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Introduction

Oli Wilson is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Music and Creative Media Production at Massey University, Wellington. His main area of research is music in Oceania, and he specializes in the recording industry and popular music cultures in Papua New Guinea.

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Dan Bendrups lectures in Research Education and Development, Graduate Research School, La Trobe University. He has a background in ethnomusicology and popular music studies, with a particular focus on the role of music in expressing and sustaining cultural heritage in Indigenous and migrant communities. His publications consider the relationship between music and cultural heritage in Australia, Latin America and the Pacific, as well as theories and methods pertaining to practice-based artistic research.

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Donna Weston is Deputy Director (Gold Coast) at the Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University, Australia. She is a senior lecturer in popular music and program director of the Bachelor of Popular Music. Her research is situated within popular music pedagogy and popular music studies, with a focus on the intersections of pagan studies, philosophies of place, esotericism, and ecomusicology.

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This issue of *Perfect Beat* departs from its usual format. The journal's editor Shelley Brunt is on maternity leave, and assistant editor Oli Wilson is Acting Editor. The issue also features editorial contributions from Dan Bendrups and Donna Weston, who compiled contributions developed from papers given at the second international Ecomusicologies conference held in Brisbane, Australia, in conjunction with the Fifth International Music Council World Forum on Music in 2013 (see <http://www.ecomusicologies.org/archive/ecomusicologies-2013/ecomusicologies-2013cfp/>). The first two articles in this issue are dedicated to ecomusicology, and

represent a cross-section of research perspectives within this emerging field, with a particular focus on the Asia-Pacific region, and make a pertinent contribution encompassing this journal's new scope and subject area.

Popular music, broadly defined, has a significant presence in current ecomusicology, with topics ranging from folk and world music festivals (Pedelty 2012; Bendrups and Weston 2015) through to case studies of popular bands which express ecological or environmental awareness through their songs or their actions (Pedelty 2012).

While ecology, nature and environment have a longstanding place in philosophical and creative discourses relating to music, there has been an exponential increase in eco-musical engagement mirroring other developments in ecological awareness in global scholarship since the 1970s. Many ecomusicologists point to F. Murray Schafer's soundscapes projects of the 1970s as an important milestone as well as a crucial stage in the development of the field of acoustic ecology. Ecomusicology is the most recent scholarly manifestation of these creative and philosophical urgings. The field emerged in the 2000s, drawing on the combined interests of eco-aware music scholars and performers who were associated through membership of large scholarly societies including the American Musicological Society and the Society for Ethnomusicology (see www.ecomusicology.info). Investigations that had previously been described in terms of ecocriticism were now brought together with new perspectives from indigenous cultures, instrument makers, contemporary performers, and others, leading to the creation of a vibrant and multifaceted community of scholars who share a common interest in the richness of interactions between humanly produced sounds and the natural environments to which these sounds relate, whether directly or indirectly.

These beginnings culminated in 2012, in the first dedicated Ecomusicologies conference, co-hosted by members of the American Musicological Society, the Society for Music Theory, and the Society for Ethnomusicology in New Orleans, and coinciding with the annual conferences of all three of these societies (see www.ecomusicologies.org).

The second Ecomusicologies conference was held in 2013 in Brisbane, Australia. The theme, Ecosystems and Ecocriticism, was intended to facilitate broad engagement, and online participation was particularly encouraged, with some sessions featured within the live media stream of the concurrent International Music Council (IMC) World Forum. Given the Australian location, this second conference served to expand participation beyond the predominantly North American membership of the American Musicology Society (AMS) and Society for Ethnomusicology (SEM) groups, and featured a number of presentations dealing with

Antipodean and Asian topics. The first two papers presented in this journal issue have been selected from this conference.

The first of these, by Australian ethnomusicologist Kirsty Gillespie, explores and critically reflects on a museum exhibition, 'Musical Landscapes of Lihir', which she curated in collaboration with the Lihir Cultural Heritage Association (PNG), at the University of Queensland Anthropology Museum, Brisbane. The exhibition included instruments, costumes and ceremonial items sourced from the Lihir environment, but more significantly, provided a platform for explaining how certain songs and ceremonial practices relate to the Lihir landscape. These performance practices have contemporary relevance in the context of the indigenous community's negotiations with mining companies, and the potential impact of mining on the landscape.

The other piece, a dialogue between musicologist Robin Ryan and contemporary Australian performer and instrument maker Mark Cain, continues the *Perfect Beat* tradition of the 'Riff' article, which provides a scholarly space for discursive approaches to contemporary music and musicians. In this article, Ryan provides an informative and thought-provoking discussion of the origins of musical instruments, and invites consideration of the place for locally made and locally conceived instruments in contemporary Australian music. She then applies this perspective to her engagement with Mark Cain, a performer and instrument maker based in Fremantle. Cain is acknowledged in contemporary Australian music circles for his enduring efforts to broaden community engagement with new music through improvisation, world music fusion and, perhaps most significantly, the innovation and creation of experimental musical instruments, many of which draw on material resources from the natural environment. In the ensuing discussion, Ryan explores the motivations and inspiration behind Cain's often quirky and genre-defying experiments, and extols Cain's vision of a future soundscape depending largely on simple, locally made instruments.

The preceding two contributions do not share the ecomusicology theme of the above contributions. The first of these is an article that examines the online community and performance contest 'Stars of Micronesia', which was run via Facebook for two months during 2013. Here, Brian Diettrich contributes to an emerging field of Pacific research that explores the role that online spaces and forums have within often dispersed Pacific communities. Specifically, Diettrich asks 'What role does social media—and especially Facebook—play for Pacific networks?' The article subsequently explores how the 'Stars of Micronesia' event facilitated transnational connections across Pacific boundaries through audience participation with performances of global popular music. Many of the participants were based outside of Micronesia, and so the study explores the role of

online spaces for considering Pacific boundaries, as well as in forging cultural networks through online-based activities and discourse. This case study exemplifies how global musical practices, such as popular music, challenge conventional representations of Pacific region and its cultures, and functions as a forum through which ideas about identity and community are fostered, while transcending physical spaces and cultural and national boundaries. Following this article is another 'Riff' interview. The interview is with Sydney-based flamenco guitarist and ARIA award nominee, Damian Wright, and was undertaken by Brent Keogh. The Riff explores issues of otherness, patronage, and cultural diversity from the perspective of a musician who practises within the field of world music in Australia.

References

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