

Deus ex machina: The Importance of Non-musical Formats and Chance Mechanisms in Syd Clayton's *Yehudi* *

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In May, 1968, musicians Barry McKimm and Roger Holmes arrived at the recently established La Mama Theatre in Carlton to perform a new piece of music by Syd Clayton entitled *Yehudi*.¹ They found a note from Clayton on the theatre's door advising that the venue had been changed to a local billiards hall (probably Café La Streega, also in Carlton). McKimm was familiar with Clayton's unconventional leanings, having played alongside him and Robert Rooney in a trio that traversed the gap between jazz improvisation and indeterminacy; both had also taken part in several performances at Keith Humble's Melbourne-based Society for the Private Performance of New Music.² During these formative years, both McKimm and Clayton had embarked upon their own explorations of graphic scores and chance-based composition. Clayton was beginning to explore performance venues outside the concert hall or theatre for his own compositions, looking to public places instead. McKimm and Holmes dutifully made their way to the billiards hall (where neither the owner or patrons appeared to

* I am grateful to Dr Joel Crotty for his support and advice in relation to this article.

¹ There is some inconsistency between McKimm's recollection (personal interview recorded at Warrandyte, 11 Aug. 2008) and Jones's chronology of La Mama performances (Liz Jones, *La Mama: The Story of a Theatre* (Fitzroy, Australia: McPhee Gribble/Penguin, 1988) 53–54); the latter records the premiere of *Yehudi* being performed by McKimm and Clayton at La Mama in May 1968, with *La Streega Joe* being staged by McKimm and Holmes in October of the same year. It is likely that *La Streega Joe* (1970; Fryer Research Library, University of Queensland, MS HO286) included the performance of *Yehudi* (the score for the former piece/happening calls in part for the performance of 'any notated music' after arriving unannounced in a billiards hall). There are no known published reviews of either performance.

² John Whiteoak, *Playing Ad Lib: Improvisatory Music in Australia 1836–1970* (Sydney: Currency Press, 1999) 282.

have been forewarned), set up their instruments and began performing from a score written in a notational system Clayton had been developing since he began composing two years earlier. The score contained no staves or time signatures, employing instead modular forms that dictated pitch, relative register, timbre and dynamics. The score for *Yehudi* also contained elements of collage, a 'false intermission,' and called upon the musicians to 'become actors,' requiring the performance of physical gestures (defined in the score as 'magical gestures'); the realisation of which was dictated by musical elements such as tempi and timbre.³ *Yehudi* demonstrated Clayton's interest in developing a new form of music theatre where gesture and speech overlapped with musical elements, requiring interpretation from performers that called on their improvisatory skills. Soon the La Mama audience began arriving. As the performance continued, Clayton played the jukebox.

Syd Clayton (1939–1994) explored aleatoric and broader indeterminate elements through his music during the late 1960s and early 1970s, and has been identified as the first Australian composer to 'systemically investigate' chance operations in music.⁴ He adapted non-musical formats—such as board games, poetry and sports—as compositional structures. The resulting structures were populated via chance operations. Clayton's favourite chance generator was a toy roulette wheel on which he painted the maxim *deus ex machina* ('God from the machine'), signifying chance in his compositional method as a form of divine interpretation. Not unlike Cage's use of the ancient Chinese oracle, the *I Ching*, this implies that Clayton invited chance as a semi-mystical element in his music, juxtaposed against compositional structures and processes defined by his adapted ready-made and (previously) non-musical formats. There exists no published, in-depth analysis of Clayton's work until now. Jenkins provides a general chronology and discussion of Clayton's work and a glimpse of his methodology,⁵ and Hemensly provides vivid descriptions of Clayton performances in the late 1960s.⁶ Whiteoak provides the most in depth appraisal of Clayton's music theatre from this period, placing Clayton's idiosyncratic style and methodology closer to the realm of 'outsider music,' or what Whiteoak identifies as an 'unorthodox adlibber.'⁷ Yet none of the published sources focuses upon the detailed and highly personalised scores Clayton completed, or how Clayton's exploration of chance operations manifested in his notation.

This article argues, through an analysis of *Yehudi* (Clayton's first serious attempt to combine improvisatory musical and theatrical elements in a score), that he developed a compositional vision that was unique in Australian music of the late sixties, whilst being representative of a nascent experimental music scene beginning to bloom in Melbourne. *Yehudi* reveals that the unique character of Clayton's output from this period was significantly a result of adapting of

³ The manuscript for this score, along with several others referred to in this article, is held in the Fryer Research Library at University of Queensland. The Library's reference numbers (in this case, HO303) are referred to throughout this article.

⁴ Geoffrey Barnard, 'Indeterminacy and Beyond,' *Currency Companion to Music and Dance in Australia*, ed. John Whiteoak and Aline Scott-Maxwell (Sydney: Currency House, 2003) 265; John Jenkins, *22 Contemporary Australian Composers* (Brunswick, Vic.: NMA Publications, 1988) 57.

⁵ Jenkins, *22 Contemporary Australian Composers*, 50–57.

⁶ Kris Hemensly, 'Sid Clayton's farewell to Melbourne: Kris Hemensly reports on the passing of a magician,' *Masque* (1969): 294–97.

