MUSIC IN THE LIFE AND WORK OF PATRICK WHITE

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Musicology

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1 February 2017
revision completed 15 November 2017

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DECLARATION

I, Vincent Patrick PLUSH, certify that this work contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in my name, in any university or other tertiary institution and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference has been made in the text.

In addition, I certify that no part of this work will, in the future, be used in a submission in my name, for any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution without the prior approval of the University of Adelaide and where applicable, any partner institution responsible for the joint award of this degree.

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I acknowledge the support I have received for my research through the provision of an Australian Government Research Training Program Scholarship.

Vincent Plush
Adelaide, South Australia
Revised, 15 September 2017.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study has been almost a decade in creation, from mid-2007 to early 2017.
That decade could have been the framework for a Patrick White novel. There was never a map which suggested the route it might take from the outset. Retrospectively, it could be said that the decade began with *The Voss Journey* in Canberra in May 2009 (see ensuing Chapter).

The final part of this process began in late November 2013 when the author commenced the programme for the PhD in Musicology at the University of Adelaide. That period has proceeded without formal interruption, broken only by visits to Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane for research and interviews, and other professional opportunities.

The University of Adelaide. The writer wishes to thank his two supervisors at the University of Adelaide, Professor Mark Carroll (Music) and Professor Nicholas Jose (Creative Writing). Their assistance and advice has been generously given and was most welcomely received. Professor Carroll's editorial assistance in the final preparation of the dissertation is acknowledged with sincere thanks.

The assistance of other individuals at the University of Adelaide is also acknowledged: from Professors Kimi Coaldrake and Charles Bodman Rae, from Stephen Whittington and Jula Szuster, from fellow graduate students Jesse Budel and Gabriella Smart. Other individuals have been helpful in sustaining my residence here: longtime colleague and recent PhD in Musicology James Koehne, Peter Grimshaw, former school friends Stephen Jeisman and Eugene Ragghianti. Special thanks is reserved to my landlady Helen Linke and her daughter Jayne, whose cheerful support and encouragement has sustained me through darker moments of the research process.

Other friends in Adelaide have also been helpful in providing their recollections of historical events here; in that context, I wish to thank Michael Morley, Elizabeth Silsbury, Anthony Steel and Graham Williams.

Libraries. The libraries in Adelaide have provided a valued resource, often unexpected but always most welcome. At the University of Adelaide, the Special Collections and Rare Books section of the Barr Smith Library, headed by Cheryl Hoskin, and the Elder Music Librarian Denise Tobin have provided valuable assistance, as has Mirna Heruc, Director of University Special Collections. The State Library of South Australia has been another valuable resource.

Beyond Adelaide, libraries and their staff in other capitals have been helpful. In Brisbane, the Fryer Library at the University of Queensland and the Music Library at Griffith University have provided assistance. In Melbourne, the LaTrobe Library - State Library of Victoria, and the Performing Arts Division at Arts Centre Melbourne have been consulted,

as has the Fisher Library at the University of Sydney. The Mitchell Library in Sydney has been an especially valuable resource, particularly with regard to its 'PWBC', White's bequest of his library and some papers. Special thanks to the Curator Emeritus Paul Brunton who handled the transfer of White's bequest and Meredith Lawn, the Music Archivist of the Mitchell Library. Similarly, the Library at the Australian Defence Force Academy (University of New South Wales) in Canberra holds valuable correspondence and other ephemera.

Most of all, it has been the collection and staff of the National Library of Australia in Canberra that has been the source – one could almost say 'the font' – of so much of the material resourced in this study. Over the course of some eleven visits to the NLA since December 2012, the collections have opened up information and possibilities that have continually nourished and refreshed this study. (So much so, it might be said, that new dimensions continue to open up, almost on a daily basis.)

To Robyn Holmes, the co-author of *eVOSS*, now the NLA's Senior Curator in Australian Collections and Reader Services (formerly, Curator of Music), I owe very special thanks; my dedication of this study to her is but a token of my appreciation for her years of cheerful and unstinting assistance. To other members of the NLA, and to Margy Burn, the Assistant Director-General, thanks are also given. Similarly, across the Lake, at the National Film and Sound Archive, thanks are accorded to two former assistants there, Jenny Gall and Christine Cummings.

Interview subjects. In the relatively early stages of writing, a number of key subjects were interviewed. Special and sincere thanks are due to each of these for their time and generosity of spirit. David Marr, the 'rock on which this study is built' – to paraphrase a term he devised for White's New York publisher, Ben Huebsch – has been central to this study, in his writings, which animate virtually every page, and his cheerful cooperation. Other key individuals to White's narrative have been most helpful and generous with their time and support: Roger Covell, David Malouf, Jim Sharman, Elizabeth Webby, William Yang and, in the year before his death, the late Peter Sculthorpe.

Individuals. In addition to the individuals already mentioned, many more have been helpful in providing advice and guidance at various stages of the writing of the study. Many have read parts of the study or segments from it, and their comments have been heeded and incorporated into the text. Among these, in alphabetical order, are:

In *Sydney*: Leonard (Len) Amadio, Gwen Bennett, John (Jack) Carmody, Geoffrey Chard, Ross and Helen Edwards, Michael Hannan, James (Jim) McCarthy, Barbara Mobbs, Graeme Murphy, Nicholas Ng, Moffatt Oxenbauld, Sandra Ridgewell, Graham Shirley, Graeme Skinner, Jill Sykes, Storry Walton, Anne Whitehead, Kim Williams.

In *Victoria*: Warren Burt, Michael Cathcart, Deborah and Barry Conyngham, the late Richard Divall, George Dreyfus, Barry O.Jones, Christine Mercer, Richard Mills, Kerry Murphy, Kim O'Connell, Michael Pattinson, Catherine Schieve, Carol Williams.

In *Queensland*: Sue Abbey, Betty Beath and David Cox, Stephen Emmerson, Nora Farrell, Clare Hoey, Helen Lancaster, Denise Marcos, Rhiannon Phillips, Sue Punshon, Marilyn Richardson, Angela Turner, Fukutoshi Ueno, Nancy Underhill, Liam Viney, Jocelyn and Bruce Wolfe.

Elsewhere in the *ACT and NSW*: Margy Burn, Christine Cummins, Andrew Ford, Jennifer (Jenny) Gall, Peter Hislop, Stephen Leek, Carmel McIninerny, Brendon McKinley, Katherine (Kate) Mears, Michelle Potter, Gregory (Greg) Ralph, Penelope (Penny) Ramsay, Martin and Peter Wesley-Smith, Belinda Webster.

In *the USA and elsewhere*: Nicholas Coppel (Yangon, Myanmar), Kyle Gann (Annandale-on-Hudson, NY), Don Gillespie (Metter, GA), Sarah Grunstein (New York, NY), Deborah Hayes (Boulder, CO), Earl Jackson (Taipei), Carol Plantamura (La Jolla, CA), Gordon Williams (Los Angeles, CA), Kerim Yasar (Columbus, OH), Elaine Yontz (Greenville, NC).

To each of these, sincere thanks. In various ways, they have been part of this long and largely uncharted journey. The writer is grateful that they have helped keep him from vanishing Voss-like in the desert of his imagination.

Vincent Plush
Adelaide, South Australia. 12 September 2017.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABC, the Australian Broadcasting Commission (1932-82), Australian Broadcasting Corporation (thereafter)

ACO, the Australian Chamber Orchestra, Sydney

AETT, the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust, Sydney

AGNSW, the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney

ANU, the Australian National University, Canberra

Con, formerly the New South Wales State Conservatorium of Music, now the Sydney Conservatorium of the University of Sydney

DM, David Marr, author/biographer of *Life* and *Letters*

DGG, *Deutsche Grammophon Gesselschaft* (German record label)

Letters: Patrick White and David Marr (ed.) *Patrick White: Letters.* Milsons Point, NSW: Random House, Australia, 1994.

Life: David Marr, *Patrick White: A Life*, Sydney: Random House, 1991.

ML, Manoly Lascaris (1912-2003), life partner of Patrick White

MSO, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra

NGA, the National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

NGV, the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne

NIDA, the National Institute of Dramatic Art, Sydney

NLA, the National Library of Australia, Canberra

NFSA, the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia, Canberra

NSW, the State of New South Wales

PW, Patrick White (1912-1990)

PWBC, the Patrick White Bequest Collection, Mitchell Library, Sydney

SLNSW, the State Library of New South Wales, the Mitchell Library

SDC, the Sydney Dance Company, Sydney

SMH, the Sydney Morning Herald, Sydney (newspaper)

STC, the Sydney Theatre Company, Sydney

SSO, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Sydney

TAO, The Australian Opera, also Opera Australia

UNSW, the University of New South Wales, Kensington, NSW

USA, the United States of America



Illustration 1: Patrick White (PW) at his desk in Castle Hill, NSW (September 1963). Portrait by Axel Poignant, NLA PIC P1054 LOC drawer R9a [accessed 15 July 2015].

This dissertation is dedicated to Robyn Holmes
friend, supporter, advocate, believer and urger

and

genial collaborator in The Voss Journey *and* eVOSS

(and also a Music graduate from The University of Adelaide)

whose passion and commitment to Australian music
has been an inspiration and the model for this dissertation

Abstract

Music in the Life and Work of Patrick White

Arguably, Patrick White (1912-1990) is Australia's best known and most celebrated writer. In a working life spanning almost seven decades, he produced twelve novels, eight produced plays, three books of short stories and several collections of poetry, as well as several film scripts (only one of which was produced during his lifetime), countless essays and possibly around 5,500 letters.

This study traces the role of music in White's life, and details the extent to which music played a part in his literary praxis, both at the narrative level, and as a structural framework. A survey of White's exposure to, and subsequent embrace of music over the course of his life is followed by a critical overview the extent to which music shaped four significant works. These case studies comprise three published novels – *The Aunt's Story* (1948), *Voss* (1957) and *The Vivisector* (1970) – as well as an unpublished film script – *The Monkey Puzzle* (1978). Together, they represent four distinct periods of his creative life and exemplify not simply the growing importance of music in his creativity, but the maturation of his musical tastes and knowledge of music.

Chapter One:

Introduction

In 1957, around the time of the publication of *Voss*, Patrick White made a critical observation. 'Music,' he admitted in an interview with an arts journalist, 'helps me with the structure of a book'.[1] The purpose of the current study is to dissect the implications of White's contention by considering both the role that music played in the author's life, and ways in which the influence of music might be detected in some of his seminal works.

2. Thesis Structure and Conceptual Framework

As the bi-focal title of this study suggests – *Music in the Life and Work of Patrick White* – the dissertation is laid out in two parts.

- Part One (Chapters 2 and 3) present an outline of the place of music in White's life. Chapter 2 (*Music in the Life ...*) traces a biographical outline, whilst Chapter 3 (*Music in the Work ...*) examines key musical influences in a broad survey of his works.

- Part Two (Chapters 4,5,6 and 7) focuses on four specific works and examines the influence and function of music in those works in more detail. It does so against what a conceptual framework that is, as shall be shown, derived from White's own observations as to music's role in his creativity.

This study does not set out to be a literary analysis of White's work. Instead, it seeks to identify the music which has influenced his writing. The essence of that investigation may be summarized in three questions:

- What music did Patrick White know?
- How did he come to know it?
- How and where does he use it in his work?

Moving now to **Part One**, Chapter 2 of this study – the *Life* – focuses on the role of music in White's biography, the narrative of his life and, to an extent, his times. Given that his life encompassed almost eighty years of the 20th century, those 'times' encompass two

[1] Patrick White, cited by Ian Moffitt, in *'A Talk with Patrick White'*, *New York Times Book Review* (18 August 1957), p. 55. Henceforward, every footnote reference to White will be prefaced by the initials 'PW'.

World Wars, two cultures – the European settler culture and the Indigenous culture of the Australian Aborigines – as well as excursions over two worlds, the European Old World and the New World of transplanted European cultures, principally Australia and the USA. Those times also encompass his two homes in Sydney. After eighteen years in the backblocks of 'Dogwoods' on the western outskirts of Sydney, the focal point of his life became Centennial Park, where he lived for the remaining twenty-three years of his life. Many of White's experiences in the concert hall were recorded in his correspondence with friends like Frederick Glover, the former bank manager who had moved from Castle Hill to Grafton and Peggy Garland, his cousin in London. From these and other sources we can get a sense of what White himself called his 'journey to music'.[2]

Chapter 3 of the study – the *Work* – looks at the role of music in his novels, plays and screenplays. The chapter deals with works not covered in the case studies that follow it. The chapter also examines the place of various composers and musical forms in his writing. Here, a critical duality emerges. Music helped the creation of his work in two ways: either as a background at the 'narrative' level, or at a less immediately apparent 'structural' level. These levels provide the conceptual framework for the case studies assayed in Part Two.

The rationale for this bifurcation lies in an exchange of letters between White and his New York publisher Ben Huebsch. Shortly after the publication of *Voss* in 1957, White wrote to Huebsch:

> You talk about 'the symphonic structure' of *Voss* – well, in the last ten years I think music has taught me a lot about writing. That may sound pretentious, and I would not know how to go into it rationally, but I feel that listening constantly to music helps one develop a book more logically.[3]

While White uses the words 'rationally' and 'logically' somewhat ambiguously, they nevertheless provide a basis for understanding the twin functions of music in his creative journey. As noted above, these are the **Narrative Level** and the **Structural Level.**

Narrative Level

In setting a general mood or tone, music created a background for White's writing. In drawing on his own reflections, music took White back to periods in his life that had moved him. It helped conjure up memories; pleasant, sad or horrifying. It will emerge that in many instances, music engendered memories more vivid and personal that anything his 'bland gray prose' could evoke.[4] In short, music helped White spin out his storytelling. As such, it functioned at the narrative level.

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[2] PW often used the term 'journey to music' to describe his experience of music as that experience evolved over the decades, PW to David Marr. NLA, Papers of David Marr MS 9356/10/2

[3] PW, letter to Ben Huebsch, 8 February 1957. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356/16/3. Emphasis added.

[4] PW, cited by Thelma Herring and Professor G.A. Wilkes, *Southerly*, pp. 138–139.

It should be noted that White's response to Huebsch's observation came at a relatively early stage in his appreciation of music. By 1957, the novelist had been back in Australia for a decade. In that time his journey to music had been charted largely by the discovery of the orchestral works by late 19th century composers like Mahler, Bruckner and Richard Strauss. In 1957, White's appreciation of music was still relatively under-developed. In addition to his experience of orchestral concerts, it was gleaned from radio broadcasts, concert programme annotations, record covers and the sometimes ill-informed opinions of a small circle of music-loving friends. He had not yet acquired the level of sophistication or depth of vocabulary to describe his responses to music *au fond*. Increasingly, White came to be observed at concerts and other artistic events. He was rarely reluctant to voice his opinions about music, not just about composers and performers, but especially what he saw as the fluctuating fortunes and declining repertoires and standards of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and The Australian Opera, in particular. Much of this will be laid out in the Chapters 2 and 3 of this study.

Structural Level

Music could also provide White with a technical framework for his writing. A pivotal example of this is the 'symphonic structure' to which his publisher had alluded. More than a surface presence, it suggested the structure of a particular novel or play. Both levels can be discerned as creative polarities in the works examined in this study. White addressed this bi-focal logical/rational approach constantly in his writing. Symbols, White expounded in a letter to the Adelaide-based writer and publisher Geoffrey Dutton, must 'certainly work on "an imaginative rather than an intellectual level," as you say':

> Surely one must deal with any detail of a work of art firstly on 'the imaginative level,' and that is what is wrong with most Australian critics. Their lack of intuition makes them rush to dissect intellectually. Or am I saying this because I am stronger in intuition than in intellect? It is something that shamed me in my youth, but which age has made me accept as a blessing as well as a weakness. It is also one reason why I will never be drawn into writing critical articles; when I am right about a work of art I am usually right, but cannot present my reasons in an intellectually satisfying way. The feminine in me, I suppose![5]

Again, White reflects on the bi-focality: intuition *versus* intellect, imagination *versus* analysis. He takes critics – and writers, and academics, and other commentators –to task for the predilection 'to dissect intellectually'.

The discussion of narrative and structural levels indeed cannot be divorced from the process through which White dissects certain elements and reconstitutes – or leaves it to the reader to reconstitute – them in ways that serve his express ends. Fragmentation, then, is the byproduct of White's predilection for vivisection, which finds its fullest expression, at both the narrative and structural levels, in the aptly-named novel, *The Vivisector*.

[5] PW, letter to Geoffrey Dutton, 25 September 1961. NLA, Papers of Patrick White, MS 9982

Throughout his writing life, White maintained that nearly all his major characters were based on aspects of his own fragmented personality.[6] Especially those who figure at the core of each of these case studies: the mad spinster-traveller, Theodora Goodman in *The Aunt's Story;* the explorer Johann Ulrich Voss in *Voss*; the reclusive painter Hurtle Duffield in *The Vivisector;* and, most revealing of all, the egocentric writer Will Garlick in *The Monkey Puzzle.* Together, they constitute a comprehensive personality, comprising 'the cast of contradictory characters of which I am composed'.[7] When reconstituting the whole, it is rather like sewing the segments of a fragmented personality together again, a process reminiscent of the handicraft of Dr Frankenstein.[8]

In White's writing, the great creative figures are characterized in minute, almost intimate detail: Hurtle Duffield at his easel, Will Garlick at his desk, the dying Elizabeth Hunter in her boudoir. And yet there is no equivalent creative figure in music, no composer doodling at his piano, or sawing away on his violin, as the expatriate Australian artist and one-time violinist Roy de Maistre would surely have done in the apartment houses he shared with White in London.

The figures who do appear in musical guises in White's narratives – the Greek cellist in *The Aunt's Story*, the young pianist in *The Vivisector* – are all created from the external perspective of an onlooker. They are the observations of someone in the audience at a concert, or a listener responding to a recording. More often than not, they are about physical activities and appearances, rather like the observations of stage directors or choreographers.

White's perception is more acute when he examines the interior lives of his characters, not their external, visual or sonic lives. Perhaps he would have made a good criminologist, another career he projected for himself. 'It's true,' Manoly Lascaris, his life-partner for almost 50 years, confided to Dutton. 'Patrick can't see things and people, he can only see into them. He cannot recall a landscape, or features, or clothes.'[9]

Essentially, White remained an outsider to music, a music lover – one with strong opinions, certainly – but, ultimately, as shall be shown, he felt unqualified to make more of the part played by music in his Muse. This study seeks to redress White's reluctance.[10]

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[6] *Flaws,* pp. 19-20.
[7] *Flaws,* pp. 19-20.
[8] See the reference to 'monsters' in Chapter 6, P. 196
[9] Manoly Lascaris, cited by Geoffrey Dutton, *Out in the Open: An autobiography,* St Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1994, p. 392.
[10] Many historians are fearful of this 'private language'. When the present writer asked Manning Clark why music was mentioned only a handful of times in the otherwise-panoramic volumes of his *History of Australia,* the historian's reply was wistful and lame. 'My wife [Dymphna] plays the piano, she can read music,' he confessed. 'I can't read music, so I suppose I can't write about it.' Manning Clark, in conversation with Vincent Plush, Manuka, Canberra, ACT. 20 April 1986.

The four 'Case Studies' that comprise **Part Two** examine specific examples from White's output. Each of these works stands roughly a decade apart, and capture the various stages of his creative development. They were chosen for the range of musical influences they yield, as well as structural dimensions taken from musical forms. On the structural level, the works in question can be characterized as follows:

(1) *The Aunt's Story* (1947) is constructed along the lines of the classical Sonata, whilst also containing elements of the Baroque Suite (Chapter 4).

(2) *Voss* (1957*)* is constructed along the lines of a symphony (Chapter 5).

(3) *The Vivisector* (1970) is constructed as a concerto (Chapter 6).

(4) The fragmentary structure of the unpublished film script, *The Monkey Puzzle* (1977?) derives from the diverse elements of vaudeville/music hall (Chapter 7).

Beyond the Conclusion of this study, there are several **Appendices**. In addition to the customary Acknowledgements and Bibliography, these Appendices are unique to this study and comprise the following:

(1) A *List of Supplementary Texts* contains extracts, principally works by White himself. These include, for example, extracts from his novels and plays, as well as correspondence; other segments come from his associates and scholarly writings about the works under investigation. These Supplementary Texts should be read in tandem with the Chapters themselves, where indicated.

(2) A *Chronology and Timeline of Events* outlines significant moments in White's life (1912-1990) as well as posthumous developments, from the time of his birth to the present day. It also encapsulates an overview of major historical events throughout the 20th century.

(3) A *List of Published Works* comprises novels, plays, poetry and public speeches, as well as details of publications in England, the USA and Australia. A tally of the contents of this list yields twelve novels, eight plays (actually produced on stage), three collections of short stories, several film scripts (only one actually produced), several collections of poetry and 'pronouncements', and over 5,500 letters to friends, colleagues, associates and perceived enemies (see below).

(4) An *Inventory of Recordings in Patrick White's LP Collection* is based on a combination of White's own tabulations (Index 1, ca.1955-60) and, posthumously, a list prepared by his executor, Barbara Mobbs (Index 2, ca.1990). It also includes compositions White mentions in his correspondence. This Inventory tabulates White's ever expanding collection of LP recordings. It attests to the slow unfurling of his experience of music.

These Appendices enable scholars to compare the lists of the recordings he acquired alongside the times of he was writing his novels and plays and the dates of their publication. They help reveal the influence of particular compositions on specific novels and plays. In other words, they help us understand what music Patrick White was listening to as he was writing those novels and plays.

3. Literature Review and Sources

Primary Sources

These fall into two categories – the novels themselves and White's own Notebooks and correspondence. All of White's published works have been examined extensively (see *Bibliography)*, with special consideration of *Flaws in the Glass* (1981). Avoiding the notion of writing an autobiography, a writing task he hated, White called *Flaws* his 'self-portrait'.[11] The four Case Studies have been examined more extensively still:

The Aunt's Story (London: Routledge & Kegan, 1948)

Voss (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1957)

The Vivisector (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970)

The Monkey Puzzle (ca.1977, unpublished screenplay) [12]

With respect to White's Notebooks and Correspondence, his biographer David Marr has estimated that, between 1918 and 1988, he may have written up to 5,500 letters; these are spread over several collections.[13] They are lodged at the Defence Force Academy at the University of New South Wales in Canberra; at the Mitchell Library (the State Library of NSW) in Sydney; and principally at the National Library of Australia in Canberra (MS 9982). In recent years, the NLA has digitized its collection of White's Notebooks.[14]

The NLA also holds the Correspondence of other individuals who figure in this study. These include the Papers of the geologist and historian Marcel Aurousseau (MS 7070); biographer and writer (Sister) Veronica Brady (MS Acc tba); composer Nigel Butterley (MS Acc07/033); poet (Lady) Maie Casey (MS 1840); historian Manning Clark (MS 7550); music critic and historian Roger Covell (MS Acc16/tba); film maker Paul Cox (MS 9985); theatre designer and director Desmond Digby (MS 10172); poet and publisher Geoffrey Dutton (MS 7285); composer Richard Meale (MS 10070); composer Moya Henderson (MS Acc tba); personal friends David and Gwen Moore (MS 86011111/157); music critics and translators Curt and Maria Prerauer (MS 10040); composer Peter

[11] *Flaws in the Glass: A self portrait* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1981)

[12] *The Monkey Puzzle . Unpublished typescript. Papers of Patrick White, 1930-2002. National Library* of Australia, MS-MS9982, Series 5.8, folder 13.

[13] David Marr, *Patrick White Letters.* Sydney: Random House Australia, 1994 *Acknowledgements,* pp. 627-631

[14] Professor Elizabeth Webby is producing transcriptions of these Notebooks. Over the course of his life, White used school exercise books as Notebooks for his research in writing his novels and plays. http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-224191956/findingaid?digitised=yp

Sculthorpe (MS 9676); and theatre and film director Jim Sharman (MS Acc09.028). The Papers of David Marr (MS 9356) are vital, for reasons outlined below.

White's Notebooks reveal that he was fastidious in his research. Preparing *Voss,* for instance, he spent hundreds of hours in the Mitchell Library researching colonial-era Sydney. He sent an early draft of the manuscript of *The Vivisector* to Sidney and Cynthia Nolan 'to see how close or remote I am from the workings of a painter's mind'.[15] Even in tiny details, White was painstaking in requesting assistance for his research: he asked Geoffrey Dutton to suggest the location of a railway siding in South Australia. He approached Maie Casey for details of a snappy Italian car in which she, the wife of the Governor-General, may have travelled.[16]

But when it came to details about music, there is no equivalence, no record in his surviving correspondence of his having sought advice or assistance on points of musical accuracy. This is both surprising and puzzling.

All White's 'guides to music' – Fritz and Ile Krieger, Curt and Maria Prerauer, Roger Covell, Nigel Butterley, David Malouf, Jim Sharman and others – were based in Sydney and were available by telephone. White rarely hesitated in using the telephone. Often it was his weapon of choice. Yet none of the survivors of the period who could have assisted him can recall White asking any questions about music.

Secondary Sources

The life and work of Patrick White have been subjected to more scrutiny than the life and work of any other Australian writer. Scholars, other writers and commentators have examined his work from many viewpoints: biography, history, theology, Indigenous culture, languages and linguistics, literature, theatre, film, art, world affairs, politics, environmentalism, queer studies, even cuisine.[17] Many of these examinations have hinted at the presence of music in White's work but have pulled back from anything more than brief, generalized comments. 'Patrick's knowledge and feeling for music,' Barry Humphries remarked in 1993, 'is a very strong thread in his art.'[18]

To date, that 'very strong thread' appears to have been examined by only two commentaries devoted to a study of the presence and function of music in White's work. In both instances, the authors make extensive use of quotations from White texts.

The British scholar Fiona Richards has pointed to a multitude of instances of music in White's writing, opening a rich lode of prospects for future exploration She observes that while there is 'an increasing body of writings on analogies between music and fiction, there

[15] PW, letter to Sidney and Cynthia Nolan, 16 December 1967. Marr, *Letters,* p. 321.
[16] PW, letter to Maie Casey, 17 October 1966. Marr, *Letters,* p. 302.
[17] David Marr, introducing *Patrick at My Table*, for the Manuscript Collection of the National Library of Australia. King's Hall, Old Parliament House, Canberra. 30 March 2007.
[18] Barry Humphries, in conversation with Jill Kitson. *Quadrant*, Vol.37 no.4, April 1993, p. 56

is as yet no comprehensive study of the extensive use of music in Australian poetry and fiction, and none written from the perspective of a musicologist'. [19] Richards argues that White 'belongs to a strong tradition of writers in Australia who are or were in various senses musical'. Richards points to the narrative/structural binary in the present study by defining those writers who are 'in various senses musical' as 'either [making] specific references to pieces of music in their writing, [or deploying] musical structures and techniques.' Richards presents a wide and succinct inventory of the appearances of music in White's life and work. In particular, her comments on *The Aunt's Story* and *Voss* – discussing the view of White's publisher's about 'the symphonic structure' of *Voss* – have been helpful springboards for the present study. At the close of her wide purview, Richards notes that 'White's personal use of music is much more than tangential reference or effect'. In White's writing, she finds that music plays 'a significant structural role and creates resonance'. My study supports that critical observation and moves some distance beyond it.

The Sydney physiologist and music-writer John Carmody, on the other hand, has taken a more analytical approach, arguing that White's use of musical metaphor and direct musical sources indicate he could have been, in fact, *composing,* not with music but with words. Moreover, Carmody argues that White was striving towards some great amalgam of the arts –literature, drama, art and music – after the fashion of the 19th century novel. This 'fertile congress of the muses' suggests a kind of master plan, he argues, the creation of the 'total art work,' or *Gesamtkunstwerk*. [20] Critical for this study, Carmody asserts that 'an understanding of White's artistic aspiration is impoverished without an acknowledgment of the centrality of music to [his] quest'.

For the moment, Richards and Carmody are lone voices who have read and heard White in a musical context. In their work, their observations are focused on his better-known novels, without referencing his plays, nor his poetry, nor what may be called his 'public pronouncements' (speeches on the Vietnam War, the environment, Australian politics as well as jeremiads about the apathetic nature of the Australian Everyman). While taking a broader approach that draws on a panoply of primary and secondary sources, the current study begins where those two previous studies began, with the published texts.[21] In the present study, references are made to White's novels and plays, his speeches and opinions/pronouncements, or as many as are available as published or archival resources.

Critical to any study of Patrick White are the two volumes by David Marr, the Sydney-based author, journalist and commentator on public affairs. Marr was White's biographer and chronicler of his correspondence. Marr's research produced the two monumental volumes that have been indispensable to this study:

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[19] Fiona Richards, 'Rubbed by the Warming Violins: Music and Patrick White'*, Cercles: Revue Pluridiscipline du Monde Anglophone*, Vol. 26. p. 23.
[20] John Carmody, 'Composer *manqué:* The Centrality of Music in White's Artistic Aspirations', *Antipodes*, Vol.29 (1), 1 June 2015, p. 155.
[21] *List of Works,* Appendix 3, p. 275.

David Marr, *Patrick White: A Life* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1992)

David Marr, *Patrick White: Letters* (Sydney: Random House Australia, 1994)

Other secondary sources include the recollections and opinions of a number of key White associates, friends and commentators. These have been recorded in archives, libraries and oral history collections within federal and state libraries, the ABC and various universities. White and Lascaris kept an extensive library that was bequeathed to the Mitchell Library of the State Library of NSW. Not only does this archive contain his books and some pieces of correspondence, but it also contains their collection of concert and opera programmes. This archive has been very helpful in ascertaining how White's tastes in music grew and changed over the period from 1947 to 1987.

The diaries and archived material of the present author have also recorded events and memories of cultural life in Sydney during the period when White, speaking from his pulpit as a Nobel laureate, emerged as a public figure. From that time, he was both celebrated and denigrated. Not only were his pronouncements on social and political issues deemed controversial, but also his later novels and plays seemed too steeped in the Australian vernacular for elevated public taste.

White did not like to be interviewed and he shunned microphones and television cameras. As a result, there are very few extended interviews, the most notable being that recorded by Veronica Brady for the NLA's Oral History project in 1983.[22] Although White was on good terms with several producers in the ABC – Rodney Wetherell, Michael Le Moignan and David Chandler, in particular – it is both surprising and disappointing that White made few recorded interviews.

The comparative absence of recorded interviews with White is not the only shortcoming hampering an investigation of this nature. Every researcher has found White's notorious handwriting a significant impediment.[23] White recognized this himself. On holiday with Lascaris in Greece in 1958, he wrote to the Kriegers, his neighbours in Castle Hill:

> I hate receiving typewritten personal letters, but I suppose if I send you one written by hand you will not be able to read it, and after all, I did decide to bring the Olivetti …[24]

[22] *Oral History Interview with Sister Veronica Brady.* National Library of Australia, Oral History and Folklore Collection, ORAL TRC 39782, 23 September 1983.

[23] In the four years preparation of this study, the present writer has had to acquire three different pairs of eyeglasses, a consequence of White's tortured and torturous handwriting.

[24] PW, letter to Fritz and Ile Krieger, from Greece, 26 April 1958. NLA, Papers of David Marr,

Other Ephemera

The most revealing key to White's aforementioned 'journey to music' in the 1950s is his collection of LP recordings.[25] For several years, White diligently recorded his acquisition of LPs. While he annotated performance details, he did not indicate record labels or dates of purchase. That information would have been helpful in ascertaining what cover notes he may have read and whether their language may have influenced his own writing.[26]

Great care was taken to acquire, annotate and preserve White's collection of books. His collection of LPs was sold off without similar attention. (People in White's closer circle did not think it necessary to preserve the LP collection or its sleeve covers.) Fortunately, many of the recordings in White's collection were also part of the collection of the present author. Thus it has been possible to compile a fuller, if not yet complete inventory of those recordings.

In **summary**, then, the current study proceeds in the belief that our understanding of White's creative practice has been hampered by a lack of appreciation of the role of music in his life and works. The study seeks to redress that imbalance by documenting the role that music played in his life's journey, and the extent to which music either overtly (as part of a given narrative) or covertly (as a structural scaffold) permeated his oeuvre.

[25] NLA, Patrick White, Index to Music Recordings (ca 1955-1960), MS 9982-10-1, p. 59.
[26] This may have occurred on at least one instance, when Messiaen's descriptions of the movements of the *Quatuor pour le fin du temps* (1941) migrate into passages of *The Vivisector* (1970), p. 528.

Chapter Two:

Music in the Life of Patrick White

1. Introduction

The focus of this chapter is on music in the life of Patrick White. Almost by definition, its narrative is largely biographical. Wherever possible, White's biography has been outlined in chronological order. (A more detailed examination of how music functions in his writing will follow in the next chapter, in more detailed examination of the four Case Studies). [27]

In one form or another, music was a daily presence in the life of Patrick White. Not only did it fill life in his homes and throughout his travels, but it also permeated virtually every page of his writing. In White's writing, music figured not just as sounds and voices, but also in compositions that can be identified, sometimes directly but – more often than not – by deduction. For White, 'music' meant Western classical or concert music, compositions that might be encountered in the theatre, music hall, cinema or church.

White's journey to music traverses the decades from, roughly, 1918 to 1988, some seven decades. It is mapped by many signposts: experiences at concerts, from radio broadcasts and recordings. These have been relatively simple to unravel, given his voluminous correspondence and surviving ephemera, including LP recordings, concert programmes and music-related books. White's musical journey is segmented by a succession of sub-journeys. His earliest memories are associated with the theatre, with vaudeville and music hall, as well as with silent movies and plays. For seventy years – from the six-year-old boy's experience of *The Merchant of Venice* to his own last play *Shepherd on the Rocks* (1987) – White was seduced by the illusion and magic of the theatre.

In the years before he returned permanently to Sydney, theatre is the best-documented element of White's cultural life. Although he attended performances of opera and ballet in London, Germany and possibly the USA, there is little evidence of his having attended concerts. (Possibly, this is due to the paucity of correspondence from the mid-War period; much of this was destroyed, in compliance with his request that it be destroyed or returned to him.) There is almost no evidence of any association with composers. Fundamentally, White had his sights set on the theatres of London's West End.

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[27] The principal biographical sources of this chapter are PW's own correspondence contained in the Papers of David Marr at the National Library of Australia in Canberram MS 9356, *inter alia.* As indicated in the Introduction, also of importance are.the two volumes by David Marr, *Patrick White: A Life* (New York: Alfred A.Knopf, 1992) and *Patrick White Letters* (Milsons Point, NSW: Random House, 1994). Another important source is White's 'self-portrait' *Flaws in the Glass* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1991).

Overall, it is a biding love of opera that emerges as the most consistent feature of White's journey to music. He attended performances of many productions, and also owned recordings and sought out films of operas in cinemas. Not only did he aspire to write opera librettos, he also imagined himself producing operas and even fantasized about singing certain roles.

Opera was the realization of childhood fantasies in front of the mirror in his mother's boudoir. Most of all, opera allowed him to escape into that 'world of illusion' – refuge from the dreary, gray realm of 'stubborn, colourless words'.[28]

2. Early Childhood and The Theatre

Throughout his life, White felt drawn to London. 'My blood is Australian,' he told a journalist in 1973, 'but my heart is in London'.[29] London was to occupy a special place in his heart and imagination for his entire creative life. The dichotomy between London (the imagined, the irrational) and Australia (the actuality, the rational) was a constant source of conflict in his writing. 'I don't think I have ever learned to accept Australia,' he confided to Swedish writer Ingmar Björkstén, 'but to endure it.' [30] Over and again, he was drawn to the place of his birth, London.

Patrick Victor Martindale White was born in Knightsbridge on 28th May 1912. When he was six months old, his parents, Victor Martindale (Dick) and Ruth White (*née* Withycombe), both Anglo-Australians and second cousins, moved the family to Sydney. There they lived in 'Lulworth,' a large house in Elizabeth Bay. This became the setting of the Bonner residence in *Voss* and the Courtney house in *The Vivisector.* At Lulworth, young Paddy and his sister Suzanne, three years his junior, lived in a flat with their nanny and a maid, while their parents lived in adjoining quarters. When he was five, White was sent to a kindergarten in Woollahra and then on to Cranbrook, the prestigious boys' grammar school in nearby Rose Bay.

[28] PW, letter to Ingmar Björkstén, 21 January 1973. Marr, *Life*, p. 410.
[29] PW, in conversation with Mike Carlton, for ABC television *Four Corners,* recorded in October 1973. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j02E06UFOcg [accessed 20 March 2010].
[30] PW, letter to Ingmar Björkstén, 21 January 1973. Marr, *Letters*, p. 413.



Illustration 2: 'Lulworth' at 17 Roslyn Gardens, Elizabeth Bay, Sydney.
Northern elevation, ca 1916.
Our Beautiful Homes, ed. M.Cannon, 1978 reprint.
Reprinted by kind permission St Luke's Care, Potts Point, NSW.

White hailed from a well-to-do, upper middle-class background. Until he reached the age of 21, Patrick White was known to family and friends as 'Paddy'. His mother was a stalwart supporter of artistic life in Sydney in the constricted years around the First World War. She held musicales at home. As one did at that time, she supported opera and the orchestra, theatres and galleries and charitable causes like Red Cross drives.



Illustration 3 : Roy de Maistre (1864-1968). Mrs Ruth White (ca 1938). Oil on canvas. AGNSW. On display at AGNSW, the connection between the subject and her writer son was not noted.

Ruth White was determined to introduce her children to what she called 'the monuments of great art,' aspirations that would ensure they ascended the ladder of Sydney society. Like Mrs Duffield, her fictional counterpart in *The Vivisector,* Ruth said that 'Australia was common'.[31] Thus, she endeavoured to fill her life and that of her son with things that were 'uncommon':

[31] PW, *The Vivisector*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1970. p. 185.

> Like the more pretentious Australian women of her day, Ruth saw the arts as charming hobbies which those of her social level might safely cultivate. A professional was something she would have found too difficult to explain anyway. Even after I had published several books, she couldn't really enjoy her pride because I wasn't the kind of writer she could produce at Australian cocktail parties. Her friends considered me mad, scandalous, a joke. Setting aside family loyalty and the fact that she had given birth to me, I expect she agreed with them on all counts.[32]

Ruth White had come to appreciate these 'finer things of life' during her two-year honeymoon in Europe and the Middle East. Little of this seems to have rubbed off on her husband. Dick White was an old-fashioned man of the land whose forebears had settled in the Hunter Valley in the early 19th century. Dick, who had 'never read a book unless [it was] a studbook', died in 1937 when his son was in London.[33] Compared to most other Australian writers of his generation, Patrick White was largely free from financial worries in his earlier life. His father provided an annual grant. This enabled him to stay in London to pursue his dream of becoming a writer.

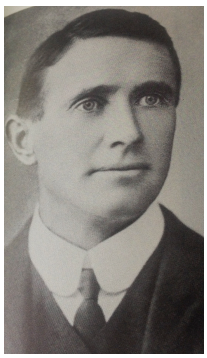


Illustration 4: Victor Martindale (Dick) White (1868-1937).
Unacknowledged photography, see Judy White:
The White Family of Belltrees: 150 Years in the Hunter Valley.
Sydney: The Seven Press, 1981. P. 56

Refusing to surrender to widowhood, Ruth White was 'determined on worldliness':

> Without losing her native innocence, she did acquire quite a lot as she junketed up the Nile and across the Aegean, gyrating in Budapest, Vienna, Paris and London, always London, something of this determination must have transferred itself to the embryo in her restless womb…[All this] resulted in [my being able to recite the European capitals at Mummy's bedside when I burst in early to disturb her sleep. There were the French irregular verbs too, but that was later.[34]

Ruth White employed Madame Marie-Thérèse Henri to teach French to her five-year-old son. Occasionally Paddy went to his tutor's place, a dilapidated terrace in the brothel region

[32] PW, *Flaws in the Glass,* London: Jonathan Cape, 1981, p. 57.
[33] PW, *Flaws,* p. 58.
[34] PW, *Flaws,* p. 9.

of Kings Cross, 'where the whores would be sitting round on their porches shouting bits of ribaldry at me'.[35]

White delighted in furtive sessions in his mother's boudoir. He tried on her dresses and smeared his face with makeup:

> I loved to follow the rites of the dressing table, the robing and disrobing, or as much of it as I was allowed to see. Lipstick was still 'lip-salve' and hidden under the handkerchiefs. She was not a woman given to scenting herself. There was the more innocent smell of powder, the dramatic stench of singed hair when the crimping-iron had been overheated, the mysterious perfumes of dresses hanging limp in the wardrobe waiting to be brought to life. I think she enjoyed my presence, like an actress with an audience of one. I stimulated her vanity and surely some of it rubbed off on me.[36]

Young Paddy charmed the household with musical entertainments, clashing saucepan lids and posing on a wastepaper basket. Breaking his pose, he would sing and dance numbers like *The Dutch Giddy's* or mime John McCormack's singing Irish ballads, or the *Songs of Araby* or selections from *Chu Chin Chow,* all played on the gramophone. He enacted and recited passages from Shakespeare and created his cast of characters as 'the most extraordinary individuals [made up] out of my own rather luxuriant imagination'.[37]

The relationship between White and his mother – painfully portrayed in the relationship between Mrs Elizabeth Hunter and her two children in *The Eye of the Storm* – was complex.[38] Somewhat like Dorothy de Lascabanes, the daughter in *Eye,* Ruth White's 'misfortune was to feel at her most French in Australia, her most Australian in France'.[39]

In the earlier years of the century, one of her best friends was the Canadian-born actress, Ethel Kelly, a leading luminary on the stage and on the social circuit of Sydney.[40] A confirmed Francophile, Ethel was a critical influence on young Paddy White as his fascination for the theatre took hold. He relished any opportunity to visit her Italian-inspired villas that attracted the world's rich and famous as they passed through the Harbour City. Nellie Melba visited occasionally. So did Ethel's brother-in-law, the composer-pianist Frederick Septimus Kelly (1874-1916), the London-based Olympic oarsman, twice wounded at Gallipoli and shot through the head only days before the end of the Battle of the Somme..

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[35] PW in conversation with David Marr, 8 October 1986. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.
[36] PW, *Flaws,* p. 42.
[37] PW, *Flaws,* p. 44.
[38] PW, *Flaws,* p. 42.
[39] PW, *The Eye of the Storm,* London: Jonathan Cape, 1973. p. 49.
[40] An extensive biography of Mrs Kelly appears at http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/kelly-ethel-knight-6917



Illustration 5: Ethel Knight Kelly (1875-1949), dressed as the Primrose Pompadour for a pageant in 1923, an image that haunted PW for his entire life. Photograph: Marr, *Life,* Plate 10.

Ruth White and her wide *coterie* of society friends often saw Ethel Kelly perform in the theatre. At the age of six, young Paddy saw her play the role of Portia in a charity matinee of *The Merchant of Venice.* He rushed down the aisle and flung a bunch of roses onto the stage. He saw musicals and pantomimes at Her Majesty's and at the Grand Opera House near Central Station. He imagined himself as the child-fairy swinging above the heads of a gasping audience. All this made him feel he was 'involved in a *world of illusion*, half-terror half-delight, like those orgasms in a hot bath'.[41]

Paddy White particularly enjoyed the fancy-dress parties lavished on the children of Sydney's society classes. On such occasions, Ruth ensured her children were brushed up to face the limelight. On at least one occasion, late in 1920, she took them to the S.R. Notman Portrait Studios in The Strand. Notman's guaranteed to create 'artistic portraits true to life'. They captured a seven-year-old Mad Hatter, striding the world like a trooper marching through his 'world of illusion'.

'There is sometimes little to choose between the reality of illusion and the illusion of reality,' Dr Holstius tells Theodora Goodman near the end of *The Aunt's Story.* 'Each of your several lives is evidence of this.'[42] If Patrick White had been afforded even one alternative life, it would have been devoted to the theatre. Most children, the writer asserted, 'have theatre in them':

> Those who carry it over into adolescence and maturity … commit the ultimate indecency of becoming professional actors. If I didn't go all the way, I became instead that far more indecent hybrid, a frustrated one. Sexual ambivalence helped drive me in on myself. Lacking flamboyance, cursed with reserve, I chose fiction, or more likely believing it was chosen for me, as the means of introducing to a disbelieving audience the cast of contradictory characters of which I am composed.[43]

[41] PW, *Flaws,* p. 20. Emphasis added.
[42] PW, *The Aunt's Story,* [London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1948]. Hammondsmith, Penguin Books, p. 278.
[43] PW, *Flaws,* pp. 19-20.



Illustration 6: PW, aged 8, dressed as the Mad Hatter for a charity ball, c. 1920*:* University of New England and Regional Archives, A1473, Album 18.
Courtesy of the University of New England.

White read voraciously. There was always a dictionary at hand. His own 'explosive vocabulary,' he wrote years later, was born 'by life out of the dictionary'. He attributed his early appetite for poetry and plays to long periods of bed-ridden boredom as he recuperated from frequent attacks of asthma. He clipped coupons from comic books and took correspondence courses in typing, shorthand and hypnosis. These were all skills that would be useful reference points for his development as a writer. By the time he reached the glowering halls of Cranbrook, he had stopped dancing; by that stage, the self-conscious lad was 'too harassed by algebra'.[44]

3. The Sick Child: Tudor House and The Piano

As a child, White suffered from severe bouts of asthma, the condition that had taken the life of his maternal grandfather. His fragile health meant that he could not participate in the social games and activities of other children. Ruth and Dick White installed Paddy at Tudor House School near Moss Vale in the Southern Highlands. [45] *In domino confido* was the school's motto. White's parents had confidence that God would restore their sickly ten-year-old son to health.

There was something 'strange and unpleasant about the landscape there,' White recalled many years later. 'It was filled with ghosts.'[46]

[44] PW, in conversation with David Marr, 13 September 1989. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.
[45] A 90 minute drive south of Sydney, Tudor House became Sorrel Vale in *The Aunt's Story*. Tudor House was established at The Kings School in Parramatta in 1897 and moved to its site in Moss Vale in 1902. Its founder, a Mr Inman, wanted to create a school that 'educated the whole boy'.

[46] PW, in conversation with David Marr, 23 December 1985. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.



Illustration 7: Hamilton House, at Tudor House, Moss Vale, NSW.
John Horbury Hunt, architect (1891).
Photograph by Vincent Plush, 17 October 2017

White was one of only thirty boys at Tudor House and in 1925 was one of two *Duces Scholae,* Dux of the School.[47] A library had existed since the school opened and White assumed the role of school librarian. Literature and the arts were core components of the school's curriculum from the beginning.

> Production of plays is more than a mere hobby, allowing boys to present something spectacular. It has great educational value, it encourages criticism, industry and determination, and it inspires team spirit in a combined endeavour to aim high. Fortunately, it extends from the oldest boy to the youngest, and one and all have a chance of contributing to an activity that not only entertains but is instructive. Even those who do not feel qualified to appear on stage find their *metier* in constructing scenery, stage props and other material and the popularity of theatricals knows no bounds. [48]

Ruth and Dick White had perhaps unwittingly prepared the theatrical ground for their sickly son. The school had only two fulltime Masters, but brought in Visitors. For an additional £2/2/- (two guineas) per term, boys could take additional lessons in French (White learned to practise his French with the aid of a hand mirror), Drawing, Dancing (from a Mme L'éclair), or Gymnastics. The young White hated Physical Culture and, in 1923, lasted only one round of boxing in classes conducted by the famous Bjelke-Petersen brothers.[49]

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[47] Taking out the prize for English in Form III, White received a volume of essays by Ralph Waldo Emerson PWBC668/64.

[48] Unknown author, *The Tudorian,* 1937. Cited by Chris.Ashton, *Tudor House: the first 100 years.* Moss Vale, NSW: Tudor House Council, 1997, p. 58

[49] Marie Caroline Bjelke-Petersen (1874-1969) was a Danish-born novelist who also taught Physical Culture. In 1892, her brothers founded the Bjelke-Petersen Physical Culture School, the first of several such institutes which continued to function to the end of the 20th century. Later a gay icon, she lived with her lesbian lover for over 30 years. Her nephew, Johannes Bjelke-Petersen (1911-2005) became the longest-serving Premier of Queensland (1968-87).

White had the best singing voice in the school, a decade before Miss Leahy would come over from Frensham, the girls' school in nearby Mittagong, for weekly singing classes. Mimicking the early days of music hall comics, White tried to teach himself ventriloquism In 1937, a fulltime Music Master was appointed; the 1948 staff included a Miss N.S.Spindler who boasted an A.Mus.A. in piano.

White was editor of the school magazine *The Tudorian* which first appeared in 1916. He published a short poem, *The Tramp,* and acted in school charades and 'theatricals'. In 1925 the school acquired a cinematograph machine and wireless, a battery set that seemed to give 'a good deal of hell'.[50]

White developed a crush on Mrs Lord, the music mistress at Tudor House; his erotic fantasies would be aroused 'as she smelled a bunch of violets or guided one's hands at the piano'.[51] Mornings resounded with soundscapes of 'birdsong, alternately cynical and sweet, piano notes faltering on frosty mornings, treble laughter intertwined with the harsh braying of broken voices'.

White learned the piano for perhaps just six months. In a piano duet with his teacher, he played the bass part in a *Tarantella,* possibly a simplified version of the famous *Tarantella, La Danza* by Rossini. But after only two terms, the freezing cold of the Southern Highlands prevailed: chilblains put an end to his brief 'career' in music. Memories of his piano teacher spilled into novels like *The Solid Mandala*:

> It was Waldo who learned to play, with care, from Miss Olive Fischer of Barranugli, *The Raindrop Prelude, The Turkish Rondo,* and *Für Eliza*. [52] … But Mother was determined Arthur [her other son] should be a genius. She sat beside him remembering all that she had learnt – sometimes of an evening she would flop down on that hard stool and play the Paderewski minuet, crossing her wrists at the moment they were waiting for – but sat beside Arthur stiff and stern to supervise his scales. Arthur's hands became ungovernable then. He could manage the angular scales, though of course he could hear, he could *see* in advance the splotches of sound. If he could only have moulded music like he knew how to work butter and knead the dough. Or add up the notes until they made a musical whole. He couldn't. And Mother gave up.[53]

Like most children of his age and breeding, White had a musical background, of sorts. At the very least, this short period would have equipped him with the rudiments of music theory, even if he was unable to negotiate the intricacies of those 'splotches of sound', a musical score. Regardless of his technical capacity at the keyboard, these skills animated

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[50] No author, *Tudor House: the first 50 years, 1898-1948.* p.17
[51] PW, *Flaws*, p. 27.
[52] White's misnaming of Beethoven's most famous piece for solo piano *Für Elise* may be deliberate. The name 'Eliza' would have been forefront in his mind, as he approached his version of the Eliza Fraser story in *A Fringe of Leaves,* published as a novel in 1976.
[53] PW, *The Solid Mandala.* [London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1966]. Hammondsmith, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1969. pp. 231-2.

his writing for his entire creative life. Moreover, that theoretical knowledge goes some way to explaining the abundance of Italian musical terms in his writing

At Tudor House, it took White some time to adjust to the presence and interests of other children. At school, he started to write plays. Some of these revolved around the kind of gossip and adult themes he would have overheard around his mother's dinner table.

In 1924, Tudor House ran into financial trouble. There was a call for donations: Dick White contributed £1,000. The administration of the school was placed under a Council of Management. (Although there was some deal of upheavel, school records dispute Marr's claim that the running of the school was 'a shambles'.) Whatever the case, the headmaster recommended that Paddy White be sent to a public school in England, a suggestion his Anglophile parents were only too happy to accept.

4. School in England

In April 1925, the White family set sail for England. They arrived in London six weeks later, on Paddy's thirteenth birthday. Within a few months, he had started school at Cheltenham College in Gloucestershire. He hated its regimentation. The only good thing about his 'four-year prison sentence' there was going to the theatre in London during the holidays.[54] Otherwise, White withdrew from school life into his private world of writing. He sang second tenor in the School choir. The shy lad worried that, when he opened his mouth, his accent would reveal his origins. He thought he sounded like a music hall character pretending to be an Australian. At first there seemed to be no geography to his accent, but underpinning it was 'a sort of grazier Australian'.[55] Hardly a day went by without his English schoolmates calling him 'a bloody colonial' or 'a bloody cockney'.[56]

At the age of fourteen, Paddy made his first trip to Paris where a play called *The Young Mozart* reminded him of that magical 'world of illusion'. Even at this early stage, he may have seen himself playing the young composer visiting Paris. 'I remember [his] blue eyelids,' he recalled, 'and the smell of that red-plush theatre'.[57]

In the summer holidays of 1929, White took a trip to France with Ronnie Waterall, his best chum at school. Waterall was a flamboyant character, utterly obsessed with the stage. In the Casino Opera House at the Grand Hotel in Dieppe, the pair of tittering teenage boys saw 'endless Massenet' including a *Thaïs* where they remembered – as schoolboys would – not

[54] White was delighted to see his old school immortalized by another Old Cheltonian, the film director Lindsay Anderson in his comic-noir film *If* (1968). Marr, *Life,* p. 598.
[55] PW, in conversation with David Marr, 18 January 1985. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.
[56] PW, Letter to Laurie Collinson, 27 November 1964. *Letters,* p. 273.
[57] PW, in conversation with Thelma Herring and G.A.Wilkes. Melbourne; *Southerly,* Issue #33, June 1973, pp.132-143. The play was 'The Young Mozart', a *comédie musicale* in three acts, a pastiche of Mozart's early works. As it was first performed in Paris on 2 December 1925, the 14-year-old White must have seen a very early performance.

so much the music as 'a soprano who'd covered her arm-pits with flesh-coloured pads held in place with elastic'.[58] White reported that they had 'immersed themselves in Debussy', but there are no specific details of that. After Waterall left Cheltenham, White's life there grew more sedate and dreary. By then, the sixteen-year-old had been assigned a study of his own. He sought sanctuary in his room and in his portable gramophone. It cranked out popular miniatures like Rimsky-Korsakov's *Chanson hindoue* and Grieg's *The Death of Asë.* His passion for Chekov, Ibsen and Strindberg grew, even though these non-English playwrights were 'so much deplored by the housemaster'. He yearned to play the great roles buried in their masterpieces.[59]

At Cheltenham, White was not really an outstanding student. Until that close friendship with Waterall, he was well liked but seemed to most of the other lads there to be a retiring person. None of their other school chums thought the friendship with Waterall was good for White. Together, one recalled, the pair would give 'practical demonstrations of chorus-girls' high kicks, with appropriate noises'.[60]

Until he was about sixteen, White thought he wanted to be an actor, much like his fictional creation Sir Basil Hunter in *Eye of the Storm.* 'Though I stopped wanting to be an actor,' he admitted in 1983, 'I've always been stage-struck'.[61] Later, he conceded that it was better to be a writer than an actor. 'Acting is a very untidy kind of life, and it's all very ephemeral,' he reasoned. 'Your novel might last, but your performance won't.'[62]

White's parents would not countenance a stage career for their teenage son. While Dick White can hardly have hoped Paddy might take over the family property in the Hunter Valley, he might at least try to make a man of him. So in 1929 Paddy was ordered back to Australia to work on the land. In his first year of jackerooing, White lived near Adaminaby in the Monaro district. On Saturday afternoons at the Cooma Bridge Club, old folks played bridge while young people danced in the evenings to music from a gramophone. White recounted these experiences several years later in his first novel, *Happy Valley*. Overall, his two years on the land were tiresome.

> Sometimes I get fed up to the teeth here in the country, where the type of Australian one encounters is the most uninspiring, unintelligent, deadening specimen to be found on earth. Although you will meet many charming people here, I detest the average Australian who is little more than a cheap imitation of the American.
>
> There is quite a lot of amusement to be found in life in Sydney, but it is a rattling, jangling affair from morn till night. It makes one long for London, and the smooth, gliding feeling which it has. I haven't been to a show for ages, not a real show with professional West End finish. The only serious work [here] is done by amateur theatres where you can see

[58] PW, in conversation with David Marr, 14 August 1986. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.
[59] PW, *Flaws,* p. 54.
[60] J[ohn] Schrywer, letter to David Marr, 30 October 1986. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.
[61] PW, in conversation with Rodney Wetherell, ABC Sunday Night Radio 2, broadcast on 9 December 1983, from ABC production transcript, p. 4.
[62] PW, cited by Craig McGregor, *In the Making,* Melbourne: Thomas Nelson, 1969. p. 218.

> O'Neill, Tchekov (sic), Strindberg, and other good stuff credibly acted. But they haven't the time, nor the money, nor the public, to do anything on a large scale. The professional stage is peopled by provincial companies in musical comedy and American farce, things which induce one to stay at home.[63]

He could hardly wait to get back to London and the theatres of the West End.

5. A Colonial in Cambridge

Ruth White would hardly have considered anything less than an English university education for her only son. After jackerooing on the Monaro, White spent a third year back in Sydney, preparing for entrance exams to Cambridge. There it was intended he read History, but on arrival he opted for Modern Languages. This 'lucky decision' enabled him to travel to the Continent 'to improve [him]self linguistically.'

In his second term at Cambridge, White and Robert ('Rouget'?) Bloomfield, a 19-year-old trainee priest, moved into rooms on the first floor. There was a piano in their spartan rooms but it was merely a piece of furniture; nobody played it.



Illustration 8 : PW (right) and his priest-lover 'R', [Robert Bloomfield] in double exposure. Marr, *Life,* plate 26.

Although they lived close to the famed college Chapel, White hardly ever went to services, not even its famed Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols at Christmas, but he cherished memories of it.[64]

At Cambridge, White never acted or appeared in any performances. He saw many films there, most of the major European films of the day. Although he later claimed he had 'learned about music' at Cambridge, this aspect of his 'learning' is undocumented. He would surely have known about two important figures in music in his days there: Boris Ord, Director of Music at King's (from 1929 to 1957) and Edward Dent, Professor of Music (from 1926 to 1941). Even so, neither figures in his correspondence from this period. Dent was not primarily a composer, as so many Cambridge professors had been, but

[63] PW, letter to Jean Scott Rogers, 16 March 1931 [from Bolano, Adamimby, via Cooma, NSW]. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356, Box 47. This is one of the earliest surviving letters in the White/Marr .archives.

[64] The Festival was first introduced in 1918, and first broadcast in 1928.

someone who was at the centre of European musicology – he was the president of the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM) and of the International Musicological Society (IMS), both of which would figure later in White's life in Sydney.

White attended concerts in Cambridge, specific details of which are unknown. Handel was much in vogue at the time. The Fitzwilliam Museum contained important Handel material, notably the autograph score of *Rinaldo.* White had fond memories of a production of *Jeptha* with Cambridge notables in the chorus, some cavorting nude. Again, visual memory prevails over auditory recall.

White spent many nights at an apartment in Corpus Christi College where a friend owned a gramophone. On weekends, a little clutch of gentlemen would sit on the floor chatting 'into the small hours of the morning, drunk on bad Chablis and talk of Beethoven and the universe'.[65] They listened to their favourite pieces on 78 rpms: *Bolero,* Mozart's final piano concerto and the late Beethoven quartets. On one occasion, White surprised his Cambridge friends by dancing wildly to a recording and then reverting to complete silence, his habitual mode of (un)social behaviour. The young Australian, somewhat awkward in demeanour, may have been attempting to mimic the choreography of Ida Rubenstein, for whom Ravel had written *Bolero* several years earlier. He may even have seen the Russian ballerina dance the work in London or Paris.



Illustration 9: PW at Cambridge, ca.1935.
Reprinted in *The Monthly*, April 2008.
By kind permission of the editors of *The Monthly*.

Aside from parties and sex, life at Cambridge appeared dull and uneventful. White didn't meet any of its great dons, preferring to spend most of his time alone in his rooms, reading texts in French and German. He admitted he 'didn't make the most of Cambridge'.[66] Still, its old academic world occasionally surfaced in his writing; it enfolded the shadowy university career of Elyot Standish in *The Living and the Dead.*[67] It also encompassed the life of the young pianist Dulcie Feinstein in *The Solid Mandala,* one of his favourite novels.

[65] PW, *Flaws,* p. 174.
[66] *Southerly,* June 1973, pp. 132-143.
[67] Marr, *Life,* p. 598.

White's academic record at Kings College was patchy. In June 1935 he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree (II,1) with the Tripos in Modern Languages.[68] What would he now do with his life? Ruth White was delighted at the prospect of having a diplomat for a son; the Foreign Service always needed diplomats who could speak French and German, especially in those inter-War years. With French, German and a little (musical) Italian in him, the 23-year-old White was now ready to explore Europe for himself.

6. Germany and Wagner

In the 1930s, White went to Germany 'a lot … while the horrors were building up and until it became unbearable'.[69] Like Theodora Goodman in *The Aunt's Story,* he found himself wandering around 'the gothic shell of Europe … in which the ghosts of Homer and St Paul and Tolstoy waited for the crash'.[70]

The only Germany White knew, David Marr has observed, was a Nazi Germany. This dark chapter of history laid the foundation for his novel *Riders in the Chariot* (1960). For White, the musical embodiment of Nazi Germany was Wagner and the rituals of Bayreuth. Even before the outbreak of War, he found Wagner and his proselytizers repulsive. At Cambridge, life was not so much consumed by politics as it was by social activities. No one in White's circle would dream of going to a Wagner opera. That was for 'noble ladies in tiaras'.[71] In London White had seen *Parsifal,* and had to force himself to sit through 'this nest of snakes'.[72]

Landing in Germany in 1934, Theodora Goodman in *The Aunt's Story* remembers hearing Wagner in Dresden: 'the great soprano [Kirsten Flagstad] sang up her soul for love into a wooden cup'.[73] At the Semper, the wonderful old opera house in Dresden, White had heard Flagstad sing Sieglinde in *Die Walküre*, a production that bored him stiff.[74] More memorable was the sight of Brünnhilde riding a white horse over that huge stage and the meal of sausages and salad served at interval:

> Dresden was like being in a dream, a dream landscape like one of those Dutch landscapes, but less tangible … You couldn't explain it, but it was like walking through a dream.[75]

In the spring of 1935, White and his 20-year-old sister Suzanne took trains from Dresden to Berlin. Their visit to Berlin coincided with the wedding of Hitler's lieutenant Hermann Goering to the actress Emmy Sonnemann. The Whites watched the procession of the

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[68] J.R.Ryan, doctoral thesis *Patrick White's Study of French at Cambridge.* University of New England, 1966. http://www.msp.unimelb.edu.au/index.php/explorations/article/download/70/66 [accessed 8 August 2016].
[69] PW, letter to Jean Scott Rogers, 13 December 1961. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.
[70] PW, *The Aunt's Story,* pp. 145-6.
[71] PW in conversation with David Marr, 13 September 1989. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.
[72] PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 15 July 1951. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.
[73] PW, *The Aunt's Story,* p. 139. White owned an early recording of Flagstad singing Sieglinde.
[74] PW, in conversation with David Marr, 13 September 1989. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 8601/1/5.
[75] PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 15 August 1951. Marr, *Letters,* p. 84.

newlyweds, amazed at the adulation accorded 'this vast couple in a limousine lined with roses. Hitler [their best man] arrived in another car. Everyone was going mad.'[76]

With such memories, White found it a struggle to write whenever Wagner was pouring from the radio. Every Good Friday afternoon, *Parsifal* would be broadcast over ABC radio in its entirety, all four-and-a-quarter-hours of it. One day, while he was writing a letter, *Parsifal* was playing on the radio. While he found 'seductive bits riding here and there,' he had 'to force myself to listen to most of it':

> I don't really like Wagner, do you? … I feel that unless one is German one has to be of that period when to like Wagner was to revolt against the conventions, really to enjoy it. (Floundering, Wagnerian sentence, but perhaps you can understand it.) [77]

Several decades later, the Nolans took White to Covent Garden to see *Tristan und Isolde.* This time, White was transported by an experience that 'transcended Wagner'. It made him think he would have made 'a great Isolde'. He began to read some of the Tristan myths. These found their way into his tenth published novel *A Fringe of Leaves* (1976), the residue of the aborted opera with Sculthorpe and Nolan.[78]

7. London and The Theatre

In the few years he shuffled between Cambridge and London, White became the archetypal 'stage-door Johnny,' hanging around green rooms and stage doors in the hope of meeting directors and stars who might take on his plays or lyrics. Lacking the extrovert temperament of an actor and terrified of making speeches in public, White adopted a more passive role, that of the introvert writer. He felt fulfilled writing for the theatre, rather than strutting the boards.

During his Cambridge days, White used a bed-sit apartment at 68 Ebury Street as his London digs. It was a respectable address, within walking distance of the West End. He went to the theatre obsessively. It was his natural milieu. Most of his friends were actors and he wanted to write plays for them. Within a few months, he moved to a flat in Eccleston Street in a building owned by the expatriate Australian painter Roy de Maistre. In London, White lived with de Maistre for about a decade. Throughout those years, almost all his friends were either theatrical people or artists, largely drawn from de Maistre's circle. [79]

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[76] *Hitler Best Man at Wedding.* On 10 April 1935, Adolf Hitler was Best Man at the wedding of General Hermann Goering and Frau Emmy Sonnemann, one of the leading actresses of the Weimar years. This memorable scene, only a year before the Berlin Olympiad, was captured by newsreel cameras. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6hXXnOVXgjQ [uploaded 25 August 2011].

[77] PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 15 August 1951. NLA, Papers of Patrick White, MS 8434 (Volume 2). Marr, *Letters,* p. 84.

[78] PW in conversation with David Marr, 13 September 1989. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.

[79] White returned to this circle in the novel *The Vivisector* (1970). [This will be discussed more fully in Chapter Six.]

