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## Section A: Teaching and Learning

### The Contexts of Indigenous Music Activity in the Kimberley: Pedagogic Models for Aboriginal Music

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may be their real significance in the attempt to utilise Indigenous music in music education.

#### Abstract

In response to documented problems in the teaching of Australian Indigenous music in schools, this paper proposes the use of the contexts of music as the bases of pedagogic models. In relation to Indigenous music activity in the Kimberley region of north-west Australia, four contexts are explained and their potential to provide ways of studying Indigenous music is explored:

- Kimberley Indigenous music in relation to national Aboriginal music
- music and history
- music and place
- music and politics.

While these contexts provide relatively simple ways of structuring pedagogies for Indigenous music, their potential to represent the symbolic levels of music as expression of cultural concerns

#### Introduction

This article emanates from the ethno-musicologically based premise that understanding the contexts which give rise to music and through which music is supported is essential in the teaching and learning of music. It proposes that in the teaching of Indigenous musics, where culturally received and often subliminal teaching models are lacking in music educators' backgrounds, these contexts can become frameworks through which pedagogy can proceed. While putting forward a solution to what has been recognised among some music educators as a lack of surety about how to teach Australian Indigenous musics (Dunbar-Hall, 1997), this approach can also be seen as part of larger movements in music education and education worldwide. In that it acknowledges the voices of Indigenous peoples in the educational arena, it is a response to and a result of post-colonialism (Smith, 1999); it can be aligned with growing international attention to the teaching of

Indigenous cultures (Castellano *et al.*, 2000); it reflects increasing cultural readings of music education (Lundquist and Szego, 1998); and it demonstrates the interaction over the past two decades of the two fields of music education and ethnomusicology (Nettl, 1983).

To demonstrate how a series of contexts can provide ways of teaching Indigenous musics (and incidentally how this also teaches Indigenous cultures through music), Aboriginal music activity in the Kimberley region of north-west Australia is used as a repertoire for study. This region is chosen for a number of reasons. As early as the late 1960s Moyle identified the Kimberley as a discrete area in her survey-style work on Australian Aboriginal music with the release of an LP of field recordings from the region (Moyle, 1968, 1977). The appearance since then of some literature on the music of the Kimberley (e.g. Keogh, 1989), and a significant amount of fiction and non-fiction about the region provides pedagogical resource support material for any study of Kimberley music. Moreover, music activity in the region is prolific and complex, with continuing traditions of music creation and performance, high levels of contemporary music production, regular festivals, and secure media presence and support through radio, TV, recording, and uses of information technology. Ready commercial access to recordings of Indigenous music from the Kimberley also assists in making this a suitable region for use in a pedagogic model.

The contexts through which this music will be explained are:

- the national Aboriginal music scene
- music and history
- Aboriginal relationships between music and place
- music and politics.

Each of these will be used to lead to a number of objectives:

- to gain specific understanding of Kimberley Indigenous music activity

- to facilitate the study of Indigenous music in general
- to investigate some of the roles of music in Australian Indigenous cultures
- to demonstrate how music responds to and shapes societal movements.

### **Indigenous music from the Kimberley in a national Aboriginal context**

Taking the recorded repertoire of Indigenous popular music from the Kimberley as a collective object and reading it as part of a national body of Indigenous music, a number of factors correlate between the local and the national. As with music groups across Australia, instruments such as boomerangs, didjeridu, clapsticks and shell rattles are integrated with those of rock group lineups. In the texts of songs, multilingualism (and implied agendas of expressions of identity, sense of community, and language preservation) appears in a number of ways – songs mix Aboriginal languages with other languages, both at the sectional/verse level where languages alternate, and throughout songs at the individual word level. Country music and reggae sounds are popular among Kimberley musicians. As with many Aboriginal music groups, memberships are often family based. Through their names, the languages of their lyrics, or the topics of songs, groups 'represent' communities. Membership between groups is flexible, with musicians appearing not only with their own groups, but as backing artists on other musicians' recordings. A strong dependence on Aboriginal owned and operated media outlets (e.g. Broome Aboriginal Media Association [BAMA]), and the support of a limited number of independent record studios (e.g. Moondog Records [Fremantle], Troppo Studios [Broome]) reflects a similar situation throughout Aboriginal Australia in the ways music is recorded and disseminated.

