ACCORDION
EXPOSITION

Investigating the playing and learning of
advanced level concert accordion repertoire

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Abstract:

The accordion is a relatively young concert instrument that is moving into an exciting era of development. Technical advancements in production have led to the development of a new playing technique, a wider repertoire choice and the creation of many new works.

Most published articles and research books focus on the history of the accordion but are lacking in detail on the repertoire that has been composed for the instrument. The absence of this information has resulted in a current generation of music students, both performers and composers, being unaware of the potential of the accordion. This project investigates the concert-level accordion performer in Australia, rather than the beginner or intermediate-level performer, through a study of three young concert-level accordion students and through my own performances of concert-level repertoire. The exegesis discusses the relationship, in terms of accordion development, between the performer, educator and manufacturer; and the relationship between the manufacturer, performer and composer that emerges throughout the history of the modern instrument. I also draw my performance process into this discussion. In doing so I hope to inspire and educate fellow musicians/composers about this instrument.

The exegesis begins with a history of the accordion and other instruments in this family. Manufacturing developments will be examined as they relate to the development of playing technique and compositional styles, and the role of performers who have helped shape the accordion into the concert instrument that it is today, and have influenced its repertoire, will be discussed. Through analysis of my performances and recordings, as well as of the advanced repertoire workshopped for students, I aim to show a cross reference of styles, which illustrate many idiomatic playing techniques.

Finally, the three areas of the exegesis – the history of the instrument, my performance of advanced repertoire, and the findings from the study of three
young students working with advanced repertoire – are drawn together to state conclusions and recommendations regarding the development of a process of study on the accordion that is attainable within Australia, and how the level of accordion education in Australia could be improved. The recommendations include participation in overseas competitions and tours, participation in youth orchestras and developing the level of tertiary education offered in Australia. These recommendations can be based on pioneering work achieved overseas but adapted to the multicultural basis of Australian society.
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Most of all I would like to thank and dedicate this project to my partner Simon Wiseman and my parents, June and Alan Jones for their perspective and patience throughout this project.
Declaration

I certify that the work in this exegesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the exegesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and preparation of the exegesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the exegesis.

Candidate Signature:______________________________
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Outline of the project

This research project investigates the advanced level (rather than beginner or intermediate) accordion performer in Australia, through my own performances of concert-level repertoire as part of my research and professional development, and through an investigation of three young concert-level accordion students learning advanced-level concert accordion repertoire.

As a case study, I invited three advanced students from my music studio to participate in a study that focused on the pedagogical issues of advanced concert accordion repertoire. The students are of different ages and have had different kinds of music education.

1.2 Research aims of the project

The project, therefore, aims to examine my own performances of advanced-level concert accordion repertoire, focusing on the compositional and technical issues which confront performers at this level, and then examines the same questions in relation to the learning of young student concert accordion performers working with this repertoire level.

The project was conducted in Australia, where the role of the concert accordion has not been researched. New repertoire by Australian composers has had an impact on the development of the concert accordion in Australia, and therefore the project also aims to examine the composition and performance of this level of repertoire in Australia, comparing the relationship between instrument makers, performers, composers and repertoire with the recent history and development of
the concert accordion and its repertoire worldwide. These aims offer an opportunity to draw the two parts of the project together and make recommendations for the future of advanced concert accordion performing and repertoire in Australia.

In doing so, the project asks:

a) What are the compositional and technical issues inherent in advanced concert accordion repertoire and how can these be addressed by the performer;

b) How has the performance, composition and teaching of advanced concert accordion repertoire in Australia been influenced by the emerging role and the impact of new repertoire for the accordion worldwide;

c) How can the current generation of music students in Australia, both performers and composers, benefit from knowledge of the potential of the concert accordion;

The impetus for the project has come from my performance of advanced-level concert accordion repertoire and from my work as an educator of accordion in Australia. The three advanced-level concert accordion students were learning the accordion with me at the time of the study. Through their active involvement, a chart of progress and difficulties encountered has been created. This work is also highlighted in the chapter that discusses my work as a concert performer and the preparation involved in presenting a recital.

1.3 Definitions and terminology used in the study

The accordion is unique in regard to the expanse of terminology that is used. Performers, composers and manufactures are still to define specifications using the same terms. In this paper I will be using the following terms and spelling.

‘Concert accordion’ is the term applied throughout this paper for the instrument that combines both the standard bass and free bass systems for the left-hand
manual and either a button board or keyboard for the right-hand manual. The concert accordion has a repertoire that consists of original contemporary works and transcriptions of classical works.

**Accordion** can also be spelt many ways, including Accordeon, Akkordeon, and Accordian. These variations relate to the country of origin of the instrument. ‘Accordion’ will be used regardless of right-hand manual layout or left-hand manual layout. Where necessary, a specification will be used.

**Bayan** is a Russian term for the concert accordion that has a button board. There are typically in B system, with a bass system that runs from high to low notes. The Russian meaning of this word is ‘minstrel’ or ‘rhapsodist’ (Lips 2000).

**Concert accordion** will be used as a term for an instrument that has both free bass and standard bass for the left-hand manual and either button board or keyboard for right-hand manual.

**Free bass** is a term for the chromatic tones in the left-hand manual. It is also called classical accordion or converter accordion in some countries.

**Standard bass**, also know as Stradella bass, indicates that the layout of the left-hand manual has a fundamental bass combined with preset chordal buttons.

Although this definition list is given, for the purpose of this research project only the concert accordion will be discussed.

### 1.4 Shape of the project

In Chapter One, the aims of the project are outlined, research aims are discussed, and definitions and terminology are clarified.

Chapter Two follows the history of the accordion from its invention to the place it has on today’s concert platform. Included are the mechanical specifications, layouts of both manuals, and compositional techniques. This is important, as accordion terminology is yet to be mainstreamed even by the manufacturers.
This chapter will serve as a foundation of assumed knowledge for the investigation that follows. Description of other instruments in this family is given, drawing on existing literature. Pedagogical literature on the accordion is sparse. Some writers discuss the history of the instrument (Macerollo 1980; Maurer 1983; Charuhas 1955; Doktorski 1997), its construction (Macerollo 1980; Maurer 1983; Charuhas 1955), compositional techniques and style (Macerollo 1980; Lips 2000; Doktorski 1997) and repertoire listings (Macerollo 1980; Maurer 1990).

Pedagogically, Lips (2000) concentrates on technique and interpretation. Chapter Three focuses on the lack of research focused on the pedagogy of the accordion. A survey of advanced concert repertoire is introduced in this chapter to show compositional value and development of technique. Manufacturing developments are examined as they relate to the development of playing technique and compositional styles, as is the role of performers who have helped shape the accordion into the concert instrument that it is today.

My own performances of concert-level repertoire are analysed in Chapter Four. A journal that documented my arrival at program choice, practice strategies and technical/interpretive difficulties encountered was kept throughout this research project. Works that have not been performed in my recitals are also documented, as they contribute both compositional knowledge and repertoire knowledge. Collectively the works are of historical importance as they add to the growing number of compositions that exist for the concert accordion.

The case studies of three young Australian concert accordion students are described in Chapter Five.

Finally, the three areas of the exegesis — history of the instrument, my performance of advanced repertoire, and the findings from the study of three young students— are drawn together to produce conclusions and recommendations regarding the development of a process of study on the
accordion that is attainable within Australia, and how the level of accordion education in Australia could be improved.
CHAPTER TWO

THE CONCERT ACCORDION – THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERFORMER AND MANUFACTURER

2.1 History

This chapter traces the history of the accordion from its origins to the modern-day instrument. The impact that the relationship between performer and manufacturer has had on the development of the concert accordion is also discussed.

The concert accordion is an instrument that combines both the standard bass and free bass systems for the left-hand manual and either a button board or keyboard for the right-hand manual. In 1911, a Belgian introduced the free bass system through the use of the converter switch. It is from this date that one can trace the development of the concert accordion. Much of the history and development of the accordion is still debated today, but within this chapter there will be an outline of historical facts and dates, specifications of different models, and historical repertoire and performer details.

Part of the free-reed family, the accordion evolved from the *sheng*, a mouth organ from China originating around 2700 BC (Image 1). A variety of types of *sheng* existed, but normal construction consisted of a gourd (wind chamber) that supported 17\(^1\) bamboo pipes of various lengths, which were arranged in a circular pattern. In the late 18th century, approximately 5 centuries after the *sheng*’s introduction to European society, experimentation on the free reed began.

\(^{1}\) Bamboo pipes could vary in number from 8 to 26.
To see the development of the free reed into the accordion one must look towards Germany. In 1800 the *Eolodicon* was invented by Eschenbach of Hamburg. It was an instrument that was operated by the player’s arm pushing the bellows, allowing air to set the metal reeds into vibration. Schlimbach of Ohrdruff made a further development in 1816. His invention, the *Aeoline*, used a foot crank to operate the bellows. Buschmann used a combination of these two inventions in 1822 to develop the *Handaeoline*. In 1821 Buschmann also designed a mouth-blown instrument, the *Aura* (Image 2) that consisted of 15 reeds cut from a single piece of metal and fastened onto a piece of wood with chambers and blow holes.

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2 The principal instrument focused on during this time was the organ, with the majority of the work being carried out by organ builders.
In 1822 he placed leather bellows, closure pallets and a rudimentary key system onto the *Aura* and patented the instrument as the *Handaeoline* (Image 3).

This instrument served as the basis for the *Accordion*, as patented by the Austrian Cyril Demian in 1829. Demian’s *Accordion* (Image 4) was an improvement on Buschmann’s *Handaeoline* as a few fixed chords had been added in the left-hand manual. The principal idea of two diatonic mouth organs
fixed together by leather bellows remained the same. With the addition of the pre-fixed left-hand chords the name of the accordion came into being, derived from the German word for chord, *Akkord*. Although this was an important date for the history of the accordion, it was just the start of a long line of developments and achievements.³

Image 4: Accordion

Charles Wheatstone patented his invention, the *Concertina* (Image 5) in 1829, although he had invented the instrument in 1827. For the development of today’s concert accordion this is an important date. Unlike Demian’s accordion, Wheatstone’s concertina was operated by two separate button manuals that produced single tones.

³ For a more complete outline of the history of the accordion, see J. Macerollo, *Accordion Resource Manual*. 

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In 1852 the piano accordion keyboard was introduced by Bouton of Paris; it was developed into a three-octave piano keyboard by 1860. The first chromatic right-hand system appeared in 1900, and in 1901 the first 120 standard bass accordion with three extra rows of buttons arranged chromatically over a three-octave range was introduced in Vienna. This was taken one step further in 1911 by a Belgian who introduced a switch that could convert the last four chord rows of the standard bass into four rows of chromatically arranged tones over a four-octave range.

In the 1940s the American accordionist Galla-Rini perfected the mechanical setup of the left-hand mechanism that enabled the use of four octaves of “free” notes in the left hand.

The concert accordion is a combination of two bass systems, and the right-hand manual can have either buttons or keys. Predominantly the free bass system is used for contemporary art music repertoire and all transcriptions, but through a switch the standard bass is available. From the 1950s onwards the concert accordion was recognised as an instrument of great capabilities, but with a
repertoire that was limited to transcriptions of the music of composers such as Bach and Scarlatti, plus Russian folk tune-based arrangements and variations.

With the manufacturing improvements to the accordion, performers developed a high level of technique and began to search for repertoire outside folk-based music and arrangements of classical music. Transcriptions still proved a great source of developmental repertoire, but a need for original works led to many great performers seeking composers.

2.2 Specifications of the concert accordion

The family of the accordion is wide-ranging and can be broken down in the first instance to diatonic instruments and chromatic instruments. All the instruments within these two divisions are linked by the method of sound production: pressing a single button or key while operating the bellows and forcing air through steel and aluminium reeds produces sound.

The instruments can be further classified according to manual type and organisation of notes.

*Diatonic accordions*

Diatonic accordions are still manufactured today. They are principally used within folk music and have limited capabilities. Sound production is the same as for all accordions, but each button has two reeds, which means that one tone is played as the air is drawn in and a different tone is played as the air is drawn out. The bass is organised so that the melodic line will be playing over either a tonic or a dominant harmony.

Each country tends to have its own favourite variety, and many key combinations can be found, including G/C, C/F, D/G and B/C. The number of rows in the right-hand board can be from one to five, but the most common are one row and three rows. Concertinas and Bandoneons can also fall into the category of diatonic free–reed instrument.
Chromatic accordions

In terms of development, the chromatic accordion has seen many changes. The early ideas developed with the English concertina and the bandoneon, of producing a chromatic button row to allow for a greater range and freedom in harmony, were rapidly developed to suit the modern accordion. In a chromatic accordion the right-hand manual has one reed per button/keyboard so that the same tone is produced when air is either drawn in or out of the reed. The left-hand manual, which is also made up of buttons, also produces the same tone for each reed.

The chromatic accordion can have either a piano keyboard or button board for the right-hand manual; the left-hand manual can have standard bass, free bass or a combination of both bass systems.

Standard bass accordions

This is the most common bass system available. Although it is produced in many different sizes, from 8 bass models through to 120 bass models, all standard bass systems work on the same layout. For purposes of explanation I will use the 120 bass model as the guideline. All standard bass accordions feature six bass rows (Image 6). Two rows produce a single fixed tone, and rows 3–6 produce pre-fixed chord combinations. Row 3 is a pre-fixed major chord, row 4 is a pre-fixed minor chord, row 5 is a pre-fixed dominant seventh chord and row 6 is a pre-fixed diminished chord.

By ‘pre-fixed’ I mean that the pitch and inversion of the chord cannot be changed or altered in any way. The bass rows are placed in order of the cycle of fifths, with the fundamental row (row 2) as the guide. The counter-bass row (row 1) is a major third above the fundamental. Some models can feature slight variations, such as three rows of single tones with row 1 being a minor counter-bass (i.e. a minor third above the fundamental), row 2 being a major fundamental (i.e. a major third above the fundamental) and row 3 being the fundamental. In this
situation the diminished row is abolished. On the smaller models many different combinations can exist, with either counter-bass rows or the diminished and dominant seventh chords being omitted.

In the publication of music there is no standardisation yet. Music that is printed in America/Canada, Germany, Italy and Russia can vary in the use of the bass staff and chord symbols. Generally music published in Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom will follow the layout used by American publishers. In general, music published in America will set the fundamental notes and counter-bass notes below the middle line, with the chordal rows printed above the middle line. An M will signify major chord, m = minor chord, 7 = seventh chord and d = diminished chord. Often music published in Germany or Italy will follow the above rule for the fundamental bass and counter-basses, while the chord will be written in full, with or without the chord symbol. In Russia the symbols used to denote chord structure will appear on top of the written out chord: (B) = Major, M = minor, 7 = dominant seventh and y = diminished.
The standard bass accordion is available in both piano keyboard and button keyboard.

*Free bass accordion*

As the name implies, this type of bass system frees the left hand from pre-fixed chordal rows and pre-fixed single tones (Image 7).
The free bass accordion too can be produced in many different models. To explain the differences in the bass system as opposed to the standard bass system I shall concentrate on the standard layout of a chromatic free bass as found on a convertor accordion.

In a convertor accordion the player has a main switch to change the bass system from the pre-set chordal rows into single chromatic tones. Usually the four chordal rows will convert, although on some older models only rows 4–6 will
convert. Each bass button will become a single tone note, thus expanding the range of the accordion onto a par with a piano.

**Concert accordion**

The concert accordion (Image 8) is an instrument that has a combination of the standard bass system and the free bass system, and a right-hand manual that is either piano keyboard or button board. When the concert accordion is manufactured with a right-hand button board it is called a bayan. The right-hand manual consists of 106 buttons that produce 64 notes, and the left-hand bass manual has 120 standard basses and, by use of a converter, 58 free basses.

Image 8

The different free reed instruments discussed above all play an important role in the development of the accordion. All types of bass systems and right-hand manual boards are manufactured and performed upon today. The type of accordion performed on can be seen as being country specific, but not exclusive. In Australia, New Zealand and America the standard bass piano accordion is the most popular instrument. The button accordion is more popular in Europe,
particularly the Balkan countries and Scandinavia, while in Germany, for example, the piano accordion is more popular. Diatonic and chromatic accordions are both manufactured, with the diatonic instrument being popular within folk traditions and the chromatic accordion being popular with education institutions, composers and beginner students.

Accordion manufacturers are producing all varieties of accordion. Each type of accordion has a specific repertoire that is suitable for its configuration. The diatonic accordion is predominantly used by folk performers playing a traditional/folk repertoire; the standard bass accordion is predominantly used by entertainers; the concert accordion is used by concert artists performing transcriptions and original contemporary repertoire. Repertoire can be used across the board by the use of arrangements, and today’s concert artists often change from piano accordion instruments to button board instruments and the bandoneon to reflect repertoire choice.

2.3 The performer–manufacturer relationship

The development of the accordion has always been closely linked to the performer, the manufacturer and (more recently) tertiary institutions. In the overview diagram (see Diagram 1) this relationship is illustrated.
An important relationship in the development of the concert accordion has been the constant interaction between manufacturers, performers and composers. One of the earliest examples of such collaboration for the concert accordion is the Danish accordionist Mogens Ellegaard (1936–96) and the Jupiter Bayan factory in Russia. Ellegaard had a traditional education on the accordion, meaning he commenced his studies on a standard bass accordion playing traditional/ethnic music, music of the Italo/American composers Diero and Frosini, and arrangements of classical works such as overtures to operas and organ works.

