

‘A strange madness’: Organ festivals in Australia 1968–1973

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Abstract

In the six years 1968–1973 seventeen pipe organ festivals were held across four Australian cities, a phenomenon that had not occurred elsewhere. This thesis considers the activities of the small number of people who drove the festivals’ establishment, the newly-built ‘neoclassical’ organs and harpsichords that were integral to the festivals’ success, and the circumstances that brought these agents for change together. The period studied here was one of considerable movement— political, social, technological and musical. This thesis shows that the festivals were part of a wider generational push to embrace ‘the new’ in diverse areas. They resulted from a development of new interests among a disparate group of specialists, which fortuitously converged with those of an isolated but developing audience for ‘new’ musical experiences.

Until the 1960s the organ in Australia was relatively isolated from mainstream music, its role mainly confined to liturgical functions. However in Europe the organ was undergoing considerable change as part of the organ reform movement that stimulated a reconsideration of organ building, taking into account the principles on which the historic instruments of the eighteenth century were constructed. Importantly, the organ reform movement also linked with and formed part of the concurrent early music movement. By the 1960s, sound recordings had made newly discovered historic instruments and their repertoire accessible to most Australian musicians and music lovers for the first time. Their impact on a number of young Australians was to have a profound effect on organ building and organ performance in this country.

Two young organists, David Rumsey and Sergio de Pieri, inspired by European experiences, took a leadership role to bring to the attention of local organists and organ builders the latest developments in performance and organ building, through the establishment and direction of this series of organ festivals. This thesis examines the goals they held for these festivals: to provide performance and educational experiences; to broaden the repertoire performed in Australia to include early music up to and including J. S. Bach and contemporary works; to encourage the acquisition of neoclassical organs that were best suited to the major repertoire of the organ; and to

develop a collegial and supportive community for organists. The documented success of these festivals confirms the achievement of Rumsey's and de Pieri's goals for the organ in Australia.

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that the thesis here presented by me for the degree of Master of Music comprises only my original work except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used.

I also certify that this thesis is less than 50,000 words in length,
exclusive of bibliography and appendices.

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It is difficult to overstate my appreciation to the many people who supported me in various ways through the development of this thesis. This topic covers events that occurred in Australia a relatively short time ago—in the late 1960s and early 1970s. The time frame of the topic provided the opportunity to consult a wide range of people who had been involved directly or indirectly in these events. The recollections, information and advice I received provided a firm foundation for the project.

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‘A strange madness’: Organ festivals in Australia 1968–1973

INTRODUCTION

Each year in the May school holidays a strange madness seems to grip certain music lovers in Melbourne and other parts of Australia. Some travel thousands of kilometres across the country to be there. Local inhabitants completely change the pattern of their lives, abandoning friends (and family, if necessary!) to attend concerts, recitals, masterclasses and competitions, in buildings ranging from the most sophisticated concert halls to simple parish churches. The compelling force is a unique festival of music—the Melbourne International Festival of Organ and Harpsichord.¹

In the six years from 1968 to 1973, seventeen organ festivals were held in Australia in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia. This was a remarkable number of festivals under any circumstances, but especially so in a country with a relatively small population, far removed from the major European centres of activity in organ building, teaching and performance. The unprecedented flowering of these festivals over a relatively short period suggests an important development in Australia’s musical history. This number of festivals was unparalleled anywhere else in the world. There were only two major European organ festivals, established in Haarlem and Nuremberg in the 1950s. The St Albans festival, established in 1963, was the first organ festival in the UK. In the USA, the American Organists Guild held biennial national and regional conventions.² That these Australian music festivals focused on the organ, an instrument hitherto linked mainly with the church, and therefore regarded as somewhat outside mainstream instruments, makes these festivals all the more significant. In this thesis I examine the factors that led to the establishment of the hugely successful organ festivals held in Adelaide, Sydney, Melbourne, and Perth between 1968 and 1973.

¹ Sleeve notes. *Highlights from the 11th Melbourne International Festival of Organ and Harpsichord*, EMI records, MIFOH 03F81.

² Dennis Elwell, American Guild of Organists, personal communication, 27 Jul. 2010. The population of Australia in 1973 was 13.6 million. ABS, accessed 20 Jun. 2011, <<http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/3105.0.65.0012006?OpenDocument>>.

The establishment of these festivals relied in large part on two factors, the first of which was the impetus provided by two young organists, David Rumsey and Sergio de Pieri. Rumsey and de Pieri—one an Australian who had trained in Europe and the other an Italian, resident in Australia—brought a suite of unique skills to the study and performance of organ music in Australia in the 1960s. At the time there was mounting dissatisfaction with the quality of instruments and performances in Australia and an emerging awareness of new developments in Europe, which created the impetus for change in Australian organ building and performance.

David Rumsey was artistic director of the first Adelaide organ festival held in 1968, and of six Sydney organ festivals from 1968 to 1973. As an undergraduate student he studied with Norman Johnston in Sydney, who in turn had studied in France with André Marchal. At a time when most Australian organists chose to study in England, Rumsey chose to undertake postgraduate study in Europe. This decision was partly due to the influence of his teacher, but he was also inspired by hearing European organists, both live, during Australian tours, and on the recordings that he recalls ‘were arriving in Australia through the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s’.³

Johnston recommended that Rumsey go to Europe and make a decision about teachers from there.⁴ Rumsey studied in Paris with Marie-Claire Alain, in Copenhagen with Jørgen Ernst Hansen, and in Vienna with Anton Heiller, graduating from the Vienna Academy with the Reifeprüfung. He focused on the German and northern European school of which Anton Heiller and Jørgen Ernst Hansen were two of the most eminent performers and teachers. David Rumsey was the first Australian organist to focus his study on this school, which was the source of classical and neoclassical instruments and the associated repertoire: early music up to and including Bach.⁵ David Rumsey returned to Australia in 1966 with his Austrian-born wife Christa, a graduate of the Vienna Academy who had also studied with Anton Heiller. On his return to Australia, David Rumsey held teaching appointments at the University of Adelaide and then the University of Sydney, as well as a busy recording and recital career both locally and overseas. He was also the organist for the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

³ David Rumsey personal communication, 9 Jun. 2008.

⁴ David Rumsey, personal communication, 9 Jun. 2008.

⁵ Christa Rumsey, personal communication, 11 Jul. 2010.

Sergio de Pieri was the organist at Melbourne's St Patrick's Cathedral and the artistic director of the first Melbourne Autumn Festival of Organ and Harpsichord. His influences were quite different to those of Rumsey. Born in Treviso, in the Veneto province of Italy, de Pieri's music education was first at the Scuola Cecilian in Treviso, and then at the Benedetto Marcello conservatorium in Venice. Giovanni d'Alessi, a musicologist based at the Duomo in Treviso, trained the church musicians at the Scuola.⁶ D'Alessi was a significant influence on de Pieri, particularly in the understanding of early Italian organ music. Under d'Alessi's direction his students, including de Pieri, performed and recorded the works held in manuscript in the Duomo. The recordings of Gabrieli—both Andrea and Domenico—Merulo, Palestrina, and Orlando de Lassus were an important part of de Pieri's experience in the interpretation and performance of early Italian music, which later was to form the backbone of his performances and teaching in Australia.⁷ Frustrated at the lack of opportunity and government corruption in Italy, he decided a better life might be possible in Australia and emigrated in 1961. He took up the position of organist at St Patrick's Cathedral in 1963.⁸ In addition, he was a chief study teacher in organ at the University of Melbourne and also taught at schools such as Scotch College, where he introduced early Italian repertoire to a wide group of students. He also included it in his many recitals. It was not only his example through performance and teaching, but also de Pieri's personal enthusiasm that inspired his students. George Loughlin, Professor of Music at the University of Melbourne, wrote that de Pieri was able to attract a broad and enthusiastic following of students, and that he performed a wide repertoire from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, which was at that time largely unknown in Melbourne.⁹ Apart from his cathedral and teaching responsibilities, he

⁶ D'Alessi's research was on the fifteenth and sixteenth-century manuscripts held in Treviso. He had published many papers on the topic in international musicological journals including *Revue de Musicologie*, in 1956, *JAMS* (1952), and others. Charles Hamm and Jerry Call, 'Italian cathedral and court manuscripts', *Grove Music Online*. Oxford Music Online. accessed 7 Jul. 2010, <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezp.lib.unimelb.edu.au/subscriber/article/grove/music/50158>>.

⁷ De Pieri's involvement in these recordings was germane to his appointment as cathedral organist at St Patrick's Cathedral in Melbourne. Dr Percy Jones, the Director of Music of St Patrick's Cathedral in Melbourne was aware of these recordings and visited Treviso seeking an organist from the Scuola to become the cathedral organist in Melbourne. Sergio de Pieri had already arrived in Australia at the time of Jones' search in Treviso. News of the quest for a Treviso-trained organist reached de Pieri and he made contact with Jones. He was appointed to the position in 1963. Sergio de Pieri, personal communication, 12 Feb. 2009.

⁸ Judith Armstrong, *The Cook and the Maestro* (Melbourne: Lothian Books, 2001), 93, 100.

⁹ George Loughlin, *Cities of Departure* (Melbourne: n.p., 1984) 77.

maintained a hectic recital schedule, playing organ and later, harpsichord. He instituted a series of ‘prom’ concerts in the town halls of Melbourne, Sydney, Hobart and Brisbane and, in 1967, a national organ playing competition for young students, and used the postlude of the Sunday High Mass at St Patrick’s Cathedral as an opportunity for the performance of major works.¹⁰ He also made a number of recordings.¹¹ These recordings and recitals established a profile for de Pieri as an advocate for ‘new’ repertoire and performing styles. Alongside early Italian repertoire he included contemporary music in his recitals, often in collaboration with the composer Keith Humble, and made a point of performing major organ works from important twentieth-century European composers such as Messiaen, which had rarely (if ever) been heard by Melbourne audiences. The range of activities de Pieri undertook from 1963 to 1968 helped to shift public consciousness in Melbourne about the organ, to detach it from a liturgical focus and reposition it as a legitimate instrument in its own right. These same goals were to underpin the festivals that were developed by de Pieri and Rumsey from 1968.

The second important factor in the establishment and success of these festivals was the development in Australia of the neoclassical organ and the harpsichord, keyboard instruments closely linked by repertoire and history. This was a direct result of two closely related movements in Europe: the early music movement and the organ reform movement. In his survey of the early music movement, Harry Haskell noted that the organ reform movement needs to be viewed against the broad scale musical reform that arose in Germany at the turn of the twentieth century.¹² Australia, of course, had no historic seventeenth or eighteenth-century organs or harpsichords comparable to those found in Europe and, as opportunities for travel in the first half of the century were limited by high costs, most Australian musicians were relatively isolated from European influences and developments. Visiting organists brought out by the (then) Australian Broadcasting Commission, provided a few opportunities to hear European performers at first hand. Unfortunately such visits were relatively rare:

¹⁰ Judith Armstrong, 128. Sergio de Pieri, personal communication, 12 Feb. 2009. John McCaughey, personal communication, 30 Oct. 2008.

¹¹ De Pieri’s recordings included Bach works recorded in 1963 in Wilson Hall, University of Melbourne, Italian early music, *Classici Italiani dell Organo* for the W&G label in 1964 and a recital recording *Musica Antiqua*. National Film and Sound Archive. accessed 19 Jun. 2009, <<http://colsearch.nfsa.gov.au/nfsa/saved/list>>.

¹² Harry Haskell, *The Early Music Revival: A History* (New York, N.Y.:Thames & Hudson, 1988) 56.

only eight international organists visited Australia in the twenty-nine years from 1938 to 1969.¹³ As shall be discussed further in Chapter 1, many of the organs used for these recitals were in poor condition, but these concerts were an opportunity for Australian organists to experience previously unheard repertoire and performance styles, and thus provided inspiration for local musicians. By the second half of the twentieth century international travel was increasingly affordable, enabling more Australians to visit Europe to hear historic instruments at first hand and experience the impact of the organ reform and early music movements. Newly-available recordings also brought the sound of historic instruments and their repertoire to Australians at home, providing experiences of performances, instruments and repertoire that had not previously been readily available.

These changes affected not only musicians such as David Rumsey, but also a number of local instrument builders, who began to base their own work upon the principles of the European organ reform movement. In Sydney, this led to the construction of a number of neoclassical organs, while in Melbourne it was the harpsichord builders who were inspired to make instruments that recreated the sounds they heard on recordings. The activity of these instrument builders working in the early 1960s in Sydney and Melbourne resulted in a number of new organs and harpsichords that were completed prior to and independent of the establishment by Rumsey and de Pieri of the early organ festivals. The availability of these new neoclassical instruments in the late 1960s linked neatly with the plans of Rumsey and de Pieri for the future of the organ in Australia, setting the stage for the successful implementation of their ideas.

In this thesis I aim to provide an understanding of influences such as the organ reform movement, aspects of the early music movement, and organ festivals and instrument building developments in Europe on Australian organ and harpsichord builders and performers. Relatively new connections to Europe, beyond the traditional links to England, coupled with a post-war generation invigorated by the new—in all spheres of life—resonated particularly with the younger generation who were in the forefront of social, political and cultural changes in Australia through the 1960s. Music was not

¹³ These are: René Nizan, 1938; Dupré 1939; Thalben-Ball 1951; Marchal 1953; Germani 1956; Cochereau 1959; Hurford 1967; E Power Biggs 1969. Thomas Heywood, 'The Living Tradition—a brief history of the Melbourne Town Hall organ and organists'. accessed 20 Jun. 2009, <www.concertorgan.com/OCA32001Feature17.htm>. No longer accessible at 7 Mar. 2011.

immune from these developments. Interest in European music, instruments, scholarship and teaching, and the concomitant distancing from the traditional Anglo-Saxon focus of previous generations, gave a sense of ‘the new’ to young Australian musicians and instrument builders. Historic instruments and their repertoire were newly available through new technologies in recording and manufacture, or through direct experience made possible by new and improved travel opportunities. All of these elements contributed to the context in which organ festivals were developed and staged in four states of Australia in the years 1968–1973.

Little has been written about the organ festival movement in Australia. It is timely, some thirty years on, to document the recollection of participants and others while the opportunity is available. The most detailed discussion of this topic is a Master of Music thesis by David Scott Hamnes, ‘The role of the Melbourne International Festival of Organ and Harpsichord in fostering Australian organ music’.¹⁴ As the title suggests, this focuses on only one organ festival—that held in Melbourne commencing in 1971—and on just one aspect of that festival. It does, however provide a general overview of the other Australian festivals. Judith Armstrong’s book, *The Cook and the Maestro* is a biography of the life of Sergio de Pieri and his brother Stefano de Pieri. It includes limited information on Sergio de Pieri’s role in the Melbourne festival, and general information about de Pieri’s background and training. There are a few brief press reviews, journal articles and reports of individual festivals, but there has been no examination of the seventeen festivals as a group, nor of their origins and development.

Similarly there is little written about the three major European organ festivals—Haarlem, St Albans and Nuremberg. A recent history of the St Albans festival was kindly provided by the present director, David Titterington, as was a one-page document about the Nuremberg festival.¹⁵ There are two books on the Salzburg festival, and Dennis Stoll has written generally on the music festivals of the world.¹⁶

¹⁴ David Scott Hamnes, ‘The role of the Melbourne International Festival of Organ and Harpsichord in fostering Australian organ music’, M.Mus. thesis, Australian Catholic University, 2001.

¹⁵ Paul Collins, *St Albans International Organ Festival: The Anatomy of a Dream 1963–2001* (St Albans: International Organ Festival Society Ltd, 2003).

¹⁶ Dennis Gray Stoll, *Music Festivals of the World* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1963). Stephen Gallup, *A History of the Salzburg Festival* (London: Wiedenfeld and Nicolson, 1987). Michael Steinberg, *The*

Festivalising!: theatrical events, politics and culture, edited by Temple Hauptfleisch, deals with the theory of festivals, with a particular focus on theatre. Contributors to this publication discuss various elements of festivals. Vicki Cremona proposes that a festival's program range, style and presentation of individual events all contribute to the ways in which programs are to be apprehended and processed.¹⁷ The presentation of events in a specific time frame or 'concentrated burst' is an important element of a festival.¹⁸ Sergio de Pieri defines a festival as one with a minimum of 10 to 15 concerts, delivered over 10 to 20 days within a month.¹⁹ All of these qualities are present in the festivals being discussed in this thesis.

The extensive literature concerning the two instruments at the centre of this thesis—the organ and harpsichord—provided a solid foundation for this work. The developments in organ building through the past century, particularly as outlined in the writings of Thistlethwaite, Williams and Owen informed Chapter 4.²⁰ Zuckermann's documentation of the harpsichord builders of the twentieth century, including Australian builders, and the history by Kottick provided extensive resources to inform the chapter on harpsichord building.²¹ Howard Pollard's article on Sydney and its organs from the 1950s provided an invaluable context and background to the development of neoclassical organs in Sydney.²² Publications by Haskell, and Cohen and Snitzer outlining the developments in early music in Europe, provided the context for the development of the harpsichord.²³ Two theses from the University of Melbourne explore the organ reform movement as it applies to Australia. The first, by Ron Nagorcka, considers the work of Ronald Sharp as an Australian representative of

Meaning of the Salzburg Festival: Austria as Theatre and Ideology (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990).

¹⁷ Vicki Ann Cremona, 'Introduction—the Festivalising Process' *Festivalising!: theatrical events, politics and culture*, ed. Temple Hauptfleisch (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007) 6.

¹⁸ Malcolm Gillies, 'Festivals: now and then', *Sounds Australian*, No 63, (2004): 5.

¹⁹ Sergio de Pieri, personal communication, 12 Feb. 2009.

²⁰ Peter Williams and Barbara Owen, *The New Grove Organ* (London: Macmillan, 1988). Nicholas Thistlethwaite, 'Origins and Development of the Organ', *The Cambridge Companion to the Organ*, ed. Nicholas Thistlethwaite and Geoffrey Webber (Cambridge: CUP, 1998).

²¹ Wolfgang Zuckermann, *The Modern Harpsichord: Twentieth-Century Instruments and their Makers* (New York: October House, 1969). Edward L Kottick, *A History of the Harpsichord* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1988).

²² Howard Pollard, 'Recollections: New Organs and Changes in Musical Tastes', *Sydney Organ Journal*, Vol 31, (2000).

²³ Harry Haskell, *The Early Music Revival: A History* (New York, N.Y.: Thames and Hudson, 1988). Joel Cohen and Herb Snitzer, *Reprise: the extraordinary revival of early music* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1985).

the movement, while the second, by Rowena Beaverstock, looks at the influence of this movement on organ building in Melbourne from 1972 to 1983.²⁴

There are no archives of the first festivals in Adelaide, Sydney and Perth. There is an extensive archive for the Melbourne festival from the late 1970s but material relevant to this thesis—from 1971 to 1973—is limited to program documents and a few reviews.²⁵ Only two complete programs, for the 1968 and 1972 festivals, were available for Adelaide festivals, kindly supplied by Christa Rumsey and Catharina Corbett.²⁶ Complete programs could only be located for the 1968, 1972 and 1973 Sydney festivals, kindly supplied by Hugh Knight and Christa Rumsey.²⁷ Brochures of the 1971 and 1973 Perth festival were provided by Christa Rumsey and Dudley Bastien. Reviews of some concerts in Sydney, Adelaide, Melbourne and Perth festivals were generously provided by Christa Rumsey and John Maidment. Other reviews were obtained from library searches. In the absence of substantial written archives this dissertation relies heavily upon interviews with those involved in the early festivals. As an organ student in Melbourne in the early 1970s, I attended the early Melbourne festivals as a volunteer and student performer, and I worked as manager of MAFOH from 1978 to 1980. I was, therefore, personally acquainted with those who were involved in the establishment and development of these festivals.

²⁴ Ron Nagorcka, 'From Schnitger to Sharp: an Assessment of the Organ Reform Movement and its major Australian representative'. BA Hons. thesis. University of Melbourne, 1971. Rowena Beaverstock, 'The Orgelbewegung and its influence on organ building in Melbourne, 1972–1983', BA Hons. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1983.

²⁵ These archives cover 1971–2000. They are held by the Early Music Studio at the University of Melbourne, but are not catalogued. Material from this archive relevant to this thesis comprises programs and a few reviews only. The program of the first Melbourne festival, missing from the archive, was kindly provided by John Maidment. More extensive material is held for the subsequent years, including formal documents and ephemera. A search for acquittal reports and programs held by the Australia Council as funding body for the third festival, was unsuccessful. Personal communication, Simeon Barlow, 30 Jan. 2008.

²⁶ The archives of the Organ Music Society of Adelaide were searched to ascertain names of the artistic director of the early Adelaide festivals. As the Society was responsible for staging the Adelaide festivals Catharina Corbett suggests it is possible that direction was by committee. Christa Rumsey is noted as Director from 1987. Catharina Corbett, personal communication, 1 Mar. 2011. Two reviews were found in the Adelaide Advertiser for the 1972 festival: Ralph Middenway, 'Organ Week Opens Well', *Adelaide Advertiser* 9 August 1972. Ralph Middenway, 'Classical Organ Gorgeous', *Adelaide Advertiser* 15 August 1972.

²⁷ Members of The Organ Music Society of Sydney were asked for assistance in locating programs of the Sydney festivals. Personal communication, 13 Nov. 2007. Resources held at the State Library of New South Wales were also searched, 24/25 Nov. 2007.

I identified nine people who had been involved with these festivals in various ways and sought permission to interview them. Those interviewed were chosen on the basis of their involvement with the Sydney, Adelaide and Melbourne festivals. No surviving representative of the Perth festival could be located.²⁸ The nine interviewees were: David Rumsey, Sergio de Pieri, Christa Rumsey, John McCaughey, Ron Nagorcka, Douglas Lawrence, Ann Morgan, Mars McMillan and John Maidment. Of primary importance were the recollections of David Rumsey, Sergio de Pieri and Douglas Lawrence, as artistic directors of festivals at the time. David Rumsey was artistic director of the first Adelaide festival and all the Sydney festivals and performed in thirteen of the seventeen festivals in this study; Christa Rumsey was a joint artistic director of the first festival in Sydney in 1968 and performed at festivals in Adelaide, Sydney, Melbourne and Perth, as did Sergio de Pieri and Douglas Lawrence who were, in succession, artistic directors of the Melbourne festival; Ron Nagorcka is a composer who was commissioned to write works for several of the Melbourne festivals; John Maidment is an authority on organs in Australia and was a chairman of the Melbourne festival board; Ann Morgan is a harpsichordist who performed at a number of Melbourne festivals; Mars McMillan is a harpsichord builder in Melbourne; and John McCaughey was involved with the first Melbourne festival as a composer and performer, and advisor to the artistic director. The information provided by these people provided a dense and rich resource, covering all the festivals. Ron Nagorcka provided invaluable background information about the prevailing contemporary music environment in Melbourne in the early 1970s, which gave a context to the inclusion of this repertoire in the Melbourne festivals. In addition to formal interviews, I conducted follow-up discussions with key people such as David Rumsey, Mars McMillan, John Maidment and Christa Rumsey over the course of the project. A later contact with Australian harpsichord player and builder Richard Ireland led to extensive correspondence about the harpsichord in Melbourne in the 1960s and 1970s. Howard Pollard and John Larner also provided additional information and written material on organs in Sydney and Perth in this period. Three people interviewed in this project—David Rumsey, Sergio de Pieri and Douglas Lawrence—had all been artistic directors of festivals, and had performed and taught

²⁸ At a later stage in the research contact was made with the organ builder John Larner, who had been involved with the first Perth festivals and worked closely with Michael Wentzell, building an organ for the first Perth festival, at the request of Wentzell. John Larner, personal communication, 30 Aug. 2010.

in festivals in each of the four states, therefore information could be obtained about all seventeen festivals. The Early Music Studio at the University of Melbourne made available the archives of the Melbourne Autumn Festival of Organ and Harpsichord (later the Melbourne International Festival of Organ and Harpsichord). The information collected from interviews, ongoing discussions and private collections of programs, articles and reviews provided an outstanding collection of resources, which has informed the majority of this thesis.

The first chapter of this thesis examines the prevailing climate for the organ in Australia in the mid-1960s, and the influence of the organ reform movement, which was such a significant factor in organ restoration and building practices in Europe from the early twentieth century. The artistic directors of these new Australian organ festivals regarded the neoclassical instruments that resulted from the organ reform movement as integral to the performance and educational objectives they established for the Australian festivals. Fortuitously, from the late 1950s, a number of individuals in Sydney and in Western Australia were actively exploring the elements of the organ reform movement, and in Sydney a number of neoclassical instruments were installed, followed later by new instruments in other states. The presence of these instruments was fundamental to the Australian organ festivals that commenced in 1968, and provided a foundation for new approaches to the organ in Australia.

In the second chapter I consider the development of new harpsichords built in Melbourne from the mid-1960s. This development parallels the emergence of neoclassical organs in Sydney in a number of ways. The builders of the new neoclassical organs in Sydney and of the new harpsichords in Melbourne shared an interest in making instruments that would reproduce the ‘new’ sounds heard on recordings of historic instruments from Europe. The new Melbourne harpsichords were included in the first Melbourne organ festival, in part compensating for the late uptake of neoclassical organs in Melbourne, to the extent that the festival was titled Melbourne Autumn Festival of Organ and Harpsichord—the only festival known to use such an inclusive title. The use of harpsichords in the Melbourne festivals gave them a broader and more intense early music dimension. Chapter 3 describes the first of the new festivals held in Adelaide and Sydney from 1968 to 1970. Chapter 4

explores the development of these festivals to 1973. Chapter 5 discusses the new festivals that began in Perth and Melbourne in 1971, concluding with an extended discussion of the Melbourne festival, which embraced a broad range of repertoire in every style from the very earliest through to newly written works, and was, uniquely amongst the Australian festivals, to survive in various forms for three decades.

CHAPTER 1

‘The Long-Awaited Dawn’: Neoclassical organs in Australia

In 1965 Ronald Sharp completed the first major Australian-built neoclassical organ for the Knox Grammar School chapel in Wahroonga, a suburb of Sydney. This mechanical action instrument of three manuals and thirty-one stops was built largely according to the principles of the organ reform movement (*Orgelbewegung*) that had swept through Europe in the first half of the twentieth century. It was the first of many such organs to be built in Australia and represented a renewed interest in music composed for the organ, especially by Bach and his predecessors, and indirectly influenced organ teaching, performance and festivals around the country. The astonishing thing about Sharp’s achievement is that he was self-taught in the craft of organ building and completed this groundbreaking instrument inspired only by sound recordings and writings about historic European instruments, without having travelled to Europe to hear them first-hand. In this chapter I examine the circumstances that led to the installation of neoclassical organs in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth between 1958 and 1973, which would play an important role in the organ festivals held in these cities between 1968 and 1973.²⁹

The organ reform movement

Peter Williams and Barbara Owen describe the organ reform movement as being concerned with reviving some of the historic principles of the organ, partly as a reaction to the organs of the nineteenth century, particularly in Germany.³⁰ Prior to the nineteenth century, organs in Europe, with some regional variations, used a direct linkage from keyboard to pipe—a mechanical action—that gave the player direct control of articulation and phrasing. The tonal disposition of these instruments covered a wide spectrum of sonorities comprising: foundation tone, harmonics, which complement and enhance the foundation tone, some at octave pitch and others such as mixtures and mutation stops;³¹ and reed stops that provided additional colour and

²⁹ No neoclassical organs were built in the other states during this period.

