

# Musical Ideas, Musical Sounds

## *A Collection of Essays*

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## *Don Banks, Matyas Seiber and Mixed Musical Identity*

This paper arose out of the writing of two much longer and more general pieces of work: monographs on the music of Australian composer Don Banks (our leading modernist, in my opinion), and on that of the Hungarian/British composer Matyas Seiber. The conjunction of the two composers arises from two facts: firstly, that Seiber and Banks enjoyed a decade-long close personal friendship, which began when Banks left his native Australia to study with Seiber in London in 1950, and ended only with Seiber's tragic early death in 1960, and secondly that the particular works of theirs I want to discuss here have a distinctive common feature: both were composed for jazz band or 'combo' and 'classical' symphony orchestra or chamber ensemble.

The genre in which aspects of jazz practice and classical practice interpenetrate is sometimes called 'third-stream music'. The term derives from a landmark lecture given by American composer Gunther Schuller at Brandeis University in 1957 (cf Shoemaker 2001), but of course examples of the genre had started to emerge quite a while before that: for example the *Concerto for Jazz Band and Orchestra*, written for the 1954 Donaueschingen Festival in Germany by Rolf Liebermann (1910 – 1999), who, however, subsequently relegated his career as a composer to a secondary place in his life, when he became one of the leading musical administrators in Europe, eventually being responsible for, amongst many other things, the public presentations of the three-act version of Alban Berg's *Lulu* and of Messiaen's *The Transfiguration of St Francis*.

The third-stream idiom had something of a heyday in the period when Banks was most active (1950-1975), and he wrote several 'third-stream' compositions, as well as a substantial journal article on the topic (cf Banks 1971). 'Classical' musicians, in Europe especially, have tended to assume that the genre has rather petered out, but in fact, Schuller has recently drawn attention to evidence of its continuing, vigorous and varied life, albeit basically (as indeed one might expect) in America (cf Schuller 2000). Nevertheless, the abundance of such developments in very recent times amounts to a phenomenon one might justifiably call a revival, though recent examples incorporate some distinctive new elements, especially those drawn from what, at the turn of the 20th/21st centuries, has come to be called 'World Music' (cf Blumenthal 2001).

Compositions in which two radically different instrumental groupings are set in counterpoint with one another are not *per se* unusual in the standard European canon. Indeed, with some genres (for example the baroque *concerto grosso*) the interplay of unlike forces is the characteristic feature. What distinguishes the combination of jazz band and orchestra from such examples is that (to call on an illustrative metaphor) the two partners seem to bring to the marriage two quite different sets of personalities, behavioural tendencies and family histories. The assumption behind the metaphor is that one might find it useful to speak of musical institutions such as the jazz band or the orchestra in terms of qualities one might ordinarily ascribe to people, and that these very general features (a rich mixture of biography, sociology and history), taken together, constitute something which we may wish to designate as the musical 'identity' of those institutions. Without doubt, describing 'identity characteristics' is an enterprise fraught with many opportunities for distortion (for example type-casting and 'racial' prejudice), with music as with human beings, and one might wonder therefore why musicology would find it worthwhile to dabble in descriptions which may seem so speculative. The reason would seem to be that more established approaches (such as analysis of sonic elements), while on safer epistemological ground, have perhaps a tendency to marginalise cultural contexts which disinterested listeners experience as being one of the music's most striking characteristics, so despite the problems, the 'identity metaphor' seems worth pursuing.

Embodiment of the third-stream concept in the juxtaposition of two such contrasting instrumental forces is, of

course, not the only way of dealing with the interpenetration of jazz and classical practices, and other Banks third-stream works, such as his *Settings from Roget*, composed for vocalist Cleo Lane and the Dankworth Quintet, handle the idea in other ways. Such juxtaposition is, however, a particularly graphic way of drawing attention to the hybrid nature of the genre. Nevertheless, Banks and Seiber handle this combative potential quite differently, as we shall see.

### *A 'Mixed' Marriage*

Jazz ensemble and orchestra do indeed seem to carry with them markedly different cultural baggage, emerging as they did in different centuries and from backgrounds of different race and class, and the idea of a marriage of the two within a single work seems to call up some kind of comparison with a marriage between partners of mixed race, class or age. Stravinsky expressed a widely-held viewpoint when he averred that jazz was 'a different fraternity altogether, a wholly different kind of music making' (cf Stravinsky and Craft 1959).

Despite this attitude, there was, from the fifties, around the time at which Seiber and Banks composed their third-stream works, something of a vogue for the attempt to integrate the activities of these different fraternities in various ways. Gunther Schuller's lecture, mentioned above, in which he proposed the term 'third-stream', was part of the Fourth Festival of the Creative Arts at Brandeis University in Massachusetts in 1957, in which six specially-commissioned pieces of this type were premiered: Jimmy Guiffre's *Suspensions*, Charles Mingus's *Revelations*, George Russell's *All About Rosie*, Harold Shapiro's *On Green Mountain*, Gunther Schuller's *Transformations* and Milton Babbitt's *All Set*. Despite the European example of Liebermann's *Concerto*, mentioned above, the works which Seiber and Banks wrote in the 'third-stream' idiom were undoubtedly more influenced by *All Set*, since both composers knew Babbitt personally and indeed Banks had studied with Babbitt on a summer course in Salzburg in 1952.

The first of the two works on which I want to offer detailed comment in this article proclaims its mixed origins on the score's very title page: *Improvisations for Jazz Band and Symphony Orchestra* is described there as being by *two* different composers: Matyas Seiber and John Dankworth. This work was premiered in London in 1959 by the London Philharmonic Orchestra and the Dankworth Band, conducted by William Steinberg. Despite the attribution to two composers, however, the counter-alphabetical listing on the title-page and the fact that the original manuscript in the British Library is entirely in Seiber's handwriting, do tend to suggest that Seiber's was the principal contribution, at least as far as authorship of the score (as opposed to the performance) is concerned. Nevertheless, jazz journalist Max Harrison (also a one-time student of Seiber) indicates particular passages which were written by one or other composer (cf Harrison 1976, 176 – 177). Harrison's article, originally published in *Jazz Monthly* in July 1959, gives the impression, without quite saying so, that this information is based on what Seiber and Dankworth told him. The gist of what Harrison says is that Seiber determined the overall structure, much of the intermediate-scale architecture and certain features of harmony, orchestration and thematic development, but that certain of the most immediately striking features were contributed by Dankworth. These Dankworth contributions included, in particular, the opening 4-bar motif, the tonal reharmonisation of the main theme for its 'Big Band version' (bars 35 ff), the central 'twelve-bar blues' theme (bars 202 ff), and the cadenza-like passage for band towards the end (bars 252 ff). However, it seems that Seiber also elaborated Dankworth's ideas in a few places, with interpolated or accompanimental material (such as in the aforementioned 'Big Band treatment' of the main theme, bars 35 ff), in the interests of better integration of the totality.

In the case of the other work on which I want to comment, *Equation I* for jazz band and ensemble, the John Patrick Orchestra contributed just as much as Dankworth and his band contributed to *Improvisations*, but

authorship is attributed solely to Banks.

Nevertheless, questions of attribution, copyright and moral rights are not my main concern here. Suffice it to say that the musical 'mixed marriage' proposed by the two works under consideration could be seen as raising some of the same kinds of question as mixed marriages between people, and one of the same dilemmas: how to balance respect for the individuals concerned against the expectation that a marriage involves sinking certain individual preferences in order to create a cohesive totality. Moreover, just as with human beings, the history of such musical marriages is sometimes a history of partnership enacted in a context of sometimes irreconcilable community prejudice. The prejudice against 'mixed-identity' hybrids is not peculiar to the 'third-stream' genre, of course. Critical attitudes (more in the nature of slogans or 'put-downs' than rational arguments) in the form of career-advancement strategies for the *apartheid status quo* couched as appeals *ad hominem* (two in particular: 'It isn't *really* X' or 'Oh it's *just* Y') very commonly characterise community attitudes to hybrid genres, and making the analogy with racial prejudice is perhaps not too far-fetched. Gunther Schuller, recalls, in his collection of autobiographical and critical essays (cf Schuller 1986) that some of the criticism to which he was subjected at this time came pretty close to accusations of racism (the term he actually uses is 'racial callousness').

(1) 'It isn't *really* jazz' (reader fill in the last word *ad lib*) is a way of asking the 'Thatcherite' question ('is-he-one-of-us?'), as a means of labelling a transgressive practice 'beyond the pale'. In fact, the synthesis of elements of idioms formerly thought to be irreconcilable is one of the commonest forms of historical change, but such a synthesis is often opposed by protagonists of both of the elements which have gone into the synthesis, and it requires a generational change for the synthesis to find wide acceptance. One thinks of some of the reactions to the influence of the world of rock on other idioms in the 1960s (including the importation of the electric guitar, brought to bear on 'folk' elements by Bob Dylan and others, or the amalgam of rock and jazz by Miles Davis in *Bitches Brew*) or the interpenetration of Indian elements and jazz in John McLaughlin's work in the 1970s, developments which were sometimes seen as one idiom 'polluting' the stylistic purity of the other. An extreme example was the 'East-meets-West' collaboration between Yehudi Menuhin and Ravi Shankar, which was as much an assertion of 'spiritual' values as sonic ones, and thus a prime candidate for criticism from listeners not sensitive to such values.

To take the particular case of *Bitches Brew*, the abundant literature recycling this venerable 'is-he-one-of-us?' prejudice ('It isn't *really* jazz' while at the same time 'It isn't *really* rock') is summarised and reviewed by Porter and Ouellette (cf Porter 1996 and Ouellette 1999). Some of the extreme attitudes outlined by Porter and Ouellette's comment 'arguably the most radically unorthodox jazz statement in history' are essentially the same observation coloured by positive and negative authorial attitudes, and they tell us more about the authors of those criticisms than about the music.

This particular prejudice even extends to the music of immigrants who worked 'between cultures' in general, for example Hans Redlich's rather patronising comments on Seiber's own work:

'..... It remains the tragedy of the uprooted composer to substitute polyglot versatility for the security of a national tradition. .... The violent cross-currents of artistic influences ..... may easily result in a creative deadlock or in an encyclopaedic prolixity of style. Seiber manages skilfully to steer clear of both dangers, but only at the expense of musical substance .....

 (Redlich 1954, 148).

He's wrong whatever he does! – not because of a lack of compositional skill, but because of the culture

from which the music arises. It's a mode of criticism which students of imperial attitudes to colonial cultures may recognise only too well.

Milton Babbitt was irritated enough at having *All Set* criticised for being 'not really jazz', that his note on the work, reproduced as the sleeve-note for the 1974 LP recording, makes the following satirical rejoinder, in one of his characteristic prose styles (word-play tinged with gentle mockery):

..... Whether *All Set* is *really* jazz I leave to the judgement of those who are concerned to determine what things *really* are, and if such probably superficial aspects of the work as its very instrumentation, its use of the 'rhythm section', the instrumentally delineated sections which may appear analogous to successive instrumental 'choruses' and even specific thematic or motivic materials, may justify that aspect of the title which suggests the *spirit* of a jazz 'instrumental', then the surface and the deeper structure of the pitch, temporal and other dimensions of the work surely reflect those senses of the title, the *letter* of which brings the work closer to my other compositions, which *really* are not jazz." (Babbitt 1974)

'It isn't *really* X' articulates a strategy for preserving the *apartheid status quo*, and although the examples quoted by Smith and Jones are of relatively recent date, the strategy itself is as old as the hills. Alastair Fowler documents resistance to hybridity of genre in literature dating back at least to Horace, Cicero and Quintilian (cf Fowler 1982, 181), and the case of musical genres with such different 'personalities, behavioural tendencies and family histories' as those under consideration here is certainly comparable.

To be sure, the widespread snobbery about the 'low' character of jazz in the twenties and thirties, reflected even in the writings of those years by the celebrated German philosopher, sociologist and cultural theorist Theodor W Adorno (1903 – 1969), is rarely encountered 70 years later, although we need to take into account the attitude to popular music expressed in Adorno's writings when we consider Seiber's jazz background (of which more below), because Adorno specifically acknowledged Seiber as his principal informant on the subject of jazz (cf Adorno 1982, Chadwick 1995 and Wilcock 1997).

'It isn't *really* jazz' is implicitly arguing rather for 'Separate but Equal' status. But in the end, the idea that the *apartheid status quo* is better for *both* components of the hybrid remains rooted in the same assertion of hegemony. The fact that the Klu Klux Klan supports 'Separate but Equal' as a social policy, on the grounds that it's better *for blacks as well as whites* has not prevented society from unpacking *KKK* motives. Likewise, the fact that 'Separate but Equal' as a specifically cultural ideology is not confined to died-in-the-wool reactionaries, but just as likely to come from those who see themselves as of the liberal left – defenders of 'progressive' musical values – should not prevent us from deconstructing it analogously: as a strategy for reinforcing the cultural power, privilege and prestige of currently dominant idioms. The composer of *All Set* responded sarcastically to such strategies by indulging his lifelong *penchant* for the ironic deployment of excruciating titles in a more recent chamber work: *Septet, but Equal*.

(2) 'Oh it's *just* Y', is an alternative strategy for preserving *apartheid status quo*. In a sense, this is the precise converse of 'It isn't *really* X': a way of dealing with a transgressive practice not by declaring it 'beyond the pale' but by asserting that there isn't really anything very special about it (ie patronising it as humdrum, even). There is something of the 'straw man' approach about this criticism: summarising the special characteristics of what one seeks to criticise in such a feeble way that it is made to seem not special at all, and even the most limited intellect can 'blow it over' like a straw man. 'Just an altered submediant seventh' (for example)

constitutes a possible description of the opening three bars of *Tristan and Isolde*, but hardly accounts adequately for the special qualities of that passage. The incorporation of microtonal elements into genres in which they are not conventional is an example of a transgressive practice which has sometimes met with this attitude. Kyle Gann's characterisation of works from Johnny Reinhard's 1999 *American Festival of Microtonal Music* as 'marginal pop' (cf Gann 1999) seems to qualify in this regard, though his suggestion that composers ought to try and reach some agreement on which microtones to use suggests an implicit acknowledgement that in amongst the chaotic multiplicity of individual experimental microtonal practice there might nevertheless lurk something new and significant.

Thus, the words 'really' and 'just', when used as elements of musicological discourse, should always flash warning signals and put us on our 'deconstructive alert', particularly where 'third-stream' or other hybrid phenomena are in question.

### **'Vernacular' and 'Cultivated'**

Instead of pursuing the 'mixed marriage' metaphor, however, we might note that a common way of accounting for the allegedly irreconcilable nature of jazz practice and classical practice at the time *Improvisations for Jazz Band and Symphony Orchestra* and *Equation I* first appeared (1959 and 1966 respectively) was driven by another historiographical model, under which the canon is divided along *class* lines. This is a division still widely adopted, of course. It would still be rare to encounter a discussion of Slim Dusty singing *The Pub with no Beer* and of Joseph Lateiner and the New York Philharmonic playing Elliott Carter's *Piano Concerto* between the covers of the same volume, even though they are more or less contemporaneous musical phenomena. That may well be because of differences of other kinds, not simply class, but it is hard to avoid the impression that class plays a role.

On most of the personal curricula vitae which Don Banks put together during his lifetime for various job and funding applications, he categorised music such as his *Violin Concerto* or his *Sonata da Camera* as his 'serious' music, which, in these politically correct times, has come to have a class connotation, implying to a later generation that music such as his jazz and his film scores was considered trivial, or at least that it occupies some lower, less worthy plane of existence. However, it has to be said that I doubt Banks thought of his description 'serious' quite in that way; to him it merely implied something like 'more formal'.

Wiley Hitchcock (Hitchcock 1974) used the terms 'cultivated' and 'vernacular' to describe two general tendencies in music in the US in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and I have adopted them here, despite the problematic status of the terms (of which Professor Hitchcock is, of course, acutely aware), and with some particular reservations and modifications of my own. In order not to distort what he says, I quote him at some length (chapter 3, pp 51 - 60):

Americans distinguish colloquially between two broad categories of music: they speak of 'classical' music and 'popular' music. The terms may be poor ones, especially the former (because of its several meanings), but they bespeak a common realization of the existence of two major traditions in American music. These I shall call the 'cultivated' and 'vernacular' traditions. I mean by the term 'cultivated tradition' a body to be approached with some effort, and to be appreciated for its edification, its moral, spiritual, or aesthetic values. By 'vernacular tradition' I mean a body of music more plebian, native, not approached self-consciously but simply grown into as one grows into one's vernacular tongue; music understood and appreciated simply for its utilitarian or entertainment value.

Despite the different ways in which this passage might be deconstructed, and the particular attitudes which critics with different ideological positions might want to distil from Professor Hitchcock's words, one can see what he means by observing, for example, that under the heading 'cultivated' he discusses Horatio Parker, Edward MacDowell and Charles Griffes, while under 'vernacular' he discusses Stephen Foster, Scott Joplin and John Philip Sousa. Moreover he is quick to define 'folk' music as different from either, to point out that musics can change their status over time, that the two traditions can interact with one another, and that there are various hybrid types.