In the Kimberley, song topics of a political nature align with those found throughout Aboriginal popular music as a whole. Songs address the

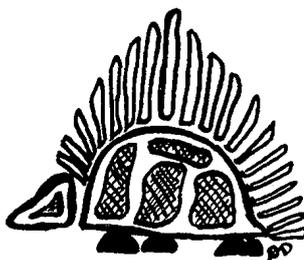
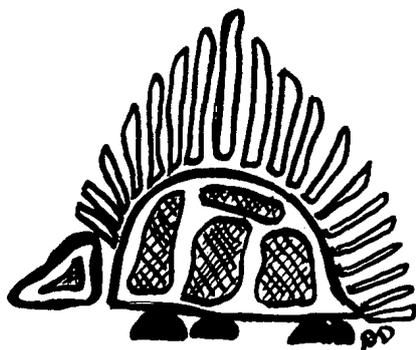
removal of children from their families, the role and influence of the church in post-contact Aboriginal history, disputes over ownership and custodianship of land, political battles over specific sites earmarked by governments and businesses for industrialisation, issues of health, and the importance of sites to Aboriginal people. In relation to this last song topic, due to the large number of songs from the Kimberley about places and the meanings attached to them, it would not be difficult to read Indigenous popular music from this region as a composite Aboriginal text on land and Aboriginal relationships to it. This can be from a number of perspectives – a pre-colonial one in songs which affirm personal and/or group attachment to sites; in songs created since colonisation, expression of feelings for places at which Indigenous workers were employed or lived (for example, in the stations of the Kimberley cattle industry), or at ones which have been the locations of confrontation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. Such a land based reading provides an oral text through which the history of the Kimberley from an Aboriginal perspective can be studied, redressing what John Watson, former chairperson of the Kimberley Land Council (KLC), notes as a lack of Aboriginal ‘input into books recounting the history of the Kimberley’ (in Marshall, 1989: x); it is an important means through which Indigenous narrative is recorded, and concerns revealed and debated.

### Music and history: Broome

A second context through which Indigenous music activity in the Kimberley can be studied is that of history. Comprehensive historical

information about the region’s music is lacking; however, enough exists about Broome to position that town as an historical case study, and to demonstrate how the music history of a place can provide a means of study.

Broome is a significant centre of Indigenous music activity. The location of two recording studios patronised by Indigenous musicians and responsible for much of the dissemination of Indigenous music from this region (Goolarri Media, Troppo Studios) and support networks such as the Broome Musicians Aboriginal Corporation, home of numerous performing groups, scene of various music festivals, and source of the musicals *Bran Nue Dae* and *Corrugation Road*, it features as the topic of numerous songs and albums (e.g. the CDs *Dreaming in Broome* by the Little Piggies, and *Full Moon Over Broome*, by Michael Torres). By locating Aboriginal music in Broome within a national Aboriginal music context, Lawe Davies (1993) relies on a local/national paradigm to give meaning to musical activity in the town. His interpretation of Indigenous music in Broome relies on seeing it historically in three time periods. He defines the first of these as the time before the 1980s – during which, due to higher levels of arts funding and increasing acknowledgment of Aboriginal issues in the press and the general national consciousness, ‘the 70s in Broome was a highly productive (musical) gestation period . . . (and) dozens of bands sprang up doing covers and even writing original material – quite unusual for those times’ (Lawe Davies, 1993: 51-52). Groups from this period include: the Broome Beats (since c. 1971), a reggae group described by Robertson (1983: 26) as playing with a ‘Broome sound’ and the basis after 1981 of Kuckles; Cross-fire (founded



in the late 1970s), which became Sunburn, and in 1980 metamorphosed into Scrap Metal.

Lawe Davies' second period is the 1980s, which he identifies as a period of local development and greater connection between Broome and the rest of Australia, through completion of the sealed highway from Perth, the arrival of ABC TV in Broome, and the beginnings of Lord McAlpine's development of commercial interests in the area. What he fails to mention is the effect of the 1978-1980 Noonkanbah dispute on the town and its music, and the concomitant drawing of the Broome region of the Kimberley into the national consciousness which the dispute engendered. To Lawe Davies, this is the time of the growth of 'the Broome sound' and he positions Indigenous music there at this time as a reflection of wider acknowledgment of contemporary Aboriginal popular culture, citing the example of the Warumpi Band (from Papunya, NT) as rising to national notice at this time. Music activity in Broome in the 1980s includes performances there on tours by the Warumpi Band and by Coloured Stone; formation of Kuckles and Scrap Metal; Kuckles' tour to Germany in 1982 to perform at the Third International Cologne Song Festival (Breen, 1989: 55), and to Perth in 1983 for an Aboriginal Arts Festival; the setting up of the Broome Musicians Aboriginal Corporation; in 1985 the recording of local musicians by the Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association; founding of a new group, Bingurr, from members of Kuckles; and travel by Broome musicians (such as Jimmy Chi, the members of Kuckles, and Arnold 'Puddin' Smith) to study at the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music (CASM) in Adelaide.