³⁰ Peter Williams and Barbara Owen, *The New Grove Organ* (London: Macmillan, 1988) 180.

³¹ Often called upperwork.

brilliance.³² The inclusion of strongly developed overtones (or harmonics) in the tonal design resulted in tonal clarity and transparency ideally suited to the performance of polyphonic music. In historic instruments, such as those built by Schnitger, Silbermann and others, all the stops were seen to have ‘a certain equality so that *all* pulled their weight in the full ensemble’.³³ Thistlethwaite notes that despite imperfections, the technology of the early organ was complete by the mid-fifteenth century and no significant innovations were made to the basic design for three centuries.³⁴

In the nineteenth century however, technological innovations allowed organ builders to build bigger instruments with increased power. Keyboards could be detached from the pipes by using newly developed tubular and electro-pneumatic actions, which eliminated the direct mechanical connection, and expressive devices such as crescendo pedals were added to allow greater dynamic variation. Nineteenth-century instruments also differed significantly from their predecessors in tonal design. Solo stops replicating orchestral instruments were added, and there was an increase in foundational tone stops, with a corresponding decrease in mixtures and mutations. These new instruments were suited to the larger forces demanded by a different repertoire, including orchestral transcriptions, but were increasingly unsuitable for much of the organ’s historic repertoire.³⁵

The nineteenth-century organ did not meet with universal acceptance. Albert Schweitzer is regarded as having provided the initial stimulus for a reconsideration of the nature of the organ. In 1896 he heard what he regarded as an unsatisfactory new organ in the Liederhalle in Stuttgart, which led to the publication of his 1906 pamphlet *The Art of Organ Building and Organ Playing in Germany and France*, in which he outlined in detail his views on the structure of the ideal organ.³⁶ Schweitzer recommended a return to mechanical action and the tonal dispositions of the

³² The combination of these stops constitutes what is termed the chorus.

³³ Ralph Downes, *Baroque Tricks: Adventures with Organ Builders* (Oxford: Positif Press, 1983) 44.

³⁴ Nicholas Thistlethwaite, ‘Origins and Development of the Organ’, *The Cambridge Companion to the Organ*, ed. Nicholas Thistlethwaite and Geoffrey Webber (Cambridge: CUP, 1998) 8.

³⁵ Thistlethwaite, 16.

³⁶ Lawrence Phelps, ‘A Short History of the Organ Revival’, reprint from *Church Music*, 67 (1967), accessed 20 Feb. 2008, <<http://lawrencephelps.com/Documents/Articles/Phelps/ashorthistory.shtml>>. Albert Schweitzer, *Deutsche und französische Orgelbaukunst und Orgelkunst* (Leipzig, 1906).

instruments of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Williams and Owen state that early signs of the organ reform movement can be found in the interpretation of old music by musicians such as Arnold Dolmetsch in England and Alexandre Guilmant in France, and in the increasing interest in Bach's music.³⁷ David Rumsey identifies the scholarship that grew around centres such as the Schola Cantorum in Paris and Belgium and the publication in the mid-nineteenth century of reliable editions of early French composers such as Titelouze as influential. Additionally, in organ building, such events as the historically sensitive 1895 Félix Reinberg restoration of the Compenius organ in Hillerød Castle in Denmark—on behalf of Cavallé-Coll—were signals of reform.³⁸

In 1921 a 'model' instrument was built by E.F. Walcker & Cie to a disposition by Praetorius of 1618, providing a concrete example of the movement's principles of organ building. The organ reform movement was formally launched at the Freiburg Organ Conference of 1926, under the leadership of Christhard Mahrenholtz, a German liturgical expert and reformer. The new instruments built according to the principles of the organ reform movement were termed 'neoclassical' or, in some cases, 'baroque' organs. The principal elements of a neoclassical organ include the use of mechanical action; slider windchest design; lower wind pressures; tonal design including mixtures and mutations and *Werkprinzip* ideals, and consideration of temperings including increased use of unequal temperings. Following the Freiburg conference, the ideals of the organ reform movement were taken up in northern Europe by such firms as Marcussen, von Beckerath, Schuke, Frobenius, Flentrop, Rieger, Klais and Walcker, and in America from the 1930s by Holtkamp and G. Donald Harrison, all followed by builders in other countries.³⁹

³⁷ Williams and Owen, 181. Despite an active Bach revival in England, the organ reform movement 'took a back seat to the great choral traditions'. 'Bach was judged to be served well on British instruments – that is, on Victorian terms.' David Rumsey, personal communication, 16 Oct. 2009.

³⁸ David Rumsey, personal communication, 9 Jun. 2008.

³⁹ William Leslie Sumner, *The Organ* (London: Macdonald, 1973) 251.

Organ reform in Australia

The first organs in Australia were imported from Britain in the 1820s, though it was not until the 1850s that instruments arrived in large numbers.⁴⁰ Organs brought to Australia included small instruments of one manual in eighteenth-century English style, as at St Matthew's, Rokeby, Tasmania and mid-nineteenth-century instruments with complete manual choruses such as at the Albert Hall, Launceston.⁴¹ By the late nineteenth century, the instrument style of the time included an increased number of unison ranks and limited upperwork, as at the Congregational Church, Ballarat, Victoria. British settlement in Australia meant that, in the main, Australia inherited the British organ building styles, which remained largely unaffected by the organ reform movement until the 1950s. Maidment notes that: 'few English organs built between 1900 and 1950 had generous choruses at all'.⁴² This can also be said of organs in Australia in the same period.

The first signs of awareness of the ideals of the organ reform movement were not seen in Australia until the 1950s. John Maidment notes that a neoclassical approach was taken in the 1958 rebuild of the organ at the Bethlehem Lutheran Church, Adelaide, by J.E. Dodd & Sons, Gunstar Organ Works, which included the independent divisions and full choruses that were a hallmark of the neoclassical organ.⁴³ The 1959 rebuild by Hill Norman & Beard of the organ at Trinity College chapel, University of Melbourne, included the relatively unusual step of reducing unison (fundamental) ranks of the existing instrument, and adding upperwork.⁴⁴ This was not a neoclassical instrument, but the rebuild showed an awareness of the tonal design principles of the organ reform movement.⁴⁵ Melbourne organ building firm George Fincham & Sons began to include elements of organ reform principles in new instruments from the

⁴⁰ John Maidment, 'Imported Organs in Australia: A 150-year Tradition', *The Organ Yearbook* 6 (1975): 64.

⁴¹ Organ Historical Trust, accessed 20 May 2009, <<http://www.ohta.org.au/organs/tas.html>>

⁴² John Maidment, 'Imported Organs in Australia: A 150-year Tradition', *The Organ Yearbook* 6 (1975): 74.

⁴³ John Maidment, personal communication, 24 Oct. 2009.

⁴⁴ John Maidment, 'Changing Concepts in the Tonal Design of Victorian Organs, 1861–1968', *Society of Organists (Victoria) Incorporated Newsletter* (Dec. 1968): 10.

⁴⁵ John Norman, of parent company Hill Norman & Beard in the UK, personal communication, 13 August 2009, noted that H.N.&B. in London started to be affected by the organ reform movement from 1953. William Brodie, the organ builder at H.N.& B. responsible for the Trinity rebuild, visited the UK in the late 1950s and would have become aware of the impact there of the organ reform movement, which one assumes influenced aspects of his work on the Trinity rebuild.

1960s, such as incorporating more upperwork in the tonal design, as at St Raphael's Catholic Church, Preston. The same firm also adjusted apprenticeship training to develop the skills required to build neoclassical instruments. Melbourne organ builder David Fincham spent the fifth year of his apprenticeship at the Tamburini factory in Italy in 1964, primarily to learn about mechanical action. He also studied reed voicing with Giesecke in Germany.⁴⁶ In 1964 and 1966, Hill Norman & Beard built two small continuo organs of four ranks with mechanical actions.⁴⁷ In Western Australia a new instrument by J. W. Walker & Sons, installed at Winthrop Hall at the University of Western Australia in 1965, included many elements influenced by the organ reform movement. The electro-pneumatic action precluded it from being regarded as a fully neoclassical instrument, but the tonal design was neoclassical, with mutations and mixtures along with reeds. It has been described as 'a typical English interpretation of the "neo-baroque" style in vogue at the time'.⁴⁸ The first examples of authentic neoclassical organs built according to all the principles of the organ reform movement were installed in New South Wales.

Organ reform in New South Wales

In 1958 Australia's first neoclassical organ was imported from Germany and installed at St Andrew's College chapel at the University of Sydney.⁴⁹ Between 1958 and 1972 in New South Wales and the ACT at least eight imported and seven locally built neoclassical organs were installed in buildings including a city hall, a residence, schools and churches.⁵⁰ The installation of these instruments was to influence subsequent activity in organ building, and hence organ performance, in all other Australian states and territories.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s many existing organs in Sydney were in poor condition. Pollard suggests that this was partly due to a lack of funds and trained

⁴⁶ Rowena Beaverstock, 'The Orgelbewegung and its influence on organ building in Melbourne, 1972–1983', BA Hons. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1983, 13.

⁴⁷ 'A Modern Mechanical Action Organ in Melbourne', *Society of Organists (Victoria) Incorporated Newsletter* (Apr. 1971): 15.

⁴⁸ Organ Historical Trust, accessed 7 Jul. 2009, <<http://www.ohta.org.au/organs/organs/Winthrop.html>>. The tonal design was by Michael Brimer. John Larner, personal communication, 30 Aug. 2010.

⁴⁹ Kelvin Hastie, personal communication, 19 Apr. 2008.

⁵⁰ Organ Historical Trust, accessed 20 Jul. 2009, <<http://www.ohta.org.au/organs/nsw.html>>.

personnel available for maintenance, along with a widely held belief that there was no future for the organ as a legitimate instrument.⁵¹ The Sydney Town Hall organ had such serious problems that it was necessary to hose the floor of the organ chamber before recitals in order to boost humidity, and thus prevent sticking of various parts of the mechanism! The organs at St Andrew's Cathedral and the University of Sydney were also in poor operating condition.⁵² International performers such as André Marchal, George Thalben-Ball and Pierre Cochereau all complained about the Town Hall instrument, and Peter Hurford, the Artistic Director of the St Albans International Organ Festival, noted in 1967 that it was 'in shocking condition'.⁵³ Clearly, this was not an ideal environment for public appreciation of, and enthusiasm for the organ and its repertoire. Local music critics had a negative attitude to the instrument, and composers were not inspired to write for it.⁵⁴ Local organists, too, were frustrated by the condition and style of the instruments available, not only due to their unreliability, but also to the difference between the tonal disposition of the local instruments and that of the historic European instruments beginning to be heard on recordings. Pollard observed that by 1960, the many fine recordings of early music that were available made it clear 'that any improvements in the local [Sydney] presentation of organ music would have to wait for the advent of new, suitable instruments'.⁵⁵

A number of committed individuals, aware of the organ reform movement in Europe, devoted a high level of enthusiasm, knowledge and energy to changing this situation in Sydney. The most active of these were Howard Pollard, physicist and organist; Vincent Sheppard, medical doctor and keen musician; Ronald Sharp, engineer-turned organ builder; Roger Pogson, professional organ builder; and Peter Lawson, scientific instrument maker and amateur organ builder.

⁵¹ Howard Pollard, personal communication, 10 Dec. 2010.

⁵² Howard Pollard, 'Recollections', *Sydney Organ Journal* 31 (Autumn 2000): 42. In later years several of these instruments were restored by builders such as Pogson, and Pitchford & Garside. John Maidment, personal communication, 24 Oct. 2009; Mark Fisher, personal communication, 19 Oct. 2009.

⁵³ Pollard, 'Recollections', 51.

⁵⁴ Pollard, personal communication, 10 Dec. 2010.

⁵⁵ Pollard, 'Recollections', 46.

Howard Pollard, who was a lecturer in physics at the New South Wales University of Technology, Sydney, and Vincent Sheppard, the Chief Medical Officer, NSW Railways Department, shared an interest in organ music.⁵⁶ Sheppard was particularly interested in early music, and both were active performers. They believed that the organs available in Sydney compared unfavourably with those they heard on recordings of European instruments. Pollard wrote of the organs available at the time:

The majority of organs available in Sydney and other Australian cities were either imported English organs of Victorian vintage or were locally built organs of the same kind. The type of tone was generally most unsuitable for older music, which of course included Bach. There was the unfortunate Victorian English tradition of excluding solo mutation ranks and there were those woefully inadequate pedal organs—many 16' ranks with one or two at 8'. The wind pressures currently employed made it difficult to voice pipes that blended satisfactorily and it was common practice among organ builders of the time to eliminate 'chiff' and other attack sounds from the pipes by resorting to heavy nicking of the pipes.⁵⁷

Pollard and his colleagues were also studying the publications of Albert Schweitzer and trying to understand what he was driving at in his writings.⁵⁸

Pollard, together with physicist colleague Roy Caddy, had undertaken experiments into organ action, in order to explore the principle of mechanical action espoused by the organ reform movement, as compared with electric actions.⁵⁹ A sponsor of this research was an advocate of electric action, so it was ironic that the outcome demonstrated the superiority of mechanical action. The results of this research were published in 1957 in the international journals *Acustica* and the *Organ Institute Quarterly*.⁶⁰

Sheppard wanted an appropriate chamber instrument that he could use for concert performances of early music. He tried to build such an instrument himself, but had

⁵⁶ New South Wales University of Technology Sydney was formerly called Sydney Technical College.

⁵⁷ Pollard, 'Recollections', 42.

⁵⁸ Howard Pollard, personal communication, 14 May 2009.

⁵⁹ Pollard, 'Recollections', 48.

⁶⁰ R. S. Caddy and H. F. Pollard, 'Transient Sounds In Organ Pipes', *Acustica* 7 (1957): 277, and Roy S. Caddy and Howard F. Pollard, 'An Objective Study of Organ Actions', *Organ Institute Quarterly* 7 (1957): 44. In Pollard, 48.

difficulty learning about the old construction methods, although he did complete one rank in time for a concert in May 1956. In 1957, after a visit to Europe, he imported an instrument built in 1790 by Knipscheer that had been faithfully restored by Flentrop, a prominent Dutch firm involved in the organ reform movement. It was a one-manual chamber organ of four ranks, disposed according to the historical principles that the reform movement sought to emulate. Pollard recalls that performances assumed new dimensions after the arrival of this instrument.⁶¹

Pollard and Sheppard, with others, were also instrumental in establishing the Organ Society of Sydney in 1950, with the objectives of fostering and encouraging a deeper appreciation of the organ and its music; proving the legitimacy of the organ as an instrument in its own right; fostering interchange between members; and keeping in touch with developments overseas.⁶² When the Society fragmented in the late 1950s, Pollard and Sheppard set up the Organ Institute of NSW, with the additional aim of ‘applying musical and scientific research to the improved performance of organ music and the improved design of organs’.⁶³ The Institute ran seminars and concerts, and published papers supporting its aims.

Another enthusiast, Peter Lawson, by profession a scientific instrument maker, also had a keen interest in organs and their construction. He was a member of the Organ Institute, and according to Pollard was ‘very vocal’ in the late 1950s about the deficiencies of local romantic-style organs, a topic he discussed frequently with Pollard.⁶⁴ In the mid-1950s Lawson set up an agency in Sydney for the German organ builder E. F. Walcker & Cie.⁶⁵ Although several British organ builders had either an agency or a factory in Australia, I have not discovered any other European organ builder with such an arrangement in Australia during the twentieth century. Lawson also acted as agent for the Swiss firm Meidinger & Cie, manufacturers of organ

⁶¹ Pollard, personal communication, 14 May 2009.

⁶² ‘Editorial’, *The Canon* Vol 4 No 9 (Apr.1951): p 418. Also in Pollard, ‘Recollections’ 44.

⁶³ Pollard, 46.

⁶⁴ Pollard, personal communication, 28 Aug. 2009.

⁶⁵ Note the distinction between E.F. Walcker & Cie, organ builders and Helmut Walcha the organist. E.F. Walcker & Cie previously had two different agency arrangements in Sydney: the first in the nineteenth-century and the second in the 1930s. Graeme Rushworth, *Historic Organs of New South Wales* (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1988), 331–33.

blowers.⁶⁶ Though not a professional organ builder, Lawson spent 1957 at the Walcker factory in Germany, learning about their instruments, presumably in order to be able to assemble them in Australia.⁶⁷ Lawson also attended one of the congresses of the newly formed International Society of Organbuilders, probably the one held in Amsterdam in 1957.⁶⁸ As Walcker's representative in Sydney, Lawson made Australian organ history by importing and installing Australia's first neoclassical instrument, for St Andrew's College chapel at the University of Sydney, in 1958.⁶⁹ This instrument was the smallest of the Walcker range of template organs.⁷⁰ By 1969, Lawson had installed nine neoclassical Walcker instruments in Sydney and the ACT. Following his untimely death in the late 1960s, the agency arrangement appears to have ceased.

At this time Ronald Sharp and Roger (Peter) Pogson, were separately exploring the possibility of building neoclassical instruments, following the principles of the organ reform movement. Ron Sharp had done apprenticeships in electrics and mechanics, and having a keen appreciation of music, had studied piano, flute and organ. Although he was not trained as an organ builder, out of interest he started making an instrument, exploring the various construction issues and reading about organs in the Sydney public library.⁷¹ Sharp regarded his lack of formal training as an asset: 'With no experience I could approach the projects with an open mind, not bowed by orthodox rules'.⁷² He also became involved with Howard Pollard and Vincent Sheppard in the Organ Institute, and credits them with his awareness of the organ reform movement.⁷³ Pollard noted that Sharp was convinced that the principles of the organ reform movement were vital to building a truly musical instrument.⁷⁴ Sharp took his cue from the 'new' sounds heard on recordings, particularly German recordings demonstrating

⁶⁶ *Proceedings of the Organ Institute of New South Wales* 1(September 1963): 22.

⁶⁷ Jim Forsyth, personal communication, 11 Sep. 2009.

⁶⁸ Pollard, personal communication, 28 Aug. 2009. The International Society of Organbuilders was formed in 1957.

⁶⁹ Kelvin Hastie, personal communication, 19 Apr. 2008.

⁷⁰ Jim Forsyth, personal communication, 11 Sep. 2009.

⁷¹ Lenore Nicklin, 'He's building the world's greatest organ', *Sydney Morning Herald* 18 Aug. 1970.

⁷² Alan Attwood, 'Sydney's Musical Monster' *The Age* Jun. 7, 1976.

⁷³ Peter Meyer, 'Ron Sharp: A Great Craftsman at Eighty', *The Sydney Organ Journal*, Vol 40, No 4, (Spring 2009): 12.

⁷⁴ Howard F Pollard, 'The Organ in New South Wales 1950–1972', presented to the Seventh Annual conference of OHTA, Sydney, 27 Aug. 1984. Kindly supplied by the writer.

the old European instruments.⁷⁵ Pollard recalls that at a meeting of the Organ Institute of NSW at St Mary's Cathedral in Sydney, Sharp gave a demonstration of Schnitger organ tones, using a record of Helmut Walcha playing the organ at Cappel in Germany.⁷⁶ David Rumsey also remembers this meeting, which also included a recording by E. Power Biggs:

There was a very famous recording where E. Power Biggs spoke about neo-classical organs, put out by Masterworks. It was very influential ... we heard the sounds of these organs and they sounded nothing like the organs we knew, and they sounded good. They were recordings of the Schnitgers and really fine classical instruments in particular. ... We played these things and [Ron Sharp] demonstrated how he'd done it in some of his instruments.⁷⁷

Pollard believes that Sharp's system of building was 'remarkably parallel to the new ideas being tried in Europe'.⁷⁸ Sharp continued his exploration of tonal design and organ construction throughout the 1950s, and by 1959 had secured the contract to build the triforium chancel organ for St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, which he completed in 1960. This instrument has electro-pneumatic action, but its tonal design reveals Sharp's understanding of the tonal principles of the organ reform movement. Sharp went on to build the first major Australian neoclassical organ, for the chapel at Knox Grammar School, completed in 1965. This was followed in 1968 by a neoclassical instrument for Wollongong Town Hall.

The Knox instrument was critical in the history of organ building in Australia. Peter Hurford, English organist and director of the St Albans International Organ Festival, gave a series of recitals on the Knox chapel organ in 1967 and is reported to have announced that he had heard only four other organs in the world that equalled or bettered it.⁷⁹ John Sinclair, of the Melbourne *Herald*, reported that Hurford considered Ronald Sharp to be the best organ builder in the world.⁸⁰ Hurford, a regular visitor to

⁷⁵ Beaverstock, 15.

⁷⁶ Pollard, personal communication, 14 May 2009.

⁷⁷ David Rumsey, personal communication, 9 Jun. 2008.

⁷⁸ Pollard, personal communication, 14 May 2009.

⁷⁹ Nicklin, 'He's building the world's greatest organ', *Sydney Morning Herald* 20 Aug. 1970. Mark Fisher is noted as the pipe maker for the Knox instrument and Sharp's chief assistant.

⁸⁰ John Sinclair, 'Organ music's young sound', *Herald* 12 May 1969.

Australia from 1965, later recorded on both the Knox and Wollongong organs, bringing these instruments to the attention of organists world-wide.⁸¹ His support led to Sharp being chosen as the builder of the organ for the Sydney Opera House.⁸²

The responses to the startling new organ at Knox Grammar School were varied. Pollard notes that ‘there was initially a hostile reaction to [Sharp’s] ideas particularly from certain professional organists, until the lavish praise from Hurford and other visitors silenced them.’⁸³ Opinions differed on details of the voicing of the Knox organ, with Peter Planyavsky, Cathedral Organist at St Stephan’s Cathedral, Vienna, regarding the stops as beautiful but without principal tone.⁸⁴ British writer Cecil Clutton found the principals: ‘extremely beautiful stops and to my personal taste infinitely to be preferred to the thin and sometimes edgy principal that so many voicers affect. The scale is not far off eighteenth-century French practice’.⁸⁵

Professional organ builder Roger Pogson had trained with the Sydney firm S. T. Noad & Son, before establishing his own business in 1963.⁸⁶ It is not known what motivated Pogson to begin building in neoclassical style but, after some initial design experiments, his first major neoclassical instrument, built in 1967 for the Futter Hall at The King’s School, Parramatta, was immediately hailed as a success. Pogson went on to build a second instrument for the chapel at The King’s School. He built other notable neoclassical instruments at Christ Church Brunswick, Victoria (1972), the NSW State Conservatorium of Music (1973), and Melba Hall, University of Melbourne (1979).⁸⁷

By 1968 seventeen new neoclassical instruments, inspired by the principles of the organ reform movement, had been built or installed in Sydney (see Table 1). They were either imported through Lawson’s Walcker agency or built locally. Further neoclassical instruments followed, from the Dutch firm Flentrop for St Paul’s

⁸¹ Basil Ramsey, ‘Interview’ *Choir and Organ*, 8/6 (2000): 23.

⁸² Kathy Kizilos, ‘Meeting of Douglas and Goliath’, *The Age* 7 Jun. 1979.

⁸³ Pollard, personal communication, 10 Dec. 2010.

⁸⁴ Ron Nagorecka, ‘From Schnitger to Sharp: an Assessment of the Organ Reform Movement and its major Australian representative’, BA Hons. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1971, 62.

⁸⁵ Cecil Clutton, ‘Ronald Sharp—Australian Organ Builder’, *The Organ* 66 (Oct., 1970): 66.

⁸⁶ Rushworth, 177.

⁸⁷ Organ Historical Trust, accessed 18 Feb. 2009, < <http://www.ohta.org.au>>.

College, University of Sydney, and from the German firm von Beckerath for the Great Hall, University of Sydney (both 1972).

Table 1: Neoclassical organs installed in NSW/ACT 1958–1968⁸⁸

	ORGAN BUILDERS		
Year	Ronald Sharp	Roger Pogson	E. F. Walcker et Cie
1958			<i>University of Sydney, St Andrew's College.</i>
1960	<i>Rockdale, Church of Christ.</i>		<i>South Hurstville, St Mark's.</i>
1961	<i>Kogarah, Marist Brothers School. Rooty Hill, Franciscan Monastery.* Sans Souci, St Finbar's, Ultimo, ABC.</i>	<i>Harbord, St John the Baptist</i>	<i>Harbord, St Mark's. Concord, St Mary's. Reid ACT, St Peter's Lutheran.</i>
1962			<i>Gladesville, Anglican.</i>
1964	<i>Residence, Johnston.</i>		
1965	<i>Wahroonga, Knox Grammar School, chapel.</i>		<i>New Lambton, Anglican.</i>
1966			<i>Mittagong, Frensham School.</i>
1967		<i>Parramatta, The King's School, Futter Hall.</i>	
1968	<i>Wollongong, Town Hall.</i>		

* Moved to St Hilda's College, University of Melbourne in 1971

Organ reform in Victoria

While there were significant changes taking place in Sydney from the late 1950s to the mid 1960s, there was no similar activity in Melbourne at that time. No neoclassical instruments were either built or imported. There is no evidence that the local organ society was advocating for better organs, as was the case in Sydney, nor were individual enthusiasts prominent in calls for neoclassical organs. Sergio de Pieri, organist at St Patrick's Cathedral from 1963, had used his teaching and performances to create awareness of new repertoire and performance styles, but there is no evidence that de Pieri was actively promoting neoclassical instruments at this stage. However, by the mid-1960s several of de Pieri's students, including Douglas Lawrence and Ron

⁸⁸ Organ Historical Trust, accessed 18 Feb. 2009, < <http://www.ohta.org.au>>.

Nagorcka were becoming interested in neoclassical instruments. Once again recordings were an important stimulus. Ron Nagorcka recalls:

I can well remember at Whitley College, arriving back from the pub with Douglas Lawrence and a few other mates and ...immediately a record of very loud organ music would be put on, and we'd listen to Bach. ... We were the first generation that encountered it on recordings. Before that you had to go to Europe to hear it. And here we were in lonely little Melbourne and this stuff was available – it was very exciting.⁸⁹

They were also aware of developments in Sydney. Douglas Lawrence recalls: 'I went to [visit the organ at] Knox Grammar School in my first year at University. I drove up with Jim Forsyth ... and we were blown away'.⁹⁰ Forsyth, another student of de Pieri, was studying music in Melbourne at the time but had formerly lived in Sydney where he worked with Peter Lawson on the installation of Walcker neoclassical instruments and developed an enthusiasm for neoclassical instruments that he shared with his fellow students in Melbourne.⁹¹ Lawrence considered his visit to Sydney in 1965 as a turning point that changed his ideas on organ building:⁹²

Ron had five stops on the positiv – that's all. I played these – it was another world. Just something else. Ron Sharp is so very important in all of this.⁹³

Lawrence became one of the first to publicly advocate for neoclassical organs in Melbourne. In 1967 he extolled the virtues of Ronald Sharp and the Knox Grammar School instrument in the newsletter of the Victorian Society of Organists: 'It would be wonderful if we could have one of these instruments in Melbourne to stimulate organists and builders alike'.⁹⁴ This must have stirred up the local organ builders, as the following announcement appeared in the September 1968 issue of the Victorian Society of Organists newsletter under the heading 'Tracker Action Organ':

⁸⁹ Ron Nagorcka, personal communication, 6 Dec. 2008.

