

Voyage of Musical Discovery

EDUCATION KIT 2022
CULTURAL NARRATIVES

2

AUSTRALIAN
ROMANTIC &
CLASSICAL
ORCHESTRA

RICHARD GILL AO | FOUNDING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

QLD

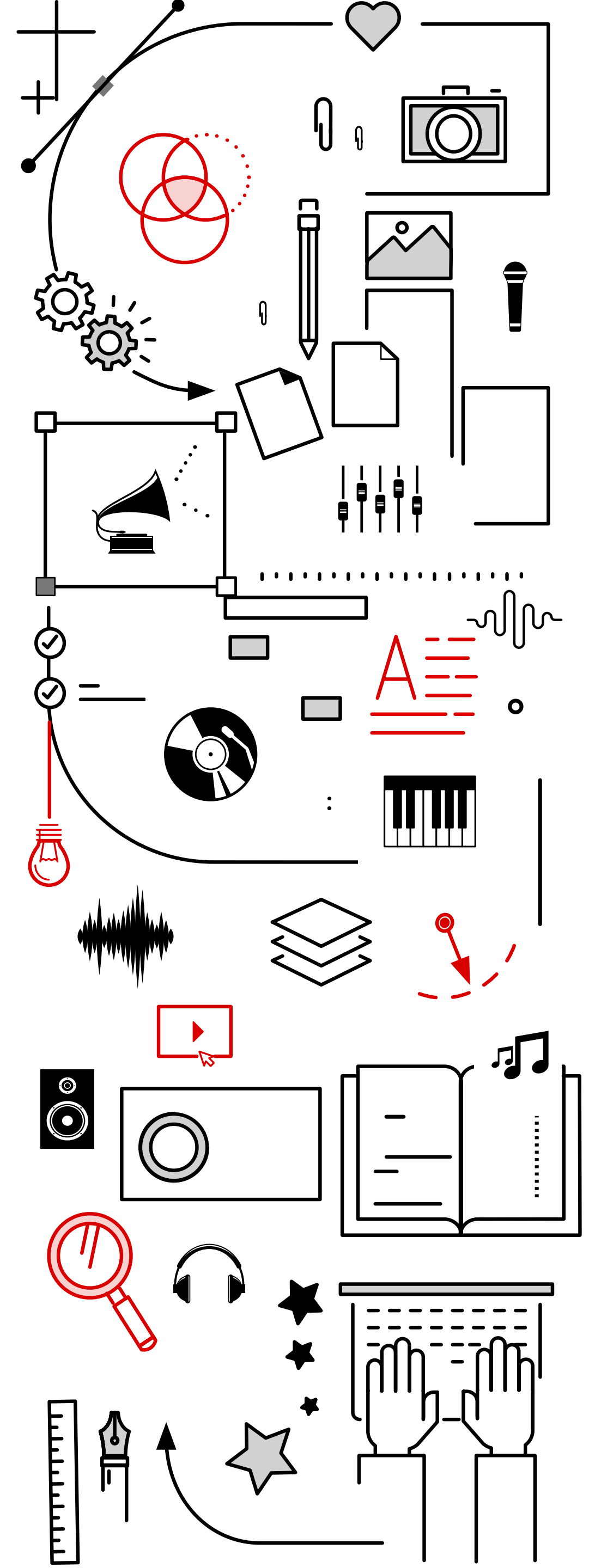


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Introduction

The **Voyage of Musical Discovery** presents musical works of different times, places and styles along with spoken explanations. The first half features orchestral and chamber music from the Classical or Romantic era performed in a historically-informed style. The second takes recently-written Australian works performed by a guest ensemble, often including the composers themselves.

This **Education Kit** works as a stand-alone learning resource, but full educational benefit is achieved by working through the activities in conjunction with attending a live **Voyage** presentation.

Visit www.arco.org.au/voyage for booking information

QLD
Tuesday 31 May 2022, 11.30am
Performing Arts Centre
St Peters Lutheran College, Brisbane

Joseph EYBLER | String Quintet in D major
Franz SCHUBERT | Octet in F major, D. 803

Heartland | Kalkani

performed by the
Australian Romantic & Classical Orchestra

composed & performed by
Véronique Serret – violin
William Barton – didgeridoo

TOPIC & FORMAT OF KIT

Different **CULTURAL NARRATIVES** are at the centre of each of the above works. To discover how these overlap, the kit looks in detail at:

1. Lines & Distance
2. Improvisation
3. Quotation

Format

These three musical aspects are explained one by one in the following format:

- (a) background and definition | *why is this important?*
 - (b) activities and projects | *how can I learn to do it?*
 - (c) cross-genre examples from the **Voyage** repertoire |
where and how does it appear in the music?
 - (d) examples from outside works or disciplines |
does it extend to other music and art forms?
-

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

1

Structure of Classes

The materials in the kit are arranged from general to specific. While it makes sense to complete them in the order listed, they can also be taken as self-contained units. This means that a specific area and/or activity can be selected to suit the class time available, as well as to complement the current syllabus focus. Students are encouraged to move through the materials freely – for example, in some cases it may be beneficial to listen to the examples before starting the activities.

2

Activities

In many ways, the activities are the most important parts of the kits – this is where things can be invented, experimented with, and explored. The activities are flexible, and options are provided for them to be expanded and integrated into larger composition and performance projects depending upon the needs and resources of the school program.

Many will work best by splitting into groups. Students should take avail of the skills, resources, space, and sound makers that are available, whether these are instruments, voices, electronics or objects lying around. These are the materials with which to try out the tools introduced in the kit.

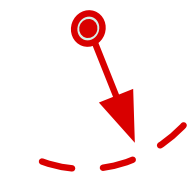
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Adaptability

As the kits deal with techniques across multiple music styles and types, activities can be adapted by:



- Breaking down into smaller parts for younger students, including in primary years



- Expanding for adult listeners, composers or musicians on the lookout for new ideas

4

Cross Referencing

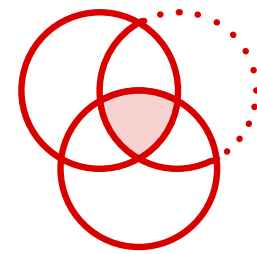


Whole books have been written about each of these subjects – references and suggested additional resources are included.



Students are encouraged to do some sleuthing of their own when it comes to general background of works and biographical information about composers etc.

This kit is one of three produced per year, and there are indications to where related material appears across the kits. Completing all provides a comprehensive survey of the core elements of **composition, performance** and **musicology** and how these align in contemporary creative practice.



DESIGN & INNOVATION

Subject Matter
Structure
Layers

CULTURAL NARRATIVES

Lines & Distance
Improvisation
Quotation



MUSICAL IDENTITIES

Collaboration
Sustain
Threads

5



Streaming and Links

This interactive landscape edition is optimised for laptop or tablet, however no third-party audio or video media is embedded in the file. The links require an active internet connection, and headphones are recommended for concentrated listening. Downloading the PDF and opening it in Adobe Acrobat Reader is recommended, or if accessed from a browser ensure that the links open in new tabs with **Command-click** (MacOS), **Control-click** (Windows), or **tap+hold** (Android/iOS).

