1. Introduction
1. Introduction

The aim of this exegesis is to present my work as an improviser and composer within the framework of collaborations with musicians from diverse musical backgrounds. As a point of reference to the reader, I will use the term ‘intercultural improvisation’ to describe the collaborative process involving the fusion of music styles where improvisation forms a significant part of musical structure, exploration and expression. I refer in particular to jazz, Indian classical, Brazilian and Latin music as the main influences of my creative work. This is the main field of my investigation, one that involves working with music and musicians from these backgrounds.

I have derived the name intercultural improvisation from intercultural music, a term employed in ethnomusicology to describe the diaspora of world music and its practice in diverse regions of the world. My approach to composition and improvisation is a synthesis rather than a pastiche of musical influences I experience as a practising musician. I concur, in part, with Cynthia Tse Kimberlin and Akin Euba’s definition of interculturalism in music when they say that:

Intercultural music is that in which elements from two or more cultures are integrated. The composer of this music usually belongs to one of the cultures from which the elements are derived, but this does not necessarily have to be the case. Indeed, this type of intercultural activity is thematic, being inherent in the music itself and therefore, the origin of the composer is irrelevant to the definition. There is another type of intercultural creative activity in which the origin of the composer is the determining factor. A composer writing in an idiom acquired from a culture other than his or her own is involved in an intercultural activity, even though the music that he or she produces is not necessarily intercultural. For example, when an African composer writes a fugue in the style of Bach, in which he or she makes no use of African resources, intercultural activity takes place but the music itself is not intercultural. (Kimberlin and Euba, 1995, p. 2-5) ¹

In recognising the validity of Tse Kimberlin and Euba’s argument, I agree that the “origin of the composer is irrelevant to the definition”. But I suggest that cultural
elements characterise the improviser's identity and have a significantly positive influence on the process and outcome of the intercultural experience. These cultural elements may be language, food and mannerisms, and extend to religion and spiritualism. For example, a non-Indian born musician learning Indian music can absorb some essence of what I refer to as 'native cultural resources' through experiences such as cooking and eating Indian cuisine, visiting or living in India and having at least, a basic knowledge of its history and religion.

If intercultural music requires definition, should the country where it is produced be as significant as the music? World musics portray their cultures, and their identity is clearly definable on the global stage. CD shops label their World music section by country and/or music genre - Irish Folk, Australian Aboriginal, Argentinian Tango - amongst a plethora of World musics. But how does one define intercultural culture? Bruno Nettl says that "[World or ethnic] music is a cultural phenomenon" and that "It is music of great significance in religion and in the integration of society. It identifies clans and social classes, confirms political status, expresses communication from the supernatural, and cures the sick."² I believe that Intercultural improvisation is representative of a shift of consciousness that is a part of contemporary Australian culture. There are 80 world languages spoken in Sydney alone, and multiculturalism is in a state of transition towards collective intercultural consciousness; Australia is an ideal environment for the exploration of new ideas.

Interculturalism in music is evolutionary by nature, it is an ongoing phenomenon throughout history, where cultures have interacted by way of war, colonialism, slavery, commerce, migration and cultural oppression. On occasions, this has given

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rise to the creation of entirely new musical forms. Jazz is the most recent and
dramatic example of this phenomenon. Author Mead Hunter says that: ‘According to
critic Ortiz Walton, black music underwent a radical sublimation in the early
American slave states, specifically because of edicts against drum playing’:

Given the drum's retention, as was the case in all other 'new world' societies, it is
likely that black music here would have sounded more like that of Trinidad, Haiti,
or Jamaica, all these musics having retained more of an African percussive
orientation. The enforcement of anti-drum laws in the United States made it
necessary to transfer the function of the drums to the feet, hands, and body by way
of the Spirituals during the slave era and by way of instrumental music after the
Civil War in the new form of black music called Jazz (Hunter, 1991, p.292). 3

I consider jazz to be synonymous with improvisation and arguably the most fertile
zone of exploration in the 20th Century. Jazz forms a significant part of my musical
background and contributes to my intercultural music explorations. But what is the
balance of the musical elements? My compositions Teena De Healer and The Riddle
contain different influences; the former leans towards Indian music whilst the latter
displays Indian, Latin and jazz influences. My composition process is governed by
'aural confirmations' of what sounds convincing to my ear a priori of the outcome.
This requires a competent knowledge of world instruments and their music at least.

In this writing I will explore how I incorporate stylistic devices in my work. These
include the use of instrumental and vocal techniques idiomatic to diverse musical
styles. This is evident in my composition Drum Drum (see Appendix 6), where the
influence of bluegrass music can be seen by the repeated use of the flat 3rd and the
flat 7th intervals (blue notes). These are applied with 'hammer-on' and 'pull-off'
techniques idiomatic to guitar, banjo and violin - the three primary instruments in
bluegrass music.
Another technique that is part of my palette of musical expression is the Indian *gamakas* (vibrato). The slow shake and/or fast vibrato applied to a note allows me to create subtle but significant variations of that same note, as can be heard in the improvisations on *Teena De Healer* (please listen to accompanying CD, track 2). *Gamak* technique is a component of in-depth exploration on the subject of intonation in Indian classical music and for all intended purposes is beyond the scope of this writing. However, this explanation by N. A. Jairazbhoy provides a useful definition:

There is, however, one special case where subtle distinctions in intonation are particularly noticeable. This occurs when a note is subjected to a slow shake or exaggerated vibrato (*andolan* or *gamak*), either as a decoration or as a functional feature in certain *raags*. It is in the context that certain musicians use the term *sruti* to indicate the subtle intervals produced as a result of this oscillation of pitch. They do, however, maintain that these microtonal deviations from the 'standard' intonation, may only be used in oscillation and may not be sustained as a steady note (Jairazbhoy, 1971, p35).  

This approach to melodic ornamentation and interpretation is intrinsic to Carnatic vocal music and to the *veena* - another influence in my work - the principal string instrument in *Carnatic* classical music as, for example heard in the compelling compositions of Muthuamty Dikshitur (1775–1835).  

When improvising on the same composition, different choices of instrument can inspire different approaches. My intention is to investigate the musical instruments employed and their influence on the collaborative process. Within this context I will also explore the different tunings for my six, seven and eight-string guitars, depending on the type of composition and collaboration. When starting a new project, I search for a suitable percussionist first, because my music is very rhythmic. I like to explore crossover rhythms, groove, and choose percussion instruments that best complement each composition. The guitars that I employ are also influenced by
the sound textures produced by the percussionists, depending on whether they use hand or stick drums. The influences even come down to particular drums. This is the case with the *kendang*, a large double-headed Indonesian hand-drum set similar to the Cuban congas, but played horizontally on the floor instead of upright. I have tried to incorporate the *kendang* in the group Passion Fruit where some of the music requires the execution of fast-tempo unison passages. I like its timbre production, but the execution of rapid sixteenth note passages on one single drum is not idiomatic to the instrument's technical practices. To compensate for this difference of approach, the player alternates the hand-strokes between the different size drum heads, producing a combination of bass and treble sound texture that is uneven in the unison lines with the guitar and flute. Later in Chapter Three, I will describe how *kendang* player Ade Rudiana manages to overcome this challenge by employing *tabla* techniques. I often incorporate *tabla* in my music because the multiple finger technique and the dynamic range of sounds allow the player to perform rapid sixteenth-note rhythmic groupings, producing a timbre that I find complementary to the sound capabilities of the acoustic guitar.

My intention is to investigate some of the more significant collaborations with a number of musicians whose contributions are vital to the realisation of my work. These include percussionists Keith Manning, Bobby Singh, David Jones, Ade Rudiana and Fabian Hevia. Other collaborators include Adrian McNeil (*sarod*), Vishwa Mohan Bhatt (Indian slide-guitar), Craig Walters (saxophones and flutes), Yoyo Darsono (voice) and Steve Hunter (bass). The experimental nature of collaborative environment with these musicians becomes a central forum for my work as a composer and performer. Within this context, following a discussion of my
approach to improvisation, I will individually examine my compositions - Teena De
Healer, Drum Drum, Creology, and The Riddle.

Notes


5. Dikshitar, M. (1775-1835) Composed mainly in Sanskrit language. He is recognised
as one of the principal composers of Carnatic music. Selected Compositions. 52CD 129,
Veena Melodies. Victoria, Australia.

6. Biographies:

Keith Manning: tabla & percussion. Manning studied in India under Pt. Nikhil Gosh. His
collaborations include: Kungura, Laborintio; Flamenco Theatre; and Ashok Roy.

Bobby Singh: tabla. Born in England, Singh studied tabla in India with Pandit Nikhil Gosh
and currently with Aneesh Pradhan. His collaborations include: Pandit Ashok Roy; Passion
Fruit; and Dhi.

David Jones: drums & percussion. Jones is a renowned drum virtuoso. His collaborations
include: Pyramid; Trilok Gurtu; James Morrison; and The Guy Strázulla Trio.

Ade Rudiana: kendang. Rudiana is recognised as one of the leading percussionists in
Indonesia. His collaborations include: Krakatau; Dwiki Darmawan; and Idras Lesmana.

Fabian Hevia: drums & latin percussion. Chilean born Hevia is one of the most in
demand Latin-jazz percussionists in Australia. His collaborations include:
Wunderlust; the catholics; Passion Fruit; and The Australian Art Orchestra.

Adrian McNeill: sarod. McNeill performs on the 25-string sarod in Australia and India.
He has achieved a high level of critical acclaim. McNeill has a PhD in ethnomusicology and has
taught in music departments in Australia, India, Hong Kong and the U.S.

Vishwa Mohan Bhatt: Mohan-veena. Internationally renowned Bhatt has an outstanding
list of achievements to his credit. He is the winner of the World music Grammy Award in a
collaboration with Ry Cooder in 1993. Other collaborations include: Taj Mahal; Jerry
Douglas; and Simon Shaheen.