⁹⁰ Douglas Lawrence, personal communication, 16 Mar. 2009.

⁹¹ David Rumsey, personal communication, 5 Jun. 2011.

⁹² Interview cited in Beaverstock, 14.

⁹³ Douglas Lawrence, personal communication, 16 Mar. 2009.

⁹⁴ Douglas Lawrence, 'A New Name in Australian Organ Building', *Society of Organists (Victoria) Incorporated Newsletter* (Sep 1967): 17.

It will be of interest to those whose views on this action have been expressed somewhat forcibly recently per medium of these pages, to know that a prominent Melbourne firm is engaged in preliminary development work on such an organ for the purpose of building such an instrument in 1969. This organ, when completed, will use classical voicing with modern tracker mechanical action similar to that used by the major continental builders. It will be installed, it is hoped, in a place, suitable for concerts. Further details will be given in this 'newsletter' as they come to hand.⁹⁵

Three months later John Maidment bemoaned the lack of neoclassical instruments in Melbourne in the same forum:

It seems quite incredible that there is not, as yet, one example of a genuine neoclassical instrument in a city of our size and supposed intellectual and cultural advancement.⁹⁶

A proposal to install a neoclassical organ in Melbourne was made by organ building firm George Fincham & Sons in the late 1960s. Maidment recalls that George Fincham invited council members of the Society of Organists in Victoria to attend a meeting at his home, for the purpose of seeking their support for a proposal to import a two-manual neoclassical organ from Werner Bosch in Germany. Support was not, however, forthcoming and the idea lapsed.⁹⁷

Along with the growing frustration at the lack of new neoclassical instruments in Melbourne there was also a growing awareness of the inadequacy of Melbourne's existing organs. John Sinclair, music critic of the Melbourne *Herald* pointed out the deficiencies of Melbourne organs in a review of a recording of Spanish organs by E. Power Biggs:

⁹⁵ 'Tracker Action Organ', *Society of Organists (Victoria) Incorporated Newsletter* (Sep. 1968): 12. It is not known which builder or instrument this refers to, but the first fully neoclassical organ built by a local builder was by George Fincham & Sons for St Francis' church, installed four years after this notice, in 1972.

⁹⁶ John Maidment 'Changing concepts in the tonal design of Victorian organs', *Society of Organists (Victoria) Incorporated Newsletter* (Dec. 1968): 9.

⁹⁷ John Maidment, personal communication, 4 May 2011. It is not known if this proposal relates to the notice referred to above.

Organ recitals in Melbourne are dull—because Melbourne organs are dull, especially the one in the Town Hall which can produce great blasts of sound to frighten little girls but not the clarity, quality or variety of tone to interest either musicians or the public.⁹⁸

Sinclair's views on the inadequacy of Melbourne organs may well have been influenced by de Pieri. John McCaughey recalls that Sinclair frequently visited de Pieri's house in the mid-1960s and his informed awareness of the more arcane aspects of organ differences was probably due to these discussions.⁹⁹ Sinclair used his media role as a respected critic to point out the deficiencies of local instruments and advance the cause for better organs in Melbourne. In early 1969 he reviewed a concert by E. Power Biggs, and again criticised the Town Hall instrument for its inadequacy as a suitable organ for recitals:

When it comes to clarity, precision and bite, the enormous electro-pneumatic monster of an organ in the Town Hall is really like a toothless old man. ... The recital was important, but only because it showed with appalling clarity the inadequacy of the organ for a player of international standard. ... The Town Hall organ is a bad instrument and a major obstacle in the development of organ music in this city.¹⁰⁰

Sinclair also reported that at the party after the concert, Biggs said Melbourne had three options for the instrument: 'Burn it; have it thrown in the sea; or give it away to anyone willing to take it away'.¹⁰¹ There was an interesting parallel to a review by Roger Covell of Biggs' Sydney concert, in which he suggested that the Sydney Town Hall organ: 'has very little past and no future. Perhaps some sentimental organisation could be persuaded to take it away and give it an airing in private on wet Sunday afternoons'.¹⁰² In Sydney, however, Biggs was able to use a neoclassical chamber organ built by Ron Sharp for the early music in his program.¹⁰³ In May 1969 Sinclair and a number of de Pieri's students attended the second of the Sydney organ festivals.

⁹⁸ John Sinclair, 'Brilliant sounds of old Spain', Melbourne *Herald* 28 Nov. 1968.

⁹⁹ John McCaughey, personal communication, 30 Oct. 2008.

¹⁰⁰ John Sinclair, 'Monster ruined recital by top player', Melbourne *Herald* 19 Feb. 1969.

¹⁰¹ Sinclair, 'Monster ruined recital'.

¹⁰² Roger Covell, 'Resources hinder organist's recital', *Sydney Morning Herald* 10 Feb. 1969. Luckily, this did not occur. The Melbourne instrument was later rebuilt and the Sydney instrument restored, both with resounding success.

¹⁰³ This instrument is assumed to be the one owned by the ABC, as the ABC was the concert organiser.

In his review of this festival in the Melbourne *Herald* Sinclair pointed out the implications of the lack of neoclassical instruments in Melbourne:

Such a festival, unfortunately, could not be held in Melbourne because we lack instruments of the required standard—instruments with the precise and sensitive response that can be achieved only by mechanical action, and with tonal qualities that conform to the greatest traditions of organ music and organ building.¹⁰⁴

Later in the same year visiting organist Barrie Cabena added to the call for better organs in Melbourne, noting that the city did not have one organ on which good music could be played.¹⁰⁵ A number of young organists, some of whom had attended the Sydney festival in May, wrote in support of Cabena's view, urging Melbourne authorities to acquire organs built in neoclassical style.¹⁰⁶

The first neoclassical organ arrived in Melbourne in 1971, when the small one-manual instrument of five stops built by Ron Sharp in 1961 was moved from the Franciscan Monastery at Rooty Hill, Sydney, to St Hilda's College chapel at the University of Melbourne.¹⁰⁷ Sergio de Pieri gave the inaugural recital and John Sinclair's review noted that this was the first time that Melbourne audiences had heard such sounds, except on recordings. He referred to its arrival as:

The long-awaited dawn of a new era of organ music in this city, the first modern instrument that conforms to principles of organ building and design basically unchanged since the time of Bach.¹⁰⁸

The St Hilda's instrument was, however, too small for performances of the major classical repertoire. In the same year a mechanical action organ of five ranks with tracker action was built by local firm George Fincham & Sons.¹⁰⁹ This also was unsuitable for performances of major works.

¹⁰⁴ Sinclair, 'Organ music's young sound', Melbourne *Herald* 12 May 1969.

¹⁰⁵ Graham Eccles, 'Success, yet a tragedy', Melbourne *Herald* 16 Aug. 1969.

¹⁰⁶ Ian Hardy, Ron Nagorecka, Sylvia Cowan, 'Support for Organist', Melbourne *Herald* 27 Aug. 1969. John McCaughey, 'Are we out of step', Melbourne *Herald* 16 Sep. 1969.

¹⁰⁷ The circumstances of the removal and installation are not known.

¹⁰⁸ John Sinclair, 'New era for organ music', Melbourne *Herald* 30 Oct. 1971.

¹⁰⁹ 'A Modern Mechanical Action Organ in Melbourne', *Society of Organists (Victoria) Incorporated Newsletter* (Apr. 1971): 15.

Melbourne's first substantial neoclassical organ was installed in April 1972 at Christ Church, in Brunswick, an inner suburb of Melbourne. The instrument of two manuals and fifteen stops was by Sydney builder Roger Pogson. Two factors that were directly linked to earlier initiatives in Sydney led to the decision to specify a neoclassical organ at Brunswick. Firstly, during research by the incumbent organist, Ted King, a friend lent him a recording produced by E. F. Walcker et Cie, demonstrating the sounds of the various neoclassical organs they had built. King remembers: 'I was totally blown away, having never in my life experienced this sheer physical joy of such beauty and clarity'.¹¹⁰ As a result, he travelled to Canberra to hear the neoclassical Walcker instrument at the United Evangelical Lutheran Church at Reid that had been installed in 1965. The specification of this instrument became the starting point for the new Brunswick organ. Secondly, a musician colleague suggested that King invite Melbourne organist Sergio de Pieri to act as consultant on the project. The specification and brief for potential builders was developed further in consultation with de Pieri. His familiarity with the Pogson instrument at The King's School, through his participation in the Sydney Organ Festivals of 1968 and 1969, no doubt influenced de Pieri's recommendation that Pogson be considered as one of two possible builders for the new organ, and that Ted King visit the organ at The King's School to hear Pogson's work. As a result, two Sydney builders were invited to quote for the new organ at Brunswick: Walcker, on the basis of the organ King had heard in Canberra, and Pogson, on de Pieri's recommendation. The contract went to Pogson and the instrument was installed in April 1972.¹¹¹ In preparing the program for the opening recital, King acknowledged the inspiration he had gained from the recording of the Walcker instrument:

The first item on the Walcker demo disk was the Pachelbel variations on *Was Gott tut das is wohlgetan* [which] was the first piece I played at the official opening recital, in honour of the inspiration it gave me.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ Ted King, personal communication, 31 Jul. 2009.

¹¹¹ Ted King, personal communication, 17 Jul. 2009.

¹¹² Ted King, personal communication, 27 Aug. 2009.

Installed some eleven years after the first such instrument had arrived in Sydney,¹¹³ the Brunswick instrument was to play a pivotal role in the newly established Melbourne Autumn Festival of Organ and Harpsichord. Melbourne organist Geoff Willis reviewing the 1972 Sydney Organ Festival pointed out that the presence of the new Pogson organ in Melbourne ‘made it no longer necessary to travel to Sydney to hear a good modern tracker organ’.¹¹⁴ It was also used for major recitals by visiting organists. In September and again in November of 1972, two international organists, Peter Planyavsky and Lionel Rogg, visited Melbourne and gave concerts on the Brunswick organ. The positive response to this instrument by performers and critics was in marked contrast to earlier organ concerts in Melbourne. Of Planyavsky’s all-Bach program, Sinclair reported:

Peter Planyavsky gave the only completely satisfying Bach recital I have ever heard in Melbourne in Christ Church Brunswick. Of course until this year when the new organ was installed such a recital was not possible because we did not have one instrument on which Bach could be played adequately.¹¹⁵

Lionel Rogg, visiting in November, played first on the organ of St Patrick’s Cathedral pronouncing it as lacking ‘character’, and then at Christ Church Brunswick.¹¹⁶

Sinclair’s review of this latter recital reported:

Lionel Rogg gave the finest organ recital I have ever heard in Melbourne. I can think of only two occasions when one was offered anything like the pleasures that came in abundance last night. ... Mr Rogg had a much finer instrument at his disposal than was available to any of his international predecessors.¹¹⁷

Organ reform in Western Australia

Two factors influenced the development of the first locally-built neoclassical organs in Perth. The first was the J. W. Walker & Sons organ at Winthrop Hall, University of

¹¹³ Taking a similar size organ, the 1961 Walcker two-manual instrument of St Mark’s South Hurstville, NSW as the comparison.

¹¹⁴ Geoff Willis, ‘Sydney Organ Festival’ *Victorian Organ Journal* (Sep. 1972): 3.

¹¹⁵ John Sinclair, ‘Bach could not have been better’, Melbourne *Herald* 29 Sep. 1972.

¹¹⁶ Tony Taylor, ‘We’re Way Down the Scale’, Melbourne *Herald* 22 Nov. 1972.

¹¹⁷ John Sinclair, ‘It was Bach at its best’, Melbourne *Herald* 28 Nov. 1972. The reviewer seemingly overlooks Planyavsky’s September recital on the instrument.

Western Australia, which had been designed in 1964 by organist Michael Brimer according to many of the principles of the organ reform movement.¹¹⁸ The sounds of this instrument inspired local organ builder John Larner to learn more about building according to the precepts of the organ reform movement. In 1969 he travelled to the UK to work with J. W. Walker & Sons, and then to the Netherlands to learn neoclassical voicing with the firm Jacques Stinkens.¹¹⁹ The second factor was the work of Fr Michael Wentzell, who had arrived in Perth to take up the combined role of priest-organist at St George's Cathedral in Perth, a position he held from 1970 until his untimely death at the age of 33 in 1973.

Originally from Melbourne, Wentzell had spent time in England as chaplain at Magdalen College, Oxford, during which he completed the examination for the Fellowship of the Royal College of Organists (FRCO),¹²⁰ and studied organ with Marie-Claire Alain in Paris. Along with his cathedral music duties, Wentzell was active as a teacher and recitalist, as president of the local organ society, and as an advisor to churches on the design and installation of organs.¹²¹ Like de Pieri and Rumsey, Wentzell was an advocate of neoclassical instruments and was well aware of the importance and quality of the Knox Grammar School organ in Sydney. He played a recital there in mid-1967 and is reported by Douglas Lawrence as having given the instrument 'unqualified praise', saying that the experience of playing it was akin to being 'in heaven'.¹²²

Larner reports that Wentzell was impressed with the Winthrop Hall organ but qualified his support, noting that the chorus did not go far enough in neoclassical terms.¹²³ In 1971 Wentzell initiated the first Perth organ festival, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5. For this festival Wentzell asked John Larner to build

¹¹⁸ Organ Historical Trust, accessed 20 May 2011, <<http://www.ohta.org.au/organs/organs/Winthrop.html>>. John Larner, personal communication, 24 Nov. 2010.

¹¹⁹ John Larner, personal communication, 24 Nov. 2010.

¹²⁰ RCO Examination Results, *Musical Times*, Vol 111 (Mar. 1970): 317.

¹²¹ Peter Mold, 'The Organists of St George's Cathedral, Father Michael Wentzell' accessed 27 Oct. 2010, <<http://www.perthcathedral.org/images/stories/organists.pdf>>. As a recitalist Wentzell performed regularly at organ festivals around the country. In 1971 and 1972 he performed at all four festivals held in that year.

¹²² Douglas Lawrence, 'A New Name in Australian Organ Building', *Society of Organists Victoria (Incorporated) Newsletter* (Sep. 1967): 18.

¹²³ John Larner, personal communication, 14 Sep. 2010. Larner said that the chorus was not exactly in line with the reform movement ideas and that later a Nazard and Cymbel were added to the Positiv.

a small chamber organ in authentic neoclassical style. Like the first neoclassical organ in Melbourne, the Perth instrument was small: a one-manual instrument of five ranks, suitable for chamber concerts only. Wentzell was advisor for Perth's second, major neoclassical instrument, built by Larner and installed in Guildford Grammar School chapel in 1972. Larner notes that Wentzell encouraged him to develop the understanding he had gained in the Netherlands and to build in true neoclassical style.¹²⁴ He recalls Wentzell's discussion about the necessity for the inclusion of a four-foot principal on the swell division, to complete and enhance the tonal pyramids that were part of *Werkprinzip* culture, a key tenet of the organ reform movement. The Guildford instrument, of two manuals and twenty-four stops, is considered 'a seminal early example of the Australian organ reform movement'.¹²⁵ It was used in the second and third Perth organ festivals.

In the fifteen years from 1958 to 1973 a total of twenty-six new neoclassical organs were installed in Australia, of which sixteen were built locally. That so many new instruments were built in a relatively short timeframe bears testimony to the inspiration, leadership and advocacy of those individuals who were so committed to the neoclassical organ: scientists, organists, journalists, students, teachers and builders. Their legacy of instruments (see Appendix 1) was to play an important part in the organ festivals held in Australia from 1968 to 1973.

¹²⁴ John Larner, personal communication, 18 Aug. 2010.

¹²⁵ Organ Historical Trust, accessed 18 Aug. 2010, <<http://www.ohta.org.au/confs/WA/GUILDFORDGRAMMAR.html>>.

CHAPTER 2

‘The Melbourne Sound’: Harpsichords in Melbourne

In Melbourne in the late 1950s and early 1960s there was comparatively little interest in neoclassical organs compared to that in Sydney. However from the early 1960s Melbourne was home to an active and vibrant group of young harpsichord builders. They produced high-quality instruments reflecting many of the tonal qualities of historic instruments. Like the neoclassical organs in Sydney these instruments first became available prior to, and independently of, the annual festivals that featured them. In a further parallel, harpsichord builders Mars McMillan and Alastair McAllister in Melbourne, like the organ builder Ronald Sharp in Sydney, built their first instruments inspired only by recordings and published material, without having travelled overseas to hear at first-hand the historical instruments, or undertaking any type of apprenticeship in the craft. The new instruments by McMillan and McAllister were hailed as musical successes, and were of critical importance to the festival that was subsequently established in Melbourne. The makers of these groundbreaking instruments were each driven by a passionate desire to build instruments in Australia that could produce the exciting sounds being heard on recordings of both historic and new English and European instruments. This chapter considers the development of what harpsichord builder Mars McMillan later described as ‘Melbourne Sound’.¹²⁶

The harpsichord revival

The development of harpsichord building in the twentieth century is closely bound up with the momentum generated by the revival of early music in Europe. This movement created a demand for harpsichords, happily met by both professional and amateur musicians. Howard Schott suggests:

The harpsichord was the first of the early instruments to be brought back to a place of honour in musical life.... The contribution of the harpsichord revival to the renaissance of early music as a whole can hardly be overestimated.¹²⁷

¹²⁶ Mars McMillan, personal communication, 13 Jul. 2009.

¹²⁷ Howard Schott, ‘The Harpsichord Revival’, *Early Music* 2:2 (1974): 85. The importance of organists, church choirs and choral societies that kept Bach and Handel in the repertoire should not, however, be overlooked.

The first phase of revival occurred in the late nineteenth century, when the piano manufacturers Erard and Pleyel of Paris began to include harpsichords in their offerings. Edward Kottick notes that their purpose in offering harpsichords was not the revival of the historic instrument, but the creation of a contemporary version of the instrument that they thought would be useful to the modern musician, taking the historical harpsichord as their point of departure.¹²⁸ Other piano manufacturers such as Neupert, Maendler and Steingraeber of Germany followed the lead of Erard and Pleyel, taking the piano as the starting point rather than the historical harpsichord.¹²⁹ The case-work was generally of heavy construction, with open bottoms, and they used iron or dense wooden frames, and piano-style keyboards, with heavy-gauge steel strings and leather plectra. Arnold Dolmetsch, a French-born musician living in England who was actively involved in the performance of early music, was also interested in historic instruments and he built a variety of early keyboard instruments, including harpsichords. His instruments were, however, also constructed with heavy cases, and from 1930 he used a welded steel frame.¹³⁰ According to Wolfgang Zuckermann, ‘despite Arnold’s concern for the old instruments, the Dolmetsch harpsichord has few similarities to the old ones’. He suggests that this may have been due partly to the dearth of published material about historic models in his day, and partly to Dolmetsch’s tendency to innovate.¹³¹ All these makers hoped to cure the ‘ills’ of the historic harpsichord, such as unreliable tuning and mechanical problems attributed to old construction techniques. They hoped to benefit from the advances provided by piano technology, but failed to recognise that certain piano construction principles were ‘inimical to the physics of a plucked instrument’.¹³²

As the early music movement developed in Europe after the Second World War there was a growing interest in building harpsichords that reflected the construction and sound of the historic instruments. Haskell notes that the post-war generation saw the

¹²⁸ Edward L Kottick *A History of the Harpsichord* (Bloomington, In.: Indiana University Press, 2003) 407.

¹²⁹ Wolfgang Joachim Zuckermann, *The Modern Harpsichord: Twentieth-Century Instruments and Their Makers*, (New York: October House, 1969) 49. Kottick, *History of the Harpsichord*, 408.

¹³⁰ Zuckermann, *Modern Harpsichord*, 108.

¹³¹ Zuckermann, *Modern Harpsichord*, 112.

¹³² Kottick, *History of the Harpsichord*, 413. Heavily built cases produce a relatively weak tone, since the addition of mass to frames and soundboards makes the sound sustain for longer, but also makes it softer and less colourful.

earlier generation represented by musicians such as Dolmetsch as being of the past.¹³³ This second phase in the development of twentieth-century harpsichord building focused on the historic instruments as models. Builders included Skovronek of Germany, and Gough, Hubbard and Dowd, in America. William Dowd categorised the difference in the two building phases:

We felt the whole German school [Neupert, Maendler, Steingraeber et al]... must all have plugs in their ears. They were not making anything that was remotely like an antique harpsichord. ... We discovered a resonant, flowering sound which we liked. ... We, with the enthusiasm and brashness of the young, believed we knew how to bring back the authentic instrument upon which early harpsichord music was based.¹³⁴

Performers such as Gustav Leonhardt were advocates for the restoration of, and performance on, historic instruments. From the mid 1950s Leonhardt recorded extensively on historic instruments and on facsimile copies by builders such as Skovronek.¹³⁵

Harpsichords in Melbourne

In Australia in the first half of the twentieth century there were limited opportunities to hear the harpsichord in performance. Until the 1960s there were no professional harpsichord builders, and the few instruments extant were either imported from England or Europe, or were built by enthusiastic amateurs. Patricia Duke reports that instruments imported to Melbourne from the beginning of the twentieth century included an unidentified harpsichord used for a performance in 1932 of Lully's version of Molière's *Le mariage forcé*, organised by Louise Hanson-Dyer through the Alliance Française.¹³⁶ A 1771 English instrument by Shudi and Broadwood, which had been brought to Melbourne for a performance in 1923 of *The Beggars Opera*, was later purchased by a collector, John H. Connell, and donated to the National Gallery

¹³³ Haskell, *Early Music Revival*, 61.

¹³⁴ William Dowd, interview with Harold Hanley, in Kottick, *History of the Harpsichord*, 440.

¹³⁵ Zuckermann notes that twentieth-century instruments fall into a number of categories of which faithful copies of historic instruments is but one, *Modern Harpsichord*, 47.

¹³⁶ Patricia Duke, 'Foundations of Early Music in Melbourne: Leonard Fullard and Other Pioneers', PhD thesis, University of Melbourne, 2005, 133.

of Victoria.¹³⁷ In 1951 British musician John Ticehurst brought an English Kirckman instrument to Melbourne, which he used in a performance with the Oriana Madrigal Choir.¹³⁸ From 1938 to 1953, a Maendler-Schramm instrument, owned by resident musician Mancell Kirby, was the only harpsichord played publicly in Melbourne.¹³⁹ Kirby later purchased a Dolmetsch instrument, and used both instruments for concerts and broadcasts. She made sixty-one broadcasts on harpsichord for the ABC between 1943 and 1954, provided continuo for the Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Society, and between 1950 and 1964 played regularly at concerts of the Bach Festival as soloist and continuo player.¹⁴⁰ Mars McMillan recalls another harpsichord in Melbourne in this period, a Neupert owned by pianist Max Cooke, which he used for continuo in various concerts in Melbourne in the early 1960s.¹⁴¹

By the early 1960s, six people in Melbourne were pursuing their interest in the harpsichord—two as performers and four as builders. Two pianists, Max Cooke and Kathleen Brady, studied harpsichord overseas, Cooke in Germany and Brady in Canada. Cooke began playing harpsichord in Melbourne in the early 1960s, using his Neupert instrument. He performed as harpsichord soloist with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra under Ferdinand Leitner, before travelling to Germany in 1968 to study harpsichord in Freiburg under Edith Picht-Axenfeld and Fritz Neumeyer.¹⁴² In 1970 Cooke was appointed to teach harpsichord at the University of Melbourne; his first students were Ann Murphy and Roger Heagney.¹⁴³ Brady won a scholarship to the Québec Conservatoire and was awarded a government bursary to study harpsichord. She was the first Québec Conservatoire student to gain a performing

¹³⁷ Duke, 'Foundations of Early Music', 130.

¹³⁸ Duke, 'Foundations of Early Music', 134.

¹³⁹ Duke, 'Foundations of Early Music', 125. Zuckermann's view was that Maendler-Schramm instruments 'incorporated all the deadly features of the German production model and were heavy and graceless, possessing thick soundboards.' *The Modern Harpsichord* 142. However, the high quality workmanship is acknowledged by Zuckermann.

¹⁴⁰ Duke, 'Foundations of Early Music', 125. Mars McMillan, personal communication, 5 Feb. 2010.

¹⁴¹ Mars McMillan, personal communication, 12 May 2010. Duke notes that this instrument was purchased in the mid 1960s from a German consular official. Duke, 'Foundations of Early Music', 160.

¹⁴² Max Cooke and Fay Woodhouse, *A Pedagogue on the Platform—Max Cooke's Life in Music*, (Melbourne: n.p., 2010) 147. The work he performed as soloist with the MSO is not noted.

¹⁴³ Duke, 'Foundations of Early Music', 160.

degree in harpsichord, and performed as a pianist and harpsichordist in Canada and the UK before returning to Australia in 1967.¹⁴⁴

Local builders

Four other Melbourne musicians—Meredith Moon, Mars McMillan, Alastair McAllister and Richard Ireland—were particularly interested in harpsichord construction. Meredith Moon started building harpsichords while working at Oxford University in the 1960s. During his time at Oxford he successfully produced and sold around thirty instruments.¹⁴⁵ On his return to Melbourne he was appointed to the staff at the Conservatorium of Music,¹⁴⁶ University of Melbourne, and ceased building, although he liaised with local builders, providing advice and collegial support. Mars McMillan and Alastair McAllister had been pursuing their separate interests in harpsichord building since the early 1960s, and by 1967 each had produced their first instruments. Richard Ireland, a keen amateur recorder and harpsichord player with an interest in building harpsichords, travelled to England in the mid 1960s and visited all the available historic instrument collections, such as the Russell Collection in Edinburgh and the Benton Fletcher collection at Fenton House, London, to hear and play those instruments. He purchased a two-manual Michael Thomas harpsichord and returned to Australia in 1967, then worked in his spare time to make a number of instruments.¹⁴⁷ Meanwhile, in 1965 Englishman Hugh Craig immigrated to Melbourne and set up a harpsichord-building business.¹⁴⁸ Beginning work in the mid-1960s, McMillan, McAllister and Craig, who were all based in Melbourne, became Australia's first professional harpsichord builders. Each of the three produced an extraordinary number of instruments, providing local and visiting early music practitioners with a range of high quality instruments.

¹⁴⁴ Michael Daly, 'Kathleen Brady', accessed 19 Feb. 2010, <<http://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/248130>>. Before 1970 it was not possible to study harpsichord as a major study at the University of Melbourne.

¹⁴⁵ John Griffiths, 'Meredith Moon Spinnet Donated', *Hoard House, News from the Grainger Collection* 2 (Apr. 2005).

¹⁴⁶ Peter J. Tregear, *The Conservatorium of Music University of Melbourne: An Historical Essay to Mark its Centenary 1895–1995* (Parkville: The University of Melbourne, 1997) 115.

The Conservatorium later became the Faculty of Music.

¹⁴⁷ Richard Ireland, personal communication, 10 Feb. 2010.

¹⁴⁸ Zuckermann, *The Modern Harpsichord*, 103.