Actually, when it comes right down to it, the terminological problem raised by political correctness is not really with 'vernacular', which most writers, for example Johnson (Johnson 1996), have been content to adopt, but with 'cultivated', which may seem to assume superiority, whether of race, class, manners, aspiration, values or whatever. But the equal sympathy for both traditions, which is very much in evidence in Hitchcock's writing, suggests the alternative meaning of 'cultivated' as a sort of 'horticultural' metaphor: the definition which groups with 'fostered, nourished, nurtured, and propagated' rather than with 'civilised, educated, polished, well-bred and refined'.

The implication of such an interpretation is that richness of musical life is enormously enhanced by the coexistence and perhaps interaction of the music which is cultivated by conservatoria, symphony orchestras and concert halls with the music which is played in bars and dance halls by 'popular' bands of various kinds, just as gardens and glasshouses complement the role of natural wilderness in preserving the environment as a whole and enhancing biodiversity. To be sure, the listings in Roget's *Thesaurus* show that the meaning of 'cultivated' shades off to 'sophisticated' and 'profound' while 'vernacular' shades off to 'slang', 'jargon' and 'gobbledegook'. However, both terms also shade off in the opposite direction as well: 'cultivated' to 'abstruse', 'pedantic' and 'artificial' and 'vernacular' to 'demotic', 'natural' and 'unaffected'.

### ***Written and Improvised***

Before proceeding to discussion of the *sound* of these two pieces, one cannot but acknowledge the limitations of what is able to be said about the scores without reference to aspects which lie entirely within the purview of the *performance* of the score, in particular the aspect of improvisation. A more complete account would need to work from recorded performances in which the John Dankworth Band and the John Patrick Orchestra make their improvisatory contributions. Despite this, I have decided to defer such comments for a return visit to these works at a later date, since I believe that imaginative interpretation of what is in these scores can still illuminate our topic, and that assertions which have sometimes been put forward in recent years to the effect that analysis of scores amounts to discussion of marks on paper, rather than of sounds is, at the very least, to make too much of an acknowledged limitation. In fact, both of these scores make rather limited provision for improvisation, and I'm sure that Seiber and Banks would have rejected the suggestion that the contributions of the jazz performers in *Improvisations* and *Equation I* were 'not really jazz' because most of their parts were notated in detail. In *Equation I*, especially, there is little improvisation *per se*; it is restricted to the odd bar here and there of 'cadential free-for-all' at the climax, interlude or coda within a larger section, and yet, as I hear it, its jazz 'feel' is even stronger than that of *Improvisations*. With Banks one has the sense of someone moving between the worlds of jazz and 'classical' chamber music in a more completely natural and relaxed way. While in some later 'third-stream' works Banks was to come closer to Seiber's concerto-like approach of dramatic contrast and conflict, *Equation I* at least is a more completely achieved 'marriage'.

This ability to move in the two 'worlds' with ease is incidentally and indirectly highlighted by Bruce Johnson's (Johnson 2000) recent complaints that published assessments of Banks' work in general, by beginning accounts of his career with his work after 1950, when he departed Australia for London, have neglected to take account of the influence of his Australian background. Considering that, throughout his 21 years in London, Banks always identified himself as Australian whenever opportunity arose, this seems a not unreasonable attitude. But there is another reason to accept Johnson's view, namely that a more inclusive view of Banks' career gives us better insights into his concert works as well. Without broaching the 'Australian identity' issue here, one of the things that a close reading of *Equation I* undoubtedly demonstrates is that, whereas most earlier discussions of Banks have tended to see his jazz works and his symphonic ones as manifestations of distinct, indeed contrasted sides of his musical personality, in fact Banks' compositional approach and method in this avowedly jazz-influenced piece is not substantially different from his approach and method in works such as the *Horn Trio* or the *Violin Concerto*. Without excessive distortion, it is possible to claim that jazz was one of the wellsprings of his whole musical being, and of course, this aspect of his musical personality was indeed formed before he left Australia.

### ***Swing and Bebop***

Having set discussion of these two pieces in the context of these very general cultural metaphors, I should like to begin discussion of the individual works with some comments by way of comparison and contrast, in case the foregoing discussion may have given the impression that *Improvisations* and *Equation I* are similar works. In fact, Don Banks' approach to jazz is quite different from Matyas Seiber's. In part, this is undoubtedly just a reflection of the 18 years' difference in the ages of the composers. Seiber (b 1905) began composing before the Second World War, whereas Banks (b 1923) really began after the war, despite some rudimentary juvenilia dating from the war years. Even though *Improvisations* was written as late as 1959, the jazz influences of an earlier age (the thirties 'swing' era of the classic big bands) can also be felt strongly (in character, that is, though not so much in its treatment of harmony, as comments below will show), whereas, for Banks, the jazz model is definitely that of the later post-war 'bebop' era. The choice of instrumentation tells this same story, since *Improvisations* is a symphonic work for big band and large orchestra, whereas *Equation I* is a chamber work for small jazz combo and chamber ensemble. It seems worthwhile digressing for a moment at this point to look at the background to these differences a little more fully, for they are surely a result of differences of biography and culture as well as differences of age.

### ***Seiber and Banks: jazz backgrounds***

Seiber was a student at the Hoch'sche Conservatorium in Frankfurt from 1924 to 1927, after which he took a job as cellist in an ensemble on a cruise ship, plying between Europe and North and South America, for a short time. Bradford Robinson states (Robinson 1994, 123) that Seiber claimed to have learned jazz during this period on a transatlantic steamer, although this 'day-job' probably built on an interest in the subject dating from his student days. At any rate, a year later, the Conservatorium director, Bernard Sekles, appointed Seiber to take over the Conservatorium's recently-founded (January 1928) jazz course, the first of its kind in an important European institution of musical education.

Sekles and Seiber were widely pilloried in the profession and the press for this innovation, Sekles for being a blinkered idealist, Seiber for being an opportunistic careerist (cf Kater 1992, 21). Indeed, the *furor* even reached the floor of the Reichstag! (cf Robinson 1994, 217). One might wonder, therefore, what the motivation behind this appointment was, for Sekles was in many respects a rather conservative figure. Adorno, one of his earlier students, in his *Minima Moralia* (cf Adorno 1974), was distinctly unflattering about Sekles' attitudes

to progressive ideas, although without identifying Sekles by name. Nevertheless, Sekles was later, like many Jewish musicians (including Seiber), dismissed from his post by the racist Nazi Civil Service Law of April 7, 1933, and his work *Die Hochzeit des Faun* was one of the exhibits in the regime's notorious *Degenerate Music* (*Entartete Musik*) exhibition, which opened in Dusseldorf in May 1938, although Sekles himself had died in the meantime (in 1934). The motivation behind the Frankfurt jazz course is examined by Michael Kater (cf Kater 1992, 17), who suggests that it was widely held in Germany at that time that German musicians had rather stodgy sense of rhythm, and that Sekles thought that the study of jazz might help to combat this shortcoming. Seiber also thought of jazz as a pedagogical tool, and wrote an article 'Jugend und Jazz' for the periodical *Zeitschrift für Schulmusik* in 1930 (cf Kater 1992, 217). Moreover, his collections of *Easy Dances* and *Rhythmical Studies*, composed around this time (especially the *Rhythmical Studies*), have a certain resemblance to Bartok's pedagogical compositions, notably, of course, the *Mikroskosmos*, many of which also pose tricky rhythmic problems (though not usually jazz-related ones) for the student performer.

We can get an idea of the character of Seiber's jazz seminar from writings by Peter Cahn, Adorno and Seiber himself (cf Cahn 1979, Adorno 1982, Seiber 1929, Seiber 1933/1965 and Seiber 1945) and it seems – remarkably! – that even a few sound recordings made by the class survive (cf Lotz 1988). One thing that is clear from this evidence is that Seiber's relationship to jazz was somewhat that of an 'outsider': an observer, teacher, analyst and composer of jazz rather than a performer deeply immersed in jazz culture. Considering that his own instrument was the cello, and that he was also a member of the Lenzewski Quartet during his Frankfurt days, this should hardly surprise us, but it makes an interesting point of comparison and contrast with Banks, who grew up playing jazz from an early age. Banks' involvement in jazz during his youth, as the pianist in various groups in Melbourne in the forties (including his own 'Donny Banks Bopset') and the way he drew on this experience afterwards, are discussed in greater detail by Johnson and Whiteoak (cf Johnson 2000 and Whiteoak 1998). The surviving jazz recordings from the late forties (cf Hair 1999, 144), though now in very bad condition, demonstrate that, in contradistinction to Seiber, he was from earliest youth, very much a jazz-culture 'insider': a performer for whom the language of jazz was 'second nature'.

An interesting footnote to Seiber's approach to jazz is provided by Adorno's above-mentioned testimony to his reliance on Seiber's authority in matters pertaining to jazz. Adorno's attitude, it will be remembered, is essentially that 'the material used by popular music is the material of serious music, now become obsolete' (Paddison 1996, 100). Paddison suggests nevertheless that 'Adorno had recognised the possibility of working meaningfully with regressive tonal and formal material – within the sphere of serious music, that is' (Paddison 1996, 100).

Such recognition of the possibilities of 'regressive' material derives from Adorno's implicit acknowledgement that 'Historically, serious "high art" music had renewed its strength by borrowing from time to time from the "lower", from "vulgar" music ..... ' (Paddison 1996, 95). Thus Adorno's view that after Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, perhaps the supreme exemplar of such a renewal, 'it was never again possible to force serious and light music together' (cf Paddison 1996, 94), seems at odds with some of his own opinions on Satie, Mahler and Weill. Moreover, 'Adorno seemed to find it inconceivable that this process could also ..... operate the other way round. But as Sandner [cf Sandner 1973, 130] points out, 'in the history of both jazz and rock music, there is quite clearly to be seen an almost obsessive pressure from the "subculture" towards "high art" music' (cf Paddison 1996, 100).

For all of these reasons, Adorno's attitude has, by the turn of the twentieth century, come to seem decidedly politically incorrect. Moreover, if Seiber was indeed Adorno's informant, these attitudes seem not a little

puzzling, since in Seiber, Adorno had other examples of creative renewal through borrowings from popular music close at hand. For example, Seiber's *First String Quartet* makes creative use of folk tunes, like the music of his teacher Zoltan Kodaly and of many other Eastern European composers, and makes Adorno's patronising attitude to Sekles' work in *Minima Moralia*, mentioned above, as pieces in which 'oriental themes were regularly extended by the chromatic scale' (cf Adorno 1974, 218) seem at least tinged with the 'straw man' attitude, outlined above. Indeed, throughout his life, Seiber continued to draw on popular material, covering the widest possible spectrum of sources, from Jean-Baptiste Besard's 1604 anthology of Renaissance dance tunes, *Thesaurus Harmonicus* (a vast collection – 403 items – of which Seiber transcribed the greater part from the original tablature (cf Besard 1975)), through to Australian folk tunes (which he utilised in his music for the war movie *A Town Like Alice*, based on Nevil Shute's novel: directed by Jack Lee and starring Virginia McKenna and Peter Finch).

Nevertheless, understanding this background may suggest why Seiber's jazz seems, to later generations, a little stiff and formal (especially rhythmically) by comparison with Banks'. Indeed, Robinson is distinctly luke-warm about Seiber's jazz sensibilities (Robinson 1994, 123 – 124, 205), although, at the time, Seiber's jazz percussion tutor (cf Seiber 1929) was favourably received (cf Robinson 1994, 205). The evidence may strike us that way from a viewpoint of nearly 80 years later partly because what was considered to be jazz in Germany in the days of the Weimar Republic did not always distinguish sufficiently between jazz and what later critics tend to label as 'dance music' (which might nevertheless be jazz-influenced). However, given my comments above, it will be clear that I am reluctant to go down the road of trying to decide whether what Seiber did in the twenties and thirties was 'really' jazz; suffice it to say that there were clearly hybrid elements even in the idiom itself, as Seiber adopted it. To be sure, Seiber's journal articles on jazz are sometimes concerned with characteristics which jazz shares with other musics, from Palestrina to Indian music! (cf, for example, Seiber 1945), rather than with the unique qualities and finer subtleties which, for example, Gunther Schuller's accounts of the repertoire demonstrate (cf Schuller 1970, 1989). But probably this was because, as an evangelist for jazz, writing for 'classical' musicians, he wanted to write in terms which would reach his readership.

One of the outcomes of this relationship between Seiber and Adorno is that the elements of 'dance music' in Seiber's jazz, to which one might conceivably attribute a certain artificiality or superficiality, may have coloured Adorno's above-mentioned notorious view of the subject. This failure to make sufficient distinction between 'dance music' and jazz – not to mention many more subtle distinctions between genres of popular music – and to treat all varieties of popular music as if they were all equally degraded, has been, broadly speaking, the basis of most later criticism of Adorno's attitude to jazz, for example that of Robert Witkin (cf Witkin 1995), T A Gracyk (cf Gracyk 1992), Wolfgang Sandner and Max Paddison:

As Sandner shows [cf Sandner 1973], when Adorno's concept of popular music is examined, it disintegrates into a multiplicity of different elements, for example, light music, hit tunes, dance music, jazz and folk music. Such lack of differentiation is quite astonishing in someone who, in the area of serious music, is normally so insistent on the necessity for making the most subtle distinctions (cf Paddison 1996, 91)

Perhaps one might also extend this criticism to Seiber's conception of jazz in the twenties and thirties, on the strength of the *Schule für Jazz-Schlagzeug* and the *Leichte Tänze*, delightful though the latter pieces are. (They have become a canonical item of the pedagogical literature, and are still in print after 70 years.) Nevertheless, by the time of the collaboration with John Dankworth in the fifties, Seiber's conception of the idiom had certainly become much more complex, and consequently *Improvisations* is a work of altogether greater musical ambition and achievement.

Banks too wrote about jazz, but only rather briefly, and his published comments on the bebop idiom are informal, journalistic and clearly not intended as more than an introduction to bebop for amateur jazz enthusiasts, written from a performer's viewpoint. His comments are those of a practitioner, and they have nothing of the somewhat didactic, academic character of Seiber's writings on the topic.

***Divergence and Integration***

*Improvisations* sets the orchestra and the band off against one another in a sort of *concerto grosso* mode, even to the extent of beginning with two versions of the principal ('Dankworth') theme. It opens with the orchestral version, characterised by atonal treatment of melodic and harmonic materials, with twelve-tone tendencies. At bar 35 comes the big band version, characterised by soaring and swooping post-romantic melody and quite sophisticated chromatic and modulatory (but nevertheless functionally tonal) harmony. The big band version of the theme is decidedly recognisable (by its contour, rhythmic details and metrical phrase-shaping, along with certain prominent intervallic similarities) as a variation of the orchestral version, but in the broad cultural sense, the identity which it projects is that of an altogether different world. The juxtaposition of the two versions of this theme vividly suggests the metaphor of mixed marriage.



Example 1



Example 2

Whereas Seiber's approach makes possible a certain dramatic contrast, the Banks integrates the idioms more completely. Unlike Seiber's principal theme, Banks' theme is harmonised by static, *motivic*, not functional harmony: in fact by the same two chords (derived from the theme) repeated over and over (sometimes combined as a polychord), variety being provided principally by the different syncopated rhythmic patterns in which they are deployed

The musical score for Example 3 is presented in three systems. Each system consists of four staves: a vocal line (treble clef), piano accompaniment (treble and bass clefs), and a drum line (percussion clef). The first system is in 4/4 time, featuring a vocal line with a triplet and various syncopated rhythms, piano accompaniment with chords, and a drum line with a complex pattern. The second system changes to 5/4 time, with the vocal line continuing its melodic line and the piano accompaniment using chords. The third system changes to 3/4 time, maintaining the same harmonic and rhythmic motifs. The score is characterized by its static harmonic language and intricate rhythmic patterns.

Example 3

***Tonality and Atonality***

Before embarking on the analysis of further details of these two pieces, it is worth underlining the additional sort of mixture which emerges from Examples 1 and 2, namely that of tonality and atonality, since, at the time

these two works were composed (*Improvisations* in 1959 and *Equation I* in 1966), both Seiber and Banks were distinguished protagonists of the twelve-tone method of composition in their works for chamber and orchestral forces, whereas jazz, then as now, and notwithstanding a limited number of examples to the contrary, tends to base its structures on some form of tonality.

*Improvisations* is notated without key-signature, but is it possible to assign an overall key to the work? The piece begins right away with an orchestral statement of the main theme (in multiple-octave ‘doubling’), the first bar of which outlines the triad of F major, with the very first two tones (F and C) articulating one of the principal motifs. However, the theme taken as a whole is an atonal one (whose structure I discuss below), and if I assert that we may usefully think of the work as being ‘in’ F (or perhaps, better, ‘on F’ or ‘around F’), it is not because of the first bar alone, but because of subsequent events. The work’s sense of tonal centrality derives more from melodic than harmonic factors, for example the propensity of melodic structures to work towards culminating-points, final or intermediate, of F, or its dominant, C. To the harmony, notwithstanding exceptions such as Example 2, I attribute mostly *motivic* significance, by analogy with the way in which one might describe particular features of a nineteenth-century symphony (usually melodic or rhythmic ones) as *motivic*.

The F-orientation of bar 1 seems to be negated in much of what follows immediately. What we have is an antecedent/consequent phrase-pair, to be sure, but despite the outlining of the F major triad in bar 1, the ‘answering’ quality of the consequent derives not so much from tonal functionality (for example dominant answering tonic and the like) as on pitch-class complementation, ie the antecedent consists of the hexachord C Dflat D E F A, while the 10 pitch-classes of the consequent include the complementary pitch-classes Eflat F# G G# Bflat and B, so that the phrase as a whole outlines a complete chromatic aggregate. Likewise the second antecedent/consequent phrase-pair presents overlapping groups of 8 and 10 pitch-classes which also sum to an aggregate (cf example 1).

