
Denis Crowdy

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Introduction

Denis Crowdy is a Senior Lecturer in Music at Macquarie University. His research has focused on the popular music of Melanesia, and he has published literature on topics including local stringband, local rock/reggae, and the traditional/jazz-rock fusion band Sanguma (from PNG).

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After the special Asian-music issues of 2011, here we return to normal programming, with articles that traverse musical geographies, genres, politics and histories. In the opening piece, Sarah Keith explores the intersection between traditional exponents of classical music in Australia with elements more often linked to popular music, through a study of Australian responses to performer Andre Rieu. She examines the 'awkward relationship between classical music and commercialism' and gives credence to the idea that there is an increasing lack of relevance for traditional structures of classical music for many people today. As she draws on the politics of 'cool', music education, fan commentary and the purveyors of high culture she asks whether Rieu can be seen as a possible middle cultural phenomenon between high and low in a time of changing hierarchy, and the sometimes contradictory democratizing force of capitalism in relation to culture with a capital 'C'.

Through diaspora, the Pacific region has a strong representation in the United States, with Anthony Harrison pointing out that Filipinos are the 'third largest ethnic subgroup falling under the "Asian/Pacific Island" umbrella [in the USA], behind Chinese Americans and Indian Americans'. Articles on hip hop in *Perfect Beat* to date have largely dealt with relatively small communities and groups in various Pacific urban settings and their relationship to the more dominant US centre of production. Harrison's article, dealing with Filipino American hip hop

music, is therefore important in connecting those studies with the complexities of modern US society, where similar issues about resistance, identity and community play out with a very close cultural and geographic link to the mainstream.

The topic of domestic exoticism in Japan emerges again for *Perfect Beat* in Kimi Coaldrake's article looking at new age musician Kitaro. With links to an important historical and religious figure and story, and relationships to anime and manga, issues surrounding the invention of tradition, involvement of technology and relationships to more globally consumed music are explored.

Finally, Katelyn Barney presents a piece that explores musical reactions to a significant national event. In 2008, the Australian Parliament finally made a formal apology to members of the Stolen Generations, the victims of the forcible removal of Aboriginal children as a matter of Government policy. It was a long time coming, and generated complex and diverse reactions. Focusing on contemporary song dealing with the event and issues surrounding it, Barney uses interviews and personal reflections to capture the power and poignancy of the moment. She demonstrates the power of song to look both back and forward, to affirm and to heal, and to further question a society that would separate children from their parents. She considers how these musical expressions explore the reconciliation process and the complexity of reactions to the apology.