Songs that Pull: Composition/Performance through Musical Analysis *

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Explaining the origin of junba songs and dances, indigenous to the north and northcentral Kimberley region of Australia, the Ngarinyin/Miwa composer Scotty Martin has noted ‘Whatever song you compose comes out of the life of the Wanjina.’ Wanjina are ancestral creative beings to which people in this region attribute the creation of the world at the beginning of time as well as creativity in the world in the present. Wanjina formed and named the landscape and, along with Wunggurr (another ancestral being), installed in it the baby-spirits that ensure the birth of children from the progenitorial essence embedded in them. As Martin’s statement suggests, the creativeness of Wanjina and Wunggurr also extends to the conception and composition of junba, and to the way that people articulate and create relationships with country when they compose and perform junba.

Creation in the ancestral past is inseparable from creativity in the present, not only in the sense that ancestral actions guide creative and social activity today, but also in the sense that contemporary activity creates meaning around ancestral acts. Any separation of ancestral and contemporary creative activity potentially fails to recognise the agency with which individuals interpret, experience and create meaning in relation to country. Redmond, for example, explains that the

theoretical paradigm that has construed Aborigines’ experience of the landscape as set in stone by ancestral action … denies the extent of bodily imagery in expressions about

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country and has the effect of obscuring the sense of agency that the human subject brings to the interpretation of the lifeworld.³

While Redmond is addressing anthropological interpretations of the way indigenous Australians relate to country, his argument also speaks to the broader context in which junba repertories, and other indigenous performance genres, are conceived, composed, performed and researched—specifically, any failure to recognise the validity of mobility and change in indigenous experience of country, such as that signaled by Warren Mundine in recent commentary on the recognition of Noongar land rights in southwestern Australia. Mundine suggests that the Noongar have been judged as if they ‘the only race of people in the world whose culture doesn’t change,’ as if—to use Redmond’s words—their way of relating to country is ‘set in stone.’⁴

Redmond presents his argument through a detailed analysis of the complex social and ancestral world surrounding current performances of a repertory of junba dance-songs (also known as balga) composed in the 1960s, illustrating ‘places that move.’ This article is concerned with the intersection of Redmond’s idea that places move with the processes that guide the musical structure of junba songs—specifically, songs that pull. In the final part of the article, I will turn to a problem faced by many researchers of indigenous music, who draw on the raw experience of performance and collaboration with indigenous experts in the field but at the same time employ tools of transcription and analysis. Flawed though they may be in ways that potentially draw music research closer to the interpretive processes identified by Redmond and Mundine,⁵ these tools, used sensitively and in combination with engagement with performers’ explanations, can play a part in indigenous music research.

Places that Move—Songs that Pull

Redmond describes how through the performance of a particular junba song, about a particular place and complex of ancestral events, places move, as the distinction between body and landscape is dissolved in ‘the kinetic embodiment of place.’⁶ Redmond explains the mythological history of a site called Winjagin. He explains that, in the creation time, the local people tried to move the mountain to another place, Mejurrin, by pulling it with hair ropes. However, before daybreak (these efforts occurred at night), the mountain became unstable, the hair belts snapped, and the attempt was abandoned. The hair belts, along with the python associated with the site, were then wrapped around Winjagin to stabilise it.⁷ Redmond explains that a relatively recent song, composed in the 1960s, describes the movement of the python associated with Winjagin down to Mejurrin. The python is split in two and wraps around each

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⁴ Mundine protested that, contrary to this view, indigenous groups such as the Noongar have a culture that ‘changes’ and ‘moves forward,’ and that this should be recognised. See Jenny Brockie et al., 2006. ‘Up For Grabs.’ Transcript, *Insight*, SBS Television, 31 October 2006 <http://news.sbs.com.au/insight/archive.php>, accessed 9 November 2006.


⁶ Redmond, ‘Places that Move’ 134.

of the peaks of Mejurrin. This, Redmond suggests, ‘is a case of the creativity of mythic thought in process’ as multiple versions of the story are overlaid by the song. Furthermore, Redmond describes the effect of performances of this song, which involve dancing with large painted boards upon which are painted the two python-wrapped peaks of Mejurrin, of invoking the continued movement of Mejurrin. He writes:

The song-boards depicting the python-wrapped twin peaks having being transported from a neighbouring community on the back of a Toyota, were mounted on the shoulders of the dancer in much the same manner that the Wanjina are said to carry caves on their shoulders. As the dancer stamped across the ground, the twin peaks shook and shuddered, tilting first in one direction and then another. The body of the dancer is the medium through which the image of place becomes animated and infused into the ‘stomping ground.’ The clouds of dust arising from the dancer’s feet obscured the actual point of contact between the dancer’s body and the ground, lending the impression that the dancer is moving through a red haze, or even walking on clouds. Clusters of green leaves at the knee and elbow joints add to the flickering, kinetic image of the body. Mejurrin became present in a dance ground several hundred kilometers away from its actual physical incarnation.

