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Denis Crowdy and Mark Evans

## Introduction

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This issue contains a variety of articles that expand on ideas—even themes—that have developed through the history of *Perfect Beat*.

In the first article, Gillespie presents some of her important work on the musical practices of Duna women in the Southern Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea. She explores the creation and performance of a particular type of Christian song, and maps movement of aspects of these practices into secular subjects and contexts. She demonstrates how characteristics of older song forms are evident in these newer styles, reinforcing important concepts of continuity. Although, as Gillespie points out, this is typical of creative practice in general, there has been a tendency for such ideas to become submerged in ethnomusicological discourse, overshadowed perhaps by concerns around an influx of transnational popular forms, rapid change and, of course, the momentum of academic discipline and focus. Prior to the development of these Christian songs, possibilities for public performance by Duna women were very limited. The Christian songs and their migration into secular realms provide more varied thematic possibilities of expression, no doubt of importance to the social future of people in the area, as they deal with issues such as HIV/Aids, lack of development, and corruption by elected officials.

The history of *Perfect Beat* has lagged only slightly behind that of the rise of world music as a phenomenon of Anglophone music industries, and issues sur-

rounding regional involvement in this phenomenon have formed a clear thread for discussion. Wilson draws on the number of such studies to critique approaches with strong semiotic elements. Have popular music scholars also been too focused on obvious signifiers at the expense of more subtle, less superficially 'authentic' aspects of indigenous musics in the region? Wilson tackles this issue through analysis of tracks by Yothu Yindi and Moana and the Moahunters, along with consideration of associated scholarly work. Specifically, Wilson critiques the semiotic approach to the analysis of music, and those who perhaps subconsciously involve semiotic frameworks in their discussion of indigenous music.

In previous issues, Jon Stratton has examined local features of Australian capital city popular music scenes—with work on Adelaide and Perth (Stratton 2005; 2008). Bennett here explores the live scene in Perth, focusing on venues and the trend towards a reduction in the number of small to medium-sized venues holding live music. Although the study is focused on Perth and Western Australia, the issues raised about gentrification and legislation resonate with experiences in other parts of the country.

We remain in Western Australia for the final article where Mark Jennings explores the West Coast Roots & Blues festival. Jennings presents a tripartite analysis of the festival based on Turner's notion of *communitas*, Bakhtin's 'carnival' and Weber's 'charisma'. In his analysis Jennings notes that Turner's work, for instance, 'raises at least as many questions as he answers', and in many ways Jennings achieves a similar ambiguity. How do these contested terms find meaning in contemporary festival settings? Is there any possible theoretical connection between them? How applicable is auto-ethnography to ascertaining corporate sensibilities? And finally, how does the particularly capitalist and bureaucratic structure of a commercial festival impact on the terms discussed here? It is our hope that Jennings's observations will revive debate, and build on previous work published, in these areas (for example, Cummings 2006; St John 2001).

## References

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