Hugh Craig trained in England as a professional harpsichord builder. His apprenticeship and early training were with makers whose work belongs to the first phase of harpsichord revival. At the age of sixteen Craig was apprenticed to Arnold Dolmetsch. After completing his apprenticeship Craig went on to work with John Feldberg in Kent and finally with William de Blaise in London. Feldberg had completed an apprenticeship with the German firm of Neupert, and Craig notes that he worked on Neupert double harpsichords while with Feldberg.¹⁴⁹ Craig's own instruments used the heavy cases found in the instruments of all his mentors and his methodology was criticised by Zuckermann: '[he] has taken over some of the bad habits learned from his masters, such as open bottoms and quarter-inch-thick soundboards'. Realising there were already many harpsichord builders in England, Craig decided to set up his own business in Australia.¹⁵⁰

Craig arrived in Australia in 1965, bringing the credibility of his formal training and background with Dolmetsch, which probably benefited him in his early years in Melbourne. On Craig's arrival, Mancell Kirby informed Richard Ireland that, 'mercifully, a properly trained young man had arrived in Melbourne'.¹⁵¹ Craig worked in the old style of harpsichord building. However, as tastes changed from the early 1960s this style of instrument was no longer popular. John McCaughey recalls: 'We had a guy called Hugh Craig who made harpsichords. He was more of the old school. They weren't of the same order [as those of McMillan and McAllister]'.¹⁵²

Mars McMillan's entry into harpsichord making took a very different path to that of Craig. She developed an interest in harpsichords while still at school after hearing a harpsichord on a recording of an opera of Mozart.¹⁵³ In her last year at school she read an article in *Time* magazine about the burgeoning interest in harpsichords in the USA, which led her to request catalogues from the American harpsichord makers Challis, Zuckermann, Hubbard and Dowd.¹⁵⁴ Only Challis and Dowd obliged.¹⁵⁵ On leaving

¹⁴⁹ Hugh Craig Harpsichords History, *Hugh Craig Harpsichords*, accessed 11 Feb. 2010, <<http://www.harpsichord.co.uk/history.htm>>.

¹⁵⁰ Zuckermann, *The Modern Harpsichord*, 102.

¹⁵¹ Richard Ireland, personal communication, 10 Feb. 2010.

¹⁵² John McCaughey, personal communication, 30 Oct. 2008.

¹⁵³ Mars McMillan, letter to Peter Watchorn, 19 Jan. 1999, personal copy made available to writer.

¹⁵⁴ 'The Plectra Pluckers', *Time* (15 Aug. 1960): accessed 12 Jun. 2009, <<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,939778,00.html>>.

school in 1961 she pursued her interest in early music, especially harpsichord, attending as many concerts as possible and taking harpsichord lessons from Leonard Fullard, director of the Bach Festival at Christ Church South Yarra. Although Fullard owned a Dolmetsch instrument, lessons were conducted using a piano, and McMillan felt that she needed a harpsichord for practice:

Since I'd heard that harpsichords were 'very expensive' I wanted to make one for myself to learn to play. Fullard had a Dolmetsch 'triangular harpsichord', which he and other performers at the Christ Church South Yarra 'Bach Festival' used as a continuo instrument. Having seen and heard this instrument ... I bought my own Dolmetsch 'triangular harpsichord' to fast-track getting an instrument.¹⁵⁶

Around this time she also requested catalogues from the English makers Morley and Goble, and bought a spinet from them, followed a year later by a clavichord.¹⁵⁷ She also started to develop her woodworking skills in earnest, in preparation for building instruments:

Thanks to Raymond Russell's book *The Harpsichord and Clavichord*, I had started the sawing and planing in my parents' garage and making those mistakes that teach you heaps! I couldn't decide whether to make a Flemish virginal or an Italian single ... I immediately abandoned construction on both attempts (and avoided going down 'the wrong path') when Hubbard's 'bible' came along in 1965 with the revelation that historical harpsichords had fairly minimal framing inside a lightly built 'sound-box', like violins, and were never built without a 'bottom' to the case. It wasn't until I had been flailing around in the workshop for some time, that I mentioned to Leonard Fullard that I was 'making a harpsichord', and he said: 'but it won't be as good as a Dolmetsch! Well, that DID IT!! All the motivation I needed.'¹⁵⁸

By 1965 McMillan was dividing her time between taking harpsichord lessons with Leonard Fullard, listening to recordings, broadcasts and concerts of early

¹⁵⁵ Mars McMillan, personal communication, 16 Jul. 2009.

¹⁵⁶ Mars McMillan, personal communication, 5 Feb. 2010. A 'triangular harpsichord' is a single manual instrument, designed by Dolmetsch in 1915. It combines the range and effect of a full harpsichord with the compactness of a spinet.

¹⁵⁷ Mars McMillan, personal communication, 16 Jul. 2009.

¹⁵⁸ Russell's book was published in 1959 and the Hubbard book in 1965. Mars McMillan, personal communication, 5 Feb. 2010.

music—particularly harpsichord—and developing her woodworking skills. At this stage she moved her workshop to premises in Malvern; by 1966 she had completed her first two playable instruments, and resolved that her third instrument would be a double manual harpsichord ‘to prove I could do it’.¹⁵⁹ In 1966 McMillan heard on the ABC radio program *Bach Before Breakfast* a recording of Gustav Leonhardt playing a Kirckman instrument tuned to mean-tone temperament,¹⁶⁰ which inspired her to make a Kirckman-style instrument herself. McMillan hoped it would be used in the Bach Festival of October 1967, and offered it to Fullard once she was sure it could be completed on time. Mancell Kirby, who was in the audience for the debut concert, told McMillan it was ‘the loudest harpsichord’ she had ever heard.¹⁶¹ From this point McMillan’s career was set. She received her first order in 1968, and has continued making instruments professionally to the present day. McMillan has never travelled overseas for professional development, continuing instead to find her own solutions to the dilemmas that arise.

Alastair McAllister had a similar entry into harpsichord making, bypassing the apprenticeship stage and learning on the job. Like McMillan, his interest in harpsichords started while he was still at school, and he was also inspired by recordings of harpsichords—particularly of Wanda Landowska performing on a Pleyel instrument and Gustav Leonhardt playing restored historic instruments—and the recent publications of Hubbard and Russell. McAllister spent considerable time as a schoolboy researching harpsichords at the Victorian State Library in Melbourne. He recalls that he became obsessed at the age of 15 after hearing the works of Scarlatti: ‘It was the sound that got me more than anything’.¹⁶² He also spent a good deal of time examining the Shudi and Broadwood instrument in the National Gallery of Victoria.¹⁶³ Duke notes that McAllister met Mancell Kirby in 1956, which was to be the beginning of a friendship that continued until Kirby’s death in 1996. He knew Kirby’s Maendler-Schramm instrument, admiring its workmanship if not its sound.¹⁶⁴ His first instrument, built in 1965 for the Carnegie family, had an iron frame, piano

¹⁵⁹ Mars McMillan, personal communication, 5 Feb. 2010.

¹⁶⁰ Mars McMillan, unpublished letter, 19 Jan. 1999. The recording was Telefunken Das Alte Werk AWT 9463-C, using a 1766 Kirckman. The work was a Bach Capriccio BWV 992.

¹⁶¹ Mars McMillan, personal communication, 5 Feb. 2010.

¹⁶² Chris Johnston ‘Hand-made musical gem from a Preston workshop’, *Age* 19 Jan. 2009.

¹⁶³ Duke, ‘Foundations of Early Music’, 149.

¹⁶⁴ Duke, ‘Foundations of Early Music’, 153.

keyboard and piano soundboard and was in the style of early twentieth-century harpsichords.¹⁶⁵ He met McMillan around this time and from 1966 they began working collaboratively, though independently, in McMillan's workshop, establishing a business name—Harpsichord Makers of Melbourne. Several instruments were made jointly, including a Hubbard kit for Harold Fabrikant, and a single-manual instrument for Jane Carnegie.¹⁶⁶ In 1972 McAllister travelled to Europe and the UK to examine historic instruments in the major collections, and in 1973 left full-time employment in banking to take up full-time harpsichord building.

McAllister's work as a builder was not his only significant contribution to the development of the harpsichord in Melbourne: he also relished tuning and regulating instruments for concerts, so performers could rely not only on a skilled tuning of the instrument they had hired, but on technical assistance if required. McMillan notes that without McAllister's work in tuning and regulating her instruments she would not have achieved what she did.¹⁶⁷

McAllister and McMillan could not claim training from a mentor, as was the case for Craig, but this left them free to forge their own paths. The recordings and newly published treatises by Russell and Hubbard were rich resources, of which McMillan said:

I was fortunate to follow my early instinct toward the 'Boston School' (Hubbard & Dowd) approach to harpsichord making, and not waste too much time or money going to England and learning from Dolmetsch, Morley or Goble (if any of them had been prepared to take me on ...). Not only did Hubbard make harpsichords, but he, the Prophet of Harpsichord, could actually talk about it, too! His Bible, *Three Centuries of Harpsichord Making*, was sufficient inspiration for me to bypass the apprenticeship hurdle.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ Roger Heagney, 'Melbourne: City of Harpsichord and Musical Instrument Makers', *Journal of the Institute of Catholic Education* 5 (1984): 37. Duke, 'Foundations of Early Music', 150.

¹⁶⁶ Heagney, 'City of Harpsichord and Musical Instrument Makers', 37.

¹⁶⁷ Mars McMillan, personal communication, 12 May 2010.

¹⁶⁸ Mars McMillan, personal communication, 13 Jul. 2009. Frank Hubbard, *Three Centuries of Harpsichord Making* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965)

Hubbard was among the first builders to research and begin making harpsichords modeled on historic instruments, rather than the piano. His book, published in 1965, is regarded by Tom McGeary as ‘the single most important work in the field, valuable for its scholarly presentation of many historic documents concerning the harpsichord’.¹⁶⁹ It included plans of historic instruments, which were of enormous assistance to those working on the other side of the world, though McMillan noted that ‘what wasn’t in Hubbard you had to invent’.¹⁷⁰ These sources pointed McMillan and McAllister to the historical models for guidance in construction, and their sound was modeled on that heard on the newly issued recordings. McMillan recalled:

Alastair and I listened to recordings of old harpsichords with the volume cranked up, so we expected a full-blooded sound from our own instruments. Perhaps this explains how the ‘Melbourne Sound’ happened.¹⁷¹

The list of the recordings McMillan and McAllister listened to in the early years of their careers can be found in Appendix 2.¹⁷² She said of this research:

Many records were used in games of ‘Guess the Mystery Harpsichord’ between Alastair McAllister, Richard Ireland and myself. Much fun and being led up the garden path, and discussion upon the nature of ‘true harpsichord tone’ was experienced by all. Until Alastair went overseas and heard some of these instruments in person (Richard had already ‘played all the harpsichords’ in Fenton House, London), he and I were at the mercy of the various recording engineers’ ideas of what represented ‘true harpsichord tone’.¹⁷³

Despite the reference to historical models, McMillan was unequivocal about not building exactly as the old masters did, pointing out that she and McAllister used modern materials and equipment, including a plastic, Delrin, for plectra. However, she did follow the lead of old makers in using local timbers wherever possible, which for McMillan included timbers such as Tasmanian myrtle and King William (King

¹⁶⁹ Tom McGeary, ‘Frank Hubbard’, *The English Harpsichord Magazine* Vol 1 No 4 (Apr. 1975), accessed 25 April 2011, <<http://www.harpsichord.org.uk/EH/Vol1/No 4/Hubbard.pdf>>.

¹⁷⁰ Heagney, ‘City of Harpsichord and Musical Instrument Makers’, 39.

¹⁷¹ Mars McMillan, personal communication, 13 Jul. 2010. Personal communication to Michael Atherton 3 Sep. 1999, made available to writer. The term ‘Melbourne Sound’ was used informally by McMillan and McAllister, but not defined or documented.

¹⁷² Appendix 2: Mars McMillan’s list of recordings.

¹⁷³ Mars McMillan, personal communication, 8 Jul. 2009.

Billy) pine. Both she and McAllister used the plans and drawings available from the Russell and Hubbard publications and later from Edinburgh University, R.K. Lee and the Smithsonian Institution. McMillan noted that this meant:

Our instruments became more like the originals. We were curious to make many different types of instrument, but did not want to make prematurely-aged slavish copies of old harpsichords.¹⁷⁴

The output of the three Melbourne harpsichord builders, Craig, McMillan and McAllister, was formidable. Between 1965 and 1968, Hugh Craig completed twenty-five instruments and in a single year, 1973, he made seventeen instruments.¹⁷⁵ This was possible, in part, due to his use of ready-made keyboards and jacks.¹⁷⁶ McAllister and McMillan were not as prolific, as every component of each instrument was custom-made, but by 1974, Mars McMillan had completed fourteen instruments.¹⁷⁷ Among the orders filled by Craig, McMillan and McAllister in the 1960s and 1970s were instruments for institutions such as the ABC in various capital cities, Sydney Opera House, schools such as Camberwell Grammar School and Methodist Ladies' College, the Adelaide Teachers' College, the University of Melbourne and the University of Sydney.¹⁷⁸

By the early 1970s a number of other enthusiasts in Melbourne had begun building harpsichords, using plans available in publications or kits produced by firms such as Hubbard and Zuckermann. Here too McMillan and McAllister were pivotal, providing advice, materials and mentoring to aspiring builders. Jean-Louis Cocquillat reported that for six months he sought advice from McMillan before building his first instrument in 1973.¹⁷⁹ Ireland wrote: 'Mars' generosity is legendary and she it is who supplied wire, pins and jacks on which so many of us are dependent'.¹⁸⁰ McAllister

¹⁷⁴ Mars McMillan, personal communication, 13 Jul. 2010.

¹⁷⁵ Zuckermann, *The Modern Harpsichord*, 102.

¹⁷⁶ Mars McMillan, personal communication, 5 Feb. 2010.

¹⁷⁷ Richard Ireland, 'The Melbourne Harpsichord Scene', *Victorian Organ Journal* 2:7 (May 74): 6. McAllister does not have an inventory of his work, so no specific details of his instruments can be given. Duke, 'Foundations of Early Music', 155.

¹⁷⁸ Heagney, 'City of Harpsichord and Musical Instrument Makers', 36–40. This is not a complete list, but is presented as relevant examples.

¹⁷⁹ Heagney, 'City of Harpsichord and Musical Instrument Makers', 40.

¹⁸⁰ Ireland, 'The Melbourne Harpsichord Scene', 7.

trained and influenced builders including Marc Nobel, Andrew Bernard, Alan Todd, Jean-Louis Cocquillat and Richard Schaumloeffel.¹⁸¹

Harpischord builders found an emerging market of enthusiastic musicians, both amateur and professional, requiring instruments for hire and purchase. Patricia Duke notes that from Hugh Craig's arrival in Melbourne in 1965 he had instruments available for hire, as did McMillan.¹⁸² This was fortuitous for emerging musicians needing a rehearsal or performance instrument. McMillan often provided instruments at little or no cost. When music student Ann Murphy required an instrument in order to undertake harpsichord study at the University of Melbourne, McMillan hired an instrument to her for twelve months. This would have been impossible in Melbourne in the decades before the 1960s. Sergio de Pieri sought the use of McMillan's Kirckman instrument for his first harpsichord concert in Melbourne, in November 1968. At the time the instrument was housed at McMillan's parent's home and de Pieri's long hours of rehearsal were not entirely suitable for the household. McMillan arranged for the instrument to be delivered to de Pieri's home so that he could rehearse there.¹⁸³ Ireland noted that:

Mars' Kirckman was seen everywhere. Mars was so generous, absolutely everybody played it and it turned up everywhere, prepared by Alastair. For a budding player, there was not a problem about having an instrument on which to perform. This is pretty unusual. For most people, you cannot play if you don't own an instrument and buying a harpsichord is an expensive item for a student.¹⁸⁴

By 1970, when the first Melbourne Autumn Festival of Organ & Harpsichord was being planned by de Pieri for May 1971, he knew that a number of quality harpsichords would be readily available. This provided him with a means to overcome the lack of suitable neoclassical organs in Melbourne for the performance of the early music repertoire up to and including J. S. Bach. The availability of the historically-based instruments of McMillan and McAllister that comprised the 'Melbourne Sound'

¹⁸¹ Mars McMillan, personal communication, 22 Jun. 2011.

¹⁸² Duke, 'Foundations of Early Music', 44; 156.

¹⁸³ Mars McMillan, personal communication, 8 Jul. 2009. A version of this anecdote is also recorded in Judith Armstrong, *The Cook and the Maestro*, (Melbourne: Lothian, 2001) 133.

¹⁸⁴ Richard Ireland, personal communication, 18 Jan. 2010.

enabled de Pieri to successfully program the classical repertoire in the forthcoming Melbourne festival and he affirmed the important place of harpsichords in the festival by giving them equal prominence in the festival title. These annual festivals (discussed in Chapter 5) for many years would present the classical repertoire through the newly-rediscovered sonorities of harpsichords, played in sympathetic environments.

The combined influence of two European movements—one in early music, the other in organ reform—was making an impression on instrument builders and musicians alike, overseas and in Australia. Developing Sydney organ builders and Melbourne harpsichord makers had been inspired by recordings of both historic original and new classical instruments, as had some musicians and an increasing number of music-lovers, all of whom delighted in the ‘new’ sounds. The decisions of David Rumsey to undertake postgraduate study in Europe, and of Sergio de Pieri to come from Italy to a position in Melbourne, set the circumstances that led directly to the establishment in Australia of new organ festivals with a clear goal: to change the perception of the organ in Australia.

CHAPTER 3

‘Something very different’: Early festivals in Adelaide and Sydney

In mid-1968, Rumsey and de Pieri met in Adelaide to discuss the state of organ playing and building in Australia. They wanted to create in Australia a new perception of the organ—as a concert instrument to be taken seriously in its own right.¹⁸⁵ To achieve this they recognised the need to bring about major changes in organ performance, teaching, and even organ building in this country, which would take into account developments that had occurred in Europe since the turn of the twentieth century. The neoclassical organ and its repertoire were central to these developments. They believed that festivals were a promising means of achieving some of these goals, offering a proven structure within which opportunities could be provided for performances, education and social activities. As artistic directors of these new festivals, Rumsey and de Pieri, and later Michael Wentzell and Douglas Lawrence (as successor to de Pieri) set out to influence the direction, nature and pace of change in the organ culture in Australia.¹⁸⁶ In September 1968, within three months of these discussions in Adelaide, the first festival was staged, promptly followed by festivals in Sydney in December 1968 and May 1969.

These were not, however, the first organ festivals in Australia. In Sydney in the late 1950s and early 1960s, local organ societies hosted several events termed ‘conventions’,¹⁸⁷ which can be regarded as precursors to the later festivals.¹⁸⁸ The organisers intended these conventions to be ‘attractive to the general public’ and to ‘contribute to the musical life of Sydney’.¹⁸⁹ The 1963 convention was organised by

¹⁸⁵ This was also a primary objective of the St Albans festival in England: See Paul Collins, ed., *The Anatomy of a Dream*, (International Organ Festival Society Ltd: St Albans, 2001) 1.

¹⁸⁶ David Rumsey, personal communication, 9 Jun. 2008.

¹⁸⁷ However, they were referred to as ‘festivals’ in the body of the society report: Keith Johns, ‘The 1963 Convention: A Report by the President’, *Journal of the Organ Society of Sydney* 1/5 (1963): 33. Kindly provided by Hugh Knight.

¹⁸⁸ The title ‘Combined Societies Organ Convention’, used in the early 1960s, reflecting the involvement of The Organ Society of Sydney and the NSW Organ Institute, was used for the first new Sydney festival in 1968, also held under the auspices of the two local organ bodies.

¹⁸⁹ Johns, 33.

Howard Pollard and Vincent Sheppard.¹⁹⁰ The opening recital was given by interstate guest performer, Robert Boughen, who also gave two other recitals and a masterclass. There were visits to local organs, a social event, and one concert devoted to contemporary Australian works, two of which had been commissioned by the organisers.¹⁹¹ The repertoire of the 1963 convention ranged from early music—Walther, Clérambault, Sweelinck, Buxtehude and Bach—to contemporary works. Given the interest of Pollard and Sheppard in the installation of neoclassical organs in Sydney, described in Chapter 2, it is interesting to note that although two such instruments had been installed in Sydney by Walcker by 1961, they were not included in the 1963 convention.¹⁹² The conventions were discontinued after 1963 due to poor attendances.¹⁹³ There were no festivals dedicated exclusively to the organ in the other states before 1968, although in Melbourne the annual Bach Festival, which always included organ repertoire, had been running since 1950 at Christ Church, South Yarra.¹⁹⁴

Unlike the earlier events in Sydney, the new festivals that were established from 1968 in Adelaide and Sydney, and later in Melbourne and Perth, were devised with a specific purpose: to create and increase awareness of the classical repertoire of the organ, that is, early music up to and including J. S. Bach, and its associated performance practices informed by recent musicological studies, performed on stylistically appropriate instruments—neoclassical organs. Rumsey and de Pieri believed that the festival structure would also provide a supportive and collegial atmosphere, with social and educational opportunities that would enrich the work of organists, who up to this time had been relatively isolated.¹⁹⁵ David Rumsey recalls that at the time:

¹⁹⁰ Keith Asboe, personal communication, 20 Jul. 2009.

¹⁹¹ Composers Moneta Eagles and Raymond Hanson were commissioned to write these works. Keith Johns, 34.

¹⁹² The two instruments were at South Hurstville and St Mark's Harbord.

¹⁹³ Johns, 33.

¹⁹⁴ By 1955 its director, Leonard Fullard, had performed the complete Bach works for organ.

E N Matthews, *The Sound of Strings* (Melbourne: Hill of Content, 1975) 115.

¹⁹⁵ David Rumsey, personal communication, 9 Jun. 2008.

Most organists around the place were of an older generation, or were not taking it terribly seriously perhaps, or had the organ lashed too securely to church music, indeed exclusively so in some ways.¹⁹⁶

Christa Rumsey recalls that many Australian organists performed only a small part of the organ repertoire, and that performances of transcriptions of music not originally written for the organ were common.¹⁹⁷ John Maidment confirms that the repertoire and focus of organists were ‘very circumscribed . . . organists who were very well educated might have gone to Britain . . . [a] very narrow perspective’.¹⁹⁸ David Rumsey was conscious that what he and de Pieri wanted was:

Something very different . . . introducing radical alternatives gained through [our] positive, even revelatory experiences gained outside the ingrained Australian organ culture.¹⁹⁹

These ‘revelatory’ experiences included study in Europe, and attendance and participation in Holland’s International Organ Festival at Haarlem, established in 1951 (and continuing to this day). The eminent performers involved in the Haarlem festival gave major recitals and taught at masterclasses, and attendees were given formal and informal opportunities for interaction with these leading teachers and performers, including tours to hear historic instruments demonstrated by festival participants. Christa Rumsey remembers being inspired by luminaries such as Anton Heiller, Gustav Leonhardt, Marie-Claire Alain and Luigi Tagliavini discussing details of performance practice.²⁰⁰

Rumsey and de Pieri drew on Haarlem as a model for their Australian festivals, particularly the educational components. They drew together eminent performers and artistic directors from each state to act as guest performers and workshop presenters

¹⁹⁶ David Rumsey, personal communication, 9 Jun. 2008. Not all organ performances were linked to the church. In the period up to the 1930s in Melbourne and late 1940s in Sydney there had been a tradition of regular Town Hall organ recitals, until the positions of city organists ceased, in 1938 and 1948 respectively. There were also occasional visits from overseas organists—usually performing at the Town Halls in capital cities.

¹⁹⁷ Christa Rumsey, personal communication, 10 Nov. 2008.

¹⁹⁸ John Maidment, personal communication, 19 Nov. 2008.

¹⁹⁹ David Rumsey, personal communication, 9 Jun. 2008; 2 Jul. 2010.

²⁰⁰ Christa Rumsey, personal communication, 10 Nov. 2008.

whenever possible. A wide range of expertise was available: the French school was represented by Michael Wentzell, the German by David Rumsey and Christa Rumsey, and the Italian by Sergio de Pieri. At most Australian festivals there were at least two guest performer/teachers from interstate, and in some cases, eminent performers and teachers from overseas. In order to effectively perform the repertoire they intended to include in these festivals, Rumsey and de Pieri envisaged organs with tonal dispositions akin to the historic instruments of Europe. Australia did not possess the historic instruments that were available in Europe, however, as we saw in Chapter 1, the mechanical action instruments that had been installed by 1968 at Knox Grammar School chapel and at The King's School exemplified the type of instrument Rumsey and de Pieri required. Christa Rumsey recalled David Rumsey's reaction in 1966 to the Knox Grammar School organ:

[This] is just so promising because these are the sorts of organ we need in Australia to do what we have set out to do—to shape the Australian organ scene, bringing the light we had seen in Europe to Australia.²⁰¹

In Sergio de Pieri's opinion instruments such as those at Knox Grammar School were critical to their intention to change performance practice, particularly of the music of Bach, Buxtehude, Pachelbel and their contemporaries.²⁰²

Within a year of the 1968 discussions between Rumsey and de Pieri, three organ festivals had been organised—one in Adelaide in September 1968, and two in Sydney, in December 1968 and May 1969. These festivals were held under the auspices of the local organ bodies—the Organ Music Society of Adelaide, the Organ Society of Sydney and the Organ Institute of New South Wales. The program of the first festival in Adelaide noted: 'This is something in the nature of an experiment and the Committee is interested in obtaining comments or criticism from either members or the general public'.²⁰³

²⁰¹ David Rumsey, quoted by Christa Rumsey, personal communication, 10 Nov. 2008.

²⁰² Sergio de Pieri, personal communication, 12 Feb. 2009.

²⁰³ 'The First Adelaide Organ Week', *Newsletter*, The Organ Music Society of Adelaide, 1 (1968): 3. Kindly supplied by Christa Rumsey.

From the beginning performance and teaching were intertwined in the new festival programs. Rumsey viewed informed performance practice as one of the key objectives of each festival:

In the masterclass sessions we were always trying to link musicology in with performance ... the reasonable assumption underlying that was ... it made for better performances. And that also brings in editions. It was all part and parcel of it—this was a new approach to music.²⁰⁴

Sergio de Pieri also stressed the importance of the masterclasses in the early festivals:

We started in Sydney and Adelaide ... We did little festivals for a few years. They were more like master class festivals ... We discussed the proper manner to play Bach and we have the influences there of Vienna school. [represented by David Rumsey and Christa Rumsey].²⁰⁵

Key aspects of performance practice relevant to the repertoire heard in the recitals were discussed in subsequent masterclasses and workshops. Christa Rumsey explained:

Teaching was always part of the festival because in the recital people had the opportunity to hear the repertoire, but to then tackle it yourself is a different thing if you don't have any guidance. People were fascinated coming to masterclasses, but [they were] not just [on] repertoire work, but also hymn accompaniment and what music to choose for this or that.²⁰⁶

In Douglas Lawrence's view the masterclasses 'were more important than the concerts. You would have learnt more than your teacher gave you in twelve months. These guys knew what they were talking about'.²⁰⁷

In the new festivals Rumsey and de Pieri wanted the works performed to provide a 'massive explosion in repertoire, taking the broadest possible scope'. Rumsey said:

²⁰⁴ David Rumsey, personal communication, 9 Jun. 2008.