Thus, just as the ancestral people attempted to pull Winjagin to Mejurrin, people in the present day performances pull places such as Mejurrin—and their incumbent ancestral meaning—to other meaningful places. The theoretical paradigmatic ‘gap’ between ancestral and present-day acts is challenged, as is geographical space.

The hair ropes with which Winjagin was to be moved in the creative time are associated with magnetic radar-like cords known as biyu, which are responsible for death, as well as the composition of songs. Song-conception and transmission, from spirits to the composer to other singers, are similarly energized by acts of pulling, and related mutual acts of following. The biyu are used by spirits to pull composers to Dulugun (the island of the dead), where the composer witnesses the performance of junba by spirits of deceased relatives. The niyarra (idea) of the junba is nyambalug (stuck) to the composer’s ni (mind) and it cannot be forgotten. This process of song-conception is referred to as dawul, meaning to listen and learn. After this experience, should she/he choose to, the composer prepares the junba for performance. In doing this, she/he will find the correct tune and the correct setting of texts. This process is referred to as biyobiyo (related to the word biyu), glossed as ‘following’ and, in another context (see below), also ‘pulling’ or ‘tracking.’ Similarly, when other people begin to pick up the songs from the composer, they are also said to dawul (listen and learn) and biyobiyo ‘follow.’ This process can also be compared to that by which baby-spirits are conceived and grow into children, as they spring or are literally pulled out of Wunggurr water-holes, and become imprinted on potential parents, before they are born. Significantly, the term used to refer to baby-spirits—burrunguma (singular form, anguma)—is used to refer to junba-bearing spirits of deceased relatives.

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8 Redmond, ‘Places that Move’ 127.
9 Redmond, ‘Places that Move’ 133–34.
10 For a more extensive discussion of junba conception and transmission refer to Sally Treloyn, Songs that Pull: jadmi junba from the Kimberley Region of Northwest Australia, PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 2006, Chapter 2.
11 Redmond, ‘Places that Move’ 123.
In performances of junba, the dancers, who enact the exact performance that the spirits carried out in the composer’s song-receiving journeys, prepare behind a wurawun (bough screen), ideally positioned on the western side of the bororru (dance ground). The ngalanyba-birri (singing ensemble) sits at the opposite side, facing the wurawun. At the centre of this group, on the edge of the dance-space, sits the junba jumanjuman (composer/song-leader) and an ‘offside,’ who helps the jumanjuman lead the performance. In performance there are three types of songs/dance-songs, referred to as galanbangarri (also known as guroguro, woiwoinangga and warami, and glossed as ‘warm-up’ ones), birrina (glossed as ‘public’ ones) and enerrngarri (‘big,’ ‘powerful’ ones). Birrina and enerrngarri both include dance, by a large group and just one or two dancers, respectively, who gradually move from behind the wurawun (bough screen), and towards the ngalanyba-birri (singers). Thus, the dancers, enacting the burrunguma spirits of the living singers’ deceased relatives, move from the west—the direction of Dulugun (the island of the dead where they reside)—towards the living world of the singers.\[12\] This movement is associated with the ‘pulling’ function of the biyu, as one enerrngarri (‘big, powerful’) dance-song in Martin’s repertory ‘redmala/buyu’\[13\] clearly illustrates. The song text consists of the lines redmala redmalingga ‘pulling pulling’ and buyu mana redmalingga ‘that biyu, keep pulling,’ referring to the ‘pulling’ (redmala redmalingga\[14\]) associated with the biyu radar/cord (sung as buyu). In performance, a biyu, in the form of a fishing line, is strung between the wurawun (screen) and the composer, and dancer-spirits emerge from behind the screen and ‘pull’ themselves along it towards the composer, and then back to the screen.