In Sydney, de Maistre had been a violin/viola student at the NSW State Conservatorium of Music and had played in Henri Verbrugghen's State Orchestra. White credits the painter with teaching him how to view painting and to hear music, but many questions about de Maistre's musical influence remain unresolved. It was unlikely that de Maistre had cut himself off from the world of music entirely when he departed for London in 1924. It is unclear if he still owned or played a violin– or whether there was a piano in his studio in Eccleston Street.



Illustration 10 : Roy de Maistre, *Studio – 13 Eccleston Street* (post 1937). Oil on canvas board 39.8 x 30.2cms. AGNSW, Sydney. https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/131.1996/ [accessed 15 June 2015].

Around 1937, de Maistre allowed a glimpse of that studio in a painting entitled *Studio – 13 Eccleston Street.* There is no sign of a musical instrument there – no piano, violin or viola – but, tantalizingly, there is an image placed on the easel in the lower right corner of the painting. It appears to be an inverse triangle comprising bricks of different colours: it is his *Colour Chart* (1919). [80] Thus White must have known about de Maistre's theories on 'colour music,' ideas that were significant as he created *The Vivisector* whilst living in Eccleston Street.



\llustration 11: Roy de Maistre, *Colour Chart* (1919). Oil on cardboard, 30.5 x 40.5cms. AGNSW, Sydney. [accessed 15 June 2015] https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/DA63.1968/

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[80] Most artists keep a personalized 'colour chart' close to their easels, but for de Maistre the colours had enhanced significance, as will be discussed in Chapter Six, page 189, in discussion of *The Vivisector.* In that context, the 'colour chart' of Margaret Preston (p. 191) is also significant.

In Ebury Street, White penned what he called 'three or four bad plays'. At the same time he wrote sketches for revues. In late 1937, he contributed a skit to *Nine Sharp,* a revue produced at the Little Theatre on The Strand by the dramatist-critic Herbert Farjeon. *Peter Plover's Party* marked his debut on the London stage. He had originally intended its lead role for his old school chum Ronnie Waters – his name now shortened – but it became a vehicle for the Australian actor Cyril Ritchard as 'a rather camp and skatty (sic) young man who dashes around a party chatting to people'.[81] The show ran for a year. It was very popular throughout the War. Servicemen performed it in the desert. Ruth ensured her son's success on West End was noted in the Sydney press. She saw to it that his photograph appeared in fashionable magazines like *The Weekly* and *Home*.



Illustration 12: PW, age 24, recent graduate from Cambridge, Studio portrait, London, ca.1935. http://www.mtwilson.com.au/mt-wilsonmt-irvine-historical-society/patrick-white-exhibition/patrick-white-a-timeline.html [accessed 25 August 2015].

Keen to build upon his minor success, White submitted his sketches to Farjeon and other producers. He offered lyrics to stars like Beatrice Lillie –whose American pianist Sam Walsh was briefly his lover and the model for Wally Collins, the jazz saxophonist in *The Living and the Dead* (1941) – but was turned down on all but one occasion. Hermione Gingold accepted a refurbished lyric for her revue *Swinging the Gate*.[82] According to Gingold's memoirs, the revue ran for 350 performances and closed only after the Nazis unleashed their bombs on London.[83] Among its stars were Gingold, Peter Ustinov and, in an unspecified 'solo item' by a 30-year-old male dancer from the Sadler's Wells Ballet, Robert Helpman.[84]

[81] David Marr, letter to Ellen Pollock, 17 December 1987. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.
[82] There is some confusion in White's *Flaws* and Marr's *Life* pertaining to the precise history of this revue. See Judy Harris http://users.bestweb.net/~foosie/gingold.htm [accessed 31 August 2016],
[83] Hermione Gingold (1897-1987). Her memoirs, *How to Grow Old Disgracefully*, were published posthumously in 1988.
[84] Robert Murray Helpman[n] (1909-1986) was born in Mount Gambier, South Australia. In 1926, performing with Anna Pavolva's company, he added an additional 'n-' to his surname, as Pavlova thought it unlucky to have a name consisting only of 13 letters.

Item 11 of the printed programme lists a song with the title of *La grande amoureuse.* It appears to have been created by a committee: lyrics by Patrick White, dialogue by Hermione Gingold, music by Charles Zwar, and performed by Gingold and Guy Vernay. White's lyric for *La grande amoureuse* recounted the tale of an old tart whose 'life has been rather gaseuse …

> *I've tasted the waters of so many spas*
> *I've been patted by princes, tortured by shahs*
> *My diamonds are only outdone by my scars*
> Quelle vie! *You'll agree …* [85]

For many years, White referred to *La grande amoureuse* as his song, ignoring the role of the composer of the music for his lyrics. That composer was Charles Zwar (1911-1989), born in rural Victoria and almost his exact contemporary. Zwar's name does not appear in any of White's correspondence, nor in any White-related literature. Perhaps the Anglophile did not want to share the West End limelight with another Australian expatriate.[86]

As a young man in London, White's obsession was the theatre. Always on its fringes, he wrote 'more bad plays than I could count'.[87] The War had caused him to lose interest in the theatre, he lamented to the expatriate Australian actor Keith Michell. 'The kind of High Drama necessary in it had been played out by us all during these years,' he confessed. 'Anything we might put on a stage could only appear colourless and feeble. So I kept at novels':

> Of course, I suppose also I have not got the technical flair for a play. And that does rankle. Particularly as I know when someone else has done something wrong. I still feel sometimes I would like to pull it off, just once, to show myself, and perhaps your letter has pandered to that ambition![88]

Michell had been 'bowled over' by White's fourth novel *The Tree of Man* (1955). He wrote asking White for a play he could produce in London, perhaps at the Royal Court Theatre where he was playing in several Old Vic productions. White tinkered a bit with *The Ham Funeral,* a play he had started in London a decade earlier. He craved a success in the theatre, in either London or New York, if only 'to make the Australian press die finally of apoplexy'.[89]

Keith Michell had left Australia in 1949 to study at the Old Vic Theatre School. White had never seen the Port Pirie-born actor on stage, but he had read reports from English friends extolling his accomplishments. 'I hope you are not lost to us,' White counselled, 'before we have a theatre for you to act in…'

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[85] Marr, *Life,* p. 196.
[86] White loathed Bobby Helpmann, 'that original funnel-web'. PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 13 March 1964. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.
[87] PW, letter to Keith Michell, 5 January 1957. Marr, *Letters,* pp. 109-110.
[88] PW, letter to Keith Michell, 5 January 1957. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.
[89] PW to Ben Huebsch, 19 March 1958. Marr, *Life,* p. 387.

> I almost succumbed to the glitter of London, Europe and all that, but it is different for an actor, who is fed on glitter to a great extent. Since the War, I have hardly stirred from these six acres outside Sydney, and as a writer, I feel the better for it.[90]

In November 1960, White sent a copy of *The Ham Funeral* to Geoffrey Dutton in Adelaide. A month later, he had a visit from Professor John Bishop, founding director of the Adelaide Festival of the Arts. The first Festival had run in March 1960 and Bishop was looking for homegrown drama for future festivals. He wondered if White would agree to his play being produced at the next Festival, in March 1962. White was overjoyed. He was once again on the threshold of the stage. It made him laugh after the way 'the wretched thing [had] lain around for 14 years'.[91]

8. Travels in America

During the years between Cambridge and the War, White wandered over Europe. In the French port city of Dieppe, where 'it always rained,' he returned to *Happy Valley*, the novel de Maistre had urged him to complete. The painter hoped a novelist might also find inspiration there, as he had himself some years earlier. White responded to the place with a painter-like touch:[92]

> It was bright and cold, the grey, watery sky, with its patches of blue and streaks of black, and the sea that was a deeper, blackish blue. On the boat, it took your breath.[93]

In the spring of 1939, in an attempt to find a publisher for *Happy Valley,* White sailed to New York. After a few fruitless weeks there, he embarked on his discovery of America. He took long train trips across the country, first heading south to New Orleans, then across Texas and on to northern California. He found San Francisco 'fascinating and beautiful and peaceful'.

On his way back east to New York, White journeyed south through the Colorado Rockies down to Santa Fe, New Mexico, the small tourist town he found 'very phony'. He then took the ninety-minute bus-ride bus to Taos, taking in Georgia O'Keeffe's towering scenery of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, 'all pink earth, grey sage-brush, blue – some of them still streaked with snow'.[94]

During his stay in Taos, White met the poet-publisher 'Spud' Johnson. They fell deeply in love. Walter Willard ('Spud') Johnson (1897-1968) was a man of 45, some 15 years older than White. This 'cool and waspish' figure, with a face White thought looked like an early

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[90] PW, letter to Keith Michell, 5 January 1957. Marr, *Letters,* p. 109.
[91] PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 20 December 1960. Marr, *Letters,* p. 177.
[92] PW, *The Living and the Dead,* p. 157.
[93] PW, *The Living and the Dead,* pp. 60-1.
[94] PW, letter to Jean Scott Rogers, 30 June 1939. Marr, *Letters,* p. 17.

Picasso, was known around the South West as a freelance journalist and publisher.[95] He was also a minor poet. [96] White kept corresponding with Johnson until he returned to Australia in 1947, keeping his amorous options open. That correspondence contains some of White's most personal and most beautiful letters.

After those 'exhilarating' weeks in New Mexico, White made a brief trip to Chicago and then returned to New York. He was infatuated by New York and, had it not been for the War, he might have remained there and taken out American citizenship. After a week, he went north to Cape Cod where he spent the summer at a writers' retreat in the gay enclave of Provincetown on the coast of Rhode Island. Returning to New York, he set sail for London, intent on returning to America to rekindle his affair with Johnson.

White's journey across the American heartland had two outcomes. It enabled him to avoid the harsh winter in New York and the creative torpor it induced. It also helped him to preview the journeys of Theodora Goodman that he would chronicle in *Holstius,* the third part of *The Aunt's Story.* In New York he commenced his second novel *The Living and the Dead* (1941) and in May 1940 he met the publisher Ben Huebsch for the first time. Huebsch was the backbone of Vikings publishing house and, in Marr's estimation, became 'the rock upon which White's career was built'.[97]

Given Huebsch's background in music – the son of a rabbi, he was both an accomplished pianist and violinist – it is odd that White records not a single experience of music in New York, nary a concert in Carnegie Hall nor an opera in the old Metropolitan house, two of Huebsch's favourite haunts. Britten and Pears were in America at the time, so was Auden. Huebsch could have facilitated meetings, dinners or drinks with any number of (gay) composers – Aaron Copland, Virgil Thomson or Marc Blitzstein or the young and glamorous Leonard Bernstein – but little in American music beyond jazz seems to have rubbed off on White. [This will be discussed more fully in the next chapter.]

9. War in The Middle East

Soon after he returned to London in August 1940, White's happy memories of America dissipated. He decided to enlist. In mid-November, Flight Lieutenant Patrick Victor Martindale White was accepted as an officer in the Royal Australian Air Force. His asthma seems not to have worried the recruiting officers.[98] Within a month, White was posted to the Middle East and sent to Kassala as an Intelligence Officer attached to a squadron of the South African Air Force.

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[95] Marr, *Life,* p.198
[96] Marr, *Life,* p.185.
[97] Marr, *Life,* p.198
[98] The painter Francis Bacon, White's close friend, had been exempted from military service on the grounds of his asthma.

The Second World War was 'a great caesura in the life and work of Patrick White,' Michael Ackland has written.[99] 'White fought a novelist's war,' Marr has observed, alluding to the realization that White's wartime postings largely kept him out of harm's way.[100] The Italian scholar Annalisa Pes has discussed 'the boredom and futility of war in White's fiction' in her examination of a little known short story entitled *After Alep* (1945).[101] This sprang from White's observation about the collapse of service marriages he tracked on a daily basis as he censored the personal letters of men in his unit.[102] During the War, Ruth White sent care parcels to her son in the deserts of Africa. Not food, but books. Knowing he was intent on becoming a writer, Ruth dispatched books by Australian authors because she wanted her son to know what was happening in literary circles back in Australia.

For all this, White's six years in the military served his writing well on at least two counts. The sands of Africa drifted into *The Aunt's Story* and eventually led him to the great love of his life, Manoly Lascaris. In terms of his writing, 'the theatre of war' provided fodder for his future life as a novelist and playwright. In the early months of the war, a time White dubbed 'the music-hall phase … when we were hanging out our washing on the Siegfried Line', life in London seemed to lurch from one party to another, from one opening night to the next.[103]

With the voice of Vera Lynn wafting from the Orderly tent wireless, White's army routine was like the life immortalized in the old song; it was one of 'rum, bum and broken gramophone records'.[104] The bawdy bursts of Army songs accompanied by 'mooning' and other lewd gestures mingled with memories of 'blue' acts he had seen in the West End. Night after night in the Middle East, cabaret 'churned into action'. He relished the songs sung by 'an orange female ourang-outang [sic], a 'star of the Vienna stage, in her Yiddish patter'.[105] At another club, the *Warsaw Concerto* was 'belted out on a piano' accompanying Allied troops as they ate vegetable stew. Experiences like these White would exhume in vaudevillian moments of plays like *Signal Driver* (1982) and *Shepherd on the Rocks* (1988) and the final scene of the *The Monkey Puzzle* (1977?).[106]

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[99] Michael Ackland, *Patrick White.* See *A Dictionary of Literary Biography: Australian Writers 1915-1950.* Vo.260 Seline Samuels, ed. Detroit, MI, Gale, 2002. p. 402.
[100] Marr, *Life,* p. 203.
[101] Annalisa Pes, 'The Boredom and Futility of War in the Fiction of Patrick White', *Le Simplegadi*, Vol. XIV No.15 (April 2016), pp. 65-74.
[102] PW, *After Alep.* See *Bugle Blast,* Vol. III. London: Allen & Unwin, 1945. p. 147.
[103] *Flaws,* p. 76.
[104] PW, *Flaws,* p. 95.
[105] PW, *Flaws,* p. 111.
[106] *You Stepped out of a Dream* was the centrepiece of the 1941 musical *Ziegfield Follies* in which Tony Martin swoons at an image of screen goddess Lana Turner descending a gilded staircase. They reappear in the closing pages of the screenplay *The Monkey Puzzle* (1977?).

10. Alexandria and Manoly Lascaris

For several years, Flight Lieutenant White was posted to various theatres of war in North Africa. In late June 1941, he spent a week's leave in Alexandria, which was 'one of the better minor cities of this world,' he reported, fondly, 'the same mix of culture, and the same easy tempo… People spend a lot of time chatting on street corners.'[107] Over the next few years, whenever he had the opportunity, White would hitchhike to Alexandria to stay with Baron Charles de Menasce, whom he had met through a mutual friend in the R.A.F. The de Menasce parties assembled the most interesting people in town. White was able to show off his language skills as he rubbed shoulders with Greeks, French, Egyptians, Armenians and Syrians. 'That was Alexandria, a Babel of the Middle East'.[108]



Illustration 13: Manoly Lascaris, Alexandria, ca 1944.
Marr, *Life,* plate 40, pp. 376-7.

At one of the de Menasce parties, White met a young Greek who was about to join the Royal Greek Army. Manoly Lascaris had been born in Cairo to an American mother, and then raised by aunts in Athens. His aristocratic family could trace their line back to the Byzantine Empire. From the age of 18, Manoly worked in the family-owned Bank of Athens. Shortly after joining a Greek army unit in 1940, he was promoted to liaison work between the British and Greek troops, largely because of his excellent English and his popularity with British officers. The repercussions of that afternoon party in Alexandria were profound for both White and Lascaris, both around 30 years old. Marr has written that 'by temperament and upbringing', it was Lascaris who was the one who served:

> In Egypt in 1941, [Lascaris] decided to serve this difficult man whose ambition was to write. He countered White's temperament with his own Levantine calm; the world that drove the Australian to black pessimism Lascaris observed with understanding and wry forbearance.[109]

[107] PW, letter Jean Scott Rogers, 13 November 1941. Marr, *Letters,* p. 49.
[108] PW, letter to Jean Scott Rogers, 15 July 1941. Marr, *Letters,* p. 47.
[109] Marr, *Letters,* pp. 47-8.

White came to call Lascaris his 'sweet reason … who has a sense of duty even in the dance'.[110] They were to be partners in the marital dance which endured for almost a half-century. For the next seven years though, they were apart more often than together. Their letters of that period have not survived. 'They were very beautiful', Lascaris told Marr, 'but I had promised Patrick I would destroy them. So I did.'[111]

11. Greece and The Return to Australia

With each visit to Alexandria, White's liking for the Greeks grew stronger. Ever the eager linguist, he began to learn Greek and by early 1945 was compiling a lexicon of Modern Greek. He thought the Greeks 'a realistic people, warm without being soft and sentimental, and very loyal if they believe in you'.[112]

Initially, White had hoped that he and Lascaris might settle in America after the War. Lascaris had relatives there who could sponsor their emigration. His mother was on Long Island and he had a sister in Fort Lauderdale. For all that, White felt that his 'great lack' was that, until that time, he had never actually been to Greece. 'I feel that in relationship with my Greek friends,' he lamented, 'I can't be all I should [be]'.[113]

White was stationed in Greece for almost a year. There he found 'perfection [presenting] itself on every hand, not only the perfection of antiquity, but that of nature, and the warmth of human relationships expressed in daily living'.[114] Parts of Greece reminded him of Belltrees, his family ancestral home in the Hunter Valley. White was tempted to stay in Greece but eventually abandoned the idea. He feared he would become 'the beachcomber all foreigners become when they settle in Greece – tolerated, but never much more than a joke'.[115] Perhaps he was reflecting on other Australians who had been lured to life there, by its cheap and laidback living and endless supply of *ouzo.*

After V-J Day, 15 August 1945, White was posted back to England. He found London 'like a graveyard filled with memories of the Blitz,' images which floated into his first play *The Ham Funeral*.[116] London was that brown, sad city of Eliot's *Waste Land*. Even music provided little joy there: all he could hear there was 'the spun caramel of violins, a drawn-out Massenet', and 'a rheumaticky *pizzicato* that was Grieg' croaked from a Lyons' Corner House.[117]

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[110] PW, *Three Uneasy Pieces,* Fairfield, VIC: Pascoe Publishing, 1987. p. 15.
[111] PW to David Marr, *Letters,* p. 48. Chapter Five will examine the long-distance relationship of White and Lascaris as a model for 'the mystical communion' between Voss and Laura Trevelyan.
[112] PW, letter to Jean Scott Rogers, 1 January 1943. Marr, *Letters,* p. 53.
[113] PW, letter to Jean Scott Rogers, 1 January 1943.
[114] PW, 'The Prodigal Son'*,* in *Australian Letters* (April 1958), pp. 37-40.
[115] PW, *Flaws,* p. 123.
[116] PW, in conversation with Thelma Herring and G.A. Wilkes. Melbourne; *Southerly,* Issue #33, June 1973, pp. 132-143.
[117] PW, *The Living and the Dead* [London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1941]. Ringwood Victoria: Penguin Books, 1967 [reprint 1983], p. 149.

As he set about writing the first part of *The Aunt's Story,* White was hungry, literally craving real Australian food. In those early post-War days there was very little to eat in London. He grew tired of the 'soft, sweet awfulness of horsemeat stew' in the few London restaurants he could afford to patronize [118]. 'To fill [his] belly may have been the chief and ignoble reason' why he decided to try his luck back in Australia, the land of sunshine and the kind of good wholesome tucker he had devoured on the stations around the Monaro.

The decision to abandon Greece and return to Australia after the War was a painful and protracted one.[119] Lascaris dealt the deciding hand. 'It was his illusion', White admitted. 'I suppose I sensed it was better than mine.'[120] For White himself, the return home had become a necessity:

> It is a long time since I listened to any music, and I must say that with so many things *to look at* I have not felt the need for it lately. Probably if I had stayed in Greece, I would never have 'discovered' music, not written any more novels; I was driven to both in an effort to fill the Australian vacuum.[121]

Rediscovering his home country after an absence of fourteen years was 'an interesting experience,' White wrote to Huebsch. The new ex-expatriate was impressed by things he now saw in his homeland. Recalling the country he had left fourteen years earlier, he found Australians were beginning to take an interest in books and paintings and music to an extent that surprised him: 'one gets the impression that a great deal is about to happen', he told Huebsch. 'One forgets really that the average Australian has seen so little. He can have heard quite a lot, read quite a lot, but on the visual side, he is a complacent Victorian.'[122]

At the time of penning that letter to Huebsch, White had been back in Australia for barely six years. The average Australian, he observed, could have 'heard quite a lot'. The 'average Australian' could only have done so by listening to ABC radio stations and attending concerts.[123] He observed that that 'average Australian' read 'quite a lot' too, possibly as a result of the post-War proliferation of magazines and broadsheets, as well as an upsurge in the publishing industry. His sympathy, though, was reserved for what he saw was the backward state of the visual arts, still trapped in the Outback pastorals of Albert Namatjira and the stiff formal portraits of Ivor Hele. Living in the orbit of Roy de Maistre in London, White had experienced the most modern and fashionable exponents of modern art. Despite the impoverishment of the art scene in Sydney, White's attention now turned to music.

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[118] PW, *Flaws,* p. 136.
[119] Marr, *Life*, pp. 333-9.
[120] PW, *Flaws,* p. 123.
[121] PW, letter to Fritz and Ile Krieger, 4 June 1958. Marr, *Letters,* p. 337. Emphasis added. Again, the visual element predominates, but now White's priorities are reversed: music takes precedence over art.
[122] PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 1 May 1953. Marr, *Letters,* pp. 90-91.
[123] The Australian Broadcasting Commission had been established in 1932, around the time White arrived in Cambridge.

12. At Home in Dogwoods

In February 1947, the Prodigal Son arrived home on the *Orion*.[124] Not long thereafter, White and Lascaris acquired Dogwoods, a small farm of several acres at Castle Hill, on the outskirts of Parramatta. For the moment, they were firmly ensconced in the western backblocks of Sydney. Life there was highly regulated and domestic, but hardly blissful: there were illnesses and rows and constant worries about money.



Illustration 14: Dogwoods. ca 1955, with PW weeding the garden. Marr, *Life,* plate 49. No details.

Lascaris blamed the War for their subdued, withdrawn lives in Sydney. 'Our chosen solitude', he explained, 'was the only way to purify our existence from the stains of experience'.[125] Australia had saved Lascaris from the ghosts and demons of Europe, now smouldering in ruins. Australia had liberated him 'from paternal protocols of obedience'. He was very grateful to be in Australia. The country gave 'a new rhythm to [his] quest for meaning'.[126]

At Dogwoods, memories of Greece and the life-that-might-have-been lingered fitfully. Their experiences in Greece resonated in several LPs of Greek liturgical and folk music noted in White's first Inventory. They constitute a handful of what White mistakenly called 'Greek folk-songs.' Lascaris also erected small shrines of Greek icons throughout the house.

[124] *The Prodigal Son* was the title of an important article White penned for the first issue of *Australian Letters,* published in April 1958. It was written in response to Alister Kershaw's article *The Last Expatriate* (1957). [see footnote 124].
[125] Manoly Lascaris, cited by Vrasidas Karalis. *Recollections of Mr Manoly Lascaris.* Blackheath, NSW: Brandl & Schlesinger, 2008. pp. 133-4.
[126] Karalis, *Recollections,* p. 137.

By the mid-1950s, the radio and the gramophone had become the principal purveyors of music in the White household. By his own admission, White had been 'rigidly anti-wireless for so long', but now found himself a devotee of 2FC, ABC radio's second network. 'I am drinking up music like a piece of blotting paper drinks ink,' he wrote to Peggy Garland. 'It is really the spoken and written word to which I remain averse, possibly because it has become so false. But I can't have enough of music':

> Vera Lynn at breakfast encouraging us to eat 'Creamoda', the young Joan Sutherland competing in the Mobil Quest, Carl Orff, Yma Sumac, Marjorie Lawrence in her concert versions of *Elektra* and *Salomé*. We had seats for the Lawrence performances but as often happened towards the night, I was bedridden with bronchial asthma.[127]

Over the years. the radio played constantly and 'indiscriminately' in the White-Lascaris household.[128] Sunday nights were reserved for radio listening. Not only did 2FC bring them dazzling performances by American orchestras on the NBC Symphony Hour, but also the home-spun verities of such long-term broadcasters as Neville Cardus and Dr A.E. Floyd. Generations of Australian listeners honed their appreciation of music with the comforting voices and armchair stories of these much-loved broadcasters.

Some decades later, White and Lascaris were also keen listeners to a new player in Australian radio: community FM broadcasting. From 15 December 1974, the Music Broadcasting Society of NSW ran a small volunteer-staffed station playing classical music, folk and jazz virtually around the clock. 2MBS enlivened the listening horizons of its small but passionate band of supporters. In this fold were White and Lascaris, two of the earliest subscribers to the fledgling radio station.[129]

13. Sarsaparilla and 'The Telly'

Music and writing filled the vacuum of life in Castle Hill, the suburb on the western fringes of Sydney White christened 'Sarsaparilla'.[130] Just as Barry Humphries had reconfigured Moonee Ponds as the symbol of Melbourne suburbia, so too did Sarsaparilla encapsulate White's feelings about Castle Hill. This became the counterpart of Moonee Ponds, nestled on the sprawling outer western suburbs of Sydney.

White ensured the immortality of his fictional Sydney suburb in a collection of short stories *The Burnt Ones* (1964) and in a play, *The Season at Sarsaparilla* (1962). This 'charade of

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[127] PW, *Flaws,* p. 141.
[128] PW, *Flaws,* p. 141.
[129] The Chair of the Music Broadcasting Society of New South Wales, Professor Neil Runcie, was a neighbour on Martin Road.
[130] 'Sarsaparilla' was also the name of a bitter soft drink found on the shelves of every Australian corner store.

suburbia in two acts', as he called it, was set 'in Mildred Street in a fictitious outer suburb of Sydney, summer, 1961'.[131]

In the summer of 1961, not many people in Sydney's outer western suburbs would have owned television sets. They barely had sewerage, a cause for alarm on the part of the local Federal Member for Werriwa, the Hon. Edward Gough Whitlam.[132] Before television, the principal form of social communication was 'the bush telegraph', a good gossip at the shops, at church or over the back fence, or on the phone. Television changed all that.

While radio and the gramophone had become treasured features of the White household, the accursed 'telly' had been banned. White found television revolting; for years he would not have one in the house. The only thing he liked about television was its aerial; he delighted in the variety of aerials poking up from the red slate roofs of Sydney. 'If I were a painter,' he mused, 'I'd be wanting to paint them all the time'.[133]

Barely a year before his death, White did relent a little. A television set was hired, largely for Manoly's benefit. When it arrived at 20 Martin Road, White asked the technician how it worked. He was more interested in knowing how to turn it off.

Television was the embodiment of the kind of mindless consumerism White deplored in Australians. 'I am gunna get married,' Dimity Slattery declares in the short story *Miss Slattery and Her Demon Lover* (1963). 'And have a washing machine.'[134] The Sydney-based academic Adrian Mitchell has described *Sarsaparilla* as 'a collective state of mind, or mindlessness':

> When White first began writing of this social territory, his readers shared his savage delight as he slashed his way through the values, the speech patterns, the affections and affectations of mid-suburban Australia. The consensus is that he was wickedly accurate. He had the mannerisms down pat (pat is good), and he knew just how to expose the public vulgarities. (They) were easy game … What he really understood was the language – the inside implications, the precise meaning of innuendo. He had discovered the subtleties of the demotic, he knew the vulnerable spots, and long before anyone else, he recognized the prevalence of the veiled threat, the latent violence within the community. He had an exact ear for idiom, but more than that, he understood the true function of gossip in a social group, the definitions that small talk established.[135]

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[131] PW, *Collected Plays, Volume 1*. Paddington, NSW: Currency Press, 1985, p. 75 ff. John Tasker directed the first production for the University of Adelaide Theatre Guild in September 1962.
[132] Gough Whitlam the Labor party's Member for Werriwa from November 1952 until his retirement from politics in July 1978. He was Prime Minister of Australia from December 1972 to November 1975.
[133] PW, letter to Jean Scott Rogers, 13 December 1961. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.
[134] PW, *Miss Slattery and Her Demon Lover.* London Magazine No.1, vol 3(8). p. 21.
This became the eighth of the collection of short stories *The Burnt Ones* (1974).
[135] Adrian Mitchell, *Eventually, White's Language: Words and More than Words.* See *Patrick White: A Critical Symposium.* Flinders University, Adelaide: Centre for Research in the New Literature in English, 1978, p. 14.

The aspirations of the good people of Sarsaparilla are trumpeted in one of the *Six Urban Songs,* written around the same time, in 1961.'We are happy! We are happy!' chorus the Sarsparillans. 'Why shouldn't we be?'

> We have ev-rything:
> The Bendix, the Dishlex,
> The Mixmaster, and the Holden Special,
> We have the telly to replace our thoughts.[136]

By 1973 White had concluded that 'life for most people in Australia seems pretty deadly dull'.[137] Paradoxically, this pronouncement was delivered at the very outset of the Whitlam government, three short years that would turn complacent Australian society on its head. In essence, White was determined to fight dullness and its minions – principally, television.

14. Guides to Music – The Kriegers

Throughout his life, White had guides to help chart his cultural awareness. In music, his first guide was Fritz Krieger (1904-86), a Viennese Jewish businessman of Austro–Hungarian extraction and a neighbour at Castle Hill. Like Himmelfarb, the Jewish refugee in *Riders in the Chariot*, Krieger and his Hungarian wife Ile (1907-89) had emigrated to Australia in the 1930s. Having no Jewish background of his own, White was grateful to the Kriegers for introducing him to their friends and customs. They opened another dimension in his writing. Marr has characterised Krieger as 'a quiet man'…

> but 'very alert, sensitive and easily hurt. When roused, Fritz loved to argue and was a stubborn opponent. [His house was] an outpost of Europe where all the rules of polite Australian conversation were flouted, the crowd at the Kriegers talked religion, politics and money.[138]

As the shadow of Nazism gathered over Europe, sophisticated, highly cultivated Jews like the Kriegers migrated, in the main, not only to the East Coast of the USA but also to Australia. Here their principal destination was Melbourne, as well as the eastern and outer western suburbs of Sydney. After several years of engagement with Jewish friends, White found that 'on the whole, they have been a disappointment'.[139] Yes, they had given Australia 'doctors, handbags, and *Torten.* But in the arts, they lurk in the thicket of Brahms and Richard Strauss; visually wild horses wouldn't drag them further than Kokoschka.' He chose to ignore their other accomplishments, especially in music: Jewish *emigré*s had founded the Musica Viva Society whose chamber concerts he had begun to enjoy so much. They also occupied many of the desks in the orchestras and teaching studios at the conservatoriums.

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[136] PW, from *Six Urban Songs* (1961). Moya Henderson set them for soprano and piano or orchestra (1983).
[137] PW, letter to Ingmar Björkstén, 21 January 1973. Marr, *Letters,* p. 409.
[138] Marr, *Life*, p. 293.
[139] PW, letter to Ben Huebsch, 2 February 1962. Marr, *Letters,* p. 204.

Most Thursday evenings throughout the 1950s, the Kriegers and the Whites drove into the city to attend concerts by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in the Town Hall. These were the golden years of Eugene Goossens's stewardship of the SSO and the Conservatorium (1946–1956). Their weekly trips were rewarded by Australian premiere performances of Liszt (the *Faust Symphony*), Bruckner (*Symphony No. 1*) and a good deal of Richard Strauss (concert performances of *Der Rosenkavalier, Elektra* and *Salomé;* the *Alpine Symphony* and *Symphonia domestica)*. These huge orchestral performances – Mahler's Second and Eighth symphonies, Bartók's *Duke Bluebeard's Castle* and Goossens's own *Apocalypse* – were shining moments in the musical life of Sydney in the 1950s.

A prolific letter-writer, Fritz Krieger maintained contact with friends in Europe and the USA. Within their world of argument and ideas, the Kriegers and the Whites read and wrote to each other in French, German and English. They met in each other's homes for meals and evenings of record listening. Wagner, Mahler, Bruckner and Richard Strauss were the main items on their musical menu, and mostly orchestral music, song cycles and opera. For fear of raising Fritz's blood pressure, the listening program rarely ventured into recent music. Chamber music and keyboard pieces were shunned. These evenings ran dry around 1960, as White and Krieger lost patience with each other.

The death of Ruth White in 1966 in London left sufficient funds for White and Lascaris to buy a new home. In a rambling Federation era bungalow and garden in Centennial Park close to the Sydney CBD, they would live comfortably, if relatively simply, for the rest of their lives. They had moved, the critic Dorothy Green wrote in her obituary of White 'to be closer to friends, to gossip ('the life-blood of a novelist'), to concert halls and theatres'.[140] By the time they moved into 20 Martin Road in June 1967, their musical soirées had ceased.[141] These exercises in music appreciation were replaced by Wednesday evening dinner parties; the noise of conversation, at times degenerating into shouting matches, would have been overwhelmed any attempt to listen to music.

[140] Dorothy Green, *Patrick White: A Tribute*, compiled by Clayton Joyce. North Ryde, NSW: Angus & Robertson/Imprint, 1991. p. 4.
[141] David Marr, in conversation with Vincent Plush, Sydney, 9 April 2015. Also in NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.

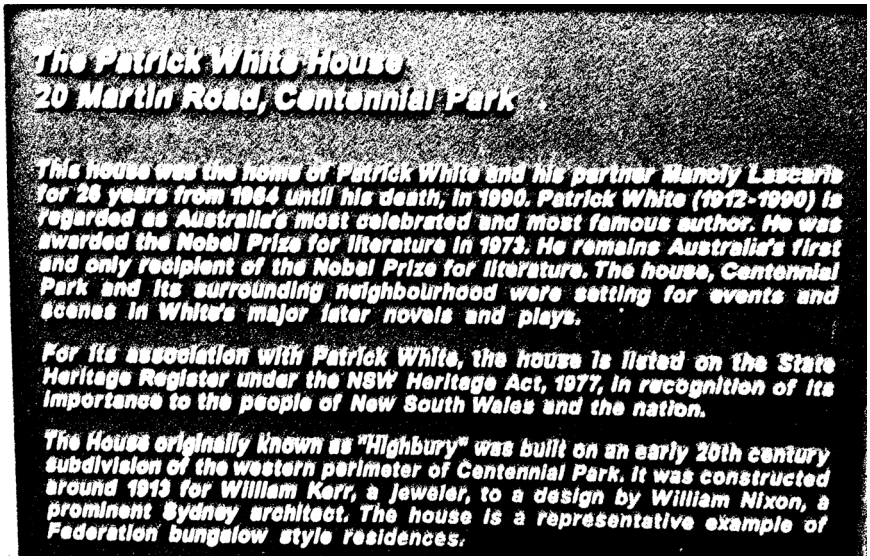


Illustration 15: Plaque at the former home of Patrick White and Manoly Lascaris, 20 Martin Road, Centennial Park, Sydney.
Photograph by Vincent Plush, 13 July 2014.

15. The Record Collection

During this decade of concert going, White was building a record collection. He had begun to collect records almost from the time he arrived back in Sydney. 'What a stand-by a gramophone is,' he wrote to Garland. 'I get quite drunk with music, and play it a lot to lead me up to my work'.[142] Building a record collection based on the large-scale Romantic works he had heard at SSO concerts had become his 'chief solace'.[143] But there was a danger: buying records 'runs away with the money perhaps worse than anything else'.

Over the years, as his royalty payments grew, White allowed himself a few luxuries. He bought a few new suits and, with the £500 cheque from the inaugural Miles Franklin Award in 1957, a new stove appeared in the kitchen. Krieger persuaded White to buy a gramophone to replace the old Stromberg-Carlson machine whose mechanical idiosyncrasies drove the writer mad. Like many music-lovers of his era, White knew what he liked and stuck with that. Armed with the scratchy old recording he knew best – Wilhelm Kempff's recording of Beethoven sonatas – he shopped around for a new gramophone player, but was at a loss to know where to turn:

> Last time in Sydney I went looking at radios-cum-hifi, but found nothing satisfactory. One of the great drawbacks is that the shop which sells the machines normally only has about three worn-out records of a kind we would not play … The best they could produce

[142] PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 5 October 1959. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.
[143] PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 17 June 1959. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.

> was a record of brass and another thing called *Baton and Bows*?[144] Even if I had been prepared to spend that amount of money, I did not like what I had heard, although it may have been our record; tone seemed more unpleasant. A Phillips machine for 195 guineas, less obnoxiously 'antique', did not seem a great advance in tone, although once again it may have been our record, a tinny worn-out Beethoven Sonatas with Kempff playing. So I don't know what to do. Have you any ideas? [145]

Despite his lack of technical prowess, White soon had the measure of the record stores in Sydney, at least for further additions to his collection. 'All the interesting records in Sydney are imported by four firms,' he advised Glover.[146] His old bank-manager neighbour had been posted to Grafton, where there was unlikely to be a ready source of LPs of classical music. For LP purchases, White recommended the stores of the music writer and record reviewer Peter Sainthill, others run by S. Johnson and Eric Anderson and, most importantly, Edels. The two Edels stores on King Street in the city and Macleay Street in Kings Cross had signs in their windows to ward off theft. If a would-be thief stole a record, the signs warned, the sales assistant would inform the police and the parents of the offenders. What he could not obtain from these stores, White imported from the catalogues of the Record Society. These occasionally offered special bargains.

> For £8 odd, I have got a Fauré piano quartet, a Messiaen quartet, a Bruckner Mass, a recording of works by the sons of Bach, and a free record with a Roussel piano concerto and a work by Stravinsky. The artists are not, of course, the glittering virtuosi required by Fritz, but seem to be honest musicianly musicians.[147]

From 1955 onwards, White's collection of LPs expanded steadily. To keep track of things, he started to compile an Inventory. In a small telephone directory, he entered his acquisitions in the orderly fashion of the boy-librarian he had once been at Tudor House: composer (alphabetical order), compositions (performer details only) but – sadly for future scholars –without any details of recording labels or dates of purchase or acquisition.

[144] White probably meant Dinah Shore's version of the popular 1947 song *Buttons and Bows*.
[145] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 8 September 1958. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.
[146] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 23 September 1959. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.
[147] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 27 January 1961. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.



Illustration 16: NLA, Patrick White, Index to Music Recordings (ca 1955-1960), MS 9982-10-1
Note that the book is open to White's collection of the music of Berg.
Photograph by Vincent Plush, NLA, 6 September 2013.

Even though White appears to have given up on this procedure around 1960, this tiny volume affords an intimate view of his journey to music during that very productive middle period of his writing career. Its presence invites speculation over the fate of the LP collection after his death. At his request, White's books went to the Mitchell Library and his art works to the AGNSW. Most of his papers found their way to the NLA, although others were distributed between the Mitchell Library and the library of the Australian Defence Force Academy in Canberra. Few people thought the LP collection important enough to preserve or even annotate. By 1990, the year of White's death, Australia was well into the age of digital recordings and CDs; analog LPs were regarded as outmoded and useless to all but a few die-hard collectors.

David Malouf has suggested White may have given away a number of LPs, just as he gave away copies of books he admired and wished to share with other people. 'There is always the possibility that the book lent, the record played,' White wrote in *The Prodigal Son* back in 1958, 'may lead to communication between human beings'.[148]

It seems not to have occurred to anyone that the LP collection might tell us something about White's writing. The LP collection would have informed us what music White was listening to as he wrote his novels and plays, and also what information he may have gleaned from record sleeves. Barbara Mobbs, White's literary executor, drew up a rudimentary list of the remaining LPs for the purpose of selling them off as 'a job lot'.[149] (She does not know who bought them.) The reaction of Paul Brunton, now the Emeritus Curator of the State Library who handled the acquisition of what is known as 'the Patrick White Bequest Collection' (PWBC), characterises the general response: 'I wish I had thought more about it,' he said. 'It didn't seem important at the time.'[150]

[148] PW, *Critical Essays,* p. 24.
[149] Barbara Mobbs, email to the author, 22 March 2015.
[150] Paul Brunton, in conversation with the author, Mitchell Library, Sydney. 10 April 2015.

Throughout those years at Dogwoods, unusual works found their way into White's burgeoning collection of LPs. Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht* (whose ultra-Romanticism he found disagreeable) joined Berlioz's *Harold in Italy* and Berg's *Violin Concerto*.[151]

As his record collection expanded, White's taste became more refined. He found himself gravitating mainly 'towards Bach and the moderns' with the only 'in-betweens' being the Beethoven quartets and some Haydn and Schubert:

> Have just got a very interesting and fanciful piece by Hindemith for piano, brass and harps. [152] Also a recording of piano-violin music with one each of Hindemith, Stravinsky and Bartók. Rosalyn Tureck playing Bach *Partitas* is touchingly perfect. And I now have the [Bach] *B Minor Mass* conducted by Karajan, with Schwarzkopff and a team of singers who make this perhaps the peak of music. So how can one really listen to Malko and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra at its lowest ebb? [153]

As an antidote to what he discerned to be the continuing slide of SSO concerts, White acquired more LPs, writing to friends about exciting new discoveries. 'Do you know Bruckner's *Ninth Symphony* and Hindemith's *Harmonies of the World?'* he asked Garland. He found both works 'very noble and exciting' and intended 'to but just one or two difficult works like those and play them over and over till I am saturated'.[154]

There were times when White's saturation almost reached the point of drowning. As the New Year turned into 1956, he started assembling *Voss.* He had listened to so much music whilst forging his new historical novel that his stomach turned at the very thought of listening to more music. Even so, in the longer term, he would really like 'to spend my life just sitting, and looking, and listening to music', he wrote to Huebsch.[155]

When he was writing, he had a routine. Early in the evening he would drink a lot of brandy. This would put him into a stupor which enabled him to sleep well into the night. Once awake, he would wash up and 'scribble lines furiously into the small hours'. Around that same time, he confessed to Huebsch, a recurring dream haunted him; in it he was 'expected to conduct an orchestra, with no warning and without being able to read music'.[156]

Alongside such nightmares, White's life was increasingly punctuated by arguments with friends. One evening in Castle Hill, White and Krieger listened to Shostakovich's [First] Violin Concerto, 'a rather shoddy work', White thought, 'almost a violin solo, for Oistrakh, of course'.[157] Krieger, for his part, was 'in ecstasies'. White came to the conclusion that

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[151] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 10 December 1958. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.
[152] Paul Hindemith, *Konzertmusik.Op.49* (1930) is scored for piano, brass and a single harp..
[153] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 29 July 1959. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.
[154] PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 15 January 1953, *A Life*, pp. 293–294.
[155] PW, letter to Ben Huebsch, 29 December 1955. *Letters,* p. 101.
[156] PW, letter to Ben Huebsch, 10 October 1957. NLA, Papers of Patrick White, MS 8434.
[157] There is no mention of Shostakovich's *Violin Concerto No.1 in a minor*, Op.77 [more commonly identified as Op.99] (1948) in either of White's Inventories. He had probably been listening to the recording

what his friend liked in music was 'only virtuosity and sensuousness'. White was offended by Krieger's remarks about chamber music: 'It cannot be great because it has nearly all been commissioned by dilettantes,' Krieger contended. 'In such moods', White concluded, '[Fritz] becomes a schoolboy, and it is quite impossible to argue'.[158] White found the strain too great, especially when Krieger declared him to be 'tone-deaf for liking Bach'.

White's love and knowledge of music grew so rapidly that, during a European trip in 1958, he and Lascaris went to considerable lengths to plan 'pilgrimages' to destinations associated with music. Every few days, postcards were dispatched to Castle Hill.

In Vienna, they had stayed 'quite near the house where Bruckner lived and died' and had walked through the woods 'where Beethoven's *Fifth* [sic] is said to have come to him'.[159] In Vienna, they stumbled upon a 'Festival of Singers' in which White expected to find 'one or two of those Australian sopranos vomiting up a lump of Puccini'.[160] In Florence they caught a production of *Turandot* in the Boboli Gardens. Even though he professed to dislike music in the open air, White found it was 'a beautiful setting and great spectacle,' offering an opinion worthy of an opera critic: 'without the spectacle the opera is really nothing,' he opined, 'and one can only think that [Puccini] would have embroidered it a lot more if he had lived'.

By the early 1960s, White was becoming quite forthright in his opinions about music, as he was with literature, art and the theatre, politics and social concerns, and increasingly about Indigenous issues. He was showing more confidence in making pronouncements and dispensing advice, even with respect to things he knew little about.

There is little sign of White's having acquired recordings of jazz or other forms of popular music. Even so, his experience of music wasn't entirely limited to classical music. He went to a few performances in the old Sydney Stadium to see performers like Frank Sinatra. He went to the Sydney Showgrounds to experience one of the revival meetings of the Rev. Billy Graham. He was too ill to see The Beatles during their Australian tour in 1964 and resisted Jim Sharman's attempts to get him to a concert by Meatloaf. He was a great fan of Janis Joplin ('What a voice!') and, quite late in life, began to investigate the songs of Bob Dylan. In New York, he saw *Hair* and hated it. On Broadway, he walked out of *West Side Story*, loathing its 'mish-mash of 90% ballet, with some lame dialogue and pathetic musical numbers thrown in'.[161] He had to go to such things, he said, if only 'to see what all the fuss was about'.[162]

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by David Oistrakh/New York Philharmonic Orchestra/Dmitri Mitropolos, on HMV/Sony Masterworks, recorded in January 1956.

[158] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 1 May 1957. *Letters,* p. 117.

[159] PW, postcard to Fritz Krieger, from Vienna, 21 July 1958. White surely meant Beethoven's *Sixth Symphony,* the *Pastorale.*

[160] PW, postcard to Fritz Krieger, 13 July 1958. NLA, Papers of Patrick White, MS 8434.

[161] PW, letter to Fritz Krieger, 13 September 1958. NLA. Papers of David Marr, MS 9356/15/10.

[162] PW, in conversation with David Marr, 4 August 1986. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.

16. A Cultural Coming of Age in Australia

In the later months of 1956, there was considerable fuss in Australia around the Olympic Games in Melbourne.[163] Every true-blood Australia felt a blood-rush of national pride. This was the first time the Olympics had been held in the Southern Hemisphere. For days on end, newspapers carried extensive supplements, the ABC broadcast almost every event on radio and many on the new medium of television. (The federal government had relented and agreed to allow television into the country.) In many ways, the Olympics changed the Anglo-face of Australia, introducing new races, customs, religions and cultures to a nation of barely 9.5 millions.

Some of the seventy-two countries participating in the Games sent performing arts companies to perform at the Olympic Arts Festival which usually preceded the sporting events. Some of these cultural ambassadors appeared in other capital cities as well. One November evening, White and Lascaris went to a performance in the Sydney Stadium by a troupe of players from the Peking Opera.[164] Like most Australians, this was something they had never experienced before. White wished he had had the foresight to book tickets for more than one performance:

> I wish I had a picture of the King of Heaven standing on his cloud with all his court and The Monkey King in the foreground … That is like focussing in so many passages of music that one aches to crystallize and have forever … Even in the least appealing, more incomprehensible bits, there were actors who seemed to convey that they were great artists, particularly one who was applauded as an old man in *A Bully Reforms,* and [another in] *The Drunken Beauty* and *Setting the Magic Heat* ... Perfect in titles alone.[165]

Titles, acting, staging and costumes, indeed: but not a word about the sound of the music itself, merely its psychological impact on the listener. Not since his own childhood performances with saucepan lids at Lulworth had White experienced such a din.

Shed of their Chinese origins and transformed into clowns and spectral beings, White transported these characters into plays like *Signal Driver* and *Shepherd on the Rocks.* Perhaps even earlier: 'Oh, I say, a circus!' exclaims a character in *Riders in the Chariot* as the crucifixion of Himmelfarb is being prepared. 'Most comical was one of the clowns who pretended to enact a public hanging on the platform of a lorry'.[166]

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[163] The Summer Games of the XVI Olympiad ran in Melbourne from 22 November to 8 December 1956. 3,314 athletes competed in 151 events celebrating17 sports. The Olympic Arts Festival ran from 12 November to 15 December 1956.

[164] Initially, China had decided to boycott the Melbourne Olympics because of the participation of 15 athletes from Taiwan. However, China relented, causing major adjustments to the cultural program. The Chinese opera season opened at the Princess Theatre in Melbourne on 8 December. .

[165] PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 18 November 1956. NLA, Papers of Patrick White, MS 8434/1-143.

[166] PW, *Riders,* p. 453.

The Australian tour of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1960 was the cause of another spat between White and Krieger.[167] White and Lascaris went to the third of the BSO concerts in the old Sydney Stadium, but were disappointed:

> I am afraid I can't share the ecstasies of most people. It was all very sumptuous music, but overblown stuff without any feeling. Since hearing their Brahms *Second Symphony*, which I found intensely boring, the Bruno Walter-New York Symphony Orchestra recording of the Brahms *First Symphony*, which I own, and Ormandy, Serkin and the Philadelphia doing the *Second Piano Concerto*. In each case the work was far more intensely felt, and I thought more satisfactorily played… There is an air of terrible complacency and whatever-you-can-do-I-can-do-better about the Bostonians. Everybody was there, in fact, I have never been to a Sydney concert at which there were so many people I did not want to see, people one is fortunately spared at an ordinary concert …Fritz turns pale with rage if one dares to criticize anything about any of the Boston concerts, but he always likes to be blasted through the wall even by the gramophone, and there was enough Boston brass and percussion to send one flying across the town….[168]

Five weeks later, in a further letter to Frederick Glover,White returned to the same theme:

> Went the other night to hear [Igor] Markevitch conduct the Sydney Orchestra. What a transformation. To me they gave a performance of far more depth and feeling than the Boston people, and even Fritz, who was the greatest supporter of the latter, agreed that that was so. Unfortunately I had a cough all through the middle of the concert, and could not concentrate for trying not to disgrace myself. The night we went they did the Beethoven Sixth and the *Le sacre du printemps.* [169]

On the basis of correspondence and other reports, it seemed that White and Lascaris may have attended performances by virtually every music ensemble and theatre group to visit Australia over the period 1955 to 1986. This was particularly pronounced after 1960, with the creation of the Adelaide Festival of the Arts and its Writers Week every even-numbered year. Among the caravans of literary visitors were several leading international figures – writers like Edna O'Brien and Yevgeny Yevtushenko – who were invited to Martin Rd for dinner, drinks or parties.

During the years from *Voss* to *Vivisector,* from 1956 to 1970, Australia was coming of age culturally.[170] That same feeling of xenophobic optimism appeared in the short story *Miss Slattery and Her Demon Lover* (1963). 'We Australians are not at all that uncivilized', Dimity Slattery chides her Hungarian suitor Szabo Tibor. 'Not in 1961.'[171] White agreed wholeheartedly:

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[167] The Boston Symphony Orchestra tour was conducted by their then-maestro Charles Munch. He fell ill during the tour and his place on the podium was taken by the composer Aaron Copland whose *Third Symphony* was being featured on the tour. White did not mention attending that performance in Sydney.
[168] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 12 June 1960. Papers of David Marr
[169] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 24 July 1960. Papers of David Marr
[170] PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 20 November 1961. NLA, Papers of Patrick White MS 8434/1-155.
[171] PW, *Miss Slattery,* p. 7.

> What is so interesting is that all this can now happen in Australia. One doesn't have to go off and live in London or New York as Australian artists and intellectuals have been doing up till now. It comes to a Sydney suburb – and Stravinsky thrown in.[172]



Illustration 17 : Igor Stravinsky, aged 79, conducting a rehearsal of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in the Sydney Town Hall, November 1961. (Note the Principal Cellist, John Painter, then 28 years old) No details of Photographer. ABC Federal Archives housed in National Archives of Australia, Canberra, A 1200, L40566

17. Stravinsky : 'The Composer of the Age'[173]

In late November 1961, White and Lascaris attended two concerts in the Sydney Town Hall conducted by the 79-year-old Igor Stravinsky. White's excitement before the concert knew no bounds. 'I would walk to Katoomba for Stravinsky,' he declared to Glover.[174]

After the first concert, White was invited to a party at Rosemont, the Lloyd Jones mansion in Woollahra. At the dinner, he found himself seated next to the composer. 'We got off to a flying start,' he recalled.[175] There was chitchat and gossip, reminiscences of the Diaghilev ballerinas White had seen decades earlier in London. White had listened to Stravinsky's music, and Stravinsky even claimed to have read a few White novels:

[172] PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 20 November 1961. NLA, Papers of Patrick White MS 8434/1-155.
[173] PW declaration to Frederick Glover, 24 March 1957. *Letters,* p. 115.
[174] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 20 November 1961, *Letters*, p. 201
[175] *Flaws,* p. 152

> There was little more we could expect of each other…I have always found it difficult to talk to musicians; a musician is his music. But I think Stravinsky and I enjoyed sitting side-by-side downing the drink we had in common.[176]

'I am a professional drunkard,' Stravinsky spluttered over the dinner table. 'All the time I drink whisky, whisky, whisky!' [177] White thought the 79-year-old composer held his liquor very well. He had imagined someone else, another Rachmaninov perhaps, 'tall, cold and cerebral', but, 'in reality…'

> … he is a dear old thing, very old, tiny and arthritic…During dessert he passed me shelled walnuts on the palm of his very soft hand. Lots of rings … His wife [Vera] is a Russian version of an Old English sheepdog, or a kind of St Bernard: one imagines her carrying him about the house in her teeth. Robert Craft, the young American conductor, who is Boswell to Stravinsky's Johnson … seemed somewhat peevish … Perhaps not enough attention.[178]

Craft made his own assessment of White at that Rosemont dinner. Patrick White, he observed, was 'a rugged figure with a craggy jaw and a hard stare' who preferred to talk about ballet, books and the music of Mahler. 'When he talks at all,' Craft sniffed, 'for he is a man of silent temperament — the only non-buoyant Australian so far.[179]

Three nights after the dinner came another occasion that White thought 'must really have been an evening of shocking boredom for the Stravinsky trio.' *Tout Sydney* flocked to the Town Hall for a concert at which…

> … the little showman himself, shrunken, wrinkled, supported by a stick, hobbled out to marshal his *Apollon musagète.* It was an august occasion. Whether it quite warranted the applause, those present clapped themselves silly; musical audiences always suffer from the clap.[180]

The capacity audience in the Sydney Town Hall applauded the diminutive composer feverishly. The ABC had pulled out all stops to make Stravinsky's concerts a historic success. The Sydney concert was televised, but the footage of that singular moment in Australian music has disappeared.

White's encounter with Stravinsky and his music remained long in his memory. Barely two years later, in September 1963, the Nolans took the Whites to Covent Garden to see Kenneth MacMillan's production of Stravinsky's *Le sacre.* Nolan had done the designs

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[176] *Flaws,* p. 152
[177] Chivas Regal was his preferred label. Igor Stravinsky, observed talking with Nicolas Nabokov, in *Stravinsky,* a film by Wolf Koenig and Roman Kroitor, for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 1966. https://www.nfb.ca/film/stravinsky/
[178] PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 20 November 1961, *Letters*, p. 202.
[179] Robert Craft, *Stravinsky: Chronicle of a Friendship, 1948–1971*, New York: Knopf, 1972, p. 139
[180] *Flaws,* p. 152

and White thought his sets and costumes were terrific. Altogether, he felt he was back in the days when 'ballet was ballet, not a bunch of English getting into polite positions'.[181]

White was so enthusiastic about the whole evening he began to jot down ideas for a ballet. He had heard Stravinsky's 1958 recording of *Agon* (1953–1957) and imagined the octogenarian composer might still have another ballet in him. He sent the draft of his scenario to Nolan with the instruction that it be delivered personally to Stravinsky:

> I hope [my letter] does not begin disrespectfully but I can never bring myself to use that arse-licking word *maestro*. The idea looks somewhat naive when committed to paper, but I hope there is something in it to set him off. It might just become an old man's last profession of faith, although I know it is the wrong faith — he went over to Rome.[182]

There was no reply to White's suggestion. Undeterred, White would soon have another go. Next time, he dared to think it might even result in an opera.

18. Opera and 'The Experts'

At those SSO concerts conducted by Stravinsky in November 1961, White met two individuals who were to replace Krieger as his principal guides to music.[183] Kurt and Marea Prerauer were about to commence translating White's sixth novel *Riders in the Chariot* (1961) for publication in a German edition. Within a year of meeting the author, the Prerauers had completed their German translation of *The Ham Funeral*. With his study of Modern Languages at Cambridge some decades earlier, White professed pride in his ability to correct translations of his works into French and German. He proclaimed his play 'read wonderfully well in Berlin dialect'. In fact, White thought it sounded 'better in German than in English!' The Prerauers soon became 'the experts' on all matters musical, particularly opera.

From as early as February 1963, White had his eye on creating an opera that would open 'the best goddam opera house in the world', as he described the edifice taking shape on Bennelong Point to the composer Peter Sculthorpe.[184] He relayed news to his publisher:

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[181] PW, letter to Geoffrey Dutton, 28 September 1963. *Letters*, p. 239,
[182] PW, letter to Sidney Nolan, 6 October 1963. *Letters*, p. 240. Stravinsky composed little beyond 1967 and died in April 1971 at the age of 88.
[183] Kurt Prerauer (1901-1967) arrived in Melbourne in 1934. He married his former singing student Marea Wolkowsky (born, Sydney1922 - d.2005) in 1942. She changed the spelling of her name to "Maria" and wrote arts gossip columns as "[Naughty] Marietta". Their papers are archived in the NLA, MS 10040.
[184] PW, letter to Peter Sculthorpe, 21 December 1963. NLA, Papers of Peter Sculthorpe, MS 9676/5/80. *Letters,* pp. 246-7.

> The Elizabethan Theatre Trust has asked me to consider writing the libretto for an opera to open the Sydney Opera House. I have an idea [to adapt *The Fringe of Leaves*] but it will depend on whether I can accept the composer. There are some truly dreadful ones at large.[185]

He regaled all who would listen with his idea for an opera: the little known story of Mrs Fraser, the English woman ship-wrecked off the coast of Queensland who lived with the Aborigines for several months. This was quintessentially an Australian theme and its author intended his project to have an entirely Australian team, befitting the opening of that 'best goddam opera house in the world'. The creative team was shaping up: the librettist (himself), the designer (Sidney Nolan), the director (Stefan Haag) and perhaps even some of the cast.[186] All that was missing was the composer.

Stravinsky had been his initial choice, but from the frail 80-year-old composer there was only silence. White then arranged copies of his libretto to be dispatched to Britten, and other composers, possibly, Walton, Copland and Bernstein. Who in the operatic Anglosphere would not want to be involved in a project that would open 'the best goddam opera house in the world?' No one wanted to repeat the kind of flop that had opened the new Metropolitan Opera at Lincoln Center in September 1966: Samuel Barber's *Antony and Cleopatra.*

White held particular hopes for Benjamin Britten, whose celebrated *War Requiem* (1961) had recently elevated him to the front rank of international composers. They had a mutual friend in Sidney Nolan, and White hoped to meet the 50-year-old Britten when he travelled to Europe in 1963. White was confident that the composer most likely to be interested in his libretto - the pre-eminent composer of opera working in the English language, no less - would leap at the opportunity to set his libretto. In Aldeburgh, they met briefly but the encounter didn't go well. Britten was too busy with conducting and other composition projects and seemed quite uninterested in anything White was proposing.

Several weeks before that disappointing encounter with Britten, White had been escorted around the shell of the Opera House site by its architect Joern Utzon. The Sydney Opera House, he wrote exultantly to Desmond Digby, made him feel 'glad' he was in Australia. 'At last there will be something worth having,' he enthused. 'If only they had got going on the whole things a few years earlier, so we could be certain of having a part in it!'[187] By then, White had settled on a theme for the opera, inspired by Nolan's Mrs Fraser paintings. He was intent on selling the idea to anyone who might be able to help see it to the stage of the Sydney Opera House. He invited Utzon to lunch, along with Stefan Haag, director of the Elizabethan Trust, and others. But there was still the matter of the composer.

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[185] PW, letter to Ben Huebsch, 17 February 1963, *Letters*, p. 219.
[186] White had admired the singing and acting of Australian soprano Marie Collier in a Sydney production of Menotti's *The Telephone* which Stefan Haag had directed.
[187] PW, letter to Desmond Digby, 15 March 1963. *Letters,* p. 223.

The Brisbane-based writer Roger Covell had arrived in Sydney in 1960 to become music and theatre critic for *The Sydney Morning Herald.*[188] At some point, White decided that Covell, then still in his mid-30s, needed assistance in negotiating the slopes and shoals of the cultural world of Sydney. Covell described his relationship with White at this time as 'an odd one':

> Patrick seemed to feel that, as a relative youngster, I needed detailed guidance in how to keep my awareness of the world beyond music in order. He took to ringing me at fairly regular intervals at 7.30 in the morning. I would be woken from sleep (usually after a late night filing a review [for the *SMH*]) and would try to sound reasonably alert. Then followed a full half-hour of intellectual and artistic guidance: which films I should see, which books I should read, which theatre performances I should attend, and so on. As an admirer of the vision behind his books I listened with the greatest respect and in virtual silence. Whenever I tried to make a small comment Patrick would plough on determinedly with his next recommendation or instruction. Then, when he considered his task was complete, he would ring off with the briefest of farewells, leaving me in a state of numbed satiety while recognising that his impulse was a mixture of opinionated overlordship and generosity.[189]

For his part, Covell did not reciprocate White's 'tutorials'; he refrained from recommending recordings the writer should purchase or concerts or opera productions he should attend. As it transpired, White attended most of these events anyway, especially operas and contemporary music concerts. In most circumstances, Covell and White found themselves in agreement with their critical assessment of things:

> There is no doubt that Patrick was keenly alert to musical values. His opinions about the merits of individual composers, however, were sometimes unduly sensitive to current estimates at the high end of fashion.

Roger Covell's reviews of Peter Sculthorpe's music in the 1960s may have helped arouse White's interest 'in the idea of Sculthorpe being the person he would select to compose the music for his libretto'. Covell chose his words deliberately. 'Patrick's idea of the composer's task was that such a person would set the author's text as it stood and would be honoured to do so'.[190]

Covell had written good things about Peter Sculthorpe, the debonair 35-year-old composer, recently arrived from Launceston. He arranged a meeting between White and Sculthorpe over lunch at Dogwoods, and discussion about collaboration began immediately. Initially, White was keen to have Sculthorpe set his *Six Urban Songs* as a kind of trial run for the opera brewing in his imagination. Already there were discordant rumblings. It soon became clear that White had already more-or-less composed the songs in his imagination. At one

[188] Roger Covell, ca.1978. NLA, PIC/10555/1689 LOC Box PIC 10555 [accessed 16 August 2016].
[189] Roger Covell, email to the author, 22 December 2015.
[190] Roger Covell, email to the author, 22 December 2015.

stage, Patrick White even gave Peter Sculthorpe what in effect might be regarded as a lesson in how to approach the composition of the *Urban Songs*:

> I don't think it necessary to have a chorus if you feel it will jeopardise the work's chances of being performed. But I do think a fairly large orchestra is necessary to bring out what is there. I also feel two voices, preferably soprano and baritone, would have to be used. I think one soprano could do *Song of the Housewives* if the music helps her with the right [kind of] chattery-nattery, twittery-jittery tones. Perhaps here and there a rumble from the baritone would help – to introduce Angst. (However, please disregard any of this if you don't like it, or find it corny. The composer is the one who matters.) [191]

For his part, Sculthorpe loaned White biographies of Berg and books on other composer-librettist relationships, Strauss and von Hofsmanthal, Britten and Myfwany Piper. Sculthorpe urged White towards the Debussy-Maeterlinck line. The composer now faced the same challenge Debussy confronted when he set Maeterlinck's play: there were too many words. White loved *Pelléas,* Sculthorpe told Marr, and 'understandably loved the quasi-recitative of the word setting'. The composer was encouraged by the thought that White was considering a somewhat unfashionable model. 'It was extraordinarily perceptive,' Sculthorpe maintained, 'all the more extraordinary being contrary to the *zeitgeist*'.[192] In the same breath, Sculthorpe noted that Maeterlinck and Debussy had experienced a serious falling-out over which soprano should sing the role of Mélisande. Their disagreement had almost resulted in a duel.

On the other hand, White's operatic 'experts' were advocating another direction altogether: the music of Alban Berg. This was hardly surprising given that the Prerauers, and Curt in particular, should cling to models from the Viennese tradition they knew so well. Curt Prerauer had helped prepare the premiere performances of *Wozzeck* in 1925, and Maria had sung the lead female role of Marie in Erich Kleiber's last performances of *Wozzeck* at Covent Garden in 1953. By the mid-1960s, though, a more astute observer would have sensed that the Second Viennese School, superseded by post-Webern modernism, was itself running out of steam.

White found himself in the middle of a stylistic tussle between his competing teams of 'experts'.

> If I bring up [*Pelléas*] I am told by the experts [that] it was something which happened at a certain point in music, and we have gone on irrevocably from there. They could well be right. I feel that opera today, and in Australia, should develop more out of the idiom and mentality of a Berg, and of course the Mrs Fraser story does not connect up with that. I think perhaps in the end we must hope for somebody who will connect up with us and it and the present; it might be done as one isolated work.[193]

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[191] PW, letter to Peter Sculthorpe, 21 December 1963. NLA, Papers of Peter Sculthorpe, MS 9676/5/80. *Letters,* pp. 246-7.
[192] Peter Sculthorpe, letter to David Marr, 18 January 1994. NLA, Papers of Peter Sculthorpe, MS 9676/5/80. *Letters,* footnote to p. 256.
[193] PW, letter to Sidney Nolan, 14 May 1964. Marr, *Letters,* pp. 255-6.