Lawe Davies predicted that the 1990s would be 'Broome's third musical phase' (Lawe Davies, 1993: 53), one to be exemplified by national interest in Broome musicians, established record production in the town, and the success of musicians such as Jimmy Chi. National recognition of Broome musicians would seem to be a component of Lawe Davies' third period, for example, the 1993 appearances of Broome bands Broome Beats, Bingurr, Kuckles, Local Land, No Name, New Image, and Scrap Metal at

the Media and Aboriginal Australia National Conference in Brisbane. Indigenous music production in Broome is readily accessible, with availability of recordings by John Albert, Kerriane Cox, Kuckles, The Little Piggies, The Pigram Brothers, Scrap Metal, and Michael Torres, and albums of *Bran Nue Dae* and *Corrugation Road*. Broome's position as the site since 1992 of a series of Stompen Ground Festivals, and the work of the two recording studios listed above, bear out Lawe Davies' prediction.



Songs from Broome can be used within an historical approach to uncover issues specific to the town and to illustrate its past. When Little Piggies, a children's rock group from Broome, sing, for example:

Shuffling on from Chinatown' in his squeaky  
orange cart  
Like a paperboy who's doing his rounds he knows  
just where to start  
Olanji, Olanji, one shilling, one shilling one,  
hiding in the shade from the midday sun  
Mr Chinaman don't turn your back on me, might  
take your olanji for free  
(Little Piggies, 'Olanji' on *Dreaming in Broome*),

the intermingling of Asian peoples with Indigenous and non-Indigenous people as a result of Broome's late 19th and early 20th century identity as a centre of the international pearl shell industry reliant on Asian divers and business people is referenced (see Edwards, 1984; Bailey, 2001). Similar multicultural influences appear in other songs from and about Broome. For example, the Pigram Brothers use multilingualism representative of the workers in the Broome

pearl diving industry in their song 'Saltwater Cowboy' on the album *Saltwater Country*:

Stand back you shallow water man  
Let a deep sea diver through  
Selamat tinggal, nakula jarndu  
Sayonara, slo'n', gallow nyundu  
These lugger sails are moving too slowly  
For this saltwater cowboy sailing home . . .

### Aboriginal relationships between music and place: Noonkanbah

The links between music and place are a much-discussed topic in Aboriginal studies, and have provided numerous authors with a convenient research paradigm through which Indigenous ways of knowing and meaning can be investigated (e.g. Bell, 1998; Gibson and Dunbar-Hall, 2000). To students of Aboriginal music, the prevalence of many songs about place/s in the Kimberley will not be surprising. Moyle (1977: 7), includes *nurlu* songs 'associated with specific territories or countries' in *Songs from the Kimberleys*; Keogh (1989) analyses Kimberley *nurlu* songs about events and the places at which they occurred; in *Reading the Country* (Benterrak, Muecke and Roe, 1996) many songs belonging to Paddy Roe and about places in the south-west Kimberley are discussed. Much of the recorded repertoire of Indigenous music from the Kimberley concerns place. Reference to Noonkanbah, a significant place in the history and Aboriginal consciousness of the region, and how music acts as a part of and a record of that history exemplify this aspect of the region's music.

Noonkanbah station, in the south-west Kimberley, had been purchased by the Aboriginal Land Fund Commission for Nyikina and Walmatjeri people in 1976. Re-ownership of their lands was a significant factor in affirming these groups' identities, as they had spent the years from 1971 to 1976 dispossessed from their traditional lands as fringe dwellers in the nearby town of Fitzroy Crossing after walking off Noonkanbah because of poor treatment by its white 'owners' and

managers. As part of their strategies for reinforcing their own cultures once back on their traditional lands, they had established a school on Noonkanbah and funded its teaching positions without government assistance. Learning their Aboriginal languages was considered a central part of this agenda as, when 'our children began to learn the language, they began to belong to the land again' (Dicky Cox in Smith and Plater, 2000: 112). The role of music in this process is also clear:

some of the old men and women sat around the fire singing songs of their country. The children ... hummed along. The sound of loud country music from a cassette player drifted over from one of the camps 'We want the children to learn about the old ways ... We teach them the songs and the dances' (Smith and Plater, 2000: 112).