Redmond additionally notes that nowadays the dancers are played by generations that are younger than the singers.\[15\] Thus, the movement of the spirits towards the singers is not just the burrunguma spirits of deceased relatives pulling towards living people, but also baby-spirits (also referred to as burrunguma) pulling towards their parents. Also, there is a tendency for the dancers to only begin moving forward from behind the wurawun bough screen, increase their pace, or change direction or gesture in some way, when the women begin a particular part of the melody, referred to yet again as ‘pulling,’ ‘following,’ or ‘tracking’—biyobiyo\[16\]—the point where the women ‘lift up their voices’ and ‘pull’ the junba along.\[17\] Thus, a notion of ‘pulling’ that pervades the movement of dancers across the dance ground refers not only to the creation of the landscape and ‘places that move,’ as described

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12 Redmond, ‘Places that Move.’ Note that many dances enact agula—the spirits responsible for the death of people and the initial biyu pulling of the composer towards Dulugun—that are considered to be distinct from the burrunguma spirits responsible for the actual giving of songs. It has been explained to me, however, that the burrunguma themselves enact agula in these dreams. While this is the case, some songs, such as some in Martin’s repertory, refer to agula that the composer him/herself has come into contact with, not necessarily via burrunguma.

13 Songs are labelled by reference to the first word of each text-line in the songtext.

14 The word is based on the verb rid- (sung as ‘red-’), meaning ‘to pull.’


16 Alice Moyle also identifies a related term biyowa ‘to follow’ or ‘to track’ for this women’s section of the tune. See Alice Moyle, North Australian Music: A Taxonomic Approach to the Study of Aboriginal Song Performances, PhD thesis, Monash University, 1974, 154.

17 The spirit-dancers are pulled forward through the mutual acts of the composer and women-singers; see Treloyn, Songs that Pull 80.
by Redmond,\textsuperscript{18} but also to the conception of children, death, the conception of songs, as well as the preparation of songs for performance, and the listening/learning of songs by the singing ensemble.

Furthermore, \textit{junba} can be sold to other performing groups according to the system of exchange referred to as \textit{Wurnan}. By sharing objects and ceremonies on the \textit{Wurnan}, relationships between clans and between people and country are maintained and reinvigorated. Song transmission in this context involves the \textit{mawurra balanggara} (stranger mob) sitting around the outside perimeter of the singing ensemble. Like the composer in his dreams and the singing ensemble, the \textit{mawurra balanggara} (stranger mob) \textit{dawul} (listens and learns) the \textit{junba}, over successive nights of performance, and gradually \textit{biyobiyo} (begin ‘following’) it.\textsuperscript{19} In this way, \textit{junba} repertories can spread to many different groups, and be performed by multiple language groups. For example, one repertory in the \textit{jadmi} style of \textit{junba}, referred to as the ‘Kimberley Downs \textit{jadmi}’ after the place where the Wodongarri clan Ngarinyin composer, Alec Wirrijangu, composed it in the 1940s was ‘sold’ in the \textit{Wurnan} and is said to have moved as far south to La Grange/Bidjadangga in the Pilbara region. Today some of the songs from this repertory are still performed by Ngarinyin people, as part of another \textit{jadmi} style repertory, also attributed to Wirrijangu, referred to as the \textit{jalarrimirri jadmi}. Songs from this repertory will be discussed throughout the remainder of this article.

As noted, there are three types of song/dance-song in \textit{junba} repertories, two of which are accompanied by dance and one that is not. The song type that is unaccompanied by dance, the \textit{galanbangarri} type, has a particular role in the process of transmitting the \textit{junba} to the \textit{mawurra balanggara} ‘stranger mob.’ There are usually only one or two \textit{galanbangarri} songs in a repertory and the texts of these songs are also often about the experience of the composer in the dreams in which she/he finds the \textit{junba}. The text of one such song in the \textit{junba} repertory referred to as \textit{Dulugun}, composed by the Gumalawurru clan Ngarinyin woman Flora Walkerbier,\textsuperscript{20} for example, has the text \textit{Dorrgoi yindirri mana}. Glosses to this text refer to the island, \textit{Dorrgoi}, associated with \textit{Dulugun}, the island of the dead where composers find songs; \textit{yindirri mana} refers to a ‘banging’ noise, possibly the sound of clapsticks heard by the composer as he/she approached the performance in his/her dream, or a particular noise associated with the passing of the spirit of people to the island of the dead.