In the 1950s he heard, for the first time, a free bass accordion, and he ordered one from a factory in Germany. At this stage, Ellegaard played a 9 row instrument that had three rows of free bass arranged near the bellows and 6 rows of standard bass further from the bellows. He took the development further on a trip into Russia, where the accordionists played a bayan with a B system right-hand manual. Ellegaard was so impressed with this instrument that he asked the technicians at the Jupiter accordion factory to make one for him. As
many accordion players in the west do, Ellegaard had been playing a C system accordion with low notes at the top of both manuals. The factory complied with his wishes. The influence of Ellegaard’s playing was so great that soon all the producers in Italy and Germany changed to 6 row bayans with converter systems.

Ellegaard continued his work on advancing the manufacturing of the concert accordion with Pigini accordions, based in Castelfidardo, Italy. One of his final collaborations resulted in the production of the Mythos Bayan.

The performer, manufacturer and pedagogy relationship

The highest level of the manufacturer’s impact on education can be seen in the relationship of the Jupiter factory and the Russian music education system. By comparative narrative the differences in the foundations of the education system in Russia and Germany can be seen. The history of the development of the Jupiter factory is also important, because its foundations were government based:

Jupiter Ltd. was founded in April of 1994 as a successor of Moscow Experimental Musical Instruments Factory (MEMIF) by a group of famous bayan masters, who worked at MEMIF (M.V. Platonov, E.I. Gusarov, V.A. Chekanov, M.N. Rybin and others) and with the support of Russian Musical Masters Association (RMMA) and A.K. Ginzburg.⁴

The following quotation from Dr Henry Doktorski explains the impact the Russians had on accordion manufacturing:

In my opinion, few nations have done as much to raise the standard of the accordion as the Russians. It was in Petersburg in the mid-1700s where Johann

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Wilde popularized the sheng by playing it for the Court Society. It was in Petersburg from the 1770s to the 1790s where Kratzenstein, Kirsnik, and Vogler were inspired to build the first free-reed instruments. It was in Tula where mass production of accordions began in the 1830s. It was in Vyatskaya in the 1840s where the first double-action accordion was built. It was in Tula where the first chromatic three-row button accordion was built in 1870 by the Russian musician N.I. Beloborodov. It was in Kiev where the first conservatory program in bayan was established in 1927. It was in the U.S.S.R. where the first two concerti for bayan were written in 1937 by Rubtsov and Sotnikov.5

Performers who are closely linked to the Russian manufacturer Jupiter include Mogens Ellegaard, Friedrich Lips, Vladislav Zolotaryov, Elsbeth Moser and Wjatscheslaw Semjonow.

The examples discussed above show how crucial the relationship between performer, educator and manufacturer has been to the technical and historical development of the accordion. The history of the accordion is affected by the relationship between the performer and manufacturer. Manufacturing in turn is affected by the performer and the compositional requirements of composers. In turn the composer–performer relationship develops repertoire and curriculum, which then develops academia and pedagogical studies. Ellegaard’s relationship with the Jupiter Bayan factory and the Pigini factory shows how the manufacturer and performer can develop an instrument that is capable of performing both concert repertoire and contemporary folk repertoire, and thus encourage other manufacturers to follow suit. There are other such relationship, including: Peter Soave (USA) and the Bandoneon for the Pigini factory; Richard Galliano (France) and the Victoria factory; and Frederic Deschamps (France) and the Hohner factory.

5 http://ksanti.net/free-reed/history/bayan.html retrieved on 22/12/2006
CHAPTER 3

PEDAGOGICAL MATERIAL AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERFORMER, COMPOSER AND TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

This chapter begins by discussing the limited literature that relates to the pedagogical issues faced by performers and educators, then discusses the achievements of high-profile accordionists. The accordionists discussed are all pioneers in their fields and have influenced the younger generation of accordionists. The impact of these pioneers is reflected in my own work in Australia.

3.1 Pedagogical literature on the accordion


Joseph Macerollo (1944–) is a Canadian accordionist who successfully established an accordion department at the University of Toronto and gained recognition on the concert platform. He has been an active campaigner for the concert accordion and its acceptance into tertiary institutions and the concert platform, and has encouraged Canadian composers to write for the accordion. During his most productive years, mainly between 1968 and 1975, Macerollo encouraged each Canadian composer to write a set of pieces to stimulate the university’s students both technically and musically. His involvement in encouraging composers has led to Canada contributing the most extensive list of easy to moderate difficulty accordion pieces. Currently a void is being created in
this area, as many performers are commissioning high-level concert works for their own performances. This has a significant impact when nurturing young talent. The complete list of these works, with detailed annotations to describe level of difficulty, style, technical and musical challenges, has been compiled by Peggy MacInnis and serves as a valuable source of material for developing the young accordionist. For further detail on Joseph Macerollo and his works, see section 3.2.

3.2 The relationship between performer, composer and academy

With the final version of the concert accordion came an extension of the triangle of interaction between manufacturer, performer and composer: tertiary institutions. One example of this interaction can be followed through Joseph Macerollo’s pioneering of accordion education in Canada.

Many articles published on Macerollo include this famous quotation:

I walk onto the concert stage holding an Accordion:
Strike one against me.
For over an hour I perform contemporary works:
Strike two against me.
Time and time again I face this challenge with fierce determination,
Seeking at least a base hit each time.\(^6\)

Macerollo’s background is similar to that of many other accordionists. He commenced studies on the accordion with a traditional conservative education that steered him towards leading his own combo for weddings and functions – at the age of eleven. In 1965 he graduated from the University of Toronto with a bachelor’s degree in musicology, not performance, as the accordion was not a recognised instrument. During his time as a student he performed once on the accordion. As a result of that solo recital he was asked to teach accordion at the

Conservatory Summer School. He accepted his first teaching post and started teaching there in 1967, with six young students.

Macerollo has a Master of Arts in musicology, has recorded numerous works, has commissioned works, and developed the first free bass syllabus for the Royal Conservatory. He has pioneered the acceptance of the accordion at Queen's University, Kingston, Canada and the University of Toronto and worked with other pioneers to see the accordion accepted at numerous tertiary institutions.

In January 2001 I spent three weeks with Joseph Macerollo in Canada through an Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust grant. During these three weeks I conducted a video interview and had numerous discussions with Joseph. An area that we shared equal enthusiasm for was the accordion and the music education system. How do you tackle placing the accordion into the education system? For Joseph there are many ways to approach this problem, and he used different approaches:

- Go outside the accordion arena – through the body of accordionists many problems are created due to conflicting ideas, such as the “ideal accordion”;

- Participate in as many boards as is possible. Act as a volunteer, that is do the “donkey work” – administration, phone calls, behind the scenes work that many do not want to do. This way one can build up a favour bank. This is a long-term plan as favours can be called in when respect is earnt;

- Aim to have the accordion as an applied major. That is the qualification that will allow accordionists to become teachers in the school system, [to work in the] recording industry, management etc. Why? There is not enough work to be a private accordion teacher or performer. This is for the exceptional few. A new image becomes created for the accordion – one which has respect for both school and tertiary aged students;

- Always follow what you believe is correct, with minimum compromise.
The above points create a network of people who can encourage the growth and popularity of the accordion through promotional work that develops a level of acceptance for the accordion within tertiary institutions and performance venues. The other way is to approach the problem the European way. This would not have worked in Canada. It involves a direct “in your face” approach. Collaborate only with top composers of worldwide reputation to compose, and be rigid in your view of what type of instrument should be played. Many European conservatoires have a solid base of students to call on.

The starting point for the development of the accordion department at the University of Toronto involved both performers and composers, with the establishment of a local music repertoire for beginners, intermediate and advanced. The result was a series of books published through Waterloo music: *Studies in a 20th Century Idiom: A collection of works by 12 composers*. Each book studies a different compositional technique: rhythm, tone, tonality, bitonality and modal. The end result is that the student has advanced knowledge. The series of works formed the basis of the examination syllabus offered by the Royal Conservatory of Music, Toronto. The syllabus started as free bass only, but now has standard bass pieces available up to Grade 5. This work took place prior to there being a group of students to enter these examinations. The academics were pleased to see educational material that concentrated on specific compositional techniques.

The accordion is offered at the University of Toronto as part of the Bachelor of Music and Master of Music. For the Bachelor of Music (Performance) there is academic coursework plus recitals of varying length. For the accordionist there is a concentration on chamber music and interaction with other instrumentalists. The initiative is usually taken by the accordionist to form the group.

Russia has recognised the accordion as a major instrument in tertiary institutions for over 50 years. Cultural history and traditional heritage have played a large part in the acceptance of the accordion. In this excerpt from a website authored
by Dr Henry Doktorski, and contributed by Schmuelling, the Russian schooling can be fully realised:

The degree of respect accorded to the bayan by Soviet composers and audiences is, to a large extent, unheard of in the West. Why have the Soviets had such great success in elevating the bayan from a crude folk instrument to a respected concert instrument, when, throughout most of the Western world, there has been much prejudice toward the instrument among classical musicians and listeners? Part of the answer, I believe, has to do with the Soviet educational system, and the other part has to do with Soviet ideology and culture …

In my opinion, the other important factor in the acceptance and development of the bayan in the Soviet Union was the widespread appreciation of folk music. Folk music was not considered inferior to serious art music just because it developed from peasant society. Marxist philosophy, at least in its pure form, demands utmost respect for working class people and their traditions, and the Soviet government decided to support native folk music culture to help establish a national identity. In fact, the bayan was specifically promoted as the preferred instrument of choice for village social functions such as weddings and dances; the piano, harmonium, organ (as well as the piano accordion) were considered too bourgeois, too Western.

In fact, the bayan was regarded so highly by the Soviet government that the Jupiter bayan factory in Moscow was established as an experimental department of the Red Army, and therefore was well funded.

Both classical music and folk music were equally respected by all classes of society, from high-positioned party administrators to factory workers. This was not simply communist propaganda; in the USSR the accordion never had the poor reputation that it had in the West.

http://ksanti.net/free-reed/history/bayan.html retrieved on 20/12/2006
Schmuelling continued:

The [Soviet] accordion players are concerned with the tradition of their instrument, but also with developing their playing slowly and steadily to an art form without forgetting that their instrument is at heart a folk instrument. In Germany, however, the art of accordion playing developed in a very different way. There was a certain period of time when there was a planned and desired break from the traditional folk music and since that point one differentiates between the artistically less valuable folk music and the artistically higher and important concert music, that is, the so called ‘new music.’ And because of this there are different groups who oppose each other with confrontation, discussion and disagreement. And so, in Germany, so much energy has been spent differentiating between folk music and concert music, while in the Soviet Union there is no differentiating between folk music and art music. Therefore, the Soviets can put their energies in one direction.

Mogens Ellegaard, through collaboration with manufacturers, composers and academics, shaped the music education of accordionists in Denmark, and had great influence on accordionists in the other Scandinavian countries and Europe. In 1958 Ellagaard performed Diero’s Concerto in D. By chance the young Danish composer and conductor Ole Schmidt was in the audience, and at the conclusion of the concert Ellegaard asked Schmidt if he liked the work. Schmidt was unimpressed with the work, but impressed with Ellegaard’s skill and technical ability. The end result of the challenge was the first major contemporary work and first concerto for the concert accordion – Symphonic Fantasy and Allegro (Op. 20) for accordion and orchestra.

For Ellegaard, Schmidt’s Symphonic Fantasy and Allegro was:

an important break for me personally and also for our instrument. It opened doors … to our instrument which had been closed until then. I premiered it with the Danish Radio Symphony. Until then, their music department had never even considered the accordion. It was very favorably received by the critics, by the musicians, by the music department and it was re-broadcast several times. Other symphony orchestras were curious and wanted to do it … and Ole Schmidt, being
also a promising young conductor, easily organized performances of this work. So we played it many times, during the next few years, with practically all of our orchestras in Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

This initial collaboration led to more works by Schmidt: Toccata No. 1 Op. 24, Toccata No. 2 Op. 28, a suite of four solo pieces, and a second concerto for accordion and orchestra. These works were completed by 1964 and all were highly successful. The collaboration between Schmidt and Ellegaard resulted in a library of works composed for Ellegaard by other Scandinavian composers, including Per Norgaard, Arne Nordheim, Torborjn Lundquist, Ib Norholm, Niels Viggo Bentzon, Vagn Holmboe, Bent Lorentzen, Steen Pade, Leif Kayser and many others. In fact most works from Scandinavia are written for, or dedicated to, Mogens Ellegaard, a tribute to his continual desire to see music composed for the concert accordion.

During this time, in the mid-1960s, Ellegaard worked with Lars Holm and established the Malmö Accordion Studio in Sweden. The studio specialised in teaching the free bass accordion to children; this was unlike the traditional method, which was to focus on the standard bass accordion. Not enough teachers who understood the free bass accordion could be found, which led to Ellegaard campaigning for the acceptance of the accordion at Danish conservatories. In 1970 he formed the accordion department at the Royal Danish Academy of Music in Copenhagen. Ellegaard’s name is also connected with the establishing of accordion classes at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, the Conservatoire in Oslo, and the University for Music and Theatre in Graz, Austria.

Ellegaard has acted as mentor and teacher for many aspiring concert accordionists. His work at the Royal Danish Academy of Music is being continued by two of his protégées, James Crabb and Geir Draugsvoll. Both of these accordionists have collaborated with Scandanavian composers in works

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8 Lips, F. *In Memory of Mogens Ellegaard.*
that continually increase demands on the performer. Aside from successful teaching careers, both Crabb and Draugsvoll are in demand as performers. Many new works have been premiered on the international platform by these two performers.⁹

Without the connection between performer, composer and manufacturer the establishment of these accordion departments would not have been possible. The beginnings of a contemporary concert repertoire by today’s composers also helped in the growth in the number of tertiary institutions that offer accordion studies.

Accordion pioneers have existed around the world, and through collaboration with composers they have lifted the image of the accordion to that of a serious instrument. The listing below shows only some of the institutions that accordion pioneers, along with manufacturers, have helped set up:

- Hohner Accordions and the Hohner Conservatory in Trossingen, Germany;
- Owen Murray and the Royal Academy of Music, London;
- Matti Rantanen and the Sibelius Academy, Helsinki Finland; and
- Max Bonnay and the Conservatoire de Paris.

3.3 A personal narrative on the relationship between performer, composer and tertiary institutions in Australia

The relationship between performer, composer and tertiary institutions can also be seen in the concert accordion achievements in Australia. By using an autobiographical narrative and analysis, I aim to “not only contribute to the knowledge of how music educators work, but also provide music teachers with

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⁹ Including Saga Night by Svend Aaquist, Midsommer Adventures by Staffan Mosseenmark, and Aprilis by Steen Pade.
methodological tools to learn more about their teaching" (deVries 2000: 177). By analysing my own concert accordion performing and learning (in Chapter 4), and my own history with the instrument, I may add to knowledge which could help young concert accordionists in Australia learn more about their future path of learning. In doing so, I can also suggest how institutions can achieve their ambitions in relation to the concert accordion and address pedagogical issues that arise.

One experience that many professional concert accordionists share is their initial learning stages. Predominantly, lessons are commenced on standard bass accordions, with folk music and classical arrangements being the repertoire of choice. Personal video footage of an interview with Joseph Macerollo (Canada), and material on Mogens Ellegaard (Denmark) obtained through discussions with colleagues, confirm that for both, the initial process was learning the standard bass accordion by playing folk music.

In my case I wanted to learn the accordion from a young age – my aunt was an accordionist who performed regularly on the international club circuit, and at the time of my birth she was living with my parents. My earliest musical exposure was to the accordion in its traditional form. Lessons commenced at the age of 5 on a small 12-bass Hungarian accordion with a teacher of German origin. I learnt to play the standard bass accordion through music of the accordion greats from the 1920s onwards until I was fluent in all styles of traditional ‘oom pa pa’ music.

At the age of 9 my teacher introduced me to the free bass accordion, and a whole new world of music opened its doors. I was able to play music of the baroque and early classical periods in its original form. No more bad arrangements, just transcriptions. At the same time, original contemporary accordion repertoire became possible, and music was sought from overseas.

Through the Accordion Society of Australia (ASA) I was competing with accordionists from interstate and overseas and had great experiences meeting overseas performers. One year Professor Owen Murray from the Royal Academy
of Music in London attended an ASA festival. He was encouraging in all his comments, but remarked on the bad use of transcriptions and a lack of understanding of contemporary accordion notation. It was suggested to my parents that I study with him in London. At the time I wanted to pursue undergraduate studies in Australia. I had already commenced a Bachelor of Music at Sydney University on accordion. At the conclusion of this degree, I embarked on the Advanced Postgraduate Performance course at the Royal Academy of Music, London.

This background shows how I commenced tertiary-level studies in Australia. At a young age I was sitting for examinations: these were held by the ASA until the Australian Music Examination Board (AMEB) accepted the accordion in 1990. The AMEB is a national body that provides graded assessments of musical achievements across a broad range of musical instruments. I delayed my diploma exam until that year as I was part of the committee who helped bring the accordion into the AMEB exam syllabus. To study at tertiary level was difficult. I applied to all universities who offered music degrees and was determined to study for a performance degree on accordion. I found that the University of New South Wales would accept me for music education, the Conservatorium of Music would accept accordion as a second instrument with piano as my major, but Sydney University would accept me on accordion, although as one of my audition panel said, “with no more of that traditional Russian contemporary music”.