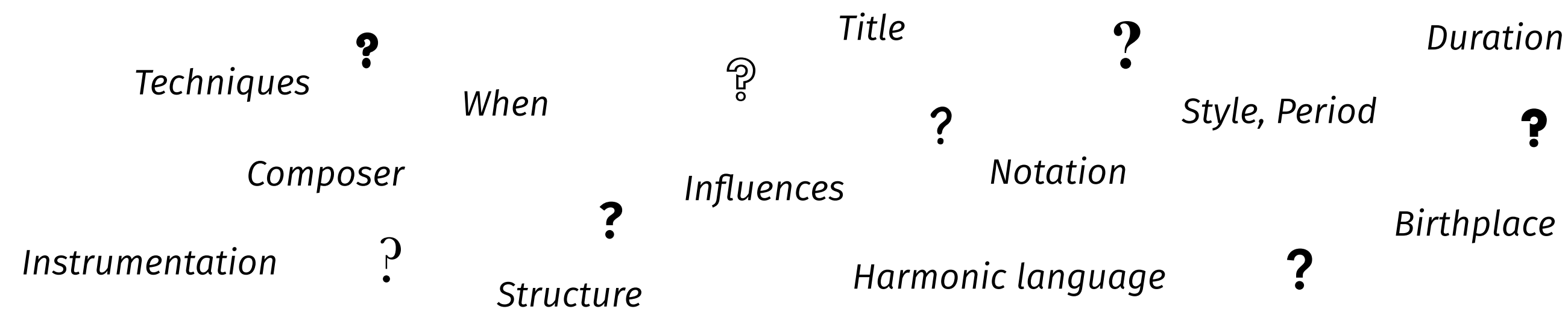
It is important too that whole movements, works and albums are listened to as they were written and intended to be heard – i.e., without starting or stopping halfway through. To make this easier, the music referred to is also collected in a [Spotify playlist](#), however in most cases the works can also be found elsewhere including on other streaming services and on CD.

1. LINES & DISTANCE

A. Background & Definitions

Perspective

Discoveries and new insights often arise due to a change in perspective. However, in the study of music new angles can sometimes be difficult to find – we get accustomed to following well-worn paths of enquiry, applying similar sets of parameters, and asking the same questions...



If you were unfamiliar with traditional European music history and theory, these questions might make you mistake music for some enigmatic science, and that its meaning can be revealed with the right combinations of objectivity and logical enquiry.

Are there other ways to look at and hear music? And can it really even be completely explained and understood?

Many of the textbook approaches to the study of music are centred around classifications, comparisons, and assumptions that have grown from the values and systems of 19th-century Europe. Given how much our contemporary culture and life differs from that of a resident of Vienna in the mid-1800s, might it not be time to try some alternative approaches to listening, analysing and creating music? Along the way we might find some fresh insights about sound and its changing role in our lives today and in the future.

○ Paths Winding ○ ○

Recurring in the mainstream study of music is the concept of linear distance. Distance and line are widely understood to be the building blocks of whole Western musical elements from rhythm, form, harmony, melody to subject matter and beyond. Musicologist and music theory professor Jeffrey Perry explains that “musicians have been mapping music’s temporal relationships onto spatial coordinate systems since Pythagoras.”

Rhythm is often described to function like an arrow – driving forward to a predetermined destination. Structures such as sonata form and popular song form are built from the notion of beginning with the familiar then embarking on adventures before returning home again, and this story arc is repeated in novels, theatre, Hollywood and beyond. In Western music these forms have developed hand-in-hand with the tonic–dominant harmonic system.

But what if distance is a construction or an illusion and the lines of departure and return in real life are not as straight or as distinct as we might think? For example, sometimes an hour’s walk seems to last an eternity yet we can watch two seasons on Netflix in what feels like the blink of an eye. And when flying to far-off places, you have no concrete feeling of covering distance just by leaving the airport lounge, watching films in a metal tube, then walking into another airport lounge that looks and sounds almost the same as the first.

In his 2019 book *Sand Talk*, poet and artist Tyson Yunkporta of the Apalech Clan from far-north Queensland explains that there is no word for non-linear in Indigenous languages because “nobody would consider travelling, thinking or talking in a straight line in the first place. The winding path is just how a path is, and therefore it needs no name.”

Perhaps this way of thinking can help us understand some other puzzles of time and distance:

- **The feeling of being at home in more than one place**
- **That many musical works across multiple styles do not have a clearly identifiable beginning, middle or end**
- **The experience of déjà vu – knowing you’ve been somewhere before even though you haven’t**
- **How rhythms can appear to self-organise or sounds move of their own volition**

These are no whacky conspiracy theories – all the following ideas are backed up by the latest research into cultural and network theory and reinforced by what many Indigenous peoples have known and practised for thousands of years. As an experiment, we are going to apply some of this knowledge to new and old musical examples, and along with the activities, the aim is to challenge some entrenched musical preconceptions. Allow these ideas to sit alongside the approaches and systems you already know and observe what happens – this is literally a **Voyage of Musical Discovery**.

Jeffrey Perry, 'The Wanderer's Many Returns: Schubert's Variations Reconsidered' in *The Journal of Musicology* Vol. 19 No. 2. University of California Press, 2002. 374–416.



Tyson Yunkporta, *Sand Talk: How Indigenous Thinking Can Save the World*. Text Publishing Co., 2019.

B. Activities & Projects

RIPPLES



Stand or sit with your eyes closed. Put a timer on for three minutes, and focus your attention on just what you hear, no matter how soft or distant.

Aim to simply observe what sounds are there. Let go of any instincts to classify or label the sounds – it doesn't matter if they are loud, soft, near, far, mechanical or imagined.

Let them come and let them go – these vibrations are like the ripples on a lake or leaves in the wind.

SURROUND SOUND



- In pairs and standing, one person creates a surround sound experience for the other. One stands still with eyes closed, and the other makes soft sounds while moving from front to back, and side to side.

Make light clicks, air sounds, swishes etc. – stay close, but no body contact

- Gather feedback on how it sounded – *go beyond explaining what you heard, and describe the effect it had on you.*

- Swap roles and repeat

Works well with all pairs simultaneously spread out in a space. Assign one pair to lead – when they stop, others stop too as they notice.

- Finish with an AUSLAN sign for applause

Hands in air, gently wobble them from side to side with fingers outstretched

“

One moves through the work not in straight lines but in curves, swirls, and across intersections, to words that catch the eye or attract attention repeatedly.

”

Lyn Hejinian is describing open-form poetry, but this could also apply to a musical work.



By drawing on the sounds and ideas from the previous exercises, create a preliminary design for a piece of music that is not built around a timeline. You might think of it as a series of self-contained modules arranged in a circle, or radiating from a central point.

Store your ideas for the sounds and number of events somewhere – on paper like a map, with different objects arranged on the floor, or in your head. Design it in any way that will allow players to choose their own order by zigzagging, repeating, overlapping or omitting. The story – if there is one – can emerge later in the telling.



C. Examples from Voyage Repertoire

Franz Schubert (1797–1828)

Schubert is one of the most written-about composers in classical music, and what emerges even from a quick overview of his life and work are the many contradictions. He doesn't appear to fit easily into the expected categories:

Light and accessible music or dark and serious music?

Fragmented or lyrical thematic development?

Subjective or objective?

Classical or Romantic?

The answers to these questions are often framed by speculation as to his real cause of death and rumours of undisclosed homosexuality, and pointing out that he was overweight and unusually short. And it is almost impossible to read anything about Schubert's music without him being compared unfavourably to Beethoven.

The reason why Schubert's music is still listened to today could be precisely *because* of its contradictions. We know now that it is possible for music to be both serious and accessible, be subjective as well as objective, and be Classical and Romantic. His music resonates with us because we recognise that it contains multiple versions of ourselves – and this mixture is that which makes us who we are.

“

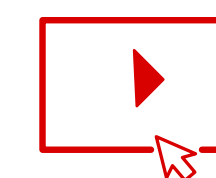
*Whenever I attempted to sing of love, it turned to pain
And again, when I tried to sing of pain, it turned to love*

”

Franz Schubert, *My Dream*

His works refuse to be shoehorned into the analytical systems of the day. For example, his particular model of sonata form was a future-looking hybrid with multiple recapitulations, his modulations followed their own cyclic system, and his works are simultaneously symphonic, chamber, poetry, dance and song. They are proof that you can follow an itinerary and timetable but also be a free spirit and walk where your heart and feet take you.

Listen to a single movement of the **Octet** as pure sound. Take it for what it is and let the facts and figures, biographical baggage and other information float to the sidelines.



