

Chapter One

Introduction, Overview of Malcolm Williamson's Life and Music and Review of the Literature

Malcolm Williamson (1931-2003) was one of the most successful Australian composers of his generation and although he spent fifty of his seventy-one years living and working in Britain, he continued to consider himself and his music to be Australian. He was part of the great wave of creative artists that left Australia for London after World War II, yet few expatriates achieved his level of success; he was considered the “most commissioned composer in Britain” during the 1960s and was appointed Master of the Queen’s Music in 1975. While his service to music in Britain is generally acknowledged by scholars, the same cannot be said of his contribution to Australian music. Although Williamson identified his music as “characteristically Australian”¹ and composed more than two dozen works specifically for Australia – many of which are based on identifiably Australian topoi – the recognition afforded to him in his homeland has yet to reflect the true extent of his creative achievements abroad. This chapter will introduce the thesis underpinning this research and include a brief biography of the composer and overview of his oeuvre in order to provide a context for the discussion of his expatriate experience and his projection of an Australian identity in later chapters.² It will conclude with a review of the literature, which will provide insight into the current state of knowledge about Williamson, his Australian music, and the expatriate experience in general.

¹ Malcolm Williamson, “A Composer’s Heritage,” *Composer* (Spring 1966): 71.

² For more information on Williamson’s life and music, see Carolyn Philpott, “The Master and the Media: Malcolm Williamson in the Press,” in *Musical Islands: Exploring Connections between Music, Place and Research*, ed. Elizabeth Mackinlay, Brydie-Leigh Bartleet and Katelyn Barney (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 157-88. This article is provided in Appendix C, “Relevant Publications by the Author of this Dissertation.”

The thesis underpinning this research is that Williamson projected an Australian identity through his music and public persona and that the investigation of the composer's expatriate experience and examination of how and why he expressed this national identity will make a significant contribution to the understanding of the composer's life and work, revealing the true extent of the impact he made on the arts in his homeland. This study is the first to be undertaken with a strong focus on the identification and examination of the many works Williamson composed for Australia. It draws on previously-unexplored primary source material, including correspondence and manuscript scores, to support the assertion that Williamson projected an Australian identity and to provide insight into the construction and manifestations of that persona and the effect that these elements had on the reception of his works. Through analyses and discussions of Williamson's "Australian" compositions, the musical techniques he employed to create a nexus to Australia in his music will be revealed. Works to be examined include the "Sydney" book of *Travel Diaries* (1960-61); *Symphony for Voices* (1960-62) to texts by James McAuley; *The Display* (1964); *The Glitter Gang* (1973-74); the Sixth (1982) and Seventh (1984) symphonies; and the bicentennial works *The True Endeavour* (1988), with texts by Manning Clark, and *The Dawn is at Hand* (1989), based on poetry by Kath Walker.

To place the discussion of Williamson's expressions of national identity in context, the composer's expatriate experience and views of his homeland will be examined and compared to the journeys and opinions of more than twenty other high-profile Australian expatriate creative artists. Importantly, this research will reveal many parallels that are indicative of the prevailing cultural attitudes towards expatriates in the twentieth century and which can be interpreted as characteristics of the reverse-migration experience.

Additionally, it will highlight the reasons why this composer's significant contribution to Australian music has been largely overlooked until this time, despite his many return visits,

a large corpus of works composed especially for Australia and the many public affirmations he made of his “life-long Australian identity.”³ Ultimately, this research will permit a reassessment of Williamson’s creative life and work and allow his contribution to Australian music to be more comprehensively understood and contextualised.

Past research on Williamson and his Australian music has been consistently hampered by the lack of available primary source material, such as selected musical scores and the composer’s personal correspondence, which were only made available to the public after the composer’s death in 2003. This is the first dissertation to be produced on Williamson since his death and therefore, it is also the first to take advantage of the increased access to these previously unexplored sources. Additionally, this dissertation has benefited from the input of some of the people who are considered to be the main surviving links to Williamson and who have helped to inform, clarify and consolidate the information provided in this dissertation. These people include the composer’s partner and publisher Simon Campion,⁴ his sisters Marion Foote and Diane Williamson, his daughter Tammy Jones, his professional colleague Kevin Power and one of his students, Don Kay. The information provided by these figures has helped to enable, for the first time, a comprehensive examination and discussion of Williamson’s projection of an Australian identity in his music and persona.⁵

This chapter focuses on the present state of knowledge about Malcolm Williamson. In Chapter 2, the experiences of more than twenty prominent Australian expatriate creative

³ Malcolm Williamson quoted in Anthony Meredith and Paul Harris, *Malcolm Williamson: A Mischievous Muse* (London: Omnibus Press, 2007), 458.

⁴ Simon Campion’s contribution to this dissertation has been both substantial and invaluable. He has provided the author with access to many scores that are unavailable elsewhere and has generously offered his insight into the composer’s working life and creative processes.

⁵ Many of Williamson’s closest professional associates are now deceased, including Sir Bernard Heinze, Sir Benjamin Britten and Sir Adrian Boult, as are some of his personal contacts and family members, including his mother, father and ex-wife, Dolly Williamson. Dolly kindly met with the author of this dissertation in person in London in June 2006, only a few months prior to her death, to discuss her thoughts and memories of Williamson and his music.

artists are examined in order to provide a context for the discussion of Williamson's own expatriate experience in Chapter 3. Unveiling the extent to which Williamson's experience was influenced by the prevailing *zeitgeist* and cultural attitudes towards expatriates is critical to understanding the reasons why Williamson projected an Australian identity and also to establishing the extent and diversity of his creative achievements and contribution to musical life in Australia.

Chapters 4 to 7 examine Williamson's Australian works chronologically, in order to prove that the composer projected an Australian identity in his music for the majority of his career and also to illuminate the compositional devices he employed at various times to create connections between his music and his homeland. Chapter 4 explores the first works that Williamson composed for Australia, including the *Sydney* book of *Travel Diaries* (1960-61) for solo piano, and three works for voice with texts by the Australian poet, James McAuley, *Symphony for Voices* (1960-62), *Celebration of Divine Love* (1963) and *An Australian Carol (Nativity)* (1963). Although the first three of these works have been examined in previous studies, this chapter provides the first detailed analyses of the "Australian" elements inherent in these compositions. Chapter 5 examines the composer's contribution to the all-Australian ballet *The Display* (1964), which was based on uniquely Australian topoi and fused the creative talents of three high-profile Australian expatriates: Robert Helpmann, who devised the scenario and choreography; Sidney Nolan, who designed the décor; and Malcolm Williamson, who composed the score. While this work has received a significant amount of attention from scholars previously, the present study extends the scope of enquiry to address how the ballet was representative of the expatriate experiences of its creators. This discussion focuses specifically on how Williamson's score for *The Display* contributed to the overall "Australianness" and dramatic effectiveness of the work.

Chapter 6 provides a detailed overview of the works Williamson composed for Australia in the 1970s and early 1980s, including analysis of the Australian connections evident in his cassation *The Glitter Gang* (1973-74), and the orchestral works *In Thanksgiving – Sir Bernard Heinze* (1982), *Symphony No. 6* (1982) and *Symphony No. 7* (1984); compositions that have not been examined in any previous theses. The discussion of Williamson’s projection of an Australian identity in his music is continued in Chapter 7, which focuses on the major works that he composed for the Australian Bicentenary of 1998, *The True Endeavour* (1988) and *The Dawn is at Hand* (1989), both of which draw on themes pertaining to indigenous Australia and illuminate the composer’s deep interest in, and dedication to, the political and humanitarian issues affecting Australians of all ethnic and social backgrounds. Although these works are two of Williamson’s most moving tributes to his native Australia, *The True Endeavour* and *The Dawn is at Hand* have not been explored in detail in any previous scholarly work. To contextualise these discussions, it is necessary to begin with a brief biography of Williamson and overview of his compositional output and stylistic influences.

Malcolm Benjamin Graham Christopher Williamson was born in Sydney in 1931 and raised in the suburbs of Mosman, St Marys and Concord, respectively, where his father was an Anglican clergyman. By the time he was of school age, he was playing the piano and the organ and attempting to compose simple pieces for the keyboard.⁶ At age twelve, he earned a scholarship to train with the Russian émigré pianist Alexander Sverjensky (1901-1971), and by age fifteen he was studying piano, French horn and violin full-time at the New South Wales State Conservatorium with the support of a full scholarship.

Williamson’s instrumental tuition at the Conservatorium informed the composition of

⁶ Williamson’s earliest surviving composition is a brief piece for piano entitled “Great Lady Waltz,” which he wrote at age ten as a birthday gift for his grandmother. The “Great Lady Waltz” is held in the collection of Williamson’s papers at the National Library of Australia. Malcolm Williamson, Papers of Malcolm Williamson, 1950-2004, National Library of Australia, MS Acc04/159.

several promising works that were successful in gaining the attention of the then-Director of the Conservatorium, Eugene Goossens (1893-1962), and it was not long before Williamson was studying composition on an individual basis with this world-renowned composer and conductor.⁷ While Williamson later conceded that the training he received in Australia was of a standard equal to the finest offered in the world,⁸ his studies under Goossens and Sverjensky inspired him to look for further instruction and career opportunities abroad. At the end of 1949, he abruptly left the Conservatorium and made plans to travel to Europe.

Williamson travelled to London for the first time in 1950, in the company of his mother, and settled there permanently in 1953.⁹ Soon after his arrival he commenced composition lessons with Elisabeth Lutyens (1906-1983), a pioneer of serial composition in England, and Erwin Stein (1885-1958), a former pupil of Schoenberg and an associate and friend of Benjamin Britten. Not surprisingly, Williamson's works from this period show a strong adherence to serial methods;¹⁰ however, there were a number of other formative influences that encouraged him to modify his approach to serialism in the search for a more inclusive idiom.

⁷ The instrumental works that Williamson composed during his early years at the Conservatorium include *Minuet for Violin and Piano* (1947), *Study for Unaccompanied Horn* (1947) for fellow Conservatorium student, Barry Tuckwell, *Two-Part Invention for Piano* (1947) and String Quartet No. 1 "Winterset" (1947-48). Under Goossens' supervision, Williamson composed his first works for orchestra: *Theme and Variations for Orchestra* (1947-49), *Scherzo for Orchestra* (1947-49) and *Lento for Orchestra* (1947-49). Simon Campion, "Draft of Malcolm Williamson, CBE, AO (1931-2003): Complete Catalogue" (Hertfordshire: Campion Press, 2008). Unless otherwise stated, all dates given in parentheses following the titles of works refer to dates of composition in this dissertation. See Appendix B, "Complete List of Musical Works by Malcolm Williamson," for publication details and additional information about the musical works by Williamson referred to in this dissertation.

⁸ Belinda Webster, "A Word With Malcolm Williamson," *ABC Radio 24 Hours Magazine*, November 1991, 34.

⁹ During 1951-52, Williamson spent a year each in Melbourne and Sydney respectively. In Melbourne, he established what was to be a life-long friendship and professional association with Sir Bernard Heinze.

¹⁰ These include *Variations for Piano* (1953), *Piece for Seven Wind Instruments and Piano* (1953), String Quartet No. 2 (1954), *Two Motets*, "Tantum ergo" and "Pange lingua" (1954) and Piano Sonata No. 1 (1955-56). Simon Campion, "Draft of Malcolm Williamson, CBE, AO (1931-2003): Complete Catalogue."

His conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1953 led to an intensive study of the music of the Middle Ages and pre-Reformation, in particular, the music of English composer John Dunstable (1390-1453).¹¹ Williamson drew a parallel between the “clearly organised” structures of fifteenth-century music and the theoretical practices of Schoenberg, but admitted that he preferred the “saner harmonic world” of the former.¹² He also undertook an intensive study of the religious music and theories of fellow Catholic composer Olivier Messiaen, discovering in the French composer’s music a language that articulated the religious beliefs he had embraced upon his own conversion.¹³ Other stylistic influences came from employment that Williamson found financially necessary during the mid to late 1950s. He worked as a piano teacher, a vocal coach, a nightclub pianist and as assistant organist at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Farm Street (1955-58), and at St Peter’s, Limehouse (1958-60), and each of these musical experiences left their mark on his mature compositional voice.¹⁴ These positions taught Williamson the importance of developing an inclusive musical language that could communicate instantly with the musically uneducated and encouraged him to modify his approach to serialism, which he came to view as an exclusive idiom, and to write in a language that was fundamentally tonal, and above all, lyrical.¹⁵ While many of Williamson’s early works achieved

¹¹ Malcolm Williamson, “Conversation with Malcolm Williamson,” interview by Hazel de Berg, transcript of sound recording, 8 October 1967, National Library of Australia ORAL DeB 290, 291, 292. Williamson viewed his conversion to Catholicism as a logical step from his upbringing in the Anglican Church and was particularly attracted to the rituals and music of the Catholic Mass. Marion Foote to Carolyn Philpott, personal conversation, 5 July 2005.

¹² Malcolm Williamson, “Conversation with Malcolm Williamson.”

¹³ Lewis Foreman, liner notes for *Malcolm Williamson Orchestral Works, Volume 1*, Chandos CHAN 10359, 2006. Williamson was deeply disappointed when his application for a twelve-month scholarship to study with Messiaen in Paris was unsuccessful; however, he later enjoyed intermittent lessons with the French composer. He was particularly attracted to Messiaen’s organ music and it inspired him to begin composing his own religious-themed works for the instrument, such as *Fons Amoris* (1955-56). Kenneth Dommett, “Malcolm Williamson Talks to Kenneth Dommett,” *Birmingham Post*, 23 March 1968.

¹⁴ Williamson also worked as a proof reader at Boosey & Hawkes, where he met several influential figures, including Erwin Stein and Benjamin Britten. Malcolm Williamson, “Conversation with Malcolm Williamson.”

¹⁵ Malcolm Williamson, “Conversation with Malcolm Williamson.”

widespread popularity and success,¹⁶ his penchant for composing in opposing stylistic idioms from work to work and often within the same piece frequently evoked strong criticism from the press. The criticism of Williamson's works and his public persona will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, which focuses on the composer's experience as an expatriate and his representation in the British and Australian press.

In addition to writing music in a variety of styles, Williamson composed music in a wide range of genres. During his first decade in Britain, he had focused primarily on composing music for the instruments he could play himself, producing a large number of works for solo piano and solo organ.¹⁷ His ability to premiere his own keyboard works had been an important promotional tool in the establishment of his reputation as both composer and performer during the 1950s and early 1960s and was successful in gaining the attention of individuals within London's musical society, such as Benjamin Britten and Adrian Boult.¹⁸ By the mid-1960s Williamson had extended his compositional range to encompass operatic, orchestral, chamber, solo vocal, choral, religious and educational music, as well as scores for ballet, musical theatre, film, television and radio and was commonly cited as the most commissioned composer in Britain. Over his lifetime, Williamson produced more than 250 works, including thirteen operas, thirteen film scores, eight ballet scores, eight

¹⁶ Williamson's first works to receive critical acclaim include *Fons Amoris*, Piano Sonata No. 1, Piano Sonata No. 2 (formerly *Janua Coeli*, 1957, rev. 1970-71), Symphony No. 1 (*Elevamini*, 1956-57) and *Santiago de Espada* (1957).

¹⁷ These works include *Epithalamium* for organ (1955), Piano Sonata No. 2, Piano Sonata No. 3 (1958), Piano Concerto No. 1 (1957-58), *Résurgence du Feu* ("Pâques 1959") for organ (1959), Variations on *Veni Creator* for organ (1959), Symphony for Organ (1960), Piano Concerto No. 2 (1960), *Travel Diaries: Impressions of Famous Cities for Pianoforte* (1960-61), Concerto for Organ and Orchestra (1961), *Vision of Christ Phoenix* for organ (1961), Piano Concerto No. 3 (1962) and Piano Sonata No. 4 (1963). Simon Champion, "Draft of Malcolm Williamson, CBE, AO (1931-2003): Complete Catalogue."

¹⁸ Williamson travelled widely as a performer, appearing as solo pianist and organist with a number of world-renowned orchestras, including the Hallé, the London Philharmonic, the BBC Symphony, the Vienna Symphony, the New Philharmonia, the Metropolitan Opera Chamber Players and the Melbourne and Sydney Symphony Orchestras and participated in broadcasts at Canterbury Cathedral, the Royal Festival Hall and the Royal Albert Hall, among other venues. Paul Conway, "Malcolm Williamson – A 70th Birthday Tribute," April 2001, available from <http://www.musicweb-international.com/Williamson/index.htm>; Internet; accessed 27 August 2008.

symphonies, four piano concertos,¹⁹ four piano sonatas and a sonata for two pianos, three string quartets, a large number of vocal and choral works, music for brass ensemble and military band, religious music, including several mass settings and works for organ, educational music, including several books of didactic piano pieces, scores for television and radio and numerous works for Royal occasions.²⁰

The creative impetus for many of these works derived from Williamson's interests in literature, religion, politics and humanitarian issues and from his personal experience as an Australian expatriate, which will be addressed in detail in Chapter 3. Williamson spoke several languages fluently and set texts by literary figures as diverse as Graham Greene, Oscar Wilde, August Strindberg, William Shakespeare, Jorge Luis Borges, Pär Lagerqvist, Dag Hammarskjöld, John Betjeman, Dame Edith Sitwell, Ursula Vaughan Williams, Mary Wilson and Dame Iris Murdoch, as well as texts by the Australian writers Manning Clark, James McAuley and the indigenous poet Oodgeroo Noonuccal (Kath Walker). Williamson also set numerous biblical texts and, following his marriage to the Jewish Dolores Daniel in 1960, he composed a number of works inspired by Jewish themes, including a concerto for harp and string orchestra entitled *Au tombeau du martyr juif inconnu* ("At the Tomb of the Unknown Jewish Martyr," 1973-76) and a song cycle for soprano and orchestra, *Next Year in Jerusalem* (1985). While he remained a practicing Catholic throughout the remainder of his life, Williamson committed himself to raising his and Dolores' three children according to Jewish practices. Following his divorce in 1978, he formed a committed relationship with fellow Australian and musician Simon Campion,²¹ which

¹⁹ He also composed numerous concertos for other instrumental combinations including Concerto for Organ and Orchestra (1961), Concerto for Violin and Orchestra (1964-65), Concerto Grosso (1965), Concerto for Two Pianos and String Orchestra (1972), Concerto for Harp and String Orchestra (*Au tombeau du martyr juif inconnu*, 1973-76) and Concerto for Wind Quintet and Two Pianos (Eight Hands) (1964-65). Simon Campion, "Draft of Malcolm Williamson, CBE, AO (1931-2003): Complete Catalogue."

²⁰ Simon Campion, "Draft of Malcolm Williamson, CBE, AO (1931-2003): Complete Catalogue."

²¹ Simon Campion later became Williamson's publisher, establishing the company Campion Press in the early 1980s.

continued until Williamson's death in March 2003. Williamson's son and two daughters inspired him to compose several works for children, including a series of ten mini-operas for audience participation known as "Cassations."²² These innovative works were particularly popular in school music programs as a means of introducing children to the mechanics of opera and were later found to be extremely effective when used with physically and intellectually disabled children.

Williamson's creative impact and the diversity of his interests and experiences are also reflected in the awards, posts, fellowships and honours he received during his career. In 1975, he was appointed nineteenth Master of the Queen's Music in succession to Sir Arthur Bliss. Significantly, he was the youngest composer and first Australian to hold this esteemed post in its 350 year history.²³ In addition, he was made a Commander of the British Empire in 1976, an Officer of the Order of Australia in 1987, awarded the Bernard Heinze Award in 1989 and received honorary doctorates from a number of academic institutions, including Westminster Choir College, Princeton (1971), the University of Melbourne (1982) and the University of Sydney (1982) for his services to music and for his work with the intellectually disabled. He was also the recipient of numerous fellowships, including two Creative Arts Fellowships from the Australian National University (1973 and 1981), which involved lecturing in music and Scandinavian literature and trialling his musical therapy techniques with disabled children at the Koomarri School; a medical research fellowship from the University of New South Wales (1981), where he was guest lecturer at the international seminar on mental disabilities; and residencies at

²² Williamson's cassations include *The Moonrakers* (1967), *Knights in Shining Armour* (1968), *The Snow Wolf* (1968), *Genesis* (1971), *The Stone Wall* (1971), *The Winter Star* (1973), *The Glitter Gang* (1973-74), *La Terre des Rois* ("The Terrain of the Kings," 1974), *The Valley and the Hill* (1977) and *The Devil's Bridge* ("Le Pont du Diable," 1982). Simon Campion, "Draft of Malcolm Williamson, CBE, AO (1931-2003): Complete Catalogue."

²³ The first Master of the Royal Musick, Nicholas Lanier, was appointed in 1626 during the reign of Charles I.

Westminster Choir College, Princeton (1970-71),²⁴ Florida State University (1975) and Strathclyde University (1983-86), where he held the position of Visiting Professor.²⁵

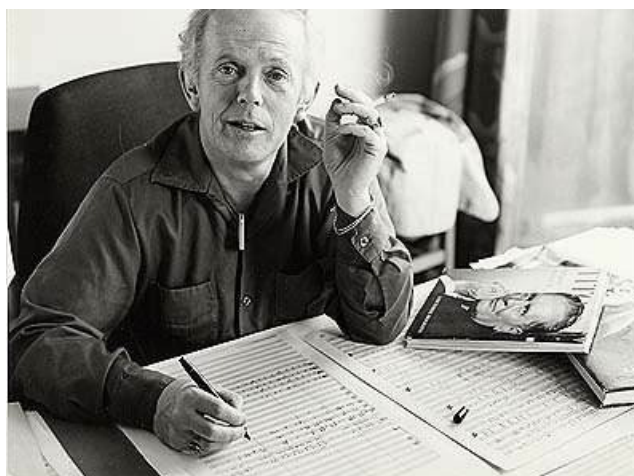


Figure 1.1 Photograph of Malcolm Williamson at age fifty.

Despite European influences and his decision to remain resident in London throughout his career, Williamson projected an Australian persona and maintained what he identified as a “characteristically Australian”²⁶ style of composition, stating in the 1960s “Most of my music is Australian in origin . . . not the bush or the deserts, but the brashness of the cities, the sort of brashness that makes Australians go through life pushing doors marked ‘pull.’”²⁷ Williamson composed at least two dozen works inspired by his native Australia and for performance in Australia. From here onwards, these works will be referred to collectively as Williamson’s “Australian” compositions. As the table given in Appendix A, “Williamson’s ‘Australian’ Compositions,” demonstrates, these works were composed

²⁴ For his residency at Westminster Choir College, Williamson learned the complete organ music of Messiaen (up until that time) for a series of lecture-recitals.

²⁵ He was also an active member of various musical associations, holding the first ever office of President of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra from 1977 to 1982, and participating as a member of the Society for the Promotion of New Music, the London branch of the International Society of Contemporary Music and on the Executive Committee of the Composers’ Guild of Great Britain.

²⁶ Malcolm Williamson, “A Composer’s Heritage,” 71.

²⁷ Malcolm Williamson quoted in “Success for Australian Composer,” *The West Australian*, 11 November 1966.

over the period 1960-1993 and were written in a variety of genres and for a wide range of purposes.

Despite Williamson's lifelong dedication to writing works for Australia and projecting a sense of Australian identity in his oeuvre, many of his works have been significantly overlooked by Australians and the local musical establishment. What is more, the recognition afforded to him in Australia generally has not and still does not fully reflect the depth and breadth of his professional achievements in Britain, especially all that he achieved in the years prior to his appointment as Master of the Queen's Music in 1975. Even in Britain, his contribution has been largely ignored since the late 1970s, as *The Independent's* Bayan Northcott has noted: "Williamson . . . remains astonishingly neglected for a figure of such creative individuality, substance and skill."²⁸ The reasons behind Williamson's neglect in Australia, and in Britain in later years, are too numerous to mention in this introduction and instead will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3. The general lack of attention paid to the composer is, however, reflected in the paucity of scholarly sources available that are dedicated entirely to Williamson's life and/or music, as will be revealed in the following review of the literature.

While there are many books, encyclopaedia entries, journal articles and theses that mention Williamson and his music, there are few dedicated exclusively to his life or compositions. Additionally, there are no published sources available to date that are dedicated primarily to the composer's "Australian" works or to his projection of an Australian identity, which was so fundamental to his personality and his sense of self. One of the main purposes of this current research has been to re-evaluate previously used sources and to uncover newly-available primary materials relating to Malcolm Williamson in order to make a significant

²⁸ Bayan Northcott, "Modern Music and the Tale of Two Ms," *The Independent*, 17 November 2001.

contribution to the understanding of the composer's life and work and to illustrate exactly how and why he projected an Australian identity in his music and public persona. It aims to fill in many of the lacunae identified in previous research and to redress some of the misleading and even erroneous information that has been published on aspects of Williamson's personal and professional life in order to give a thorough and accurate assessment of his contribution to music in Australia and abroad.

The literature currently available on Williamson can be divided into primary and secondary sources.²⁹ Primary sources include transcripts and recordings of formal interviews and speeches given by Williamson, his personal letters, musical scores, sound recordings with the composer as performer and program notes and articles that he wrote himself.

Secondary sources comprise biographies of Williamson, journal articles, theses, critical surveys of his music, newspaper articles, published and unpublished catalogues of his oeuvre, concert reviews and sound recordings of his music by artists other than the composer. Within the secondary sources, most of the literature can again be separated into two categories, with some cross-over of content: biographical works which comment on and record information about Williamson's life and the history of his music; and analytical works, which address in varying detail the compositional processes Williamson employed in one or more musical works. There are more works of a biographical make-up available than of an analytical nature, however, there are few sources that are comprehensive in scope or that focus solely on Williamson; many also address the contribution of other Australian, or indeed British, composers.

²⁹ Sources consulted in this dissertation include those held by the Australian Music Centre (AMC), the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC), the National Library of Australia (NLA), the State Library of Victoria, the University of Sydney Library, the University of Tasmania Library, the National Archives of Australia, the National Film and Sound Archive, the British Library, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), the British Music Information Centre and the publishing houses of Josef Weinberger (London) and Boosey & Hawkes (London). Additional material and further insights about the composer were provided by Williamson's partner and publisher Simon Campion; his ex-wife, Dolly Williamson; his sisters, Marion Foote and Diane Williamson; his daughter, Tammy Jones and one of his previous students, Don Kay. A full list of sources consulted in this dissertation is provided in the bibliography.

To place Williamson's expatriate experience in context, this study compares and contrasts the journeys of a number of other significant Australian creative artists who relocated to Britain for career purposes. The literature available in this subject area is mostly of a historical nature, including biographies and autobiographies of individuals and histories of Australian expatriation to Britain. Closely related to this subject is the history of the evolving relationship between Australia and Britain, which has attracted interest from scholars in recent years. While an in-depth study of the relationship between Australia and Britain is not the central aim of this thesis, the topic will be addressed briefly in Chapter 2 in order to establish an historical context for the discussion of Australian expatriation to Britain, and indeed, to provide a backdrop for the examination of Williamson's own expatriate experience in London in Chapter 3. Consequently, a number of seminal texts on this topic will be referred to in this literature review.

As a starting point, the relevant primary source material available on Williamson will be examined in order to gain an understanding of the composer's own views of Australia and his Australian identity, before secondary sources are evaluated. The primary sources available on Williamson are among the most useful and reliable resources on the composer that are accessible and most of them are held in archives at libraries and publishing houses. The largest public archive of Williamson's personal papers is held at the National Library of Australia in Canberra. The collection Papers of Malcolm Williamson, 1950-2004 includes personal correspondence, journal and magazine articles, newspaper clippings, concert programs, scores, recordings, program notes, photographs, scripts of eulogies from Williamson's funeral and obituaries.³⁰ Most of these items came from the estate of Williamson's mother, Bessie Williamson, and were collated and donated by the

³⁰ Malcolm Williamson, Papers of Malcolm Williamson, 1950-2004, National Library of Australia, MS Acc04/159. Williamson's sister, Marion Foote, graciously granted permission for the author to access the material held in this collection.

composer's sisters, Marion Foote and Diane Williamson. While some of the items included in this collection are secondary sources that can also be sourced elsewhere, the composer's personal letters, of which there are over one hundred, are obviously unique to this archive and are particularly revealing. Most of the letters were written by Malcolm Williamson and addressed to Bessie, Marion and Diane in Australia. They cover a broad range of subjects, from family life to new commissions and performances of Williamson's works. Many letters include detailed descriptions of the composer's feelings towards Australia, his desire to return permanently, his clashes with members of Australian organisations such as the ABC and how he felt about the criticism he received from the Australian press.

Although Williamson may have avoided mentioning to his family issues that may have met with contention, such as his homosexuality, the vast majority of the letters appear to have been written straightforwardly and without concern for upholding the strong façade that he projected when interviewed by the media. For example, in several of the letters Williamson has written candidly of his struggles with alcoholism and bouts of depression, as well as the deterioration of his eighteen-year marriage to Dolly; topics he avoided addressing in public interviews. It can be assumed, therefore, that the remarks he made in these letters about his relationship with Australia are also genuine and have been made freely, without reservation. As such, these letters provide glimpses into Williamson's true thoughts about his homeland and overall, they have proved to be invaluable sources for the formation and justification of many of the arguments made in this dissertation.

The National Library of Australia also houses two other important resources for research into Williamson's life and music that deserve a special mention here: a recording and transcript of a ninety-minute interview conducted in 1967 by Hazel de Berg entitled

“Conversation with Malcolm Williamson;”³¹ and a folder labelled “Biographical cuttings on Malcolm Williamson,”³² which contains a large number of newspaper clippings on the composer and his music. In the interview with Hazel de Berg, Williamson speaks articulately about his upbringing and musical training in Australia; the guidance he received from Sir Bernard Heinze; his life in Great Britain during the 1950s; early influences on his compositional language; his first published piano sonata (1955-56); his marriage and children; the opera *Our Man in Havana* (1963) and the chamber operas *English Eccentrics* (1963-64), *The Happy Prince* (1964-65) and *Dunstan and the Devil* (1967); writing music for ballet, including *The Display* (1964); his religious music; writing music for children; his thoughts about Australia, the Australian character and the limitations placed on Australian composers; his working habits and his compositional methods and style. In particular, the comments Williamson makes about his life in Australia and Britain, his opinion of Australia and the Australian character and his contribution to the ballet *The Display* have been useful in supporting many of the ideas expressed in this dissertation.

The folder “Biographical cuttings on Malcolm Williamson” includes hundreds of newspaper articles and concert reviews from Australian newspapers dating from the 1960s until the present day. These clippings trace Williamson’s success in Britain; his movements during return visits to Australia; local performances of his works and the comments he made about Australia and his national identity in interviews with the press. Numerous articles also document developments in the composer’s private life, such as his separation and divorce and in later years, the controversial remarks he made about others;

³¹ Malcolm Williamson, “Conversation with Malcolm Williamson,” interview by Hazel de Berg, transcript of sound recording, 8 October 1967, National Library of Australia ORAL DeB 290, 291, 292. This transcript is twenty-eight pages in length and the tape recording of this interview consists of three sound tape reels with a total running time of approximately ninety-five minutes.

³² Malcolm Williamson, “Biographical Cuttings on Malcolm Williamson, composer and Master of the Queen’s Music,” National Library of Australia, Newspapers/Microforms Reading Room, Bib ID 817772.

as originally published in newspapers in Britain. Many of the newspaper clippings contained in this folder have directly informed the discussion about Williamson's expatriate experience, his projection of an Australian identity and the way that he was perceived and represented by the Australian press in this dissertation.

The other major archive for research into Williamson's life and music is held at Josef Weinberger publishing house in London. This collection includes hundreds of informative newspaper cuttings on the composer and his music. These cuttings are mostly from British newspapers and like those held at the National Library of Australia, they follow the highs and lows of Williamson's career and personal life and collectively, they serve to illuminate the type of relationship he shared with the press. The archive at Josef Weinberger also contains many scores, sound recordings and video recordings that are not readily available elsewhere, including the manuscript versions of the piano rehearsal score for the ballet *The Display (A Dance Symphony)* and the full orchestral score of the *Concert Suite from The Display (A Dance Symphony)*; recordings of both of these works; and even a video recording of a full performance of the ballet *The Display* made by ABC National Television (Melbourne) and featuring the Australian Ballet and Melbourne Symphony Orchestra conducted by Robert Rosen. Without access to these priceless resources, the in-depth discussion of *The Display* provided in Chapter 5 of this thesis would not have been possible. The Weinberger archive also includes many photographs, recordings, advertising materials and other ephemera, making it a valuable resource for research into Williamson's life and music.

In addition to materials held in archives, there are several other primary sources available that provide insight into the composer's thoughts on Australia, Australian music and his own sense of national identity. These include articles written by Williamson, formal

interviews, lectures and a documentary film made with the composer's own words.