⁷ Whiteoak, *Playing Ad Lib*, 284, 291–93; John Whiteoak 'Unorthodox Adlibbers,' *Sounds Australian* 59 (2002): 30–31.

what he called 'ready-made formats' (such as the scoring system for cricket) as compositional structures alongside his use of chance mechanisms as means for population of musical material.⁸ The score analysis reveals quasi-serialist pitch ordering methods based on the adapted structure of a cricket scorecard and the use of chance in the application of tempo, register, dynamic and theatrical gesture. The article focuses upon the primary source of the score itself and draws parallels to the composer's broader concern with regard to indeterminacy in everyday life and its intersection with art. Clayton's place in the context of 1960s experimental theatre and counter-culture could be of significance from a broader perspective, but is beyond the scope of this article.

Born in 1939 in country Victoria, Clayton taught himself drums and saxophone before beginning to play in Melbourne jazz bands from the age of eighteen. He had no formal music education before taking private lessons, initially in saxophone and later double bass, and learnt to read music at this time as well. Clayton became interested in free jazz and developed an idiosyncratic style that alienated him from some in the jazz scene, but led to collaboration with two other young jazz experimenters in Barry McKimm (trumpet) and Robert Rooney (piano) from 1963-1966.⁹ It was through Rooney that Clayton first encountered the ideas of John Cage. Rooney and McKimm wrote graphic scores for interpretation by for the trio, whilst Clayton's contribution was as an improviser rather than composer.

Clayton was active in the visual arts at this time, creating a number of sculptures or 'assemblages' from found objects in a style akin to the *Merz* art of Kurt Schwitters (although it is unclear who Clayton may have been directly inspired by in his visual artwork), showing them at least one exhibition in the mid-1960s.¹⁰ *Merz* was a collage-based art and sculpture form founded by Schwitters in early twentieth century Europe, created from detritus he collected in the street (such as discarded tram tickets, cardboard, etc).¹¹ Like Schwitters, the impermanence of Clayton's assemblages was deliberate. Clayton was fascinated by how these pieces changed over time.¹² His incorporation of found objects (sometimes collected on his postal rounds; Clayton worked as a postman) into both scores and sculpture, often selected by chance operations, draws connections between Schwitters' impermanent art forms and the Cagian indeterminacies that Clayton would explore as a composer.

Clayton's first composition *Snakes and Ladders* (1966) premiered at Keith Humble's Society for the Private Performance of New Music (SPPNM).¹³ Between 1968 and 1972 Clayton completed around a dozen further works, the majority of which were performed at La Mama.¹⁴ These works saw Clayton traverse the divide between experimental music and theatre, incorporating theatrical gestures for musicians, and pitch and tempo instructions for dialogue, as well as elements of chance composition.

⁸ Jenkins, 22 *Contemporary Australian Composers*, 56.

⁹ Jenkins, 22 *Contemporary Australian Composers*, 51; Jenepher Duncan, 'Biography,' *From the Homefront: Robert Rooney Works 1953-1988* (Melbourne: Monash University Gallery, 1990) 36.

¹⁰ McKimm, interview. The details of the exhibition are not recorded.

¹¹ Gwendolen Webster, *Kurt Merz Schwitters: A Biographical Study* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997) 106-107.

¹² McKimm, interview.

¹³ Whiteoak, *Playing Ad Lib*, 313

¹⁴ Jones, *La Mama* 52-66; Rainer Linz, 'Electroacoustic Music,' *Currency Companion to Music and Dance in Australia*, ed. Whiteoak and Scott-Maxwell, 440.

He withdrew from the La Mama scene in 1973 due to ill health,¹⁵ and around the same time abandoned chance composition methods for a number of years, writing instead in blues and folk idioms as well as completing several cantatas and dances, composing in standard notation for the first time. Work from this period may have mostly been unintended for public consumption as Clayton seems to have made little effort to have it performed.¹⁶ He returned to chance composition in the 1980s, both of music and theatre, and began actively seeking to get his work performed again, with mixed success. He also wrote extensively, painted periodically, and became intensely interested in the theatricality and strategies of baseball.¹⁷ A note in Clayton's papers declares, 'I have covered all the areas in sound-music-theatre that interest me.'¹⁸ Clayton died in 1994 after a long illness.

Clayton's output from the late 1960s needs to be examined against the backdrop of developments in indeterminate composition in Melbourne to arrive at a fuller understanding of the compositional methods he employed, and their context, both historically and geographically. Aleatoric composition and the use of non-musical formats as musical structures were being utilised by composers in the United States and Europe before this time, but Clayton appears to have been one of the earliest composers to explore these methods systematically in Australia.¹⁹

Aspects of Australian music in the 1960s were showing signs of heading in directions associated with the music of John Cage, with some key works from the middle of the decade by composers including David Ahern in Sydney and Robert Rooney in Melbourne demonstrating elements of indeterminacy and aleatoric process.²⁰ Yet in general, the Melbourne music scene of the 1960s was one awakening from a long torpor with regard to locally composed contemporary music. By the middle of the decade, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) was commissioning new works from local composers at an unprecedented rate, followed to a lesser extent by the chamber music organisation, Musica Viva.²¹ The ABC also offered new opportunities for composers to have their work recorded and released on disc through its association with the World Record Club. Yet at the time, the ABC had little interest in programming indeterminate music.²² The establishment of a Melbourne chapter of the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM) at the beginning of 1965 provided a regular forum for both the performance and discussion of contemporary music methods, including indeterminacy. Although the ISCM's support of the more radical forms of contemporary experimentation, such as aleatoric composition and graphic notation, varied over the Society's eight year existence, in general the ISCM remained an advocate of these forms of experimentation in the interests of 'keeping up' with contemporary trends.²³

¹⁵ Valerie Kirwan, personal interview, recorded at North Fitzroy, 31 July 2009.