Craig Walters: saxophones. New Zealand born Walters has studied in the US with George
Coleman and Steve Grossman. His collaborations include: Mike Nock and Billy Cobham.

Yoyo Darsono: voice, rebab (spike-fiddle) & suiling (flute). Darsono is a teacher and performer
specialising in Beluk singing style of West Java. He is a member of Krakatau.

Steve Hunter: electric bass. Hunter is a leading composer and bass player in jazz fusion.
His collaborations include: Dale Barlow, Billy Cobham, Chick Corea and Bobby Previte.
2. Improvisation
2.1 My influences

My involvement with the acoustic guitar has led me to the discovery of engaging contemporary music through some of its most influential representatives. Egberto Gismonti is a contemporary Brazilian guitarist and composer. He blends styles such as *choro* and *frevo* with a percussive, yet lyrical approach to the 6, 7 and 8-string classical guitar. A testament to his innovative work as a guitarist and composer can be heard on a number of releases by the German record label ECM. Acoustic guitarist and composer Ralph Towner, a major ECM artist since the early 1970s, was also a major influence on my work. His innovative left-hand finger-style work employs a ‘prepared’ right-hand damping technique, where the fingers alternate between rest and suspension over the strings as Towner explains:

The following exercise enlists this damping technique, but it has even greater technical benefits. It develops volume control, tone, and independence of the individual right-hand fingers. The p, i, m, and a fingers (thumb, index, medium, and ring finger) begin at rest on the fifth, third, second, and first strings respectively. Pluck each string beginning with the fifth through the first without lifting the fingers that remain on the strings until their turn comes. When you finish plucking the a or ring finger, your hand will be suspended above the strings, not touching them as they vibrate (Towner, 1985, p.9).
I have also investigated Towner's polyrhythmic technique of displacing accents; a chosen finger accents the notes of a chord pattern every time that finger is used in the pattern as can be seen in the following example:

(Towner, 1985, p.10).  

(Towner, 1985, p.14).
Brazilian guitarist Baden Powell was also a major influence on my work. His \textit{Balancado} guitar-style blends jazz with flamenco, Iberian baroque and Afro-Latin styles. Powell, like Towner, explores polyrhythmic harmonic structures such as the 9/8 over 2/4 that can be heard in his composition \textit{Choro Para Metronome}. I recorded this composition with percussionist Fabian Hevia on the CD, \textit{Passion Fruit}, in 1997.\footnote{Strazzullo, 1994, p.20}

The following example demonstrates the polyrhythmic structures of the composition:
There are many other players and composers in my musical background that have stimulated my interest and passion for exploring improvisation across diverse musical styles such as Jazz, Latin and Brazilian music, Indian classical and Indian fusion. These musicians are: Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Antonio Carlos Jobim, João Gilberto, Bill Evans, Chick Corea, John McLaughlin, Leo Brower, Roger Frampton, Wes Montgomery, Alla Rakha, Zakir Hussain, Ravi Shankar and Vilayat Khan amongst others. This list of players and composers is intended for general reference only; an investigation of their respective techniques is beyond the scope of this writing and could form the subject for further research.
2.2 An approach to improvisation

Most musicians learn to improvise by accident; or by a series of observed accidents; by trial and error. And there is of course an appropriateness about this method, a natural correspondence between improvisation and empiricism. Learning improvisation is a practical matter: there is no exclusively theoretical side to improvisation. Appreciating and understanding how improvisation works is achieved through the failures and successes involved in attempting to do it. Indian music, with its long complex relationship between teacher and pupil has the only methodology or system which acknowledges these basic characteristics of improvisation (Bailey, 1992, p.8).¹

In 1993, I began studying raga with my teacher, Pandit Ashok Roy. I noted that some of the scales used in Indian classical music improvisation are identical to jazz improvisation (see appendix 4). Improvisation in Indian music is the expanding of the melodic and rhythmic frameworks of the raga. This approach is also found in jazz improvisation where the central melodic theme and/or sub-themes can provide a fertile pool of ideas for the improviser. Improvisation practice in raga generally employs only one scale. This is In contrast with jazz improvisation, where it is possible to apply any number of scales related to the harmony or, depart from this practice altogether by employing dissonant scales to create melodic tensions.
Improvisation in *raga* is based on the exploration of melody and rhythm with the drone providing the tonic, referred to as the *sa*. These are fundamental elements in my intercultural work, inspired by listening to the music of John McLaughlin with the North-South Indian fusion group, *Shakti*; and John Coltrane’s incursions, in 1961, into Indian inspired modal improvisation, which Jazz writer Steve Holtje describes:

Coltrane also takes his interest in modality to new levels of inspiration with daring improvisations on "Impressions" and "Spiritual," and his incorporation of ideas associated with Indian ragas also blossoms here with *India*. This music casts aside the comfortable parameters of melody, steady rhythm, and chord progressions in favor of more primal expression, yet more sophisticated methods of organisation (Holtje, 1997).3

Indeed, the similarities in approach between Indian music and jazz improvisation may be recognised when modal jazz compositions, usually consisting of only one or two chords are employed. This may form some basis for an intercultural approach between jazz and Indian music improvisation.

My resources in composition and improvisation are derived from the similarities rather than the differences between musical styles. This helps me create a synthesis without too much tampering with the fundamental elements of each tradition. It is a philosophy that I adhere to in my approach because it aims to maintain musical integrity for the traditions I draw on.

Only a dialogue of cultures carried out on equal footing can lead us out of both these dead ends: a dialogue that takes place within the dynamic of intercultural encounter and that principally recognizes the Other in his/her Otherness, without overemphasising or suppressing the Own. (Baumann, 2000).3

My view is that inner knowledge and aural perception of what ‘works’ aesthetically, should govern the explorative exercise of synthesising culturally diverse music
styles. Indian singer, English-born Sheila Chandra, explains the creative process in reference to her interpretation of the traditional Irish song, *Dhyana and Donalogue*:

Someone said to me that it all seemed so worked out, but all the working out happened afterwards. Originally it was me playing around with Irish vocals and my voice automatically going into Islamic vocal and then back again. My following what my voice wanted to do, causing a whole set of connotations to take place...a certain vocal ornament will lead you from one tradition to another. In that gateway there's like a nexus where there is pure music, pure vocal music and it could go in any number of directions (Taylor, 1997, p. 150).”

Chandra’s insight into ‘pure vocal music’ is supported by her technical and emotional rendition of *Dhyana and Donalogue*. Conversely, I would not refer to my music as being ‘pure’ guitar music. It is a contradiction in itself, because the exercise of synthesising styles negates a concept of purity. In my view, the nexus described by Chandra is a seamless process where one music flows into another and back again. This is a point where musical styles converge and maybe form a hybrid or simply, an aesthetic perception. In reference to my introduction, could this perception also be an indication of displaced identity? This argument could form the basis for future research in my work.

Some of the technical practices in my approach to improvising include guitar-strumming patterns and melodic improvisation based on percussion rhythms. A special feature of Hindustani and Carnatic drumming, integral to improvisatory techniques, is the *quaida* (rhythmic structure). These are extended improvisations based on set compositions and rhythmic cycles (*talas*) such as *tin-tal* (16 beats), and *jhaptal* (10 beats). I have constructed melodic compositions based on *quaida* improvisations in fast *jhaptal* (Vasishth, 1967) and named them *ti-hai*. This term is arguable, since they are not standard *ti-hai* patterns in *jhaptal*. Nonetheless, they
follow a similar composition structure to ti-hai; one feature being the triple repetition of a phrase containing a short extension at the end. The other, is the geographical position, or oriental placement, of when they are played in the course of the improvisation. Indian drummers play ti-hai at the conclusion of guaida, a practice that I follow accordingly in my approach. This can be heard on Teena De Healer at the end of the guitar improvisation where I play ti-hai No. 3 (Please listen to track 2 on the accompanying CD). The following ti-hais in jhaptal are an example of my work in this area:

Ti-hai no.1 (Please listen to accompanying CD, track 12).

![Ti-hai no.1](image)

Ti-hai no. 2 (Please listen to accompanying CD, track 13).

![Ti-hai no.2](image)

Ti-hai no. 3 (Please listen to accompanying CD, track 14).