²⁰⁵ Sergio de Pieri, personal communication, 12 Feb. 2009.

²⁰⁶ Christa Rumsey, personal communication, 10 Nov. 2008.

²⁰⁷ Douglas Lawrence, personal communication, 16 Mar. 2009.

The repertoire reached backwards, back to Buxtehude, even beyond at times, so it broadened out in that direction and [then] right through to Alain, Messiaen up to contemporary and avant garde—Gerd Zacher, *Volumina* of Ligeti and so on.²⁰⁸

Table 2: Repertoire summary: Adelaide & Sydney festivals 1968–1970 ²⁰⁹

Year	Adelaide	Sydney
1968 ²¹⁰	Bach, de Grigny, Titelouze, Buxtehude, Schlick, Isaac, Franck.	Bach, Messiaen,* Hollier,* Heiller,* Sweelinck, Daquin, Buxtehude.
1969 ²¹¹	<i>No program or review available.</i>	Sweelinck, Bach, Haydn, Kropfreiter,* Buxtehude, Scheidt, Schmitt,* Couperin, Brahms, Reger, Frescobaldi, Pasquini, Valente, Franck, Mozart.
1970 ²¹²	<i>No festival held.</i>	Bach, Homilius, Soler, Peeters,* Krebs, Reger, Alain,* Mozart, Williamson,* Brumby,* Hindemith,* Wills, Handel, Couperin.

* Twentieth-century.

Christa Rumsey saw at first hand the tremendous impact of the broader repertoire on festival audiences, many of whom were hearing these works for the first time:

I know that for a while people were just flabbergasted with how beautiful the music of Buxtehude is. And of course Buxtehude was just bread-and-butter for organists in Europe: it wasn't new at all. The classical French repertoire the same. It hadn't really been played here much, but if you don't have the type of instrument to play the French repertoire it's a bit difficult.²¹³

Another important aspect of these festivals was the opportunity for social interaction. Rumsey and de Pieri knew the benefits of the spirit of shared discovery, discussion

²⁰⁸ David Rumsey, personal communication, 9 Jun. 2008.

²⁰⁹ Details are incomplete due to lack of complete programs for the 1969 and 1970 Sydney festivals.

²¹⁰ 'The First Adelaide Organ Week', *Newsletter, Organ Music Society of Adelaide*, 1 (1968): 3. Program, Combined Societies Organ Convention, Sydney, Dec. 1968. Kindly supplied by Christa Rumsey.

²¹¹ John Sinclair, 'Organ music's young sound', *Herald* 12 May 1969. F. R. Blanks, 'And a Feast for Organists', *Sydney Morning Herald* 20 May 1969.

²¹² F. R. Blanks, 'Flying Colours Success', *Sydney Morning Herald* August 1970, and Fred R. Blanks, 'Sydney Organ Festival', *Musical Times* 111 (Oct. 1970): 1036.

²¹³ Christa Rumsey, personal communication, 10 Nov. 2008.

and enjoyment, and ensured that the structure of the festivals facilitated these connections. They saw beyond the music-making, as Sergio de Pieri noted:

A festival is not just to have a concert ... a festival has to put people together. The people have to meet each other many times ... then the thing will become a family. Everybody enjoys and everybody is happy because they know and embrace other people and that is a festival. Festival is *festa*. That is the idea.²¹⁴

From the first festival in 1968, there was a formal dinner organised to mark the end of each festival, and there were informal social opportunities throughout the festivals.

David Rumsey recalled:

The Festivals brought everybody all of a sudden together, face to face. Many organists would come interstate to these festivals so we got to actually know each other. It brought us all physically together into one part of Australia for a week or however long the festival was. It gave us a chance to network, to exchange ideas, to see the new organs, try the harpsichords that were being installed in these other cities. With the Sydney festival, like the Melbourne festival, we had people from virtually every capital city attending virtually every festival—and some from New Zealand as well. ... Brisbane students [came] and met other students from Sydney, Adelaide, or Melbourne. It was a meeting place, and ... we'd play our repertoires to each other in public concerts ... and talk ... and teach.²¹⁵

The initial festivals were modest in scale. In Adelaide, the first festival—titled the First Adelaide Organ Week, comprised six events over six days—one organ recital, a choral concert and four lecture/demonstrations—and one social event, the final event.²¹⁶ By 1968 there were already several neoclassical organs in and around Sydney, but none in Adelaide. This did not, however, deter the organisers. Overcoming the lack of appropriate instruments offered challenges which festival organisers had to meet through creativity and advocacy. The organisers of the first festival in Adelaide promoted neoclassical instruments by including recordings of the neoclassical organ of Sydney's Knox Grammar School in one of the lectures. A

²¹⁴ Sergio de Pieri, personal communication, 12 Feb. 2009.

²¹⁵ David Rumsey, personal communication, 9 Jun. 2008.

²¹⁶ 'The First Adelaide Organ Week', *Newsletter, Organ Music Society of Adelaide*, Vol 1, No 7 (Sep. 1968): 3.

second lecture presented recordings of classical French organs. The other two lecture events covered research on organ action and techniques of flue and reed voicing.²¹⁷ The only organ recital, given by David Rumsey, provided the first example of the breadth of repertoire envisaged for these festivals. Rumsey's program comprised works reaching from the fifteenth century—Heinrich Isaac and Schlick to Titelouze, de Grigny, Buxtehude and Bach, and one work from the nineteenth century—by César Franck. The only other performance event of this festival was a choral concert, plus one social event, a final dinner.

Rumsey stressed that where there was no suitable organ, the primary importance was still to bring a broader repertoire to audiences: 'As often as not it [repertoire] would be played on completely wrong instruments, but at least it got played'.²¹⁸ He acknowledged the problem with this compromise, especially when recordings from overseas provided examples of the ideal organ for the repertoire:

This was one of the things that were a millstone around our necks in the organ festivals. We were trying to play Bach, we were trying to play romantic music and modern music, Ligeti and clusters and all on pretty much the same kind of organ. Yet we did well, and I don't regret doing it, but the real illumination was always going to be over the next rise. It's hard to know how you can really give masterclasses on Australian organs about French classical music, Spanish music, even romantic music, where the whole layout of the British style organs was just alien.²¹⁹

Six events were programmed for the first festival held in Sydney over three days in December 1968: three recitals, two masterclasses and a discussion. A much more ambitious program followed five months later in May 1969, when Sydney's second festival offered a program of seven recitals and fifteen masterclasses, and featured guest organist Peter Planyavsky.²²⁰ These festivals could be focused on neoclassical organs without the compromise programming required in Adelaide. The instruments at Knox Grammar School and The King's School were used in the 1968 festival,

²¹⁷ 'The First Adelaide Organ Week', *Organ Music Society of Adelaide*, (Sep. 1968): 3.

²¹⁸ David Rumsey, personal communication, 9 Jun. 2008.

²¹⁹ David Rumsey, personal communication, 9 Jun. 2008.

²²⁰ This event was called the 'Sydney Autumn Organ Festival' (dropping the use of the term 'Convention') and was the last to involve the local organ societies.

together with an historic mechanical action instrument at St John's Parramatta. Although the St John's organ was not a neoclassical instrument, it had been sensitively restored in 1966 by Ron Sharp and Mark Fisher and was tonally suited for the recital of contemporary repertoire. The repertoire in the 1968 Sydney festival was more extensive than that of the Adelaide festival three months earlier. One of the three concerts was devoted to a program of contemporary works of Messiaen, Heiller, and Australian composer Donald Hollier, performed by David Rumsey and Christa Rumsey. The other two recital programs concentrated on the classical repertoire of the organ. Sergio de Pieri played an all-Bach recital at Knox Grammar School, and a joint recital by the three organists, David Rumsey, Sergio de Pieri and Christa Rumsey, included works by Sweelinck, Bach, Daquin and Buxtehude. The masterclasses focused on early music: de Pieri gave a lecture on the authentic performance of early Italian organ music, and David Rumsey presented a workshop on the performance of early French and German music on Australian organs.²²¹

By the May 1969 Sydney festival a new neoclassical instrument by Sharp was available for use at Wollongong Town Hall. This provided a social and musical opportunity for a tour to Wollongong to inspect the instrument and hear it in concert. The scope of the festival program was more extensive, with fifteen masterclasses and seven recitals. The festival also included a guest performer, the 'earth-shattering improviser', Peter Planyavsky,²²² organist at St Stephan's Cathedral, Vienna, who had won the international improvisation competition at Graz in 1968. Like David Rumsey and Christa Rumsey, he had studied with Anton Heiller in Vienna. At the Sydney Festival he played three recitals—one on each of the neoclassical organs at Knox Grammar School, The King's School and the Wollongong Town Hall—and gave two masterclasses. In each recital he performed an improvisation, and he devoted a masterclass to the topic.²²³ His second masterclass was on the neoclassical organ. As Planyavsky had spent a year after graduating from the Vienna Academy working as an organ builder with the Gregor Hradetzky firm, he was in an ideal position to

²²¹ Program, Combined Societies Organ Convention, Sydney, Dec. 1968. Kindly supplied by Christa Rumsey.

²²² David Rumsey, personal communication, 9 Jun. 2008.

²²³ Peter Planyavsky, 'Antipodean engagements from 1969', kindly provided via Christa Rumsey, personal communication, 17 Aug. 2010.

inform Australian organists about contemporary European neoclassical instruments.²²⁴ His concerts covered a broad range of repertoire, from Sweelinck, Froberger, Scheidt, Buxtehude and Bach to the Australian premieres of works by the contemporary composers Augustinus Kropfreiter and Florent Schmitt.²²⁵ Other performers were David Rumsey, Christa Rumsey, Keith Asboe and Sergio de Pieri. Fifteen masterclasses were given including classes by de Pieri on Italian organ music, by Christa Rumsey on church organist skills, and by Keith Asboe on eighteenth-century English organs.²²⁶

By the end of the 1969 Sydney festival the organisers had reason to believe that the new organ festivals had been well received. A number of students from Victoria, Queensland and New Zealand had travelled to Sydney to attend the 1969 festival, as did Melbourne music journalist John Sinclair. Positive reports appeared in the Sydney and Melbourne daily press. John Sinclair wrote of the May 1969 festival:

We might as well take this festival as the writing on the wall—as surprising and joyous evidence that we have a generation of intelligent and dedicated young organists determined to change the face of organ playing in Australia.²²⁷

Sinclair regarded this festival as ‘one of the most significant and exciting developments in Australian music in recent years,’ not least because ‘this historic change has been brought about by young people’. Sinclair noted that Planyavsky was only 22 while David Rumsey, Sergio de Pieri, Christa Rumsey and Ronald Sharp were in their 30s.²²⁸ Sydney reviewer Fred Blanks, in addition to reviewing a number of concerts, observed that:

²²⁴ Peter Planyavsky ‘Biography’, accessed 10 Mar. 2011, <http://www.peterplanyavsky.at/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=40&Itemid=51>. Christa Rumsey, personal communication, 17 Mar. 2011. Coincidentally, it was this firm that was brought in to assist Ron Sharp complete the building of the Sydney Opera House organ in 1979.

²²⁵ Program, Autumn Organ Festival, Recital by Peter Planyavsky, 10 May 1969. Kindly supplied by Christa Rumsey. This is the only program available. No program of the complete festival could be located.

²²⁶ F. R. Blanks, ‘And a feast for organists’, *Sydney Morning Herald* 20 May 1969.

²²⁷ John Sinclair, ‘Organ music’s young sound’ *Herald* 12 May 1969.

²²⁸ Sinclair, ‘Organ music’.

Too often the organ loft is a citadel of isolation from the mainstream of music. The Autumn Festival did its best to lower the ramparts.²²⁹

The first three festivals, in 1968–69, were followed immediately by further festivals that consolidated the ideas trialled in Adelaide and Sydney. The Second Adelaide Organ Week was held over five days in October 1969. The program included three recitals, a masterclass, a lecture-demonstration, and a social event. It also introduced an organ competition that became a regular feature of the Adelaide festivals for many years.²³⁰ Sergio de Pieri played a major role, performing the opening recital on organ and the closing recital on harpsichord, and giving a masterclass about early Italian organ music. Other events included an organ recital by J. V. Peters and a lecture-demonstration on the music of Max Reger, given by John Barker.²³¹ There was no organ festival in Adelaide in 1970, as it would have conflicted with the Adelaide Festival of Arts, in which a number of organ recitals had been programmed.²³²

In Sydney, the 1970 festival name was changed to Sydney Organ Festival. The local organ societies were no longer involved and David Rumsey and Christa Rumsey were responsible for its financial underpinning, with organisational assistance by colleagues.²³³ There is no program of the 1970 Sydney festival available, but some details can be gleaned from two press reviews and a report in the Victorian Society of Organists newsletter. The festival offered a week-long program of concerts, masterclasses, lectures, discussions and student activities, featuring the three organs used in the 1968 festival. Again David Rumsey and Keith Asboe were recitalists, along with guests Christoph Diehl from Germany, and Robert Boughen from Brisbane, who gave the closing recital. A report in the newsletter of the Victorian Society of Organists noted that Boughen's attendance was:

²²⁹ Blanks, 'Feast for Organists', *Sydney Morning Herald* 20 May 1969.

²³⁰ This was not the first organ playing competition to be held in Australia. In 1967 the Victorian Society of Organists had staged a national organ playing competition, instigated by Sergio de Pieri. Sergio de Pieri, personal communication, 12 Feb. 2009. 'Young Organists', *Age* 28 May 1967. Subsequently in 1971 in Perth the first Western Australian organ playing competition was held and the winner was scheduled to give a recital as part of the first Perth Organ Festival in that year.

²³¹ Second Adelaide Organ Week, *Organ Music Society of Adelaide Newsletter*, (Sep. 1969): 3.

²³² *Organ Music Society of Adelaide Newsletter*, (Feb. 1970): 7.

²³³ Christa Rumsey, personal communication, 10 Nov. 2008. No government funding was provided for any of the Sydney festivals.

A valuable accomplishment of the festival ... contact [was] made between organists from Brisbane and those in other states. ... He [Boughen] brought five students with him. They all returned to Brisbane full of enthusiasm for the festival and mechanical action organs.²³⁴

Repertoire included the complete *Orgelbüchlein* of Bach performed by David Rumsey and works by Reger, Alain, and Hindemith, and a first performance of *Assemblages* by Australian composer Colin Brumby, performed by Robert Boughen. One or two pieces were also performed on harpsichord, but the instrument did not play a major role in the festival.²³⁵ The leadership of David Rumsey continued in this festival, in both performance and artistic direction.

By the end of the 1970 Sydney festival, David Rumsey and Sergio de Pieri had achieved their goal of presenting something radically different for the organ in Australia. David Rumsey believes that the ideas for the festivals fell on fertile ground:

What we were offering was welcomed by the musical world at large and the fledgling early music movement in Australia. It linked in also with what the organ builders were doing in Sydney. ... The audience loved it, partly because the range of repertoire was expanded wildly beyond what they had ever heard before ... and partly because as you can only do with festival audiences, you can put a lot of experimental material in there ... you can't do this with an orchestral subscription crowd or churchgoers on Sunday.²³⁶

From 1971 the festivals in Adelaide and Sydney continued to be held annually, and new festivals began in Perth and Melbourne. The development of the festivals in four cities between 1971 and 1973 is discussed in the following chapters.

²³⁴ Michael Edgeloe, 'The Organ—alive and well in Sydney, Report from our Sydney correspondent'. *Society of Organists (Victoria) Incorporated Newsletter*, (Oct. 1970): 5.

²³⁵ F. R. Blanks, 'Flying Colours Success', *Sydney Morning Herald* Aug. 1970, and Fred R. Blanks, 'Sydney Organ Festival', *Musical Times* 111 (Oct. 1970): 1036.

²³⁶ David Rumsey, personal communication, 9 Jun. 2008.

CHAPTER 4

Consolidation: developing festivals in Adelaide and Sydney

In the three years to 1970, five organ festivals had been held in Australia.²³⁷ In the following three years the number increased dramatically in what can be seen as the consolidation phase of organ festivals. The Adelaide and Sydney festivals continued, and new festivals began in Perth and Melbourne. The schedule of annual events across the four cities provided new opportunities, and established a sense of a national movement. This chapter considers the continuing festivals in Adelaide and Sydney in the period 1971–1973 and summarises the development of both festivals.

Table 3: Festivals in Adelaide and Sydney 1971–1973

Year	Adelaide	Sydney
1971	1–8 JUNE 3 organ recitals 1 ensemble 1 masterclass 1 competition	20–29 AUGUST <i>Program not available</i>
1972	8–15 AUGUST 3 organ recitals 1 harpsichord recital 2 ensemble 2 masterclasses 1 competition	18–27 AUGUST 10 organ recitals 15 workshops 4 masterclasses
1973	28 JULY–4 AUGUST <i>Program not available</i>	1–9 SEPTEMBER 9 organ recitals 5 ensemble 6 workshops

Adelaide festivals: 1971–1973

The 1971 Adelaide festival, like its predecessors, was a modest event. The program contained only three organ recitals, one masterclass and a concert for orchestra and organ. However, repertoire included a range of works, such as the Copland Organ Symphony performed at the opening concert; works by Vierne played by David

²³⁷ For ease of expression all the festivals discussed in this chapter will be referred to by city name and festival. The full titles of the festivals were: Adelaide Organ Week, Sydney Organ Festival, Perth Organ Festival, and Melbourne Autumn Festival of Organ and Harpsichord. Each title was preceded by its year, or a numeric indicator e.g. ‘3rd.’

Merchant at St Peter's Cathedral; and major works by Liszt and Bach played by James Govenlock and Robert Ampt at Tynte Street church. Michael Wentzell, the only interstate guest, gave a major recital at the Adelaide Town Hall, and the only masterclass of the festival, titled 'Freedom and Convention in Baroque Music'.²³⁸ This and subsequent Adelaide festivals continued the organ playing competition instituted in 1969.

In 1972, the Adelaide festival included a greater variety of concerts and repertoire. There were six concerts, of which four were solo recitals—three for organ and one for harpsichord. The inclusion of a harpsichord recital was probably influenced by the Melbourne festival, which had begun in 1971 and featured harpsichord in the festival title and to a significant extent in the program. Details of this are discussed in the following chapter. The most significant event was the opening concert, which featured interstate guest David Rumsey, local organist Ashleigh Tobin, flautist David Cubbin, timpanist Richard Smith and the Corinthian Singers in a varied program. Nevertheless, the organ was the centerpiece. The first item was the major Bach work, Fantasia and Fugue in G minor BWV542, and the concluding items were two contemporary works for organ, one of which was Ligeti's *Volumina*, performed by David Rumsey.²³⁹ David Rumsey also gave two masterclasses, one on the performance of Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D minor BWV565. Lindsay O'Neill from Tasmania also was a guest, as organ soloist in the Saint-Saëns Symphony No 3, and playing solo items including the Mozart Fantasia in F minor²⁴⁰, and Choral Song and Fugue by S. S. Wesley. The third guest, Michael Wentzell, gave a recital of works by Pachelbel, de Grigny, Bach and Schumann at the Bethlehem Lutheran church. Other events were a lunchtime harpsichord recital by Terry Norman, performing Bach's *The Musical Offering* on an unspecified instrument, and two solo

²³⁸ *Organ Music Society of Adelaide Newsletter* (Jun. 1971): 7. Wentzell's recital program is not given.

²³⁹ A note in the newsletter of the Society of Organists in Victoria reported that 'Ligeti's *Volumina* must surely be the most frequently performed and popular contemporary organ work in Australia. Since David Rumsey gave the Australian premiere at the 1970 Sydney Prom concerts, there have been at least eight subsequent performances: two in Sydney by David Rumsey, three in Melbourne by Sergio de Pieri, one in Hobart and Brisbane also by Sergio de Pieri and one in Adelaide by Robert Ampt.' *Society of Organists (Victoria) Incorporated Newsletter* (Jul. 1971): 7.

²⁴⁰ No Köchel number is given.

organ recitals by Norman and Rumsey, covering major works by Bach, Bruhns, Buxtehude, Reger, Alain and Planyavsky.²⁴¹

Although no program is available for the 1973 Adelaide festival, held in late July/early August, the highlights were outlined in advance publicity in the newsletter of the local organ society.²⁴² The presence of guest performers from Melbourne and Sydney was noted, although they were not named. Sydney organ builder Roger Pogson was to give a lecture on organ building, and masterclasses and a dinner also were scheduled. Christa Rumsey recalls performing Pachelbel, Buxtehude, Bach, Frank Martin and Reger.²⁴³ The commissioning and first performance of the work *Cathedral Music III*, by Melbourne composer Ian Bonighton, was one of the few examples of a specific commission for the Adelaide festival. It is likely that Douglas Lawrence was the Melbourne visitor, and he probably performed the Bonighton work.²⁴⁴

Sydney festivals: 1971–1973

As in Adelaide, festivals in Sydney began in 1968 and continued annually up to 1973. The 1971 Sydney festival continued the pattern of recitals and masterclasses of previous festivals. Although no program is available for the 1971 festival some details are provided by a preliminary announcement in the newsletter of the Victorian Society of Organists and a press review, which reported a program of repertoire from the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, and contemporary music. Sergio de Pieri, Michael Wentzell and Robert Boughen were the interstate guest performers. Other players listed were Keith Asboe, harpsichordist Robert Goode, Christa Rumsey and John O'Donnell.²⁴⁵ David Rumsey opened the festival with a recital of Bach and Buxtehude on the organ at Knox Grammar School, while de Pieri played 'baroque and younger musical mosquitoes' — W. F. Bach, Daquin, Zipoli and Langlais — on the Sydney Town Hall organ. The use of this latter instrument for baroque works was

²⁴¹ Program, The Fourth Adelaide Organ Week Aug 8–15 1972.

²⁴² 'Fifth Adelaide Organ Week', *Organ Music Society of Adelaide Newsletter* 6:5 (Jun. 1973).

²⁴³ Christa Rumsey, personal communication, 12 Jul. 2010.

²⁴⁴ There is no record of the commissioner of this work, but it is likely that it was Douglas Lawrence.

²⁴⁵ '1971 Sydney Organ Festival', *Society of Organists (Victoria) Incorporated Newsletter* (Jul. 1971): 7.

referred to by the reviewer as using an ‘organ sledgehammer’ — a swipe at the nineteenth-century style of the organ, which made it less than suitable for the successful performance of this repertoire.²⁴⁶ Lectures and masterclasses were scheduled to complement the recital program. Boughen is reported as lecturing on church music accompaniment, Sergio de Pieri on Italian organ music, Michael Wentzell on ‘Freedom and Convention in Baroque Organ Music’ and David Rumsey on Bach’s Toccata and Fugue in D minor.²⁴⁷ The advance publicity in Melbourne noted that individual lessons would be included: fifteen 90-minute sessions with three students in each session; plus lectures by Francis Cameron on ‘The Problems of Early English Organ Music’ and by Howard Pollard on ‘A Critical Look at Organ Tone’. An audiovisual presentation on twentieth-century European organs is also listed.²⁴⁸ Reviewer Fred Blanks noted that the key aspect of the 1971 festival was: ‘the lasting value in [the] student tuition and masterclasses’.²⁴⁹ This festival was more extensive than its predecessors. There were three guests and a more extensive teaching program, extending to individual teaching sessions, lectures and an audio-visual presentation. The subsequent festival was to add considerably to the teaching emphasis.

The program for the 1972 Sydney festival was extraordinarily innovative. It was more extensive than the previous Sydney festivals, with ten organ recitals, four masterclasses and fifteen workshops over ten days.²⁵⁰ The entire program was committed to the presentation of the complete organ works of J. S. Bach in ten concerts, with supporting masterclasses and workshops. Although Leonard Fullard had given the complete works in Melbourne over a number of years at the annual Bach festival, this was the first time in Australia that they had been performed in the concentrated time frame of a festival. Eight organists were involved, five of whom—David Rumsey, Keith Asboe, Michael Wentzell, Robert Boughen and Christa Rumsey—had performed in previous festivals. The other three had recently returned to or arrived in Sydney after post-graduate study in Europe: John O’Donnell had

²⁴⁶ Fred Blanks, ‘Rumsey sets a high standard’, *Sydney Morning Herald* 24 Aug. 1971. This appears to be the only time this organ was used in a Sydney Organ Festival recital.

²⁴⁷ Wentzell also gave this masterclass in the Adelaide festival in 1971 and Rumsey also gave this masterclass in the Adelaide festival in 1972.

²⁴⁸ ‘1971 Sydney Organ Festival’, *Society of Organists (Victoria) Incorporated Newsletter* (Jul. 1971): 7.

²⁴⁹ Fred Blanks, ‘Rumsey sets a high standard’, *Sydney Morning Herald* 24 Aug. 1971.

²⁵⁰ Program, 1972 Sydney Organ Festival.

studied in France with Jean Langlais; James Forsyth had studied in Italy with Fernando Germani and in Austria with Anton Heiller; and Jeanne de Voss had studied in the UK, and in France with Marcel Dupré.

For the first time a professionally prepared program was printed, providing an enhanced opportunity to communicate with festival patrons. In the foreword, Rumsey noted his intention as artistic director for the festival, to position the organ as an instrument with a legitimate musical function to provide a unique set of artistic experiences:

We are attempting to present a concentration of artistic and cultural experiences not normally available to the public, and one which transcends the mere mechanics of art, the instruments, composers, performers and audiences. ... If organ music is a true form of artistic expression then it must surely have a significant value to the community at large, and the responsibility of the festival is to make the best of it available to the community.²⁵¹

Prior to this, no clear statement of purpose had been published about any of the organ festivals in this study. The foreword was also used to explain the specific focus of the repertoire of the 1972 festival—the complete organ works of Bach. Rumsey also included a message to encourage participation in social opportunities:

We particularly recommend active participation in the conversations and informal ‘events’, which inevitably go hand in hand with functions such as these. The uniqueness of the opportunities afforded by these festivals for participation ... should be exploited to the full, enabling a consequential enrichment ...²⁵²

An extensive teaching program of nineteen events complemented the recital program and covered the introduction to and concentration on Bach’s ‘musical architecture’, especially symbolism—numerical, pictorial and musical—which was regarded as ‘essential to the proper understanding and full appreciation of his music’.²⁵³ Not surprisingly, this festival was reviewed as: ‘ranking prominently among this year’s

²⁵¹ David Rumsey, ‘Foreword’, 1972 Sydney Organ Festival program: 3.

²⁵² Rumsey, ‘Foreword’ 3.