In 2003 I was asked to review the AMEB accordion syllabus, and in 2005 to establish the accordion studies for a Bachelor of Music (classical performance) at the Australian Institute of Music. Prior to the AMEB introducing an accordion syllabus, the only examination system offered by an Australian organisation was the Stradella (Standard) Bass and Classical (Free Bass) Accordion exams of the ASA.

The AMEB accordion syllabus is offered under two instrument classifications: stradella accordion and free bass accordion. Both of these syllabuses were
based on the piano examinations offered by the AMEB and repertoire listed within the ASA syllabus. Although extensive research was undertaken by the then specialists from different states around Australia, I believe it falls short.

The first component of the examination, the technical work, follows the format of the old piano syllabus. Scale requirements generally fall above the range and technical capabilities of young accordionists and an assumption is made that all candidates will be performing on a piano keyboard with at least 60 basses. This starts the young accordionist on a bad developmental track straight away. Repertoire choice is dated, and many of the publications are no longer available for purchase. To work from this basis to develop a concert accordionist is difficult.

The advanced grades are designed to be performance diplomas. An advanced concert accordion performer should be fluent on both bass systems – the standard bass and the free bass – yet in the AMEB syllabus the performer does not require knowledge of both.

In 2003, when I was asked to review the syllabus, I approached the project by first changing the requirements of the technical component of the exam to a more realistic level. Some important changes were decreasing of octaves for the scales, delaying the introduction of scales for the left hand and delaying the introduction of hands together scales. These points are important, as the size of hand and size of instrument in regard to range and bellow folds affect the octaves playable and the control of the bellows.

As the new AMEB syllabus is yet to be implemented, there are still cases of technical work being unable to be performed by a student today. A case in example is a current 13-year-old student preparing for Grade 6 standard bass. Two of the scales listed in the current requirements are beyond the limits of a 96 bass accordion. As the student in question is of a small physical build, changing to a 120 bass accordion is not an option. This means that the technical requirements will not be presented to the level requested.
Repertoire proved to be a more difficult area. Exposure to current compositions for accordion has been limited for students and teachers in Australia. To completely change the repertoire listing would well have resulted in a lack of interest and understanding by teachers. Many teachers are only familiar with works that they have performed or taught in the past, and adding modern repertoire would mean using different notation, particularly of Russian publications, which would need to be studied. So repertoire from the past syllabuses that are still in publication had to be included. Selection of the new repertoire commenced, following certain guidelines, particularly relating to availability and ease of purchase. Many of the new compositions can be purchased online in downloadable pdf format or through online publishing houses with secure internet purchase facilities.

The lists in the AMEB syllabus also set parameters: List A Technical/Baroque, List B Classical, List C Romantic, List D Contemporary. Flexibility within these constraints is important for the accordion syllabus, as List A, List B and List C are governed by suitability of arrangement or transcription. For this reason works of a traditional/folk nature that incorporate stylistic features of the different music periods listed may be included. Capturing the imagination of the young student and exposing the student to a broad range of musical styles was also a guiding parameter. Level 1 and Level 2 of the AMEB standard bass syllabus was subjected to publishing searches to begin with. All music listed within the current syllabus needed to be in print and available for purchase. Works that were no longer in print were deleted from the syllabus, and works that could still be purchased remained in the syllabus. From this working model I searched available online music, focusing especially on downloadable pdf files. Transcriptions and original contemporary accordion music form the basis of the free bass syllabus; there were also parameters relating to suitability of transcription and exposure to a variety of styles.

The major change I undertook was to merge the standard bass and free bass diploma syllabuses. As the AMusA (Associate of Music, Australia) and the
LMusA (Licentiate of Music, Australia) are both performance diplomas, I felt that students should have knowledge of both bass systems. The combining of the two syllabuses allowed me to list transcriptions only of classical works, and to list more of the advanced concert accordion material. As many students in Australia only play standard bass accordion I did have to modify my original repertoire choices to include a minimum of one work for standard bass in each list. This involved searching for suitable arrangements of baroque, classical and romantic works that could be performed on standard bass only, and searching for contemporary music that could be performed also only on standard bass. For students who perform on both bass systems the repertoire choice was less problematic, and repertoire was chosen for suitability and the ability for correct interpretation of style.

I feel that the changes will help direct the education of the young accordionist starting out towards a professional career, but I feel it still falls short in regard to educating the already established teacher. Workshops on changes of technique, notational devices and compositional techniques should be held to inform the advanced player, teacher and examiner of changes.

The new millennium has seen an increased interest in concert accordion studies. While the University of Western Sydney (UWS) has accepted accordion since 1994, the conservatorium model music institutions are also now accepting concert accordion. UWS offers a Bachelor of Arts (Music) degree where students can present on concert accordion. It is the students’ responsibility to organise their own external teacher for the instrument of their choice, which can limit the development of some of the students.

The Australian Institute of Music (AIM) commenced offering accordion studies in 2005 within their Bachelor of Music (Classical Performance) degree. At AIM the students enrol with the classical department and are assigned a teacher. The coursework for the student consists of 13 one hour private tutorials per trimester on their instrument, a 2 hour chamber class per week, and weekly participation at
masterclass and performance practice. Also included are history, theory, aural work, etc. As the number of students studying on accordion is currently low, accordionists are included in the piano masterclass. When designing the coursework for this institution I set a reasonably high entry level, which can be on standard bass only.

Students who study at AIM must commence learning free bass accordion. Many of the accordionists who apply have only studied standard bass accordion and are often fluent on arrangements of classical music and traditional/folk music, but have a desire to learn more. The free bass accordion allows them to study transcriptions and original contemporary accordion compositions. When accordion studies at AIM were first discussed, two departments were to be established: one in the classical degree and the other in the contemporary degree. At the moment only the classical degree exists. I am currently in discussions with the University of Sydney’s Conservatorium of Music to establish accordion studies. Initially this will be at a postgraduate level, with undergraduate to take place at a later date.

The development of accordion studies at AIM would not have been possible if the Dean, Dr Raffaele Marcellino, had not composed an opera including the accordion. *Midnite* was composed for the OzOpera production series, and I met with the composer both prior to performances and after the performances. The result was the establishment of accordion studies at AIM.

Ideally, Australian institutions should base their accordion studies on models provided by the Royal Danish Conservatory of Music, Denmark or Graz University, Austria. Both of these institutions offer accordion studies within their classical department and students are required to study both the standard bass and free bass with a high emphasis on original concert accordion repertoire. All students must study the history of the accordion, partake in pedagogical classes (in Denmark, this involves teaching young students for two years), chamber classes and performances. In Graz, students must also learn folk music,
including the diatonic accordion. All students are exposed to jazz, Piazzolla, classical, contemporary and world music, so that when they finish their course, they are complete performers. Unfortunately, as the number of students who want to study to this high level in Australia is low, a course design like this would not be financially viable.

No matter how much an institution directs a student towards concert accordion repertoire, pedagogical material and development of a high technique, you can’t forget your initial exposure to the folk accordion. After years of honing my skills practising different techniques, learning new repertoire and new notations, collaborating with composers and seeking performance venues, I can still always find work as an ‘oom pa pa’ accordionist playing musette music at the American Club, Italian folk songs with Pavarotti, and tango for a gay lederhosen party!

3.4 Conclusions

The relationship between a performer and composer has impacted on the development of tertiary institutions across different continents that will accept the accordion as a major study instrument. This is equally true of my own experience in Australia. Without the development of repertoire, the building of a profile as a concert performer by the accordionist and developing a curriculum for the education of young accordionists this could not have been achieved.

Due to the relative youth of the accordion, in comparison with the violin or piano, acceptance by educators has been slow. Many teachers are unaware of the full capability of the accordion. Some have been exposed to the accordion performing traditional/folk music, others to jazz or world music, and limited numbers to the concert repertoire. As the knowledge base has broadened, the level of acceptance has increased. With the accordion being continually profiled in pop music, world music, commercial music and the concert platform, more composers are recognising its versatility – and tertiary institutions are recognising its value as an instrument that is capable of performing all styles of music.
CHAPTER FOUR

PERFORMANCES, RECORDINGS AND COLLABORATIONS

To explore the full capabilities of the concert accordion I undertook performing, recording and collaborative projects as a component of my research. Through performing projects I was able to research the performing process and the final performance interaction with an audience; with recording projects I was able to look at recording techniques; and through collaboration with composers I was able to build Australian repertoire for the accordion and look at compositional techniques. This range of projects allowed both solo performances and chamber performances to be included. With chamber performances interaction between the accordion and other instruments was also a research area.

4.1 First recording and recital: Animi Causa (January 2000) and Recital of Selected Accordion Works (May 11th 2000)

Animi Causa (Appendix 1- CD) was the first recording project I undertook as part of my research project. The music selected for performance on this recording was influenced by my performance work at the Garrison Church in Millers Point, Sydney for commemorative services. ‘Animi Causa’ is Latin for ‘pleasure’ and ‘to reflect’. The selection of works presented on the recording were often performed during the moments of reflection during church services, but for the purpose of inclusion in my research project, they also form part of my teaching repertoire for young accordion students who are planning to pursue a career in music.

The works played and recorded, with the exception of the final track, are transcriptions of keyboard works. Diapson Movement (Track 1), Pastorale (Track 2), Grave (Track 3), Cornet Voluntary (Track 10) and Air (Track 11) come from Old English Organ Music for Manuals (edited by C.H. Trevor). As these works were composed for organ manuals only – with no foot pedals – they are ideal for
transcription across to the accordion. In many instances the accordion can match
the registrations of the organ and produce a similar tone and clarity. This is in
contrast to large organ works that include foot pedal; these can be transcribed to
the accordion, although unflattering comparisons are known to have been made.

All the works chosen from the *Old English Organ for Manuals* have
characteristics that are ideal for educating an accordionist who is beginning to
learn the free bass system and works of a classical nature:

- The works are all short and self contained;
- The range of the organ manuals corresponds to the range of both the right-
  hand manual and the left-hand manual on the accordion;
- The suggested registrations for the organ can be matched by the
  registrations offered by the accordion;
- The level of technical difficulty for the left hand is within the grasp of the
  student being exposed to works of this style;
- Unlike works for full organ that include pedal and also pedal point with long
  sustained notes, the issue of bellow control does not become a problem;
- The overall attitude of the student studying the work is that the work will be
  within their grasp; and
- The final product is pleasing to student and audience alike.

The sonatas by Domenico Scarlatti (1685 – 1757) are included as transcription
requirements in the top level of accordion competitions, audition requirements for
some universities, and in concert programs. Many of Scarlatti’s sonatas were
composed for unspecific keyboard instruments; they are generally well suited to
performance on the accordion. Most of his sonatas were composed as one-
movement works, and they include many dance motifs and rhythms of such folk
dances as the bolero, jota, seguidilla, siciliano, tarantella and the dances of the baroque suites.

Because of the rhythmic nature of his works, accordionists learning free bass often have a natural understanding of the folk rhythms through their work on the standard bass. The technical nature of Scarlatti’s works places greater demands on students, and stylistically the baroque period of music can be studied. An interesting point generally arises when ornamentation is discussed. Often a student who has studied their national folk music will approach ornamentation from a folk perspective. This includes a different knowledge of symbols: a continual tone approach to trills and mordents without acknowledgement of harmonic basis, and all trills commencing on the main note regardless of surrounding melodic lines, for example.

The works by Scarlatti included on this recording were chosen for personal reasons. *Sonate in D Major K 335* (Track 4) was the first work by Scarlatti that I learnt on the accordion. The two *Sonates in C, K 11 in C minor* (Track 8) and *K 159 in C Major* (Track 9), often form part of my solo concerts. When paired this way, they provide a unique contrast in style and show different technical and musical aspects of the accordion.

Music for the classical period is harder to transcribe for the accordion than music of the baroque period. Although playing of all works is possible, the repertoire chosen needs to suit the capabilities of the accordion. Certain instrument characteristics and orchestration ideas need to be studied when choosing repertoire. Within the score, and by listening to recordings, an accordionist can address characteristics such as:

- Pedal
- Pedal point
• Structure of left and right-hand harmonic lines – heavy block chordal movement and arpeggiated chords can draw unflattering comparisons from listeners

• Range of melodic passages to allow for either modifications or changes of registration.

The works from the classical period included on this recording are by Carl Phillipe Emmanuel Bach (1714 – 1788) and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 – 1791), and are composed for instruments which are rarely performed on today. Sonate in G Wq65/48.H280 (Tracks 5–7) composed by C.P.E. Bach in Hamburg, in 1783, was for an instrument little known today – the Bogenflugel. The Bogenflugel belongs to the bogenklavier family, and as the name suggests, it is a bowed keyboard instrument. The bogenklavier family is different from all other keyboards in that the instrument can sustain pitches indefinitely. As the bogenflugel is now extinct, the accordion serves as an ideal substitute for performing this work, due to its similar sustaining powers.

In my performance of this work I found that I had technical problems to overcome in regard to legato technique, balance of hands and right-hand note accuracy. Stylistically I am still unsure about the suitability of this work for the accordion, although it features constant changing textures and dynamics, but I believe that the majority of this feeling is based on my own personal relationship with the music of C.P.E. Bach. As I do not regularly perform music of the Rococo period, it is a style that does not come easily to me. My solo concert performances on the piano have focused more on the middle to late works of Beethoven, and I have found the classical period music difficult to perform and express on both the piano and the concert accordion.

The other work from within the classical period that is performed on this recording is the Adagio für Glasharmonika KV356 (Track 12). It was composed by W.A. Mozart in Vienna, in 1791, for another relatively unknown instrument, the Glasharmonika. It is thought that this small work would have served as an encore
to Mozart’s larger work, the *Quintet K617* for armonica, flute, oboe, viola and ‘cello. This work was composed for the blind armonica player Marianne Kirckgessner, who was famous throughout Europe between 1790 and 1808. The type of glasharmonica Mozart would have had knowledge of would have been invented by Benjamin Franklin. His armonica consisted of the bowls of glasses fitted into a horizontal rod which was operated by a crank attached to a pedal. This allowed the player more precise tuning of pitch and faster movement on the scales and run passages. The timbre of the glasharmonika makes this an ideal work to perform on the accordion – there are similar sustaining powers, and the light texture that can be achieved through use of registration in the accordion.

The only original work for accordion that appears on this CD is Wladislaw Solotarow’s (1942 – 1975) *Monastery of Ferapont* (Track 13), composed in this monastery in northern Russia and inspired by the famous fresco that was created by the Russian artist Dionisus. The work is programmatic in style, and to achieve a convincing interpretation I adopted metaphors to help with rhythmic placing, tone and dynamic level. Metaphorically, the opening is reminiscent of bells tolling, and the main body, which contains rhythmic patterns and melodic ideas, is suggestive of monks meditating. It creates an image unique to the accordion. Programmatically, I have found that the piece can work on two levels. As a performer it is an easy piece to use to introduce an audience to the concert accordion. Although not completely tonal, the images that one can depict allow the audience a listening access to the concert accordion. From a pedagogical point of view, the same reasoning can be used when introducing a young concert accordionist to modern repertoire.

*Animi Causa* was recorded in January 2000 at the University of Western Sydney’s Penrith Campus, and served as a basis for my recital in May of the same year.
First Recital

The first recital that formed part of my research was held in the Performance Space, University of Western Sydney, Kingswood Campus (Appendix 2 – DVD and program notes). For this recital a mixture of transcriptions and original works were chosen. The selection of works aimed to demonstrate a broad range of the musical capabilities of the accordion, from lyricism, to percussive work, to humour.

Monastery of Ferapont by W. Solotarjow was chosen as the opening work for the reasons listed in 4.1. This work can capture the imagination of an audience when performed and presented correctly. Although not at the advanced end of concert repertoire, technical difficulties do exist, such as legato touch, tonal balance, and dynamic range. The fact that the piece is programmatic also creates difficulty. If the audience is not captured into a scene of a monastery and monks, the artist has failed in their delivery.

As many Australian audiences have not attended a concert by an accordionist, to capture their imagination and draw them towards the accordion is always one of my initial aims. In preparing this work for the performance, tonal balance became an issue. Throughout the work the left hand performs the lyrical melody, accompanied by a broken chord figure in the right hand. Listening to recordings, I found that the accompaniment was overshadowing the melodic line. As the bellows control both manuals, an adjustment in my finger pressure was required. If the pressure is less, less air escapes through the reed, producing a softer tone. In practice this problem needed to be solved by constant attention to the pressure of my fingers and the level of depression on the buttons. Control of phrasing through finger articulation was then affected, and time needed to be spent working on achieving a finger legato by gliding between buttons. Constant pressure on the bellows was developed to maintain an even dynamic between manuals and notated dynamic markings.
Suite Sacre for Accordion Solo by the Scandinavian composer Leif Kayser (1919 – 2001) is an early original work for the concert accordion. Kayser has composed many works for the accordion, among them Arabesques and Confetti. In beginning my preparation for Suite Sacre it became apparent that the rhythm would present great problems for me as a performer. Although Suite Sacre is rhythmical, dynamic and notationally precise, one of the most interesting characteristics of this five-movement work is the lack of time signatures throughout. The pulse is gained by a metronome marking as opposed to a time signature. This marking occurs at the beginning of each new section and offers the performer a unique way to interpret time. To achieve rhythmic stability I “broke down” the rhythm into the lowest notational value and worked with a click track to keep time. After achieving rhythmic stability I listened carefully to the tone being produced. To achieve timbral differences I needed to rely on the unusual set of registrations presented in this work. Unlike the many composers who indicate what timbre they would like to hear from the accordion, Kayser marks non-specific register changes, showing that a change is required but not clarifying the sound intended. Although the score contains many directive markings, the work is open to performer interpretation.