The tonality F is emphatically affirmed in the final bars of *Improvisations* (289-299), with the melodic top line (fl, tpts, a-saxes) reiterating the C-F motif *tutta forza* in the top register in manic fashion (though the harmony relates to several motifs used in other passages, for example the 0148 tetrachord, the 014589 hexachord and the octatonic scale, as discussed below). Indeed, this C-F motif is the culminating cadential gesture in a line which has been rising over and over chromatically to the C throughout the whole of the final section (252-299): A B C (tpts 252-9, 260-3, 264-6, 267-8) and A flat Bflat C (276-7). Moreover a transposition of this motif to the dominant forms the principal cadence at more or less the work’s half-way point (188-195), and like the final cadence, this intermediate one on C is preceded by a long melodic rise (this time to the goal-tone C itself, rather than to its dominant). As example 4 shows, this rise starts with the reiteration of the D-E-F motif (tpts, 170), and moves (octatonically rather than chromatically, in this case) to G and A flat (tpts, 182), and then B natural (183, 186) before reaching the top C in 188 (though, again, the harmony is *motivic*, along the lines of the parallel passage at 289-299, discussed above).



Example 4

The ‘perfect fourth’ motif, though ubiquitous, does not always carry an obvious ‘dominant-tonic’ flavour, except at one other point, namely the E-A timpani lead-in to the big band of the main theme at 30-35, though the cadence turns out to be a ‘deceptive’ one, with the E harmony resolving back on F at 35, rather than on A.

Complementing the atonal (orchestral) version of the main theme is the tonal (big band) version which appears at bar 35, characterised by a rapidly modulating functional harmonic progression, beginning with the F major triad. The structure and significance of this progression as a whole are discussed in some detail below. The aesthetic effect is something akin to that produced by Schoenberg’s tonally functional harmonisation of the twelve-tone theme of his *Orchestral Variations* op 31 for the well-known talk about this work which he gave for Frankfurt Radio in 1931. Schoenberg’s harmonisation is of course merely hypothetical, produced after the event, and the talk (cf Schoenberg 1960) claimed to show merely how he *might* have harmonised his theme, and explains why his choice of a twelve-tone harmonisation is more in keeping with its twelve-tone nature (cf examples 4a and 4b).

♩ = MM 72

The musical score for Example 4a is presented in four systems. The first system begins with a tempo marking of quarter note = MM 72. The first staff (treble clef) starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic, while the second staff (bass clef) starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second system continues the piece, with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic marking in the second staff. The third system features a long, sustained chord in the first staff. The fourth system concludes the piece with a final chord in the first staff and a rest in the second staff.

Example 4a

Series: Prime (on B flat)  
5-note group      2      3      4-note group      4      3-note group      5      etc

Violoncelli

Series: Inversion (on G)

Accompaniment

5-note group      4-note group      3-note group  
(+ 2-notes from the  
previous 4-note group)

Example 4b

The parallelism with Seiber's work is not exact, of course, since the big band version of the *Improvisations* theme actually modifies its melodic intervals as well as the harmony, thus giving it a markedly more tonal 'feel' (cf Example 2).

The impression that these scattered examples leaves is that the F-tonality of *Improvisations*, while incontrovertible, is nevertheless not a central determining feature of the work, as with the tonality of, say, a Beethoven symphony. Tonality is rather just one amongst several important features, and is prominent in some places but submerged by other features elsewhere. This characteristic seems to be confirmed by the way in which the harmony is notated, ie written out in full for the most part, and falling back on conventional jazz chord symbols in only 5 short passages (in 70 of the work's 299 bars):

- (1) 35 – 48 (repetition of the main theme)
- (2) 73- 80 (codetta to the first section)
- (3) 81 – 96 (opening of the development)
- (4) 107 – 130 (developmental episode)
- (5) 214 – 221 (climax of the development)

The sense of tonality in *Equation I*, on the other hand, is very much more equivocal. There is nothing quite like Seiber's series of long structural lines leading to 'goal-tones'. One could say of the tone centre of *Equation I* that it is 'probably D', but this centricity is really a feature more of the theme than of the work as a whole. Many passages are essentially atonal, with D thus becoming a 'focus-point' emerging from atonal surroundings. The role of the celebrated D-minor orchestral interlude in Alban Berg's opera *Wozzeck* comes to mind as analogous, and there likewise, it is probably doubtful that one could reasonably describe the opera as a whole as being 'in' (or even 'on' or 'around') D. Even the theme itself in *Equation I* asserts the D by reiteration of focal melody-tones, not by any kind of 'functional' harmony. So tonality in *Equation I*, while present in some sense, is just one of several features: indeed even more a matter of 'something lurking in the background'.

### **Chord Structures**

The patterns of harmony in Seiber's symbolically-notated passages constitute middle-scale structures with

coherent harmonic strategies of their own (which I discuss below), but I want to start examination of the harmony itself with an aspect of the local harmonic detail, namely the chord-structures *per se*. The very first actual chord of the piece (ie the one on the downbeat of bar 5, articulated as a simultaneity rather than implied by arpeggiation) is a characteristic sonority (C-E flat-G-B). It would be far-fetched to designate it in terms of harmonic function (surely not an altered dominant in F, given the presence of the *major* seventh?). A more neutral summary designation would be as a concatenation of intervals (in semitones) 3-4-4 (ie three thirds, major or minor, summing to a major seventh), ie in 'motivic' terms. The idea of a specifically *harmonic* motif dates back at least to Wagner's 'Tristan' *leitmotif*, but it is only with Schoenberg and music of the 'post-Schoenbergian' tradition that harmonic sonorities become motivic in quite such a thorough-going way. Nevertheless, some forms of jazz of the 1950s and after, the treatment of such four-tone (and larger) sonorities approaches the 'motivic', and clearly Seiber wants to draw on this 'family history' in *Improvisations*, to complement the 'swing' associations of the principal theme.

Whole sections of *Improvisations* draw almost exclusively on this tetrachordal harmonic motif or on related ones, ie on intervallic concatenations comprised of triadic sonorities plus a major seventh, or, expressed in semitonal patterns, compounds of three intervals summing to 11, such as 344, 443, 434, 533, 353, 335. In some passages these motifs are expressed in conventional chord-symbol form, though the imputation of 'root' status implied by such notation is often weakened by the texture and context. Consider, for example the 10-chord sequence in the longest of these passages, at 107-130, where the composer(s) add(s) traditional chord symbols for the alto-saxophone soloist: Amin\_maj7, Eflat\_maj7, F#min(maj7), C+(maj7), Eflat+(maj7), F#maj7, Amin(maj7), Eflat\_min(maj7), Cmaj7, Amaj7.

Here, the sense of root and root progression implied by the nomenclature is undercut by the textural layout (the fifth as often above the root as below it, and no rhythm section to underlay a conventional voicing of the tetrachordal sequence beneath the orchestral chords and the alto saxophone soloist), by the presence of the *major* seventh in every chord and by the constant turnover of all twelve tones within the space of 3 or 4 chords. The resulting effect is nearer to an atonal sequence (ie motivic, not systemically functional) than to 'roving' harmony (to use Schoenberg's term): where there is no sense of 'home', there is no sense of what 'roving' could be, either. The sequence's essential nature is more accurately captured by characterisation simply in terms of its pitch- and interval-class content and twelve-tone turnover:

- |   |                            |
|---|----------------------------|
| (1) A_C_E_G# (intervals 344)            |                            |
| (2) Eflat_G_Bflat_D (intervals 434)     |                            |
| (3) F#_A_C#_E# (intervals 344)          |                            |
| (4) C_E_G#_B (intervals 443)            | all 12 tones in chords 2-4 |
| (5) Eflat_G_B_D (intervals 443)         |                            |
| (6) F#_A#_C#_E# (intervals 434)         | all 12 tones in chords 3-6 |
| (7) A_C_E_G# (intervals 344)            | all 12 tones in chords 4-7 |
| (8) Eflat_Gflat_Bflat_D (intervals 344) | all 12 tones in chords 5-8 |
| (9) C_E_G_B (intervals 434)             | all 12 tones in chords 6-9 |
| (10) A_C#_E_G# (intervals 434)          |                            |

In terms of Allen Forte's listing of tetrachords by intervallic content, 'triadic sonorities plus a major seventh' constitute a very limited selection (four – 0148, 0158, 0147, 0347 – out of the total repertoire of 29 intervallically-distinct tetrachords), and those used in the the passage at 107-130 are all versions of either 0148 or 0158. The

tetrachords which are eliminated from the vocabulary include (on the one hand) those semitoneless ones with pronounced functional associations which are more prominent in earlier forms of jazz, such as dominant and half-diminished sevenths (both 0258 in Forte's nomenclature, as they are inversions of one another), minor sevenths (0358), dominant sevenths with flattened fifth (0268), sevenths with 'suspended fourth' (0257), as well as (on the other hand) those with more than one semitone clash, such as populate much serial chamber and symphonic music contemporary with *Improvisations* and *Equation I*, for example Babbitt's variously-partitioned aggregates, Boulez's 'multiplication-structures', or the all-tetrachord, all-pentachord and all-hexachord harmonic vocabularies of the Carter concertos.

These tetrachordal motifs, saturated as they are with the 'mixed' sound of major and minor thirds (and their combination in the 'blue' trichordal 014 subset), together with the semitone/major seventh, incorporate and chime particularly comfortably with the 'blue' harmonic quality referred to elsewhere (cf for example, Example 14). Moreover, the harmonic motifs do not carry with them the same sense of constant reference to underlying diatonic collections within the chromatic flux as do functional harmonies. The scalar associations which the 0148 and 0158 harmonies suggest are the chromatic scale directly, not the chromatic scale through the diatonic. This approach to harmony, in which the semitone interval is a central element within the harmonic-motivic fabric, thus also constitutes part of a strategy for integrating the microtonal inflexions which are such a distinctive feature of jazz playing into the 'mixed-identity' marriage of *Improvisations*.

I suggest, therefore, that Seiber allocated privileged status to this limited repertoire of tetrachords and this particular way of deploying them in order to effect a *rapprochement* of the 'personalities, behavioural tendencies and family histories' of the jazz and symphonic contributions to *Improvisations*.

Of course, by no means all the harmonies in *Improvisations* are tetrachordal. Four-tone chords are the *basic* units of jazz harmonic vocabulary (as triads are basic units of the 'classical' Bach-to-Brahms repertoire), but of course some kinds of jazz harmony, especially in big-band jazz, draw upon a harmonic palette comprised of chords of 5 – 8 (or even more) tones: ie 'chord extensions'. For example, the tetrachords whose semitonal interval components are 344, 443 and 434 (sets 0148 and 0158) are subsets of the symmetrical hexachord 014589 (saturated with the 'blue' trichord 014) and chord extensions which add one or both of the additional tones can be found in some passages. The 'octatonic scale' (0-1-3-4-6-7-9-10) – or more frequently its 5-, 6- or 7-tone segments – is also a commonly-used superset in *Improvisations*, but it is even more ubiquitous in Banks. Without generalising too far, one can say that one of its roles is to extend tetrachords with interval-structures such as 533, 353 and 335 (in set-theoretic terms: 0147 and 0347) in much the same way as the hexachord 014589 is used to extend 334, 343 and 433 (0148 and 0158) structures. Three random examples from *Equation I*, bars 66-8, 88 and 98, show three different hexachordal subsets (023467, 013479 and 023489) generated by three different 'bites' into the octatonic scale. However, the topic of chord extensions, their treatment in 'third-stream' music and their relationship to other kinds of post-tonal harmonic practice in general is a complicated one, worthy of a separate paper in due course.

The image shows three systems of musical notation. Each system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The first system is labeled '66-8' and shows a treble staff with a chord and a bass staff with a single note. The second system is labeled '88' and shows a treble staff with a sequence of notes and a bass staff with a sequence of notes. The third system is labeled '98' and shows a treble staff with a sequence of notes and a bass staff with a sequence of notes. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 0-9 below the notes.

Example 5

### Chord Sequences

The foregoing discussion of *Improvisations* has centred on the chord-structures and the twelve-tone 'turnover rate' of this passage at bars 107-130, but there is another aspect which should also be taken into consideration, namely the transposition-sequence suggested by the notation nomenclature (Amin\_maj7, Eflat\_maj7, F#m(maj7), C+(maj7), Eflat+(maj7), F#maj7, Amin(maj7), Eflat\_min(maj7), Cmaj7, Amaj7). The principle of aggregate transposition-sequences which outline a diminished seventh is a common feature of Schoenberg's later ('American') works, such as the *Violin Concerto*, the *Fourth String Quartet* or the *Phantasy* for Violin and Piano. The principle is also extended to other symmetrical divisions of the octave, notably the augmented triad.

Indeed, if there is a model for the approach to tonal structure in *Improvisations* and *Equation I*, it could perhaps be seen in those late works of Schoenberg, such as *Kol Nidre* and *Ode to Napoleon*, where a form of the twelve-tone method and a form of tonality intermingle, rather than in the world of jazz. Of course, these late Schoenberg works were often sniffed at by composers, notably Boulez, in the period following Schoenberg's death in 1951, for reasons which could be seen as driven by the 'irreconcilable prejudices' referred to above, namely that the twelve-tone method was characterised by its progressive character, whereas tonality was seen as regressive, nostalgically recycling material from the past, while, on the other hand, later usages of tonality in the 'post-modern' era have often been deliberately (even militantly) reactionary ('rolling back' modernism's brave new frontiers). Schoenberg's 'twelve-tone tonality' has thus perhaps found its true progeny not so much in later chamber and symphonic music as in the unlikely environment of the 'third-stream' world (and perhaps also in some other jazz idioms contemporaneous with *Improvisations* and *Equation I*; but that's another story).

We have already remarked that the sense of chord 'roots' in the passage at 107-130 is weakened by the texture and context, but there is one place where the 0148/0158 motifs of that passage are stated not as a chord but as a series of root progressions, namely in the 'big band' version of Dankworth's theme itself (cf Example 2). Here, the 01458 pentachord F Gflat A Bflat Dflat, a superset of both 0148 and 0158 (cf the discussion above of the 014589 hexachordal superset) becomes a 'motivic sequence' outlined in *functional* harmonies, each of which is tonicised to some degree. Thus is established a motivic connection which mediates between the atonal world of 'triad-plus-major-seventh' chords (0148/0158 sets) with rapid twelve-tone turnover and the tonal world of chromatic but functional harmonies, related to the 'diminished-seventh-related' and 'augmented-triad-related' symmetrical root progressions found in late-romantic composers such as Liszt, Wagner, Scriabin, Rimsky-Korsakoff, early Stravinsky and others.

***Aggregates, Twelve-tone Series, Isorhythmic Patterns***

The most extreme form of extension applied to the tetrachordal elements is the twelve-tone aggregate. Such an extension, of course, belongs much more to the 'classical' idiom than to jazz, and is often accompanied by procedures in the rhythmic or textural domains which evoke the personality, behavioural tendencies and family history of that world. Although such treatment is more characteristic of Banks than of Seiber, there is one section of *Improvisations* where it reaches an apotheosis. This is the passage at bars 138 ff. It begins with the orchestral basses giving out a three-bar rhythmic pattern



Example 6

which is stated seven-and-two-thirds times (bb 138-163). This passage is followed and brought to a climax by a more rapid 'codetta' pattern of two-and-a-quarter bars):



Example 7

Although Example 7 is simply an ostinato, the first of these passages (bb 138-163) exemplifies so-called *isorhythmic* organisation, along the lines of certain historic isorhythmic compositions by medieval composers, though the detail of its application differs from the historical model in several respects. On the 11-tone rhythmic pattern (the 'talea') is superimposed a pitch-pattern (the 'color') of a different length (12 tones). Thus, a '12 against 11' overlapping process of talea and color is established, whereby 12 repetitions of the 11-tone talea would potentially occupy the same duration as 11 repetitions of the 12-tone color. However, Seiber cuts off the process long before it has run its full course.

This '12 against 11' structure is a more complicated ratio than anything I know of in the medieval repertoire, and the character of the *color* is likewise specifically of the twentieth century: it is a twelve-tone series, albeit a very simply-constructed one, consisting of alternating intervals of 6 and 5 semitones:



Example 8

..... otherwise known as a 'derived' series (a tritone dyad replicated 6 times).

What Seiber does with this material is to overlap it with itself in 3-part canon, with the *comes* following the *dux* at intervals of 2 bars (cellos) and 4 bars (violins).

Then an additional element is added on top of all this, with the entry of members of the jazz band: solo trombone (b 142), tenor saxophone (b 158), trumpet (b 158) and alto saxophone (b 162), who are not given notated music to play, but instructed rather to improvise until bar 169. A footnote in the score (p 20) adds the further injunction that the improvisations are to be 'as "atonal" as possible' (the inverted commas around 'atonal' are Seiber's). Although what the qualities of such improvisations are to be is not specified further, I think we can take it that they should chime well with the characteristics of the orchestral string parts: that is, they should contain combinations of intervals similar to those of the string parts, and should try to keep as many different pitch-classes as possible in constant circulation. One doubts, however, that the jazzmen are being asked to imitate the isorhythmic and isomelic qualities of the string parts! Seiber allows for, indeed expects, that quite different things will emerge from their contribution. In other words, the double basses set up an ensemble situation which results in the interplay of two different musical identities. By 'two different musical identities' is meant here not just two contrasting types of materials or ensemble (as would be the case after all in a classical symphony or concerto), but two different worlds of music making, in which different modes of musical thinking, and different notions of the extent and limits of musical procedure collide and are compounded together by their being thrust into a particular context.