Williamson's 1966 article "A Composer's Heritage," which was published in *Composer* (the journal of the Composers' Guild of Great Britain),³³ expresses his views on the development of a "national music" in Australia, declaring "all doors must be thrown open to welcome it,"³⁴ and includes several telling statements about the composer's own construction of "Australianness." Many of the ideas asserted in this paper have been quoted extensively in articles and program notes since, such as Williamson's claim that his music is "characteristically Australian" and his opinion of the Australian character: "We Australians have to offer the world a persona compounded of forcefulness, brashness, a direct warmth of approach, sincerity which is not ashamed, and more of what the Americans call 'get-up-and-go' than the Americans themselves possess."³⁵

The broadcast lecture that Williamson gave as the Australian Broadcasting Commission's "Guest of Honour" during his first return visit to Australia in 1967 extended some of the ideas explored in the article mentioned above.³⁶ In this talk, Williamson spoke openly about his thoughts on Australia, its music, composers, and general public; declaring at the outset that he had longed to be back in his homeland so that he could say what he pleased about the country and its people. He announced that during his visit he had observed first-hand the "forthright" and "direct" social manner of the Australian people and stated his belief that "Our Australianness comes through in our music . . . the brash, candid, no-nonsense character of Australia directs an Australian composer's thinking."³⁷ His lecture also addressed the limitations placed on composers living in Australia and included his criticism of what he viewed as the "unacceptable" lack of government support for

³³ Malcolm Williamson, "A Composer's Heritage," 69-73.

³⁴ Malcolm Williamson, "A Composer's Heritage," 72-73.

³⁵ Malcolm Williamson, "A Composer's Heritage," 71.

³⁶ Williamson's ABC "Guest of Honour" talk was broadcast on 2FC on the evening of 24 September 1967, exactly two weeks prior to the aforementioned interview with Hazel de Berg.

³⁷ Malcolm Williamson, "Australian Broadcasting Commission 'Guest of Honour:' Mr Malcolm Williamson," 24 September 1967.

composers living in Australia; he believed that if Australian composers were given the sort of support that the building of the Sydney Opera House had received, there should exist a “precious and indestructible musical tradition, which would survive, even if the Sydney Opera House were to slide into Sydney Harbour.”³⁸

The paper “How Australian Can Australian Music Become,” which Williamson presented at the Commonwealth Section of the Royal Society for Management of Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce in 1970, takes the composer’s argument for government support for the arts one step further. In this paper, Williamson praised Australian composers for their dedication and persistence at working in Australia and simultaneously registered his disgust for the lack of funding they received from the Government; stating, “It seems that this music, if not ephemeral, must await some sort of posthumous discovery.”³⁹ He also re-addressed the concept of nationalism in Australian music, with reference to the contributions of four notable Australian composers, Nigel Butterley, George Dreyfus, Richard Meale and Peter Sculthorpe. He encouraged local composers to continue writing identifiably Australian music, stating, “The new Australian music is nationalistic music . . . [and it is affected by] the national character and the way of life.”⁴⁰ He did not, however, discuss how he projected an Australian identity in his own works in this particular article.

The sixty-minute documentary film *Williamson Down Under* was made during Williamson’s promotional tour of Australia in 1975, shortly after he was appointed to the

³⁸ Malcolm Williamson, “Australian Broadcasting Commission ‘Guest of Honour:’ Mr Malcolm Williamson.”

³⁹ Malcolm Williamson quoted in “Government’s Policy on Arts ‘Disgusting,’” *The Canberra Times*, 28 February 1970, 17.

⁴⁰ Malcolm Williamson, “How Australian Can Australian Music Become,” extracts from a paper read at the Commonwealth Section of the Royal Society for Management of Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce, 1970.

post of Master of the Queen's Music.⁴¹ In the film footage, Williamson addresses the criticisms of the Australian press, his personal feelings about returning to Australia and the impact of his expatriate status upon his sense of Australian identity and his relationship with the Australian press. He declares that despite his decision to live outside Australia and regardless of what the Australian press said about his supposed "lack of patriotism," he still considers himself Australian and finds creative inspiration in the local landscape and other uniquely Australian topoi. He acknowledges that at the time of recording the film, he had not yet made a deep impression upon Australian audiences and expresses hope that his appointment as Master of the Queen's Music will have a positive effect upon the reception of his music in his homeland in the future. He also discusses several of his compositions, including selected cassations, organ works, church music and operas, as well as his childhood in Australia and his friendship with renowned Australian conductor Sir Bernard Heinze. Unfortunately, he does not mention the Australian works he had composed to date in this documentary, however, his comments on his relationship with Australia and the Australian press, which reflect those made in his personal letters, are particularly insightful.

The last formal interview that Williamson gave was conducted by American broadcaster Bruce Duffie in 1996, over twenty years after the composer's appointment as Master of the Queen's Music and as he was nearing the end of his creative life. In this interview, Williamson once again expresses his views towards Australia and its influence upon his compositional style. Revealingly, he admits that expatriation had left him with the feeling that he was unable to "place" himself and that he did not have a "flag you can nail to the mast." Despite the sense of statelessness he felt, however, when asked about his feelings towards Australia, he exclaims "I love it!" and declares that his music is "absolutely

⁴¹ The film was broadcast as part of the BBC's Lively Arts Series in 1975. Malcolm Williamson, *Williamson Down Under* (London: BBC2 The Lively Arts Series, 1975).

Australian in attitude” and that “Australia certainly is in my blood! Australian vegetation, Australian sunlight . . . they’ll always be there”⁴² Although Williamson only discusses one of his “Australian” works in this interview, Symphony No. 7, the comments he makes about Australia on this occasion are echoes of those expressed by him numerous times previously and, combined with the other proclamations of Australian identity that he made in interviews and lectures, they have helped to provide evidence of the fact that he projected an Australian identity throughout his working life.

Secondary sources currently available on Williamson vary in terms of their purpose, scope, reliability and the overall contribution they make to the understanding of the composer’s life, personality, creative work and his expressions of Australian identity. The only substantial biographical account of Williamson that has been published to date was compiled in the years following the composer’s death in 2003.⁴³ Written by British authors Anthony Meredith and Paul Harris, *Malcolm Williamson: A Mischievous Muse* draws on a number of useful sources, including letters written by Williamson and interviews with his family, including one of his sisters, Marion, and his ex-wife, Dolly, as well as interviews with some of his professional colleagues.⁴⁴ As such, the sections of the book pertaining to Williamson’s early years in Australia and the fifteen years that he spent living with Dolly (until 1975) have been meticulously researched and documented and this information, especially some of the excerpts from the composer’s letters, has helped to support some of the arguments made in this thesis.

⁴² Malcolm Williamson, “Composer Malcolm Williamson: A Conversation with Bruce Duffie,” interview by Bruce Duffie, transcript, 18 October 1996, available from www.kcstudio/williamson2.html; Internet; accessed 7 June 2007.

⁴³ It was once rumoured that Williamson was compiling his own autobiography, and later there was speculation that the first biography would be written by the composer’s friend, Robert Solomon, however, neither of these projects were ever completed or published.

⁴⁴ Anthony Meredith and Paul Harris, *Malcolm Williamson: A Mischievous Muse* (London: Omnibus Press, 2007). See also Appendix C, Carolyn Philpott, “Book Review: Malcolm Williamson, A Mischievous Muse,” review of *Malcolm Williamson: A Mischievous Muse*, by Anthony Meredith and Paul Harris, *Limelight: The ABC’s Arts and Entertainment Magazine*, June 2008, 50.

Unfortunately, it is to the book's detriment that Meredith and Harris were not able to secure the imprimatur or input of Williamson's partner (and later also publisher), Simon Campion. Campion not only lived with Williamson for the last twenty-five years of the composer's life, but he also travelled with him, performed with him in some rehearsals and concerts, and assisted in notating, orchestrating, publishing and promoting his compositions. As Williamson's closest associate and confidant from the late 1970s onward, Campion is able to provide – and has generously provided to the author of this dissertation – invaluable first-hand accounts of his life with Williamson, including his recollections of the places they visited, the premieres they attended, the people Williamson associated and collaborated with and the composer's compositional processes and thoughts on Australia. Campion has also allowed the current author to access items and resources unique to the composer's estate and to Campion Press Music Publishers, such as the manuscript scores of various compositions, including Symphony No. 7 (1984), *The Dawn is at Hand* (1989) and the "Introitus" of *Requiem for a Tribe Brother* (1992), as well as numerous recordings of the composer's music (some with the composer as performer) that are no longer available commercially and a comprehensive, up-to-date draft catalogue of Williamson's complete works. The latter-half of Meredith and Harris' book would have benefited immeasurably from the input of a knowledgeable and credible contact such as Campion. As it stands, much of the content of later chapters of their book derives from secondary sources, including some erroneous and misleading media reports,⁴⁵ and focuses disproportionately and often scurrilously on Williamson's alleged personal problems,⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Some of these media reports will be discussed in Chapter 3 of this present study.

⁴⁶ Where facts are lacking in Meredith and Harris' book, unfounded trivia and empty speculation abound; a viewpoint that is supported by Campion. Simon Campion to Carolyn Philpott, personal email, 6 January 2008. Within *Malcolm Williamson: A Mischievous Muse* there is generally a deplorable lack of references to the sources of information, particularly in passages of text concerning the composer's alleged frivolities. In some places where a citation is provided, a specific source is not supplied, only a reference to an unnamed "friend of long-standing." There is an example of this on page 332 of Anthony Meredith and Paul Harris, *Malcolm Williamson: A Mischievous Muse*. The absence of references to reputable sources does not inspire the reader to have confidence in the authenticity of these stories and given that many of them are salacious in nature, it is difficult to believe that they have been told by someone who the composer would have considered a "friend."

which is perhaps a reflection of the inordinate amount of media attention that aspects of the composer's personal life attracted in the years following his appointment as Master of the Queen's Music.⁴⁷

In the parts of Meredith and Harris' book that concern Williamson's music, some details provided on the commissioning and performance of works and the composer's compositional processes are misleading, taken out of context or completely inaccurate. In some instances, the authors have even used false information as the basis for further speculation. For instance, the meretricious assumption that there was a rift between Williamson and the Royal family is based on a claim that the Master of the Queen's Music was deliberately excluded from the Royal Wedding in 1981,⁴⁸ as originally insinuated by the press in numerous articles published at the time. It seems as though Meredith and Harris were unaware, however, that music from Williamson's *Symphony for Organ* (1960) was indeed performed in St Paul's Cathedral on that very occasion.⁴⁹

In addition, there are many instances in Meredith and Harris' book where discussions of compositional techniques could have benefited from a close analysis of the score in question and/or the inclusion of an illustrative musical example. In the discussion of Williamson's orchestral work *In Thanksgiving – Sir Bernard Heinze*, for example, Meredith and Harris claim that the main theme of the composition is based on Bernard Heinze's initials, B.T.H.,⁵⁰ however, they do not give any explanation or musical example to illustrate exactly *how* these initials are presented in the score. As will be shown in

⁴⁷ Aspects of Williamson's personal life that impinged on his creative life were the focus of many media reports published on the composer and his music from 1977 onwards. Through an examination of the primary sources mentioned earlier, however, the author of the current dissertation has been able to provide a reassessment of the motivations behind Williamson's attitudes and behaviours, as well as his relationships with the press and professional colleagues. These ideas will be addressed in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

⁴⁸ Anthony Meredith and Paul Harris, 369.

⁴⁹ Simon Campion, Program note for *Now is the Singing Day* by Malcolm Williamson (1981), available from the Williamson Archive at Josef Weinberger Publishing House, London; accessed June 2006. Simon Campion to Carolyn Philpott, personal conversation, 29 June 2006.

⁵⁰ Anthony Meredith and Paul Harris, 385.

Chapter 6 of this dissertation, Meredith and Harris' claim in this regard is not entirely accurate.

Most of Williamson's "Australian" compositions are mentioned in Meredith and Harris' book, yet the descriptions of these works are generally restricted to commission and performance details, with the occasional comment added about the overall aural effect of the music. Williamson's projection of an Australia identity is not the primary focus of this British book, and therefore it does not include musical examples or the type of in-depth discussions of the composer's Australian works that are provided in Chapters 4 to 7 of this dissertation. Another point of difference between *Malcolm Williamson: A Mischievous Muse* and this present study is that the former does not address the composer's expatriate experience within the wider context of the general expatriation of Australian creative artists to Britain and in fact, references to other high-profile Australian expatriates appear relatively infrequently in this biography. Additionally, these authors have consistently misspelled the names of several well-known Australians such as Rex Hobcroft and Alan Moorehead,⁵¹ which suggests they are not particularly well-acquainted with some of the other most important and influential figures living and working in Australia during the latter half of the twentieth century. The book does include a comprehensive list of Williamson's works, complete with brief but helpful annotations; however, disappointingly, there is no discography. In particular, a list of original recordings with the composer as performer would have provided an invaluable resource for those eager to hear the real, dynamic Malcolm Williamson. Such a list will be provided in the discography of the present dissertation.

⁵¹ Anthony Meredith and Paul Harris, 47, 260, 527, 529.

Most other published works on Williamson consist of chapters or sections within discursive texts on Australian music and concise biographical entries within general music dictionaries and encyclopaedias. Roger Covell's landmark 1967 text *Australia's Music: Themes of a New Society* is one of the first books to acknowledge Williamson's contribution to music in Australia by including biographical information and a detailed ten-page overview of the most significant works the composer had produced to date, including four works written specifically for Australia: the *Sydney* volume of solo piano pieces in the *Travel Diaries* series; *Symphony for Voices*;⁵² Piano Concerto No. 3 and *The Display*. Covell mentions that Williamson had "proclaimed his national identity"⁵³ publicly and lists some of the musical elements in the score of *The Display* that are identified in Chapter 5 of this dissertation as identifiably Australian, such as "shrill bird chatter and hollow undergrowth scuffles of rain-forest country."⁵⁴

James Murdoch's 1972 book *Australia's Contemporary Composers* contains a biography of Williamson and one of the first published selected lists of his compositions, which includes fifty-four works composed between 1953 and 1965.⁵⁵ Murdoch describes Williamson as an "active force in British music" and lists works that he believes should be familiar to Australian audiences, namely *The Display*, the Third Piano Concerto and two cassations: *The Moonrakers*, which was presented at the Canberra Musica Viva Festival in 1967; and *The Stone Wall*, which was heard at the 1972 Prom Concerts in Sydney.⁵⁶ Significantly, Murdoch observes that "in recent years Malcolm Williamson has become aggressively Australian" and makes reference to the composer's public statements on the

⁵² Covell describes Williamson as "the most currently successful of all composers of opera of Australian birth" and as one of the "two best-known Australian composers now living in England," the other being Don Banks. He refers to *Symphony for Voices* as Williamson's "best known extended work for voices" composed to date. Roger Covell, *Australia's Music: Themes of a New Society* (Melbourne: Sun Books, 1967), 267, 168, 174.

⁵³ Roger Covell, 169.

⁵⁴ Roger Covell, 178.

⁵⁵ James Murdoch, *Australia's Contemporary Composers* (Melbourne: Sun Books, 1972), 205-7.

⁵⁶ James Murdoch, 205.

lack of governmental support for the arts in Australia. Murdoch observed that the composer's effect on the "Australian scene in general [had] been minimal so far,"⁵⁷ however, he predicted that Williamson would "surely revitalize many aspects of the Australian scene, were he given the opportunity."⁵⁸ It is one of the aims of this present study to evaluate how and to what extent Williamson and his music impacted upon and contributed to Australian musical life.

Biographical information on Williamson and stylistic assessments of some of his compositions are also provided in James Glennon's *Australian Music and Musicians* (1968), Stephen Walsh's entry on Williamson in the first edition of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (1980),⁵⁹ Thérèse Radic's contribution on Williamson in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Music* (1997),⁶⁰ Michael Barkl's entry on Williamson in the second edition of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (2001), and the article on Williamson by Nicolas Slonimsky, Laura Kuhn and Dennis McIntire in *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians* (2001), which includes one of the most comprehensive lists of Williamson's compositions currently available.⁶¹ Most catalogues of Williamson's compositions published to date are "selective" or necessarily incomplete because they were published part-way through the composer's creative life. This dissertation will present one of the first complete lists of Williamson's compositions that has been compiled since the composer's death in 2003 and made available to the public (see Appendix B).

⁵⁷ James Murdoch, 205.

⁵⁸ James Murdoch, 206.

⁵⁹ Stephen Walsh, "Malcolm (Benjamin Graham Christopher) Williamson," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 1st ed. (London: Macmillan, 1980), 436-39.

⁶⁰ This article includes a selected list of works.

⁶¹ Nicolas Slonimsky, Laura Kuhn and Dennis McIntire, eds., "Malcolm Williamson," *Baker's Biographical Dictionary of Musicians* (New York: Schirmer, 2001), 3944-45. See also Appendix C, Helen Rusak and Carolyn Philpott, "Williamson, Malcolm (Benjamin Graham Christopher)," in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart: Allgemeine Enzyklopädie der Musik*, 2nd ed., vol. 17 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2007), 983-85. Biographical information and detailed analyses of Williamson's organ works appear in Peter Hardwick, *British Organ Music of the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Scarecrow Press, 2003).

Brian Chatterton's chapter on Williamson in *Australian Composition in the Twentieth Century* (1978), edited by Frank Callaway and David Tunley, provides one of the most detailed overviews of the composer's output that has been published to date, including analysis of some of the most significant works Williamson had composed to that time.⁶² Despite the book's focus on Australian composition, however, Chatterton's discussion only refers to one "Australian" work by Williamson, *Symphony for Voices*.⁶³ In fact, Chatterton admits at the beginning of the chapter that he questioned whether a coverage of Williamson's works even "belongs in a book about Australian composers," considering the length of time that the composer had lived abroad. The deciding factor for the inclusion of this expatriate composer in the book was, in Chatterton's words, Williamson's "readiness, not to say anxiety, to associate his music with what he calls a 'slender Australian tradition.'"⁶⁴ The ambiguity of Williamson's cultural identity is obvious in the reluctance of many authors to include a discussion of the composer's works in their books on either Australian or British music. Most books on twentieth-century British music, for example, mention Williamson's name and in some instances even the significance of his contribution to music in Britain in the introductory pages, before excluding him from the main discussion on grounds of his Australian nationality.⁶⁵

Some other biographical sources, such as Michael Barkl's contribution on Williamson in the second edition of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (2001), include brief descriptions of some of Williamson's Australian compositions; however, there are few authors who have extended the discussion to mention how or why Williamson projected an Australian identity in these works. One source that does call attention to

⁶² Brian Chatterton, "Malcolm Williamson," in *Australian Composition in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Frank Callaway and David Tunley (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1978), 146-58.

⁶³ It is surprising to note that Williamson's most celebrated work for Australia (and the one that has had the most significant impact on Australian audiences and critics), the score for the ballet *The Display*, is not even mentioned by Chatterton.

⁶⁴ Brian Chatterton, 146.

⁶⁵ An example of one of these sources is Lewis Foreman, ed., *British Music Now* (London: Paul Elek, 1975).

Williamson's Australian identity is Roderic Dunnett's article on Williamson in *Contemporary Composers* (1992). Dunnett writes that Williamson was "happy to admit his 'essentially Australian identity' – of which a directness, freshness and unstuffiness perhaps form a part."⁶⁶ He also includes a brief comment on the Australian connections inherent in Williamson's choral symphony *The Dawn is at Hand* (1989); which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7 of this dissertation.

Although many biographical sources acknowledge that Williamson expressed a strong sense of national identity in his verbal remarks, and some even recognise Australian characteristics in the music he composed for his homeland, there is no comprehensive publication available to date that has made the investigation of Williamson's projection of an Australian identity its primary focus. Through the examination of a comprehensive collection of primary resources, including Williamson's personal correspondence and musical scores that have not previously been available to the public, the present study will provide a re-evaluation of some of the commonly-held perceptions of the composer's life, personality traits and creative impetuses, ultimately illuminating how and why Williamson projected an Australian identity and the effect that it had on the reception of his works.

Several journal articles published during Williamson's lifetime also provide insights into the composer's experience as an expatriate, the reception of his works in Britain and Australia, his thoughts on Australia, his construct of "Australianness" and his creative processes. These articles will be examined briefly in chronological order to illustrate the direction of research undertaken to date. Colin Mason's article from 1962 is one of the first scholarly articles to be published that is dedicated solely to Williamson and his compositions. It begins in a biographical mode of delivery and proceeds via discussions of

⁶⁶ Roderic Dunnett, "Malcolm Williamson," in *Contemporary Composers*, ed. Brian Morton and Pamela Collins (London: St James Press, 1992), 968.

the major works that Williamson had produced to that time, to conclude with a final paragraph which predicts that “his music, by sheer force of invention and originality, will increasingly demand our attention.”⁶⁷ Although this article was written very early in Williamson’s career and does not address the significance of his early expressions of national identity in music, it does mention two of the works with connections to Australia that he composed in the early 1960s: *Celebration of Divine Love* and *Symphony for Voices*, which both feature texts by Australian poet James McAuley. Mason describes the latter work as “the finest example among his many shortish choral works of his most “serious” style.”⁶⁸

Similarly, Stephen Walsh’s article “Williamson the Many-Sided” provides an in-depth survey of the most significant compositions Williamson had written to that time, including analytical overviews of *Celebration of Divine Love* and *Symphony for Voices*. The focus of Walsh’s research is on the compositional techniques employed, however, rather than on the literary themes or other Australian connections found within these works.

By Williamson’s fiftieth birthday in November 1981, it had become obvious to music critics and musicologists in Britain and Australia that many of the composer’s works that had been immensely popular with audiences and concert programmers in the late 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s were now on the brink of obscurity. Most scholarly articles published from this time onward attempt to address the reasons for the sudden lack of interest in this formerly-successful composer’s musical output. Most of these articles were published in British sources, however, and consequently they do not draw attention to how

⁶⁷ Colin Mason, “The Music of Malcolm Williamson,” *The Musical Times* (November 1962): 759.

⁶⁸ Colin Mason, 758-59.

his compositions were received in Australia or examine his relationship with the Australian press.⁶⁹

Respected music critic Ernest Bradbury, in his article “Williamson at 50,” attributes the decline of Williamson’s popularity to the “burden” he carried as Master of the Queen’s Music.⁷⁰ He questions whether the honour may be “too onerous” or if it might be an “inhibiting factor in the development of a lively, compassionate, wholly extrovert composer.”⁷¹ Insightfully, he proposes that the tenure of Master should be reduced from a life-long post to a mere five or ten-year appointment, “after which the holder would be released for – if he so wished – even anarchical freedom as an artist.”⁷² It seems that the Queen’s advisors agreed with Bradbury; Williamson’s successor, Sir Peter Maxwell-Davies, has been appointed to the post for a ten-year period only.

Fiona Richards’ article from 1991 also observes that the composer has been “unjustly neglected of late” and proceeds to provide an informative survey of over thirty of his works, which illuminates the diversity of his output and indirectly implies that a revival of interest in his music is warranted.⁷³ Richards describes several works that Williamson composed for Australia, including *The Display*, the Second and Third Piano Concertos, Symphony No. 7, *Symphony for Voices*, and *The Dawn is at Hand*. Perhaps due to the fact that her research interests extend to Australian music, this British author and academic makes reference, albeit briefly, to the Australian connections evident in the scores of *The Display* and *The Dawn is at Hand*, stating of the former, “[*The Display*] reflects

⁶⁹ These topics will be addressed in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

⁷⁰ Ernest Bradbury, “Williamson at 50,” *The Musical Times* 122: 1665 (November 1981): 737. Most of Bradbury’s article focuses on the *Mass of Christ the King*, due to it being the “most substantial work by Williamson [written] in the last five years (the period that goes beyond that covered by Stephen Walsh in *The New Grove*).” Ernest Bradbury, 737.

⁷¹ Ernest Bradbury, 737.

⁷² Ernest Bradbury, 737.

⁷³ Fiona Richards, “Malcolm Williamson,” *Classical Music: The Repertoire Guide* (12 January 1991).

Williamson's affinity with his home country in its portrayal of the heart of the Australian forestland."⁷⁴ Although she has only written a few sentences on the subject, Richards is one of the few British scholars to recognise and make note of Williamson's expressions of Australian identity in his musical works.

Chris de Souza's article "The Right Question," written in celebration of Williamson's sixtieth birthday, provides more insight than most other scholarly articles into Williamson's expatriate experience and views on Australia.⁷⁵ De Souza interviewed Williamson prior to writing the article and has included word-for-word quotations from the composer's replies to questions about his life, relationship with Australia and the way he was treated by the press. Williamson's responses to questions about his appointment as Master of the Queen's music and the criticism it attracted in Australia are especially revealing and underpin some of the arguments made in this dissertation. For example, Williamson admits to de Souza that he feels as though Australia had "rejected" him and that he had been left to "make [his] own way in Britain,"⁷⁶ but then later in the same interview he goes to great lengths to reaffirm his Australian identity and the Australianness of his music, stating, "my Australianism is in me . . . in the music, it's only an Australian . . . who would push through a door marked 'pull,'" a metaphor he had used numerous times previously when discussing the unique qualities of the Australian character.

Christopher Austin, a British conductor, orchestrator and academic and one of the few to champion Williamson's works in later years, wrote an article for *British Music* that questions why the music of this prolific and once-successful composer is now so rarely

⁷⁴ Fiona Richards, "Malcolm Williamson."

⁷⁵ Chris de Souza, "The Right Question," *The Musical Times* 132: 1785 (November 1991): 562-64.

⁷⁶ Malcolm Williamson quoted in Chris de Souza, "The Right Question," 563.

heard.⁷⁷ Austin gives two possible explanations for this dramatic shift of public interest: firstly, he believes that “an overriding characteristic of our contemporary musical life is its short memory . . . [in other words, this culture] values the new for a time and then discards it,” and secondly, he suggests that Williamson may have been “a victim of his own prodigality” because in Britain there exists a “popular critical equation (selectively applied) that a *fluent* composer is most likely a *facile* composer whose output is necessarily uneven because of composing *too much* . . . this critical suspicion has pertained to most assessments of Williamson’s work.”⁷⁸ While these arguments are convincing and probably entirely accurate, Austin does not extend the discussion to question *why* Williamson adopted a wide-ranging and inclusive idiom in the first place. As later chapters of this present study will reveal, this is directly related to the composer’s Australian background and his experience as an Australian expatriate living in Britain. There are also several other reasons for the decline of Williamson’s popularity that Austin did not address and these will be discussed in Chapter 3. Austin also describes, in varying detail, a number of the most significant works that Williamson produced during the 1960s, including *The Display*. In his discussion of this work, however, he focuses more on aspects of the scenario rather than on how its uniquely Australian themes are represented by the composer in the score; this latter topic will be addressed in detail in Chapter 5.

Of Williamson’s “Australian” works, *The Display* is the most widely known and therefore, it is not surprising that this work, with its provocative scenario and imaginative musical score, has attracted the most attention from scholars of any of the works he produced for Australia. One of the first scholarly articles to be published on *The Display* actually focuses on the ballet’s décor rather than its scenario, choreography or music. Michelle

⁷⁷ Christopher Austin, “To Be a Pilgrim – Malcolm Williamson at 70,” *British Music* 23 (2001): 5-9. This article was written to mark the occasion of the composer’s seventieth birthday.

⁷⁸ Christopher Austin, 5, 9.

Potter's article "Spatial Boundaries: Sidney Nolan's Ballet Designs" describes Nolan's setting and costumes for *The Display* and discusses how they helped to advance the narrative and mood of the ballet's scenario and how they complemented and enhanced Helpmann's choreography.⁷⁹ Potter also comments on the significance of *The Display* as the first "wholly Australian"⁸⁰ ballet for the Australian Ballet company, as well as Nolan's contribution to the ballet's overall success.

This was followed in 1999 by Amanda Card's article "Violence, Vengeance and Violation: 'The Display,' A 'Powerful Dramatic Work, Intended to be Very Australian,'" which provides a descriptive reading of the scenario, choreography and score of *The Display* and an overview of the creation, performance and critical reception of the work; addressing aspects of national representation and gender identity and exploring the relationship between music and dance.⁸¹ Although published in a music journal, the article focuses heavily on the contribution of choreographer Robert Helpmann to the ballet, including his attempts to capture a sense of the Australian "way of life" in the scenario.⁸² While Card mentions some of the compositional devices employed by Williamson to support Helpmann's scenario, she does not address in any detail the composer's use of instrumental colour and carefully-crafted melodic and rhythmic figures to underpin and enhance the ballet's uniquely Australian elements. As a part of the present study, examination of the full-score and video recording of *The Display* has identified a number of compositional

⁷⁹ Michelle Potter, "Spatial Boundaries: Sidney Nolan's Ballet Designs," *Brolga* (December 1995): 53-67. This article also examines two of Nolan's previous ballet commissions, *Icare* (1940) and *Rite of Spring* (1962), and discusses the artist's exploration of spatial boundaries, including those between performer and design, in order to create coherent, three-dimensional spaces in which the performances could unfold.

⁸⁰ Michelle Potter, 62.

⁸¹ Amanda Card, "Violence, Vengeance and Violation: 'The Display,' A 'Powerful Dramatic Work, Intended to be Very Australian,'" *Australasian Music Research* 4 (1999): 77. Further information about *The Display* can be found in Peggy van Praagh, *Ballet in Australia* (Melbourne: Longmans, 1965); Ian F. Brown ed., *The Australian Ballet 1962-1965: A Record of the Company, its Dancers and its Ballets* (Melbourne: Longmans, 1967); and Edward H. Pask, *Ballet in Australia: The Second Act 1940-1980* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1982).

⁸² It also includes several paragraphs detailing Helpmann's efforts to construct and maintain a public image of himself as the "local boy who made good" in Australia. Amanda Card, 81.

techniques through which Williamson reinforced the Australian topoi explored in the ballet's scenario.

Williamson's score for *The Display* has also been examined in at least two previous Ph.D. dissertations. Joel Crotty's much-quoted dissertation from 1999 focuses on emerging balletic collaborations in Australia up to the year 1964, with particular focus on ballets that reflect the Australian "way of life" and explore the unique aspects of Australian society and its natural environment.⁸³ *The Display* is discussed in detail, including the many Australian themes explored in the ballet's scenario and how they are represented in the score. Crotty provides a descriptive analysis of the visual and aural effects of the ballet, supported by illustrative musical examples, rather than an in-depth analysis of compositional devices used. His discussion is somewhat limited by the fact that he was not able to access the full theatrical score of the ballet and instead had to rely on the greatly reduced concert suite version to inform his research.⁸⁴ Helpfully, however, he places the ballet and its reception within its historical context and his observation that the *The Display* is as ingrained in the "Australian aesthetic"⁸⁵ as Antill's *Corroboree* is both perceptive and insightful.

Rachel Hocking's 2006 dissertation aims to provide an extension of Crotty's research.⁸⁶ Hocking gives a comprehensive overview of *The Display* and three other successful Australian ballets, using the works as case studies through which she illuminates the common types of artistic connections made between composers and choreographers in

⁸³ Joel Crotty, "Choreographic Music in Australia, 1913-1964: From Foreign Reliance to an Independent Australian Stance," Ph.D. dissertation, Monash University, June 1999.

⁸⁴ Joel Crotty, 267.

⁸⁵ Joel Crotty, 128.

⁸⁶ Rachel Hocking, "Crafting Connections: Original Music for the Dance in Australia, 1960-2000," Ph.D. dissertation, School of Music and Music Education, University of New South Wales, 2006.

Australia between the years 1960 and 2000.⁸⁷ In her discussion of *The Display*, Hocking focuses on the process of collaboration between Helpmann and Williamson and the influences on the composition of the music. She includes analysis of the main themes and overall structure of the score, showing the relationships between the melodic themes used to represent each character and revealing that the “dance symphony,” as Williamson referred to it, follows the theatrical form of a dance suite, rather than the form of a traditional four-movement symphony.

Hocking briefly mentions the Australian themes explored in the synopsis and how they are reinforced by the score, such as the use of bird calls to represent the Australian lyrebird. While her analysis is detailed, there are a few glaring omissions in her discussion of the work. For example, she makes the claim that “unlike Australian composers who followed him, Williamson asserted that he wrote in an Australian way merely because he was Australian He did not make a decision to write ‘Australian’ music: he assumed that whatever he wrote would be ‘Australian.’”⁸⁸ While this may have been true during the early 1960s when Williamson was working on *The Display*, the same could not be said of the works he composed for Australia in the 1970s and 1980s, in which it is obvious that he had made a conscious decision to write “Australian” music; however, Hocking does not make this point clear.⁸⁹ Further to this, Hocking makes the assertion that the character of “The Outsider” in the ballet was particularly relevant to the three collaborators because they had each “experienced being outsiders both in Australian and international society;”⁹⁰ however, she does not elaborate upon this point or support it with references or quotations

⁸⁷ Rachel Hocking, 14.

⁸⁸ Rachel Hocking, 126-27.

⁸⁹ The works Williamson composed on Australian themes in the 1970s and 1980s will be discussed in detail in Chapters 6 and 7 of this dissertation. In addition, Hocking states that the collaboration between Helpmann, Williamson and Nolan was “one of the most distinguished collaborations of all time, as all three participants had been knighted by the Queen.” Rachel Hocking, 127. Although it can still be considered a “distinguished” collaboration because of the prominent position held by each of the creative artists in their respective field, it is a widely-known fact that Williamson was never offered a knighthood, neither before nor after he was appointed Master of the Queen’s Music.