\textit{Galanbangarri} songs are typically performed before the performance, to draw people to the \textit{bororru} (dance-ground), including those who will make up the \textit{ngalanyba-birri} (singing ensemble), as well as the \textit{mawurra balanggara} ‘strangers’ who may be there to receive the \textit{junba} according to \textit{Wurnan} exchange. \textit{Galanbangarri} songs are also performed before \textit{birrina} and \textit{enerrngarri} dance-songs, waiting for the dancers to prepare for the next dance. These songs therefore alternate with \textit{birrina} and \textit{enerrngarri} songs throughout the performance.\textsuperscript{21}

\textit{Galanbangarri} songs thus pull (via the \textit{biyu}) the composer to spirits in the dreams to listen and learn (\textit{dawul}) \textit{junba}, pull singers and later (in \textit{Wurnan} transactions) strangers to the \textit{junba}

\textsuperscript{18} For a detailed account of the way \textit{junba} singers pull places onto the dance ground, see Treloyn, ‘Flesh with Country: Juxtaposition and Minimal Contrast in the Construction and Melodic Treatment of \textit{jadmi} Song Texts,’ \textit{Australian Aboriginal Studies} 2007(2): 90–99.

\textsuperscript{19} Treloyn, Songs that Pull 70–2.

\textsuperscript{20} Note that this repertory was reportedly first given to a man who then handed it over to Walkerbier.

\textsuperscript{21} For an account of song order refer to Treloyn, Songs that Pull, Appendix 5.
dance ground to sit around the composer to dawul and participate in the junba performance, and pull dancers (who are associated with the burrunguma spirits of deceased relatives and baby-spirits) toward the living world of the composer and other living relatives. Galanbangarri songs are thus important tools in the junba repertory that mediate, by pulling, between the composer and the spirit world in composition/conception, between the composer and singers in composition/performance, between the living world of the composer/singers and the spirit world in dance, and between the spirit world, performers and strangers in Wurnan transmission. Incorporating Redmond’s exploration of the ‘kinetic embodiment’ of place through junba performance, it may also be said that these songs mediate, also by pulling, between ancestral beings and acts installed in the landscape and the creative acts of people in our contemporary world.

**The Analysis of junba Text Structure**

The present analysis of junba musical structure stems from a stream of research originating with T.G.H. Strehlow who first observed the independence of melody and text/rhythm in Aranda songs from Central Australia. This was continued through the work of Catherine Ellis, Linda Barwick, Guy Tunstill and Antony McCardell (Prabhu Pritam). Barwick and Ellis, in particular, have focused on the way that melody is mapped onto text/rhythm in performance, and have investigated the agency that this ‘mapping’ gives performers in enacting aesthetic social and political agendas. Ray Keogh adopted this approach in his

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22 Redmond, ‘Places that Move’ 134.

23 For a comprehensive account of junba musical structure, see Treloyn, Songs that Pull, Chapters 4–11. In this article I have chosen to focus on the organisation of text in junba songs, in order to minimise the complexity of the analysis presented.


26 Treloyn, Songs that Pull 205–8.
Songs that Pull

analysis of *nurlu* songs from the western Kimberley and I have taken it up in research of northcentral Kimberley *junba*.27

At the basis of analysing Central Australian, Western Desert, and Kimberley songs is the identification of text cycles and their rhythmic setting. Repertories of songs, often referred to as ‘song-series,’ comprise multiple songs, which typically have unique texts. These texts are relatively short and are repeated throughout the performance of the song. Songs may be performed multiple times in the course of a performance, both consecutively and alternating with other songs. Each performance of a song—referred to as a ‘song item’—may differ from other performances of that song, expanding and contracting to accommodate accompanying ritual action, such as dancing, the preparing of ceremonial objects and paint, and the painting of body designs.

As noted, the text of each song is relatively short, and is repeated throughout the song item. The text set out in Figure 1 is from the Central Australian Pitjantjatjara *inma Langka* (Blue Tongue lizard and Mountain Devil lizard) song series, and was transcribed by Ellis.28 As indicated in the figure, the song is based on the text ||: miniri panyanpa :||: walunku ngarangu walunku ngarangu :||,29 glossed as ‘standing on the Miniri [Mountain Devil lizard] rock.’30 This is repeated throughout the song item. It can also be seen from this transcription that the song performance does not begin from the first word of the text, which is ‘miniri,’ but rather on the second word ‘panyanpa.’ There is also no clearly defined ending or end-word in the song item—instead, it ends with what might be referred to as a ‘fade-out,’ as the singers gradually stop singing.31

These characteristics are all common features of songs from Central Australia and the Western Desert. In summary, these are:32

1. uninterrupted repetition of the text string throughout the song performance;
2. commencement of the song performance from a word that does not have to be the first word of the text string; and
3. a fade out.