Covell thought that White had wanted to create 'an opera that would create a bit of a storm', a work 'subject to dispute and shock'. Just as the operas of Berg and Schoenberg had done, White's opera would 'disturb the populace', as his novels and plays had also done.[194]

Nothing came of White's grand plan. Over time, it became clear to all concerned that the would-be librettist was an obsessive auteur who required control of every dimension of his projects. In the history of opera, it is extremely rare for any author – and a first-time librettist, at that – to assume the reins of such a project. As for a composer, there could be no collaboration with Sculthorpe. 'We got together too late,' White admitted, 'and by that time the idea had set too rigidly in my mind [for me] to be able to satisfy a collaborator'.[195]

Mrs Fraser had been the bond that had brought Nolan, White and Sculthorpe together. By April 1964, White had come to realise that the bond had been sundered. The rift with Sculthorpe was final, and deep: the composer felt it until his death.[196] The bond with Nolan would remain several more years, until the calamitous appearance of *Flaws in the Glass* in 1981. For now, this moment had passed: it was unlikely White would ever approach the prospect of writing an opera libretto again.



Illustration 18. The only known photograph of 'the creative team'.
Peter Sculthorpe (back to camera), Sidney Nolan and Patrick White.
Bonython Gallery, Adelaide, March 1964. Photograph by Robert McFarlane,
NLA, http://nla.gov.au/version/7427588 [accessed 15 August 2015].

[194] Roger Covell, in conversation with Vincent Plush, 6 April 2016.
[195] PW, letter to Juliet O'Hea, 20 April 1964, Marr, *Life,* p. 435. O'Hea was White's agent in the London office of Curtis Brown (1941-75).
[196] Peter Sculthorpe in his final conversation with the present author, Sydney, August 2013.

19. Academe and The Nobel Prize

Cambridge had marked the beginning and end of White's academic career. His experience there left him with no desire to become an academic; he just wanted 'to get out of it and get it done with'.[197] Much later, in a letter to the expatriate Australian writer Randoph Stow, White confessed he 'couldn't face universities'.

> I've just come across a good remark by Philip Larkin *a propos* invitations to appear at seminars and move in as 'poet in residence'. "I don't want to go around pretending to be myself." That is how I feel when dreary academics and intense thesis writers want me to discuss my 'life and work'. Ugh![198]

Aside from a few isolated addresses on subjects like nuclear disarmament and the need for Australia to become a republic, White avoided the campus and academic life altogether. He declined offers of honorary doctorates from universities world wide, among these were offers from the Australian National University in Canberra and his *alma mater,* Cambridge. In similar fashion, he refused a knighthood and, following the Whitlam dismissal in November 1975, he returned his Companion of the Order of Australia, and broke with friends like Manning Clark who did not follow his example.

The only honour he valued – and which, some suggested *sotto voce*, he sought – came in the same week as the opening of the Sydney Opera House. In October 1973, it was announced that Patrick White had been awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. This was awarded on account of 'his epic and psychological narrative art which has introduced a new continent into literature'.[199] The Swedish Academy noted universal qualities in his writing and commended the 61-year-old Australian for 'his uncommon capacity to combine the epic and the poetic':

> White has evolved a highly compressed language in which verbal art worked out to the last detail and constantly aiming for a maximum of expressive effect … Here beauty and truth are closely allied or completely fused together: a beauty radiating light and life, evoking the poetry inherent in things, in nature and in all manner of phenomena, and truth which exposes and liberates … Patrick White is a social critic mainly through his depiction of human beings … a bold psychological explorer, [with] ideological views of life or mystical convictions … His relationship to himself, like his relationship to his fellow beings, is complex and full of contradictions … He is constantly assailed by doubts concerning the capacity of thought and art, even though he is indefatigable in his high-minded pursuit of both.

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[197] PW, in conversation with David Marr, 1 May 1987. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.
[198] PW, letter to Randolph Stow, 22 December 1979, cited in Suzanne Falkiner, *Mick: A life of Randolph Stow*. Crawley, WA: University of Western Australia Press, 2016, p. 613.
[199] Artur Lundkvist, Presentation Speech for the 1973 Nobel Prize in Literature, 10 December 1973. See *Nobel Lectures Literature 1968-1980*, Editor-in-Charge Tore Frängsmyr, Editor Sture Allén, World Scientific Publishing Co., Singapore, 1993. [accessed 1 May 2014].

White's 'poor bronchial tubes' could not tolerate the long journey to a winter in northern Europe. So it was that, in Stockholm on 10 December 1973, Sidney Nolan bowed to the King of Sweden, Carl Gustav XVI, to accept the award on behalf of his sickly friend.[200] Once the award arrived in Sydney, it was immediately dispatched to the State Library of New South Wales as a safeguard against theft. White and Lascaris recognized that their lives would never be the same again.

20. The Opera Enthusiast

The Sydney Opera House opened in the same week as the Nobel announcement. Instead of a new Australian work, it was launched with a controversial production of Prokofiev's *War and Peace.* Some of White's friends had worked themselves to near-collapse as the date of the Royal Opening loomed. Desmond Digby, White reported to Garland, had to design four new productions for the miniscule stage of the Opera Theatre and he was 'exhausted'.[201]

White's play *A Cheery Soul* was the first production to be staged in the Drama Theatre. Despite that, the new Nobel laureate was not engaged in the opening festivities.[202]With each outing to Bennelong Point, his enthusiasm for the Opera House grew. Before long, he had become a *bona fide* opera buff:

> The minute you get inside that Opera Theatre, there is all the glamour and excitement I expect when I go to the theatre, which I get in London, whereas usually, in Sydney, one is battered into a state of moral and physical despair in some Nissan hut or church hall.[203]

White could hardly have forgotten those cold evenings in the cheerless Conservatorium Main Hall and in the dowdy old Elizabethan Theatre tucked away in a back street in the seedy inner Sydney suburb of Newtown. Initially, his tastes in opera were quite catholic, embracing Mozart, Verdi, Weill and Janácek. Occasionally he would indulge himself with 'a wallow in Puccini'.

Once inside the Sydney Opera House, White was virtually 'in heaven'. He paid as much attention to texts and dramaturgy as to the glorious voices that soared around the Opera Theatre. While Lascaris closed his eyes and listened to the music, White was enthralled by the stage presence of Joan Sutherland, a frequent presence in Sydney in the decade when her conductor-husband Richard Bonynge was Music Director of The Australian Opera (1976-86). Not only were her performances both 'grotesque and terrifying,' White told

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[200] On these occasions, it is traditional to play a short work honouring the native country of the Nobel laureate. On this occasion, for 'introducing a new continent to literature,' the Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra honoured White by sauntering through a bon-bon by Percy Grainger, the English 'Morris dance' – *Country Gardens* (1908-18).

[201] PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 9 November 1973. NLA, Papers of Patrick White, MS 8434/195.

[202] *A Cheery Soul* inaugurated the 544-seat Drama Theatre in a production by the Paris Theatre Company (pre-cursor to the Sydney Theatre Company), directed by Jim Sharman and starring Robyn Nevin in the role of Miss Docker.

[203] PW, letter to Geoffrey Dutton, 20 January 1974. Marr, *Life*, p. 561.

David Marr, but he was thrilled by the diva's 'comedic timing … It was amazing just how funny she could be'.[204] But he was often critical of the repertoire she and her husband were dishing out:

> We went to see Sutherland in 'OFFMANN [sic] at great expense. Utter trash as opera, and visually very vulgar. The sets looked like vast Latin American super-cinemas. All night I regretted [giving up] my bed, though one could see what she might do with a worthwhile opera from one or two moments in the Antonia episode. Maddening to think that they can spend so much money on nothing, and sting the public for their mistakes. But they loved it; they stamped and clapped. Australians will get with anything if you show them a bit of silver glitter and fumes of dry ice. I think we are the Americans of yesterday presented on Bennelong Point.[205]

By mid-1978, the glitter had fallen away from opera altogether in Sydney. Despite a few highlights, White didn't feel especially attuned to opera that season; they had been to the opera only twice that year. White's archive contains the printed programs of many of the operas he saw in Sydney; he had seen a wide variety including *Trittico* (February 1974), *Peter Grimes* (July 1986), *La fille du regiment* (August 1986), *Eugene Onegin* (February 1987) and *The Rake's Progress* (July 1988). The collection of programmes ends with *Tristan und Isolde* (February 1990). This would have been particularly a poignant production as it was directed by Neil Armfield, and conducted by Stuart Challender who had brought so much vitality to *Voss* in 1986.[206] It was even more ironic that Marilyn Richardson who had created the role of Laura in *Voss* only a few seasons earlier, was now the Isolde, the operatic role White fantasized he most wanted to sing.

Nor had he been to any orchestral concerts 'because one can't keep up with everything in one's old age.'[207] Those Stravinsky concerts in November 1961 had been one of the few highlights of orchestral concerts in Sydney in the post-Goossens years. Following Goossens, the ABC had installed Nicolai Malko as the SSO's new Chief Conductor. The 73-year-old Ukrainian conductor was already in poor health; he was quite boring but relatively inexpensive and very available. White sensed, accurately, that the orchestra's performances were in decline.[208] A year into Malko's tenure, White gave up on the SSO altogether. Concerts were so appallingly bad, he reported to Garland, 'music has almost died out here, except when Musica Viva brings somebody from overseas'.[209] The Whites became subscribers to Musica Viva seasons and began to collect more recordings of chamber music.

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[204] PW, in conversation with Marr, 4 August 1986. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.
[205] PW, letter to Alan D Williams of Viking Press, New York, 11 August 1974. Mitchell Library MLMSS 9508 / Folders 1-2
[206] The recording of *Voss* was one of Challender's final appearances as the SSO's Chief Conductor. He died in Sydney on 13 December 1991, at the age of 44.
[207] PW, letter to David Moore, 25 July 1978. NLA, Papers of David Moore, MS 8601/157.
[208] Nicolai Malko (1883-1961) was conductor of the SSO from 1957 to 1961, when he died suddenly 'on the job', conducting a rehearsal of Bartók's *Violin Concerto,* the very work White had used to help him write the decapitation of Voss. Thus, Malko may be seen as an early victim of White had dubbed 'the curse of Voss,' which, he predicted, would befall everyone who became involved in 'the accursed Voss'.
[209] PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 5 October 1959. Marr, *Letters,* p. 159.

1963 saw a complete turn-around in the fortunes of orchestral performance in Sydney with the appointment of the young British conductor John Hopkins as the ABC's Federal Director of Music. Hopkins employed composers as programmers (Richard Meale, Nigel Butterley, Ian Farr, Vincent Plush and others) and inaugurated concert series that featured new and unusual music, the Proms (1965-1973) and the Gold series (1966-74). For White, these may have seemed a kind of latter-day salvation for orchestral music in Sydney, had he not already become too old and feeble to enjoy many of them.

Despite his intense if waning interest in opera, White did not involve himself in the production of the operatic version of *Voss*. When the project was first mooted in 1979, the 68-year-old author felt himself too old and poorly equipped write the libretto. He was happy to see the task assigned to David Malouf, a younger writer, opera critic and one-time violinist and would-be composer. White was skeptical of its success but was so moved when he first saw a performance in Sydney in July 1986, Malouf reported, 'he went home to bed for a week'.[210]

From that point, White thought it his responsibility to support the company that had broken 'the curse of *Voss*'. Despite increasing frailty, he took an active interest in the opera company and many of the leading figures associated with it, particularly the composer Richard Meale and David Malouf, its librettist, whom he nominated for the Nobel Prize for Literature.

21. Contemporary Music

Patrick White was generally regarded as the most distinguished and best known – and possibly the least read – writer in Sydney. It is odd that his name did not figure more frequently in music projects in his home city. His *Six Urban Songs* – rejected by Peter Sculthorpe and others – were set by Moya Henderson and performed in April 1986.[211] Nigel Butterley dedicated his string orchestral work *Golden Grove* (1981) to White and Lascaris; the couple attended its premiere performance by the Australian Chamber Orchestra in June 1982.[212] This is perhaps the only mention of the ACO in White's biography or correspondence – particularly odd, given the adventurous programming and exciting performances of that ensemble since its inception in 1975, experiences that would surely have appealed to White. Less enjoyable, perhaps, would have been the prospect of hearing music by the composer most championed by the ACO from its origins: Peter Sculthorpe.

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[210] David Malouf, at *The Voss Journey* in Canberra, 19 May 2009.
[211] Moya Henderson's *Six Urban Songs: The Patrick White Song Cycle* was dedicated to White on his 70th birthday. It was first performed by the soprano Elizabeth Harwood and the SSO conducted by Antonio de Almeida, in ABC 'Meet the Music' concerts in April 1986.
[212] PW, letter to Kerry Walker, 24 June 1982. Marr, *Letters*, p. 566.

Around this same time, White's latent interest in contemporary music picked up markedly. In the late 1950s, he had taken a keen interest in concerts of 20th century music presented in Sydney by a new generation of young musicians associated with the Conservatorium. These included the composer-pianists Richard Meale and Nigel Butterley, and the soprano Marilyn Richardson and her flautist husband Peter Richardson. He followed the activities and careers of these musicians who had given Australian premiere performances of pieces like Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire* in 1959. At their Con performance of *Pierrot*, White found Giraud's poetry 'terribly dull, [and] the *Sprechstimme* terribly distracting [because it didn't allow him] to listen to the music, which sounded interesting'. [213] Two years later, he was prepared to allow part of his *Six Urban Songs* to be set as *sprechstimme* – provided, of course, his words would not be swallowed by the music.

White and Lascaris sought out performances of contemporary music whenever they could find them. White was thrilled by the premiere performance of Meale's *Homage to Garcia Lorca* in the Cell Block.[214] Jim Sharman recalls seeing White at Stockhausen's concert in the Cell Block in late 1970, and at concerts which David Ahern gave with his improvising ensembles, Teletopa and AZ Music. White attended Nigel Butterley's performance of John Cage's *Sonatas and Interludes* in the Watters Gallery in Darlinghurst in March 1976 and was observed chatting with the composer after the performance.[215]

Concerts by several other contemporary music ensembles in the late 1970s provided Sydney with an expanding diet of contemporary music. The Australian Contemporary Music Ensemble (ACME), directed by composer-pianist Keith Humble, presented memorable concerts of music by Schoenberg, Berg and Webern, and selected Australian composers. The Seymour Group, formed at the University of Sydney in 1976, specialized in performances of music theatre pieces. White was present at the Australian premiere performance of Peter Maxwell Davies's music theatre piece *Eight Songs for a Mad King* (1968).*[216]* He also attended concerts in the Opera House when Maxwell Davies and The Fires of London presented their theatre pieces there in March 1974.[217]

They had a common friend in the expatriate Australian poet Randolph Stow who had created the text for *Eight Songs.* White invited Maxwell Davies to lunch; in turn, the composer inscribed several scores to his host.[218] White admired Maxwell Davies's ability

[213] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 23 September 1959. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.
[214] Richard Meale *Homage to Garcia Lorca.* Strings of the Sydney Little Symphony Orchestra, Joseph Post, conductor; 15 October 1964. Cell Block Theatre, Sydney.
[215] Cage was visiting Australia as 'the pit pianist' for the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. There were many American visitors to Sydney and Adelaide that month, as part of the U.S. State Department's celebrations of the American Bicentennial.
[216] Peter Maxwell Davies *Eight Songs for a Mad King* (1968) Australian premiere was given by Lyndon Terracini (baritone), The Seymour Group, Vincent Plush (conductor), Great Hall, Sydney University, 12 March 1978. PWBC 1365.
[217] Following their appearances at the Adelaide Festival in March 1985, The Fires of London, directed by Peter Maxwell Davies, presented three concerts in a week in the Sydney Opera House. It is quite likely White went to all three concerts. PWBC 1685.
[218] (Sir) Peter Maxwell Davies (1934-2016), two simple piano pieces: *Farewell to Stromnes* and *Yesnaby Ground.* London, Boosey & Hawkes, 1980. PWBC/1717 125.

to create arresting dramatic pieces with limited musical resources, rarely more than a solo singer-actor and an ensemble of often only six instrumentalists . In the back of his head, he may have been hoping for some sort of collaboration with Maxwell Davies.[219]

White showed particular interest in another Sydney-based new music ensemble. Flederman was the co-creation of trombonist Simone de Haan and the pianist-composer Carl Vine. White admired the simple songs and scores Vine had created for his plays, particularly for *Signal Driver* (1982), and was moved by Vine's dedication of another work to him.[220] *Aria (a woman of fashion & distinction)* was a setting of a short extract from an 'unfinished operatic libretto'.[221] White had re-worked his text in response to Vine's request for 'a short essay in operatic style using minimal resources'. White's archive in the Mitchell Library contains printed programmes of other Flederman concerts, indicating that he was aware of many of the Australian composers performed by that ensemble over those years.

From time to time, White attended concerts of the International Society of Contemporary Music. Its Australian branch was the god-child of Donald Peart, the eccentric foundation Professor of Music at the University of Sydney.[222] White went to such events out or curiosity, to inform himself about currents in contemporary music. Even so, his description of one ISCM event yields his perception of the traits of society figures for whom new music events, like gallery openings, were little more than an excuse to socialize and be seen. It reveals also his enthusiasm for new music, even music he did not know nor could understand:

> On Saturday night… we were unwise enough to let ourselves in for a musical evening given by the Contemporary Music Society. We once went to a very interesting concert of theirs, and I naturally thought the party might be interesting too, that we might have met some of the young musicians who performed on that occasion. But you have never seen such a gathering. It was held at the house of … an old girl [dressed] in the oriental style whom one often sees at concerts. She is, I think, a Jewess from here, with a bird's-nest of Japanese hair, and a little mouth straight from the prints. She has an old husband whom she always calls 'Daddy', a very small, very Central European Jew… The company was of the strangest assemblages: mostly assimilated Jews, with a few of a very woolly order, [John] Antill the composer, and, of course, the Walter Bunnings.[223]

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[219] It is surprising, then, that PMD's music does not appear in PW's collection of LPS.

[220] Carl Vine *Aria.* Jane Manning, soprano; Flederman. Recording Hall, Sydney Opera House, 29 April 1984. PWBC 1686.

[221] The 'unfinished operatic libretto' was that of *Births, Deaths and Marriage*s. White had tried to foist this text upon Richard Meale as a trial for (or deterrent against) setting *Voss.* Meale was appalled by the text, vacillated in replying and infuriated White who passed it on to the 'younger composer,' Carl Vine.

[222] Donald Peart (1909-1981) came to Australia in 1948 as foundation Professor of Music at the University of Sydney. In 1956 he helped revive the Sydney chapter of the International Society for Contemporary Music (the ISCM).

[223] Though they were almost exact contemporaries, John Antill (1904-1986) and White seem to have had no association, according to Antill's daughter, Jill Antill-Rose. Walter Bunning (1912-1977) was the eminent architect and town planner, most famous for his design of the NLA (1968), the first great civic building to be erected along Lake Burley Griffin.

> … Almost nobody appeared the least bit interested in music. Least of all the patroness [who didn't] seem to have a clue. …Professor Peart made rather a rambly introductory speech before playing a record of an American composer, Carter Ellis or Ellis Carter. [It was] not conspicuously contemporary, [a] very boring piano sonata which did not please the senses in spite of the triangular teak stools on which we were sitting. [224] … We crept away after the supper, although we had been promised some 'much more disruptive music' by Professor Peart. [225]

In the mid-1970s, White was particularly excited by events around Music Rostrum Australia, an international music festival in Sydney created by pianist Roger Woodward. Given their shared musical passions and aspirations for Australian culture, it is strange that Woodward's name does not figure prominently in White's archives. Woodward performed a series of solo recitals at the Conservatorium in late 1974 as a prelude to the International Rostrum in early September 1975. This saw the importation of some of the most important international names in contemporary music of the day. Leading these were the Italian composer-conductor Luciano Berio, his former wife, the American soprano Cathy Berberian, and the Japanese composer-pianist Yuji Takahashi. In just over a week, the Rostrum mounted a dozen or so programs at the Con and in the Opera House Concert Hall; White attended almost all of them and refused every offer of complimentary tickets.

In 1988 there was a great deal of fuss and cultural activity around the celebrations of the Australian Bicentennial. In solidarity with Australia's Indigenous peoples, who had re-badged Australia Day (January 26) 'Invasion Day', White refused to have anything to do with the festivities.

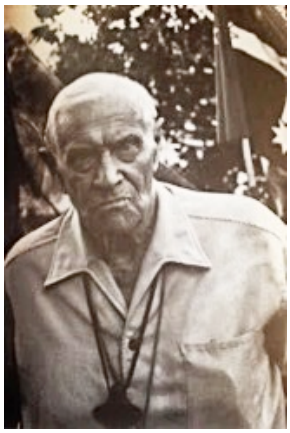


Illustration 19: PW, in the garden of his home in Centennial Park, Sydney, on'Invasion Day,' 26 January 1988., the Australian Bicentenary Day. Photograph by Barry O. Jones. With kind permission, Primavera Press.

From twin flagpoles in his garden, White flew the Aboriginal and the Eureka flags, symbols of Australian independence. He helped a publisher scramble to produce an early release of *Three Uneasy Pieces* in late December 1987, lest it appear in the Bicentennial

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[224] This 'very boring piano sonata' was, in fact, the *First Piano Sonata* (1946) by Elliott Carter (1908-2012) would later become an important part of the early repertoire of Carl Vine.
[225] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 14 March 1960. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356

year. He refused to have any of his plays presented that year. 'I won't have anything of mine performed during the nauseating Bi,' he thundered in a letter to composer Moya Henderson.[226]

> The whole idea of the Bicentennial year has been troubling me for some time. There was too little I could feel proud of in our past. Even less in our present – too many dishonest vulgar politicans and too many vulgar philistine organisers piling the bullshit higher and higher. So I decided to have nothing to do with it …The Bicentennial circus tends to hide from us the fact that we are no longer a democracy. We are a country run for and by millionaires … Perhaps most humiliating of all, the Bicentennial celebrations demonstrate that Australia is intended to remain subservient – whether to the Americans, the Japanese, or, most insidiously, the English. The Royal Goons will be with us most of the year … I can't see any good coming out of the Bicentary for our country as a whole – only for the greedy conmen. I'm not alone in believing this. There are many thoughtful down-to-earth Australians who share my opinion. Circuses don't solve serious problems. When the tents are taken down, we'll be left with the dark, the emptiness – and probably a two-dollar loaf.[227]

By January 1988, White's journey in music was effectively at an end.

[226] PW, letter to Moya Henderson, 10 June 1987. Marr, *Letters,* p. 614.

[227] PW, *The Bicentenary,* extracted from *Patrick White Speaks* [Christine Flynn and Paul Brennan, eds.]. Leichhardt, NSW: Primavera Press, 1989.pp.184-7. PW originally wrote this text at the invitation of George Negus, which he recorded for broadcast on Australia Day, 26 January 1988, for broadcast on Channel 9's *Good Morning Australia* program. But only 'grabs' were used, so White offered it to the small Canberra magazine *Blast,* which published it in full.

22. Summary

Patrick White's journey in music sprawls over seventy-five years of his life. During that time, he had witnessed remarkable cultural changes in Australia, particularly in music.

He had experienced for himself the emergence of music from the concert hall and the theatre into the homes of the populace, through the media of radio and television and, critically, through gramophone recordings. He had seen the creation and domination of public organizations like the Australian Broadcasting Commission (later Corporation) and The Australia Council and Australian Film Commission. He had experienced the transformation of arts festivals from community-based populist festivities to programs of international significance which inspired and supported local creators – writers and dramatists, artists and composers – to make new works reflecting the origins and aspirations of the country. In terms of music, he had seen the evolution and flowering of orchestras, opera companies, teaching institutions and contemporary music ensembles, as well as fine music radio stations.

White believed that it was the responsibility of the artist to support and nurture his cultural environment. Over these years, the author observed White in attendance at many of these occasions in Sydney, often without Lascaris; he seemed to be at every new play and film, art gallery exhibition and concert of contemporary music. That same, austere figure, beanie on head and pen hanging around his neck, appeared in virtually every lobby and foyer in Sydney, taking in the conversation and chatter more than actively contributing to it.[228]

To a large extent, the phases of White's life charted in this chapter appear in an arc which encompasses Sydney, London, America, Egypt, Greece and finally Sydney again. Another arc denotes the phases of his musical experience: music hall in Sydney, West End revues in London, popular music in America, ethnographic-folk music in Egypt and Greece, art music in theatres and concert halls back in Sydney. That arc reveals the music he heard, acquired, ingested and returned in his writing.

This chapter has outlined the role of music throughout White's life, some seven decades in all. The next chapter will move beyond the biographical outline of this long and productive life. It will focus on the presence of music in White's writing, and how we see – and hear! – music in it.

[228] As mentioned in the previous Chapter, details of the contemporary music concerts that White attended in Sydney in the 1970s are contained in the diaries of the present author, as well as the collection of printed concert and opera programmes contained in the Patrick White Bequest Collection (PWBC) at the Mitchell Library in Sydney.

Chapter Three:

Music in the Work of Patrick White

1. Introduction

The previous chapter provided an outline of the role of music in the life of Patrick White. It followed the chronology of the writer's life and illustrated the shifts and turns of his appreciation of music as his life and career advanced. The current chapter advances that general outline, but it addresses more specific aspects of his work, particularly the plays. It delves more deeply into his work to show how music influenced his writing in a more general way.

This chapter examines particular works that illustrate the twin tenets of this study, namely the role of music at both narrative and structural levels. (In the main, these works fall outside the four Case Studies which will be examined in the ensuing chapters).

On the narrative level, White turned to the music of certain composers (for example, Bach and Mahler, Mozart and Liszt, Bartók and Stravinsky) to create the mood and background for his novels. At the structural level, he incorporates aspects of musical structures into the formal structure of his novels.

Beyond this narrative/structural duality, White intuits another set of bi-polarities. These are already presented in early novels like *The Living and the Dead* (1941). 'There were two countries,' Elyot Standish comes to realize, 'the countries of different moons, the different languages, intuitive and reasoned.'[229]

The duality of 'intuitive and reasoned' can be read as 'narrative and structural'. One is ephemeral, less able to be defined; it is almost omni-present, like music purring from a phonograph whilst the writer is at his desk. It helps set a general mood or atmosphere. The other is derived from more intent, focussed listenings, gaining a sense of how music develops, shapes, expands, rotates and occupies its duration. In other words, its form. It does not need to deliver a precise analysis in strict musico-theoretical terms, just a general sense of the structure and inner workings of the music the writer is listening to.

'The only way to listen to music', Eden Standish opines in *The Living and the Dead,* 'is to give it a structure'.[230] Rather like consulting a map before a journey. Like Voss, White had no time for maps (and, thus, structural analysis): 'I'll make my own maps', he told Marr.[231]

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[229] PW, *The Living and the Dead.* [London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1941]. Ringwood, Vic: Penguin, 1967 [reprint 1983], p. 250

[230] PW, *The Living and the Dead,* p. 161

[231] PW, in conversation with David Marr, 10 July 1985. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9357.

In *The Living and the Dead* – for some unspecified reason, White's least favourite novel – Elyot Standish reflects on the differences between his own life and that of his sister Eden. Elyot voices White's own ambivalence about writing, as he swings between the poles of 'different moons … different languages'. This engenders work that springs from 'intuitive' or 'reasoned' impulses. In similar fashion, there may be dual or multiple readings of characters or situations, sometimes within the fabricated or fractured mind of a single character like Theodora Goodman, as the following chapter will outline.

Music is essentially an intangible and word-less art form. In White's writing, music could be useful in helping to explain things somewhat better than a tangible, word-bound art. **'**Music is the profoundest art,' White declared in 1973. 'You could get closer to what I try to express in music than in words.'[232]

White was never entirely sure about his word-bound creations, Lascaris confided, so he left his stories 'with meaningful gaps and suggestive missing links'. It was never his intention 'to punish his readers with truths that left no space to breathe'.[233] Readers must bring their own intelligence to bear.

Music, with its many layers of possible meaning and multiple, co-existing strands, may also help define the psychology of the writer himself. On many occasions, as discussed in the previous chapter, White reminded the reader that nearly every character contained elements of himself:

> All artists are terrible egoists. Unconsciously you are largely writing about yourself. I could never write anything factual; I only have confidence in myself when I am another character. All the characters in my books are myself, but they are a kind of disguise.[234]

'He played all those incredible roles, hundreds of them, his own mother, his own father', the director Jim Sharman told Marr. 'All of them.'[235] Sharman found White's manner aristocratic, in keeping with someone who had financial security, thus he had 'the freedom to perceive the world, [freedom] that other writers didn't have'.

Like Gore Vidal, White had so many characters within him. 'If he's writing something,' Sharman observed, 'you are talking to that [same] character'. If you rang the doorbell while he was writing, say, *The Eye of the Storm,* you might get Mrs Hunter or Sir Basil, her actor-son. The bits Sharman most wanted to read were those moments White wrote when he was at 'his most destructive … he doesn't cease to be the character when he puts down his pen.'

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[232] PW, in a television interview with Ingmar Björkstén, 1973, reprinted in *Nation Review* (21-27 June 1974), p. 1179.
[233] Manoly Lascaris, cited by Karalis, *Recollections,* p. 61.
[234] PW, cited by Craig McGregor, *In the Making,* Melbourne: Thomas Nelson, 1969, p. 221.
[235] Jim Sharman, in conversation with David Marr, 10 July 1985. NLA, Papers of David Marr MS 9357.

Perhaps Sharman was recalling the apothegm of Aldous Huxley: 'When the inexpressible had to be expressed, Shakespeare laid down his pen and called for music.'[236]

In similar situations, when White's imagination and invention showed signs of drying up, he took comfort in music. Music, he said, had a liberating effect on the mind. 'It loosens something in me,' he explained, noting that it had the same effect on the French writer Gustave Flaubert. 'You don't know what it is to spend a whole day with your head in your hands,' Flaubert wrote to a friend, 'trying to squeeze your unfortunate brain to find a single word.'[237]

Such mood-swings are often clearly evidenced in White's response to particular pieces of music. The composers who most influenced him – all from the mainstream tradition of Western art music, it need hardly be mentioned – were 'souvenirs' of four decades of collecting music from radio, recordings and concerts: many were called upon to do service in his novels and plays. White identifies these purloined pieces of music only very rarely. This was one of his games he played with his readers: he leaves it to the reader to identify the music, to fill in the gaps, as Lascaris observed.

One of the purposes behind this study is to attempt to fill in some of those gaps, to identify those pieces of music which resonate silently behind and within White's writing.

2. Johann Sebastian Bach

Through all the twists and turns, the revelations and rejections, there is one element that shines most brightly and with greatest consistency through the writing of Patrick White: the music of Johann Sebastian Bach.

Throughout his career, White drew the most elevated inspiration from the music of Bach. There was 'nothing I loved more in life,' he wrote to Peggy Garland.[238] An early von Karajan recording of the *Mass in b minor* represented 'the heaven of all music'. The *Christmas Oratorio* was 'wonderful and consoling, in any circumstances'. After reading *Voss,* Manning Clark sent White an LP recording of the *Magnificat in D, BWV 243.* It was a tribute to a creator Clark held in similarly high esteem, a gift 'in return for writing *Voss*'.[239]

In this relatively early period (1947-63), White appeared to be drawn to the large choral works of Bach. He found their sheer splendour and sonority thrilling, transcendent even.

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[236] Aldous Huxley (1894-1963), *The Rest is Silence,* see *Music at Night and Other Essays,* London: Chatto & Windus, 1931. p. 137.
[237] Gustave Flaubert, (1821-1880) *L'education sentimentale,* Mainz Editeur, Vienna, 1869. Mitchell Library, PWBC 961-2, Box 85 (two volumes).
[238] PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 7 January 1960. NLA Aldous Huxley, *The Rest is Silence,* see *Music at Night and Other Essays,* London: Chatto & Windus, 1931. p. 137., Papers of David Marr, MS 9357, Box 54 /17/19.
[239] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 29 June 1961. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9357, Box 54 /17/19.

They engendered the same thrill he derived from the paintings of Goya and El Greco. Their great canvases led him to imagine the apotheosis of the naturalist Palfreyman in the ill-fated expedition of Voss. He hoped Nolan might create the dust jacket for his novel *Voss*.

> As Palfreyman is by innocence and instinct the essential Christian, I can see his death depicted after Greco's *Burial of the Conte de Orgaz*, though in the Sidney Nolan manner, with the members of the expedition lifting up his body, and instead of Greco's heavenlychoirs, the detached blacks standing in judgment on a cloud of mist in the background.[240]

White was not alone in drawing a comparison between *Voss* and the paintings of El Greco. '*Voss,'* observed Kylie Tennant, then a journalist at *The Sydney Morning Herald,* 'has an El Greco thunderstorm light about it'.[241] As he gazed on this extraordinary canvas, White may indeed have had the music of Bach resounding in his head:



Illustration 20: El Greco (1541-1614), *The Burial of the Count Orgaz* (1586-88). Oil on canvas, 480 x 360 cms. Church of St Thomas, Toledo, Spain.

[240] PW, letter to Sidney Nolan, 7 March 1957. Marr, *Letters,* p. 112.
[241] Kylie Tennant, [title undetected] *Sydney Morning Herald,* 8 February 1958, p. 12.

In December 1959, White admitted he got 'quite drunk with music ... and I play it a lot to lead me up to my work'.[242] White imbibed the music of Johann Sebastian Bach on many occasions. 'Whenever I am feeling mentally ill,' he confessed to Nolan, 'I play [Bach] endlessly. His sanity and simplicity make me sane again.'[243]

In essence, White created his own Bach. For him, Bach was both Redeemer and Leveller. Bach helped him understand his own flaws. At times, White felt he would like to 'cut some nerve, the absence of which will allow Bach to be absorbed [into the bloodstream] '.[244]

He could not understand why some friends did not share his enthusiasm. Worse, Bach was sometimes the cause of sundered friendships: Fritz Krieger, his earliest guide to music, accused White of being 'tone deaf' for liking Bach. At that point, their friendship began to falter and eventually die.[245]

White lacked any deep technical understanding of the technical or structural elements of Bach's music. Several recordings he purchased suggested hints for him. In March 1959, he bought recordings of *The Musical Offering* and *The Art of the Fugue*.[246] Beyond these, it is doubtful he was familiar with anything that would have afforded him deeper insight into Bach's musical techniques. In Bach, White discovered 'a whole shining scaffolding of sound'.[247]

Bach first appears in White's writing in his earliest novel *Happy Valley* (1939). From that time onwards, the music of Bach suffuses White's novels and plays, from the beginning of his writing career to the end, some fifty years later.

At the urging of Roy de Maistre, White re-worked the semi-autobiographical novel he had commenced whilst working as a jackeroo in the Monaro district. In *Happy Valley,* White recounts a muted love affair between the local doctor Oliver Halliday and Alys Browne, a spinster who teaches piano in a cottage at the edge of town. The only point of transcendence in her humdrum life is not Bach but the music of Robert Schumann; this she plays on her upright piano, 'but not very expertly'.[248] Although there is no mention of Schumann's music in either of White's inventories of LP recordings, he would surely have known such popular piano miniatures as *Kinderszenen,* Op.15, the *Scenes from Childhood.* Aunt Titina, one of the characters in a story in *The Burnt Ones,* sings German lieder and plays Schumann's piano pieces 'sweet and sticky'.[249] Ruth White would have played pieces like *Traümerai (Dreaming)* on the piano for her son, just as Alys Browne would have played it for Oliver Halliday.

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[242] PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 5 October 1959. Marr, *Letters*, p. 159.
[243] PW, letter to Sidney Nolan, 14 May 1964. Marr, *Letters,* p. 255.
[244] PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 7 January 1960. Marr, *Letters,* p. 162.
[245] PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 11 November 1962. Marr, *Letters*, p.214.
[246] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 18 March 1959, NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9357.
[247] PW, *Riders in the Chariot,* [London: Eyre & Spottieswood, 1961] Hammondsmith: Penguin Modern Classics, 1974. Fourth edition, p. 236.
[248] PW, *Happy Valley,* Melbourne, Victoria: Penguin Text Classics, 2012, p. 22.
[249] PW, *Being Kind to Titina,* the seventh story of *The Burnt Ones.* New York: Viking Press, 1964. p. 206.

At a famous church in Paris, Dr Halliday experiences an epiphany in music: the organ music of Bach. The overpowering effect of this music is a pre-echo of White's own experiences, first in the cathedrals of Europe and later in the Sydney Town Hall. Ruth White may have suggested her son visit the famed church of Saint-Sulpice, in the *Odéon* or Luxembourg quarter of the *arrondisement 6ième.* There he may have heard one of the two famed composers who presided over the organ music there, Charles-Marie Widor (organist from 1874-1934) and Marcel Dupré (1934-1971). White, on one of his European trips during his Cambridge days, may well have heard Dupré play Bach on the organ at Saint-Sulpice. [250]

> [Dr Halliday] had gone into a church, he did not know why, it was an ordinary church … The organ was playing a Bach fugue. He knew it was Bach because he had picked out bits of Bach on the piano at home. And then he was at home again, but not at home, it was in the church in the neighbourhood of the Luxembourg, it was in France, with old German Bach streaming out of the organ loft, and the War had stopped, and he was losing his breath, he was losing …
>
> Then he sat very still. He supposed he was breathing. He did not know. But he knew he was crying. He did not care if he cried; there was nothing wrong with this sort of crying and nobody would see. The music came rushing out of the loft, unfurling banners of sound. You could touch it. You could feel it. You could feel stillness and music all at once. You were at once floating and stationary, in time, all time, and space, without barrier, passing with a fresher knowledge of the tangible to a point where this dissolved, became the spiritual.[251]

There are yet more binaries in this passage: 'stillness and music', 'floating and stationary'. This was the bronchial Patrick White himself, struggling to breathe in the lofty environs of Saint-Sulpice, hardly 'an ordinary church'. Perhaps he felt himself expiring, carried aloft by angels in the murals Delacroix had painted in the Chapel of the Holy Angels at Saint-Sulpice. From that near out-of-body experience, White equated the organ music of Bach with the transcendental experience of near-Godliness.

Twenty-five years later, in another efflorescence of writing, White returned to the organ music of Bach. By then, he had almost worn out his Bach recordings, playing them over and again as he created such startling moments as the life-changing experience of Mrs Godbold in *Riders in the Chariot* (1961). Trapped in a loveless marriage, Mrs Godbold comforts herself at the ironing board by singing hymns from her Nonconformist childhood. As a girl, she had strolled through Ely Cathedral where she chanced upon an organist practising in the loft:

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[250] In its abundant orchestration of colours, this organ is widely regarded as the most impressive French instrument of the Romantic era. On several occasions, Dupré (1886-1971) had performed the complete organ music of Bach from memory, a feat that had created worldwide interest. White was not in Australia for Dupré's ABC concert tour in 1939. Surprisingly, he seems not to have owned recordings of Bach's music played by Dupré, but by the blind organist Helmut Walcha (1907-1991), recorded on Archiv (1947-52).

[251] PW, *Happy Valley,* p. 26.

> The organ never stopped playing … She had never heard anything like this, and was at last frightened to accept what she was experiencing. The organ lashed together the bars of music until there was a whole shining scaffolding of sound. And always the golden ladders rose, extended and extended, as if to reach the window of a fire. But there was no fire, only bliss, surging and rising, as she herself climbed upon the heavenly scaffolding and placed still other ladders, to reach higher. Her courage failed before the summit … For an instant she floated in the cloud of indecision, soothed by the infinitely kind fingers. So, in the end, when the organ stopped, she was dazed and sweating.[252]

'A strange gentleman' tells Mrs Gosbold, the washerwoman from Sarsaparilla, that she has come under the thrall of 'the Great Composer'. 'I can see', the gentleman said, 'you will remember this day when you have forgotten a lot of other things. You have probably been taken closer than you are ever likely to come.'[253] The spectral presence speaks 'in an agony of enthusiasm and bronchial obstruction'. This quasi-mystical language suggests that the 'strange gentleman' is White himself, bronchial and gasping for breath as the music of Bach swallows him in the kind of ecstasy he could barely express in words.

White's description of Godbold's ecstatic experience suggests he may have been listening to the *Fantasia and Fugue in g minor*, BWV 542. Its torrential chromaticism creates floods of diminished harmonies interrupted by a levee of unexpected *recitativo* passages, all punctuated by block chords. Bach creates a series of steps leading, like Jacob's golden ladders, to what Einstein called 'a kind of transcendent height'.[254] At the summit of that journey, the unexpected arrival of that closing G major chord leaves the listener both exhausted and exhilarated.[255]

On three evenings in July 1959, White went to ABC recitals by the French organist Pierre Cochereau in the Sydney Town Hall.[256] Like Mrs Godbold, White found himself 'dazed and sweating', overwhelmed by the sound of Bach thundering from the Grand Organ in the Town Hall.[257] Each of Cochereau's three programs contained contemporary French music and several works by Bach. They closed with improvisations on themes presented by members of the audience, in the great tradition of French cathedral masters:

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[252] PW, *Riders*, p. 236.
[253] PW, *Riders,* p. 237.
[254] 'I have this to say about Bach's works. Listen, play, love, revere – and keep your trap shut.' Albert Einstein, in an interview with Jerome Weidman, *The Reader's Digest,* 5 August 1955, cited by Brian Foster, *Einstein and his Love of Music,* Baltimore, MD. Johns Hopkins University 2005.
[255] A performance of this work by Michel Chapuis is accompanied by the scrolled score at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tg50ozbZcqM [accessed 15 August 2016].
[256] At the time, the brilliant organist-composer-improviser Pierre Cochereau (1924-1984) was titular organist at Notre Dame cathedral in Paris. His recitals in Sydney left a deep impression on a teenager there: David Rumsey, the recently deceased eminent Australian organist, recalled that Bach figured prominently in each Cochereau recital. Rumsey, in conversation with the author, Hornsby, NSW, 8 April 2016.
[257] 'Playing the Town Hall organ is the ultimate power trip,' Rumsey suggested. The Sydney Town Hall Grand Organ was constructed by the English firm William Hill & Son. When installed in 1890, it was the largest in the world and described as the 'finest organ ever built by an English organ builder'.

11 July	Bach *Prelude and Fugue in C* Bach *Violin Fugue in d minor* Bach *Passacaglia and Tema Fugata and Fantasia on 'Je veux te dire Adieu'* Duruflé *Suite on 'Veni creator'* Improvisation in 4 movements
14 July	Bach, *Toccata, Adagio and Fugue* Vierne *Clair de lune, Impromptu & Finale* from *Symphony No 4 in G* Jean Langlais, *Song of Peace* Improvised 'symphony' in 4 movements
18 July	Couperin *Offertoire sur les Grands Jeux, 'Domine Deus, Rex Coelestis'* Bach *Four Chorale Preludes* Messiaen *Dieu parmi nous* Dupré *Symphonie passion* Improvisation on a Given Theme

Cochereau's performances inspired White to purchase several more recordings of organ music. White surprised himself. 'I never thought I should become interested in organ music', he wrote to Glover the morning after Cochereau's first recital.[258] Somehow, he admitted, he needed it to fuel inspiration for *Riders*. At present, he confessed, 'I cannot make myself play anything between Bach and the moderns'.[259] He had heard some deal of both in Cochereau's recitals.

Around Christmas 1959, twelve years after the publication of *The Aunt's Story*, White purchased recordings by pianist Rosalyn Tureck.[260] He found her performances of four *Partitas* 'touchingly perfect'.[261] Bach's suites or partitas or 'sonatas' make fleeting appearances on several occasions in White's writing.

The Aunt's Story portrays the adventures, real or imagined, of its central character Theodora Goodman, to be examined in the next chapter of this study.[262] In the novel's central part, *Jardin exotique,* Theodora arrives at a seedy establishment in the south of France. White identifies this location by means of several references to the gavotte, the strictly formal Baroque dance which, to Theodora and to White himself, sounds 'tight, frilled, mechanical'. [*TAS*, p. 187] White attempts to convey the sound of a harpsichord; it is 'like a mouse in a piano picking at the bones of a gavotte'. [*TAS*, p. 192] Elsewhere, Theodora observes 'a hand practising a gavotte, each note white and separate that it picked up'. [*TAS*, p. 234]

Clearly, the music White had in mind was a movement from one of the French keyboard suites (BWV 812-7). The Fourth, Fifth and Sixth French Suites all have gavottes. It is possible White was contemplating a movement from the *Suite No.5 in G major,* BWV 816;

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[258] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 3 July 1959. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 8601/1/3.
[259] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 29 October 1959. NLA, Papers of D.Marr, MS 8601/1/3.
[260] PW owned Tureck's recordings of Partitas 1,2,3,6 (VAIA 1040).
[261] PW, letter to Mollie McKie, 22 July 1959. NLA, Papers of D.Marr, MS 9357, Box 54 /17/19.
[262] PW, *The Aunt's Story.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1948, subsequently by Eyre & Spottiswoode in 1948. Henceforward, all citations from *The Aunt's Story* will be listed in text as *TAS*, taken from *The Aunt's Story* [London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1948] Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin Books Australia, 1967 (fifth reprint) and page numbers derived from that edition.

the somewhat stilted aspect of the ingratiating Gavotte *(tempo di Gavotta)* coincides with his characterization of that 'tight, frilled, mechanical music'.[263]

Bach also appears in *The Cockatoos* (1974), a collection of six short stories.[264] White had grown to love the swarms of white cockatoos that flew over Centennial Park each day at dusk. Some even landed on his lawn and Lascaris would put out seed to feed them. At one point White counted fourteen cockatoos, some of them growing quite tame. He started to play selections from his LP collection to them:

> They are very happy with Bach unaccompanied violin sonatas, and their movements go very well with Bach. Then I tied some *Cosi fan tutte*: they were a bit afraid of Ferrando, but flew back for Fiordiligi's big aria. Next time I want to try Elvira's *Mi tradi.*[265]

In their contrasting moods, locations, characters and observations, these 'shorter novels and stories' constitute a kind of literary *partita.* They are dedicated to his old school chum Ronnie Waters 'for having survived forty-eight years of friendship.' [266]

Bach called his collection of six pieces *Sei Soli – a violino senza Basso accompagnato*, ['Six solos for violin without bass accompaniment']. There are six movements in BWV 1006, comprising three partitas and three sonatas. White sometimes interchanges the three terms – sonata, partita and suite – creating confusion for the reader. In general terms, White's reader would most likely recognize the sonata as a three-movement form, and the partita and suite as multi-movement forms, with the suite derived from dance forms. As for White himself, whilst he may not have known the precise differences between the terms, he may have been indulging in one of his favourite literary disguises – leaving facts ambiguous and keeping the reader removed from his true meanings or intentions.

In the final movement of White's 'suite', a violinist excites a swarm of sulphur-crested cockatoos by playing a *Sarabande* and a *Chaconne* from an unspecified partita. Only one of Bach's violin sonatas and partitas contains both these movements, the *Partita no.2 in d minor*, BWV 1004. Initially, the raucous birds respond to the languorous *Sarabande*.[267] While playing this movement, the amateur violinist Olive Davoren remembered 'what she had found most difficult'.[268] It is curious that Davoren – who had failed her diploma course at the Conservatorium – could even attempt to play the famous *Chaconne,* a work which Yehudi Menuhin called 'the greatest structure for solo violin that exists'.[269]

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[263] When PW refers to a *tempo di gavotte,* the reference could only have been to the penultimate movement of the Partita No.6, BWV 830, not the sixth of the French Suites, where the movement is simply called 'gavotte'. That movement also appears in a version of the Sixth Sonata for violin and harpsichord continuo, BWC 1019a, which Bach also designated as *'tempo di gavotta'.*
[264] PW, *The Cockatoos*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1974.
[265] From *Don Giovanni.* PW letter to Tom Maschler, 29 April 1973. Cited in Marr *Life,* p.411.
[266] PW's dedication and characterization of the collection.
[267] J.S. Bach *Sonatas for Solo Violin, volumes 1 & 3.* Yehudi Menuhin (violin). EMI (recorded 1938-54).
[268] PW, *Cockatoos.* pp. 286-7.
[269] Yehudi Menuhin, *Unfinished Journey,* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, orig pub.1976, p. 226.

Despite Davoren's 'horrible travesty' of the *Chaconne,* the music is still recognizable as Bach, recalling the oft-quoted maxim about Bach being 'indestructible'. No matter how badly his music is played, White tells us, Bach never fails to elevate his listener or performer to a higher plane.

On many occasions, when inspiration had dried up, White was rejuvenated by the exhilaration of Bach's music for solo violin. He owned a recording of Menuhin playing the Bach partitas, so he would have been aware of the difficulties presented by the *Chaconne.* In a vicarious way, Menuhin had nurtured the writer's love of Bach. In July 1970, White attended a concert in Sydney by Menuhin's Festival Orchestra of London. He told Ninette Dutton he and Lascaris found Menuhin's Sydney concert 'a night of sheer bliss'.[270] Strangely, White did not go out of his way to meet the violinist he had admired for decades.

Perhaps at that stage of his life the novelist was too shy, too stage-struck, or perhaps he thought himself not yet musically mature enough to converse with one of the most revered musicians in the world. A decade earlier, he had managed to hold up to Stravinsky at a post-concert dinner in Sydney. 'On the whole', White observed in a letter to Nin Dutton, 'musicians only come out of themselves with other musicians'.[271]

White approached Bach in a kind of therapeutic or even spiritual sense.[272] At various times, Bach's 'stability' and 'emotional purity' calmed what might be called his 'inner demons'. At other times, White found himself almost drowning in the ecstasy induced by Bach's music. 'It is odd that anything so innocent as Bach,' he wrote to Manning Clark, 'can make one so drunk'.[273]. Like his novelist friend, Clark felt similar sensations himself.[274] Clark's unpublished papers contain notes for what might have become a speech about music.[275]

> I don't know anything like music. I suppose music affects people in all sorts of ways. I know more people like it as a game. For me, I'm one of the ones who need music because of its ability to make me quiet. You see, I don't want to loathe people, to cause injuries, plan revenges – that would be hard enough. And I don't want to be haunted by the past, to have it in me like one sustained uninterrupted nightmare … All the time, I shout in pain when it lifts me up, as it does from time to time when I'm tormented or bothered by things which do not trouble others.[276]

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[270] PW, letter to Ninette Dutton, 24 August 1970. Marr, *Letters,* p. 367.
[271] PW, letter to Ninette Dutton, 24 August 1970.
[272] Manning Clark, in conversation with the author, Manuka, ACT, 10 April 1986.
[273] PW, letter to Manning Clark, 28 June 1961. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356/15/10.
[274] Manning Clark's record collection, still preserved in his home in Forrest, ACT, includes many works by Bach, notably the passions, the cantatas and larger instrumental forms.
[275] In his long life of public speaking, Manning Clark delivered at least one speech about music. To open a Conference on the History of Australian Music, at the University of Melbourne, Clark delivered an address, *Music and the Arts in Australian History,* 11 September 1981. These scribbled remarks may be sketches for that speech.
[276] Manning Clark, undated and unpublished notes under 'Short Stories'. NLA, Papers of Manning Clark, MS 7550, Box 160, 19/1.

The language in the historian's notes mirrors the very thoughts of his close friend. Those words could be the confessions of either Manning Clark or Patrick White. Clearly, the music of Bach inspired some of the most extraordinary writing from each man.

Sometimes White's employed his characters to reveal his innermost feelings about Bach. As Elyot Standish sinks deeper into 'the landscape of his own mind' in *The Living and the Dead*, Bach is the ultimate panacea, even in situations that seem prosaic and commonplace, like tying up pyjama strings.

> There was a purpose, a stability in Bach that translated itself to your hands, as you tied pyjama strings, as you opened the bed. There was a purpose, caught from the music, even in the personal mistake. He did not regret these. Lying in bed, there was perhaps even an ultimate pattern, woven partly from mistakes.[277]

Bach's 'purpose' is more the purpose for which White – or, for that matter, anyone – 'uses' Bach. His 'stability' is a less obvious trait; Bach's music is anything but stable, it is incessantly mobile, at times even motoric. To White, it was much more; he used Bach to help him set a psychological tone to his writing and to afford an insight into his own psychology.

'Of course, I do not mind if I cannot "understand" music, poetry, novels, paintings,' White explained in a letter to Frederick Glover, 'provided I am able to react to them'. White could not understand Glover's attitude to the Bach *Partitas,* for example. 'It is quite incomprehensible to me,' he protested. 'It made me feel you should take a course in Zen Buddhism. That, I am sure, is the right approach, unless one wants to play surgeon with the arts.[278]

Here White addresses another dimension of the narrative/structural duality: Bach's music, he told Glover, touches on something spiritual and intangible, akin to the experience of Zen Buddhism. White had read about Zen but had never really explored it for himself. As for Glover, it was more likely that his old bank manager friend, who wrote plays and acted in amateur productions, would approach Bach somewhat more analytically than the novelist, rather like a teller counting coins.

In *The Cockatoos,* Davoren 'knew that she should love Bach, and did', but she too has no need for a surgical analysis of Bach's fugues and the like.[279] Neither White nor his characters could play 'surgeon with the arts,' as critics and academics do, White argued. In relation to music, White would have concurred with Albert Einstein's well-known dictum: 'Imagination is more important than knowledge.'[280]

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[277] PW, *The Living and the Dead,* p. 82.
[278] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 6 April 1960. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 8601/1/3.
[279] PW, *Cockatoos,* p. 262.
[280] Cited by Alice Calaprice, *The Expanded Quotable Einstein.* 2000, p. 10.

Bach was assigned an important role in White's first mature play, *The Ham Funeral*. Although written in 1947, it did not see light of day until November 1961. The director John Tasker felt some of the play's longer speeches were too literary and, after rehearsals with NIDA students, persuaded White to re-work them. In effect, these long speeches, Tasker maintained, were arias whose grandiloquence required underscoring with music.

Tasker commissioned Adelaide jazzman-composer Jeremy Wesley-Smith to create a score for small jazz ensemble, inspired by Bach *d'après* the well-known French jazz pianist Jacques Loussier.[281] White knew relatively little about jazz but was enthusiastic.[282] He took Tasker's point: in later plays, he specified the use of music at particular moments and began to refer to longer speeches as 'arias'.

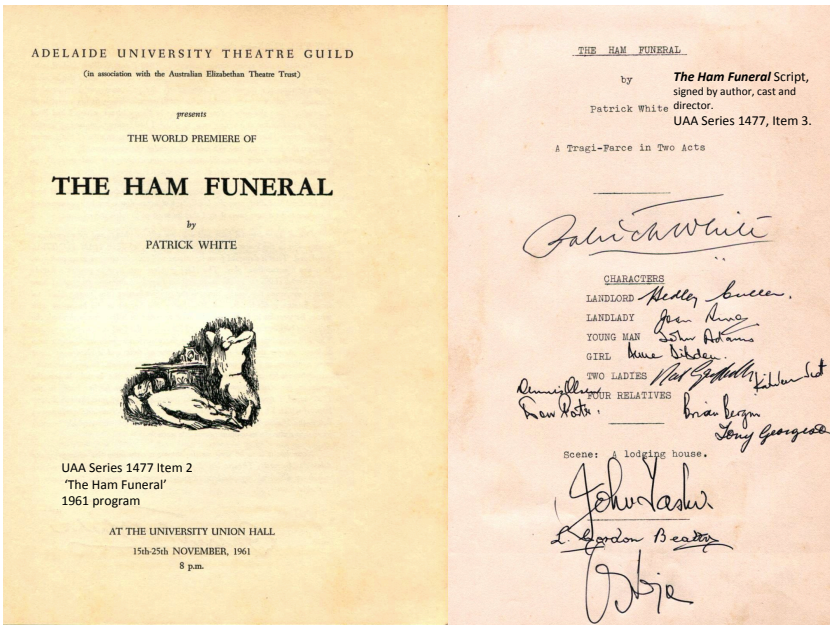

ADELAIDE UNIVERSITY THEATRE GUILD
(in association with the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust)
presents
THE WORLD PREMIERE OF
THE HAM FUNERAL
by
PATRICK WHITE
AT THE UNIVERSITY UNION HALL
15th-25th NOVEMBER, 1961
8 p.m.
UAA Series 1477 Item 2
'The Ham Funeral'
1961 program
THE HAM FUNERAL
by
Patrick White
A Tragi-Farce in Two Acts
CHARACTERS
LANDLORD
LANDLADY
YOUNG MAN
GIRL
TWO LADIES
FOUR RELATIVES
Scene: A lodging house.
The Ham Funeral Script, signed by author, cast and director.
UAA Series 1477, Item 3.

Illustration 21: Programme, Special Collections, Barr Smith Library, University of Adelaide. UAA Series 1477 Item 1.
The Ham Funeral was produced by the University of Adelaide Theatre Guild and opened in Union Hall on 15 November 1961.

On completing his second published play *A Season at Sarsaparilla* (1962), White declared it had pleased him more than its predecessors on stage. 'It seems more fluid somehow, more like music', he wrote to Geoffrey Dutton, 'whereas in *The Ham Funeral* I suspect myself of trying to push around troublesome groups of statuary'.[283] In *Sarsaparilla,* music moved from background to centre stage. Having seen how music could elevate the dry text of the 'arias' in *Ham Funeral,* White was now more confident in assigning a defined role to a specific piece of music.[284]

[281] Jeremy Wesley-Smith [1941-2006], double bass and French horn player, arranger and composer, was known in Adelaide jazz circles as 'Jerry Wesley'. He was the first of four famous brothers, the middle brothers being the twins, Martin and Peter, composer and librettist [b.1945].
[282] John Tasker, 'Notes on *The Ham Funeral*', *Meanjin* No.98, volume xxiii, number 3, 1964. pp. 299-302.
[283] PW, letter to Geoffrey Dutton, 8 June 1961. NLA, Papers of Geoffrey Dutton, MS 7285/31.
[284] All the same, the printed programme lists no attribution for original music. Instead, it credits Christian Meyer for 'sound' and acknowledges Helen Fisher for having performed Judy Pogson's violin music, with

Like its predecessor, *Sarsaparilla* requires the performance of music from another Bach *Partita*.[285] Judy Pogson is studying the violin at the Con.[286] Several pages into the first act, White provides the stage direction: 'A violin is heard in another part of the Pogson house, playing something sweet and true, but with a touch that is not exactly brilliant. The piece could be the *Loure* from the Sixth Sonata in E Major.'[287]

As he did in *The Cockatoos*, White assigned a dance movement from a Bach solo sonata to another of his characters. This distinctive dance form appears only twice in Bach's music, in this *Violin Partita No.3,* BWV 1006*,* and in the keyboard *French Suite No.5 in G*, BWV 816. There are six movements in BWV 1006; White surely means the *Loure,* the elegant, slow gigue that is second movement of Bach's *Third Partita in E Major*, BWV 1006.

Young Judy Pogson plays without any sense of bravura. Her dedication to music provokes a testy exchange with her father. White's own father may well have provided the model for Clive Pogson, the voice of the rough Australian archetype who is unable to comprehend the use or function of culture in society.

> CLIVE *(throwing down his paper).* If there's something I can't stand, it's a squeaky fiddle!
>
> GIRLIE *(on the defensive)* She plays it lovely, Clive! So she ought to. Studying at the Con. But before breakfast! A girl can't give up everything, and holidays too, for an old violin. *(Calling)* Judy! Remember your health, dear. Specially on a hot day.
>
> CLIVE What I can't understand is what people think about while they sit there listening to music. Sitting, and sitting, like a whole lot of bloomin' mushrooms.
>
> JUDY I'd tell you, Father … If I could.[288]

Like White himself, Judy Pogson cannot put into words the power music holds over her. No matter how poorly she plays, she senses music leads her towards a kind of communion with God. From early childhood, Judy recognized that music had nourished and given meaning to her life, as it had done for White himself from earliest childhood.

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no mention of Bach. *Photo:* Programme, Special Collections, Barr Smith Library, University of Adelaide. UAA Series 1477 Item 3.

[285] White subtitles the play 'a charade of suburbia'. It was first produced by the University of Adelaide Theatre Guild, opening on 14 September 1962. John Tasker was the director, the designer was Desmond Digby.

[286] On several occasions, White brings forward young musicians – frequently violinists – who are 'studying at the Con'. Here he echoes the youthful experience of Roy de Maistre, who had studied violin and viola there, as well as playing in the State Orchestra conducted by Henri Verbrugghen.

[287] PW, *The Season at Sarsaparilla,* 1,i. Sydney, NSW: Currency Press, 1965 [r.1993], p. 85.

[288] PW, *Sarsaparilla,* Act One, scene one p. 86.

The violin – not the voice, nor the piano piano, nor any other musical instrument – assumes the role of a favoured motif throughout White's life and writing. Violin sonatas and concertos appear prominently in his LP collection. His collection of concert programmes capture memories of many concerto and recital performances. His fascination with the violin surfaced at a very early age.

Just before Christmas 1918, the six-year-old Patrick White wrote to Father Christmas with his wish list Christmas. This was a special Christman: the first the world could really celebrate, following several years of war. Paddy White asked Santa for many things but what he wanted most of all was a violin:

> Lulworth, December 1918. Dear Father Xmas. Will yoy (sic) please bring me a pistol, a mouth organ, a violin, a butterfly net, Robinson Cruso, History of Australia, Some marbles. A little mouse what runs across the room. I hope you do not think I am too greedy but I want the things badly. Your loving Paddy.

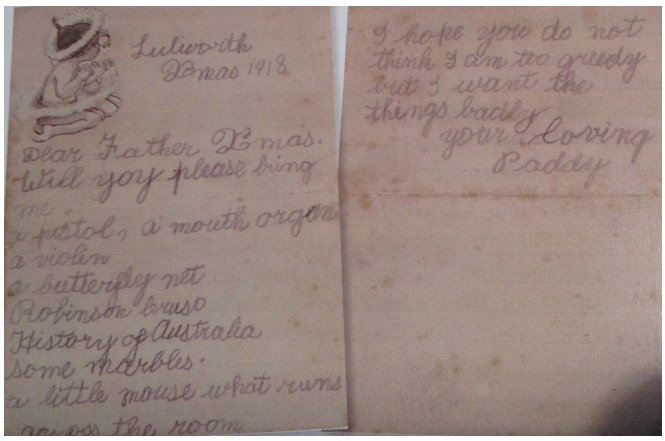


Illustration 22: PW, letter to Father Xmas December 1918. State Library of NSW, MLMSS 5717/125.

Young Paddy didn't get his wish. Like Clive Pogson in *Sarsaparilla,* Dick White hated the violin and refused to allow his son to have one.[289]

Dick was also the model for Curly Golson, a character in *The Twyborn Affair* (1979). Curly – an intentional rhyme with 'girlie,' the derogatory term used to denigrate (often gay) men with artistic tastes – was a gruff Australian who had 'a passionate hatred of music, especially the violin'.[290] Dick White may have had unpleasant memories of those musicales at the Kelly household, where 'THK' struggled to play his violin, 'snatching, half brave, half desperate, at a tangle of hairs hanging from his bow'.[291]

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[289] PW in conversation with David Marr, 4 August 1985. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356/15/10.
[290] PW, *The Twyborn Affair,* Harmondsworth, Middlesex, U.K.: Penguin Books, 1979, p. 82.
[291] PW, *Twyborn,* p. 85. 'THK' is the wealthy metal merchant Thomas Herbert Kelly (1874-1948), husband of Ethel Kelly, Ruth White's best friend. An amateur violinist, THK had actually studied violin with Joseph Joachim.

3. Writer-Composers

White had observed that a number of novelists wrote about music – that 'wordless art' – in imaginative and convincing ways. It is unfortunate that he didn't feel confident enough to attempt to do so himself. A collection of essays on music by Patrick White would have shed light on his own writing.

Within the canon of 20th century English literature alone, the works of such well-known mainstream British writers as T.S. Eliot (1888-1965), W.H. Auden (1907-1973), Dylan Thomas (1914-1953) and Anthony Burgess (1917-1993) reveal the influence of music on their writing. Their books contain an abundance of musical sources and often reveal a literary construction that is based on music.[292]

The most readily discernible influence of music in literature occurs in the writing of James Joyce (1882-1941). This is especially evident in his last two novels *Ulysses* (1922) and *Finnegan's Wake* (1939). White may have been envious of Joyce's impressive musical credentials. Like his father before him, the Irishman had a fine tenor voice, could read music, as well as play the piano, and collected operas and musical experiences.

In those two novels, Joyce quoted texts from scores of operas, songs and children's tunes, even snatches of musical notation. 'He would set himself at the piano, drooping over the keys, and the old songs, his particular way of singing them in his sweet tenor voice, and the expression on his face,' recalled the writer Sylvia Beach. 'These were things one can never forget.'[293]



Illustration 23: James Joyce at the piano (1939).
Photograph by Gisele Freund.
http://www.james-joyce-music.com/joyceandmusic.html
[accessed 6 November 2016].

[292] PW's library contained several key novels by Joyce: two volumes of the 1935 edition of *Ulysses* [PWBC 541-2]; *Dubliners* [PWBC 730] and *Finnegan's Wake* [PWBC 731]. Perhaps unsurprisingly, his collection appears not to include any writing by Burgess.
[293] Sylvia Beach, no further details, cited in Dublin Writers Museum website.
https://irelandincontext.wordpress.com/tag/dublin-writers-museum/ [accessed 6 November 2016].