Return to their lands on Noonkanbah station was a short-lived period of security of land tenure for the site's Indigenous owners. In 1978 Amax Corporation, with the assistance of the West Australian government, began mining at a sacred site on the property. This precipitated the Noonkanbah dispute, a dispute in which music played an important role. At least three locally written songs became associated with the dispute - 'Bran Nue Dae' by Broome musician Jimmy Chi, a rock song, 'Noonkanbah Blues' (Breen, 1989: 56), and a song, 'Nguyipinya Marnalunya' ('We hunted them out') by George Manyanji Bell about specific events of the dispute (Hawke and Gallagher, 1989: 214-219).

Broome musicians, Jimmy Chi and Steve Pigram, commented about music and Noonkanbah in the following ways:

**Jimmy Chi:** Noonkanbah was the turning point in people's identification of themselves - they realised you couldn't be half this or half that - you had to make a stand about where you stood and I think it brought out a lot of people to realise that they were no different from any other black fella in Australia (Bran Nue Dae Productions, 1991)

**Steve Pigram:** in the mid 70s ... I ran into a guy called Jimmy Chi who was starting to write his own music in them days. We started to get

together to write original songs, and a lot of the songs that we were writing were about issues that were happening around us ... I guess the first big social issue that was effecting people in the Kimberley here was the Noonkanbah issue where a company called Amax wanted to mine on sacred sites out at Noonkanbah station just north-east (sic) of Broome. A lot of the songs that Jimmy and I were writing then been prompted by them sort of issues that were happening in them days (Bran Nue Dae Productions, 1991).

The contribution of Chi's music to statement of the Aboriginal position over Noonkanbah, and the effect that this also had on other Broome musicians as their songs became increasingly politicised, is commented on in Smith and Plater's biographical text about life in the Broome region.

Many managed to overcome their fear of conflict and trouble to take part in the protest at the Broome turn-off waiting for the oil rig that was headed for Noonkanbah in mid-1980. A group of the town's musicians performed on the back of a truck. They sang 'Bran Nue Dae', Jimmy Chi's song that had become Broome's anthem. Many had matured in their political thinking. Their songs reflected this, as they gradually added words with a political influence to a mixture of West Indian reggae beat and Aboriginal traditional rhythms, to their repertoire of country and western and rock love songs (Smith and Plater, 2000: 139).

The Noonkanbah dispute lasted for approximately two years, from 1978 -1980 (see McLeod, 1984; Davey and Dixon, 1987; Kolig, 1987, 1990; Hawke and Gallagher, 1989). Occurring at a time when development of the Argyle diamond mine in the north-west Kimberley region was creating its own confrontations between Aborigines, governments and developers (Dillon, 1991), the Noonkanbah dispute had a musical profile which continues to the present day. Apart from the three contemporary songs mentioned above, this concerns the use by the Noonkanbah mob, and their neighbouring language speaking groups, of corroboree songs and dances in an all-night performance which was unequivocally intended to achieve a number of agendas:

- to affirm ownership of the Noonkanbah site identified for drilling

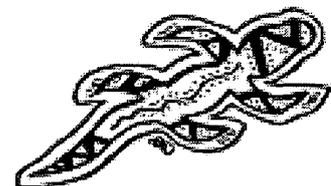
- at a point in the dispute when the government and miners seemed to be setting the agenda, for the 'old Lawmen of Noonkanbah to take matters into their own hands'
- to move the dispute onto a different, more spiritual level than had been prevalent to that point
- to protest about treatment of Aborigines and their relationship to the land through expression of and appeals to Aboriginal Law:

the dancing was for the benefit of the Amax camp. They had no choice but to listen ... Not a word was said to them, hardly a look cast in their direction. But the dancing continued with hardly a pause for more than six hours ... it was a masterly piece of psychological warfare ... by one-thirty (the next day) they (the miners) were gone. The Lawmen had won through (Hawke and Gallagher, 1989: 208-213).