It is obvious that this passage is really driven by the string isorhythmic structure, and that the soloists from the jazz band are asked to enter into this musical identity to the extent of providing an obbligato compatible with it. The obbligato takes on some of its local features, but its essential nature emerges from a fundamentally different way of musical thinking. However, the passage which immediately follows the 'isorhythmic' section (bb 170-195) of *Improvisations* returns the two partner idioms into a more balanced relationship. It is, at one and the same time, both simpler and more complicated than the preceding isorhythmic passage. While there is nothing so complicated as the '12 against 11' counterpoint of the isorhythmic passage, this material undergoes more extensive rhythmic variation both in the small and medium scale.

Let us assume for the moment that we can read the opening phrase of this passage as consisting of five-and-a-half bars, which I shall designate as a 'head' (5 rhythmically-varied repetitions of the 3-tone motif D-E-F) plus a 'tail' (cadential gesture: loud orchestral chord and arpeggio 'afterbeat'). In fact, although the 3-tone motif, the chord and the arpeggio form the material of the whole section, their initial placements (as 'head' and 'tail') vary as the passage unfolds.

Notice that the 'head' has its own sense of cross-rhythm: in this case, 5 against 4 (5 repetitions of the 'D-E-F' motif in 4 bars). However, the whole passage, creating syncopation and cross-rhythm from three or four fixed thematic units in constantly-varied rhythmic placements, compares much more closely to the jazz's rhythmic propensities than to the preceding 'isorhythmic' passage, with its 12 against 11. Nevertheless, setting the relationship between the different identities which go into the making of *Improvisations* against one another is part of Seiber's overall strategy of dramatic contrast and conflict. With Banks, in *Equation I* at least, the different treatments of the material are fused at a much more detailed level, and while such a strategy may not have quite the expressive variety of Seiber's concerto-like treatment, it makes for a more integrated totality.

In *Equation I*, the integration strategy is not so much to develop these cross-rhythms, as to expand and contract metrical units. Thus, for example the theme treats a stereotypical four-beat unit of jazz metrical patterning by internal expansion or contraction (4+4+5+4+5+4+5+3+4+5+4 beats, cf Example 3). Accompanying with this rather complex and esoteric treatment of the tune and cymbal rhythm, the piano accompaniment lays out its two chords, varied by syncopation and cross rhythm, an approach which comes near to Seiber's treatment of

his 'D E F' motif referred to above (cf Example 4).

***Tetrachord, Scale and Series***

*Equation I* is clearly the work of a younger composer than that of *Improvisations for Jazz Band and Orchestra*, and to me it feels like the work of a composer with jazz even more deeply embedded in his musical personality. As suggested above, the jazz influence is of a different, more recent idiom, namely bebop, and this seems a slightly easier idiom to integrate into the context of post-tonal 'classical' chamber music, partly, perhaps because the bebop idiom is itself a more 'specialised' one than swing. Where *Improvisations* sets the orchestra and the jazz bound in opposition to one another, even to the extent of the two contrasting versions of the main theme, the material of *Equation I* seems to have been planned with the integration process even more firmly in mind right from the conception stages of the work. One of the features of the integrative process is the flexible way in which Banks moves between tetrachord, series and scale to effect the *rapprochement* of the two partner idioms.

The overall design of *Equation I* adopts the following layout:

- 1 *Lento* (crotchet = 48) [bars 1 ff]
- 2 *Tempo 100* [bars 11 ff]
- 3 *Meno Mosso* [bars 40 ff]
- 4 *Allegro* (crotchet = 176) [bars 55 ff]
- 5 *Moderato* (crotchet = 80) [bars 98 ff]
- 6 *Fast* (minim = 92/96) [bars 108 ff]
- 7 *Lento* (crotchet = 60) [bars 122 ff]

and the discussion which follows is referenced to this plan.

Banks' principal theme (bars 12 ff, section 2) is given in Example 3. This is an eight-tone theme, based on the concatenation of two tetrachords which are transpositions of one another, namely D, F, G and Aflat and Bflat, Dflat, Eflat and E (the second of which actually appears in retrograde order), resulting in the eight-tone scale D, Eflat, E, F, G, Aflat, Bflat, Dflat (in set-theoretic terms: 0-1-2-3-4-5-7-9).

Clearly the tetrachordal unit was chosen to suggest the 'blue' scale, with its minor third and flattened fifth scale-degrees, but this tetrachord-pair was also selected with a possible third tetrachord in mind, namely F#, A, B, C: a tetrachord which is not only a transposition of the others, but also the tetrachord which would complete a twelve-tone 'derived' series:

[D, F, G, Aflat] [E, Eflat, Dflat, Bflat] [F#, A, B, C]

In the Banks Collection (MS 6830) at the National Library of Australia, the pack in which the manuscript fair copy of *Equation I* is held (Folio Box 6, Pack 9) also contains a four-page foldout of sketches which include a listing of this twelve-tone series (the 'original' form) and three of its transpositions (by 3, 6 and 9 semitones), as well as its inversion and three of *its* transpositions. Figure 1 also adopts the pitch nomenclature of Banks' labelling:

<b>Oa</b>	D F G Aflat	Bflat Dflat Eflat E	F# A B C	<b>Ia</b>	Aflat F Eflat D	C A G F#	E C# B Bflat
<b>Ob</b>	F Aflat Bflat Cflat	C# E F# G	A C D Eflat	<b>Ib</b>	F D C B	A F# E D#	C# Bflat Aflat G
<b>Oc</b>	G# B C# D	E G A Bflat	C Eflat F Gflat	<b>Ic</b>	D B A G#	F# Eflat Dflat C	Bflat G F E
<b>Od</b>	B D E F	G Bflat C Dflat	Eflat Gflat Aflat A	<b>Id</b>	B Aflat Gflat F	Eflat C Bflat A	G E D C#

FIGURE 1

Banks' sketch also includes an indication of the relationships between the tetrachordal segments of various transpositions of original and inversion, ie between Oa and Ib, Ob and Ia, Oc and Id, Od and Ic, namely that tetrachord D F G Aflat of appears as tones 1-4 of Oa and also as tones 2, 1, 12, 11 of Ib, B flat Dflat Eflat E appears as tones 5-8 of Oa and also as tones 10, 9, 8, 7 of Ib, and F# A B C appears as tones 9-12 of Oa and also as 6, 5, 4, 3 of Ib (and similarly all the tetrachords of all eight series-forms).

In the theme itself, the tetrachords are never used in exactly this way. Such 'twelve-tone' usage is reserved for developmental or coda passages, in accordance with Banks' treatment of the twelve-tone concept more generally, that is to say, as a particular outcome of the treatment of more limited pitch-groups which may also generate other non-twelve-tone structures. In other words, the twelve-tone aggregate becomes just a 'special case' of a more generalised procedure. One such usage occurs in the last few bars of the work viz:

Example 9

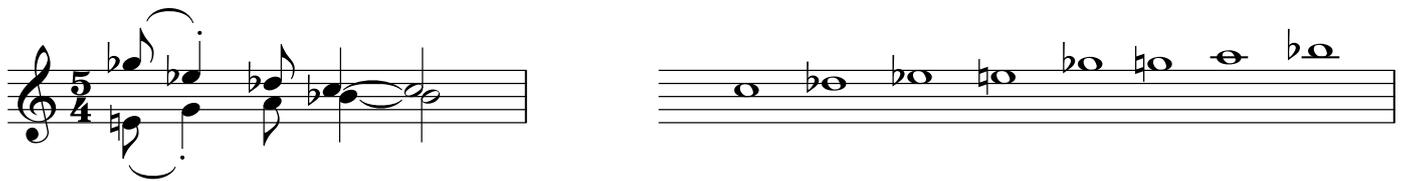
Elsewhere, the tetrachords tend to be combined in pairs rather than threes. One extensively-used pairing forms the 'octatonic' scale (0-1-3-4-6-7-9-10). Each of the three tetrachords of the twelve-tone series quoted above consists of a four-tone segment of one of the three possible different transposition of this scale, and when combined with an *inversion* of itself (rather than with a transposition, as in the series and in the theme) creates the whole of (that form of) the 'octatonic' scale. Let me refer to these three content-distinct forms of the octatonic scale as the 'P', 'Q' and 'R' forms.

Thus, D F G Aflat combines with E Dflat B Bflat to produce the scale-form D E F G Aflat Bflat B C# [the 'P' form]

..... while E Eflat Dflat Bflat combines with C A G F# to produce the scale-form C C# Eflat E F# G A Bflat [the 'Q' form]

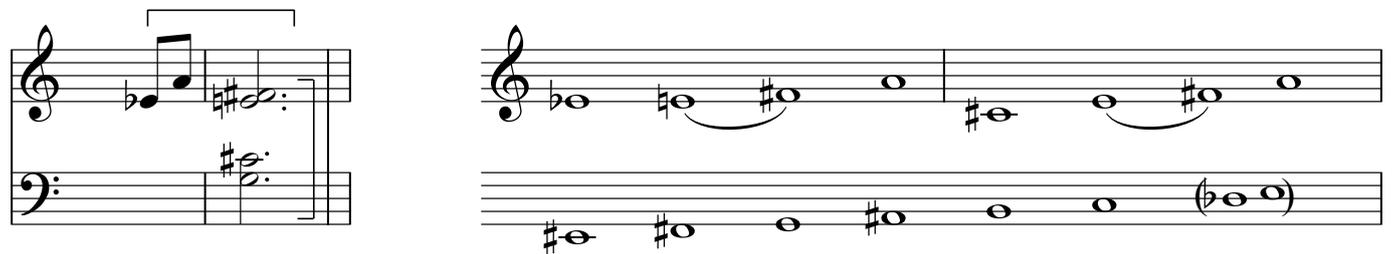
..... and F# A B C combines with D Eflat F Aflat to produce the scale-form C D Eflat F F# G# A B [the 'R' form]

P, Q and R recur in various ways, generated by different treatments of the tetrachords. For example, in section 4 (*Allegro*) at bar 80, the trumpet and tenor saxophone present, in rhythmic unison, two inversionally-related tetrachords. Gflat, Eflat, Dflat, C and E, G A, Bflat, which sum to the 'Q' form.



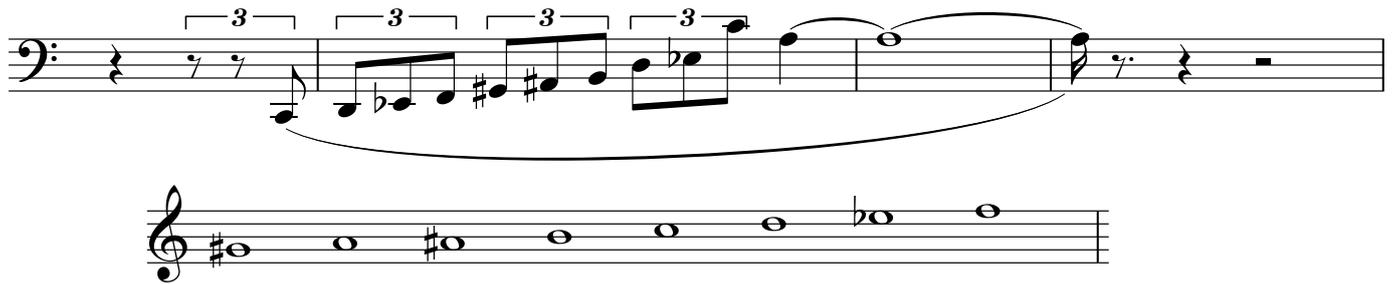
Example 10

Sometimes the pairs are overlapping rather than discrete, producing smaller groups of 5-7 tones, rather than 8. For example, in section 1 (*Lento*), bars 3/4, the strings combine Eflat E F# A vertically and C# E F# G chordally, a different combination of transpositions of an inversionally-related pair which produces the hexachord C# D# E F# G A (023568), a subset of the same 'Q' form.



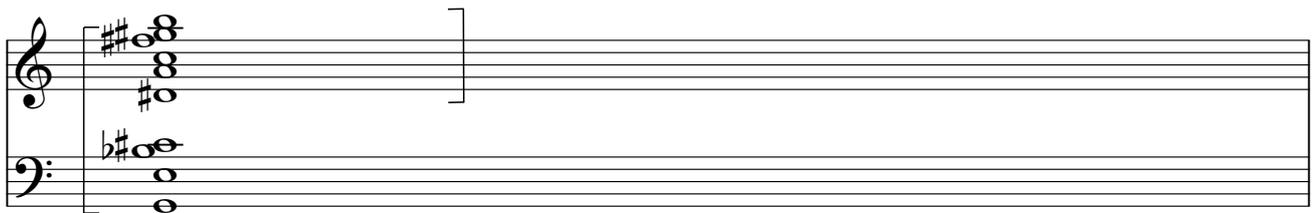
Example 11

On the whole, however, the eight-tone groups in *Equation I* are derived by combining two of the tetrachords from one or other forms of the twelve-tone series, thus creating an 'alternative:' form of the the octatonic scale to the 'standard' one in which the intervals of tone and semitone alternate. This is the 'octatonic' form deployed in the theme, for example: Aflat A Bflat B C D Eflat F (01234679). There, of course, the tetrachordal components are kept distinct from one another (ie tone-repetition occurs only *within* each tetrachord) in order to retain the 'blue' quality, but often, the two tetrachords are merged into an eight-tone entity (ie tone-repetition occurs *between* the tetrachords as well), as for example in the cello phrase at bars 6 ff, whose pure 'cultivated' identity is accentuated by the gentle *cantabile* string timbre and phrase-shaping, not just by its timbre.



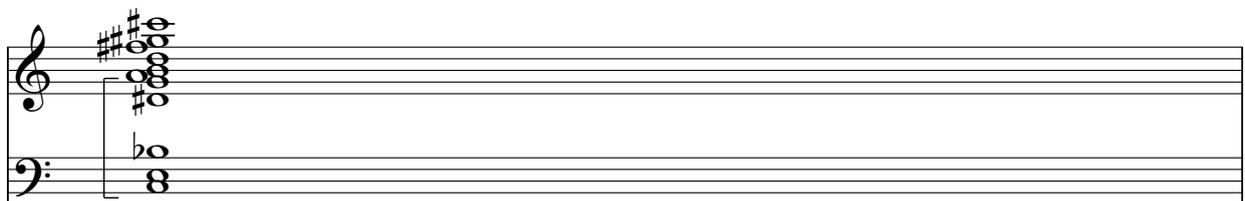
Example 12

In a similar way, the tetrachordal components are used as the generators of 9-, 10- and 11-tone collections, as well as 5-, 6- or 7-tone ones. For example, the work begins with a 10-tone scrunch which consists of (reading from bass to treble) the octatonic form 'Q' (tones 1-8), overlapping with 6 tones from 'R' (tones 5-10), immediately followed by the two missing tones D and F on double bass, pizzicato (which then grow into a foreshadowing of the main theme by accretion (D F G followed by D F G Aflat).



Example 13

Finally, the double-bass' final tetrachord figure (Gflat F Eflat C) comes to rest on C and initiates the 11-tone pile-up on C which constitutes the final cadence. Since all 11-tone chords are identical in interval content it would be perhaps far-fetched to see this in 'extended octatonic' terms, except that the five-tone sonority at the bottom of the chord is one of the classic 'blue' harmonies (dominant seventh with the prominent false relation of the 'blue' flattened third degree in the upper octave, above the major third in the lower).



Example 14

***'Diminished' and 'Augmented' Scales: 'Cultivated' and 'Vernacular' Approaches***

It remains to add a few very broad comments about these tetrachordal, hexachordal, octatonic, scalar and serial elements in other jazz of the forties and fifties. Let me preface my comments by a quote from Joachim

Berendt:

The flatted fifth became the most important interval of bebop ..... Within ten or twelve years ..... the flatted fifth was to become a 'blue' note, as common as the undetermined thirds and fifths familiar in traditional blues. (Berendt 1992, 17)

The octatonic scale (often called the 'diminished' scale in jazz parlance) can be treated as the concatenation of two tetrachords at the transposition level of the flatted fifth (eg C C# D# E and F# G A Bflat) and suggests why many chords and harmonic sequences in bebop draw upon it. The 'major/minor third' hexachord, 014589 (Schoenberg's 'Ode to Napoleon' hexachord) reveals a different but related structure, viz that its complement is a transposition of the same hexachord at the flatted fifth, so that the hexachord and its complement can be juxtaposed to produce a twelve-tone aggregate, eg C C# E F G# A + F# G A# B D D#. This hexachord (sometimes now called the 'augmented scale' in jazz contexts) is also a feature of more recent jazz styles, such as those of Ornette Coleman (cf Weiskopf and Ricker 2002), whose harmonic character is anticipated in our 'third-stream' contexts.