Andante für eine Walze in eine kleine Orgel KV616 by W.A. Mozart was selected to mirror the classical transcriptions from the recording Animi Causa. As with the work by Mozart in 4.1, the Andante für eine Walze in eine keine Orgel was composed for an unusual instrument – the mechanical organ. In transcribing this work for the accordion, no difficulties arose. The range of both manuals matched that of the accordion and timbre equivalence could be achieved through use of registrations.

As with the recordings, I found this work difficult to perform stylistically. A recording of the work for its original instrumentation could not be found, but recordings by accordionists could be. The majority of my preparation time was spent listening to the recording and studying the score, as opposed to practising. When practice commenced, the piece provided no problem notationally, but
developing a sense of style and cohesive musical thought throughout the work did.

The style related directly to balance problems and an inability to produce the articulation that I desired. Through separate manual work and various combinations of different fingering to phrases I achieved a sense of style. The length and repetitive nature of the work created tone problems, and stamina was an issue, with the constant pressure of the bellows needed. This was achieved through practice with a metronome and work with a recording.

The second transcription performed in this recital, *Sonate in F Major K 82* by Domenico Scarlatti, was included for the same reasons as on the recording *Animi Causa*. The works of Domenico Scarlatti are a pleasure to perform on the accordion, although certain stylistic features must be taken into account when transcribing. The canonic nature of this particular Sonate is suitable to the tonal balance achievable on the accordion. In preparing this work I researched the ornamentation and articulation of Scarlatti. To apply the correct articulation I worked on a “reverse fingering” to apply a cleaner articulated tone and a more rhythmically precise delivery. An example of “reverse fingering” would be a repeated note passage of three quaver Fs being fingered in a usual manner of 2-3-4, which can create an difference in tone and rhythm through hand positioning. By changing the fingering to 4-3-2 I was working against my natural hand shape, but I achieved a clearer articulation and more rhythmic precision.

The final work in this recital was chosen more as an encore style of piece. *Little Suite*, by the Russian composer Derbenko (1949 - ), is full of wit, lyricism and humour. *Little Suite* contains four movements, each movement given a descriptive title:

1. Polka
2. Balalaika
3. Barrel Organ
4. Roosters

Like much accordion music from Russia, tradition and culture heavily influence the composer. This can be seen through the titles of the first three movements and also through the compositional style employed. Polka mimics the traditional “oom pa pa” bass of the standard bass on the free bass system, with a light melodic right-hand melody. Balalaika employs a strumming mimic in the right-hand melodic line, and Barrel Organ allows the accordion to perfectly mirror an organ grinder busking in the street. Through using semitonal intervals in the right hand and the standard bass in the fourth movement, Roosters, Derbenko cleverly has the accordion mimicking a rooster pecking at the ground. As with the Monastery of Ferapont, the main difficulty for the performer is depicting the images to the audience.

The combined recording and recital formed the developmental ideas of my research project. In repertoire choice I focused on “audience accessible” works through the use of transcriptions and programmatic works from the 20th century. In presenting the recording and recital I discovered the differences in approach required for a recording session versus a recital. A recording session is unforgiving and highlights all technical deficiencies, from uncontrolled bellow changes to clicks of the buttons. A recital focuses not only on the sound, but also on the presentation of the artist on stage. Aside from rehearsing technical difficulties, the performer has to prepare stage presentation and stagecraft. In a recording session it is possible to record many takes, while a recital is an immediate reaction between performer and audience. The recording and recital process was used to highlight differences in two performances of both the same and similar works.

4.2 Second recital: Accordion Recital 27th November 2000

The second recital presented as part of my research project was held in the Garrison Church, Millers Point Sydney (Appendix 3 – DVD and program notes). This church is a sandstone and timber building with excellent acoustics for the
accordian – that is, a venue in which the live performance has a natural resonance and reverberation. Because of my years of serving the church as both soloist and organist for Commemorative and Ordinary Services, I was able to hold an evening recital in the church. Although not held on the campus of the University of Western Sydney, the evening was video recorded and audio recorded for records.

The program for this recital was selected to showcase the accordion as both a solo instrument and a chamber instrument in a resonant acoustic venue. Three Scarlatti sonatas were chosen to commence the recital. Two of the sonatas were paired and one sonata was presented individually, due to the structure of the work. According to the musicologist Kirkpatrick, many of Scarlatti’s sonatas are paired, although it is the performer’s choice whether the sonatas are presented in pairs or not, as each sonata is also an independent and complete unit. Distinguishing features of the pairs are: sharing the same key, relative major to minor or vice versa, tonic major to minor or vice versa and complementary or contrasting characteristics, for example meter or tempo.

Scarlatti’s *Sonate in D minor* K 1 and *Sonate in D minor* K 9 opened the recital as a pairing. The common characteristic of the two sonatas is the sharing of the same key, and the contrasting characteristics are different meter and style. *Sonate in D minor* K 1 is in a 4/4 meter with a lyrical nature, and *Sonate in D minor* K 9 is in a 6/8 meter and reminiscent of a tarantella, a feature discussed in 4.1.

*Sonate in G minor* K 10 is also known colloquially as “The Cat’s Fugue”. Although many of Scarlatti’s sonatas touch on brief passages of imitative work, only six receive complete fugal treatment and form. *Sonate in G minor* K 10 is an example of fugal writing form from beginning to end. Flighty in its characteristics, with harmonic writing cluttered at times, then empty and sparse, and with syncopation throughout the work, the sonata was technically difficult to perform. The hemiola rhythm did not need to be accented, so control and relaxation of
pressure was required. To achieve this I had to think physiologically – arms in at all times to support the bellows as opposed to a standard “in–out” with the bellows, where gravity does all the work. How do I approach my buttons? From behind or on top? This resulted in me looking at the tonal control possible from my buttons in a similar manner as a keyboard player looks at tone approach on their keyboard. From an aural perspective I had to think on two levels: the sound that I was hearing from the accordion and the sound that the audience would be hearing. Particular attention had to be paid to the co-ordination of hands, as sound delays in the chosen venue could create problems. The technique required in performing Sonate in G minor K 10 was demanding.

Following the three opening transcribed works, two original works by the Danish composer Sven Erik Werner (1937 - ) were programmed. The two pieces were selected from his Tango Studies for Accordeon. Werner says of his Tango Studies:

For nearly a century the tango has been one of the most popular dances all over the world, thanks not least to the influence of the cinema and other branches of the entertainment industry … Even in Argentina, the land of its birth, the musical and bodily conventions of the tango have long since become clichés. Yet it retains its fascination because of its direct link with the strongest, electrified levels of human existence. This is why the so-called serious composers of art music were not long in producing stylized tangos that were more preoccupied with the archetypical symbolic power of the genre than with its immediate practical use as dance music … The tango cannot do without the accordion (or bandoneon, as it was originally supposed to be), and when the Danish Accordion Academy started I was foolish enough to suggest that each player should have his/her own tango. As if there were not enough tangos in the world already!

For my recital I selected the first two tangos from 12 Tango Studies – Tango Study No. 1 “Sneaking” and Tango Study No. 2 – both of which are dedicated to students from the Danish Accordion Academy, an institution founded by Jeanette Dyremose in 1989. Composed shortly after the death of Argentinean composer
and bandoneon player Astor Piazzolla, his influence is evident to varying degrees throughout the twelve tangos. Stylistically, both Tango No. 1 and Tango No. 2 are like picture postcards from Argentina. As with all tangos, rhythm and style are important characteristics. In my preparation, the subdivision of rhythmical passages, precision of entry and importance of the main beat were studied. A rhythmical subdivision was placed on the score and recordings of practice time were important tools. For precision of entry and delivery of main beat the recording of my practice time was invaluable, as there is a delay from the instrument to the audience hearing the beat.

In keeping with the tango feel, the next work selected for the program was by Australian composer Eric Gross (1926 - ): Tanghetto con Bandoneon Op.227/4A. This was the premiere of this work, a privilege I have had for this composer on more than one occasion. Eric Gross was born in Vienna in 1926 and emigrated to England in December 1938. After a visit to New Caledonia, he came to Sydney in 1958. From 1959 to 1960 he taught at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, and from 1960 to 1991 he was on the staff of the Department of Music at the University of Sydney, retiring as Associate Professor of Music. It was during my undergraduate studies at the University of Sydney that my collaborations with Eric Gross commenced. The first work that he composed for me was Study for the Left Hand, which is now included in the AMEB syllabus. This initial collaboration was specific in its intentions, as it allowed Gross as a composer to fully explore the possibilities of the left-hand free bass system. At the time I was performing on a 9-row piano keyboard Guiletti instrument with an extended keyboard. The right-hand keyboard manual did not pose any problems for the composer. A lifelong friendship has developed, and Gross has contributed much to the development of concert accordion repertoire in Australia. Gross says of his work as a composer:

I believe that my first duty as a composer, in addition to maintaining professional and artistic standards and integrity, is to my performers/interpreters, because it is
they who must work and invest time and energy in order to bring my music to life and place it before its audience.

My music must convince its performers before it can convince its audience. I aim to communicate with audiences by stating musical ideas which audiences may find to have some relevance to their own musical perceptions or requirements. If I am asked to write music for a specific occasion, then I try to make it appropriate to that happening, and if such an “occasional” composition has sufficient intrinsic merit, it may perhaps survive and be given further performances …

In addition to a predilection to jazz idioms, my worldwide travels and cultural experiences tend to give my music a cosmopolitan flavour, with some traces of Austrian, Scottish, Asian and South American influences emerging from time to time …

Of his composition included in this recital, Gross says:

*Tanghetto con Bandoneon* is a work based upon a movement (Tanghetto) from my 2nd Suite for Plectrum Ensemble, composed in 1998 for the Sydney Mandolins as a movement in Tango style. After hearing the fine recording of the original version, I felt that this piece could be given an even greater Argentinean flavour by adding an obligato accordion (bandoneon) part, using Elizabeth Jones’ excellent technique and flair for appropriate choice of registration.

In preparing this work for the recital I approached the Sydney Mandolins, directed by Adrian Hooper, to perform and participate in the collaborative project. The Sydney Mandolins was formed in 1975 by Adrian Hooper and consists of a core of five leading performers: Paul Hooper, Adrian Hooper, Joyce Bootsma, Barbara Hooper and Michael Hooper. The ensemble works regularly for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation in radio broadcasts, as well as concerts. They perform classical music from all periods and have commissioned, often with the help of the Australia Council, many works from contemporary composers. My collaboration with this group evolved into two works for accordion and mandolins, as well as a recording.
Rhythmically, the *Tanghetto con Bandoneon* is challenging. Precise placement of the beat and subdivision of rhythmic phrases took up the majority of my practice time. Work with metronome and subdividing drum machines secured the accuracy required. Stylistically, the development of the obligato line also held problems. Understanding its place in the ensemble was problematic when rehearsing alone. Listening to the obligato-style playing of tango violinists was of great help in achieving the appropriate style.

In rehearsal with the mandolin group the practice unravelled – my practice of beat placement and style became off-centred through delay of sound. Combining plectrum instruments with the percussive sound of the accordion did not always work, and much of the initial rehearsal time focused on ensemble playing. Earlier articulation of notes by me began to solve the problem of beat placement, and the precise point of “attack” varied according to the registration that had been chosen. Anything involving the 16 foot reed “spoke” late and resulted in sound delay. Individual practice then involved listening to recordings of ensemble practice to identify main points of delay.

With the issue of ensemble precision resolving, balance of parts became an issue. The accordion part often overshadowed the work of the mandolin ensemble, so adjustment of dynamics shown in the score was needed. This balance problem again appeared at the venue, due to the resonance of the Garrison Church. Adjustment of bellow pressure, point of articulation and balance of ensemble was focused on during the performance.

To continue with the chamber music texture in the middle of this recital the following two works involved accordion ensembles and arrangements of works. An ensemble was formed specifically for this recital and linked my work as a performer and educator. The ensemble consisted of Ross Maio (my teacher on standard bass for a period of time and inspiration to my studies), his two sons Marcello Maio (15 years old) and Lukas Maio (12 years old) who were studying both accordion and piano with me, and Linda Gu (13 years old), who had been
studying with me for one year. The three students involved in the project were all advanced players, with Marcello and Lukas preparing to pursue careers in music on accordion and piano.

The repertoire chosen to highlight accordion ensemble work was demanding and technically difficult. Working with young players involved intense rehearsal time and the expanding of my capacities as an accordionist. To achieve a correct balance of timbre and articulation between the instruments involved I returned to playing the converter piano accordion, and needed to redevelop my right-hand keyboard skills in a short length of time. As a fundamental difference between the button board and keyboard manual is hand positioning and fingering, I redeveloped my technique through the use of scales and arpeggios. This helped me readjust my hand position in a limited space of time and allow me the role of musical director during rehearsal time – as opposed to a musician struggling against an instrument.

Asturias, by Isaac Albeniz (1860 – 1909), continued the Spanish theme of this recital. Originally composed for the piano and forming part of his Suite Espanola Op.47, Asturias has been arranged for many different instruments and combination of instruments – the most popular arrangement is for guitar, which captures the true Spanish feel of this work. There is also an arrangement for solo accordion, by the Russian bayanist Friedrich Lips. This arrangement for accordion ensemble, by Wlodzimierz Lech Puchnowski, has been performed by many of Europe’s leading accordion ensembles.

Puchnowski is head of the accordion department at The Fryderyk Chopin Academy of Music in Poland, and with his colleagues he has formed an accordion ensemble to demonstrate the many different styles of music that are possible on the accordion. Like many European concert artists, Puchnowski and his colleagues perform on the bayan, and so have a greater range than piano accordion.
Due to the popularity of the piano accordion in Australia, all my students involved in this ensemble perform on standard bass piano accordions. This involved some alterations to the arrangement. Suitability of parts and technical issues for each student were discussed in their lesson time. The predominant technical issues faced were speed, clarity and rhythmic precision. Through marking fingering and bellow changes on the score, technical difficulties were overcome, and through incremental metronome practice the speed issues were mastered.

*Rondo Capriccioso* Op.14 was also arranged for accordion ensemble by Puchnowski. Originally composed for piano by Felix Mendelssohn (1809 – 1847) in 1830, the work is dramatic, commencing with a lyrical Andante introduction leading into a lively Presto which is fugal in character. In this arrangement the entry of each voice can be clearly heard, and each accordion part is worked around the different registers and timbral changes of the piano. In preparing the ensemble for the recital, lesson time was spent with each student individually on fingering, rhythm, bellow control and notation. During ensemble rehearsal time, the entry of each voice was worked through – recording the rehearsal allowed the dynamic level of entry to be heard. For stylistic interpretation, various recordings were listened to, from solo piano through to accordion ensembles.

Vagn Holmboe (1909 – 1996) was the most prominent Danish symphonist since Carl Nielsen. With his teaching and his many works from a composing career spanning over 60 years, Holmboe had a great influence on Danish music and Nordic music in general. *Sonata* Op.143A is reflective of many of Holmboe’s works, in that it is small and well structured. His music is luminously clear and precise, with striking lines and rhythms and a clear and strong structure. *Sonata* Op.143A is neoclassical in style, paying homage to Carl Nielsen. With its structure and dedication to Mogens Ellegaard, *Sonata* Op.143A has filled a gap in the accordion repertoire and is concert material for the studying advanced student.
The first movement presents articulation difficulties in the flowing legato line of the right-hand manual and the staccato effects of the left-hand manual. To achieve a legato line I practised with slow rhythmical precision, concentrating on the release and depression of buttons. For the left-hand manual I worked on a rapid downward approach to the buttons, with a quick release. For repetitive note work I worked on my half-depression of the button to balance the right-hand manual to the left-hand manual. Changes of bellow direction were marked into the score to define the phrasing of Holmboe’s writing.

The second movement required more focus on legato articulation, with slow practice for both manuals, highlighting the depression and release time of buttons to create a flowing legato. Along with this was work on bellow pressure to achieve the correct emotion required. The B section of the second movement created balance problems when both manuals were articulated legato. With experimentation from both hands being legato, to right hand being legato and the left hand being staccato and vice versa, I found that the best balance between manuals could be achieved by the right-hand manual being performed non legato and the left-hand manual being performed legato.

The third movement of the sonata is a complete contrast in style. From working on legato articulation I needed to move onto defining a strong marcato tone. The attack of the button from above, with added bellow pressure, created a strong percussive tone. Rhythmic precision was achieved through metronome practice and the subdividing of the beat.

The final movement of the sonata takes the shape of a fugue. The articulation was easier to achieve, as it was a combination of the work from the first to third movements. Separate practice allowed me to clearly hear the development of the lines, and precise repetition of the articulation for each theme was required so the fugal effect could be heard. Use of registration as marked, and experimentation with different registration, allowed a balance of parts to be achieved. The final part of preparation involved looking at the movements and
how to link them into a stylistic work. Recordings were used at this stage to help define the complete sonata.