Small wonder that the music inherent in Joyce's writing sparked the creative imaginations of so many composers throughout the 20th century, from Karol Szymanowski to Luciano Berio. 'We often find more poetry in prose than in poetry itself,' Berio once observed, 'and more music in speech and noise than in conventional musical sounds'.[294]

In his youth, White had considered Joyce 'practically God'.[295] Although in later life he found he could not read Joyce – whilst confessing he liked to read about Joyce –White admitted that 'most certainly I shouldn't have made use of the stream of consciousness [technique] if it hadn't been for Joyce'.[296]

For his part, Patrick White possessed few of Joyce's musical attributes. Before his voice broke, Paddy had a fine singing voice and he did take piano lessons for several months as a schoolboy at Tudor House. This alone disputes White's claim that he could not read music, nor play the piano, nor sing. He collected recordings and performances of opera.There the musical comparisons between the two lives of Joyce and White begin and end, until one delves more deeply into White's novels. The linguistic similarities between the two writers are legion, as the following chapters illustrate.

In the 1920s, the slum-like backstreets of Kings Cross and Darlinghurst, White's childhood domain, could have been a mirror image of Joyce's Dublin. 'The men in the street looked and sounded the same', White ruminated in a letter to Ben Huebsch. He was delighted to discover that Huebsch was the first publisher to publish Joyce in America.[297] Reading *Ulysses* in 1935, the 23-year-old aspiring novelist was swept away. In it, he found 'prose like music – making more sound than sense at times – and a dazzling technique that took him inside the vivid, wandering minds' of Joyce's scruffy Dubliners.[298]

White found the most poetic potential in Australian vernacular speech. The Melbourne theatre critic Leonard Radic maintained that *Night on Bald Mountain* – that 'most flawed of [White's four early plays] in terms of construction' – was also the one within which 'the latent poeticism of the Australian vernacular is seen at its richest'.[299] White lifted his dialogues from conversations overheard in everyday encounters, on the bus, in stores, on street corners or whilst walking his dogs in Centennial Park.

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[294] Luciano Berio (1925-2003), programme annotation for *Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)*, an electro-acoustic elaboration of Cathy Berberian's voice on tape (1958), based on the eleventh chapter of *Ulysses* (the episode entitled *Sirens* which is dedicated to music and which Joyce maintained used fugal procedures).
[295] PW, letter to Marshall Best, 25 February 1960. Marr, *Letters,* p. 165.
[296] PW, letter to Ingmar Björkstén, 21 January 1973. Marr, *Letters,* p. 409.
[297] PW, letter to Ben Huebsch, 11 October 1960. Marr, *Life*, p. 49.
[298] Appendix 1 (21): Marr, *Life,* p. 145.
[299] Leonard Radic, *The State of Play: The Revolution in the Australian Theatre since the 1960s.* Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin Books, 1991. p. 38.

It is possible White heard Joyce's voice, either on a recording Joyce made of the Aeolus episode of *Ulysses* in 1924, or on ABC radio.[300] Practically every page of *The Living and the Dead* vibrates with the kind of music Joyce himself observed or created. The very title of White's wartime novel references Joyce. White was struck by last words; his Sketchbooks contain notes towards a novel with that title. [301] The last words of *Dubliners* resonated with him*:*

> He heard the snow falling faintly through the universe and faintly falling, like the descent of their last end, upon all the living and the dead.[302]

Where Joyce 'hears' the silence of snow falling, White shudders at the sound of thunderous audience applause at a symphony concert he describes in *The Vivisector*:

> They were all clapping and clap clapping vindicated fulfilled drenched by their part in this voyage to Cythera at the end of which they had positively laid eyes on the goddess.[303]

The last line of *Vivisector* reads and sounds like White at his most Joyce-ian and most musical. It also references Blake's 'sick rose': "O rose Rose. Too tired too end-less obvi indi-ggoddd'. [304]

On the international stage, Anthony Burgess was one of White's leading admirers. 'A country is only remembered for its art,' he once famously said. 'Rome is remembered for Virgil, Greece for Homer, and Australia may be remembered for Patrick White'.[305] The British writer (1917-1993) is best known as the author of the dystopian satire *Clockwork Orange* (1962), made famous in the film version by Stanley Kubrick (1971). Burgess is less known as the composer of over 250 pieces of music, including such inter-medial Beethoven-inspired works as his 'novel in four movements,' the *Napoleon Symphony*.

4. The Piano and Beethoven

Pianists accompany White throughout his life. Their presence constitutes a kind of theme embellished by countless variations. It is odd, then, that White did not own a piano in any of his residences. There was a piano in his student quarters in Cambridge, but it was merely a piece of furniture; no one bothered to play it. Unlike his affection for the violin, White seems not to have liked the piano very much. There was a piano in Lulworth, his childhood home in Elizabeth Bay, where his mother Ruth presided over musicales for her family and

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[300] Lucas Reilly, *Listen to James Joyce read 'Ulysses'*. MentalFloss website, 4 February 2014. http://mentalfloss.com/article/33666/hear-james-joyce-read-ulysses-and-finnegans-wake [accessed 15 August 2015].
[301] Marr, *Life,* pp. 588-9.
[302] James Joyce, *Dubliners.* London: Grant Richards Ltd, 1914, p. 149.
[303] PW, *The Vivisector,* New York: Viking Press, 1970, p. 460. Perhaps White also hears the clip-clopping of Joyce's horses as they trot along the cobblestone streets of Dublin.
[304] *The Vivisector,* p. 567.
[305] Anthony Burgess, *99 Novels: The Best in English Since 1939.* London: Allison & Busby 1984.

friends. Ruth played the piano and could even cross her hands at the keyboard, an accomplishment that greatly impressed her young son.

At one stage, White may have had to acquire a piano: Mario Lascaris, younger brother of Manoly, was a concert pianist. White and Lascaris were hoping Mario might come to stay with them at Dogwoods, but White was nervous about the prospect. Although he would enjoy having live music in the house, White realised that 'the snag would be the piano which we should be paying off forever after'.[306]

In his correspondence, White acknowledged concerts and recitals that had provided rewarding resources for his writing. On occasion, his novels took readers to recitals where young women grappled with Beethoven. In *The Solid Mandala,* Dulcie Feinstein 'elbows her way through the lashing rejoinders of ungovernable music'.[307]

White knew the more popular Beethoven sonatas well enough, just as he knew and loved the late string quartets passionately. White used his 'tinny worn-out Beethoven sonatas' to test-drive potential new hi-fi sets.[308] On the record sleeve, he read that the first movement of the *Moonlight* bore the initial marking *Adagio sostenuto*: in White's account of Dulcie's recital, that becomes the *'Adagio what's-it'*.[309] Reading on, White learned that Beethoven dedicated his sonata *'quasi una fantasia'* to a pupil, the 17-year-old Countess Giulietta Guicciardi with whom Beethoven had been in love. This teacher-student inter-generational love affair found its way into his next novel *The Vivisector* (1970).

Creating the role of the pianist in *The Solid Mandala,* White had several significant prototypes. In E.M. Forster's novel *A Room with a View* (1908), Lucy Honeychurch deftly negotiates her way through the repressed culture of Edwardian England.[310] Forster inserts a line of 'gendering' piano music into a critique of the English middle classes at the outset of the 20th century. That line of 'gendering' suggested that the ability to play the piano was a desirable and worthy attribute in the life of a young woman of the day, as indeed it was for Laura Trevelyan in *Voss.* It also extends from the novels of Jane Austen and George Eliot through to Jane Campion's movie *The Piano* (1993), and beyond.[311]

The Norwegian scholar Lise Karin Meling makes the somewhat extraordinary claim that 'almost every piano composition written in the 19th century was written for women and girls'. In the 19th century, she maintains, the piano was considered 'the feminine musical

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[306] PW to Peggy Garland, 15 August 1951. Marr, *Letters,* p. 84.
[307] PW, *The Solid Mandala,* [London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1966], Ringwood,Victoria: Penguin Books, 1974, p. 157.
[308] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 8 September 1958. Marr, *Letters,* p. 156
[309] Beethoven's *Piano Sonata No 14 in c sharp minor,* Op. 27 No. 2 *('The Moonlight')* was composed in 1801.
[310] In the 1930s, both White and Forster were based at Kings College, but the aspiring Australian novelist did not come across the venerable Cambridge don. White kept his copy of E.M. Forster's *A Room with a View* to the end of his life. E.M. Forster, *A Room with a View,* London: Edward Arnold, 1947. Mitchell Library, PWBC 506, Box 52.
[311] Jane Austen herself was an accomplished pianist. Like her character Anne Elliott in her final, posthumous novel *Persuasion* (1818), Austen practiced the piano several hours each day.

instrument *par excellence'.* So much so that it was considered the norm for all women from the *bourgeoisie* or the upper classes of society to play the piano.

'No cultured house should be without a pianoforte,' the Norwegian author Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson wrote in 1855. "No Lady, who wishes to be a Lady, can admit to not being able to play the pianoforte, and no Gentleman can allow its disregard.' [312]

Some years before writing *Voss,* White had read Henry Handel Richardson's novels, *Maurice Guest* and *The Getting of Wisdom.* He was especially fond of the former. As a recent Cambridge graduate in Modern Languages, White had travelled in Germany in the 1930s. He may have felt an affinity with Guest, its main character, the hapless English pianist, and the locale, the Leipzig conservatory, with its abundance of music and pianists.

White was in good company in drawing on Beethoven's music in his writing. E.M. Forster devised prose analogs for all thirty-two Beethoven piano sonatas, and a discussion of the *Fifth Symphony* is used as an integral component of *Howard's End* (1932). In his longest novel *Point Counter Point* (1928)*,* Aldous Huxley 'plays' his characters as they perform the Op.132 quartet.[313]

Beethoven figures as inspiration and reference points for novelists and composers from various cultures. Leo Tolstoy's novella *The Kreutzer Sonata* (1889) was constructed around Beethoven's A major violin sonata, op.47, and then returned to music by Janáček in his *String Quartet No.1* (1923). In his three-act play *The Ghost Sonata* (*Spöksonaten*), the Swedish playwright August Stringberg derived his title and structure from two works by Beethoven, the *Piano Sonata No.17 in D minor, Op.31 No.2,* known as 'The Tempest' and the *Piano Trio No.4 in D Major, Op.70 No.1,* also known as 'The Ghost Trio'.

Beethoven is present in many cultures of world literature too. In *An Equal Music* (1999), Vikram Seth frames a doomed romance around Beethoven's little known *String Quintet in c minor, Op.104*. In Haruki Murakami's novel *Kafka on the Shore* (2002), Beethoven's *Piano Trio in B flat Major, Op, 97,* the mighty *'Archduke',* is deployed to explain the relationship between two main characters, Nakata and Hoshino, and the latter's development as a personality.[314]

Charles Ives invoked Beethoven in the Emerson movement of his *'Concord' Sonata* (1904-47). Peter Gena's solo piano piece *Beethoven in Soho* (1980) transplants Beethoven's

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[312] Lisa Karin Meling, *The Piano- the best suited instrument for the female body* ScienceNordic, 28 April 2016. http://sciencenordic.com/piano-%E2%80%93-best-suited-instrument-female-body

[313] PW owned an early edition of Huxley's *Point Counter Point.* London: Chetto & Winder, 1929. His copy (PWBC 529, Box 53) is inscribed "P.V.M. White, 25 May 1930, from Rouget," possibly his first lover in Cambridge, the trainee priest, "R." Bloomfield.

[314] Murakami is a thoughtful and highly knowledgeable advocate for classical music, illustrated in his book *Absolutely on Music.* This is a series of conversations with his compatriot, the conductor Seiji Ozawa. Hardcover/ kindle versions published by Harvill Secker in late 2016.

arpeggio-driven figurations to the Minimalist world of contemporary Manhattan.[315] The harmonic language of Beethoven is also the foundation of much of the music of John Adams. 'We have music that we love so much that we kind of want to get under the skin of that composer,' Adams has said. 'For me, taking not so much melodies but just little harmonic fragments, like fractals, from Beethoven and putting them through the black box of my own musical personality was real stimulation to my invention.' [316]

For many composers, the invocation of Beethoven signifies dissatisfaction and exhaustion with Serialism and the kind of Modernism espoused by many post-War European figures, composers like Stockhausen, Boulez and Xenakis. Younger European 'Post-Modernists' have rehabilitated the triad. In the final movement of his 42-minute trio for cello, clarinet and piano *Recitatives and Ariosos -Lerchenmusik* (1984) Henryk Gorecki draws on Beethoven's *Piano Concerto No.4 in G major, Op.53.* In his *Horn Trio* (1982), Gyorgy Ligeti repudiated the serial lexicon, drawing on the language of both Beethoven and Brahms. In his film and theatre piece *Ludwig van* (1968) Mauricio Kagel issues a provocative challenge to performers and audiences: who is our Beethoven?

Paradoxically, in the late 20th century, Beethoven became the guiding spirit and seed for many contemporary composers. Largely driven by American composers, Post-Minimalism was a movement that did not reach Australia until the mid-1980s. By this time, it was too late to touch Patrick White who had begun to embrace Modernism – the antithesis of Post-Modernism and Minimalism – two decades earlier.

The late Beethoven quartets were favourite pieces of White; they are hinted at in various fugue-like exchanges between characters in his plays and, more obviously, in the encounters of Theodora Goodman in the second part of *The Aunt's Story.*

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[315] In his orchestral work *Concord/Eendracht* (1990), Vincent Plush draws on the melody from the slow movement of Beethoven's *Piano Concerto No.5 in E flat, Op.73 ('The Emperor')*. It is first heard in two keys played by two ensembles which slowly come together to symbolize the fall of the Berlin Wall and re-unification of Germany.

[316] *John Adams Mines Beethoven's Mind.* NPR Radio' Deceptive Cadence', 10 November 2015. http://www.npr.org/sections/deceptivecadence/2015/11/10/450560466/john-adams-mines-beethovens-mind [accessed 20 January 2016]

5.Mozart and Liszt

'Ah, Mozart!' White exclaimed, 'with exasperation' when asked how he responded to the music of Mozart.[317] For White, late in life, old Father Bach and the eternally young Amadeus – 'lover of God' – instilled in him feelings he could barely articulate:

> You can't *explain* the genius of Bach and Mozart, or a rather squalid old man like Turner – none of the great artists – or saints. So one has to accept the depths along with the heights.[318]

White allowed several of his characters to voice his innermost feelings about Mozart: in *The Living and the Dead*, Muriel Raphael extolls Mozart as 'a triumph of accomplished intellect'.[319] Like the music of Bach, 'a Mozart symphony left her clear-eyed, satisfied'. It enabled White to prove 'the superiority of the objective, the intellectual approach,' something he could hardly explain in words. 'Mozart had become a neat mathematical pattern that stimulated without disturbing,' the 29-year-old White wrote in *The Living and the Dead*. This was in 1941, long before he had surrendered himself to music that Krieger dismissed as 'a stream of lemonade'.[320]

Twelve years separate White's fourth play *Night on Bald Mountain* (1964) – its title 'pinched from Mussorgsky' – and his next play, *Big Toys* (1976).[321] A black comedy, *Big Toys* was another White bromide against consumerism and property developers in the era when Neville Wran was NSW Premier (1976-87).[322] The literary critic and publisher Katherine Brisbane viewed this play as 'a comedy of manners … an elegant and refined form of theatre'. She found 'this essentially civilized, Mozartian style' jarred with White's dark warnings against the dangers of unchecked urban development and industrial exploitation.[323] Even in the mid-1970s, White was still finding his theatrical feet when suggesting music for his plays.

White provided Brisbane with her 'Mozartian' hook by specifying three excerpts from *Le Nozze di Figaro* to be played at specific moments in the action. Here, White uses Mozart to amplify, even exaggerate, the interplay between his characters; almost everyone in the audience will know this music, he wagers, and thus will be able to place these characters and fathom their Figaro-like philanderings.

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[317] PW, in conversation with David Marr, 28 November 1985. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356/15/10.
[318] PW, in conversation with Thelma Herring and G.A. Wilkes. Melbourne, Victoria: *Southerly,* 33, June 1973, pp. 132-143.
[319] PW, *The Living and the Dead,* p. 292.
[320] PW, *Flaws,* p. 140.
[321] 'The title deliberately pinched from Mussorgsky,' White admitted. 'If it comes off, it will be the first Australian tragedy.' PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 11 November 1962. Marr, *Life,* p. 409. PW imagined Michael Redgrave playing the lead.
[322] *Big Toys* was first produced by the Old Tote Theatre Company in Sydney, opening on 27 July 1977. It was directed by Jim Sharman and starred Kate Fitzpatrick, Max Cullen and Arthur Dignam. The play is dedicated 'to all those involved in the original production'.
[323] Katherine Brisbane, Introduction to *Big Toys*. Sydney: Currency Press, 1977.

Introduction to Acts One and Two of *Big Toys*:

Voi, che sapete	You ladies,
Che cosa è amor	Who know what love is
Donna, vedete	See if it is
S'io l'ho ne cor.	What I have in my heart.

Introduction to Act One, Scene Two:

L'arte schermendo	If you would dance
Signor Contino	my master
Il chitarrino le suonerò.	It will be to my tune.

Introduction to Act Three:

Se vuol ballare,	Try to deceive me.
L'arte adoprando	I'll do the same thing,
Di quo pungendo,	Two can play at that game,
Di làscherzando,	Yes sir, believe me,
Tutte le machine roverscierò.	I'll put a spoke in your wheel if I can.[324]

The comparisons between White's plot and Mozart/da Ponte's scenario are only lightly sketched. All the same, White knew Mozart's operas reasonably well. At the Con and in the old Elizabethan Theatre in Newtown, he had seen productions of *Cosi, Figaro, Flute* and *Don Giovanni*.

Two decades before *Big Toys*, a controversial new production of *Don Giovanni* prompted White's tentative approach to opera: it introduced him to the 21-year-old stage director Jim Sharman. White was intrigued by Sharman's production 'with its $6,000 budget and a B-grade cast moving around a chessboard floor he had painted on the stage'.[325] 'Actually there is a good new young producer [around town] called Sharman', White reported to his niece Luciana Arrighi, the costume designer.[326] 'But I suppose he will have to go away.'[327]

Although it was to be several years before they would meet in person, White and Sharman were effectively introduced to each other by *Don Giovanni*. By then, White's estimation of Mozart had crystallized. Whilst writing *Big Toys,* Mozart was the composer who meant the most him, 'not in the past, but now' [328]. Earlier, White had been interested mainly in the music of 19th century mavericks.

Piano concertos by Mozart and Liszt provided the principal musical impetus for *The Vivisector* (1970). At first glance, Liszt may seem an unusual choice for the focus of a

[324] Introductions to each of the acts of *Big Toys* (1978).
[325] Harry M. Miller, cited by Denis O'Brien, *My Story.* South Melbourne, Vic.: Macmillan, 1983. p. 176.
[326] Today, Sharman would be described as 'director'. White habitually used the old West End designation of 'producer' to describe what was essentially a directorial role.
[327] PW, letter to Luciana Arrighi, 16 October 1967. Marr, *Letters,* p. 318.
[328] PW, in a television interview with Ingmar Björkstén, 1973, reprinted in *Nation Review* (21-27 June 1974), p. 1179.

character in a novel by Patrick White but, in his oft-quoted confessional essay *The Prodigal Son* (1958), White revealed Liszt as one of the creative impulses behind *Voss*:

> Always something of a frustrated painter, and a composer *manqué*, I wanted to give my book the textures of music … to convey through the theme and characters of … what Mahler and Liszt might have heard.[329]

Other than Mahler, Liszt was the only 19th century composer White felt drawn towards, or so he claimed at the time.[330] Even so, Liszt was not a composer he particularly liked, 'only that his bravura and a certain formal side helped me in conveying some of the worldly, superficial passages of *Voss*'.[331] While it is tempting to draw comparison between the figures of Liszt and Johann Ulrich Voss – almost exact 'contemporaries' according to the calendar – such notions evaporate as soon as the explorer leaves Sydney.

Liszt makes a fleeting appearance in White's seventh play, *Netherwood* (1983), the sixth of his plays to be premiered in Adelaide.[332] Here the pianist Dora Pilbeam – played by the real-life composer-pianist Alan John – introduces music therapy into an asylum for the mentally disturbed, although she herself is one of the asylum's residents. As she addresses the keyboard, Dora finds her fingers are sticky with honey smears, leftovers from breakfast. 'Spitting on her chiffon hanky and vigorously rubbing the keys', she laments the fate of 'all my lovely improvisations'. She fears that 'my Chopin, my Chabrier, my Liszt,' all her most-honeyed repertoire, 'will clot'.[333] Unless Dora actually improvised around their themes, such pieces were hardly 'improvisations'. Perhaps, because so many keyboard pieces sound 'formless' or outside conventional formal boundaries, White characterizes them as 'improvisations', like daydreams or reveries. Beyond that moment, Liszt disappears from Pilbeam's honeyed repertoire and vanishes from White's novels and plays altogether.

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[329] PW, *The Critical Son,* in Geoffrey Dutton, ed. *Australian Letters: a quarterly of Australian writing and criticism,* vol. 3, April 1958: Adelaide, np, 1958. Cited in *Critical Essays on Patrick White,* ed. Peter Wolfe. Boston, MA: G.K. Hall & Co., 1990. pp. 205-6.
[330] PW, letter to Geoffrey Dutton, 19 November 1960, NLA. Papers of David Marr, MS 9356/16/3.
[331] PW, letter to Geoffrey Dutton, 19 November 1960, NLA. Papers of David Marr, MS 9356/16/3.
[332] PW, *Netherwood.* Sydney: Currency Press, 1984. It was directed by Jim Sharman and produced by Lighthouse, opening in the Adelaide Festival Centre on 11 June 1983. It subsequently appeared at the Sydney Festival in January 1984.
[333] PW, *Netherwood,* p. 8.

6. The German Romantics

One evening in January 1959, White and Krieger argued passionately about Krieger's dismissal of Mozart, Bach, Bartók and the entire corpus of chamber music. To calm the atmosphere, Ile Krieger put on a recording her husband had given White as a Christmas present, Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen.* A few months before completing *Riders*, White professed he had been inspired by 'a great craving' for Bach's music, 'partly in connection between the two poles of Bach and Bartók with some interludes of Bloch, and the grand finales of Bruckner'.[334]

White's mounting passion for the grandiose Romantic symphonic repertoire reached its zenith with the symphonies of Bruckner. The final 'orchestrated bits' of *Riders* leading up to the apotheosis of Mrs Godbold, White explained to his publishers in New York, were 'helped out by the symphonies of Bruckner, for whom I shall always have a weakness'.[335]

Bruckner and Mahler served White well during the extended absences of Lascaris. With his partner visiting family in Greece for several weeks at a time, White found life at Dogwoods 'intolerably dreary' on his own.[336] It wasn't just the work around the house, the six acres of gardens and all the dogs and other animals, but 'the slow passage of time'. Each night after dinner, White would start drinking, turning up the volume on the radio or gramophone until his head thundered. 'I shall probably be ready for Alcoholics Anonymous by the end of it', he admitted to the Moores, the friends to whom he had dedicated *The Solid Mandala*.

Curiously, White's interest in the Romantics excluded several figures. Despite early purchases of recordings of the music of Brahms – the Second Symphony, the Second Piano Concerto and some of the Op. 32 songs – beyond 1960, there was little Brahms in White's inventory of LP recordings. By then, listening to Brahms had become a chore. In *The Living and the Dead,* Eden Standish finds herself trapped by a Brahms concerto. 'I *must* listen to it,' she felt:

> She fastened on her hands, must give to music a structure, because this is the only way to listen, avoiding the backwaters of your own mind.[337]

'The only way to listen to music', she concludes, 'is to give it a structure'. A telling admission when applied to White himself: he needed to divine the structure of a piece of music before he could appreciate it fully.

Often, when first confronted by a piece of music, many of White's characters – and, thereby, White himself – did not know how to respond. To a significant degree, they were left to navigate their own way around the mysterious pathways of music. Eden Standish

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[334] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 18 March 1959. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356/13/13.
[335] PW, letter to Marshall Best, 27 February 1961. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356/13/12.
[336] PW, letter to David and Gwen Moore, 9 April 1957. Marr, *Letters,* p. 116.
[337] PW, *Living and the Dead,* p. 161.

had to concentrate on this long and intimidating (unidentified) concerto by Brahms. Her mother always had difficulty listening to 'a new and cacophonous piece of music, while her imagination wandered to the renovation of an old dress'.[338] This performance of the Brahms concerto was getting progressively worse:

> … the bland unison of 'cellos took possession … the misery of violins fell upon her head … The clarinet had lost control. It ricocheted among the strings … There was very little freedom.[339]

Here White parodies one of the most famous moments in so-called Romantic music, the long cello solo that opens the third movement (*Andante*) of Brahms's *Piano Concerto No.2 in B Flat Major,* Op.83. Here White mistakes the wind instrument which joins in unison dialogue after the opening cello solo; it is not a clarinet, but an oboe. At this stage of writing, he may not have known the difference in the sound of the two instruments.[340]

Eventually, White decided he could 'no longer listen to Brahms', he complained to Peggy Garland.[341] In *The Vivisector*, he vented his exasperation: 'Brahms beating his chest while the waves broke around him'; and 'the souped-up Brahms surged in browned, more turgid waves'.[342] Towards the end of *The Aunt's Story,* White disparages Brahms again: Theodora's niece has been practising the piano. Cutting toast at the breakfast table, her hands were 'still miserable from Brahms'.[343]

Within a few years, White's taste in music had begun to change. His earlier devotion to Mahler and Bruckner was faltering. Mahler, once his greatest passion in music, was becoming what Marr termed 'the incongruous enthusiasm' of Colin Pardoe in *Eye of the Storm*.[344] In an effort to relieve the ordinariness of life as a suburban pharmacist, Col, who venerates the symphonies of Mahler, tries to persuade his lover Flora Manhood to accompany him to a concert. Flora is nervous and embarrassed:

> 'But I don't know how to listen to music' […] 'All that *Mahler*! All I can do is think of other things at music.' [Col] didn't seem to feel it mattered. 'That's fine. Go on thinking, Flo, and some of the music'll rub off on your thoughts.'[345]

Like many of White's suburban ladies, Flora Manhood was unable to cope with the musical demands White placed upon them. As long as they had somewhere to park their minds – just as they deposited their coats in the Town Hall cloakroom – everything would be fine.

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[338] PW, *Living and the Dead,* p. 215.
[339] PW, *Living and the Dead,* p. 162.
[340] Brahms *Piano Concerto No.2 in B Flat, Op.83.* third movement (*Andante*)*,* bars 13-21 oboe solo. PW owned a recording by Rudolf Serkin (piano), with the Philadelphia Orchestra and Eugene Ormandy, conductorColumbia Masterworks (USA), ML 4014, recorded in the Broadwood Hotel, Philadelphia, 1960.

[341] PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 9 July 1959. Marr, *Letters,* p. 157.
[342] PW, *Vivisector.* p. 518.
[343] PW, *The Aunt's Story,* p. 258.
[344] Marr, *Life*, p. 518.
[345] PW, *Eye of the Storm.* [London, Jonathan Cape, 1973]. Ringwood, Penguin, 1975, p. 110.

Several commentators, notably Roger Covell, have discerned the influence of Mahler on White's writing, particularly in his early plays. Music was a major dimension of *Sarsaparilla* whose 'sheer affluence of material,' Covell suggested, reviewing the premiere production in Adelaide in March 1964, 'will probably combine to give it the untidy but exhilarating inclusiveness of some of the longer Mahler symphonies'. Covell thought *Sarsaparilla* a play 'big enough in conception to break a multitude of rules'.[346]

White's fourth novel, *The Tree of Man*, appeared in 1955. Two years before the publication of *Voss*, it too exhibits signs of a symphonic structure, as will be observed in the discussion of *Voss*. Like *The Aunt's Story*, the four parts of *The Tree of Man* are designated 'parts', not chapters, much less movements of a symphony. They relate the tale of a pioneer couple, Stan and Amy Parker, as their lives move through four stages of innocence, experience, death and reconciliation. Each of these emotions, especially the recapitulatory last section, could be appended to the movements of a Romantic symphony, perhaps something along the lines of Bruckner's *Symphony No.4 in E flat Major,* WAB 104 *('Romantic',* its title given by the composer himself) or Schumann's *Symphony No.3 in E flat Major,* Op.91 (*'Rhenish'*). Both symphonies have a quasi-literary program.

In *The Tree of Man*, the 'symphonic' symbolism of the number four spills into White's construction of four seasons or movements. In each part, a natural disaster creates a kind of mystical crisis that subverts their quest for the constant and known. As in a Mahler symphony, each individual 'part' or movement encompasses an expansive and tumultuous period of time. In totality, the novel's four parts encompass an entire lifetime. At the end, Stan Parker sits in the mandala of his own existence 'filled with peace and under-standing'.[347] Shortly before the same music resounded throughout *Voss,* Stan's self-realisation and acceptance has the ring of music White had experienced a few years earlier,in Mahler's *Resurrection Symphony*.

White owned a recording of the *Resurrection Symphony* performed by the Vienna Symphony Orchestra conducted by Otto Klemperer. In September 1950, Klemperer came to Sydney to conduct four performances of the work.[348] Even today, some 70 years later, these performances are the stuff of legend.[349] Incredibly, White did not go to any of them. It is hard to believe he would have deliberately passed up the opportunity to witness such a historic moment in the musical life of Sydney. More likely, he had been laid low by one of his frequent bronchial attacks. Some years later, he mentioned he had heard a radio broadcast. He had listened 'sentimentally to the Klemperer concerts of a few years ago':

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[346] Roger Covell, 'Patrick White's Plays', *Quadrant* (April-May 1964), p. 11.
[347] PW, *Tree of Man,* p. 477.
[348] As a 20-year-old student, Klemperer had directed the off-stage band in the first complete performance of the symphony, with Mahler conducting the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, on 13 December 1895.
[349] The SSO/Klemperer performances of Mahler's *"Resurrection"* in Sydney ran from 19-25 September 1950. 'Thus Mahler Enters Heaven', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 September 1951, p. 6.

> I can remember listening to Mahler on the air then, and feeling that it was all completely beyond me. How much poorer I should be now, if I hadn't taken the trouble to find out what he was getting at.[350]

Clearly, White took the trouble to get to know Mahler's *Resurrection* as best he could. He had Klemperer's recording in his collection and memories of the SSO broadcast resonating in the back of his head. He had acquired a number of books about Mahler, but all this was only after he had written *The Tree of Man* and *Voss*.

Following the publication of *Voss* in 1957, White's knowledge of music expanded rapidly. Liberated from the constraining influence of the now-ostracized Krieger, White began to explore major figures of 20th century music. Just as Jim Sharman found another world in the conversations and discoveries at White's home in Martin Road, White found another world in the music of the early 20th century.

7. 'All the B's one likes …'

At the time he was writing *Riders in the Chariot* (1960), Bach and Bartók were the composers whose music meant most to White. 'I like to work to them', he explained to Huebsch.[351] Along with the Beethoven quartets, they were 'all the B's one likes', he wrote to Garland. 'Bloch and Berg too. But I can no longer listen to Brahms'.[352] The critical phrase there is 'to work to', in the sense that he may have listened to their music as he planned his creations, or as he actually wrote them. Not even Lascaris could clarify this.

White confessed he got 'quite drunk with music' and that he played it 'a lot to lead me up to my work'.[353] (This perhaps settles the question raised above: playing music helped him in the *planning* of his work, it would seem.) Several months after completing *Riders*, he added other 'B'-composers to his list of favourites. 'At the moment,' he wrote to Garland, 'I feel I want to listen to nobody but Bach, with a few interludes by Bartók and Bloch'.[354]

White had listened to Bloch's *Second Violin Sonata: Poème mystique* (1924), in 'a marvelous performance by [Jascha] Heifetz'. This sonata was 'a major experience'. Even though it was supposed to have been inspired by Indian philosophy, White found in it elements that would help define the character of Mordecai Himmelfarb, the Orthodox Jew who was the central figure in his new book.[355]

In Bloch's own words, this 'tormented work [portrays] the world as it should be: the world of which we dream [depicted in] a work of idealism, faith, fervour [and] hope, where

[350] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 27 January 1959. NLA, Papers of David Marr.
[351] PW, letter to Ben Huebsch, 17 December 1958. Marr, *Letters,* p. 151.
[352] PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 9 July 1959. Marr, *Letters,* p. 157.
[353] PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 5 October 1959. Marr, *Letters,* p. 159.
[354] PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 17 June 1959. Marr, *Letters,* p. 153.
[355] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 22 November 1959. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356/13/5.

Jewish themes go side by side with the *Credo* and the *Gloria* of Gregorian Chant'.[356] With its eerie quartertones, White found Bloch's music 'so essentially Jewish [that it enabled me] to know inside me what it means to be a Jew'.[357] A little later, White purchased more recordings of Bloch's music. Before long he had acquired the Griller Quartet's performances of all four quartets and he wondered how he had managed to live so long without the *Piano Quintet*. He was disappointed by the theatricality of Bloch's *Sacred Service*; it seemed unrelated to the fervour and majesty he had encountered in the Great Synagogue in Sydney.[358]

White conducted his research into Jewish music with several trips to *Beth Israel* itself. On one occasion his guide was 'a very devout taxi-driver from Bessarabia who is also a scholar of Hebrew'.[359] White could trace no Jewish element in his own bloodline to inform his writing. His experiences of the High Feast-Days in the Great Synagogue moved him deeply. He wrote to Garland extolling the Great Synagogue as 'a lovely building inside, in much better taste than the Sydney churches'.[360]

As he was 'brooding' over the start of *Riders in the Chariot,* White caught a radio broadcast from Salzburg.[361] He found the *Symphonie Liturgique, H.186* by the Swiss composer Arthur Honegger (1892-1955) 'quite stupendous'. Honegger seemed 'to be saying a lot of what I want to say in [*Riders*],' he wrote to Garland.[362] The Swiss composer, one of *Les Six,* had survived the War in Nazi-occupied Paris. In the immediate post-War years, Honegger's *Third Symphony* '*Liturgique'* (1946) was highly regarded as an impassioned plea for peace. The devout Catholic composer described his symphony as 'a drama, in which three characters – real or symbolic – play: misery, happiness and man. It is an eternal problem. I have tried to face it anew.'[363] Honegger appended each of its three movements with a fragment from the liturgy of the Requiem Mass. His ritualistic tripartite form suggested another possible framework for the four 'riders' in White's new novel. He immediately sought out a recording.[364]

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[356] Ernest Bloch, cited by David Zakari Kushner, *The Ernest Bloch Companion.* Westport, CT, Greenwood Press, 2001, p. 10.
[357] PW, letter to Marshall Best, 27 February 1961. Marr, *Letters,* p. 127.
[358] The first Inventory of LP recordings contains mention of a disc entitled *Ceremonial Music of the Synagogue*, performed by the Cantor, E. Haçmann (no further details).
[359] PW, letter to Ben Huebsch, 31 August 1959. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356/16/03. In a letter to David Marr, the author Kylie Tennant identifies the cab-driver as Yoshel, brother of one of her best friends Naomi Kelly. Kylie Tennant, letter to David Marr, 10 March 1985.
[360] Appendix 1 (23): PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 5 October 1959. Marr*, Letters,* p. 159.
[361] The broadcast probably came from 1957, the year of Herbert von Karajan's first Salzburg Festival. With 'the Salzburg Festival Orchestra', better known as the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, von Karajan played Honegger's symphony in that first season.].
[362] PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 13 November 1957. Marr, *Letters,* p. 125.
[363] Arthur Honegger, annotation for *Symphonie No.3 ["Liturgique"],* written for the recording of the Paris Conservatoire Orchestra [Decca ECS 640] and cited by Richard Rodda in programme notes for the American Symphony Orchestra http://americansymphony.org/symphony-no-3-liturgique/ [accessed 6 August 2016].
[364] Honegger *Symphony No.3, Liturgical,* Paris Conservatoire Orchestra/Robert F. Denzler, Decca ECS 640, 1956.

Sometime in 1955, White purchased a recording by the Hungarian String Quartet of the First String Quartet (1909) by Bela Bartók. It wasn't long before he had purchased all six Bartók quartets, performed by the Vegh Quartet. They became his 'desert island discs' worn out from constant playing.

White found *Riders* 'a very trying book to write'. It was 'shaping and altering' all the time, and the four voices of 'what I like to think of as a cantata are beginning to sing in the way that, finally, they must'.[365] Most of the bitter dialogues between the women in *Riders*, exchanges that build into a kind of deranged fugue, were created with Bartók's string figurations nattering in the background.[366] Before *Riders,* Bartók had come in useful for another function also:

> I couldn't get the death of Voss right, and I was in bed with bronchitis, feeling like death. I suddenly got out and put on the Bartók *Violin Concerto*, and everything began to come right.[367]

White was struck by several moments in Bartók's *Violin Concerto (No.2)* BB 117 (1937-8), in particular by those jarring orchestral chords and the solo violin's insistent stabs towards the end of the opening movement, *Allegro non troppo*.[368] These drove him towards the decapitation of Voss by the young Aboriginal guide, Jacky.

White left few clues to explain his enthusiasm for Bartók. He had little time for music inspired by folk sources. He dismissed Grainger, for instance, for his 'irritating folk-arrangements, endless Vikings, and appalling self-promotion'.[369] He would not have understood Bartók's adherence to the structural principles of the 'golden mean', nor his counterpoint or other technical devices. Instead, White allowed himself to be swept away by the sheer sonority of Bartók's music; what he related to was its inherent drama, its sweep and verve.

White used Bartók's music to 'tune' his ears. Around Christmas 1958, he purchased a new hi-fi set, reporting to Huebsch that it made 'very good music,' especially when Bartók was on the turntable.[370] Not only did White feel the drama of Bartók's music, he also glimpsed its romances. Those qualities would serve him well as he went on to produce more novels and plays over the ensuing three decades.

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[365] PW, letter to Ben Huebsch, 11 February 1958. Marr, *Letters,* p. 131.
[366] PW, letter to Marshall Best, 27 February 1961. Marr, *Letters,* p. 127.
[367] PW, in *The Listener,* BBC, 25 October 1974, also cited in *Flaws,* p. 141.
[368] The entry in White's first Inventory simply records 'Bartók' *Violin Concerto* [no number], Yehudi Menuhin, Philharmonia Orchestra, Fürtwangler'.
[369] PW, in conversation with David Marr, SMS 9 December 1989. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9357, Box 54 /17/19.
[370] PW, letter to Ben Huebsch, 18 December 1958. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9357.

8. Sibelius and the Swans

At an SSO concert in June 1960 conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent, Manning Clark had been 'deeply moved' by the music of Jean Sibelius.[371] 'It seemed then a great moment in our history,' the historian wrote to White, '[when] the old man's vision of life had been trumpeted over Sydney.'[372] After reading *Riders* and *Voss,* Clark declared he had been 'just as moved to think that [White's] vision has been communicated with such grace and distinction'. The historian's gratitude came in the form of a gift: another LP recording of those Beethoven piano sonatas performed by Wilhelm Kempff.

White wrote to thank Manning Clark for his 'generous present' and to acknowledge the compliments which 'he couldn't very well comment upon'.[373] He refrained from commenting on Clark's comparison with Sibelius, as he did not share the historian's enthusiasm for the recently deceased Finnish composer:

> [The SSO] came to life when Sargent was here: unfortunately he chose to give us a whole evening of Sibelius, and I always find one work a severe enough trial.[374]

Yet it was Sibelius's *Valse triste* that inspired the novel *The Eye of the Storm.* Lascaris lifted White's veil: 'You have to read the novel as a verbal documentary on Sibelius's music,' he explained.[375]

Valse triste (*Sad Waltz*), Op. 44, No.1 is the first of six short movements Sibelius wrote as incidental music for the play *Kuolema* ['Death'], which premiered in December 1903. It bears the inscription *Tempo di valse lente – un poco risoluto.* As the story of *Eye of the Storm* took shape, White listened repeatedly to Sibelius's mournful tone poem, reading its program over and over:

> It is night. The son, who has been watching beside the bedside of his sick mother, has fallen asleep from sheer weariness, Gradually a ruddy light is diffused through the room: there is a sound of distant music: the glow and the music steal nearer until the strains of a *valse* melody float distantly to our ears. The sleeping mother awakens, rises from her bed and, in her long white garment, which takes the semblance of a ball dress, begins to move silently and slowly to and fro. She waves her hands and beckons in time to the music, as though she were summoning a crowd of invisible guests. And now they appear, these strange visionary couples, turning and gliding to an unearthly *valse* rhythm. The dying

[371] Sibelius had died on 20 September 1957. The SSO presented several memorial concerts in memory of the Finnish composer, led by two musical knights (and rivals) who fancied themselves as Sibelius experts, Sargent and Bernard Heinze.
[372] Manning Clark, letter to PW, 8 November 1961. NLA, Papers of Patrick White, MS 9982/13/5-1. Sibelius had died barely three years earlier, on 20 September 1957, aged 92. The *Valse triste* was played at his state funeral ten days later.
[373] PW, letter to Clark, 6 December 1961. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356, Folder 4.
[374] PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 20 June 1960. NLA, Papers of Patrick White, MS 8434/141.
[375] Manoly Lascaris, cited by Karalis, p. 173. Paul Grabowsky's jazz-infused score for Fred Schepisi's film version of *The Eye of the Storm* (2011) seemed to ignore the tone poem by Sibelius.

> woman mingles with the dancers; she strives to make them look into her eyes, but the shadowy guests one and all avoid her glance. Then she seems to sink exhausted on her bed and the music breaks off. Presently she gathers all her strength and invokes the dance once more, with more energetic gestures than before. Back come the shadowy dancers, gyrating in a wild, mad rhythm. The weird gaiety reaches a climax; a knock at the door, which flies wide open; the mother utters a despairing cry; the spectral guests vanish; the music dies away. Death stands on the threshold.[376]

The connections between Sibelius's music and White's novel, *The Eye of the Storm* (1975) are immediate and clear. Moreover, the family matriarch Elizabeth Hunter is modelled on White's own mother Ruth. It took White several hundred pages to depict the death of his mother, Lascaris observed, perhaps resentful that White did not introduce him to Ruth White for some eighteen years after their first meeting.[377] The parallels between Sibelius's six-minute tone poem and White's elongated death-scene are striking. In his novel, White has Elizabeth Hunter perched unproductively on her commode. She slumps towards her final sleep, her mind swirling in a stream of semi-conscious recall:[378]

> The seven swans are perhaps massed after all to destroy a human will once the equal of their own weapons its thwack as crimson painful its wings as violently abrasive don't oh DON'T my black birds of light let us rather – enfold. Till I am no longer filling the void with mock substance; myself is this endlessness.

In this intensely Joyce-like passage, the swan is an important symbol. Each time he walked his dogs in Centennial Park, White would have encountered a pride of black swans gliding on its fetid lakes. At the time of writing *Eye of the Storm,* he did not realise that swans were the symbols of death. Despite his indifference to Sibelius's music, he must have heard the old Finn's tone poem *The Swan of Tuonela* many times; it was a much-loved staple of ABC concert and radio programs.[379] Elizabeth Hunter's reverie fades to oblivion. Only in that last sentence does White yield the first sign of punctuation, the final snuffing of the candle, the last sigh of the cor anglais.

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[376] Arvid Järnefelt, programme note for his play *Kuolema. http://www.sibelius.fi/english/musiikki/nayttamo* [accessed 16 October 2016]
[377] Karalis, *Recollections,* p. 53.
[378] Appendix 1 (26): PW, *The Eye of the Storm,* p. 532.
[379] Sibelius's 1895 tone poem *The Swan of Tuonela* (*Tuonelan joutsen*) is part of the *Lemminkäinen Suite (Four Legends from the Kalevala)*, Op. 22, based on the *Kalevala* epic tale of Finnish mythology. In Sibelius's nine-minute score, the cor anglais intones the song of the mystical swan as it glides around *Tuonela,* the realm of the dead. Lemminkäinen, the hero of the epic, has been tasked with killing the sacred swan but on the way he is shot with a poisoned arrow and dies.

9. Two Moderns

Over time, White grew to admire the music of the Second Viennese School, particularly their signature devices such as canons, inversions, even *Klangfarbenmelodie*. Superficially, a listener can sense the fragmentary nature of this music, without being able to describe it more precisely in analytical terms. So it was with White. Again, he left few clues which might reveal its influence on his music. Although many literary scholars have drawn attention to fragmentation in White's writing, inspired by Joyce and Beckett and others, none seem to have ventured similar comparisons with reference to music.

At first glance, the fragmentary prose of *Jardin exotique* – that strange central part of *The Aunt's Story* – may appear to have been inspired by the desiccated music of Anton Webern.[380] But that is hardly likely, given that White would not have heard any music by Webern in Australia before completing *The Aunt's Story.* Webern died in 1945, two years before the publication of *The Aunt's Story* and at that time there was no apparent advocate for his music in Australia. If White had any experience of Webern's music to this point, it would have been on ABC radio broadcasts in Australia – unlikely before 1960 or thereabouts –or in London in the 1930s, but he records no such encounter during those years. In Sydney, Webern did not begin to appear in concert programs until local musicians like composer-pianists Meale and Butterley began performing music by Schoenberg, Berg and Webern.

White may have been able to approach this music more confidently had he viewed it through the prism of art; he knew the art of Klee, Kandinsky and Picasso from his London years. Not until quite late in life did he show an awareness of the music of Les Six, Manuel de Falla, and the neoclassic works of Stravinsky. In their re-visitations of the Baroque – the so-called 'Back-to-Bach' movement of the mid-War years – these composers addressed processes of fragmentation and collage in much the same ways as their colleagues in art had done.

Overall, from the time of White's return to Australia in 1947, Sydney had been quite well served with performances of Stravinsky's music. This coincided with the start of what became known in Australian music history as 'the Goossens decade'. The British composer-conductor (1893-1962) occupied – for the only time in Sydney's music history – twin positions in Sydney's musical life, as the SSO's Chief Conductor and as Director of the NSW State Conservatorium of Music.

On the strength of his own neo-classically inspired compositions, Eugene Goossens had been dubbed the English Stravinsky. As a conductor, he had long been identified with British and Australian premieres of Stravinsky's scores, especially the ballets. He gave the

[380] In 1960, White purchased the boxed set of four LPs comprising the complete works of Webern (1883-1945) directed by Robert Craft (Columbia Masterworks, K-4L 232,1957), re-released by Naxos on three CDs 8.501402 (1989). This was less than a year before he met Stravinsky and Craft at a dinner in Sydney.

British concert premiere of *Le sacre du printemps* on 7 June 1921 at the Queen's Hall with the composer present.

White was not so impressed by the imposing 53-year-old maestro who in 1946 had introduced *Le sacre du printemps* and John Antill's ballet suite *Corroboree* to Sydney audiences in a single week. In the decade the British maestro was based in Sydney, White did not seek out Goossens. 'He was more interesting than most we had', White recalled in 1985, somewhat dismissively.[381] Given his passion for Stravinsky, it is odd that White did not seek out the conductor who had done much to promote Stravinsky's music throughout the world, especially in Sydney.

At the time of writing his early novels *Happy Valley* (1937) and *The Aunt's Story* (1947), White seemed unaware of the music of Stravinsky and Milhaud, two composers whose Neo-Baroque idioms could have opened a door to the music of Bach. The music of both composers was performed quite extensively in and around London in the 1930s; White may have caught performances of their music, but there is no mention of this in his surviving correspondence.[382]

All the same, White came to recognize Stravinsky as another potential source of inspiration. Already noted in the previous chapter, a decade after the publication of *The Aunt's Story*, White proclaimed Stravinsky 'the composer of the age!' He bought a recording of *Capriccio* (1926-29/1947) but was disappointed to find it 'dead-cold and brilliant, but like everything of cosmopolitan Stravinsky's, [it was] just an exercise'.[383] He found the neoclassic pieces 'terribly sterile' but he resolved to broaden his opinion by listening to 'some more of his later stuff'. [384] Had he actually listened to any of Stravinsky's music from the *Cantata* (1952) onwards, it is likely he would have found music from Stravinsky's Webern-inspired, twelve-tone period even more clinical and sterile.

10. Jazz and the Physicality of Performers

White held no particular fondness for most forms of popular music. Even so, throughout his life he held great affection for the songs he had heard as a child in vaudeville, the music hall and on the silver screen. Where he did turn to popular music in his writing, White used it as kind of a sonic prop, to set atmosphere, time or place. On such occasions, he could be annoyingly imprecise. In the final pages of the unproduced film script *Last Words* (1979),

[381] PW, in conversation with David Marr, 28 November 1985. NLA, Papers of David Marr.
[382] White's British networks must have informed him about the Stravinsky-Auden opera *The Rake's Progress*, whose English premiere was mounted by the Cambridge University Opera Group in December 1956. A few years earlier, in August 1953, Glyndebourne Opera had mounted a staged production in Edinburgh, the British premiere.
[383] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 26 November 1957. NLA, Papers of David Marr.
[384] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 24 March 1957. Marr, *Letters,* p. 115.

for instance, White instructs street musicians and wartime bands simply to play unspecified 'war music':

> SCENE 44: Music in the Street, what sounds like a three-man band: banjo, drums and spoons. Man's voice singing one of the patriotic wartime songs … Shot of Street Musicians from above, singing "There's a long, long trail [road to Tipperary]…"[385]

Several of the eleven short stories which make up *The Burnt Ones* (1964) contain oblique references to jazz. In the fourth story, *Clay,* the hands of a pianist frolic over the keyboard 'playing out of every warm hole in the old, sea-changed piano'.[386] In the tenth story, *The Woman who wasn't Allowed to Keep Cats,* the voice of Kikitsa, a woman who keeps cats illegally in her Athens apartment, is 'suddenly transposed into the darker key of the midnight alleys'.[387] In the eighth story, *Miss Slattery and her Demon Lover,* music at a bohemian artist party in Woolloomooloo is provided by guitars whose 'twangling break the light into splinters'.[388]

In his early days in London, White had fallen in love with Sam Walsh, the accompanist of Bea Lillie, the Canadian-born British actress-singer and star of stage and film comedies.[389] The gentle, bald-headed American pianist became the model for Wally Collins, the swaggering saxophone player in *The Living and the Dead*. White painted a steamy depiction of his relationship with his onetime lover. The piano, symbol of the Old World, became the flashy neon-sound of the saxophone, the voice of jazz in the New World.[390]

> Wally Collins sauntered. He had all the time. He began to whistle a number, more than whistle, mentally transcribe it into terms of the saxophone … There was nothing like the deep bass notes of the sax, or the higher, climbing, shining ones for burning up the guts. This nightly burning of the guts was the *raison d'être* of Wally Collins, a brief, orgasmic almost death under the glare of chromium, more important this than sex, though appreciated too, the pursuit of skin through lingerie. But nightly the bowels rose in a sad surge of saxophones.[391]

Wandering around America, White casually sought out experiences associated with various parts of the country. He was particularly excited by music he found in the South and Midwest. Again, he was impressed not so much by the music itself as the physicality of musicians playing it. In the orgiastic dances at the Savoy Ballroom in Harlem, White was amazed to see 'negroes dancing on their chests'.[392]

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[385] PW, *Last Words* (1979), screenplay scenes 43-44, p.42. NLA, Papers of David Marr MS 9356/15/10 Box 42, series 1.
[386] PW, *Clay* from *The Burnt Ones* (1964). Hammondsmith, UK: Penguin, 1977*,* p. 132.
[387] PW, *The Woman who wasn't Allowed to Keep Cats* from *The Burnt Ones,* p. 264.
[388] Appendix 1 (27): PW, *Miss Slattery,* from *The Burnt Ones,* p. 219.
[389] PW, in conversation with Marr, 24 January 1989. NLA. Papers of David Marr, MS 9356/15/10.
[390] PW, *The Living and the Dead,* p. 234.
[391] PW, *The Living and the Dead,* p. 234.
[392] Today, this would most likely be called 'break-dancing' or 'b-boy dancing'.

At the Apollo, the renowned jazz dance hall on 125th Street in Manhattan, the impressionable Australian watched 'negroes [doing] ballroom dancing'.[393] In the French Quarter of New Orleans, he thrilled at the virtuosity of musicians he saw in the tiny front room of Preservation Hall, the so-called 'birthplace of jazz'. The bands of Count Basie and Nat Pierce he found 'wonderfully electrifying'.[394]

Similarly, on rare occasions, White found himself 'electrified' by performances at concerts in the Sydney Town Hall. In June 1952, White and Lascaris attended all three recitals by the visiting ABC celebrity artist, the Greek-American mezzo-soprano Elena Nikolaïdi. Her recital programs comprised music by Mahler, Schumann, Wolf, Brahms and Schubert's *Erlkönig.* White had always hated *Erlkönig*, he confessed to Garland, but Nikolaïdi gave him 'shivers of excitement'. It helped, of course, that the singer was Greek: 'such a slashing, dashing, dazzling, golden-skinned creature I have never seen', White gushed, 'and a voice that must be the greatest in the world at present'.[395] Her recordings soon found their way into White's collection.

White could be equally forthright about performers who did not excite him. On the afternoon of a Federal election in November 1958,[396] White wrote to Glover about 'the incredibly dreary' SSO Subscription concerts recently.[397] He found the figure of Lance Dossor at the keyboard 'so dry, colourless, mediocre'. Indeed, the dour British pianist – who had arrived in Australia in 1953 and went on to a long career as a teacher at the Elder Conservatorium in Adelaide – was far from an exciting figure, but here White was analyzing the persona of a performer who, he thundered, 'should not be allowed to perform in public'.

At this relatively early stage of White's journey to music, the quality of the performance delivered may have been beyond the writer's grasp. It was secondary to his principal concern as a fabricator or manipulator – or, indeed, vivisector – of personality and identity.

Over and again – as he had done with he Greek cellist in *The Aunt's Story* and the young pianist in *The Vivisector* – White captured the physicality of the performer in vivid detail. In some instances such as Wally Collins's saxophone playing in *The Living and the Dead,* the instrument or voice metamorphoses into a symbol or recollection of sexual desire and release. Ultimately, the reader experiences not so much the music as the writer's interior, even veiled response to it.

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[393] PW, in conversation with David Marr, 29 November 1988. NLA. Papers of David Marr, MS 9356/15/10. Today, this kind of exaggerated and elegant dance would be called 'voguing'.
[394] PW, in conversation with David Marr, 29 November 1988. NLA. Papers of David Marr, MS 9356/15/10.
[395] PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 25 June 1952. Marr, *Letters,* p. 88.
[396] At that Federal election in November 1958, White and Lascaris voted for 'Doc' Evatt's Labor Party for the first time; White felt he could 'no longer contribute to the career of that Slyguts Menzies'. Eighteen months earlier, at a ceremony where White was presented with the inaugural Miles Franklin Award, Menzies had praised *Voss* fulsomely, without having read a page of it [see *photograph,* p.115].
[397] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 22 November 1958. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9357.

11. Dance

Just as he would describe his encounters with musicians in physical terms, White was in awe of the physicality of dancers. In his responses to dance, he rarely mentioned music. It was almost as though dancers had performed without any music whatsoever.

Among the many alternative careers White dreamed for himself was that of a dancer. Such an ambition was not unusual for a gay man. Aspirations for that improbable career carried into his writing several times. After completing *Happy Valley* (1937), White immediately launched into 'a complicated novel' called *Nightside*, about a French cabaret dancer named Lys. The *demoiselle,* he explained years later, was really Lily, a girl from the Sydney suburb of Mosman, murdered by a perverse German. 'Lily's story was an invention,' White confessed to Marr. 'It was me. I've always wanted to be a dancer.'[398]

Throughout White's biography, dance emerges almost as a guilty obsession. As a child in Lulworth, the young Paddy pranced in front of family and friends. In London in the 1930s, accompanied by his Spanish lover Pepe Mamblas, White was captivated by performances of the *Ballet Russe*. Four decades later, he swapped ballet memories in Sydney with another great balletomane, Igor Stravinsky.

A few years later, White created a scenario for Robert Helpmann who had asked White to provide a scenario for a ballet set in the Australian bush. This 'truly dreadful ballet' came to life as *The Display* (1964), premiered at the Adelaide Festival in March 1964. In White's picaresque scenario, the *dénouement* is a duet between the Young Girl wearing a raincoat and a Male Lyrebird, staggering under the weight of his huge fan. Initially, White wrote in his scenario, 'the Lyrebird dances around the extended body of the Girl, then appears to raise her up. As this movement takes place, the raincoat slips from her and she is revealed as naked as tights and Adelaide will allow.'[399]

White had no time for the kind of chocolate-box confections created by Helpmann and other choreographers associated with The Australian Ballet. At various times, he described ballet as atrocious, appalling, wretched or, at best, mediocre.[400] Ballet, he declared in a letter to Glover, was 'an art for adolescents, senile ladies and queens'.[401]

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[398] PW, in conversation with David Marr, 29 November 1988. NLA, papers of David Marr, MS 9357, Box 54 /17/19.

[399] PW, notes from Scene 3 of 'A scenario for a ballet by Patrick White', created for Robert Helpmann, unpublished. NLA, Papers of Patrick White, MS 9982, 19/10-1.

[400] See, for example, White's withering description of Helmann's ballet *Yügen* (1965) ,as 'a kind of Folies Bergères Unrevealed – showgirls milling about rather clumsily, half-naked muscular boys and [the star held aloft] scattering silver in the direction of the audience'. PW, Letter to Geoffrey Dutton, 21 March 1965. Marr, *Letters,* p. 277.

[401] PW, Letter to Frederick Glover, 12 February 1965. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9357.

Even so, White was an ardent fan of Graeme Murphy's early dance-dramas for the Sydney Dance Company. He was excited by *Rumours* (1979) inspired by the life and artwork of Norman Lindsay, and *Poppy* (1978), an affectionate *hommage* to the life and work of Jean Cocteau. *Poppy* provided his introduction to the dashing young figure of Carl Vine, who became one of his favourite composers. It also featured a dance by the boys of the company, including Murphy, all stark naked. 'Ballet no longer turns me on,' he wrote to composer Richard Meale in Adelaide, 'but this one did!'[402]

More than just a somewhat salacious interest in the physicality of dancers, White wrote a number of dances into his novels and plays. These are generally moments of release, of joyous communion and intense personal encounters. Regrettably – but not unexpectedly – there is rarely any mention of the music played or heard in such instances. In *Happy Valley,* Sidney Furlow and Clem Hagan meet at the Race Week Ball; they dance to light music struggling to be released from a gramophone. In *Voss,* Belle Bonner's wedding is celebrated with a ball, an occasion where Laura could be both happy and true to herself. In the first part of *The Aunt's Story,* Theodora Goodman experiences similar release at a dance.

In *Miss Slattery and Her Demon Lover* (1963), White dances in an artist's studio in Woolloomooloo.[403] The party and its 'disintegrative' music spill out of the studio. 'There was a singing, a crumbling of music on the stairs' and, on the street, 'prawn shells tinkled as they hit the asphalt'.[404] Doubtless there were tangos, but nothing specific: the music of Astor Piazzolla did not arrive in Australia until the mid-1980s. More likely, White had already been seduced by the tango in New York.

In White's last completed piece of fictional writing, *Three Uneasy Pieces* (1987)*,* the narrator of the central story *Dancing with Both Feet on the Ground* is an old man who adores the Charleston and the foxtrot and has learned that life 'must be celebrated only cautiously'.[405] The old man, doddery and infirm – again, White himself? – dances over the detritus of 'spilt milk, lettuce leaves and potato peelings. Bloodstains too.' Surrendering at times to the ravages of senility, the old man's memory dips in and out of a treasured moment: at a particular *thé dansant* in a grand European ballroom in the dead of winter years earlier. He summons up a memory of a stage direction in Shakespeare: 'All dance.'

As White's writing developed, the possibilities of images and their accompanying sounds became more pronounced, but in the main they remain just possibilities. Potential sounds are rarely released. By *Riders,* dancing had become the trigger for joy and release. 'It is a special technique for achieving ecstasy or some awful state outside the bounds of normal experience,' Harry Heseltine has observed.[406] Heseltine cites the 'ghastly parody of a

[402] PW, Letter to Richard Meale, 23 April 1978. NLA, Papers of Richard Meale, MS 10070.
[403] Appendix 1 (27): PW, *Miss Slattery and Her Demon Lover*, *London Magazine* No.1, vol. 3(8). pp. 10-19.
[404] PW, *Miss Slattery,* p. 14.
[405] PW, *Three Uneasy Pieces.* Fairfield, Victoria: Pascoe Publishing, 1987. pp. 15-23.
[406] Harry Heseltine, *Patrick White's Style,* see *Critical Essays on Patrick White,* ed. Peter Wolfe. Boston, MA: G.K.Hall & Co., 1990. pp, 205-6.

dance' in *Riders* when Miss Hare and Mrs Jolley stagger through the halls of Xanadu. There had never been any music at lunch there 'beyond the sustained pizzicato of conversation'.[407] White created a graphic, even shocking account of the sacrilegious dance of a young labourer who stomps on the smouldering ruins of Xanadu, 'dancing himself briefly into a new plane of ecstasy'. [408]

There is nary a mention of sound, much less music to accompany the kind of fan-dance Lily of Mosman – or White of Centennial Park – may have danced to, recalling those homoerotic fan-dances White experienced in the Middle East.[409]

Towards the end of *Eye of the Storm*, the young Jewish nurse Lotte Lippmann dances before the bejewelled cadaver of the bed-ridden Elizabeth Hunter. The old woman's body resembles one of Nolan's desert skeletons.[410] The only sound heard in this virtuosic canvas of word-painting is the ticking *rallentando* of a metronome. Time is running out.

With Elizabeth Hunter, a reader might ask: is that all we're paying for?

12. Souvenirs of Childhood: Vaudeville & Music Hall

Vaudeville and music hall provided many critical moments in White's childhood. They propelled him towards the stage and, more cautiously, towards music. Memories of these formative experiences surfaced at various times, especially towards the end of his life. 'Oh, yes, well, I've always wanted to be an actor,' White told Kerry Walker, one of his favourite actors. 'The roles I would most like to play are Vaudeville, Lear and Hedda Gabler.'[411]

Similar thoughts surface in the befuddled mind of White's geriatric alter ego Will Garlick, the central character in his film script, *The Monkey Puzzle* (1977?). In one of his reveries, Garlick is transported back to a 'spectacular revue' with 'showgirls descending stairs in elaborate costumes, some in rose-petals, others in sequins, or feathers, or shining armor, all with appropriate headdresses'.[412] At this point, White hears music 'of the same level' as *A Pretty Girl is like a Melody,* the immortal song by Irving Berlin created for *The Ziegfield Follies of 1919.*[413] Or, more telling still, *You Stepped out of a Dream.*[414] The last moments of the script are accompanied by the banal lyrics of a movie song: 'Life is just a bowl of cherries…'

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[407] PW, *Riders,* p. 479.
[408] Heseltine, referring to *Riders,* p. 521.
[409] Appendix 1 (28): PW, *Riders,* p. 465.
[410] Appendix 1 (29): PW, *Eye of the Storm,* p. 525.
[411] PW, in conversation with David Marr, 10 October 1989. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9357 (Marr) Box 54 /17/19.
[412] PW, *The Monkey Puzzle,* p. 29.
[413] Sheet music cover art by Henry Clive, music by Irving Berlin - UCLA Digital Library Program Archive of Popular American Music [1], Public Domain accessed 6 November 2016].
[414] *You Stepped out of a Dream* was the centrepiece of the 1941 musical *Ziegfield Follies,* a song White encountered at a club in London whilst waiting to be demobbed at the close of the Second World War.



Illustration 24: Sheet music cover art by Henry Clive, music by Irving Berlin - UCLA Digital Library Program Archive of Popular American Music Public Domain
https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=8720358
Accessed 6 November 2016

Even the most banal moments in White's novels and plays have significance. 'However [much] you deplore a popular song', Maudie Westmacott declares in *The Living and the Dead,* 'it usually has relevance'.[415] Here, as he did on many occasions, White satirized the vacuity of audiences at such events, patrons of the opera and ballet especially. 'I'm not into much opera at present,' he wrote to the Moores in July 1978. 'Perhaps it's the awful complacent audiences of company directors and their mink-coated wives.'[416]

White described his sixth play *Signal Driver* (1981) as 'a morality play for the times' whose retrogression symbolized the decay of Australian society from 1920 to the present day. He also characterized it as 'a chamber work' for a quartet of actors.[417] The director Neil Armfield has drawn attention to the quasi-musical function of the players, as they speak in unison, or in harmony, or in solo phrases, but always 'in musical terms in describing the quality of the play'.[418] The dialogue of the two Beings amplifies these musical characteristics to the point of Brecht-Weill exaggeration. When spoken, White instructs, their voices are 'down-to-earth and naturalistic; when sung or chanted [their voices become] more formal. At all times, their delivery should have a touch of the Music Hall in it.'[419] Now, in the last years of his life, White is actually composing music, but with words, as sound-text poet-composers like the Italian Futurists, Ernest Toch and others had done.

[415] PW, *The Living and the Dead,* p. 88.
[416] PW, Letter to David and Gwen Moore, 24 July 1978. NLA, Papers of David Moore, MS 8601/157.
[417] PW's own characterization of the play, in subtitle of *Signal Driver, A Morality Play for the Times.* Sydney, Currency Press, 1983.
[418] Neil Armfield, *Signal Driver: an interview with Neil Armfield and Gus Worby,* Sydney: Theatre Australia, March 1982, p. 14.
[419] PW, Instructions for staging *Signal Driver.* Sydney, NSW: Currency Press, 1981, p. 5

Carl Vine's innocuous music for *Signal Driver* peppered elements of music hall with the sharp barbs of Brecht/Weill cabaret.[420] White admired the music of the handsome young composer-pianist. '[Vine] doesn't say an awful lot', the auteur-playwright opined, 'but you feel he's very much in tune with the play, very sensitive to the words of it, so that's a good thing when it comes to composing music for the songs'. Covell's cautionary words resonate here: White's idea of the composer's task was that 'such a person would set the author's text as it stood and be honoured to do so'.[421]

White had intended to call his eighth and final play *The Budgiewank Experiment* but Sharman stepped in to persuade him to adopt the more socially acceptable title, *Shepherd on the Rocks* (1987).[422] Once again, a White play had appropriated the title of a musical composition. This time, the connection with music was superficial. White's rocks were hardly as wild as Mussorgsky's peak, nor was his *Shepherd* as lyrical as Schubert's plaint.