⁹⁰ Rachel Hocking, 154.

from the individuals in question, despite the fact that each spoke openly about such topics in interviews with the press. This idea will be addressed and expanded upon in Chapter 5.

Other previous theses or dissertations on Williamson's music have restricted their subject matter to a specific musical genre,⁹¹ or undertaken analysis of one composition,⁹² or alternatively, investigated Williamson's music in conjunction with works by other composers.⁹³ While these previous theses have contributed to the body of knowledge in relation to various aspects of Williamson's oeuvre and compositional language, few attempts have been made to discuss the works he composed for Australia and to date, no previous study has focussed on the composer's projection of Australian identity, his expatriate experience, or his contribution to music in Australia. Only recently, since Williamson's death in 2003, has it been possible to contextualise and provide a thorough evaluation of his contribution to music in Australia and abroad. There are now more primary sources available on the composer than ever before, and this current study is the first to draw on valuable previously-unexplored material, such as manuscript scores and the composer's personal correspondence, to support, question and in some instances, refute, the information provided in previous studies.

As Paul Conway observed in 2008, "a detailed survey and critical analysis of Williamson's output remains to be written"⁹⁴ and while a comprehensive analysis of the composer's complete corpus of musical works is beyond the scope of this present study, this project

⁹¹ See Fiona Trisha Cook, "A Critical Review of Select Works for Solo Voice and Piano of Malcolm Williamson," Honours thesis, University of Queensland, 1984; Elizabeth M. Crawford, "The Published Piano Sonatas of Malcolm Williamson: A Critical Analysis," Honours Thesis, University of Queensland, 1985; and Belinda Kendall-Smith, "Pitch Processes in the Major Symphonies of Malcolm Williamson," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Queensland, 1995.

⁹² See Phillip Gearing, "Malcolm Williamson's Organ Symphony: An Analysis of Serial Technique," M.Mus thesis, University of Queensland, 1989.

⁹³ See Barbara Janet Wilson, "Select Vocal Works for Female Voice by Six Australian Composers," Honours thesis, University of Queensland, 1979.

⁹⁴ Paul Conway, "Book Reviews, Malcolm Williamson: A Mischievous Muse by Anthony Meredith and Paul Harris," *Tempo* 62 (244): 49.

nevertheless aims to fill a gap in the literature by providing a detailed survey of the works he composed specifically for Australia and identifying the ways through which he created a nexus between these compositions and a sense of Australia. With a revival of his music now underway, it is timely and appropriate to study Malcolm Williamson's contribution to music and cultural life in Australia.

The link between Williamson's projection of an Australian identity and his expatriate experience underpins the main argument of this dissertation and to place this discussion in context, the experiences of numerous other Australian expatriate creative artists will be considered in Chapter 2. There are several useful sources available that address the topic of expatriation generally, including Jim Davidson's 1978 book *The Expatriates*; Leon and Rebeca Grinberg's *Psychoanalytic Perspectives on Migration and Exile* (1989); K.S. Inglis' chapter "Going Home: Australians in England, 1870-1900" in *Home or Away? Immigrants in Colonial Australia* (1992); and Carl Bridge and Glenn Calderwood's article "Australians in the UK" in *Around the Globe* (Autumn 2006). There are few sources, however, that are devoted entirely to exploring the experiences of Australian expatriate creative artists, despite the fact that most viewed the act of leaving Australia as a "rite of passage." The first and only study to examine this topic comprehensively is Stephen Alomes' *When London Calls: the Expatriation of Australian Creative Artists to Britain* (1999).⁹⁵ This book can be viewed as a collective biography of several groups of prominent Australians from the fields of fine art, literature, theatre, and music who moved to Britain in the years following the Second World War. It provides an overview of the experiences and views of figures as diverse as Sidney Nolan and Arthur Boyd in art; Richard Neville and Peter Porter in writing; Phillip Knightley and Murray Sayle in journalism; Leo McKern and Alan Seymour in the theatre; Charles Mackerras, Barry

⁹⁵ Stephen Alomes, *When London Calls: The Expatriation of Australian Creative Artists to Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Tuckwell, Malcolm Williamson and Don Banks in music and other significant individuals, labelled “Megastars,” such as Barry Humphries, Germaine Greer, Robert Hughes and Clive James. In addition, Alomes comments on the complex relationship between Australia and Britain and the implications of the Australian expatriate movement on the development of a national culture.

While Alomes’ survey of the expatriate experiences of Australian creative artists is detailed and informative, there are many instances in the book where he leaves a discussion open-ended or does not consider both sides of an argument. For example, he hints at the notion that by leaving Australia, many musicians and composers may have hindered the establishment of a national identity in music,⁹⁶ but then fails to acknowledge the contribution that many of these successful figures made to raising the profile of Australian music and musicians abroad and by encouraging the younger generation to aspire to the same degree of success. He appears to rely heavily on the ideas and opinions of others, particularly in his discussion of the journeys of the “Megastars” Robert Hughes, Germaine Greer, Barry Humphries and Clive James,⁹⁷ providing little in the way of personal reflection or concluding remarks. In some places in the book, the attention paid to particular figures seems to be based more on how much information Alomes was able to accumulate on them, and not on the significance of their contributions. For example, equal space in the book is given to journalists – to whom the application of the term “creative artist” is questionable – as to musicians and composers, whilst other expatriate figures who would fit well within the “creative artist” category, such as Robert Helpmann, barely receive a mention.

⁹⁶ Stephen Alomes, 147, 165.

⁹⁷ Alomes’ research methods and interpretations were met with strong criticism by Clive James, who stated that Alomes’ book would be enough to make “any current expatriate think twice before coming home for anything longer than a brief incognito visit, and might well recruit new expatriates by the plane-load.” Clive James, “Up Here from Down There,” *Even as we Speak: New Essays 1993-2000* (London: Picador, 2001), 258.

Alomes' discussion of Malcolm Williamson's expatriate journey is relatively concise; consisting of about three pages of text, spread across three different chapters. In addition to providing the standard biographical outline associated with Williamson, Alomes gives a useful overview of the composer's relationship with Australia, including the return visits he made, his thoughts on Australia as conveyed in interviews, the major works he composed for his homeland, his capacity for arousing controversy and his strained relationship with the Australian press. While most of this information is based on widely-known and accepted facts about the composer, the author tends to rely very heavily on media reports. As a result, his evaluation of Williamson's expatriate experience is not as comprehensive or accurate as that which will be provided in Chapter 3 of this present study, which will draw on primary sources that have been made available to the public in the years following the publication of Alomes' book. Additionally, Alomes does not address how the composer's expatriate experience impacted upon the works he composed, nor does he describe in any depth the "Australian" topoi that are evident in the works he wrote for Australia.

Other aspects of Alomes' discussion of Williamson have helped to inform or support some of the contentions made in this dissertation. Alomes confirms the commonly-accepted view that Williamson was "caught in an expatriate gulf which was arguably not of his own making," that is, after several years living in Britain, the composer was no longer considered a "true Australian" and yet, in Britain, he was considered too Australian to be British.⁹⁸ The author also recognises distinctively Australian elements in the composer's character, concluding, "there was something very Australian about Williamson."⁹⁹ Importantly, Alomes places this discussion in context by detailing the experiences of other Australian composers and musicians who arrived in London at a similar time, including

⁹⁸ Stephen Alomes, 158.

⁹⁹ Stephen Alomes, 157.

Don Banks, David Lumsdaine, Charles Mackerras, Barry Tuckwell, Joan Sutherland, Geoffrey Parsons and Geoffrey Chard, and the ideas expressed in this section significantly underpin the arguments made in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, “Artistic Australians Abroad.”

There are several other sources available that trace the experiences of a small number of prominent Australian expatriates, not all of whom ventured to Britain, but whose journeys nevertheless help to place Williamson’s experiences in context. Clyde Packer, in his 1984 book *No Return Ticket*, interviews several well-known Australian expatriates living in America, including Robert Hughes and Germaine Greer. These two figures also appear in Ian Britain’s 1997 publication *Once an Australian*, which focuses specifically on expatriate writers and also includes chapters on Barry Humphries and Clive James. Biographies and autobiographies of Australian expatriate creative artists also provide valuable insights into the expatriate experience.

Several other sources on the relationship between Australia and Britain have helped to contextualise and contribute to the understanding of the reverse-migration experience and the implications of post-colonial attitudes on expatriates. These include two publications of essays by A.A. Phillips, *The Australian Tradition: Studies in a Colonial Culture* (1958) and *On the Cultural Cringe* (2006); A.F. Madden and W.H. Morris-Jones’ book *Australia and Britain: Studies in a Changing Relationship* (1980); Manning Clark’s paper *The Quest for an Australian Identity* (1980); Richard White’s book *Inventing Australia: Images and Identity 1688-1980* (1981); John Rickard’s *Australia: A Cultural History* (1988); the collection of papers published under the title *Australia and Britain: The Evolving Relationship* (1993); and David Malouf’s detailed article “Made in England: Australia’s British Inheritance” in *Quarterly Essay* (2003). While an in-depth critique of these

publications is beyond the scope of this study, these sources have proved useful in providing background information on the complex relationship between Australia and Britain and have been helpful in supporting and validating some of the ideas presented later in this dissertation.

This study aims to reveal how and why Malcolm Williamson projected an Australian identity in his music and public persona; serving to enhance the current understanding of the composer's life, personality, creative work and contribution to music in Australia. Some of the information included in this dissertation will serve to confirm or even challenge aspects of the composer's life and creative output discussed in previous studies; however, most of the material is completely new and will fill gaps relating to the knowledge of Williamson's Australian works and his sense of national identity. Prior to analysing Williamson's expatriate experience and its impact upon his compositional output, it is important to establish the historical context in which this took place. The appropriate starting point for this discussion is to examine and compare the expatriate experiences of other high-profile Australian creative artists in order to reveal any emerging trends that may be significant. This will be the focus of the next chapter.

Chapter Two

Artistic Australians Abroad

Malcolm Williamson was one of many Australian creative artists who expatriated to Britain after World War II to pursue career opportunities not available at home. The wave of expatriation that occurred at this time was significant in terms of its size; however, the trend for Australian-born creative artists to relocate to Britain was actually established much earlier, in the years leading up to the Federation of the Australian colonies in 1901.¹ This pre-Federation period witnessed the expatriation of the soprano Nellie Melba (1886), the composer Percy Grainger (1895), the painter Arthur Streeton (1897) and the writer Henry Lawson (1900), to name but a few. Although the relationship between Australia and Britain evolved significantly during the twentieth century, there are strong parallels that can be drawn between the experiences of almost all successful Australian expatriate creative artists, regardless of when they were born or when they left Australia. This chapter will focus on the parallels evident between the experiences of expatriate musicians and composers in particular, but will also extend to Australians working in other artistic fields, in order to contextualise the expatriate experience of Malcolm Williamson. Several of these figures spent extended periods in England before returning to resume their work in Australia, while others stayed abroad permanently, returning for nothing more than fleeting visits. The experiences of these expatriate creative artists are not only individually fascinating, but collectively they provide a mapping of Australia's cultural history and the complexity of the psychological relationship between Australians and the "mother country," England. Importantly, it will be shown that Williamson was not alone in his desire to maintain a connection with his homeland and to project an Australian identity in

¹ The years leading up to Federation saw a strong trend towards expatriation in general. According to the England and Wales census of 1901, there were 15, 295 Australian-born in England and Wales on the evening of 30 March 1901. Carl Bridge and Glenn Calderwood, "Australians in the UK," *Around the Globe* (Autumn 2006): 27.

his verbal comments and creative work. An appropriate starting point for this discussion is to provide a brief overview of the relationship between Australia and Britain and the history of Australian expatriation to Britain, which dates back almost as far as the European settlement of the Australian colonies in the late eighteenth century.

Since the time the first settlements were established in Australia and the first convict boats arrived, reverse-migration to Britain has been culturally significant.² For the convicts who had been brought to Australia to serve long and trying sentences in penal institutions at a colonial outpost, the possibility of a return to Britain signified freedom and potential reacceptance in society. The same was true for many free settlers, who felt like outsiders in Australia's strange, sterile and even hostile environment.³ The strong attachment that many early settlers felt to the "mother country" was passed onto their children and grandchildren, who, despite having been born in Australia, continued the habit of referring to Britain as "home."⁴ While there was an increase of national consciousness in Australia during the late nineteenth century, especially among the supporters of the *Bulletin*, the push for Federation during this time was made largely for geographical reasons and because of a widespread wish to unify the colonies, rather than for the purpose of asserting a local identity over a British one.⁵ Many Australians of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries remained fiercely loyal to Britain and wealthy Australian families sent their sons to be educated in England, with the hope that they would eventually gain

² Stephen Alomes, *When London Calls: The Expatriation of Australian Creative Artists to Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 2.

³ Reports of colonial families losing their children to the "strange and silent country" reflected the depth of the white settlers' distrust of their new land and its native inhabitants. The concept of the lost child became an emblem of white Australian society, making appearances across many artistic mediums, including painting, photography, pantomime, fiction, verse and music. Peter Pierce, *The Country of Lost Children: An Australian Anxiety* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1999), i.

⁴ This habit continued into the 1930s and only really changed as a result of the Second World War, when Australia was forced to become more independent. For more information see Richard White, "The Australian Way of Life," *Historical Studies* vol. 18, no. 73 (1979): 530-31.

⁵ David Malouf, "Made in England: Australia's British Inheritance," *Quarterly Essay* 12 (2003): 27.

entrance to the universities of Oxford or Cambridge.⁶ London was commonly considered the cultural capital of the Empire, and the city that ambitious creative artists and intellectuals wanted to experience first hand, in order to test their competence by universal standards and to pursue employment opportunities that did not exist in Australia at the time.⁷ London also provided a base for those wishing to explore the sights and landscapes described in English and European literature, to view the paintings that they had come to know through reproductions and to experience the music of the great European composers performed in its place of origin.

From the time of European settlement until the early twentieth century, the Australian national character was commonly considered British. It took many years and a number of wars before a distinctive national character or “type” began to emerge in Australia. While the physical strength and fighting spirit of the Australian male had been exhibited during the second Boer War (1899-1902), it was World War I and, specifically, the landing of Australian and New Zealand troops at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915 that established the “Diggers” as heroes in Australian society and highlighted the following qualities as characteristics of the Australian male: “independence, manliness, a fondness for sport, egalitarianism, a dislike of mental effort, self-confidence, and a certain disrespect for authority.”⁸ While Australia’s ties to Britain remained strong through the period of the First and Second World Wars,⁹ anti-British sentiments emerged periodically, especially following Gallipoli; after all, it had been British strategists who had organised for Australian troops to be sent into a war zone in which they had little chance of emerging victorious.¹⁰ Consequently, Australians began to question whether they were indeed

⁶ David Malouf, 27.

⁷ John Rickard, *Australia: A Cultural History* (London: Longman, 1988), 135. Note that even Rickard’s book on Australia’s cultural history, completed during the bicentenary year, was published in London.

⁸ Richard White, *Reinventing Australia* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1981), 76-77.

⁹ John Rickard, 135.

¹⁰ John Rickard, 119-20.

comprised of “British stock” and instead looked to qualities that could be considered unique to their own nationality. For example, the lack of a strong class system in Australia had caused many locals to embrace egalitarianism and “mateship” as Australian social ideals and these, combined with an intense disregard for pretentiousness, were qualities that helped to distinguish Australians from the British. Pro-Australian feelings were aroused again during the Second World War, when the “young” country was forced to “grow up,” become independent and form alliances with countries other than Britain. It was after the Second World War that the phrase “Australian way of life” gained currency in political speeches and the press, although few were able to define it explicitly.¹¹

As Australia began to establish and assert its own cultural identity post-World War II, it became even more common for Australians to compare themselves and their local cultural products to British models. Naturally, Australia’s status as a colonial outpost of Britain and its continuing cultural ties with the “mother country” had a negative impact upon many native-born Australians and their self image. Most Australians, whether living at home or abroad, had the uneasy feeling that as “provincials,” their experiences and opinions were second-rate, especially when it came to matters of education and culture.¹² During the first half of the twentieth century, in particular, it became the general consensus among Australians of British descent that most aspects of Australian cultural life were thin and insubstantial in comparison with life in Britain. According to the expatriate writer David Malouf (b. 1934), it was “only *outside* Australia, in that source of all value and meaning – and from all objects too, since virtually everything we used was imported from there, that

¹¹ For more information on the “Australian way of life,” see W.E.H. Stanner, “The Australian Way of Life” in *Taking Stock: Aspects of Mid-Century Life in Australia*, ed. W.A. Aughterson (Melbourne: F.W. Cheshire, 1953): 1-14.

¹² David Malouf, 27.

perfect Platonic realm called ‘England’ – that the world was solid and experience authentic and real”¹³

The post-colonial Australian tendency to regard local cultural products as inferior to those produced overseas became known as the “cultural cringe,” a term coined in 1950 by the Australian writer A.A. Phillips.¹⁴ This “disease at the heart of colonial life”¹⁵ formed the deepest imbalance of all between Australia and the “mother country” and it was felt not only by Australians living in Australia, but also by those living in England. The cultural cringe appeared not only in the tendency to make needless comparisons and the sense of inadequacy that usually followed, but also in the form of what Phillips identified as the “cringe inverted.”¹⁶

One manifestation of the “cringe inverted” was the resentment that many nationally-conscious Australians held towards those who preferred the foreign to the local, the British to the Australian. The Australian creative artists who were conspicuously successful in England became the targets of strong criticism. Not only had they “chosen” the metropolitan over the colonial, but they had also abandoned Australia when its cultural development relied on their support and creative input the most. Regardless of the fact that there were few professional opportunities available to them in their homeland, many of these expatriates were labelled “traitors,” and when they responded to such accusations, they usually attracted derision and hostility from Australia. Many of the expatriate creative

¹³ David Malouf, 29.

¹⁴ Phillips’ essay, “The Cultural Cringe,” was published in the magazine *Meanjin* in 1950. The essay also appears in A.A. Phillips, *On the Cultural Cringe* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press Masterworks, 2006).

¹⁵ David Malouf, 29.

¹⁶ A.A. Phillips, 2.

artists included in the following discussion were also branded “tall poppies,”¹⁷ and/or became victims of the widespread Australian tendency to denigrate or “cut down” high achievers to a manageable size, otherwise known as the “Tall Poppy Syndrome.”¹⁸ These figures and their expatriate journeys will be discussed chronologically, in order to place their experiences in historical context.

The soprano Nellie Melba (1861-1931) was one of the first Australians to achieve international success in the field of music.¹⁹ As a child, she had been aware of the limited opportunities for musical training and performance in Australia and through her adolescence and early adulthood, the idea of moving to England had become her “ruling ambition.”²⁰ At the age of twenty-three, she declared:

I would give ten years of my life to be able to get to Europe to have a trial, I feel certain I would have some success The more I think of it the more desperate I get . . . I feel every day I stay here is another day wasted, there is no one that can teach me anything here . . . all I can say is that I would give my head to get Home [to Europe]²¹

Melba left Australia for England in 1886 and did not return until 1902, by which time she had achieved international fame. Her success abroad had not gone unnoticed in Australia and she was received with great warmth and enthusiasm by local audiences and critics during her stay.²² Her concerts were well-attended and to her delight, she observed that

¹⁷ “Tall Poppy” is a pejorative term used to describe an individual whose distinction attracts hostility.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the terms “Tall Poppy” and “Tall Poppy Syndrome” were first seen in their current usage in the 1970s and 1980s, respectively.

¹⁸ B. Peeters, “Tall Poppies and Egalitarianism in Australian Discourse: From Key Word to Cultural Value,” *English World-Wide* vol. 25, no. 1 (2004): 1-25.

¹⁹ Melba’s name at birth was Helen Porter Mitchell. She adopted the name “Melba” in honour of her home town of Melbourne. Nellie Melba, *Melodies and Memories*, ed. John Cargher (Melbourne: Nelson, 1980), 37-38.

²⁰ Nellie Melba quoted in Thérèse Radic, *Melba: The Voice of Australia* (Melbourne: Macmillan, 1986), 32. Melba left Australia with her father, David Mitchell.

²¹ Nellie Melba quoted in Thérèse Radic, ix. Most Australian-born people of British descent of Melba’s generation referred to Britain as “home,” regardless of whether or not they had set foot there.

²² She later admitted, “how different was my home-coming to my departure . . . then I had been an unknown girl, setting out on a lonely and arduous adventure; now they had put red carpets down for me, they sent their

people had travelled from drought-stricken areas, “from the wilds of the Bush, from outlying hamlets, sometimes travelling for several days in acute discomfort, just to hear me sing It was as wonderful a tribute as any artist had ever had.”²³ Australian audiences and critics were obviously impressed and even “star-struck” by her international success, as the following excerpt from a welcome speech given to Melba by the Ormond Professor of Music at the University of Melbourne reveals:

Your living presence has compelled this immature, partially cultured, somewhat unintellectual city to dimly feel for a moment that presence of that occult divine power which in higher states of civilisation is openly worshipped . . . and you, madame, who [comes] from . . . historical seats of the ancient splendour, power, and culture of the human race, seem to waft with you something of their aroma, of their beauty, their traditions, in the presence of which even modern, plebeian, democratic Melbourne becomes animated, festive, and joyous. You are to us the ambassadress of that far romantic ideal world of art, of beauty, and of adventurous hope to which we vaguely aspire²⁴

This speech shows the extent to which even highly-educated and cultured Australians were afflicted by the so-called “cultural cringe” at the very beginning of the twentieth century. At the other extreme, Melba also experienced the “Tall Poppy Syndrome” during her 1902 visit, when malicious gossip about her private life was circulated by the press.²⁵ Melba was not exactly surprised by the behaviour of the local press, later commenting, “It was only to be expected that when I returned to Australia after sixteen years there would be at least a few scandalmongers to spread their gossip about me”²⁶ and to some extent, she probably believed the old adage that bad press is better than no press.

mayors and their corporations, their officials, their leaders of art and literature and society to meet me, they pelted me with flowers.” Nellie Melba, 138.

²³ Nellie Melba, 140.

²⁴ Thérèse Radic, 103.

²⁵ According to the Australian press, Melba had been hiding an alcohol-dependency problem and had conducted numerous affairs with prominent tenors, baritones and conductors, “it did not seem to matter very much which.” Nellie Melba, 143.

²⁶ Nellie Melba, 142-43.

Regardless of any ill-feelings, Melba's love for Australia remained "as strong as ever"²⁷ and she made a number of subsequent return visits, including an extensive tour of small "outback" towns in 1909.²⁸ The fact that this "bush" tour took place at the height of her fame proves that she felt a great sense of loyalty towards her fellow Australians.²⁹ In her own words, she had "known what exile meant"³⁰ and because of this, she seemed to crave the adulation and acceptance of her fellow Australians more desperately than the praise she received at Covent Garden. With each return visit, Melba felt more and more that she would like to settle in Australia and in 1923, she had a house built near Lilydale, where she had lived as a child.³¹ She returned to Australia permanently in late 1930 and died there in February 1931. During the last two decades of her life, Melba focussed her fame and fortune on furthering the cause of Australian music.³²

While Melba maintained her Australian identity throughout her life – stating at the opening of her 1925 "autobiography," *Melodies and Memories*, "If you wish to understand me at all you must understand first and foremost that I am an Australian"³³ – simultaneously, she exhibited the Australian tendency to "cringe" to the English, and was at times heard mocking the character traits of her compatriots in order to differentiate herself from them.³⁴

²⁷ Nellie Melba, 141.

²⁸ She made return visits/tours of Australia in 1902, 1909, 1911, 1914 (she spent the war years in Australia), 1922, 1924, 1927 and 1928, and returned permanently in late 1930.

²⁹ Joseph Wechsberg, *Red Plush and Black Velvet: The Story of Dame Nellie Melba and Her Times* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1962), 280.

³⁰ Nellie Melba, 185.

³¹ Thérèse Radic, 135.

³² She negotiated with J. C. Williamson about the prospect of launching a season of grand opera that would rival that of Covent Garden and continued her long-term involvement with the Albert Street Conservatorium in Melbourne, teaching a new generation of Australian singers the methods she had devised and perfected herself, and raising proceeds for the concert space Melba Hall, which was officially opened in 1913.

³³ Nellie Melba, 1-2. *Melodies and Memories* was ghost-written by Melba's friend, the English journalist and popular writer Beverley Nichols.

³⁴ According to reports, Melba was also capable of extreme jealousy if musical competition appeared from her homeland, and she targeted female singers such as Florence Austral (Florence Fawaz) in particular. Austral left Australia in 1919 and Melba disliked the fact that she had copied "her idea" of using another stage name. According to the Australian writer Max Harris, Melba "was the prime exemplar of the Australian tall poppy syndrome She pretended [Florence Astral] didn't exist. Even if they passed backstage, Melba stared straight through her fellow countrywoman. If she couldn't be destroyed she just wasn't there She hated female colleagues and would destroy them as ruthlessly as her dad would blast a

In 1907 Melba reportedly told the English contralto Clara Butt, who was about to tour Australia, to “sing ‘em muck! It’s all they can understand”³⁵ and according to Beverley Nichols:

If only the Australians could have heard how Melba herself used to rail against her own country! If only I had possessed a gramophone record of the mocking, bitter invective which she poured out upon Australia and everything Australian! . . . I found myself in the curious position of having to defend her own countrymen against her onslaughts. “They may be crude,” I would say, “but they’re incredibly warm-hearted and hospitable, and they’re anxious to learn.” She brushed such protests aside: “They’re hopeless . . . hopeless!”³⁶

Melba’s character was full of contradictory elements and she would often change her opinion on a given subject to suit the circumstances. The conflicting comments she made about Australia and her fellow Australians through her life are just one example of this and they reveal her inner desire to be accepted by the people of whichever country she was working in at the time. As will be illustrated in the discussion that follows, this need to gain approval and to feel a sense of acceptance and belonging was common to the expatriate experience and most of these figures also attempted to maintain a connection with their homeland, Australia, by projecting an Australian identity in their verbal remarks and/or their creative products.

Parallels are apparent between the expatriate experience of Melba and that of the composer and pianist Percy Grainger (1882-1961), who left Australia for Europe in 1895.³⁷ Grainger

quarry face.” Max Harris, *The Unknown Great Australia and Other Psychobiographical Portraits* (Melbourne: Sun Books, 1983), 27-31.

³⁵ Nellie Melba quoted in Thérèse Radic, 126.

³⁶ Beverly Nichols quoted in Thérèse Radic, 103.

³⁷ Grainger and Melba knew each other through family connections; however, while Grainger admired Melba’s singing voice, he was not fond of her personality and they only appeared together professionally on two occasions, both fundraising concerts in America. Grainger wrote of Melba: “Myself, I never liked Melba at all But I loved her voice as truly as I disliked her person. Her voice always made me mindsee [*sic*] Australia’s landscapes, her voice having some kind of a peach-fur-like nap on it that made me think of the deep blue that forms on any Australian hill if seen a mile or more off.” Thérèse Radic, 146. Melba once

achieved international success after only a few years abroad through cunning social networking with Australians in London.³⁸ When he returned to tour Australia for the first time in 1903, he found Australian audiences to be generous in their praise of his musical performances and the local press to be scurrilous in their reporting of rumours about his personal life, just as Melba had experienced the previous year.³⁹ The fact that Australian journalists tended to focus on aspects of his personal life and eccentricities, rather than his music, infuriated Grainger; however, he was not the only creative artist who had to contend with such issues, as Eileen Dorum has observed:

It was the fact that his very serious and important work as a composer was almost entirely ignored by the press in favour of such frivolous matters that disturbed him so much While he was well received he was always underrated by his fellow Australians, a characteristic too frequently met with in Australia.”⁴⁰

Despite feeling underappreciated in his homeland, Grainger projected an unashamed Australian identity and made a personal commitment to contribute to the development of musical life in Australia.⁴¹ In many ways, he embodied all the traits of the typical Australian male. During his childhood in Melbourne he had acquired “all the extrovert characteristics of the Australian stereotype, a passion for football, cricket and above all

wrote to Grainger: “I am so proud of you as an Australian.” Letter to Grainger from Melba dated 23 August 1916, quoted in Eileen Dorum, *Percy Grainger: The man behind the music* (Melbourne: IC & EE Dorum, 1986), 105.

³⁸ For more information on the contacts Grainger made during his early years in London, see Anne-Marie Forbes, “Grainger in Edwardian London,” *Australasian Music Research* 5 (2000): 1-16.

³⁹ An incident at a Melbourne train station, where Percy had unintentionally caused a delay because he had left his hat in a cab, caused a sensation in the media, with many reporters suggesting that the otherwise strictly-run transport system would not have waited for anyone less important than the visiting “star.” From this time onwards, Australian reporters focused on Grainger’s personal life and eccentricities. Eileen Dorum, 51, 57.

⁴⁰ Eileen Dorum, 51, 57. Grainger later admitted that he found the erroneous and exaggerated reporting style of the Australian press to be “painful.” Eileen Dorum, 50. Malcolm Williamson was one of the many other high-profile Australian expatriates who shared a similar complaint about the Australian press; this will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

⁴¹ Max Harris, 62. Although Grainger became an American citizen in June 1918 and remained resident there, he never gave up public claim to being an Australian and a veritable symbol of Australianism. He often referred to himself as “the first great composer of Australia” and had a dream to make Australia “shine bright.” See Percy Grainger, letter to Balfour Gardiner, 3 May 1922, quoted in Malcolm Gillies and David Pear, eds., *The All-Round Man: Selected Letters of Percy Grainger, 1914-1961* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 55, 57.

else, marathon bush-walking,⁴² and in adulthood, he retained the characteristics that he would have claimed to be Australian: the ability to be forthright, honest and courageous in his attitude to the arts,⁴³ qualities he shared in common with numerous other Australian creative artists, including Malcolm Williamson. Grainger advocated the establishment of an Australian school of composition and considered many of his own compositions to be characteristically Australian.⁴⁴ His pianistic style also featured a “bracing, breezy and quite wonderful out-of-doors quality”⁴⁵ that critics such as Harold Schonberg identified as uniquely Australian, and Grainger encouraged young Australian pianists to retain similar elements of their local training that could later be identified as national traits.⁴⁶ Like Melba, Grainger made the long journey by sea to Australia regularly, particularly in later years when he was actively involved in the establishment of the Grainger Museum in Melbourne.

When it came to matters of music education, Grainger believed that music should be for everyone and that people of all social backgrounds should be given the opportunity to participate in music-making.⁴⁷ He identified this philosophy of inclusiveness as a product of his Australian heritage, claiming that because of the country’s colonial history the Australian people are naturally suspicious of any form of hierarchy and are strong believers in democratic equality.⁴⁸ He viewed himself as “ultra-democratic, ultra Colonial Australian”⁴⁹ and devised so-called “elastic scorings” of his own and other composers’ compositions to enable as many musicians as desired to participate in performances. He

⁴² Max Harris, 59.

⁴³ Eileen Dorum, 48.

⁴⁴ Eileen Dorum, 175, 94. Grainger believed this Australian school of composition should be influenced by the music of neighbouring islands and characterised by the intrinsic nature of the isolated continent itself, as already evident in the works of Australian painters.

⁴⁵ Harold Schonberg quoted in Max Harris, 63.

⁴⁶ Eileen Dorum, 173.

⁴⁷ Eileen Dorum, 152.

⁴⁸ This was the reason he gave for turning down distinctions conferred upon him, such as an honorary doctorate offered by McGill University in 1945. Malcolm Gillies and David Pear, eds., 7.

⁴⁹ Percy Grainger to Robin Legge, 6 May 1917, quoted in Malcolm Gillies and David Pear, eds., 37.

abhorred musical styles that singled out elite performers, such as concertos, and believed that what the world, and particularly Australia, needed was fewer solo works and more large-scale chamber works.⁵⁰ However, like Melba, Grainger could also be outspoken and contradictory⁵¹ and the values of democratic equality that he preached throughout his life were at odds with his long-held belief in the superiority of Nordic culture.⁵²

Grainger's international success inspired a number of younger Australian musicians to aspire to similar heights, including the Tasmanian-born pianist Eileen Joyce (1908-1991). In fact, Grainger recognised elements of his own pianistic style in Joyce's playing, including a "relaxed, breezy, out-of-doors quality" that reflected her Australian heritage.⁵³ He advised her teachers against sending her "to a worn out celebrity to be needlessly 'Europeanised' or 'Continentalised'" and instead suggested that she study with "an Australian master in his prime so that the peculiarly Australian quality in her talent may be preserved."⁵⁴ The "Australian master" that Grainger recommended was Ernest Hutcheson (1871-1951), who was enjoying a distinguished career as a performer and teacher in New York. Ironically, it was the case that even if Joyce wanted to study with an Australian pianist, it would be necessary for her to travel abroad.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Percy Grainger to Bernard Heinze, 3 December 1947, quoted in Malcolm Gillies and David Pear, eds., 7, 217. Grainger's inclusive philosophy also extended to an interest in world music and during the height of his compositional career (approximately 1904-10) he became an important collector of folk-songs, helping to contribute to the internationalisation of Western music. His interest in world music resulted from his extensive travels and was perhaps also related to his Australian background and the relative detachment he felt from the musical traditions of Western countries. Max Harris, 68.

⁵¹ Eileen Dorum, viii.