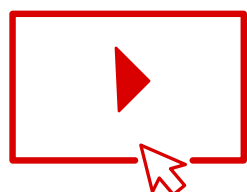
[Playlist on Spotify](#)

William Barton & Véronique Serret

The music of this duo is also difficult to explain by following customary lines of enquiry. Their works highlight the distinct personalities of the two performers as much as the instruments they play.

William Barton is a Kalkadunga man and is known as a composer, producer, multi-instrumentalist and vocalist. He is one of the world's leading specialists of the didgeridoo – an Indigenous instrument that stems from northern Australia and has been in use for at least 1,500 years. The word didgeridoo is an anglicisation, and today it is also common to hear the instrument referred to as **yidaki** – in the language of the Yolgnu peoples of north-east Arnhem Land. Barton often blends the sound of the didgeridoo with the traditional instruments of Europe, and has written, performed and recorded many new works in collaboration with orchestras around the globe.

Véronique Serret is an improviser and violinist who is fluent in many musical styles from the early to modern orchestra, contemporary art music, folk and rock. Collaboration is at the centre of her creative practice and she records and tours often with people across a range of disciplines including film music, dance, composition, theatre and in performance art. In addition to a Classical-era violin, she plays a custom-made six-string electric violin paired with electronics. While living and working in Darwin she was introduced more closely to Indigenous culture and music. In addition to her work with William Barton, she has performed at the Barunga and Walking With Spirits festivals, with the Bangarra Dance Theatre, and as a part of Gurrumul's *Djarimirri* Live



Before reading any further, [listen to the track *Kalkani*](#)

Kalkani

The sound connects the above worlds on many levels, and this is emphasised by how the two players interact – leading the listener to view the musical threads from different vantage points. The acoustic instruments undergo their own modifications along the way too, with actual sung voices twisting in and out of the string and wind timbres.

The players' way of responding and adapting to one another creates a work where opposites meet rather than functioning as binary contrasts. The effect resembles a series of slowly revolving and overlapping concentric circles – composition meets improvisation, performer is composer, night becomes day, and questions and answers blur into one. Try putting the track on repeat – as it loops back around, the music doesn't stop then start again but keeps evolving.

The title *Kalkani* – meaning **eagle** in Kalkadunga language – sets an overall scene from which multiple interpretations can emerge depending on a listener's own associations, experiences and imagination. The sounds don't necessarily require that you envisage an eagle soaring through the sky, but could be taken more broadly as observing and interacting with different aspects of an ever-changing environment. In *Sand Talk*, Yunkporta explains that many Indigenous people in the south of the continent see the planets of Mars and Venus as the eyes of the eagle at night – and this not only signifies a seamless connection between earth and sky, but suggests a sacred convergence of past, present and future.

Joseph Eybler (1765–1846)

Even today with the internet and social media, word of mouth and personal recommendations are still some of the most powerful promotional tools. In Vienna two hundred years ago, this was even more the case. Decisions as to which composers and works were performed in the city lay in the hands of a small collection of men on behalf of three main music associations and a handful of invitation-only salons. Schubert himself was at first refused entry to this elite because as one of the first freelance composers in Vienna, he wasn't deemed to have attained sufficient social standing.

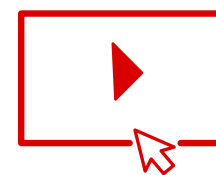
Eybler, on the other hand, was very well connected. His father and Michael Haydn – Joseph's younger brother – were childhood friends and Eybler also became close to both Haydn and Mozart. He worked as a répétiteur with Mozart – coaching the singers for their roles in *Così fan Tutte*. After Mozart's death, Eybler was one of the first composers approached by Mozart's wife Constanze when she sought assistance with the completion of the *Requiem*.

“

After Mozart he is the greatest living genius of composition that Vienna has ever seen.

”

Georg Albrechtsberger



Initially Eybler studied law, but was forced to return to working as a musician after his parents lost all their belongings in a house fire. After his only opera – *The Magic Sword* (1790) – failed to make an impression, he concentrated primarily on writing chamber music and sacred works. His musical style is more closely aligned with the traditional writing of Mozart and Haydn than that of Schubert and Beethoven. Although, he did tend to write more democratically for the instruments than was customary – e.g., giving the viola a prominent role – and he played organ, piano, viola and french horn to a high standard.

He held many important positions throughout his career – secretary then vice president of the Society of Musicians (*Pensionsinstituts der Tonkünstler*) and eventually taking over from Antonio Salieri as the Musical Director (*Hofkapellmeister*) of the 50-piece Imperial Orchestra and Chorus. In this role, he dismissed a proposal to perform Schubert's *Mass No. 5 in A-flat* and rejected the composer's application for the deputy director job – on the grounds that Schubert and his music were not of a suitably traditional style nor fit for the emperor's ears.

Eybler's achievements and contribution to music were so significant that he was knighted in 1835, and as a bittersweet reminder that enduring success is a very fragile concept, he is almost unheard of today.

In contrast to the suggestions for the *Octet*, go to [the Playlist and listen](#) to the short first movement of the *Quintetto* while keeping the preceding information about the composer's life in your mind. For an added coincidental example of how music and sound can traverse lines, borders and times, keep the playlist running and experience the effect of *Kalkani* starting as if in response to a lingering question from Eybler.

Source of Eybler information: Reinhold Kainhofer, www.eybler-edition.org/biografie, 2009.

D. Extra Examples

Some examples of artists disrupting and prising apart traditional lines, space, duration and expectations:

[Mapping the Sound](#)

Melbourne-based performance artist **Angela Viora** created a long-duration work in a public space where she is blindfolded and draws the sounds she hears around her with charcoal on a large sheet of paper.

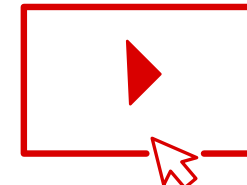
[Blue Poles](#)

The painting has a life of its own. I try to let it come through.

One of the most significant contributions to 20th-century art was made by **Jackson Pollock** – separating colour from line and completely upending the meaning of space in a picture or drawing.

[Gatz: Elevator Repair Service](#)

A seven-hour theatre work that begins with an employee in an office discovering a copy of *The Great Gatsby* amongst the jumble on his desk. He starts reading it aloud, and gradually the remaining office workers join in and slowly become the characters in the book.



[String Quartet No. 2 \(1983\)](#)

Form is easy: just the division of things into parts. But scale is another matter. **Morton Feldman's** quartet lasts almost six hours, and envelopes listeners in an extended network of gentle and subtly changing sounds.

[Read more in The Guardian](#)

[Injun](#)

Nisga'a poet **Jordan Abel** has created a book-length poem as response to North American colonialist portrayals of Indigenous peoples. It is built from 91 extracts of 19th-century western novels and makes a visual pastiche of the words remaining after racist terms have been erased.

[Housekeeping Observation](#)

Under all this dirt
the floor is really very clean.

(An entire short story – **Lydia Davies**, *Can't and Won't*. Hamish Hamilton, 2014.)

2. IMPROVISATION

A. Background & Definitions

Improvisation is not only embedded in the music of cultures all around the world, it also occupies a far greater role in mainstream Western classical music than is often taught or acknowledged. However, for much of the 20th century it has been conspicuously absent from traditional classical and orchestral music performance.

“

Classical performance has lost much of the improvisatory element that was an essential part of its original character. This has resulted in a stiffly formal distortion of what the greatest composers and performers of the past expected.

”

Clive Brown, Musicologist

One of the advantages of learning about and studying music in the 21st century is being part of the gradual return of improvisation to the modern musician's toolkit, regardless of style or specialisation. Today's versatile contemporary musicians understand that improvisation is much more than playing a bit of jazz to relax, embellishing a cadenza, or creating background textures. It is an entire musical ecosystem that spans the tiny spontaneous and individual musical decisions made in the moment right through to generating complete structures and works in real time.