On two further occasions, White appropriated other musical titles. His incomplete novel, *The Hanging Garden* drew on *Das Buch der Hängende Gärten,* ['The Book of the Hanging Gardens'], Op.15, the title of the 1909 song cycle by Arnold Schoenberg.[423] White also borrowed the title of Verdi's opera *Sicilian Vespers,* for the fifth story of *The Cockatoos*.[424]

Armfield characterised White's *Shepherd* as 'Patrick's *Tempest.'* But it is hardly White's valedictory to the theatre. More was still to come. White's Notebooks contain fragments of several other projects, sketches for more films and radio plays. One of these, improbably enough, was to be a dramatization of the life and work of Mother Mary MacKillop, later to become Australia's first saint. *The Nun,* one of *Four Love Songs,* was to have been 'a nun's monologue' for Kerry Walker. White had assembled considerable research for the project but eventually he abandoned it. Ultimately, he found himself 'too impressed with the nun to send her up in a play'.[425]

Lascaris maintained that White had a deep love for everything he seemed to denounce or parody in his work. He cautioned that readers should interpret White's works as 'immense parodies, especially his last works, which are parodies of his own style'.[426]

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[420] Unusually, Vine's music is printed as an Appendix in the Currency Press publication of *Signal Driver.*
[421] Roger Covell, email to the author, 22 December 2015.
[422] Neil Armfield's premiere production for the State Theatre Company of *Shepherd on the Rocks* opened at the Adelaide Festival Centre, on 9 May 1987.
[423] Coincidentally, PW might have finished this novel, had he not set it aside to write his play *Signal Driver.*
[424] Verdi's opera *I vespri siciliani* was first produced at the Paris Opera in June 1855. It has yet to be performed by Opera Australia. Thus, White may have heard it on the radio or from a recording loaned to him by the likes of Desmond Digby.
[425] PW, letter to David Marr, 14 January 1988. NLA. Papers of David Marr, MS 9356/15/18
The title is crossed out in the Notebooks, NLA M9982/2/9. Patrick White's research into Mother Mary MacKillop. NLA. Papers of David Marr, MS 9356/15/17.
[426] Karalis, *Recollections,* p. 66.

'Are you for magic?' Danny Shepherd asks at the opening of *Shepherd on the Rocks.* For the final time, the priapic former Anglican priest throws himself into the lion's cage at the Jerusalem Show with the exclamation: 'I am!'.[427]

> Inadmissible when we are taught to believe in science or nothing. Nothing is better. Science may explode in our faces. So I am for magic. For dreams. For love. [428]

Magic and dreams, dreams and love were what Patrick White wanted from his theatre, the theatre historian Andrew Fuhrman has written. Where the magic was potent enough, there would be love, 'the kind of world-consuming love' that exceeds the scope and power of the stage and elevates the theatre as 'a place of worship and enlightenment'.[429]

White's plays are 'unlike anything else in the Australian theatre,' Armfield has remarked, somewhat effusively. 'They have their feet in vaudeville and their heads in the stars, in the vaulted air of the cathedral.'[430] Not just White's plays, it might be argued, but also his novels and other writing, which often bring together elevated thoughts and scatological humour on the same page.

Music too was part of White's alchemy. The capacity of music to set time and place, to probe those insights into character and situations which could not be expressed in 'the dry sludge' of words, made it a powerful tool. Judy Pogson, the young violinist in *The Ham Funeral*, could not explain the power of music. Nor could White himself.

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[427] At the conclusion of *Shepherd,* the priest-turned-lion tamer is eaten by one of his lions.
[428] PW, *Shepherd on the Rocks*, in *Patrick White, Collected Plays, Volume 2.* Sydney, NSW: Currency Press, 1987. p. 246.
[429] Andrew Fuhrmann, 'Patrick White: A theatre of his own', *Australian Book Review*, No.356 (November 2013), p. 45.
[430] Neil Armfield, 'Patrick White: A centenary tribute', *Meanjin* (18 June 2014), p. 30.

13. Summary

This chapter has discussed a wide range of novels and nearly all White's plays, all from the sound-point of music. The kaleidoscopic references to music illustrate White's broad and ever expanding knowledge of music, his mounting appetite for music and his growing understanding of music.

This chapter has also documented White's responses to a wide roster of composers and to such popular forms as jazz, vaudeville and music hall, as well as to other art forms like dance and ballet. All these citations and instances barely represent the tip of the literary iceberg, so to speak. White's writing abounds with musical references to other compositions too numerous to mention here in full.

Beyond discussion of technical and cognitive dimensions of White's writing, there is also the philosophical and spiritual element. This becomes increasingly significant with the appearance of each successive novel, play, short story and – to a lesser extent – film and public proclamation. Underlying all these discussions, paradoxically, is the least 'noisy' and least 'heard' dimension of White scholarship: music.

With this in mind, what follows are the four Case Studies. These explore in greater detail White's use of music at the narrative and structural levels and reveal further layers of his relationship to sound and music.

The next chapter will trace the musical background of one of White's earliest novels, *The Aunt's Story* (1947). In turn, that retraces White's own musical experiences in his travels around Europe in the earlier years of the 20th century.

Chapter Four: Case Study #1:

The Aunt's Story

1. Introduction

The previous chapter examined the role of music in a general review of White's writing. The next four chapters focus on specific illustrations and stages of his writing. The present chapter outlines the role of music, at both a narrative and structural level, in a novel that first introduced White to the literary world. It remained a favourite of its author until the end of his life.

The Aunt's Story is White's third published novel. It first appeared in London in 1948 and stands between *The Living and the Dead* (1941) and *The Tree of Man* (1955). It also post-dates *The Happy Valley* (1939), recently restored to White's catalogue. Coming at this relatively early stage in his career, *The Aunt's Story* represents, for the sake of this study, 'the early White'.[431]

Like most of White's novels, *The Aunt's Story* had a long period of gestation. White began writing it in 1941, when he was not quite thirty years old. It retraces not only his own experiences travelling in Europe and the USA in the 1930s, but also draws on the travels of his mother during her extended two-year honeymoon some three decades earlier. Moreover, it chronicles the years leading to the Second World War, culminating in White's wartime service in North Africa where in July 1941 he met his life partner Manoly Lascaris. In essence, *The Aunt's Story* documents White's experiences from, roughly, 1932 to 1948. At that point, White and Lascaris returned permanently to Sydney, beginning a new phase of his writing career and his relationship to Australia. In terms of music, *The Aunt's Story* may be viewed as a compendium of White's experience of music to that point in his life.

Structurally, *The Aunt's Story* is the first of White's novels to derive from a musical form. It illustrates what this study has termed 'the structural level'. Music provides the structural basis for each of the three parts of this novel and subdivisions of those parts. White was fond of the three-part structure of classical sonata form, containing elements of a palindrome or recapitulation section of first movement sonata form. In passing, the central part of *The Aunt's Story* also references earlier music, specifically the suites of Johann Sebastian Bach, reminding the reader of the importance of Bach's music on White's narrative.

In *The Aunt's Story,* White presents the first of his larger-than-life, almost operatic characters. Figures like Theodora Goodman, Johann Ulrich Voss, Hurtle Duffield and Will

[431] All citations from *The Aunt's Story* will be listed in text as *TAS*, taken from *The Aunt's Story* [London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1948] Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin Books Australia, 1967 (fifth reprint) and page numbers herein derive from that edition.

Garlick command centre-stage, with secondary characters gravitating around them. White gives them great speeches which a composer could readily translate into arias and solo dramatic *scenas*. The composer Peter Sculthorpe, for one, saw the operatic potential of Theodora Goodman, even before he embarked with White on the ill-fated opera on the subject of the ship-wrecked Eliza Fraser.

Some years before he began to draw together the strands of his new novel, White had trialled a similar project in an undated novel called *Pure Words*. In a mere two-and-a-half pages of his Notebooks, White sketched a three-part novel. Part one carried the title 'Australia', part two was entitled 'Europe – the act of escape' and part three depicted 'a period of hopelessness and chaos', with no indication of its actual setting.[432] These sketches contained the seed of autobiography, as they traced the course of White's own life leading to his permanent return to Australia in 1948.

2. Theodora Goodman



Illustration 25: PW, *The Aunt's Story.*
London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1948,
subsequently by Eyre & Spottiswoode in 1948.
Dust jacket based on *The Aunt,* a painting by Roy de Maistre.

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The Aunt's Story relates the tale of Theodora Goodman, an unmarried middle-aged Australian woman travelling alone after the death of her mother. During her personal rite of passage, Theodora experiences what is either a mental breakdown or some kind of revelation or epiphany. These terms are often associated with Joyce and were adopted by White in his few attempts to define his own writing style.[433]

[432] The sketches for *The Aunt's Story* can be found in NLA, MS 9982. Papers of Patrick White, 1930-2002 [manuscript]. Series 2: Literary notebooks, 19302-1970s. Item 3: War Journal, including material for *The Aunt's Story* (1948), c.1941 (119 parts).
http://www.nla.gov.au/apps/cdview/?pi=nla.ms-ms9982-2-3 [accessed 8 August 2015].

[433] It is possible that White knew of the *Epifanie* (1960-63/65) a twelve-movement work for soprano voice and large orchestra by Luciano Berio. The texts are arranged in such a way, Berio writes in the liner notes (RCA LSC-3189, 1967; the LP also contains the famous *Folksongs,* both sung by Cathy Berberian) 'as to suggest a gradual passage from a lyric transfiguration of reality (Proust, Machado, Joyce) to a disenchanted

In 1936, the 23-year-old White first read *Ulysses*, often mentioned as one of the central influences on his writing. In her book, *Self and Shadow* (1966), the Australian scholar Thelma Herring traced Theodora's odyssey not as an exact replica of the mythical journey of the ancient Greek hero, but as the odyssey which defines Theodora's suffering and tribulations. Like Ulysses, Theodora struggles to extinguish what Herring termed 'the great monster Self'.[434]

White's Notebooks reveal that he had imagined a similar odyssey of his own. Sometime in 1941, somewhere in the deserts of North Africa, he sketched the first portrait of Theodora Goodman. These sketches reveal the embryonic tripartite structure of the novel, and do so in a way that suggests literary and musical fragmentation.[435]

Despite gaps and what may appear to be grammatical inaccuracies – all by-products of White's often indecipherable hand-writing – his outline is clear enough: this novel will explore the descent of its main character into madness. In its closing pages, Theodora's sister announces: 'Theo is coming home … What is more, she appears to be quite mad' (*TAS,* 256) . *The Aunt's Story* is another of White's descents into darkness, a recurring theme through which he attempted to unravel and explore his own state of mind.[436] From the time she leaves her family home, Theodora's grip on reality falters. So much so that, in the second and third parts of the novel, the reader can never be sure what is reality, and what is some kind of half-remembered recollection or hallucination in her mind.

Like the eponymous character of *Voss*, Theodora sets out on a multi-dimensional journey. Her journey unfolds not just in geographical terms, but also in a spiritual sense. Herring suggests that, whereas Voss was the explorer, 'Theodora is the traveller wandering in the Old and New Worlds'.[437] Theodora's wanderings shadow White's own experience of the world, as he travelled somewhat aimlessly through Europe and the USA in the 1930s.

Like many of his leading ladies, Theodora Goodman was a composite of characters drawn from White's imagination and from real life. These women were part of what Marr has characterised as 'the bestiary of *grandes dames* in his life and work, [that] parade of willful rich females that had begun with his mother, Ruth'.[438] They helped flesh out fictional creations like Mrs Hunter in the novel *The Eye of the Storm* (1973) and Miss Docker in the play *A Cheery Soul* (1963).

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acknowledgment of things (Claude Simon; for this text the voice speaks and becomes gradually nullified by the orchestra). Lastly, the words of Bertolt Brecht … are the cry of regret and anguish with which Brecht warns us that often it is necessary to renounce the seduction of words when they sound like an invitation to forget our links to a world constructed by our own acts.'

[434] Thelma Herring, *Self and Shadow: The Quest for Totality.* London: Oliver and Boyd, 1966. p. 66.
[435] Appendix 1 (30): NLA, MS 9982 Papers of Patrick White, 1930-2002
[436] White used the Koestler-like term 'descent into darkness' many times in various conversations with his biographer. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356/15/10.
[437] Thelma Herring, '*Odyssey of a Spinster: A Study of* The Aunt's Story', in *Ten Essays on Patrick White,* G.A. Wilkes, ed. Sydney: Angus and Robertson, 1970, p. 12.
[438] David Marr, *White and Adelaide.* Adelaide Writers Week, 6 March 2012, unpublished, p. 5.

White dedicated *The Aunt's Story* to another *grande dame* in his life. Betty Withycombe (1902-1993) was his cousin and, for many years, his principal confidante. Despite their close relationship, there was a critical distance between them: Withycombe did not approve of White's sexuality nor his lifelong partnership with Lascaris. In 1976 White requested she return all their correspondence. She obliged, returning about four hundred letters. White burned them all. For that reason, then, this period of White's life (1930-50) is only thinly documented, thwarting any attempt to piece together his narrative before he returned to Australia.[439]

There are still more claims for the origins of Theodora Goodman. A painting by Roy de Maistre, *Figure in a Garden (The Aunt)* was triggered by de Maistre's discovery of a photograph amidst the bombed ruins of a house near Chelsea Barracks. The painting bespeaks what art historian Helen Verity Hewitt has described as 'a poignant contrast between a life devastated by war and the conventions of the Edwardian portrait photograph, with its formal pose and concern for correctness'.[440] Where these 'familiar features and expression confirming continuity and order should be,' Hewitt has noted, de Maistre created a blank face devoid of life and emotion.



Illustration 26: Roy de Maistre, (1894-1968)
Figure in a garden (The Aunt), 1945.
Oil on hardboard, 90.5 x 63.5cm on board; 108.0 x 80.3 x 7.2 cm frame.
Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney - Gift of Patrick White, 1974
https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/media/collection_images/4/48.1974%23%23S.jpg
[accessed 15 May 2015].

De Maistre's face-less female body was precisely what White needed to spark an idea that had been slow-burning in his imagination for some time: a wandering spinster touring the world on the brink of the global madness that ignited the Second World War. The image was used on the cover of the first edition of the book. De Maistre's painting propelled White towards writing what would become his third novel.

[439] The gestation periods of the three other case studies are well documented by White's correspondence, but the period leading to the publication of *The Aunt's Story* is scantly documented.
[440] Hewitt, *Patrick White, Painter Manqué,* p. 21.

At the outset, White drew on other lingering memories from his past:

> … the paddocks at Moss Vale; the mysterious house on the crater of Mount Ashby across from my prep school, the Morrice's house 'Brownlie' somewhere between Moss Vale and Bowral, [Maie] Brett's lantern of a house in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains of New Mexico.[441]

The intervention of War caused White to put his novel to one side. After the War, he found himself itching to return to writing. He got drunk 'cultivating a garden of words and sensations which I had been waiting years to germinate (sic)'.[442] White's creative self 'frozen into silence by the war years' now begun to thaw. ' I can't say that it poured on to the paper after years of drought,' he admitted to Huebsch. 'It was more like a foreign substance torn out by ugly handfuls.[443]

Like Theodora's wanderings, White allowed his writing to flow freely, without a direct road or inflexible map. 'There is no life-line to other lives,' Theodora declared. There were roads, but 'she could not take the direct road. Roads did not leave through the infinite landscape in which she hesitated'. (*TAS,* 132-137) White himself had no time for maps, as illustrated in the previous chapter.

3. The Literary Sonata

At this point, it is helpful to recall White's admission at the time of the publication of *Voss* (1957). 'Music,' he said 'helps me with the structure of a book'.[444] Beyond that admission, Fiona Richards is struck by 'the sheer profusion of musical allusions in *The Aunt's Story*,' noting how White made 'subtle and careful choices of music to reflect the three distinct periods, locations and moods of the novel'.[445]

[441] PW, *Flaws,* p. 127.
[442] PW, *Flaws,* p. 127.
[443] PW, letter to Ben Huebsch, 30 June 1947. Marr, *Letters.* p. 71.
[444] PW, cited by Ian Moffitt, in *'A Talk with Patrick White'*, in *New York Times Book Review* (18 August 1957), p. 55.
[445] Fiona Richards, *Rubbed by the Warming Violins: Music and Patrick White,* The Open University, 2012-16. *Cercles: Revue Pluridiscipline du Monde Anglophone*, 26. pp. 22–38. http://oro.open.ac.uk/35600/ [accessed 29 August 2015].

Structurally, this study takes Richards's observation a step further. It suggests that *The Aunt's Story* is modelled on a sonata in three movements. Here, there are two considerations: the classical sonata as a three-movement work, as well as the inner workings of the first movement of a sonata. In terms of the closed, symmetrical structure of three-movement sonata form, White created a structure which might be read along the following lines:

> Part One, the Introduction: Theodora's childhood at Meroë in Australia;
>
> Part Two, the Development: Theodora's encounters at the Hôtel du Midi in France;
>
> Part Three, the Recapitulation: Theodora's memories of Meroë, which resurface as she travels through 'Abyssinia', as she describes the American Southwest.

In terms of the structure of the first movement of a classical sonata, White created a more focussed formal structure in the first part of the novel:

> The Exposition: music in Theodora's childhood at Meroë;
>
> The Development: music in her adult life, particularly her encounter with Moraïtis, the Greek cellist;
>
> The Recapitulation: a return to domestic life at Meroë, shortly before she embarks on her journey of self-discovery.

To emphasize the sonata-like structure of the novel, its three distinct parts are characterised by differences in geography and personalities, language and techniques, as well as references to various musical forms and styles, as Richards has noted.

Curiously, White designated the chapters of *The Aunt's Story* as 'parts' with each 'part' being further divided into smaller subsections. White saw interconnections between each 'part'; they are literally 'parts' of a whole, portraying aspects of the life and travels of its central character. In musical terms, these 'parts' could be considered 'movements', but this is not a term White used to describe the subdivision of his novels. They were not chapters, as a reader might expect.

When Patrick White was a child, his mother took him to concerts and soirees where sonatas were performed. As a teenager, it is likely that White heard pieces like the *Moonlight Sonatas* in the grander houses of Sydney's eastern suburbs. While at Cambridge and later in London, he may have heard sonatas played at concerts, at home musicales and record-listening sessions. He may have attended lectures or read the analytical tomes of writers like Donald Tovey and George Bernard Shaw, whose books are archived in his library. By the time he sat down to write the earliest sketches of *The Aunt's Story,* White would have already been familiar with the fundamental framework of sonata form. A decade after the publication of *The Aunt's Story,* Wilhelm Kempff's recording of Beethoven piano sonatas consolidated that basic knowledge. It became his spiritual and aural reference point. It was one of the first LPs he collected and he played it continuously until he had worn out its grooves.[446]

[446] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 11 May 1957. Marr, *Letters,* p. 116.

As a member of the cultivated upper middle class, a very basic knowledge of the classical sonata would have been part of White's vocabulary of general knowledge. All the same, he could hardly have been expected to have acquired the ability to explain sonata structure in detail. That hardly mattered matter to him. 'Of course, I do not mind if I cannot "understand" music, poetry, novels, paintings', he admitted to Frederick Glover, 'provided I am able to react to them'.[447] It is noteworthy that the word 'understand' appears in this statement; understanding the inner workings of music *au fond* was a skill that eluded White. Where writers like Anthony Burgess and Vikram Seth could compose sonatas – and did! – it was enough for White to capture his own response to the sonata. A photograph of an object rather than the actual object itself.

A more detailed understanding of the role of music in this early novel affords heightened insights into White's methodology. What follows is a critical evaluation of the role of music in each of the three parts of *The Aunt's Story.*

4. Part One: *MEROË*

Each part of *The Aunt's Story* is prefaced by an epigraph. The first and third parts are prefaced by quotations from Olive Schreiner's *The Story of an African Farm* (1883). The first part of *The Aunt's Story* is introduced by lines which reveal the psychological underpinnings of the novel:

> She thought of the narrowness of the limits within which a human soul may speak and be understood by its nearest of mental kin, of how soon it reaches that solitary land of the individual experience, in which no fellow footfall is ever heard.[448]

Schreiner's lines unfurl the fabric of this opening part, with its threads of loneliness, solitude, and the inability to communicate with others or be understood by them.

Meroë is the name of an old house in a country region of New South Wales, possibly somewhere near Scone in the Hunter Valley, the setting of the White ancestral homestead 'Belltrees'.[449] The fictitious Goodman family lived at Meroë from the period immediately after the First World War until the Depression years, perhaps little more than a decade, in all.

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[447] PW, letter to Glover, 6 April 1960. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 8601/1/3. Emphasis added.
[448] *The Story of an African Farm* was the first published novel by South African author Olive Schreiner (1855-1920), writing under the pseudonym 'Ralph Iron'. Upon publication in 1883, it was an immediate success and has since become recognised as one of the first novels of the feminist canon.
[449] Judy White, *The White Family of Belltrees: 150 years in the Hunter Valley*. Sydney: The Seven Press, 1981.



Illustration 27: 'Belltrees', ca. 1917. Judy White, p.120

The name Meroë is derived from the ancient city on the east bank of the Nile, the capital of the kingdom of Kush, approximately 200 kilometres northeast of Khartoum. Theodora recalls all this in a letter written during her 'lost days' in the USA. In *Holstius,* the final section of the novel, she writes home: 'the time has come to return to Abyssinia' (*TAS,* 256).

Unlike its ancient namesake, the Meroë of *The Aunt's Story* is an old house in which 'nothing remarkable had taken place, but where music had been played' *(TAS* 34). Transplanted to the Australian countryside or the Outback, the manorial home is the archetypal 19th century Australian rural property. It figures throughout the concourse of Australian literature, from Ethel Turner's *Seven Little Australians* (1894) to Colleen McCullough's *The Thorn Birds* (1977). In a grander guise, it also recalls Belltrees, the residence in which White spent part of his childhood.

The rolling hills of the Hunter Valley, teeming with vineyards, bear little, if any resemblance to the deserts of the Sudan. More likely, White may have been referring to the barren mental landscapes of many of the rural folk who lived around his father's property. In the layout of that property, the model for *Meroë*, White discerned a musical structure:

> *Meroë* was a pale grey house, with a drive leading up to it. There were privet hedges on either side … and white windows that could not contain the music that flowed perpetually into the garden, the complicated pieces played by older girls. The garden was full of broken music. There were pauses as well as music. The fuchsias tumbled like detached notes waiting to bridge the gap between bars. (*TAS,* 47)



Illustration 28: Aerial view of Belltrees homestead, Scone, Hunter Valley, NSW, ca.1917. Judy White, *Belltrees.* p. 52.

Much has been written about fragmentation in White's writing, but there has been little comment about the silences in his writing. The writer Hal Porter recognized both elements, interpreting White's prose as 'composed of razor-bright sentences, vitreous jig-saw slices of paradox and poetry, the fastidious gluing-on of sharp-edged fragments'.[450] Illustrating this, White's description of Meroë in *The Aunt's Story* derives from the layout of Belltrees.[451] The 'broken music' or 'silences' of the gardens in Meroë – and Belltrees – are an important structural dimension in White's writing, one that was addressed by Porter and others.

Lascaris felt that White 'left his stories with meaningful gaps and suggestive missing links', much like the paintings of the Cubists or the music of Anton Webern, perhaps. 'He never wanted to punish his readers with truths that left no space to breathe', Lascaris observed, a few years after his partner's death.[452]

5. The Piano and Pianists

In many Australian homes, the piano held pride of place in the living room; in grander houses, a music room would be reserved for private pleasures and public recitals. The piano in colonial Australia was ubiquitous; its impact on Australians of White's generation cannot be underestimated. Several decades before the emergence of television in this country, the piano was the focal point of the social life of the family.[453]

In these old homesteads, the visitor is struck by the music that is preserved within their cluttered rooms. Not only the upright piano – almost mandatory – but also harmoniums, harps, fiddles and cellos, music boxes and children's toys, along with ancient volumes of sheet music and dog-eared popular songs and ditties, all residing under the tasselled lids of creaky long piano stools.

[450] Hal Porter, 'Patrick White'*,* in *Contemporary Novelists,* James Vinson, ed. London: St James Press, 1972, pp. 1345-8.
[451] Judy White, *Belltrees,* p. 110.
[452] Manoly Lascaris, cited in Karalis, *Recollections*, p. 61.
[453] Humphrey McQueen, in *The New Brittania: An Argument Concerning the Social Origins of Australian Radicalism*, Ringwood, Victoria: Penguin Australia, 1970, (fourth edition, 2004) outlines the role of the piano in the 'civilizing' of Australia.



Illustration 29 : 'The Drawing Room (ca 1900-1910).
Richards & Co., Photographer, 23 Sturt St, Ballarat, Vic.'
Digital image from the State Library of Victoria, with kind permission.

Theodora would have spent many hours in such a setting. As a pianist, she was one of White's 'rather anguished and more wooden performers'.[454] As a child, she was made to practice her scales; it was the sort of thing good children did, Theodora's mother instructed her, like brushing one's teeth.

In the previous chapter, it was noted that the eight-year-old White took piano lessons, although only for a short period. Theodora did too but in winter, her 'hands stuck to the music'. Young Paddy's did too, as he battled the chill-blains which curtailed his piano lessons at Tudor House in the freezing winters of the Southern Highlands. 'Beating out the icy bars of a nocturne,' Theodora's hands – like Paddy's – were 'stiff and blunt when they should have sailed out as smooth and continuous as a wedge of swans' (*TAS* 28). Swan replacing cygnet, Mrs Goodman would sit next to Theodora on the piano stool. White had often done the same, sitting next to his mother at the piano in Lulworth or with his adored piano teacher Mrs Lord at Tudor House. Given his few months of piano lessons, White could hardly have matched even the technical abilities of the 'wooden' Theodora as she sat at the piano with her mother.[455]

Clearly, Theodora was not destined to be a pianist. Her 'thin, dark, struggling arms' filled old Mrs Goodman with distaste' (*TAS* 109). She seemed to play 'an angular music that did not exist' (*TAS* 109). Theodora's Chopin was hardly 'real' Chopin – mellifluous, undulating, unleashing dreams of secret seductions. The sounds may have been beauteous – or should have been – but Theodora's arms were 'angular,' quite unsuited to a beauteous delivery of Chopin. These references to angularity recall White's letter to Sidney Nolan in which he expresses his delight that Nolan may 'do some paintings from *Voss',* an observation which yields the much-quoted and important admission:

[454] Theodora came to be known by the more familiar and affectionate name 'Theo', despite its somewhat gender-ambiguous moniker.
[455] Appendix 1 (31).

> I always see most of what I write and am in fact, a painter manqué. Visually, *The Aunt's Story* is a kind of Klee. Long before it was written, there was a tremendous exhibition of Klee's paintings which poured oil on my flames.[456]

Angular arms playing angular music. White's description recalls Stravinsky's notion of the piano as a machine with angles and planes, somewhat like a Cubist painting.



Illustration 30: Paul Klee (1879-1940) *Abstract Trio* (1923).
Watercolour and transferred printing ink on paper, bordered with gouache and ink, mounted on cardboard. 49.9 x 64.5 cm.
The Berggruen Klee Collection 1984. Wikipedia Creative Commons.
http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/1984.315.36/
[accessed 12 September 2016].

Theodora's sister Fanny, on the other hand, was near-perfection at the piano. Fanny 'wore pink, married well, and [was] a bright young woman' (*TAS* 92). She was her mother's 'pretty little parakeet'.[457] Fanny was 'the musical one … the artistic one' who thought up 'many clever games' (*TAS* 27). The characterization of two sisters bonded in music recalls the real-life figures of Ethel Florence Lindesay (later Henry Handel) Richardson and her sister Ada Lilian Richardson, both talented pianists.

In comparing the two sisters, the 'pretty' Fanny and the 'hollow' Theo, White created an intriguing counterpoint. The sisters could be characterized as the first and second subjects of a sonata: Theodora would be represented as the minor key first subject, her sister Fanny the second subject, in a contrasting major key. Like her namesake, Fanny Mendelssohn (1805-1847), Theodora's sister could turn any piece of 'swift, smooth music she played [into] a whole bright, tight bunch of artificial flowers surrounded by a paper frill' (*TAS* 30).

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[456] PW, letter to Sidney Nolan, 7 June 1958. Marr, *Letters,* p. 138.
[457] 'Pretty Little Parakeet' sounds like the title of a popular children's rhyme and, possibly, a parlour song. In common parlance, it signified the pink colouring of what was thought the prettiest parakeet (or budgerigar). There were many parlour pieces of this nature, such as *The Bird Waltz* by Charles Coote, Jr. (nd).

The old Mrs Goodman lamented that Theodora was 'a hard, plain, egotistical young woman who will never interpret the meaning of love' (*TAS* 92). Those words would 'beat on [Theodora's] soul forever so that it answers regularly as an African drum' (*TAS* 92). Almost as an after-thought, White introduces another counterpoint: a local gentleman named Huntly Clarkson emerges as a potential love-interest. Huntly and Theodora had little in common. He had scant time for music, sometimes listening to music merely 'as a logical stage in developing the evening after dinner' (*TAS* 104). On rare occasions, he escorted Theodora to concerts where everyone in the audience was 'rounded and well fed' (*TAS* 109). The contrast between the plumpness of most of the audience – mirroring the over-ripeness of the music of Brahms and Rachmaninov which comprised much of the repertoire they heard at such concerts – and the gaunt, willowy Theodora constitutes another line of counterpoint:

> Music filled out the lines and emphasized banality. It is not possible to listen to music without the body becoming a hump on a chair. (*TAS* 110)



Illustration 31: Draft dust jacket cover by Sidney Nolan for the first U.K. edition by Eyre & Spottiswoode, London, 1948.

For all her dowdiness and unattractive foibles, Theodora Goodman was held in fond regard by her creator. He was disappointed by Sidney Nolan's initial dust jacket sketch for the cover of *The Aunt's Story*. White thought Nolan had made her look 'pure Shanty Irish,' like Nolan himself, but without one of Nolan's signature hats.[458] He had imagined her very differently indeed: as 'a distinguished creature,' worthy of *Vogue* magazine cover.[459]

[458] Nolan knew hats well. His first job was painting the advertising posters for the Melbourne hat company Fayrefields. They were the manufacturers of the famous Australian slouch hat, the identifying symbol for generations of Australian Diggers at war.
[459] PW, letter to Geoffrey Dutton, 13 December 1959. Marr, *Letters,* p. 160.

6. The Greek Cellist and His Concerto

Midway through this first part of *The Aunt's Story,* White introduces a mysterious musician, a Greek cellist named Moraïtis, travelling Australia as a concert artist. His concert schedule of three recitals and a single orchestral concert in a capital city sounds very much like the kind of schedule the ABC would arrange for its visiting celebrity artists from, roughly, 1935-75. The setting has to be Sydney: after a concert, Theodora escapes to her tram, perhaps to a stop in Pitt Street, a block away from the Town Hall.[460]

At first glance, the obvious model for a Greek cellist would be Lascaris, but this is not so, White told Marr, quite emphatically: this cellist was 'just a musician'.[461] Still, Lascaris's unassuming character and Greek background must have crept into the creation of Moraïtis to some extent. White completed *The Aunt's Story* after he and Lascaris had lived together for a year in Greece.

Moraïtis meets Theodora at a dinner party hosted by Huntly Clarkson. For some reason, unexplained, this 'Greek with sad eyes' was drawn to her. Amid the vacuous chatter of dinner party conversation, Moraïtis waited in vain 'for the women to talk about music, because women, a certain kind, do talk about music, and these were they' (*TAS* 106). To society ladies from Sydney's North Shore or eastern suburbs who fluttered around post-concert receptions, this celebrity artist tried to explain that Greece was 'a primitive country'. [462]

Hearing his homily, the good ladies of Sydney would nod in recognition. Yes, they knew Greeks, especially those who came to Australia after the War. Their Greeks were labourers on the Snowy Mountains scheme. Some were greengrocers and fish-and-chip shop owners, others ran restaurants and olive groves, but none could possibly have been concert cellists.[463]

Moraïtis had been announced as a virtuoso cellist. Parodying the breathless language of an ABC press release, this cellist wove 'a magnificent tapestry of sound and colour' (*TAS* 109). White captured the backstage atmosphere before a performance cannily; he had experienced this ritual many times at theatres and concert halls in London. Theodora hears 'slabs of music piled one upon the other', while musicians rehearse their parts and Moraïtis waits to go onstage 'through the rain of distant music' (*TAS* 109). Then, like the breaking of a drought, 'the silence crackled':

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[460] The last tram service in Sydney ran in 1961.
[461] PW, in conversation with Marr, 22 October 1988, NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.
[462] Appendix 1 (32).
[463] Ironically, White's novel was written two decades before the SSO appointed two principal cellists with Greek names, the French-born Gregory Elmaloglou and Algimantis Moietekaitis.

> The concerto had begun. The violins made a suave forest through which Moraïtis stepped. The passage of the cello was difficult at first, struggling to achieve its own existence in spite of he pressure of the blander violins. Moraïtis sat upright. He was prim. He was pure … and he saw with the purity of primitive vision, whether the bones of the hills or the shape of a cup. Now the music that he played was full of touching, simple shapes, but because of their simplicity and their purity, they bordered on the dark and tragic, and were threatened with destruction by the violins. But Moraïtis closed his eyes as if he did not see, as if his faith would not allow. He believed in the integrity of his first tentative, now more constant theme. And Theodora, inside her, was torn by his threatened innocence, by all she knew there was to come. She watched him take the cello between his knees and wring from its body a more apparent, a thwarted, a passionate music, which had been thrust on him by the violins.
>
> The cello rocked, she saw. She could read the music underneath his flesh. She was close. He could breathe into her mouth. He filled her long aching silences, between the deeper notes that reached down deep into her body … The bones of her hands, folded like discreet fans on her dress, were no indication of exaltation or distress, as the music fought and struggled under a low roof, the air thick with cold ash, and sleep, and desolation.
>
> But in the last movement Moraïtis rose again above the flesh. You were not untouched. There were moments of laceration, which made you dig your nails into your hands. The cello's voice was one long barely subjugated cry under the savage lashes of the violins. But Moraïtis walked slowly into the open. He wore the expression of sleep and solitary mirrors. The sun was in his eyes, the sky had passed between his bones. (*TAS* 111)

With imagery as erotic as anything written by D.H. Lawrence, White transforms Theo into the cello between the knees of the Greek virtuoso. She imagines 'she could read the music underneath his flesh' (*TAS* 110). His music is 'more tactile and [real] than the hot words of lovers spoken on a wild nasturtium bed' (*TAS* 106).[464]

The cello appears on an earlier occasion in *The Aunt's Story.* At Meroë, Theodora's father carves the Sunday roast – being rural Australia, it had to be lamb (mutton) – and watching him was 'like somebody with music, someone with a 'cello in his hands' (*TAS* 38). In the second part of the novel, Theodora observes the young English schoolmaster-poet, Wetherby, 'whose face when seen full on was a 'cello' (*TAS* 162).

Elsewhere, in *The Solid Mandala,* Dulcie Saporta has a voice with ''cello notes' (*TSM* 66), which emerge 'muted' from her throat' (*TSM* 131). This distinguishes her voice from Waldo's ringing '*Rigoletto*-tenor tones' (*TSM* 72).[465]

[464] Elgin W. Mellown, 'Music and Dance in D.H. Lawrence'. *Journal of Modern Literature,* Vol. 21, No. 1 (Summer, 1997), pp. 49-60.
[465] PW, *The Solid Mandala.* London: Penguin Books, 1966. Pages as indicated under *TSM.*

In *Song of Myself,* the American poet Walt Whitman – White once lambasted him as 'that old wind-bag'[466] – invoked the stirrings of a young man aroused by the shape of a cello: 'I hear the violoncello,' Whitman wrote in *Songs of Myself*. It is 'the young man's heart's complaint, it shakes mad-sweet pangs through my belly and breast.[467]



Illustration 32: Man Ray (1890-1976),
Le violin d'Ingres (France, 1924).
Reprinted by kind permission the
J.Paul Getty Museum of Los Angeles, California.
Arguably, Man Ray's model appears more as a cello than a violin.

In Western art, the cello has long been the musical representation of the female figure. It extends from voluptuous Baroque beauties to contemporary images associated with the *outré* performances of Charlotte Moorman[468] and that notorious photograph of Man Ray. It even appears in the *argot* of musicians. Many international male cellists feminize their instruments. On airline travel, 'Mrs Cello' often occupies a seat next to the cellist, her carapace firmly seat-belted for the duration of the journey. The Russian-Israeli virtuoso Mischa Maisky calls his famous Montagnana cello (1730s) his 'beautiful lady,' noting that the word for cello in Russian – Виолончели – is feminine, as it is in many languages.[469]

It is reasonable to suggest that the music White describes is actually Antonin Dvořák's *Cello Concerto in b minor,* Op.104 (1891). Its long opening orchestral *tutti* lasts four minutes, a considerable time for a concerto whose entire duration fans out to forty minutes in performance. White depicts the violins thrusting 'a passionate music' onto the cellist in the opening *Allegro* movement. Again, in the last movement, *Allegro moderato,* there are 'moments of laceration, which made you dig your nails into your hands' (*TAS* 110). Here the voice of the cello sounds as 'one long barely subjugated cry under the savage lashes of the violins' (*TAS* 111).

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[466] PW, letter to Nigel Butterley, n.d. NLA, Papers of Nigel Butterley, MS Acc07/33.
[467] Walt Whitman, *Song of Myself,* 1892 version. http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poems/detail/45477 [accessed 5 July 2016].
[468] The cellist-performance artist Charlotte Moorman (1933-1991) founded the 'Avant Garde Festival of New York' (sic) and was a frequent collaborator of Korean composer Nam June Paik and other members of the so-called 'Action School' associated with John Cage. With Cage and Merce Cunningham, Paik and Moorman came to Australia in March 1976. In the AGNSW, Moorman invited members of the audience to cut pieces from her dress until she was completely naked.
[469] Tim Janof, *Conversation with Mischa Maisky,* 25 July 2007. http://www.cello.org/newsletter/articles/maisky/maisky.htm [accessed 6 July 2016].

White's description of movements of the Dvořák concerto, outlined above, might be considered alongside an annotation by the American musicologist Michael Steinberg. [470]

> The *Adagio [ma non troppo*, second movement] begins in tranquillity, but this mood is quickly broken by an orchestral outburst that introduces a quotation from one of Dvořák's own songs, now sung by the cello in its high register and with tearing intensity …The song returns in the finale, and [a] coda stops the dancelike momentum.

Steinberg then cites Dvořák's own comments on that passage in his concerto:

> 'The Finale closes gradually *diminuendo,* like a sigh, with reminiscences of the first and second movements – the solo dies down … then swells again, and the last bars are taken up by the orchestra and the whole concludes in a stormy mood. That is my idea and I cannot depart from it.'[471]

The period in which White wrote *The Aunt's Story* pre-dates the arrival of the LP record, and his collection of 78 rpms contains only three titles.[472] Neither inventory of LPs contains mention of this Dvořák concerto. Despite this, it is reasonable to suggest that White may have first encountered this concerto during his years in London or whilst travelling on the Continent in the 1930s. At this time, the Spanish cellist Pablo Casals was at the height of its career, as a soloist, conductor and recording artist. White, as a concert-goer, would surely have recognized Casals and other eminent cellists of the day, and it is possible he may have heard or even owned the early 1938 recording of the concerto by Pierre Fournier.[473]

A decade after the publication of *The Aunt's Story,* White's enthusiasm for the cello remained undimmed. In 1957 he eagerly awaited a performance of the Dvořák concerto by the diminutive Argentinian cellist, Adolfo Odnopossof (1917-1992).[474]

In August 1960, he attended an SSO concert in which the 33-year-old Mstislav Rostropovich played Prokofiev's *Sinfonia Concertante*.[475] After the concert, White contemplated buying a recording even though 'one really should *see* Rostropovich', he enthused. 'Rostropovich plays like an enraged bear', he observed, 'then comes out at the end to acknowledge the applause like a gay and gentle human being'.[476] Here, White's penchant for observing the physical qualities of a musician comes to the fore. As noted in the previous chapter, the music actually played and hears seems a secondary concern.

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[470] Michael Steinberg (1928-2008) was one of the leading critics, concert programmers and program annotators in contemporary American music. He gave the Stuart Challender Memorial Lecture for the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in 2004.

[471] Michael Steinberg, program note for Dvořák's *Cello Concerto,* reprinted by the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, 2013. https://www.sfsymphony.org/Watch-Listen-Learn/Read-Program-Notes/Program-Notes/DVORAK-Concerto-in-B-minor-for-Cello-and-Orchestra.aspx. [accessed 20 April 2016]

[472] The inventory compiled by Mobbs lists only three titles under the heading '78 RPM': Mahler *Symphony no.2* (Festival); Bach *Sonatas* (sic); A.A. Milne *The Hums of Poo* (HMV).

[473] It is likely that White knew the 1938 DGG recording of the Dvořák concerto by Pierre Fournier, with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by George Szell.

[474] PW, letter to David & Gwen Moore, 9 April 1957. Marr, *Letters,* p. 117.

[475] The *Sinfonia Concertante* was dedicated to Rostropovich, who gave the premiere performance in Moscow on 18 February 1952.

[476] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 19 August 1960. NLA Papers of David Marr. MS 9356.

7. Part Two*: Jardin exotique*

In his Notebooks, White penned an (undated) thumbnail sketch of the second part of *The Aunt's Story* – 'the act of escape'.[477] White's early sketches characterize the *Jardin exotique* as the setting of a kind of comic operetta; its bizarre cast of characters play out their fantasies and fetishes as the nations of Europe march towards war:

> The Hôtel du Midi is a little picture of comic [indistinct] frivolity, as expressed in the lives of Sokolnikov, Mrs Rapallo, Lieselotte and the Demoiselles Bloch …The Commissionaire, one of the White Russian Legend, the Edwardian Nostalgia. All this [indistinct] passions and purification of pre-War years. Theodora is not part of this. She is now a chorus or commentary, though acting also as a messenger or confidante. She is apart from this.[478]

Theodora's meanderings struck a nerve among many living Australians. Among these was the poet-conservationist Judith Wright. Like Manning Clark, Wright had also travelled around Europe in 1937:

> (I) had struggled with the terrors of those times and the approaching darkness, clearly then not far ahead. Dissociation of lives, madness, uprootedness, were part of my own times.[479]

Coming from far-off Australia, Theodora cannot comprehend the looming crisis swirling around her. She seems unaware of the Spanish Civil War (1936-39). Although she finds herself 'acting as a messenger or confidante,' White reminds us 'she is apart from this' (*TAS* 207). He suggests a growing disconnect between Theodora everything around her.

This second part of the novel is inscribed with lines from Henry Miller's *Black Spring* (1936). This was a momentous year – the Berlin Olympiad under the Nazis, the death of King George VI and the bombing of Guernica the following April. It was also the very year several Australians – Theodora Goodman, Manning Clark, Judith Wright, Patrick White and even Theodora Goodman – were travelling around Europe. White deploys lines from Miller's *Black Spring* as the epigraph for *Jardin exotique*:

> Henceforward we split into myriad fragments, like an insect with a hundred feet, a centipede with soft-stirring feet that drinks in the atmosphere; we walk with sensitive filaments that drink avidly of past and future, and *all things melt into music and sorrow*: we walk against a united world, asserting our dividedness. All things, as we walk, splitting with us into a [sic] myriad iridescent fragments. The great fragmentation of maturity.[480]

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[477] White's distinctive handwriting prevents an accurate and literal transcription of this passage.
[478] NLA, Papers of Patrick White, MS 9982, Series 2 Folder 3.
http://www.nla.gov.au/apps/cdview/?pi=nla.ms-ms9982-2-3-s89-e

[479] Judith Wright. See *Patrick White: A Tribute.* North Ryde, NSW: Angus & Robertson / Harper Collins Imprint, 1991. p. 13.
[480] Henry Miller, *Black Spring.* Paris, France: Obelisk Press, 1936, p. 113. Cover of first edition. No details of artist. Emphasis added. Miller's novel itself is divided into ten almost independent sections.

In deploying this quotation from *Black Spring,* White signalled that fragmentation and dissolution would form the underlying tenet of this part of his novel. The reader follows Theodora as she slips further and deeper into a demi-world inhabited by an almost surreal world of characters from cabaret, operetta and the circus. A previous chapter described how White was drawn to the fantastical world of pantomime and vaudeville from a very early age. Now, in this central part of *The Aunt's Story*, he escorted Theodora into that same world of fantasy and 'reality'.

Theodora's travels are tantalizingly unchronicled by her creator: the reader learns nothing of her impressions of Paris, French art and music, nor of her tastes in French cuisine and wine. The exterior world, as Lascaris has explained meant little to White: what mattered more was the interior psychology of his characters. After five years, Theodora arrives at a little hotel on the French Riviera. She is exhausted 'as if she had been listening to music, some echo of Moraïtis from his country of the bones' (*TAS* 137).

Theodora has convinced herself that, as she no longer relates to people, she has come to the Hôtel du Midi 'to have contact with tree and flower' (*TAS* 139). She seeks solace in the pride of the hotel, its *jardin exotique*.[481] Initially, she is disappointed by its sparseness. It was 'static, rigid … the equation of a garden' (*TAS* 139). This *jardin*, White revealed many years later, was mostly his reconstruction of the Hostellerie de Ciborne near Monaco. It was run by a Madame Jacquet, into whose *jardin* he had 'planted' cactus plants, a feature of other notable gardens in Monaco.[482]



Illustration 33: The *jardin exotique* at the Hostellerie de Cibourne, 1937. Marr, *Life,* plate 33, no further details.

[481] Appendix 1 (36): PW, *The Aunt's Story,* pp. 140-1.
[482] PW, in conversation with Marr, 29 April 1987. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356 Folder 17.

White had stayed in this hotel in 1937 with Pepe Mamblas, the Spanish diplomat, his lover and travel companion at the time. Mamblas was a supporter of General Franco, later rewarded with the title of 'Duke of Buena'. Mamblas was 'very keen on superficially important artists', White recalled, people like aristocratic novelists and dancers from the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo. Mamblas took White to performances of the Ballet Russe in London. Diaghilev's *Ballet Russe* was dissolved after his death in 1929, and a number of *Ballets Russes* companies were then formed. Ironically, had White been in Australia at this time, he could have caught one of the tours orchestrated by Colonel Wassily de Basil between 1936 and 1940. Had he been in his hometown Sydney, White could have seen a stunning array of 20th century ballet:

> The Ballets Russes companies brought with them a panorama of choreography, music and design of a kind not previously seen in Australia. Works such as *Scheherazade* and *Le Spectre de la Rose* linked directly back to the Diaghilev repertoire, with some, such as *Aurora's Wedding*, extending that link back to the Tsarist Russian period. Ballets such as *Les Presages* and *Cotillon* introduced Australian audiences to works that post-dated the Diaghilev era. Five ballets, including David Lichine's *Graduation Ball*, received world premieres in Australia. In all, forty-four works, most of them Australian premieres, was presented over the three tours.[483]

The staff at the Hostellerie were far from impressed by the Duke and his young Australian partner. They were anti-social, the staff sniffed; they spent most of their time at the Hostellerie together in their room. They emerged only for meals. [484]

Before the War, White had explored many parts of the French countryside; he found regions around Annecy and Chamberry, 'rather chaste and chilly'. [485] On the whole, he told his London literary agent Juliet O'Hea, he preferred the southern provinces of France. Recalling those explorations a half-century later, White was less impressed: 'from what I've seen of them in recent years, they haven't much of their charm left,' he wrote to O'Hea. 'If one must travel today, never go back to places one has known.'[486]

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[483] Ballets Russes Australian Tours, 1936-40.
NLA, www.trove.nla.gov.au/list?id=1194 [accessed 8 May 2016].
[484] PW, in conversation with Marr, 15 February 1988. NLA, Papers of David Marr MS 9356, Folder 16.
[485] PW, letter to Juliet O'Hea, 7 August 1983. Marr, *Letters,* p. 583.
[486] PW, letter to Juliet O'Hea, 7 August 1983. Marr, *Letters,* p. 583.

8. Music in the *Jardin*

In musical terms, this central part of *The Aunt's Story* suggests a kind of *tema e variazione,* a form which often constitutes the middle movement of a sonata. Its interlocking *fugato*-like episodes depict the interplay of the principal subject/character with an array of secondary characters. None are clear-cut; they may or may not be what they seem or claim to be. 'Once created', White writes, these characters 'choose their own realities' (*TAS* 242).

Many readers drop away a few pages into reading *Jardin exotique*. Largely because of its fragmented structure, it is among the most difficult 'reads' in the White canon. 'It is a bold experiment,' Herring suggests, 'in rendering the mental life of Theodora by a more dramatic method of blending past and present, illusion and reality than [by merely writing in an] ordinary monologue'.[487]

In this second part of *The Aunt's Story,* language changes markedly: no longer direct and personal, it is more opaque and somewhat impersonal. It exhibits qualities similar to Stravinsky's music of this same period – clean-cut, clinical, severe even – neoclassic works that White would not have known at the time. Similarly, the musical settings shift from the rural Australian lounge room and concert hall to the austere formality of a sumptuous room modelled on the French Baroque. This scene conjures up the setting of Stravinsky's '*Dumbarton Oaks'* concerto, a kind of neoclassic re-visitation of Bach's *Brandenburg* concertos, as Stravinsky himself explained:

> I played Bach very regularly during the composition of [my *Dumbarton Oaks*] Concerto, and I was greatly attracted to [Bach's] *Brandenburg Concertos* ... whether or not the first theme of my first movement is a conscious borrowing from the third of the Brandenburg set, however, I do not know. What I can say is that Bach would have been delighted to loan it to me, to borrow in this way was exactly the sort of thing he liked to do.[488]

Although written in Europe, Stravinsky's chamber concerto was first heard in May 1938 in the gilded Music Room of the Dumbarton Oaks estate in Washington, in a performance directed by Stravinsky's most ardent disciple, Nadia Boulanger. White may have 'taken' Theodora to a room similar to this – somewhat more run down – at the Hôtel du Midi. Several references to the Gavotte, that strictly formal dance in 4/4 time, now place the reader in the world of the Baroque. 'With some sadness', Theodora heard sounds that were 'tight, frilled, mechanical' (*TAS* 104). It was a Gavotte. She may have heard members of her family attempt Bach suites on the piano in Meroë, a memory which would account, in part, for her 'sadness', perhaps even home-sickness.

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[487] Herring, *Patrick White: Painter manqué,* p. 19.
[488] Igor Stravinsky, cited by Eric Walter White, *Stravinsky: The Composer and His Works*, second edition. Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: The University of California Press, 1979. P. 270.

Lured by the distant sounds of music, Theodora finds herself at a quasi-operatic *soirée*.[489] She is no longer an observer in the domestic world of scales and nocturnes. She is now among a cast of eccentric figures who could have stepped from Jean Genet's play *The Balcony*.[490] Gradually, she becomes more sociable and comes to find the *jardin* more agreeable. At night, as 'music melted the gardenia trees,' Theodora relishes the pleasures it suggests, 'for the glorious young [people who] could never remember which waltz [they] should save for whom' (*TAS* 158). She is 'enchanted by the gouty, golden music' (*TAS* 154). There is no sense of Stravinsky's clean, astringent Bach-inspired counterpoint here; now, White pours out 'gouty, golden music,' the domain of Wagner and many other late German Romantics.

Waltzes aside, it could be suggested that the sections of *Jardin exotique* were derived from the five movements of Bach's *Partita no.2 in d minor,* for solo violin, BWV 1004. In those movements – setting aside the *Gavotte* – the characteristics of some residents of the Hôtel may have surfaced. Taken movement by movement, the salient features might be characterized as follows:

- The stilted form of the opening *Allemande* suggests M. Durand, 'the not particularly distinguished [*maître*] who puts 'the apt words in their right order' (*TAS* 136).

- The flighty nature of the ensuing *Corrente,* with its juxtaposition of triplets and dotted rhythms, suggests the young girl Katina who begs Theodora 'to be a kind of aunt' (*TAS* 143).

- The emotionally charged third movement is the *Sarabande* – the very music which excited the birds of *The Cockatoos* –suggests the testy conversation between the *mesdemoiselles* Bloch, Marthe and Berthe, unsettled Jewish sisters who are 'honest mice picking forever at the crumbs of the past' (*TAS* 89).

- The exuberant fourth movement, the *Giga,* suggests a portrait of 'the American adventuress', Mrs Elsie Rapallo, a woman 'of great ugliness and great cunning' (*TAS* 154).

- The immense framework of the concluding *Ciaconna* (or Chaconne), with its simple four-bar theme exaggerated almost immediately into a quite complex structure, suggests it could be a mirror for the complex and somewhat contradictory layers which emerge within the character of Theodora herself.

[489] Appendix 1 (63).
[490] Jean Genet's *The Balcony*, first produced in 1957, is set in an up-market brothel whose clients and whores symbolize a microcosm of the world at war.

The most fleshed out character in this *ménage* hardly fits into a Baroque mould. The exiled Russian General Alyosha Sergei Sokolnikov is a member of the former Czar's Imperial Army. He is proud of his moustache through which he hums snippets of Meyerbeer 'as convincingly as a French horn' (*TAS* 177).[491] At one point, Theodora finds herself caught in 'the iciness of music,' another neoclassic trait. 'Music pursues,' the General tells her (*TAS* 235). She cannot escape it.

There are other elements of musical exoticism in this central part of *The Aunt's Story*. Theodora hears distant snatches of a tango, one of White's favourite dances. Here it is sung by *le petit*, the bellhop's voice 'brick-warm, supple as a cat' (*TAS* 138).[492] The language White uses to describe *le petit* recalls his description of a young Abyssinian he interrogated in North Africa during the War – dark, smooth and odorific. In the age of Josephine Baker – the African American singer who had made her career in France in the 1930s – the black African bellhop at the Hôtel du Midi mesmerizes his audience of white guests.

Another guest at the Hôtel is a mysterious woman named Lieselotte, whose 'physical smallness intensified her passion' (*TAS* 166). White paints her as a Wagnerian parody: her mauve lips are 'outlined very faintly in black, over her wax skin' (*TAS* 166). Lieselotte recounts 'a fairy-tale [wherein] brown, wooden men acted a jolly pantomime of respect to please the *Gesellschaft'* (*TAS,* 166). Here, White shifts from the Wagnerian opera he had seen in Dresden to the Nazi wedding entourage he had witnessed in Munich. Moreover, Lieselotte comes with some salacious baggage: her husband was 'a myth in jackboots' (*TAS* 174) and her father 'by nature the hero of an operetta' (*TAS* 166). More than that, she explains, he chose to be 'a disinfectant,' a true Nazi who aspired to 'disinfect the world' (*TAS* 166). In the *jardin,* Lieselotte spins her Wagnerian 'fairy-tale' to the delight of the other guests. Listening to her myths, they caught 'the sickness of the violins. Music dripped, coating the walls with glistening moisture of sound.' (*TAS* 166).[493]

Here White conjures up the love-music of *Die Walküre,* the moment when Siegmund and Sieglinde realize they are brother and sister, twins and lovers. White found himself torn between attraction to the music and repulsion at what it represented. The twins are bonded in one of the incestuous taboos that fascinated him in *A Fringe of Leaves* (1976) and *Memories of Many in One* (1986). In Dresden, White had seen Kirtsen Flagstad sing the role of Sieglinde in *Die Walküre*. Years later, he confessed that 'the only Wagner in which I could find a wallow' was *Tristan und Isolde,* and 'possibly also the end of *Götterdamerung*'.[494] More fanciful still, Isolde was a role he imagined he himself could play. It is difficult to explain the meaning of this particular fantasy.

[491] The 'general' is another re-creation modelled on a real-life figure from White's past, in this case a Russian major who lived in the basement of 13 Eccleston Street in London.
[492] Appendix 1 (37).
[493] Appendix 1 (38).
[494] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 10 July 1966. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 8601/1/3.

9. *Autres jardins*

Over the past five centuries of Western culture – in music, painting and literature – there has been a floribundance of 'gardens'. Many of these *jardins* were French in origin. They extend from the refined *claveçin* music of Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764) to the glistening piano music of Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992), and beyond. The best-known of these *musiques du jardin* is the piano piece by Claude Debussy, *Jardins de la pluie* (1903) ['Gardens in the Rain']. But the penchant for depicting gardens in music is not confined to French composers. It passes through the 20th century to composers as diverse as Schoenberg and Takemitsu, even to the Australian composer Anne Boyd.

The garden was also the defining symbol of the music of Toru Takemitsu (1903-1996). The Japanese composer often characterized his music as 'like a garden, [with myself] the gardener'.[495] In the documentary film *Dream Garden: Reflections on the Japanese Garden* (1992), he compared listening to his music to the sensation of 'walking through a garden and experiencing changes in light, pattern and texture'.[496]

In 1926 Paul Klee painted *Jardin exotique*. His garden comprised 'floating fern fronts, abstracted stars and stepped lines [accompanying] vaguely hierophantic plants, threatening and imperious'.[497] Klee painted many other images of gardens, ten of which White had seen in 1945 at an exhibition at the Tate.[498] Overall, 137 of Klee's paintings were displayed in the tremendous exhibition which had 'poured oil on [White's] flames'.[499] Klee ignited the spark which fanned over the terrain of the *jardin* in *The Aunt's Story.*

> Shadows lay with a greater hush across the stones [of the *jardin exotique*], as if the abstracted forms to which the shadows were attached could only be equalled by silences. The garden was completely static, rigid, the equation of a garden … [it] continued to wear the colourless expressions of glass. (*TAS* 166).

Abstracted forms – shadows – silences – static – rigid, the 'equation of a garden': the same language could be applied to the brittle music of Anton Webern. This music fascinated White; in early 1960, he acquired the complete set of Webern recordings directed by Robert Craft.[500] He found resonances of this 'rigid quality' in other music too. In Richard Meale's *Flute Sonata* (1960) he discerned 'imprisoned waltz tunes one felt one wanted to help break out'.[501]

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[495] Takemitsu's music is the central thread of the documentary film *Dream Window: Reflections on the Japanese Garden.* John Junkerman, director. Washington, D.C. The Smithsonian Institution, 1992. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xWcmuk2tN7M [accessed 16 February 2016].
[496] Tom Service, *A Guide to the Music of Toru Takemitsu.* London, The Guardian, 11 February 2013.
[497] Hewitt, *Patrick White, Painter manqué,* p. 21.
[498] The Paul Klee exhibition ran at the Tate Britain gallery from 22 December 1945 to 17 February 1946.
[499] PW, letter to Sidney Nolan, 7 June 1958. Marr, *Letters,* p. 138.
[500] Complete works of Anton Webern (1883-1945), directed by Robert Craft
Columbia Masterworks, K4 L 232,1957, re-released by Naxos on three CDs 8.501402 (1989).

[501] White had heard Meale's *Flute Sonata* at the Conservatorium performed by Peter Richardson (flute) and Richard Meale (piano). This may have been his first acquaintance with the music of Meale who was to



Illustration 34: Paul Klee, *Zaubergarten* ('Magic Garden') (1926)
Oil on plaster-filled wire mesh in artist's frameplaster: (52.1 x 42.2 cm); Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice, 1976.
Reproduced with permission of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation.

White's *jardin exotique* resembled Webern's meticulously manicured music or a garden traced in the music-like lines and angles of Klee. In other words, it was more the 'equation' of a garden, rather than the 'reality' of one. That garden recalled the geometric designs of the gardens of Meroë. They help to explain Theodora's 'sadness' at the memory of something she knew and loved so distant and long ago.

'Music runs through the whole of Klee's work', the New York-based art historian Will Grohmann has observed. According to the painter's son Felix, more than five hundred of the 9,146 works recorded in Klee's *catalogue raisonné* refer to the theatre, masks, or music. Paul Klee, the son of a musicologist and himself an accomplished violinist, is important to musicians.

Many composers draw on Klee's theories; one thinks of works as diverse as Berio's *Circles* (1960) and *Tirade* (1968) by Don Banks; Gunther Schuller's *Seven Klee Portraits* (1959) and the recent orchestral work *Olive Pink's Garden* (2017) by Anne Boyd. Many more composers possess volumes of his sketches and writings, especially his *Pedagogical Sketchbook* (1921-31).[502] Until the appearance of computer-generated notation – a task he often assigned to students and assistants – Peter Sculthorpe laid out his manuscripts in Klee-like fashion. He gave students and friends copies of the *Pedagogical Sketchbook* as gifts. As he took his lines 'for a walk', Sculthorpe wrote in his autobiography, 'Klee's lines and descriptions teach one how to write music quite as much as they teach one how to draw'.[503]

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assume Sculthorpe's mantle as 'the real thing'. PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 6 April 1960. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356/47/13.

[502] Paul Klee's *Pedagogical Sketchbook* is based on his extensive lectures on visual form at the Bauhaus Staatliche Art School where he taught (1921-1931). Sculthorpe gave a copy to the author as a birthday present.

[503] Peter Sculthorpe, *Sun Music,* Sydney: ABC Books, 1999. p. 261.

10. Part Three: HOLSTIUS

Recalling the importance of fragmentation representing madness, White returned to Schreiner's *The Story of an African Farm* for an epigraph for the third part of *The Aunt's Story*: 'When your life is most real, to me you are mad' (*TAS* 255).

The advance of Theodora's madness outlined in the two previous parts now reaches its lowest point in *Holstius,* the third and final part of *The Aunt's Story*. White's Notebooks carry the inscription 'The Switchback' as a preliminary title.

> The return to Australia is [disillusion], via a boisterous, trumpeting, passionately unaware America. She is still this diffident stranger in shapeless clothes, who one a type of servant respects, and another ridicules. The barometer of servants' reaction … [indistinct] The murderous winters on the US East Coast must be very finely weighed and balanced … as a symbol of Theodora dying. No retrospect, because this inclines towards regret. The time is both consuming and creative, finite and infinite.[504]

The term 'switchback', barely known in Australia, is common in the USA. For the most part, it is found in travel guides and accounts of road journeys. The term can connote a roller coaster-like road or a trail joined by a hairpin turn. More likely, given the nature of Theodora's journeys across America, it refers to a train journey. At times these adventures must have felt like a roller-coaster ride, with startling psychological ascents and thrilling, heart-stopping descents.

Somewhere in the American Midwest, Theodora wanders aimlessly away from an unidentified railway station. White left her location vague until, quite late in life, he reflected on her travels. 'Yes, it was Taos where she ended up,' he told Marr. 'She didn't go home. Not necessarily couldn't because she was going a bit nutty by then. She's very mixed up by all that last part.'[505] It was in the tiny artistic community of Taos, New Mexico, that White spent those 'three exhilarating weeks' in 1937, and where he met and parted company with his American lover, Spud Johnson. Taos is also a kind of shrine to Lawrence followers: his ashes are mixed in the concrete of a chapel at Kiowa Ranch, and his paintings were exhibited behind closed doors in the La Fonda hotel. During his stay in Taos, White would surely have seen these erotic and gawdy images. [506]

At this stage in Theodora's journey, the reader is unable to distinguish between reality and fantasy. She has transformed herself into another character; she now presents herself as 'Miss Pilkington'. Improbably, the soaring vistas of New Mexico remind her of that other 'Abyssinia' in her life, the homestead Meroë. 'She looked through the trees for the tree walking which in time would become Holstius' (*TAS* 279).

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[504] PW Notebooks, NLA, Papers of PW, MS 9982, Series 2 Folder 3. http://www.nla.gov.au/apps/cdview/?pi=nla.ms-ms9982-2-3-s89-e [accessed 8 August 2015]. Again, White's handwriting impedes an accurate transcription of this passage.

[505] In this conversation with Marr, White admitted that he would need to read it again to recall why Theodora didn't get to go home. PW, interview with David Marr, 23 December 1986. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 8601/1/3.

[506] http://www.nytimes.com/1983/07/19/arts/dh-lawrence-art-on-view-near-his-taos-home.html

The name *Holstius* is possibly a Latinization of *holz*, the German term for tree. On a literal level, the title of this final part of the novel does not appear to be a fabricated name. Theodora is treated by a Dr Holstius, who is perhaps another creation of her imagination. Before publication of his novel, White sought permission to use the name of a Dr John Holstius, a writer he had met casually in San Francisco in 1939. He simply liked the sound of the name, he claimed, somewhat disingenuously.[507]

Theodora Goodman rumbles across the American prairies through 'a trumpeting of corn' (*TAS* 259). The significant word 'trumpeting', previewed in the Notebooks, suggests that the European sense of doom hovering over the previous part of the novel may now be only a memory, a distant thunder barely detected in a 'passionately unaware America'.

At this point in Theodora's journey, the reader begins to hear a soundtrack running through the author's head as he recalls 'the full golden theme of corn … the flowing corn song … the bland corn song' (*TAS* 259). Gazing out the train window, the traveller – Theodora or White or the reader – could become hypnotized by an endless vista of cornfields: a symphonic canvas of undulations and reverberations.[508] This 'inner music' is hardly the sound track of the 'prairie music' of composers like Aaron Copland or Virgil Thomson. White had no time for such literal, cinematic music. In the 'bland corn-song' of the American Southwest, Theodora stands out. In her eccentric attire, her strange demeanour and brusque manner, she is 'a discord' (*TAS* 260). Her inner turmoil is at odds with the serenity of the mind-numbing prairie which envelops her.