⁵² Grainger photographed the eyes of major composers, particularly those of the British school, in order to prove that blue-eyed musicians, like himself, were creatively superior and invented his own form of "blue-eyed English," a language which honoured the speech of pure Nordics by avoiding the use of words with Latin or Greek origins. He also disliked the genres of sonata and symphony and orchestral music in general, because of their "middle-class nature" and southern, German, origin. For more information, see Max Harris, 65-66. Grainger even viewed himself as flawed because of his Australian heritage, describing the Australian race as "careless, slovenly, mind-blind, lazy, ignorant, self-indulgent, unhealthy." Percy Grainger to Bernard Heinze, 3 December 1947, quoted in Malcolm Gillies and David Pear, eds., 6.

⁵³ Richard Davis, 41. Grainger once described Joyce as one of the most "transcendentally gifted" pianists he had ever known. Percy Grainger quoted in Richard Davis, *Eileen Joyce: A Portrait* (Fremantle: Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 2001), 37-38.

⁵⁴ Percy Grainger quoted in Richard Davis, 38.

⁵⁵ Richard Davis, 38.

Despite Grainger's high standing in Australia, his recommendation for Joyce was overlooked in favour of the opinion of a foreign musician, German pianist Wilhelm Backhaus. Backhaus toured Australia shortly after Grainger in 1926 and received greater acclaim purely on grounds of his nationality, rather than because of any superior artistic ability.⁵⁶ He suggested that Joyce travel to Leipzig to study at his *alma mater*, the Mendelssohn Conservatorium,⁵⁷ where Ernest Hutcheson had also received training, and it was simply presumed by Joyce's teachers, without much consideration, that a musician from Europe must know better than an Australian; even one as talented and internationally renowned as Grainger.⁵⁸

The "cultural cringe" also impacted upon Joyce's career once she was in Europe. After three years training in Leipzig in the late 1920s, she decided to establish her artistic base in London, yet, she discovered soon after her arrival that conservative English musicians and audiences were prejudiced in favour of British artists and often behaved condescendingly towards those from "the colonies."⁵⁹ She realised that for a "colonial," or in her own words "an Awestralian savage," to gain respect and employment in London, a good reputation would have to be earned via the provinces.⁶⁰ After several months of giving piano recitals in suburban town halls and appearing as a soloist with amateur orchestras, it seems that Joyce began to resent her status as an Australian.⁶¹ In the late 1920s and early 1930s, she made several derogatory comments about her fellow Australians in order to

⁵⁶ Richard Davis, 40.

⁵⁷ He recommended she study with Carl Reinecke and Bruno Zwintscher.

⁵⁸ It is not particularly surprising that that the opinion of a foreign artist carried more weight than that of an Australian during this period, especially considering the snobbish preference in Australia for foreign artists at the time; it simply confirms that many Australians were under the influence of the "cultural cringe."

⁵⁹ This was a problem encountered by most expatriate musicians from Australia, New Zealand and Canada. The conductor Sir Thomas Beecham was one of those who held a low opinion of "colonial" musicians, particularly those from Australia, such as Melba, Joan Hammond, and later Joyce and Joan Sutherland. Richard Davis, 76-77.

⁶⁰ Eileen Joyce quoted in Richard Davis, 64. Post war, the British-Australian society network that Grainger had used was no longer as strong or influential.

⁶¹ Her letters from this period convey a deep sense of frustration, loneliness and vulnerability. Richard Davis, 43, 47.

distinguish herself from them, just as Melba had done a quarter of a century earlier, and made public her belief that Australians were foolish for raising money to send young hopefuls such as herself to study with famous foreign teachers without knowing anything about their teaching practices or standards.⁶² She also began to tell lies about her age and her childhood, fabricating a rags-to-riches fairytale in order to attract attention and publicity.

While such manipulation of the media may have been an effective marketing tool in foreign countries, the Australian press and public were outraged. When she returned to Australia in 1936 for an ABC tour, her family, the media and the public demanded to know why she had claimed that her father was an illiterate bushman who had raised her in the “wild west of Australia,” a place where, according to Joyce, people starved to death, and why she had called Australians “foolish” when they had done so much to help launch her career.⁶³ Although Joyce should have known better than to try to “pull the wool over the eyes” of her fellow Australians, she was shocked by the bold manner of the Australian press and in an attempt to relinquish herself of all blame, she accused the British press of misquoting her. Consequently, it did not seem to matter much that her Australian recitals were received with great enthusiasm by audiences and critics, because upon returning to London she announced to reporters that the Australian tour had been an “awful nightmare,” and that she was delighted to be “home” in England.⁶⁴ She told the British press and public exactly what they wanted to hear: Australians, she claimed, were not nearly as musical as the English.⁶⁵

⁶² Richard Davis, 59.

⁶³ Richard Davis, 78, 85.

⁶⁴ Like other expatriates who had achieved success abroad, Joyce discovered that her relationship with her homeland had changed during her decade-long absence. She was now a more sophisticated and privileged young woman who had little in common with those she had left behind.

⁶⁵ Richard Davis, 93.

Joyce's relationship with Australia improved in the 1960s when she was at the height of her professional career and was commonly referred to as "Britain's most popular pianist."⁶⁶ Australians took pride in the fact that she appeared in films, gave hundreds of charity concerts, attracted large audiences with her "marathon" concert programs and became something of a fashion icon, wearing glamorous gowns by famous designers for her recitals and assembling her own stylish outfits for other public outings.⁶⁷ While many critics viewed her flamboyant dresses as a "tasteless distraction" and accused her of committing "conduct unbecoming to a serious artist," they had to agree that through her performances in the concert hall, in film and television and through her recitals in hospitals, asylums, prisons and schools, Joyce had drawn people of all social backgrounds into the world of classical music and had helped to make "music for everyone."⁶⁸ The egalitarian ideals that she embraced in later years can be viewed as characteristically Australian and also had the added benefit of enhancing her public image and increasing her popularity with audiences worldwide.

Joyce maintained links with her homeland through her involvement in the Australian Musical Association,⁶⁹ her regular appearances at Australia House functions and through her friendships with other expatriate musicians and artists, including Arthur Boyd, Malcolm Williamson, Joan Sutherland, Geoffrey Parsons, Daisy Kennedy, Ronald Dowd and Peter Dawson.⁷⁰ In later life, she showed appreciation for Australia's support by

⁶⁶ Richard Davis, 138.

⁶⁷ Her "marathon" concert programs usually consisted of two or more major works for piano and orchestra. Her playing and attitude towards these performances exhibited an element of athleticism that had previously been seen in the Australian pianists Percy Grainger and Frederick Septimus Kelly, and had become recognised as typically Australian.

⁶⁸ She gave charity concerts in South Africa to the physically handicapped, to sufferers of cerebral palsy and to sufferers of tuberculosis. Richard Davis, 139-43.

⁶⁹ The AMA was co-founded by Don Banks and Margaret Sutherland. Based at Australia House, the association aimed to promote Australian compositions, commission new works, organise regular concerts featuring Australian music, composers and performers and attend to the needs of Australian performers and composers in London.

⁷⁰ Joyce also maintained friendships with the Australians Bernard Heinze, Rex Hobcroft and the Australia-based Frank Callaway.

making generous donations and declaring her loyalty publicly, stating during her final visit in 1989, “My heart has always been here with you in Australia.”⁷¹ Despite Joyce’s ongoing effort to retain a sense of Australian identity, however, the criticism and lack of affection she received from Australia and Britain took a toll on her sense of national identity and left her feeling as though she did not belong in either country,⁷² which was yet another characteristic of the expatriate experience.

The experiences shared by Melba, Grainger and Joyce had strong parallels to those of other Australian creative artists who relocated to Britain prior to the beginning of the Second World War. Most of these figures, including the artist Arthur Streeton, the writer and poet Henry Lawson, the musicians Frederick Septimus Kelly, Arthur Benjamin and William McKie, the dancer Robert Helpmann and the writers Alan Moorehead and Manning Clark, left Australia because of the limitations imposed upon them by artistic life in their home country. Nevertheless, these creative artists continued to maintain connections with Australia and many also looked to Australian subjects to inspire and give meaning to their work.

Arthur Streeton (1867-1947) left Australia for London in 1897 because he was anxious to achieve success overseas, but like many Australian artists in England, he found the experience difficult because he did not feel the same intuitive affinity with the English

⁷¹ Eileen Joyce quoted in Richard Davis, 218. During return visits Joyce ingratiated herself with the Australian press by visiting hospitals, schools and convents and donating large sums of money to the University of Western Australia for the purchase of resources for piano students and to fund a studio in her name. She also attempted to follow in Melba’s footsteps by publicising her plans to sponsor a talented young Australian pianist, a protégé, whom she could assist materially and musically to study in London (Melba had previously acted in a similar way with soprano Stella Power, also known as “the little Melba”). Although this never eventuated, Joyce’s willingness to help her fellow Australians may have helped to abate rumours relating to her status as a “Tall Poppy.”

⁷² Joyce was desperate to be appointed a Dame, but never felt accepted by the British Establishment because she “was not and never would be one of them.” Eileen Joyce quoted in Richard Davis, 207-8. In 1971 she was awarded an honorary doctorate of music from Cambridge University and from this time onwards insisted that she be addressed as “Doctor,” which was perceived by some as rather pretentious.

landscape that had inspired his Australian paintings.⁷³ Despite the fact that he had few friends in London and suffered from homesickness and nostalgia for Australia, he remained abroad for over twenty years, eventually returning to settle in Australia in 1920 as a famous artist.⁷⁴ He maintained a strong sense of Australian identity throughout his time abroad and the paintings he created after he returned were widely regarded as embodying the essence of Australian national character; in particular, they were seen to capture the distinctive qualities of the Australian sunlight.⁷⁵

Like Streeton, Henry Lawson (1867-1922) relied on Australia for creative inspiration, but felt disenchanted by the lack of opportunities for local writers, eventually uprooting his family and moving to London in the year 1900. He felt so strongly about expatriation that he later advised the younger generation of Australian writers to flee the country at any cost:

My advice to any young Australian writer whose talents have been recognised, would be to go steerage, stow away, swim, and seek London, Yankeeland, or Timbuctoo – rather than stay in Australia till his genius turned to gall, or beer. Or, failing this – and still in the interests of human nature and literature – to study elementary anatomy, especially as applies to the cranium, and then shoot himself carefully with the aid of a looking-glass.⁷⁶

Lawson returned to Australia after just two years abroad due to illness and financial problems, yet he was able to reflect on the benefits of having gained recognition as a writer in London. His observation that “Australian literature had to fight its way home to its own

⁷³ “Artist Profiles: Arthur Streeton,” *Australian War Memorial Website*; available from http://www.awm.gov.au/aboutus/artist_profiles/streeton.asp; Internet; 3 June 2008.

⁷⁴ Streeton returned to Australia several times during this period and while he was based in London, he sent his paintings home to be exhibited.

⁷⁵ “Artist Profiles: Arthur Streeton,” *Australian War Memorial Website*.

⁷⁶ Henry Lawson, “Pursuing Literature in Australia,” in B. Kiernan, ed., *Portable Australian Authors: Henry Lawson* (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1976), 209-10.

country by way of England”⁷⁷ reflected the general lack of confidence in all things local that prevailed at the time. Lawson claimed to have “a heart full of love for Australia,” a sentiment also conveyed in his creative output; however, he found the limitations of work in his homeland so frustrating that upon returning in 1902, he entered a personal and professional decline, drinking heavily and spending a significant amount of time in mental institutions and prison.⁷⁸

The Australian musicians Frederick Septimus Kelly (1881-1916), Arthur Benjamin (1893-1960) and William McKie (1901-1984) also felt the need to gain artistic approval from England, but unlike most other expatriates, they each enjoyed considerable success in their homeland, as well as abroad. The pianist and composer F.S. Kelly was the son of a successful Sydney businessman and like many boys from wealthy Australian families, he was sent to England to receive a “proper” education.⁷⁹ His family connections appear to have helped him gain acceptance among London’s aristocratic society and he soon found a niche with its music patrons, eventually taking on the role of patron himself in 1912 as the chairman of the London Classical Concert Society.⁸⁰ Kelly was also an avid sportsman; he won a gold medal as a rower in the 1908 Olympic Games, and like Percy Grainger and Eileen Joyce, his pianistic style was characterised by an athleticism that critics recognised as typically “Australian.” He visited Australia a number of times, including to make his professional debut as a pianist in his hometown of Sydney in 1911. Kelly’s diaries reveal a great appreciation of the Australian landscape and natural environment and show that, like

⁷⁷ Lawson continued, “Australian editors seemed not to have the courage to judge an Australian’s work on its merits, nor to notice it until it had been reviewed by an English magazine, and then only, or barely so far as it had been noticed. The Australian writer until he got a ‘London hearing’ was sometimes grudgingly accepted as ‘the Australian Burns,’ ‘the Australian Bret Harte,’ etc. etc. and, later on, as ‘the Australian Kipling.’” Henry Lawson, “The Sydney *Bulletin*,” in B. Kiernan, ed., 355.

⁷⁸ Henry Lawson, “Pursuing Literature in Australia,” in B. Kiernan, ed., 209.

⁷⁹ He attended Eton and Balliol.

⁸⁰ Thérèse Radic, “Race Against Time,” *NLA News* vol. XV no. 1 (October 2004).

many Australians of the time, he viewed himself as a British-Australian, having come “from a new branch of an old culture.”⁸¹

In the same year that Kelly gave his first recital in Sydney, 1911, the young composer-pianist Arthur Benjamin left Australia for Britain. After just eight years abroad, Benjamin had earned sufficient recognition and respect that he was asked to return to his homeland to take up the position of Professor of Pianoforte at the New South Wales Conservatorium (1919-21); however, he returned to London after only two years to take up a similar post at the Royal College of Music, where his pupils included Peggy Glanville-Hicks, Dorian Le Gallienne and Benjamin Britten. Although Arthur Benjamin returned to Australia only briefly, he maintained connections with his homeland through his life and embraced the role of promoting Australian composers abroad; for example, he organised concerts of Australian music at Australia House in London.

The organist and composer William McKie, who left Australia in 1919 to study at the Royal College of Music in London, was likewise a keen promoter of Australian music. McKie gained popularity in Australia after he returned for an extended period in the 1930s to fulfil the roles of Melbourne City Organist (1930-38) and Musical Advisor to the City Council. During this period he also took up the position of Musical Director at Geelong Grammar School, gave regular organ recitals and organised a number of festivals in Melbourne, including the Bach Festival of 1932 and the Bach-Elgar Festival of 1934. He returned to England in 1938 to take up the position of organist and instructor in music at Magdalen College, Oxford, and in 1941 was appointed organist and master of the choristers of Westminster Abbey, a post he held until his retirement in 1963.⁸² During this

⁸¹ Thérèse Radic, “Race Against Time.” Kelly’s diaries were published by Thérèse Radic and the National Library of Australia in under the title *Race Against Time* (2004).

⁸² While he held the position from 1941, due to war service, he was unable to act in the role until 1946.

time he was noted for directing the music for the royal wedding in 1947, for which he composed the antiphon *We wait for Thy loving kindness* (1947), and for directing the music for the coronation of Elizabeth II in 1953, after which he received a knighthood (1953).⁸³ Despite his prominent position in the British Establishment, McKie remained an avid supporter of Australian music and was involved in the preparations for the Percy Grainger Festival of 1970.⁸⁴

The Australian ballet dancer and choreographer Robert Helpmann (1909-1986) also felt obliged to travel overseas in order to gain professional experience and employment, leaving for London in 1933. Like other prominent expatriates, he projected an Australian identity in his persona and creative output, devising a number of ballet scenarios based on Australian themes, and he was outspoken when it came to issues concerning support for the arts in Australia. He attributed his forthright and outgoing nature to his Australian background and believed that he would not have achieved such a high degree of success had he been born in any other country.⁸⁵ Helpmann's expatriate experience will be discussed further in Chapter 5.

The author and journalist Alan Moorehead (1910-1983) echoed the sentiments expressed by Henry Lawson over three decades earlier when he admitted that he had left Australia in 1936 because he had felt oppressed in "a country where nothing happened."⁸⁶ Like Lawson, Moorehead had witnessed first-hand the snobbish preference in Australia for

⁸³ He later directed the music for the wedding of Princess Margaret (1960).

⁸⁴ Stanley Webb and Howard Hollis, "Sir William (Neil) McKie," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* 2nd ed., vol. 15 (London: Macmillan, 2001), 505. McKie was president of the Royal College of Organists from 1957-58 and played at the commemorations of Handel and Purcell in 1959 and at the London premiere of Britten's *War Requiem* in 1962. He commissioned Vaughan Williams' anthem *O Taste and See* and later played at the composer's funeral.

⁸⁵ Robert Helpmann quoted in Meg Abbie Denton, ed., "An Artist of Infinite Range: An Interview with Robert Helpmann Recorded by Hazel de Berg in 1974," *BROGLA* (December 1996): 25.

⁸⁶ Alan Moorehead quoted in Ann Moyal, "Alan Moorehead," *NLA News* vol. XV no. 12 (September 2005).

everything English and realised that the only way to gain recognition and respect at home was to gain official approval from London:

To go abroad – that was the thing. That was the way to make your name. To stay at home was to condemn yourself to non-entity. Success depended on an imprimatur from London . . . to be really someone in Australian eyes you first had to make your mark or win your degree on the other side of the world All things [in Australia] had to be a reflection of life in England Everything was imported. And because [Australians] believed that the imitation could never be as good as the original, they were afflicted always with a feeling of nostalgia, a yearning to go back to their lost homes on the other side of the world.⁸⁷

Like other expatriates, Moorehead was outspoken and often made contradictory comments regarding his sense of national identity. Upon arriving in England, he felt that he “had come home” and that it was where he “wanted to be”⁸⁸ and yet, later in his career he stated that he had always remained an Australian “at heart.”⁸⁹ He returned to Australia several times and noted great progress in the development of the Australian arts scene, confiding in an interview with Hazel de Berg in 1964 that if he was younger, he “would not hesitate for two minutes, I would return to this country and I would write here of Australian themes.”⁹⁰ Moorehead also maintained friendships with other Australians in London, including the artist Sidney Nolan and the writer Manning Clark, who had left Melbourne in 1938 to study at Oxford and once there suffered the social snubs commonly experienced by “colonials” at that time.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Alan Moorehead quoted in Geoffrey Serle, *The Creative Spirit in Australia: A Cultural History* (Melbourne: William Heinemann, 1987), 123.

⁸⁸ Alan Moorehead quoted in Geoffrey Serle, 123.

⁸⁹ Ann Moyal, “Alan Moorehead.”

⁹⁰ Alan Moorehead quoted in Ann Moyal, “Alan Moorehead.” Similarly, the Australian author Patrick White, who moved to England in 1932 and stayed away until the age of thirty-six, felt the need to return to Australia because “there persisted a longing to return to the scenes of childhood, which is after all, the purest well from which the creative artist draws.” When White returned, however, he was engulfed by the “Great Australian Emptiness,” but he decided to stay and work, partly because of the “possibility that one may be helping to people a barely inhabited country with a race possessed of understanding.” Patrick White quoted in Geoffrey Serle, 125.

⁹¹ Manning Clark (1915-1991) left Australia for England on 16 August 1938. According to Stephen Holt, Clark “did not appreciate being regarded as an inferior colonial but he had no ready answer to English condescension since he himself equated Australia with ‘vulgarity, mediocrity and cosiness.’” Stephen Holt,

In the post-war years, increasing numbers of ambitious Australian creative artists and intellectuals began to view expatriation as the essential ingredient in the making of a successful career. The long journey to England was made by the wealthy relatively frequently, but for the majority of Australians it was still a luxury. The actor Leo McKern (1920-2002), who left on the *Orbita* in 1946, was one of the first creative artists to leave Australia following the end of World War II. A desire to visit the “mother country,” England, had been instilled in him as a child, when he first heard Australians speaking of going “back home” to “The Old Country.”⁹² He recalled that many Australian-born of his generation referred to the whole United Kingdom as “England,” by which they “meant no disrespect to Scotland, or to Wales or Northern Ireland for that matter; it was simply that we were very aware of this blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this ENGLAND and how pleasant it was to be in ENGLAND.”⁹³ As McKern discovered, however, to be an Australian in England during the post-war years was “to experience a mixture of attitudes from the natives; condescension, tolerant amusement, resentment, great friendliness.”⁹⁴ He realised that in order to be accepted and gain employment as an actor, he would need to lose his Australian accent, which was one of the few lingering signs of his “colonial” heritage.⁹⁵ After “endeavouring to obviate [his] vowel-flattening speech,” McKern found that it was not long before he felt the clichés “meteoric rise” and “rocketing to fame” were inadequate descriptions of his journey to success. He later reflected: “I could scarcely

A Short History of Manning Clark (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1999), 31. A sense of inferiority has been claimed to be the source for Clark’s life-long dislike of the English. Miriam Dickson, “Clark and National Identity,” *Manning Clark: Essays on his Place in History*, ed. Carl Bridge (Melbourne University Press 1994), 195.

⁹² Leo McKern, *Just Resting* (London: Methuen, 1983), 65.

⁹³ Leo McKern, 65.

⁹⁴ Leo McKern, 66. McKern has admitted that during his early years abroad he possessed a “nomadic tendency,” a sense of restlessness, like he could not quite find “home.” Leo McKern, 26.

⁹⁵ He stated, “There is no doubt that I must have had an accent of considerable harshness to the English ear, and to the discerning listener probably still have But in those days the possibility of obtaining work with such a handicap was remote.” Leo McKern, 68.

have done much better; my good fortune was extraordinary, it was dream-come-true time.”⁹⁶

It is interesting to note that McKern attributed his success to good fortune, rather than to hard work or talent, revealing a lack of self-confidence that was typical among Australian creative artists at the time. While he claimed the idea of returning home, defeated, was “unthinkable,” his distrust of his own ability to be successful was reflected in the fact that he and his wife carefully preserved return fares to Australia “in case of utter failure.”⁹⁷ When they eventually decided to return to Australia in the early 1970s and again in the 1980s, it was because of their desire to live in the country they considered “home,” however, the difficulty of finding work proved insurmountable and both times they found themselves returning to England, where there were greater opportunities for employment in the film and television industries. During this period, McKern admitted that he felt “torn between the two countries,” but when asked if he still considered himself Australian, he declared, “Yes . . . I’ve got the passport to prove it.”⁹⁸

Although widely considered to be Australian, the conductor, Charles Mackerras (1925-2010), was also known to question his national identity. While his parents were Australians and raised him in Australia from the age of three, he was actually born in New York State, USA. He completed training in piano, harmony and counterpoint at the New South Wales Conservatorium before moving to England in 1947 in the hope of finding full-time work in the music profession, an ambition that was almost impossible to fulfil in Australia at that time.⁹⁹ After several years abroad, he achieved great success and by the

⁹⁶ Leo McKern, 68, 78.

⁹⁷ Leo McKern, 74.

⁹⁸ Leo McKern quoted in Stephen Alomes, 255.

⁹⁹ Nancy Phelan, *Charles Mackerras: A Musicians’ Musician* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1987), 38.

early 1980s he “had a foot on each side of the world,”¹⁰⁰ juggling commitments in both Britain and Australia. While he gained immense personal satisfaction from being in demand in both countries, he eventually found that maintaining careers on opposite sides of the globe was both exhausting and impractical.¹⁰¹ Like other successful expatriates, he began to feel like an outsider in both countries he called “home” and inevitably had to face questions regarding his national identity. According to his biographer Nancy Phelan:

For Charles the trouble was that he really did not know where he belonged, he had become *déraciné*, he was not even quite sure what he was. In England he was constantly labelled *Australian*, in certain circles his Mackerras directness and impatience with humbug were seen as rather crudely “colonial,” yet in Australia he was often regarded as a “bloody Pommie.” To the British his accent was almost “ocker” yet in his own country his voice was referred to as “plummy British.” He was too cosmopolitan now to belong completely anywhere.¹⁰²

Mackerras eventually decided to settle in England; his choice heavily influenced by the ongoing lack of support for the arts in Australia and by the “largely apathetic [Australian] public, a section of whom regarded music as an elitist luxury far less important than sport.”¹⁰³ In 1995, over forty years after his own expatriation, Mackerras expressed the belief that Australians still need to go to Europe in order to achieve recognition in the field of music.¹⁰⁴

Mackerras was followed to London in the early 1950s by a large number of Australian composers and musicians, many of whom achieved outstanding success. The year 1950

¹⁰⁰ Nancy Phelan, 223.

¹⁰¹ Mackerras’ contract with the ABC required him to spend several months each year in Australia, usually during the European summer, meaning that he lived complete years in winter climates. In England, his absence for several months each year caused people to assume that he had returned to Sydney permanently and when he reappeared in London, he was asked how long he would be visiting for “this trip.” Nancy Phelan, 227.

¹⁰² Nancy Phelan, 223. Mackerras’ direct, brash manner, combined with infectious enthusiasm and generosity, was seen as characteristically Australian and became known as “The Mackerras Manner” because they were qualities also found in his mother, Catherin MacLaurin. Nancy Phelan, 25, 246-47.

¹⁰³ Nancy Phelan, 242.

¹⁰⁴ Mackerras quoted in *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 November 1995.

alone saw Malcolm Williamson, Don Banks, Barry Tuckwell, Geoffrey Parsons and Keith Humble leave Australia for Britain, followed shortly thereafter by Joan Sutherland in 1951 and David Lumsdaine in 1953. The trend of post-war expatriation also extended to the fields of fine arts and writing, with the artist Sidney Nolan leaving Australia for Britain in 1950, followed by the writer Jill Neville and poet Peter Porter in 1951, and the writers Murray Sayle and Charles Osborne, who left in 1952 and 1953 respectively. Like those who had gone before, their journeys were shaped by their individual ambitions, choices and personalities, but there were also strong parallels between their expatriate experiences.

Don Banks (1923-1980) achieved international success relatively soon after leaving Australia in 1950.¹⁰⁵ While this was mostly due to his creative skills and hard work, it was also a consequence of his eagerness to establish personal and professional connections with prominent figures in the international musical world. In Europe, he took composition lessons with Luigi Dallapiccola, Mátyás Seiber, Milton Babbitt and Luigi Nono and in 1954 his career was launched with the premiere of *Four Pieces for Orchestra* by the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Sir Adrian Boult.¹⁰⁶ Despite his success abroad, Banks never lost sight of his Australian identity and was a primary force behind the establishment of the Australian Musical Association in London in the early 1950s, which brought him into contact with many other Australian expatriate composers and musicians.¹⁰⁷ He returned to Australia several times, including to take up a Creative Arts Fellowship at the Australian National University in 1972.¹⁰⁸ During this visit, music critic

¹⁰⁵ Prior to leaving Australia, Banks studied at the University of Melbourne Conservatorium with Waldemar Seidel (piano) and A.E.H. Nickson and Dorian Le Gallienne (composition).

¹⁰⁶ Banks' Violin Sonata was also well received at the Darmstadt Summer School.

¹⁰⁷ It was through his involvement with the AMA that Banks came to know the Australian expatriate composer David Lumsdaine, with whom he organised a regular series of Composers' Weekends to be run under the auspices of the Society for the Promotion of New Music. Lumsdaine later dedicated *Kelly Ground* (1966) to Banks. Michael Hall, *Between Two Worlds: The Music of David Lumsdaine* (Todmorden: Arc Music, 2003), 62.

¹⁰⁸ Other distinguished expatriates who were granted this Fellowship include the artists Sidney Nolan (1965) and Arthur Boyd (1971), the writer Christine Stead (1969) and later, the composer Malcolm Williamson (1975).

Maria Prerauer announced in the *Sunday Australian* that the local music scene desperately needed a composer of Banks' calibre to remain resident in Australia and therefore, he should not be allowed to "escape again:"

First-rate Australian composer-teachers don't grow on gum trees. We need this year's Australian National University Creative Fellow, Don Banks, more than Don Banks needs us The big question everyone should be asking is what, if anything, are we doing to keep this Melbourne-born 49-year-old here for good Don Banks – shame that in his country of birth it seems necessary to spell it out – is a most distinguished expatriate composer He is expatriate only because 20 years or so ago when he went abroad there was nothing – repeat nothing – for an Australian prophet to profit in his own country.¹⁰⁹

Perhaps Banks was convinced that he did have a lot to contribute to musical life in Australia, because he decided to return the following year, 1973, to take up the position of Head of Composition and Electronic Music Studies at the Canberra School of Music. Soon after he settled in Canberra, he was elected Chairman of the Music Board of the Australia Council, for which his responsibilities included helping to "create a renaissance in the musical life in Australia."¹¹⁰ This proved to be quite an undertaking and Banks became so consumed by administrative duties that he had little time left for composing. His life in Australia was also made difficult by some local figures who had built up entrenched positions and perceived the composer as an "empire builder" and a "threat."¹¹¹ It would not have been surprising therefore, if Banks had experienced second thoughts about his decision to return to Australia, especially considering that in order to repatriate, he had given up a successful international career as a composer and academic.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Maria Prerauer, "Don Banks Must Not Escape Again," *Sunday Australian*, 28 May 1972.

¹¹⁰ Michael Hall, 62.

¹¹¹ David Lumsdaine quoted in Stephen Alomes, 156.

¹¹² Prior to returning to Australia, Banks had held the position of Head of Music at Goldsmith's College, London.

Another of Banks' expatriate friends was the French horn player Barry Tuckwell, for whom Banks composed his *Horn Trio* (1962). Like other young Australians in England during the early 1950s, Tuckwell had to work his way to London via the provinces; he held positions within the Hallé in Manchester (1951-53), the Scottish National Orchestra (1953-54) and the Bournemouth orchestra (1954-55), before attaining the prestigious position of first horn in the London Symphony Orchestra in 1955. While this progression was fairly common due to the prevailing British tendency to employ local artists over those from the colonies, as Eileen Joyce had previously experienced, Tuckwell was disappointed by the realisation that he had "left [in Sydney] an orchestra better than the [provincial ones he] was playing in."¹¹³ His experience abroad was also typical in that he felt the weight of expatriation bear heavily upon his sense of national identity:

I was very nostalgic. I always have been and I think the thing that saddens me is that I know now that I'm probably not enough of an Australian because I haven't lived there, but I still feel it. It is like a rat which is taken away from the pack and they clean it up, so it doesn't smell like a rat and it goes back to the pack and they attack it because it doesn't smell right, they don't recognise it. Whereas that rat smells everybody and says "Here guys, I am home." And I have been away for long enough for people there [in Australia] to think of me as just somebody who is not Australian anymore. In the same way that I will never ever be totally part of England because I wasn't born here; it's just a fact of life. So in a sense I have lost both.¹¹⁴

The sense of isolation and loss of identification with a specific country or place that one could call "home" was particularly common among expatriate performers, who were less likely to be able to express their feelings about their national identity through their creative output than expatriate composers, artists or writers. The expatriate accompanist Geoffrey Parsons (1929-1995) maintained a connection with Australia by touring the country thirty-

¹¹³ Charles Mackerras quoted in Stephen Alomes, 69.

¹¹⁴ Barry Tuckwell quoted in Stephen Alomes, 260.

one time between 1957 and 1993, bringing with him some of the world's most celebrated singers.¹¹⁵ Likewise, the expatriate composer, pianist, conductor and music educator Keith Humble (1927-1995) made numerous visits to Australia before returning permanently in 1966 to take up the position of Senior Lecturer at the Melbourne Conservatorium.¹¹⁶ Humble, like Don Banks, made a significant contribution to the development of Australian music, particularly in the field of music education and through the promotion of contemporary Australian composers and their music.¹¹⁷

Other expatriate creative artists returned to Australia less frequently and found that geographical distance from the country of their birth gave them greater perspective when it came to the issue of national identity and the expression of it in their creative work. This was certainly the case for Malcolm Williamson, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 3, and for the artist Sidney Nolan, whose development of strong iconographic symbols resulted because of “the distance, psychological and physical, from their source, Australia.”¹¹⁸ While Nolan may not have returned to Australia regularly, he maintained connections with his homeland through other avenues, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5 in the context of his contribution to the Australian ballet *The Display*.

Two of Nolan's closest friends in London were the Australian soprano Joan Sutherland (1926-2010) and her husband, conductor Richard Bonyng (b.1930).¹¹⁹ Sutherland and Bonyng met at the NSW Conservatorium in the late 1940s and again in London in the

¹¹⁵ Ian Holtham, “Geoffrey Parsons,” *The Oxford Companion to Australian Music*, ed. Warren Bebbington (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1997), 446. Parson's first big break came accompanying fellow Australian expatriate Peter Dawson (baritone).

¹¹⁶ At the Melbourne Conservatorium, Humble established the Electronic Music Studio at the Grainger Centre, re-established the Opera School and formed the Society for the Private Performance of New Music.

¹¹⁷ In 1974 Humble was appointed Foundation Professor at La Trobe University and in 1975 he founded the Australian Contemporary Music Ensemble with the hope that it would encourage the composition and performance of new Australian works. Humble performed with the group and was its musical director until 1978.

¹¹⁸ Bruce Bennett, *Spirit in Exile: Peter Porter and His Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 90.