![Ti-hai no.3](image)

I also practise constructing melodic lines based on Shankar’s exercises for the mizrab
These are rhythmic patterns comprising 2 to 16 beat patterns that I apply to the guitar. This approach is part of tala (rhythmic cycles), which are the essential elements of time and rhythm in Indian music. Talas contain the same number of beats that may have the stress or accent on different beats. These are useful for combining rhythmic patterns with melodic motifs and also strengthen my plectrum technique by placing accents on different note groupings. I use a variety of scales and modes common to jazz and Indian music to practise talas (see Appendices 3 and 4). The syllable Da should be played with a strong stroke (attack) whilst Ra (pronounced ‘Ruh’) receives a weak stroke:

Eight-beat talas

1. Da Ra Da, Da Ra Da, Ra Da 1 2 3, 1 2 3, 1 2
2. Da Ra Da, Da Ra, Da Ra Da 1 2 3, 1 2, 1 2 3
3. Da Ra, Da Ra Da, Da Ra Da 1 2, 1 2 3, 1 2 3

Sixteen-beat talas

1. Da Ra Da, Da Ra Da, Da Ra Da, Da Ra Da, Da Ra Da, Da Ra, Da Ra 1 2 3, 1 2 3, 1 2 3, 1 2 3, 1 2, 1 2
2. Da Ra, Da Ra Da, Da Ra, Da Ra Da, Da Ra Da, Da Ra Da, Da Ra Da, Da Ra Da 1 2, 1 2 3, 1 2, 1 2 3, 1 2 3, 1 2 3
3. Da Ra Da, Da Ra Da, Da Ra, Da Ra, Da Ra Da, Da Ra Da, Da Ra Da, Da Ra Da 1 2 3, 1 2 3, 1 2, 1 2, 1 2 3, 1 2 3
4. Da Ra Da, Da Ra Da, Da Ra Da, Da Ra, Da Ra, Da Ra Da, Da Ra Da 1 2 3, 1 2 3, 1 2, 1 2, 1 2 3

Example of my 16-beat groupings applied to C Lydian selected notes:

1. c d e, g f# e, g f# e, f e, d c, d d 1 2 3, 1 2 3, 1 2 3, 1 2 3, 1 2, 1 2
2. f# e, g f# e, f# e, f e, d d 1 2, 1 2 3, 1 2, 1 2 3, 1 2 3, 1 2 3
3. c d e, d e a, g f#, g f#, f e, d d 1 2 3, 1 2 3, 1 2 3, 1 2 3, 1 2 3
4. f# d c, g f# d, a f# d, g f# d, g f#, e d d 1 2 3, 1 2 3, 1 2 3, 1 2, 1 2 3
In Australia, I continue to collaborate with tabla players such as Manning and Singh. Working with them is an ideal musical situation that allows me to explore improvisations based on konnakol. This is:

...a marvellous system of Indian rhythm that is done without an instrument, explains McLaughlin: "You use your voice and your hands so you don't have to learn a percussion instrument in order to fully understand the simplicity and sophistication of Indian rhythmic traditions. It's a system I highly recommend to all my students, although I don't claim in any way to be a master of konnakol. But as I said, rhythm is really universal and if you can understand konnakol—the most superior system of learning rhythm in the world—you can understand any rhythm from any country on the planet. For example, if I have to communicate something to one of the percussion players in Remember Shakti, I can sing it to them in a rhythmical sense and vice-versa. It could be 'Ta-ka ta-ka ta ta-ka tin day ta.' You then immediately see the mathematics of it. And if you can sing a rhythm, it means you understand what it is and then it's a question of applying it to your instrument (McLaughlin, 1999)."

Konnakol can be applied effectively to rhythm guitar, and it is fundamental to my intercultural improvisation and composition because of the influence of Indian music on my work. The possibilities of note-rhythm combinations to constructing a phrase are limitless. The previous examples of ti-hais No. 1-3, in Teena De Healer, are a minute representation of these.
2.3 Theory of modal temporary tonics

Through my studies with sarod master, Pandit (Pt.) Ashok Roy, I have observed that a scale in Indian music contains a relationship of primary and secondary notes to the tonic, as is the case in Western music. The primary notes are the tonic, subdominant and dominant; whilst the secondary notes are the supertonic, mediant, submediant and the leading-tone. I have developed an approach to improvising that employs a system based on what I refer to as ‘modal temporary tonics’. In theory, this means that any note of the scale, aside from the true tonic, can be treated in ways as to create the sonic illusion of being a ‘temporary’ tonic. Through my improvisations, I have come to develop the diatonic system of modal temporary tonics, which is in effect a super-imposition over the established tonic (the sa drone). For example, if I decide to use the sixth degree of the C major scale as a secondary tonic - A over the C drone - the fifth degree, G, becomes its leading tone whilst the seventh degree, B, becomes the supertonic. Similarly, if I employ the second degree as the temporary tonic note, D, the first degree C will become its leading tone and the third degree E will assume the role of supertonic. The practising improviser can test this approach by resolving a musical phrase on a temporary tonic, central to that phrase. Eventually, a return to the original key-centre occurs by resolving to the original tonic or primary dominant fifth interval.

My theory is not intended as a challenge to what is essentially a physical gravitational pull towards the true or established tonic in a composition using one drone. My approach bears similarities to Jairazbhoys’s description of Bhatkhande’s
system in Indian music, which is used primarily by vocalists and deals with similar concepts:

In every rag two notes, in theory, are given greater importance than the others. These notes are called vadi-sonant, and samvadi-consonant. According to Bhakthkhande the prime character of a rag appears in the vadi. The vadi is that note which is sounded clearly again and again, a note which is superaboundant in a rag. The samvadi is described as being a note used less than the vadi but more than the other notes in the rag. The samvadi should not be near the vadi as it will tend to detract from the importance of the vadi. Ideally it should be a perfect fifth away or, if that note is not present in the rag, it should be one of the adjacent notes, the fourth or the sixth, preferably the former. These definitions of vadi appear to relate primarily to frequency of occurrence but statistics applied to Bhakthkhaned's own notations reveal irreconcilable inconsistencies. Obviously much depends on the interpretation of the key phrase 'sounded clearly again and again', which Bhakthkhande does not clarify. He seems aware of the inadequacy of his definition and quotes a divergent view from the Gita Sutra Sara by K. Banarji (Bannerjee) in which the author questions the validity of these terms. Much of this difficulty seems to arise from the fact that rags have different facets which are successively developed in the course of a performance. In this connection Bhakthkhande equates vadi and visrantiyvar (or maqam sthan), terminal or resting notes, when he states that singers choose different notes on which to end their melodic phrases, momentarily presenting each of these notes as vadi, finally returning to the prescribed vadi without detriment to the the rag” (Jairazbhoy, 1971, p.42).

This approach can be seen in the melodic construction of a composition such as Teena De Healer. The first semi-phrase (bars 1 & 2) ends on the dominant, D; the second semi-phrase (bars 5 & 6) ends on the leading-tone, F; while the third phrase (bars 9 – 12) falls on the tonic, G. When applied to improvisation both the dominant and the leading tones respectively can function as supplementary tonic, eventually returning to the original tonic of G. This is the theory that forms the basis for a uniform approach between my composition and improvisation as can be seen in the following example - shown next page - (see Appendix 6 for a full score of Teena De Healer).
My approach to playing modes is similar to that of American jazz guitarist Mick Goodrick. He describes two very practical ways of thinking about modes:

Derivative: D Dorian is C major scale starting on the second degree (finding the major scale from which the mode is derived). Parallel: D Dorian is D major scale with b3 and b7 (constructing the mode from a parallel major scale/same root. Since (in the exercises) we are using the modes of the C major scale, it would seem that our approach is derivative. However, when you are playing against a vamp, I'd encourage you to think of the mode from the root of the tonic chord (Goodrick, 1987, p.13).^2

Adding to the theory of supplementary tonics, I have developed Goodrick’s approach further, by combining derivative and parallel modes. Thus, if I play A Dorian over C Lydian it becomes its sixth mode as in the following example.
This theory becomes a standard model applicable to any scale or mode, as in the following example:

I find these approaches create a broad spectrum of colour variation against the backdrop of the drone and open a vast exploratory path in modal improvisation on my chosen instrument, the guitar. This is a particularly well suited instrument to intercultural improvisation. It is a melodic, harmonic and rhythmic instrument that can be tuned to a number of different pitches with the added bonus of drone strings. In certain cases, a sympathetic string resonator can be added across the soundboard for added sustain. The guitar can be played in any key, making it adaptable to play with any instrument. Some of my guitars have undergone modifications in order to suit my intercultural explorations. This will be discussed in Chapter Three.
Notes 2.1

1. *Choro* is a Brazilian instrumental genre fusing European dances such as polka, waltz, and schottisch with African-derived rhythms, particularly the 2/4 time also found in samba. Most closely associated with Rio de Janeiro but played throughout Brazil, it is characterized by virtuosity, improvisation, and counterpoint, requiring much practice in rodas de choro (jam sessions). The traditional *choro* is structured in three parts: A-B-A-C-A. Daniella Thompson daniv@jps.net 2001.

2. *Frevo* is a traditional 'musical dance' from Pernambuco, Brazil. The dance represents happiness, party and the spirit of the 'Carnaval' http://savethecircle.org/frevo.html


4. Ibid.


6. Ibid


Notes 2.2


Notes 2.3


3. Instruments
3. Instruments

I use a range of different guitars to serve particular musical ideas (please refer to the complete list in Appendix 6). To pursue my research in intercultural music I collaborated with luthier Peter Biffin in 1995 to modify my acoustic guitars. My aim was to enhance the capability of the guitar to capture the sound of the Indian sarod. Biffin modified a 6-string acoustic guitar, originally made for me by Sydney based luthier Teen Goh. This modification involved carving the wood to produce a slightly scalloped, concave shaped fret-board. This construction follows the sitar in that it facilitates greater bending of strings that it is usually possible on guitar. Peter and I also inlaid flat brass frets on the fret-board to function as position markers and to retain greater sustain. A seventh string was also added to the bass side of the guitar for providing drones. I use light-gauge plain steel strings for this purpose. This allows me to employ the tonic and fifth intervals in a few different keys, depending on the thickness of the strings.

The sustaining qualities of the chikari and drone strings are fundamental to my music. The combination of drone and chikari strings provide support to the melody and chords when I play solo or in combination with other instruments. I also use a variety of guitar tunings to create open-string chords, only rarely altering the tuning of the top four strings, as these are used for melodic playing (see Appendix 5). The open string chords work in a similar manner to the sympathetic strings of a resonator. This is a fundamental element of my drone inspired compositions (please listen to the Biffin guitar-veena on the accompanying CD, track 1).
I currently play a Sonea-guitar-veena built by French luthier, Martine Montassier. I use this instrument in all my collaborations with Indian and South-East Asian musicians. The Sonea was originally designed as a seven-string classical guitar with features idiomatic to steel string guitar building. It has a metal truss-rod, not usually found in classical guitars, inside the neck for extra strength. Noticing this feature, I decided to re-string it with light-gauge steel strings so as to achieve both greater sustain and an ‘Indian-like’ quality to the sound; Indian string instruments such as the sitar, sarod and veena use steel strings that contribute to a metallic sound characteristic. The Sonea is made of spruce, sycamore and rosewood. It has a twenty-four-fret scale-length allowing a range of four octaves. All the instruments listed in Appendix 5 can be heard on the accompanying compact disc to this dissertation (please see Appendix 9 for track credits).

