

The CALD Front: A Summary Report of Arts Funding for Diverse Musical Disciplines in Australia

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Introduction

The following paper explores the flows of Government funding to what is often identified as diverse musical disciplines in Australia. It is part of a broader doctoral study concerning the Australian Government's contribution to the discourse and environments of World Music in Australia. Contextualised within the history of funding policy in Australia as it relates to multicultural arts generally (as covered by Smith 2012), this article discusses the flows of government funding using empirical data from the financial year 2010-11 as a springboard for further discussion concerning the nature and effects of the discourses surrounding diverse musical cultures in Australia.

As the result of becoming a signatory to the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005) in 2009, 2013 will be first year that the Australian Government will report on measures taken to protect and promote the diversity of cultural expressions in its territory, as well as internationally. Whilst becoming a signatory to this convention reflects the multicultural attitudes and policies that have informed notions of Australian identity since the 1970s, this paper specifically explores how this apparent affirmation of diversity is reflected in the practical flows of Arts funding. An additional question concerns the levels of funding available for diverse musical disciplines one might expect of a Government espousing these values for diversity. These focal points are exploratory, and therefore, this paper aims to offer a preliminary insight, and does not provide a set of set recommendations, as I argue more study is needed in these areas. This paper begins by providing a brief discussion of the ways in which sonic diversity has been discursively defined, which has then been utilized to categorize and distribute funding for music. I then highlight the disproportionate flows of arts funding, which privileges Western Art Music forms over diverse musical disciplines. Finally, this paper considers some of the arguments used to justify current levels of Government support for Western Art Music, and considers how these arguments might also be applied to the funding of diverse musical disciplines.

Articulating Sonic Diversity

There have been numerous terms used to articulate sonic diversity in a range of discursive contexts. The terms Multicultural, World Music and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (often abbreviated to CALD) arts have been among the more popular. These terms have been contested within industry and academic discourses at both local and international levels. These terms have been criticised for constructing biased distinctions of 'otherness', in which cultural essentialisms reduce diversities and complexities into singular, manageable clichés, seen through the "celebratory" and "anxious" language used by Feld (2000, p.151; see also Brennan 2001). On the celebratory side, one could argue that these terms, as applied to diverse musical disciplines, celebrate and promote the acceptance of sonic difference. On the anxious

side, diversity highlights imbalances in the power relationships between dominant and subaltern musical disciplines, and may as some have argued contribute to perpetuating these divides.

Whilst it is difficult to use the terms CALD, World Music or Multicultural in ways that do not immediately invoke both the celebratory and anxious narratives of sonic difference, these terms continue to have currency within institutional bodies, instrumentalities and Government supported multicultural initiatives. In some instances, these terms are distinguished from each other, and in other examples, the terms are used synonymously. For example, in an advertisement published on the webpage of Multicultural Arts Victoria (2012), all three terms were used to promote an upcoming 'Music Business' workshop targeted towards musicians from culturally diverse backgrounds (Multicultural Arts Victoria, 2012). The synonymous use of World Music with CALD and multicultural sounds is also evident in the 'About' section of BEMAC's website (BEMAC, 2012).

Despite the semiotic overlap between these terms, evidenced by these two examples, the funding categories of instrumentalities such as the Australia Council for the Arts more closely represents the definition of CALD as detailed by the Supreme Court of Western Australia (2009, p. 7.0.5):

The term "culturally and linguistically diverse" is generally used to refer to groups and individuals who differ according to religion, race, language and ethnicity — except for those whose ancestry is Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Celtic, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander...For convenience, "CALD" is commonly used as an abbreviation for "culturally and linguistically diverse." (Culturally and Linguistically Diverse, 2009, p. 7.0.5)

As a result of this categorical distinction, Australian Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander musicians and musical projects are often catered for by their own categories when it concerns the allocation of Government arts funding (see Seares 2011, p. 24). The distinction made here between the sonorities of Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Celtic, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and the others is highly problematic, not least because Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander musicians and musical disciplines are often associated with the World Music category in other spheres of Australian musical life. For example, Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu won the ARIA award for Best World Music album in 2008 and 2011 (Australian Recording Industry Awards, 2012). As a result of this categorical distinction, funds to these musicians and musical projects will not be accounted for in this paper.

As a point of further clarification, it should be acknowledged that Major Art Organisations such as the SSO are in many respects examples of the success of multicultural policies in Australia, where the demographics of the nation's orchestras consist of people from diverse ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds. While fully acknowledging this point, the focus in this paper is not so much on the assimilation or infiltration of musicians from diverse ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds into the well-established structures of the Western Art tradition in Australia. Instead, the emphasis is on flows of patronage to musical sounds whose disciplines are distinct from the Western Art canon, and which feature regularly in the broader discourse of diversity at the policy level.