¹¹⁹ Nolan and Sutherland worked together when Nolan was commissioned to produce the designs for *Il Trovatore* for the Sydney Opera House.

early 1950s, when they were both students at the Royal College of Music.¹²⁰ Sutherland left Australia in 1951 armed with a letter of introduction from Goossens and with one ambition – to sing at Covent Garden.¹²¹ It was not long before she achieved this goal and began to receive a considerable amount of attention from the press. Within just a few years of her Covent Garden debut, she was hailed “La Stupenda” and “The Voice of the Century” and was in demand all over the world, including the major opera houses of Paris, Milan, Vienna and New York.

Although Sutherland had felt awkward about her Australian accent upon her arrival in London, believing it was something that needed to be erased, the press, particularly French journalists, made many references to her Australian character in their reports, implying that her foreign origin added a certain exoticism to her performances.¹²² While Sutherland retained a proud Australian identity throughout her career and returned to her homeland many times, it is obvious from her comments in interviews and in her autobiography, *A Prima Donna's Progress*, that her views towards Australia were affected by her relationship with the local press.

The Australian press reported Sutherland's rise to international fame with much pride during the late 1950s and early 1960s. During this period, the well-publicised construction of the Sydney Opera House, with its striking architectural design, drew public attention towards opera in general and brought the careers of Australia's opera singers into the

¹²⁰ Sutherland performed at Bonynges's farewell concert shortly before he left Australia and at this time, she promised herself that she would follow in his footsteps soon. She left Australia with her mother on board the *Maloja*, arriving in London in August 1951. As a student at the NSW Conservatorium, Bonynges had studied piano with Lindley Evans, who had been Nellie Melba's last accompanist. This training equipped him well for his later work with Sutherland. The pair married in 1954.

¹²¹ Joan Sutherland, *A Prima Donna's Progress: The Autobiography of Joan Sutherland* (Sydney: Random House, 1997), 18. The letter from Goossens read, “The bearer of this letter has a magnificent dramatic soprano voice and has done excellent work here in concert and operatic appearances. Her voice is in the true ‘Austral’ tradition Her departure for Europe will be a great loss for Australia, for such grand natural voices as hers are all too scarce nowadays.” Brian Adams, *La Stupenda* (Melbourne: Hutchinson, 1980), 52.

¹²² Brian Adams, 47, 74, 118.

spotlight. The cancellation of what was to be Sutherland's first tour of Australia with the ABC in 1962 was met with great disappointment in her homeland and marked a turning point in the way the Australian press reported information about her professional and personal life.¹²³ The tour had been cancelled because Sutherland had aggravated a pre-existing spinal injury and had been advised by doctors to avoid long-distance travel; however, her willingness to participate in a new production of Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots* at La Scala (which required her to mount a real horse on stage) at the time she should have been in Australia, caused the Australian press and public to accuse her of being a "traitor" for choosing Europe over Australia once again.¹²⁴

All things considered, it is not surprising that Sutherland was apprehensive about how she would be received when she made her first, belated, tour of Australia in 1965. In the months leading up to the tour, she again received a significant amount of media attention, with Australian papers and magazines running story after story about her career and including all the details about her forthcoming performances.¹²⁵ When she arrived in Sydney, she was mobbed by the public and "dozens of press, radio and TV reporters" and when journalists insisted on following and reporting her every move during her visit, she grew increasingly agitated and angry, describing their behaviour as "outrageous and undisciplined."¹²⁶ When she later began to refuse interviews and photographs, the press became even more aggressive, with some reporters launching written attacks on her

¹²³ In the lead up to the proposed tour, Sutherland announced that she could not wait to visit Australia, a country so "beautiful" that "many of us do not appreciate until we leave it." Sutherland quoted in Brian Adams, 137. This quotation was printed in the Australian magazine *Our Women* (October-December 1961).

¹²⁴ Brian Adams, 154.

¹²⁵ The *Australian Women's Weekly*, among others, published historical information about each opera to be performed including an act-by-act synopsis of each plot and a pronunciation guide (for example, "Loo-CHEE-ah dee LAHM-maw-mohr" for *Lucia di Lammermoor*). Brian Adams, 189-90.

¹²⁶ "Enter Joan Sutherland: The Mad Scene, 12 Minutes of Panic," *The Sun*, 17 June 1965, 1. Bonyng described the Australian media contingency as a "herd of orang-outangs." Brian Adams, 189, 198.

character.¹²⁷ Sutherland retaliated to this personal criticism, declaring that she had never been treated so “downright rudely” by reporters anywhere else in the world.¹²⁸

Fortunately for Sutherland, the Australian critics who reviewed her performances during the tour were almost always fair and generous in their praise, as were her fans.¹²⁹ The opening night of Donizetti’s *Lucia di Lammermoor* in Melbourne received twenty curtain calls and according to Sutherland, it was “as great musically and greater personally than any of [her] performances at Covent Garden, the Met or La Scala, because it was coming home after fourteen years.”¹³⁰ As this statement implies, Sutherland continued to call Australia “home,” in spite of her choice to live abroad and the criticism she had received from her fellow countrymen and women.

Sutherland returned to Australia more frequently after she and Bonyngé acquired an apartment in Sydney in the mid-1970s.¹³¹ By this time, the Australian Opera had established itself as a full-time permanent company based at the newly-opened Sydney Opera House¹³² and in 1976, Bonyngé was appointed its Musical Director, which tightened the couple’s links to Australia even more. Like many other Australian expatriates,

¹²⁷ For example, under the headline “Joan Blows Up!,” a reporter for the *Sunday Mirror* accused her of being a “Tall Poppy,” while a writer for *The Australian* expressed resentment not only at her behaviour, but at the length of time she had stayed away, declaring: “Joan Sutherland must control her petulance She must learn to handle with dignity and quell with charm the little imbroglios that an excited Press and public create when she appears It is inexcusable that she should reprove our newsmen and cameramen . . . who are interested in photographing and questioning the world’s leading opera singer for the benefit of her Australian admirers who may not see her again for another fifteen years” Brian Adams, 198, 203-4.

¹²⁸ This was a similar argument to that expressed by numerous other expatriates, including Malcolm Williamson, as will be addressed in Chapter 3.

¹²⁹ Following her performance in *Semiramide* a critic from *The Australian* reported: “Her performance was the most staggering show of singing heard in Australia for decades She put her voice through acrobatics that could hardly be imagined, let alone thought possible.” Brian Adams, 195.

¹³⁰ Sutherland quoted in Brian Adams, 192. The closing night in Melbourne was also memorable for Sutherland, who gave an encore performance of “Home, Sweet Home” in the tradition of Melba, with Bonyngé accompanying her on piano. The applause lasted for “a full forty minutes.” Joan Sutherland, 188.

¹³¹ Brian Adams, 222.

¹³² The Opera House, which was officially opened in 1973, was one realisation of Goossens’ dream to keep local artists, like Sutherland, in Australia: “[It is] high time Australia took steps to keep [Sutherland’s] talent at home If we had a fine national opera house with performances the year round and adequate financial rewards for our singers, they would think twice before leaving the country.” Eugene Goossens quoted in Joan Sutherland, 23.

Sutherland believed music should be “for everybody”¹³³ and during return visits she embraced the opportunity to educate the younger generation of Australian singers, advising them to foster unique, individual styles. Sutherland also maintained connections with her homeland by working and associating with other Australians living in London, such as Barry Tuckwell, Charles Mackerras, Sidney Nolan, Leo McKern and of course her husband, Richard Bonyng.¹³⁴

The writer Jill Neville (1932-1997), who left Australia the same year as Sutherland (1951), also found the expatriate journey less lonely when shared with other Australians in similar situations. On the long sea voyage to England, she met the young poet Peter Porter and once in London, she befriended the composer David Lumsdaine and the writer Murray Sayle. Like most expatriates, Neville continued to craft connections with her homeland throughout her life. Her creative output reveals a mind preoccupied by expatriation, which she viewed as a rite of passage for all ambitious Australian creative artists.¹³⁵ She observed that with each ocean-liner that departed from Australian shores, hundreds of paper streamers were severed like “umbilical cords” and the passengers on board were “damning [themselves] forever to be cut in half.”¹³⁶ Neville experienced this first hand; she often felt torn between her professional life in Britain and her “physical self and more than physical, idealistic spiritual self,” which she believed was still in Australia.¹³⁷

Simultaneously, she knew how difficult it would be to return permanently, especially after

¹³³ Sutherland stated: “I don’t think [music is] for the socially elite at all. I think Mozart wrote for the people, although he was a court composer; Verdi was very close to the people and wrote about them. I think [opera] is the greatest art form because in it you have the best of everything – great dramas set to music, sets, costumes, ballet and singing – it’s a marvellous blending of so many different components. I think it’s for everybody” Joan Sutherland quoted in Brian Adams, 265.

¹³⁴ Sutherland and McKern worked together on the film *Dad and Dave On Our Selection* (1995). She also participated in the Bicentennial Celebration at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, attended by Princess Alexandra and featuring predominantly Australian artists, including Barry Tuckwell, Charles Mackerras, Douglas Gamley, Susanne Kessler, Malcolm Donnelly and “Dame Edna Everage.”

¹³⁵ Neville’s 1966 novel *Fall-Girl* is about the experience of an Australian expatriate in London.

¹³⁶ Jill Neville quoted in Stephen Alomes, 6, 107.

¹³⁷ Neville left Australia because she believed “there really wouldn’t have been anything for me in the Fifties if I’d stayed in Sydney.” Jill Neville quoted in Stephen Alomes, 100.

hearing stories about the treatment of other expatriates during return visits. When she attempted to return herself in the late 1970s, after more than twenty-five years abroad, she felt that many Australians viewed her as a traitor because she had “preferred somewhere else to [her] native land.” She observed:

You have to get punished if you go away and leave Australia Instead of staying at home and helping to create a new culture you went away and partook of the old culture. Sometimes I wonder would they be more angry with one if one hadn't gone back to England, which is the rather loathed mother country. If one had gone away and lived in Greece or something¹³⁸

Exile is also a recurring theme in the writing of Neville's friend, the expatriate poet Peter Porter (b. 1929). After Porter left Australia in 1951, his poetic output began to reflect a feeling of separation not only from Australia, but from any sense of “home.” This is evident in the final lines of the poem “In the New World Happiness is Allowed” from the collection *The Cost of Seriousness* (1978):

Depression long persisted in
becomes despair. Forgive me, friends and relatives,
for this unhappiness, I was away from home.¹³⁹

While the poet's personal confession of being away from home may be autobiographically true, as an explanation it is ironically insufficient because “home” remains something of a mirage that is continually sought by Porter in his poetry, but is always out of reach.¹⁴⁰ As an Australian in London, Porter felt like a “provincial” and an “outsider” and never viewed himself as a member of any London establishment, nor was he perceived as such by critics. Instead, he recognised in himself the Australian tendency to “suspect the motives and

¹³⁸ Jill Neville quoted in Stephen Alomes, 111.

¹³⁹ Peter Porter quoted in Bruce Bennett, 175.

¹⁴⁰ Bruce Bennett, 176.

ability of those who put on special airs and graces.”¹⁴¹ Like other Australian expatriate creative artists, he had a democratic, egalitarian outlook and believed that all forms of art should be accessible to all who can learn to appreciate them. Many Australians, however, perceived Porter’s fascination with the “high” arts as arrogant and pretentious and labelled him a “culture vulture,” a term applied to those with an excessive interest in arts such as opera, painting and poetry.¹⁴²

In the 1970s and 1980s, Porter returned to Australia several times and reconnected with the country of his birth through his writing. He produced a number of poems based on Australian themes, notably “An Australian Garden,” “The Blazing Birds” and “Woop Woop,” as well as two pieces concerning the plight of Australia’s indigenous population, “Cities of Light” and “Next to Nothing.” After more than twenty years abroad, he was now able to see “the real land [Australia] and it was as if a mask had fallen from a handsome face.”¹⁴³ His focus on Australian themes gained approval from many critics, including Les Murray, who was impressed by “the sheer number of Australian passages, inflections, references and counterpointings, as well as the number of poems actually set in this country.”¹⁴⁴ During the same period, Porter also collaborated with a number of well-known Australians, including the painter Arthur Boyd,¹⁴⁵ and the composers David Lumsdaine, Christopher Whelen, Nicholas Maw, Don Banks, George Newson, Ronald

¹⁴¹ Porter continued: “I’m an old-fashioned Australian . . . I believe that a writer should be a real democrat, that he should behave in the same way as other men in most public places and you certainly shouldn’t know he’s a writer from his demeanour.” Peter Porter quoted in Bruce Bennett, 103.

¹⁴² Bruce Bennett, 168.

¹⁴³ Peter Porter quoted in Stephen Alomes, 114. Porter returned to Australia for the first time in 1974. In the 1980s he accepted the appointments of writer-in-residence at the universities of Melbourne (1983) and Western Australia (1987) and returned almost annually, accepting the Gold Medal of the Australian Literature Society in 1990.

¹⁴⁴ Les Murray quoted in Bruce Bennett, 199. Les Murray had previously criticised Porter for “betraying” his homeland in favour of London. Porter’s rediscovery of Australia coincided with a renewed interest in his work in his homeland and in Britain. Previously, most Australians had been ignorant of the importance of his work in Britain, just as British readers had little knowledge of Porter’s Australian heritage. In part, this had been due to the national revival of the arts in Australia during this period and a resistance towards outside influences, particularly from those who had “made it” overseas. Bruce Bennett, xii.

¹⁴⁵ Porter and Boyd collaborated on several books, including *Jonah* (1973), *The Lady and the Unicorn* (1975), *Narcissus* (1984) and *Mars* (1988). Paintings by Boyd appear on the cover of the second edition of Porter’s *Collected Poems* (1986) and on *A Porter Selected* (1989).

Senator and Geoffrey Burgon, which strengthened his connections with Australia even further.¹⁴⁶

Another of Porter's associates in England was the Australian writer and journalist Murray Sayle (b. 1926), who was an outspoken commentator on issues relating to Australia's evolving relationship with Britain. Sayle left Australia for London in 1952 because he "felt the Australian emptiness closing in on [him] and [he] had to get out."¹⁴⁷ He had found it easy to "join a mass movement," noting that on his vessel alone, the R.M.S. *Otranto*, there were a couple of young architects, two or three dentists, a "gaggle" of typists, academics, advertising men, schoolteachers, nurses, pianists, poets and painters, all making the "customary pilgrimage to London."¹⁴⁸ He believed that "like all migrants, we were looking for something we couldn't find at home, and we weren't coming back without it."¹⁴⁹ Sayle found what he was looking for after just a few years in London, when he was appointed as a foreign correspondent for the *Sunday Times*, however, he also experienced the sense of inferiority felt by many Australians abroad, commenting on one occasion:

Australians themselves, unprompted, feel that they belong to an absurd nationality Standing on their heads, in a lunar landscape hopping with improbable animals, Australians have inverted the British society they inherited. Politeness has become bluntness, even boorishness There are contradictions in our society and our personality which we have not been able to resolve, and most of them stem from our British heritage and the way in which we have adapted it . . . all our history, effectively, has been Britain: old slights, old grudges which we all hold,

¹⁴⁶ Bruce Bennett, 132. Porter and Lumsdaine were introduced by a mutual friend, Murray Sayle, and later the pair collaborated on several cantatas. Porter was also good friends with the Australian expatriate Clive James, to whom he dedicated the poem "Spiderwise," a response to Porter's sense of exile from Australia.

¹⁴⁷ Murray Sayle, "As Far As You Can Go," *Alienation*, ed. Timothy O'Keeffe (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1960): 96-97.

¹⁴⁸ Murray Sayle, 96-97. Sayle left from his birthplace, Sydney, on 8 August 1952.

¹⁴⁹ Murray Sayle, 96-97. It is interesting to note that he used the word "migrant," which implies a sense of permanence, rather than the term "expatriate," which suggests a continuing relationship with the country of birth.

unacknowledged perhaps, against our parents, which no parent ever guesses, and underneath the reproaching and undeniable fact of blood relationship.¹⁵⁰

The writer Charles Osborne (b.1927), who left Australia in 1953, was just as outspoken as Murray Sayle when it came to the topic of expatriation. In what would become a recurring metaphor used by expatriates, Osborne claimed that his life in Australia prior to expatriation had been “a preview of life” and that he had travelled “to Europe to be born . . . Australia had been a sort of womb.”¹⁵¹ He had felt compelled to go to a place where he could witness “operas, *real* plays, *real* operettas for that matter and to look at paintings and baroque churches, and even see some *real* modern architecture.”¹⁵² Not surprisingly, Osborne’s preference for the high art forms of the “Old World” made him a target for the “Tall Poppy Syndrome” in Australia.¹⁵³

Likewise, the composer David Lumsdaine (b. 1931) left Australia in 1953 because he felt restricted by a lack of opportunities for creative and professional development in his homeland.¹⁵⁴ As a student at the NSW Conservatorium, he had observed that there were no full-time professional composers of serious music:

The person who was closest to being a professional was John Antill, the composer of *Corroboree*, but he worked for the Australian Broadcasting Commission and had to compose at weekends and on holidays He made it quite clear [to me] that although he may have been a professional in terms of his techniques, he could

¹⁵⁰ Murray Sayle, 95-96. Sayle reported on the Vietnam War, the Cuban revolution and conflicts in the Middle East, Northern Ireland and the Indian subcontinent. He published a novel about journalism entitled *The Crooked Sixpence* (1960) and in 1973 he was appointed Asian Editor for Newsweek International. From this time forward he lived in Japan, where he reported local stories to leading newspapers in Australia, Britain, America and Hong Kong.

¹⁵¹ Charles Osborne quoted in Stephen Alomes, 103.

¹⁵² Stephen Alomes, 103.

¹⁵³ In Osborne’s own words, he was “not a modest person” and he viewed his “detestation of mediocrity [as] the natural obverse of [his] admiration of excellence.” Charles Osborne quoted in Stephen Alomes, 102. Osborne became friends with Sidney Nolan and Barry Humphries in London.

¹⁵⁴ According to Michael Hall, Lumsdaine viewed Australia as a musical backwater. Michael Hall, *Between Two Worlds: The Music of David Lumsdaine* (Todmorden: Arc Music, 2003), 22. See also Andrew Ford, *Composer to Composer: Conversations About Contemporary Music* (London: Quartet Books, 1993), 76.

never hope to make his living as a composer; in this sense, he would always be an amateur¹⁵⁵

Lumsdaine also lacked confidence in the training he had received in Australia and felt that he needed to leave in order to gain more professional tuition.¹⁵⁶ Following the advice of Professor Donald Peart, Lumsdaine travelled abroad to take lessons with Mátyás Seiber, who was regarded as one of the best composition teachers in Britain at that time.¹⁵⁷ Deeply self-conscious of his “colonial” works, Lumsdaine disowned or destroyed all the music he had composed prior to leaving Australia, keeping only a short piece that was written during the voyage to England.¹⁵⁸ Once in London, he made contact with other Australians including Murray Sayle, who he had known from his University days, and Peter Porter, with whom he later collaborated on a number of cantatas.¹⁵⁹ Ironically, the majority of performers and fellow composers with whom Lumsdaine formed alliances in London were themselves Australian expatriates, including Barry Tuckwell, Doug Whittaker and the composer Don Banks.¹⁶⁰

Lumsdaine remained in the UK throughout his career, working freelance as a composer, conductor, teacher, music editor and academic and in later years visited Australia regularly to attend performances of his works and to conduct workshops with young composers. His compositions from the mid-1960s onwards demonstrate an increasing fascination with the history and landscape of Australia, such as *Kelly Ground* (1966) for solo piano, *Kangaroo Hunt* (1971), *Aria for Edward John Eyre* (1972) for voices, electronics and instruments

¹⁵⁵ David Lumsdaine quoted in Michael Hall, 22-23.

¹⁵⁶ Michael Hall, 22-23.

¹⁵⁷ Michael Hall, 23.

¹⁵⁸ Michael Hall, 16.

¹⁵⁹ In the 1950s, Lumsdaine and Porter had planned to collaborate on an opera about Ned Kelly, but later abandoned the project. While Lumsdaine had been quite obsessed with the subject matter, Porter was less enthusiastic because he believed the result would be too “brashly” Australian, too “ocker.” Michael Hall, 26.

¹⁶⁰ Together, Banks and Lumsdaine pioneered the Young Composers’ Schools in Australia, as well as the Society for the Promotion of New Music Composer’s Weekends mentioned previously.

and *Salvation Creek with Eagle* (1974) for chamber orchestra.¹⁶¹ A number of works also incorporate quotations of Australian birdsong, such as *Cambewarra* (1980) for piano and *Mandala V* (1988) for orchestra.

Despite his preoccupation with Australia, Lumsdaine has never seriously considered returning to the country of his birth to live.¹⁶² Simultaneously, however, he has never felt as though he really “belongs” in England.¹⁶³ In the early 1990s, after forty years in London, he commented:

I have no association any longer with the music or social world in England. I am associated with small groups of friends but otherwise I could be in a monastery composing.¹⁶⁴

Self-exile had left Lumsdaine feeling “free of so many identifications,” enabling him, he believed, to hear music “from the outside . . . [because he was] equally removed from the natural world and from Western European music and the music of other cultures.”¹⁶⁵ In other words, the expatriate experience had brought Lumsdaine personal and artistic freedom.

¹⁶¹ *Kelly Ground* is dedicated to Don Banks. Lumsdaine also composed a short piano piece entitled *An Aria for Kelly* in the early 1960s. Most of the commissions Lumsdaine received during the 1980s and 1990s came from Australian ensembles. He composed *Bagatelles* (1985) for the Australia Ensemble, *Empty Sky, Mootwingee* for Flederman (1986), *A Dance and a Hymn for Alexander Maconochie, Norfolk Island, May 25 1840* (1988) for Elision and *Kali Dances* (1994) for Sydney Alpha. Considering the number of years Lumsdaine has lived in England, it is perhaps surprising that only a few works carry titles with references to Britain or Europe.

¹⁶² In 1992, Lumsdaine admitted: “I don’t know why [I haven’t returned to Australia to live]... There must be something which tells me that I could be too comfortable in Australia; it always feels right here [in Australia], in a way that it never does anywhere else, no matter how much I enjoy other places. But maybe self-exile is a way of sharpening the imagination for some of us.” David Lumsdaine quoted in Andrew Ford, 76. The idea that self-exile could give greater perspective was also expressed by other expatriates, including Malcolm Williamson and Sidney Nolan, as mentioned earlier in this chapter.

¹⁶³ Michael Hall, 16. Lumsdaine has also been labelled an outsider by critics. For example, *The Times*’ Paul Griffiths observed: “[Lumsdaine is] such a loner . . . whose works, scarce and wonderful and in many ways quite unlike each other, have come out of a solitary journey.” Paul Griffiths quoted in “David Lumsdaine,” *University of York Music Press Website*; available from <http://www.uymp.co.uk/composers/lumsdaine1.htm>; Internet; accessed 5/4/08.

¹⁶⁴ David Lumsdaine quoted in Stephen Alomes, 156.

¹⁶⁵ David Lumsdaine quoted in Stephen Alomes, 143.

The belief that Australia was “on the outer rim of nowhere and that the epicentre of life – culturally, at least – was most definitely Atlantic”¹⁶⁶ still existed in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The last generation of Australian creative artists that considered expatriation compulsory included the actor/comedian Barry Humphries and the writers David Malouf, Clive James, Germaine Greer and Robert Hughes.¹⁶⁷ All five of these figures spoke openly about their experiences as expatriates and their evolving relationships with Australia, despite the fact that their willingness to comment on such issues attracted scorn from critics and the public.

Barry Humphries (b.1934) knew that he would be “going to England” from a very young age.¹⁶⁸ As a student at Melbourne Church of England Grammar School, he was reminded of Australia’s colonial history continuously and he soon learned that if he wanted to succeed on the world stage, he would need to travel to the centre of the theatrical world, London.¹⁶⁹ Humphries arrived there in 1959 and after only five years, had earned widespread success through his unique one-man shows. The characters he devised for his early shows were based on the lives of the “Kangaroo Valley” generation of Australian expatriates living in Earls Court, London, and included “Buster Thompson,” a wealthy young bloke pub-crawling his way through Europe; “Lantana Holman,” an Australian art dealer who loathed her fellow compatriots and “Eric Ballarate,” a young tenor trying to “make it” at Covent Garden.¹⁷⁰ While none of these invented characters became well

¹⁶⁶ Christine Wallace, *Greer: Untamed Shrew* (Sydney: Pan Macmillan, 1997), 128.

¹⁶⁷ After this time, the convenience and decreasing cost of travel by air made it increasingly possible for Australians to travel regularly, rather than expatriate permanently.

¹⁶⁸ Barry Humphries quoted in Peter Coleman, *The Real Barry Humphries* (London: Robson Books, 1990), 19.

¹⁶⁹ The school magazine declared: “Let us be a little louder in proclaiming that we are British subjects, living in the British Empire, under the British flag.” Peter Coleman, 22. Humphries once declared, “‘Australia-based’ means a person of diminished aspiration who has been successfully bribed with grants and awards to resist the lure of expatriation.” Barry Humphries quoted in Peter Coleman, 126. According to Peter Coleman, “mere self-respect alone would have compelled Barry Humphries to emigration.” Peter Coleman, 55-56.

¹⁷⁰ Peter Coleman, 60-61. As Stephen Alomes has observed, Humphries “emphatically defined himself as an expatriate” through these characters. Stephen Alomes, 219.

known, their stories reflected Humphries' early experience as an Australian expatriate in London and later culminated in the adventures of another one of his characters, "Barry (Bazza) McKenzie."

"Bazza McKenzie" was the first Humphries character to become popular with English audiences, however, audiences and critics in Australia were not impressed by what they perceived as an expatriate's attempt to damage his country's reputation abroad.¹⁷¹

Humphries recalled:

It was not so much that [Australian audiences and critics] were affronted by the portrayal of Australians as vulgar and incontinent (McKenzie vomited and urinated copiously throughout the film), but that audiences in that intimidating place called "Overseas" might judge us all by Barry. By the early seventies . . . Australia's international image became a matter of national concern. We wanted to be perceived as a rather refined and cultivated nation with superlative skills in sport, armed conflict and even macramé.¹⁷²

It was not until Humphries' 1965 tour of Australia, when he introduced the charming characters "Sandy Stone" and "Edna Everage," that he had a breakthrough with Australian audiences and critics. "Edna Everage" (later "Dame Edna Everage") was particularly popular and became notorious for her ridicule of public figures and celebrities. Australians soon found that they were able to laugh at themselves, as noted by a critic from the *Herald*, who announced "it will be surprising if Melbourne can resist going along to see itself."¹⁷³

Four years later, however, Humphries was creating controversy again with his performances of *Just a Show* (1969). While Australian critics were unanimous in their

¹⁷¹ Peter Coleman, 87, 92. There were two films made about this character, *The Adventures of Barry McKenzie* (1972) and *Barry McKenzie Holds His Own* (1974), which were dismissed by Australian critics as "vulgar rubbish" and the "worst Australian Film[s] ever made."

¹⁷² Barry Humphries, *My Life as Me: A Memoir* (Melbourne: Penguin Books, 2002), 216. Likewise, the slobbering, foul-mouthed and badly-dressed Australian character "Sir Les Patterson" was successful with London audiences before gaining the attention of the Australian public. Australia's international image has continued to remain a matter of national concern; for example, Paul Hogan and the late "crocodile hunter" Steve Irwin have both been judged by Australian critics and the public for being too "ocker."

¹⁷³ Peter Coleman, 54.

approval of the show initially, their opinions changed after they heard the response of their British counterparts.¹⁷⁴ According to London reviewers, *Just a Show* was a “sustained hymn of hatred of [Humphries’] native Australia,” in which he depicted the country as a “land of louts, drunks, philistines, bigots, bores and bums.”¹⁷⁵ Although Humphries had included slides encouraging the English to “Emigrate Now!,” one critic announced, “nothing I have ever seen about Australia makes me feel less inclined to do so.”¹⁷⁶

Humphries had painted himself as the “unlovable type of Commonwealth entertainer who specialises in flattering the metropolitan public by sneering at the habits of his own country” and from this time forward, impugning his patriotism became something of a “blood sport” among critics everywhere.¹⁷⁷ Although Humphries has rarely responded to criticism,¹⁷⁸ he has been known to enjoy stirring up controversy and it seems that he has grown tired of trying to please or impress Australian critics. In his 2002 biography, *My Life as Me: A Memoir*, Humphries gives an example of a time when he felt he could not win approval or acceptance from the Australian press regardless of what he said or did:

I remember the first time I nervously confronted a large group of Sydney journalists . . . one patently hostile journalist got down to the nitty-gritty. “How long are you gonna be in Australia this time, Baz?” he inquired with a disarming smile. “Just a few months for this tour,” I replied, “I’ve had a nice offer from the BBC to do a bit of television.” “Yeah, that figures,” he rejoined, “I suppose your old mates seem a bit boring now after some of the fancy types you’ve been hobnobbing with overseas.” Suitably rebuked, I thought I had better change my tune for the next interviewer. “G’day Baz, how long can Australia expect to see ya

¹⁷⁴ The fact that the views of British critics were adopted in Australia so promptly indicates that Australian critics and audiences lacked confidence in their own judgement, preferring to defer to British opinion instead.

¹⁷⁵ Peter Coleman, 116.

¹⁷⁶ Peter Coleman, 115.

¹⁷⁷ Irving Wardle quoted in Peter Coleman, 115-16. The popular Sydney television talk-show host Mike Walsh described Humphries as Australia’s “worst enemy” and stated that he was in the process of doing “great damage to our image over there.” Mike Walsh quoted in Peter Coleman, 116, 164-65.

¹⁷⁸ When Humphries did respond to criticism, he was usually disguised as one of his characters. He also compensated for feelings of inadequacy with alcohol and during a return visit in 1970, he presented a play entitled “Welcome Home Mate” in which the main character was a “Drunken Ex-Pat” who had “trouble readjusting to the realities of the Australian life,” a figure not unlike himself. Peter Coleman, 118-20.

this trip?” “Oh, ages,” I gabbled, “I mean, there’s [*sic*] a few jobs on offer in the UK but it’s wonderful to be home. I mean, it’s just about the most interesting cultural centre in the world and I’m proud to be part of it. I don’t think I’ll be leaving for a long time.” “Yeah, that figures,” replied the scribbler, “The word’s out you’re not doing too well over there.”¹⁷⁹

Almost every statement Humphries made about his relationship with Australia or his sense of national identity was framed negatively in local press reports; showing the prevalence of the “Tall Poppy Syndrome.” Australian critics believed he had been satirising a “long-gone, backward country” and was “unaware of the swinging, sophisticated new Australia.”¹⁸⁰ By claiming that Humphries was “living in the past,” the critics implied that they were the ones living in the present.¹⁸¹ However, this accusation revealed little more than the critics’ own fears that as “provincials” they were living in the past, while the expatriates working in the metropolitan centres were the real ones living in the present.¹⁸²

Although Humphries has never returned to Australia to live permanently, he has continued to project various Australian identities throughout his career, demonstrating a life-long obsession with his homeland and its public affairs. Like other expatriates, including

¹⁷⁹ Barry Humphries, 70. Humphries later created a character based on this experience; a journalist suffering from the Tall Poppy Syndrome. The journalist envied and loathed all successful Australian expatriates for turning their backs on Australia and going “after the bright lights and the facile acclamation of a bunch of snobs.” The journalist announced: “If any of you members of the so-called ‘Australian colony’ deign to pay us a visit some time (and it may surprise you to learn that we don’t much care whether you do or not), don’t expect the red carpet And if you think we’re going to bribe you to come home with astrological salaries, you’ve got another thing coming We don’t want scum like you who’ve got to be paid to visit their homeland You’re a bunch of bloody traitors!” Peter Coleman, 67-68. Many of the monologues Humphries devised for his one-man shows were inspired by aspects of the expatriate experience, including the criticism he received from Australia. Humphries also observed: “Anyone remotely famous visiting Australia was always asked their opinion of the continent minutes after their plane touched down. How they could possibly have formed a favourable opinion – and it had to be a *very* favourable opinion – in so brief a time boggles the imagination. Noël Coward mumbled something about Sydney having ‘beautiful rooftops,’ since that aspect of Australia was all he had glimpsed from the aircraft window before the journalists moved in on him.” Barry Humphries, 69. Joan Sutherland has also commented on this phenomenon and Malcolm Williamson learned to anticipate such questions from the Australian press by declaring his Australian identity the moment he arrived, as will be discussed in Chapter 3.

¹⁸⁰ Peter Coleman, 117. The Australian press responded in a similar manner to most artistic products created by expatriates that were based on Australian subjects. For example, the Australian topoi explored in the Helpmann ballet *The Display* (1964), with music by Malcolm Williamson, were perceived by the Australian press as clichéd and out-of-date, as will be explored in more detail in Chapter 5.

¹⁸¹ This is an example of the characteristic that A.A. Phillips identified as the “cringe inverted.”

¹⁸² Peter Coleman, 117.