¹⁶ The reasons why Clayton gave up aleatoric composition and public performance remain unclear.

¹⁷ Jenkins, 22 *Contemporary Australian Composers*, 55–57; Julie Deasey, personal interview recorded at Alphington, 23 Aug. 2008.

¹⁸ Syd Clayton, typed fragments, circa 1988 ('Collected index'), archive held by Clayton family.

¹⁹ Geoffrey Barnard, 'Indeterminacy and Beyond,' 265; Jenkins, 22 *Contemporary Australian Composers*, 57.

²⁰ Roger Covell, *Australia's Music: Themes for a New Society* (Melbourne: Sun Books, 1967) 234.

²¹ Covell, *Australia's Music*, 138–40, 270–71.

²² Covell, *Australia's Music*, 140.

²³ For discussion of the Melbourne ISCM, see Clinton Green 'The International Society for Contemporary Music in Melbourne: Forerunners, Foundation, and Decline,' *Musicology Australia* 32.2 (2010), 243–63.

Between 1966 and 1967 Keith Humble's Society for the Private Performance of New Music (SPPNM) provided an alternative to the ISCM with a stronger focus on experimentation. The SPPNM was a series of performance workshops largely directed by Humble, intended for what he saw as the more radical musical elements in Melbourne.²⁴ Certainly, for some of the younger composers who became disillusioned with the ISCM, the SPPNM became the new focus for their indeterminate music, although many of these composers drifted away from the SPPNM by mid-1967.²⁵ In Clayton's case, this was due in part to a lack of affinity for Humble's workshop atmosphere and emphasis on theory.²⁶ It is also likely that the autonomy offered by a venue like La Mama (where Clayton could work on his music and plays with minimal artistic interference from program directors), along with his increasing interest in music theatre, were also factors.

Indeterminacy (particularly graphic notation) was explored during the 1960s by musicians and composers with whom Clayton had various degrees of involvement. Of particular note is the McKimm/Clayton/Rooney (MRC) Trio, which was most active from 1964 to 1966.²⁷ The three regularly listened to Richard Meale's contemporary music programme on ABC radio, through which they became familiar with new music from Europe and America, and Rooney had access to scores by Stockhausen and Cage through Hall's Book Store where he worked.²⁸ McKimm and Rooney composed a variety of indeterminate open scores (including graphic scores and graphic notation) for interpretation by the trio.²⁹ Each of the three sections of Rooney's *Duos 1 2 3* (1965), for example, consisted of two graphically scored parts indicating high-middle-low registers of the instruments involved (see Fig. 1). The third member of the trio would improvise to the results of the other two's interpretation of the score, and these roles would change throughout the three sections. Like many of the MRC Trio's compositions, *Duos 1 2 3* was essentially a 'take-off point for improvisation.'³⁰ This composition is indeterminate in two aspects; how the performers interpret the non-representational notation, and how the improvised part will manifest in response to these interpretations. After the trio ceased performing, Rooney explored the use of ready-made non-musical forms as structures, such as chess (*Procession for brass and timpani* and *Procession for piano*, both from 1966) and billiard game diagrams (*Cushion Kiss Cannon* from 1969).³¹ McKimm continued to explore graphic scores as a means to avoid the repetition of patterning inherent in jazz improvisation and to involve classical musicians in improvisatory practice.³² McKimm also explored aleatoric composition through ready-made non-musical formats inspired by some of Cage's methodology; one piece entitled *Azure* (circa 1969) was created by placing a piece of composition paper beneath a randomly chosen magazine page and

²⁴ Whiteoak, *Playing Ad Lib*, 253–54, 296–99, 313.

²⁵ John Whiteoak, 'Interview with Keith Humble,' *New Music Articles* 7 (1989) 21–22; Whiteoak, *Playing Ad Lib*, 268.

²⁶ McKimm, interview.

²⁷ Whiteoak, *Playing Ad Lib*, 284–91.

²⁸ Robert Rooney, letter to the author, 5 Aug. 2009.

²⁹ Robert Rooney, personal interview, recorded at Hawthorn East, 3 Aug. 2008.

³⁰ Whiteoak, *Playing Ad Lib*, 290.

³¹ Rooney, interview.

³² Whiteoak, *Playing Ad Lib*, 291.

pressing through the magazine with a pen on each occurrence of the letter 'A' in the magazine text. The resulting marks on the composition paper became the notation (this process was repeated for each letter of the alphabet, creating a composition twenty-six pages in length). McKimm drew direct inspiration here from the aleatoric method Cage had employed to compose *Atlas Eclipticalis* (1961–62).³³

Figure 1. Rooney's *Duos 1 2 3* (1965). Author's private collection, reproduced with permission of Robert Rooney.

Duo 1

The image shows a musical score for two instruments, Trumpet and Bass, titled "Duo 1". The score is written on four systems of staves. The top two staves are labeled "Trumpet" and "Bass". The notation consists of vertical stems and horizontal lines, with various performance instructions and markings. Key markings include "Pizz." (Pizzicato), "col legno" (col legno), "Fl." (Flute), and "P" (Piano). Numerical markings (7, 5, 4, 3, 2, 12, 7, 4, 3, 7, 5) are placed along the staves. The score is enclosed in a rectangular frame.

³³ McKimm, interview.