With both 'diminished' and 'augmented' scales, there is sometimes a sense of chord-complementation (following a given chord by another using notes of the chromatic scale which were not present in the first) in the jazz context. Nevertheless, this rarely goes so far as a formal, sustained aggregate-formation principle, as in our Seiber and Banks examples. On the whole, the use of these materials in a jazz context, even a bebop one, is less 'radical' harmonically than with composers of the 'cultivated' tradition (late Debussy and early-to-middle-period Stravinsky above all), in the sense of being closer to 'functional' rather than to 'motivic' in character. The octatonic harmonies can essentially be construed as neighbour-, passing- or embellishing-chords attached to straightforward functional progressions, even simple cycle-of-fifths sequences (VI – I – II – V – I and the like). From this point of view, the use of octatonic material in jazz probably derives from Ravel or other post-impressionist harmony, more than from Debussy and Stravinsky. Thelonius Monk's treatment of the opening of Gershwin's 'Nice Work if You Can Get It' (cf Example 15) is characteristic:

The image shows a musical score for piano. The top system is labeled 'Piano' and the bottom system is labeled 'Pno'. The key signature has two flats (B-flat major) and the time signature is 4/4. The score consists of two systems. The first system has four measures, with the first two measures containing octatonic chords highlighted by boxes. The second system starts at measure 5, with a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. A box highlights an octatonic chord in the right hand at the end of the second system.

Example 15

Nevertheless, by such means, *Improvisations* and *Equation 1* draw on some common elements and placed them

in two different contexts, contexts which call to mind the two different 'family backgrounds' which went into the making of these two works: the 'post-impressionist' and 'Schoenbergian' background and its 'cultivated' character on one hand, and the jazz background and its the 'vernacular' character on the other, which between them give the music its 'mixed identity'. I have concentrated on what the two works have in common, while nevertheless identifying certain differences (for example, the 'swing' and 'bebop' backgrounds, the different interaction between 'functional' and 'motivic' harmony, the presence or absence of long voice-leading lines, and, more generally, the relationship – peripheral or central – to the respective composers symphonic and chamber production). These pieces stand as a reminder that, even though the fecundity of the 'vernacular' idiom as a source for the renewal of the musical language of the 'cultivated' idiom may have moved up the priority-list during the postmodern age, it was by no means a forgotten idea during the period of the hegemony of 'High Modernism', and was often asserted in that period, albeit naturally in a different way.

### ***Recorded sources***

As a footnote to this discussion, I ought perhaps to mention that both *Improvisations* and *Equation 1* still await recordings through which the actual *sound* of these works might be more widely available. At the moment, *Equation 1* is only available to Petherick Room readers at the National Library of Australia, where a copy of the recording of a performance by the John Patrick Orchestra, held in the library's Don Banks Collection, can be heard. *Improvisations* is also only available via library collections: those which hold the little-circulated 1962 LP (British Saga, XIP7006).

### ***Acknowledgement***

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## *Larry Sitsky: Two Reviews*

Cotter, Jim (2004)

Sitsky. *Conversations with the Composer*. (Canberra: Nation Library of Australia)

ISBN 0 – 642 – 27606 – 4

Larry Sitsky is one of Australia's foremost senior composers (he turned 70 in 2004). This handsomely-produced book consists of selected recent conversations with Jim Cotter (a colleague on the staff of the ANU School of Music and himself a composer), complemented by a wonderful array of photographs, taken at different stages of Sitsky's life.

The conversations are grouped in eleven chapters. Sitsky recounts aspects of his early life in a Russian family in China (1934 – 1950), his immigration to Australia after the Chinese communists came to power, his student years in Sydney, and the various chapters of his life thereafter, through his time in Brisbane and Hobart, down to the now 30 years or so during which he has presided over aspects of the life of the School of Music in Canberra, become one of the elder statesman of Australian composition, and (recently) written his First Symphony. Other chapters record Sitsky's sometimes trenchant opinions on Australian musical life, and yet others explore Sitsky's own compositional development through his vast output, from piano solos to operas.

Composers and lexicographers are most likely to link Sitsky's name with two other figures in Australian modernism, Don Banks (1923 – 1980) and Keith Humble (1927 – 1995): the radicals of that generation. Sitsky's work also shows that being an Australian composer can mean relating to aspects of Australian intellectual life – for instance through his friendship and collaboration with poet Gwen Harwood – as well as to Australian geography and landscape, which dominated the attention of some of his contemporaries. Sometimes the 'dissenting' aspect of Sitsky's personality raises its head, particularly when he speaks of run-ins he has had with conservative mandarins, and one or two 'scandals' which his work provoked. Yet his interest in the music of earlier generations of Australian composers (eg Roy Agnew), and his evocation of his Russian heritage in recent years, particularly after his return to Russia in middle age, belie this 'tearaway' image.

Much of Sitsky's life has been devoted to pianistic activities as well as to composition. He studied in Sydney with Winifrid Burston – something of a visionary in Australian musical life in her time – and in San Francisco with the distinguished pianist Egon Petri, a pupil of Busoni. Thus an account of 'the Busoni tradition' – Sitsky's part in it, and the attitudes to composition and performance, music more broadly, and indeed life in general which this history has engendered – places Sitsky's work in an international as well as an Australian context.

The conversations are preceded by Cotter's introduction, and followed by a glossary of 'who has been who' in Sitsky's life and times. A bedside-table book, perhaps, but a fascinating, revealing and very readable one.

Sitsky, Larry (2005)

With a contribution from Roger Woodward.

Australian Piano Music of the Twentieth Century (Westport, Conn: Praeger)

ISBN 0-313-32286-4

ISSN 0736-7740

Larry Sitsky (70 in 2004) is one of Australia's foremost senior composers and pianists, but has for many years been active in musicology too: for example, his book on the post-World War I composers of the Russian Avant-Garde is widely considered a definitive work on that topic.

From its title, one might suppose that his latest publication is a reference book, and, up to a point, it is. It's large (335 pages) and covers a lot of ground: almost 150 composers rate at least a mention, and 63 are honoured with quotations. Indeed the inclusion of so many musical examples contributes a lot to the specificity of the impressions given.

Nevertheless, the author's style is anything but a bland 'encyclopaedic' one. Consider the title of its last section ("Conclusion. The Anti-Composer in Australian Society: Kitsch is Alive and Well") to get an idea of its tone in some passages. To be fair, this last section (a diatribe about the prominence of careerists with defective musical skills but well-developed networking talent) occupies only 8 pages, but I suspect it's included because Sitsky feels the evaluation of Australian music has been distorted by such 'anti-composers', and one intention of the book is to 'set the record straight', for there are other passages of rather strident polemic elsewhere (of which more below).

Some idiosyncratic attitudes flow from this outlook of respect for doers rather than talkers: for example, some sections are divided into "Pianists" and "Non-Pianists" (though the latter are not quite relegated to second-class status). The category of "Australian" composers, on the other hand (composers who cultivate local cultural or geographic references, as opposed to others, presumably considered "internationalists"), a category which appears in 3 of the book's 4 parts, takes up the theme of many earlier histories of Australian music.

The polemical passages also point to the book's real nature: even if it is published in Praeger's "Music Reference Collection" it is not so much a reference work as a personal, critical view of one slice of our musical history.

It has some attractive and distinctive features. One is that it does not assume that Australian music in some sense "came of age" after the World War II, as so much historical writing of the previous generation did, thereby relegating earlier music to "preludial" status. Part 1: The First Generation about the music of the earlier 20th century is one of the most interesting, especially the sections on Brewster-Jones (1887-1949) and Roy Agnew (1891-1944). Few Australian pianists know much about this material, so Sitsky's 20 pages on the former and 10 on the latter provide a valuable introduction.

Nevertheless, Sitsky clearly regards the modernists of his own generation as the weighty figures in this history and Part 2: The Second Generation, which deals with them and their contemporaries, is the longest. Werder, Banks, Humble, Williamson, Meale, Hollier, Kos and Butterley are included here. Composers of this generation not considered to be part of this modernist group are given a separate category entitled "Retrospective Composers". Also within this second part of the volume, there is a special section not by Sitsky but about him. It is a genial tribute from one major Australian pianist (Roger Woodward) to a colleague. It is also the longest section by far on a single composer (44 pages): the same length as the entire Part 3: The Third Generation, where 58 composers are discussed, also in 44 pages.

It is perhaps understandable that Sitsky feels less sympathy for this last, younger group of composers, especially those (probably the majority) who have departed from precepts which have been central to his own career and approach. To see ourselves in the mainstream and those who differ from us as small backwaters is a natural human instinct, whereas to acknowledge the importance of some of these recent developments might risk describing the tide of history flowing away from us.

Nevertheless, some preoccupations of this generation rouse Sitsky's ire more than others: as he says (page 235), "The mere whiff of a school of composition makes my blood run cold". Thus Maximalism (Dench, Smetanin, Brophy, Formosa) receives the most trenchant polemic in the whole volume. But he is not very sympathetic to approaches at the other end of the aesthetic spectrum either: Vine, one of the most-performed Australian composers in recent years, is castigated for "a simplistic melodic approach", "flirtation with commercialism" and being "showy but not profound".

Still, there are, throughout the book, many illuminating vignettes where Sitsky's sympathies are engaged. Composers such as Don Hollier (longtime colleague and friend) and Ann Ghandar (former pupil) receive more extensive attention than they are likely to receive from others, and it is good to have a perceptive account of such contributions.

In Part 4: The Australian Piano Concerto the chronological view is abandoned for the generic, giving a quick overview of 100 years' worth of concertos down to Smalley's (1985) and Vine's (1997); the latter's receives kinder treatment than his solo works! The chapter ends with another diatribe, this time against the ABC for not supporting more performances of these many interesting pieces: a familiar Sitsky theme.

A book that deals with so much material, piece by piece, inevitably cannot delve in depth into particular composers, works, historical movements or aesthetic issues. It gives a reasonably comprehensive, but nevertheless impressionistic overview of the topic outlined in the title, from a well-defined individual perspective, but leaves quite a bit of room for further words to be uttered. If I'm not mistaken, I hear a riposte or two already in the offing ...



## *Don Banks: An Introduction to his Work*

Don Banks was Australia's most important modernist composer in the third quarter of the 20th century. His most important works were probably the orchestral and chamber works which he wrote while living in London between 1950 and 1971, but he also made a significant contribution to Australian jazz, wrote a great deal of imaginative film music, composed the most important Australian contributions to the 'third-stream' genre (combining aspects of jazz and 'classical' practice), and made some isolated but distinctive contributions to developments of a more 'experimental' nature, including facets of Australian electronic music.

He was born in South Melbourne in 1923, and had a good start in life for a future composer, being the son of a professional band musician who played numerous instruments: all the saxophones (soprano, alto, tenor, baritone and bass) as well as percussion, piano and trombone. The young Banks' memories of those early years include performances given by his father's band at functions at Government House in the thirties. During his schooldays at Melbourne Boys' High School (1937-9) Banks acquired a passion for jazz, which remained with him all his life. The following decade was to see him become perhaps the most important pioneer of early bebop in Melbourne in the late forties, with various bands, including his own: the Donny Banks Boptet.

During the earlier years of this period (1941-6), Banks served with the Army Medical Corps in Melbourne, while playing jazz at night in various Melbourne venues. After the war (1947-9), he joined the large number of ex-servicemen who undertook belated tertiary studies: in his case the Diploma of Music at the Melbourne University Conservatorium. But he also continued to play jazz with his Boptet. The Boptet's final appearance was on radio station 3AR in January 1950 as part of the ABC's programme Thursday Night Swing Club (though the music it played was almost certainly not swing but bebop), just before his departure for London.

In early 1950 Banks left Australia to study in London, and thereafter jazz took a secondary part in his life, and although he always insisted on being identified as an Australian composer, he became quite a cosmopolitan in outlook. Certainly, the first few years of his period of residence in Europe were spent studying with three of the finest teachers of that (or any) day -- Matyas Seiber (who was Hungarian), Milton Babbitt (American) and Italian Luigi Dallapiccola (Italian) -- none of whom had any serious connection with Australia. He studied privately with Matyas Seiber in London, from early 1950 until mid-1952. During the summer of 1952, he took a course at the American Institute in Salzburg with Milton Babbitt, and then spent the 1952-3 academic year studying with Luigi Dallapiccola in Florence. After this he settled back in London, though there was one further significant period of study three years later, when he attended a summer school at Gravesano in Switzerland in August 1956. This took place at the villa of the famous conductor Herman Scherchen, who had a passionate interest in new music, and the principal lecturer was the Italian composer Luigi Nono. Sessions were devoted principally to the study of the Orchestral Variations of Schoenberg and Webern (at that time works comparatively little-known in Europe, but widely regarded by composers such as Nono as heralding the future of music), and to electronic music (Scherchen had a private studio of his own in situ).

These early years of apprenticeship also saw his first significant compositions. His first substantial success was with his Duo for Violin and Piano, written under Matyas Seiber's tutelage during 1951, which was awarded the Edwin Evans Prize in 1952. The prize was presented by Professor Edward Dent at a performance in London in February 1952. The visit which Banks made to Salzburg in the summer of that year to study with Babbitt also enabled him to hear his Duo played at the 1952 ISCM Festival there. His Four Pieces for Orchestra, written during his period of study with Dallapiccola, was given in 1954 by the London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Adrian Boult. His Three Studies for Cello and Piano, composed soon after his return from Florence, were premiered by Nelson Cooke and Eric Parkin in London's Royal Festival Hall in April 1954.

Towards the end of the fifties, Banks began a significant career in composing for film. Essentially this remained the principal means by which he earned his living for his remaining years in London, along with teaching work at Morley College. He composed a huge quantity of music for film: documentaries, features, animated films, even TV advertisements. No account of Banks' work would be complete without reference to – in particular – those classics of vernacular culture, the 'Hammer Horrors'. Banks wrote 19 feature films, of which the 10 or so for Hammer Productions form the centrepiece. Into these scores he poured huge quantities of music which drew on every one of the musical idioms in which he had developed expertise, as occasion demanded. Although these film scores (and indeed most of his music outside the symphonic and chamber output) has been taken as peripheral in some accounts of Banks' work, they nevertheless allowed him to 'let his hair down' – free of the sometimes restrictive constraints of expectation imposed by audiences for jazz or 'classical' music, and in some respects show the different sides of his personality in even more vivid form than the symphonic and chamber works.

These films for which he wrote such huge quantities of music (something like 15-20 hours altogether) should probably be described – frankly – as 'B' movies, though this somewhat severe judgement is by no means universally shared, as can be deduced from the fact that Hammer has found it worthwhile during the nineties to re-issue quite a number of them on video as 'cult' movies. These re-issues include *The Mummy's Shroud*, *The Reptile*, *Rasputin the Mad Monk*, *Nightmare*, *The Torture Garden* and *The Evil of Frankenstein*. Nevertheless, 'B' movies or no, we should recall that many of the greatest popular songs of the century come from musicals which 'bombed' after a few performances, and that often the songs they contained took on a new life of their own thereafter. In the same way, I believe that a good deal of Banks' film music is considerably stronger than the films in which it appeared, and deserves to be re-recorded for its own value. Indeed, in the cultural climate of the end of the century, when the rather patronising view of film music as inherently a second-class genre – quite a widespread attitude amongst composers of previous generations – is gradually fading away, and re-issues of film scores have become a more and more ubiquitous feature of the CD catalogues, this is now quite likely to happen.

If you look up Don Banks in the 1980 edition of the *New Grove Dictionary*, the article there by British journalist William Mann concentrates, as you might expect, on the side of his work by which he became best-known in Britain: the composer of "serious" works for orchestral and chamber forces in a 'modernist' idiom – works which make considerable demands on listeners' powers of perception and conception, and are predicated on a deep background knowledge of the development of 'progressive' musical styles in this century. The pieces on which Mann's assessment is based are essentially the chamber pieces beginning with the *Sonata da Camera* (1961) and the *Horn Trio for the Edinburgh Festival* (1962), leading to successes with larger orchestral canvasses such as the *Horn Concerto for Barry Tuckwell and the London Symphony Orchestra* (1966) and the *Violin Concerto for the 1968 London Promenade Concerts*, although the final work in this impressive sequence was written after his return to Australia in the early seventies: *Prospects for the opening of the Sydney Opera House* (1973).

Certainly these pieces do in some sense manifest the cosmopolitan qualities to be expected of an 'expatriate'. Nonetheless, the tone of Mann's article (basically a sympathetic one) makes a good deal of Banks' 'regional' origins. Conversely, and perhaps ironically, it's in Australia that writers have tended to emphasise the European, 'expatriate' aspect of his work.

Even if we regard these chamber and orchestral pieces as the 'core' of Banks' output, there are several other genres to which he made significant contributions, and which should be mentioned here. One was 'third-stream' music, in which jazz idioms and jazz performers were integrated with the 'classical' idiom and forces such as string quartet, chamber ensemble and orchestra – works such as *Settings from Roget*, *Intersections* and later *Nexus*.

Another was electronic music. As he was reported as saying on the subject many years later: 'The language of music

must be constantly reworked, and I believed that in time the avant-garde of today will become the mainstream of music in the future'. Experiments with electronic music began in the sixties, but there were many trials and tribulations involved in getting access to facilities for electronic music in London at that time. Considering the magnitude of these problems, it is hardly surprising that electronic music never became more than a secondary component of his output (as it might have done, had he come to maturity a generation later, when better equipment had become cheaper and more widely accessible), and when he did call on electronic resources, it was usually in combination with 'live' instruments.