Malcolm Williamson, Humphries has been perceived as brash, outspoken, direct and something of an “outsider” from society, with a lack of concern for European “taste;”¹⁸³ traits which could be considered uniquely Australian. He has also exhibited an inclusive philosophy, which was common among Australian expatriate creative artists; designing his characters and shows to appeal to the broadest demographic.¹⁸⁴ Additionally, Humphries has maintained connections with his homeland through friendships with other Australians, including the painter Arthur Boyd, and has played a role in raising the profile of Australia abroad, projecting its qualities in a humorous, if not always positive, light.

As suggested earlier in this chapter, the creative output of writer David Malouf (b. 1934) also demonstrates a preoccupation with Australia, the relationship between Australia and Britain and the expatriate experience. Malouf left Australia in 1959 and lived in London for almost a decade, before returning to Australia in 1968. Several of his novels explore the issue of exile, such as the celebrated *Remembering Babylon* (1993),¹⁸⁵ and his 1982 novel *Fly Away Peter* is also typical in its addressing of themes concerning Australia’s complex relationship with Europe.¹⁸⁶

The books and essays of Clive James (b. 1939) also reveal a mind ever-conscious of Australia, despite his choice to live in England since the early 1960s.¹⁸⁷ He has returned to Australia on numerous occasions and still carries an Australian passport, of which he is

¹⁸³ These qualities are often mediated through Humphries’ stage characters.

¹⁸⁴ Peter Coleman, 49.

¹⁸⁵ *Remembering Babylon* is set in nineteenth-century Australia and tells the story of a young white male castaway who is raised by an indigenous Australian family. When the boy eventually makes contact with white Australians, the environment is familiar yet foreign and he begins to feel like an outsider to both cultures.

¹⁸⁶ See also David Malouf, “Made in England: Australia’s British Inheritance,” *Quarterly Essay* (Issue 12, 2003).

¹⁸⁷ See James’ three-part autobiography: *Unreliable Memoirs*, *Falling Towards England* and *May Week was in June*.

“very proud.”¹⁸⁸ Simultaneously, however, he has described his citizenship as “a bit uncertain,”¹⁸⁹ indicating that he has experienced the sense of statelessness that is common among expatriates, and admits that he has not regretted his choice to leave Australia:

I think I did the right thing forty years ago. Australia has changed a lot since
But in those days, when we were young, we felt we had to come over here to do the kind of work we wanted to do. I think we were right.”¹⁹⁰

The writer, actress, academic and feminist Germaine Greer (b. 1939) has admitted to feeling a similar way. She left Australia in 1964 to study a Bachelor of Arts at Cambridge because she thought the degree she had from the University of Sydney “probably wasn’t good enough.”¹⁹¹ She was surprised to discover, however, that she had been “completely wrong . . . Cambridge offered an inferior version of the same thing” and shortly thereafter, she transferred to the university’s Ph.D. program.¹⁹² Her ultimate ambition was to return to Australia to take up an academic appointment because, despite her outgoing nature, she felt very lonely and isolated in England, later admitting, “I didn’t belong anywhere . . . I was miserable”;¹⁹³ a statement which echoed the sentiments of many expatriates. When she returned to Australia in the 1970s to promote books and make television programs, she

¹⁸⁸ Clive James, transcript from interview with James Ellis held on 26 January 2005 available from www.metro.co.uk; Internet, accessed on 16 June 2008.

¹⁸⁹ Clive James, transcript from interview with James Ellis.

¹⁹⁰ Clive James, transcript from interview held on 6 July 2001, *BBC Talk: Your Thoughts, Your Views, Your Space Website*; available from http://www.bbc.co.uk/communicate/archive/clive_james/page1.shtml; Internet; accessed 3 June 2008.

¹⁹¹ Germaine Greer quoted in Christine Wallace, 129. Greer once stated, “I had formed my plans to leave Australia when I was twelve. I think I decided that Australia and I were both deprived. It was boring. I used to walk down to Port Melbourne and watch the boats sail away, and I promised myself that I’d be on one just as soon as I could. It took me thirteen years to realise those plans. Once I’d gone, I knew I wasn’t coming back.” Germaine Greer quoted in Clyde Packer, *No Return Ticket* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1984), 99. Greer’s first-class Masters degree helped to secure her a Commonwealth Scholarship to study at Cambridge.

¹⁹² Germaine Greer quoted in Christine Wallace, 129. For her Ph.D., Greer conducted research into Shakespeare’s early comedies and their contemporary continental counterparts. During her student years in Cambridge, she contributed to a number of revues, including a skit about the expectations placed on expatriate Australians by the English.

¹⁹³ Germaine Greer quoted in Christine Wallace, 147, 149.

found it as “easy and familiar as putting on an old shoe;” however, simultaneously, she knew that she would not be able to sustain a career in her homeland.¹⁹⁴

Greer has commented on her expatriate experience many times and once described her life as one of “professional exile.”¹⁹⁵ She has expressed sentimental thoughts about Australia on numerous occasions, announcing in 1981 that she dreamt about Sydney “at least once a week,”¹⁹⁶ and she was deeply saddened following an incident in which a compatriot mistook her for being English. She later reflected, “Here was proof positive that I had not a home, anywhere The Australian passport I was so proud of . . . meant nothing if my countrymen took me for a foreigner.”¹⁹⁷

Like many expatriates, Greer has been known to change her viewpoint to suit any given situation and according to biographer Christine Wallace, her style and language are “unmistakably antipodean: forthright, without regard to the authority of entrenched institutions and their leadership, and manifesting a biting wit,”¹⁹⁸ characteristics which certainly seem to be common among expatriate Australian creative artists, if not Australians generally. Greer has also attributed her pungent rhetorical style to her Australian heritage; observing that most Australians tend to speak over-emphatically: “Just listen to any of them: listen to Barry Humphries, listen to Clive James, listen to Robert Hughes, they all have this ‘over the top’ rhetorical power It’s one of the ways

¹⁹⁴ Germaine Greer quoted in Christine Wallace, 154, 256-57. There were several occasions when Greer rejected offers of work in Australia because the fees proposed were not high enough to meet her demands. In the 1980s she wrote to the ABC Women’s Broadcasting Cooperative: “Please note, there is no short cut to getting me to work for you. I am a professional and expect to be paid: my time is paid for at terms negotiated by my agent Why is it that only Australians pull these stunts?” Germaine Greer quoted in Christine Wallace, 291.

¹⁹⁵ Christine Wallace, 291. Greer complained profusely to the Australian press about the lack of opportunities for professionals like herself, declaring on one occasion, “The Americans ask me to come and be a visiting professor all the time. Australia, never . . . forget it!” Germaine Greer quoted in Clyde Packer, 99.

¹⁹⁶ Germaine Greer quoted in Christine Wallace, 292.

¹⁹⁷ Germaine Greer quoted in Christine Wallace, 292.

¹⁹⁸ Christine Wallace, 289. Greer’s brusque and at times even patronising attitude has occasionally been perceived by the Australian press and public as pretentious, and has attracted intense criticism.

Australian language is spoken”¹⁹⁹ Perhaps not surprisingly, each of these Australian figures has used their “rhetorical powers” to comment on their complex relationships with Australia. This was also true of Malcolm Williamson, as will be shown in Chapter 3 of this dissertation.

Robert Hughes (b. 1938) left Australia for London in 1965, the year after Germaine Greer. The pair had met through the Sydney group of artists, writers and intellectuals known as the “Push,” of which Clive James was also a member. Hughes had decided to pursue a career as a commentator on the visual arts, but knew that it would be “flatly impossible” to acquire a working knowledge of fifteenth-century Italian painting, Baroque sculpture or contemporary European art while living in Australia.²⁰⁰ In his 2006 memoir, *Things I Didn't Know*, Hughes writes extensively on his expatriate experience and relationship with Australia. He reveals that upon leaving Australia, he “hardly felt a twinge of misgiving.”²⁰¹ What he was not prepared for, however, was the experience of being a “provincial” in London:

I wish I could claim that I arrived in London full of good ideas and well-formed resolutions, but I did not . . . I knew nobody and I felt lost – a provincial Australian in a place that still . . . tended to look down on Australians. Whatever credibility as a writer I might have accumulated in Sydney counted for very little here I passed my days oscillating miserably between a sense of inferiority, which I did my best to conceal, and periodic flashes of exaltation induced by the wonderful things I was at last getting a serious look at . . . I marvelled at the sheer impaction of national art and imperial loot. And I was cowed by it. It was wholly outside my experience, because in Australia one had only been able to see the distant tail end

¹⁹⁹ Germaine Greer quoted in Christine Wallace, 289-90.

²⁰⁰ Robert Hughes, *Things I Didn't Know: A Memoir* (Sydney: Random House, 2006), 274. Three years before Hughes left Australia, he had made a name for himself when his book *The Art of Australia* (1962) was one of the first to be released by Penguin's newly-established Australian publishing program. Hughes was encouraged to go abroad by his friend, the Australian expatriate writer Alan Moorehead, who gave Hughes letters of introduction to literary agents and publishers. Robert Hughes, 276.

²⁰¹ There were Australian friends that he would miss, but he believed there was every chance that they may see each other again on the “Other Side, in Europe.” Robert Hughes, 282. The first chapter of Hughes' memoir is entitled “A Bloody Expat.”

of it. But would I, could I have anything of the smallest interest or originality to say about these mighty deposits of British culture, after all that the English, Irish, and Scots themselves had written and uttered?²⁰²

In spite of Hughes' initial feelings of inferiority and provinciality, it was not long before he achieved success as a writer in London; however, with this success came a barrage of written criticism from the Australian press. In his autobiography, Hughes claims that the source of the media's antagonism is related to the fact that he is a cultural "elitist" and that Australian journalists are intimidated by his preference for the "high arts" of Europe over the "colonial" culture of Australia.²⁰³ Additionally, Hughes' admission that he despises Australia's sporting culture has only added more gravity to the general assumption that he has "sold out" on Australia.²⁰⁴ What Hughes has struggled to understand, however, is why Australian journalists abhor elitism in art when they are content to celebrate the display of human inequality on the sporting field:

Perhaps I am not a "true" Australian, as my antipodean critics have indeed been known to claim. Australians have no difficulty with elitism in sports. On the contrary, it fuels their imaginations, it blots up their leisure time, and they prize it as their chief claim to national distinction Competitive sport is not just an example, but the very essence, of elitist activity: by its nature, a competition can yield only one winner as against any number of losers²⁰⁵

The criticism of the Australian press has at times left Hughes feeling hurt and frustrated, and has caused him to lose the naïve nostalgia that he felt when he first left the country.²⁰⁶

²⁰² Robert Hughes, 290-91.

²⁰³ Hughes has admitted, "Of course I am completely an elitist, in the cultural but emphatically not the social sense . . . I am, after all, a cultural critic, and my main job is to distinguish the good from the second-rate." Robert Hughes, 38, 40.

²⁰⁴ Hughes writes, "Due perhaps to some deformity in my upbringing, I've never been particularly keen on watching [sport] or felt concerned about which team, crew, or side won. The long bus ride out to the banks of the Nepean River for the inter-school regattas, and the tedium of sitting on an ant-infested grass slope waiting for the fours and eights to slide distantly past, could send me into a coma." Robert Hughes, 40.

²⁰⁵ Robert Hughes, 41-42. Interestingly, many of the expatriate creative artists mentioned in this chapter have stated that they have next to no interest in playing or watching sport, including Malcolm Williamson.

²⁰⁶ Robert Hughes, 42.

Reluctantly, he now questions the nature of his relationship with Australia and has even contemplated changing his citizenship status:

The spate of inaccurate reports, the op-ed articles about my supposed disloyalty as an expatriate . . . all this had made me wonder if in fact there was anything to be gained by remaining a “patriot,” whatever that now meant. What penance was I meant to do? Did Australian culture . . . have anything further to offer me? Conversely, did I owe Australia anything, having lived outside it for more than forty years and only lived in it for twenty-six? . . . Was my Australian-ness the most important thing about me, or was it only one of the attributes of an evolving life, one that could be left behind without bitterness on either side, even though my Australian accent . . . lingered in the branches of the gum tree?²⁰⁷

These questions are similar to those asked by most of the high-profile Australian expatriates mentioned in this chapter and in many ways Hughes’ journey can be viewed as typical of the expatriate experience.

Each of the expatriates mentioned in this chapter left Australia because of the lack of career opportunities available to them locally and because of the general assumption that the colonial culture was inferior and that one just had to go “Overseas” in order to gain recognition at home. Once abroad, most of these figures felt the weight of their status as “provincials” bear heavily upon their sense of self-worth and confidence, especially as they began to judge their own creative works by world standards. They all worked hard to improve their knowledge and skills, not only to make ends meet, but because the thought of returning to Australia signified failure and was almost unthinkable. After achieving success in Britain, many made regular return visits to Australia and almost all were subjected to the intense scrutiny of the Australian press, particularly if they exhibited behaviour which could be perceived as pretentious. Such figures were viewed and portrayed by the press as “traitors,” “ex-patriots” or “tall poppies” that needed to be cut

²⁰⁷ Robert Hughes, 42.

down to a manageable, provincial size. The personal criticism that many of these creative artists experienced caused most of them to question their own sense of national identity. The problem was that if they were no longer Australian and never had been British, what exactly were they?

Expatriation could be a dislocating experience and the national identity of many expatriates seemed to fall between countries, never to settle completely with either the adopted country or of the country of origin, which often remained, at least psychologically, “home.”²⁰⁸ Most of the creative artists mentioned in this chapter, from Nellie Melba to Robert Hughes, were viewed by the British press and public as “brash,” “forthright” and “crudely colonial,” yet in Australia, they were referred to as “bloody Pommies,” because their accents, mannerisms, attitudes and clothing had altered over time to emulate British trends.²⁰⁹

The sense of statelessness that was characteristic of the expatriate experience affected the personal and professional lives of these creative artists in a variety of ways. Many felt that they had to try harder to maintain a relationship with the country of their birth and they did so by returning regularly, by making connections with other Australians abroad and by projecting an Australian identity through their persona and/or their creative output. Most of these creative artists also found the expatriate experience less lonely when shared with others in a similar predicament, and so it was not unusual for them to band together for both social and professional purposes for this very reason. It was also common for these expatriates to make over-the-top declarations of loyalty to Australia and to base their

²⁰⁸ Bruce Bennett, xii.

²⁰⁹ The treatment the expatriates received from the Australian press and public varied according to the status they had achieved in the arts abroad, the contribution they made to the arts and arts-education in Australia, the number of times they returned and the duration of their visits, their behaviour during visits, the degree of pretentiousness they exhibited for having “made it” abroad and whether or not they proved their allegiance to Australia by expressing their Australian identity proudly and publicly.

creative works on Australian subjects and/or texts in order to maintain a strong sense of national identity and perhaps also to prove to Australian critics and audiences that they were not traitors or “ex-patriots.” Some wrote stories set in Australia, painted Australian landscapes or wrote music inspired by Australian subjects or based on Australian texts. In their homeland, however, their work was often viewed as “clichéd” or “out-of-date,” suggesting they had lost touch with the new, progressive Australia and that they were living in the past.

Jill Neville, Peter Porter, Murray Sayle, Barry Humphries and Robert Hughes, among others, found that the experience of exile provided creative impetus and that they were able to use their work as an outlet through which they could express their feelings about the expatriate experience and their relationship with Australia. A few of the figures mentioned in this chapter also changed their opinions of their homeland to suit the circumstances, or their audience, which indicates that they were willing to go to great lengths to gain a sense of belonging or acceptance in whichever country they were occupying at the time. The strong desire that most expatriates held to “fit in” also manifested itself in the “inclusive philosophy” that so many of them adopted in order to make their artistic endeavours seem less elitist and more accessible to people of all socio-economic backgrounds.²¹⁰

While “stars” such as Nellie Melba, Percy Grainger, Eileen Joyce and Joan Sutherland were well-received by the Australian public, most of the time, their contributions to Australia were seriously overlooked or underestimated. By leaving Australia and staying abroad, it was presumed that these figures had neglected Australia. Not only had they taken their own talent away, but they were inspiring the younger generation of Australian creative artists to do the same. What the Australian press and public failed to realise,

²¹⁰ This philosophy also showed the influence of their democratic Australian backgrounds and was a reflection of the fact that they had not been brought up in the class-system of Europe.

however, was that for most expatriates, a permanent return was out of the question. Not only was it impossible for these Australian creative artists to maintain the same career and level of income in Australia that they had been enjoying in England, but if they returned to Australia, it was assumed that they had failed, as Barry Humphries has related. In addition, many of these figures had married English partners and had children who were settled in English schools. The Australian press and public also overlooked the fact that each of these expatriates made a significant contribution to their homeland just by being abroad and by helping to raise the profile of Australia, its artists and its artistic scene overseas. In addition, many expatriate creative artists directly contributed to the development of the arts in Australia by returning regularly, or even permanently, and by spreading the knowledge and ideas they had learned and cultivated overseas to younger generations of Australians. Further to this, by achieving success in the arts abroad, the expatriates made it possible for other Australians to take pride in their country's cultural history and achievements.

Almost all of the characteristics of the expatriate experience mentioned above are evident in the journey of the composer Malcolm Williamson. Williamson's expatriate experience was shaped not only by the prevailing *zeitgeist* and cultural attitudes towards expatriates, but also by the unique range of choices he made and by the variety of opportunities that were presented to him over the course of his career. These ideas will be explored in detail in Chapter 3, "Williamson's Expatriate Experience."

Chapter Three

Williamson's Expatriate Experience

Malcolm Williamson's decision to leave Australia for London in the early 1950s marked the beginning of a compositional career pursued according to environmental influences.¹ His expatriate journey was affected by the people he met and worked with, the places he visited (especially his homeland), the number and types of commissions he received, his complex persona, his controversial views and behaviour, the criticism he received, his relationship with the press in both Britain and Australia and the prevailing zeitgeist and cultural attitudes towards expatriates. This chapter will explore Williamson's life as an expatriate and make several parallels between his experiences and those of other expatriate creative artists, as detailed in Chapter 2, in order to gain an understanding of the extent to which his journey was typical of the expatriate experience. In particular, this discussion aims to reveal the reasons why Williamson projected an Australian identity and also to illustrate exactly how he expressed his Australian identity through his persona. The press played a major role in documenting much of this information and its criticism of Williamson's music and persona influenced his attitudes and experiences significantly. Therefore, this chapter will also examine the inaccuracies of the media's perception and representation of Williamson, its role in fabricating a rift between the composer and the Royal family, and the implications of such damaging speculation on his career and experience as an Australian expatriate.²

¹ Brian Chatterton, "Malcolm Williamson," *Australian Composition in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Frank Callaway and David Tunley (Melbourne: OUP, 1978), 146.

² This chapter will draw on the collection of Williamson's papers held at the National Library of Australia and the archive of Josef Weinberger publishing house in London. For an article dedicated to Williamson's relationship with the press, see Appendix C, Carolyn Philpott, "The Master and the Media: Malcolm Williamson in the Press," in *Musical Islands: Exploring Connections between Music, Place and Research*, ed. Elizabeth Mackinlay, Brydie-Leigh Bartleet and Katelyn Barney (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 157-88.

Like many young Australian creative artists of the post-war period, Williamson went abroad because he had felt inhibited by the lack of professional opportunities available in Australia and had been inspired by what he had heard about the vibrant cultural scene of London and continental Europe. In addition, most of his teachers at the NSW State Conservatorium, including Goossens, Sverjensky and Burnard, were of European origin and had encouraged him and other gifted young Australian composers and musicians to look abroad for further training and experience. According to Williamson, his studies under Goossens had led him to believe that his “life lay in being a composer more than in being a pianist” and the realisation that it was possible to make composition a full-time profession in London had given him “the greatest encouragement.”³ Williamson later spoke of his decision to leave Australia in an interview with the Australian press:

When I was growing up during the Depression everybody thought you had to go to London, New York or Paris. None of us in Australia took account of the fact that – thanks to Adolf Hitler, Stalin and others – a great richness from Europe had come to Australia, and the training given in the arts, education and medicine was just tremendous. But on the other side of the world, cut off by World War II, we didn’t know that. So, when I graduated in music from Sydney, the pennies were scraped together because London was thought to be Mecca.⁴

Armed with letters of introduction from Goossens and Sverjensky, Williamson left Australia in early 1950 at the age of nineteen, accompanied by his mother, Bessie, for what was to be a six-month period abroad.⁵ They enjoyed brief stops in Italy, Vienna, Berlin and Paris, before settling in London. In Paris, Williamson met and pursued lengthy

³ Malcolm Williamson, “Conversation with Malcolm Williamson,” interview by Hazel de Berg, transcript of sound recording, 8 October 1967, National Library of Australia ORAL DeB 290, 291, 292.

⁴ Williamson quoted in Sarah Harris, “Queen’s Composer Still Maintains Political Rage,” *The Mercury* (Hobart), 15 October 1992. Williamson later commented that the training he had received in Australia was of a standard comparable to that provided by any leading musical institution in the world. Belinda Webster, “A Word With Malcolm Williamson,” *ABC Radio 24 Hours* (November 1991), 34.

⁵ The letter from Goossens, dated 28 October 1949, read: “To whom it may concern. The bearer of this letter, Malcolm Williamson, has studied composition with me and, in my opinion, deserves every encouragement in his creative work. Both his originality and his industry make him very potentially a young man whose future will be well worth watching.” Eugene Goossens quoted in Anthony Meredith and Paul Harris, *Malcolm Williamson: A Mischievous Muse* (London: Omnibus Press, 2007), 40.

discussions about British music with the conductor, musicologist and critic Frederick Goldbeck, who Williamson found to be “very scornful of most things, but [who] named four people who were figures of significance – Britten, Lutyens, Lambert and Rawsthorne.”⁶ Once in London, Williamson attempted, unsuccessfully, to convince Alan Rawsthorne to give him lessons. He then contacted Elisabeth Lutyens (1906-1983), who was at that time a relatively unknown pioneer of serial writing in England. It was the beginning of a long and fruitful association and years later, he was to write to her, “If you were to undress my musical personality, you would find the fingerprints of your own still there.”⁷

When Williamson returned to England to settle permanently in early 1953, this time in the company of his whole family, he recommenced composition lessons with Lutyens immediately.⁸ Although he had made a few contacts in London and had been given a good introduction to the city during his previous visit, when he returned there to settle and make a career he found himself suffering from a strong dose of the so-called “cultural cringe,” as he later admitted:

Coming from Australia, I began with a terrible timidity of the great European world, and there was a chip on my shoulder, a feeling of inferiority, imposed, I think, as much by the Australian mentality as by any European superiority . . . this has to be fought and one has to learn to hold one’s head high as an Australian.⁹

The sense of inferiority that Williamson described was also experienced by numerous other Australian expatriate creative artists, as discussed previously; however, it was not long

⁶ Malcolm Williamson quoted in Alan Poulton, *Alan Rawsthorne* (Kidderminster: Bravura, 1984), 56.

⁷ Malcolm Williamson quoted in liner notes to *Red Leaves*, Brunel Ensemble, Cala Records CACD 77005 (1996).

⁸ During the voyage he befriended the young aspiring actress Ruth Cracknell (1925-2002), who was also relocating to England for career purposes. The pair entertained guests on board the *Otranto* with their duo of poetry and music. Ruth Cracknell, *A Biased Memoir* (Ringwood, Vic.: Penguin, 1997), 87. Williamson’s family stayed in London for two years before returning to Australia.

⁹ Malcolm Williamson, “Conversation with Malcolm Williamson.”

before he achieved great success and found that he was able to “hold his head high as an Australian,” expressing a proud Australian identity through his music and verbal remarks.

Williamson’s rise to success was somewhat accelerated by a series of fortuitous encounters with high-profile British musicians and composers during his first few years in London. With money rather tight upon his arrival, he acquired a job as proof-reader at Boosey & Hawkes, the publishing house responsible for producing the works of Goossens. It was through this position that Williamson came to know Erwin Stein, who was a former student of Schoenberg and a friend of Benjamin Britten.¹⁰ Shortly thereafter, concurrent with his studies with Lutyens, Williamson began studying composition with Stein and befriended Britten and his partner, tenor Peter Pears.¹¹ Britten and Pears helped to promote some of Williamson’s earliest works, such as the song *Aye, flattering fortune* for unaccompanied tenor, which was given its first public airing by Pears in December 1954.¹²

Through his role at Boosey & Hawkes, Williamson also met the composer Gerald Finzi, who introduced him to the renowned conductor Sir Adrian Boult.¹³ Boult soon became an important influence on and advocate for Williamson, promoting his works through performances with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and convincing the music department of BBC Radio to broadcast his compositions. As stated in Chapter 1, both Britten and Boult were extremely impressed by Williamson’s ability to premiere his own keyboard works and in addition, they helped to ensure that many of his earliest works were

¹⁰ Stein had worked as an Editor at Boosey & Hawkes since 1938. Malcolm Williamson, “Conversation with Malcolm Williamson.”

¹¹ This teaching arrangement provided the young student with a balanced musical education, for according to Williamson, Lutyens’ “sonic imagination was very acute and Erwin Stein emphasised things structural in his teaching.” Malcolm Williamson quoted in Belinda Webster, 35. Both teachers encouraged Williamson to study the music of the Second Viennese School of composers and to explore the possibilities of serial techniques in his own compositions.

¹² Pears performed *Aye, flattering fortune* at Morley College, London, on 22 December 1954. Donald Mitchell, “London Music: Some First Performances,” *The Musical Times* (February 1955): 92.

¹³ Anthony Meredith and Paul Harris, 84-85.

published.¹⁴ Williamson's hard work and astute social networking during this period eventually paid off; his music achieved such popularity that by the mid-1960s he was commonly referred to as the most commissioned composer in Britain.

Although Williamson was one of the most successful Australian expatriates of his generation, he was also one of the most controversial, and his career and expatriate experience were significantly affected by the inordinate amount of media attention and criticism he received during his lifetime. Critical comments about Williamson and his music first appeared as early as the mid-1950s, when his music was only just beginning to attract public attention. In fact, many of the compositions that helped to establish his career were initially greeted with mixed reviews from music critics. For example, the *Sonata for Piano* (1955-56), which was premiered by the composer at the 1956 Aldeburgh Festival following a request from Britten, attracted both positive and negative critical responses. This work shows Williamson's adaptation of serial methods to operate within a tonal framework and demonstrates an overriding concern for lyricism, both of which were to become features of his mature output.¹⁵ However, while one critic described the sonata as "one of the very few important pieces of really new piano writing of recent (and even not so recent) years, a fascinating and satisfactory work,"¹⁶ another announced, "It is a disappointment to see so much contrivance spent to such little effect."¹⁷ Since this time, critical response to Williamson's music has almost always been polarised and

¹⁴ Paul Conway, "Malcolm Williamson – A 70th Birthday Tribute," April 2001, available from <http://www.musicweb-international.com/Williamson/index.htm>; Internet; accessed 27 August 2008.

¹⁵ The *Sonata for Piano*, published by Boosey & Hawkes, is dedicated to Williamson's parents. The first four bars of the sonata's opening movement employ all twelve pitches of the chromatic scale, however, some pitches are repeated before all twelve are heard and the frequent reiteration of the notes "F" and "C" suggests F as a tonal centre.

¹⁶ Colin Mason, "Some New Music," *Musical Times*, xcvi (August 1956): 422.

¹⁷ Ivor Keys, "Reviews of Music," *Music and Letters*, xxxvii, 4 (October 1956): 421.

unbalanced,¹⁸ despite the fact that audiences have generally been very supportive of the composer and his music.

Most of the criticism directed at Williamson's music relates to the apparent eclecticism and inconsistencies in musical style evident when comparing one work to the next or sometimes within a given work. Williamson's compositional language, like his life and personality, embodied contradictions and from the late 1950s onwards, his musical output followed two distinctly different, and at times conflicting, modes of development. Many of his works were written in a serious vein and show the influence of his training in serial techniques, such as the first and second symphonies (1956-57 and 1968, respectively), the Organ Symphony (1960), *Symphony for Voices* (1960-62), Sonata for Two Pianos (1967) and the Piano Quintet (1968). Simultaneously, however, he composed works in a more popular, accessible style, such as his early church music, several instrumental works (including the tuneful Overture *Santiago de Espada*, 1957), and the ten Cassations (dating from 1967), which feature simple, melodic lyricism inspired by the composer's work as a night-club pianist during the late 1950s.¹⁹

Williamson's persistence with writing music in these two contrasting idioms, the serious and the popular, and the diverse range of political, humanitarian, religious and literary interests that influenced his output have at times infuriated critics and inhibited them from categorising his personal compositional style. In an interview in 1967, Williamson responded to the ongoing criticism regarding his lack of stylistic consistency and defended his works in the accessible idiom:

¹⁸ Thérèse Radic, "Malcolm Benjamin Graham Christopher Williamson," in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Music*, ed. Warren Bebbington (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1997), 592.

¹⁹ Williamson's work as a night-club pianist exposed him to the popular tunes of Gershwin, Kern, Rodgers and Bernstein.

I've never had much use for what the critic would like to call consistency in music. Our great enemy, the music critic, demands consistency but this is largely so that he can write of one's music all tied up into neat packages. I don't think it is necessary to give the critic this . . . to do this means suppressing one side of myself and I suppose the vulgar or blatant perhaps melodic instinct which is in me Both of these things, the simple and the complex, the dense and the sparse, must exist side by side in music The greatest crime in musical composition is to bore The fashion has been prevalent that music must be . . . a thing of the intellect, and it must be a thing for the understanding few . . . [music] seems at times to be in danger of dying of its own sterilisation because there is a lack of the human in it.²⁰

As this statement implies, Williamson believed that music should not be aimed at a "small snobbish coterie,"²¹ but rather, that it should be written for the enjoyment of everyone, and this is one reason why he composed music in such a diverse range of styles and genres.²² This egalitarian attitude towards the arts was something he shared in common with other Australian expatriate creative artists and is a quality that has been recognised as characteristically Australian, as discussed in Chapter 2. Williamson's divergence from what was expected of a young composer in England in the 1950s and 1960s was, therefore, inextricably tied to his Australian heritage and also to the sense of detachment that he felt from the musical history and traditions of Britain and continental Europe.²³

²⁰ Malcolm Williamson, "Conversation with Malcolm Williamson." The following year, 1968, Williamson again defended his approach to musical style: "Strangeness and conflicts exist inside me; stylistic clashes which I have to cultivate and discipline as best I can. I think my music displays a wide stylistic spectrum, and I know from the response it gets from the public and from critics that it has the power to disconcert and to shock. But it embraces apparently contradictory ideas rather than from any intrinsic desire to shock. Nowadays, I think certain composers are too ready to accept limited tenets of style instead of exploring a wide stylistic range." Williamson quoted in Kenneth Dommett, "Malcolm Williamson talks to Kenneth Dommett," *Birmingham Post*, 23 March 1968. Only a handful of critics have suggested that Williamson's stylistic inconsistency may have been a product of his search for a universally-appealing musical language, as a reviewer from *The Scotsman* insinuated in 1965: "In many ways his music is alive with brilliance and talent. He is never dull, has a flair for elegant melody, and orchestrates with assurance and sophistication. But stylistically he is a chameleon. What is Mr Williamson's purpose in ducking from style to style? Is he after some sort of symbolic 'universality'?" JC, *The Scotsman*, 10 September 1965. As this present study will reveal, it seems as though this was exactly Williamson's purpose.

²¹ *Melbourne Sun*, January 1962.

²² Paul Jennings, "Music is for Everyone," no source or date given, available from Josef Weinberger archive, London; accessed 26 June 2006.

²³ He alluded to this idea in an interview published in *The Times* in 1956: "I was lucky enough to grow up without the modern tradition and then come to Britain and discover 12-note music, Serialism, and all the

As Thérèse Radic has observed, Williamson's defiance of his critics was "deliberate and sustained"²⁴ and during the late 1950s and 1960s, he went to great lengths to defend his light church music and cassations, which had elicited more derision from critics than any other works he had produced to date.²⁵ Both of these groups of works were designed to be universally appealing and *Gebrauchsmusik* and the cassations, in particular, achieved a level of success well beyond what Williamson had initially anticipated.²⁶ These innovative "mini-operas" for audience participation were very popular in school music programs as a means of introducing children to the mechanics of opera and were later found to be extremely effective when used with physically and intellectually disabled children. Despite their success in the classroom and their proven therapeutic benefits, however, the cassations were frequently criticised by reporters and dismissed as "trivial," "superficial" and "simplistic."²⁷ According to some critics, Williamson's desire to encourage the musically uneducated to participate actively in the creation of opera through the singing of simple melodies and the improvisation of dramatic actions was inconsistent with his stature as a composer of serious music.

Williamson regularly seized opportunities within press interviews to defend his inclusive approach to composition, stating on different occasions:

People are more important than music If I want my music to reach all sorts and conditions of people, it is likely that I will have to, in my own style, write all

things that are going on. That was terribly good and terribly exciting, but coming to it as I did from the outside, I can excuse myself for being conscious that I've been right through all that." Malcolm Williamson quoted in "Malcolm Williamson on Writing Music," *The Times*, 19 August 1965.

²⁴ Thérèse Radic, 592.

²⁵ Examples of Williamson's light Church music include *Adoremus* (1959, Boosey & Hawkes), *Procession of Palms* (1961, Josef Weinberger), *Easter Carol* (1962, Josef Weinberger) and *Harvest Thanksgiving* (1962, Josef Weinberger).