Purpose-built guitars such as the Sonea allow me to develop extended solos as well as facilitate and influence collaborative work. I will now examine the effect of collaboration on my work.
4. Compositions and Collaborations
4.1 *Teena De Healer*

Music composition is a highly personal statement for me. Amongst other things, it is about deep experiences at particular points in my life. I sense a spiritual connection with music when I allow my intuition to take me on a journey that converts personal experiences and feelings into sound. This is the case with compositions such as *Teena De Healer*, a piece that I have written as a tribute to my Italian grandmother, Tina, in 1995. She was the last in a long line of traditional healers in her family. She practiced in her native southern-Italian town of Petrella, sixty kilometres west of the Adriatic Sea. Today, it is still possible to see the historic ruins and the cultural influences of the Turkish Saracens who invaded the region during the Middle Ages.

I was captivated by my grandmother's world of healing. Despite my interest, I realised that I could not be trained as a healer because tradition calls for the knowledge to be passed on only to another woman in the family. I am happy to say that most of my spiritual needs, as a 13 year-old, were fulfilled by the music of the *Beatles* and *Ten Years After*, along with a handful of other bands. Many years later in 1984, I travelled to India and observed an affinity between local customs and those of Tina's regional Italian culture.

*Teena De Healer* also evokes my feelings when I played in Mysore, South-India, in 1984. I was touring for the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Musica Viva, as a member of the modern jazz group Intersection led by the late pianist and composer Roger Frampton (1948-2000). My experiences with my grandmother's
culture made me feel a stronger connection with South India than with the Northern-Italian city of Turin, where I spent the early years of my life.

*Teena De Healer* was originally recorded in 1995 at ABC Studio 227 in Sydney as part of Jim McCleod's radio program, *Jazztrack*, (ABC Classic FM). The composition was released on the compact disc, *Passion Fruit*.\(^2\) For the recording I played the melody and improvisation on the Pedrini 8-string classical guitar and used the Goh/Biffin guitar-veena to provide the drone in the form of a single-chord arpeggio pattern. Keith Manning contributed the *tabla* playing. The rhythm is a variation of the Indian *jhaptal*, which is a 10-beat rhythmic cycle subdivided into two groups of 2+3+2+3 beats. However, Manning reversed this pattern into 3+2+3+2 beats in order to fit the phrasing for the melody. I composed the melody by singing whilst playing the repetitive chord pattern on the guitar-veena. The chord contains the notes G, D, C, F and E, which are the chord tones of G7sus 4 add 6 (see Appendix 6). The melody is derived from the G-Mixolydian mode.

I have played *Teena De Healer* in a variety of contexts, exploring its improvisation possibilities through a range of collaborations. I performed this composition with Australian Koori\(^1\) musician Matthew Doyle with the bands ConSpiritOz\(^4\) and The Wizards of Oz.\(^5\) Doyle's approach included singing the melody and improvising. He also played the didjeridu to provide the drone for my guitar improvisations. Doyle said that he felt comfortable singing *Teena De Healer* because it reminded him of Aboriginal songs from Arnhem Land in northern Australia. On the other hand, *tabla* players Manning and Singh have both referred to *Teena De Healer* as having similarities to South-Indian vernacular music.
In 2002, I recorded *Teena De Healer* in another collaboration with Adrian McNeil and Bobby Singh at Macquarie University in Sydney. McNeil's lyrical counterpoint, coupled with the sound of his *sarod*, gives the piece a discernible Indian identity. This version is particularly satisfying for me because it is the first time the composition has been played on a melodic Indian instrument with satisfying results. McNeil's playing captured the feeling I had in my mind when I first composed *Teena De Healer* (please listen to accompanying CD, track 2).

I believe this collaboration is a revealing example of intercultural process in Australian music today where an Italian-Australian musician such as myself produces music influenced by Indian traditions using a modified guitar. My collaborators include an Australian of Celtic background, Adrian McNeil, who is a recognised master of the *sarod*, and Bobby Singh, an English-born Indian *tabla* player living in Australia. Both McNeil and I share a background in Western classical music, classical guitar performance and the blues. This underpins the positive outcomes of our collaboration.

Another composition that uses the same guitar tuning as *Teena De Healer* is *Drum Drum*, composed in 1996. It is often performed as the second movement of *Teena De Healer*, due to the combination of the identical guitar tuning and the increase in tempo, making it a natural follow-up to a slower piece in a repertoire program. However, I never intended *Drum Drum* to be a 2\textsuperscript{nd} movement as such, because the experience that inspired its composition was vastly different from that of *Teena De Healer*, as I will explore next.
4.2 *Drum Drum*

The conception of *Drum Drum* is the result of an unexpected event that happened to me one afternoon in the spring of 1996. A group of *Kooris* asked me to join them on the footpath outside Central Station in Sydney. They saw I had a guitar with me and one of them asked me if he could borrow it to play a few tunes. I agreed and sat in their circle joining in the conversation, the music and their friendliness. One of the elder women must have been touched by my sense of familiarity with them when she said: “You’re God aren’t you?” One of the younger men borrowed my guitar and launched into a heart-felt rendition of *I Can’t Stop Loving You.*\(^1\) Suddenly, this harmonious feeling was interrupted by an outburst of violence. The eldest Aboriginal man forcefully struck a younger one, who had been drinking alcohol and was offering me a drink from a bottle wrapped up in a brown paper bag. It seems this gesture was an embarrassment to the elder man. It also challenged the dignity of the group. I was perturbed by the violence, even though it was only a brief moment. The elder woman reassured me that everything was all right and that I need not worry.

This experience was powerful enough for me to express its feelings in a composition. To develop this, I thought of using a drone, for two reasons: firstly - to emulate the laid-back country & western feeling of the song, *I Can’t Stop Loving You*; and secondly – to suggest the Aboriginal identity of my experience without stereotyping it by using the didjeridu to achieve this. Then I composed a fast melody with features of bluegrass music.\(^2\) My intention was to depict the contrasting sudden burst of violence from the elder Koori man and the feeling of the rush from the
automobile and pedestrian traffic surrounding us.

In the B section of Drum Drum, I incorporated a hybrid ti-hai consisting of syncopated 16th-note line groupings reminiscent of Afro-Cuban-jazz and funk elements. I use the structural technique of the ti-hai, a standard practice in the gat3 section of the raga in order to create a dramatic effect leading both into the improvisations and the ending the piece (Please listen to accompanying CD, tracks 3-5).

Drum Drum was first recorded in November 1997 at the ABC’s Studio 227 in Sydney, for the CD The Riddle4 (please listen to Drum Drum 2 on the accompanying CD, track 4). The trio, comprising percussionist David Jones, bassist Steve Hunter and myself playing classical guitar, had recently returned from touring Indonesia. One of the highlights of the tour was the collaboration with folk vocalist Yoyon Darsono and percussionist Ade Rudiana. The performances took place in Bandung, where we played two concerts. It was a revelation to see how Rudiana and Darsono adapted their skills and elements of their music tradition to Drum Drum. Darsono’s vocal improvisations included singing quarter-tone and semi-tone pitches above the drone, creating dissonant harmonic tension over the funk grooves. This came to
inspire my vocal improvisations on the ABC recording. The Trio member, David Jones, was also inspired by the collaboration with Rudiana to play the drum-kit with his hands.

Rudiana executed complex rhythmic combinations in *Drum Drum*. I recognised how he incorporated a technique similar to the Indian *tabla* individual finger strokes, allowing him to produce complex rhythms at any tempo. Steve Hunter’s bass lines provided melodic grooves, drones; and he played the unison *ti-hai*. I also incorporated the *gopichand*, a single-string Indian folk instrument that I had been introduced to by percussionist Keith Manning, to provide a rhythmic drone for Jones’s drumming in both the introduction and improvisation sections (please listen to *Drum Drum* 3 on the accompanying CD, track 5).

The ABC recording of *Drum Drum* is a landmark in my career because it captures an intense period of collaboration with Indonesian colleagues and a deepening of the intercultural experience. For example, playing the drone on the 8th string of the guitar and simultaneously playing the *gopichand* and vocalising improvised lines inspired by Yoyo Darsono and our intercultural experience. It was one of those special moments where spontaneity echoes a deeper place inside where creativity is allowed to flow unrestricted.

*Drum Drum* has since evolved through a number of collaborations including one with Adrian McNeil started in 2001 (please listen to *Drum Drum* 1 on the accompanying CD, track 3). Our ongoing collaboration is a work-in-progress where we explore the relationship between the *sarod* and my guitar *vina*. Both instruments
are plucked with single and/or alternate plectrum strokes. We have experimented with equalising our respective plectrum techniques in order to achieve balance in tone production and phrasing.

A common feature of the sarod and the guitar playing technique is the khatka, the Hindustani term that refers to the technique of ‘hammering-on’ and ‘pulling-off’ strings. In exploring the technical demands of the melody in Drum Drum, McNeil and I discussed a range of tuning possibilities. There was an initial problem with being able to perform khatka on the same strings. The top four strings of McNeil’s sarod are tuned to B (4), F♯ (3), B (2) and E (1) while my guitar’s top four are tuned to D (4), G (3), B (2) and E (1). Consequently, it is practically impossible for us to play in the original key of G since the open strings do not match. I have attempted to solve this problem by modifying the guitar tuning to match that of the sarod, but this approach is both impractical, and indeed disorienting. I then decided to use a capo, locked on to the fifth fret without any change to the guitar tuning. This reduced the range of notes available, but it was far more practical and effective. In addition to the top-four strings of the guitar-veena I assigned the drone to the fifth string and the chikari strings. This level of experimentation has led me to achieve a satisfactory blend with the sarod’s sonorities whilst retaining a recognisable guitar sound.