Clive Brown, 'We're Playing Classical Music All Wrong – Composers Wanted Us to Improvise', [The Conversation](#), 14 January 2015.

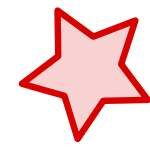
In Western music outside the realm of improvised jazz, a new generation of classically-trained players is beginning to incorporate improvisation into historically-informed performance, interdisciplinary artworks, and the contemporary art music ensemble. In some situations this involves reading between the lines of existing notation by modifying and developing within the stylistic conventions. In others, it involves reacting to other media or stimuli – e.g., a visual image, story, movement, emotion, place, animal or sound.

Music psychologist and improviser Raymond MacDonald undertook extensive case-studies to evaluate musicians' experiences when improvising, and defines improvisation with the following set of parameters: It is **creative, spontaneous, social, non-verbal, universal** and **ambiguous**, and he adds that **interaction** and **negotiation** between players is a central part of musical decision making.

Raymond MacDonald, David J. Hargreaves and Dorothy Miell (eds).
Handbook of Musical Identities. Oxford University Press, 2017.



Neal Peres Da Costa. *Off the Record: Performing Practices in Romantic Piano Playing.* Oxford University Press, 2012.

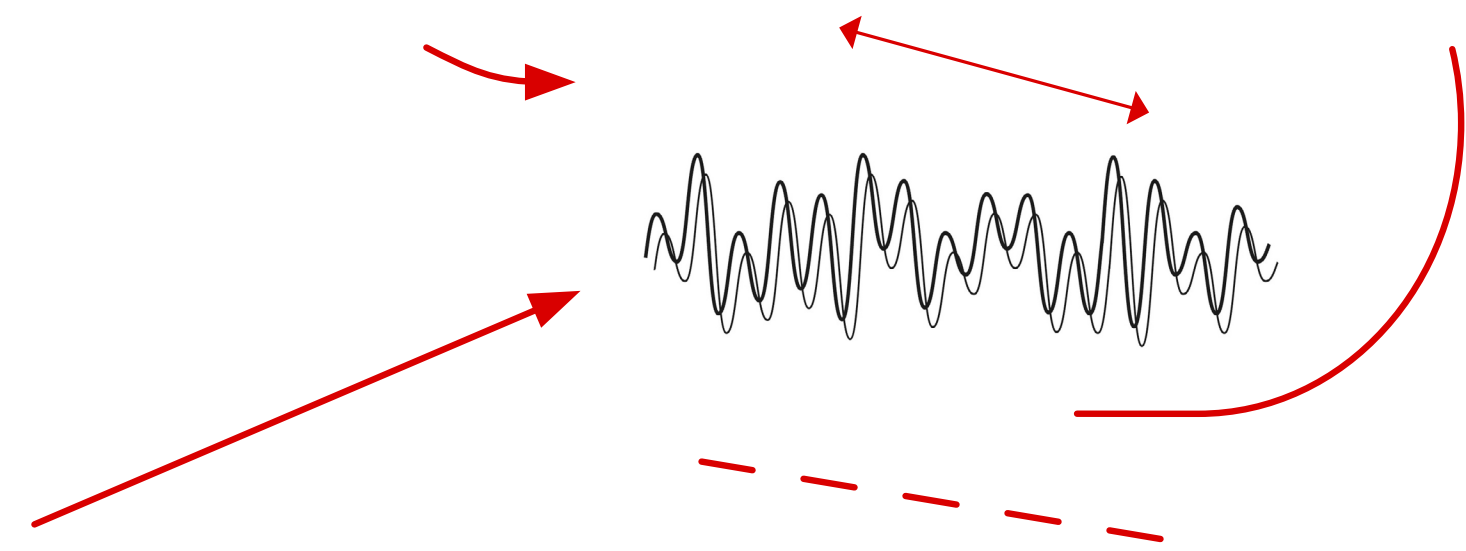


If you are new to improvisation, there is no need to worry!

Think of it as a music's way of tapping into the creative swirls of nature – the shapes in the clouds, the arrangement of fallen leaves on a path, the intricate patterns of eroded sand, or the formation of an entire galaxy. Even the most advanced scientific equations and theories have trouble explaining these sorts of variables, because there are often too many combinations of **IF/AND/OR** to comprehend.

As a composer, you can make improvisation become music's version of feedback networks and machine learning – you set up the initial question and design the algorithm, then trust the musicians to do the rest. Let them self-organise and define their own protocols of interaction. If you come up with the right combinations of initiating elements and players it may even go viral – the sound you create can actually move of its own accord and do things you didn't expect.

When writing and notating music, it is important to remember that you do not have to control everything. And like the leaves on the path, there is no need to be afraid of unpredictability or complexity. Audiences not only love witnessing communication and interaction amongst musicians, but they thrive on spontaneity and ambiguity in the resulting sounds.

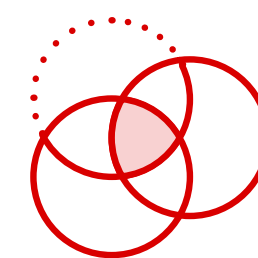


“

The first step is always that of imitating something and the next step is that of transforming what you're able to imitate.

Karlheinz Stockhausen

”



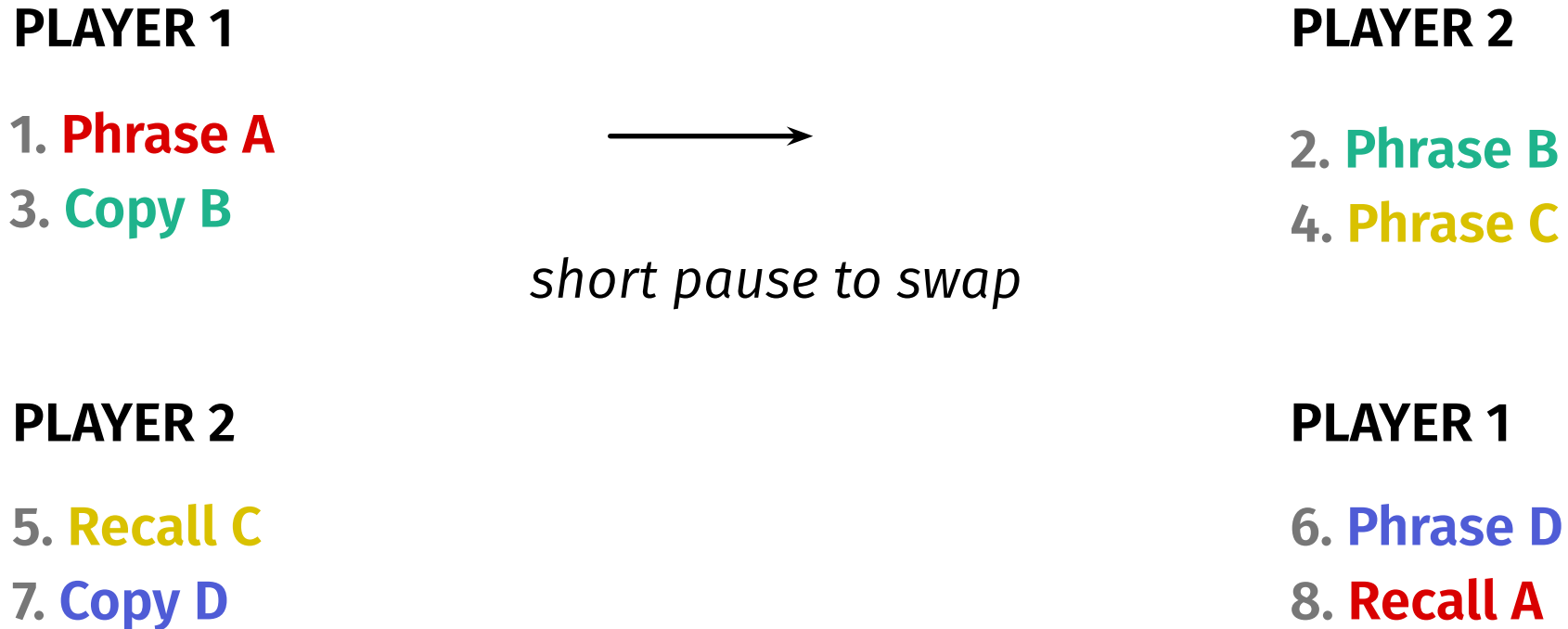
Kit 3 – **MUSICAL IDENTITIES** looks in more detail at collaboration and negotiation in music.