The MRC trio were involved in several ISCM events during 1965, receiving a mixed response from audiences and the Society itself,³⁴ finding greater acceptance with Humble's SPNNM. Humble recalled Clayton and his musical colleagues as enthusiastic but somewhat innocent of the contemporary music he had been immersed in during his time in Paris; 'as if they'd read the book but not heard the music,' Humble commented later.³⁵ Humble had been closely associated with experimental music theatre exponents in Paris,³⁶ yet McKimm dismisses the likelihood that Clayton's interest in combining the experimental aspects of both music and theatre was directly influenced by his contact with Humble.³⁷ If anything, Clayton reacted against Humble's tendency to explain in detail the theory of a composition in the SPPNM's workshops.

Clayton was closer to Cage in several areas including compositional process, musical aesthetics, and the attempt to draw attention away from the idea of an all-powerful composer, and he later acknowledged the American composer's influence on his work.³⁸ Clayton's designation of his roulette wheel as a form of divine interpretation via the *deus ex machina* maxim is also analogous to Cage's use of the *I Ching* oracle as a chance mechanism with mystical connotations.³⁹ Cage's advice that the 'wisest thing to do is to open one's ears'⁴⁰ is not that far away from Clayton's reply to criticism at an ISCM forum that the MRC Trio's music was akin to noise and that 'you may as well go outside and listen to the sounds in Bourke Street,' to which Clayton retorted, 'maybe you should, it might open your ears.'⁴¹ Clayton incorporated indeterminate devices and ready-made non-musical formats comparable to those that Cage had used at various stages, including shuffled decks of cards on which numbers and colours indicated dynamics, tempi and texture in Clayton's *Dreams That Money Can't Buy* (circa 1966), and the use of board games as structures in *Snakes and Ladders* (1966).⁴²

The period from 1966 to 1971 saw Clayton explore a number of compositional concepts in improvisatory experimental music-theatre. Although he was exposed to other forms of indeterminacy amongst other local composers (particularly graphic and non-traditional notational language), Clayton's development of a nexus between music and experimental theatre that called on degrees of improvisation from both disciplines, as well as the complex yet subtle compositional structures he employed, marks his output from this time as unique, certainly in terms of the Melbourne scene up to that time, and arguably even throughout Australia. Clayton's *Yehudi* is testament to this through its use of cricket as a 'ready-made non-musical format' adapted as a musical structure, chance as a compositional mechanism, and various forms of indeterminate notation.

Written for a brass and string duo (two performers), *Yehudi* (1969) is of particular interest for its beginnings in the merging of music composition and theatre that became Clayton's main

³⁴ Whiteoak, 'Interview with Keith Humble,' 21.

³⁵ Whiteoak, 'Interview with Keith Humble,' 24.

³⁶ Whiteoak, *Playing Ad Lib*, 253–54, 296–99.

³⁷ McKimm, interview.

³⁸ Syd Clayton, letter to John Cage (unsent) 1985 ('Collected index' box).

³⁹ Syd Clayton, Draft of submission for 22 *Contemporary Australian Composers*, circa 1986 ('Collected index' box) 7. Clayton writes here that his dictionary defines the maxim as 'divine interpretation.'

⁴⁰ O'Grady, 'Aesthetic Value in Indeterminate Music,' *Musical Quarterly* 67.3 (1981): 367.

⁴¹ Whiteoak, 'Interview with Keith Humble,' 21.

⁴² Jenkins, 22 *Contemporary Australian Composers*, 50, 56.

focus during this time, and remained present in much of his output. *Yehudi* also exemplifies Clayton's use of a game of cricket as both the compositional technique and the form of the piece in conjunction with his roulette wheel as a chance mechanism.⁴³

Yehudi was somewhat arbitrarily named after violinist Yehudi Menuhin, whom Clayton admired. Clayton had hung a doll he'd named 'Yehudi' on a piece of string from the ceiling at home. As they prepared to perform it for the first time for a private performance⁴⁴, McKimm asked what the piece was called; Clayton pointed up to the doll and replied, "*Yehudi*".⁴⁵ Both McKimm and Rooney view such obscure explanations as part of a Clayton aesthetic, equally influenced by the found object art and happenings of Kurt Schwitters and Cage's indeterminacy.⁴⁶ The naming of the piece is analogous to Clayton's intense interest in the juxtaposition of random events; the doll happened to be present when McKimm enquired, so Clayton chose it as the title.

The recording of Clayton and McKimm's private premiere performance of *Yehudi* bares some resemblance to the sonic character of a cricket match, with its long silences and minimal sound material. McKimm recalls that performing the piece involved large amounts of 'waiting around and doing nothing ... like cricket.'⁴⁷ A reading of the score whilst listening to this recording is in line with the interpretation of Clayton's notation discussed below.

The *Yehudi* score is in manuscript form, precluded by a typed sheet giving a brief background and description along with performance instructions and lists of elements/symbols used.⁴⁸ It consists of 27 parts, including a 'false intermission' (Part 16). Clayton defines a 'part' as a section (usually equivalent to one page of the score) including instructions for each instrument and a tempo. The notation is non-traditional (see Figure 2), employing Clayton's personalised form that mixes musical instructions with actions. There are no staves or time signatures, with pitch indicated by printed letters and relative register. A legend to symbols and abbreviations is provided by the composer in the introduction to the score, but not all elements used are fully explained. As a performer of several Clayton pieces in the 1960s, McKimm recalls questioning Clayton on how to interpret such elements in preparation for performance and receiving little guidance.⁴⁹ He says Clayton was interested in giving performers the freedom to interpret within the score's structure, and was loathe to provide any instructions that might restrict this. In performing *Yehudi*, McKimm and Holmes would freely improvise 'magical gestures' (a common yet undefined instruction used through Clayton's scores from this period that acts

⁴³ Clayton 1969 (HO303) i; Jenkins, 22 *Contemporary Australian Composers*, 52.