Some time after the dispute a cassette, *Corroboree: Australian Aborigines of Noonkanbah* (sic), and consisting of songs about Noonkanbah Dreaming sites was released (Boyle, undated) - seemingly as a tribute to the Noonkanbah mob:

the Aborigines of Noonkanbah (sic) made world headlines in August 1980 when they tried to prevent oil companies drilling on their sacred sites by lying down on the road in front of the rigs, but they were forcibly removed by the police. They consist mainly of Walmatjeri people from the Great Sandy Desert (Boyle, undated cassette cover note).

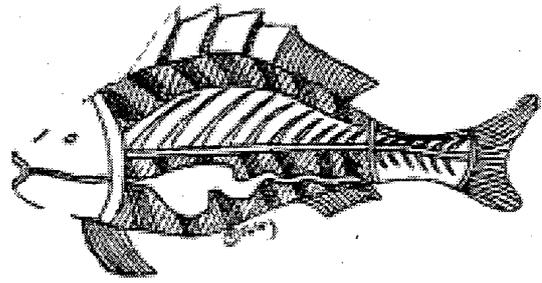
Twenty years after the dispute, it and the people who fought in it remain both the creators and the topics of songs. This can be heard in 'Tribute to Noonkanbah People', on the album of the same name, 'written by Malcolm Skinner and Troy Laurel for the 20th anniversary celebrations of the stand taken by Noonkanbah people to have a say in the protection and use of their homelands' (*Tribute to Noonkanbah People* album notes).



Commenting about Indigenous reactions to the Argyle diamond mine in the north-east Kimberley, and grouping it with Noonkanbah at a macro-level in Aboriginal struggles over land, Dillon (1991: 149) comments that Kimberley Aborigines 'are yet to fully develop the capacity to define their interests in a broader regional or national sense.' Given Dillon's comment, it is apposite that the Noonkanbah dispute, which brought together Aborigines from approximately thirty communities to protest at the site, is cited in documents of the Kimberley Land Council as seminal to the formation of that body. Since the time of Dillon's text (1991), and propelled by the activities and agendas of the Kimberley Land Council, a definable Indigenous regionalist ethos has developed in the Kimberley, one which is reflected in music, and in which music plays a role. This provides the fourth context through which Indigenous music activity in the Kimberley will be investigated.

### Music and politics: Regionalism and Kimberley music

Since 1990 an identifiable regional agenda can be identified in Kimberley Indigenous politics. The reasons for this are various, symbiotic, and not always transparent. However, appeals to the need to present a proactive combined Indigenous front to politicians at both state and federal levels, Indigenous responses to the Mabo and Wik decisions, a concerted effort by Kimberley Aboriginal communities to preserve culture and relationships to land, and the work of the Kimberley Land Council as the representative body for all Indigenous groups in the area can be cited as factors contributing to it. Regionalism can be seen as the basis of much Indigenous activity in the area in various documents. For example, the *Report of the Conference on Resource Development and Kimberley Land Control* (usually referred to as the *Crocodile Hole Report*, Kimberley Land Council and Waringarri Resource Centre, 1991) documents the establishment of a regionally based group to represent Kimberley Aboriginal positions on land



in negotiations with governments. The conference reported in this publication was a response to research activity by Aboriginal communities in the east Kimberley in the early 1980s and a 1989 report (*Land of Promises*) edited by Dr H.C. Coombs *et al.*, which analysed Indigenous 'concerns and aspirations ... in relation to development ... While *Land of Promises* focused on the east Kimberley ... it was obvious that the issues identified were applicable across the whole of the Kimberley' (Kimberley Land Council and Waringatti Resource Centre, 1991: 9-10).

The role of the Kimberley Land Council (KLC) (founded in 1979) as the driving force in regionalist direction can be seen as a thread in that body's reports. For example, the 'Introduction' to the KLC 1992-1993 annual report states that:

the Kimberley Land Council grew directly out of the struggle of Aboriginal people to protect their land from mining companies backed by the Western Australian Government. In May 1978 people from more than 30 communities came together at Noonkanbah station in what was then the biggest gathering of Kimberley Aboriginal people in recent history (KLC, 1993: 3).