B. Activities & Projects



Jericho Brown devised a new form of poem called **Duplex** – made of repetition and rhyme that combines Middle Eastern and Indian ghazal with the sonnet and blues. Beginning with two lines, new lines are added but only after paraphrasing the preceding second line. This cycle continues until the fourteenth line is an exact copy of the first.


A musical adaption of Brown’s poetic form for two players:



A phrase **copy** should be recognisable as being related to or built from the original. Make it of a similar contour, range or duration – change one musical parameter and keep the rest the same.

A phrase **recall** can be a close or exact repeat.

A new phrase should be of different or contrasting length, rhythm, dynamic or register – change everything.

 **CIRCULAR 2**

Extend the circle now by building improvised dialogue into the sound events – either by extensions of the **Ripples** and **Surround Sounds**, by bringing instruments into the mix, or a combination of the two.

The actions do not need to be as strictly followed as in the previous exercise – after an initiating idea suggested by an object, word or symbol, each player is free to:

repeat what they hear • **MAINTAIN**

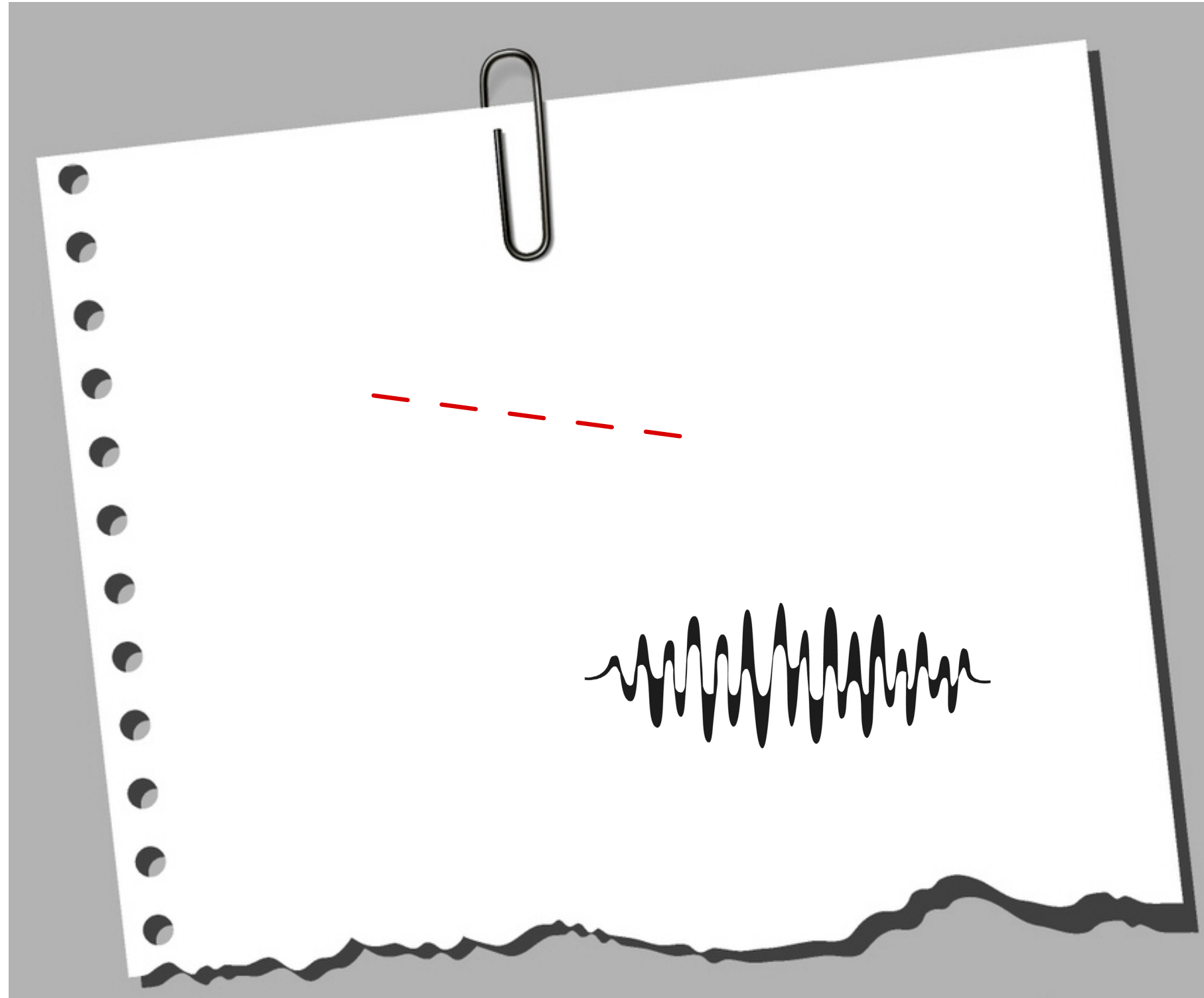
gradually change it • **MODIFY**

start something new • **INITIATE**

This can happen by either going around the circle, or by crisscrossing from side to side. Use eye contact and body movement to communicate who you are playing to or responding to.

Think of this work as a quilted patchwork – a collection of small units that could be arranged in any number of ways.

Don't be too concerned with **beginning–middle–end** and instead let it go as long as the ideas and energy last, or set a time limit and stop.



TRANSCRIBE

For anyone having learnt music in the Western education system, it is valuable to be reminded that music across much of the world is an oral rather than written tradition. Fortunately – and no matter what styles of music you are interested in – it is quite easy to build some learning-by-listening into your daily routine.

If something in your musical travels particularly catches your attention – a certain motif, chord progression or rhythm – try to work out what it is by copying it and learning it. Take advantage of the pause, rewind and stop buttons and figure out exactly what's happening – not only the notes and rhythm, but the idiosyncrasies of phrasing and timing including inflections, bends and volume changes. Learn it directly on your instrument and sing the phrases if you get stuck, and only notate it if you think it's necessary for recalling it later. Start small – with a single phrase or section – then as your skills improve you can tackle an entire piece and all its different layers and parts.

Learning music in this way is one of the most valuable things to improve ear-training and musical knowledge. The point is not to steal someone else's work, but to study and understand it by emulating it. The things you collect can become a library of ideas to inform and influence your own playing, improvising and composing.

C. Examples from Voyage Repertoire

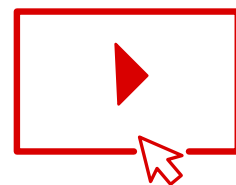
Schubert *Octet* – I

Schubert was acutely aware that the traditional culture of Vienna was beginning to show cracks. He and his circle of educated and artistic friends were feeling increasingly powerless against the rise of political corruption and religious oppression, and they were unconvinced by either aristocratic frivolity or the industrial ambitions of the growing middle class.

Even though much of his music was still infused with an earlier Viennese Classicism, he also found his own imaginative ways of navigating an uncertain future. His experiments with form and modulation are particularly evident in the smaller-scale works – e.g., songs and chamber music – and this was music he would have written for friends and people he knew rather than for the larger establishment.