*Prelude 12 for Accordeon* by Edward McGuire (1948 - ) was commissioned by the Arundel Festival in the summer of 1994, for the winner of the Royal Overseas League Gold Medal winner – David Preston. Minimalist in its character, *Prelude 12 for Accordeon* fills a gap in the accordion repertoire similar to the role taken by Holmboe’s *Sonata Op.143A*. In preparing for this performance my main concern was the grouping of the 9/8 meter (1 2 – 1 2 – 1 2 – 1 2 3) – to avoid the work sounding like a jumble of notes as opposed to a rhythmic idea. This was particularly apparent in the opening section. Precise entry of the quavers generated a misterioso tone, and early attack of the bass button allowed the note to speak on time for the audience. Defining the changing time signature meant slight bellow accents on the beginning of each main beat, allowing the change from 9/8 to 4/4 to 5/4 to be felt.

The non-notational chord clusters easily became non-defined in practice. To achieve a correct stylistic interpretation of this effect I worked on achieving a firm tone with rhythmic precision. A highlight of the piece is the chord cluster glissando in the right-hand manual. Although originally notated by the composer as a glissando for both manuals, the effect was nondescript. I decided to change the double glissando to a single glissando in the right-hand manual with a sustained chord cluster in the left hand. Through use of firm arm control and constant bellow pressure, the glissando is used to great effect. In the score, tremolo is notated as an effect for both manuals. When performed in one manual under a melodic line a good effect is achieved, but when the tremolo is performed simultaneously on both manuals, it is not as effective. I decided to change the two manual tremolos to a bellow shake. This creates a more precise rhythm and also a visual element to the performance. Alternating notated chord clusters between manuals also created technical problems. Precise tone between manuals needed work, which involved experimentation with arm pressure, bellow pressure and attack on the manuals.
Registration markings by the composer are not given on the score, leaving the interpretation to the performer. To choose the registrations I looked at the emotive quality and stylistic features of sections. For the sections with syncopation I decided on the use of 16 foot reeds and 4 foot reeds, with the section transposed up one octave. This created a sharpness to the sections. For the melodious sections I used softer reeds – the 16 foot reed transposed up one octave or the 4 foot reed in cassotto. This generated a warm tone to the sections. The final part of my preparation focused on the overall combination of different sections. Imagination formed the basis of my overall performance, with each section depicting a different time in the growth of Earth. Although this was not stated by the composer at any point, the use of imagination as a tool helped me build a complete work.

The final work presented in this recital was Concertino for Button Accordion (Bayan) and Plectrum Ensemble Op.241/2 by Eric Gross. Of this work, Gross has stated:

Although I have written several accordion solos for Elizabeth Jones, I am pleased that I rearranged for her, my composition entitled “And the Sun danced on Easter Morn”, using organ and button accordion (bayan), for button accordion and the plectrum ensemble of the Sydney Mandolins directed by Adrian Hooper. I realised that further performances with organ would be difficult to arrange, and also I was anxious to utilise the expertise of all performers involved in, what was for me, an experimental use of instrument timbres.

The accordion part is exactly the same as in the original version written for performance at Easter at the Old Garrison Church at the Rocks in Sydney. The music was intended to represent the old Christian legend that the Sun danced on the morning of Easter Sunday.

In preparing this work for my recital rhythmic difficulties occurred. The initial entry by the accordion is a powerful statement that differs from the rest of the work. Precise three against two work was achieved through slow practice in a staccato format, before introducing the legato articulation for the right-hand manual. The
entry of semiquaver triplets was worked on through metronome practice, and in
an ensemble situation was performed slightly before normal entry point due to
the timbral difference between the accordion and the mandolins. Bellow shakes
are a feature of the accordion part in the Concertino and stamina was a great
concern as the performance approached. Being the final piece in this recital,
energy levels and precision of the arm movement required for bellow shakes was
lessened, and as a result the rhythmic precision required was hesitant and weak.
To try to counteract the physical pressures of the bellow shakes, I practised
bellow shakes between all pieces, worked bellow shakes in slow motion and
increased the length of practice time daily. The ensemble rehearsals focused on
balance and entry of parts. Often the accordion could overpower the mandolins,
so dynamics on my part required adjusting. Security of the ensemble was
achieved through recording of rehearsals and the attendance of the composer
towards the end of preparations.

In 2003 this work was released as Track 8 on American Dream (Jade records,
JADCD 1090) (see Appendix 4 - CD). This reunited me with the Sydney
Mandolins and also served as a point of introduction to the collaborator on this
CD, Australian composer Robert Allworth. American Dream received fantastic
reviews. The following is an extract from one review:

   Exciting counterpoint abounds in "Essay for Mandolin and Wind Quintet" (1996) by
   Gross and in his intriguing "Concertino for Button Accordion (Bayan) and Plectrum
   Ensemble" (2000).  

My introduction to Robert Allworth (1943 - ) also resulted in composition
collaboration. Nightfall is a 12-tone minimal work that is part of today’s Australian
concert accordion repertoire, although yet to be published.

4.3 Third recital: Art of Fugue 18th April 2002

The program selected for my final recital (Appendix 5) as part of my doctorate was influenced by a 5-month study tour in 2001. This study tour was supported by a grant awarded by the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust in 2000. During this tour I studied with Joseph Macerollo at the University of Toronto, Canada; Peter Soave at Wayne State University Detroit, Michigan, USA; researched at The Graduate School, The City University of New York, USA; and studied for 3 months at the Royal Danish Academy of Music, Copenhagen, Denmark with James Crabb and Geir Draugsvoll. The knowledge and personal experiences of repertoire, technique and history that they shared with me had an impact on my technique, repertoire choice and future career path.

The first piece presented in this recital was influenced by Joseph Macerollo and the brief time spent studying with him in Toronto. While in Toronto, aside from personal lessons, Macerollo guided me through the depth of the Canadian repertoire, the development of tertiary studies in Canada, and his collaborations with numerous composers. I had the pleasure of meeting both his current and past students and talking to them about their own studies and personal history. During my studies with him, much time was spent listening to recordings. Among the recordings was Gems (Conaccord 490491-3, 1989) by Joseph Petric, a Canadian accordionist. Track 2 of that CD was Equivoque, composed by Canadian Christos Hatzis (1953 - ) in 1985 for accordion and two computer-controlled synthesisers. During my time in Canada I met with Hatzis to discuss his compositions for the accordion.

Hatzis has experimented with many different compositional languages, from early experimentations with graphic notation to applying principles of fractal geometry to music and developing systems of “musical structure where intervallic relations from within a single sound are transferred to the realms of harmony, rhythm and form” (http://www.hatzis.com). Throughout his experimentation, Hatzis has
developed his own musical language, which is influenced by the music of the third world, jazz, pop, J.S. Bach and other baroque composers.

Of this work, the composer writes:

_Equivoque_ is the second piece in an ongoing series of compositions based on Johann Sebastian Bach’s *The Art of the Fugue* and it was written for the occasion of the master’s 300th birthday in 1985. *Equivoque* is a palimpsest of *Contrapunctus XII*, the first of four two-part canons in *The Art of the Fugue*. Basic melodic line, formal structure and tone evaluation are the same in both works, but whereas *Contrapunctus XII* is entirely in D minor, *Equivoque* constantly fluctuates between the original key and that of A-flat minor, tonally the most distant key to D minor. As the title suggests, there is an equivocal treatment of the two tonalities. The two keys are like red and green, image and afterimage; they don’t mix, yet they are complementary. There is no linear, “qualitative” modulation from one to the other, but rather a quantitative process of coexistence with various degrees of balance between the opposing tonal forces. One key is pitted against the other and both are struggling for possession of the tonal centre. This causes a disturbance to the listener’s sense of acoustical perspective, not unlike the kind of disturbance one experiences with some of the engravings and lithographs of M.C. Escher, an artist whose work has considerably influenced my own, particularly in this series of compositions. *Equivoque* is dedicated to Johann Sebastian Bach and Maurits Cornelis Escher, who inspired it, to Joseph Petric, who commissioned it, and to my first music teacher, Charalambos Kehaides, who taught me to play the accordion.

My initial preparation of this work commenced in Canada under the tutelage of Macerollo. The main areas of work focused on time and arm weight. Tension within my arm was affecting my tone production. By loosening my arm, similar to the bowing movement of a string player, my tone would by fuller and rounder. Likewise, my tone improved by changing the positioning of my arm for different areas of the button board:

- Top end = arm low
- Middle = arm even, but tucked in
• Bottom end = arm angled slightly upwards

Preparation continued on *Equivoque* with Geir Draugsvoll in Denmark. During my lesson time spent on *Equivoque* phrasing was work on, articulation discussed and a technique of learning to use both hands to control technique with a fast action on the downward depression of the buttons, with a slow action on the release on the button.

The final part of my preparation involved strict metronome practice, as I was to perform with two computer-controlled synthesisers recorded onto CD, and commence at precisely the same time in the opening. Within this component of my practice I worked on fingering, as rhythmical inconsistencies of the quaver pattern appeared. By changing my hand shape into one that faced up the right-hand manual instead of down the right-hand manual, I had more control over the final quaver in the groups of 3. This resulted in a more cohesive ensemble with the CD. The ensemble preparation for *Equivoque* was unique due to the ensemble being a CD. As a performer it was both exciting and frustrating to be controlled by an electronic device which allowed no error.

*Partita No. 3 in A minor* BWV 827 by J.S. Bach (1685 – 1750) was selected for the program as a link between *Equivoque* and *Five Tango Sensations*. Hatzis explained in his lengthy program notes that his music is influenced by the works of J.S. Bach, in particular the fugal treatment that is present in Bach’s formal structure. One of the most important influences on Bach’s music was his journey to study with Swedish organist/composer Dietrich Buxtehude. He returned from this journey full of new ideas about tonality and form. Bach’s works use established musical forms including the polyphonic forms of fugue and canon, and suites of dances. Both of these characteristics are present in the *Partita No. 3*. The decision to include a Bach Partita was influenced by Peter Soave, who I studied with at the Wayne State University in Detroit, USA.
My initial preparation on the *Partita No. 3* was with James Crabb, while studying at the Royal Danish Academy of Music, Copenhagen. The technical aspects concentrated on were:

- Fingering – linked directly to articulation;
- Ornamentation – correct performance, including rectifying my problem of performing directly on the beat;
- Structure of each dance movement;
- Placement of the beat and the articulation required to achieve this;
- Terraced dynamics; and
- Listening to recordings – specifically Glenn Gould and Claudio Arrau.

In the ‘Fantasia’ I concentrated specifically on the momentum required by the harmonic structure of the movement and the placement of beats. The movement is divided into 4 sections, with stylistic writing similar to two-part inventions. Understanding the structure helped me define the momentum throughout and define exact placement of the beats. The first beat of every second bar was performed as a down beat, with emphasis from depressed finger action, and the first beat of every second bar was performed as an up beat, with a rising finger action. This helped create a dance feel to the ‘Fantasia’. Through releasing finger action, momentum and rhythmic precision were achieved. An example of this finger action would be crossing finger three in the left hand over finger four. In a chromatic bass system the only way to achieve this is to release the bass buttons that define the precise rhythmical beat.

The second movement of the *Partita*, the ‘Allemande’, required work on precise placement of ornamentation and precision in phrasing. The ornamentation was researched and bellow markings added to define the phrasing. Achieving a pulse throughout the ‘Allemande’ was difficult, and I worked towards achieving a
downward beat on the first and third beats of the bar and an upward beat on the second and fourth beats of the bar.

Work on the division of the pulse continued into the third movement of the Partita, with a concentration on achieving a minim followed by crotchet feel. This entailed a downward beat on the first beat of the bar and an upward beat on the third beat of the bar, achieved through the pressure of the arm. The use of the arm continued, as a free-flowing movement, almost circular in action, was required to render rhythmical, yet lyrical run movement throughout the ‘Corrente’.

By contrast, the ‘Sarabande’ required a calm body to allow the lyrical nature of this movement to flow through. A changing pulse was required, with the first bar being divided into crotchet followed by minim, then the following bar with a minim followed by a crotchet. This division of beat continued throughout the movement. Fingering required work to perform precise ornamentation throughout the ‘Sarabande’.

The final movement of the Partita required the most preparation. The compositional style of the ‘Gigue’ was difficult to perform. It required good technique from my shoulder to fingertip, and work on actual movement of the fingers. I found that I needed to work on having the thumb move with the rest of my hand to release the tension that was building in my hand muscles. An even arm balance weight on each playing finger ensured an even tone throughout, and this was helped by constant bellows pressure from beginning to end. For flowing passages my arm needed to move with my fingers, not remain behind, so the rhythmic pulse could be achieved. Releasing notes slightly before the end of a tie helped to achieve the syncopated affect of Bach’s writing.

The final part of my preparation involved listening to recordings particularly those made by Glenn Gould and Claudio Arrau. This listening work helped me form the complete structure of the Partita.
On my return to Australia I continued to develop my articulation technique and turned to the metronome to help with direct placement of the beat. The time difference in the tones reaching the audience led to me playing before the beat so that the audience would hear on the beat.

The final work for this recital was Astor Piazzolla’s (1921 – 1992) *Five Tango Sensations*. Although already familiar with works by Piazzolla, I had never played a bandoneon until studying with Peter Soave at Wayne State University, in Detroit. Many concert accordionists are incorporating works by Piazzolla into their repertoire both as chamber and solo works. As a chromatic bandoneon exists it is possible for an accordionist to learn the bandoneon with relative ease, provided they understand the music. This means that the repertoire of the concert accordion can be expanded and aimed towards a wider market.

After initial lessons on the fingering and positioning of notes Soave helped me commence work on Piazzolla’s *Five Tango Sensations*. As I was aiming to achieve the emotional quality and breath control of the bellows needed for Piazzolla’s music, vocal lessons were organised with a tenor from the Detroit Opera. Bellows are the lungs on the accordion, so understanding the phrasing for the voice can help an accordionist achieve the long melodic lines and phrasing control required of their bellows. To continue with my development of this style of music hours were spent listening to recordings of Astor Piazzolla, Joe Pass, Frank Sinatra and Django Reinhardt and researching the history of Piazzolla.

For this recital *Five Tango Sensations* was presented on the accordion, as I did not own a bandoneon. Although no changes needed to be made to the score, there is a timbre difference between bandoneon and accordion. As the title suggests, this work deals with the senses, and each movement is titled with a descriptive sense:

- Asleep
- Loving
Each movement posed different technical problems in my preparation. The first movement, *Asleep*, needed to capture the imagination of the audience and create a sense of atmosphere. To define the atmosphere I needed to focus on my body. As a performer I generally move with the music; I needed to change this to a still body with all focus on the music and its atmosphere of stillness. Through videotaping I was able to watch how much I moved as a performer, and to see whether or not this improved through practice. While working on the phrasing of *Asleep* I focused on “al niente” technique, where the performer works with the finger over the button, sliding off to the sides while decreasing bellows pressure to achieve a dying end to the phrase. This technique would also work in reverse, to help achieve a growth at the start of a phrase. Using this technique produces a softer, gentle tone to the accordion. A flowing arm movement helped create a legato tone and work on the level of depression of buttons helped to control the tone of the accordion. To achieve a performance similar to that of a bandoneon I worked on registration and the combination of manuals. The use of a 16 foot reed and an 8 foot reed outside of cassotto produced a tone similar to that of the bandoneon but with more power.

In the ensemble preparation work time was an issue. The accordion needed to perform with rubato throughout, but the ensemble needed to maintain the strict beat of the tempo. Tuning was also an issue, with the initial first violinist ceasing to be a member after the first set of rehearsals and a new first violinist being hired close to performance date.

The second movement, *Loving*, is open to interpretation by the performer. It is notated by Piazzolla in sparse semibreves, and improvising is encouraged. I worked on creating different emotions through my improvisation. The initial
statement of the theme was sparse, with only the basics presented. On the second statement of the theme I varied the ornamentation to create tension and unrest. The third statement was varied by the introduction of both manuals, more involved ornamentation and chromatic run work, which led to a new theme and mood. Rhythmic precision and a sparser ornamentation helped to generate a different mood, Pulse was of great importance in this area. Ensemble rehearsal work proved difficult, as the strings followed the interpretation of the accordion instead of keeping the beat. However, through listening to recordings of Piazzolla the second movement began to take shape.

As a performer, the third movement, Anxiety, generated more technical problems than the other movements. In my arranging of the score I decided to open with both manuals instead of just the right hand manual. To achieve a threatening feel, I sustained the lower octave note throughout the entry of the upper octave right-hand note. This effect continued into the main body of the work. To achieve a precise staccato I worked on my wrist staccato technique. In the contrasting molto cantabile I found that in rehearsal the second finger of my right hand was generating an accent. To achieve the evenness in tone I needed to listen to all entry points of the theme and control the pressure of my arm on the finger. Working on bellows pressure and changes ensured a close imitation of the bandoneon.

The fourth and fifth movements of the Five Tango Sensations posed the major problems in ensemble work. Despertar is the longest movement of the piece, and also the movement where the accordion is acting in more of an ensemble role. Maintaining a rhythmic pulse throughout the main body of this movement was difficult to achieve, as was the balancing of manuals on the accordion. In my preparation I experimented with reversing the hands, but ultimately decided to perform the part as written. Depression of sustained notes was focused on with a half-depression technique used for the sustaining notes under a moving quaver passage. In the ensemble rehearsal time we worked on precise entry points, rubato of the solo instruments and the balance of the ensemble. Predominantly
this was achieved through recording the practices and adjusting the parts after discussion.

