

(a few interesting pages are devoted to how many Griffith Italians people felt in visiting their land of origin: emotion, pleasure, disappointment, puzzlement), as it is about the way people live their present condition and look to the future.

Many important themes come to the surface, recurrently, in the course of the volume. Some of them, because of the narrative effort made by the author, in giving us a sense of what each single informant told him, reappear here and there and are not easy to rapidly locate and put together, without reading or re-reading the whole book: themes such as, for instance, nostalgia, musical tastes, and memories of the town of origin. An index of names is provided; an index of the themes touched upon would have been very useful.

In conclusion, this is a book I read with great interest and pleasure, a book I recommended to anybody interested in music at large, in migration, in Italian and Australian cultural history.

David Tunley, *William James and the Beginnings of Modern Musical Australia*

Grosvenor Place, NSW: Australian Music Centre, 2007

ISBN 9780909168629 (pbk.), 134 pp. ill., ports, index, bibliog.

Reviewed by Kathleen E. Nelson

The name of William James recurs through Australian musical history of the early to mid-twentieth century. Nevertheless, his work is now little known, and understanding of his contribution is often hazy. As this paperback book makes plain, William Garnet James (born in Ballarat in 1892; died in Sydney, 1977) made a great contribution to Australian musical history through his career as a music administrator, composer and pianist. For many years he was one of those working more or less 'behind the scenes' so his contribution can be overlooked. On the other hand, in studies of Australian music involving the Australian Broadcasting Commission, his name will often surface. For those of us who have worked with the archival materials of the ABC from the 1930s through to the 1950s, the name and signature of William James have become familiar and prominent. Appointed as Federal Controller or Director of Music for the ABC in 1936 he held that position until his retirement in 1957. He was already involved with radio in the late 1920s and was present in the earliest days of the ABC. As the ABC's Director of Music his contribution was both crucial and pioneering. He was one of those influential in shaping the musical life of the nation, although his presence was not always a public or visible one. His early years based in London as a pianist, and the connections developed there, gave him a fine background for his long Australian career. Putting the focus on James himself, this book on his life and work comes as a very welcome and needed addition to the published literature of Australian musical history.

Many Australians will have had some familiarity with one or more of James's *Australian Christmas Carols*, but few will now know that he was the composer of these attractive songs, or indeed of his greater role in our musical history. It might be said that it is these carols

that now form James's most obvious legacy to Australian music. Tunley puts it very well in his Introduction: 'To mention the name William Garnet James nowadays—especially in the company of the young to middling generation—is to invite some puzzling stares, until someone remembers that they have sung or heard some of his *Australian Christmas Carols*' (p. 7). The carols were composed while James was still at the ABC, with the first set published in 1948 and the next two sets in the mid 1950s. They were well received in Australia and beyond. In 1961 came 'perhaps the biggest boost to their popularity' (p. 95) with the World Record Club recording of the carols conducted by Bernard Heinze. In fact James's list of compositions is lengthy and came as a surprise to this reader. The list is dominated by songs and short piano works. As Tunley says 'he was essentially a miniaturist, drawn particularly to song writing, for which he had a real gift' (p. 97). Tunley makes illuminating comments on selected examples of James's compositions and throughout the book makes some interesting suggestions of those that would be particularly suited for revival in performance. The Appendix A provides a full chronological listing of the compositions.

David Tunley has given us a fine introduction into the life and times of William James. The appendices also add value offering, in addition to the work list, lists of visiting musical performers whose tours for the ABC and its predecessor were organised by James, as well as broadcast scripts by James dating from 1927, 1947 and 1955. This book was a pleasure to read. It is written with sympathy, and is full of insight into James's career and the people and events around him. It should without doubt be read by those interested in the musical history of twentieth-century Australia.

Paul Griffiths, *A Concise History of Western Music*

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006

ISBN 9780521842945, ix+348 pp., index, bibliog.

Reviewed by Paul Watt

Music researchers of the future may well look back at the first decade of the twenty-first century and wonder why two histories of western music were published. Richard Taruskin's huge *History of Western Music*, in five volumes, was published by Oxford University Press in 2005, and Paul Griffiths's *A Concise History of Western Music* was published by Cambridge the following year. It is worth noting that in the period c. 1890–1910 there was a rush to the presses of music histories on both sides of the Atlantic: do these books by Taruskin and Griffiths, reflect or suggest a *fin de siècle* and trans-Atlantic publishing trend to reassess musical history?¹ Time will tell.

¹ Books published in this twenty-year period are numerous but include H.G. Bonavia Hunt, *A Concise History of Music from the Commencement of the Christian Era to the Present Time: For Students* (London: Charles Scribner's, 1888 with many reprints in the 1890s), W.S.B. Mathews, *A Popular History of Music* (London: Grevell, 1888, also reprinted many times) and Waldo Selden Pratt, *The History of Music: A Handbook and Guide for Students* (New York: Schirmer, 1907).