A.P. Thomas’s description of ‘communal’ singing in the Pilbara region—the approximate region to which Wirrijangu’s *jadmi junba* has travelled—suggests that songs from this region


28 Ellis, *Aboriginal Music* 212. The *inma Langka* series is discussed by Ellis, as well as Tunstill, and is variously referred to as *inma Langka, inma Ngiyari* (or Miniri) *Langka*. See Ellis, *Aboriginal Music*, and Tunstill, ‘Melody and Rhythmic Structure.’

29 While Ellis does not appear to clearly state how the boundaries of this text are defined, text morphology and their coincidence with major rhythmic and melodic structural boundaries, details of which are provided by Ellis in *Aboriginal Music*, support the designated boundaries.

30 Ellis, *Aboriginal Music* 118.

31 The term ‘fade-out’ refers to the gradual, staggered cessation of vocalisation by the singers, usually accompanied by a loosening of rhythm, rather than a measured continuous diminuendo.

also share these characteristics. Keogh’s study of *nurlu* songs suggests that this is also the case for genres indigenous to the western Kimberley.

*Junba* songs, however, from the northcentral and North Kimberley, to the north of the Desert, Pilbara, and western Kimberley regions, exhibit distinctly different characteristics, despite being also communally performed. The text of a song composed by Martin is set out in Figure 2. As indicated, this song is based on the text *gurreiga* *narai* *binjirri* *gurreiga* *narai* *binjirri* *ngadarri* *jagud* *binjirri* *ngadarri* *jagud* *binjirri*, which refers to the brolga (*gurreiga*) preening its feathers and to the movement of dancers’ headcaps (*ngadarri*). While this is repeated throughout the performance, as in the Central Australian/Desert/Pilbara/western Kimberley style, at one point it is interrupted and recommenced (see Figure 2). In addition, whereas song items in the Central Australian/Desert/Pilbara/western Kimberley style may begin at a number of different points in the text, this song, like all *junba* song items, begins from the first word—in this case, *gurreiga* (brolga). Finally, while Central Australian style song items often end with a fade out, *junba* song items have a clearly defined ending, and the clapsticks, played by the composer/song leader (in this case Martin), stop strongly, one beat after the singing.

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33 Note that song genres such as *tabi* from the Pilbara, which is the focus of Thomas and Brandenstein’s study, are performed by a solo singer and do not share these characteristics. See A.P. Thomas and C.G. Brandenstein, *Taruru: Aboriginal Song Poetry from the Pilbara* (Adelaide: Rigby, 1974). Text transcriptions provided by Alice Moyle in her survey of music from the Kimberley, suggest that this is also the case for strophic form solo songs in the western Kimberley such as *liljin* and *ludin*. See Alice Moyle, *North Australian Music*.

34 See Keogh, *Nurlu Songs of the West Kimberleys*. Variations to these principles identified by Keogh (the ‘breaking’ of text cycles between melodic cycles, for example) may be attributed to the size and nature of his sample. See Treloyn, *Songs that Pull* 136–7.
These characteristics are typical of *junba*. In summary, these include:

1. interruption of the repetition of the text string;
2. commencement from first word of the text string only; and
3. a clearly defined ending.

In the course of my research, I have documented the texts of approximately 422 different song texts, and of these only three are performed in a manner that does not exhibit these characteristics. One of these is attributed to the Ngarinyin composer Alec Wirrijangu, referred to previously, part of whose *jadmi* repertory reportedly moved down as far as the Pilbara according to the *Wurnan*.

In Figure 3 the text of Wirrijangu’s song ‘*lirdmindimindi malaya*’ is set out. As indicated, it is based on the text *lirdmindimindi jawurung bina malaya winyirinyiri*. Unlike other *junba* songs, this song item does not begin on the first word of the text—it begins on *lirdmindimindi*, rather than *malaya*. Also, the repetition of the text is not interrupted as is usual in *junba* songs, but is uninterrupted, repeating throughout the song item. Furthermore, while the song sometimes ends with a typical strong clapstick beat, it does not usually have a clearly defined vocal ending—it ends with a ‘fade-out.’