²⁶ Paul Jennings, "Music is for Everyone."

²⁷ "Malcolm Williamson: Composer, Master of the Queen's Music, 1931-2003," *Sydney Organ Journal* 34, no.3 (2003): 17-18.

sorts and conditions of music All my music is composed to teach on different levels – to disturb and get under the skin and prod at preconceptions.²⁸

I hate the idea of music being merely professional performers before passive audiences Some critics don't like this do-it-yourself stuff, but for me it's just the wheel coming full circle . . . I hope music is for everyone.²⁹

Despite his confident public persona, however, Williamson found it increasingly difficult to remain unaffected by the negative criticism his music received. In an interview conducted in 1966, he admitted:

To go on being what you are, musically speaking, is not always easy. Creative artists, more than most people, love approbation; and to be starved of critical approbation can be painful. While knowing what asses most music critics are, composers writhe at the thought of thousands of people reading adverse notices written in haste by them.³⁰

Williamson was determined, however, to maintain his multifaceted musical identity and this was the impetus behind a number of warnings he issued in the 1960s to emerging and established Australia-based composers concerning their apparent inclination to follow European musical trends. In 1966, thirteen years after he had left Australia permanently and a year prior to his first return visit, he encouraged Australian composers to embrace their unique national heritage:

I abhor more than I can say the occasional signs from Australia that it is desirable to attain a European chic . . . [I have] seen a number of my fellow composers treating the musical profession as a rat-race In this race they see Pierre Boulez firing a Schoenbergian starter's pistol It is unlikely that Australia will produce the sort of key-figure who will . . . seriously disturb the language of music in the Western world, but should one Australian composer do so it will be out of sheer

²⁸ Malcolm Williamson quoted in Phillip Truckenbrod, "Aussie Composer Writes for Multi-Faceted Man," *Music in Jersey*, no date given, available from Josef Weinberger archive, London; accessed 26 June 2006.

²⁹ Malcolm Williamson quoted in Paul Jennings, "Music is for Everyone."

³⁰ Malcolm Williamson, "A Composer's Heritage," *Composer* (Spring 1966), 72.

force of musical personality, an acceptance of his indigenous past and a forging forward into his own future, rather than a donning of new garments from the old world.³¹

Despite Williamson's attempts to offer useful advice to Australian composers, when he returned to Australia in 1967 for the first time in almost fifteen years, he was labelled a "tall poppy" by his compatriots and treated with hostility by the Australian press.³² This was not particularly unusual at the time, as there were many other Australian expatriate creative artists who encountered the so-called "Tall Poppy Syndrome" during return visits, as has been discussed earlier. The Australian press had previously been sympathetic to neutral in its reporting of information about Williamson and his achievements abroad; however, the composer's 1967 visit marked a turning point in the way he was perceived and represented by the Australian media.

The catalyst for this change seems to have been Williamson's eagerness at this time to offer Australia-based composers advice about their stylistic directions, as illustrated in the quotation above, and his public criticism of the Australian Government's lack of support for the arts and creative artists; views that were perceived by the local press as arrogant and patronising when coming from an expatriate. It probably did not help Williamson's cause that he announced that he had waited until he was on Australian soil to voice his complaints because he believed "If you say nasty things when you're living outside the

³¹ Williamson, "A Composer's Heritage," 71-72. Williamson later encouraged his fellow Australian composers to follow his lead and write music in a more accessible style so that it could be used by children and amateur performers, and to educate future generations. He stated "If these [Australian] composers can but learn to write for children, learn to write very much in their own musical styles but as simply, directly and clearly as possible, they will be creating a public for themselves and for their followers in the next generation, as well as creating a much richer musical culture in the nation." Malcolm Williamson, "Conversation with Malcolm Williamson." Williamson's ideas about introducing Australian children to music may have been influenced by his association with Bernard Heinze in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Heinze held similar beliefs about introducing Australia's youth to classical music in order to boost its national profile.

³² Williamson returned for three weeks in September 1967 at the request of Musica Viva Australia to participate in the Spring Festival held in Canberra. He also made an appearance on ABC Radio as "Guest of Honour" and made a number of recordings for the ABC, including recordings of the Sonata for Two Pianos with Nigel Butterley, the Second Piano Concerto and the Organ Symphony.

country it looks bad This is the first chance I've had in fifteen years."³³ Whilst criticising the Australian Government, however, he was full of praise and support for Australian musicians and composers, as the following excerpt from a talk that he gave as the ABC's "Guest of Honour" demonstrates:

Our Australian-ness comes through in our music, I think, as clearly [as] in the works of our painters . . . the brash, candid, no-nonsense character of Australia directs an Australian composer's thinking The country is bursting at the seams with serious and important musical talent (including compositional talent), and the idea that it must be siphoned out to London, to Paris, to New York, or to Moscow, because a young underpopulated country cannot support its composers is simply unacceptable. Composers should be able to live here³⁴

It is worth mentioning here that Williamson identified certain qualities, such as brashness and candidness, as unique to the Australian character, as the above quotation illustrates, and during the same 1967 visit, he also observed that the social manner of Australians was "forthright," "direct" and "markedly different" from that of the English, Europeans or Americans.³⁵ As discussed earlier, Williamson had already announced during the previous year, 1966, that he considered his music to be "characteristically Australian" because it exhibited the Australian qualities of "brashness" and "directness"³⁶ and his personality also seemed to embody these traits. Indeed, these characteristics can also be identified in the personas of most of the Australian expatriate creative artists referred to in Chapter 2, and

³³ Malcolm Williamson quoted in Sue Jordan, "Home is Where He Says What He Thinks," *The Australian*, 12 September 1967. He continued, "It's easy to be nostalgic when you're so far away."

³⁴ Malcolm Williamson, "Australian Broadcasting Commission: Guest of Honour," 24 September 1967. During the same visit to Australia, Williamson declared: "I think one's Australianism in music comes out in the music itself and not in plastering titles to do with gumtrees or koala bears on to the music. The real Australian-ness is in our nature, and we have, of all new countries in the world . . . the strongest national identity and this is there in the musical character." Malcolm Williamson, "Conversation with Malcolm Williamson." He later complained "Australia has never had cultural attachés in the major cities of the world," an idea initially expressed by his friend and professional associate Robert Helpmann, and communicated his disappointment over the fact that "Australia has never had publishing houses for serious music." Malcolm Williamson, "How Australian Can Australian Music Become," extracts from a paper read at the Commonwealth Section of the Royal Society for Management of Arts, Manufacturers and Commerce, 1970.

³⁵ Malcolm Williamson, "Australian Broadcasting Commission: Guest of Honour."

³⁶ Malcolm Williamson, "A Composer's Heritage," *Composer* (Spring 1966): 71.

have previously been recognised as uniquely Australian, or as some critics have stated, “crudely colonial.”³⁷ For Williamson, however, these traits held special significance because they helped to set him and his music apart from British composers and British music, and simultaneously, gave him and his music a strong sense of place and national identity.³⁸

Another of Williamson’s expatriate grievances was that his music was better known and more frequently performed in England than in his homeland; a fact he reiterated on numerous occasions during his career. The comments he made to an Australian reporter in 1972 summarised his argument succinctly and were printed in *The Age* (Melbourne) under the headline “Feted Abroad; Ignored at Home:”

It is upsetting to be ignored by your own country. Being slated or abused is different. If my work was ignored all over the place, I would accept that as a likely indication that it was worthy of being ignored. But my operas and other music are persistently performed in many parts of the world, yet not in Australia. You know, I sometimes think this is a curiously Australian thing – a resentment of those who live and work abroad Australia is like a woman who will not allow a child to grow up and go away to live his own life.³⁹

Williamson’s complaint extended to the fact that he had applied for numerous academic positions in Australia, but had been rejected. Eventually, in 1973, he was offered a three-month H.C. Coombs Creative Arts Fellowship at the Australian National University. He accepted the position with great enthusiasm, but also used the publicity surrounding the appointment to express his ongoing frustration over the lack of permanent positions for

³⁷ Nancy Phelan, *Charles Mackerras: A Musicians’ Musician* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1987), 223.

³⁸ Paul Conway, “Malcolm Williamson – A 70th Birthday Tribute.”

³⁹ Malcolm Williamson quoted in Peter Cole Adams, “The Expatriates: Feted Abroad; Ignored at Home,” *The Age*, 24 June 1972, 10. By the late 1960s, Williamson had experienced great success in England with the large-scale operas *Our Man in Havana* (1963), *The Violins of Saint-Jacques* (1966) and *Lucky Peter’s Journey* (1967-69) and the chamber operas *English Eccentrics* (1963-63), *The Happy Prince* (1964-65), *Julius Caesar Jones* (1965) and *The Growing Castle* (1968), yet there was little to no interest in staging these works in his homeland.

expatriate creative artists in Australia. *The Australian* announced the Creative Arts Fellowship with the front-page headline “Humiliated Composer Glad to Accept First Job Back Home,” followed by an article which quotes Williamson directly:

The humiliation of asking Australia to take you back is considerable. And I have done it often. I went to London in 1953 and I always swore that if someone offered me a job in Australia I’d come back. This is my first offer and here I am . . . I’ve never had to ask for a job in my life – people come to me . . . Australia is the only place I’ve written to saying: “Please employ me.” There are blocks of Australians in England who would love to come back. I’ve sent suggestions all over Australia and they’ve been rejected again and again.⁴⁰

Likewise, *The Herald* (Melbourne) printed a detailed account of Williamson’s complaints, under the title “An Aussie Complains with a Pommy Accent,” which concludes with Williamson stating that because of the lack of support for his work in Australia “I have to be an expatriate . . . how I loathe that word!”⁴¹ Both articles portray Williamson as an outspoken “tall poppy,” as did the caption of a photograph that appeared in *The Australian* in December 1973, which accompanied an article detailing Williamson’s plan to obtain a permanent job in Australia (see Figure 3.1).

Figure 3.1 Photograph from *The Australian*, 11 December 1973.



Malcolm Williamson blows his own trumpet

⁴⁰ Malcolm Williamson quoted in Janet Hawley, “Humiliated Composer Glad to Accept First Job Back Home,” *The Australian*, 14 August 1973.

⁴¹ Malcolm Williamson quoted in Neil Jillett, “An Aussie Complains with a Pommy Accent,” *The Herald*, 7 September 1973, 4.

Although Williamson's complaints stemmed from a deep desire to be able to live and work in the country of his birth, it seems that many Australian reporters interpreted his criticisms as pretentious. It is likely that many Australian journalists, music critics and musicians were also deeply envious of Williamson's success abroad. One of the few journalists who jumped to his defence was Fred Blanks of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, who attributed the negative response in Australia to Williamson's accessible music to professional jealousy:

A self-righteous and fairly influential circle of local creative musicians find it strange at best and unfortunate at worst that Williamson, who has been living in England for two decades, should want to write melody-based music. One detects a whiff of sour grapes Musical progressives, often cold, academic or rebellious at heart, who find their own "masterpieces" turning into public disaster pieces, like to spread the deplorable view that composers such as Williamson, who win public acclaim and even affection, are really prostituting not just their talent but the integrity of contemporary music.⁴²

The negative attitude that many Australian musicians and reporters held towards Williamson's accessible music did not prevent the composer from workshopping his cassations with Australian school children, including intellectually impaired children, during his 1973 visit.⁴³

Quite by accident, Williamson had met a group of intellectually handicapped children from the Koomarri School at Tuggeranong, south of Canberra, during his 1967 visit. Inspired by the success that his friend and associate John Andrewes, of Boosey & Hawkes, had experienced whilst "performing" the cassations with physically handicapped children, Williamson decided to devote some of his Fellowship time in 1973 to work with a group of

⁴² Fred Blanks, "Milestones Along Our Music's Bush-Track," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 28 August 1973, 14.

⁴³ Although many Australian musicians and reporters criticised Williamson's cassations, most reviews of performances acknowledged that the audience members who participated seemed to enjoy the experience. During Williamson's 1967 visit to Australia, he had conducted his first cassation, *The Moonrakers* for audience and orchestra (1967), to great success during the Canberra Spring Festival. For more information, see Roger Covell, "A Tiny Work of Joy," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 3 October 1967.

children from the Koomarri School, firstly on a simplified version of his cassation *Genesis* (1971).⁴⁴ The outcomes were surprising and promising, as this “all-involving instant music drama” allowed the children to “exercise their bodies in unusual ways without their realising it.”⁴⁵ Impressed by these positive results, Williamson then embarked on a serious study of music therapy, travelling to Tanzania later in 1973 to workshop his cassations with another group of intellectually impaired children. He observed:

When we took the brain-damaged children into this unobserved situation they were singing instead of speaking, being somebody else instead of themselves, making gestures that were unnatural if they were themselves but were natural if they were elephants or Vikings or crocodiles. After a while they were beginning to do things that went against the known medical diagnosis. We discovered all sorts of abilities that hadn't been looked for and were right there just waiting to be exploited but by indirect means. We had to find ways to trick the information into the unimpaired part of the brain, usually into its retentive faculty, and somehow get around the insulted, damaged, part.⁴⁶

Despite the success of the cassations with both intellectually and physically disabled children and their obvious potential for future therapeutic use, Williamson continued to receive critical comments in relation to these works for the duration of his career.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ This was one of the first times the cassations had been workshopped with intellectually impaired children.

⁴⁵ Malcolm Williamson quoted in Jill Sykes, “Composer Bangs the Big Drum,” *The Advertiser*, 18 August 1973, 27. Williamson later stated, “The total participation of audiences [in the performances of cassations] means that there are no longer audiences, only participants, so that there is nobody to judge the quality of the performance, simply singing and acting by all present.” Malcolm Williamson, “English Sinfonia 1978-79” pamphlet, available from Josef Weinberger archive, London; accessed June 2006. Representatives of the ABC were so impressed by these innovative works that they commissioned Williamson to compose a cassation based on an Australian theme, which became *The Glitter Gang* (1974).

⁴⁶ Malcolm Williamson quoted in Jill Margo, “Why Life is Movement to the Musick Master,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 March 1983, 40. The cassations have since been translated into a number of languages, including French and German, in order to make them even more universally accessible.

⁴⁷ Williamson's interest in music therapy also led him to study the cognitive development of children with intellectual impairments, the so-called split brain theory, and to research the brain functions of crocodiles. Ena Kendall, “On Her Majesty's Symphonic Service,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25 April 1992. Williamson became so fascinated by members of the crocodylian family, such as alligators, caimans and gavials, that he collected as much information about these animals and their retentive memories as possible; however, while all this research stemmed from Williamson's underlying interest in music therapy, the press relished the opportunity to ridicule him. As late as 1990, one critic wrote: “Malcolm Williamson, the Master of the Queen's Music, has developed a peculiar passion for crocodiles . . . His close friend, publisher Simon Campion, tells me: ‘He collects ornamental crocodiles, artefacts, pictures and books to do with crocodiles. In fact, he has become extraordinarily knowledgeable about reptiles in general.’ Williamson, 59, has been

The criticism that Williamson received intensified following his appointment as Master of the Queen's Music in 1975. While outwardly this Royal appointment signalled Williamson's acceptance by the British Establishment, the controversy that it stirred in England as well as Australia was indicative of the ambiguity of his cultural identity. While the British press complained that an Australian could not possibly have had sufficient grounding in the British music tradition to fulfil the Royal post adequately, critics in Australia simultaneously questioned whether an individual who had lived abroad for over twenty years could still be referred to as "Australian." Even the announcement of the appointment itself was not without controversy, as many critics, in anticipation that Malcolm Arnold would be the successful nominee, speculated that the Queen had selected "the wrong Malcolm."⁴⁸ In formulating this piece of unfounded trivia, reporters conveniently overlooked the fact that Williamson had been recommended for the post by his mentor, Benjamin Britten,⁴⁹ and that he had previously composed a number of works for Royal occasions, including *Mowing the Barley* (1967), a short folk-song arrangement for SATB chorus and orchestra that was commissioned by the Greater London Council for the opening of the Queen Elizabeth Hall; *I Will Lift Up Mine Eyes* (1970), an anthem for chorus, echo chorus and organ that was commissioned by St Stephen's Church, Sydney, and first performed there on 3 May 1970 in the presence of the Queen; *Adelaide Fanfare* (1973) for brass and organ, which was premiered in 1973 during the Royal visit to Adelaide by the Queen and Prince Philip; and *Canberra Fanfare* (1973) for brass and percussion, composed for the opening of the Canberra Theatre by the Queen.⁵⁰ In addition, Williamson had shared a strong professional association with the previous Master of the

producing royal tunes since 1975. Sadly his annual honorarium of £100 won't buy him a real crocodile." *Evening Standard*, 31 December 1990.

⁴⁸ Don Kay to Carolyn Philpott, personal communication, May 2006. This story was recounted so frequently that it was even included in Arnold's obituary in the *Daily Telegraph*, published on 25 September 2006.

⁴⁹ Humphrey Carpenter, *Benjamin Britten: A Biography* (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), 571-72.

⁵⁰ Simon Campion, "Draft of Malcolm Williamson, CBE, AO (1931-2003): Complete Catalogue" (Hertfordshire: Campion Press, 2008).

Queen's Music, Sir Arthur Bliss, who in 1972 had commissioned Williamson to compose a symphony, his third, for the Cheltenham Festival.⁵¹

The media's omission of these facts did little to help the public or Malcolm Arnold himself accept the Queen's decision, for in the days following the announcement, Arnold reportedly attempted suicide.⁵² While the controversy surrounding the appointment undoubtedly would have dampened Williamson's celebrations, shortly after the announcement he returned to Australia, where he expressed his surprise and delight to the media, simultaneously re-confirming his Australian identity:

I was feeling very gloomy over the past few years thinking my life as a composer was finished . . . then quite out of the blue I was chosen as Master of the Queen's Musick . . . I am very proud to be the first Australian [to be appointed to the post] To the day of my death I shall be in spirit, an Australian.⁵³

It is likely that this overt declaration of national identity was made in an attempt to anticipate and abate probing questions from Australian journalists, who were already beginning to criticise Williamson for the length of time he had lived abroad. Other members of the press, such as the well-respected music critic Maria Prerauer, took the opportunity to criticise Williamson's music to the composer's face. Prerauer, who was occasionally referred to as "Maria Piranha" by her detractors,⁵⁴ projected her strong views

⁵¹ After Bliss' death, Williamson composed a Piano Trio (1975-76) in his honour, which was premiered on 22 June 1976. Several years later, Williamson spoke very highly of Bliss in an interview with the media: "When I heard the radio announcement that Arthur [Bliss] was dead, I burst into tears. I was still crying when the BBC rang up, and I went and did an off-the-cuff broadcast about him. Later, when I became his successor as MQM, I felt terribly inadequate. Partly – well, it's a royal command, one is part of the royal household; and partly, one thinks of one's predecessors: Elgar, Bax, Arthur . . ." Malcolm Williamson quoted in Paul Jennings, "Music is for Everyone."

⁵² Paul Harris and Anthony Meredith, *Malcolm Arnold: Rogue Genius* (London: Thames Publishing, 2004), 335.

⁵³ Williamson quoted in Mark Baker, "Queen's Musick Master Comes Home for Festival," *The Age*, 4 November 1975, 2.

⁵⁴ Frank Devine, "Lifetime On and Off the Stage: Maria Prerauer, Journalist," *The Australian*, 31 May 2006, 7.

towards Williamson and his music in an interview filmed during his 1975 visit to Australia and included in the BBC television documentary *Williamson Down Under* (1975):

Congratulations, Malcolm, on becoming Master of the Queen's Music. It's actually confirmed my belief that it isn't always the best composer who becomes Master of the Queen's Music or the best poet that becomes Poet Laureate . . . as you know I have never been one of your fans . . . I feel that your work is often a miscellany of other composers' [music] – ordinary sort of “tunes” with a few wrong notes put in to make them sound more interesting Furthest below the plimsoll mark are those do-it-yourself or do-it-yourself pieces, where you have people running around flapping their arms at dawn and being roosters or kangaroos . . . I walked out [of the performance] because I wouldn't bow down to “God” Malcolm Williamson.⁵⁵

In the documentary, Williamson took the opportunity to respond to the criticism of the Australian press, mentioning Prerauer specifically:

If there is anything to attack, the Australian press will attack it with a lack of compassion, with a lack of kindness, which seems to me unique . . . Maria has in print perpetually pushed me down in ways that I consider almost less than decent, I mean she has indulged in what I would consider personal attacks on my very soul.⁵⁶

Perhaps surprisingly, Williamson did not attribute the response of the Australian press to the “Tall Poppy Syndrome,” as expatriates such as Robert Hughes have been known to do, but instead he believed the negative reactions of reporters to the news of his appointment were related to the relationship between Australia and the British monarchy:

In Australia there is a tremendous conflict between Monarchists and anti-Monarchists. Some people feel I'm a traitor to Australia for accepting this appointment [as Master of the Queen's Musick]. And many Australians look to the United States, with its non-Royalist tradition, as a kind of parent.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Maria Prerauer quoted in Malcolm Williamson, *Williamson Down Under* (London: BBC2 The Lively Arts Series, 1975).

⁵⁶ Malcolm Williamson, *Williamson Down Under*.

⁵⁷ Williamson quoted in Robert Finn, “Aussie is Royal Musician,” *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 24 October 1975, 11.

Over the next few years, Williamson received an inordinate amount of media attention in Australia and Britain in regard to his fulfilment of the role of Master of the Queen's Music. The main issue that attracted criticism was his inability to complete two works on time for their high-profile deadlines during the Queen's Silver Jubilee year of 1977. In his excitement at being named Master of the Queen's Music, Williamson ambitiously agreed to compose a Mass, a symphony, a hymn and a children's opera in celebration of the occasion. Unfortunately, it seems that he had over-committed himself. The *Mass of Christ the King*, which was commissioned by the Three Choirs Festival and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and dedicated to the Queen, was due to be performed on 25 August 1977 by the Three Choirs Festival Chorus and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by John Sanders. Williamson had completed the vocal score early, however, it had formed into a sixteen-movement, hour-long work and as the deadline for submission approached, he found it necessary to work around the clock to complete the orchestrations. A few days before the well-publicised premiere at Gloucester Cathedral, the conductor refused to accept any late additions to the score.⁵⁸ At this stage, the orchestrations for three movements of the Mass were still awaiting completion and Williamson was understandably very distressed that the work would not be performed in its entirety.⁵⁹ In an attempt to prevent criticism over his failure to finish the work, Williamson asked Sanders to stand down as conductor at the last minute so that he could conduct the complete work himself.⁶⁰ Sanders refused Williamson's request and according to press reports, shortly before the performance was due to commence, the composer was heard protesting loudly and was forcibly removed from Gloucester Cathedral by ushers, who put "half-Nelsons" on him and pushed him down the steps of the cathedral.

⁵⁸ Roland Pullen, "Queen's Man Dragged out of Cathedral," *The Herald* (Melbourne), 27 August 1977.

⁵⁹ The movements that were omitted at the first performance were the "Gloria" from the Introductory Rite and the "Psalmus Responsorius" and "Credo" from the Liturgy of the Word. Simon Campion, "Draft of Malcolm Williamson, CBE, AO (1931-2003): Complete Catalogue."

⁶⁰ Roland Pullen, "Queen's Man Dragged out of Cathedral."

Inadvertently, Williamson had perhaps attracted more negative publicity than he otherwise would have received had he accepted Sanders' decision to perform the work in its incomplete form. The reports that appeared in British and Australian papers following the premiere focused on the controversy that surrounded the event. Melbourne's *The Herald*, for example, reported the story under the headline "Queen's Man Dragged out of Cathedral."⁶¹ The media's sensationalised reporting of this incident shifted attention away from the fact that the music itself was generally very well received by music critics and audiences, both at its first incomplete performance and when it was premiered in its entirety the following year in the presence of the Queen Mother.⁶² Following the incomplete performance in 1977, William Mann of *The Times* reported:

It would be idle to assess *Mass of Christ the King* until it is performed complete. I can only assure those readers who spurn Williamson's simplistic music (its invention all the stronger because it has to be instantly performable) that the new mass is an elaborate composition, grand and often surprising, for all that the choral music draws on ecclesiastical traditions, especially on plainsong. It makes a jubilant and variegated noise, approachable yet demanding concentration.⁶³

The other work that Williamson failed to complete in time for the Queen's Silver Jubilee was the *Jubilee Symphony*, the composer's fourth symphony, in the key of "E" for "Elizabeth." The symphony was commissioned by the London Philharmonic Orchestra and the Arts Council of Great Britain and was scheduled to be performed at the Queen's Jubilee Festival Hall concert in December 1977. The work was withdrawn from the program at the last minute, however, when it was revealed that Williamson had failed to finish one of the work's four movements and that the three existing movements were

⁶¹ Roland Pullen, "Queen's Man Dragged out of Cathedral."

⁶² The premiere of the complete work took place on 3 November 1978 at Westminster Cathedral by the Three Choirs Festival Chorus and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Charles Groves. Simon Campion, "Draft of Malcolm Williamson, CBE, AO (1931-2003): Complete Catalogue."

⁶³ William Mann, *The Times*, 27 August 1977.

prepared too late to be rehearsed.⁶⁴ Roy Perrott of London's *The Sunday Times* published a report of this story under the headline "The Agony of the Master of the Queen's Music," which drew attention to the inherent difficulties of being a full-time composer, however, it was accompanied by a rather insensitive caricature which implied that the composer had been struggling to write more than one note of the Symphony (see Figure 3.2).⁶⁵

Figure 3.2 Caricature from *The Sunday Times* (London), December 1977.



Exactly the same article also appeared in Melbourne's *The Age* under the title "Gallant Master of the Queen's Music Slogs On";⁶⁶ however, the caption attached to the caricature was even more insulting than that which appeared in *The Sunday Times* (see Figure 3.3).

⁶⁴ The work still exists in three movements: "The Birth of the World," "Eagle" and "The Prayer of the Waters" and is published by Campion Press. Simon Campion, "Draft of Malcolm Williamson, CBE, AO (1931-2003): Complete Catalogue."

⁶⁵ Roy Perrott, "The Agony of the Master of the Queen's Music," *Sunday Times*, December 1977.

⁶⁶ Roy Perrott, "Gallant Master of the Queen's Music Slogs On," *The Age*, 31 December 1977, 16.

Figure 3.3 Caricature from *The Age*, 31 December 1977.



Williamson...a crisis.

Not surprisingly, Williamson was distressed that news of his inability to complete the *Jubilee Symphony* had reached Australia, as he wrote to his mother, Bessie, “[the conductor] did not even bother to rehearse the three existing movements properly . . . of course the Australian press minced me as I have learnt to expect . . . Only bad things reach Australia, many of them untrue.”⁶⁷

The media’s focus on Williamson’s inability to complete these works on time greatly overshadowed the success of the other two works he composed for the Silver Jubilee. His large-scale fifty-minute children’s opera *The Valley and the Hill* was completed promptly and performed on 21 June 1977 before the Queen and Prince Philip in the streets of Liverpool by seventeen thousand local children in two cathedrals, one Catholic and one Anglican, and along the connecting roads.⁶⁸ The performance was an instant success, with over thirty thousand people filling the streets to participate in the well-publicised event.

⁶⁷ Malcolm Williamson to Bessie Williamson, 10 January 1978, available from Papers of Malcolm Williamson, National Library of Australia MS Acc04/159. Symphony No. 4 is still awaiting its first performance.

⁶⁸ Simon Campion, “Draft of Malcolm Williamson, CBE, AO (1931-2003): Complete Catalogue.”

The day following the premiere, Williamson spoke proudly to a journalist from the *Liverpool Daily Post*:

It was a superb performance. I could not believe the precision of it all and the quality of the organisation. I was also astonished by all the outdoor scenery. The Queen indicated to me last night during the reception how pleased she had been by the performance.⁶⁹

The Queen was also delighted with the *Jubilee Hymn* that Williamson composed to a text by the Poet Laureate, John Betjeman.⁷⁰ The work was premiered before an audience of five thousand at the Royal Albert Hall on 6 February 1977 and was generally very well-received by the press, despite Williamson's claim that he had found the process of setting the Poet Laureate's words to music as difficult as "trying to knit with spaghetti."⁷¹

Although the media may have portrayed Williamson as lazy and unreliable during the Queen's Silver Jubilee year, he was in fact extremely productive. In addition to the four Silver Jubilee works mentioned above, he composed an orchestral suite entitled *The House of Windsor* for a six-part BBC series; a choral work, *This Christmas Night*, based on poems by Mary Wilson, the wife of former British Prime Minister Harold Wilson; and an organ work, *The Lion of Suffolk*, for Benjamin Britten's memorial service at Westminster Abbey.⁷² The fact that he was able to produce this many works during the Silver Jubilee year is all the more remarkable considering that it coincided with a very difficult period in his personal life. By this time, his marriage of seventeen years to Dolores Daniel had dissolved and he was involved in a lengthy and somewhat difficult divorce. He had also been experiencing health problems, which were only exacerbated by his tendency to turn to

⁶⁹ Malcolm Williamson quoted in *Liverpool Daily Post*, 23 June 1977. The work was later recorded by choirs from Liverpool schools on the label Bush SSLP 126.

⁷⁰ Anthony Holden, "Genius or Master of Gimmicks?," *The Age* (Melbourne), 23 July 1977, 16.

⁷¹ Robert Solomon, "Royalty's Favourite Outsider," *The Weekend Australian*, 21 March 1992.

⁷² Simon Campion, "Draft of Malcolm Williamson, CBE, AO (1931-2003): Complete Catalogue."

alcohol in times of despair.⁷³ The pressures of a large work load with very little in the way of financial remuneration, as well as the criticism of the press and public, proved too much, as Williamson later reflected:

The moment of creation is not all romantic and beautiful with lovers holding hands and walking into the twilight. It is that moment when you're searching in the black and white of the keys and having to fight poor health like an athlete . . . it became intolerable. I was being hounded about finishing the jubilee symphony. I couldn't. I thought it was my ruin and I thought indeed that I was finished.⁷⁴

The damage caused to Williamson's reputation during the Queen's Silver Jubilee year did seem irreversible, especially when the media began to speculate that he had fallen out of favour with the British Establishment. While some people believed that the composer had "gallantly over-reached himself with the workload of Royal jubilation,"⁷⁵ others interpreted his failure to produce the two high-profile Silver Jubilee commissions as "ocker republicanism" and a "frightful snub" at the Palace.⁷⁶ Although the Queen apparently responded with "generous consideration,"⁷⁷ some members of the press meretriciously asserted that there was a rift developing between Williamson and the Royal family, as the following cartoon from *The Times* sarcastically implies (see Figure 3.4).

⁷³ For more information, see Papers of Malcolm Williamson, National Library of Australia MS Acc04/159.

⁷⁴ Malcolm Williamson quoted in Ann Morrow, "The Musick Maker," *The Australian*, 11 May 1978, 10.

⁷⁵ Roy Perrott, "The Agony of the Master of the Queen's Music."

⁷⁶ "Malcolm Williamson: Too Many Hot Baths Got Him into Cold Water," *The Bulletin*, 10 January 1978, 27.

⁷⁷ "Malcolm Williamson: Too Many Hot Baths Got Him into Cold Water."

Figure 3.4 Cartoon from *The Times*, December 1977.



The idea that there was a rift developing between the Royal family and the Master of the Queen’s Music was further cemented in the public consciousness with reports that Williamson had pointedly not been invited to contribute to a number of important Royal occasions, beginning with the wedding of Prince Charles to Lady Diana Spencer in 1981. In the months leading up to the Royal wedding, the press announced that Prince Charles had requested Welsh composer William Mathias (1934-1992) to compose an anthem to be played during the ceremony, while the Master of the Queen’s Music had been overlooked. Under the headline “Discordant Note to Royal Music,” a reporter from the *Evening Standard* declared:

Prince Charles seems to have snubbed Malcolm Williamson, the Master of the Queen’s Music. I understand that Williamson has curiously not been asked to write a piece of occasional music to celebrate the Wedding in July. Although the bearer of the honorary title would normally expect to be hard at work in preparation, Williamson is singularly absent from the palace’s plans Williamson’s exclusion has certainly come as a surprise to the musical establishment.⁷⁸

⁷⁸ “Discordant Note to Royal Music,” *Evening Standard*, 27 April 1981. On 24 June 1981, *The People* published Williamson’s response to the tittle-tattle in the press under the title “No Royal Discord:” “Malcolm Williamson is sorely displeased by reports that he has been snubbed by Prince Charles The reports, he

What the press failed to realise or reveal, however, is that the bearer of the title “Master of the Queen’s Music” is a member of the Queen’s Royal Household, not of the Household of the Prince of Wales. The appointment carries “no fixed duties” and no salary, only an annual honorarium of £100. Consequently, Williamson would not have been expected to compose a work for this occasion. It was also entirely appropriate that Prince Charles, as the Prince of Wales, should request a Welsh composer to write a work in honour of the occasion, particularly one who was well-known for writing church music. The press not only overlooked these facts, but also neglected to report that an Aria and a Toccata from Williamson’s *Symphony for Organ* (1960) were actually performed at St Paul’s Cathedral on this very occasion.⁷⁹ In addition, Williamson composed a new piece as a gift for the Royal couple, a work for soloists and choir entitled *Now is the Singing Day* (1981).⁸⁰ In reality, no slight to Williamson was given or intended, however, the facts surrounding the event were conveniently ignored by members of the press, who were more intent on fabricating a rift between Williamson and the Royal family in order to attract public interest and sell papers.