The fifth movement, *Fear*, required an equal energy level and mimicking of articulation from all players. Composed as a fugue, the entry of each part was a focus of all rehearsals. The feel and articulation needed to be the same in all entries. Discussing the accents, dynamic entry level and delivery of the rhythm helped achieve a balance among all parts. A decision was made by the group to shorten the tied minim of the subject in all parts. This resulted in a similar delivery of the subject and rhythmic precision across the group. Control of the tempo became an issue as the energy levels rose throughout the performance. The preparation also involved work on precise unified rhythmic delivery, in particular for the final bar.

In the lead-up to the final performance the change of first violinist affected the rehearsal time. Time needed to be spent on adjusting to the pitch, style and interpretation of a new player. Ensemble preparation suffered in the initial rehearsals, but through adjusting the level of rubato a cohesive ensemble was achieved for the performance.

The bandoneon is at some times acting as a soloist and at others an integral part of the ensemble. As part of my preparation for the performance an ensemble needed to be formed. The ensemble was called “The Piazzolla Quartet” and was made up of session musicians who have a vast knowledge of various styles of music. My work on the music of Astor Piazzolla and Argentinean tango has developed from the inclusion of this work in my recital.

### 4.4 Professional artist development

*Raffaele Marcellino and Midnite*

In October 2004 OzOpera and Orchestra Victoria approached me to audition for an upcoming production of a new children’s opera, *Midnite* (Appendix 6 - DVD).
The scoring involved a continuous accordion part which required a high level of
technique, understanding of contemporary music and an ability to work with a
score that was still being written. I was accepted for accordion part and met with
the composer Raffaele Marcellino, the Dean at the Australian Institute of Music.
We discussed the specifications of the accordion, stylistic writing and also the
education of accordionists in Australia. The accordion part for *Midnite* continued
to be worked on throughout the short rehearsal time and into performances.

Six rehearsals were scheduled for this production; there were to be eight
performances, as part of the Melbourne International Arts Festival. All
performance were held at the Athenaeum Theatre, Melbourne.

At the conclusion of *Midnite* I met once again with Marcellino to discuss the
education and promotion of the accordion in Australia. The result was the
commencement of accordion studies at the Australian Institute of Music within
their Bachelor of Music (Classical) degree and the Bachelor of Music
(Contemporary) degree.

*Recording of the NSW Youth Accordion Orchestra*

Throughout all my studies the education of young musicians has always been a
driving force. The need to inspire, technically improve, expand the knowledge of
repertoire, and continue an education in music has been a continuous source of
motivation. One of the main problems in Australia has been the lack of
acceptance of the accordion as an examinable concert instrument with a varying
repertoire. In many cases high school music teachers do not explore the full
capabilities of the accordion and encourage students to either drop school music
studies or change instruments. To counteract this I formed a youth accordion
orchestra.

The NSW Division Youth Orchestra was formed in 2002 specifically to attend the
World Accordion Orchestra Championships that are held in Innsbruck, Austria
every three years. With fundraising, practice and hard work, the youth orchestra
competed successfully at these competitions and toured Germany and Austria. This marked a major achievement for a young Australian accordion orchestra. The age range is from 8 years to 21 years, with an adult for bass accordion.

To continue with the development of the orchestra, tours to New Zealand have been held yearly, and a tour of the United States is being organised. The recording of a CD of the orchestra (Appendix 7 - CD) as part of my doctorate has been included, to demonstrate:

- The versatility of the instrument;
- Original accordion orchestra works of a concert level;
- Traditional music for the accordion, showing its folk roots; and
- My ability as a musical director, educator and conductor.

_Irische Suite_, by Matyas Seiber, was a major achievement for the orchestra. It is a large orchestral work with four movements, so a year of preparation was involved, with weekly rehearsals and parts of lesson times devoted to the piece. With this recording a sense of achievement and success was felt by all students involved. _Extompt in C sharp minor_ by Russian composer E. Derbenko demonstrates the development of the young advanced accordion student in Australia. Other tracks show the diverse repertoire available on the accordion, from tangos to Russian folk melodies.

_Solo recording November 2005_

This recording (Appendix 8 - CD) is intended to show my development as a solo artist on the accordion. While recording I was working on accordion technique specifically discussed with Joseph Macerollo. Macerollo has a unique way of viewing the playing of the accordion. His principal way of expressing his views is through the concept of “Time and Tone”. Many accordionists struggle at the top level of their playing to produce a unique tone on the accordion. Many try to copy
the performance styles of pianists or organists instead of developing knowledge of how the accordion works and how to produce a different tone for the type of music and emotion involved. This control is produced on numerous levels.

a) Tone Control – through the use of bellows pressure you can control the tone that you are producing. As a performer you must experiment with different bellows pressure on a single note to produce a tone that is suitable. At the same time you must work on how to approach a note. Will it be from above, below, on top? Where is the entry level of the dynamic level? For example, on a crotchet beat, should the dynamic level change on the first semiquaver pulse, or the second, third or fourth? The balance of the hands is also involved – they should be two independent units, thought of as horizontal not vertical.

This is always dependent upon context. The overall aim is to extend the basic principle that is currently the push/pull action for the bellows to produce dynamic level and the approach of playing the note with the finger. In regard to balance of the hands, the majority of accordionists in Australia are taught that hand balance will be the same in both hands because the bellows control air pressure to both manuals. The approach to the notes can change this.

As the difference between an excellent performance and a “special performance” comes down to how tone is produced, the performance of even a single tone can create a special atmosphere.

b) Time – the concept of rhythm. The performance of contemporary music on the accordion, whether a solo piece or a chamber piece, always involves intense rhythmic passages. All rhythmic passages must be broken down into micro-rhythms to achieve a point of entry. Without this a solo piece will not have its definition, and in a chamber situation the other players need to know their point of entry. This can be achieved through subtle movements of the body.

With the above technical points I created a recording demonstrating the tone of the accordion.
Prelude 12 for Accordeon (Track 1), by Edward McGuire, featured in my first recital. With new technical approaches I studied this work again. In the recording I aim to achieve more precise time and unique tone.

Offertoire (Track 2) and Offertoire in E (Track 3), both by C. Franck (1822 – 1890), were selected to show the tone achievable on the accordion. In preparing these works I concentrated on my dynamic level and approach to the notes. I required a legato sound throughout, and discovered that by sliding between buttons a rounder tone could be produced.

Nightfall (Track 4), by Australian composer Robert Allworth, presented problems in regard to tone. The dynamic level of the entry was a specific point of concern, as it was directly related to the image being created. After experimentation, decisions were made and marked onto the score.

The music of Astor Piazzolla is suitable to demonstrate the expressive and tonal qualities of the accordion. Tanti Anni Prima (Track 5) was arranged for the concert accordion by Peter Soave. It requires complete control of bellows and finger articulation. La Chiquilin (Track 6) is an expressive vocal work which I arranged for accordion. Articulation was important in this piece, as was the dynamic entry level of each note. S.V.P. (Track 7) has been included to demonstrate a different style of work and the tone that can be created for a staccato dance-oriented work.

Collaboration with composer Stephen Lalor

In 2006 my collaboration with Australian composer Stephen Lalor (1962 - ) developed. Lalor has a diverse background as a performer, composer, teacher and contributor to music coursework for schools and tertiary institutions. A player of stringed instruments, keyboard, electric guitar/bass and other instruments, he has performed professionally in popular, classical and world music arenas. Lalor has had two extensive study periods at the Tchaikovsky Conservatorium in Kiev, Russia. The Tchaikovsky Conservatorium has a world-renowned folk instrument
department where the bayan, balalaika and domra are studied. As a result of his
time there, Lalor’s compositions are influenced by Eastern European
compositional traditions, the nuances of the Balkan dances, the unique rhythms
of Eastern Europe’s traditional music and the works of Bela Bartok. As Australia’s
foremost mandolin performer and performer of Russian stringed instruments, the
playing techniques of plucking and bowing also influence his works.

The supporting recording (Appendix 9 - CD) demonstrates the work that has
been undertaken by Stephen Lalor and myself during 2006/2007. All tracks are
compositional sketches by Lalor which show his background influences.
Improvisation was experimented with in these recordings and for me this was
growth as a performer, as improvisation was one music skill that I had avoided.
The recording session also allowed experimentation with microphoning an
accordion for recording work. Through experimentation with the sound engineer it
was decided that two mics from above and two mics from below captured the
tone, body and power of the accordion.

*Kammermusik* Op.24 No.1

Hindemith’s (1895 – 1963) *Kammermusik* Op.24 No.1 is a four-movement work
scored for flute/piccolo, clarinet, bassoon, trumpet, piano, percussion, violins,
cello, double bass and accordion. Composed in 1921, it is the very first orchestral
piece composed by a classical composer to include the concert accordion. The
orchestral works including accordion that preceded it were composed for diatonic
accordion – Tchaikovsky’s *Orchestral Suite No.2*, Giordano’s opera *Fedora* and
Charles Ives’ *Orchestral Set No.2*.

*Kammermusik* Op.24 No.1 is one of the earliest examples of the
composer/performer/manufacturer triangle. As a composer, Hindemith felt that
the concert accordion performers had advanced sufficiently, technically and
musically, to perform his music. The advancement of the concert accordionists
was directly linked to the development of the chromatic accordion at the German
Hohner factory. Hohner had only just released a 9-row accordion with standard
bass and free bass. The accordion had therefore developed to meet the composer’s expectations.

My performance of this work was with the “Australia Ensemble” in the Clancy Auditorium, University of New South Wales, on 9 September 2006. The concert was recorded live by ABC ClassicFM and broadcast on 11 October 2006.

To perform on the accordion with some of Australia’s leading chamber and solo musicians was a major highlight for me. Two problems to overcome during the rehearsals were the balancing of the accordion against the trumpet and percussion, and complete rhythmic stability. I found that as Hindemith had composed *Kammermusik No.1* for the early 9-row piano accordion of Hohner, some minor changes needed to take place on the score. On the bayan a switch is required to change between standard bass and free bass, while on a 9-row accordion the performer can jump between the two bass systems. Often there was no time to change, so standard bass work was often performed on the free bass. However this did not result in any pitch or timbral differences; it was only the technical difficulty that increased.

Reviews of this concert were published in Sydney newspapers. The title from the review in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on Wednesday, 13 September 2006 by Graeme Skinner reads

*Even the accordion gets an outing*

The excerpt on the Hindemith from this review read:

*By comparison, Paul Hindemith’s Kammermusik No.1 remains a sort of musical museum piece, a catalogue of modernist possibilities as conceived in the Germany of 1922. It is fascinating and witty for all that, and its antic circus sounds and military band spoofs (pre-echoes of Cabaret) are not technically undemanding in performance. At least there was not the faintest whiff of formaldehyde in this latest showing, with Dene Olding conducting an ensemble of 12, notable for the egalitarian inclusion, in such hallowed halls, of an accordion.*
This review sparked a controversy within accordion circles and academic colleagues. The review was viewed by some as complimentary tone, and by others as derogatory. To draw my own personal conclusion, I translated certain sections into everyday understandings. For me, *At least there was not the faintest whiff of formaldehyde* refers to the cleansing of race that was taking place in Germany at the time of Hindemith’s composition, while *notable for the egalitarian inclusion* refers to the principle of equal rights. It has been my aim to achieve an equal position for the accordion on both the concert platform and academic field, and was pleased to see that the review responded to those aims positively.

### 4.5 Summary of performances, recordings and collaborations

The performance component of my research was designed to support my work as a professional musician and educator in Australia. The performances and recordings focus on advanced contemporary repertoire for the accordion as a solo instrument and part of a chamber ensemble, pedagogical repertoire, and the development of technique. In the period of my research I have mirrored the development of the accordion that has taken place in Europe, America and Canada. The main difference has been the time factor. While my work has taken place and been implemented from the late 1990s into the early 2000s, similar work took place overseas between the late 1950s and the early 1960s. Referring to the material discussed in Chapter 3, the relationship between performer, composer and tertiary institutions may be related as described in the diagram below.
The supporting material has been designed to reflect the development of the above diagram on a personal level. The work submitted has shown direct connections between the performer, the composer and the development of tertiary institutions within Australia. Through my performances Australian repertoire for the concert accordion has grown, and this has been mirrored in the education of accordionists and musicians.

In preparing for all my performances I actively sought literature on the composers and their compositional processes, and literature on performance preparation and process.
CHAPTER FIVE

Advanced concert accordion repertoire and the young female accordion student

5.1 Outline of the case study

Methodology

To examine the challenges presented by advanced level concert accordion literature, three students from my music studio were selected to participate in a study that investigated the pedagogical aspects of studying advanced concert repertoire for the accordion. The three students were investigated as a multiple case study, a ‘bounded system’ “involving in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context … bounded by time …” (Creswell 1998, p. 61). In-depth data was gathered through three approaches. To study the background of the students I designed a questionnaire, an instrument which Silverman (2005) describes as able to provide facts, attitudes or experiences rapidly. This data formed the basis of this study. I also mapped the development and practice skills of the participants while studying their first advanced concert repertoire piece through journal keeping and videotaping. Finally, the repertoire was performed by the students and evaluated by me. In undertaking this research, I obtained ethics approval from the UWS Ethics Committee.

Participants

The three female students, Melissa, Melina and Jane, were all in the age bracket of 15 years to 18 years, and all were members of my teaching studio at the time of the study. The names used in this document are not the actual names of the student participants.
Data collection

For Ronalds (2004), the journal offers ‘middle year’ students an opportunity to write reflectively about the enjoyment of the composing activity, and problems encountered and solved. The journal that the students kept allowed me to focus on the problems they encountered during their practice time and, in lesson time, help them solve these issues. Videotaping allowed me to correct postural issues and performance idiosyncrasies as they arose. The questionnaire asked about personal history, cultural influences, music education, repertoire, aspirations, level of acceptance and learning methods (see Table 1).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>Questionnaire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Personal History** | Name  
Date of Birth  
Country of Birth  
Mother’s Country of Birth  
Father’s Country of Birth |
| **Cultural Influences** | 1) Cultural Influence (for example member of cultural group, language school, languages spoken at home etc) |
| **Music Education** | 2) Describe your very early (0–3 years) musical environment.  
3) Describe your earliest musical memories.  
4) What made you choose to learn the accordion?  
5) What was the first instrument that you played?  
6) Do you play any other instrument?  
7) What style of music did your first teacher play?  
8) How many other teachers have you had and what were their styles?  
9) What is your level of music theory/knowledge?  
10) What is, and has been, your involvement in musical groups? |
| **Repertoire** | 11) Name 2–5 pieces in each area, including full title and composer/arranger.  
i) Examination material  
ii) Competition material  
iii) Public performances  
12) In which venues have you performed?  
13) Has the choice of venue/audience ever influenced your repertoire choice? If so give examples of how this has determined your program choice.  
14) Name up to 5 pieces (from within the categories below) which you have listened to. Include title and composer. Briefly comment on each piece with regard to whether you would:  
i) Perform it  
ii) Recommend the work to others your age  
iii) Study works in the same style, or the same composer.  
(Please limit to works involving the accordion)  
Traditional/Folk  
Contemporary  
Classical  
World Music eg. Klezmer, Cajun, Zydeco, Celtic, Brazilian etc  
Australian  
Jazz  
Piazzolla  
Chamber |
| **Aspirations** | 15) Do you plan on continuing your accordion studies through the Australian Music Examination Board or any other internationally recognized examination system? If yes, to what level?  
16) Are you planning to pursue your accordion studies at a tertiary level? If so, will you be studying in Australia or overseas (name the country)?  
17) What style of music do you plan to continue studying to an advanced level?  
18) To what performance level do you aspire?  
19) If you are planning to teach the accordion or any other music subject, at what level can you envisage?  
20) Which accordionist do you admire the most and why? |
| **Level of Acceptance** | 21) Describe how you have found, on a personal level, the acceptance of the accordion within your community. Consider discussing cultural and educational aspects, for example. |
| **Learning Methods** | 22) Outline your approach to practice.  
23) Outline your approach to preparation for performance.  
24) What repertoire would you like to study at an advanced level? Name 2–5 pieces including full title and composer. |
Analysis

The questionnaires were subjected to a content analysis, seeking commonalities and differences in the three students’ responses. The journals were also analysed for common and different approaches to the pedagogical challenges presented by the repertoire. The video was analysed by comparative development.

5.2 Findings

Personal history – cultural background

While all students were born in Australia, both Melina and Jane had one parent born overseas, and Melissa had both parents born overseas. Their cultural backgrounds played an important role in their musical development. Two have been members of a folkloric group, and all have attended functions with cultural influences. Melissa and Melina are fluent in the language of their cultural background: Melissa has Serbian as her home language, and Melina attends Saturday language school to study Italian. Jane, who is of Lebanese background, is studying German at school.

Music education

One of the students, Melina, had an early level of exposure to music, remembering going to performances in a community hall. The students’ first memories of music are diverse, with Melissa remembering competitions and examinations, and the other two students remembering the initial stages of learning an instrument. The choice of instrument was also varied. For Melissa, the accordion was chosen by her father, as it is a traditional instrument from Serbia; the other two students chose the instrument themselves through listening exposure. For two of the students the accordion was their first instrument, and for one it was a second instrument. All three students can also play piano, and Melina is studying the trumpet and percussion as well.
The initial learning experience was with teachers other than me. Melissa was initially taught by a teacher with tertiary qualifications and a classical background, the other two by a teacher with a traditional accordion background. Melissa has had two teachers with classical training and four teachers for Serbian music. Her exposure to different teaching techniques has been high. The other two students have only had two accordion teachers. All students have only had limited exposure to the theory of music.

