; Denis Close, percussion

Performance techniques: Pentatonic melodies are repeated on the fiddle with octave doubling and a strong sense of contour and flow. Minor chords sweeten the sound of this tune.

Comments: This four-part tune was composed in Lafayette in 2005 but was the last tune recorded in this Masters Project. I have named it for my supervisor as a token of appreciation for his insights into my project and all the help he has given me. This naming process is often used in traditional music. The idea is that you are giving the music to somebody.

The feel of this tune is upbeat. It has a lively Caribbean, or island, flavour created out of the catchy pentatonic melody combining with the light rhythm of the guitars and triangle. The inclusion of double bass adds depth to the piece and pushes it along.

Chapter 6

Summary and conclusion

Today, I fly home to Australia after six weeks of immersing myself in Cajun music and culture. I will not really know exactly what I have learned for some time. I will need a period of re-adjustment and, over time, knowledge and ideas will emerge. There are technical aspects of the music that I have been thinking of connected with rhythm: rhythmic bowing patterns and fingering of the left-hand ornaments, slides, drones, octaves and various combinations thereof. As well, there are questions of repertoire and I feel that I must let the tunes wash over me many times until I become familiar enough with them so that my fingers will just fall into the right place. The tunes are all so similar that it's difficult to pick distinguishing features and I know the locals sometimes get confused as well. There are so many two-part waltzes that sound the same. The melodies are usually simple and use only five notes. A good player can dress them up and make the tune their own. There are so many two-steps, stomps and breakdowns. They are dance tunes with the bare bones of a melody but powered along with incredible rhythm. Waltzes and two-steps make up the bulk of repertoire but there are also blues of various kinds and ballads and country songs. I have only scratched the surface and there appears to be an infinite number of tunes and a depth of repertoire that is astounding. No musician that I have met admits to knowing all the tunes, they just learn what they can from whatever source is at hand. The widespread opinion is that 'French' music is a gumbo—a bit of this and a bit of that all thrown in the pot and cooked up to suit the taste of the chef ... sounds good to me. It's really the approach I have taken with music in Melbourne. The secret is to make the dish taste delicious. (Baylor, Louisiana Journal, 2005)

This project has documented a personal journey. It is a journey which has many sides. It started in the 1970s with electronic recordings of music from faraway places fuelling the imagination of a young musician. Inspired by folk culture from other parts of the world

and educated in a Western intellectual tradition, I set about making meaning from the music that I was playing and hearing. I developed a musical aesthetic which was a response to a sense of not belonging. I identified Cajun music (and other forms including blues and early country music from the USA) with an idealized and romanticized Arcadian vision. Through my music I worked at introducing these themes into the Australian cultural landscape and finding my own voice.

Through direct engagement with the scholarly practices of this Masters degree, I have identified and learned about my place as an individual in history. I have also scrutinized the concepts of identity, tradition and authenticity and discussed them from the standpoint of someone who is not part of tradition but part of a modern world where identity and sense of self are negotiable and constantly changing.

My journey has taken me to Louisiana twice to experience Cajun culture first-hand. The first time in 1989 gave me the opportunity to experience the music in its native setting and meet musicians. On this trip I found the inspiration to keep playing and learning the music. In 2005 I again journeyed to Louisiana and my experiences during this sojourn have provided much of the raw material for this project. It was on this trip that I began composing the music presented in this project. I continued composing throughout the course of this project.

Methodology

My methodologies have allowed me to present a broad range of knowledge from seemingly disparate sources and present them as they relate to the music. Use of ethnomusicological techniques has allowed me to codify and analyze various aspects of Cajun music and performance and show how these have crossed over into my original music. Auto-ethnography has been combined with my performance-based practices as a professional musician to illuminate and explain my motives, ways of thinking and my personal and professional history. The use of personal narratives, particularly in Chapter 3, helped me draw attention to the themes which have underpinned the creation of my Australian-Cajun hybrid. Personal narrative was as an effective tool for establishing

insights into historical and social perspectives in Melbourne in the 1970s, explaining how my Classical education played a part in forming my ideas about folk culture and examining my creative processes.

Of importance in this study has been the use of a field journal kept in 2005 on my study trip to Louisiana. Technically, this has been an ethno-musicological tool, but has many elements of auto-ethnography in the way that it has presented personal comment, narrative, poetry and other styles of writing. I have used the knowledge located in this journal in a number of ways in this project. Firstly, I have presented historical and social information about the nature of Cajun music. Secondly, I have provided technical data about music. Thirdly, I have documented my own impressions, feelings and reactions to being an observer from outside the culture.

This journal contains two interviews with Cajun musicians which contain important information. For instance, I have drawn on the notion of ‘personal transcendence’ as explained by Joe Hall as a touchstone in my work as a performing musician and composer. This notion has been addressed in the song ‘Amede played Accordion’.

The music

The music is the centerpiece of the project. It is fiddle music inspired by Cajun music but which is not Cajun music. It is contemporary Australian music. It is not traditional but references tradition. It is closely allied to the playing and performance techniques of Cajun fiddle playing but not exclusively. There are references to other fiddle traditions including Celtic, Australian old-time, American old-time, Classical and country fiddling. The varied use of percussion adds stylistic diversity. The music is not about Cajun themes, it is about human themes. It is instrumental music designed to be listened to, or danced to in a relaxed, home environment. It is music imbued with many of the values associated with Cajun music, such as a strong sense of place, a ‘down-home’ quality, a casual, informal approach, a non-commercial voice, a need for deep personal expression and an improvisatory quality.