From 1988, Williamson suffered a series of debilitating strokes which left him with impaired use of his hands and slightly slurred speech. While his deteriorating health was clearly the underlying reason behind his inability to meet several high-profile deadlines, the press showed little understanding or compassion. In 1991 he made headlines for failing to complete a flute concerto in time for its scheduled premiere at the Proms by James Galway. Michael White of the *Independent on Sunday* responded with a scathing

says, that his nose was put out of joint are simply not true Mr Williamson said; ‘I knew what the music for the wedding was to be long before it was announced, and I approved fully of the arrangement. Some hurtful things have been said about myself and John Betjeman being left out of the arrangements, but as appointees of the Queen’s Royal Household it is impossible to reply to them publicly.’”

⁷⁹ Simon Campion, “Draft of Malcolm Williamson, CBE, AO (1931-2003): Complete Catalogue.” Simon Campion to Carolyn Philpott, personal conversation, 29 June 2006.

⁸⁰ *Now is the Singing Day* is scored for baritone and mezzo-soprano soli, SATB chorus, strings, piano four hands and percussion (or keyboard alone) and is based on texts from *The Song of Songs*, translated by Rabbi Albert Friedlander. It was first performed at Leeds Town Hall in June 1981.

report under the heading “Composer Noted for the Sound of Silence,” which was accompanied by the following provocative cartoon (see Figure 3.5).

Figure 3.5 Cartoon from *Independent on Sunday*, 5 May 1991.



“Even Schubert finished some pieces”

In later years, Williamson achieved greater recognition for his outspoken and controversial comments, rather than his music. In 1987, he reportedly described Margaret Thatcher as a “stupid, mindless philistine” and a “bitch” because of her lack of support for the arts in Britain, which prompted one British Member of Parliament to call for Williamson’s immediate dismissal from the post of Master of the Queen’s Music.⁸¹ In 1992, Williamson again made headlines for launching a verbal attack on British musical theatre composer Andrew Lloyd Webber. Lloyd Webber’s music had been selected as the highlight of a televised pageant to mark the Queen’s fortieth year as monarch, while the Master of the Queen’s Music had apparently been “publicly snubbed.”⁸² According to *The Sunday Times*, a spokesperson from the palace had allegedly stated, “We just forgot about Mr Williamson . . . he’s not really at the forefront of people’s consciousness,”⁸³ which further

⁸¹ This call came from the conservative MP Mr Terry Dicks, who also added, “Since he is an Australian he should take the first available Qantas flight out and join his demented cricket team.” “Royal Musician Hits Harsh Note,” *The Australian*, 26 January 1987. According to the *Daily Mirror*, Williamson also called Thatcher a “snake.” “Maggie’s a Snake, Says Queen’s Man,” *Daily Mirror*, 24 January 1987.

⁸² Ava Hubble, “By Appointment to Her Majesty,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, 22 February 1994.

⁸³ *Sunday Times*, 19 January 1992.

fuelled media speculation that a rift had developed between Williamson and the Royal family.

Understandably upset and disappointed by these reports, Williamson reportedly retaliated by describing Lloyd Webber's music as "extremely poor melodically and harmonically extremely crude" and declaring, "Lloyd Webber's music is everywhere, but then so is AIDS . . . I'm not an athlete but I would run a hundred miles rather than listen to *Cats*."⁸⁴ According to the report, he even went so far as to remark: "The difference between good music and Lloyd Webber's is the difference between Michelangelo and a cement-mixer . . . but the comparison breaks down to an extent that there is an element of creativity in a cement-mixer."⁸⁵ Although Williamson insisted that he had been "wildly misquoted" by the Australian journalist who had interviewed him⁸⁶ and later described Lloyd Webber's music as "immortal,"⁸⁷ it seems the damage to his reputation had already been done. He was accused of professional jealousy and became something of an easy target for the media, which seized every opportunity to calumniate him through unsympathetic and often erroneous reporting.

The articles printed in Australian papers were particularly vitriolic at times, as the following excerpt from *The West Australian* demonstrates:

It could be argued that Australian composer Malcolm Williamson has created more cacophonies than symphonies in his 16-year tenure as Master of the Queen's Music While there are many who share these sentiments [about Andrew Lloyd

⁸⁴ "Choice of Music for Queen's Anniversary Strikes Sour Note with Her Composer," *Canberra Times*, 31 January 1992, 16.

⁸⁵ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 January 1992.

⁸⁶ Ava Hubble, "By Appointment to Her Majesty." Williamson claimed that his comments were taken out of context by some "silly girl" who asked him why his music was not as popular as that of Lloyd Webber. According to Williamson, the reporter exited from the *Sunday Times* shortly after his complaint. Sarah Harris, "Queen's Composer Still Maintains Political Rage."

⁸⁷ Williamson changed his opinion after attending a performance of *Sunset Boulevard* in August 1993. Rebecca Fowler, "Lloyd Webber's Harshest Critic Changes His Tune," *Sunday Times*, 15 August 1993. The same report also appeared in *The Australian*: Rebecca Fowler, "Praise is Music to Lloyd Webber's Ears," *The Australian*, 20 August 1993.

Webber's music], it is rather silly to make such a fuss given that the pageant line-up has not been decided and Williamson probably would not complete a commission in time even if he was invited to.⁸⁸

The media gained further mileage out of the Andrew Lloyd Webber fiasco several months later when it was revealed that Williamson was a fan of the music of pop star Michael Jackson. According to a report in *Today*, Williamson believed Jackson's music had a "superb quality" and supported the pop-star's claim that God had made him as great as Tchaikovsky.⁸⁹ The same report also made reference to the composer's previous comments about Lloyd Webber's music, claiming in its sub-heading "Queen's Music Chief May Not Like Webber but Loves Jacko," in order to suggest that Williamson's judgement was flawed.

Williamson's capacity for critical judgement was again called into question in the 1996, when he reportedly described the music of his late friend and mentor, Benjamin Britten, as "ephemeral . . . it will not last."⁹⁰ According to an article that appeared in the *Daily Mail* under the eye-catching headline, "Was Our Greatest Modern Composer a Paedophile; Battle of Britten's Reputation as Protégé Launches Astonishing Attack," Williamson made the criticism of Britten personal, claiming he "was a friend . . . a backstabber too," and labelling him a "paedophile."⁹¹

⁸⁸ "Upmarket Minstrel with a Mastery of the Slow Delivery," *The West Australian*, 27 January 1992.

⁸⁹ Liz Moore, "There's Nothing Pathétique about Michael Jackson's Bid to be the New Tchaikovsky," *Today*, 29 April 1992.

⁹⁰ Malcolm Williamson quoted in Geoffrey Levy, "Was Our Greatest Modern Composer a Paedophile; Battle of Britten's Reputation as Protégé Launches Astonishing Attack," *Daily Mail*, 27 July 1996, 17. An account of this story also appears in Dermot Clinch, "Off With His Head! A Modest Proposal for the Master of the Queen's Music – Malcolm Williamson," *New Statesman* (6 September 1996): 38-41.

⁹¹ Malcolm Williamson quoted in Geoffrey Levy, 17.

During the final decade of Williamson's life, the media portrayed him as an outsider from the Royal Family, from Britain and from Australia.⁹² Even in his death, the supposed rift between the Master of the Queen's Music and the Royal Family was the focus. His obituary in *The Guardian*, for example, carried the title "Controversial Composer out of Tune with the Establishment."⁹³ The first biography of Williamson, *Malcolm Williamson: A Mischievous Muse* by British authors Anthony Meredith and Paul Harris,⁹⁴ also focuses rather scurrilously on the controversies that surrounded the latter years of the composer's life, as discussed previously in Chapter 1. Additionally, many reviews and articles on the book tend to sensationalise its content further, under damaging and misleading headlines such as "Disaster of the Queen's Music,"⁹⁵ "Master of No Musick"⁹⁶ and "A Very Public Embarrassment."⁹⁷

Surprisingly, the media rarely mentioned Williamson's homosexuality and usually only when the composer had exhibited it publicly, such as when he allegedly arrived at a Palace event wearing a Jewish skullcap, a large pectoral cross around his neck and a badge announcing "I Am Gay."⁹⁸ Generally, the British press seems to have been more preoccupied with Williamson's public outbursts and his suitability for the role of Master of the Queen's Music, while members of the Australian press were more interested in whether or not he was a model Australian. Ultimately, the criticism Williamson received from the British and Australian press overshadowed the substantial contribution he made to music in both countries during his lifetime.

⁹² Williamson's old school friend Robert Solomon wrote an article for *The Weekend Australian* under the title "Royalty's Favourite Outsider," which was published on 21 March 1992, as referenced previously.

⁹³ Tim McDonald, "Controversial Composer Out of Tune with the Establishment," *The Guardian*, 4 March 2003.

⁹⁴ Anthony Meredith and Paul Harris, *Malcolm Williamson: A Mischievous Muse* (London: Omnibus Press, 2007).

⁹⁵ Anthony Meredith and Paul Harris, "Disaster of the Queen's Music," *BBC Music Magazine* (November 2006): 54-57.

⁹⁶ Norman Lebrecht, "The Lebrecht Weekly," 19 September 2007, available from <http://www.scena.org/columns/lebrecht/070910-NL-master.html>; Internet; accessed 4 October 2007.

⁹⁷ Roger Lewis, *Daily Telegraph*, 3 November 2007, 25.

⁹⁸ Michael Church, "A Composer Fit For a Queen," *The Independent Review*, 11 February 2004.

Although Williamson was accused of treating the post of Master of the Queen’s Music merely as a sinecure, in reality, he actually composed more works for the Royal family than many of his predecessors.⁹⁹ Figure 3.6 lists the works Williamson composed for Royal occasions during his tenure as Master of the Queen’s Music.

Figure 3.6 Williamson’s “Royal” Compositions.

Year	Composition	Publisher	Royal Connection
1977	<i>The Valley and the Hill</i> for voices (SSA), audience and orchestra or piano	Campion Press	Cassation dedicated to Queen Elizabeth II. Premiered 21 June 1977 in streets of Liverpool in the presence of the Queen and Prince Philip.
1977	<i>Jubilee Hymn</i> for unison chorus, SATB chorus and orchestra/piano	Josef Weinberger	Poem by Sir John Betjeman (Poet Laureate). Written for the Queen’s Silver Jubilee.
1977	Symphony No. 4 for orchestra	Campion Press	Composed “on E” for “Elizabeth” and dedicated to Queen Elizabeth II. Silver Jubilee work.
1977	<i>The House of Windsor – Orchestral Suite</i>	Campion Press	BBC studio recording for 6-part series for Radio 3 to script by Frances Donaldson. In 7 movements: “Fanfare,” “Windsor at Dawn,” “Waltz of the Royal Princesses,” “A Solemn Occasion,” “Fanfare II,” “March of the Household Cavalry” and “The Queen at Westminster.”
1978	<i>National Anthem</i> for SATB chorus and full orchestra	Josef Weinberger	Premiered on 6 July 1979 at The Queen’s Hall, Edinburgh, in the presence of the Queen. ¹⁰⁰
1975-1978	<i>Mass of Christ the King</i> for lyric soprano, dramatic soprano, tenor, baritone, echo choir, SATB chorus and orchestra	Josef Weinberger	Dedicated to Queen Elizabeth II. First performed 25 August 1977 (incomplete) and premiered 3 November 1978 at Westminster Cathedral in the presence of the Queen Mother.
1979	<i>Songs for a Royal Baby</i> for solo SATB or chorus and string Orchestra	Campion Press	6 songs to poems by Mary Wilson dedicated to grandchildren of Queen Elizabeth II: “Morning Song,” “The Rocking-horse,” “Banbury Cross,” “Pram Ride,” “Bath Time” and “Cradle Song.” ¹⁰¹
1977-1980	<i>Mass of St Margaret of Scotland</i> for congregation, optional SATB choir and organ	Josef Weinberger	Dedicated to Princess Margaret.
1980	<i>Ode for Queen Elizabeth</i> for string orchestra	Josef Weinberger	Dedicated to the Queen Mother. In the key of “E” for “Elizabeth.” Consists of 5 movements: “Act of Homage,” “Alleluia,” “Ecosse,” “Majesty in Beauty” and “Scottish Dance.” Premiered 3 July 1980 at Palace of Holyrood House, Edinburgh, in the presence of the Royal Family. ¹⁰²

⁹⁹ A decline in productivity was common among all previous Masters of the Royal Music, as many were not appointed until they were over fifty years of age (Sir Walter Parratt was appointed at age 52, Sir Edward Elgar at age 67, Sir Walford Davies at 65, Sir Arnold Bax at 59 and Sir Arthur Bliss at age 62).

¹⁰⁰ The *National Anthem* was premiered by the Scottish Baroque Ensemble and Scottish Chamber Orchestra, conducted by the composer. Simon Campion, “Draft of Malcolm Williamson, CBE, AO (1931-2003): Complete Catalogue.”

¹⁰¹ *Songs for a Royal Baby* was first performed on 18 May 1985 at the Royston Arts Festival. The first performance for chorus and orchestra took place on 25 January 1986 at Chapter House, Canterbury Cathedral by the University of Kent Chamber Choir and Orchestra, conducted by Andrew Fardell. Simon Campion, “Draft of Malcolm Williamson, CBE, AO (1931-2003): Complete Catalogue.”

¹⁰² *Ode for Queen Elizabeth* was commissioned by the Scottish Baroque Ensemble with funds from the Johnson Wax Arts Foundation and the Scottish Arts Council. The first performance was given by the

1980	<i>Lament in Memory of Lord Mountbatten of Burma</i> for violin and string orchestra	Josef Weinberger	Written in memory of Lord Mountbatten of Burma, uncle of Prince Philip. Premiered on 5 May 1980, Queen's Hall, Edinburgh. ¹⁰³
1981	<i>Now is the Singing Day</i> for baritone and mezzo-soprano soli, SATB chorus, strings, piano four hands and percussion	Campion Press	Composed as a wedding gift for Prince Charles and Princess Diana based on a text from <i>The Song of Songs</i> , translated by Rabbi Albert Friedlander.
1987	<i>Galilee</i> for SATB chorus	Campion Press	Premiered by choristers from the choirs of Westminster Abbey, St Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Cathedral and Her Majesty's Chapel Royal, Windsor, and the brass and timpani ensemble of the Royal Military School of Music.
1988	<i>Fanfare of Homage</i> for military Band	Campion Press	Premiered at Hampton Court Palace by the Band of the Irish Guards to celebrate the 40th wedding anniversary of the Queen and Prince Philip. ¹⁰⁴
1988	<i>Bicentennial Anthem</i> for orchestra	Campion Press	Dedicated to Princess Alexandra and premiered at the Australian Bicentennial Royal Gala Concert.

The media's fabrication of a rift between Williamson and the Royal family and its disproportionate focus on his alleged personal problems had significant implications for Williamson's professional and private life. On many occasions he declined to comment on press reports publicly, which only encouraged media speculation. When he did respond, his statements were often directed at the Australian press, whom he believed took particular delight in vilifying his character. In interviews conducted in 1981, he reflected:

I've had more abuse from the Australian critics than the British . . . and I don't like the puritan attitude that exists here that I should come home and take my medicine like a naughty boy.¹⁰⁵

There is a simple malice which is an Australian speciality. It is particularly directed at non-conformists . . . [including] those . . . who receive acclaim abroad Australia kills its great. It also kills its solitaires.¹⁰⁶

Scottish Baroque Ensemble, led by the composer. The public premiere was given on 25 August 1980 at Hopetoun House, Edinburgh, by the Scottish Baroque Ensemble, led by Leonard Friedman. Simon Campion, "Draft of Malcolm Williamson, CBE, AO (1931-2003): Complete Catalogue."

¹⁰³ *Lament in Memory of Lord Mountbatten of Burma* was dedicated to and premiered by the Scottish Baroque Ensemble and Leonard Friedman. Simon Campion, "Draft of Malcolm Williamson, CBE, AO (1931-2003): Complete Catalogue."

¹⁰⁴ Simon Campion to Carolyn Philpott, personal email, 18 December 2007.

¹⁰⁵ "Composer Williamson Back for Keeps," *The Courier-Mail* (Brisbane), 9 October 1981, 2.

¹⁰⁶ Malcolm Williamson quoted in Phillip Sommerich, "The Music Master," *The National Times*, June 28-July 4 1981, 36. In 1986, after Williamson had read a negative report about himself and his music in an Australian newspaper, he wrote to his mother, Bessie, "I thought thank God that I don't live in Australia. Not that music critics here are exactly Einsteins, but they don't sink below a certain level, and their Aussie

It is significant that Williamson identified himself as a “non-conformist” and a “solitary,” considering that these ideas are recurring themes in the plots of many of his stage works. For example, the scenarios of the ballets *The Display* (1964) and *Sun Into Darkness* (1966) and the plot of the large-scale opera *The Violins of Saint-Jacques* (1966) are centred around a solitary figure and the chamber opera *English Eccentrics* (1963-64) focuses on a number of eccentric characters who according to Williamson, “are all ultimately unacceptable to others.”¹⁰⁷

Williamson’s preoccupation with these themes suggests that he viewed himself as something of an “outsider” in mainstream society and in later years, he was certainly perceived as such by the press and public. In Britain, he was viewed as an outsider in an established musical society that expected consistency and conservatism and in Australia there was often the sense that he had abandoned his native country, and was something of a traitor and an “ex-patriot.” The strong British accent that he assimilated in later years was also inconsistent with his overt declarations of Australian identity. Perhaps, like other successful Australian expatriates, he had become too cosmopolitan, too universal, to “fit in” anywhere. In many ways, the sheer diversity of his output, from the major operatic and orchestral works to the simple, inclusive pieces for children and audience participation, demonstrates his commitment to composing music that was accessible and useful to a wide audience and also reveals his personal desire, as an outsider from society, to gain acceptance.

confreres never seem to rise to that level except in terms of pretension. There is also an unacceptable degree of malice, which, if it exists in Europe and North America, is at least heavily disguised.” Malcolm Williamson, Hertfordshire, to Bessie Williamson, Australia, 2 November 1986, available from Papers of Malcolm Williamson, National Library of Australia MS Acc04/159.

¹⁰⁷ Malcolm Williamson quoted in *Radio Times*, 4 June 1964. *Sun Into Darkness* and *The Violins of Saint-Jacques* are published by Josef Weinberger. *English Eccentrics* is published by Campion Press. The themes of isolation and segregation from society also recur in the works of other Australian creative artists, including the ballets of Robert Helpmann, the paintings of Russell Drysdale (such as *The Drover’s Wife*, 1945) and the compositions of Peter Sculthorpe (including *The Loneliness of Bunjil*, 1955, and the *Irkanda* series, 1955-61) and can perhaps be attributed to the geographical and cultural isolation of Australia, as well as the position of the artist as an outsider in Australian society.

The sense of isolation and exile that Williamson experienced was also felt by other expatriate creative artists, as explored in Chapter 2, and can be viewed as part and parcel of the expatriate experience. For Williamson, however, this feeling was magnified by the intense scrutiny and criticism to which he was subjected from the mid-1950s onwards. Although he had fuelled much of the media speculation and criticism himself by expressing his controversial views publicly and in a forthright manner, it is clear from his comments in interviews and personal correspondence that he did not expect journalists to respond by launching written attacks on his character and work ethic and by publishing salacious gossip about his private life. He was particularly affected by the behaviour of the Australian press because throughout his time abroad he had continued to feel such a strong personal attachment to the land of his birth. He had also made a considerable effort to maintain a relationship with Australia by making return visits, declaring his loyalty to his homeland in interviews with the press, and writing compositions in honour of Australia, for performance in Australia and based on Australian subjects and/or texts. Williamson not only projected an Australian identity because he was proud to be an Australian, as he had announced on so many occasions, but because embracing this nationality gave him the sense that he had a place to call “home,” a place to belong, and this helped to counteract the overwhelming feelings of isolation and statelessness associated with the expatriate experience.

Williamson regularly spoke about the concept of an Australian musical identity, which he believed derived from “a certain extrovert aggressiveness in the Australian personality which manifests itself in the music,”¹⁰⁸ as discussed earlier, and he aligned his own music with the emerging Australian tradition. He frequently compared himself to Australian composers living in Australia, and believed that his experience as an expatriate had given

¹⁰⁸ Malcolm Williamson quoted in Jill Sykes, “Music Ambassador,” *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 August 1973, 7.

him greater perspective on his Australian identity and the Australianness of his music, as the following statement from 1972 implies:

I think my music is at least as Australian as that of any other Australian composer, partly because I live outside the country and have an enormous preoccupation with it. On the other hand, I have noticed again and again that Australian composers living in Australia write with a sort of exoticism that suggests a fascination with other countries. There seems to be in their work a very strong desire to escape, at least mentally and spiritually.¹⁰⁹

The idea that exile could sharpen one's perspective of Australia was an idea also expressed by other expatriates, including David Lumsdaine and Sidney Nolan (as addressed in Chapter 2), and in some ways, was another justification for the decision to remain abroad. In fact, Williamson's declarations of Australian identity were often accompanied by phrases that justified his choice to remain an expatriate, revealing a true ambivalence that was not atypical of expatriates.¹¹⁰ This is obvious in the following statement which Williamson made in 1996:

I love [Australia]! But every child gets to a stage when he/she resents his mother's womb and wants to be independent . . . [my music is] absolutely Australian in attitude . . . because it's like there's something in the Australian attitude where you push through doors marked "pull."¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Malcolm Williamson quoted in Peter Cole Adams, 1972, 10. On one occasion, Williamson spoke about Peter Sculthorpe's choice to live in Australia, stating "The circumstances of [Sculthorpe's] life have so placed him that he can live wherever in the world he chooses but he has an uncontrollable, permanent love affair with elemental Australia. A composer cannot be praised or criticised for loving or rejecting the land of his birth. What is praiseworthy about Sculthorpe is his acceptance of the liabilities of musical life in Australia and yet he has made for himself what the Australian poet, James McAuley, has called a 'mythical Australia.'" Malcolm Williamson, "How Australian Can Australian Music Become?"

¹¹⁰ The ambiguity of Williamson's cultural identity was also obvious in the way that he was perceived by critics. While some critics, such as Ernest Bradbury, believed Williamson was "universally regarded as an English composer," most others categorised him as "Australian," or at least "Australian-born." Ernest Bradbury, "Master Class," *Yorkshire Post*, no date given, available from Josef Weinberger archive, London; accessed 26 June 2006.

¹¹¹ Malcolm Williamson, "Composer Malcolm Williamson: A Conversation with Bruce Duffie," interview by Bruce Duffie, 18 October 1996; transcript available from <http://www.kcstudio/williamson2html>; Internet; accessed 7 June 2007.

According to his partner of nearly thirty years, Simon Campion, Williamson could also be something of a “chameleon” and would often say what he thought others wanted to hear, perhaps in order to “fit in.” Additionally, Campion has admitted that Williamson was “enthusiastically Australian . . . he constantly talked about Australia and loved nothing more than coming home, but with a return ticket in his pocket.”¹¹² Williamson made a similar comment to this in an interview with American radio personality Bruce Duffie in 1996, in which he stated, “Australia certainly is in my blood . . . Australian vegetation, Australian sunlight . . . they’ll always be there, I think . . . but I still have nightmares that I am stuck in Australia without an exit ticket.”¹¹³

Despite these comments and the feeling that Australia had “rejected” him,¹¹⁴ Williamson often expressed a wish to return to Australia permanently, particularly in letters to his family. In July 1984 he wrote to his mother:

My nostalgia for Australia becomes greater and greater. It is 34 years since I came to UK for career reasons, and I often think that I’ve made as much a career in music as I’m likely to make. The MQM appointment is the highest thing that this land can give me. I have written a huge amount of music, much of which is published & recorded. Life seems to be more of the same. I have commissions stretching into 1986, and I work hard at writing music . . . I feel that for the future, as and when, I’d like to enjoy life in the climate of my own country. All the romance of the YE OLDE has gone. The two reasons for living here are (i) Buckingham Palace, and (ii) the fact that London is the centre of the musical world. On the other hand, I wrote my best music in recent times in Sydney, Melbourne & Canberra, and felt the most sublime freedom & relaxation A composer’s life is never really secure, but to have a home of one’s own would be a comfort, and should I be able to

¹¹² Simon Campion to Carolyn Philpott, personal conversation, 9 July 2006.

¹¹³ Malcolm Williamson quoted in “Composer Malcolm Williamson: A Conversation with Bruce Duffie.”

¹¹⁴ In an interview for the *Musical Times* in 1991, Williamson stated, “Australia has rejected me in the way that – flavours of the month or, because Australia is so pedestrian, flavours of the year – had taken over.” Williamson quoted in Chris de Souza, “The Right Question,” *The Musical Times* 132: 1785 (November 1991): 563.

acquire a house I'd rather it be in Australia . . . [I want to] write music in a part of the world that I love.¹¹⁵

The significant number of works that Williamson composed with Australian themes during the 1980s also indicates that he was looking to Australia for creative inspiration and considering a return.¹¹⁶ During the late 1950s and 1960s, Williamson's most successful period in Britain, he had written relatively few works for Australia, and even fewer works that expressed an Australian identity convincingly. As his popularity in Britain began to decline in the late 1970s, however, after he missed deadlines for a number of high-profile commissions, his creative focus returned to Australia and Australian themes. Although he seemed keen to escape from the "maelstrom of artistic friction"¹¹⁷ in London, there were also negative implications to consider before he made plans to repatriate to Australia, as he informed his mother:

A trouble with being in Australia is that the rest of the world is not interested in what happens there. This doesn't matter except for a composer it is reputation and sales of music that make the income.¹¹⁸

He also acknowledged that returning to Australia would require a strength that he admired in figures such as Patrick White, Robert Helpmann and Joan Sutherland, but did not feel that he possessed.¹¹⁹ Eventually, in 1997, Williamson and his partner Simon Campion made the decision to return to Australia, however, shortly afterwards, Williamson suffered

¹¹⁵ Malcolm Williamson to Bessie Williamson, 14 July 1984, available from Papers of Malcolm Williamson, National Library of Australia MS Acc04/159.

¹¹⁶ See Appendix A for a list of Williamson's "Australian" compositions.

¹¹⁷ Malcolm Williamson to Bessie Williamson, 14 July 1984, available from Papers of Malcolm Williamson, National Library of Australia MS Acc04/159.

¹¹⁸ Malcolm Williamson to Bessie Williamson, 4 September 1983, available from Papers of Malcolm Williamson, National Library of Australia MS Acc04/159. There were a number of other factors that made returning to Australia difficult. In addition to professional ties, such as the Master of the Queen's Music appointment and the publishing business Campion Press, Williamson's children were based in the northern hemisphere. The close proximity of London to Europe and America also made it easier to source commissions and attend performances of his music.

¹¹⁹ Malcolm Williamson quoted in Phillip Sommerich, 36. In 1967 he had admitted, "I feel I have not the strength of character to live in Australia. This is a criticism of myself not of Australia . . . I feel it's beyond my powers to live where I am not loved . . ." Malcolm Williamson, "Conversation with Malcolm Williamson."

a stroke so severe that it made the move impossible and, after fifty years living in Britain, he died in his adopted country on 2 March 2003.¹²⁰

Williamson's expatriate experience is relatively typical when considered alongside those of other high-profile Australian creative artists who have lived and worked in London. Like each of the expatriates mentioned in Chapter 2, Williamson left Australia because of a lack of professional opportunities available in the arts at home and due to the expectation that it was essential to gain an imprimatur from London in order to be recognised as a successful creative artist in Australia. The overwhelming sense of inferiority that he experienced as a "colonial"¹²¹ in London was something he shared in common with many other Australian expatriates, including Eileen Joyce, Manning Clark, Joan Sutherland, Murray Sayle and Robert Hughes. Like other successful Australian expatriate creative artists, Williamson made many return visits to his homeland, during which he was hounded by the press and subjected to the same degree of personal criticism as other outspoken "Tall Poppies," such as Nellie Melba, Percy Grainger, Joan Sutherland, Robert Hughes, Barry Humphries and Germaine Greer, to name but a few. The hostility that Williamson encountered during return visits left him feeling like an outsider in Australian society; yet, simultaneously, he did not feel as though he really belonged in Britain, because he had not been born or raised there. A similar sense of statelessness was also expressed by Eileen Joyce, Charles Mackerras, Barry Tuckwell, Jill Neville, Peter Porter, Germaine Greer, Robert Hughes, Barry Humphries and David Lumsdaine, which suggests that Williamson's experience was greatly affected by the prevailing zeitgeist and cultural attitudes towards Australian expatriates. Like most of the expatriates mentioned in Chapter 2, however, Williamson continued to consider himself an Australian and projected a distinctively Australian identity in his verbal remarks and his creative work.

¹²⁰ Simon Champion to Carolyn Philpott, personal conversation, 13 December 2007.

¹²¹ Malcolm Williamson, "Conversation with Malcolm Williamson."

Williamson's character traits also closely resembled those of other Australian expatriate creative artists. He was outspoken, forthright and something of a chameleon, changing his viewpoint to suit the given circumstances, not unlike Melba, Grainger and Joyce. In addition, he adopted an egalitarian attitude towards the arts that was similar to the inclusive philosophies expounded by the same three figures, as well as Joan Sutherland and Peter Porter. All of these traits have previously been recognised as characteristically Australian, as discussed earlier. Another quality that Williamson shared in common with other Australian expatriate creative artists was a complete disregard for Australia's sporting culture. Like Barry Humphries,¹²² Joan Sutherland, Charles Mackerras, Don Banks and Robert Hughes, Williamson felt like an outsider on the sporting field and this continued to have a negative impact upon his sense of self long after he had left Australia for England, as he once admitted:

In Australia I could never win. I was a total failure. I loathe competitive sports and the boarding school I was at, which was very fine in its own way, regarded competitive sports as an indication of manhood. It's so stupid I had, and still have, this fear of being put on a football field . . . to this day I hate Saturday afternoon more than anything, for that is the time for sport It has left me with a deep-rooted feeling of guilt that I'm opting out¹²³

Williamson's life story shares some remarkable similarities with one of the expatriates mentioned in Chapter 2 in particular, David Lumsdaine. Both of these composers were born in Sydney in 1931 and completed degrees in the city of their birth before leaving Australia to settle in London permanently in 1953.¹²⁴ Lumsdaine, like Williamson, composed many works based on Australian subjects and/or with Australian titles to fulfil

¹²² Humphries described the experience of being forced to play football as a student at Melbourne Church of England Grammar school as like a "nightmare." Peter Coleman, *The Real Barry Humphries* (London: Robson Books, 1990), 22.

¹²³ Malcolm Williamson, unreferenced interview from 1973 printed in Anthony Meredith and Paul Harris, 22. Joan Sutherland's experience was also typical: "I grew up quite happily in Sydney. I was never a very sporty sort of person, although at school we were forced into it because it was the Australian way of life. I wasn't an outdoors person but certain things we had to do at school I had to suffer. I was more interested in musical life" Joan Sutherland quoted in Brian Adams, *La Stupenda* (Melbourne: Hutchinson, 1980), 29.

¹²⁴ Lumsdaine was born less than a month before Williamson, on 31 October 1931.

commissions from Australian organisations and ensembles. Both composers incorporated birdsong into some of the works they composed for Australia and generally, their compositions show a preoccupation with humanitarian issues. While most performances of Lumsdaine's music received optimistic reviews, performances of his works have been on a steady decline since the late 1970s, when like Williamson, he decided to take over responsibility for the publishing, printing and promoting of his music himself.¹²⁵

As the above discussion has revealed, Williamson's journey was typical of the expatriate experience in several ways; however, the obstacles that many expatriates faced were somewhat intensified for Williamson due to the high level of status he achieved in Britain during his first two and a half decades abroad, the lack of recognition he received in Australia, his capacity for arousing controversy, and his tumultuous relationship with the British and Australian press. The level of criticism Williamson received in the latter years of his life was directly proportional to the degree of success he had achieved in earlier years and both extremes would have been unlikely had he remained resident in Australia. His expatriate status made him a target for criticism in both Australia and Britain, yet also enabled him to become one of the most productive and successful Australian composers of his generation and allowed him a unique opportunity to raise the profile of Australian composers and Australian music overseas; a responsibility that he embraced wholeheartedly.

This chapter has shown that Williamson's expatriate experience impacted upon his sense of national identity and has provided numerous examples in the form of quotations that illustrate how and why he expressed an Australian identity through his persona and musical output. The following chapters, Chapter 4 through to Chapter 7, will explore in

¹²⁵ Michael Hall, *Between Two Worlds: The Music of David Lumsdaine* (Todmorden: Arc Music, 2003), 8.

detail the various ways through which Williamson projected an Australian identity in the works he composed for Australia, starting in Chapter 4 with several small-scale pieces written in the early 1960s. Although the composer's life and career have attracted much public attention in the past, it is his music, recorded and performed, that is Malcolm Williamson's enduring legacy and the following chapters will contribute significantly to the current body of knowledge that exists on the compositions he produced for Australia and the overall contribution that he made to music in his homeland.