This time, the imaginary music is more akin to the sound-collages of a composer like Charles Ives whose life and music was virtually unknown at the time White was writing *The Aunt's Story*. Later in life, White came to admire the music of Ives, albeit somewhat selectively.[509] Here, White comes close to creating a musical score of his own. His vivid sonic description of the American prairie matches the 'score' of the gardens at Meroë he had created earlier. White could almost be outlining the structural components of *The Unanswered Question* by Charles Ives, even though he would have been transplanting the old Yankee's New England music to the corn-filled Midwest. The dominating solo trumpet in Ives's score ('single notes,' White writes, 'gathered into gravely structural phrases'), his quartet of flutes (the 'frill of flutes twisted round a higher theme') and those 'Druids,' the strings ('flowing ..deliberate accompaniment, which did not impede, however structural'). All elements are 'part of the same integrity of purpose and of being,' suggesting an answer to Theodora's own 'unanswered question'.[510] It is more important to ask the question, she seems to say – echoing Ives – than to have the answer.

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[507] Marr, *Life*, p. 183.
[508] Appendix 1 (40).
[509] White caught a performance of *Symphony No.1* by Charles Ives (1874-1954) at an ABC Gold series concert on 5 July 1973, by the SSO/Patrick Thomas. This made him feel that perhaps he didn't like Ives after all. Still, he enjoyed their performance of *The Unanswered Question.* 'Quite often [Ives] was the best thing at the Proms [in Sydney]', he told Marr ,21 March 1988. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.
[510] Charles Ives (1874-1954), annotation for *The Unanswered Question, A Cosmic Landscape,* (1908-35). C.E.Ives, *Memos,* John Kirkpatrick, editor. London: Calder & Boyars, 1973. p. 159.

Unfortunately, these commonalities, close as they may appear, are mere coincidences. *The Unanswered Question* was premiered in New York in May 1946, and not recorded until 1951. Thus, White could not have been aware of Ives's composition at the time of writing his novel (*The Aunt's Story* was completed in 1947.)[511] Still, the correspondences and resonances are striking.

11. Critical Response

White's Notebooks containing outlines for *The Aunt's Story* were scribbled in the deserts of North Africa.[512] These were amplified in London in January 1946, after he was demobilized whilst awaiting a ship to return to Australia. Back in Sydney temporarily in late 1946, he relayed the emotional roller-coaster journey of writing *The Aunt's Story*:

> I got nearly halfway through the book in re-writing and typing it. My phases of hope and despair have been many. At one stage I nearly threw the whole thing away. At present I am sobering down a little after an exhilarating rebirth of enthusiasm. When all is said, I have not the slightest idea what the book is like.[513]

A few months later, he dispatched the manuscript to his publisher. 'It has meant a lot to me in writing,' he explained to Huebsch, 'and it has cost sweat and blood'. This was the first book he had written 'after five years of inactivity'. He admitted he found himself 'unable to judge it from the angle of a publisher or a public'.[514]

On its initial publication, *The Aunt's Story* left critics confused. 'The hit-or-miss way of writing may release subtle associations in the reader's mind, or it may fall flat,' an anonymous critic opined in the *Times Literary Supplement*. It was 'sometimes ridiculous, [but] often stimulating'.[515]

Despite such ambivalent responses, White expressed a personal fondness for his third novel: 'It is the one I have most affection for', he explained to Geoffrey Dutton in 1959, 'and I always find it irritating that only six Australians seem to have liked it'.[516] White complained that Australians could not comprehend *The Aunt's Story* because they had not experienced 'all those European cross-currents of the Thirties', as he himself had done in those pre-War years. 'Perhaps in twenty years' time,' he mused, 'they will begin to see the point'.[517] By 1979, twenty years after his prediction, Europe and Australia did indeed seem

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[511] The first Australian performance of Ives traceable in ABC records is that of *Three Places in New England* by the SSO/John Hopkins at a Proms concert in Sydney in February 1969.
[512] These sketches for *The Aunt's Story* are at http://www.nla.gov.au/apps/cdview/?pi=nla.ms-ms9982-2-3 [accessed 8 August 2015].
[513] PW, letter to Jean Scott Rogers [undated, possibly 27 July 1946]. Marr, *Letters,* p. 66.
[514] PW, letter to Ben Huebsch, 11 January 1947. Marr, *Letters,* p. 67. Huebsch's response to White is not contained in the correspondence between publisher and author contained in the Mitchell Library, Sydney.
[515] *The Times Literary Supplement*, 2 October 1948. Author anonymous. http://www.complete-review.com/reviews/whitep/auntss.htm [accessed 5 September 2016].
[516] PW, letter to Geoffrey Dutton, 13 December 1959. Marr, *Letters*, p. 160.
[517] PW, letter to Geoffrey Dutton, 12 August 1959. Marr, *Letters,* p. 158.

less far apart: air travel – in terms of time and cost – had shrunk the distance White had endured when he travelled to between Australia and Europe by sea in the decades enclosing the Second World War. .

Even though Ruth White had travelled extensively around Europe, she was not among the handful of people who liked *The Aunt's Story*. 'What a pity you didn't write about a cheery aunt,' was her response.[518] Ruth White's off-handed remark may have sparked her son's examination of 'the sin of goodness' in the figure of Miss Docker in *A Cheery Soul* (1963). Cheer was not necessarily an attribute readers associate with Patrick White or his writing.

On the whole, the public reaction to *The Aunt's Story* was more one of bemusement than hostility. Despite the positive tone of most American reviews, 'few people seem to have read it', White lamented.[519]

Later in life, White would make periodic sorties to various libraries in Sydney to inspect their collections of his published novels. He noted the number of withdrawals for each book, and where the fingered crease-marks ended. He was disappointed that few copies of *The Aunt's Story* bore evidence of having been read beyond the first few pages of *Jardin exotique.*[520] The middle chapter of this novel was certainly the longest and most difficult of any his writing to date. Clearly, many readers were defeated and could not continue reading it.

[518] PW, letter to Ben Huebsch, 4 February 1948. Marr, *Letters,* p. 71.
[519] Appendix 1 (41). PW, letter to Jean Scott Rogers, 26 September 1948. Marr, *Letters*, p. 73.
[520] Marr, *Life,* p. 258.

12. Film and Opera

Almost from the date of its publication, there was discussion about the cinematic potential of *The Aunt's Story.* In February 1947, White received a mysterious letter…

> … from some strange kind of agent in California who said he would like to handle it as a film possibility, but he did confess he hadn't read it. (George Plank?) [521]

There was admiration for *The Aunt's Story* from several other quarters too. In March 1975, the British actress Glenda Jackson visited Sydney to present the annual Australian Film Industry awards. White invited her to lunch. Jackson announced that she intended to film *The Aunt's Story,* playing the role of Theodora Goodman herself. Like most proposals involving White and films, this one came to naught.

Another White novel that did come to the screen served to revive discussion of *The Aunt's Story* as a possible film. The 2011 adaptation of *The Eye of the Storm* (1973) directed by Fred Schepisi, starred Charlotte Rampling as Mrs Elizabeth Hunter with Judy Davis and Geoffrey Rush as the two venal siblings warring over her estate. The casting of Rampling, the film's only international star, was intentional. According to Schepisi, she was 'the best and most marketable international actress' available at the time. Her casting was also ironic: she had been White's choice to play Laura Trevelyan in Joseph Losey's film version of *Voss* some thirty-five years earlier.

In April 2012, Schepisi and his producer Anthony Fabian introduced a preview screening of *Eye of the Storm* in Canberra. On that occasion, Fabian mentioned that Judy Davis was keen to proceed with an adaptation of *The Aunt's Story* although no further details of this plan have since emerged.[522] Davis maintained that, in creating Theodora Goodman, White had gifted a great role for 'an actress of certain years', people like Glenda Jackson, Judi Dench, Helen Mirren – now all Dames of the British Empire – and perhaps Australian actresses like Robyn Nevin, Helen Morse, Kate Fitzpatrick and Davis herself. To varying degrees, they were all accomplished and committed White exponents. Within acting circles, it is generally agreed that Patrick White had written great roles for female actors.

Like many White film projects, *The Aunt's Story* has yet to appear on screen. A stage adaptation by theatre designer-director Adam Cook surfaced at the Melbourne International Festival in 2001. The following year, it was staged in Sydney's Belvoir Street theatre.

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[521] PW, letter to Ben Huebsch, 4 February 1947. Publishers Letters to Patrick White, State Library of New South Wales, MLMSS 9508, Folder 1.
The American artist and illustrator George Wolfe Plank (1883–1965) is chiefly remembered for his long-term association with *Vogue* magazine which resulted in years of his designing covers in an Art Deco style. The association with White and a film of *The Aunt's Story* is unclear, except to recall that White saw Theodora as a potential cover image for *Vogue.*

[522] Anthony Fabian, email to Graham Shirley and the author, National Film and Sound Archive, Canberra, 23 May 2012.

'White's stories present many challenges to directors and audiences,' the critic Bryce Hallett noted, 'not least in clearing a path to essential truths and displaying inner lives'.[523]

At various times, when speaking or dealing with composers, White would drop the word 'opera' into the conversation. Perhaps he was testing the waters. He had always felt that his first play *The Ham Funeral,* he told Garland, 'was really an opera in search of its music'.[524] He did not pursue that particular notion. When White did venture a discussion about opera, most composers made respectful utterances before running in other directions. There were too many words in White, they maintained, too many convolutions and hoops for a composer to jump through. Moreover, there was the prospect of having to deal with the notoriously demanding auteur-author himself. Peter Sculthorpe felt there was already a great deal of music in White's writing. Could or should a composer add more?[525]

> I must mention that for ten years or more, I've felt that [*The Aunt's Story*] could be it, i.e. the opera. Perhaps you would consider this [scenario] – the work is so complete that music could probably add very little, if anything. I think that the impact and survival of any opera must depend upon at least one [main] role, and we have this in Theodora. Somehow, all the ingredients are there.[526]

Sculthorpe had recognized Theodora Goodman as a potential 'operatic character'.[527] Uncharacteristically, White immediately dismissed the composer's suggestion. *The Aunt's Story,* he protested, was 'too subtle, too introspective,' he preferred to think. 'If I had had technical experience in films, I should like to make it into a film,' he lectured Sculthorpe, 'but I should have to do it myself'.[528] Given White's unsuccessful career as a screen-writer, it is difficult to agree with his view that he was capable of converting his 'subtle and introspective' novel into a satisfactory film script. Sculthorpe acceded, but at the same time begged to disagree. *The Aunt's Story* would make 'a most wonderful film,' he wrote back. 'But … obviously you'd have to do it yourself and then I'm sure you know [the pitfalls] more than some'.[529]

Despite White's dismissal of the idea of turning *The Aunt's Story* into an opera, the circumstances surrounding its way into the world became increasingly operatic.

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[523] Appendix 1 (41): Bryce Hallett, *Sydney Morning Herald* (16 August 2002), p. 14.
[524] PW to Peggy Garland, 10 November 1961. NLA, Papers of Patrick White, MS 8434/155.
[525] Peter Sculthorpe, in conversation with the author, Sydney, 20 May 2008. This occurred a year before *The* Voss *Journey* in Canberra (May 2009).
[526] Peter Sculthorpe in an unpublished letter to Patrick White, undated (most likely February 1964). NLA, Papers of Peter Sculthorpe, MS 9676 Box 25.
[527] Appendix 1 (70): Peter Sculthorpe in an unpublished letter to Patrick White, undated (possibly February 1964). NLA, Papers of Peter Sculthorpe, MS 9676 Box 25.
[528] PW, letter to Sculthorpe, 21 December 1964. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.
[529] Sculthorpe in another unpublished letter to Patrick White, undated (possibly February 1964). NLA, Papers of Peter Sculthorpe, MS 9676 Box 25.

13. Summary

The multifarious musical references in *The Aunt's Story* do not take us down Theodora Goodman's journey into darkness in a literal sense. At the time of completing his third novel (1948), it is likely that White was unaware that composers had depicted madness in operas and other music.[530] Thus, his use of music in this novel is framed more in a narrative sense: it helped set time and place, people and memory – the piano in the life of colonial Australia; the French Baroque in the *Jardin exotique*, and so on. Music may also have been helpful in creating insight into the deteriorating mind of Theodora Goodman.

Primarily, in *The Aunt's Story,* White used music as background to help create characters and situations. Homespun Chopin, like the kind of domestic piano music Theodora heard and played at Meroë, and the (Dvořák) cello concerto become the 'soundtrack' of the opening part of the novel. Music from the French Baroque and Bach's partitas have the same function in the central part. Less clear is the music accompanying the imagery of the third part; it combines the energy of, say, the train music (*Pacific 231*) of Arthur Honegger – a composer whose music White later came to admire – set within the panoramic pastoral sound of American composers such as Roy Harris and, to a lesser extent, Charles Ives, whose music was unknown to White as he was writing *The Aunt's Story*.

It was in his deployment of particular musical techniques and epochs (the Baroque partita, the Impressionist evocation of gardens, the Romantic cello concerto, and so on) that White brought the structural dimension of this discussion to the fore.

In *The Aunt's Story,* music is a pervasive presence, even if at times the reader is left to deduce details from White's clues— the 'Such-and-Such' cello concerto, for example. In charting Theodora's travels beyond Australia, White created a collage of memory for her that was almost as postmodernist as it is modernist. Having endured 'five years of inactivity' during his wartime service in North Africa, White's creative energy had burst, producing what he called a 'volcanic' torrent of language and musical references.[531]

The Aunt's Story may be viewed as an early summary of White's own experiences in travel and encounters with other cultures, especially in music. On his return to Australia in 1948, the 36-year-old novelist was poised to resume his productive life in his home country to the full. This will become apparent in the next chapter, an examination of his seminal novel *Voss,* published a decade later.

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[530] Among the many instances of 'madness' in opera are the famous 'Mad Scene' from Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* and the music theatre piece *Eight Songs for a Mad King* by Peter Maxwell Davies. White was present at the Australian premiere of this in Sydney in March 1978.

[531] PW, letter to Ben Huebsch, 11 January 1947. Marr, *Letters*, p. 67.

Chapter Five: Case Study #2:

Voss

1. Introduction

Voss is Patrick White's fifth published novel. It stands between *The Tree of Man* (1955) and *Riders in the Chariot* (1961). These three novels are generally regarded as representing White's 'middle period'. [532]

As already noted at the outset of this study, the key to this chapter – and, indeed, to this entire study – lies in an exchange of letters between White and his publisher in New York, Ben Huebsch. Just before Christmas 1956, White had posted the manuscript of *Voss* to Huebsch, who read it over the New Year holiday and replied to White immediately. Unfortunately, Huebsch's reply appears to have been lost, but White's reply survives: [533]:

> You talk about *'the symphonic structure* of *Voss'* – well, in the last ten years I think music has taught me a lot about writing. That may sound pretentious, and I would not know how to go into it rationally, but I feel that listening constantly to music helps one to develop a book more logically.[534]

In its 'symphonic structure' and multiple references to music*, Voss* is a compelling representation of the importance of music in White's writing.[535] Moreover, in his correspondence, he identifies for the first time specific compositions and composers which had influenced the writing of his novel. Mahler and Berg were the main composers, but Bach, Bartók and Honegger also played significant roles in this respect.

At first glance, Huebsch's observation – he was speaking figuratively rather than literally – may appear to be an 'over-stretch', but nonetheless it requires close and detailed examination. White does not confirm Huebsch's observation about 'the symphonic structure of *Voss*'. It is equally significant that he does not dispute it. The fact that the remark remains unchallenged is also highly significant.

This chapter probes that 'symphonic structure' mindful that, without primary evidence – in terms of either the reference in the author's Notebooks or in the White/Huebsch correspondence that has survived – the matter cannot be concluded decisively. At the same time, any study of this nature cannot ignore the remark and must leave open the option of a symphonic model.

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[532] PW, *Voss*. London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1957. All page numbers in text refer to this edition, the first English printing of the novel

[533] When he moved house from Dogwoods to Centennial Park in June 1966, White burned many documents, including sketches, drafts and correspondence. Thus, Huebsch's obviously enthusiastic response to *Voss* was perhaps immolated in one of White's periodic fiery purges. In researching Huebsch's archive in the Library of Congress, David Marr was unable to locate this critical letter. Nor can it be located in the otherwise extensive archive of PW-*Vikings* correspondence in the Mitchell Library.

[534] PW, letter to Ben Huebsch, 8 February 1957. Marr, *Letters*, p. 110. Emphasis added.

[535] The fact that, to date, it is the only one of his major works to have become an opera is incidental to this study. An investigation of *Voss* as an opera is beyond the scope of the present study.

This chapter also illustrates that *Voss* inhabits many dimensions of White's creative life. It begins life as a novel, then is projected as a film (three attempts ended in failure), and appears as a kind of *postscriptum* – a kind of 'line in the sand', Jim Sharman has suggested – in scenes from the screenplay *The Monkey Puzzle* (to be examined in Chapter Six). Music figures in each of these, but the discussion of music is carried in a much broader context in the present chapter.

This chapter argues that there are indeed sufficient references to and resonances of symphonic form to support Huebsch's (perhaps off-handed) remark.



Illustration 35 : PW, *Voss.* London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1957. Cover image by Sidney Nolan.

Whereas most of the images of Patrick White are those of a frail, frowning old man – many taken by photographer William Young in the last decade of his life – this is misleading. Sharman asserts that, at the time of writing *Voss,* White was 'an extremely vigorous 45-year-old, at the height of his creative powers and energy'.[536] The photograph taken of White, at the time of the award of the Inaugural Miles Franklin Award for Literature in April 1958, attests to his vigour and comparatively youthful demeanour.

Dapper in his new suit and sandwiched between the two leading politicians of the day, Prime Minister Robert G. Menzie and Leader of the Opposition Dr H.V.Evatt – neither of whom had read the novel they had been called upon to commend so fulsomely –White felt ambivalent and uncomfortable on so public a platform. Some weeks later, when it came to collecting the prize – a cheque for £500 – White was too nervous to venture out and asked fellow novelist Kylie Tennant to collect it for him.

[536] Jim Sharman, *The Voss Journey.* NLA, Canberra. 15 May 2009. NLA/NFSA video/sound recording



Illustration 36: PW, with Prime Minister Robert Menzies (L) and Opposition Leader Dr H.V. Evatt (R). Presentation of the Inaugural Miles Franklin Award, Rural Bank, Sydney, 2 April 1958.
By kind permission, Primavera Press.

Voss evolved over a period of more than fifteen years. It had begun in London during the Second World War. On leave from his post as an Intelligence Officer with Air Force-Army Liaison Wing in Egypt, White was searching for a theme for a novel about 'a megalo-maniac explorer'. Huddled under his hotel bed whilst Luftwaffe bombs burst onto London and fortified by sips of Calvados brandy, the 30-year-old Australian read the journals of Edward John Eyre.

White knew his new novel had to be set in Australia because, as he later told Huebsch, his American publisher, it was 'really the only country I know in my bones'.[537] It had to be set in Australia's past because, he reasoned, by the middle of the 20th century, 'there was practically nothing left to explore'. From the outset, then, White's sights were set on 19th century Australia.

After some fourteen years away from Australia, White returned permanently to Sydney in 1947. He then began to research old records in the Mitchell Library.[538] His idea for a novel about a 'megalomaniac explorer' gradually shifted from Eyre, Sturt and other explorers to the figure of Ludwig Leichhardt.[539] The Prussian botanist and explorer (1813-1848) had arrived in Sydney in 1842. He made three expeditions into the Outback and, on the third of these (1848), Leichhardt and his party vanished. Their disappearance caused considerable concern among the citizens of,a colony then barely sixty years old. Many attempts were made to solve the mystery and, over the decades, his story became the stuff of legend. It also personified European fears of 'the great Australian unknown'. Leichhardt presented White with the perfect framework for a novel.

[537] PW, letter to Ben Huebsch, 11 September 1956. Marr, *Life*, pp. 313–314.
[538] The sketches for *Voss* can be found in NLA MS 9982. Papers of Patrick White, 1930-2002 [manuscript]. Series 2: Literary notebooks, 1930s-1970s. Item 4: Notebook including material for *Voss* (1957), (123 parts). http://www.nla.gov.au/apps/cdview/?pi=nla.ms-ms9982-2-4 [accessed 8 August 2015].
[539] Ludwig Leichhardt, no details, NLA image from the public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.



Illustration 37: Ludwig Leichhardt, no details, NLA image from the public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

White did not want to limit himself to a historical reconstruction. That would be 'too difficult and too boring'; besides, he was 'far too unscholarly' for that.[540] Even so, he did extensive research without assistance. 'I wouldn't know who to get help me', he explained. White's explorer, he decided, would be based on Leichhardt, whom he came to view as 'a merely unusually unpleasant' character. White would take his character a step further: Johann Ulrich Voss would be 'mad, as well'. His fictitious character would be far more psychologically interesting than Leichhardt.

By the time the operatic version of *Voss* reached the stage, in March 1986, Voss had become White's 'most hated character'.

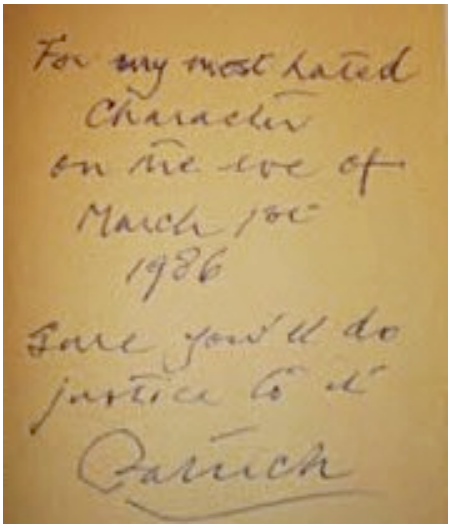


Illustration 38: Inscription by Patrick White in the first edition of *Voss* presented to baritone Geoffrey Chard, who played the title role in the opera *Voss,* 1 March 1986.
By kind permission of Geoffrey Chard.

[540] PW, in conversation with David Marr, 6 September 1985. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.

White concocted his 'megalomaniac explorer' from a brew of fiction, history and biography. In his novel's main character, he drew on that 'arch-megalomaniac of the day' Adolf Hitler, alongside 'bits of Leichhardt, bits of Eyre, and I suppose, some of the other [explorers], but there is more of my own character than anybody else'.[541] That was a familiar refrain: as this study has demonstrated several times, White constantly referenced his own character in the characters he created.

Just before Christmas 1956, White sent copies of the typescript manuscript of *Voss* to his publishers in London (Eyre and Spottiswoode) and New York (Viking). By this stage, Ben Huebsch had retired from Vikings but had stayed on as White's nominal editor. His successor Marshall Best had the task of bringing White's 'difficult' novel to the world.[542] White provided his Vikings with a revealing synopsis:

> The narrative of his novel grows in the minds of the two people concerned more through the stimulus of their surroundings and through almost irrelevant incidents. Voss and Laura only meet three or four times before the expedition sets out. They even find each other partly antipathetic. Yet, Voss writes proposing to the girl on one of the early stages of the journey, partly out of vanity and partly because he realises he is already lost; she accepts, partly out [of] a desire to save him from his delusions of divinity; partly out of a longing for religious faith to which she feels she can only return through love …
>
> As the two characters are separated by events and distances, their stories have to be developed alternately, but they do also fuse, in dreams, in memories and in delirium — most closely, for instance, when Voss is dying half-dead of thirst and starvation, and Laura is suffering from delusions as the result of a psychic disturbance diagnosed as the inevitable 'brain fever'. Voss is finally dragged from his golden throne, humbled in the dust and accepts the principles Laura would have liked him to accept before he is murdered by the blacks. Laura recovers. She becomes a headmistress, and a figure of some respect in the community, if also one that nobody really understands, because of some mysterious past…
>
> There is a lot that had to be made convincing. I want to include the crimson plush and organ peals, while making them acceptable to the age of reason by a certain dryness of style. To a certain extent, the style is based on that of records of the day … but I have also left some loopholes through which to get my own effects.[543]

Huebsch read White's manuscript and responded almost immediately. White read his response cautiously before replying.[544] As already noted, that response contains the

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[541] PW, letter to Marcel Aurousseau, 10 July 1970. NLA, Papers of M. Aurousseau, MS 7070/1/ 76, box 14.
[542] White's correspondence with each of these 'Vikings' is extensive and illuminating. Most of it has been preserved in the Mitchell Library. 'The Vikings': Publishers' Letters to PW, Mitchell Library, Sydney. Special Collections Safe / MLMSS 9508, Folder 1. In addition, there are three folders of correspondence in Huebsch's archive in the Library of Congress, in Washington, D.C. Papers of Benjamin W. Huebsch, U.S.Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, compiled 2013.
[543] PW, letter to Ben Huebsch, 11 September 1956. Marr, *Letters,* p. 108.
[544] This critical letter from Huebsch is not contained in the Sydney archive of correspondence between White and his publishers.

germinal essence of this entire study: Huebsch had discerned a 'symphonic structure' in the White's latest novel *V*oss[545]

In Marr's estimation, the publisher Ben Huebsch would become 'the rock on which [White's] career was built'. [546] Huebsch (1876-1964) interacted with almost every significant author, composer and performer as they passed through NewYork. A senior partner in Viking Press, [547] Huebsch belonged to that *welt der Hochkultur* that was at the core of Jewish artistic society in that city. The son of a German rabbi, he had studied art at the Cooper Union. He had also taken violin lessons with Sam Franko; a student of both Joachim and Vieuxtemps, Franko went on to form the American Symphony Orchestra. For a time, Huebsch was also a music critic of *The New York Sun* and would have heard Mahler conduct the Philharmonic, and Caruso sing at the Met. For all this, Huebsch's main love was chamber music and he took delight in taking visitors – writers like D.H.Lawrence, Siegfried Sassoon, and others – to concerts in the Carnegie Recital Hall and elsewhere in Manhattan.[548] Huebsch was the godfather-publisher of the American literary *avant garde*. Moreover, he had published the early Joyce and Lawrence, two of White's literary heroes.

When he first met Huebsch, in March 1940, White was surprised to find a simple man, then in his mid-60s, 'softly spoken, direct, intelligent, but worldly'. He was 'one of a breed of noble Jews' who respected the 30-year-old White as a serious writer.[549]

2.The Literary Symphony

By the mid-1950s, at the time he was working on *Voss,* White would have heard many symphonies at concerts or on the radio. They had begun to populate his collection of LP recordings with increasing frequency. It is hardly possible, though, that White had acquired the technical knowledge of music sufficient to drill into the *arcana* of symphonic form. Huebsch's extensive musical background, on the other hand, suggests that the publisher knew enough about music to draw a comparison between *Voss* and symphonic form.

In White's Notebooks, there is nothing to suggest a symphonic-like structure that he might have used to create the framework of *Voss*.[550] The Notebooks reveal the fastidious degree of research and attention to detail that went into the narrative of the novel, but not a word about its structure or the possible influence of music. Rather like Klee's line drawings, White tended to set up his character portraits and then let them 'go for a walk' on their own. It would have been contrary to his working methods to have set them up and then to have tethered them to a rigid structural framework.

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[545] PW, letter to Ben Huebsch, 8 February 1957. Marr, *Letters*, p. 110. Emphasis added.
[546] Marr, *Life*, p. 198.
[547] Viking Press (NY) was founded in March 1925. Since 1975, it has been a subsidiary of Penguin Books.
[548] Jean Moorcroft Wilson, *Siegfried Sassoon: The Journey from the Trenches (1918-1967).* New York: Psychology Press, 2003, p. 83.
[549] Marr, *Life*, p. 198.
[550] PW's Notebooks for *Voss* NLA. http://nla.gov.au/nla.ms-ms9982-2-4 [accessed 16 January 2015].

The Notebooks include hand-drawn maps relating to rainfalls, and a primitive directory of streets in Elizabeth Bay. They also contain quite detailed references to music in the social life of the colony in the 1840-50s. But there is nothing relating to particular compositions, much less anything that look likes a framework, to suggest the importation of a musical form like the symphony.



Illustration 39: PW's sketch of Elizabeth Bay, Sydney. Notebooks for *Voss*, NLA. http://www.nla.gov.au/apps/cdview/?pi=nla.ms-ms9982-2-5-s69-v [accessed 17 January 2015].

> Like any sophisticated amateur music-lover – as he was by the mid-1950s – White was able to flesh of classical sonata form (a 'conversation' of two or more ideas, worked through and recapitulated, and closed with a coda); its blood-stream of tonic-dominant key relationships; its skin invigorated by the palette of orchestration.

The principal characters in *Voss*, particularly Voss and Laura Trevelyan, interact in ways that resemble the 'conversations' of first and second subjects of sonata form. Interludes and bridge passages, even cadenza-like flourishes – especially from Voss himself – are mirrored in descriptive passages of place and progress of time.

Beyond the creation of his central character, White had another purpose in mind. He wanted to create something that would be less tethered to realism, something more literary and musical. It might even suggest operatic treatment in the manner of 19th century Italian *verismo*. He told Huebsch he wanted to write 'the story of a grand passion'.

Behind the tale of the doomed explorer Voss would be the story of Laura Trevelyan, the 18-year-old niece of Mr Bonner, a Sydney merchant who was a patron of Voss's expedition. This 'grand passion,' he maintained, would be different from those stories and operas with double-barrel names, different from *Romeo et Juliette, Tristan und Isolde, Pelléas et Mélisande,* even *Porgy and Bess*.[551]

[551] Appendix 1 (70): PW, letter to Ben Huebsch, 11 September 1956. Marr, *Letters,* p. 108.

In *Voss*, White evolved a language and style that co-mingled colonial expression ('a certain dryness of style') with his signature techniques ('my own effects') of character perception, panoramic landscape painting, as well as an acute ear for sounds and dialogue, both elevated and vernacular.

The rich sound-world of *Voss* draws on many elements: a babel of accents from the colony's society and military networks contrasting with the rough brogue of its convicts and other reprobates; Indigenous culture; the natural habitat of the sounds of birds and animals; weather patterns with storms, winds and breezes. All are presented like the layered lines of orchestration of a symphonic score.

White's Notebooks contain some eighty-four pages of research notes for *Voss,* scrawled in his almost illegible hand.[552] Only a few of those pages record aspects of music and culture in the young colony. White notes the arrival of 'the French musicians – M. and Memo Gutrot (?)' without further comment [*Voss* p.61]. He records ' a saxhorn band' and notes 'the use of bugles in the 1840s and 1850s' [*Voss* p.68]. 'These instruments,' White noted in comments from historian Hugh McCrae, 'emulated the municipal geese of Rome and, by their brazen cacophony, often saved the town.' White cites Georgiana McCrae's mention of a fire in Collins St [Melbourne] at 2.00am on 8th March 1845: 'the alarum bell sounded,' she had recorded, 'and bugles sounded.'[553]

White coopted another moment from Mrs McCrae's diaries: 'in the evening, Mr Richmond Barry, [came] to musical supper. A high bass, Mr Barry sang *Love's Witchcraft*, his favourite song' [*Voss* p.65]. In *Voss,* White assigned that very song to Tom Radclyffe who delivers it with the mock-operatic gusto typical of amateur singers everywhere.

> Real fervour filled his scarlet coat, and caused some vibration amongst the objects in glass and china on the shelves of cabinets. Belle Bonner's skin had turned a cloudy white. 'Maiden look me in the face,' the Lieutenant sang. 'Steadfast, serious, no grimace'. [*Voss, p. 91]*.

White also noted the opening of the Royal Victoria Theatre on Pitt St [*Voss,* p.61] without describing what was actually performed there. It opened on 17 March 1838 with an Irish dance and concert, appropriate for Saint Patrick's Day.

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[552] Notebooks of Patrick White. NLA: http://www.nla.gov.au/apps/cdview/?pi=nla.ms-ms9982-2-5 [Accessed 15 July 2015].

[553] Georgiana McCrae (1804-1890) arrived in Port Phillip in March 1841 and remained there until her death in Hawthorn in 1890. Her grandson, the historian Hugh McCrae (1876-1958), published extracts from her diaries in the magazine *Southerly* (1946-7).



Illustration 40: Interior of the Royal Victoria Theatre, Pitt Street, Sydney, ca 1838. In all, the theatre could accommodate 2,000 patrons. http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks06/0600151h.html#p32a [accessed 20 August 2016].

In both the novel and the opera which appeared some three decades later, this disparity of colonial/contemporary language and style is the appeal of a reading/hearing *Voss.* At times, it can also be an impediment to an understanding of White's original creation. White wanted to convey in his novel the opulent world of 'crimson plush and organ peals' alongside the barren desolation of a largely silent desert. Further on, he was more specific: 'As for the look and sound of the thing,' he wrote to Huebsch, 'I have tried to marry Delacroix to Blake, and Liszt to Mahler. Now I am really committed to my own shortcomings.'[554]

To varying degrees, each of these four creative figures stand at the threshold of sanity. Just as Voss and his creator did, it might be said, in their own ways.

3. Alban Berg's *Violin Concerto*

In the early years of his journey to music, it was the Austro-German Romantic tradition which had made the most impact on Patrick White. It helped that he spoke fluent German and French, the product of his studies in Modern Languages at Cambridge. In pre-War years, he visited Germany where he attended concerts and operas. Returning to Australia after the War, White and Lascaris joined a group of neighbours who shared experiences over listening sessions and meals. Their evenings were devoted, in the main, to listening to recordings of the orchestral music of Mahler and Bruckner, Berg and Bartók.

[554] PW, letter to Ben Heubsch, 11 September 1956. Marr, *Letters,* p. 108.

Around this time, White began to collect LP recordings and attend SSO performances. In the Goossens years (1946-56), the SSO season included memorable performances of Mahler, Bruckner and Richard Strauss. The mantle radio at Dogwoods, their first home at Castle Hill, played music constantly. White was 'saturated' by music and could not get enough of it.

When writing *Voss,* White confided to Geoffrey Dutton, he had found the music of Mahler 'very helpful'.[555] (The influence has been examined in an earlier chapter, along with the music of Bruckner.) White also identifies another composer as a critical influence as *Voss* was taking shape: Alban Berg.

Two years after the publication of *Voss,* White confessed to his cousin Peggy Garland that he got 'quite drunk with music':

> …and I play it a lot to lead me up to my work. Funnily enough, I have always felt closest to Berg, and on the sleeve of the last record I bought I found out that he was also a bronchial asthmatic.[556] I had played his *Violin Concerto* all through the 'illness' of Laura Trevelyan in *Voss* and I have been using it and the *Concerto for Wind Instruments* too.[557]

White revealed that he had read about Berg's asthma on the sleeve note. This confirms that he paid close attention to these short capsules of music education, as they might be called; they provided sources of information which would become models for his own writing. White told Garland that he found himself developing an affinity with Alban Berg. Moreover, he sensed some kind of connection between Laura Trevelyan, his fictional creation, and the real-life figure who had inspired her. Manon Gropius was the teenage daughter of Alma Mahler and architect Walter Gropius. They were about the same age, eighteen. Both were highly cultured young women, sophisticated and worldly-wise beyond their years. Each lived with transplanted parentage.[558]

In terms of language, there are several parallels connecting Berg's concerto and White's novel. In his *Violin Concerto,* Berg created a blend of traditional tonality and the twelve-tone technique:

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[555] PW, letter to Geoffrey Dutton, 19 September 1960. Marr, *Letters*, p. 169.
[556] Here White admits to paying heed of record sleeves.
[557] PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 5 October 1959. Marr, *Letters*, p. 159.
[558] Manon Gropius (1916–1935) was an aspiring actress who had contracted polio and who died at the age of 18. Berg set aside the composition of his opera *Lulu* to write his *Violin Concerto.* He inscribed it with the dedication, 'to the memory of an angel'



Illustration 41: Alban Berg, *Violin Concerto* (1936)
Tone row for composition.
http://ems.music.illinois.edu/courses/tipei/M202/Notes/berg.html

Although Berg's tone-row contains all twelve notes of the chromatic scale, there is a strong sense of tonality in the tone-row and, consequently, throughout the entire composition. This is largely due to Berg's masterly ordering of the twelve pitches of the octave, comprising sets of interlocking triads: from G minor to D Major to A minor to E Major, whose opening pitches are the open strings of the violin. The last four notes of the row, ascending whole tones, are also the first four notes of a chorale melody by J.S.Bach, *Es ist genug.* Berg quotes this chorale in the concerto's last movement with Bach's harmonisation heard in the clarinets.

This same fusion of language, old and new, permeates *Voss*. It mingled White's own 'modernist' style of writing with the language of its colonial setting. It mirrored the duality of colonial Sydney and the eternal Outback.[559]

In an important letter to Schoenberg, Berg outlined how his *Violin Concerto* had been constructed in two sections.[560] Each of these sections contained two sub-sections, according to the following scheme:

I. a) Andante (Prelude)
   b) Allegretto (Scherzo)
II. a) Allegro (Cadenza)
   b) Adagio (Chorale Variations)

While Berg's framework is far removed from the textbook model of the conventional four-movement symphony, it is at least a shadow of that form. At the same time, it provides one way to read 'the symphonic structure' of White's novel. In highly simplified terms, its symphonic structure might be imagined along these lines:

[559] With quotations of German lieder, colonial quadrilles and the like, Richard Meale mingled the old-with-the-new in the score of his opera *Voss* (1986).

[560] Alban Berg to Arnold Schoenberg, 28 August 1935, reproduced in facsimile in Rufer, *Dokumente einer Freundschaft,* pp 42-3. English translation in Julianne Brand *et al.* (eds.) *The Berg-Schoenberg Correspondence.* Houndmills, UK: Macmillan, 1987. p. 466.

Berg 1A – Prelude	Voss 1A – the Colony
Berg 1B – Scherzo	Voss 1B – the Dinner at the Bonners:
	The meeting of Voss and Laura
Berg 2 A – Cadenza	Voss 2A – the vision of Voss
Berg 2B – Chorale & variations	Voss 2B - Catastrophe in the Outback:
	The 'mystical communion of Voss and Laura.

With respect to both his own music and for the concerto as a form, Berg's bi-partite structuring of the *Violin Concerto* was unusual. In devising his musical architecture, Berg habitually adhered to one of Schoenberg's favourite maxims: '*Alle guten Dinge sind drei* … All good things come in threes.'[561] From the creation of his first opera *Wozzeck* (1924) with its three-act schema, Berg had shown a marked preference for three-part structures: the three acts of *Lulu* (1937, op.post.); the three sections of the concert aria *Der Wein* (1929); the three movements of the *Kammerkonzert* (1925), with its three instrumental components; and the *Three Orchestral Pieces,* Op. 6. (1913-15), dedicated 'to my teacher and friend Arnold Schoenberg, in immeasurable gratitude and love.'[562]

The tri-partite structure of most of Berg's works facilitated the creation of the palindrome, the symmetrical device much favoured by Baroque composers and also 20th century composers influenced by Baroque music.[563]

In White's surviving correspondence, the first mention of Berg's *Violin Concerto* occurs in a letter dated October 1955. Four years later, White admitted that he had played a recording of Berg's *Violin Concerto* 'all through the illness of Laura in *Voss*, and had been 'using it and the *Concerto for Wind Instruments* (sic) too'.[564]

By this stage, White had acquired the 1954 recording of Berg's *Violin Concerto* performed by the Hungarian violinist André Gertler.[565] By then, the writing of *Voss* was well under way. Thus, White's reference to Berg's *Violin Concerto* as having influenced his novel should be interpreted as something *post hoc,* an afterthought.

White was in London at the time of two early British performances of the concerto by Louis Krasner, the Jewish-American violinist who had commissioned and premiered the work. The first of these was with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Webern on 1 May 1936.[566] Berg's recent death and the appearance of Webern were

[561] Schoenberg was alluding to the 'holy trinity' of the Second Viennese School, comprising Berg, Webern and himself.
[562] Alban Berg, *Three Orchestral Pieces, Op.6* (1915). Vienna, Universal Edition, 1929. p. 5.
[563] In 1906, Webern received a PhD degree with a dissertation on the *Choralis Constantinus II* of the Renaissance Flemish composer Heinrich Isaac (c.1450-1517).
[564] PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 5 October 1955. Marr, *Letters*, p. 159.
[565] The Gertler recording of the concerto was released in Australia initially by The Record Society.The recording by Gertler/Philharmonia/Kletzki, owned by White, was on Columbia FCX 297.
[566] This performance was re-issued on CD in 1985, on Continuum Testament SBT 1004.

noteworthy events in themselves The BBC gave them great prominence. Any reader of the BBC's Radio Times or listener to BBC radio would have known about them. For all this, there is no reference to Berg's concerto in any of White's surviving correspondence, much less any mention of his having attended any performance of the work around this time.

According to Symphony Australia's archival records, Berg's *Violin Concerto* was not performed in Australia until April 1963, almost thirty years after its premiere in Barcelona.[567] The Victorian Symphony Orchestra gave that Australian première, with Georges Tzipine conducting and the soloist Tibor Varga. A few months later, in June 1963, Varga gave the first performance in Sydney with Joseph Post conducting the SSO. At that time, White and Lascaris were overseas so they would not have heard either performance.[568] At the time of writing *Voss*, what White knew of Berg's Concerto must have come from that one source: the recording by André Gertler.

4. Berg's *Kammerkonzert* and Professor Topp

As the writing of *Voss* evolved, White admitted Berg's *Kammerkonzert*, the concerto for violin, piano and 13 wind instruments (1923-25) had also been a great inspiration for him. White found this 'concerto for winds' – as he mis-named it – 'a rich and lovely work'.[569] At a critical moment in *Voss,* White alluded to the connection between the *dramatis personae* of his novel and the quasi-dramaturgy of Berg's *Kammerkonzert*:

> 'If I had mastered the art of music', Voss announces to Professor Topp, 'I would set myself the task of creating a composition by which the various instruments would represent the moral characteristics of human beings in conflict with one another.' [*Voss,* p.42. Emphasis added.]

Berg had intended his *Kammerkonzert* as a fiftieth birthday present for Schoenberg. He was somewhat disappointed that Schoenberg expressed little enthusiasm for a work which represented him as the piano, 'the all-encompassing instrument'. After visiting the Schoenbergs, Berg reported that, although they were in good spirits, 'it wasn't too pleasant an atmosphere':

> He kept on finding fault with my Chamber Concerto. He doesn't like the piano in this combination. Only he doesn't know, of course, that it is a concerto, not an ordinary octet.[570]

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[567] The premiere of the concerto was given by the American violinist Louis Krasner at the ISCM Festival in Barcelona on 19 April 1936. In September 1994, the author met Krasner at his home in Boston in September 1994, and conducted a radio interview with him. He also displayed his correspondence with Berg. This was to be the last interview given by the frail 91-year-old who died on 4 May 1995.

[568] White and Lascaris travelled in Greece and England, from 28 March to 3 October 1963.

[569] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 5 September 1959. Marr, *Letters*, p. 158. White would have to wait some years more before he could hear a live performance. At an ABC Gold Series concert in the Sydney Town Hall on 29 June 1972, Willem van Otterloo conducted a performance with the then-24-year-old 'superstar' violinist from New York, Pinchas Zukerman and Sydney-based pianist Albert Landa. Barely a year later, another performance in Sydney followed: Keith Humble directed the Australian Contemporary Music Ensemble with Ladislav Jasek (violin) and Larry Sitsky (piano). White was seen at both these performances.

It took Berg a further three months to arrive at a definitive instrumental combination: solo violin, solo piano and a Mozartian ensemble of 13 wind instruments, led by the French horn.[571] White sensed parallels between *Voss* and Berg's musical depiction of the three central figures of the Second Viennese School. Taking this level of dramaturgy and encoding a step further, White may have assigned the roles of the leading instruments in Berg's chamber concerto to figures in his dramaturgy, perhaps along these lines:

Violin, the 'cerebral instrument'	Anton Webern	Laura Trevelyan
Piano, the 'all-encompassing instrument'	Arnold Schoenberg	Johann Ulrich Voss
French Horn, the 'romantic instrument'	Alban Berg	the expeditionary party

The words White assigns to Voss – 'various instruments [representing] the moral characteristics of human beings in conflict with one another' – could be spoken as much by White himself as by his fictional creation. In that important statement, one senses the guiding voices not only of Berg but also of Schopenhauer who found in music 'the most intimate history of the self-conscious will, its most secret life, the ebb and flow of the human heart'.[572] Beyond Bach, Mahler and Berg, there was another composer hovering over White as he wrote his novel: Beethoven.

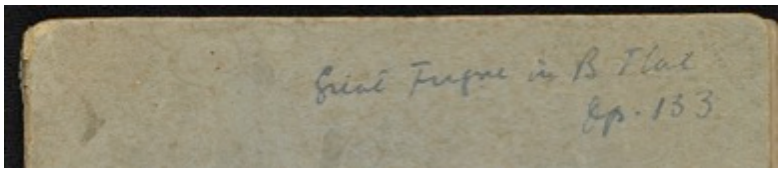


Illustration 42: Papers of Patrick White, 1930-2002 [manuscript].
NLA, MS 9982. Series 2: Literary notebooks, 1930s-1970s.
Item 5: Notebook containing research for *Voss* (1957), c.1955-1957 (84 parts)
Image of cover frontis : http://nla.gov.au/nla.ms-ms9982-2-5-s1-e-cd
[accessed 5 March 2015].

The main Notebook with sketches for *Voss* is one of a series of school exercise books White used over several decades. In the top right hand corner of its front cover is an inscription – perhaps a simple *aide memoire* – scrawled in blue ink: *'Great Fugue in B flat, Op.133'.* The annotation refers to that monumental finale in Beethoven's last quartet.[573]This comes as no surprise. Leichhardt had aspired to play the piano and would have known the keyboard works of Beethoven, as Manning Clark had noted:

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[570] Alban Berg, letter to his wife Helene, 29 March 1923, *Alban Berg: Letters to His Wife.* London: Faber and Faber, 1971, p. 365.
[571] Alban Berg, *Kammerkonzert fur Klavier und Geige mit dreizehn Bloasern*, 1923–1925, Vienna: Philharmonia Partituren in der Universal Edition: c. 1953.
[572] Arthur Schopenhauer, *On the Metaphysics of Music,* in Book 3, Supplement XXXIX *The World as Will and Representation (1838/44),* p. 27.
[573] White owned an early LP recording of Beethoven's *Grosse Fugue* played by the Hungarian Quartet, from their historic 1953 recordings, Regis RRC7011.

> The gods had planted in [Leichhardt] both the mind of a scientist and the creative imagination of an artist. He wanted to find the answer to Faust's question: what held the world together in its innermost parts. He wanted to achieve 'something exceptional on a grand scale'; he wanted a 'heroic friendship' with another man; he wanted to play the piano well; he wanted to purify his soul and to bring it to perfection. He wanted also to study all the lechery and beastliness in man, because, like Schiller, he was puzzled why God should plant in the heart of the same creature both a vision of His throne, and the insect of sensual lust.[574]

In the estimation of Manning Clark, Leichhardt had been 'singled out from the vast majority of mankind … He knew himself to be one of those elect of God,' the historian wrote, '[men] who were being prepared for an even higher destiny in the life of the world to come'. In those words, White heard Clark extolling the music of Beethoven. He would also have recognized elements of his own character in Clark's estimation of the explorer. Moreover, it is interesting to observe the dates of Beethoven (1770-1827) and Leichhardt (1813-1848): they are roughly contemporaneous.

For his part, Clark sensed he had heard Beethoven in the writing of his sometimes difficult friend, Patrick White. In September 1961, he sent White a recording of Wilhelm Kempff playing Beethoven's last piano sonatas. He drew White's particular attention to the slow movement of the Opus 111.[575] 'Beethoven seems to be communicating a vision of a man who had not only climbed a pinnacle in human achievement,' Clark wrote, 'but had seen there something such as you have seen'.[576] White already knew this recording. A few years earlier, he had bought that very LP and had played it over and again, almost wearing it out.[577]

This exchange between White and Clark connects Leichhardt/Voss directly to Beethoven. It emerges as a kind of retro-fit of music to a novel which had been published several years before the first actual communication between historian and novelist.

After White's death in September 1990, a number of prominent Australians were asked to reflect on his life and the legacy of this work. In a single printed page, Manning Clark delivered one of his signature eulogies to the man who once embraced him as a lover-brother, 'a man who belonged to a different order of being,' but who had later spurned him:

> There are from time to time human beings who had taken such a huge bite at the fruit of the tree of knowledge that they have become gods. Patrick White was one of them. That was neither easy for him nor for us. His work will tell those who come after us that in an era enslaved to greed and titillation there was at least one mighty spirit in the land.[578]

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[574] Manning Clark, *A History of Australia, Volume III: The Beginning of an Australian Civilization, 1824–1851,* Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1973, p. 338.
[575] Wilhelm Kempff playing Beethoven *Piano Sonata No.32 in c minor, Op.111*, second movement, *Arietta: Adagio molto semplice e cantabile.* DGG 138 935 (1951).
[576] Manning Clark, letter to Patrick White, 8 November 1961. NLA, Papers of Patrick White MS 9982.
[577] Clark's gift replaced an LP White had already worn out, and it was greatly appreciated.
[578] Manning Clark, *Patrick White, A Tribute.* Compiled by Clayton Joyce. North Ryde, NSW: Angus and Robertson, HarperCollins Imprint, 1991, p. 7.



Illustration 43: The view of Sydney Harbour
as Laura Trevelyan might have seen it.
Jacob Jannsen (Germany/Australia, 1779-1856)
Panorama of Sydney Harbour with Government House and Port Macquarie from Lady Macquarie's Chair (Sydney, c.1845). Oil on canvas, 62.8 x 91.0 cm.
Courtesy of Art Gallery of South Australia, TLF R4912.
http://www.myplace.edu.au/TLF_resources/R4192/description.html
[accessed 17 July 2015].

5. The 'Mystical Communion' of Voss and Laura

Berg's two-part structure and sub-structure also suggested models for the several dualities within White's novel: in the locale (Sydney/the Outback); use of language (elevated /vernacular); dramaturgy (preparation/dissolution); racial dimensions (European/Aboriginal); and psychological states (reality/the imagined).

This duality is especially potent in the 'mystical communion' between Voss and Laura. In her bed in Sydney, Laura Trevelyan struggles with a fever at the same time as Johann Ulrich Voss becomes delirious in the Outback. Somehow, they manage to communicate with each other successfully. That 'communion' appears to have been transmitted 'mystically' by sound and music.

In his explanatory letter to Huebsch, White explained that Voss and Laura meet each other only a handful of times. They write letters to each other but otherwise their verbal communication is scant. White painted Laura as the archetype heroine in a German Romantic painting whereas Voss was depicted as 'the ugly rock upon which truth must batter itself to survive'. If he were to justify himself, White said, he must 'condemn the morality and love the man'.[579]

[579] There was nothing mysterious about the choice of the name, Laura, White explained to Marr. It had nothing to do with Petrarch. It simply seemed 'an appropriate name' for a young lady of the period. PW to David Marr, 8 October 1988. NLA Papers of David Marr, MS

The seed for *Voss* had been sown as White read Eyre's Journals during the London Blitz. It germinated several years later in the public ward of a Sydney hospital. White had been taken there during one of his violent attacks of asthma. In his half-drugged state, he saw figures moving in a desert landscape. He could hear snatches of conversation. He became, in turn, Voss and his *anima* Laura Trevelyan. With asthma turning into pneumonia, White sketched the outline of the book he would write. 'The real Voss, as opposed to the actual Leichhardt,' White wrote in *Flaws in the Glass,* was 'a creature of the Egyptian desert'.[580] Later, for Australia Day in 1984, he penned an article on 'Patriotism' in which he fleshed out the hallucinations he had experienced in his hospital bed.

> In the Western Desert of Egypt, I was obsessed by memories of the Australian landscape. The landscape became for me The Land, images round which my own patriotism formed more positively: frosty mornings on the Monaro, with sulphur-crested cockatoos toppling the stooked oats; floodwaters of the Barwon and Namoi [rivers] through which I swam my horse to fetch the mail; the peppertrees and cracked asphalt of steamy Sydney streets.[581]

The first 'mystical communion' had travelled across the sands of the Egyptian desert. That communion was between White and a man in Alexandria who was to become his new lover and permanent partner for the remaining years of his life. Thus, White acknowledged that the models for Voss and Laura were Manoly Lascaris and himself.



Illustration 44 : Manoly Lascaris and Patrick White, on leave in Beirut, 1943. Marr, *Life,* plate 41, courtesy of 'the estate of Patrick White'.

The long-distance courtship between Voss and Laura was not merely a literary device or conceit: White genuinely believed in communication of the spirit. In April 1939, from his sanctuary in a writers' colony on Cape Cod, White wrote again to his American lover in distant Taos. 'In the last couple of weeks, you've been extraordinarily close,' White

[580] PW, *Flaws,* p. 104.
[581] PW, 'Patriotism'. *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 January 1984. Reprinted in *Patrick White Speaks,* ed. Christine Flynn and Paul Brennan. Leichhardt, NSW: Primavera Press, 1989, p. 142.

confessed to. Spud Johnson. 'I could almost put out a hand. It's a dubious sort of comfort, but comfort of a kind.'[582]

> ESP research in recent years has surely proved that telepathic communication does exist … I'm convinced that life is built on coincidence and strange happenings. But in all this, and in spite of not writing what could be called naturalistic novels, you have to keep in touch with fact, which I feel I do.[583]

Through the haze of his own bronchial fevers, White had seen the figures of Voss and Laura coming together, just as they were to meet in their fevers.[584] He had come to believe in the existence of extra-sensory perception.[585]

In his book *The Eye in the Mandala: A Vision of Man and God,* Peter Beatson has suggested that the relationship between Voss and Laura demonstrated 'the power of the mind to transcend normally accepted physical limitations. ESP has the same tangential connection with the hidden soul as miracles have with the Hidden God.'[586] For most of the novel, Beatson suggests, the link between Voss and Laura may be explained naturalistically, but in the climactic chapter where Laura 'witnesses' the decapitation of Voss, their relationship must be accepted as a psychic event, abnormal yet genuinely believed.

In the early 19th century, German researchers conducted quasi-empirical investigations into what became known as 'the paranormal'. This entailed investigation of conditions such as clairvoyance, communal sensations and divinations manifested in magnetic sleep.

The German physician Franz Anon Mesmer (1734-1815) – from whose name the term 'to mesmerize' is derived – was the first to suggest the notion of telepathy as 'a propagation of thoughts affecting the inner sense of man'. [587] In 1853, the German poet-physician Justinus Kerner (1786-1862) published *Die somnambülen Tische* (literally, 'The Tables of Sleepwalking'). It marked the transition period between so-called 'mesmerism' and the ascent of spiritualism. Schopenhauer's essay *Versuch über das Geistersehn* (1851) (literally, 'An Essay on Seeing Ghosts') was a significant contribution to the philosophical discussion of the importance of paranormal phenomena in the first half of the 19th century.

Ludwig Leichhardt's personal library, now in the collection of the Mitchell Library in Sydney where White researched much of the background material for *Voss,* contains

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[582] PW, letter to Spud Johnson, 17 August 1939. Marr, *Letters*, p. 23.
[583] PW, in conversation with Herring and Wilkes, *Southerly* 33, June 1973. pp. 132-143.
[584] White had been a bronchial asthmatic from the age of six, inherited from his mother's line of the family. It often incapacitated him and he would spend days in bed, even weeks at a stretch. It was also a condition he shared with Alban Berg, a factor which drew him closer to Berg's *Violin Concerto*.
[585] PW, with Thelma Herring and G.A.Wilkes, *A Conversation with Patrick White* Melbourne: *Southerly* 33, June 1973. pp. 132-143.
[586] Peter Beatson, *The Eye in the Mandala: A Vision of Man and God.* London: Elek, 1976, pp. 81-110.
[587] Eberhard W. Bauer, *A Short Introduction into the History of Parapsychological Research in Germany. Institut für Grenzgebiete der Psychologie & Psychohygiene.* New York: the Parapsychology Foundation website, 1999-2015. http://www.pflyceum.org/86.html [accessed 1 July 2017].

several books related to spiritualism. These books may have provided the key to White's invocation of spiritualism in his novel.

Like so many other aspects of *Voss*, this telepathic mode of communication underscores another dimension: the blend of European and Indigenous beliefs. While the German Romantics were fascinated by para-psychological occurrences, anthropologists observed telepathic powers among the Australian Aborigines. In his Notebooks, White copied paragraphs from Dr A.P.Elkin's pioneering 1938 book, *The Australian Aborigines*.

> The Aborigine has, in fact, developed the art of contemplation to a much greater degree than most of us. He may be taking part in general conversation …when he drops into a state of recollection and receptivity, lasting minutes, until he has realized who will be 'coming along' in the near future … Many white folk who have known their native employees well, give remarkable examples of the Aborigine's power for knowing what is happening at a distance, even hundreds of miles away… how he could have known, they do not understand, for there was no means of communication and he had been away from his own people for weeks and even months … In any case, granted their animistic and 'dreaming' philosophy, they are quite logical, and what is more, they act on their logic and apparently seldom find it wanting.[588]

White sent Voss into the desert to grasp the elusive meaning of the land. In doing so, he spoke with his native guides in what Antonella Riem has called 'a language of spiritual communion'.[589] This could only happen through the use of the creative word of silent empathy with the landscape, its inhabitants and their lore and spirituality. This same search for an intuitive experience of the sacred stands at the foundation of Aboriginal spirituality, as James Cowan has explored in *Myths of the Dreaming.*[590]

In his depiction of the corroboree – the Aboriginal dance-ceremony he appears never to have witnessed first-hand –White described with uncanny accuracy the characteristics of Aboriginal chant-song: the song begins on a high pitch, tumbles by uneven steps to the octave below, then returns to the high note to repeat the process several times over. (At the time of writing *Voss,* it is unlikely White had ever heard any Aboriginal music. His knowledge of it must have been acquired from written accounts.) To untutored ears, like those of Voss and White, this singing would sound 'as monotonous as grey earth'.

> [The song] rose in sudden spasms of passion, to die down, down, as the charcoal lying. The voices of dust would die right away. To rise and sing. One voice, alone, would put on the feathers of parakeets in gay tufts of song. The big, lumbering pelican voices would spread slower wings. There was laughter too, of young voices, and the giggling of black women. Before the end came. There was a definite end. [*Voss,* p.401-2]

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[588] A.P.Elkin, *The Australian Aborigines.* Sydney, Angus and Robertson, 1938. pp. 240-1.
[589] Antonella Riem, 'The Spirit of the Creative Word in Patrick White's *Voss*'. See *Patrick White Centenary: The Legacy of a Prodigal Son* Newcastle upon Tyne, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014, p. 228.
[590] James Cowan, *Myths of the Dreaming.* Roseville, NSW: Unity Press, 1994, p. 3-4.

The land Voss is trying understand and map, Riem asserts, was under the protection of his two Aboriginal guides: Dugald and Jackie embody this archetypal world, where the inner networks of the Songlines provide a guide for the explorer. With these mythic cartographies, '[The Songlines represent] a more accurate and exact form of mapping the Aboriginal landscape,' Riem suggests, 'than the one used by white settlers.'

A similar characterization could be extended to 'the mystical communion' of Voss and Laura. That 'communion' and indeed their entire relationship appears suspended in a bubble, not just in time but in space and geography. The bubble bursts with the disappearance and presumed death of Voss and his party in the Outback, yet it is reconstituted– as a memorial statue, this time a memory frozen in stone – in the closing lines of the novel, where Mr Topp heard 'in the wooden words of the headmistress [Miss Trevelyan] the stubborn music that was waiting for release'. [*Voss,* p. 475]

> 'Voss did not die,' Miss Trevelyan replied. 'He is there still, it is said, in the country, and always will be. His legend will be written down, eventually, by those who have been troubled by it.' 'Come, come,' [said Mr Ludlow.] 'If we are not certain of the facts, how is it possible to give the answers?''The air will tell us,' Miss Trevelyan said. [*Voss,* p. 477-8]

In the final moments of the operatic *Voss,* Laura stands alone on centre stage and sings a eulogy before the statue of Voss. For the strange German explorer, 'places yet uninvited [had] become an obsession, promising final peace and goodness'. [*Voss,* p. 472] Laura's final lines in the opera resound 'in the air':

> Voss, Johann, Ulrich, my love.
> You are there still, there in the country.
> Your legend will be written in the air,
> In the sand, in thorns, in stones
> By those who are troubled by it.
> And what we do not know
> The air will tell us,
> The air will tell us.[591]

Here the opera's librettist David Malouf has condensed the last several pages of White's novel to but a few lines. In setting them, the composer Richard Meale imported the final moments of Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* into the closing pages of his score. The listener discerns resonances of Mahler: the same heavy pendulum swing of pulse and harmony, the same evanescent tinkle of the glockenspiel and sense of suspended timelessness. In *Das Lied* – a work White knew and loved [592] - Mahler and the poet Bethge looked beyond the European civilization they knew, searching outwards to a world they barely knew. Their gaze turned to China and the exotic civilizations of Asia, as 'eternal' as the unknown civilization of the Australian Outback:

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[591] David Malouf, libretto to the opera *Voss.* Sydney, The Australian Opera, 1986. Programme book to the ABC CD recording 420928, p. 63, and in the novel ,p. 478.

[592] White owned the 1952 recording of Mahler's symphonic song-cycle with the Vienna Philharmonic conducted by Bruno Walter and soloists Kathleen Ferrier and Julius Patzak.

Die liebe Erde allüberall blüht auf im Lenz und grünt
Aufs neu! Allüberall und ewig blauen licht die Fernen!
Ewig... ewig...

The dear earth everywhere blossoms in spring and grows green anew!
Everywhere and forever blue is the horizon!
Forever ... Forever ... [593]

In like manner, the settler colonists farewelled Voss, the mysterious explorer who had confronted a mysterious and forbidding Outback, an eternal world that was there but, as yet, undiscovered, untamed, waiting to be understood. Writer and composer - White and Mahler, Malouf and Meale - evoke faith in the act of discovery: 'the air will tell us'.

5.Professor Topp and Music in the Colony

To a reader with an interest in music, the most significant musical dimension of *Voss* might appear to lie in the character of Professor Topp. The music master is 'a single gentleman, comparatively silent and unprolific':

> … a small, white, worried man, with small, moist, white hands, shameful in that country of dry yellow calluses. All he made was music, for which he was continually apologizing, and hoping he might not be called upon to explain what useful purpose his passion served. [*Voss,* p. 33]

White wonders what use music might be in a community like this. He poses the question, but avoids answering it. In its ceremonial and liturgical functions, music in that young settler colony was a civilizing influence; music reminded the community of the ennobling qualities of the culture they had left behind. But not entirely so. They had exported reminders of civilisation with them, albeit in smaller measure. They had brought these tokens to a new society on the other side of the globe. Mr Bonner, Voss's main sponsor, addressing his dinner guests, lauds the achievements of the administrators, the farmers, the men - all men, it need hardly be said:

> 'We have only to consider the progress we have made. Look at our homes and public edifices. Look at the devotion of our administrators, and the solid achievement of those men who are settling the land. Why, in this very room, look at the remains of the good dinner we have just eaten.' *Voss* 29

These men had built the backbone of the community, they were its bricks-and-mortar. Mr Bonner does not think to mention the women or the artists in that community, people who saw and heard their society and who attempted to document and interpret it. In Australian society, White seems to be saying, some things never change.

[593] Hans Bethge, lines from *Die chinesische Flöte*, set by Gustav Mahler in the final movement *Der abschied*, from *Das Lied von der Erde* (1908-9).

From the time of Leichhardt's disappearance during his third expedition into the Outback (1848), there were a number of wild theories that attempted to explain the fate of the explorer. Well into the mid-20th century, search parties scoured the Outback attempting to solve the mystery. In 1871, one of these search parties was led by a Lewis Thompson.

During his preliminary research in the Mitchell Library, White stumbled upon information that placed music at the centre of his new novel. He was intrigued to learn that Thompson had been a piano-tuner and that he was also employed to sell sheet music and give piano lessons as he criss-crossed the countryside bringing civilization to the wilderness. 'The incongruity of [Thompson being a piano tuner] appealed to me immensely,' White wrote to Alec Chisholm, author of *Strange New World*, that controversial book about Leichhardt, 'but I have not been able to confirm the statement in any other source.' [594]
'

White's letter to Chisholm appears soon after his arrival back in Sydney in 1947, indicating that the figure of Professor Topp appeared very early in his planning of the novel. This information from Chisholm provided the foundation for Professor Topp, flautist and explorer *manqué*. Dr Topp had come to Australia to 'bring nicety to barbarian minds' [*Voss,* p. 247]. He was also a composer who had once composed a sonata for flute and piano. 'He had never dared own it,' he maintained. '[Topp] would introduce it to his pupils as: "A little piece that we might run through".' [*Voss,* p. 46]. No doubt Professor Topp's young female students would have been more impressed had they known that the true talents of their 'usually modest [but also somewhat] melancholy' teacher also extended to musical composition [*Voss,* p. 43]. In his years in the colony, Professor Topp had acquired quite a reputation: he had been coming 'to everybody's house for years, to the exasperation of everybody's girls' [*Voss,* p. 463]. White refers to another canard: in the eyes of many in such a community, artists were sometimes regarded as little more than untrustworthy deviants.

In the journals of Georgiana McCrae, one of the pillars of colonial society in Melbourne, White chanced upon another skerrick of information which helped flesh out the character of Professor Topp. One evening, Mrs McCrae wrote in her diary, 'Mr McLure played on his flute'.[595] Thus, Mr Thompson the piano-tuner became Professor Topp, the flute-playing music-master.

Early in the novel, Tom Radclyffe, who goes on to marry Belle Bonner, taunts 'old Voss', still in his mid-30s: 'Are you back with poor Topp?' he enquires of Voss. 'I hear that all his thoughts are for a certain young lady who is taking lessons in the flute' (p.20). White would have picked up similar snippets of gossip over his dinner party conversations.