In continuing to explore compositions that have fuelled a number of intercultural collaboration. I will now investigate Creology (1993). The title of this composition reflects its mixture of influences, indicative of how I was beginning to see my music and my life as an artist in a multicultural environment.
4.3 Creology

Prior to composing Creology, I had just met the Australian acoustic guitarist Steve Cooney who now lives in Ireland, where he specialises in traditional Irish music from the Cork and Kerry regions. The event was the Guinness Irish Festival in Sydney. Cooney's inventive rhythm guitar work made a lasting impression on me, in particular his accompaniment skills, supporting and embellishing the melodies of accordionist Seamus Begley. In 1993, I also heard the John McLaughlin trio at the Sydney Opera House. The trio included percussionist Trilok Gurtu; electric bassist Domenique Di Piazza; and McLaughlin playing an amplified nylon string acoustic guitar. The trio played McLaughlin's composition, Florianopolis. This piece of music is named after the city in Brazil. It is influenced by flamenco, Brazilian and Indian music.

Inspired by Cooney and McLaughlin I began experimenting with rhythmic patterns, improvising over a D drone. The compositional basis of Creology is the D major scale set against D and A drones. For the improvisation, I use the D major scale and the D-Mixolydian mode. I also use note-bending, slides and rhythmic patterns inspired by Indian rhythms. Creology, like Drum Drum, is subjective to collaborative process where it is often performed in duet format with a percussionist. I focus on maintaining a balance between the different possibilities available on the guitar-veena and how I can best utilise them in this musical context. My approach is to strike the drone strings at regular intervals whilst playing the melody or improvisation. The scale notes trigger the sympathetic vibration of the drone strings producing audible harmonic resonances. This creates the impression that the drone is
struck at regular intervals, in actual fact this approach creates an illusion for the listener. It helps to achieve a musical balance between bass lines, chords, melody, improvisation and the drone. This has been reinforced by the concept of the 'domino piece', as described by Ralph Towner:

Take three small objects, such as dominoes and place them on a table, one above the other. Then, moving only one domino at a time, advance all three across the table to the other side. You could choose to move each one the complete distance in three moves, but the sense of a unified group of three elements moving together would be lost. By moving each object a short distance with several moves, you will get them all across the table without losing their identity as a threesome. To apply this to music making, consider the top domino to symbolise the melody voice; the centre domino, the chord content; and the lower the bass voice (Towner, 1985, p.34).³

It is possible to see how the domino pieces can increase according to the number of players involved and their approach to the music. I have played Creology with several percussionists including Singh, Jones, Manning and Fabian Hevia.³ Tabla artist, Singh, combines constant rhythmic grooves with bursts of improvisation. This is a standard approach in both Indian classical music and western jazz where each player engages the other into ‘call and response’ improvisation. When I collaborate with Singh, I employ a percussive style in my rhythm guitar work by improvising patterns that complement his Indian grooves. Manning and Hevia employ a similar approach in Creology. They use a variety of percussion instruments, such as rain stick and bells. This ‘ensemble’ approach adds different sounds and textures to the composition. At times, the regularity of groove can transform into a less pronounced one where it is abandoned in favour of a rubato approach.⁴ This allows a range of possibilities for treating the guitar as a miniature orchestra. Using a broad range of dynamics, colours and techniques such as artificial harmonics, sustaining chord structures with fixed arpeggio patterns, drones and percussive sounds.
Creology was first recorded in 1996 with the group Passion Fruit at the ABC Studio 227 in Sydney (please listen to Creology 2 on the accompanying CD, track 7). This track was never released because I don't feel it is a good example of my intercultural work. But it is significant for my research. This collaboration with fellow musicians Craig Walters, Fabian Hevia, Keith Manning, and myself produced mixed results; the outcome sounding like a jazz group with the addition of tabla in the background. My reflections tell me that this is partly the result of Walters and Hevia having no experience in Indian music improvisation, and partly because of the textures of the instruments I employed. In hindsight, I would have preferred Hevia to play Latin percussion such as bongos and shakers in combination with Manning’s tabla.

The duet recording of Creology was released in 1999 on the CD, The Riddle (please listen to Creology 1 on the accompanying CD, track 9). It features percussionist David Jones playing Moroccan darbuka, foot-tambourine, drum kit, and hand-cymbals, and myself on 8-string classical guitar. This is essentially an intuitive intercultural approach influenced by the Indonesian experience of the Riddle trio in Indonesia. This version received a Jazz APRA nomination. Perhaps this recognition shows how broadly the term ‘jazz’ can be applied to improvised music. It also suggests that the perception of jazz is one of evolutionary art, which, by its intrinsic nature, finds new ways of reinventing itself.

It will be interesting to see to what extent intercultural improvisation will become an integral part of World music. For example, the last time I applied for Passion Fruit to perform at the World Music Festival in Sydney in 2002, I was amused when its artistic director expressed the concern that the music was too ‘jazzy’. Interestingly,
the same person was actually responsible for introducing my group on a previous occasion at the Harbourside Brasserie in Sydney; the event being a World music drumming festival.

There are elements of jazz in my intercultural compositions. For example, I use chords with extensions and alterations such as D minor 9 or G7♯5−9, chord progressions with moving bass lines and jazz scales such as the G altered scale: G, Ab, Bb, Cb, Db, Eb, F, G. This is evident in The Riddle, a work that combines jazz with Afro-Cuban and Indian influences. It is the culmination of my intercultural collaborations spanning a period from my first trip to India in 1984 to the recording of Travelling On by the group Australian Creole in 1993. This is discussed in the next Chapter.
4.4 The Riddle

I composed The Riddle in 1993 as a result of playing duets every week for two years with Keith Manning. The composition process began when I was tapping rhythms on the armrests of my seat on an aeroplane trip between Sydney and Brisbane. At the time I was focussing on developing repertoire for my first East-West experimental group, Australian Creole.²

Exploring rhythm is an intrinsic part of my approach to music performance. My rhythm guitar work has been described as having a percussion-like approach (see Appendix 1). Ralph Towner also explains the importance of feeling rhythm like a percussionist:

> In all the instruments, you have to be part drummer to play very well. It's important to have a percussion concept when you're playing. You have an internal rhythm that's going on a meter, ticking away inside. You're always making reference to that. The stronger you are with that, the more cohesive your playing is (Towner, 1985).³

This concept is particularly relevant to my playing, since syncopation forms a significant part of my rhythmic approach. The melodic lines in The Riddle are extended and rhythmically complex. I have to be able to apply cross-rhythms against the down-beat with ease and technical control without misplacing the first beat of each bar.

The melodies in The Riddle are a combination of Afro-Cuban and jazz-fusion lines and Indian style ti-hai, played in unison at the beginning and at the end of the tune. The jazz element is in the chord progression, where a combination of modal and quartal harmony – the 4th degree becomes intrinsic to the chord - is employed (see
Appendix 6).

There are two recorded versions of *The Riddle* on compact disc and each represents different stages of collaboration. In the first, with Australian Creole, I used a Roland GR1 guitar synthesiser. This involved finding a special pick-up to make the instrument work with the synthesizer. I selected the German-made *Shadow* pick-up. Roland engineering helped me modify the synthesizer's impedance to match the nylon string guitar rather than the steel-string it was designed for.

I experimented with sounds that gave the guitar sustain and attack similar to a Fender Rhodes electric piano. The improvisation occurred over the A drone where the guitar and the *tabla* set up an interaction reminiscent of the North Indian *jhala*, minus the customary *ti-hais*. In contrast to this, Craig Walters, a highly skilled *jazz* saxophonist, played his improvisation over the set of changes devised for the melody. The version released on the ABC trio recording, with Steve Hunter on bass and David Jones on drums employs the same chord progression. The different approaches allow both *jazz* and *non-jazz* musicians to choose their preferred style of improvising according to their traditions (please refer to the accompanying CD, tracks 8 & 9).

*The Riddle* is an exciting piece to play live, probably because of all the unison lines and the high level of energy required executing them. It is a popular request with my audiences and as a result, I have performed it for several years in a variety of settings, changing its mood and structure according to the type of collaboration.

Recently, I have written a new *ti-hai* to emphasise the Indian influence of the latest
incarnation of the group Passion Fruit.

*Ti-hai* for *The Riddle* (please listen to accompanying CD, track 11).

This work-in-progress is fundamental to collaboration and in developing new ideas on an old theme. This approach contributes to maintain a sense of freshness, vital in connecting with the piece and an audience.
4.5 A Meeting with Vishwa Mohan Bhatt

In September 1998 the director of the Australian Institute of Eastern Music in Sydney, David Walker, invited me to collaborate with Hindustani slide guitar player Vishwa Mohan Bhatt. The occasion was a collaborative concert for Carnivale, a Sydney-based arts cultural festival. Bhatt comes from the North-Indian city of Jaipur. He is internationally recognised as a master of the Hindustani slide-guitar.\(^1\) His work with Ry Cooder on the CD *A Meeting by the River* won a Grammy Award for Best World Music Release in 1993.\(^2\)

Before meeting Bhatt, I listened to the recording several times and learned some of the pieces. I envisaged that he might ask me to play some of the compositions from the CD, as he did. Our collaboration took place in September 1998 at the Erskineville Holy Trinity Anglican Church Hall in Sydney. The first project together included an informal style lecture and short performance where we talked about our instruments and approaches to music. We improvised over a melodic motif with *tabla* player Mahendra Chandra - on tour with Bhatt - providing the accompaniment. At the end we were pleased with our first musical meeting and felt enthusiastic about the forthcoming concert at the Basement in Sydney.