In *Meeting Place*, written for the London Sinfonietta in 1970, he went a stage further still, combining both the 'third-stream' idiom and electronic media. But it was not until after his return to Australia that he was involved in the event in which this 'experimental' side of his musical personality reached its apotheosis, in one of the major events in which he was involved in Canberra in the early seventies, the 'no-holds-barred' audio-visual extravaganza *Synchronos '72*, which combined these elements plus yet another: visual images created and projected by Stan Ostoja-Kotkowski.

In 1970 Banks paid a visit to Australia, and then decided to return to Australia to live, which he finally did, after a further year in London, in 1972. He joined the staff of the Canberra School of Music for several years, and eventually moved to the Sydney Conservatorium of Music in 1978. For much of this period his work was hampered by the illness from which he eventually died in 1980, and although he wrote a number of successful works during the seventies, it would not be an unreasonable assessment that the major scores which he had written in London during the sixties remained his best.

Much of Don Banks' music is published by Schott. This means that performing scores of some of the solo and chamber works are available for purchase, as well study or miniature scores of some of the larger works. But a good number of these Schott works are still available only on hire. The works which were not published during his lifetime are now available for purchase from Southern Voices through the Australia Music Centre.

The principal repository of Banks' documentary material is the National Library of Australia. The manuscript collections of the NLA are, as one would expect, a rich resource for Australian Studies in most fields. But, compared to the resources for the study of literature, painting and other art forms, those for music are as yet rather more limited. Fortunately, the Banks Collection is one of its most significant musical resources. It is divided into two principal components: the Manuscript Room Collection (MS 6830) and the Petherick Room Collection (MUS BANKS). The most important things in MS 6830 are the music manuscripts (scores, parts, drafts, and sketches of chamber, orchestral, film and TV music, in the main) of most of his compositions (25 large black boxes) and the personal papers (34 large grey boxes, containing correspondence, programmes, scripts, diaries, and much else). The Petherick Room Collection consists of Banks' personal library: scores by other composers, books and journals (322 catalogued items, some of which are themselves bundles of several or many items) and recordings, on cassette, reel-to-reel tape and disc, not only of music, but also of broadcast talks, interviews and other spoken material (several hundred items in all). The collection was acquired by the NLA on the 10th August, 1982, but various bits and pieces have been added to it in the last sixteen years.

Overall the Don Banks Collection presents a remarkably rounded portrait of the composer and his activities, but there are some lacunae, above all the film scores. Unfortunately, the NLA's archive contains only the short-score sketches for most of the film music (in pencil on three- or four-stave systems). The composer's widow, Valerie Banks, who now lives in Canberra, holds three or four full scores. The rest are probably somewhere in the Hammer archives, but since the musical manuscripts in the Hammer archives are largely uncatalogued and in a state of some disorder, I have not yet managed to reassemble complete and coherent full scores for the whole series of Banks

movies in a form which precisely matches what is on the sound-tracks, though I hope to do so in the next year or two.

Writings about Don Banks are rather in need of updating. Since his activities, as sketched above, covered several fields of composition which ordinarily have little to do with one another, most writers who have attempted an assessment of his work have concentrated on one or two of these fields and ignored or skimmed over the others. There have also been several symposia with chapters in which his work has been discussed – albeit mostly quite old ones by now. However, in one recent one (see the bibliography, below) Randall D Larson discusses Banks' music for the Hammer horror movies, and describes him as 'the crown prince' of the genre. None of these quite gets to grips with the many identities which were an essential part of Banks' musical personality.

In the eighties and nineties we have become more accustomed to the idea that the work of Australian composers often embodies many musical identities, because of the arrival of a generation of composers, now in their thirties and forties, whose work, while thoroughly Australian in outlook, is less likely than the previous generation to accord precedence in the determination of identity to such straightforward factors as citizenship of a particular nation state or inhabitation of a particular landscape, and is equally influenced by a plethora of compositional practices derived from their contacts with the European new music festivals, the many sub-cultures of American musical life or the popular musics of six continents (amongst other possibilities). This phenomenon of multiple identity has sometimes been seen as analogous with, or perhaps an example of, the simultaneous development in other spheres of life of both globalisation and regionalisation (as for example within the European Union, in political and economic life). In the post-modern era, indeed, one might even say multiple identity has become the dominant paradigm in musical composition, in Australia as elsewhere, although the older tradition which tended to define Australian identity in terms of Australian landscape and something of an 'Asia/Pacific v Europe' polemic – a tradition promulgated for so many years by Peter Sculthorpe and others – has continued to find adherents.

A particularly interesting resource with respect to the 'jazzman' side of this multiple identity is in the National Film and Sound Archive in Canberra: the videocassette *The Melbourne Jazz Days, 1938 - 1950* by Banks' son Simon. A large part of this video is given over to interviews in 1985 with musicians who had played jazz with the young Don Banks in the forties, before he went to London to study, and these musicians all speak with great respect of his capabilities and originality as a jazz pianist and arranger.

Though there has not yet been a book devoted solely to Don Banks and his music, there have been a number of academic theses; several are in progress at various universities around the country as I write.

I should also mention two other forthcoming publications in which I have attempted to document the many identities of Don Banks more fully – a Guide to the NLA collection, *Don Banks on Music* – an anthology of the composer's own writings, transcribed talks and interviews about music (many of them edited from the manuscripts and published for the first time) – and a monograph: *Meeting Place: the Music of Don Banks*.

Finally, a personal impression – one which remained unchanged from my first meeting with him in 1968 through a friendship of twelve years until his (by contemporary standards) quite early death at the age of 56: that of a slightly-built, quietly-spoken and unassuming person – very self-critical, but always ready to give credit where credit was due, whether to colleagues, students or other composers, and never given to carping or polemic. This flexible capacity to 'give credit where credit was due' was perhaps a key personality trait: one which enabled him to see, without ideological prejudice, possibilities in many different fields of musical composition – fields which espouse very different, even conflicting, ideas as to what constitutes musical value. Although, to be sure, this is a subjective personal impression of mine, it is not contradicted by the more objective, precise and complete answer

to the question which the documentary evidence, especially the NLA collection, provides.

I joined the staff of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music in mid-1980, expecting to spend some time as Don Banks' colleague, although it was apparent that he was already very ill. In fact, he died only a few weeks later, on September 5th of that year, and I became his successor as Head of Composition instead of his colleague. He was a few weeks short of his 57th birthday when he died, and his composing during those final years in Australia had been considerably affected by his battle with cancer. In other circumstances, one might have expected that much of his best work was still to come.



*Don Banks: List of Works*

<b>Title</b>	<b>Instrumentation</b>	<b>Date</b>
Trio	flute, violin and cello	1948
Fantasia	string orchestra	1949
Sonatina	piano	1949
Divertimento	flute and string trio	1951
Duo	violin and cello	1951
Five North Country Folk Songs	soprano and piano	1953
Four Pieces	orchestra	1953
Sonata	violin and piano	1953
Five North Country Folk Songs	soprano and string orchestra	1954
Psalm 70	mezzo-soprano and orchestra	1954
Three North Country Folk Songs	soprano and piano	1955
Three Studies	cello and piano	1955
I'm easy	vln, double bass, trombone, guitar, pf, drums	1956
Pezzo Drammatico	piano	1956
Episode	small orchestra	1958
Sonata da camera	8 instruments	1961
Elizabethan Miniatures	flute, lute, viola da gamba and strings	1962
Horn Trio	horn, violin, piano	1962
Equation 1	12 players	1963
Form	tape	1964
Three Episodes	flute and piano	1964
Concerto for Horn and Orchestra	horn and orchestra	1965
Divisions	orchestra	1965
Assemblies	orchestra	1966
Settings from Roget	voice and jazz quartet	1966
Sequence	solo cello	1967
Concerto for Violin and Orchestra	violin and orchestra	1968
Prologue, Night Piece and Blues for Two	clarinet and piano	1968
Tirade mezzo	soprano and ensemble	1968
Dramatic Music for Young Orchestra	orchestra	1969
Equation 2	12 instrumentalists	1969
Findings Keepings	chorus (+ optional bass guitar and drum kit)	1969

Intersections	electronic sounds and orchestra	1969
Aria from Limbo	mezzo-soprano, ensemble, 2-channel tape	1972
Fanfare and National Anthem	orchestra	1970
Meeting Place	chamber ensemble, jazz group, synthesizer	1970
Commentary	piano and tape	1971
Four Pieces	string quartet	1971
Limbo	3 singers, 8 instruments, 2-channel tape	1971
Music for Wind Band	wind band	1971
Nexus	orchestra and jazz quintet	1971
Three Short Songs	jazz singer and jazz quintet	1971
Aria from Limbo	mezzo-soprano, ensemble, 2-channel tape	1972
Equation 3	ensemble, jazz quartet and electronics	1972
Shadows of Space	4-channel tape	1972
Synchronos '72	tape	1972
Walkabout	children's voices and instruments	1972
Take Eight	jazz quartet and string quartet	1973
Prospects	orchestra	1974
Carillon	2-channel tape	1975
String Quartet	string quartet	1975
4 / 5 / 7	tape (graphic score for student performers)	1976
Benedictus	male chorus, jazz quartet, electronics	1976
Trio	bass clarinet, elec pf, Moog synthesizer	1976
4 x 2 x 1	clarinettist and tape	1977
Magician's Castle	tape	1977
One for Murray	solo clarinet	1977
Trilogy	orchestra	1977
An Australian Entertainment	male voices	1979

In addition to these works of 'absolute' music, the following feature films have scores which were wholly or partly composed by Don Banks:

- Murder at Site 3 (Eternal Films Ltd, 1958)
- The Price of Silence (Eternal Films Ltd, 1959)
- The Treasure of San Teresa (Associated British Picture Corporation, 1959)
- Jackpot (Eternal Films Ltd, 1960)
- The Third Alibi (Eternal Films Ltd, 1961)
- Captain Clegg (Hammer/ Universal International, 1961)
- Petticoat Pirates (ABPC, 1963)
- The Evil of Frankenstein (Hammer/ Universal International, 1963)
- Crooks in Cloisters (ABPC, 1963)

The Punch and Judy Man (ABPC, 1963)  
Nightmare (Hammer Film Productions Ltd, 1963)  
Hysteria (Hammer Film Productions Ltd/MGM, 1964)  
The Brigand of Kandahar (Hammer Film Productions Ltd, 1964)  
Rasputin, the Mad Monk (Hammer Film Productions Ltd, 1965)  
The Reptile (Hammer Film Productions Ltd, 1966)  
The House at the End of the World (Alta Vista Film Productions Ltd, 1966)  
The Mummy's Shroud (Hammer Film Productions Ltd, 1966)  
The Frozen Dead (Hammer Film Productions Ltd, 1967)  
The Torture Garden (Hammer Film Productions Ltd, 1970)

This list does not include the many documentary, animated and television films for which Banks wrote the music. For information on these films please consult *Graham Hair: A Guide to the Don Banks Collection* in the National Library of Australia (Canberra: Manuscripts Division, National Library of Australia), ISBN 0 642 10711 4.



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## *Don Banks: A Chronological Sketch*

Compositions and events are listed chronologically, except that the title of each composition written within a particular year is given immediately under the heading for that year in cases where the score is not precisely dated. In the case of events whose precise date has not (yet) been ascertained, estimated dates have been given, accompanied by a parenthesised question mark.

1923

October 25th: born in Melbourne.

Parents both born in Australia

Father: Donald Waldemar Banks, band and jazz musician -- played all the saxophones (sop, alto, tenor, bari, bass), percussion, piano, trombone

Mother: Elsie Banks, nee Carlson)

Sister: Norma

Paternal grandparents born in Scotland

Maternal grandparents:

Grandfather Oscar Carlson, born Ujsted, Sweden [seaman]

Grandmother Elisabeth Carlson, born in Ireland

Home address: 89 Nelson Road, South Melbourne, SC5

1928

Began piano lessons [with George McWhinney ?]

First school: Cambridge College, Albert Park, Melbourne

1929

Began to participate in piano competitions in Victoria (Ballarat, Bendigo etc)

1930

1931

1932

Attended Albert Park State School (?)

About this time, played intermission music with Donald Weekes, violin (who later played with the London Philharmonia Orchestra) during an appearance by his father's band at Government House

1933

Attended Albert Park State School (?)

1934

Attended Albert Park State School (?)

About this time, after a few years' piano playing, gave up [= gave up formal tuition, but kept playing ?], due to lack of interest in practising.

1935

Attended Middle Park Central School

1936

Attended Middle Park Central School

1937

Attended Melbourne Boys' High School

About this time, renewed contact with music by learning to play jazz piano.

1938

Attended Melbourne Boys' High School

Participated in MBHS Jazz Appreciation Society [organised by Max/Ray Margison].

Played jazz as a highschool boy with fellow students Paul Longhurst (drums) and Rick Atkins (reeds). [some references also mention Ray Marginson (drums) and Keith Atkins (reeds)]

1939

Attended Melbourne Boys' High School

Performed jazz with Graeme Bell (piano), Roger Bell (trumpet) and others during an insurance company picnic function on the paddle steamer Weroona, sailing Melbourne - Sorrento

[Date?] Participated in jazz concert at Unity Hall, Melbourne. Billed as 'Don Banks, the sixteen-year-old boogie woogie wonder'

1940

Went to work for Hetherington, Ffoulkes and Austin (solicitors), Melbourne; later for Denman and Robertson (also solicitors)

1941

Continued to play jazz piano, eg at St Leonard's Cafe, St Kilda (with Charlie Blott)

August 9th: Participated at a History of Jazz Concert, with Graeme Bell and his Jazz Gang, at The Stage Door, 276 Flinders Street, Melbourne. Billed as 'Don Banks the 17-year-old wonder'.

October 28th: Contemporary Art Society Concert, "Hot Jazz", by Graeme Bell and his Jazz Gang. Don Banks was soloist ("Boogie Woogie Piano solo"). Review: Melbourne Truth 1/11/41

December 19th: beginning of war service with the CMF (Citizens Military Forces). Allocated first to Signal Corps, then to the Army Medical Corps. Eventually moved to the AMC base administration in Melbourne.

1942

Continued war service and playing jazz

1943

Continued war service and playing jazz

Played jazz at the Rainbow Room, Melbourne, with Roger Bell (trumpet), Don ('Pixie') Roberts, Lin Challen and Laurie Howells (drums)

Played jazz with The Mosters: Splinter Reeves (tenor), Dilly Weston (?), Alan Nash (tpt), Lin Challen (bass), Don Banks (pf).

Began playing jazz with the BBC Trio (DB, Charlie Blott and Lin Challen)

September: visit of the Artie Shaw Band (to entertain the American troops in Australia). DB recorded jazz with Australian jazzman Roger Bell (trumpet) and with Max Kaminsky, trumpeter of the Artie Shaw Band 19/9/1943

1944

Continued war service and playing jazz

March 16th: recorded jazz (incl Sweet Georgia Brown) with The Aldous Huxley Trio (private recording)

1945

Continued war service and playing jazz

Wrote scores for the Glenn Gilmour Band

About this time, played jazz in the band at Sammy Lee's Stork Club (Black Rock, outer Melbourne suburbs). Personnel: Craig Crawford (leader, tenor), Ralph Pommer (deputy leader, alto), Kevin Gobert (ten, vocals), Ivan Haskall (cl, alto, bari), Ken Brentnall (tpt), Bill "Buffalo" Coady (drums), Ken Lester (bass), Don Banks (pf), Betty Lester (vocals).

October: P&A Parade concert. Don Banks with the Dolf ("Splinter") Reeves Quintet: Splinter Reeves (tenor), Charlie Blott (drums), Alf Baker (guitar), Linton Challen (bass), Don Banks (pf). Cf Listener In report.

1946

Continued war service and playing jazz

May 12th: P&A Parade concert. Don Banks with the Reeves Rhythm Ensemble: 'Splinter' Reeves (tenor), Charlie Blott (drums), Alf Baker (guitar), Linton Challen (bass), Don Banks (pf). Cf Listener In report.

August 8th: conclusion of war service with the CMF

1947

Commenced studies for the Diploma of the Melbourne University Conservatorium under the ex-servicemen's scheme.

[Exact date ?] Recorded jazz (incl Tea for Two) with Splinter and his Chips (private recording)

[Exact date ?] Mid-1947: recorded jazz (incl I'm in the mood for love) with The Don Banks Group (private recording).

July 23rd: recorded jazz (incl Wholly Cats) with Russ Jones and the Happy Chaps (private recording)

August 24th: Don Banks with Bob Limb's All-Star Septette. New Theatre, Flinders Street, Melbourne. Reported in Tempo 10/12 (Sept 1947).

[Exact date ?] Late-1947: recorded jazz (incl Lady Be Good) with The Bobby Limb Orchestra (private recording).

1948

Continued studies for the Diploma of the Melbourne University Conservatorium  
Work composed: Trio for flute, violin and cello, Piano Sonata in C sharp minor

About July: formed the Donny Banks Bopptet.

Players who performed with it 1947-1950 included:

Charlie Blott (drums)  
Ken Lester (bass)  
John Foster (bass) [according to Bisset]  
Eddie Oxley (alto sax, clarinet)  
Orm Stewart (trombone)  
Joe Washington (guitar) [according to Bisset]  
Bruce Clarke (guitar)  
Alf Baker (guitar) (?) [see discography]  
Ken Brentnall (trumpet)  
Don Banks (piano)  
Don ('Pixie') McFarlane (bass)  
Betty Parker (vocals)

July 25th: participated (with the Donny Banks Bopptet) in a Modern Music Society Concert, New Theatre, Flinders Street, Melbourne. Personnel: Don Banks (pf), Errol Buddle (ten), Eddie Oxley (alto), Ken Brentnall (tpt), Joe Washington (g), Lin Challen (bass), Charlie Blott (drums), Laurel Quinzel (vocals).