The development of Indigenous regionalism is explained in the introductory comments to a report initiated by the KLC in 1991 - *Aboriginal People in the Economy of the Kimberley Region* (Crough and Christophersen, 1993). According to the report's authors, the 1991 Crocodile Hole meeting, a series of documents which impinged on Aboriginal existence in the Kimberley (*viz.* a 1989 study of Aboriginal contributions to the economy of Central Australia; a 1990 regional report by the West Australian government; the 1991 report into Aboriginal deaths in custody),

and the Mabo decision of the High Court of Australia, are all acknowledged as impetus for this study and as contributing to a sense of regional rather than local community ethos. The report had a number of intentions, but overall its focus was regional, and based on the specific regional situation of Kimberley Aborigines. For example:

- in it information was to be 'aggregated on a Kimberley regional basis'
- the document itself was to be seen as a response to increasing federal and state government regionalisation of affairs of state
- it was intended to redress a lack of consideration of Aboriginal people in government reports and policies
- it advocated proactive means of applying results of the Mabo and Wik decisions to the Kimberley situation
- above all, it set out to acknowledge and seek acceptance of the level of Aboriginal contribution to the Kimberley economy (Crough and Christophersen, 1993: 1-18 *passim*).

Five years later another initiative of the KLC, a 1998 conference, *The Kimberley: Our Place - our Future* was clearly organised with the aim of furthering attention to regional issues by providing:

an opportunity to identify issues of immediate and long term concern to the peoples of the Kimberley, faced as we are, by an accelerating pace of change and powerful external forces (KLC, 1998: Foreword).

As Kurijinpi McPhee, Chairman of the KLC at that time stated, 'we want to live together and work together in the Kimberleys - our place' (KLC, 1998: 25).

These documents are not the only sources which put forward an Aboriginal regional agenda in the Kimberley. Others which reinforce this perspective can be cited. In 'Multilateral agreements: a new accountability in Aboriginal affairs', Peter Yu, one time Chairman of the Kimberley Land Council, also clearly enunciates

the needs and benefits of an Aboriginal Kimberley regional ethos with statements such as:

regional control of decision making on community infrastructure development, health and education services, land ownership and management, and economic development is essential (Yu, 1997: 168-169).

In a more anecdotal form, many older Aboriginal people have presented their life stories in publications which collectively present a picture of the Kimberley region. These publications, for example *Raparapa Stories from the Fitzroy River Drovers* (Marshall, 1989), *When the Dust come in Between: Aboriginal Viewpoints in the East Kimberley prior to 1982* (Shaw, 1992) and *Nyibayarri: Kimberley Tracker* (Bohemia and McGregor, 1995), while restricted to east or west Kimberley contexts, cover the whole region by the fact that the stories in them range over the region by travel, work, and intermarriage. Rather than concentrate on individual locales, these books present Aboriginal life in the past from a Kimberley perspective. As noted above, they appeal to another regional aspiration by redressing a lack of Aboriginal contribution to the region's history.

It is significant that the documentation which identifies and puts forward a defined regional perspective for the Kimberley dates from the early 1990s and that musically this period is also one in which a Kimberley identity begins to appear in music and associated activity. Stompen Ground (actually the Kimberley Aboriginal Arts and Culture Festival) began in 1992; a set of three CDs (*All this Spirit in the Land; Singing up the Country; Walking along the Edge*) which present music associated with 'the Kimberley region (which) is a very special part of the planet' (album notes, *Singing up the Country*) were recorded in 1992/1993; it is in the 1990s that music products from the region - not only Jimmy Chi's two stage musical *Bran Nue Dae* (1990) and *Corrugation Road* (1996), but an increased recorded output by numerous musicians - have helped define the region through musical activity.

Regionalist thinking is also mirrored in other ways in music activity in the Kimberley. The first of these is in the activities of Goolarri Media/BAMA, the Broome based broadcast and production house of the Kimberley component of the National Indigenous Media Association of Australia (NIMAA), which works as a regionally based Indigenous broadcast and recording studio. Statements of objectives by Goolarri/BAMA are regional in their ambit and clearly implicate musical expression as a means through which regionalism is addressed:

Goolarri Media is the operating name of the Broome Aboriginal Media Association. Goolarri's vision is to provide a culturally dynamic and technically efficient environment to stimulate and support the cultural strengths of Aboriginal people in the Kimberley (sic) region of Western Australia. Goolarri incorporates facilities for media and multi media production, digital sound recording, events management, performing arts training, and leading edge integrated computer technology (Goolarri Media Enterprises, catalogue undated)

We record music festivals, sports carnivals and other community events throughout the region using crews of community operators . . . many hours of local Indigenous music have been recorded in this way since 1996 with regular coverage of Nindji Nindji Festivals in Hedland, Derby Moonrise Rock Festivals, Munumburra Festivals in Wyndham, and Stompen Ground in Broome (Goolarri Media Enterprises website)