⁴⁴ A partial recording of this performance can be found on *Artefacts of Australian Experimental Music: 1930–1973*, Compact Disc (Melbourne: sham050, 2007). The full recording is held in the present author's private collection.

⁴⁵ McKimm, interview

⁴⁶ McKimm and Rooney interviews.

⁴⁷ McKimm, interview.

⁴⁸ *Yehudi*, along with other Clayton manuscript scores from this period, feature numerous hand-written notes whose authorship is unclear. In the *Yehudi* score the notations often follow elements consistent with the score (indicating they may be Clayton's), or possibly the notes were made by performers interpreting the work. Where photocopies have been relied upon it is difficult to distinguish between what is a pencilled interpretation and a definitive score element. The brief viewing of the original *Yehudi* manuscript revealed further notes (originally pencilled but now erased) visible on the manuscript paper; McKimm believes it is likely these are his performance notes (McKimm, interview).

⁴⁹ McKimm, interview.

Figure 2. *Yehudi* Part 5 with interpretative legend. Manuscript held in the Fryer Research Library at University of Queensland (HO303). Reproduced with permission of Julie Deasey.

Legend

| | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|---|
| <i>B</i> – module pitch | <i>Noise Black</i> – noisy timbre | <i>Vocal Instrument</i> – sing with instrument |
| <i>Clap</i> – action | <i>Pp</i> – pianissimo | <i>VSoft</i> – very soft volume |
| <i>DB</i> – master pitch | <i>Pzf</i> – soft, then loud | $\frac{1}{4}$ tone – $\frac{1}{2}$ a semitone |
| <i>E</i> – module pitch | <i>Sing</i> – vocalisation | 3 – repeat the instructions in the module this many times |
| <i>In Audible</i> – extremely low volume | <i>VLow</i> – very low register | > – decrescendo |
| <i>MG</i> – magical gesture | <i>Very Fast</i> – tempo | Colour: Red – vocalisation |
| <i>MReg</i> – middle register | <i>VHi</i> – very high register | |

as an improvisatory element for both physical and aural response from the performer) that they felt were appropriate to the combination of other instructions provided. Performers are also required to interpret text fragments in a similar fashion, such as the third string module in Part 3 (see Figure 3); which McKimm recalls performers interpreting by reading the text aloud in the register set by the score. A recording⁵⁰ of a 1993 performance of Clayton's *The Man on the Left, He's Joe Bigger from Topeka* (1968), whose score⁵¹ consists of collage material drawn from comic strips to be interpreted vocally, takes this approach. This combination of theatrical, text and musical elements occurs regularly throughout Clayton's scores of this period, and

⁵⁰ Held in the author's private collection.

⁵¹ Syd Clayton, *The Man on the Left, He's Joe Bigger of Topeka*, Fryer Library, University of Queensland Library, MS HO289.

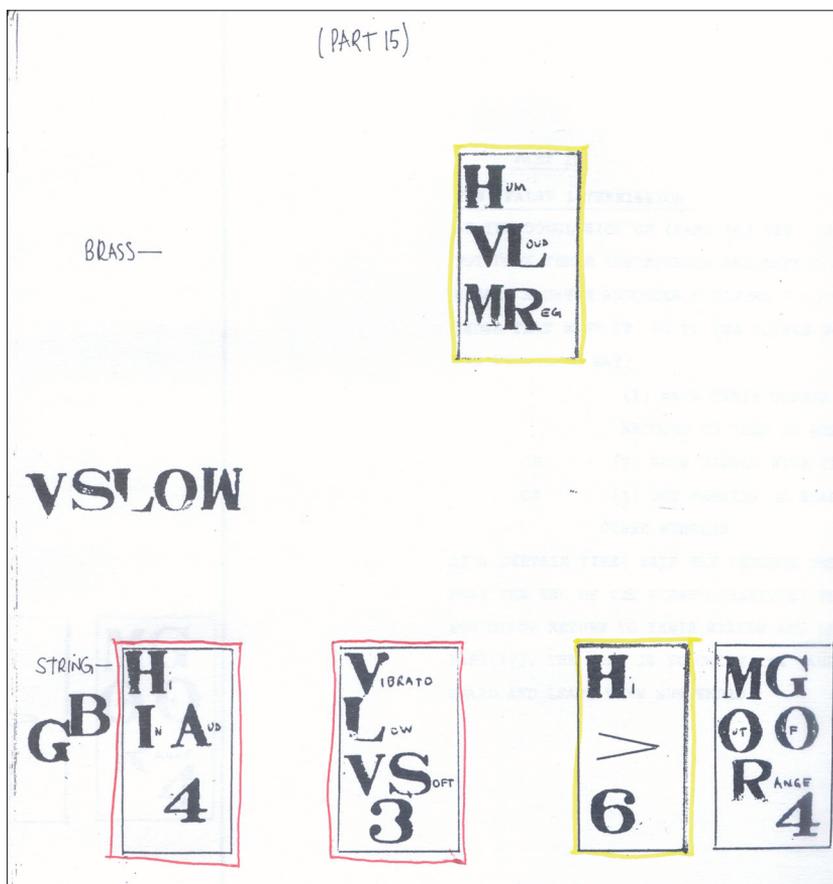
reflects his efforts to arrive at his own form of music theatre. The recollections of Clayton's peers and the few recordings available suggest there is no definitive interpretation of *Yehudi*.⁵² The following interpretation is based upon a study of the score (as well as other Clayton scores contemporary to *Yehudi*), live recordings, and interviews with those who performed Clayton's work from this period.