Flows and Trickles

In the financial year 2010-11, Australia's premier funding body, the Australia Council for the Arts, contributed \$84.7 million to the funding of music generally (Australia Council 2011, p. 22). Of that \$84.7 million, \$51.3 million was allocated to the nation's Symphony Orchestras, \$21.1 million was allocated to Opera, and \$12.3 million (14.2%) was allocated to other music boards and organisations (Australia Council 2011, p. 22). Approximately \$6.5 million was distributed in grants through the Music Board for this year (this figure was derived from a document published on the Australia Council website detailing the list of grant recipients for this year. As of May 2012 however, this document was no longer available to the public). From this amount, \$333,660 (4.66% of total funding distributed by the Music Board)¹ flowed to musicians and projects that fit the definition of CALD provided by the Supreme Court of Western Australia (Australia Council for the Arts 2012). At the state level, an account of the funds allocated by Arts NSW directed to diverse musical disciplines equated to \$739,926 (7.37%). This includes funds given to the "World Music" project offered by Orange regional Conservatorium, and it was difficult to ascertain whether or not the style of music they intended to create was in a CALD music style, nor whether any of the musicians were from CALD backgrounds (Arts NSW, 2010-11). Arts Victoria provided \$759,154 (2.5%) (Arts Vic, 2011) and Arts SA² awarded \$65,4652 to musicians from diverse musical disciplines.

Whilst there was a large number of Indigenous musicians and projects that received Government funding by Arts NT in 2010-11, there were no grants directly awarded to musicians from disciplines that match the definition of 'CALD' as articulated by the Supreme Court of Western Australia, nor did these musicians receive any direct funding from Arts ACT,³ the Department of Culture and the Arts in Western Australia,⁴ or Arts TAS.⁵

In contrast, Western Art Music disciplines have a history of significant Government arts patronage in Australia. In 2010-11, the amount of funding received by the nation's major symphony orchestras equated to \$64.4 million. Specifically, the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra received \$7.8 million (Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra Annual Report 2011, p. 42), the Melbourne Symphony \$13.8 million (Melbourne Symphony Orchestra Annual Report 2010-11, p. 24), the Sydney Symphony received \$13.2 million (Sydney Symphony Orchestra Annual Report 2011, p. 15), the Queensland Symphony \$13.5 million (Queensland Symphony Orchestra Annual Report 2011, p. 37), the Western Australian Symphony \$8.5 million (Western Australian Symphony Orchestra Annual Report 2011, p. 35), and the Adelaide Symphony \$7.6 million (Adelaide Symphony, 2011, p. 35). This is a significant, and disproportionately high

1 www.australiacouncil.gov.au/GrantsList/f?p=113:1:1596458233354555 viewed 2 April, 2012.

2 www.arts.sa.gov.au/site/page.cfm?u=453 viewed 2 April, 2012.

3 www.arts.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/248765/Fellows_Project_Comms_announcement_Media_Release.pdf, viewed 2 April, 2012.

4 www.dca.wa.gov.au/funding/dca-grants/contemporary-music/past-recipients viewed 2 April, 2012.

5 www.arts.tas.gov.au/funding/funding_recipients/2011_funding_recipients viewed 2 April, 2012.

quantity when compared to the approximate figure of \$1.8 million funding for the diverse musical disciplines that fall collectively within the 'CALD' category. In other words, if 2010-11 is used as a general indicator of the flows of Government funding to diverse musical disciplines, Australian symphonies in one year alone received the total equivalent of approximately 36 years of funding distributed to CALD music disciplines. If funding to Opera was included in this equation, which received \$21.1 million from the Australia Council in the year 2010-11 (Australia Council 2011, p. 22), Western Art Music disciplines collectively received close to half a century's worth of funding (47 and a half years) to CALD styles for this year.

Heritage Arts (Re)Considered

The funding model, as of 2012, suggests that the Australian Government demonstrably favours and privileges Western Art Music disciplines. While there are many issues that could be discussed here, it is useful to firstly identify some of the effects of the institutional categorization of music, and how this impacts on the flows of funds to musicians and musical projects. A cursory consideration of the flows of funding to music suggests that musicians operating in the World Music, CALD and multicultural categories are likely to find it more difficult to attract Government patronage than musicians from the Western Art Music disciplines. Despite demonstrations of Government support for cultural diversity through such actions as becoming a signatory to the UNESCO Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions (2005), the figures quoted earlier reveal the disparity between the overtures to cultural diversity and the levels of patronage provided to sonically diverse expressions. In light of this data, it could be suggested that whilst Governments ostensibly support the values of cultural diversity, on a practical level, Government patronage for diverse musical traditions is comparatively miniscule.