All three students have considerable experience of group playing. The three students are all members of the Accordion Society of Australia (ASA) orchestra and the two school-aged students are members of school ensembles and bands. Melissa also performs regularly for Serbian events with her father, who is a guitarist. Through performing with the ASA orchestra and also through cultural groups, all three students have had a high exposure to performing in national clubs, such as the Russian Club, Serbian Clubs, Club Marconi (Italian), German Clubs, Austrian Clubs and nursing homes founded by the Italian community. This range of venues has affected the repertoire choice.

In regard to exposure to the accordion in its various styles, the students’ experiences have been limited. While all had knowledge of some contemporary works and classical works, the scope of material listened to for jazz, Piazzolla, and ‘world’ was very limited. No student had listened to Australian works or chamber works. For traditional/folk, two of the students had a high level of experience.

Overall, the aspirations of the students were positive, taking into consideration their youth. Melissa, who is currently studying at a university level, had the highest level of aspiration. She plans to complete a Bachelor’s degree, follow through with AMEB examinations, increase her knowledge of music theory and teach music privately. The two students of school age also show a relatively high level of aspirations considering their stage of academic development. Both students plan to continue with their AMEB examinations, although neither plans
to continue her studies to a tertiary level at this stage. The choice of music for study is also based more around enjoyment than achieving a level of technical development. This is in contrast to the tertiary-level student, who wants to expose herself to music for development.

Each student is inspired by different accordionists. For Melissa, her teachers are her greatest inspiration, while for Melina and Jane accordionists of Italian and American background have been the most influential. Bill Palmer, Bill Hughes and Peter Frosini are all accordionists and educators from the 1960 era. They composed music for the accordion that is entertaining and enjoyable. This result does at least partly reflect the differences in the age groups.

*Level of acceptance*

Two of the students found that the accordion is admired and accepted within their school and family community. Melissa found that the accordion is relatively unknown and the understanding of its capabilities is not known. This was also the case for Melina. All students noted that within their cultural community, the accordion has a high level of acceptance.

5.3 Conclusions and implications regarding student history and education

The findings have several implications for teachers of accordion, school music teachers and composers. For all students, the level of exposure to music of the contemporary accordion repertoire, chamber repertoire, world music and jazz was relatively low. The students have a more thorough knowledge of traditional accordion music because of the music that is taught, the technique learnt and their listening exposure to traditional music and early accordion repertoire (from the 1960s). Contemporary repertoire was virtually unknown.

To help students learn more about their chosen instrument, there is a need to introduce contemporary repertoire into their learning process as early as
possible. Although there are now many advanced works for the concert accordion, there is a lack of interesting and accessible original repertoire for the young accordionist. Composers need to be encouraged to write new works that children find enjoyable. The piano has such a repertoire, with composers such as Sonny Chua, Martha Mier and Kieren Bailey composing interesting works for beginner piano students. An interaction with composers and performers has taken place with the concert accordion on an international level since the 1950s, but advanced works have been the dominant result.

All students found the accordion well accepted within their cultural community, and the level of acceptance within school and tertiary institutions is also growing. In regard to acceptance of the accordion in the classroom and school ensemble, it is the responsibility of the school music teacher to think beyond the usual school ensemble instruments. The accordion is capable of providing the melodic line as well as harmony and rhythm and accompaniment. A well-informed student would always be able to work alongside the school music teacher in regard to capability of the instrument.

The aspirations of the students, although varied, are encouraging. The findings indicate that for students progressing into advanced accordion studies and advanced concert accordion repertoire, there needs to be an acceptance of the role which is part of accordion history – to encourage composers, performing groups and venues to let them perform.

5.4 Repertoire choice

The three students were each given a repertoire list of six advanced concert accordion works. All the lists were compiled from the questionnaire answers. Recordings were issued to help with the choice of work. Although guided by me through the repertoire list compilation, the final choice of work to be studied rested with the student (see Table 2).
Table 2 Repertoire choice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Melissa</td>
<td>S. Gubaidulina</td>
<td>De Profundis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>V. Holmboe</td>
<td>Sonata Op.134A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Lorentzen</td>
<td>Tears</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>O. Schmidt</td>
<td>Toccata No.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W. Semjonow</td>
<td>Don Rhapsodie Nr.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W. Semjonow</td>
<td>Don Rhapsodie Nr.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melina</td>
<td>S. Gubaidulina</td>
<td>Et Exspecto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Nordheim</td>
<td>Flashing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Takahashi</td>
<td>Like A Water Buffalo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>E. McGuire</td>
<td>Prelude 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Aho</td>
<td>Sonata No.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>P. Norgard</td>
<td>Introduction and Toccata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jane</td>
<td>L. Berio</td>
<td>Sequenza XIII</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S. Mossenmark</td>
<td>Wood Spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tiensuu</td>
<td>Aufschwung</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A. Bibalo</td>
<td>Sonata Quais Una Fantasia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M. Lindberg</td>
<td>Jeux D’Anches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>W. Semjonow</td>
<td>Guelder Rose</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As none of the students had in-depth knowledge of concert accordion works, the outside factors influencing their choices were minimal. Listening and studying the score became their main source of information. Reasons for the students’ choice
of repertoire varied. Melissa decided on *Don Rhapsodie Nr.1* by W. Semjonow. Her Serbian background influenced her choice, as Semjonow has drawn upon Russian folk music as a melodic and harmonic backdrop. Melina decided to study Per Norgard’s *Introduction and Toccata*. The rhythmical nature of this piece was her greatest influence. Jane decided to study W. Semjonow’s *Guelder Rose*. The stirring Russian melody and the length of piece were the greatest influencing factors for her.

Of the three works chosen for study, two came from the Russian traditional school where the composer was also the performer. Both these pieces are of a high level, and demonstrate the technical, virtuosic and dynamic expression of the accordion. Per Norgard’s *Introduction and Toccata* is more avant garde in its melodic and harmonic conception, and although the composer is not an accordionist, the piece demonstrates the wonderful rhythmic nature of the accordion. Per Norgard’s association with the accordion was developed through the work of Mogens Ellegaard.

**5.5 The lessons**

In the initial lesson students were given verbal information on the composer and structure of the work chosen. The life history of the composer plays an important role from both a stylistic and a technical point of view. For Melissa and Jane, who studied works by W. Semjonow, the information on the composer was drawn from websites. Such information tended to give birth year, musical history and examples of major compositions.¹¹


Viatcheslav Semionov was born in 1946 in the ancient city of Trubchevsk, Bryansk (about 300km south of Moscow). Following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, he began playing the bayan (chromatic accordion) at the age of 7. After his father’s initial tuition he continued his studies at the Rostov Art College and the Gnessins’ Musical Pedagogical Institute in Moscow (now called the Russian Gnessins Academy of Music), one of the great musical centres in Russia.

At 21 years of age his international career began, when he started to take part in accordion competitions in Klingenthal, Germany (1967), Sofia, Bulgaria (1968) and Berlin, Germany (1973),
For Melina, who studied the work *Introduction and Toccata* by the composer Per Nørgaard, similar information was provided.\(^{12}\)

With Nørgaard there is an important link to one of the earliest composers for the concert accordion, Vagn Holmboe. Holmboe collaborated with the Danish accordionist Mogens Ellegaard to produce some longstanding concert accordion repertoire, including *Sonata No.1*.

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The art of seeing eternity in a grain of sand: Per Nørgård (b. 1932) is one of the most original artists in the cultural life of Denmark. His work and efforts as composer, teacher, and theorist through almost half a century has had an enormous significance to the development of contemporary Danish art music. Nørgård has written works in all categories, for amateurs as well as for professionals: from large-scale operas to modest hymns, from simple movements to imposing edifices.

As a young man, Nørgård was a student of Vagn Holmboe, and indeed his early works display that he was inspired by the Nordic character of his teacher. From this period, the 1st Symphony and Constellations for strings are key works. During the last half of the 1950s, Nørgård expanded his compositional field of vision by exploring the new possibilities in the Central European modernism. His occupation with new structural approaches led to the discovery of the so-called infinity row, a serial system or musical growth principle which can be compared to the symmetrical formations of nature. This way of composing has been compared with fractional geometrical forms — edifying structures in an indefinite, hierarchical system. Amongst the works that employ this technique, the significant 3rd Symphony assumes a prominent position.
a) Melissa

In the first lesson with Melissa the first movement of the *Don Rhapsodie Nr. 1* was explored. Questions were used to provoke Melissa into an analytic approach to the work:

- What terminology is used throughout the movement, including Italian terms and accordion terms?
- What role does the introduction play in the first movement?
- How can the parts not playable on the piano accordion be transcribed in such a way that the melodic and harmonic work of the composer is reflected?

Through analytical questioning Melissa developed an understanding of the structure of the work, the traditional influences that are apparent in Semionov’s compositional style and the notation that is common with Russian composers. She had a thorough understanding of the technical difficulties she would face and an initial outline of how to overcome these problems. With these questions answered, work commenced, and fingerings and alterations to voicing were added to the score.

The first movement was studied for one month before moving onto the second movement. Throughout the month 4 lessons were given, with only part of the time spent on the *Don Rhapsodie Nr. 1*. Each lesson was videotaped to provide reference at a later date, and also to view any posture difficulties.

Melissa’s journal outlined her practice regime and personal thoughts on the work. Because of the traditional style of the composition, Melissa found the harmonic nature of the work appealing. Her major difficulty lay in actually performing the chordal structure, and this was due to her hand size. With discussion in lesson time we worked on a suitable re-voicing of the chords that allowed the harmonic
structure to be maintained but allowed her, as a performer, to achieve confidence.

Her approach to the work was thorough. She spent much time on hands separate work before attempting to put the two hands together. As her practice time increased from 30 minutes to approximately 3 hours every day, more of the first movement was covered and her musical understanding of the work grew.

When the notes of the first movement had been studied and corrected the second movement was added to her practice. Her study of the second movement commenced in the second month of the study, and the approach used for the first movement was again used.

Unlike the first movement, the second movement created difficulties due to length and technical problems. Melissa currently has a new accordion on order with the Pigini factory in Italy. The instrument that she is performing on is a borrowed accordion with converter left-hand system. The chromatic basses on this instrument do not cover the full range of a concert instrument and alterations to the score became a constant battle.

We experimented with registration, chord voicing, and alteration in pitch in each lesson, and suggestions for a practice routine were made. Different possibilities for sections that created problems were pencilled into the score, with Melissa to practise all and decide what was possible. This was then demonstrated in the next lesson, and after discussion, a final interpretation was decided.

After two months of study the halfway point of the second movement was reached, and the work became easier to approach due to an increase in the standard bass work. While still practising the first movement and working through the second movement, a joint decision was made to start work on the third movement.

The third movement is considered the most technically demanding by all concert accordionists. It is regularly performed in International competitions as a “stand
alone” work. Reminiscent of the first movement, the third movement grows into a powerful musical work. In the excerpt from the third movement of Don Rhapsodie Nr.1 (Excerpt 1) the technical difficulties of ricochets (bar 8 to bar 14), tremolo, sustaining notes below a moving part and range can be seen.

Excerpt 1  Don Rhapsodie Movement 3, Wjatscheslaw Semjonow, p. 20, Intermusik Schmulling, 1979

For Melissa the upper register of the left-hand manual needed to be transposed down the octave due to the limitations of the accordion. With no 4 foot reed
available on her accordion, the timbre shifted dramatically from the composer’s intentions. Registration for the right hand also required alteration due to the limited choice of registrations on her instrument. Correct timing of the ricochets also created an unforeseen technical difficulty for her. Metronome practice was required throughout, due to problems with a shifting time signature.

Melissa’s journal continued to outline her thoughts and practice regime. Each entry mirrors her original practice structure of hands separate work followed by hands together work. This was then consolidated into sectional work to master areas of technical and rhythmical difficulty (see excerpt 1).

While working on the *Don Rhapsodie Nr.1* Melissa was preparing for recitals at the Australian Institute of Music, competitions held in Australia by the Accordion Society of Australia, and competitions held in New Zealand organised by the New Zealand Accordion Association. Prior to achieving a concert level of the *Don Rhapsodie Nr.1* and participating in the competitions, Melissa’s tore tendons in her shoulder. A presentation of the *Don Rhapsodie Nr.1* as outlined in my proposal of this case study to the ethics committee at the University of Western Sydney was not possible. The practice time involved, the strength required to generate the correct tone and work on ricochets had damaged her shoulder. Doctors, physiotherapists, osteopaths were consulted and x-rays and ultrasounds conducted. Time was the only healer, and her participation in the case study ceased after five months.

b) Jane

In the first lesson with Jane the accessibility of studying *Guelder Rose* was discussed. For Jane this was the first time a work from the advanced concert level repertoire was to be studied. Jane, at the commencement of this case study, had only been studying the free bass system for one year. With a natural understanding of music and persistence with her practice, her advancement on the free bass system was rapid. To help Jane with her understanding of *Guelder Rose* questions were used to provoke an analytical approach to the work.
• What is the meaning of the terminology used throughout, including Italian terms and accordion terms?

• What role does the introduction play?

• How can the parts not playable on the piano accordion be transcribed in such a way that the melodic and harmonic work of the composer is reflected?

For Jane the analytical questioning helped her build confidence with her musical knowledge and encouraged a belief in herself as being capable of performing a large work. The analytical questioning allowed me to build her knowledge and show her possible areas of technical difficulty in the middle of Guelder Rose. With these questions answered work commenced, with fingerings and alterations to voicing added to the score.

For the first week Jane concentrated on the introduction. The initial process involved sight reading during the lesson time and selecting areas of weakness to be focused on during practice time. These weaknesses included accordion score notation, rhythm, finger legato and sustaining of notes (see Excerpt 2, page 1 of the score).
Jane’s journal outlined her practice regime and personal thoughts on the work. Her approach to the work was thorough and encouraging. Much time was spent on hands separate work before putting hands together. As her practice time
increased and her musical knowledge increased, Jane was confident enough with her own ability to proceed further into *Guelder Rose* with no assistance. As a teacher helping a young student with advanced repertoire, it was encouraging to watch this development take place.

Within three months Jane had successfully performed for me in lesson time half of *Guelder Rose*. It was during this time that work on *Guelder Rose* lessened as Jane prepared to sit for her AMEB 6th Grade examination in the stradella accordion. This was closely followed by State competitions held by the Accordion Society of Australia and an orchestra tour to New Zealand. Both Jane and myself had hoped that *Guelder Rose* would have been ready for the competition schedule and then performed at the University of Western Sydney. However, due to the time restrictions with school, family and other musical presentations, *Guelder Rose* required more work to be ready for such a performance. Jane continued with her study of *Guelder Rose* and has discovered a rise in her technique and confidence.

The technique of legato articulation posed the major problem for Jane to overcome. Her ability to connect notes in the left hand through fingering was underdeveloped. This issue was increased by the lack of bellows control initially displayed. With continued reinforcement of legato technique and correct bellow markings on the score, this area of Jane’s performance improved. As a student who had a low level of exposure to the free bass system, Jane’s bass work needed more focus. Initially we worked on the correct register placement of notes, then moved to legato technique, followed by button depression to work on the balance of hands. The limited range of the piano accordion in the right hand meant time in lessons was spent discussing possible arrangements of runs, and voicing of chords. Unlike the chordal problems faced by Melissa, which were generated by hand size, Jane was able to stretch her hand to cover a larger distance. The structure of *Guelder Rose*, from a practice viewpoint, can be viewed as clearly defined sections. This was advantageous during the initial learning stages but became a hindrance when working on a final product. A
sense of unity within the work was missing. This was overcome through listening exercises and using linking thoughts between the sections.

c) Melina

Melina commenced the case study as the most promising student. Already an advanced performer who had studied the standard bass accordion for 12 years and the free bass accordion for 3 years, her left-hand technique was already highly developed. Her exposure to concert-level music was higher than Melissa’s and Jane’s, and her instrument was a piano keyboard version of the bayan. From the repertoire list Melina had chosen an avant garde work, more contemporary in nature than Melissa’s and Jane’s chosen works.

As with the Melissa and Jane, Melina’s lessons commenced with a discussion about the challenges presented in the work and the historical context of the piece. The discussion presented an initial context for Melina to commence studying the work. Included in the discussion was the form of the piece, which was important when designing a practice schedule. A joint decision to commence with the *Toccata* was reached, and as with Melissa and Jane the following questions were asked to seek an analytical approach to the work.

- What is the meaning of the terminology used throughout including Italian terms and accordion terms?

- What role does the introduction play?

- What role does the *Toccata* play?

- How can the parts not playable on the piano accordion be transcribed in such a way that the melodic and harmonic work of the composer is reflected?

- Rhythmic structure.
Page 1 of the *Toccata* (Excerpt 3) illustrates some of the problems encountered in the initial stages. As a teacher I was surprised at Melina’s lack of understanding of cut time – beats and pulses all required some discussion. As the opening is syncopated, much of the lesson time was spent clapping the rhythm, with particular attention given to bar seven onwards. Abbreviated musical signs, for example right-hand bar, required explaining, as did the move into three staves at the bottom of the page (see Excerpt 3).

Excerpt 3   Introduction and Toccata, Per Norgard, Oktav Musikforlag 1967, page 3
At the conclusion of the lesson Melina was set page 1 of the *Toccata* for practice, first hands separate, then hands together.