The first movement of the *Octet* is an excellent example of how he bent and expanded form. It is also a lesson on how fraught it can be to squeeze Schubert's works into structural analysis methods such as Schenker. Many scholars have shown that it is possible, but not without dozens of footnotes labelling and explaining the many subsidiary second subjects, transitional passages, paraphrases, and closing themes leading to codettas before final codas. And these systems do not do a very convincing job of explaining Schubert's habit of having the exposition move through three different key centres.

Listen to the whole movement without worrying about any of this. Experience it instead as a free compositional take on the traditional notions of departure, distance and homecoming and one that travels to expanses of the mind with a seamless blend of premonition and flashback.



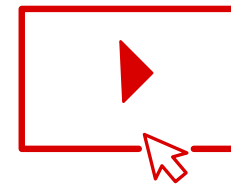
[Octet – Movement I](#)

William Barton & Véronique Serret

[This video shows the performers](#) playing *Kalkani* in the studio, and it is the same recording from which the audio track linked to on page 12 has been created.

Observe how the two musicians interact, and how deeply they concentrate on the combined sound. Important to note – and this is often the case with experienced improvisers – is how the players both lead and follow. This interplay shifts as quickly as the sounds do, and in the words of David Toop, a change can occur due to “a pause, a shift in atmosphere, an unintended noise, an unvoiced thought picked up through implication or body language.”

The following clips show different versions and sections of Barton and Serret’s larger *Heartland* project. Watching these suggests that the works are a combination of improvisation and composition, although any sections or signposts that they have worked out in advance are remembered and internalised rather than read off a score.



[Live on ABC Q+A](#)

[Peggy Glanville Hicks Residence](#)

[Phoenix Central Park, Sydney](#)

Allowing these works to speak for themselves – i.e., without adding individual titles or contextualising stories – encourages the listener to imagine and form their own idea of where the paths are leading, and it's possible to hear how the perspective shifts from the microscopic to the interplanetary in the blink of an eye.



David Toop, *Into the Maelstrom: Music: Improvisation and the Dream of Freedom – Before 1970*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2016.

Schenker & Salzer

- One of the modern-day music theorists responsible for the widespread deployment of Schenkerian analysis – particularly in the United States – was Felix Salzer. His musicology graduation thesis at the University of Vienna in 1926 was on Schubert's Sonata Form. In this paper he proposed that the different dramatic tensions between the lyrical themes and driving dotted rhythms in the Octet's first movement are determined by what he called the improvisatory element of music. He was referring to the subtle and spontaneous changes and inflections of tempo and dynamic that occur in performance – either emphasising or downplaying the many different arrival and departure points throughout.

After almost a hundred years of more strict orchestral-based interpretations, this practice is once again thriving in historically-informed ensembles. Further, this is particularly well-suited to chamber music settings where each player follows and leads depending on the changing roles they have.

[Octet – Movement IV](#)



Schubert Octet – IV

Considering the many additions, expansions and detours that Schubert made in sonata form, it is safe to surmise that he needed a different and more flexible structural template to work within. Later in the Octet he shows us precisely what that was. The fourth movement is a theme and variations, and while this is not a new form in itself, what Schubert does with it is fascinating.

It begins with what appears to be a relatively standard theme, like we've stepped into the tastefully-decorated entrance of a grand old house. But rather than proceeding with systematic variations as one may have heard in previous musical periods, Schubert lets a set of unusual circular and timbral variations unfold. They are timbral in the sense that he tends to put more emphasis on the combinations of instrumental colours than on the virtuosity of melodic lines. And they are circular because it feels like a collection of instruments in lively discussion more than a series of monologues with accompaniment.

While listening to the movement, try this experiment. You are watching footage from a handheld camera panning around the faces of eight people sitting together talking. There are a few friendly disagreements, sometimes they all talk at once, and throughout the discussion different allegiances are formed and agreements are reached. The music is structured in a way that you could witness this all on a different occasion – the characters in different spots, discussion topics raised in a different order, with a few alternative conclusions reached – but the overall effect would be similar. Schubert is roaming and ambling through time and space, moving bits here and making copies there – a compositional approach of improvised stream-of-consciousness. Recall Yunkporta's statement about linearity: the winding path is just how the path is...

It is no surprise that the format of theme and variations was to become so important in the future – for example in Brahms and Mahler then Schoenberg and Webern but also in parallel developments a world away with the emergence of collective jazz improvisation leading to multiple improvised choruses over popular songs. Schubert may not be directly responsible for all these developments, but he certainly played a role in setting things in motion.

D. Extra Examples

Connections between nature and creativity:

From its beginnings in mythical storytelling and oral narratives, literature has been a medium of cultural ecology in the sense that literature has symbolically expressed the fundamental interconnectedness between culture and nature in tales of human genesis, of metamorphosis, of symbiotic co-evolution between different life forms.

Hubert Zapf goes on to explain that birds feature frequently in poetry as symbols of transformation and dialogue: “the classical nightingale in Keats, the mockingbird and spotted hawk in Whitman, the white heron in Sarah Orne Jewett, the oven bird in Robert Frost, the vulture in Robinson Jeffers, or the eagle in Joy Harjo.”

Hubert Zapf, ‘Creative Matter and Creative Mind: Cultural Ecology and Literary Creativity’, in *Material Ecocriticism* eds S. Iovino and S. Oppermann. Indiana University Press, 2014.



Watch a [murmuration of starlings](#)

Yoko Ono was studying philosophy at university and also had training in classical music. A composition exercise she was given in 1953 when she was 19 years old, was to incorporate the sounds of nature into music notation. Her response hints at how difficult this task is – *Secret Piece* consists of a sustained F written in bass clef and the instructions “with the accompaniment of the birds singing at dawn.”

A typical live work by Australian improvising trio **The Necks** – Chris Abrahams (piano), Lloyd Swanton (bass), Tony Buck (drums) – lasts an hour and is made up of gently undulating and crisscrossing material. In over thirty years of playing together the group has developed an approach to performance where each musician simultaneously remains in their own thematic and textural world while also being completely attuned to the other players.

If you ever have the opportunity to hear them perform, do so.

Hear [Blue Mountain](#)



Composer **Edgard Varèse** was convinced that sound could move of its own volition, and described its movement to be like “a geometrical figure on a plane, with both figure and plane moving in space, each with its own arbitrary and varying speeds of translation and rotation.”

His music showed that sound could indeed go beyond the horizontal and the vertical; to zigzag through a performance space, move into the inner regions of the imagination, then continue towards the planets and stars.

[Hear Déserts](#)

Malcolm MacDonald, *Varèse: Astronomer in Sound*. Kahn & Averill, 2002

For many contemporary classical musicians, the so-called intuitive music of **Karlheinz Stockhausen** serves as an entry point to improvisation.

From the Seven Days (Aus den sieben Tagen) from 1968 is a collection of 15 short text-based compositions. The instructions can be interpreted freely and include references to vibrations of the wider world and beyond. Performances of these works have some similarities with free jazz of the same period, but tend to revolve around drones, textural dialogue and quick meeting points rather than thematic material linked to an existing idiom.

[More information about the works](#)

3. QUOTATION

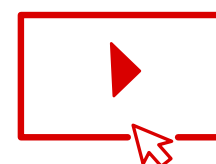
A. Background & Definitions

There is frequent discussion and debate about the originality and authenticity of musical works, and calling something derivative is often a polite form of disapproval. However, the massive ocean of music across the world would not be the way it is today without the thousands of interconnecting tributaries. These are the many influences, adaptations, rearrangements, recycling, sampling and borrowing that define a musical style and make it familiar and recognisable to a particular group of listeners or players.

Like stories passed from generation to generation, sounds and songs are also embroidered through repetition across the years. Musicians learn by copying existing music and adapting and developing it with their own ideas and experiences. While these practices are commonplace, they do need to be done with an awareness of copyright and respect for the intellectual property of others.