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[594] PW to Alex.Chisholm, 31 January 1947. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.
[595] Diary of Georgina McCrae, transcribed by PW in his Notebook containing research for *Voss*. NLA. MS 9982 Papers of Patrick White, 1930-2002 [manuscript].
Series 2: Literary notebooks, 1930s-1970s Item 5: Notebook containing research for *Voss* (1957), c.1955-1957 (84 parts), http://nla.gov.au/nla.ms=ms9982-2-5-s65-e-cd [accessed 15 July 2015].

In the final pages of *Voss*, White revealed the true character of Professor Topp, that 'grumpy little man, a failure, who would continue to pulse, none the less, though the body politic ignores his purpose' (p.473). White's description of Topp again recalls how he often wrote his own character into the personages in his novels:

> Out of his hatred for the sour colonial soil upon which he had been deposited many years before he had developed a perverse love, [one] that he had never yet succeeded in expressing and which, for that reason, nobody had suspected. [*Voss,* p. 474].

Like so many artists whose work and pronouncements cause discomfort within their society, Topp could see – and hear! - a future for Australia:

> He could hear the stubborn music that was waiting for release. Of rock and scrub. Of winds curled invisibly in wombs of air. Or thin rivers struggling towards seas of eternity. All flowing and uniting. Over a bed of upturned faces. (p. 475)

To Topp, this 'bristling, unpleasant little thing', White assigned one of the most significant and moving passages in the entire novel, one worthy of the orations of Manning Clark. Along with the rock and scrub and winds and thin rivers, White unleashed the peal of church bells and the powerful thunder of organ, drums and cannons, the velvet plush and the full panapoly of transplanted imperial ceremony. Here White endowed Topp, perhaps the lone artist in an uncomprehending society, with a potent vision for the future of the colony. But for the short-reach and lack of vision of its people, it could be achieved. Some day, White hoped. Some day, he predicted, if…

> … we do not come to grief on our mediocrity as a people. If we are not locked forever in our own bodies. Then, too, there is the possibility that our hates and our carnivorous habits will unite in a logical conclusion: we may destroy one another (p. 475).

White's representation of Sydney's colonial society in *Voss* — as well as the character of Topp himself — was fleshed out by historical sources depicting musical life in the colony. Even so, it is surprising that, given all the detailed references to rainfall, market gardens, women's fashion, even floggings and orgies, references to music in the colony are comparatively scant.

The piano in the Bonner's drawing room represented the obligatory civilising symbol of the social progress of the colony, proud of what is had achieved in barely half a century. The French pianist, composer and music critic Oscar Comettant visited Australia for the Centennial celebrations of European settlement in 1888. M.Comettant (1819-1898) was also an ardent traveller, reporting on his travels in the magazine *Siècle*. His keen eye caught the ubiquitous presence of the piano, already observed in the music room at Meroë, in *The Aunt's Story*

M.Comettant estimated that, by this time (1888), it was quite possible that some 700,000 pianos had been shipped to or manufactured in Australia, a remarkable and perhaps improbable claim for a country with a population of 2,981,677 people (1888 figures) of

European extraction. On a second visit a decade later, M. Comettant commented on the rise of piano manufacturing in this country:

> Everywhere here the piano is considered to be a necessary piece of furniture. Rather than not have one of these sonorous instruments in the drawing-room, as a sign of respectability, they would go without a bed; they would sleep on the piano while waiting to complete their furnishings, and appearance would be kept up, which is the main thing in Australia.[596]

The typical piano in Australia was characteristically German, M. Comettant scoffed. It had 'the right sort of shape, with heavily ornate moulding and vulgar, double-branched candlesticks. That it makes a noise when the keyboard is struck is, for the most part, all that matters'.

Laura Trevelyan exemplified what was expected of a respectable young lady in the colony. Without bidding, Laura sits at the piano in the Bonners' drawing room and gives 'a rather flat rendering' of a nocturne by John Field. It is Mrs Bonner's favourite, 'the one with the pretty tune towards the end,' Mrs Bonner coos [*Voss,* p.99].[597] (Why does White not have them play the sonatinas of Beethoven? Could *Für Elise* not have been *Für Laura*?) Laura played music by the Irish composer because it was hardly likely she might have known music written by a composer in the colony itself, Topp notwithstanding. John Field wrote the kind of innocuous, undemanding music young ladies from the colony's better families could play at home, under the watchful eyes of tutors like Professor Topp.[598]

At the Bonners' harbourside house in Sydney, the gentle sounds of Field's nocturne drew Voss and Laura together. Voss sat, 'listening, or so it appeared, as if the music propounded some idea about the level of its agreeable mediocrity' (p.29). Voss was fascinated by this opinionated young woman, wise beyond her years. He imagines how the fertile mind of an 18-year-old can cope with the confines of domestic life in the colony, her 'beehive'.[599]

Voss teases Laura and, by extension, satirizes the stifling ordinariness of a woman's life in the colony. He is unable to fathom the gulf that separates Laura's mental capacity and her future potential within the impoverished smallness of her circumstances. He asks her about novels; he may well have asked her about music, something they seem to have in common.

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[596] Oscar Comettant, *Au Pays de Kangorous et des Mines d'Or.* Paris, 1890, p. 178ff. Cited by Roger Covell, *Australia's Music: Themes of a New Society.* Melbourne: Sun Books, 1967, pp. 22ff..

[597] The Irish composer John Field (1782-1837) was known principally for his keyboard miniatures. Between 1812 and 1836, Field composed some 19 nocturnes for solo piano; it is possible White has Laura playing the best-known of these, the *Nocturne No.5 in B flat Major,* an *Andantino.*

[598] In the operatic version of *Voss*, John Field's Nocturne is replaced by more robust music created other colonial composers, Samuel Hale Marsh and Isaac Nathan.

[599] Appendix 1 (54).

A few pages further on, Voss 'could not have told [her] what he was thinking':

> He would have liked to give, what he was not sure, if he had been able, if he had not destroyed this himself with deliberate ruthlessness in the beginning. In its absence there remained, in the lit room, a shimmering of music, and of the immense distances towards which he already trudged (p. 99).

'A shimmering of music': in that simple phrase, White provided the key to the code which unlocks the 'mystical communion' of Voss and Laura. It is not in their conversations nor in their letters, real and imagined. It is in the sounds that 'shimmer' in their memory, sounds of voices mingled with the gentle tinkling of a nondescript nocturne on the piano.

If only Voss had asked Laura about music in her life! In the opera, he does. The opera's librettist David Malouf – himself a violinist who had once aspired to be a composer – condensed that scene into a few telling lines:

VOSS : I try to catch your music.
[emphasis added]
I try to imagine your life in the hive.
Do you make pastry? Do you hem sheets?
I try to imagine your life in the nest.

LAURA: It is easier for us to imagine your lives.
I imagine you by what I see of you.
I see a desert. Sand. Rocks.
You scatter words
Like torn up bits of paper
But they blow
Away in the vastness of you.[600]

In *Voss,* White describes the kind of establishments wherein newly arrived musicians would set themselves up to teach, play, print and sell music and musical instruments. All the while, they advertise their skills and wares in newspapers like *The Sydney Herald*.[601] In the young colony, the streets of Sydney must have been very noisy.[602]

The great distance that separated the colony from its motherland was not just geography, it was the gulf that separated the minds and concerns of its citizens – the soldiers and their charges, the magistrates and merchants, the clerics and petty clerks – from the culture they had largely left behind and had tried to replicate in the deprived circumstances of their new and strange continent.

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[600] David Malouf, libretto for the opera *Voss,* Act 1, scene iii ("In the Garden"). David Malouf, libretto for the opera *Voss,* after Patrick White. Contained in David Malouf: *A First Place: A Celebration in Writing for David Malouf's 80th Birthday*. Sydney, NSW: Knopf – Random House, 2014.
[601] Examples of advertising from this period can be located using the NLA's *Trove* digitised newspapers. [accessed 16 August 2015] http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article12925268
[602] Appendix 1 (55).



Illustration 45: The main street of Sydney,
captured only a few months before the arrival of Ludwig Leichhardt.
Henry Curzon (1788-1854),
George Street Sydney – Looking South January 1842).
Watercolour, 33.9 x 50.2 cms, State Library of New South Wales, Sydney.
Image in the public domain, Wikimedia Commons.
http://dictionaryofsydney.org/image/19923
[accessed 15 August 2016].

By 1842, the year of Leichhardt's arrival in the colony, the solitary fife and bugle and drum had grown into bands, and the solitary voices intoning the tales of places far away had become choirs. There were pianos, harps and organs. There was now also a handful of composers in the colony.

7. Models for Topp: Stephen Hale and Isaac Nathan

In all, there were at least three real-life characters who contributed to the character of Professor Topp. The first was Lewis Thompson, the piano-tuner who survived the expedition to find what was left of Leichhardt's party in the Outback. The second was a musician who had accompanied Leichhardt on his voyage to Australia. From the letters and diaries of the 29-year-old Leichhardt, White read details of a musician who, in order to relieve the tedium of passengers on the long voyage, had given recitals on the harp.[603]

[603] Appendix 1 (56). The *Sir Thomas Paget* had sailed from Gravesend on 1 October 1841 and arrived in Sydney on 14 February 1842 with 248 emigrants, among them a 'Dr Leichhardt'. Isaac Nathan and his family had arrived a year earlier.

That musician was Stephen Hale Alonso Marsh, a 37-year-old harpist and composer, who figured prominently in Leichardt's abbreviated domicile in Sydney.[604] Music and literature filled their conversations aboard ship and continued into their daily communications at Ammington, the Marsh house where Leichhardt rented a small room for six months. Similarly, in White's narrative, Voss rented a room at the Sussex Street residence of Professor Topp. Doubtless Leichhardt would have found it very pleasant to room in a house where the main background was music played on the harp by his landlord. Marsh composed music celebrating his tenant's expeditions, pieces like *Dr Leichhardt's March,* composed in 1846 by 'his friend S.H.Marsh … on the successful termination of his (second) Expedition, after having traversed a distance of nearly 3,000 miles through a portion of Australia, hitherto untrodden by civilized man'.



Illustration 46: S.H.Marsh *Dr Leichhardt's March,* for the Harp. London: T.Boosey & Co., 1846. http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj166241284/view?searchTerm=Marsh+Dr+Leichhardt%27s+March&partId=nla.obj-166241292#page/n0/mode/1up [accessed 4 November 2016].

Although it was unlikely White had ever heard any Australian colonial music before writing *Voss*, he may have found in the Mitchell Library the self-published musical and literary works of another important colonial composer, the multi-faceted musician Isaac Nathan. It is therefore odd, given White's assiduous research of matters other than music, that his Notebooks contain no reference to Nathan, the most important and busiest musician in the colony in the years Leichhardt/Voss lived there.

At the very least, Leichhardt's engagement with the musicians of the colony should have connected White directly with their music. But if he had made the acquaintance of this music, most likely it would only have been through written references rather than actual musical scores, much less live performances. The exchanges between Voss and the music master Topp attest to the importance White gave to music in the life of the young colony:

> 'I would rather suggest the sublimity of perfection,' said the innocent music master, 'in great sweeps of pure sound' [*Voss,* p.42].

[604] Stephen Hale Alonzo(1805-1888) established himself in Sydney as a professor of harmony and an importer of pianos. He spent ten years at Sydney before going to Melbourne in 1852 and then on to San Francisco in 1872.



Illustration 47: Isaac Nathan (1790-1864)
Portrait by unknown artist, ca 1820.
Oil on canvas: 92 x 71.5 cm. NLA
http://nla/gov.au/nla.obj-134342723
[accessed 17 July 2014].

Those 'great sweeps of pure sound' serve to introduce a composer who was, in all but name, the Composer Plenipotentiary of the colony. In April 1841, the Jewish musician Isaac Nathan arrived in Sydney with his second wife and eight children. (Leichhardt arrived a year later.) Whereas Topp was modest, even melancholic, Nathan —mysterious emissary of royalty, intimate of Lord Byron and other Romantic notables —was one of those larger-than-life figures whose energetic *personae* resonated throughout all corners of the colony.

Nathan reached Sydney when he was already fifty years old, an age when men of his day might have retired from public life.[605] Instead, upon arrival, Nathan opened a singing academy and built a large house in Randwick he named Byron Lodge. His energy and activity were prolific, the antithesis of Topp's atrophy. Not only did Nathan, a descendant of Polish Jews, lead the music at the Great Synagogue, he also directed the music at St Mary's (Roman Catholic) Chapel. The two edifices were close to each other, a mere five-minute jaunt across Hyde Park.[606]

> Nathan's full-blooded choruses would have stirred the citizenry in recalling the odes and oratorios in the great cathedrals and choral festivals back in England. In a very public manner, Nathan's music proclaimed their attachment to what Rachel Cowgill has characterized as the 19th century trinity of 'Monarchy, Protestantism and Britishness'.[607] At this time, patriotic fervour was synonymous with the odes and oratorios of Handel. These themes bleed into *Voss,* both the novel and the opera.

[605] In 1845, at the height of the Irish Potato Famine, the life expectancy for an English male in the Australian colonies would have been around 45.
[606] Governor Macquarie laid the foundation stone of St Mary's Chapel in 1821. A stone building in neo-Gothic style, it burned to the ground in 1865. The chapel had an organ from 1831, but a larger two-manual Bevington instrument was inaugurated in July 1841, a few months after Isaac Nathan arrived in Sydney.
[607] Rachel Cowgill and Julian Rushton, *Europe, Empire, and Spectacle in Nineteenth-Century British Music.* Music in 19th-Century Britain. Aldershot, Ashgate, 2006.

In fulfilment of his (self-appointed) role as the colony's Composer Plenipotentary, Nathan also composed two Odes celebrating the achievements of his explorer friend Ludwig Leichhardt. The colony's leading magazine *The Australian* extolled 'Mr Nathan's solid reputation as a votary of 'strength in the great metropolis of the world' and heaped fulsome praise on Nathan's 'exquisitely plaintive dirge' composed when Leichhardt was thought lost on his first expedition.[608]

Several months later, Leichhardt miraculously re-appeared and was feted again in another ode by Isaac Nathan, *Leichhardt's Return: Thy Greeting Home Again.*[609] Again, an anonymous author in *The Australian* – perhaps the composer himself – showered Nathan's music and patriotism with superlatives: 'As long as great poetry and music shall sway the sons and daughters of Australia, the glories of Leichhardt, as sung by Nathan, will excite and delight.'[610]

Isaac Nathan's influence on his adopted community was brutally cut short. On 15 January 1864, he stepped from a tram near the SydneyTown Hall and became the first traffic fatality in Australia. He was buried in St Stephen's Cemetery in Camperdown, the inner west of Sydney.

Today, Nathan's output can seem embarrassing. Even some of his contemporaries found its effusive patriotism an affront to good taste. Others recognized Nathan's unique attempt to awaken the eyes and ears of a still young colony to the mysterious sounds that hovered around it. It also invited discussion of the differences, political and otherwise, between the Australian colonies and the British motherland.[611] At the very least, Nathan's music was professional in notation, publication, distribution and public notice. The first musician with an esteemed European reputation to settle in Australia, Nathan was also the first to attempt a serious study of Aboriginal music.[612] His persona lived on – in part, at least – as the humble musician Professor Topp in the novel *Voss*.

During his fastidious and detailed research in the Mitchell Library, White must surely have stumbled across Nathan's name and perhaps even his printed music. (The Library contained copies of all the music Nathan himself published in Sydney from, roughly, 1844-64.) As already mentioned, it is strange he makes no mention of Nathan's music at all.

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[608] Appendix 1 (57). Isaac Nathan, *Leichhardt's Grave- an elegiac ode* (1846). London: W. Baker, Hibernian Press; Faulkner, 1845. NLA [accessed 17 August 2014] http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-165997773

[609] Isaac Nathan, *Leichhardt's Return: Thy Greeting Home Again* (1846). London: Cramer, Addison and Beale, [1846?] [accessed 17 August 2-14].NLA online http://.nla.gov.au/work/16497347

[610] *The Australian,* 19 May 1846. The magazine was published in Sydney (1824-48) by a consortium of publishers and proprietors among whom was William Charles Wentworth, the pioneering politician, author and explorer (1790-1872).

[611] The contrast between Nathan's enlightened enthusiasm for Aboriginal music is in stark contrast to the prevailing disparaging view about 'primitivism', enunciated by Sir Hubert Parry in *The Evolution of The Art of Music* (1898).

[612] Among Nathan's descendants are several famous Australian names, including the conductor Sir Charles Mackerras (1925–2010).

Several commentators have noted the 'operatic' context of White's language and interior vision in *Voss*. It is interesting to speculate on the sounds White may have had in his head as he was writing his novel. We have some idea what was he listening to, and how this music might have influenced his writing. The influence and presence of the music of Bach on White's writing has already been discussed. It is worth recalling White's confession to Nolan: 'Whenever I am feeling mentally ill, I play Bach endlessly. His sanity and simplicity make me sane again.'[613] For his own darker moments, Nolan preferred the fluidity of Debussy. He did concede, though, that 'musicians and painters are on the [same] spot in many ways'.[614] White's invocation of El Greco's *Burial* suggests music even more rich in harmony and counterpoint than Bach's *Magnificat,* more fulsome in orchestration than the *Christmas Oratorio,* more intuitively dramatic than the *St Matthew Passion.* It suggests the music of another of White's 'gods', Gustav Mahler.

8. Mahler, White and Jim Sharman

In the mid-1960s, not quite a decade after the publication of *Voss*, many young Australian had attempted to read White's 'difficult' novel.[615] In Sydney, Jim Sharman had been 'impressed and overwhelmed, exhilarated even' by it. Even so, reading *Voss* had been 'a struggle'. In London, as he was staging *The Rocky Horror Show,* Sharman returned to it 'with greater insight':

> There are some things to savour early in life: rock-and-roll, dance parties and political extremism, for example. Other things require more maturity, like Mahler symphonies, political reality and the writings of Patrick White …[616]

For nigh on twenty-five years, Mahler-White-Sharman were a kind of spiritual and intellectual triumvirate. The author and the director of so many new White plays – his protégé and, as Marr described Sharman, 'the surrogate son' – shared experiences and insights into the composer's works and interior visions. In May 1977, Sharman inscribed a birthday gift to White with the words: 'There is another world, but it is in Martin Road [White's address in Centennial Park]. With thanks for all your love and inspiration.'

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[613] PW, letter to Sidney Nolan, 14 May 1964. Marr, *Letters,* p. 255.
[614] Sidney Nolan, letter to Sunday Reed, 18 May 1943. See *Nolan on Nolan: Sidney Nolan in His Own Words.* Nancy Underwood (ed.). Melbourne: Viking, 2007, p. 127.
[615] PW had characterized *Voss* as his 'difficult novel'. Adelaide Teachers College ordered 200 copies of *Voss* in 1960, and by 1963 it was a set text in English literature courses at the University of Sydney, and elsewhere.
[616] Jim Sharman, *Blood and Tinsel,* Melbourne, Victoria: Miegunyah Press, 2008, p. 257.



Illustration 48: The book Sharman presented to White.
Mitchell Library PWBC/1776 128
Sigrid Wiesmann (ed.) *Gustav Mahler in Vienna.*
London: Thames and Hudson, 1976.

In the final pages of *Voss,* there is a ceremony honouring the explorer in which the full panoply of a British colony, with Governor, his retinue, a military escort, Union Jack fluttering in the breeze, ladies in their finery and, incongruously, 'a young man with a slight talent for exhibiting himself reeling off dreamy waltzes at the piano' (p.468). For all its intrinsic Britishness, Sharman staged this scene in the opera as a kind of Mahlerian reflection, looking backwards (to European heritage), forwards (to a bright future for a new continent-nation) and inwards (to a new race of mixed cultures). For some, Sharman evoked memories of the El Greco painting which had moved White decades earlier.

Behind the complex detail and Baroque opulence of El Greco's *Burial,* White may have imagined an angelic host singing music as sweeping and moving as the closing moments of Mahler's *Resurrection Symphony*. At the Day of Judgment, Mahler wrote in an explanatory note, 'once more we must confront terrifying questions'.[617] In hushed awe, the chorus intones the closing text, created by Mahler himself:

> Everything is yours that you have desired. Yours, what you have loved, what you have struggled for … Arise, yes, you will arise from the dead, my heart, in an instant! What you have conquered will bear you to God.[618]

With telling irony, those last two lines could have been addressed to Voss. But Johann Ulrich Voss did not believe in God; he died with his 'delusions of divinity' intact.[619] It is doubtful he would have viewed his life's mission in the way Mahler extols in a note to his *Resurrection Symphony*: 'What you have conquered will bear you to God.'[620]

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[617] Appendix 1 (58). A short section of a programme note written by Mahler to accompany a performance of his *Symphony No.2 in c minor* (1888-94), the '*Resurrection* ' in Dresden, 1901. http://gustavmahler.com/symphonies/mahler-symphony-2.html [accessed 300516].
[618] Gustav Mahler, text for the closing movement of *Symphony No.2, 'The Resurrection'.*
[619] PW, letter to Ben Huebsch, 11 September 1956. Marr, *Letters,* p. 108.
[620] Gustav Mahler, text for the closing movement of *Symphony No.2, 'The Resurrection'.*

Mahler's *Resurrection* surfaces on several later occasions in White's life. In 1963 he and Lascaris were in London where they went to a Prom concert in the Royal Albert Hall. There, they heard the 81-year-old Leopold Stokowski conduct Mahler's *Resurrection.* [621] By then, White had read Donald Mitchell's first volume on the composer and also Bruno Walter's hagiographic biography, as well as Alma Mahler's roseate version of her husband's life and career.[622] All three volumes appear in White's library in the years 1958-62, several years after the publication of *Voss.* His knowledge of Mahler, then, would more likely have come from experience of the music either in live performances or on the radio or gramophone recordings. Even so, by the mid-1960s, White found himself 'drifting away' from Mahler.

At that time, White found himself drifting away from orchestral performances altogether. Increasingly, he was more interested in other genres of music – first chamber music, then opera, then contemporary music.

9. Summary

One afternoon in November 1987, a group of people assembled at the Australian Music Centre in The Rocks in Sydney to celebrate the launch of the new recording of the opera *Voss*. Almost all the leading players were there but Voss's original creator was not. Perhaps White was too feeble to attend, perhaps he could not bring himself to recapitulate the achievement of the novel and its opera. Perhaps he felt he could not accompany Manning Clark on what the historian called their 'walk through the Paradise Gardens'.[623] Clark's poetic invocation was hardly the most appropriate image for an opera about the loss of an exploratory party in the Australian desert.[624] Attending a performance of the opera in the Sydney Opera House one night in June 1986, Clark reflected on his experience. 'On that night,' he mused, 'art gave me a walk in the paradise gardens'.

> Voss believed in that moment when life and death would be united in love's embrace, believed that the interior of our continent would bring his soul to perfection ...[Richard Meale's music] heightened out awareness of the contrast between the sketchy civilization on the edges of our continent and the coming confrontation between the mighty spirit of Voss and the interior of Australia. Because, in some ways, Australia is the great hero of the work… We no longer need to cast covetous, envious and grovelling eyes abroad. We are no longer spiritual exiles in Australia, no longer sojourners in a strange land. We now

[621] Appendix 1 (59).
[622] Donald Mitchell, *Mahler.* London: Rockliff, 1958. [PWBC/255]. Bruno Walter, *Gustav Mahler,* London: Hamish Hamilton, 1958. [PWBC/300 14]. Alma Mahler, *(Herausgegeben von) Gustav Mahler Briefe 1879-1911* Berlin: Paul Zsolnay, 1924 PWBC/1292 102 "For Patrick Sydney, 28.5.62 from Maria and Curt [Prerauer]".
[623] Julie Steiner (General Manager, ABC Enterprises), Letter to Manning Clark, 7 Dec 1987. NLA, Papers of Manning Clark, MS 7550/18/34. 'All present were deeply moved by your magnificent speech taking us on a walk "through the Paradise Gardens".' Steiner wrote to Clark.
[624] Clark's speech alluded to the orchestral tone poem by Frederick Delius, *The Walk to the Paradise Garden,* the entr'acte from his opera *A Village Romeo and Juliet* (1907). He was probably also referring to the walk to the Opera House through Sydney's famed Royal Botanic Gardens.

> know that we belong here, that we are the inheritors of the wisdom of the Aborigines, the Europeans, the Asians and the British. We are making, at last, our own contribution to the great conversation of humanity. We are no longer borrowers, we are creators … Like all great art, *Voss* strengthened our faith in our own powers. *Voss* convinced us that we too could be like gods. [625]

This chapter has traced the influence of music on Patrick White as he created his fifth novel, *Voss.* It was the work of a major writer at the peak of his creative powers, a writer whose tastes in music had evolved over the long gestation of this novel. On occasion, they varied from the standard canon of classical music, but still only tentatively so. Fundamentally, White's musical experiences reflected the largely conservative tastes of ABC orchestral concerts and radio programmes. Beginning with the God-given delight he found in the music of Bach, White was drawn towards the vast canvasses of the Romantic symphonic tradition, and cautiously towards the explorative sound worlds of early 20th century masters like Berg, Bloch and Bartók.

Music permeates virtually every page of *Voss,* from the society of the young colony to the strange murmurs in the bush, from the monotonous drones of the Outback to the celestial choirs of Voss's delirium. In *Voss,* White shared his 'discovery' of music, just as his fictional mad explorer had explored a country that was his 'by right of vision', as Johann Ulrich Voss declares in his opening lines in the opera.[626]

In his novel, White had aspired to conjure up the look of velvet plush and the sound of organ voluntaries and the peal of tower bells. Small wonder, then, that when outlining *Voss* to his publisher, White attempted to describe the 'look and the sound of the thing' not logically in any specifically technical language - because that was beyond him - but in more general, rational ways.[627]

In conclusion, Ben Huebsch's observation about 'the symphonic structure' of White's novel still appears to be an over-stretch. But that is hardly the point. Whilst there are indeed elements of the symphony in the framework and unfurling of the novel, Huebsch's observation should not be taken literally. In *Voss,* White touched lightly on compositions and their composers, in more of a narrative way. A non-musician, lacking the technical understanding of musical processes, he can hardly have been expected to have done otherwise.

White was on more secure territory when discussing or writing about art. This will be addressed in the ensuing chapter of this study, a discussion of his teeming eighth novel, *The Vivisector* (1970).

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[625] Manning Clark, *Walk in the Paradise Gardens,* remarks on the launch of the recording of the opera *Voss.* Reprinted in *24 Hours,* Sydney: ABC publication, January 1988, pp. 5-6.
[626] Johann Ulrich Voss, in the Opening line of the opera libretto by David Malouf,*Voss.* Sydney, The Australian Opera, 1986. Programme book to the ABC CD recording 420928, p. 28
[627] PW, letter to Ben Huebsch, 8 February 1957. Marr, *Letters*, p. 110.

Chapter Six: Case Study #3

The Vivisector

1. Introduction

First published in 1970, *The Vivisector* is Patrick White's eighth and longest novel. It stands at a critical stage in his writing career, midway between *The Solid Mandala* (1967) and *The Eye of the Storm* (1973). By this stage of his life, White was in his late fifties, a mature author with seven novels and several plays already in his portfolio, and widely recognised as the leading novelist of the day living and working in Australia. At the time of its publication, *The Vivisector* was widely regarded as White's *magnum opus*. It also became the novel that projected him towards the Nobel Prize in Literature only a few years after its publication.[628]

In terms of its size and 'frenzied building up of tension', the Nobel citation read, '*The Vivisector* [is] among his greatest feats'. It emerges as 'the imaginary biography of an artist,' in which…

> … a whole life is disclosed in a relentless scrutiny of motives and springs of action: an artist's untiring battle to express the utmost while sacrificing both himself and his fellow-beings in the attempt. [629]

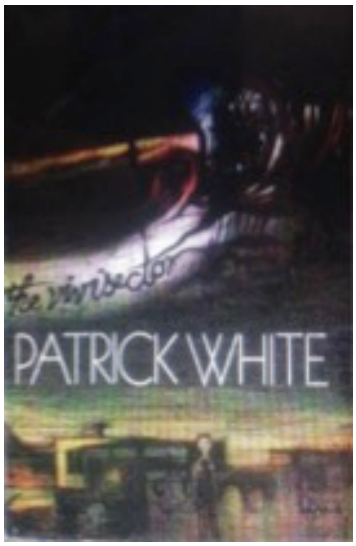


Illustration 49: Patrick White, *The Vivisector.* London: Jonathan Cape, 1970.
The wrap-around cover by Tom Adams is regarded as a fine art work in its own right.

[628] PW, *The Vivisector.* London: Jonathan Cape, 1970.
All page numbers cited in this chapter relate to this edition of the novel.
[629] Nobel Prize for Literature 1973. Nobel Media AB 2014 [accessed 22 March 2016].
[accehttp://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1973/press.html

The principal character in *The Vivisector* is Hurtle Duffield, a painter and semi-recluse in Sydney art-circles and celebrity in the eyes of everybody but himself. Many of White's observations about painters and paintings in this novel could just as well relate to artists working in other art forms and the public response to their work. In essence, it derives from the extended process of creation, those long periods of intense solitude and silence into which an artist retreats as he creates his work.

Beyond Duffield, the main secondary character is a young pianist, Kathy (later Katherine) Volkov. White chronicles her career by referencing concertos by Liszt and Mozart, and he eavesdrops on discussions about the role of music in the lives of pianist and painter as they become lovers. In effect, as he was to do so often, White provides insights into his own character –'my unfortunate character, at least,' he admitted – as well as the sources of his creativity and the public response to his work. '*The Vivisector* is more about myself than any other,' he explained to the Irish literary critic Jimmy Stern, 'though in very different circumstances.'[630]

For more than a quarter-century, Geoffrey Dutton, the Adelaide-based writer and publisher, was one of White's closest literary friends and personal confidants. Perhaps more than any other observer, Dutton observed the construction of the persona White was creating around and for himself, particularly with respect to *The Vivisector.* 'All his life,' Dutton suggested, '[Duffield] ruthlessly makes use of anyone or anything that will help him to become a better artist'.[631] In writing *The Vivisector,* White gave us 'the harshest and most revealing of his methods of all his novels,' Dutton asserted. 'It was like asking a python to examine the character of the piglet he is about to swallow.'[632]

This chapter compares and contrasts the techniques and materials of art and music, principally in the use of form and colour. White's interest in art and artists is well documented. Their influence on his writing has been discussed comprehensively by his biographer David Marr, and also by scholars like art historian Helen Verity Hewitt, both of whom will be referred to extensively in this chapter.[633] To date, though, there has been no attempt to link their observations to other art forms, such as music, with specific reference to composers, compositions and performances.

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[630] PW, letter to James Stern, 20 March 1966. Marr, *Letters*. p. 292.
[631] Geoffrey Dutton, *Out in the Open: an autobiography.* St Lucia, Queensland: University of Queensland Press, 1994, p. 379.
[632] Dutton, *Out in the Open,* p. 372.
[633] Helen Verity Hewitt, *Patrick White, Painter Manqué: Paintings, Painters and Their Influence on His Writing*, Carlton, Victoria: Miegunyah Press (Melbourne University Press), 2002.

2. The Literary Concerto

Once again, the piano figures prominently in a novel by Patrick White. This time, though, the piano stands centre stage throughout *The Vivisector.* More than its physical presence, the piano is featured in the guise of Liszt's *Piano Concerto No.1 in E flat*. This is the popular concerto that propels Kathy Volkov to an international career as a concert pianist.

The concerto soloist is, in effect, the painter Hurtle Duffield. Beyond that, the similarities between the concerto as a musical form and the structure of this novel are striking. As a series of fragmentary episodes, this study suggests that the main model for *The Vivisector* is the single-movement form of Liszt's concerto.

Liszt had grappled with this concerto over a period of twenty-six years; the main themes date from 1830 and the final version of his score appeared in 1849. The two-decade-long emergence of the concerto is partly due to the composer's semi-improvisatory appearances as its soloist, hardly unusual in its day. The structure of the concerto, unusual it itself, resembles one of Liszt's signature tone poems, with the addition of a solo *obbligato* instrument, the piano. The concerto is laid out in a single movement, lasting around eighteen minutes, broken into four sections played *attacca*:

Allegro maestoso
Quasi adagio
Allegretto vivace – allegro animato
Allegro marziale animato

Liszt had borrowed his four-movements-in-one form from Schubert's *Wanderfantasie* D.760/Op.15 (1822) whose four sections are interlinked in similar fashion.[634] Bartók described Liszt's concerto as 'the first perfect realization of cyclic sonata form, with common themes being treated on the variation principle'.[635] In essence, then, this concerto is constructed as a theme with variations, a fragmented form which became a favourite structural plan for White. Bartók may well have have provided a preview of White's mosaic-like construction of *The Vivisector.* Its principal theme – sprawling over ten chapters or 'parts' – is the relationship of the artist to his art and to God.

[634] Because of its technical difficulties, Schubert could barely play his *Wandererfantasie* and is reported to have said 'The devil may play it'. Doubtless this would have appealed to Liszt, whose talents were often attributed to the devil. In turn, this would have appealed to White, although there is no reference to any Schubert piano music in his LP collection or correspondence.
[635] Bela Bartók, *Liszt problemák.* Budapest, 1937, as cited in *Bela Bartók Essays*, selected and edited by Benjamin Suchoff. Omaha: University of Nebraska Press, 1993, p. 234.

Duffield's search for God through his work recalls the late-age transformation of Liszt from the flamboyant, womanizing artist to the pious *abbé* who composed works like the *Harmonies poétiques et religieuses* (1847) in his quest to discern the Divine in music.[636] That quest is revealed as another important goal of both White and his fictional creation, Duffield. In pursuing that quest, White took counsel from another musical source Schoenberg's essays, *Style and Idea* (1951). 'God is a force for good or evil,' White transcribed Schoenberg's maxim into his Notebooks, 'according to whether we use the gifts he has given us positively or negatively'.[637]

Another important theme emerges in *The Vivisector*, one that Marr called 'the cult of celebrity'.[638] In the mid-19th century Franz Liszt was the embodiment of this cult; in today's parlance, he would be feted as the rock-megastar of his day.[639]. On 22 October 2011, Liszt received a special present to celebrate his 200th birthday. His celebrity status – universal and eternal, thanks to the internet – thus remains intact.



Illustration 50: Google's homepage tribute to Liszt
on his 200th anniversary, 22 October 2011.
https://www.google.com/doodles/franz-liszts-200th-birthday
[accessed: 20 June 2016].

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[636] Many of the women who crossed the path of the great composer-pianist threw their undergarments onstage as he played; the term "Lisztomania" was coined to describe those symptoms of hysteria. Liszt (1811-1888) had a string of high-profile affairs: Marie Duplessis, the high-class courtesan immortalised by Dumas in *La Dame aux Camélias;* the scandalous Lola Montez, who performed on the goldfields of Victoria; Princess Caroline Sayn-Wittgenstein; the actress Charlotte Hagn (who Liszt boasted was also the mistress of two kings) and Countess Marie d'Agoulet, who described him in her *Memoirs* as 'a wonderful apparition'. Later in life, Liszt took holy orders as a way of renouncing his hedonistic past.
[637] Arnold Schoenberg, *Style and Idea*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1950, p. 234. Cited by White in his Notebooks. NLA Papers of Patrick White MS9982, Series 2 (Literary Notebooks, 1930s-1970s), Item 6 (notebook, including *Voss,* and others). http://www.nla.gov.au/apps/cdview/?pi=nla.ms-ms9982-2-6-s102-v [accessed 25 July 2016].
[638] Marr, *Life*, p. 474.
[639] In Ken Russell's seedy film *Lisztomania* (1975), Liszt is played by the 'rock megastar', Roger Daltrey, lead singer of The Who. See Tom Service, *The Hot Liszt,* in *The Guardian,* 28 December 2010. https://www.theguardian.com/music/2010/dec/27/liszt-200th-anniversary [accessed 1 September 2017].

3.Writing *The Vivisector*

Proceeding on the understanding that fragmentation is a state that is is arrived at through the act of vivisection, it is insightful now to consider White's *The Vivisector*. In February 1967, in the middle of a steamy Sydney summer, White started work on a new novel. Its principal character, he maintained, would 'celebrate the world in all its squalor and beauty', and his pursuit of truth would bring him 'close to God'.[640] The pursuit of the Divine in art emerges as a primary theme in this novel. As already noted in this study, White revealed that music, not writing, is a better means to achieving that end:

> Composers and musicians come closer to the presence of God. It is the writer who deals in stubborn, colourless words who is always stumbling and falling.[641]

Initially, White thought he would be able 'to project [the narrative] through the eyes of many people'. He soon came to the conclusion 'that it all has to be conveyed through one man, though not told in the first person'. He feared readers might view *The Vivisector* as some kind of autobiography.[642] Facing such a prospect, he drew back. 'Immediately I become inhibited,' he confessed to his close friend, fellow writer Maie Casey. 'So I could never think of writing an autobiography':

> I can't feel I should be the least bit interesting as the single identity I am supposed to be, only as the many characters of which I am composed. I expect that is why I became a novelist, and why I had difficulties at first in seeing things through the eyes of one man in *The Vivisector*, until I discovered ways of achieving the kind of fragmentation by which I convey reality.[643]

Again, fragmentation. From the outset, White identified the significance of fragmentation in this novel, a technique which may be observed in all his novels. The fragments in this particular novel correspond loosely to the fragmentary or mosaic-like construction of Liszt's one-movement concerto, bound together by the structural glue provided by the solo pianist/painter. White's fragments comprise locations, situations and the principal *dramatis personae* of his narrative. Even so, a co-relationship between the four movements of the concerto and the ten sections of the novel – unlike the four-movement 'symphonic form' of both *Voss* and *The Tree of Man* –seems unsustainable.

The *Macquarie Dictionary* defines 'vivisection' as:

(i) the action of cutting into or dissecting a living body; and

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[640] Marr, commentary in *Letters,* p. 309.
[641] PW, letter to Ingmar Björkstén, 21 January 1973. Marr, *Life*, p. 410.
[642] The only one of his books that could be construed as an autobiography, *Flaws in the Glass: a self-portrait* (1981) was still fourteen years away.
[643] PW, letter to (Lady) Maie Casey, 26 November 1967. Marr, *Letters*, p. 319. Emphasis added.

(ii) the practice of subjecting living animals to cutting operations, especially in order to advance physiological and pathological knowledge.[644]

In *The Vivisector,* White dissects his painter-protagonist Duffield as methodically as any forensic investigator or profiler. Whilst writing this novel, White thought that he would like to have been a criminologist. In the main, the principal dissection is of the novelist himself. Having dissected the carcass or cadaver, the criminologist (or writer) now examines its fragments.

In a biographical sense, White was himself the creation of a kind of fragmentation. He felt that fragmentation keenly, torn between the twin geographic pillars of his life, London and Sydney. It is worth recalling his lament shortly after the Nobel announcement in October 1973. 'My blood is Australian,' he admitted, 'yet my heart is in England'.[645]

In *The Vivisector*, Hurtle Duffield – White's painter and another of his alter egos – reduces his characters 'to physical commodities'. This exploitation is most clearly evidenced in his treatment of two mistresses, the self-absorbed teenage pianist Kathy Volkov and the disturbed and depraved Greek socialite Hero Pavloussi. The literary scholar Matt Young has suggested that in many ways, White's novel is 'an introspective profile of the conflict within the artist'. It is a 'vivisection' of the physical creature who creates with both mind and hand.

> As a result Hurtle experiences a confused and endless discord between the physical and metaphysical … This dichotomy between the real and the abstract is carried throughout his life, acknowledging the great discrepancy between aesthetic truth and sleazy reality. He considers his body an animal that feeds his mind, or his 'creative half' ... it is this torment that seems to endear [him] to the reader. Despite his ills, he seems to become a martyr for the creative practice. White portrays the artist as the cultural sin-eater and purifier of the soul because he allows it to be dirtied ... This is where the novel derives its title: the artist is the vivisector of the human animal, dissecting the form in order to understand its inner machinations: the human condition. As a result, the artist is brought into closer quarters to God, vivisector and illuminator, to a higher level of truth. [646]

The Vivisector is a novel of dense complexity. Young's warning is echoed by Lascaris who maintained that the novel was 'for those who hate easy solutions'. It was 'the story of those who understand that futility is the mother of creative impulse'.[647]

There are several ways by which the reader might unravel the mysteries and probe the characters in this novel. In this respect, it is perhaps helpful to consider White's response to

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[644] *The Macquarie Dictionary* (2nd ed.), Macquarie University, Sydney: Macquarie Press, 1991, p. 1952.
[645] PW, in conversation with Mike Carlton, *Four Corners,* ABC Television, 19 October 1973 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j02E06UFOcg [accessed 16 March 2014].
[646] Matt Young, *Cannibalizing the Artist: The Monster in Patrick White's 'The Vivisector'.* http://theculturetrip.com/pacific/australia/articles/cannibalising-the-artist-the-monster-in-patrick-white-s-the-vivisector-/ [accessed 24 August 2014].
[647] Manoly Lascaris, cited by Vrasidas Karalis, *Recollections*, p. 74.

Marr's monumental biography which he managed to read only weeks before his death. 'I think this book should be called *The Monster of All Time,*' he wrote to Marr. 'But I am a monster.'[648] He confessed he was 'a bit frightened of *The Vivisector*.' He told Casey he thought his novel was 'a kind of Frankenstein's monster.'[649]

All art is at once surface and symbol,' Oscar Wilde once wrote. 'Those who go beneath the surface do so at their own peril.'[650] White would have recognized Wilde's admonition about burrowing beneath the surface; in so doing, a writer stood the danger of discovering 'a monster'.[651] In that sense, White himself was more than a vivisector: he was also a kind of Dr Frankenstein. 'It raises the question of how the writer saw himself,' Young suggests, 'as a cannibalistic monster, a purveyor of truth, or both'.[652]



Illustration 51: Brett Whiteley, *Patrick White at Centennial Park,* 1979-80.
Oil, collage of canvas on board. NSW Parliament Collection.
Used on the cover of the biography by David Marr, *Patrick White: A Life* (1991).
http://www.portrait.gov.au/image/16675/
[accessed 08 December 2016].

[648] PW, letter to David Marr, 20 August 1990. Marr, *Letters,* p. 651.
[649] PW, letter to Maie Casey, 13 July 1969. Marr, *Letters*, p. 345.
[650] Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890). London: Norton, 1988, p. 3.
[651] Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, p. 3.
[652] Young, *Cannibalizing the Artist,* see ref. 649, above

4. Painters as Models

For almost half a century, White knew many of the leading artists in Australia. They came to his dinner table and his parties. Some fled in shock and disgust at the treatment he meted out to some of his guests, others stayed for the longer haul. White was a major player in the art world of Sydney: he attended gallery exhibitions frequently, he bought art works studiously but he did not commission paintings. At times, he even curated exhibitions.[653] By the time of his death, he had been bequeathed over 250 paintings to the AGNSW, one of the four major beneficiaries in his will.

From the time of the first appearance of *The Vivisector*, a burning question occupied Sydney's art circles: just who was the model for the character of Hurtle Duffield? Characteristically, White – the self-confessed 'painter *manqué'* – did not allow himself to be drawn into a public discussion about the model for Hurtle Duffield:

> Some painters have told me that [he] is not a painter, others that he is … Whether [he] is a painter or not, I see him as a composite of several I have known, welded together by the one I have in me but never became.[654]

'The portrait of the central character [of *The Vivisector*],' Hewitt wrote, 'has White's own strongly romantic bent.' White admitted as much to Marr: 'the painter at the easel is myself, but the paintings, I suppose are Bacon's'.[655] White had drawn deeply on the figure of Francis Bacon whom he came to know well during his London years, even having Bacon, a former interior decorator and furniture designer, create a desk for his Eccleston Street flat. White turned to Bacon, almost his exact contemporary, not only as a model for the character of Duffield, Hewitt suggests, but also as 'the painter [White] did not become'.[656] White saw painting as a pleasant and more fulfilling alternative to writing:

> I had imagined that if I could acquire the technique I might give visual expression to what I have inside me, and that the physical act of painting would exhilarate me far more than grinding away at grey, bronchial prose. This could be the delusion of a writer who has always resented having to write.[657]

White and Bacon shared other traits too, not only their physical appearances but also in degrees of self-loathing. These common characteristics become apparent when their photographs are viewed alongside each other. 'I loathe my own face,' Bacon confessed to art historian David Sylvester.[658] Bacon had done a lot of self-portraits, he explained,

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[653] For the AGNSW's summer exhibition in 1981-2, *Patrick White's Choice,* White chose twenty-four pieces from the AGNSW's Australian collections.
[654] PW, *Flaws,* pp. 150-1
[655] PW to David Marr, 29 June 1969. NLA, Papers of David Marr MS 9356. Also Marr *Life,* p. 474.
[656] Hewitt*, Painter Manqué ,* p. 2.
[657] PW, *Flaws,* p. 150.
[658] The close relationship between Bacon and Roy de Maistre has been examined by Rina Arya in an article exploring the religious mythology and homoerotic undertones in the paintings of both artists. 'Wrestling with Angels'. *Art and Christianity* (Autumn 2016, issue 87), pp. 6-9.

because people around him had been 'dying like flies and I've nobody else to paint but myself'.[659]





Illustrations 52 & 53: Photograph of Francis Bacon ('in the 1980s') from BBC1 television documentary [see following ref.] and Photograph of Patrick White taken by William Yang in 1980 [see following ref.]

It is unlikely White ever saw these self-portraits of his onetime friend; first exhibited in April 1980 at the Marlborough Gallery in New York, they were not seen in Sydney until 2013.[660] The ravaged faces of both men reveal a deep psychological loathing, striking in their similarity. No more so than in those affecting late photographs of White taken by William Yang.[661]



Illustration 54: Francis Bacon (1909-1992). *Three Studies for a Self Portrait* (1979-80). Oil on canvas, (each: 37.5 x 31.8 cm), Jacques and Natasha Gelman Collection, 1998, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/489966 [accessed 15 September 2015].

[659] *Francis Bacon: Fragments Of A Portrait*. Television documentary with interview by David Sylvester, first broadcast on BBC1, 18 September 1966. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xoFMH_D6xLk
[660] Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney. *Francis Bacon: Five Decades*, November 2012–February 2013, unnumbered catalogue, p. 200.
[661] William Yang *Patrick White: The Late Years*. Sydney, NSW: Macmillan, 1995.

Over the years, a number of White's friends and colleagues grew tired of his moaning. By 1986, even Geoffrey Dutton had lost patience with White's 'obsession for parading his lack of love for himself':

> The artist's paint-box with its seductive and impersonal range of colour would have suited him better than the writer's cruel medium of black and white.[662]

For all the splendid moments in *The Vivisector,* Dutton maintained that it was 'a most unsatisfactory attempt by a writer to enter the world of a visual artist'.[663] Rather than attempting to probe the mind of a painter, Dutton thought that *The Vivisector*, like so many of White's works, was 'an allegory' of the author's own state of mind', portrayed in several of his novels as fragmented in vivid array.

> *The Solid Mandala* represents two sides of his nature, destructive and regenerative. *Eye of the Storm* is about the life and death of a woman, but is really about himself. *The Twyborn Affair* is about himself as man and woman. All these books are great constructions, of varying artistic success, but although he could write and re-write them, and still wrote wonderful letters, the pressures he was forcing on himself were from time to time unhinging him.[664]

Like the Duttons, Sidney Nolan and White were once very close friends.[665] The appearance of White's 'self-portrait' *Flaws in the Glass* in 1981 sundered another long friendship. White's intimate knowledge of the complex relationship between Nolan and John and Sunday Reed at the artist colony in Heidi in the 1930s had also contributed significantly to the creation of the fictitious painter Hurtle Duffield. In happier times, just before Christmas 1967, White wrote to the Nolans, inviting them to read an early draft of his new novel:

> … to see how close or remote I am from the workings of a painter's mind. I should hate to find he is only a character in a novel like most of the painters in fiction.[666]

Nolan's response to White's request is unrecorded, but the novel – which is dedicated 'for Cynthia and Sidney Nolan' (sic) – seems to have haunted the painter throughout his life. Soon after their first meeting, in Florida in August 1958, Nolan recounted his childhood years to White, and his stories emerged as the childhood of White's painter, Duffield.[667]

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[662] Geoffrey Dutton, *The Innovators: The Sydney Alternatives in the Rise of Modern Art, Literature and Ideas*, South Melbourne: Macmillan, 1986, p. 175.
[663] Dutton, *Innovators,* p. 379.
[664] Dutton, *Innovators,* p. 379.
[665] White owned four Nolans, all gifts from the painter, including *The Galaxy*, synthetic polymer paint on canvas on hardboard, 193 x 256 cm, AGNSW, gift of Patrick White 1974.
[666] PW, letter to Sidney and Cynthia Nolan, 16 December 1967. Marr*, Letters,* p. 321.
[667] Underhill, *Nolan,* p. 58.



Illustration 55 : Axel Poignant (1906-86) Portrait of Patrick White and Sidney Nolan in front of Nolan's painting *The Galaxy* (1963) which he gifted to White. Photographic print, ca 1963 NLA MS 9982 Series 19.

A Covent Garden performance of *Parsifal* – that 'nest of snakes', White once called Wagner's opera [668] – had a strange effect on Nolan: 'it reminded me of past lives and useless spear-throwing,' he reflected bitterly, referring to the vituperative mud-slinging between the pair that occurred after the appearance of *Flaws*. Just as Kundry reminded Parsifal of his mother, Nolan recognized the boy in *Vivisector* as himself.[669]

In late 1985, he had a vision of himself painting Sydney Harbour through the 'window of studio of *Vivisector*' (sic), perhaps in an attempt to out-paint another of White's discarded once-favourite painters, Brett Whiteley.[670]

White had told Nolan that *The Vivisector* would 'probably shock a lot of people, Australians in particular'. His prediction was an understatement. For some Sydneysiders, White's novel was altogether too close to the bone. His friends from Melbourne delighted in what they interpreted as a 'put-down' of that desolate and *déclassé* city to the north. The satirist Barry Humphries, also a close friend soon to be discarded, found 'the events [White] chronicles … so strange but so compellingly, repulsively familiar':

> We discover his freaks within ourselves, his outlandishments *(sic)* illuminate and exorcise all that was painless and prosaic … The sexual encounters are so unbearably tremulous and personal one can never be an armchair voyeur, but an engulfed participant. And after each sabbatical of tenderness and lust, the Vivisector climbs or is driven back to his cell, his ramshackle Paddo attic, hunted back there to the seediness to assuage his vice, his inexorable Art … It is White's greatest book, unless you care to re-read the others.[671]

[668] PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 15 July 1951. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.
[669] Underhill, *Nolan,* p. 75.
[670] Underhill, *Nolan,* p. 63.
[671] Barry Humphries, critique of *The Vivisector,* cited by Peter Coleman, *The Real Barry Humphries,* London: Robson Books, 1970, p.125

For all the dash and swirl of the palette in *The Vivisector*, there is also noise and music. Like many real-life painters, White has Duffield painting to music, broadcasts on the radiogram and listening to his lover practice the piano. In Paddington, Charles Blackman would habitually ramp up the volume on Berlioz, Verdi and Mahler, tormenting neighbours late into the night.[672] Arthur Boyd's studio at Bundanon is strewn with paint-splattered CD jewel cases of music by Debussy, Satie and *Les Six*. Many painters paint to music, just as White listened to music to lower or raise his imagination into a certain frame of mind. Then he was confident he could put pen to paper.

Many years after the publication of *The Vivisector*, White admitted that the principal model for Duffield was the painter Godfrey Miller (1893-1964), an eccentric and wealthy man who created difficult paintings whilst living in virtual squalor in Paddington. White had long sought to buy Miller's *Nude and the Moon* (1954-9) before 'he worked it up into the dried-out composition which now hangs in [the AGNSW]'.[673]

There were many similarities between Duffield and Miller – 'old and mad,' White called Miller. They were courted by the same clients, prowled the same fetid back alleys of Sydney's inner eastern suburbs and were very reluctant to part with their paintings. They were also artists of the highest order.

Significantly, there was one painter who White did not evoke in any of this writing. He did not want to satirize the figure of his former lover-mentor, Roy de Maistre.

5. Roy de Maistre: Mentor, Landlord, Lover.

Several days after her prize-winning performance of the Liszt concerto, Kathy Volkov wrote a long letter to Hurtle Duffield. In the first few sentences, she expressed her gratitude to her painter-lover for opening her out to many experiences, cultural and physical. In effect, Kathy was enunciating White's own gratitude to de Maistre for opening him to the cultural life of London in the mid-1930s. 'If I have learnt anything of importance,' Volkov wrote to Duffield, 'it was you who taught me'. [*Viv,* 494] [674]

[672] Throughout the 1970s the painter Charles Blackman and his blind poet wife Barbara lived in adjoining terrace houses at 157/159 Paddington Street. At that time, the author lived several doors down, at number 141. Despite the distance, the music from Blackman's studio was often unbearably loud and police were occasionally called to force him to turn down the volume.
[673] PW, letter to Sidney Nolan, 14 May 1964. Marr, *Letters,* p. 259.
[674] PW, *The Vivisector,* New York: Viking Press, 1970, p. 494. All pages references in this chapter relate to this first American edition of the novel.

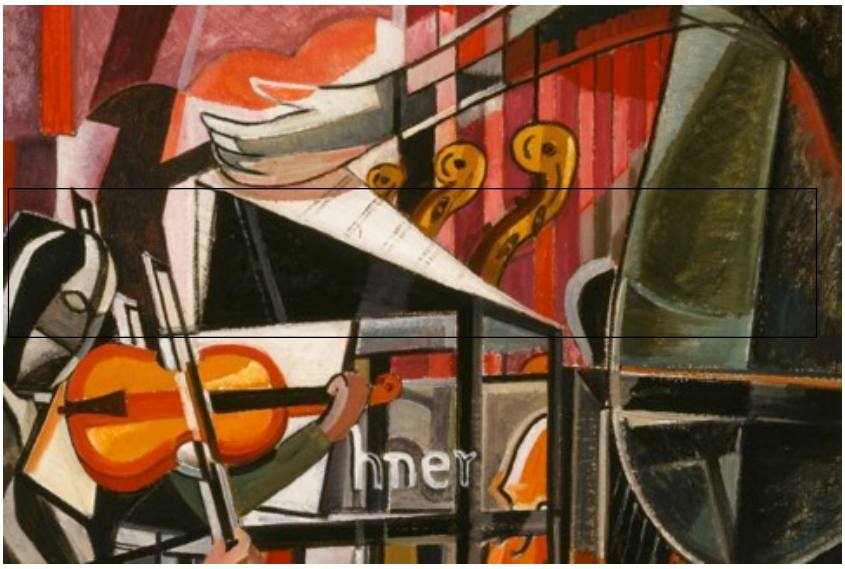


Illustration 56: Roy de Maistre (1894-1968) *The Concert* (ca.1943).
Oil on paperboard, 91 x 61 cm. AGNSW, gift of Patrick White, 1974.
https://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/collection/works/47.1974/
[accessed 24 July 2015].

In the same spirit, Roy de Maistre, the former orchestral violinist, demonstrated the joy and substance music gave to his work throughout his entire creative life. nowhere is this more apparent than in his magisterial painting *The Concert* (ca.1943) which Helen Verity Hewitt asserts, 'contributed to the many ecstatic moments in White's work' – moments such as the Greek cellist's concerto in *Aunt's Story,* Kathy Volkov's piano concertos in *Vivisector,* and Ruth Godbold's Bach-inspired epiphany in *Riders.*[675] White had long coveted *The Concert*, but de Maistre refused to part with this painting.[676]

In her two-part biography of de Maistre, Heather Johnson notes that *The Concert* appears in various catalogues dated between 1934-1936.[677] This was the very time when de Maistre was returning to his colour/music experiments, with reference to his *Colour Chart* (1919), as mentioned in Chapter Two.

The Concert draws together Klee's theories about lines and gesture as well as elements of de Maistre's own theories about colour music. The prominent presence of a grand piano (without a performer) at the front of the stage – HO(hner) or (BLUT)hner? – seems to signify that the orchestra may be about to accompany a piano concerto. The lid of the piano collides into the music on the conductor's stand, rather like Picasso's multi-angled view of a face or musical instrument. The viewer can almost read musical notation in the instrumental part. White must have taken great pleasure in reflecting on the musical references in this particular painting, a superb de Maistre he craved to own.

[675] Hewitt, *Patrick White: Painter Manqué,* p. 12.
[676] Only after de Maistre's death in March 1968 did White manage to acquire it and in 1974 it became one of a group of 14 de Maistres White bequested to the AGNSW which presently owns 110 of his works
[677] Heather Johnson, *Roy de Maistre: The Australian Years, 1894-1930.* Sydney, Craftsman House 1988. Also: *The English Years*, 1930-1968. Sydney, Craftsman House, 1995. (See Chapter 2)

In essence, as he was with painting, White was an observer of sound. He was what might be called an 'auditor,' neither neither creator nor interpreter. Although he expressed the wish he could have been a composer, he could hardly have known what that entailed. He knew the trials of solitude: composers, like writers, spend thousands of hours at their work, often alone in tiny rooms. But the writer emerges with words, in his novel or play or film script, visible evidence that can be read and evaluated. Only the *cognoscenti* – those who speak that private language of music – can review a score, the end product of a composer's countless hours of solitude.

An observer can see a painting taking shape. In the past – before this age of computer-assisted music technology – a listener could not hear the music a composer is writing. Often, that music might not be heard for years or decades, sometimes not until after the death of its creator, if at all. Whereas painting is a tangible art form, music is the least tangible. Sound, in itself, is an intangible, mutable phenomenon, difficult to describe in words. 'There is a stark opposition between the visible and the audible,' Mladen Dolar has written:

> … the visible world presents the relative stability, permanence, distinctiveness, and a location at a distance; the audible presents fluidity, passing, a certain inchoate amorphous character, becoming, elapsing, with unclear contours, as opposed to the relative permanence, solidity, durability of the scene.[678]

Whereas White was quite capable of describing the more superficial characteristics of composers as they wrote music, he could hardly get inside their minds as they worked. He might *imagine* what their music sounded like, but often he would be far from the mark.

During his lifetime, White knew only a few of the many composers of concert music living in Sydney – Sculthorpe and Meale, Butterley, Henderson and Vine – none of them recluses, all but a phone call away. White was pleased when he heard that Meale, then based in Adelaide, was going to compose an opera based on *Voss.* Meale's reputation as a fearless modernist, Roger Covell thought, initially earned him White's approval.[679]

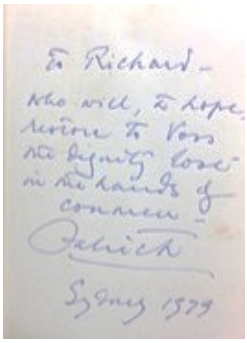


Illustration 57: Patrick White, PW, inscription on first edition of *Voss,* for Richard Meale, 'Sydney, 1979'.
NLA, Papers of Richard Meale, MS 10048.

[678] Mladen Dolar, *A Voice and Nothing More.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006, pp. 78-9.
[679] Roger Covell, email to the author, 21 December 2015.

White sent Meale an autographed first edition of *Voss* with a personal message of good will. 'To Richard,' he wrote, still with a tinge of bitterness at the failure of *Voss* to find its way to the screen, 'who will, I hope, restore to *Voss* the dignity lost in the hands of conmen'. [680] If *Voss* could not find its way to the screen, it was some consolation that White's accursed novel might find its way to the stage of 'the best goddam opera house in the world'. [681] Even so, *Voss* would not appear on stage at the Opera House until June 1986, some thirteen years after its actual opening.

In all White's writing, there is no equivalent Hurtle Duffield character in music. It is doubtful there could have been one. Lacking profound musical knowledge, White was hardly the author of *Doctor Faustus* (1947), nor it was likely he could have written *Death in Venice* (1912). In both novels, composers – Schoenberg and Mahler respectively – are the inspirations behind the focal characters. White knew Thomas Mann's fictional writer Gustav von Aschenbach well, not only from the novella and the film by Visconti (1971) and but also from the opera by Benjamin Britten (1975). [682]

While White was comfortable inhabiting the comparatively tangible domains of art and the theatre, he was less secure in addressing the abstract, wordless world of concert music. Not having a secure command of the technical vocabulary of music, he might have sought the assistance of a composer or – in the case of *The Vivisector*, a pianist – for technical questions about music, but there is no hint of that in his correspondence, nor in the memories of those composers he knew and may have consulted. What he could not see or read, White could only partially comprehend. Music was something he could only hear and sense, he could not see it, as he could words or paintings. 'I always see most of what I write*,* and am, in fact, a painter *manqué,'* he wrote to Garland. 'When I see all those Goyas—I feel I want to eat them, and bury my face in them, and sniff them up!'[683]

In his unceasing litany of self-complaint, White regarded writers as 'dealers in stubborn, colourless words [and] always stumbling and falling'.[684] Hewitt suggests that although White probably had many opportunities to learn the skills and techniques of painting, he chose not to do so. Perhaps he simply doubted his ability to actually pick up a brush and paint. More likely, he may have preferred the thought of painting to the actual physical and mental task of painting.[685]

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[680] By 1986, there were at least two 'conmen' who had thwarted the novel's progress to the screen, the impresario Harry M Miller and White's onetime mate Sidney Nolan who had acquired the film rights.
[681] PW, letter to Peter Sculthorpe, 21 December 1963. NLA, Papers of Peter Sculthorpe, MS 9676/5/80. *Letters,* pp. 246-7.
[682] In March 1980, White flew to Adelaide to see Jim Sharman's production of Britten's *Death in Venice.* 'It was the finest evening I have spent in the theatre,' he told Sister Veronica Brady in an interview on 23 September 1983. NLA, Oral History and Folklore Collection, ORAL TRC 39782.
[683] PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 17 January 1958. Marr, *Letters*, p. 127. Emphasis added.
[684] PW, letter to Ingmar Björkstén, 21 January 1973. Marr, *Life*, p. 410.
[685] Hewitt*, Painter manqué,* p. 87.

6. The Cult of Celebrity

In *The Vivisector*, Marr asserts, White 'ruthlessly criticizes art and its attendant cult of celebrity.' White had seen celebrity turn the heads of several of his one-time friends and associates. He sensed that they had allowed themselves to be consumed by the cult of celebrity to the detriment of their art. Like latter-day Liszts, figures like Sidney ('Sir Neddy') Nolan, and Peter ('the Scarlet Playboy') Sculthorpe, even the great Joan ('La Stupenda') Sutherland, had surrendered to the rituals and blandishments of 'the cult'. White could hardly allow his fictional artist to succumb to such cheap flattery.



Illustration 58: caricature of Franz Liszt (1842), no further details. http://www.tagseoblog.de/comic-doodle-zum-200-von-franz-liszt [accessed 8 January 2017].

In one telling episode of *The Vivisector,* White takes the reader to familiar territory: an AGNSW retrospective devoted to Duffield's long and successful career. By this stage, Duffield has acquired not only fame and fortune, but also the fear of being transformed into a 'national monument' or 'national treasure'.[686]

White struggled to create conversations at the AGNSW opening and the like. He drove Lascaris mad, playing and re-playing a recording of Stockhausen's *Momente* (1962-69). White's writing already combined the kind of fragments of speech and bursts of conversation heard in Stockhausen's voice-collages; this will be illustrated in the next chapter, devoted to the filmscript *The Monkey Puzzle*.[687]

Nolan and Sculthorpe were practised and acknowledged masters at gallery openings and launches of books, recordings and even ships. They performed well, they did everything expected of them. Duffield/White did not share their social ease and grace: the painter/writer stood apart from that 'cult of celebrity'. Midway through his AGNSW

[686] After the award of the Nobel Prize in 1973, White rejected every honour offered to him, civic and academic laurels alike. He returned his Companion of the Order of Australia in 1976 to protest against the dismissal of the Whitlam government the previous year.

[687] Stockhausen first articulated the concept of 'moment form' in his composition for piano, percussion and four-channel tape, *Kontakte* (1958-60). Moment form consists of 'a mosaic of moments'. In turn, a moment is defined as 'a self-contained (quasi)-independent section, set off from other sections by discontinuities.' Jonathan Kramer, *Moment Form in 20th Century Music, Musical Quarterly*, 64:177-94 (1988).

celebration, Duffield flees into the night, pausing only to have a pee under one of the huge Moreton Bay fig trees in The Domain before catching a taxi home. There, he retreated 'into that silence where he had spent half a lifetime and giving birth' [*Viv* 546].

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In *The Vivisector,* the young pianist Kathy Volkov is a student of Professor Khrapovitsky, a piano teacher at the Conservatorium. Here, White takes a shot at Alexander Sverjensky (1901-1971), a much-loved teacher at the Con. Known universally as 'the Professor', Sverjensky cut a distinctive figure; he was bald, short, slim and energetic and spoke English with a strong accent.[688]

The first conversation between Duffield and Volkov is awkward. 'Who is your favourite composer?' he asks. (A time-honoured conversation-starter, this is the very question Henrietta Birdsell asks Will Garlick in *The Monkey Puzzle*.[689]) Like the antiquated writer Garlick, the painter stumbles. Duffield 'would have frowned on any such question put to him as a boy' [*Viv* 393].