In examining our respective approaches, I sense an affinity with the work between Bhatt and Cooder. The interpretation of the chord cycle of D, G and A\(^7\) was at times as ambiguous as I had found to be when listening to the CD. This is first apparent during the third of the four choruses of the *alap* in the title track. The harmony is in the key of D major and includes the subdominant chord of G major and the dominant
A7. Here, Bhatt is phrasing over the A7 chord with Cooder playing that chord. However, the harmony becomes ambiguous when Bhatt strums the sympathetic strings of his veena, which are tuned to the tonic chord of D. Perhaps this is because Indian musicians do not normally practice improvisation over chord progressions. Their approach to improvisation is essentially modal and based on a fixed drone. This may be the reason for the harmonic ambiguity between Bhatt and Cooder, as described by Adrian McNeil:

Perhaps the most obvious point of dissimilarity between the playing of the two musicians is derived from the mostly harmonic organisation and structure underlying Cooder's approach as opposed to the fixed drone and melody of Bhatt's music culture (McNeil, 1995, p 92).  

The jazz critic for the Sydney Morning Herald, John Shand, made the following point about our concert at the Basement:

The rehearsed collaboration with Strazzullo began tentatively, slipping into an alternating sequence of solos. The second piece was notably stronger, as Strazzullo found ways to complement Bhatt' highly-charged and fairly self-sufficient approach. Now the dialogue became more interactive and seamless, the softer, rounder tone of Strazzullo's eight nylon strings blending beautifully with Bhatt's singing, metallic sound. Let us hope for a return encounter (Shand, 1999).  

I think the tentative approach was partly due to harmonic ambiguity and also to the fact that we had practically just met. The feeling was co-operative as we were finding common ground upon which to base our performance and to share the same with an expecting audience of 350 people. On a technical point, Bhatt and I were applying the alap section of the raga based on the melody of Meeting by the River. The melody is then treated in the same manner as the tala or rhythmic cycle (please refer to the accompanying CD, track 10). This is standard practice in Indian classical music performance. With the alap, the intention is to create a mood upon which to
draw the audience into the music. My Indian music teacher, Pandit Ashok Roy, often stressed the importance of maintaining a consistent mood or emotion throughout the improvisation, expanding and elaborating in order to create an hypnotic effect. Despite the occasional harmonic uncertainties between us, I think that we were focused on the music and willing to explore pathways together. I stayed positive and focused on listening. I abandoned myself into the music with a feeling that it was all going to ‘work out.’

Perhaps it is true that Bhatt has a ‘self-sufficient approach’ as Shand describes, but it also a fact that this is standard practice with all Indian classical musicians. Raga in usually performed in duo format with a percussionist with the addition of the tambura providing the tonic drone. Indian string instruments such as the sarod, sitar and Mohan-veena, developed by Mohan Bhatt, are built with resonating sympathetic strings and chikari strings to purposely aid the player to have a self-sufficient approach. I believe that a successful collaboration is primarily about embracing the creative process with a willingness to collaborate. I think that the observations that can be made concerning differences in rhythmic and harmonic concepts in this collaboration inform the discourse on performance practice. McNeil sums up this point in reference to the Bhatt/Cooder collaboration:

Perhaps more importantly (Bhatt and Cooder) have recourse to some common notions of aesthetics and ways of dealing with musical material at their disposal. The way in which these meeting points between the two cultures have been conceived and exploited also bestows some degree of integrity on the hybrid product that is produced (McNeil, p. 94).^5

This holds for me with my collaboration with V.M. Bhatt.
Notes 4.1 (Teena De Healer).

1. Intersection toured India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in January 1984 as part of an Australian Department of Foreign Affairs cultural exchange program between India and Australia. Personnel: Roger Frampton (leader, piano & saxophones); Guy Strazzullo (guitars & vocals); Steve Elphic (double-bass); Phil Treloar (drums). Organised by Peta Williams for Musica Viva.


4. ConSpiritOz: Funded in 2000 by Riley Lee (composer & shakuhachi); with Guy Strazzullo (composer, guitars & vocals); Matthew Doyle (didgeridoo & vocals); and Ian Clerworth (percussion).

5. The Wizards of Oz: Dale Barlow (leader, composer & saxophones); Guy Strazzullo (guitars, vocals & composer); Matthew Doyle (didgeridoo & vocals); and Calvin Welch (drums). This group toured the Republic of South Africa in 1997.

6. Adrian McNeil: sarod. McNeil performs on the 25-string sarod in Australia and India. He has achieved a high level of critical acclaim. He has a PhD in Ethnomusicology and has taught in music departments in Australia, India, Hong Kong and the U.S.

Notes 4.2 (Drum Drum).

1. I Can’t Stop Loving You: Composed in 1958 by Don Gibson. See www.cmawards.com

2. Bluegrass: A musical style from the Appalachian Mountains region of Southeast USA. Bluegrass, containing elements of country music and blues, was developed in the late 1940s by mandolinist Bill Monroe and his group: 'The Blue Grass Boys'. (Evans, T. & M. Guitars. Paddington Press, UK: LTD22240, 1979), p. 119-121.

3. Gat: fixed instrumental composition in any tempo accompanied by tabla. A gat can be in any tala (rhythmic cycle) and can be from 2 to 16 beats in length.


Notes 4.3 (Creology).

1. Stephen Cooney: This unlikely pairing of an Australian rock guitarist Stephen Cooney, and accordion player Seamus Begley is now recognised as one of the top acts in Irish music. Playing traditional dance music with a fire that is true to the tradition, and much appreciated by the dancers for whom the music exists. The duo specialise in the songs and dance music of the Cork/Kerry region, mixing the local polkas and slides with the more usual jigs, reels and hornpipes. The music is naturally full of vigour and energy. This pair is true to this essence, but bring their own style and innovations that have made their music very popular around the world. Internet site: www.ceolas.org/artists/Begley_and_Cooney.html


3. Fabian Hevia: drums & Latin percussion. Chilean born Hevia is one of the most in-demand
Latin-jazz percussionists in Australia. His collaborations include: Wanderlust; the catholics; Passion Fruit; and The Australian Art Orchestra.


**Notes 4.4 (The Riddle).**

1. Australian Creole was formed in 1993. Personnel: Guy Strazzullo (composer, classical guitar & classical guitar synthesizer); Craig Walters (tenor and soprano saxophones); Keith Manning (tabla & percussion).


**Notes 4.5 (A Meeting with Vishwa Mohan Bhatt).**

1. The Mohan Veena is a highly modified Concord archtop, which Bhatt plays lap-style. It has 19 strings: three melody strings and four drone strings coming off the peghead, and 12 sympathetic strings. The instrument has a carved top, mahogany back and sides, a mahogany neck, and a flat, fretless, rosewood fingerboard. Rick Turner, Dpt. Of Tourism, Art and Culture, Govt. of Rajasthan, January 1988.


5. CONCLUSION
5. CONCLUSION

The findings of my exegesis reveal an intuitive and emotive approach to composition and improvisation. I assert that interculturalism is a way of life, not an experiment. Even if the process is experimental in nature, the perception of the outcome must feel like there is tradition in what I hear and compose. My music implies a cinematic approach, where the aim is to create a perception of visual imagery that portrays places, people and emotions from deep experiences, as is the case with *Teena De Healer* and *Drum Drum*.

Reflecting on the outcomes of this writing, the most significant achievement is the collaborative process in itself. I have enjoyed great experiences and learned much by being able to share my music with the musicians mentioned in this paper; their invaluable contributions giving a sense of identity to the collaborative process. *Drum Drum* and *The Riddle*, played and recorded with David Jones and Steve Hunter, offer a unique contribution to acoustic jazz-fusion in Australia. This is due to the combination of nylon string guitar with an electric rhythm section, and the exploration and inclusion of Indian-like melodic-rhythmic phrases with Latin-jazz fusion over jazz chords. This virtuosic trio enjoyed widespread appeal, with 175 performances over two years throughout Australia. This collaboration was also extended to, and influenced, by Indonesian musicians Ade Rudiana and Yoyo Darsono in Bandung. Darsono’s *Beluk* singing style of West Java and his *rebab* (spike-fiddle) finding a voice within the drone based, open form composition, *Drum Drum*. While Rudiana’s *kendang* drum rhythms and David Jones’s percussive
approach to the drum-kit crossed-over to find a dialogue of improvisation between jazz and Indonesian drum fusion.

The recordings of *Teena De Healer* with Keith Manning, and Bobby Singh and Adrian McNeil explore the combination of modified guitars – 7-string guitar *vinas* by luthiers Peter Biffin and Martine Montassier - with Indian instruments such as the *sarod* and the *tabla*. My work-in-progress with Adrian McNeil demonstrates a unique and challenging collaboration that explores the techniques of plectrum strokes, intonation and melodic phrasing between the *sarod* and guitar *vina*.

The stage and the occasion for the collaborative encounter between Vishwa Mohan Bhatt and myself are perhaps the unique aspects of this collaboration. To my knowledge, this was the first time that an Indian guitar player had collaborated with an Australian guitarist. The workshop, given a day prior to the concert, gave us an opportunity to talk about our respective intercultural approaches. More specifically, Bhatt's traditional improvisation techniques of Hindustani music and my background in modal Latin-jazz improvisation and, central to the improvisation dialogue, my Indian music background. In retrospect, the main benefit of this collaboration for me was the fact that it exposed an identity crisis. During the concert I was dealing with a feeling of displaced identity because Bhatt's own identity is unquestionably Indian, and his guitar style, as described by John Shand: "self sufficient".¹

One of the main challenges for the intercultural musician is to create a tangible feeling of cultural belonging within the music, a sense of identity. This is what makes the indigenous and folk musics of the world compelling and integral to their
respective cultures and to global civilisation as a whole. My view is that the term intercultural improvisation, as opposed to the generic term ‘World music’ for example, more aptly describes an interactive process that is culturally non-discriminating. This accords with what I believe to be a respect for cultural identity in collaborative work. All music traditions evolve, and reflect the social and cultural position of their societies as Bruno Nettl explains:

> It is tempting to think of Western music as dynamic and all other music as static. We often hear about the “Stone Age” music of tribal peoples and the great age of the music of China and India. But all musics have a history and all of them change, though at various rates and not always in the same directions (Nettle, p. 7).  