This regionalist identity is reified in the output of Goolarri, first as the body behind the running of Stompen Ground, and in recordings. The first recording issued through Goolarri is *Didj'un: Singer/songwriters from the Kimberley*, which includes a song commissioned for the album, 'Anywhere in the Kimberley (is home sweet home to me)', by Kevin Gunn. Recordings from other companies also have regionalist themes - CDs of festivals (*Kimberley Moonrise Rock Festival 2000; Munumburra Songwriters' Festival 1999*), and albums (e.g. *Kimberley Country* by the Benning Brothers Band). Numerous musicians have recorded songs which address the Kimberley as a region. Typical of these is 'Kimberley born and bred' by the Young Guns.

This song is about:

the big differences between living in the Kimberley and living in the city. Kimberley people are proud of who they are and where they come from (album notes, *Munumburra Songwriters' Festival 1999*).

The strongest musical sense of region, however, is that presented collectively in the three CD set *All this Spirit in the Land; Singing up the Country; and Walking along the Edge*, mentioned above. Not only do these CDs include songs about the Kimberley (e.g. 'My Place' by Ken Prouse; 'Kimberley Riders' by Laurie Shaw), but their continual references to language speaking communities and specific places act as a form of accretion to build up a composite expression of the region as a whole - a map, as it were, inscribed through music.

## Conclusion

Like that throughout Aboriginal Australia, Indigenous music activity in the Kimberley is broad and multidimensional. Also like national Indigenous music repertoires, it presents problems for music educators with little or no training specifically in Aboriginal music, or in the wider field of Aboriginal culture. However, understanding of the contexts in which Kimberley Indigenous music exists can be shown to provide a means of constructing models through which this music can be studied. In many ways this is not very different from the ways music from other sources is studied: local musical traditions, historical events as they are reflected in songs, music about events at specific places, and links between music and politics are often the topics through which music is taught and learnt. In the case of Indigenous music from the Kimberley, an attempt has also been made to link music and its topics to other forms of expression to published reminiscences by both Indigenous and non-Indigenous writers, to academic literature, to local histories, to conference reports and regional documents, and to political analysis of interactions between Indigenous peoples, mining companies and governments. Through these

other, extra-musical sources, the use of contexts as the bases of pedagogic approaches is reinforced and expanded; these other sources also provide ways of interpreting music sociologically, and imply roles imputed to music in the Indigenous communities of the Kimberley.

Over-riding these initial levels of the coding of Indigenous music examples into teachable chunks of information, there is a deeper level of significance in these contexts. This is the level at which each of them acts as a separate reification of music as symbolic expression of cultural collectivity – what Cohen (1985) calls the symbolic construction of community. It is the potential of music to act symbolically, and in this case, to represent cultural agendas, beliefs and concerns, that justifies a reading of music education which acknowledges the cultural dimensions of music as ethnomusicological in nature. It was with this premise that discussion of the pedagogical implications of Indigenous music activity in the Kimberley began. Drawing this link between musical symbolism and one specific repertoire brings the study of Indigenous music close to the aesthetic dimensions of music education, and the expectations that through music students' abilities to think in symbolic terms can be achieved; in this conceptual site, Indigenous music becomes an ideal forum for achieving the deepest aims of music education.

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### Note

<sup>1</sup>Chinatown is a section of the town of Broome and was originally called either the Asiatic Quarter or Japtown, from the number of Japanese boarding houses, brothels, and businesses there during the period of the height of the pearl shell industry between the 1880s and the 1920s. □

### Recordings

- All this spirit in the land - Traditional Songs Recorded Live in the Kimberleys, Western Australia.* Garduwa Amboorny Wirnan Inc, 1992, JCK92CD2
- Bran Nue Dae.* BND Records, 1993, BNDCD002
- Corroboree: Australian Aborigines of Noonkenbah* Cassette produced by J Boyle, no details
- Corrugation Road.* Angoorabbin Records, 1996, AR8.
- Didj'un - Singer/songwriters from the Kimberley.* Goolarri Music, 1998, GMCD001
- Dreaming in Broome.* Little Piggies, 1997, LP-CD1
- Full Moon over Broome.* Michael Torres, Goolarri Media, 1997
- Kimberley Country.* Benning Brothers Band, Pindaroo, 1998, PIN503CD
- Kimberley Moonrise Rock Festival 2000.* CD no details
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