While these characteristics are strikingly unusual in *junba* songs, they are the usual characteristics of the Central Australian/Desert/Pilbara/western Kimberley style, illustrated in Figure 1. This song is also typically performed with distinct rhythmic and melodic characteristics in common with this style, which also contrast it with *junba*.

What questions arise from this analysis-based finding? In order to see the significance of it, we need to refer to the context in which *junba* is performed and the cosmological beliefs

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35 In the course of my research in 2000–2002, several glosses were given for this text, including references to a shooting star and a particular hairstyle characterised by matted ropes of hair.

36 Sally Treloyn, *Songs that Pull* 139–40.
underpinning its conception, composition and performance. In Wirrijangu’s combined jadmi repertory there are said to be two galanbangarri songs. As discussed, these songs pull between the living, spirit and ancestral worlds, as well as between the composer and other people in the living world. One of these songs is ‘lirdmindimindi/malaya’ which, strikingly, exhibits the central Australian style. Given that this song (as galanbangarri) is a song that pulls, and given that the repertory has been ‘sold’ south into the Pilbara, as discussed above, where the Central Australian style is typical, what could its Central Australian style mean?

In the absence of definitive performers’ statements on the question, the inclusion of a song with distinctive Central Australian characteristics in a Kimberley junba repertory, and its repeated contrastive alternation with Kimberley style songs in performance, can be interpreted in several ways. In discussing differences in the modal organisation of rhythm in northern Australia, Barwick has suggested that diversity in the organisational principles that underlie musical structure may be one way that different groups mark themselves in relation to one another.

By including a distinctly Central Australian song style in a junba repertory, and repeatedly alternating the Central Australian style with the typical northcentral Kimberley style, perhaps performers are communicating some aspect of the relationship between distinct cultural groups. Because galanbangarri songs pull people to the dance ground, could the presentation of this song in a Central Australian style gesture, in some way, towards the mawurra strangers to engage with the process of transmission? Also, given that the northcentral

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37 During my fieldwork in 2000–2002, performers attributed the unique style of Wirrijangu’s song to the fact that this is was the way that the burrunjuma spirits gave the composer the song.

38 Personal communication, 15 September 2005.
Kimberley and the Desert have distinct cultural practices, and given that *galanbangarri* songs pull between the living world and spirit worlds, could this also be a way that the Ngarinyin performers of the repertory use *junba* and, specifically, musical language, to come to terms with a distinct culture within their existing cosmology? Is this broadly analogous to the situation in which people move places and their incumbent ancestors and creative acts to other places in *junba* performances?

**Songs that Pull and Musical Analysis**

For me, further understanding of these questions requires that I return to the performers and continue to engage with the meaning of the repertory. I therefore venture that, just as *galanbangarri* songs pull between a multitude of worlds, classes of being, geographical spaces, and cultural groups, through musical analysis, the *galanbangarri* song in Wirrijangu’s repertory has pulled me into closer engagement with performers, as I endeavour to explore some of the questions raised by analysis. Analysis thus continually pulls me back into that engagement to further understand its significance. This brings me to an important point with regard to the discipline of musicology and the role of analysis in music research, signaled in the introduction to this article. In the introduction to *May It Fill Your Soul: Experiencing Bulgarian Music* Timothy Rice identifies a ‘gap’ between the descriptive, scientific, language-encoded methods used to study music and the vivid, deeply moving, often unarticulated inner experiences we have performing or listening to it. This ‘gap’ can manifest in the experience of the ethnomusicologist as she/he moves between research (including performance, listening and learning) in the field, and writing and reflecting ‘outside’ the field; between her/his academic representation of knowledge, her/his actual experience, and performers’ knowledge and experience. Linda Barwick, for example, referring to the experience of writing about Central Australian music and documentation collected by other researchers, comments on the ‘reconstructive’ and ‘constraining’ nature of writing:

> Memory is always reconstructive, and the very necessity of using academic discourse inevitably constrains what we can express of our experience. For any sort of research with people, and especially any cross-cultural research, there can never be a guarantee (if indeed it is possible at all) that field experience alone will ensure that the researcher ‘knows’ the same things as the people with whom she or he works, let alone that such knowledge will be able to be expressed in the media and discourses of academic institutions.