The project has afforded me the opportunity to focus on this body of work, to hone it, record it and document it. This is an extension of what I do in my professional practice as a musician but I have been able to combine the process with scholarly insight. This has been a rewarding aspect of the project and I have consulted texts on a wide range of subjects including history, art, social theory, ethno-musicology, auto-ethnography, located knowledge and ideas, and related them to the music.

The music, as the core of my project, has allowed me to re-contextualize my Louisiana experiences into an Australian setting.

Future directions

In many ways this project is a starting point. There is great scope to continue exploring my own creative processes as they compare to those of other Australian musicians of my generation. Indeed, I have considered how other Melbourne musicians (particularly musicians who were part of the 'roots' of Melbourne's alternative music scene in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s) each have their own individual stories. One of the ways to develop my research would be to form a study of a group of musicians in Australia who have pursued similar paths to my own.

In this project I have briefly touched on how I have created a sense of place in my music, most obviously, by naming various tunes after places where they were written. This is something that I partly learned from Cajun music as a method of identifying music with place and thereby yourself and place. How and why this process of identification is carried out in Australia is an area of research which calls into play some key areas in Australian musicology. It is a subject which could be usefully explored more fully in a future project.

I have introduced, as a theme into my work, the influence that classical literature and the concept of Arcadia, or Eden, has played in my artistic journey. This theme has strong links to the idea of sense of place and indeed the nature of artistic expression itself. I have

not had the space within this project to fully explore and develop this theme in relation to the playing of folk and other styles of music.

As an instigator of Cajun music in Australia and as a musician performing and composing Cajun-style music there is still great scope to further deepen my knowledge of this style, both technically and culturally, and to continue to develop a hybrid style of music. There is more to be done in exploring cross-cultural music-making and composition in combination with scholarly research. Whilst scholars and musicians within Cajun culture itself have explored and codified vast amounts of knowledge about the music and the society from which it grew, there is great scope for a musician from another place outside the culture to interpret and re-contextualize this knowledge in new ways.

Conclusion

The following comments come from the last days of my Louisiana field journal.

Some days I feel like I will not be able to play music at all when I get back to Australia. It just seems like such an unmusical place. Sure, we have a music industry and a professional scene, but there's not much musicality in the people or the culture as a whole. We're so 'Anglo', so hung-up about dancing and relaxing and just enjoying music. The musical passions of Southern Louisiana largely come from Africa. They have become part of the fabric of American culture. We do not historically have this cultural influence in Australia. I have witnessed on many occasions, a sense of unease in Australians when they feel that there's 'too much' music going on, it gets in the way of talking. Australian people are quite often intimidated by the power of music. Music is not a natural part of our socializing and family get-togethers. There is more of an established literary tradition and visual art tradition in Australia, and this is an Anglo-European intellectual inheritance. (Baylor, Louisiana journal, 2005)

Whilst it has been possible for me to create an Australian Cajun hybrid and present it to audiences in Australia, it has been difficult for the music to take root. Over the last thirty years in Australia, Cajun music has become known as a lively, regional style of American folk music. A few Australian musicians have flirted with it and attempted to get the feel and the flavour into their work. Generally speaking, the music can only ever be a minor style with a comparatively small audience. People know what it is, where it comes from and roughly how it sounds and they can buy CDs of Cajun music easily.

Over the last decade in Australia, the use of the World Wide Web in gaining access to musical styles has become of paramount importance. The effects of this have yet to be measured. These days, though, it is possible to see many historical performances of Cajun music on screen in your own home. When I re-read my narratives concerning how I first heard Cajun music in Melbourne I am struck by how things have changed. Back then, we diligently sought out the music from obscure sources and really knew very little about where the music came from. I think that there is something in the search, though, that makes you who you are.

Cajun music will remain a regional American style with a unique history and tradition of its own. Musicians will venture out of their territory and play their music around the world but will ultimately have to return home, as we all do. As the world becomes more of a global culture, we all paradoxically feel the need for our own sense of home and our own songs.

Australia will continue to be a place where this paradox is keenly felt. Rather than having the treasure of a traditional style of music which we call our own, we will have the freedom to mix and match any style of music in any way that seems appropriate to us. While we may long for the surety and comfort of a style of our own, we are destined, as a country, to construct our own cultural identities out of bits and pieces of other people's culture. We will take what we need. We have the abilities and resources available to allow us to transcend the boundaries of culture and style and to become whoever we want to become.

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Appendix A

ARCADIANA

ANDY BAYLOR and NICK LANGTON

1. *Here in this city, The rains pouring down
Sometime it feels like one hell of a town
I think of a time, now too long ago
When the music was good and the company real slow*
2. *It was deep in a bayou, on a hot Louisiana night
I hear the screech of the owl, in the misty moonlight
A fiddle's playing by the light of the moon
rock me to sleep with an old Cajun tune*

*CHORUS: Arcadiana, the fiddle and bow
The ramshackle blues, the spicy gumbo
Arcadiana, take me away
To the tune of my heart and I'll never more stray
(Alt ... to that happy place, where the music does play)*

3. *There was a woman, for there but a time
Heart and soul, that woman was mine
I looked into her eyes and nothing was false
And we danced together an old Cajun waltz*

Chorus

4. *I held her close, as close as I could
And we danced around the old cottonwood
But the dream disappeared, the curtain came down
And I woke up alone in old Melbourne town*

Chorus

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