²⁵³ Rumsey, ‘Foreword’ 3.

most significant, and even more prominently among its most ennobling, musical projects'.²⁵⁴ Blanks also noted that while 'virtually all the playing was first rate, the real hero was old Johann Sebastian himself'.²⁵⁵

The 1973 Sydney Organ Festival was the most complex program of all the Sydney festivals to date, involving seven organists, of whom two were international guests; choristers; a jazz group; a chamber orchestra; a renaissance music ensemble; trumpet, timpani and baritone soloists; and electronics operators. There were nine organ recitals and five ensemble concerts. There was also a display of instruments, six workshops and a final festival dinner. Again, the printed program was used to set out the purpose for this festival, this time positioning the organ as an instrument capable of new and different, exciting roles:

We are adopting some new approaches ... the organ appears in places where we least expect to find it ... at other times we take age-old concepts associated with the organ and, by a process of 'artificial musical insemination', experiment with likely and unlikely possibilities.²⁵⁶

While the focus of this festival was a celebration of the anniversaries of two composers who had far-reaching influences on the organ in the twentieth century—Max Reger and Anton Heiller—there were also first Australian performances of four works by Malcolm Williamson, one by Richard Felciano and the first Sydney performances of another three works.²⁵⁷ Two of these, by young Melbourne composers Ron Nagorcka and Ian Bonighton, had been commissioned for and premiered in the Melbourne organ festival held just a few months before. The backbone of organ repertoire from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, especially that of Bach and his predecessors, was not forgotten: the opening concert, with the exception of one work by Reger, was devoted to Bach, Buxtehude, Bruhns and Böhm, while the closing work was Bach's Prelude and Fugue in E flat major BWV 552. After the 1973 festival there were no further annual organ festivals in

²⁵⁴ Fred Blanks, 'A Project of Noble Significance', *Sydney Morning Herald* 22 Aug. 1972.

²⁵⁵ Fred R. Blanks, 'Sydney Festival' *Musical Times* 113 (Oct. 1972):1009.

²⁵⁶ David Rumsey, '1973 Sydney Organ Festival', 1973 Sydney Organ Festival program: 3.

²⁵⁷ It was noted in the festival program that three of the four Australian organists performing in this festival had been students of Anton Heiller—David Rumsey, Christa Rumsey and Douglas Lawrence.

Sydney, as David Rumsey had taken a new position at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music.²⁵⁸ David Rumsey and Christa Rumsey had taken financial responsibility for all the Sydney festivals, which was an untenable responsibility in the long term. The possibility of providing educational activities for organists at the Conservatorium meant that recitals, overseas guests and masterclasses continued, but under a different aegis.²⁵⁹

Both Adelaide and Sydney were integral in the initial establishment, trial and consolidation of the plans for organ festivals in Australia, proposed by David Rumsey and Sergio de Pieri in mid 1968. By 1973 eleven organ festivals had been held in these two cities—five in Adelaide and six in Sydney. While Adelaide had the distinction of staging the first organ festival before their establishment in other cities, it is noteworthy that there were no neoclassical organs there until 1975.²⁶⁰ This led to a particular programming challenge from the very first festival—to implement the goal of promoting the neoclassical organ without the benefit of having the instruments to hand. Festival organisers dealt with this issue by introducing the instrument through recordings and workshops. As late as the 1973 festival, Sydney organ builder Roger Pogson gave a lecture on organ building, probably focused on the neoclassical organ. Secondly, only eleven organ recitals were given over these five years. By contrast, in the same period thirty-two organ recitals were given on seven neoclassical organs in the Sydney festivals. The relatively small number of solo organ recitals in Adelaide was probably due to the lack of neoclassical organs. Thirdly, all Adelaide festivals in this period were relatively modest in scope. All comprised less than ten events, compared to festivals in Sydney and Melbourne in the same period, where in some years there were over twenty events. The absence of suitable organs may also have prevented organisers from including overseas guests in Adelaide festivals. There may have been a further reason for this: the strong leadership of the artistic directors evident in other states was not replicated in Adelaide after the first festival, which was organised and directed by David Rumsey.

²⁵⁸ David Rumsey, personal communication, 9 Jun. 2008. The Conservatorium was later amalgamated with the University of Sydney.

²⁵⁹ David Rumsey, personal communication, 2 Jun. 2011.

²⁶⁰ In 1975 the first neoclassical organ was installed in South Australia—an instrument by Roger Pogson for St Peter's Lutheran church, Mannum.

Despite the absence of neoclassical organs in Adelaide until 1975, the most suitable available instruments were used by visiting and local performers: at Elder Hall, University of Adelaide; St Oswald’s Parkside; Adelaide Town Hall; Tynte Street Baptist church; Bethlehem Lutheran church, and St Peter’s Cathedral. In line with the intention of Rumsey and de Pieri to broaden the repertoire performed by organists in Australia, the only organ recital of the first Adelaide festival, given by David Rumsey, comprised works from the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries (see Table 4). Performances in Adelaide festivals included repertoire not previously heard, ranging from early music to contemporary works, including one commissioned for the 1973 festival. As was the case in Sydney, masterclasses were integral to the Adelaide performance program. Local performers were supported by visitors David Rumsey (after 1969), Michael Wentzell, Sergio de Pieri and Douglas Lawrence. All brought performance practices informed by their European training. An indication of repertoire covered in the Adelaide festivals 1968 to 1972 can be found in Table 4.

Table 4: Repertoire summary: Adelaide festivals 1968–1972

Year	Up to and including J S Bach	To end of 18th century	Nineteenth century	Twentieth century
1968	Bach (2), de Grigny, Schlick, Isaac, Titelouze, Buxtehude. (4). <i>10 works</i>		Franck. <i>1 work</i>	
1969	<i>No information available</i>			
1970	<i>No festival</i>			
1971	Bach. <i>1 work</i>		Reger, Vierne, Liszt. <i>3 works</i>	Copland, Holst. <i>2 works</i>
1972	Bruhns, Bach (14), de Grigny, Buxtehude (4), Pachelbel (3). <i>22 works</i>	Mozart. <i>1 work</i>	Reger (3), Schumann, Wesley. <i>5 works</i>	Badings, Ligeti, Alain (2), Britten, Langlais, Planyavsky. <i>7 works</i>
1973	<i>No program available</i>			

Note: Due to the absence of source material for the 1969 and 1973 festivals and lack of detail on the 1971 program, this table is incomplete. It includes only works in which the organ or harpsichord were used other than as continuo or accompaniment. Each listing indicates a single work performed, except where indicated otherwise.²⁶¹

²⁶¹ Organ Week Program, Aug 8–15, 1972; ‘Fifth Adelaide Organ Week’, *Organ Music Society of Adelaide Newsletter* 6:5 (Jun. 1973). There was no festival in 1970 due to the staging of the Adelaide Festival of Arts, which included five organ recitals. *Organ Music Society Newsletter* (Feb. 1970): 7.

The circumstances in Sydney were, however, quite different. David Rumsey, who was artistic director from the first Sydney festival in 1968 through to 1973, was in a position to implement and develop what he and de Pieri had envisaged in their 1968 discussions. Organisers also had the good fortune to have at their disposal a number of quality instruments of the type they regarded as intrinsic to the repertoire they wished to promote in the festivals. The availability of these instruments from 1968 on made possible consistent movement towards Rumsey and de Pieri’s goals—to encourage the acquisition and use of neoclassical organs; to provide high quality performance and teaching examples of the repertoire best suited to these instruments, and to encourage and support local organists. By 1973 Sydney had seven neoclassical organs, excluding the Walcker instruments, available for use in the festivals (see Table 5).²⁶² In the program of the 1973 festival the commitment to neoclassical instruments was acknowledged as a tenet of Sydney festivals. ‘The recitals in this Festival use only modern mechanical action organs with classical voicing’.²⁶³

Table 5: Neoclassical organs in Sydney festivals

Location	Builders
Wahroonga, Knox Grammar School, Chapel.	Ron Sharp
Parramatta, The King’s School, Futter Hall.	Roger Pogson
Wollongong, Town Hall.	Ron Sharp
Parramatta, The King’s School, Chapel. University of Sydney, St Paul’s College.	Roger Pogson Flentrop
Sydney, Conservatorium of Music. University of Sydney, Great Hall.	Roger Pogson Von Beckerath

²⁶² David Rumsey gives several reasons for the exclusion of the Walcker instruments. The festival chose to support the Australian builders such as Sharp and Pogson in preference to the imported instruments, not only because they were of a high quality, but because they were better instruments musically—all of which affirmed a sense of national pride. The local instruments were also bigger and more exciting and the Walcker instruments were not located conveniently for festival events. Further, David Rumsey said of the Walcker tradition of building: ‘We had all come back from Europe with the knowledge that these Walcker instruments did not stand up to the high standards there—consequently we were not willing to promote them in what we saw as events where excellence, state of the art, etc. were being promoted. The Australian Walckers of this era were harbingers, nothing else’. David Rumsey, personal communication, 9 Jun. 2008.

²⁶³ ‘The Organs, 1973 Sydney Organ Festival’, 1973 Sydney Organ Festival program: 9. The two exceptions—one recital at Sydney Town Hall in 1971 and several on a mechanical action instrument at St John’s Parramatta in 1968—did not invalidate the key commitment to neoclassical organs.

In order to present high quality performances and teaching in Sydney festivals, Rumsey selected organists with training and experience in the repertoire presented at the festivals. The principle that had been implicit in the presentation of the early festivals was articulated in the 1972 program foreword: ‘our established policy of presenting the best of all available professional organists’.²⁶⁴ The availability of quality instruments also made feasible the early inclusion of occasional international guests as performers and teachers. Peter Planyavsky visited as early as 1969 and was followed by Christoph Diehl and Arno Schönstedt, bringing the European influences of the organ reform movement and its associated performance practices, in support of the festival goals. However, the majority of performances were given by local players—Sydney residents David Rumsey, Christa Rumsey, Keith Asboe, James Forsyth, John O’Donnell, Jeanne de Voss; and interstate visitors Sergio de Pieri, Michael Wentzell, Douglas Lawrence and Robert Boughen—most of whom had trained in Europe with teachers such as Anton Heiller and Marie-Claire Alain. David Rumsey said of the involvement of both overseas and local organists:

It became a major point of the exercise to bring as many as possible of the leading Australian organists together. Overseas players came, more or less one at a time, but these festivals served the local scene primarily. ... In those early years we came as the equals of the overseas performers. ... We were a band of organists each of which was regarded as having their own importance. ... In those days one of the important criteria was that we were playing—the Australians were playing.²⁶⁵

It was possible to program eight young Australian organists in the 1972 festival, six of whom had trained in Europe. Rumsey viewed the involvement of local organists as a means of achieving another of his goals—to provide encouragement and create a collegial atmosphere amongst local organists. He said:

Of the ten leading organists around Australia, probably seven or eight of them would be performing in one festival or another every year. I think that was terribly important because it gave us all encouragement, and, in a place like Australia organists need encouragement. So we were very mutually supportive.... Everybody was there, we were talking about the new organ types, we had something to preoccupy us. ... It was

²⁶⁴ David Rumsey, ‘Foreword’, 1972 Sydney Organ Festival program: 3.

²⁶⁵ David Rumsey, personal communication, 9 Jun. 2008.

[a] very open kind of thing and we also had talk-sessions—there was an educational component to it, which to me was very important. There was a lot to feed in to these communities.²⁶⁶

The instruments available in Sydney enabled organisers to plan festival programs of the repertoire best suited to them—early music up to and including J. S. Bach, and contemporary music (see Table 6).

Table 6: Repertoire summary: Sydney festivals 1968–1973

Year	Up to and including J. S. Bach	To end of eighteenth century	Nineteenth century	Twentieth century
1968	Bach (17), Sweelinck, Dacquin, Buxtehude (4), <i>23 works</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	Hollier, Messiaen, Heiller (4) <i>6 works</i>
1969	Sweelinck, Bach (6), Buxtehude (6), Couperin, Frescobaldi, Pasquini, Valente, Scheidt, Froberger. <i>19 works</i>	Haydn (4), Mozart. <i>5 works</i>	Brahms (2), Reger, Franck. <i>4 works</i>	Kropfreiter (2), Improvisation (3), Schmitt. <i>6 works</i>
1970	<i>No program available</i>			
1971	Bach (7), Buxtehude (7), W. F. Bach, Zipoli, Daquin <i>17 works</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	Langlais <i>1 work</i>
1972	Bach—complete organ works	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>
1973	Sweelinck (2), Gibbons (2), Frescobaldi (2), Froberger, Bruhns, Böhm (2), De Grigny, Handel, Viviani, Buxtehude (11), Bach (9). <i>34 works</i>	Mozart Haydn (2) <i>3 works</i>	Reger (10) <i>10 works</i>	Badings, Felciano, Bonighton, Nagorcka, Stockmeier, David, Kropfreiter, Heiller (3), Alain (2), Messiaen, Williamson (4) <i>17 works</i>

Note: Due to an absence of source material for the 1970 and 1971 festivals, and lack of detail on the 1969 program, this table is incomplete. It includes only works in which the organ or harpsichord were used other than as continuo or accompaniment. Each listing indicates a single work performed, except where indicated otherwise.^{267,268}

Works from the early period up to the end of the eighteenth century made up the bulk of repertoire performed in Sydney organ festivals from 1968 to 1973, the pinnacle

²⁶⁶ David Rumsey, Interview 9 Jun. 2008.

²⁶⁷ Program, 1972 Sydney Organ Festival. Program, 1973 Sydney Organ Festival.

²⁶⁸ Fred Blanks, 'Flying Colours Success', *Sydney Morning Herald* Aug. 1970. Fred Blanks, 'Rumsey sets a high standard', *Sydney Morning Herald* 24 Aug. 1971.

being the performance of the complete organ works of J. S. Bach in the 1972 festival. These works were complemented by contemporary works, many from local composers. Conversely, only fourteen works of the nineteenth century were performed, and of these most are stylistically 'classical', suited to the neoclassical instrument.

By the end of the 1973 Sydney Organ festival David Rumsey had implemented many of the goals he and Sergio de Pieri held for the organ in Australia. The locally built neoclassical organs installed before the first festival, and new instruments that followed in subsequent years, were used almost exclusively in the Sydney festivals, played by musicians who were trained in the performance skills relevant to these instruments. The presence of neoclassical instruments enabled festival organisers to arrange programs comprising the broad repertoire Rumsey and de Pieri wished to present, including both early and contemporary works, much of which had not been previously accessible to audiences. As the festival in Sydney developed, the commitment to the neoclassical organ, its repertoire, and the position of the organ as an instrument in its own right, were affirmed in festival programs. The program of entertainment and educational activities, together with social and informal activities, provided new opportunities for stimulus, support and education for organists otherwise isolated around the country. The following chapter discusses the ways in which new festivals in Perth and Melbourne implemented the goals discussed in 1968 by Rumsey and de Pieri.

CHAPTER 5

The past and the future: New festivals in Perth and Melbourne

The festivals in Perth and Melbourne started in 1971, three years after the first events in Adelaide and Sydney. Prior to 1971 Michael Wentzell had been in Europe but soon after his arrival to take up the position of priest-organist at St George's Cathedral he began to organise the first festival in Perth. The Perth organ festival ran for only three years—two under Michael Wentzell's direction and the third in his memory, following his sudden death in early 1973. While Sergio de Pieri was integral to the initial discussions and first festivals that started in 1968 in Adelaide and Sydney, he did not establish a festival in his home city until 1971. This chapter will first trace the brief course of the Perth festival followed by a more detailed discussion of the early years of the long-running Melbourne festival, which could be regarded as a culmination of the series of festivals staged in Australia between 1968 and 1973.

Perth

The Perth festival ran for only three years from 1971 to 1973. Like the Sydney festival, the existence and vision of the Perth festival was in great part due to the leadership of its artistic director, Michael Wentzell. His early death before the third festival was a tragedy and the festival presented later that year was staged as a memorial to him. However, Wentzell's vision could not be sustained, and no further annual organ festivals are known to have been held in Perth.²⁶⁹

Wentzell applied to the Perth festival programming many of the elements that were central to the Sydney festivals, including the focus on the neoclassical organ and its repertoire, and the importance of performance informed by eminent European pedagogues (see Table 7 for a summary of programs at the Perth festivals). There were no fully neoclassical organs available in Perth in early 1971, and few existing instruments were totally suited to the repertoire Wentzell regularly performed. He

²⁶⁹ A page noting 'Perth Organ and Harpsichord Festival', dated 5 November 1981 was provided by John Larner, but no further information has been found about this event.

directly influenced the acquisition of neoclassical instruments, even commissioning such an instrument for the first festival. He encouraged local organ builders to adopt neoclassical building practices and performed and taught at the two festivals he directed. Like festival directors in other states, Wentzell invited his colleagues and one international guest to perform and teach in Perth.²⁷⁰ Across the two festivals he directed there were six guest performers—Sergio de Pieri, Douglas Lawrence, John Nicholls, Sylvia Cowan, David Rumsey, and Peter Planyavsky.²⁷¹

Table 7: Festivals in Perth and Melbourne 1971–1973

Year	Melbourne	Perth
1971	15–23 MAY 9 organ recitals 2 harpsichord recitals 1 ensemble 9 lecture-recitals 2 workshops	5–15 SEPTEMBER* 13 organ recitals 2 ensemble 2 lecture-recitals
1972	13–20 MAY 10 organ recitals 1 harpsichord recital 2 ensemble 6 lecture-recitals	23–30 SEPTEMBER No information available
1973	11–20 MAY 5 organ recitals 2 harpsichord recitals 6 ensemble 5 masterclasses	8–16 SEPTEMBER* 8 organ recitals 5 ensemble 1 masterclass 1 lecture-recital

* Brochure only – no program details

The first Perth Organ Festival, held in September 1971 comprised seventeen events.²⁷² Michael Wentzell was artistic director and gave the opening recital. Other performers were guests David Rumsey, Sergio de Pieri, John Nicholls from Tasmania, Sylvia Cowan and three local organists. The focus on early and contemporary repertoire with supporting education events, established in the festivals in Sydney, was also incorporated in the festival in Perth. There were two lecture-recitals, one on ‘Early Italian Music’ given by Sergio de Pieri and another by David Rumsey, on ‘Bach’s *Little Organ Book*’. The winner of the first Western Australia Organ Playing competition was scheduled to give a recital. The lunchtime concerts took a thematic

²⁷⁰ In 1972 Wentzell was a participant in every organ festival around Australia, as was David Rumsey.

²⁷¹ David Rumsey was a guest at both these festivals.

²⁷² Program, Perth Organ Festival, 1971. Kindly supplied by Dudley Bastian. This document gives limited information about the performances, particularly the repertoire.

approach, exploring the little organ books of Clérambault, de Grigny, Messiaen and Bach, presented over five recitals. An all-Bach concert was given by Sergio de Pieri at St Mary's Cathedral while David Rumsey's recital at Winthrop Hall at the University of Western Australia included Buxtehude and Reger chorale preludes, Bach's Fantasia and Fugue in G minor BWV 542, and Planyavsky's *Toccata alla Rumba*.²⁷³ One concert was devoted to contemporary Australian compositions. Two of the six works in this program for which there are reviews, *Statico I* by Keith Humble and *Toccata* by Felix Werder, had been premiered by Sergio de Pieri four months earlier in the first Melbourne festival, at which Michael Wentzell had been guest performer. Wentzell's goal—shared with Rumsey and de Pieri—to position the organ and its repertoire on its own terms, and in so doing distinguish the organ from its church role, was noted in a review by Mary Tannock:

The program featured Australian compositions and managed to sever the link between organ and the church. ... One thing is certain, if last night's performance is a measure of the language of future organ repertoires, it will certainly not be without interest and merit.²⁷⁴

A fully neoclassical positiv organ, commissioned by Wentzell and built by John Larnier specifically for the festival was used for the masterclass on early Italian music and for some chamber music.²⁷⁵ An indication of the repertoire of the first Perth festival is given in Table 8.

²⁷³ Mary Tannock, 'Moving recital by organist', *West Australian* 10 Sep. 1971. Kindly provided by Christa Rumsey.

²⁷⁴ Mary Tannock, 'Originality in organ recital', *West Australian* 13 Sep. 1971.

²⁷⁵ The Festival organisers also used this instrument to publicise the festival. It was loaded onto the back of a truck and placed in the Hay Street mall near London Court on the day before the festival opening. Ian Hardy gave a lunchtime concert in this location. 'Time for Music', *West Australian* 4 Sep. 1971. Kindly provided by John Larnier.

Table 8: Repertoire summary: Perth festival 1971

Year	Up to and including J S Bach	To end of 18th century	Nineteenth century	Twentieth century
1971	Clérambault, organ book; de Grigny, organ book; Bach, 1 full program; Bach, <i>Little Organ Book</i> ; Buxtehude, several chorale preludes.	—	Reger, several chorale preludes.	Messiaen, organ book; Penberthy, Humble, Keenan, Hansen, McCaughey, Planyavsky (2).

Note: This table is incomplete as there are no programs available for the 1971 and 1972 festivals and no detail for the 1973 festival.²⁷⁶

By the time of the 1972 Perth festival, the first major neoclassical organ of two manuals and 26 stops had been installed at Guildford Grammar School chapel. Wentzell gave the inaugural recital on 16 September 1972, one week before the opening of the second Perth Organ Festival.²⁷⁷ It then was used for the opening concert of the festival, given by international guest Planyavsky. No program exists for this festival, but advance publicity in Sydney notes the guests were to be Peter Planyavsky, David Rumsey, and Douglas Lawrence from Melbourne.²⁷⁸ While this second festival was held relatively soon after the Sydney festival, Planyavsky did not attend any other Australian festivals during his visit, although he gave single recitals in Melbourne, Canberra, Sydney and Brisbane. His concert program shows he gave a recital at Guildford Grammar School on 23 September, presumably the festival's opening concert. On the following day he gave a seminar on improvisation at St George's Cathedral.²⁷⁹ A new work by Melbourne composer Ian Bonighton, *Quintet for Organ and String Quartet*, was commissioned for this festival by Douglas Lawrence.²⁸⁰ This festival was the last directed by Wentzell.

The Third Perth Organ Festival was held in September 1973 as a memorial to Michael Wentzell. It was directed by the Rev. John Cardell-Oliver and involved interstate

²⁷⁶ Program, 1971 Perth Organ Festival. Mary Tannock, 'Originality in Organ Recital', *West Australian* 11 Sep. 1971 and 'Moving recital by Organist', *West Australian* 13 Sep. 1971; Program, 1973 Perth Organ Festival.

²⁷⁷ John Lerner, personal communication, 18 Aug. 2010.

²⁷⁸ *Sydney Organ Journal* (Sep.1972): 9.

²⁷⁹ Planyavsky concert program, 'Antipodean Engagements' kindly supplied via Christa Rumsey, personal communication, 17 Aug. 2010.

²⁸⁰ Program, Third Melbourne Festival of Organ and Harpsichord, 1973, 18. This work was performed in Melbourne in 1973 and the program note includes the information noted here.

organists David Rumsey, Christa Rumsey, Douglas Lawrence, and German visitor Arno Schönstedt.²⁸¹ It was held immediately following the Sydney festival at which Schönstedt was the guest performer, making it possible for the organisers in Perth to take advantage of his availability. The festival brochure notes the venues and performers for eight organ recitals, five ensemble concerts, one masterclass and a lecture-recital, but gives no detailed information on repertoire.²⁸² Schönstedt gave the opening recital at St George's Cathedral. The five ensemble concerts included brass, contralto, choirs, and a string quartet. Of the eight solo organ recitals, five were programmed for St George's Cathedral. According to organ builder John Larnar, Wentzell had held 'a poor opinion of the Hill/J. W. Walker & Sons/Dodd rebuild at St George's', so it was ironic that most recitals were programmed for this instrument, given the existence of the newly installed instrument at Guildford Grammar school with which Wentzell had been closely associated. Guildford was used for only one solo recital, but there may have been practical reasons for this.²⁸³ Douglas Lawrence gave one masterclass, topic unspecified, at Guildford. John Larnar had installed what was Perth's third neoclassical instrument, at St David's Applecross, in time for its inauguration by Christa Rumsey as part of this festival. Smaller than the Guildford instrument, it was used for two recitals and a lecture-recital on the topic of 'The Small Parish Organ', also given by Christa Rumsey.²⁸⁴ A final dinner for participants was included in the program.

²⁸¹ John Larnar, personal communication, 18 Aug. 2010.

²⁸² Program, Third Perth Organ Festival, 1973: In Memoriam Michael Wentzell. Kindly supplied by Christa Rumsey.

²⁸³ John Larnar, personal communication, 14 Sep. 2010.

²⁸⁴ Program, Third Perth Organ Festival, 1973: In Memoriam Michael Wentzell.

Melbourne

Although Sergio de Pieri had been active as a performer and teacher from the earliest festivals in 1968, it was not until May 1971 that he staged the first organ festival in Melbourne, of which he was artistic director. He returned to Italy in 1972, so asked his student Douglas Lawrence to take over as artistic director from that time, with de Pieri acting as an adviser in 1972.

The availability of mechanical action instruments of neoclassical style was central to the festivals planned by Rumsey and de Pieri, but there were no such instruments in Melbourne in early 1971.²⁸⁵ This circumstance led de Pieri to devise a number of strategies, all of which contributed to the unique structure of Melbourne festival programs. Firstly, he decided to program performances of early music using an appropriate alternative instrument—the harpsichord. As we saw in Chapter 2, by 1971 there was a number of high quality harpsichords in Melbourne, built by McMillan and McAllister, ‘like the harpsichords of the classical period’.²⁸⁶ These instruments had the integrity required by de Pieri for the performance of early music, and provided a practical and musical solution to the staging of an important part of the repertoire.²⁸⁷ The harpsichord was included in a range of events, from solo recitals, to ensemble concerts, to shared programs, usually with organ, thereby adding another dimension to the Melbourne festival. David Rumsey identified the benefits of including harpsichord in the Melbourne festivals:

It was a stroke of genius to put harpsichord in there as well as organ, bearing in mind the basically Victorian organs which Melbourne possessed, and it was also a stroke of genius in the sense that the two instruments had complementary textures – one was a plucked string and the other a continuous pipe, so if you went to an organ recital one

²⁸⁵ An historic Fincham organ at the Church of All Nations was the only mechanical action instrument available in Melbourne that de Pieri regarded as having the tonal qualities suited to some of the repertoire envisaged for the festivals. Unfortunately it lacked mixtures, regarded as essential for a full chorus normally used for major works by Bach, Buxtehude and their contemporaries. However, Sergio de Pieri would have been aware of the imminent arrival of the first major neoclassical instrument in Melbourne, for Christ Church Brunswick, as he was consultant on the project. That instrument was installed in time for the second Melbourne festival, in 1972.

²⁸⁶ Sergio de Pieri, personal communication, 12 Feb. 2009.

²⁸⁷ Bach wrote more works for harpsichord than for organ. Douglas Lawrence, personal communication, 16 Mar. 2009.

night and you went to a harpsichord recital the next night, you were constantly confronted by totally different sounds and totally different means of producing sounds, and so from one concert to the next, or even from one item in a concert to the next, this happened. This was a wonderful foil to the early absence of ‘classical’ organs in Melbourne.