While I am aware of the rich complexity of Australian Aboriginal music, it is not a direct influence on my music. As an Euro-Australian, my Italian cultural background may be defining for me, however the origins of my strongest musical influences are from different parts of the world other than Italy or Australia, where I choose to live. Because of these factors, I occasionally feel a sense of displaced identity. Perhaps this is the reason why defining cultural identity, by balancing the musical elements, is intrinsic to my approach. Even if interculturalism were not perceived as a hybrid manifestation of the traditions it draws on, it is the combination of consummate technical skills, imagination, personal identity and experiences of my collaborators and myself that ultimately propels the music into existence. Perhaps intercultural music is a global phenomenon that defies simple description.

Lastly, my research has shown that intercultural exploration forms a fertile zone for music improvisation and the development of both open and closed compositional forms. Our Australian musical landscape today depicts a diversity of musicians in the field of intercultural improvisation and World music. My music stands
alongside other composers and improvisers whose interests and passions explore the nexus between Western and non-Western music. This environment is central to my work for the realisation of new compositions and for exploring improvisation within the framework of intercultural collaborations.

NOTES


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**Articles**


**Music scores**

All notated music scores and examples handwritten by Guy Strazzullo © Guy Strazzullo.

**Unpublished material**


Shand, J. *A Meeting with Vishwa Mohan Bhatt; September 30 1998*. Shand is a freelance music critic for the Sydney Morning Herald.


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*Choro is a Brazilian*. Daniella Thompson daniv@jps.netsavethecircle.org/frevo.html
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Appendices
Another solo introduction, this time to *Teena De Healer* on seven-string guitar, was so compelling you could feel the listening palpably intensify. Strazzullo sustained this spell, then effected a startling, sitar-like solo over an open groove. On *The Riddle*, a labyrinthine staple that is still one of Strazzullo's best compositions, he showed what an exceptional rhythm guitarist he is, driving and colouring the music with the sensibilities of a fine percussionist.
Appendix 2

_Shakti_ (PC 34162)
_Handful of Beauty_ (PC 34372)
_Natural Elements_ (JC 34980)


*Remember Shakti*: interview excerpt by Anil Prasad

_Shakti, Handful of Beauty and Natural Elements_, the three albums that comprise the group’s ‘70s output. Those albums focused largely on short tracks, along with an occasional 10-to-15 minute mini-epic. In general, they featured a fiery blend of catchy acoustic pyrotechnics that showcased a youthful quartet determined to prove its mettle, as well as champion what was ostensibly a new genre of music. Something not attempted before the 1970’s. "I’m extremely proud of Shakti because prior to it, there was very little collaboration between North and South Indian musics," said McLaughlin. "Shakti played a role in the reunification of the North and South in the musical sense. Since Shakti, the collaborations between North and South have grown a thousand times. We now have very regular North-South meetings.

Interview dates: June 28-29, 1999
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Appendix 3

Table of modes and synthetic modes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Mode</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lydian</td>
<td>Mixolydian</td>
<td>Aeolian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logrian</td>
<td>Altered Dominant</td>
<td>Neapolitan Minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neapolitan Major</td>
<td>Oriental</td>
<td>Double Harmonic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enigmatic</td>
<td>Harmonic Minor</td>
<td>Hungarian Minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major Logrian</td>
<td>Lydian Minor</td>
<td>Lydian Dominant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lea Wholetone</td>
<td>Hungarian Major</td>
<td>Symmetrical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pentatonic Major</td>
<td>Pentatonic Minor</td>
<td>Minor Blues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symmetrical 1/2-step</td>
<td>Symmetrical 5/4-step</td>
<td>Suspended 2/4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4

Table of Hindustani scales with corresponding ragas and western modes

*that is the Hindustani word for scale

1. Kalyan / Lydian
   Raga Kalyan

2. Kamas / Mixolydian
   Raga Khamaj

3. Kafi / Dorian
   Raga Kafi

4. Asawari / Aeolian
   Raga Aswari

5. Bhairavi / Phrygian
   Raga Bhairavi

6. Bhairav / Double Harmonic
   Raga Bhairav

7. Purvi / Idiomatic
   Raga Purvi

8. Marwa / Lydian
   Raga Marwa

9. Todī / Idiomatic
   Raga Todī
Appendix 5

Guitar tunings and instruments

String 1 - tuned to: E
String 2 - tuned to: B
String 3 - tuned to: G or F#
String 4 - tuned to: D
String 5 - tuned to: A, G or B
String 6 - tuned to: E, E♭, D or C
String 7 - tuned to: B, B♭, A, or C
String 8 - tuned to: G, F, A or E

Instruments

1. 6 & 8-string hand-made classical by Pedrini, Milan, Italy.
2. 6-string classical guitar by K.Yairi, Japan - re-topped with a one hundred years old piece of German spruce by Jeff Kemp, Armidale N.S.W.
3. 6-string acoustic guitar hand-made by Teen Goh, Sydney.
4. 7-strings guitar vina conceived and reconstructed by Peter Biffin, Armidale N.S.W.
5. 6-string classical guitar by Giannini, Brazil - with Roland GR1 guitar synthesiser modified by Phase Engineering - Roland Australia.
6. Gopichand: single-string folk instrument from Bengal region in India.
7. 7-string Sonea classical guitar hand made by Martine Montassier- France.
Appendix 6

*Teena De Healer*

**guitar tuning**

```
\( \text{G} \)
\( \text{D} \)
\( \text{G} \)
\( \text{D} \)
\( \text{G} \)
\( \text{E} \)
```

**scales for improvisation**

```
\( \text{G Mixolydian} \)
```

```
\( \text{G idiomatic} \)
```

**rhythm pattern for percussion**

```
\( \frac{3}{4} 1 2 3 4 \)
```
Drum Drum

Performance notes

Chord on the 7-string

Chord on the 6-string

7-string tuning

6-string tuning

Rhythm section - guitar

Drone

Section - percussion rhythm sample

Section

Scale for the melody

Scales for improvisation

G blues

G Mixolydian

G blues
Creology

FOR 7-STRING GUITAR / VEENA (OR NYLON STRING) AND TABLA.

TUNING FOR GUITAR VEENA: G A D A D G B E

NYLON STRING: C D

SCALES FOR IMPROVISATION.
Credo
The Riddle, P.2

solo on changes or over A drone

This chord sequence is for the last solo only
Appendix 7

Compact Discs and Photographs

V.M. Bhatt & Guy Strazzullo

Photo by David Walker

After recording Teena De Hootier

Photo by Kevin Hunt

David Jonas Guy Strazzullo Steve Hunter

Photo by Mary Szenthal
Appendix 8

Reviews

"Australian Creole, led by guitarist Strazzullo, explore a wide musical terrain. Talk about world influences if you must, but this is simply wonderful music."

"Guy Strazzullo, one of those musicians who hear and accommodate everything that flows to them from other performers, is able to emulate the rising intensity of sitar-like improvisations."

"Sparks fly between his lightning guitar work and Manning’s light yet dense tabla playing. Guy Strazzullo has created compositions that allow all members to fly. The whole CD has been lovingly recorded. A gem. Travelling On, Australasian Jazz’n’ Blues. Vol.2 No 2. 1995.

"This is ravishing music...immediately striking is the sheer beauty of the sounds."
The Sydney Morning Herald – Passion Fruit CD 1996.

"Amazing technique; blindingly fast runs, peppered with exotic scales, pour from his six and eight string acoustic guitars. At times...the pace is simply torrid...but elsewhere...Strazzullo shows a deeply expressive and almost romantic strain."

"The influence of the Indian sitar tradition can be traced beside that of the European classical guitar, the combustive fire of Brazil and the explosive virtuosity of the likes of John McLaughlin and Egberto Gismonti."

"Guy Strazzullo is recognised as Australia’s leading exponent of the acoustic nylon string guitar. He’s certainly not short on technique, ideas and composition skills and his classical jazz tone, round and pure, puts him among the most captive voices in modern music."

"Strazzullo takes to the classical acoustic guitar and the virtuosity is dazzling...the three electric guitar tracks figure prominently...one in particular is the inventive reworking of John Coltrane’s Naima...the work captivates with the unexpected."
Appendix 9

Accompanying Compact Disc – track listing

Track 1. *Teena De Healer* 1
Guy Strazzullo, Pedrini 8 string classical guitar, P. Biffin guitar veena

Track 2. *Teena De Healer* 2
Guy Strazzullo, Sonea guitar veena
Adrian McNeil, *sarod*
Bobby Singh, *tabla*
Recorded at: Department of Contemporary Music Studies, Macquarie University, 2002.
* includes ti-hai No: 3.

Track 3 *Drum Drum* 1
Guy Strazzullo, Sonea guitar veena
Adrian McNeil, *sarod*
Bobby Singh, *tabla*
Recorded at: Department of Contemporary Music Studies, Macquarie University, 2002.

Track 4. *Drum Drum* 2
Guy Strazzullo, Pedrini 8 string classical guitar, vocals
Steve Hunter, electric bass
David Jones, drums

Track 5. *Drum Drum* 3
Guy Strazzullo, classical guitar
Yoyo Darsono, *rebab*, vocals
Steve Hunter, electric bass
Ade Ridiana, *kendang*
David Jones, drums

Track 6. *Creology* 1
Guy Strazzullo, Pedrini 8-string classical guitar, vocals
David Jones, Moroccan *darabuka* and drum kit.