In a similar way to the use of licensed images, incorporating the work of another artist in your music requires permission and this must be taken seriously. By all means absorb the music you are influenced by and learn from it, but be certain that what you make yourself isn't just directly copied.

[A more in-depth look](#) into a recent music copyright case in the US involving singer Katy Perry and rapper Flame.



If you wish to write, record or perform works that makes use of outside material, a good place to begin is by finding works that are in the public domain. These are works where copyright has expired, and in Australia this generally means that the creator has been dead for at least 70 years. However, it is important to note that separate copyrights may still apply to recordings even when a musical work is in the public domain. [More information](#) on copyright duration.

Assuming you have permission to make use of some existing materials – e.g., licence-free samples and/or an agreement with the original creators – what's the best way to go about building a piece around them? The more successful pastiche works are those where the outside references, snippets and quotes are there for a reason and are skilfully integrated or layered.

JUSTIFY

Similar to a film-maker's decision to reference a scene or dialogue from an earlier classic film, quotes should serve a purpose. That means, make sure you have a thorough understanding of the external material – including its historical significance and context, and how and why this relates to your project. This is to prevent your music being insensitive to the original work, becoming unintentional parody, or reverting to a game of name-that-tune.

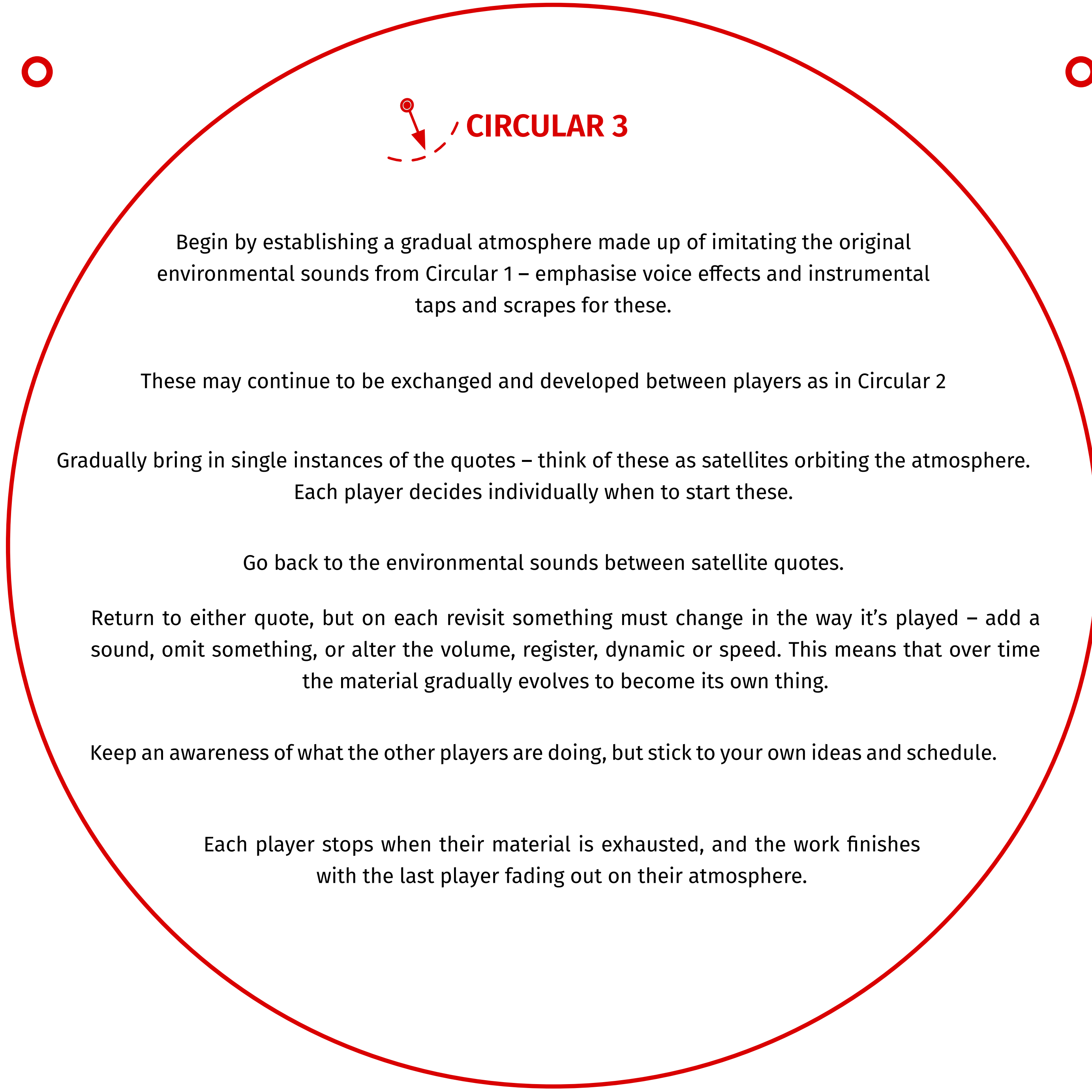
INTEGRATE

Incorporate outside quotes by ensuring that your own music and sound design – whether composed or improvised – builds, develops and bounces off the material strongly. This is to prevent your work sounding superficial, or being like a shopping trolley full of randomly-selected items.

B. Activities & Projects

The final stage of this work involves incorporating some short quotes from one of the Schubert movements referred to in this kit. Each player involved in the circle piece should find a short melodic quote and a short rhythmic quote. A circle will probably work best with 3 or 4 players. The quotes can be as simple as just three consecutive pitches or one brief rhythmic unit, and learn them by listening and copying rather than by reading.

Record the result if you have the chance, and listen together afterwards and discuss the overall effect.



CIRCULAR 3

Begin by establishing a gradual atmosphere made up of imitating the original environmental sounds from Circular 1 – emphasise voice effects and instrumental taps and scrapes for these.

These may continue to be exchanged and developed between players as in Circular 2

Gradually bring in single instances of the quotes – think of these as satellites orbiting the atmosphere.
Each player decides individually when to start these.

Go back to the environmental sounds between satellite quotes.

Return to either quote, but on each revisit something must change in the way it's played – add a sound, omit something, or alter the volume, register, dynamic or speed. This means that over time the material gradually evolves to become its own thing.

Keep an awareness of what the other players are doing, but stick to your own ideas and schedule.

Each player stops when their material is exhausted, and the work finishes with the last player fading out on their atmosphere.

C. Examples from Voyage Repertoire

Schubert Octet – VI

Schubert references some of his own works in the Octet – the song *Der Wanderer* in the first movement and the variation theme of the fourth is from his light opera *Die Freunde von Salamanka* – but on the topic of quotation in the final movement, he follows a different path altogether.

Schubert builds **verbunkos** into the movement – an 18th-century dance and music style originating in Hungary. This practice was so widespread among the composers of the Classical era that works or movements were often simply referred to as *Ungarischer Tanz* or *Style Hongrois*. However, Haydn and Co. incorporated this music into their works more as a sort of compositional sport rather than based on any particular interest in or knowledge of the culture it came from. The characteristic dotted rhythms, repeated notes and octave jumps appealed to them as musical devices, and the well-to-do of Vienna would have been amused by what they heard as rousing, rustic and exotic endings to their salon concerts. However, the composers' source material was often limited to published collections designed for people to play from at home, and these transcriptions were not only simplified and stylised but they overlooked the improvisation and communication that were key features of the original style.

It's not dissimilar to when word of jazz began to spread to Europe in the early 20th century. Listening to some composers' attempts at emulating ragtime and blues can be awkward today because it's obvious they knew little about the music, its origins, nor how it was performed or phrased. It is important to acknowledge that the history of Western music is littered with examples of composers appropriating music from other cultures – and hand-in-hand with systemically poor treatment of marginalised peoples on a larger political and economic scale, this has not always been done with sensitivity and understanding.