Rumsey also noted that the use of harpsichords gave an integrity to performances of early music in the Melbourne festivals, that could not be achieved using the organs available in Melbourne at the time.²⁸⁸ It was also featured in the educational events, including items such as a workshop on instrument construction. John McCaughey, an advisor to the festival’s artistic director, believes the inclusion of harpsichord was a conscious development by de Pieri:

I think that in Sergio’s mind this was something unusual, a festival of organ and harpsichord. It wasn’t an ordinary platitude because we [Melbourne] had the instruments [harpsichords] it brought into this culture of concerts a sense of this new thing, which in Sydney was already underway in organ. This was a wonderful entry of early music through the very physical thing of the instrument, and I suspect that was the reason why it was called the organ and harpsichord [festival].²⁸⁹

The harpsichord became an integral part of all the Melbourne festivals, and it was formally recognised in the festival title, Melbourne Autumn Festival of Organ and Harpsichord. It provided a point of distinction for the festival, where it retained a legitimate musical role in programming, through the three decades of the Melbourne festival.

Presentation of the classical repertoire on the harpsichord left de Pieri free to use the available romantic-style organs to program the repertoire and players best suited to such instruments. This gave greater breadth to the program, in contrast to the focus in Sydney. He recalls:

²⁸⁸ David Rumsey, personal communication, 9 Jun. 2008.

²⁸⁹ John McCaughey, personal communication, 30 Oct. 2008.

I wanted to embrace everything, even romantic and modern music. I wanted to attract people to the festival. I thought we needed all types of repertoire, but to try to play it in the most original way possible. ...²⁹⁰

This second strategy meant that programs of English music and of classical and romantic works by Brahms, Mozart and Schumann were performed in major evening concerts at the first Melbourne festival. This enabled de Pieri to include local musicians as much as possible, resulting in the involvement of sixteen players in the first festival—of whom only one, Michael Wentzell, was a visitor.

A third strategy that contributed to the breadth of repertoire introduced by de Pieri was the regular inclusion of works of local composers, a number of which were specially commissioned for the festival. De Pieri explains his reasons:

You can't stay with romantic music. You have to open your eyes and ears and hear what Ligeti is doing, what Messiaen is and so on. ... We played *Statico I*, which is 30 minutes long ... It was experimental and I saw people gain a new idea of what was going on in the world.²⁹¹

New works were commissioned for the Melbourne festival for the next three years. Hannes notes that the Melbourne festival played a significant role in commissioning and programming new works, particularly in the 1970s.²⁹² Douglas Lawrence believes that the commissioned works, paid for by Australia Council grants, made the Melbourne festival unique.²⁹³ While a commitment to the performance of contemporary works, particularly Australian works, was part of all the Australian organ festivals from 1968 on, only two works were commissioned for festivals other than Melbourne, and in each case the commission came from Douglas Lawrence, the second artistic director of the Melbourne festival (see Table 9 for a summary of the works commissioned for Australian festivals, 1968—1973).²⁹⁴ Two works, from

²⁹⁰ Sergio de Pieri, personal communication, 12 Feb. 2009.

²⁹¹ Sergio de Pieri, personal communication, 12 Feb. 2009. *Statico I: Keith Humble*

²⁹² David Scott Hannes, 'The role of the Melbourne International Festival of Organ and Harpsichord in fostering Australian organ music', M.Mus. thesis, Australian Catholic University, 2001, 110.

²⁹³ Douglas Lawrence, personal communication, 16 Mar. 2009.

²⁹⁴ Contemporary works were regularly programmed in Sydney festivals, such as the concert in 1973 devoted to works by Malcolm Williamson, performed by the composer. Earlier, for the 1963 Sydney Organ Convention, two works had been commissioned.

Melbourne composer Ian Bonighton, were commissioned for the Adelaide and Perth festivals.

Table 9: Works commissioned for Australian organ festivals 1968–1973

Work and instrument/s	Composer	Commissioned by	Performance year/s & place/s
<i>Statico I</i> , organ	Keith Humble	Sergio de Pieri	1971 Melbourne and Perth
<i>Sequenza</i> , organ	Ian Bonighton	Sergio de Pieri	1971 Melbourne
<i>Toccata</i> , organ	Felix Werder	Sergio de Pieri	1971 Melbourne and Perth
<i>Cathedral Music I</i> , organ	Ian Bonighton	Douglas Lawrence	1972 Melbourne
<i>Theme and Variations</i> , organ	Ron Nagorcka	Douglas Lawrence	1972 Melbourne
<i>Masses for Organ</i>	Gerald Glynn	Douglas Lawrence	1972 Melbourne
<i>Et in Terra Pax</i> , voices, synthesiser	Ron Nagorcka	Douglas Lawrence	1973 Melbourne
<i>Hymn on the Death of Jesus and Devils Up There</i> , organ	James Penberthy	Douglas Lawrence	1973 Melbourne
<i>Quintet</i> , organ and string quartet	Ian Bonighton	Douglas Lawrence	1972 Perth, and 1973 Melbourne
<i>Ben's Cloak, or Thus Spake Isaiah</i> , organ	James Penberthy	Douglas Lawrence	1973 Melbourne
<i>In Nomine</i> , organ, tape, percussion	Ian Bonighton	Douglas Lawrence	1973 Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide
<i>Cathedral Music III</i> , organ	Ian Bonighton	Douglas Lawrence	1973 Adelaide

For local composers, the nature of the organ as a musical instrument gave these commissions a particular impact. Ron Nagorcka explains:

Up until that time [of the Melbourne festivals] contemporary music in Australia, not just in Melbourne, had been very constrained—virtually nothing more than romantic really. We were young musos influenced by the likes of Keith Humble and John Cage and that whole American school and we just wanted to go crazy. And to go crazy in a forum where you've got a traditional audience: that was a real opportunity. The fact that it went down well has always been instructive to me. You can be crazy—it doesn't necessarily put people out ... What excited me at the time was the notion of the organ as an instrument of timbre—you could produce so many different colours and textures out of this instrument ... Much to my surprise it [*Theme and Variations*] went down well.²⁹⁵

²⁹⁵ Ron Nagorcka, personal communication, 6 Dec. 2008.

Hamnes reports that ‘Nagorcka’s compositions are among the best remembered experimental works performed and typify the early years of the festival in their search for new modes of expression’.²⁹⁶ Like its interstate counterparts, Melbourne festival programs also included many first performances of other contemporary works from a range of composers. Six of the fourteen known first performances in the period of this study were given at Melbourne festivals (see Table 10).

**Table 10: First Australian performances in Australian organ festivals
1968–1973²⁹⁷**

Work and instrument/s	Composer	Performance year/s and place/s
<i>Sonata No 2</i> , organ	Augustinus Kropfreiter	1969 Sydney
<i>Toccata alla Rumba</i> , organ	Peter Planyavsky	1971 Perth
<i>Music and Space</i> , organ	Piet Kee	1971 Melbourne
<i>Partita</i> , harpsichord	Felix Werder	1971 Melbourne
<i>Continuum for harpsichord</i>	Georg Ligeti	1972 Melbourne
<i>Derivations II</i> , harpsichord	Ian Bonighton	1972 Melbourne
<i>Passacaglia for Timpani & Organ</i>	Henk Badings	1972 Adelaide, 1973 Sydney
<i>Duplum</i> , organ and harpsichord	Hermann Schroeder	1973 Melbourne
<i>Oscussion</i> , percussion & synthesiser	Felix Werder	1973 Melbourne
<i>Glossolalia</i> , baritone, percussion, electronics, organ	Richard Felciano	1973 Sydney
<i>Mass of a Medieval Saint, Piece pieces Bk I, Piece pieces Bk II and Vision of Christ-Phoenix.</i> All organ works.	Malcolm Williamson	1973 Sydney

The performances of contemporary works helped reinforce a different perception of the organ as independent of the church and innovative and stimulating for audiences. Douglas Lawrence believes the contemporary works played a major role in repositioning the organ in public perception:

When you perform new works ... you’re looking to the future not the past. MAFOH [the Melbourne festival] was looking to the past and using the past, but looking to the future as well. I really think that’s one of the reasons it succeeded so well. ... For a

²⁹⁶ Hamnes, ‘Australian organ music’, 90.

²⁹⁷ It is possible that works by Anton Heiller, *Tanz Toccata, In Festo Corporis Christi* and *Ecce lignum Crucis*; by Donald Hollier, *Sonata for Organ*; and by Florent Schmitt, and Peter Planyavsky, also received their first Australian performances at Australian festivals, but this information is not available given the absence of programs for some festivals.

festival based on traditional instruments such as the organ and harpsichord it was a wonderful thing—very exciting.²⁹⁸

There was a further benefit to commissioning new material: the new works were then available for performance in other festivals.

There were two other aspects to the programming of the first three Melbourne festivals that differed from the other festivals. Firstly, artistic directors Sergio de Pieri, and Douglas Lawrence consciously programmed contemporary works together with early music in the same recital program, establishing a link between the two styles. One of the concerts in the first festival juxtaposed Frescobaldi with Nagorcka—a chronological distance of some 400 years. John McCaughey suggests this provided a further dimension to the inclusion of contemporary music in the festivals:

The discovery of early music in new ways, new instruments, new sounds was itself a form of new music, and yet it belongs somehow alongside contemporary music and even there it was locally generated contemporary music. Those two worlds aren't just nice to put together, actually they can live off each other in interesting ways.²⁹⁹

Secondly, de Pieri had a particular view about the role of the venue in a program, beyond the practicalities of staging a concert. He believed that the venue and the music were complementary:

I can't make music if the church is modern and ugly. From the architecture it is a tonic point—the glass the windows, the stone. So I looked at the Melbourne churches. We went everywhere in the city it was possible to go. There was the idea of using different buildings—not a concert in the same concert hall, in the same church, but to go all over Melbourne into different historical churches, especially the very beautiful ones.³⁰⁰

While this was a subjective view, there were also acoustic decisions about linking the music program with the appropriate venue, and, in the case of commissions, de Pieri

²⁹⁸ Douglas Lawrence, personal communication, 16 Mar. 2009.

²⁹⁹ John McCaughey, personal communication, 30 Oct. 2008.

³⁰⁰ Sergio de Pieri personal communication, 12 Feb. 2009.

was able to indicate to composers the venue that would be used for their work. He frequently used St Patrick's Cathedral for contemporary organ works because 'the building was big ... we didn't have many other big organs available. It was very good for avant-garde music. It has the space'. Finding the performance space that was best suited to the repertoire created what de Pieri termed '*affetuosa*'—where the building and the music become part of the performance.³⁰¹ This was in distinct contrast to the festivals in Sydney in particular, where the presence of neoclassical organs was at the forefront of the programming and therefore dictated the venues.

As in other cities, the social aspect of each festival was a valued part of the festival. By the third festival in Melbourne organisers had expanded the social activities, scheduling four social events and listing them as part of the program. John Maidment believes that the social component became a key feature of the Melbourne festivals:

The social aspect was just as important as the musical. ... The interaction between performers and the audience was very critical. I think it was an opportunity that really wouldn't happen under any other circumstances.³⁰²

Reflecting on this, Douglas Lawrence said:

Organ Power! [A] festival runs on its stomach and in the very early days there were a lot of parties. And that's what a festival is—a party. Music first, then wine then food. ... People loved going back after a concert and sitting for hours and hours talking and drinking more than they should have. They were [at the masterclass] next morning and performers too loved meeting in this casual way. It was terribly important.³⁰³

The first organ festival staged in Melbourne was held in May 1971. It was a major event in scale and conception, scheduled over nine days, involving sixteen performers using nine venues around the city, twelve performances, nine lecture-recitals and two workshops. Harpsichords for all performances were supplied by McMillan and

³⁰¹ Sergio de Pieri, personal communication, 12 Feb. 2009.

³⁰² John Maidment, personal communication, 19 Nov. 2008.

³⁰³ Douglas Lawrence, personal communication, 16 Mar. 2009.

McAllister.³⁰⁴ The only interstate guest was Michael Wentzell. The artistic director was Sergio de Pieri, assisted by local composers John McCaughey and Ian Bonighton. The opening recital was given by de Pieri at St Patrick's Cathedral. He chose an all-Bach program including major works such as trio sonatas and toccatas and fugues. The closing recital by Michael Wentzell included major works of the classical organ repertoire from Buxtehude, Couperin and Bach, together with relatively contemporary works by Jolivet and Krenek. In between these two concerts, the most respected local organists, harpsichordists and other musicians performed in a variety of concerts and lecture-recitals or workshops in twenty-three events presenting virtually all the styles possible on the instrument. A large contingent of local performers included organists Lance Hardy, John Mallinson, Norman Kaye, Simon Campion, Terry Norman, Harold Fabrikant, John McCaughey and John Cowan. Fred Morgan and Richard Ireland performed on recorder and Anne Murphy played harpsichord in ensemble. Max Cooke and Kathleen Brady, pioneers of harpsichord performance in Melbourne, gave solo recitals.

As in the Sydney and Adelaide festivals, educational events supported the performance program. In Melbourne the general practice was for a performer to follow their recital with a workshop, usually on the subsequent day, generally dealing with the performance program or an area of specific expertise demonstrated in the performance. This meant that in the 1971 festival there was an equal number of concerts and education events. Local composer Keith Humble, whose work *Statico I* was given its first performance in the festival, chose as his lecture-recital subject the music of John Cage. Harpsichord topics were covered in a number of ways. Richard Ireland lectured on construction of instruments; Kath Brady on estampie for clavier 1300–1750; and Max Cooke gave two lecture-recitals on German music for harpsichord and clavichord. The major performance schools for organ were covered in workshops by Michael Wentzell and Sergio de Pieri. Wentzell gave three lecture-recitals: on Bach, Couperin and Clérambault, and on French music, while de Pieri gave one on Frescobaldi and early Italian music. The other lecture-recitals were on early English music, French style and its influence on German baroque, given by

³⁰⁴ Program, Melbourne Autumn Festival of Organ and Harpsichord, May 15–23. This was the first festival, in 1971.

Harold Fabrikant, and on the recorder and its makers, given by Fred Morgan, an emerging recorder builder.

At the end of 1971 Sergio de Pieri returned to Italy to live. His student, Douglas Lawrence, who had returned to Melbourne after two years studying with Anton Heiller in Vienna, took over as artistic director of the second Melbourne festival, held in May 1972. He remained in this role until 1985. Lawrence followed the programming and scheduling model of the first festival, with morning, lunchtime, afternoon, twilight and evening events including workshops, masterclasses and recitals. Sergio de Pieri was listed as music advisor, as were Ian Bonighton and John McCaughey.³⁰⁵ The 1972 festival was held over eight days. There were twenty events, fifteen performers and nine venues for this festival. Of the performers, twelve were organists, two were harpsichordists, and a brass ensemble, soprano and violinist were also included. The program comprised ten organ recitals, two harpsichord recitals, two ensemble concerts and six lectures: some were lecture-recitals and others were demonstrations. Following the pattern of the Sydney and Adelaide festivals, this festival included interstate guests—David Rumsey from Sydney and Michael Wentzell from Perth.

The first major neoclassical organ in Melbourne was installed in April 1972 at Christ Church Brunswick, just prior to the second festival. By Sydney builder Roger Pogson, it provided the opportunity to include the classical organ repertoire that Rumsey and de Pieri had envisaged when planning these festivals in mid-1968. De Pieri's 1971 strategy to 'embrace everything' therefore became less necessary. In addition the small Sharp neoclassical organ moved from Sydney to St Hilda's College University of Melbourne in late 1971 was available for use in this festival. The Brunswick organ was used for four of the ten major recitals and two of the six lecture-workshop events of the festival and the St Hilda's organ for one recital.³⁰⁶ A mechanical action positivist organ built by local firm George Fincham & Sons provided the opportunity for works for two organs to be played at the opening and closing concerts at St Patrick's Cathedral. However, the place of the harpsichord was not diminished by the arrival of

³⁰⁵ Program, The Second Melbourne Autumn Festival of Organ and Harpsichord May 13–20 1972.

³⁰⁶ Other organ recitals were held at St Paul's Cathedral, two at the Independent Church, and one at the Student's Church in Carlton. The Independent church is now called St Michael's Church, Collins Street. The Student's church is now the Romanian Orthodox Church of St Peter and St Paul.

the Brunswick instrument. It continued to be included in the title of the festival and in solo recitals and ensemble concerts. As in the first festival, the harpsichords of McMillan and McAllister were used throughout this festival.

All but one program in this festival included some aspect of sixteenth to eighteenth-century repertoire, which provided a solid core for the program. Seventy works from this period were performed, of which twenty-five were by Bach, compared to forty-three in 1971. Six solo recitals, four of which were at Brunswick, covered works by Buxtehude, Bruhns, Lübeck, Böhm, Pachelbel, de Grigny and Bach, and one work from each of Schumann, Mendelssohn, Franck, Langlais and Peeters.³⁰⁷ The only recital featuring English nineteenth-century works was a lunch-time event at St Paul's Cathedral, by incumbent organist Lance Hardy³⁰⁸ and only six works from the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were performed, compared with nineteen in the previous festival. The opening and closing concerts—the most significant of a festival—profiled the two guest organists, following the pattern of Sydney and Adelaide festivals. Wentzell played contemporary works by Jolivet and Messiaen at the opening concert and Rumsey played early music at the closing concert. These concerts included commissioned and contemporary works and each program also included at least one work for two organs. A brass ensemble was part of the billing at both concerts and *Music and Space* by Piet Kee was presented on both programs, along with two new works by Ian Bonighton, each of which required two organs and a brass ensemble. As in the first Melbourne festival, the juxtaposition of early and contemporary works in one concert was part of the program structure, this time in the opening and closing concerts. It was also a feature of the only solo harpsichord recital of this festival, given by Roger Heagney. Along with works by Scarlatti, Couperin and Bach he gave the first performance of *Derivations II* by Ian Bonighton and *Continuum* by Ligeti. Contemporary music was again featured in this festival, with three newly commissioned works from local composers and three first performances (see Tables 9 and 10, pp. 77, 78).

³⁰⁷ The Schumann work was *Six Fugues on BACH*. Program, The Second Melbourne Autumn Festival of Organ and Harpsichord May 13–20 1972.

³⁰⁸ Program, The Second Melbourne Autumn Festival of Organ and Harpsichord May 13–20 1972. The program comprised works by Parry, Darke, Howells and Vaughan-Williams.

Educational events continued to support the performance program, but there were fewer educational events, with only six lecture-recital/demonstrations. This was in contrast to the Sydney festival of the same year where the nineteen educational events outnumbered the ten recitals. Rumsey, Wentzell and Heagney all gave lecture-recitals on the programs they had presented. Composer Ian Bonighton, whose works featured in a number of recitals, gave a lecture-demonstration on contemporary music at the Electronic Studio at the University of Melbourne. Harpsichordist Harold Fabrikant, who had performed with soprano Annette Holland in a concert of seventeenth-century repertoire, lectured on French style.

By 1973, the third Melbourne festival was sufficiently well-established to consolidate the administration and continue developing its program. Funding from the Australian Council for the Arts enabled the employment of a professional program co-ordinator who facilitated the delivery of the festival. There was also a level of confidence in the achievements to date, acknowledged in the program Foreword by artistic director Douglas Lawrence:

In 1971 Sergio de Pieri organised the first Melbourne Autumn Festival of Organ and Harpsichord. In three years a quite remarkable growth of activity and interest has occurred. What was initially a venture in faith by a handful of enthusiasts has now become a major festival.³⁰⁹

The financial support of the Australian Council for the Arts and the Victorian State Government was acknowledged in the program booklet. It is not known if this was the first time support had been provided or merely the first time it was formally noted. The printed program for the Third Melbourne Autumn Festival of Organ and Harpsichord now included a sub-title: 'An exciting ten day festival of old and new music', while each concert carried a title such as 'An Evening with Johann Sebastian Bach'.³¹⁰ The death of Michael Wentzell, one month before this festival, was recorded in the program. Acknowledging that he had been scheduled as a performer, the 1974 Melbourne festival was dedicated to his memory.

³⁰⁹ Douglas Lawrence, *Foreword*, Third Melbourne Autumn Festival of Organ and Harpsichord, 1973: 6.

³¹⁰ Program, Third Melbourne Autumn Festival of Organ and Harpsichord, 1973.

In 1973 there were thirteen concerts, of which six were for solo organ, two for harpsichord and five for ensemble of organ and harpsichord, plus five masterclasses. Five performers were from interstate: David Rumsey and Christa Rumsey from Sydney, Robert Ampt and Ashleigh Tobin from Adelaide and Robert Boughen from Brisbane. As with the other festivals, visiting artists Robert Boughen and Robert Ampt were involved in the opening and closing concerts. The other visitors gave solo recitals and masterclasses. Six concert venues were used, but only one recital was programmed for the Brunswick organ, while eight of the thirteen concerts were at St Paul's Cathedral, including a lunchtime concert on solo harpsichord. The only other venues used were St Francis' Church for two recitals: Trinity College chapel for one recital and the National Gallery of Victoria Great Hall for one concert. In view of the earlier protestations in Melbourne about the necessity of using neoclassical organs for the performance of the major repertoire of the organ, the heavy use of St Paul's in this festival is curious.³¹¹ The nineteenth-century nature of the organ and the acoustic problems of a church located in the city centre where traffic noise can be heard would have compromised the presentation of certain concerts. The Melbourne *Herald* critic, John Sinclair commented on the acoustic problems apparent at the opening recital, 'In all the quiet passages the rumble of traffic noise was louder than the tone of the organ'.³¹² Given the importance of the arrival of Melbourne's first neoclassical organ at Christ Church Brunswick in the previous year, it is surprising that the 1973 festival did not capitalise on the availability of this instrument. A neoclassical organ, newly built by local firm George Fincham & Sons had been installed at St Francis' Church Lonsdale Street in 1972, but was only used for two recitals, both by David Rumsey.

Despite the idiosyncratic choice of instrument, the repertoire offered at this festival conformed to Rumsey and de Pieri's wish, to broaden the repertoire performed in Australia, and to perform the backbone of the organ's repertoire—works from Bach and his predecessors. Four concerts concentrated on this repertoire. Bach was well represented with thirty-three works performed through the festival (see Table 11). Contemporary repertoire also was well served, with four commissioned works and three first performances. One of the commissioned works, *Ben's Cloak or Thus Spake*

³¹¹ It is not known if this was due to practical problems such as programming clashes, availability or other unknown factors.

³¹² John Sinclair, 'Not the worst but it can improve', *Herald* 12 May 1973.

Isaiah by Penberthy was dedicated to Michael Wentzell.³¹³ Other commissioned works performed were two works by Bonighton, *In Nomine* for organ, tape and percussion and *Quintet* for organ and a string quartet, and Penberthy's *Hymn on the death of Jesus* and *Scherzo: Devils up There*. First performances were given of Schroeder's *Duplum* for organ and harpsichord, Werder's *Oscussion* for percussion and synthesiser and Nagorcka's *Et in Terra Pax* for singers and synthesiser. The organists scheduled for solo recitals at St Paul's Cathedral presented a variety of repertoire. Robert Ampt focused on seventeenth and eighteenth-century works, represented by Frescobaldi, Scheidt, Sweelinck and Buxtehude. Norman Kaye played Bach, but concentrated on nineteenth and twentieth-century works better suited to the organ by Widor, Vierne, Dupré and Langlais, as did Ashleigh Tobin who presented Reubke, Leighton and Messiaen. Christa Rumsey chose Bach, Franck and Penberthy. The concerto concert provided the opportunity to perform works by Haydn and Wesley along with contemporary works of Schroeder, Leigh and Bonighton. One evening concert by David Rumsey on the newly installed neoclassical organ at St Francis' Church was devoted to Bach. The two harpsichord recitals—one lunchtime and one evening event—presented works of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries while the only major concert at Brunswick was focused on medieval and renaissance music from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries. At this concert Douglas Lawrence played both organ and harpsichord. There was also one student concert, presented at St Paul's Cathedral, comprising works by Bach, Buxtehude, Reger, Schumann and Mendelssohn.³¹⁴ Again the guest performers were profiled in the opening and closing concerts. Robert Boughen opened the festival with a program acknowledging Melbourne connections in works by Muset, Brumby and Karg-Elert together with Liszt's *Fantasy and Fugue on the chorale Ad nos ad salutarem undum*. The closing concert comprising contemporary works was given by the organists Robert Ampt and Douglas Lawrence and included a percussion group and synthesiser.³¹⁵

³¹³ National Library of Australia, accessed 26 May 2010, <<http://nla.gov.au/nla.ms-ms9748>>.

³¹⁴ The writer was one of the student performers in this concert.

³¹⁵ Program, Third Melbourne Autumn Festival of Organ and Harpsichord, 1973: 8, 19.

Table 11: Repertoire summary: Melbourne festivals 1971–1973³¹⁶

	Up to and including J S Bach	Late 18th and 19th centuries	English, 19th & 20th centuries	Twentieth century
1971	Bach (10), Blacher (4), Buxtehude (6), Byrd (2), Clérambault, Couperin, Frescobaldi (5), Handel (4), Lübeck, Purcell, Stanley (3), Scarlatti (4), Tomkins. <i>43 works</i>	Brahms (3), Franck, Haydn, Liszt, Mendelssohn (2), Mozart (2), Reger (2), Reubke, Rheinberger, Schumann (2), Vierne (3). <i>19 works</i>	Bridge, Darke, Harwood, Macpherson, Parry (2), Stanford (2), Statham, Wesley. <i>10 works</i>	Bonighton, Jolivet, Krenek, Messiaen, Nagorcka, Trumble, Werder (2), Widor (2). <i>10 works</i>
1972	Bach (25), Blanco, Böhm, Boyce, Bruhns, Buxtehude (10), Cavazzoni (2), Coelho, Couperin (2), da Cruz, Frescobaldi (5), Gabrieli (2), de Grigny, Handel, Kerll (2), Lübeck, du Mage, de Olagne, Pachelbel (4), Puxol, Scarlatti (2), Schlick, Soler, Sweelinck, Valente. <i>70 works</i>	Brahms, Franck (2), Gigout, Mendelssohn, Schumann. <i>6 works</i>	Darke, Howells, Parry, Vaughan Williams. <i>4 works</i>	Alain (4), Bonighton (3), Glynn, Jolivet, Kee (2), Langlais, Ligeti, Messiaen, Nagorcka, Peeters, Widor. <i>17 works</i>
1973	Bach (33), Byrd (2), Buxtehude (5), Couperin (2), Frescobaldi, Mattheson, Pachelbel, Pasquini, Phillips (2), Purcell, de Santo Elias, Scheidt, Sweelinck. <i>52 works</i>	Franck, Haydn (2), Liszt, Mendelssohn, Reger (7), Reubke, Schumann, Vierne. <i>15 works</i>	Wesley. <i>1 work</i>	Alain (2), Bonighton, Brumby, Dupré, Janacek, Karg-Elert, Langlais, Leigh, Leighton, Messiaen (3), Muset, Nagorcka, Penberthy (3), Schroeder, Widor (2). <i>21 works</i>

³¹⁶ Note: This table includes only works in which the organ or harpsichord were used, other than in continuo/accompaniment functions. Listings refer to one work, except where noted otherwise. (Details from programs for 1971, 1972 and 1973 Melbourne Autumn Festival of Organ and Harpsichord.)

While this festival continued the principle of providing supporting educational events, there were only five masterclasses among the thirteen performances. The program notes only the name of the presenters and the times, with no information on the topic. Four masterclasses were held at the organ at Brunswick—one each by Douglas Lawrence and Christa Rumsey, and two by David Rumsey. The fifth, by Ian Bonighton, was held at the Grainger Museum, University of Melbourne—presumably on contemporary repertoire, given the venue and presenter, though there is no information to support this.