Repertoire included: Undecided, I'm in the mood for Love

Reported in Tempo 11/11 (August 1948), p10

[Date ?] recorded jazz (incl Pennies from Heaven and Maternity) with Blott's Boppers (private recording).

September 2nd: recorded jazz (incl Symphony Sid and Talk of the Town) with Errol Buddle and his Sextet on the first Australian jazz recording (Jazzart, numbers 1 and 2).

Tuesday, November 30th: Participated in Jazz Parade, a concert including both (trad) jazz and bop, at the Collingwood Town Hall, Melbourne.

Items presented by the Donny Banks Bopptet:

Schon Rosmarin (Kreisler, arr Ken Brentnall)  
Louise (arr Don Banks)  
Lady be Bop (Ken Brentnall)  
I'm in the mood for Love (Fields/McHugh arr Don Banks)  
Sportsman's Hop (arr Joe Washington)  
Peace of Mind (Vivien Lum)  
Cherokee (Ray Noble, arr Don Banks)  
How High the Moon (arr Don Banks)

1949

Completed studies for the Diploma of the Melbourne University Conservatorium, graduating with first class honours

Work composed: Fantasia for String Orchestra

[Date: ?] Premiere, Sonata in C sharp minor. Concert of the Society for New Music, Melbourne. Played by the composer. This was the only ('serious') work by Banks to receive a (public) performance prior to the composer's departure to study in Europe.

August 10th: Exhibition Building concert by (amongst others ?) Rex Stewart and the Splinter Reeves Splintette. Included arrangements by Don Banks.

1950

January 16th: recorded jazz (incl I've got my love to keep me warm and Can't help lovin' dat man) with The Don Banks Orchestra (The Donny Banks Boptet) (Jazzart, numbers 48 and 49)

[January 1950 ? or late 1949 ?] Broadcast (radio station 3AR): Alan Saunders' Thursday Night Swing Club. Last appearance of the Don Banks Boptet. Personnel: Don Banks (pf), Eddie Oxley (alto), Bruce Clarke (guitar), Ken Brentnall (tpt), Don ("Pixie") McFarlane (bass), Charlie Blott (drums).

February: Left Australia for further study in England, in the company of fellow students Ian Pearce and Ivan Sutherland, on the liner Strathaird

Address in London: 28 Pembridge Gardens, Notting Hill Gate, London, W2

March [approx]: Began private studies in composition in London with Matyas Seiber (continued to the summer of 1952). While studying with Seiber, supported himself by playing at seaside hotels and by working in the office of the London Contemporary School of Music (secretary to Edward Clark).

1951

Shared a house in London with Roger Bell and Ian Pearce

Work composed: Russian Folk Song for piano

May: completed Duo for violin and cello (1950-1)

June 17th: Premiere, Duo. British Council, London. John Glickman (violin) and Christopher Bunting (cello).

August 22nd: Duo. Australian Music Festival concert, Elder Conservatorium, Adelaide

December: completed Divertimento for flute, violin and cello.

1952

Founded and organised the Australian Musical Association in London

Awarded the Edwin Evans Prize (for Duo for violin and cello)

Awarded Italian Government Scholarship for study in Florence with Dallapiccola.

February 26th: Duo for violin and cello. London Contemporary Music Centre concert at the RBA Galleries, London. Emmanuel Hurwitz (violin) and Vivien Josephs (cello).

February 29th: Premiere, Divertimento for flute and string trio. London Contemporary Music Centre (British Section of the ISCM) at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, 17-18 Dover Street, London, W1. Douglas Whittaker (flute) with the Robert Cooper Trio, ie Robert Cooper (violin), Gwyne Edwards (viola) and Denis Vigay (cello).

May 29th: The Cherry Tree Australian Musical Association "First Recital", Australia House, London. Ailsa Green (soprano) and Douglas Gamley (piano).

June 23rd: Duo for violin and cello. 1952 ISCM festival (Salzburg)

July 10th: Australian Musical Association "Second Recital", Australia House, London.

[Date ?] Australian Musical Association "Third Recital", Australia House, London.

[Date ?] Australian Musical Association "Fourth Recital", Australia House, London.

August: attended Seminar in American Studies at the Schloss Leopold, Salzburg, taking a course in twelve-tone theory with Milton Babbitt

October 3rd: Australian Musical Association 'Inaugural Concert', Cinema Hall, Australia House, London.

November: completed Sonata for Violin and Piano

November (until May 1953): studies in Florence with Luigi Dallapiccola.

1953

Works completed: Psalm 70, Four Pieces for Orchestra, 5 North Country Folk Songs (version 1 with piano accompaniment).

February 15th: Premiere, Violin Sonata.

April 23rd: Violin Sonata. Australian Musical Association concert, Australia House, London. Maria Lidka (violin) and Margaret Kitchin (piano).

May(?): completion (in Florence) of Four Pieces for Orchestra

August 5th: marriage to Valerie Frances Miller

Thursday, November 19th: Premiere, Five North Country Folk Songs Australian Musical Association concert, Australia House, London. Sophie Wyss (soprano) and Douglas Gamley (piano).

1954

January 28th: Divertimento Australian Musical Association concert, Australia House, Strand, London. Peter Andry (flute), John Glickman (vln), Harold Harriott (viola) and Ursula Hess (cello).

February 20th: completed Three Studies for Cello and Piano

March 10th: Premiere, Three Studies Royal Festival Hall, London. Nelson Cooke (cello) and Colin Kingsley (piano).

[Date ?] Violin Sonata. 1954 ISCM Festival (Haifa, Israel), where the work received the City of Haifa Prize for chamber music

June 1st: Premiere, Four Pieces for Orchestra. BBC Third Programme, Maida Vale Studios, London. London Philharmonic Orchestra, cond Sir Adrian Boult.

July 20th: Four Pieces for Orchestra. ABC Sydney Youth Subscription Concert. Sydney Symphony Orchestra, cond Sir Eugene Goossens

September 15th: Premiere, Five North Country Songs (version 2 for soprano and string orchestra). Wigmore Hall, London. Sophie Wyss (soprano) and The Concert Artists String Orchestra, cond Arthur Denington.

October 10th: Five North Country Songs (version 1 for soprano and piano). SPNM concert, London.

1955

Work composed: Three North Country Folk Songs

[Date: ?] Premiere, Three North Country Folk Songs BBC Home Service Recital. Alisa Gamley (soprano) and Douglas Gamley (piano).

1956

Works composed: Pezzo Drammatico, I'm easy.

June: attended Composer's Seminar in Gravesano, Switzerland, at the villa of Hermann Scherchen. Seminar (led by Luigi Nono) on the orchestral variations of Schoenberg and Webern, and on electronic music.

[Date: ?] Premiere, Pezzo Drammatico. Berne, Switzerland. Margaret Kitchin, (piano).

1957

Living at 44 Princes Gardens, West Acton, London W3

Documentary Film: Alpine Roundabout

May 5th: birth of first child, Kaaren Banks (Mrs Sutcliffe)

1958

Work composed: Episode for Chamber Orchestra

Feature Film: Murder at Site 3

Documentary Film: Your Petrol Today

TV series: The Flying Doctor

1959

Feature Films: The Price of Silence, The Treasure of San Teresa

Documentary Film: Professor's Paradise

Awarded the medal of the Arnold Bax Society for contributions to music in the Commonwealth.

June 12th: Three Studies, 1959 (33rd) ISCM Festival (Rome). Programme also included Two Sonnets (Babbitt).

1960

Feature Film: Jackpot

Documentary Films: Kerosine, I am a passenger, Michali of Skiathos, May Wedding, Alpine Artists

Moved to 16 Box Ridge Avenue, Purley, Surrey

Untimely death of Matyas Seiber, Banks' former teacher.

1961

Works composed: Sonata da Camera (written in memory of Matyas Seiber).

Feature Film: The Third Alibi, Captain Clegg

Documentary Film: The Transistor Story, Freedom to Die, Postman's Holiday, The Cattle Carters, Belgian Assignment

March 16th: birth of second child, Phillipa Banks (Mrs Saraceno)

July 6th: Premiere, Sonata da Camera Cheltenham Festival. Cheltenham Festival Virtuoso Ensemble: Patrick Halling (vln), Gwynne Edwards (vla), Willem de Mont (vc), Edward Walker (fl), Sidney Fell (cl), ? (bass clarinet), Stephen Whittaker (perc), Susan Bradshaw (pf), cond John Carewe.

August: completed Elizabethan Miniatures

1962

Works composed: Horn Trio

Documentary Films: The Commonwealth Story, Midnight Sun

TV series: Dimension of Fear, Silent Evidence

TV Plays: Comedy Playhouse (4 episodes)

August 31st: Premiere, Horn Trio. Edinburgh Festival. Barry Tuckwell (horn), Brenton Langbein (violin) and Maureen Jones (piano).

[Date: ?]: Premiere, Elizabethan Miniatures. Sinfonia of London, cond Douglas Gamley.

1963

Works composed: Equation I

Feature Films: Petticoat Pirates, The Evil of Frankenstein, Crooks in Cloisters, The Punch and Judy Man, Nightmare

Documentary Films: The Diamond People, With General Cargo

1964

Works composed: Three Episodes for Flute and Piano

Feature Films: Hysteria, The Brigand of Kandahar

Documentary Films: Britain Today

14th November: Completion of Form X: a graphic score for from 2 to ten players. For the ensemble of the Centre de Musique, Paris, conducted by Keith Humble.

August 7th: birth of third child, Simon Alexander Banks

1965

Elected to Council and Executive Committee of the SPNM (London)  
Works composed: Divisions for orchestra, Concerto for Horn and Orchestra  
Feature Film: Rasputin, the Mad Monk  
Documentary Film: The Prince in the Heather

July 12th: Premiere, Divisions. Cheltenham Festival. City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, cond Sir Adrain Boult.

October 25th: Premiere, Three Episodes for Flute and Piano. Wigmore Hall, London. Douglas Whittaker (flute) and Don Banks (piano).

November 9th: Premiere, Equation I. Le Centre de Musique, American Center, Paris. Soloists of the Centre de Musique, cond Keith Humble.

December 3rd: Premiere, Assemblies. University of Melbourne Conservatorium of Music. Conservatorium Symphony Orchestra, cond Keith Humble.

1966

Vice-Chairman, SPNM

Works composed: Settings from Roget, Assemblies

Feature Films: The Reptile, The House at the End of the World, The Mummy's Shroud

Documentary Films: Island Boy, The Small Propellor

February 27th: Premiere, Concerto for Horn and Orchestra. Royal Festival Hall, London. Barry Tuckwell (horn), London Symphony Orchestra, cond Colin Davis.

March 18th: Horn Concerto. Centennial Hall, Adelaide. Adelaide Festival of Arts Concert. Barry Tuckwell, horn, with the London Symphony Orchestra, cond Colin Davis

September 16th: Premiere, Three Settings from Roget. Castle Dynevor, Wales. Cleo Laine (voice) and the John Dankworth Quartet.

1967

Chairman, SPNM

Organiser and Joint Director, SPNM Composers' Seminar

Works composed: Sequence for Solo Cello

Feature Films: The Frozen Dead

Documentary Films: Abu Dhabi

November 30th: Premiere, Sequence for Solo Cello. Newport, UK. Concert of the 66 Group, Cardiff. George Isaac (cello).

1968

Organiser and Joint Director, SPNM Composers' Seminar

Works composed: Tirade, Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Prelude Nightpiece and Blues for Two

February 16th: Premiere, Tirade. Le Centre de Musique, American Center, Paris. Josephine Nendingck (mezzo-so-

prano), with soloists of the Centre de Musique, cond Keith Humble.

March 8th: Settings from Roget. Camden Festival, London.

March 10th: Three Episodes. Wigmore Hall, London.

August 12th: Premiere, Concerto for Violin and Orchestra. Royal Albert Hall, London. Wolfgang Marschner (violin), BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, cond Norman del Mar.

November 21st: Horn Trio. Purcell Room, London.

1969

Became Music Director, Department of Adult Studies, Goldsmith's College, University of London (position held until 1971)

Organiser and Joint Director, SPNM Composers' Seminar

Works composed: Equation II, Findings Keepings, Dramatic Music, Intersections

TV series: A Boy at War

April 20th: Premiere, Equation II. Tenth Bromsgrove Festival Concert. The John Patrick Jazz Ensemble and the John Bradbury String Trio, with Ann Griffiths (harp) and Ronald Stevenson (piano). First performance of complete version of Equation, comprising Equation I and Equation II.

May 10th: Premiere, Dramatic Music for Young Orchestra. Farnham Festival, Surrey.

November 18th: First broadcast, Equation 1 and 2. The John Patrick Orchestra, cond John Patrick

December 19th: Tirade, (Settings from Roget ?). Redcliffe Concert, Purcell Room, London: 'Jazz from other angles'. Programme also included Matyas Seiber's Two Jazzolets.

1970

Returned to Australia for the first time for 20 years for the First National Young Composers' Seminar, Perth, 25/2/70 - 6/3/70.

Works composed: Fanfare and National Anthem for Orchestra, Meeting Place

Feature Film: The Torture Garden

January 24th: Premiere, Intersections The Fairfield Halls, Croydon, London. London Philharmonic Orchestra, cond Arthur Davison.

February 21st: Intersections. ABC Melbourne Promenade Concert. Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, cond John Hopkins

February 26th: Sonata da Camera. Festival of Perth Concert. Members of the WA Symphony Orchestra, cond Thomas Mayers

March 3rd: ?. Festival of Perth Concert. WA Symphony Orchestra, cond John Hopkins

March 5th: Intersections. Assemblies. Festival of Perth Concert.

April 13th: Premiere, Fanfare and National Anthem. Captain Cook Memorial Concert. Royal Festival Hall, London. LSO Chorus with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, cond Charles Mackerras

June 5th: Sequence. Park Lane Group concert, London.

June 15th: Premiere, Meeting Place. Queen Elisabeth Hall, London. London Sinfonietta, cond David Atherton.

September 26th: Meeting Place. London Sinfonietta Concert, QEH, London. London Sinfonietta.

October 9th: ABC talk (interview with John Amis): My music

November: Organiser and Joint Director, SPNM Composers' Seminar

November 26th: BBC3 talk: Electronic Instruments

1971

Works composed: Music for Wind Band, Nexus, Commentary, Three Short Songs, Limbo, Four Pieces for String Quartet

March 17th: Talk to RMA: Third-Stream Music

February 27th: Dramatic Music. RPO.

March 20th: Intersections. Goldsmith's College, London..

April 8th: Premiere, Nexus. Staatstheater, Kassel, Germany, John Dankworth Quintet, with the Orchestra of the Staatstheater, Kassel, cond Gerd Albrecht.

April 21st: Premiere, Commentary. English Bach Festival Concert. Holywell Music Room, Oxford. Paul Crossley (piano).

May 13th: Premiere, Music for Wind Band. Farnham Festival Surrey, UK. Wind Band of Farnborough School, cond Peter Mound.

July 9th: Premiere, Three Short Songs. Cheltenham Festival. Cleo Laine (voice) and the John Dankworth Quintet.

July: Organiser and Joint Director, SPNM Composers' Seminar

August 8th: BBC3 talk: Jazz in our musical world

? Premiere, Four Pieces for String Quartet Cardiff Festival Concert. [The Wharton Quartet ?]

1972

Fellowship in the Creative Arts, Australian National University, Canberra.

Address: 16 Liversidge Street, Acton, ACT 2601.

Took up permanent residence in Australia.

Works composed: Walkabout, Equation III, Shadows of Space, Aria from Limbo

February 15 - 23: Director, Second National Young Composers' Seminar, University of Western Australia, Perth (?)

February ? Four Pieces for String Quartet Festival of Perth Concert. Oriel Quartet.

February 29th: Findings, Keepings Festival of Perth Concert, Adelaide Singers, with instrumental ensemble.

March 13th: Premiere, Limbo. Adelaide Festival of Arts concert.

May 5th: Commentary NSW State Conservatorium. David Miller, piano

July 7th: Violin Concerto. Leonard Dommett, violin, with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, cond Fritz Rieger

September 26th: Synchronos 72, an audio/visual show. Melville Hall, Australian National University. Synchronos 72 had 9 performances altogether, in Canberra and Sydney. The programme included premieres as below:

Premiere, Aria from Limbo. Lois Bogg, soprano, with a chamber ensemble of the Canberra School of Music.

Premiere, Shadows of Space. Electronic work..

Premiere, Equation 3. Don Burrows Quartet with a chamber ensemble of the Canberra School of Music, conducted by the composer.

1973

Appointed Head of Composition and Electronic Music at the Canberra School of Music

Appointed first chairman of the Music Board, Australia Council.

Work composed: Take Eight

February 13th: Nexus. ABC Sydney Proms Concert. Don Burrows Quartet and Judy Bailey (pf) with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, cond John Hopkins

February 15 - 23: Director, Fourth National Young Composers' Seminar, University of Western Australia, Perth

February 15th Dramatic Music. Festival of Perth Concert. WA Symphony Orchestra, cond ?

March 17th: Tirade (first Australian performance), Limbo and Meeting-Place. Don Banks Music-theatre evening, University of New South Wales.