Allan Marett, similarly, speaking of the ‘gap’ faced by the ethnomusicologist between the actual musical world under examination, and the transcriptions and analyses that attempt to represent it in some way, suggests that analyses do not ‘reflect the musical culture itself, but an image of our own mind … engaging in an interaction with another culture,’ and that

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39 Keogh, for example, discusses the cultural distinction between western Kimberley and Desert cultures in relation to performance genres; see Keogh, *Nurlu Songs of the West Kimberleys*.


41 Barwick, ‘Central Australian Women’s Ritual Music’ 61.

transcriptions [are] socially constructed documents that can never totally encode the sound world to which they relate.\textsuperscript{43}

The significance of these ‘gaps’ goes beyond the fact that there is a degree of slippage between the representation (transcription or writing) and the actual sound world upon which it is based. We learn from the history of transcription that it can be a ‘tool of colonial acquisitiveness, a means of appropriating and exhibiting sensory experiences,’ a tool to ‘demonstrate preconceived universalist theories,’\textsuperscript{44} and thus there is a danger that it may generate an abstraction or objectification of the performers’ creativity akin to the problematic theoretical paradigm in anthropology, identified by Redmond.\textsuperscript{45}

While this is the case, Marett’s experience of moving between analysis, participatory performance, and collaborative research, as expressed in the introduction to his book \textit{Songs, Dreamings, and Ghosts: The Wangga of North Australia}, has proven that ‘analysis … provides our best methodological tool for isolating significant (and signifying) moments of performance.’\textsuperscript{46}

While they both invoke a ‘gap’ between their representations and the subjects of their research, Barwick and Marett also emphasise the interaction between themselves and the subjects of their respective research. They do not write about a musical world absolutely separated from the world of their scholarly representation, but, rather, they write about the history of their experience in relation to that world, and the history of the intersection between their musical experience and the tools used to represent it.\textsuperscript{47} Marett for example, in the epilogue to his book, articulates his response to country surrounding Wadeye in the Daly region of north Australia, that, once unfamiliar, is made vivid by his developed cultural knowledge of songs:

It’s late October, and I am flying out of Wadeye. Passing below me is a landscape, the outlines of which I knew well enough from maps even before I first came here. But what I see now is a living entity, country that is alive and which throws into life many different phenomena … I have learned about this country through the medium of songs.\textsuperscript{48}

Barwick, furthermore, repeatedly gestures not only to a decrease in the gap between the medium of scholarship and the musical world that it represents, but also the gap between this world and her audience of academic readers.\textsuperscript{49} In her discussion of the way that Warumungu women have opened up \textit{Yawulyu Mungamunga} songs to a non-Aboriginal national and international audience, through the release of a CD and its launch at the Musicological Society of Australia conference in Sydney in 2000, Barwick asks ‘does the relative lack of knowledge of

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\textsuperscript{44} See Ellingson, ‘Transcription’ 110–13.

\textsuperscript{45} See Note 3.

\textsuperscript{46} Marett, \textit{Songs, Dreamings, Ghosts} 6.

\textsuperscript{47} By ‘history of their experience,’ I am referring to the hermeneutical notion of historical consciousness discussed by Gary Tomlinson and the hermeneutical solution to the gap between performance/listening and writing offered by Rice. As the ‘horizons’ of the Self continually shift and expand in relation to the Other, through a process of pre-existing understanding, distanciation and appropriation, new understanding emerges. See Gary Tomlinson, \textit{Music in Renaissance Magic: Towards a Historiography of Others} (Chicago: U of Chicago Press) and Rice, \textit{May it Fill your Soul}, Chapter 1.

\textsuperscript{48} Marett, \textit{Songs, Dreamings, Ghosts} 233.

\textsuperscript{49} Linda Barwick, ‘Creative (Ir)regularities’; ‘Central Australian Women’s Ritual Music’; ‘Unison and Disagreement.’
Warumungu country and society by most papulanji (non-Aboriginal) audiences exclude us from aesthetic engagement with Yawulya Mungamunga? Drawing on Theodor Adorno’s view that the ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ of an art work (its producers and audience) cannot be kept separate, because ‘[w]here there is internal consistency in a work there is also an accurate awareness of the external’ Barwick contends that non-Aboriginal audiences can be aesthetically engaged with the songs because the ‘outside’ of these artworks is not only Warumungu. We are all now part of ‘the external’ of these artworks and implicated in them. By bringing Yawulyu Mungamunga to the Musicological Society Conference in 2000, performers engage us and challenge us in the world that we all share.