During the six months allowed for the purpose of this case study, five lessons covered the Introduction and Toccata. Only four of the lessons have been taped. After her initial enthusiasm to participate in the project, Melina lost interest in pursuing contemporary repertoire.

Factors in this loss of interest included: school commitments, competitions, part-time work as an accordionist in a local restaurant, and also a clearer view of what she wanted to achieve from her musical studies. I feel that Melina may have succeeded in the case study if a work from a Russian composer had been chosen. As with Melissa and Jane, personal background does influence the music one enjoys studying and performing.

### 5.4 Summary of the multiple case study

This case study highlighted many problems with the education of young concert accordionists in Australia. The three students who were selected to participate in the study are high achievers at school/university, and active within accordion circles of the Australasian region as competitors and performers. Their background, cultural influences and early music education promote a strong tradition with the accordion. All students had an exposure to the free bass accordion before commencing this case study and had an intermediate level of technique. The lack of exposure to contemporary accordion music had a major impact on their progress rate within the study; a growing lack of interest displayed by one student resulted in no major achievement by the end of the six-month period set for study.

For a young accordionist in Australia to achieve a concert level of performance, restructuring of their education will need to take place. Ideally, an introduction to
the free bass accordion in initial lessons would be of great benefit, but due to cultural pressures this may not be possible. Many students in Australia choose accordion because of their cultural background. As the accordion is a traditional instrument in countries such as Russia, Serbia, Italy, Germany and France etc, many students commence learning through either parent advice or grandparent advice – linking the accordion directly to their background. Traditional music is covered early, with virtuosic entertainment music from composers like Frosini and Diero rapidly following. This introduction to the accordion develops a good technique and immediate gratification for all parties involved. Contemporary and classical music is often ignored, unless an arrangement for standard bass is provided.

As the students progress with their studies, in particular during high school, time often becomes an issue. Jane and Melina are currently high school students studying music for their Higher School Certificate. Both students are top of their school music year and perform regularly for examinations and school concerts. Due to the “flashy” nature of the virtuosic entertainment music for accordion, they are regularly asked to play such pieces at school. This demands time in both their lessons and their practice schedule. This often affects other works being studied. When the final examinations approach, other repertoire needs to be performed and often this does not reach the level required due to time limitations. This has been reflected in this case study in Melina’s growing lack of interest in Per Norgard’s *Introduction and Toccata*, which was not immediately gratifying to her as a performer, and Jane’s not succeeding with learning *Guelder Rose* within the time frame allowed through limitations on practice time.

The older student, Melissa, would have achieved a solid performance of *Don Rhapsodie Nr.1* if physical problems had not arisen. These physical problems are also characteristic in students who practise long hours with an intensity to learn and achieve. Melissa is of small stature and frame, meaning that performing such a work as *Don Rhapsodie Nr.1* is demanding on her body. From the case study she has learnt how to manage her practice time better, and how to maintain her
body. Dance is being studied to strengthen her muscles, and regular visits to a physiotherapist to maintain suppleness are now part of her performance preparation.

As an educator I aim to introduce students to the free bass accordion before they start high school, at the approximate age of 11 years. This will allow the student to study a broader cross-section of music, and not limit them in future career paths. An introduction to the contemporary music composed solely for standard bass is being incorporated into lessons of all students, regardless of age. Without this exposure, students struggle to understand the melodic, harmonic, rhythmic and formal structure of concert-level accordion repertoire. Listening, attending competitions and attending concerts also forms part of their music education.

In summary, the study finds that a young accordionist studying in Australia could benefit from an education structure within these parameters:

- Early exposure to the accordion through either traditional music or “fun” standard bass repertoire;
- Early participation in competitions to gain exposure to more accordionists;
- Attendance at concerts focusing on classical and contemporary repertoire, regardless of instrumentation;
- Mixing with other accordionists within their region of Australia. For example, there are Accordion orchestras in Sydney, Melbourne, Perth and the Gold Coast;
- Before commencing high school, changing from standard bass to a converter accordion with free bass;
- During high school years, performing a broad cross-section of repertoire;
• Participation in school music ensembles – orchestra, jazz bands, string ensembles etc. Working with the school music teacher to educate the teacher as well as fellow students;

• Participation in overseas tours;

• Encouraging young accordionists to explore compositional techniques, either as young composers or collaborating with composers; and

• Participation in Australian Music Examination Board exams (practical and theoretical).

The results of this case study can help other accordion educators to shape the development of the young accordionist.

As student progress with their studies, it is important that they are exposed to the European level of concert accordion performance. This can be achieved through:

• Short overseas study tours;

• Participation in International competitions;

• Summer courses offered at European institutions and privately run courses in Europe; and

• Masterclass opportunities within the Australasian region.

To help with funding of this level of education, the Accordion Society of Australia provides sponsorship money (through fundraising). The three students who participated in the case study have all received financial support with their education. All three students have attended competitions and concerts in New Zealand; Jane and Melina have also toured Germany and Austria with the NSW Youth Accordion Orchestra. During this tour they participated in the World Accordion Orchestra Championships in Innsbruck, Austria. This was the first time that an orchestra from the Australasian region had participated. This tour,
including repertoire choice and musical direction, was organised by myself as president of the Accordion Society of Australia.

An education of music teachers is also required to see the level of concert accordion performances rise in Australia. Many music teachers still view the accordion as an instrument of little capability, more traditional than serious. Without a change in their viewpoint, participation in school music activities will not be possible. For the student studying at a tertiary level, involvement in chamber music is paramount to promoting the accordion and educating fellow students.
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The exegesis began by asking the following questions:

a) What are the compositional and technical issues inherent in advanced concert accordion repertoire and how can these be addressed by the performer?

b) How has the performance, composition and teaching of advanced concert accordion repertoire in Australia been influenced by the development of this level of repertoire worldwide?

c) How can the current generation of music students in Australia, both performers and composers, benefit from knowledge of the potential of the concert accordion?

This chapter draws together the historical development, personal artistic development and development of pedagogical issues facing the concert accordionist, and in doing so, responds to the three questions.

In Australia the concert accordion is developing into an accepted instrument, with students studying in high school, at a tertiary level and performing on the concert platform. As a result of its growth in popularity, composers are writing for the instrument, resulting in the growth of musicians' knowledge.

In 1927 the first accordion department was established in Russia and a wealth of accordion repertoire followed. The accordion was featured in concertos and solo concerts, continually educating composers, educators and the general public.
Accordion manufacturer Hohner established a conservatorium specifically devoted to the accordion, and pedagogy encouraging young accordionists to continue with their studies and performances. Mogens Ellegaard and Joseph Macerollo in the late 1950s to early 1960s encouraged composers to write for the accordion, educated young accordionists on the free bass and formed accordion departments at leading tertiary institutions.

On a smaller scale, a similar development occurred in Australia. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, accordionists focused on early American virtuoso music. The club scene was flourishing and accordionists were in great demand as entertainers. However, instead of broadening their knowledge and expanding the accordion repertoire, as accordionists overseas were doing, Australia stayed behind. Although the accordion was one of the most popular instruments during the 1960s, education on it was generally limited to traditional music of the player’s cultural background. As the club circuit diminished and a different style of music was sought by the public, accordionists turned to the keyboard. With the isolation of Australia from Europe, many new techniques and compositional notations specific to the accordion were misunderstood. As a result, the accordion maintained the stigma of being a non-serious instrument for an extended period of time.

The contrast between developments overseas and developments in Australia is highlighted through the education system. Until 2005 there was no accordion department in an Australian tertiary institution, although students had studied within Bachelor of Music Education or (as in my instance) Bachelor of Music (Performance) degree with a piano teacher. The depth of concert accordion repertoire in Australia did not increase until the 1990s, and currently the Australian Music Centre holds only 32 works that include accordion (as of 5 January 2007). Collaboration with composers, as has been discussed throughout this dissertation, is the principal way of increasing public awareness of the concert accordion. This method also helps to encourage a higher level of performance and education of fellow musicians.
In the recital component of my Doctoral studies I have presented a cross-section of concert-level works. The programs were designed to introduce the concert accordion to the general public, so there were high level pedagogical works, works in which the accordion was a chamber instrument, a selection of Australian concert accordion repertoire and a selection of works to demonstrate different compositional techniques, playing techniques and emotional states. The recordings that have been included, as part of my performance component, are examples of pedagogical works, Australian repertoire and chamber repertoire.

In selecting the recordings and live performances I have been able to showcase the concert accordion in Australia and my development as a concert performer through: selection of suitable transcriptions, inclusion of contemporary accordion works from Australia, Scandinavia, United Kingdom and Russia, World Music (including Piazzolla on accordion and bandoneon), improvisational skills, large-scale collaboration with composers through the opera Midnite and the first orchestral work that included the concert accordion in its instrumentation – Hindemith’s Kammermusik No.1.

Through analysis of my own performance preparation and the multiple case study, several issues emerged. Viewing the recent history of the concert accordion in Australia, the problems encountered in this level of education have reached an achievable solution, which can serve as a platform for further development of the concert accordion in Australia.

The manufacturer, performer and composer have shaped the concert accordion’s history, both overseas and in Australia, in a closely connected way, each causing the other to ask more of the instrument’s technical and sound capabilities (see Diagram 2). These connections are cyclic and therefore continuous. While Australia has no accordion manufacturers, the relationship between performer and composer exists, as does the relationship between performer, composer and tertiary institutions. This is reflected in my work in Australia. Through my work as a performer I have discovered a lack in the knowledge of my fellow musicians.
Many have been unaware of the full performance capabilities of the accordion. Through performing directly in this circle, a knowledge base is improved. This leads to collaborations with composers (both those at a student level and those who are established). Australian composers who have added to the accordion repertoire in Australia include: Margaret Brandman, who has composed *Firestorm* and arranged piano works for the accordion, Eric Gross, who has composed *Study for the Left Hand, The Sun Danced on Easter Morn, Concertino*, and *Tanghetto*, among other arrangements, and Raffaele Marcellino, who included accordion in his opera *Midnite*.

As an educator, I aim to encourage more young accordionists in Australia to continue with their studies on the concert accordion, collaborating with composers to develop a more in-depth and expansive repertoire for the concert accordion from Australian composers. As a performer I encourage other young accordionists to perform a wide range of different styles. The more exposure the accordion receives on a concert platform the more depth of repertoire we generate as performers.

Without the growth of each contributor the concert accordion would not have reached the concert stage. It is an instrument with many repertoire capabilities, including traditional/folk, world music, jazz, classical transcriptions and, finally, its own contemporary repertoire.
This dissertation shows the relationship that exists between the performer, educator and manufacturer. The history of the accordion is closely linked to the manufacturer, performer and composer. The same triangulation has also impacted on the pedagogical repertoire, concert repertoire and the academic
institutions. Curriculum offered by tertiary institutions is varied according to cultural influences. The relationship between composer and performer is highlighted through my own personal experiences with the Australian Music Examinations Board and the Australian Institute of Music.
IMAGES

Image 1: Sheng

Personal musical instrument

Image 2: Aura

www.ksanti.net/.../history/buschmannaura.jpg retrieved 22nd December 2006

Image 3: Handaoline

www.people.freenet.de/Akkordeonwelt/buschmann.gif retrieved 22nd December 2006

Image 4: Accordion

www.civilization.ca/arts/opus/images/opus54s.jpg retrieved 22nd December 2006

Image 5: Concertina

www.anglo-concertina.net/images/concertina_1.jpg retrieved 22nd December 2006

Image 6

ASA scale book from the Accordion Society of Australia Archives

Image 7

ASA scale book from the Accordion Society of Australia Archives
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**INTERVIEWS AND PROGRAMS**


*Soundstage Canada May ’81.* Program of events. Canada, 1981.

**DISCOGRAPHY**


Majken Bell, Jeanette Dryemose and The Danish Accordion Ensemble.
dacapo, 1994
APPENDICES

Appendix 1

CD: **Animi Causa**

Studio Recording January 2000
University of Western Sydney 2000

Track 1  *Diapson Movement*
John Keeble (1711 – 1786)

Track 2  *Pastorale*
Charles Wesley (1757 – 1834)

Track 3  *Sonate in D Major K 335*
Domenico Scarlatti (1685 – 1757)

Track 5 – 7  *Sonate in G Wq65/48*
1. Andantino
2. Adagio e sostenuto
3. Allegro
Carl Phillip Emanuel Bach (1714 – 1788)

Track 8  *Sonate in C minor K 11*
Domenico Scarlatti (1685 – 1757)

Track 9  *Sonate in C Major K 159*
Domenico Scarlatti (1685 – 1757)

Track 10  *Cornet Voluntary*
John Travers (1703 – 1758)

Track 11  *Air*
John Battishall (1738 – 1801)
Track 12  Adagio für Glasharmonika KV 356  
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 – 1791)

Track 13  Monastery of Ferapontow  
Wladislaw Solotarow (1942 – 1975)

Appendix 2

DVD: Recital of Selected Accordion Works

Live recording May 11th 2000
Performance Space, University of Western Sydney, Penrith Campus 2000

Track 1  Monastery of Ferapontow  
Wladislaw Solotarow (1942 – 1975)

Track 2  Suite Sacra for Accordion Solo  
Leif Kayser (1919 – 2001)

Track 3  Andante für eine Walze in eine kleine Orgel KV 616  
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 – 1791)

Track 4  Sonate in F Major K 82  
Domenico Scarlatti (1685 – 1757)

Track 5  Little Suite  
E. Derbenko (1949 - )

Appendix 3

DVD: Accordion Recital

Live recording 27th November 2000
Garrison Church, Millers Point, Sydney
Track 1  *Sonate in D minor K 1*
Domenico Scarlatti (1685 – 1757)

Track 2  *Sonate in D minor K 9*
Domenico Scarlatti (1685 – 1757)

Track 3  *Sonate in G minor K 10*
Domenico Scarlatti (1685 – 1757)

Track 4  From *Tango Studies for Accordeon*
Tango Study No.1 “Sneaking”
Tango Study No.2
Sven Erik Werner (1937 -)

Track 5  *Tanghetto con Bandoneon Op.227/4A*
Eric Gross (1926 -)

Track 6  *Asturias*
Issac Albeniz (1860 – 1909)

Track 7  *Rondo Capriccioso Op.14*
Felix Mendelssohn (1809 – 1847)

Track 8  *Sonata for Accordion Op.143a*
Vagn Holmboe (1909 – 1996)

Track 9  *Prelude 12 for Accordeon*
Edward McGuire (1948 -)

Track 10  *Concertino for Button Accordion (Bayan) and Plectrum Ensemble Op.241/2*
Eric Gross (1926 -)
Appendix 4

CD: *American Dream* (Jade records, JADCD 1090), 2003

Track 8  *Concertino for Button Accordion (Bayan) and Plectrum Ensemble Op.241/2*

Eric Gross (1926 - )

Appendix 5

DVD: *Art of Fugue*

Live recording 18th April 2002

The Playhouse, University of Western Sydney, Penrith Campus

Track 1  *Equivoque*

Christos Hatzis (1953 - )

Track 2  *Partita No.3 in A minor BWV 827*

1. Fantasia
2. Allemande
3. Corrente
4. Sarabande
5. Burlesca
6. Scherzo
7. Gigue

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685 – 1750)

Track 3  *Five Tango Sensations*

1. Asleep
2. Loving
3. Anxiety
4. Despertar
5. Fear
Astor Piazzolla (1921 – 1992)

Appendix 6
DVD: **Midnite**
Live Recording, October 2004
Athenaeum Theatre, Melbourne
Production by OzOpera and Orchestra Victoria
Raffaele Marcellino (1964 - )

Appendix 7
CD: **Recording of the NSW Youth Orchestra**
Studio Recording January 2002
University of Western Sydney, Penrith Campus
Track 1  **Ambassador**
Jeorg Draegar
Track 2  **Malinovie Zvon**
Traditional arr. R. Maio
Track 3  **Carmen**
George Bizet (1838 – 1875) arr. anon
Track 4  **Oci Ciornia**
Traditional arr. Lanaro
Track 5  **Die Juliska aus Budapest**
Fred Raymond (1900 – 1954) arr. A. Wurzer
Track 6 – 9  **Irische Suite**
Matyas Seiber (1905 – 1960)
Track 10  *El Choclo*
Angel Villoldo (1861 – 1919) arr. P. Deiro

Track 11  *Extompt in C sharp minor*
E. Derbenko (1949 - )

Track 12  *Zillertaler Hochzeitmarsch*
Traditional arr. Breitfuss

Appendix 8

**CD: Solo recording**

Studio recording October 2003

University of Western Sydney, Penrith Campus

Track 1  *Prelude 12 for Accordeon*
Edward McGuire (1948 - )

Track 2  *Offertoire*
C. Franck (1822 – 1890)

Track 3  *Offertoire in E*
C. Franck (1822 – 1890)

Track 4  *Nightfall*
Robert Allworth (1943 - )

Track 5  *Tanti Anni Prima*
Astor Piazzolla (1921 – 1992)

Track 6  *La Chiquilin*
Astor Piazzolla (1921 – 1992)

Track 7  *S.V.P*
Astor Piazzolla (1921 – 1992)
Appendix 9

CD: *Recording of original composition by Stephen Lalor (1962 - *)

Recorded at Q Studios April 2007

Track 1  *Dans L’Apres Midi*

Track 2  *Mlle de Bucharest*

Track 3  *Manouche Waltz*

Track 4  *Zakarpatsky*

Performed with Stephen Lalor