Figure 3. *Yehudi* Part 3, third string module, (dialogue reads, 'Why, Mr. Fethry, that is an absolutely charming idea'). Manuscript held in the Fryer Research Library at University of Queensland (HO303). Reproduced with permission of Julie Deasey.

Each section of *Yehudi* is wholly self-contained; pitch, tempo, dynamic and effect is established anew in each of the 27 parts. With the exception of Part 16 ('the false intermission'), the elements populating each part are placed either inside or outside modular forms. Anywhere from one to ten of these rectangular modules appear in any one part. Each module typically contains an indication of register (high, middle, or low), dynamic, and sometimes actions to perform such as clapping or physical gestures. For example, Part 15 (see Figure 4) contains one module for brass (on the top half of the page), and four modules for string (on the bottom half). Pitch and tempo are established outside these modules, and typically apply to the instructions inside each module as the part progresses. Duration remains indeterminate, apart from relative indications of repeats. The recording, alongside McKimm and Rooney's recollections, indicates that the blank spaces between modules (as the performer works left-to-right across the page) are to be interpreted as silence. The performers move through the score by remaining attentive to each other's progress and by interpreting the amount of silence between modules relative to the blank space on the page. This system is a variation on the notation Clayton employed in several other scores from this period.

⁵² Kirwan, McKimm and Rooney interviews.

Figure 4. *Yehudi* Part 15 with interpretative legend. Manuscript held in the Fryer Research Library at University of Queensland (HO303). Reproduced with permission of Julie Deasey.



Legend

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>GB</i> – G and B pitches | <i>MReg</i> – middle register | 4,3,6 – repeat the |
| <i>Hi</i> – high register | <i>Out Of Range</i> – extremes of | instructions in the |
| <i>Hum</i> – vocalisation | instrument or element | module this many times |
| <i>In Audible</i> – extremely low | <i>Vibrato</i> – play with vibrato | > – decrescendo |
| volume | <i>VLow</i> – very low register | Colours: |
| <i>Low</i> – low register | <i>VSoft</i> – very soft volume | <i>Yellow</i> – noise |
| <i>MG</i> – magical gesture | | <i>Red</i> – vocal |

Part 16 consists exclusively of text instructions with no musical content, labelled the 'False Intermission':

At the conclusion of (Part 15) the two musicians put down their instruments and take a coffee break. A [sic] usher announces 'coffee' to the audience. Those that want it go to the coffee bar.

The musicians may:

- (1) have their coffee and cigarette brought to them on stage, or
- (2) both mingle with the audience, or

(3) one remains on stage whilst the other mingles.

At a certain time [...] the two musicians return to their stands and begin playing Part (17). The idea is to catch the audience off guard and leave them suspended.

On the surface, this appears to be a manifestation of Clayton's humour. Yet the episode can also be seen as another element of the theatrical in Clayton's work, as well as a challenging of the accepted boundaries of performance that were also being addressed by Kagel (such as in his *Heterophonie* (1961), where the orchestra's tune up is part of the score)⁵³ and *Fluxus*. The intermission also fits with Clayton's stated compositional form of a game of cricket, equivalent to a lunch break.

The link to cricket comes from Clayton's introduction to *Yehudi*:

The composition technique (which is also the form): a game of cricket was played using 'chance' methods. Brass versus string (each having a series of notes – 'team').

One part = one over.

Eight balls = eight elements (the elements' combinations also decided by chance methods)

This brief explanation yields important clues to the underlying structure of *Yehudi*. The pitch structure indicates each tone has been used in a hierarchical order determined by the composer in the form of a cricket score card, making up each 'team' as Clayton defines it. The elements (both musical and theatrical) contained in each module have been determined by the 'chance methods' Clayton writes of, representing balls bowled in the cricket sense. As batsmen must play a bowler's delivery consisting of various elements (speed of the bowling, angle, where the ball pitches, etc.), so each pitch must 'play' a module consisting of register, dynamic, effect and/or gesture, ruled by a tempo set for each part. Here the parallels Clayton draws between music and cricket begin to appear; tempo and bowling speed, musical and cricket pitch, high/low pitch register and height of a ball bowled to a batsman.

The juxtaposition of the elements present in *Yehudi* is partially a result of Clayton's use of chance operations in his compositional method. Cage's aleatoric method of the 1950s involved designing a structure or frame empty of content, then populating it via chance operations.⁵⁴ Clayton's technique is not dissimilar, except that he adapted pre-existing formats for music and theatre, and populated them via the chance mechanisms of either his hand-made wheels that resembled clock-faces⁵⁵ or with a roulette wheel.⁵⁶ Whilst structure in pitch ordering is evident and based on the format of a cricket batting score card, the population of other elements in

⁵³ Attinello views Kagel's instrumental theatre as essentially a 'sarcastic reaction' to contemporary *avant-garde* music, and Heile agrees that Kagel's music reflects upon music. Yet Clayton is more interested in less political concerns like searching out synchronicity in both performance and compositional process, and blurring the accepted boundaries of performance and art. Paul Attinello, 'Imploding the System: Kagel and the Deconstruction of Modernism,' *Postmodern Music/Postmodern Thought*, ed. Judy Lochhead and Joseph Auner (New York: Routledge, 2002) 263, 27; Björn Heile, *The Music of Mauricio Kagel* (London: University of Sussex, 2006) 41–49; Björn Heile, 'Collage vs. Compositional Control: the Interdependency of Modernist and Postmodernist Approaches in the Work of Mauricio Kagel,' *Postmodern Music/Postmodern Thought*, ed. Lochhead and Auner, 289.