An historical and ideological exploration into these funding models, which would include post-colonial, post-structuralist, cultural imperialistic critiques and ethnomusicological perspectives, exceeds the scope of this paper. It is however, worth considering some of the current arguments being made by advocates for maintaining existing levels of funding for Western Art Music traditions in Australia, as these provide insight into the problematic rationales provided for the funding bias. Dr Richard Mills, the Artistic Director of the Western Australian Opera, published a paper with the Australia Council for the Arts titled *Some Thoughts on Heritage* (Mills 2010). In this article, he argues in favour of the existing levels of Government funding for Western Art Music traditions. Mills's argument that musical traditions such as Opera and Western Art Music are deserving of continued levels of public funding can be summarized in five general points. Firstly, Mills argues that the Western Art canon is deserving of public funding on account of the level of excellence required to execute this music. He writes,

No-one buys a ticket to the theatre or concert hall to witness something ordinary, something that can be done by any reasonably intelligent person with a modicum of application and training – like making a computer game or designing an ear-ring...This knowledge and expertise will always, of necessity, find its highest expression through an elite skill base. (Mills 2010, p.3)

Secondly, Mills argues that the Western canon is a treasure of civilisation, and a "necessary heritage for a civil society" (Mills 2010, p.3). Thirdly, by stating that

“opera was never a money making venture” (Mills 2010, p.1), Mills alludes to the argument of market failure, that true art was never about profit, and thus requires a wealthy patron – here, the Australian Government – to support this practice. Fourthly, he argues that the major performing arts companies contribute to the “national narrative” and help cultivate a healthy society in Australia, arguing that Western Art Music’s benefits to society “should, in a democracy be the birthright of every citizen” (Mills 2010, p. 4). Finally, he argues that the removal of funding to the major art organisations (he cites symphony orchestras) would have a disastrous effect at all levels of musical training and expression, from the school music programs, to youth orchestras and tertiary level (Mills 2010, p. 3).

Arguments such this are still being used to inform Government funding decisions concerning music in Australia, and thus impact upon those who would seek patronage from the State. Whilst one can appreciate Mills’ passion for music, there are problems when this logic is used exclusively to Western art music disciplines at the expense of other musical disciplines and cultures, which have the potential to equally satisfy the list of justifications for public funding laid out by Mills. Let us consider Mills’ list of justifications at face value. If this logic justifies public patronage of musical disciplines, it is possible to apply Mills’ arguments for funding Western Art Music to a number of musical disciplines in Australia. This raises a pertinent question; whose cultural values does Mills’ arguments support? and how does this reflect and reinforce hegemonic structures within Australian society?

To explore these questions, let us firstly consider the notion of ‘excellence’. This notion is currently a necessary criterion for attracting Government funding, however, notions of ‘excellence’ are culturally specific, and thus can be detected in many musical disciplines that exist in Australia. For example, if one considered musicians of the calibre of Paco de Lucia or Jose Fernandez Torres (better known as ‘Tomatito’),⁶ one could argue that the excellence (and perhaps the related notion of complexity) required to perform the flamenco guitar is comparable with that of the string player in a symphony. Similarly, if one considered musicians such as Ravi Shankar or Alla Rakha,⁷ the excellence required to play Hindustani classical music with all its melodic and rhythmic complexity is arguably just as comparable with the excellence required to play Western Art Music. In fact, Mills unintentionally acknowledges the antecedent contribution of diverse musical disciplines to the heritage art now supported by the Australian Government, when he refers to the “genius” of the French impressionistic composer Debussy who was inspired by the “modes and rhythms of Indian music” (Mills 2010, p. 1-2). The point of comparison here is not to suggest that every flamenco guitarist or *sarod* player living in Australia could or should be funded by the Australian Government. Rather it is simply to highlight the culturally relative nature of definitions of so-called ‘excellence’ that is used in this context. Arguably, ideas of excellence are not exclusive to the Western Art Music canon. If excellent music is a criterion for receiving funding in Australia, then this criterion can be applied equally to

6 Paco de Lucia and Tomatito are considered two of the most proficient contemporary flamenco guitarists (see for example Sevilla 1995).

7 The late Alla Rakha is the father of *tabla* guru Zakir Hussein. He often accompanied *sitarist* Ravi Shankar, and they both performed for George Harrison’s “Concert for Bangladesh” in Madison Square Garden, New York, 1st August 1971 (Inglis 2013, p.276).

many musicians and musical acts that currently receive a disproportionate amount of arts funding.