Martin’s view from the beginning of this article that ‘[w]hatever song you compose comes out of the life of the Wanjina’ points to the fact that the creative source laid down by Wanjina is fundamentally enmeshed in all others, and that the realisation of junba in the moment of performance springs from the same creative source as land and as people. This dissolves the theoretical paradigm, identified and also challenged by Redmond, that separates ancestral creative past from the present. I contend that the approach to musicology exercised by Barwick and Marett similarly challenges a variety of paradigms that permeate the musicologist’s experience, separating her/his musical/cultural experience from reflections on it and representations of it. Through an examination of songs that are said to pull between a variety of ‘separate’ worlds in Ngarinyin culture and cosmology, and recounting a series of analytical and performative events in the history of my experience of junba, I have attempted to advance a model for this approach to music research, in which analysis pulls the researcher and performer closer together, destabilising the ‘gaps’ between musicology and musical experience, and outsider and insider experience. While tools of transcription and analysis function within the shadow of colonial history, coupled with fieldwork and collaboration these tools can draw researchers into closer interaction and closer dialogue with the people and music with which they work. Just as the notion that places move challenges the theoretical paradigm separating ancestral past from creative present, so too, the notion that songs pull challenges the boundaries that separate researcher and performer, and analysis and musical experience.

Conclusion

Movement and mobility are central to the Ngarinyin world-view, merging life and creative activity in the present with ancestral creative acts. Redmond eloquently examines this in

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50 Barwick, ‘Performance, Aesthetics, Experience’ 18.
51 Barwick, ‘Performance, Aesthetics, Experience’ 16.
52 Barwick, ‘Performance, Aesthetics, Experience’ 16.
54 This resonates with the view of Steven Knopoff who suggests that non-Aboriginal researchers should include three basic elements in their approach to representation of Aboriginal music: analysis, consultation with performers, and taking ‘personal responsibility’ for their reaction to the music. Involved in this last element is acknowledgement that musicologists, particularly in cross-cultural situations, come to terms with the music, at least in part, via analysis. See Steven Knopoff, ‘What is music analysis? Problems and prospects for understanding Aboriginal songs and performance,’ *Australian Aboriginal Studies* 1 (2003): 39–49 at 46–47.
terms of

places that move, features in the landscape that travel, shake, tremble, and split. These places range from cave sites that were said to be transported on the shoulders of Wanjiina during the lalan (Dreaming), to giant stones with soft centers that were carried from one mountain range to another by personages assimilating historically known persons with originary beings, to stone formations that are said to teeter, sway, move, and sing in a permanent state of unstable equilibrium.  

As discussed in this article, one manifestation of this occurs in the performance of a junba dance-song that, as Redmond shows, makes one place become ‘present in a dance ground several hundred kilometers away from its actual physical incarnation.’ Related to this movement is the action of pulling—the pulling of mountains, spirit beings, composers, baby-spirits into life, people into death, and people into junba.

Movement and mobility are also central to experiencing junba composition/performance. Representations of my understanding of junba musical language, in articles such as this, are realisations of the interaction of my perception and reaction, with my analytical tools and experiences, and with people who are indigenous to the junba tradition. Just as the realisation of junba in the moment of performance is inseparable from other creative processes in the Ngarinyin world, in my world, my analytical tools, my subjective reactions and experience, and my understandings gained through engagement with performers, are equally inseparable. They merge in a shifting expanding matrix from which my representations of junba musical language spring. Central to the mobility of this matrix—the development of my musical understanding, and the production of this article—are songs that pull me into a continual cycle of engagement with the performers on the one hand, and with analysis on the other, and then through analysis into further engagement with performers, and so on. In this way, these songs pull me back and forth between engagements with performers’ explanations and with my own traditions of analysis.

Finally, as discussed above, Barwick encourages her readers to explore the ‘common ground’ that they share with the Warumungu performers of Yawulyu Mungamunga. I venture that it is not only my understanding of junba composition/performance that is pulled through the analysis of the songs discussed here. Through this article, through musical analysis, these songs may also pull the reader into a deeper engagement with junba composition/performance, however mediated by me and theoretically distanced by her/his different areas of speciality and musicological preoccupation.

—Redmond, ‘Places that Move’ 121.
—Barwick, ‘Performance, Aesthetics, Experience.’