⁵⁴ Michael Nyman, *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: CUP, 1999) 61–62.

⁵⁵ Syd Clayton, draft of submission for 22 *Contemporary Australian Composers*, 7.

⁵⁶ Jenkins, 22 *Contemporary Australian Composers*, 56.

the score is random, suggesting that Clayton played out his musical cricket game using charts or multiple paper wheels, or a combination of both⁵⁷ to interpret the results as musical and theatrical elements.⁵⁸ The realisation of some of these juxtapositions can be problematic; for example, in Part 5 (refer Figure 2) what does Clayton intend when he asks the brass player to perform a '¼ tone' with the pitch of D and B, or a 'magical gesture' with a pitch of B? These problems are indicative of chance operations used by the composer to create material for *Yehudi's* structure, as well as his interest in offering these situations to performers with the freedom to interpret them.⁵⁹ This is an example of Clayton's interest in 'combinations of the unlikely and the unknown.'⁶⁰

Pitch exists in the score with a degree of indeterminacy; notes are identified but only within relative registers (high, medium, low, etc.). In some ways this is a result of Clayton's imprecise notational system and the chance mechanisms used to generate musical and theatrical elements, but analysis indicates that an ordering system is used to govern pitch rather than the chance operations that select the other elements in the score. Table 1 plots the occurrence of pitch for each instrument.

Table 1. Pitch in *Yehudi*

| Part | String | Brass |
|------|---------|----------|
| | Pitch * | |
| 1 | - | C |
| 2 | E | C |
| 3 | E | C |
| 4 | E | C, B |
| 5 | E | DB, E, B |
| 6 | E | B |
| 7 | E, F | - |
| 8 | F | - |
| 9 | F | B |
| 10 | F | - |
| 11 | - | - |
| 12 | - | B |
| 13 | - | - |
| 14 | DB, GB | - |

| Part | String | Brass |
|------|--------------------|-------|
| | Pitch * | |
| 15 | GB | - |
| 16 | False Intermission | |
| 17 | AB, E | AB |
| 18 | E | AB |
| 19 | - | - |
| 20 | - | B |
| 21 | GB | B |
| 22 | - | B |
| 23 | B | - |
| 24 | GB | B |
| 25 | - | B, GB |
| 26 | GB, C | GB |
| 27 | C | GB |

* Where two pitches are notated together (such as the DB master pitch in Part 5), they are listed as such, but where pitches are applied separately to different modules (such as E and B in Part 5 for brass) this is indicated by a comma separating the two letters.

⁵⁷ Julie Deasey, email correspondence with the author, 10–12 Oct. 2008.

⁵⁸ Clayton, draft of submission for 22 *Contemporary Australian Composers*, 7.

⁵⁹ McKimm, interview.

⁶⁰ Clayton, draft of submission for 22 *Contemporary Australian Composers*, 7.

Only the seven notes from A to G are employed in the score (sharps and flats are absent). All seven are used in the string parts, and all feature in the brass parts with the exception of F (no explanation is apparent for this absence). Clayton's use of pitch is minimal, with no more than two different notes being used for each instrument in any part, bar one. The variations in register result in some diversity; it is rare for both instruments to play the same note as each other in the one part, let alone at the same moment in time.

Considering the brass section first, an order is at work in which two pitches are partnered together. As the composition continues, either or both of these two pitches can be used (although in practice one pitch is more dominant than the other); for example, Parts 1–4 see a partnership between C and B, where C is the prevailing partner. Yet once another pitch enters (initially D in Part 5), it replaces one of the previous members of the partnership (C is replaced in Part 5). The departing pitch then does not reappear in the score for that instrument. Sometimes the appearance and departure of a pitch can happen quickly (D appears once in Part 5, then is immediately replaced by E in the same part), but the rule of permanent departure remains. It is not always apparent that a pitch is present; B is not visible in the aforementioned partnership in Parts 1–3, but the underlying compositional form implies that B is a 'silent partner' (the logic of this is discussed below).

The string section follows the same ordering principle, with the exception of the reappearance of E in Parts 17 and 18. The ordering of these notes differs between the two instrumental parts, but besides one or two anomalies (the unexplained reappearance of E in the string part, as well as the non-use of F in the brass part, discussed below) the 'partnership' and non-reappearance principles are consistent. These pitch patterns provide a valuable clue to how Clayton executed his compositional technique marrying chance-based mechanisms with the use of a game of cricket as a compositional form and technique.

Yehudi's structure is based on several aspects of cricket rules and traditions. These include partnerships between two batsmen (including the role of the 'non-striker'), scoring to a maximum of six runs per ball, variations of bowling pace, and meal breaks. A key to understanding the how pitch is ordered in *Yehudi* is the basic rule of cricket that once a batsman is 'out,' he plays no further part in the game until the end of the innings.