Track 7. *Creology* 2
Guy Strazzullo, classical guitar,
Craig Walters, tenor saxophone
Keith Manning, *tabla*
Fabian Hevia, drum kit
*Passion Fruit* CD, Tall Poppies 106, 1996.

Track 8. *The Riddle* 1
Guy Strazzullo, Roland synthesizer attached to Giannini classical guitar, vocals
Craig Walters, tenor saxophone
Keith Manning, *tabla*
Track 9. *The Riddle* 2
Guy Strazzullo, classical guitar
Steve Hunter, electric bass
David Jones, drums

Track 10. *A Meeting with V.M.Bhatt*
Guy Strazzullo, Pedrini 8 string classical guitar
Vishwa Mohan Bhatt, *Mohan veena*
Mahendra Chander, *tabla*
Recorded on a Sony Walkman, Live at the Basement, Sydney, September 1998.

Track 11. *The Riddle - Ti-hai*
Guy Strazzullo, Sonea guitar veena

Track 12. *Teena De Healer*
Ti-hai No: 1.
Ti-hai No: 2.
Ti-hai No: 3.
Guy Strazzullo, Sonea guitar veena.
Glossary

alap: the first movement of a raga. The alap expresses and then unfolds the characteristics of the raga in respect to melody.

capo-tasto: mechanical device that can be clamped around the guitar neck to allow the player to maintain open string chord fingerings in a selected higher position.

chikari: raised drone strings found on the sarod and the sitar. They are plucked frequently to punctuate melodic phrases and provide rhythmic variety.

gopichand: also known as gopiyantra or khumak, the gopichand is a very popular folk instrument of Bengal. It is an instrument that is much used by the wandering minstrels known as the Baul. There are several variations on the construction. The length may be as small as one foot or as long as three feet, however 2-3 feet is the norm. It consists of a length of bamboo that is split through most of the length. The two ends are pried apart and attached to a resonator. This resonator may be a coconut, gourd, metal container or a hollowed out cylindrical section of wood. The open end of the resonator is covered with taught skin and a string penetrates the centre. This string is attached to a reinforced section in the centre. This string then passes through the hollow of the resonator and attaches to a tuning peg located in the bamboo. The sound of the gopichand is most distinctive. There is a peculiar bending of the pitch as the two legs of the bamboo are squeezed together by the left hand while the right hand plucks the string. This is a rhythmic instrument rather than a melodic instrument and it is used to accompany instruments such as the kartal, dotar or khol.

gat: normally follows the alap in a raga. It is a composition generally based on 8 and/or 16 beats cycle with one to three movements with varying tempos, from slow to fast. Notes from my lessons with Ashok Roy –1994, unpublished.

jhala: It was evolved by the Beenkar and Rababiya gharanas. During fast tempo gat, long tans (patterns for improvisation) are played with long ti-hais to finish the raga. My notes with Ashok Roy, unpublished 1994, Sydney.

khatka: a technique of hammering and pulling a string with any of the playing fingers, usually for the execution of trills between two or more notes.

kendang: a set double-headed hand drums from Indonesia.

khyal: modern vocal style of Indian classical music where the rich, delicately ornamented phrases have more importance than the lyrics of the text.

mizrab: plectrum.

Mohan veena: the Mohan Veena, named after its inventor V.M. Bhatt, is a highly modified Concord arch-top jazz guitar, which Bhatt plays lap-style. It has 19 strings: three melody strings and four drone strings coming off the peghead, and 12 sympathetic strings. The instrument has a carved top, mahogany back and sides, a mahogany neck, and a flat, fretless, rosewood fingerboard.

pandit: honorary name to describe a master Hindu musician. Ex. Pandit Ashok Roy.

prana: vital energy that can be drawn in by humans from the surrounding universe. It is sometimes translated as 'breath' or 'soul'.

quidda: principal of rhythmic permutations associated with tabla playing. It is found in improvisatory techniques in South East Asian music.

sa: the tonic of a scale or raga in Indian music.
sarangi: the sarangi is a North Indian bowed string instrument made of teak wood. Most often, this heavy-bodied instrument is used to accompany khyal or thumri singing.

sarod: a short-necked, unfretted, waist-shaped lute carved from a block of teak and covered with a skin belly. Its broad, triangular fingerboard is superimposed with a thin sheet of polished metal. Amjad Ali Khan’s instrument for example, carries eight main strings - four melody strings two drone strings, and two chikari strings (raised drone strings plucked frequently to punctuate melodic phrases and provide rhythmic variety) - and anything from eleven to fifteen sympathetic strings that are tuned to the scale of the raga in use and which vibrate when the corresponding pitch is sounded on the main string. The strings are plucked with a triangular plectrum often made from coconut shell, and are stopped with the fingernails of the other hand, which press the string down onto the metal fingerboard. Unhindered by frets, the player is able to slide along the string to produce the slides in pitch (meend) and other embellishments so characteristic of Indian music.

saudade: an expression used in Brazilian music. It describes something like sorrow combined with nostalgia, similar to the blues in North America.

sitar: North Indian string instrument played with a plectrum worn on the right hand index finger. It has seven strings and a number of resonating strings. The body is made of gourd and an additional gourd is found at the top, directly behind the neck.

raga: the melodic basis of Indian classical music on which the musicians improvise.

rehab: Indonesian string instrument played with a bow (spike-fiddle).

tabla: North-Indian hand percussion comprising two drums, the tabla and the baia (kettle drum).

tabla bols: rhythmic patterns for tabla.

tan: musical phrase sung on vowels, syllables, or words drawn out or stretched by expressive passages. Tans can be sung or played in any tempo. Tan varieties are determined by an added word, such as bol tan, jabra tan and so on.

ti-hai: a technique found in both North and South Indian music where all the players repeat a rhythmic melodic line in unison three or nine times usually in the fast gat section of the raga.

veena: this instrument of the lute family is played in both North and South India, though it is more popular in Carnatic music. The veena is fretted and has 7-strings plus resonating strings; one gourd on the underside at both ends of the neck.
An Intercultural Approach to Composition and Improvisation

Exegesis in Partial Fulfilment of Requirements for Master of Arts (Honours)

By Guy Strazzullo

School of Contemporary Arts
College of Arts, Education and Social Sciences
The University of Western Sydney

December 2003, Sydney, Australia
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Declaration

I, Guy Strazzullo, declare that this exegesis, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the award of Master of Arts with Honours, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. This document has not been submitted for qualification at any other academic institution.

Guy Strazzullo
PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning this thesis, and the best possible result has been obtained.
Acknowledgments

I would like to thank a number of individuals and organisations without whose help this exegesis would have been an impossible task to achieve.

Firstly, my gratitude goes to Pandit Ashok Roy for teaching me about raga. Extra special thanks to all the musicians that have played my compositions and contributed to my explorations in intercultural music: Keith Manning; Ashok Roy; Craig Walters; Fabian Hevia; Kevin Hunt; Sandy Evans; Steve Hunter; David Jones; Ade Rudiana; Yoyon Darsono; Vishwa Mohan Bhatt; Bobby Singh; Matthew Doyle; Riley Lee, Tunji Beier; Mark Atkings, Adrian McNeil; Hugh Fraser; Casey Greene; Michael Atherton; Debashish Brahmchari and Mahendra Chandra. Special thanks also to luthiers Angelo Gianni Pedrini, Jeff Kemp, Peter Biffin and Teen Goh, for their guitar building skills and advice.

The recordings mentioned in this dissertation were made possible with the support of Belinda Webster at Tall Poppies Records; the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) through Jim McCleod from ABC Classic FM; Nick Bron and Pat Sergo and all the staff at ABC Music; Eloise Nolan and staff at ABC Music Publishing. Special thanks to the Music Board of the Australia Council for the Arts in Sydney for recognising and supporting my intercultural work over the years and for awarding me the Music Fellowship in 2001-03, an honour that I hold in high esteem. Thanks to the Australian Performing Rights Association (APRA) for providing a small boost to intercultural music in this country by recognising my compositions Creology and Mandela with an APRA nomination and award respectively. Thanks also to the many radio stations in Australia for broadcasting the compositions discussed in this
dissertation. Many thanks also to David and Lis Walker from The Australian Institute of Eastern Music; Jane March and Peter Rechniewski from the Sydney Improvised Music Association; Lex Marinos, Paula Masselos and Justo Diaz from Carnivale Arts Festival; Martin Jackson from the Melbourne Improvised Music Association; Chris Richards at the Basement in Sydney; Michael Tortoni and Megan Evans at Melbourne’s Bennetts Lane; Adrian Jackson from the Wangaratta Jazz Festival and the Melbourne International Jazz Festival. Extra special thanks to my partner Lee Sullik and my sons Lucas and Raphael for their patient support through a challenging period in my life. Finally, I would like to extend my deepest thanks to Professor Michael Atherton from the University of Western Sydney for providing me with invaluable supervision during my Masters program. My thanks also to all the music staff at the University.
Abstract

Experiences as a composer and performer in Australia involve a number of significant collaborations with musicians from diverse cultures and musical backgrounds. The musical result incorporates a number of World music elements in the form of drones, rhythms and the use of instruments such as modified guitars and the tabla. But it is distinctly different in content and approach from the generic term, World music, because it deals almost exclusively with music traditions where improvisation is central to collaborative processes. The application of the term ‘intercultural improvisation’ is a more useful descriptor of the process in which musicians from diverse backgrounds cross the boundaries of their music and step into a zone of experimentation. This is explored through composition and improvisation that cross musical boundaries.
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