Schubert did something different, once again showing a future-looking awareness and disposition. Firstly, rather than superficial stylistic imitation, he has borrowed features of verbunkos and interpreted and transformed these anew. Secondly, according to letters he wrote, he spent at least two extended periods in a rural area of Hungary where he would have heard the local music being performed, including by Romani musicians. His allusions to verbunkos in the Octet are convincing because they are **integrated** into an original new structure rather than being pasted in, and are **justified** by being expressions of an actual personal and lived experience.



Csilla Pethő-Vernet, 'Style Hongrois: Hungarian Elements in the Works of Haydn, Beethoven, Weber and Schubert' in *Studia Musicologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* T. 41 Fasc. 1/3. Akadémiai Kiadó, 2000. 199–284.

[Listen to the whole movement](#)

1

In the opening bars, the tremolo in the cello resembles **cimbalom** – the Hungarian dulcimer – and the dramatic dynamic surges are timed to coincide with the rhythmic announcements of the ensemble. The tremolo motif later appears in other instruments, sometimes immediately following sudden silence.

Observe how Schubert creates an immersive programmatic atmosphere at the very beginning – you could imagine walking toward a tavern where a small band is getting ready to play, then being right up close in the middle of the action. Schubert’s brilliance in this movement is how he evokes what musicologist Csilla Pethő-Vernet describes as “Hungarian reminiscences” with instrumental effects rather than wholesale quotation.

2

The interplay between instruments – particularly the first violin and the clarinet – is often written to imitate the spontaneous type of call and response that might occur in a band.

Andante molto.

Cl. in B \flat
Hrn. in F
Bsn.
VI. 1
VI. 2
Vla.
Cello
Bass

D

3

The many fast and punctuated octave triplet figures have an uninhibited and conversational character.

4

When the slow introduction returns towards the end, the added ascending violin cadenzas are notated to sound improvised.

A musical score for a piano piece, likely from the 19th century. It features multiple staves, including a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and several individual staves. The music is characterized by fast, punctuated octave triplet figures. Dynamic markings such as *ff* (fortissimo) and *fz* (forzando) are prominent throughout the score. The notation includes various rhythmic values and articulation marks.

3

These are all examples of what musicians and composers mean when they refer to phrases being **gestural** as opposed to literal. In this case, they are effective imitations of the sorts of things musicians would have done when performing music of an oral rather than notated tradition.



66

Andante molto.

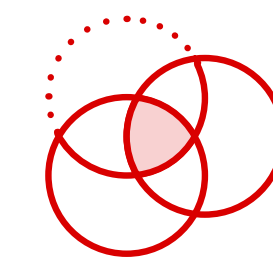
A musical score for a piano piece, starting with the tempo marking "Andante molto." The score is in a key with one flat and a common time signature. It features a grand staff and several individual staves. A circled "4" is placed over a section of the score, indicating a violin cadenza. The music includes various dynamic markings such as *ff*, *fz*, *p*, and *ffp*.

4

Barton

[In this short video](#) from the Melbourne Recital Centre in 2019, William Barton introduces and demonstrates *Contours of Songlines*. He explains how he creates a synthesis of contemporary sounds and traditional vocabulary, and highlights being clear about the context and reasons for doing so.

Listen to how he incorporates electronic beats and DJ scratching, and how the sounds of passing cars are mixed in with the evocations of animals. He also breaks down some of the techniques for creating the sounds – including vocalisations, and multiple and flutter tonguing. His playing and approach are reminders of how contemporary culture can include the past as living knowledge rather than a static exhibit.



Kit 3 – **MUSICAL IDENTITIES** looks in more detail at motifs and threads.

Diversity & Cancel Culture

Listening to, studying and performing historical works requires sensitivity, openness and imagination to help understand their place and relevance in contemporary society. Take the information here as a starting point – an incentive to engage with and further discuss how to navigate what are often very difficult issues. Remember too that, in the words of Regina Rini (Professor of Philosophy, York University in Canada), “our institutions are still riven with centuries-old inequalities,” and “repairing all of this is hard; we are going to make mistakes, and some of these mistakes will be unjust. And so we ought to operate carefully. “

We can afford to be forgiving of European composers from an earlier period appropriating musical themes or ideas from other cultures. Generally speaking they were curious to learn about sounds that were new and unfamiliar to them, and when their efforts come across today as twee or clichéd, this can often be attributed to limited access to culturally-diverse resources rather than directly reductive or racist perspectives. Don't forget either that despite being more culturally sensitive than in the past, the musical cliché itself in TV and film sound design is still prevalent. With some exceptions, current mainstream film scores consist of generic musical cues designed to evoke standard emotional responses:

- the backwards sample for dystopian bewilderment
- forward-thumping rhythms for journey action
- piercing high pitches when an unpleasant memory is triggered
- sustained sub-bass to signify other-worldly disquiet

Regina Rini, ‘Why I’m Tired of Hearing About “Wokeism”: Overblown rhetoric doesn’t advance social justice’, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 15 November 2021.



Things become more complicated with opera. The mainstays of the traditional opera house repertoire are works written in a time of colonialist Europe – and these often view non-European cultures as exotic and include caricatured portrayals of non-white peoples. Under the artistic directorship of Alexander Neef, the Paris Opera has adopted a number of forward-thinking initiatives to address this situation. As background, Neef explains:

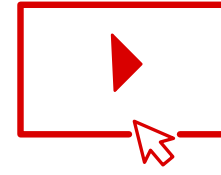
When you take a score from the bookshelf and open it, you can realistically only understand it from a 21st-century perspective. We can gain musicological and dramaturgical insights so as to be historically informed – but we cannot realise it in an historical way. We are not a museum and nor are we time-travellers – not in the orchestra, on stage, or in the audience.

Historian and director of the French National Museum of Immigration Pap Ndiaye makes the point that if we were to remove all repertoire with colonialist-era racist viewpoints, there'd be almost nothing left to perform. However, he notes that the Paris Opera has now made it official policy that under no circumstances will singers, actors, or dancers be asked to appear with make-up to imitate darker complexions. And while they have made the decision not to censor or edit any libretto, they instead find inventive ways to alter the meanings and implications by delivering the text with different emphases, irony or humour, and by rethinking the staging and direction.

When performing works such as *Turandot*, *Madama Butterfly*, *Aida* or *Othello* – the productions are augmented with information sheets and foyer displays explaining more about the background and company's approach. Neef also explains that this repertoire can only survive if there are people on stage and behind the scenes who are willing to bring it to life, and that a contemporary and diverse audience must be able to see themselves represented in the ensemble. And he adopts a long-term perspective: “it’s a beginning, and it’s a process that remains in a cycle of perpetual renewal.”

Christiane Kaess, ‘Diversität in Pariser Oper – Offensive des Traditionshauses’, podcast on *Deutschlandfunk Kultur* [in German], 12 April 2021.

D. Extra Examples



[Roadrunner](#)

John Zorn writes music with the television on, and this work for accordion consists entirely of quotations punctuated by knocks on the instrument.

[Tuning Up](#)

Varèse's *Tuning Up* references many well-known works. It was originally written to provide the sound of an orchestra tuning up in the 1947 Hollywood film *Carnegie Hall*, but ended up never being used. Listen to the UK National Youth Orchestra perform their version of a reconstruction of the work at the 2012 BBC Proms.

Lines & Distance

[Playlist on Spotify](#)

[Gunslinging Bird](#)

Charles Mingus was well-known for referencing and quoting other pieces and personalities in his music – often with a sense of humour and irony. The Mingus Big Band performs *Gunslinging Bird* – the original title was *If Charlie Parker Were a Gunslinger, There'd Be a Whole Lot of Dead Copycats*.

[Orchestra Hit](#)

What do Stravinsky, Australia and Bruno Mars have in common? A short YouTube documentary about one of the most frequently-used samples of all time.

Voyage 2 Repertoire

[Playlist on Spotify](#)



Voyage of Musical Discovery

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