From the pitch analysis, an impression of each 'team' of notes is evident when understood in the context of a batting innings. Pitch structure suggests the brass and string teams are not so much playing against each other as the score unfolds, but instead the score consists of two batting innings alongside each other. If one team was bowling/fielding, the expectation is that the pitches/team members would be able to reappear regularly, as is the practice with bowlers in cricket bowling in 'spells.' No such bowling pattern is apparent, and would contravene the quasi-serialist rule of permanent departure Clayton has established. From this view of the score, two teams in batting order/order of use can be deduced:

String: E – F – D – B – G – A – C

Brass: C – D – B – E – A – G

The absence of F from the brass section creates an imbalance in the teams, but this could be accounted for by imagining a scenario where F 'did not bat' in Clayton's game, in which case the Brass team is construed as:

C – D – B – E – A – G – (F)

To discern these batting orders and partnerships, the 'non-striking' pitch must be identified. This is the 'silent partner' in the pitch partnership referred to above. For example, as can be seen from Table 1, only C is active for the Brass team from Parts 1–3, but the logic of these pitch teams and partnerships means that B must be the silent partner in this pitch partnership. Perhaps B is not 'on strike' (batsmen play in partnerships, sharing the 'strike,' where they face the bowler) until Part 4, where B faces his first 'ball.'

It does not appear that a batsman going out is marked by any element in the notation, besides the introduction of a new pitch replacing a previous one. As such, these 'teams' act as quasi-tone rows, where no more than two pitches can coexist until one is replaced by the next pitch in the row/team.

Clayton's introduction tells us that each part represents an over of eight balls⁶¹ (besides the false intermission, which implies the 'lunch break'), and that the combinations of musical elements accompanying the pitches were selected by chance methods. This indicates that the batting line-up of pitches faced twenty-six overs each played out on Clayton's roulette wheel, translated into musical and theatrical elements.

However, it is not clear what Clayton means by eight 'elements' making up each part. The amount of modules, dynamics, etc., in each part is inconsistent and rarely adds up to eight. One can speculate that some mechanism was built into Clayton's aleatoric system which allowed for extra elements to be added to a part, or alternatively the non-inclusion of any element (and thus the empty spaces). Clayton employed differing rules and procedures for the roulette wheel for each piece, but the details are not recorded.⁶² Whatever the detail of how the chance elements were produced, the structure of the piece implies that these elements represent the 'balls bowled' during the over/part. Like a batsman, each pitch must play the 'ball'; this is manifested by the pitch being applied to the register, timbre, etc, in each module. Tempo is also analogous to the pace of bowling (Clayton uses colloquial terms for tempo, such as 'very slow,' 'fast,' etc., but retains traditional music terminology for dynamics, such as *pianissimo*).

Another similarity between the score and a cricket score card are the numbers used in *Yehudi*. The appearance of numerals in the notation is likely to imply repeats of the instructions in a module. A survey of the numbers used in the score reveal a strong similarity to runs⁶³ commonly scored per ball in cricket; all numbers are between one and (never exceeding) six. Where a module contains no numerals, we can conclude that no runs were scored on that 'ball.'

The score of *Yehudi* demonstrates that the use of chance operations was a significant element in Clayton's compositional technique as a device for populating existing structures with pre-defined musical materials. It was common in this score for some of these musical elements to be of an indeterminate nature in various capacities, including relative indications of pitch, ambiguously defined symbology and combinations of musical instruction and collage materials. How performers interpreted the notation without extra guidance was of interest to Clayton, and analogous to his concerns with the role of randomness in music, art and life in general. Clayton equated chance with divine interpretation, and the randomness of

⁶¹ Overs (sets of consecutive balls by one particular bowler) in Australian cricket consisted of eight balls at this time, as opposed to the modern six-ball overs.

⁶² Deasey, email correspondence.

⁶³ A 'run' is the standard scoring unit in cricket.

interpretation of his more indeterminate open notation could also be construed as an aspect of this. Clayton's utilisation of chance and indeterminate notation represent his philosophical approach to music and theatre, through which Clayton sought to both explore and challenge compositional structure, technique and performance.

Although exposed to other local composers working with degrees of indeterminacy, *Yehudi* is demonstrative of Clayton's deeper exploration of the role played by chance in combination with adapted, previously non-musical, structures (in this case, cricket). In fact, Clayton's music proved so radical that not only did it not find a permanent home in either the ISCM or Humble's SPPNM, but Clayton continued to find it difficult to recruit musicians willing to invest the time and effort to understand his eccentric notation. Besides Barry McKimm's regular contribution, Clayton mostly relied on actors with experimental theatre backgrounds to perform his scores. Perhaps as a result of this, his work from this period became increasingly concerned with vocal (rather than instrumental) music.

Clayton's music was in some ways a personal exploration of coincidence and the intersection of indeterminacy in art and everyday experience. Clayton wrote of retrieving his roulette wheel from a drawer for a photo of himself holding his long-time oracle: 'I had, some months ago, placed some brown sticky tape around the edge and rim of the wheel, where my small daughter had opened it. As I posed in front of the mirror, I observed that the EX MACHINA had been covered by the tape, and only the DEUS remained.'⁶⁴ Like Schwitters' *Merz* art, Clayton interprets this change in his oracle not as decay, but as only one stage of continuous transformation. It was this transformation that Clayton saw as divine interpretation.

Clayton's lack of formal musical training, along with his links to theatre and visual arts, are perhaps contributing factors to his inimitably idiosyncratic approach amongst Australian composers working in indeterminacy during this period. Yet the element of mystery in much of Clayton's work was an important factor as well. Hemensley surmises that Clayton's performances created an 'extra dimension... Perhaps ritual was the basis of his music. Maybe it was humour. Or silence. Whatever his basis the effect was magic.'⁶⁵ *Yehudi* remains a relatively radical example of the experimentation that sits on the fringe of *avant garde* exploration in Melbourne of the 1960s.

⁶⁴ Clayton, draft of submission for 22 *Contemporary Australian Composers*, 7–8.

⁶⁵ Hemensley, 'Sid Clayton's farewell to Melbourne,' 294.