The third Melbourne festival program also included a number of programmed social events. These comprised an opening cocktail party, two late-night specials featuring a folk singer, Margaret Roadknight and a guitarist, Joachim Schubert, plus a closing lunch. Ormond College at the University of Melbourne was the venue for the late night specials and became the festival social centre for performers and audiences.³¹⁷ The close proximity of most venues to the city, the University of Melbourne and the inner suburb of Carlton and its many cafes also facilitated both organised and informal social gatherings.³¹⁸

An adjunct activity of the 1973 festival was an instrument display, held over the duration of the festival in the foyer of the National Gallery of Victoria. It enabled organisers to show the organ and harpsichord to the public in what was a unique exhibition. The instruments were demonstrated each day by organ students and a more formal ‘concert’ and talk were given on the final day. Both organs and harpsichords were represented: builders Sharp, S. J. Laurie and George Fincham & Sons displayed two one-manual organs and a positiv, while four harpsichords were displayed by builders—two by Mars McMillan, and one each by Meredith Moon and Alastair McAllister. This idea was echoed in the 1973 Sydney festival held later in the year, although no harpsichords were displayed at the Sydney exhibition.

³¹⁷ In later years the idea of the festival centre was expanded, with a range of facilities, including an evening café, available to performers and visitors. At one stage a disused organ builder’s factory was used as the festival centre and for several years the festival bottled its own wine, appropriately called *Organ Power*, which fortified festival centre visitors and supplemented funds.

³¹⁸ The map provided in the program of the 1973 festival noted not only the location of the venues for concerts but also nine cafes in Carlton!

As with his interstate counterparts, Sergio de Pieri had to take into account local circumstances when developing the new festival, while retaining the goals that he and David Rumsey had discussed in 1968. What could have been an inhibiting factor, and was a constraint in Adelaide—the absence of neoclassical organs—instead became the catalyst for a differently constructed program in Melbourne. De Pieri used this circumstance to devise a more expansive program than all the other festivals, without compromising their key premises—to stage performances of the major repertoire of the organ, up to and including J. S. Bach, using the most appropriate instruments available. The fortuitous availability of high-quality harpsichords built in the classical style made it possible to program the early repertoire from the first year, not only with solo harpsichord, but also in ensemble performances, further extending public access to the available repertoire. The necessity to use available *non*-neoclassical organs in the first year in Melbourne was offset by juxtaposing them against newly commissioned works—which became a continuing practice. Accordingly de Pieri could use a wide range of interesting venues, linked with music specially written for them, to create a sense of excitement: casting out the old image of the organ, while building on the spirit of new music and the ‘new old’ classical repertoire. This added interest to the staging by presenting different sounds in different acoustics, from intimate spaces such as Trinity College chapel for candlelit harpsichord recitals, to cathedrals for major works such as those of Messiaen and local composers. Nonetheless he did not lose sight of the focus of the organ and its repertoire: it is significant that the first recital of the 1971 festival, given by de Pieri, was an all-Bach program—firmly positioning Bach at the centre and pinnacle of the event. Bach was to remain the linchpin of this and following festivals.

The Melbourne festival continued annually beyond 1973. In 1979 the festival changed its name to Melbourne International Festival of Organ and Harpsichord, recognizing the role of international guests as a key aspect of the performance program. Attendances at the Melbourne festivals give some indication that the intention to interest music-lovers and reposition the organ as an instrument in its own right had achieved a significant success. From an estimated 400 tickets sold for the 1971 Melbourne festival, in 1977 some 4600 were sold.³¹⁹ While this is indicative only, it

³¹⁹ Hamnes, ‘Australian organ music’, 42.

does give some impression of interest in organ music in concert settings in those years and of the success of festival organisers in obtaining an audience for concerts. The Melbourne festival continued as an annual event for 28 years, until 1999, when the title was changed to Melbourne Autumn Music Festival. In 2002 the constitution was also changed and organ and harpsichord were no longer specifically mentioned in the new objectives.³²⁰ The subsequent festival, focused on early music, ceased activity after 2005 and the formal organization was dissolved in 2008.³²¹

However, when Sergio de Pieri returned to Australia in 1995 to spend time with family he started a new organ festival in the central goldfields region of Victoria, centred on Ballarat. The festival, Organs of the Ballarat Goldfields, has been presented annually since 1996.³²² It is based on local instruments of varying styles, none of which are neoclassical. Nevertheless this thriving festival contains many of the hallmarks of the earlier Melbourne festival—a variety of venues, repertoire, instruments, performers and social events. De Pieri says of this festival: ‘now the continuation of MAFOH is the Ballarat Festival where I embrace everything’.³²³ De Pieri is artistic director of this festival, spending half the year in Italy and half in Australia. Not content with one festival, with his brother Stefano de Pieri, he also started a music festival in Mildura—the Murray River International Music Festival, now in its fourth year.³²⁴ In 2010 and 2011 he also ran two annual music festivals, called ‘Beethoven in Brunswick’, in that inner city suburb of Melbourne.

³²⁰ Constitution, Melbourne Autumn Music Festival, 2002. It was believed that organ and harpsichord was a ‘turn off’ to audiences. John Griffith, personal communication, 5 Aug. 2010.

³²¹ John Blanch, personal communication, 1 Jun. 2010.

³²² ‘Organs of the Ballarat Goldfields’, accessed 20 Jan. 2010, <http://www.ballarat.com/organs/about_us.htm>.

³²³ Sergio de Pieri, personal communication, 12 Feb. 2009.

³²⁴ ‘Murray River International Music Festival’, *Arts Mildura*, accessed 8 Feb. 2011, <<http://www.artsmildura.com.au/mrimf/>>.

Conclusion

The seventeen organ festivals held in four Australian states between 1968 and 1973 was a unique series of events. These festivals were neither accidental, nor isolated from broader changes in the political, social and musical environment of the 1960s. They were part of the phenomenon of ‘the new’; the reactionary desire of the younger generation to oppose the establishment and challenge what had gone before. In music, the seemingly antithetic repertoires of early and contemporary music, neglected by the establishment, were embraced as part of this phenomenon. Early music, which was becoming increasingly accessible through recordings and publications, brought a range of ‘new’ instruments and repertoire, and was presented as a new and contemporary force, exemplified in Australia by the radical performance styles of groups such as the Renaissance Players in Sydney.³²⁵ For composers the organ provided a ‘new’ medium for experimental music. Young organists and instrument builders, reacting against Victorian-style instruments and repertoire, were inspired by the positive experiences of hearing the music of Bach and his predecessors, on recordings of both historic and newly-built instruments that had not been heard previously in Australia.

A number of these young people developed a particular enthusiasm for the new instruments to the point of choosing to build them in Australia. Ronald Sharp, Mars McMillan and Alastair McAllister individually embarked on building organs and harpsichords. Previously untrained in instrument building, they relied solely on secondary sources such as recordings and publications for their reference points. This was a uniquely Australian approach, born of isolation and the need to be self-sufficient and inventive, unencumbered by any ‘establishment’ apprenticeship or other training requirements. These ‘bootstrap builders’ turned their isolation into a benefit—they made a long-term commitment to learning through experimentation in order to achieve the instruments they envisaged, referenced only by the sounds they heard on recordings. The result of their initial work—a number of high-quality organs

³²⁵ David Rumsey, personal communication, 22 Jun. 2011.

and harpsichords completed and in use by 1968—set the stage for the festivals that began in Adelaide in 1968.

While these builders were pursuing their goal to build new instruments in Australia, two young organists arrived in Australia from Europe. David Rumsey's interest in the 'new' repertoire and instruments led him to seek further education in Europe, and he returned home highly motivated by his experiences, determined to share that inspiration with local players. Rumsey and his colleague Sergio de Pieri, recently arrived from Italy to a cathedral post in Melbourne, channelled their enthusiasm into plans to change the state of organs and organ-playing in Australia—making a conscious decision to take a leadership role that was to lead directly to the establishment of the new festivals.

These young instrument builders and performers brought a sense of optimism, energy and confidence to their development of festivals and instruments. David Rumsey said of this time: 'We were all young and enthusiastic. The world was our oyster'.³²⁶ No-one entertained the notion of failure—success was assumed. The instrument builders believed that they could teach themselves how to build a totally new type of instrument and, as we saw in Chapter 2, in the case of Mars McMillan, a suggestion that this was not possible was not only rejected, but taken as motivation. In Adelaide, the organisers of the first festival (while hedging their bets by noting that they regarded this first festival as a trial) were bold enough to call the event 'The First Adelaide Organ Week', rightly assuming that more would follow. David Rumsey recalls that at the time of establishing the earliest festivals, he and Sergio de Pieri were both confident of continuing success: 'once started, neither of us saw an end'.³²⁷

The stimulus of recordings and the optimistic and revolutionary spirit of the times also affected the audience members, a great many of whom (myself included) were students who travelled to festivals in neighbouring states, performed in masterclasses, and became active participants as volunteers. They too were excited by the new instruments—and by early music, contemporary music, and experimental music. John Maidment recalled:

³²⁶ David Rumsey, personal communication, 9 Jun. 2008.

³²⁷ David Rumsey, personal communication, 3 Jun. 2011.

We were catering for a reasonably sophisticated audience which was quite knowledgeable about organ and harpsichord music in particular, [they] would have heard this music on recordings. The students were there—some of them would have had the music in front of them. ...The recordings would have influenced people's perceptions of what they were hearing at the festival.³²⁸

The earliest festivals began at a time when a small number of high quality neoclassical organs were available in Sydney, providing ideal conditions for many of Rumsey and de Pieri's goals, but no such instruments were available in Adelaide and Perth. Michael Wentzell overcame this by commissioning an organ for use in the first Perth festival, while in Melbourne Sergio de Pieri was able to use the high-quality harpsichords that were fortuitously available, to present representative examples of the early repertoire that was the backbone of the festivals. The subsequent installation of the first neoclassical organ in Melbourne was a direct result of Rumsey and de Pieri's encouragement of the acquisition of such instruments. Douglas Lawrence attributes the decisions to install neoclassical organs in Victoria to the impact of the Melbourne festival:

One of the major reasons for the organs at Monash, the Concert Hall and Scots church—but first of all the little organs at Christ Church Brunswick and Ormond College—the reason these organs happened was because of this festival. People became aware, really aware of the possibility of these beautiful clear sounding instruments. MAFOH had an enormous effect on that. It opened people's ears.³²⁹

The involvement of the newly-built harpsichords in the Melbourne festival provided it with an unexpected, additional dimension, giving it a unique focus, re-establishing the harpsichord's relationship with the organ, broadening the repertoire presented at the festival, and stimulating widespread interest in building and performing on these new/old instruments.

Rumsey and de Pieri intended the festivals to present 'a massive explosion in

³²⁸ John Maidment, personal communication, 19 Nov. 2008.

³²⁹ Douglas Lawrence, personal communication, 16 Mar. 2009.

repertoire—the broadest possible scope’,³³⁰ including both early and contemporary music, much of which was new to Australian audiences. Initially David Rumsey, Sergio de Pieri and Christa Rumsey, and later Michael Wentzell and Douglas Lawrence, took the lead in presenting these works, drawing on their European training. To encourage performance of this broader repertoire, Rumsey and de Pieri included a teaching component in the festivals, bringing the newly-available insights from musicological research to bear on performance practice. They complemented the recital programs with masterclasses, workshops and demonstrations which provided opportunities for learning and development not previously available. Festival participants were also encouraged to be involved in the social aspects of the festivals—connecting with performers, students, composers, instrument builders and audience members, which generated a sense of collegiality and common purpose. David Rumsey summarised it as: ‘an organist generation of enquiry and interest, a vitality that we all felt, a vibrancy and a community’.³³¹

The success of the seventeen festivals examined in this thesis lies in the confluence of three factors—the activities of a small number of individuals responsible for the fortuitous availability of neoclassical organs and new harpsichords, the determination of young organists to achieve major changes in organ performance in Australia, and the influence of recordings and the early music movement that generated interest among music lovers searching for new forms of expression.

Rumsey and de Pieri’s intentions to reposition the organ in Australia met with unprecedented success. The reviews of festival performances and reflections of interviewees quoted in this thesis point to a changed perception of the organ. It moved from being seen as a musically peripheral and predominantly liturgical instrument to a position as an instrument with a legitimate, extensive repertoire and wider musical validity. Its link with contemporary composers and with the local early music movement gave it a valid place as part of the phenomenon of new movements while distinguishing it from the symphony orchestras and organisations presenting choral and chamber music that had for so long represented classical music performance. David Rumsey and Sergio de Pieri aspired to change organ building, performance and

³³⁰ David Rumsey, personal communication, 9 Jun. 2008.

³³¹ David Rumsey, personal communication, 9 Jun. 2008.

teaching in Australia, through the medium of festivals. In the period of the seventeen festivals discussed in this thesis their goals were met, and in many cases surpassed.

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Perth Organ Festival, 1971.

Third Perth Organ Festival, 1973, In memoriam Michael Wentzell.

Melbourne Autumn Festival of Organ and Harpsichord, May 1971.

Second Melbourne Autumn Festival of Organ and Harpsichord, May 1972.

Third Melbourne Autumn Festival of Organ and Harpsichord, May 1973.

Appendix 1

Neoclassical organs installed in Australia 1958–1973

Year	ORGAN LOCATIONS AND BUILDERS		
	NSW & A.C.T.	VIC	WA
1958	<i>University of Sydney,</i> <i>St Andrew's College.</i> W.		
1960	<i>Rockdale,</i> <i>Church of Christ.</i> RS. <i>South Hurstville,</i> <i>St Mark's.</i> W.		
1961	<i>Kogarah,</i> Marist Brothers School. RS. <i>Rooty Hill,</i> Franciscan Monastery. RS (to Melb) <i>Sans Souci,</i> St Finbar's. RS. <i>Ultimo,</i> ABC. RS. <i>Harbord,</i> St John the Baptist, RP. <i>Harbord,</i> St Marks. W. <i>Concord,</i> St Mary's. W. <i>Reid, ACT,</i> St Peter's Lutheran. W.		.
1962	<i>Gladesville,</i> Anglican. W.		.
1964	<i>Residence, NJ.</i> RS.		
1965	* <i>Wahroonga,</i> Knox Grammar School chapel. RS. <i>New Lambton,</i> Anglican. W.		.
1966	<i>Mittagong,</i> Frensham School, W.		
1967	* <i>Parramatta, The King's School,</i> <i>Futter Hall.</i> RP.		
1968 – 70	<i>Wollongong,</i> <i>City Hall,</i> RS.		
1971		* <i>University of Melbourne,</i> <i>St Hilda's College.</i> RS (from Sydney)	* <i>Perth,</i> First Perth Organ Festival, JL.
1972	* <i>Parramatta</i> <i>The King's School,</i> chapel, RP. * <i>University of Sydney,</i> St Paul's College, Fl.	* <i>Brunswick,</i> <i>Christ Church,</i> RP.	* <i>Guildford,</i> Guildford Grammar chapel, JL.
1973	* <i>Sydney,</i> <i>Conservatorium of Music,</i> RP. * <i>University of Sydney,</i> <i>Great Hall,</i> vB.	* <i>Melbourne,</i> <i>Lonsdale St.</i> <i>St Francis church,</i> F.	* <i>Applecross,</i> <i>St David's,</i> JL.

Key: Builders: F–George Fincham & Sons; Fl–Flentrop; JL–John Larnier; RP–Poger Pogson; RS–Ron Sharp; vB–von Beckerath. *Used in organ festivals to 1973

Appendix 2

HARPSICHORD RECORDINGS: MARS MCMILLAN

Section 1

These records are the ones that influenced me early in my career. The first category of recordings were obtained and played excessively at high volume, just because they were of ‘WOW!!!’ HARPSICHORDS. Most turned out to be klangophones of the grossest kind.³³²

Scarlatti Sonatas Vol I

Wanda Landowska, harpsichord (Pleyel, Paris 20th c.)
HMV

I think it is the first harpsichord record I ever owned in the early 60’s, and I played it to death until I ‘saw the light’. I eventually gave it away to Alastair McAllister who already had Vol II. By then I just couldn’t stand the wonky sound of the Pleyel any longer!

The Virtuoso Harpsichord: Selected Harpsichord Works Volume Two

François Couperin, ‘Le Grand’
Anton Heiller, harpsichord (German mass-produced instrument 20th c.)
Vanguard ‘Bach Guild’ BG-619

Bach Harpsichord Recital

George Malcolm, harpsichord (Thomas Goff, London 20th c.)
Decca LXT 5619

Mr Malcolm Goes to Town

George Malcolm, harpsichord (Thomas Goff, London 20th c.)
Decca CEP 5502 (7in. 45rpm)
Hilarious example of excessive registration changing and over-the-top virtuosity on a chunderphone.

Bach: The Six Sonatas for Violin and Harpsichord Vol I & II

Yehudi Menuhin, violin. George Malcolm, harpsichord (Thomas Goff, London 20th c.). Ambrose Gauntlet, viola da gamba.
HMV ALP 1924, HMV ALP 1925
T.Goff’s ‘thick ‘n’ chunky soup’-mobile plunking along with Yehudi Menuhin — God help me, I thought it was terrific!

³³² This note and the annotations following the recordings listings are written by Mars McMillan as a commentary on the significance of the recordings.

Holiday for Harpsichord

E. Power Biggs and his Pedal Harpsichord (John Challis, Detroit 20th c)
mfp Classics CFP 4055.

E. Power Biggs on a big, soupy monster turns the tables on those who play harpsichord music on the piano.

Section II

The following recordings were acquired when I was in my mid-1960's 'countertenor phase'. They included some anonymous harpsichords with more interesting sounds than previously encountered. The record companies gradually began to reveal the identity of the instruments used, presumably in response to enthusiasts' curiosity about early music and instruments.

Music of Henry Purcell, Jenkins and Locke

Alfred Deller, counter tenor, Gustav Leonhardt, harpsichord. Leonhardt Baroque Ensemble. Consort of Viols
Vanguard 'Bach Guild' BG-547

Monteverdi — Madrigali Amorosi

The Deller Consort, Alfred Deller, director with Baroque String Ensemble,
Denis Vaughan, harpsichord
Vanguard 'Bach Guild' BG-579

Deller's Choice — A Concert of Music both Rare and Rewarding

Alfred Deller, counter tenor, with Gustave [sic] Leonhardt, harpsichord and organ
Vanguard 'Bach Guild' BG-612

Vocal Music of Monteverdi

The New York Pro Musica Antiqua,
Noah Greenberg, director. Paul Maynard, harpsichord
CBS 'Odyssey Legendary Performances' 32 16 0087

Songs of Henry Purcell

Russell Oberlin, countertenor, New York Pro Musica Antiqua,
Noah Greenberg, director.

Paul Maynard, harpsichord (Hubbard & Dowd, Boston, after a 17th century Italian original)

Everest 'Counterpoint/Esoteric' 5535

I finally got to hear a record of a Hubbard & Dowd Italian harpsichord! I'd read about them in 'Time' magazine and pored over Frank Hubbard's 'Three Centuries of Harpsichord Making' for several years.

Music for the Harpsichord and Virginal

Stewart Robb, harpsichord (William de Blaise, London 20th c),
Virginal (Milton Koos, New York 20th c)
Folkways FM 3320

Purcell. Couperin. Rameau. Händel. Scarlatti. J.S.Bach

Ralph Kirkpatrick, harpsichord
Deutsche Grammophon 139 122
Fantastic, lively playing — a refreshing change from the baroque sewing machine style.

Johann Sebastian Bach — Das Wohltemperierte Klavier, 1.Teil. (2 discs)

Ralph Kirkpatrick, harpsichord (Hubbard & Dowd, Boston 1958)
Deutsche Grammophon 138 844/45

Johann Sebastian Bach — Das Wohltemperierte Klavier, 2.Teil. (3 discs)

Ralph Kirkpatrick, harpsichord (Hubbard & Dowd, Boston 1958)
Deutsche Grammophon 139 146/48
It was only when the second part was released that they revealed the identity of the harpsichord.

Italian Baroque Music for Harpsichord

Igor Kipnis, harpsichord (Rutkowski & Robinette, New York 1961)
CBS 'Epic Stereo' BC 1311

English Harpsichord Music

Igor Kipnis, harpsichord (Rutkowski & Robinette, New York 1961)
CBS 'Epic Stereo' BC 1298

German Music for Harpsichord & Clavichord

Igor Kipnis, harpsichord (Rutkowski & Robinette, New York 1961),
clavichord (Rutkowski & Robinette, New York 1963)
CBS 'Epic Stereo' ELCS 9121
I found the Rutkowski & Robinette sound a bit dry and disappointing, but what grabbed me was Igor's fantastic playing.

Frescobaldi Couperin Böhm Bach — Toccaten, Fantasia.

Acht Preludes. Suite Nr.8. Capriccio BWV 992
Gustav Leonhardt, harpsichords
(1: Jacobus Kirkman, London 1766.
2: Wilhelm Rück, Nürnberg 1956/57 after Karl August Gräbner, Dresden 1782.
3: Martin Skowronek, Bremen 1963, after I.D.Dulcken, Antwerp 1745)
Telefunken 'Das Alte Werk' AWT 9463-C
This was the moment of 'seeing the light'. I was lying in bed one Sunday morning (c.

1966) listening to ABC radio, when on came Gustav Leonhardt playing Bach's 'Capriccio on the Departure of the Beloved Brother' BWV 992. I immediately sat up and took notice, blown away by the big, gutsy sound of the Kirckman. I knew then I was on the right track, and wanted to start building a 'Kirckman' right away! It was also my introduction to meantone temperament—WOW!!

Werke von Georg Friedrich Händel

Li Stadelmann, harpsichord (Jacobus Kirckman, London 1763)
DGG 'Archiv Produktion' 14 194

I got it because it was a Kirckman. But it sounded like the proverbial two skeletons copulating on a tin roof, and the sewing-machine playing did not help, either.

Cembalomusik auf Originalinstrumenten. aus den Niederlanden, Italien, Deutschland und England um 1650-1750

Gustav Leonhardt, harpsichords
(1: Andreas Ruckers, Antwerp 1648, 2: anon. Italian 1693,
3: Christian Zell, Hamburg 1741, 4: Jacobus et Abraham Kirckman. London 1775)
Telefunken 'Das Alte Werk' SAWT 9512-B

This record was recommended to everyone who was interested in buying a harpsichord.

Johann Sebastian Bach — Goldberg-Variationen um 1740

Gustav Leonhardt, harpsichord (Martin Skowroneck, Bremen 1963,
after J.D.Dulcken, Antwerp 1745)
Telefunken 'Das Alte Werk' SAWT 9474-A
Gustav Leonhardt's 'real harpsichord' atonement for an earlier recording of the Goldbergs on an Ammer German mass-produced 20th c. klangophone.

Englische Virginalmusik um 1600

Gustav Leonhardt, virginal (Martin Skowroneck, Bremen 1965 after
early 17th century Flemish), harpsichord (Martin Skowroneck, Bremen
1961 after 17th century Flemish)
Telefunken 'Das Alte Werk' SAWT 9491-A

HMV Baroque Library (No. 23): Music for Virginals, Clavichord & Harpsichord

Geraint Jones, virginals (Robert Hatley, London 1664), clavichord
(Barthold Fritz, Brunswick 1751), harpsichords
1: Burkat Shudi and John Broadwood, London 1770.
2: Jacob and Abraham Kirckman, London 1787.
3: attributed to Jan Couchet late 17th century, alterations by Taskin 1783.
HMV HQS 1100

Historic Harpsichords & Clavichords

Michael Thomas, harpsichords

(1: Franciscus de Paulinis, Rimini 1726,

2: Alessandro Cresci Pilano, Levano 1760. 3: Ruckers, Antwerp 1623.

4: Crang, London 1745), clavichords

(1: Michael Thomas reconstruction. 2: Deckert, 18th century German)

Oryx 1725

An Anthology of Elizabethan Keyboard Musick

Michael Thomas, claviorganum (Woffington, Dublin 1785), positive organ ('I.L. 1630'), chamber organ (Allen 1790), double manual harpsichord (Michael Thomas, Berkshire), single manual harpsichord (Zenti), clavichord (Michael Thomas, Berkshire)

Saga PAN 6202

Richard Ireland brought back a Michael Thomas harpsichord with him from England.

It was interesting to have examples of Michael Thomas' work and other old instruments played by him, in particular the Zenti, which has a fabulous sound.

L. Couperin — 2 Suites. G. Boehm — 4 Suites

Hubert Bédard, harpsichord (Andreas Ruckers, Antwerp 1646)

Pirouette JA 19019

This record is not only a good example of Ruckers sound cranked up to the max, but also how effective meantone tuning is for raising the neck hairs.

Section III

The following recordings may have been obtained post-1970.

Johann Jakob Froberger - Werke für Cembalo

Gustav Leonhardt, harpsichord (Johannes Ruckers, Antwerp 1640)

Harmonia Mundi 20 21524-5

Gustav Leonhardt an Historischen Cembali

Gustav Leonhardt, harpsichords

(1: Carlo Grimaldi, Messina 1697. 2: Andreas Ruckers, Antwerp 1637.

3: Carl August Gräbner, Dresden 1782.)

Harmonia Mundi 20 20307-7

Englische Virginalisten

Gustav Leonhardt, harpsichord (Johannes Ruckers, Antwerp 1640)

Harmonia Mundi 25 20308-5

Girolamo Frescobaldi Werke für Cembalo und Orgel

Gustav Leonhardt, harpsichord
(Martin Skowronek, Bremen, after 17th century Italian original),
organ (Antegnati c.1630, in San Carlo, Brescia)
Harmonia Mundi 20 21163-0

Gigges and Dompes and other Keyborde Musicke

Alan Cuckston, harpsichords
(Side 1: copy of 16th century Italian.
Side 2: copy of 18th century French, John Rooks, Derbyshire.)
RCA Victrola VICS-1693

Appendix 3

Organ Festivals in Australia 1968–1973

Date	Festival	Artistic Director
1968		
2–7 September	Adelaide Organ Week	David Rumsey
6–8 December	Combined Societies Organ Convention (Sydney)	David Rumsey Sergio de Pieri Christa Rumsey
1969		
2nd week of May (5 days)	Autumn Organ Festival (Sydney)	David Rumsey
7–11 October	Adelaide Organ Week	Unknown
1970		
End August (6 days)	Sydney Organ Festival	David Rumsey
1971		
15–23 May	Melbourne Autumn Festival of Organ & Harpsichord (MAFOH)	Sergio de Pieri
1–8 June	Adelaide Organ Week	Unknown
20–29 August	Sydney Organ Festival	David Rumsey
5–15 September	First Perth Organ Festival	Michael Wentzell
1972		
13–20 May	MAFOH	Douglas Lawrence
8–15 August	Adelaide Organ Week	Unknown
18–27 August	Sydney Organ Festival	David Rumsey
23–30 September	Second Perth Organ Festival	Michael Wentzell
1973		
11–20 May	MAFOH	Douglas Lawrence
28 July–4 August	Adelaide Organ Week	Unknown
1–9 September	Sydney Organ Festival	David Rumsey
8–16 September	Third Perth Organ Festival	John Cardell-Oliver