Additionally, Mills argues that the Western Art Music canon as a treasure of civilisation, and thus is deserving of arts funding. To demonstrate this point, Mills uses the example of string player in an orchestra:

A fine string player in one of our professional orchestras is a profound repository of knowledge and cultural practice extending back to the 1600s in the very process of bowing and fingering that are part of the daily task. (Mills 2010, p.3)

The irony of this justification for Government support for Western Art Music, is that virtually the same argument can be made for many other music traditions. Many other musical disciplines have been identified as treasures of civilization, as can be demonstrated with respect to UNESCO's list of intangible cultural heritage (UNESCO, 2012). In this list, traditions such as the *maqam* heritage of those Middle and Near-Eastern musical disciplines are considered to be 'treasures of civilization.' The string player in Mills' example, could be compared to the Arabic *qanun* player, who draws on the profound musical philosophies and heritage that can be traced back prior to the 6th century A.D. (see for example Maalouf 2011, p.53).

Additionally, diverse musical disciplines suffer the same problems of market failure as their Western counterparts, perhaps to an even greater degree in Australia, where this music lies on the peripheral consciousness of mainstream media – often consumed simply as a souvenir of sonic tourism or token nod to the multicultural 'other' (Born and Hesmondhalgh 2000, p.2). And while Western Art Music has some historical significance to this country as the classical tradition of Australia's 18th century colonisers, supporting diverse musical disciplines is arguably more significant now as Australian identity has shifted from that of a European penal colony, through to today's articulation of Australia as a bastion of multiculturalism. Additionally, unlike Western Art Music, there is very little funding that supports pedagogical flows, from novice through to professional levels, for musicians from diverse musical disciplines. Further exploration into this point is outside of the scope of this paper, but is worthy of further scholarly attention.

In his paper, Mills acknowledges the importance of additional private patronage for Western Art Music, in ensuring the "secure establishment of major companies provides employment for artists to play, dance, sing or act and also – as an ancillary activity – to teach expertly" (Mills 2010, p. 3). As an indication of this kinds of private patronage given to Western Art Music, in 2011 the Sydney Symphony Orchestra received over \$2 million in philanthropic donations and enjoys patronage from such Principal Partners as Emirates, Credit Suisse, Bigpond and Ausgrid (Sydney Symphony 2011, p.18). What is not stated in Mills' argument is that the employment opportunities offered by the major arts companies only benefits certain artists, dancers, singers and actors. The reality is that there are no major arts companies collectively representing CALD or diverse musical disciplines, which means that it seems that these disciplines and musicians currently exist in exactly the kind of state that Mills fears would result for Western Art Music disciplines if their public funding were reduced. This reveals another layer of bias towards Western Art Music disciplines,

which receive significant levels of patronage from both Government and industry in comparison to those musical disciplines associated with CALD, Multicultural and World Music. At least with respect to Government forms of funding, there appears to be no logical argument as to why this bias should be maintained.

It is likely there are myriad reasons as to why there is so little funding for musical disciplines that tend to fall within the discourse of CALD, Multicultural or World Music in Australia, and an exploration of these is outside of the scope of this paper. Whilst a solution to the problem of funding for diverse musical disciplines that satisfies all parties may be elusive, the only fair solution is one informed by a culturally unbiased and theoretically fair framework. However, such a solution will likely challenge the privileged position of Western Art Music traditions in Australia. This paper has argued that diverse musical disciplines are worthy of public patronage for the same reasons as Western Art Music traditions. The huge discrepancies in funding allocations alone indicate the need to reconsider the proportions of funding distributed to the various musical disciplines that contribute to musical life in Australia. Further investigation and review into the kinds of funding available is necessary; for example, where the funding streams available for musicians from diverse musical disciplines are delivered through competitive rounds, the more lucrative funding for Major Art organisations are non-competitive, ensuring a greater sense of financial security. This has resulted in a biased funding system that privileges a type of peripheral music that has historical ties to European hegemonic groups, and is justified by culturally biased value system that applies a mono-cultural definition of 'art' and 'virtuosity'. With this in mind, it is also time to reconsider the categories that enable, and effectively disable, different musicians from accessing certain funding streams.

In light of the data presented in this paper, the current disparity between Government rhetoric concerning multiculturalism and the actual allocation of government funds for these musical disciplines is an area of funding policy that requires further investigation. In addressing this disparity, it need not be to the exclusion of Western Art forms, which justifiably seek government patronage, as do many other musical traditions which feature in the multi-cultural milieu of Australian society. I argue that it is worth considering a fairer funding system that includes diverse musical disciplines, providing intentional funding aimed at cultivating thriving and diverse musical cultures in Australia. If Mills' points are to be taken literally and without cultural-bias, then I could concur with many of his points, as these would argue that funding a diverse range of music with taxpayer money has the potential to benefit Australian society.

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