June 2nd: Dramatic Music. ABC Canberra Series.

[Exact date ?]: Four Pieces, Limbo (British premiere), Tirade, Sequence, Equations 1 and 2. Park Lane Group, London. Don Banks 50th birthday concert.

September 24th - 28th: Participated in the Third National Young Composers' Seminar, Melville Hall, Australian

National University, Canberra

October 25th: Don Banks 50th Birthday Concert. ABC Radio Broadcast.

November 1st: Premiere, *Take Eight*. Sydney Opera House. Carl Pini String Quartet and the Don Burrows Quartet. Programme also contained *Four Pieces for String Quartet*.

1974

Returned to Australia (Canberra) to live. Address: 21 Harcourt Street, Weetangera, ACT 2614

Work composed: *Prospects*

April 3rd: *Equation I and II*. Adelaide Promenade Concert. Adelaide Town Hall.

July 27th: Premiere, *Prospects*. Sydney Symphony Orchestra, cond Willem Otterloo.

June 19th: *Four Pieces for String Quartet*. Music Department, Sydney University.

December 9th: completed *Carillon*, a theme for FM radio, commissioned by the ABC to celebrate the opening of ABC-FM radio.

1975

August 8th: completed *String Quartet*

October 17th: Premiere, *String Quartet*. Seymour Centre, Sydney. Austral Quartet.

1976

Works composed: *4 / 5 / 7*, *Trio for Bass Clarinet, Electric Piano and Synthesier*, *Benedictus*

April 1st: *Sequence*. University House, Canberra.

June 26, ANU Convocation Evening with Don Banks and Rodney Hall (poet-novelist).

[Date ?] Premiere, *Carillon* (electronic music). Opening of ABC-FM Radio.

September ?: Premiere, *Benedictus*. Canberra School of Music concert. David Kain Quartet with students of the Canberra School of Music, dir Don Banks

1977

Works composed: *Trilogy*, *One for Murray*, *4 x 2 x 1*, *Magician's Castle*

April 18th: *Meet the Composer*, ABC Odeon Theatre Hobart: performances of several works by DB

April 21st: Premiere, *Trilogy*. Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, cond Vanco Cavdarski.

November 16th: *Four Pieces for String Quartet*. Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester.

1978

Appointed Head, School of Composition, New South Wales State Conservatorium of Music, Sydney. Moved to 24 Waiwera Street, McMahons Point, North Sydney, NSW 2060.

March ?: Premiere, 4 x 2 x 1. Adelaide Town Hall. Adelaide Festival Concert. Murray Khouri, clarinet (composer as tape operator).

May 20th: Equation 3, Four Pieces for String Quartet. New South Wales State Conservatorium of Music, Sydney.

1979

Work composed: An Australian Entertainment

April 18th: Premiere, An Australian Entertainment. Perth Concert Hall. The King's Singers.

1980

June 14th: awarded the Order of Australia

Addendum

[Year ?] March 12th: Episode for Small Orchestra. Adelaide Festival Concert. ? (cond David Bishop ?).

March 3rd, 1982 Awarded DMus (honoris causa), posthumously, by the University of Melbourne

# *Don Banks: Jottings*

## *Duo*

When Don Banks began his compositional studies in London under Maytas Seiber in early 1950, one of the principal topics was analysis of the Inventions of J S Bach. Seiber had his pupil make diagrammatic summaries of the musical processes of all the two-part and three-part inventions, and then compose some original inventions of his own, some in the style of Bach and others in a 'free' style of Banks' own, which, at this time involved a highly chromatic – somewhat Bartokian – form of extended tonality. The first movement of the Duo began life as a 'free' two-part invention of this kind, but the version which appears in the work as published here was only the last of quite a number of complete and incomplete drafts.

Although the counterpoint is highly chromatic, the key-signature, cadential patterns and thematic incipits of the first movement indicate an unambiguous tonality of F minor, with digressions to its close relatives. The violin begins alone with a strikingly distinctive theme – containing several different figures within it – in the first 6 bars, and this theme is then taken up in imitation by the cello in 7-13, against which the violin plays a contrasting counter-subject. Further statements of this theme in the dominant (violin, 21), the subdominant (cello, 35) and lastly back in the tonic (violin, 49) – played always against its counter-subject (cello 21, violin 35, cello 49) – follow. Between the statements of the theme and its counter-subject come three episodes (13-20, 27-34 and 41-8), each built rigorously upon figures extracted from the theme and its counter-subject.

The second movement is the longest and most varied. It contains 6 principal sections: Allegretto, Giocoso, Agitato, Lento espressivo, Risoluto and A Primo Tempo (this last a varied recapitulation of the first Allegretto). It's essentially a series of scherzando sections enclosing a central slow section.

Like the first movement, the second begins with a theme (violin) and a counter-subject (cello), but these two elements are heard simultaneously right from the start this time. At bar 11, violin and cello swap theme and counter-subject – to provide an 'answer' at the dominant – and then continue in contrapuntal dialogue, as in the first movement.

Later scherzando sections are not quite so comprehensively contrapuntal as the first movement. For example, the Giocoso is characterised by a series of (decorated) 'pedal-tones' accompanying a skittish scherzando, and the Risoluto introduces a violin theme accompanied by cello pizzicati triads and a passage where the two instruments are in octaves.

Although the counterpoint in this movement is highly and freely chromatic, the key-signature suggests C minor, and there are decisive cadences on C at various points, including the beginning and end of the Agitato, the beginning and end of the Lento espressivo, and the beginning and end of the final section (A Primo Tempo).

The third movement is a lively finale, cast in a simple 'ABA' design, characterised by driving 'motoric' rhythms in the outer 'A' sections and a contrasting cantabile theme in the 'B' section.

Whereas the first movement is wholly contrapuntal, and the second movement predominantly so, the finale has one instrument accompany the other most of the time (with repeated dyads in the 'outer' sections, and a 'walking bass' in the central cantabile section). The exception is in the latter part of the middle section where the 'cantabile'

theme and its 'walking-bass' accompaniment move progressively into contrapuntal dialogue and the tessitura rises gradually into the high range of both instruments to achieve a climax, just before the return of the 'A' idea.

The tonality of the last movement is even more ambiguous than that of the second, but with various passing suggestions of F minor and C minor (references to the tonalities of the first two movements, perhaps), but it moves to cadences on G at the end of both the 'outer' sections of the movement, thus outlining a scheme of 'progressive' tonality (progressing by fifths: F minor --> C minor --> G minor) over the course of the whole work.

### *Episode for Small Orchestra*

Don Banks' *Episode for Small Orchestra* is a bagatelle, but nevertheless an elegant and beautifully-crafted one. It came into being as a result of the composer's attendance at a short composers' course, held at the residence of the celebrated conductor Hermann Scherchen in Gravesano, Switzerland in the summer of 1956. One of the features of this course was the opportunity for the young composers present to try their hand in the electronic studio which Scherchen had installed in situ. However, more significant in respect of *Episode for Small Orchestra* was the fact that the principal guest lecturer was the Italian composer Luigi Nono, who gave a series of lengthy analytical lectures about two sets of *Orchestral Variations*: Schoenberg's op 31 and Webern's op 30. After the course, all those who had been there sent in scores to Scherchen composed in response to what they had learned. Banks' piece was this short twelve-tone piece, scored for the same small orchestral forces as the Webern op 30, but based on the series of the Schoenberg op 31.

### *I'm Easy, for Jazz Ensemble*

Don Banks' *I'm Easy* was composed in 1956 for a recording session by the ensemble led by Australian jazz violinist Don Harper, who was, like Don Banks, also resident in London at that time. *I'm easy* was recorded in London on November 13th, 1956 and issued as a 10-inch 45rpm disk on the Nixa label (Nixa NJE 1034) under the title *Introducing the Don Harper Quintet*. The disk contains performances of three other numbers: *I may be wrong*, *Just Rockin'* (Don's tune) and *My Grandfather's Clock*. Banks also provided fully-orchestrated 'head' sections for the first two of these. *I may be wrong* is a version of the old 1929 'standard', while *Just Rockin'* (Don's tune) is probably a (Don) Banks 'head' based on a (Don) Harper tune. The third, a version of the old Victorian parlour tune, is entirely improvised. The disk overall is of variable quality, the elegant and witty *I'm Easy* being far superior to the rest.

The other four performers who accompanied Don Harper's violin on the recording were George Chisholm (trombone), Ken Jones (piano), Bobby Kevin (drums) and Sammy Stokes (bass). Banks' score actually provides a sixth part (for guitar), which is omitted from the recording. Perhaps the projected guitarist fell ill, or Banks allowed for future 'live' performances by the 'Don Harper Sextet.'

By now it is well-known that Banks was himself one of Australia's foremost jazzmen in the early years of his career. Certainly he has usually been considered the foremost bebop pianist in Melbourne during the late forties. At that time bebop was a newish idiom even in the United States, so it is clear that, in the Australian context, Banks' thinking was as innovative in jazz as it was later to be in chamber and symphonic work. In later works, such as *Equation I and II*, Banks was to fuse the bebop and 'classical' idioms together in the style then known as 'third-stream', and in the film *Hysteria* he provided 45 minutes of big-band music in a more 'advanced' (chromatic and dissonant) idiom. *I'm Easy* is, however, from a different world: a bagatelle, whose character approaches that of 'light' music. It harks back to the 'swing' era, and shows little trace of the composer's bebop background and

innovative musical personality. It is, nevertheless a delightful and elegant 'soufflé'.

## One for Murray

Don Banks' *One for Murray* is a 'late' work, if indeed anything by Banks can be so-described, given that he died at what, for the last quarter of the twentieth century, was a comparatively early age (56). It is a bagatelle, about three minutes long, for solo clarinet in B flat, and the manuscript bears the inscription '7/8 April, 1977'.

The dedicatee was Banks' colleague and friend, Murray Khouri, hence the title. Khouri was on the staff of the Canberra School of Music during the seventies, when Banks was Head of Composition there, and later, with Banks and others, instigated the short-lived Australia Contemporary Music Ensemble, which gave a series of recitals at the 1978 Adelaide festival, conducted by Keith Humble. During this recital series, Khouri gave the première of another, much longer, clarinet work by Banks: 4 x 2 x 1, for clarinet doubling bass clarinet with electro-acoustic sound. There are many correspondences in character and material between 4 x 2 x 1 and *One for Murray*. In fact *One for Murray* could be described as an 'offshoot' of the larger work.

The piece is essentially a 'written-out cadenza', moving freely around the whole register of the instrument, from sinuous passages in the lower 'chalumeau' to strident ones in the extreme top. Like much of Banks' later music, it makes extensive use of four-note chords (arpeggiated in this instance, of course) consisting of triads (major, minor, augmented or diminished) tucked inside a major seventh, eg E, G#, C, D# or C, D#, F#, B etc.

## *Sonatina for Piano*

Don Banks' *Sonatina* was completed in November 1948. At various times in later life the composer referred to it as the only work of his which had been performed in Melbourne before his departure for advanced study in London, though material now housed in the Banks Archive in the National Library of Australia shows that he composed quite a few other pieces around about this time, and of course he had created a good deal of jazz (in the then rather new 'bebop' style) as pianist and composer with various groups around Melbourne, including his own band, the Donny Banks Boptet.

Possibly Banks felt that this *Sonatina* was his first work of any substantial achievement, even though it's essentially a piece of juvenilia. Certainly it shows a more highly-developed sense of craftsmanship than anything he had written up until that time, though there is very little evidence at all of the distinctive stylistic features which were to characterise his mature work. Once he reached London and began studies with Matyas Seiber, these features began gradually to emerge, though there are one or two works (eg the Violin Sonata) which represent something of a throwback to this 'Melbourne style' of his youth.

The influences which make their presence felt here really come from the kind of style which was favoured by the most compositionally-accomplished of his teachers at the Melbourne University Conservatorium of Music (where he studied between 1947 and 1949), namely Dorian Le Gallienne. This style was derived from the English 'pastoral' style, flavoured with a dash of neo-classicism (showing the influence of composers such as Hindemith, Stravinsky, perhaps even Poulenc).

Themes featuring solid metrical rhythms (eg the pattern of the first bar of the *Con Spirito* first movement) often recurring many times (as here) with a frequent use of ostinati in accompanying voices (as here), and the fugal writing of the slow movement are characteristic features of the style. It was a widely-favoured style in post-colonial Australia, right up until the 1960s when the influence of younger European and American composers began to be felt more widely.

In Banks' case, the decisive influence in the development of his mature style was the encounter, mediated by Seiber in London, with Schoenberg and the so-called 'Second Vienna School', along with certain other 'post-Schoenbergian' figures, such as Roberto Gerhard, Milton Babbitt and Luigi Dallapiccola.

In 1948, however, this was all in Banks' future. The *Sonatina for Piano* is a work of quite traditional caste, in three movements, in C sharp minor. The first movement is in sonata form, with a vigorous *Con Spirito* first theme in the tonic and a contrasting, more lyrical *Andante* at half the tempo of the first, in E major, which are both recapitulated in C sharp minor after an intervening development section. The second movement (*Largo con Espressione*) begins with a fugato in A major, which proceeds more or less according to expectation for the first 14 bars and the entry of the first two voices (characterised essentially by crotchet movement), whereupon the third voice enters with the theme in (essentially) dotted crotchet movement, thus setting up an interplay 3/4 metre against 6/8 (hemiola rhythm). The movement overall follows a conventional ternary design, in which the contrapuntal outer sections are contrasted with an entirely homophonic (Quasi Chorale) middle section. The third movement is a rondo of sorts, in which the main *Risoluto* theme, a passage of two-part counterpoint with each of the parts doubled in octaves, occurs three times, and is contrasted with a *scherzando* theme and a lyrical theme marked *lamenteudue*, which both appear twice. The *risoluto* theme appears with the top and the bottom parts reversed the third time around.

### *Psalm 70*

Don Banks' *Psalm 70* was written some time between October 1952 and May 1953, the period which the composer spent studying with Luigi Dallapiccola in Florence. During the previous summer he had attended the Institute of American Studies in Salzburg and studied with Milton Babbitt, following two and a half years in London, studying with Matyas Seiber. Thus *Psalm 70* dates from the end of a long period of study, but nevertheless it sounds in no way like a 'student' work.

The other work which Banks composed during this period, *Four Pieces for Orchestra*, was played soon thereafter by Sir Adrian Boult and the London Philharmonic Orchestra, and over the years has been repeated quite a few times by various Australian orchestras. *Psalm 70*, on the other hand, though no less interesting and accomplished than the *Four Pieces for Orchestra*, has seldom – indeed, so far as I know at the date of writing (December 2001), never – been performed, a fate which it has shared with Banks' *Episode for Small Orchestra*, written a little later, also as part of an period of intensive study (with Hermann Scherchen and Luigi Nono in Switzerland in 1956).

Nevertheless, both *Psalm 70* and *Episode* are both finely-crafted – indeed honed and finished – products. The reason for their neglect is probably that they are both very short (about 3 minutes in each case), hard to programme (scored for unusual combinations), and eschew flashy display of any kind. Their rather lofty, 'aristocratic' tone is somewhat exceptional for Banks.

Moreover, unlike Dallapiccola, Banks was, of course, primarily a composer of instrumental music. *Psalm 70* is one of only a handful of vocal works. Indeed, it is easy to see the influence of Dallapiccola in the actual choice of the text itself. Dallapiccola's preference for texts from the great repositories of classics (ancient Greek poetry, the Bible etc), and the elevated, rather patrician approach to them which he favoured, could hardly be more different from Banks' usual approach to words, when he used them, which was decidedly more vernacular, down-to-earth. The only vocal work in which Banks chose a text from such a 'traditional' source as the Book of Psalms is *Psalm 70*. It is thus an exceptional work in Banks' output in several respects.

Like *Episode*, *Psalm 70* is a twelve-tone piece, but it has other, perhaps more immediately striking features: for example, the close attention paid to the way in which the constantly changing mixture of colours in the orchestral accompaniment helps to illuminate the vocal line. In several later interviews, Banks said that his time in Florence was particularly notable for his increased confidence in dealing with instrumentation and orchestration, and both

Psalm 70 and the Four Pieces for Orchestra bear out this assertion. Nevertheless, it is surely not fanciful to attribute the decided advance which can be observed in these two works in Banks' compositional powers generally (not just the orchestration) to Dallapiccola's influence.

### *String Quartet*

The String Quartet is in one continuous movement, although it falls into two easily identifiable sections. The first, an Allegro, links with an Adagio, which is mainly played by muted strings.

All the material springs from a twelve-tone series with combinatorial properties. This is to say that various transpositions of the series result in a 'reshuffling' of the groupings of two semitones, which only divide into two areas of transposition. Some use is made in the opening part of the work of the interval being allied to specific durations – but in the main it is a free-flowing work and should ideally be listened to as such.

The opening Allegro has a deal of rhythmic vitality, which is really only interrupted by a solo cadenza-type passage for the first violin before a pizzicato section leads to a recapitulation of the opening and a slowing down of the rhythmic activity as a link to the Adagio.

This starts with a whispered fragment of a motive by the muted cello, which combines with a measured statement of the main intervallic groups and contrasts with a melodic phrase in four-part harmony of a wistful character. There is an outburst of activity towards the end, which gives way to the quiet measured statement from the opening. The work then finishes with the short fragment from the cello dying away to nothing.