> She sighed, then mumbled quickly: 'Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov, Liszt. Liszt's my favourite. He's so difficult. And brilliant.'
>
> 'Good Lord!' It was dishonest because none of them, till now, had been of great importance to him. 'What about Bach, Mozart, Beethoven?'
>
> 'Oh yes! They're wonderful, aren't they?' she murmured sententiously, like a lady at a reception. 'But you can't understand about Liszt!' She was smiling convinced out of the window. 'Mr Khrapovitsky says I must start studying the First Concerto now. It doesn't matter how many years I take.' [*Viv* 393].

'The Liszt' became Kathy Volkov's teenage rockstar-like obsession. Just as it took Liszt many years to complete his concerto, Kathy would devote years to studying the work with 'the old Khrap'. Over that time, she prepared for her coming-of-age as an entrant in 'the Concerto Competition'.[690] To her precious concerto, she brought a painterly glimmer of perception, perhaps one of those 'sideway glances' from her visits to Duffield's house: in her concerto, Kathy Volkov discerned 'the colours of opal' [*Viv* 395].

Duffield lived his dissolute life in Chubb's Lane, one of the seedy back streets of Sydney's inner eastern suburbs. There, Kathy Volkov 'wallowed in Liszt' [*Viv* 441]. She wheeled through her concerto: its 'fireworks… coruscating … the cheap bangers, the intoxicated Catherine wheels, the soaring, feathered rockets' [*Viv* 426].

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[688] Among Sverjensky's celebrated students were Nancy Salas, Malcolm Williamson, Larry Sitsky and Roger Woodward. He was an exponent of many modern composers: Scriabin, Balakirev and Stravinsky figured prominently in his concert recitals. Fleshing out the analogy to the fictional Duffield-Volkov romance, he was married three times. His second wife was a younger female student, Enith Clarke, who herself taught piano in Sydney.

[689] PW, *The Monkey Puzzle*, Screenplay typescript, 1977, pp. 69-72. NLA, Papers of Patrick White, MS 9982/5.8/13, box 10.

[690] The ABC's National Concerto and Vocal Competitions, subsequently known as the Young Performers Awards.

Further on, Duffield feels he can hardly bring himself to attend Kathy's competition performance: 'Not to wallow in Liszt. And Tchaikovsky. And Rachmaninov. By a pack of students. For another pack' [*Viv* 453]. Hurtle's sister Rhoda upbraids him for 'always being an intellectual snob', whereas she herself 'can't help loving all lovely music' [*Viv* 453]. Here White shows his true colours: he can not – must not! – allow Duffield to lower himself to the level of those whose main response to music is merely to 'wallow in the *choons*'. Even so, Duffield relents. He attends the concert. Over several dense pages, White provides a detailed account of the concert, a ritual he had experienced – or endured! – many times over.

> He arrived slamming and scrambling, not late, but close enough to it. He hadn't reserved a seat: they found him one almost too easily … the strings were tuning, knuckles tightening knuckles; the woodwind croaked mustily [*Viv* 393].

Such passages underscore White's penetrating observations about music, not just performances, but – as usual – the physical attributes of performers. His description of a fairly humdrum concert in the Sydney Town Hall –plenty of tickets are available for last-minute concert-goers – is as vivid as any event painted by de Maistre. White wrote about such occasions perceptively; he could almost have been a music critic. At a Town Hall concert, his mischievous eye catches another male ritual: the toilet-break at intermission:

> [Duffield's] bladder was forcing him out. He stood peeing in the row of anonymous men: the relief of a good fart, and the anonymity of it. 'Didn't know you were interested in music, Duffield?' A shorter, pursier, superficially younger, too glossy, aggressively dapper male. 'Shaurd,' Shaurd explained [*Viv* 458].

Duffield has stumbled upon a music critic in the last place one would expect or want to meet a critic: in the toilet at the Town Hall. After the publication of *The Vivisector,* Julian Russell, music critic at *The Herald,* buttonholed White at a concert.[691] 'Now, tell me,' Russell persisted, 'I am the music critic in *Vivisector,* am I not?' White obfuscated with his usual defence: his characters were composites and never taken from real life. But, in this case, White later confided to Marr, Russell was 'dead right!' White loathed this 'slimy man who left his wife to live with a richer woman' but he could not recall whether Russell 'had a taste for the flesh of young girls, or not'.

Mindful of White's love of the scurrilous and scatological, Kathy Volkov is Duffield's Lolita. Indeed, the parallels with Nabokov's *Lolita* are as lubricious as they are coincidental.[692] Both novels lay bare the affairs between an elderly male artist (painter or writer) and a much younger, nubile woman (Kathy Volkov and Dolores [Lolita] Haze). Both novels were written by a white male writer, in his late 50s and in mid/late-career.

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[691] PW, in conversation with David Marr, 14 November 1988. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356/15/17.
[692] Vladimir Nabokov (1899-1977), *Lolita* (1955), a copy of which White had in his library.WBC/816.

The model for White's young pianist Kathy Volkov was not a pianist, White confessed, but the actress Zoe Caldwell.[693] White first met her in July 1962 when she played The Girl in the Sydney production of *The Ham Funeral.* He was smitten with the elphin creature: born in 1933, she was barely 30 when they met, he was already 60. White declared that Caldwell was the only great actress he came to know really well, and he saw her build parts in three productions of his plays. He recognised her 'genius at work' but was uncertain how to convey it in his writing:

> I think I have brought it off with the painter [Duffield] in *The Vivisector,* and in the same book perhaps, with the girl musician (a kind of Zoe at the piano).[694]

Not only did *The Vivisector* portray a gallery of people from White's life in Sydney, it also depicted the actual geography and character of the city. 'At the same time,' White confessed in *Flaws in the Glass* (1981), he intended to paint a portrait of the city, his brush ready to reveal his love/hate relationship with…

> … wet, boiling, superficial, brash, beautiful, ugly Sydney, developing during my lifetime from a sun-lit village to this present-day *parvenu* bastard, a compound of San Francisco and Chicago.[695]

Throughout his writing, White returned to this love/hate relationship with Sydney as a kind of *leitmotif.* In *The Vivisector,* that *leitmotif* inflated into something that could almost become an opera.

7. The Concerto Competition: Liszt *versus* Mozart

At a Town Hall concert in December 1947, shortly after his return to Sydney, White caught a performance of Liszt's concerto.[696] From his random musings on Liszt, it would appear that, whilst he might have admired certain technical aspects of Liszt's music, White could not bring himself to like the actual music itself. Nor could he bring himself to like music by other staples of the concert repertoire, perennials like Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov, Paganini and – most of all – Brahms, as outlined in Chapter Three.

In the closing pages of *The Vivisector*, Duffield fantasizes about escorting Kathy Volkov through 'whatever Hades of Tchaikovsky or Rachmaninov … as a passport to Mozart and truth'[*Viv* 555]. In his own journey to music, White had made himself wade through the thick orchestration of Bruckner and Mahler, before he could appreciate the comparative clarity and aural purity of Bach, Mozart and Beethoven. [697] Duffield was White's Orpheus: the author made his semi-biographical character stagger through the suffering of Hades to reach his 'Eurydice' of truth, Kathy Volkov.

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[693] Elizabeth Harrower, to David Marr, 17 April 1989. NLA, Papers of Patrick White, MS 9982/5.8/13.
[694] PW, letter to Ronald Waters, 28 June 1970. Marr, *Letters,* p. 366.
[695] PW, *Flaws,* p. 151. PW first experienced these American cities three decades earlier, around 1940.
[696] Eunice Gardiner, piano. SSO/Goossens, Free Civic Concert, Sydney Town Hall, 9 December 1947.
[697] PW, in conversation with David Marr, 14 November 1988. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356/15/17.

'The Liszt' does not come easily to the young Volkov. She writes a progress report to Duffield admitting she finds it 'more and more of a challenge':

> I have made some progress, Khrap thinks, though my left hand is still a little bit weak. O God I've got to be good! I wonder if I was Roman Catholic would that make it any easier? Or Christian Science? Unfortunately I am only me, and nothing or no one will ever change that [*Viv* 450].

White may have known that, in many Catholic primary schools, nuns would use their special rulers to correct tendencies to left-handedness. God had intended His flock to be right-handed. In a second breathless *post scriptum,* Kathy admits that the second movement, the *quasi Adagio,* continues to give her trouble: 'I can't always bring it out clear enough,' she confesses, 'then at other times it becomes so very easily and naturally pure' [*Viv* 450].

> Katherine Volkov had raised her head to compete with the 'pure' bits of the *Quasi adagio*. Her wobbling chin reminded him of that weakness in her left hand. Poor little Kathy: tears almost dropping from the blue eyes, for the lovely music, for the orgasm she can't have experienced … After what seemed like several hours of jealousy, remorse, suppliant love, hectic passion, to say nothing of coughing, programme dropping and a halitosis to the left, he watched Katherine emerge, her serene shoulders, the majestic mother-plaited crown, rising above a vulgar situation. She gave one last shudder: of thankfulness. She had arrived in more than safety; she was received into a world of light. Realization nearly jerked her head off her neck. [*Viv* 460].

In the end, Kathy Volkov wins the Concerto Competition. With that accolade, it will soon be time to embark on that time-honoured ritual of all talented young Australian musicians: overseas study. 'Mr Khrapovitsky favours Vienna,' Rhoda Duffield chortles to her brother. 'She's leaving in the spring – *our* spring' [*Viv* 464]. She torments Duffield by humming something familiar, one of the more familiar tunes of the Liszt concerto which causes him to 'wake up to the full viciousness of her behaviour' [*Viv* 477].

A year or so later, Volkov returns to Sydney for a short visit. There had hardly been time to make the transition from teenage prodigy to adult virtuoso. Still, she had been engaged to perform with the orchestra, an offer no musician could afford to pass up. Duffield/White makes the ritual journey to the Town Hall to hear her concert, which included the Orchestra 'playing a work by a contemporary composer':

> Imprisoned between walls of Mozart, the subscribers were prevented from stampeding out. [Hurtle] wished he could have supported the despised composer, but his hands had been made feeble by the collapse of faith in his ability to sway himself, let alone others. The scattered applause sounded like an old venetian blind stirred by a slight breeze [*Viv* 484].

Almost certainly, White was recalling a performance of the *Choral Prelude for Strings* (1948) by Felix Werder (1922-2012).[698] White admired the 'honest-to-goodness lyricism' of this Melbourne-based composer, a Jewish *émigré* and former 'Dunera boy', who was also the highly opinionated and somewhat notorious music critic of *The Age*.[699]

On this occasion, the concerto-composer was not Liszt, but Mozart. After a year or so of study in Vienna, Katherine was now able to master a concerto by the young Mozart, his *Piano Concerto No.9 in E flat,* K.271, better known by the moniker, *'Jeunehomme'*.[700] White's choice of the '*Jeunehomme*' – the 'young man' – to mark the transition of the promising but struggling young pianist Kathy Volkov into the mature soloist Katherine Volkov made for a good pun. [701]

White's delight in Mozart's music was too much for Fritz Krieger, his first guide to music. As already noted, Krieger regarded Mozart's music was nothing more than 'a stream of lemonade'. There would be no more trips with the Kriegers to the Sydney Town Hall.[702]

The '(too) suave Dutch conductor' leading Kathy's Mozart concerto is clearly a reference to Willem van Otterloo (1907-1978), chief conductor of the MSO (1967-70) and then the SSO (1970-78). The venerable Dutch maestro had guest-conducted in Sydney many times before his SSO appointment. Before and during the period he was writing *The Vivisector* (1970), White drew on his experiences of van Otterloo concerts, stolid and rarely exciting, such as they were.[703]

> [Duffield] could almost hear [Katherine's] knuckles cracking as she kneaded them; he could hear her stiff, watered skirt seething with black nerves … Not for long: she was required to intrude indecently soon: but the violins inclined towards her, in courtship, and the too suave (elderly) Dutch conductor. Then they were all united in the noble charges and intensified caracollings of the music … There were, on the other hand, the moments, the unaccompanied ones, when the unnecessary orchestra of husbands and housewives and raw boys and tired spinsters [of the SSO] sat clasping their instruments, while his mistress Katherine Volkov played to delight her lover in a room empty except for themselves; or when his darling Kathy called in her brood, and the golden chicken-notes, in danger of scattering too far, scuttled fluttering for protection under the flounce of her swelling black. [*Viv* 484-5].

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[698] Felix Werder's short *Choral Prelude* was first performed by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra conducted by Eugene Goossens in 1955. In September 1965, John Hopkins conducted performances in the Sydney Town Hall, before performing the work in Edinburgh and Glasgow and other places, as part of the SSO's first international tour. White may have heard one or both performances.

[699] In the concert where White heard Werder's *Choral Prelude,* the concerto was not a Mozart piano concerto, but Mozart's *Flute Concerto No.1 in G,* K313 with soloist Neville Amadio. Rossini's overture to *The Thieving Magpie* and Sibelius's *Second Symphony* made up the rest of this programme, a strange one for a try-out for the SSO's European debut.

[700] This is the concerto with the title of *'Jeunehomme'*, composed in Salzburg in 1777 when Mozart was 21years of age. Strangely, it does not figure in either of the two inventories of White's LP collection.

[701] Very late in the novel, Kathy becomes 'my dear Cat', in the near-delusional mind of Duffield (p.556).

[702] Appendix 1 (72).

[703] A rare exception would have been that performance of Berg's *Kammerkonzert* which van Otterloo conducted in March 1973 and which White attended in the Sydney Town Hall.

White conjured up images of two pianists, Kathy and Katherine, both captured in the teeming and lubricious imagination of Duffield. Volkov shook with nerves at the prospect of being assigned to master 'the Liszt' – whose own romantic life White would have known – desperately anxious about scattering barnyards of 'chickens' (wrong notes). Then, following a period of Viennese polishing, the Cinderella figure of the mature Volkov emerges, dressed to the nines, paying homage to what for many is that most 'noble' music of the ages, a concerto by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. By this stage, White was a Mozart-worshipper. A few years after writing *The Vivisector*, he made a revealing declaration in an interview with the Swedish journalist Ingmar Björkstén:

> Music is the profoundest art. You get closer to what I try to express in music than in words. The composer who means the most to me at this time is Mozart, not in the past, but now.[704]

The reader wonders if one of the earlier Beethoven concertos, sounding almost Mozartian, might have been deployed here. Even though the symbolism of White's pianist playing a concerto with the nickname *'Jeunehomme'* might have been lost, an alternative choice of an early Beethoven concerto would have reinforced the notion of Beethoven as that most 'masculine' of composers.

Perhaps there is another pun here. Was White pointing to a dichotomy represented in the equation of Beethoven/Mozart? Where Beethoven was strong German beer, Mozart would forever be 'a stream of lemonade'.

8. Colours I : Synaesthesia, Kandinsky and Roy de Maistre

As outlined in Chapter Two, White would have known the association of sound and colour through his mentor Roy de Maistre.[705] Though the painter was twenty years older than White, he became what the young writer most needed, coming down from Cambridge in the mid-1930s: 'an intellectual and aesthetic mentor'.

> He taught me how to look at paintings, to listen to music. He persuaded me to walk in the present instead of lying curled and stationary in that over-upholstered cocoon of the past, refuge of so many Australians then and now.[706]

Just how de Maistre taught White 'to listen to music' is unclear. Clearly, it did not have the depth of what the older man had taught him in art. Later, he acknowledged another critical dimension of de Maistre's influence. 'He taught me to write,' White said, 'by teaching me to look at paintings and get beneath the surface'.[707] The reader wonders how de Maistre may have helped White 'get beneath the surface' of music.

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[704] PW, in a television interview with Ingmar Björkstén, 1973. Reprinted in *Nation Review,* 21-27 June 1974, p. 1179.
[705] The colour theories of Roy de Maistre are extensively documented in the catalogue created for the exhibition *Sydney Moderns: Art for a New World* (AGNSW, July – October 2013).
[706] PW, *Flaws,* p. 60.
[707] PW, cited by Craig McGregor *In the Making,* Sydney: Thomas Nelson, 1969, p. 218.

De Maistre could have made a good 'guide' to music for White in London. As already noted, he had been a viola player in the Sydney orchestra, and had attended many concerts and rehearsals in the early years of the Sydney Conservatorium.[708] His best friend was Adrien Verbrugghen, a medical student keenly interested in music. He was also the son of the Conservatorium's foundation director, the Belgian violinist-conductor Henri Verbrugghen, whose term ran from 1916 to 1923. Roy de Maistre left Sydney in early 1930 at the age of 36. He remained in London, never returning to Australia.

In London, de Maistre did not share White's passion for the theatre, but the older man did introduce the aspiring writer to his circle of artist friends. De Maistre took White to important exhibitions, fuelling the young writer's lifelong passion for galleries. In 'that palmy era before the War,' White was a constant visitor to the Tate and other galleries.[709]

It is not clear whether de Maistre took White to concerts during those vibrant pre-War years in London . At the time, London was a major forum in the stylistic *guerre* between the advocates of the Second Viennese School and the exponents of French-propelled so-called Neoclassicism, the 'Back-to-Bach' movement.

In Sydney, as a young painter-musician himself, de Maistre had developed a theory of 'colour-music' that applied the properties of harmony in music to the techniques of painting. He and Adrien Verbrugghen devised a chart based on the 'colour circle' of Sir Isaac Newton.[710] Along with the New Zealand born artist Roland Wakelin (1887-1971), one of the leading exponents of Modernism, Verbrugghen *fils* and de Maistre held a joint exhibition in The Art Salon in Sydney in 1919 called *Colour in Art*.[711] That modest exhibition, accompanied by performances of music for violin and piano, featured small, colour-music 'syncromies' that gave rise to the first wave of Abstract art in Australia.

Encouraged by the public and even critical success of their exhibition, de Maistre began a series of purely abstract paintings created from whorls of pure colour. The first of these, *Rhythmic composition in yellow green minor* (1919) was inspired by Beethoven's Op.131 string quartet. De Maistre had heard it played by the Verbrugghen String Quartet while he was a student at the Sydney Conservatorium. In later years, his painting was hailed by art commentators like Bernard Smith as 'a marvel, unequalled anywhere in the world'.[712]

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[708] In 1918, the Sydney Conservatorium awarded Roy de Maistre a prize – a copy of J.Comyn Carr's book *The Ideals of Painting* (1917) – for his performance of a work by the French composer Félicien-César David (1810 – 1876).
[709] PW, *Flaws,* p. 36.
[710] In his treatise *Opticks* (1704) Newton assigned the seven colours of the rainbow to the pitches from A to G, aligned to placement of the planets in the solar system.
[711] Nick Waterlow and Annabel Pegus, *Colour in Art: Revisiting 1919: 22 August – 27 September 2008,* exhibition catalogue. Paddington, New South Wales: Ivan Dougherty Gallery, 2008.
[712] Bernard Smith, *Australian Painting, 1788–2000* Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1962.

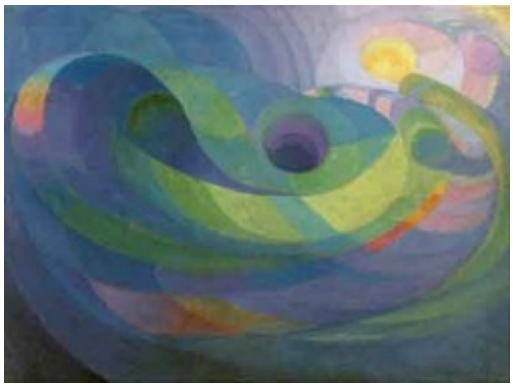


Illustration 59: Roy de Maistre (1901-1968) *Rhythmic composition in yellow green minor* (1919), also entitled *Frozen Music.*
Oil on paperboard, 85.3 x 115.3cm.
Art Gallery of New South Wales, purchased in 1960.

De Maistre's exhibitions and lectures in Sydney occured a decade after the synaesthetic experiments of Wassily Kandinsky in Bavaria. Their theories are almost identical. It is unclear when de Maistre – and, by extension, White – became aware of Kandinsky. There appears to be nothing in their correspondence and other comments to throw light on this coincidence.

In the earlier years of the 20th century, painters everywhere seemed to be translating musical ideas to canvas. Hardly a universal 'movement' as such, this was more a kind of 'period style' manifested accidentally but contemporaneously. Aside of better-known artists like Kandinsky and Klee, there were other important figures in Europe: the Czech Franz Kupka (1871-1957); the Dutchman Theo Van Doesburg (1883-1931); the Italian Luigi Russolo (1885-1947) and the Frenchman Robert Delaunay (1885-1941). And in England, Franz Klein (1910-1962) and Duncan Grant (1885-1978).

All had moved towards musical subjects before the end of the First World War. It is possible that some artistically inclined Australian soldiers, demobilized after service in Europe – as White had been in 1946 –may have returned to Sydney espousing these new developments in art. In any case, colour music emerges for a brief moment in Australian art history, with de Maistre as its absent standard-bearer.

9. Colours II : Scriabin

Over the centuries, the key of E flat major has held symbolic significance for composers. It has long been associated with Beethoven and his *Eroica,* as well as with Mozart and Freemasonry. For the early 19th century German theorist Christian Schubart, the key of E flat denoted 'the key of love, of devotion, of intimate conversation with God'.[713] For Harry Farjeon, the key of E flat was 'the preferred key of songs of young ladies … sky-blue pink, light mauve; browns and oranges preferred but a few blues and a pinky-mauve'.[714] For de Maistre, who became a devout Catholic, the key of E flat was the colour blue to blue-green; it was 'the key of love, of devotion, of intimate conversation with God'.[715]



Illustration 60 : Margaret Preston (1875-1963), *Sketchbook on Colour Theory* (ca 1917). Oil, ink, pen and pencil on paper. 20 x 162 cms. Gift of Mrs L.Hawkins, 1987. NGA, Canberra.

In her *Sketchbook on Colour Theory* (ca.1917), Margaret Preston assigned the key of E flat to the colour orange-yellow. Thus, it became Indigo, the elusive colour which assumes heightened significance as this discussion on *The Vivisector* advances.

The composer most recognized for his attempts to match colour with sound is Alexander Scriabin (1872-1915). His fifth symphony *Prometheus, the Poem of Fire,* Op.60 (1908-10) featured a '*clavier à lumières'*.[716] Played like a piano, this colour organ projected not sounds but coloured light onto a screen behind the orchestra. Here, the pitch of E flat signified the colour steel.[717] Alexander Hector presented recitals on the colour organ in

[713] Christian Schubart *Ideen zu einer Aesthetik der Tonkunst* (1806) translated by Rita Steblin in *A History of Key Characteristics in the 18th and Early 19th Centuries*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: UMI Research Press, 1983.
[714] Harry Farjeon, *The Colour of Keys, & The Colour of Notes,* London: The Musical Times, Vol.79, May 1938, p. 500-1.
[715] Three of the eleven paintings hung in the *Colour in Art* exhibition in 1919 bore the title of 'Syncrony'. De Maistre's two were in the keys of blue-green major and yellow-green minor - E flat and C sharp, respectively - and Wakelin's was in the key of orange-red, B flat.
[716] An article about Scriabin's *Prometheus* appeared in the *Blaue Reiter Almanac* (1912) which Kandinsky had helped to edit.
[717] An extended discussion of Scriabin's *Prometheus* and his interest in synaesthesia appears in an MA thesis by Tyler Matthew Secor from the University of Oregon (USA, 2013). https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1794/13442/Secor_oregon_0171N_10827.pdf?sequence=1

Sydney in 1918 which de Maistre attended.[718] It is possible he may also have been aware of Scriabin's *Prometheus* even before he arrived in London.

In 1951, Goossens conducted what was billed as the Australian premiere of Scriabin's *Prometheus* with the SSO and pianist Muriel Cohen as soloist. Almost certainly, Krieger would not have accompanied White to that performance; Scriabin was not the sort of composer old Fritz would have approved of. Later guides could have alerted White to Scriabin's unique colour-inspired harmonic language and theories on synesthesia. Scriabin was an important influence on both Meale and Butterley, in their manifold capacities as composers, pianists and ABC concert/radio programmers. Their early performances of contemporary music at the Sydney Conservatorium may have steered White to another important dimension of 20th century music: the colour-suffused music of Messiaen.

10. Colours III : Messiaen

On various occasions from 1959 onwards, White went to the Conservatorium to hear Richard Meale, then barely out of his teens, play the piano music of Olivier Messiaen (1908-1992). 'To hear Meale play Messiaen,' the critic Kenneth Hince once wrote, 'is like hearing a sermon by John the Baptist'.[719] From early 1961, White began to collect LPs of Messiaen's music:

> I finally received from New York, Messiaen's *Les Vingt-Sept* (sic) *Regards sur l'Enfant Jésus*. A very long piano work, with rewarding, even beautiful passages, but some heavy and boring ones as well. I think I shall get more out of it as I continue to explore it.[720]

Several weeks later, White reported that he had purchased several recordings, among these 'a Messiaen quartet,' obviously the *Quatuor pour le fin du temps* (1941).[721] He also owned early recordings of such large-scale orchestral pieces as *Turangalîla-symphonie* (1948) and *Chronochromie* (1960). In the title of this latter work – the aptly named 'colour of time' – Messiaen merged the Greek words for time and colour –*Khronos* and *Khrôma* – drawing attention to the interaction of two strands of musical material, one based on rhythm, the other on pitches and other sonorities.

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[718] James Wierzbicki, *Shedding Light on the 'Colour Music' of Sydney's Alexander B.Hector.* , *Musicology Australia* (Vol.34, 2012), pp. 81-99.
[719] Kenneth Hince, *The Australian* [n.d], cited in James Murdoch *Australia's Contemporary Composers.* South Melbourne: Macmillan, 1972, p. 142.
[720] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 4 January 1961. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356/15/10.
[721] PW letter to Frederick Glover, 27 January 1961. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356/15/9. Messiaen, *Quatuor pour le fin du temps* (1941). Olivier Messiaen, piano. Jean Pasquier, violin. Etienne Pasquier, cello. Andrew Vacellier, clarinet. These musicians gave the first performance of the work, Stalag VIII-A, Gorlitz, Silesia, on 15 January 1941



Illustration 61: The stained glass windows of the church of Sainte-Chapelle, in the Palais de la Cité Paris. http://www.sainte-chapelle.fr/en/

Any discussion about synaesthesia or colour-in-music must involve discussion of the music and theories of Messiaen. When he was eleven years old, the French composer visited Sainte-Chapelle in Paris and was overwhelmed by the colours of its stained glass windows.[722] This was a dazzling epiphany, recalling the words of Anthony Burgess:

> There is, for everybody, a first time. A psychedelic moment …
> an instant of recognition of verbally inexpressible spiritual realities,
> a meaning for the term *beauty*.[723]

Many of White's characters experience just that kind of epiphany – Mrs Godbold, Dr Halliday, Mordecai Himmelfarb and others.

From the moment the eleven-year-old Messiaen first gazed at the magnificent windows of Sainte-Chapelle, he understood that music conveyed colours. 'You don't see all the colours and pictures at once,' he explained. 'You're dazzled. When you hear chords they are complexes of sounds'. [724] Messiaen had the ability to transcribe sounds into colours in his inner imagination (*synaesthesia*) and he went to great pains detailing these colours in his scores where he thought such explanation was appropriate.

The *maître* maintained that whenever he heard or imagined music he would experience sensations of colours. In many of his own scores, Messiaen described the colours in his

[722] The stained glass windows of Sainte-Chapelle are arranged across fifteen windows, each fifteen metres high. The panes depict some 1,113 scenes from the Bible recounting the history of the world until the arrival of sacred relics in Paris among which, it was claimed, was the Crown of Thorns.
[723] Anthony Burgess, *This Man and Music.* London: Applause Theatre and Cinema Books, 2001, p. 35
[724] Claude Samuel . *Olivier Messiaen: Music and Color. Conversations with Claude Samuel.* Translated by E. Thomas Glasow. Portland, Oregon, USA: Amadeus Press, 1986, p. 47.

music as a way to assist performers in their interpretation rather than direct the experience of listeners towards his personal palette.

> Intellectually, like synaethesiacs, I too see colours – if only in my mind – colours corresponding to sound. I try to incorporate this in my work, to pass on to the listener. It's all very mobile. You've got to feel sound moving. Sounds are high, low, fast, slow, and so on. My colours do the same thing, they move in the same way. Like rainbows shifting from one hue to the next. It's very fleeting and impossible to fix in any absolute way. It's true I see colours … They're musician's colours, not to be confused with painter's colours. They're colours that go with music. If you tried to reproduce these colours on canvas it may produce something horrible … I believe in natural resonance, as I believe in all natural phenomena. Natural resonance is in exact agreement with the phenomena of complimentary colours. I have a red carpet that I often look at. Where this carpet meets the lighter coloured parquet next to it, I intermittently see marvellous greens that a painter couldn't mix - natural colours created in the eye.[725]

The seventh and penultimate movement of his *Quatuour pour le fin du temps* ['Quartet for the End of Time'] (1941) is scored for all players of the quartet (clarinet, violin, cello and piano). It bears the title *Fouillis d'arcs-en-ciel, pour l'Ange qui annonce la fin du Temps* ['Tangle of rainbows, for the Angel who announces the end of Time']. The similarity of language, between that of White's fictional artist Duffield and the near-theological testaments of Messiaen is intriguing.

'The angel appears in full force,' Messiaen wrote, explaining this movement …

> … especially the rainbow that covers him (the rainbow, symbol of peace, wisdom, and all luminescent and sonorous vibration) … In my dreams, I hear and see ordered chords and melodies, known colours and shapes; then, after this transitional stage, I pass through the unreal and suffer, with ecstasy, a tournament; a roundabout compenetration (sic) of superhuman sounds and colours. These swords of fire, this blue-orange lava, these sudden stars: there is the tangle, there are the rainbows![726]

Without any theological foundation, White's depiction of Duffield, as he prepares a new canvas, swims in similar verbal imagery. While it comes very close to the theological tenets of Messiaen, White's imagery almost drowns in erotic intensity of a comparable order:

> That night he started work on the flowering rosebush. Each of the big scalloped saucers of single roses was given its tuft of glistening human hairs. It was natural that the face should flower at the centre of the bush, humanly radiant amongst the not dissimilar roses, and not all that unnatural for the bush to be growing at sea's edge, under a livid sky [*Viv* 387].

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[725] Messiaen, in conversation with Claude Samuel, p. 48-50

[726] Olivier Messiaen, *Fouillis d'arcs-en-ciel, pour l'Ange qui annonce la fin du Temps*, seventh movement of *Quatuor pour le fin du temps* (1940-41). Paris: Durand Editions Musicales, 2003.

In the synesthetic correlations between colour and keys/pitches – a highly subjective proposition, always – the reader discerns the colour palette of a painter.

For all Duffield's virtuosity as a painter, one colour seemed to elude him - the colour that was concealed 'beyond the end of the rainbow'. This was the colour that signified Duffield's vision of mortality, emerging as the apogee of his artistic vision: Indigo

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The final painting of Duffield's career carries the title *The Whole of Life.* Not only self-aggrandising, it is also 'an ambitious, perhaps even blasphemous attempt to represent his vision of God,' J.M.Coetzee has argued.[727] Nolan dismissed Duffield's 'God-painting' as 'Cezanne pastiches'.[728] Twice during the creation of his masterpiece, Duffield suffers a stroke. He dies, paintbrush in hand, but not before 'acknowledging with all the strength of his live hand the otherwise un-nameable I-N-D-I-G-O' [*Viv* 566]. At this point, barely a page before the end of the novel, the discerning reader returns to the front of the novel to be reminded of the four inscriptions with which White prefaces his 600-page tome. Along with St Augustine, William Blake and Arthur Rimbaud, White quotes lines from the British abstract painter Ben Nicholson:

> As I see it, painting and religious experience are the same thing, and what we are all searching for is the understanding and realisation of infinity.[729]

That quest towards an 'understanding and realisation of infinity' eluded Duffield, as it did his author. Perhaps, he suggested in an exchange with the Swedish writer Ingmar Björkstén, such an almighty goal could not be achieved in mere words. It might better be achieved in a less tangible form: music. Again, it is worth recalling his observation:

> Composers and musicians come closer to the presence of God. It is the writer who deals in stubborn, colourless words who is always stumbling and falling.[730]

Given White's assertion that he can *see* everything he writes – or wishes he could – it is ironic that the reader is left with nothing to see at the end of *The Vivisector*. Coetzee goes further. 'There is something absurd at the heart of the enterprise of embodying a metaphysical vision in a series of paintings that exists solely in the medium of words,' he has commented. It is equally absurd, it could be argued, to attempt to discuss music without sound.[731] *The Vivisector* is testament to White's verbal and narrative powers as he draws the reader into the visual and sonic life and work of Duffield without citing – or sighting, or hearing – a single image, or sound.

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[727] J.M.Coetzee, Introduction to *The Vivisector,* Middlesex: Penguin Classics, 2009, p. 4.
[728] Sidney Nolan, November 1979, cited by Nancy Underhill, *Nolan on Nolan: Sidney Nolan in his own words.* Camberwell, Victoria: Penguin Group (Australia), 2007. p. 36.
[729] Lucy Kent, *Immortal mind: Christian Science and Ben Nicholson's work of the 1930s, i*n *The Burlington Magazine,* July 2015.Vol.157, No.1,348, pp.474-481. Ben Nicholson (1894-1982) became a convert to the ideas of Christian Science in the 1930s. In the light of his beliefs, Nicholson's move towards abstraction became 'a search for a new and more profound realism.' Moreover, 'painting and religious experience are the same thing,' he wrote. 'It is a question of the perpetual motion of a right idea.'
[730] PW, letter to Ingmar Björkstén, 21 January 1973, cited by Marr, *A Life*, p. 410.

9. Summary: *Gesamtkunstwerk?*

At the outset of this study, it was noted that John Carmody had suggested that White's longest novel *The Vivisector* approaches the definition of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, [732] History primarily identifies this concept of 'total art work' in terms of the sometimes bewildering and often overwhelming theories and monumental operas of Richard Wagner.[733]

In his last book *Ein Zeitalter wird besichtigt* (*Contemplation of an Age*), the German literary theorist Heinrich Mann asserted that 'the novel, as the great 19th century has bequeathed to us, is the attainment of the *Gesamtkunstwerk,* or else nothing at all is'.[734] Carmody takes Mann's theory a step further, arguing that 'White really strove to write 19th century novels,' a perception which this study tends to supports, given their panoramic scope, their pedigree and aspirational trajectory towards the canon of Australia literature.

Furthermore, Carmody suggests that White's true aim was 'to produce just such a comprehensive and all-embracing *Gesamtkunstwerk*: art, music and literature in one challenging aesthetic amalgam'.[735]

Carmody has characterised *The Vivisector* as 'a love affair of the visual and the musical arts as [much as] it is of the two sexes'. Moreover, he suggests, 'its mystical dimension, the absorption into the totality of great art, is of transcendent importance'. Carmody finds this dimension not only in *The Vivisector*, but in all White's writing. He esteems White's work as 'a fertile congress of the muses'. This 'congress' suggests a kind of master plan, he argues, the creation of the 'total art work,' or *Gesamtkunstwerk*.

More than any other work by Patrick White, *The Vivisector* tends to support Carmody's theory. It is indeed multi-dimensional: it embraces literature, art and music, as well as exploring social history, psychology, philosophy, theology and aspects of social commentary.

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[732] John Carmody, 'Composer *manqué:* The Centrality of Music in White's Artistic Aspirations', *Antipodes*, Vol.29 (1), 1 June 2015, pp. 153-161.

[733] The notion of 'total-art-work' is not Wagner's domain exclusively. In more recent times, further contenders have emerged: in the large-scale ceremonial events of Iannis Xenakis and Tan Dun, in the ritualistic stage productions of Peter Brook, in the history-operas of Philip Glass and Robert Wilson, in the films of Jean Cocteau, even in the dance-theatre pieces of Graeme Murphy.

[734] Heinrich Mann *Ein Zeitalter wird besichtigt* (mit einem Nachwort von Klaus Schröter und einem Materialienanhang, zusammengestellt von Peter-Paul Schneider); 1945. Frankfurt-am-Main: Fischer, 1988, pp. 254-5.

[735] Carmody, pp. 155-6.

Even film. White habitually envisaged his novels and plays as films. The film director *manqué*, White would surely have seen his *Vivisector* as a film, as he did in the case of almost all his creations.[736] Even so, he fobbed off the entreaties of the Dutch-Australian film director, the late Paul Cox, who had pleaded for permission to make a film of the novel:

> My experience of film-making (eight years and the film of *Voss* still not taking off) inclines me to avoid anything to do with it in the future. Anyway, surely films from original scripts are more satisfactory than films from novels.[737]

Cox surrendered: 'Of course he was right.' And who might have played the virtuosic central character of Duffield? [738] In his painter-anti-hero White created not just a complex and acclaimed creative figure, but also a concerto soloist, a complex and self-obsessed virtuoso the equal of any he had experienced in the concert hall or in real life (*pace* Barry Humphries, as will be observed in the following chapter).

Carmody's last assertion is less convincing, because it implies a monumentality of intent on the part of the author, something approaching autobiography. White stressed many times that this was never part of his agenda or higher purpose. (He may, however, have viewed it as his ticket to the Nobel Prize, as some have suggested.) White challenged the notion of what a novel should be, suggesting what it could be: a document rich in ideas, images and sounds. He also suggested that it could adopt a musical form, the concerto, as the groundwork for its architecture.

In the previous chapter, it was noted that White's publisher Ben Huebsch had viewed *Voss* in terms of its 'symphonic structure'. Had he lived to see it – Huebsch died on 7 August 1964, several years before the publication of *The Vivisector* – the musically perceptive publisher may have recognised *The Vivisector* as a concerto. In terms of sound, colour and printed word, the novel might indeed be read as a concerto.

When reaching the end of this novel – teeming with personalities, paintings and music – the reader experiences a kind of gratification, relief and near exhaustion. By then, the reader has recognised the *raison d'être* of White's fourth and final epigraph, penned by Arthur Rimbaud:

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[736] It is odd that White, who saw many international films, seemed unaware of Ronald Neame's 1956 screen version of Joyce Cary's novel *The* [737] PW, letter to Paul Cox, 23 August 1981. NLA, Papers of Paul Cox (1940-2016), MS 9985.

[737] PW, letter to Paul Cox, 23 August 1981. NLA, Papers of Paul Cox (1940-2016), MS 9985.

[738] Had Cox made a film of *The Vivisector*, it is reasonable to suggest he may have cast one of his leading actors in the title role. Norman Kaye (1927-2007), star of *Man of Flowers* (1983) – for which he won an AFI award - in addition to being a very find character actor, was also an accomplished painter and organist. In his youth, he had studed the organ with Pierre Cochereau at Notre Dame in Paris, and he won a Premier Prix for conducting at the Nice Conservatoire.

> He becomes beyond all others the great Invalid, the great Criminal, the great Accursed One – and the Supreme Knower. For he reaches the unknown.[739]

White defined the true creative artist – be s/he a poet, or painter, or composer – as a visionary artist, striving towards the unknown and towards supreme knowledge, which some identify as God. Hurtle Duffield comes to the end of his life's quest without actually producing his great work, his *Gesamtkunstwerk*. It is not failure, Rimbaud would suggest, to have reached such a point: at least the artist will have seen glimpses of the unknown, to use a phrase often associated with Messiaen. Given the many-sounding musics in this novel, it may be concluded that Duffield/White will have *heard* them too.

Important for this study, Carmody asserts that 'an understanding of White's artistic aspiration is impoverished without an acknowledgment of the centrality of music to [his] quest'.[740] Through recordings and performances – and, indeed, a possible e-publication – the reader may share the compositions and sounds which resound throughout *The Vivisector*. In this long and complex novel, White hinted at an abundance of musical information and clues, perhaps more so than in any other of his novels. Only on occasion though did he provide titles of compositions, composer and performer names, or their aliases.

Lascaris remarked that *The Vivisector* is 'a novel for those who hate easy solutions'.[741] It was the story, he maintained, 'of those who understand that futility is the mother of creative invention'. Only when you understand how futile everything is, do you want to save anything. 'And then,' he added, 'you inexorably fail [but we do manage to] save something when we fail to save it.' Most readers would agree with Lascaris's curly assessment of *The Vivisector*: it was 'paradoxical … tricky … and painful'.[742]

White's excursion into the creative mind of a painter is extended in the following chapter of this study. There, in the eyes of an aspiring film-maker, he directs focus firmly on himself as a writer in the waning days of a long and successful career.

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[739] The full quotation is cited in Appendix 1: Arthur Rimbaud, *The Systematic Derangement of the Senses,* from *Letter of a Seer* (15 May 1871), cited in http://www.mag4.net/Rimbaud/DocumentsE1.html [accessed 10 October 2016].
[740] Carmody, p. 155.
[741] Vras. Karalis. *Recollections of Mr Manoly Lascaris.* Blackheath, NSW: Brandl & Schlesinger, 2008. p. 74.
[742] Karalis, *Recollections,* p. 74.

Chapter Seven: Case Study #4:

The Monkey Puzzle:

'A Comedy for the Screen'[743]

1. Introduction

By 1975, Patrick White had already written ten of his twelve novels and seven of his eleven plays. To that point, the sixty-three-year old writer had been projecting his novels to the screen for over two decades. Just after Christmas 1955, he shared with his cousin Peggy Garland his 'wild dream' to see *The Tree of Man* made into a film, 'without regard for expense or public'.[744]

The Monkey Puzzle has its origins in White's satiric writing for page and stage. Although it was written as a screenplay, it could have been a stage play or novel, had he written it to scale. Whatever its eventual outcome, it was fuelled by his roller-coaster love/hate relationship with Sydney, where he had lived for some thirty years, its arts community and film industry. Written in the mid-1970s, in many respects *The Monkey Puzzle* is vintage Patrick White.[745]

Music is very much central to the consideration of this film-script. It not only reveals White's ideas for music in the soundtrack of the film but also unmasks, for the first time, this chapter will assert, White's own musical tastes.

White designated his screenplay as 'a comedy for the screen'. *The Monkey Puzzle* is the first completed script actually intended for the screen.[746] In this screenplay, White imagines and assembles his company of actors, directors and designers, his cinematographer and composer – in this instance, more of a music editor. It is the work of an auteur. The script reveals an acute sense not only of what the film might look like but what it might sound like.

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[743] PW's own sub-title, taken from the filmscript. Papers of Patrick White, National Library of Australia, Manuscripts Collection, MS 9982/5.8/13, box 10, http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn3789379

[744] PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 28 December 1955. Marr, *Letters,* p. 101.

[745] This study draws on research undertaken during the creation of the e-publication, *Patrick White,* Voss *and the Australian Cultural Landscape* (2009-12), written by Robyn Holmes and the author. It was not until after the writing of *eVOSS* that the writers became aware of the existence of *The Monkey Puzzle.* Only after completing *eVOSS*, did it become apparent that there were two versions of the script. The first derives from the collection of White materials sold to the NLA in late 2006 by Barbara Mobbs. The second, a revised and expanded version, is in the Anthony Buckley collection at the NFSA.

[746] *The Night the Prowler* originated as the third of the six short stories that comprise *The Cockatoos* (1966).

The Monkey Puzzle is more than just a bitter satire on the Sydney arts scene.[747] Though White claimed to despise this *demi-monde*, he was an integral part of it: his plays were produced there, he curated gallery exhibitions, he appeared at various performances, plays, concerts and film screenings, and, later in life, at large scale political events and civic protests. Sydney provided fuel for his writing, exploding in many literary bromides, particularly *Big Toys,* a play written around the same time and brimming with similar prejudices.[748] 'Was Melbourne horrid, darling?'[749]

The central character of *The Monkey Puzzle* is a writer, 'Will Garlick,' yet once again a thinly veiled caricature of White himself. This recalls his assertion that all his characters are reflections of his own personality. Marr has observed that the screenplay is, first and foremost, about the process of writing:

> Though White had written about painters, actors and musicians at work, he had steered clear of the great cliché: writing about a writer writing. But in *Monkey Puzzle* he made a first attempt in fiction to say something about what it is like to write.[750]

This study extends Marr's observation: in *Monkey Puzzle*, White provided the most personal revelations about what it was like to create. The 'puzzle' in the title invites reflections on life, how one lives one's life, how one climbs the tree of life.[751]

2. Adelaide, The Tree and The Monkey

White's own life would have changed significantly, had he acted on his plan to move to Adelaide. In March 1953, he and Lascaris, barely six years back in Australia, drove across country from Sydney to Adelaide, a distance of around 1,200 kilometres. White sent a postcard of Adelaide's Parliament House to his sister Suzanne back in Sydney:

> We made a bad start at Broken Hill, the most awful place on earth but Adelaide is compensation, the most civilized & cosmopolitan town in Australia, also the most beautiful, I think, since Sydney has been (decimated?) by its inhabitants. We feel we would like to live here. Our home would probably be in the city but it is very expensive here. [752]

In 1955, just after he packed off the manuscript of *The Tree of Man* to his publisher in New York, White suffered one of the worst bronchial attacks of his life, and he came to

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[747] Elizabeth Webby, email to Vincent Plush, 22 January 2015.
See also: Elizabeth Webby & Margaret Harris, *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature;* 2013, Vol. 13 Issue 2, p. 1.
[748] *Big Toys* opened on 27 July 1977 in a production of the Old Tote Theatre Company in Sydney, directed by Jim Sharman. White later converted the script for television, screened on ABC-TV as one of six plays comprising *The Australian Theatre Festival* (1979-80).
[749] PW, *Big Toys.* Sydney, NSW: Currency Press, 1978, p. 6.
[750] Marr, *Life*, p. 590.

[752] PW, letter to Suzanne White 7 March 1953. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356/15/10.

Adelaide for relief. 'Adelaide has a dry, blazing heat,' he wrote to Ben Heubsch. 'This should clear out my breathing apparatus.' [753]

White's romance with Adelaide lingered for several decades. Each time he visited, he would stock on up exotic vegetables, herbs, ricotta from Mt Lofty, yabbies and squid, occasionally eels and wurz. At one stage, he had had 'a very idyllic dream about Adelaide'.

> I can't remember what happened in it, only that I was walking along an empty sports-ground with somebody anonymous somewhere near a university. There was dew on the grass, and an early morning light… [754]

White discovered that Adelaide was full of interesting people. One of these was Geoffrey Dutton who had invited White to contribute an article for his literary quarterly *Australian Letters*. There were other beacons of civility too: the art gallery owner and jazz *aficionado* Kym Bonython, the publisher and writer Max Harris, the arts-loving Premier, Don Dunstan, who played Chopin on the piano, conducted cooking shows on television and read Ogden Nash's poetry while sitting on an elephant. Clearly, it was a very civilized place. So great was the appeal of the city, White felt happy just walking along its broad, well laid-out streets. He weighed over the prospect of leaving Sydney altogether:

> Who knows, we may even live in Adelaide. If we are ever forced out of [Sydney], I shall certainly consider doing that. [755]

'I begin to feel that Sydney is the blot on Australia,' White wrote to Manning Clark. 'Certainly I want to move to Adelaide every time I go there'. [756]

Adelaide also had its famed wine regions and, from 1960 onwards, its arts festival. It had brought several of his plays to the stage. Over the years, White came to feel he had many friends there. Notable among these were the Haywards. Sir Edward Hayward had made his fortune as proprietor of John Martins, the leading department store in the city. A keen horseman,'Bill' Hayward cut the figure of a country squire, much like Dick White perhaps. For his wife Ursula, Bill built a *faux* 17th century English manor house, Carrick Hill, some 15 kilometres from the city centre. The sheer Britishness of it all must have appealed to White's own innate Britishness. He dined there on several occasions, and enjoyed their growing collection of contemporary artworks. Along with paintings by Australian and British masters, including Augustus John and Jacob Epstein, the Haywards had acquired major pieces of Roy de Maistre, White's former lover-landlord in the 1930s.

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[753] PW, letter to Ben Heubsch, 11 November 1955. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356/15/10.
[754] PW, letter to Geoffrey Dutton, 18 November 1964, NLA, Papers of David Marr MS 9356/15/10
[755] PW, letter to Geoffrey Dutton, 26 November 1961. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356/15/10.
[756] PW, letter to Manning Clark, 6 December 1961, NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356/15/10.

In the living room at Carrick Hill, White would have seen a painting by the Northern Ireland artist Sir Stanley Spencer. *The Monkey Puzzle Tree* is a still-life of a remarkable tree which the Haywards had in their gardens. Originally from Chile, the Monkey Puzzle Tree did not appear in Europe until the 1850s. Because of its distinctive spiky appearance – fully grown, it can stretch to a height of 40 metres – an early owner is reported to have remarked that 'it would puzzle a monkey to climb that'. Lacking a popular name to that point, the moniker stuck



Illustration 62: (Sir) Stanley Spencer (1891-1959)
Monkey Puzzle Tree
(Northern Ireland, 1952).
Collection of Carrick Hill, Adelaide, SA.
Courtesy of the Art Gallery of South Australia.

The painting and the tree must have stuck in White's mind too. In the mid-1970s, he began to write a filmscript with the title *The Monkey Puzzle.* A stage direction in the script fairly early on reveals his fascination for the tree he had seen in Adelaide:

> To one side [of the house] there is a Monkey Puzzle Tree (*Araucarua imbricate*). Its dark candelabra-like branches and stiff sharp leaves [look] as though they had been cut out of metal. There is something louring, even faintly sinister about the tree…[757]

The figure of the monkey also hearkens back to the vaudeville acts White had seen as a child. Film historian Elizabeth Webby discovered this script whilst preparing an electronic edition of White's Notebooks for the NLA and the University of Sydney, where she is Professor Emerita in Australian Literature. Webby suggests that in this screenplay White was reviewing his life and the 'monkeys' that remained on his back to the end of his life.[758] In that sense, more than a whiff of autobiography hangs over the exercise.

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[757] PW, *The Monkey Puzzle*, Screenplay typescript, 1977, p. 3.
[758] Elizabeth Webby, in conversation with Vincent Plush, 9 April 2015, Mitchell Library, Sydney.

3. *The Night the Prowler*

At various times in his life, White had declared his wish to be a composer, a painter or director of a theatre company. At other times, he fantasized about being a nun, a cook, a dancer, a bank-manager, a criminologist, even a goatherd in Greece. In the last decade of his productive life, to that wish list of alternative careers, he added another. 'How I wish I had been born later,' he wrote to the American director Joseph Losey after the American director's attempt to film *Voss* had failed. 'I'd have become a film director, one can do so much more about today in a film … As it is, I'm a dated novelist, whom hardly anybody reads, or if they do, most of them don't understand what I am on about'.[759]

A few years after writing *The Monkey Puzzle*, White explained that he thought film was 'the most creative medium today' [760]. Or, in the right hands, it could be, 'and that is why I feel if I had the chance I think I would have liked to begin as a filmmaker'.[761]

An antipodean *film noir, Prowler* returned White to his favourite haunt - the discreet (if hardly charming) bourgeoisie of Sydney's eastern suburbs. Jim Sharman shot the film in a borrowed mansion in Vaucluse, with exterior settings in Centennial Park, literally in White's backyard. *Prowler* opened the 25th Sydney Film Festival at the State Theatre in June 1978.[762] Given its contemporary subject matter – too close to Sydney's bone? – *Prowler* was a failure at the box office and its reception was not helped by uncomprehending local reviews.[763]For his part, White was philosophical about the disappointing reception to the film. It had been, he reported, 'a success with a few, but a failure with that great Australian majority which prefers rose-tinted soap opera'.[764]

White attended at least two filming sessions on the set in Vaucluse. On several occasions, the producer Anthony Buckley collected White from his home in Centennial Park and drove the lanky writer to the *Prowler* set, about 20 minutes away. White's appearances on the set 'terrified the wits' out of the normally unflappable Buckley. '[White] would sit grandly on the set and observe all,' he recalled. One morning, White casually announced he had written another screenplay and asked Buckley if would read the script for *The Monkey Puzzle*. It was written for Barry Humphries, he said.[765]

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[759] PW, letter to Joseph Losey, 4 April 1981. Marr, *Letters*, p. 544.
[760] PW, quoted in 'A Very Literary Luncheon', *The National Times,* 30 June 1979, p. 30.
[761] In reality, White had written only one screenplay that was actually produced. This was *The Night the Prowler;* it pre-dates *The Monkey Puzzle* and originated as the third of the six short stories that comprise *The Cockatoos* (1966).

[762] Over its two-week season, the 25th Sydney Film Festival screened 100 short films and 71 features.
[763] Appendix 1 (75): Martha DuBose, 'Opening Choice an Act of Faith: *The Night the Prowler*: Sydney Film Festival', *The Sydney Morning Herald,* 5 June 1978, p. 7.
[764] PW, *Flaws* p. 248. During an extended stay in hospital, White became fascinated with the television soap opera, *Neighbours.*
[765] Anthony Buckley, *Behind a velvet light trap: A film-maker's journey from Cinesound to Cannes.* Prahran, Vic: Hardie Grant, 2009*,* p. 217.

A decade later, Buckley decided to look again at the screenplay of *The Monkey Puzzle*. He wrote to White's agent Barbara Mobbs more 'officially' to explore the possibility of taking out an option to film the screenplay. Buckley was now 'reappraising the scripts and looking at the revival that Patrick's works are having and the interest of the younger generation in particular'. Although he had yet to approach any director, names like Jim Sharman and Nick Enright were mentioned. Buckley had not yet raised any money for the project but he was keen to explore its potential for 'quality television'. He named two possible backers. The project, he teased her, would also mean 'revenue for the [White] Estate'.

Mobbs did not take Buckley's bait. She had 'a long think' about his proposal but decided that any unproduced scripts should be left 'in the cupboard' for the time being.[766] In 2001, a decade after White's death, Mobbs noted that there was then quite a lot of interest in the author's work in theatre and film. She would rather see 'some of [those] film projects come to fruition before I think about anyone working on the more difficult projects'.[767]

4. Unravelling *The Monkey Puzzle*

As an antidote to the dismal response to *Prowler*, White dashed off the first draft of *The Monkey Puzzle* in a couple of weeks. His Notebooks contain only a single mention of it, a list of six *dramatis personae:*

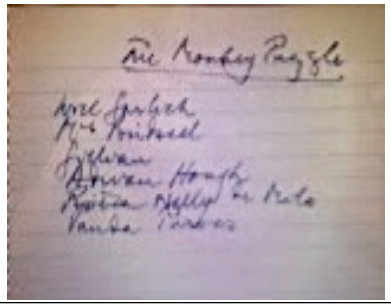


Illustration 63: Cast list for preliminary version of *The Monkey Puzzle.* PW, Notebooks. NLA. Papers of Patrick White, MS 8034

The variants between these first thoughts and the voluminous Cast List that appears at the front of the eventual full screenplay are significant. 'Will Garlick' survives, as does 'Mrs Birdsell', although the Oral Historian has yet to be assigned a first name. 'Adrian Hough' survives also. 'Nellie de Milo' was to have been 'Rita', but the name was rejected, doubtless because it would not have supported White's anecdote about meeting Nellie Melba. 'Vanda Purves' does not make her way into the screenplay; perhaps, by then, she has become 'Mrs Peabody', the 'square-set elderly' household help. There is no mention of a German Plumber who appears in the eventual script as the fantasy reconfiguration of Voss. Most surprising of all, there is no mention of Will Garlick's novelettiste wife 'Lalange Moffatt Garlick', unless she was originally assigned the more prosaic name 'Gillian'.

[766] Buckley, p. 219.
[767] Barbara Mobbs, letter to Anthony Buckley, 31 January 2001. NFSA collection RMM 10591, Box 60.

Tucked between the cast list and a detailed outline of *The Faïry Kingdom,* another unrealised screenplay, this is the only mention of *Monkey Puzzle* in White's Notebooks. In most instances, White habitually began his 'first thought' notes with a cast list. White wrote this script very quickly, bypassing the Notebooks, and going straight to his Olivetti typewriter. After his first draft, he made amendments in red ink. Some time later, he added two further scenes.

Unlike the process of writing novels, White told Manning Clark, writing a film script was relatively easy. He was glad he had dropped into this medium 'for my old age'.[768] It was so much kinder 'on the lungs than grinding away for a couple of years at a novel'. He hoped to have his new screenplay ready by Christmas 1977. Then it would be 'back to grinding away' at his tenth novel *A Fringe of Leaves* (1976), the residue of the opera project which had collapsed a decade earlier.

5. Oral History Interview I *(fictional)*

The Monkey Puzzle revolves around the central character of Will Garlick, the archetypal Great Writer and author of two volumes of memoirs. The narrative unfurls in a series of flashback portraits of the writer as he allows himself to be subjected to an oral history interview.

The oral history interviewer is Mrs Henrietta Birdsell, from 'Federal Archives, Canberra'. White's screen directions paint her as 'a big rangey woman, with a masterful air … dressed semi-trendy with semi-trendy makeup'.[769] The model for the interviewer is the real-life figure of Mrs Hazel de Berg, the pioneer oral historian whose initial interviews were acquired, then others subsequently commissioned by the NLA. They became the foundation of the NLA's extensive Oral History collection.[770]

Over several interview sessions, Garlick and Birdsell come to know each other well enough for the writer to call the interviewer 'Hetty'. For years, she had done her utmost to capture the one remaining [living] Australian author whose secrets had yet to be recored for the Archives' (p. 23). An interview with Garlick would mark the crowning point of her career. Her (fictional) superiors in Canberra can hardly believe she has pulled off such a coup.

Mercilessly, in his script White pillories 'the national archivist today, violating all of us' (p.97). For her part, Mrs Birdsell manages to persuade Garlick to agree to the interview by invoking posterity, something no self-respecting author could afford to ignore. It would ensure his place in history:

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[768] PW, letter to Manning Clark, 17 November 1977. Marr, *Letters*, p. 502.
[769] PW, *The Monkey Puzzle*, Screenplay typescript, 1977, p. 3.
[770] Hazel de Berg (1913–1984) was the veteran pioneer oral historian and chronicler of lives past and famous. Over a period of 23 years, she collected some 1,290 interviews for the NLA.

> HENRIETTA: Let's look at it this way — many humble artefacts are of great archaeological importance when dug up centuries later (p. 9).

White takes delight in lampooning other targets. He excoriates writers who survive on government grants and who luxuriate in public success. Will Garlick even resents the achievements of his wife, Lalage Moffatt Garlick, a highly successful writer of romance novels: [771]

> WILL: *(with hate in his voice)* My artistic conscience never lets me down — and the grants allow me to pay my whack.
>
> LALANGE *(vindictive)* Those grants! They barely pay for the booze! I'm the one who foots the bills! (p. 44)

Garlick may think he writes great art, but it hardly pays the bills. 'Literature pay?!' Mrs Mounsey exclaims, in *The Living and the Dead.* 'Literature's a pain. Literature's a disease, a smoker's cough, a husband's curse, the jiminy-piminies. Anything you like. Does literature pay!'[772] In the 1960s – the decade that began with *Riders in the Chariot* and ended with *The Vivisector* – White calculated he had earned a gross income of about $150,000.[773] Clearly, literature alone could never pay.

At their first encounter, Garlick's interviewer seems in awe of her subject. Gradually, over the course of several sessions, the author becomes cantankerous, impatient with a process he considers time wasting and increasingly pointless, constantly complaining:

> WILL : Nobody — *really* — realizes — not the reading public — not that woman Lalage Moffatt bashing out her two-a-year novelettes on her infernal machine —perhaps not even you, Hetty — nobody knows what a lonely, constipating occupation *creative* writing is (p. 20).

By Christmas 1977, the Nobel Prize had sat like a noose around White's neck for four years. Yet, for all the acclaim and laurels he had accrued, White had come to regard creative writing as little more than 'a lonely, constipating occupation'[774]. He hated writing novels. Seduced by the new medium of film, he had a fresh outlet for his writing, one that would also enable him to settle a few scores.

In *The Monkey Puzzle,* White reserved his sharpest barbs for the citizens of the Sydney film industry. To that point, *Voss* had been knocking on its door for almost a decade. In the revised NFSA script, the film's opening scene is set in the interior foyer of the State

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[771] Of the several candidates (male or female) who might serve as models for the portrayal of the successful female 'novelettiste', the most likely would have to be the Colleen McCulloch. Her best-selling novel *The Thorn Birds* was published in 1977 just as White was writing *The Monkey Puzzle.* This was the novel Joan Sutherland 'couldn't put down'. *Flaws,* p. 239

[772] PW *The Living and the Dead,* p. 207.

[773] Marr, *Life,* p. 520.

[774] PW, *The Monkey Puzzle,* script, p. 20

Theatre. The opening night of the Sydney Film Festival has just screened the world premiere of 'a major motion picture directed by Buster Trueman'. A glitzy audience trickles out of the theatre. All offer judgment on what they have just seen: Trueman's screen version of Garlick's *Holy Writ*. White's description leaves little room for director or costume designer:

> *Doors are flung open and the mob pours out, as well as from the lower depths, all in their festival drag – from velvets and ruffles to hairy woollens, Prudence of Pymble to Flamingo Park. Laughing, screeching, somber, thoughtful. In the background cabinet ministers and 'film stars' are helping themselves to champers and savouries. Opinions are overheard…*
>
> VOICES *(variously):* Should do well overseas? … At least there weren't any kangaroos … So depressing I know what you mean, *dolling*, it just isn't film! (sic) (p. 2)

Bruce Beresford [a.k.a. Buster Trueman] went on to make *The Adventures of Barry McKenzie* (1972) and its sequels, with Barry Humphries as (Dame) Edna Everage and Barry Crocker as the eponymous bumbling 'hero'. These adventures were highly successful in Australia, where they lampooned the same Australian values White satirized in his plays and novels. In London, they were virtually incomprehensible.

6. The Ghost of *Voss*

The Monkey Puzzle parodies not just its audiences and creative figures, its funding and administrative agencies – all nervous in the aftermath of the dismissal of the Labour government of Gough Whitlam in November 1975 – but also the author himself. Resenting the ongoing failure to turn *Voss* into a film – a (doomed?) exercise that continues to this day[775] – White took a cudgel to *Voss*-the-movie-that-might-never-be-made. Lalage confesses to Will that she is 'toying' with the idea of transforming their German plumber into a character most of us would recognize instantly:

[775] 'Never was there an Australian film that had more effort poured into it for less outcome.' Phillip Adams, *The Weekend Australian*, 23 April 2005, p. 12.

> LALANGE [*seeing the plumber]:* I find it stimulating listening to a man who's doing something physical. In fact, I'm toying with an idea…something I may turn into a book…
>
> LALANGE'S VOICE [*dissolved into a dark screen, she reads]:* 'As he pressed on into the distance, saltbush catching at his frayed — trousers? – blisters turning to sores on his lips, the blazing universe splintering around him …'
>
> *Dissolve to dusty, desert landscape in which the Plumber has become a 19th century explorer, gaunt, staggering at the end of his tether.*
>
> LALANGE'S VOICE '… he had almost forgotten his objective of crossing this vast continent, for remembering her voice, her eyes, her cool camellia skin, all the seduction of his sojourn in Sydney.'[776]

Morphing into the pre-Raphaelite-like figure of Laura Trevelyan, the spiritual muse of Voss, Lalage becomes 'Laetitia'. White paints a somewhat over-ripe portrait of Laetitia/Laura/Lalage riding alongside Voss on a superb black horse (an image borrowed from David Mercer's screen play for Losey). Elsewhere in the script, Lalage drives more powerful horsepower, her black Alfa Romeo. In production directions as well as the *faux* German grunts of the plumber, White skewers *Voss.* Over the years his 'great Australian novel' had become little more than a romance potboiler by a highly successful 'novelettiste'.

For Sharman, this sequence was White's 'way of drawing a line in the sand over the *Voss* saga'.[777] Perhaps White saw *The Monkey Puzzle* as 'time-out relief' from writing his eleventh novel, *The Twyborn Affair.* By mid-December 1977, the would-be- screenwriter had a final draft to show the hoped-for director. At first, the 32-year-old Sharman said he liked the screenplay, but later changed his mind.

In the weeks leading to the Sydney premiere of his third play *A Cheery Soul,* White settled his nerves by nibbling at the script of *The Monkey Puzzle.* He added the elaborate prologue – a spoof on the crowd at the Sydney Film Festival – and appended the scene of the awards dinner in Chinatown. The frontispiece of the NFSA script announced Buckley as producer and Sharman as director, reprising their roles in *The Night the Prowler*.[778] For all these optimistic announcements, the script remains stillborn.

Few people have sighted the script and the reasons for its neglect are not hard to imagine. Recently, the Melbourne-based director Michael Pattinson read the screenplay and found it 'an excruciating and tiresome piece of work'.[779] In his view, it was founded on the idea of 'the sole pursuit of Art,' a premise that underestimated the purpose and power and, critically, the potential of the medium of film.

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[776] PW, *The Monkey Puzzle,* p. 40.
[777] Jim Sharman at *The Voss Journey*, NFSA, Canberra, 16 May 2009.
[778] Tony Buckley donated his papers to the NFSA and his script of *The Monkey Puzzle* was part of that bequest.
[779] Michael Pattinson, email to the author, 8 May 2016.

Pattinson pointed to a critical disparity in the enterprise.[780] White had come to cinema via the theatre. He understood the three-dimensional nature of the theatre well, possibly all too well. Actors standing on a stage, delivering lines, mostly to each other. Film, Pattinson expounded, requires a more refined understanding of the role of words and actions, settings and cinematography, sound and music.

In his plays, White could direct the thoughts of his audience. His idea of a film, Pattinson contends, is that his audience 'must be subject to the lecture of his characters because we are too stupid to intuit themes in the enjoyable and subliminal ways of the cinema'. Pattinson's curse illustrates 'the vast media differences which it seems White cared little about entertaining'. Small wonder so many in the industry continue to be disappointed by White's film scripts. After all, the novelist was an ardent cinephile; not only did he make it his business to see virtually every art film screened in Sydney, but his library contained many biographies of film directors and stars.[781] It is perhaps revealing that his extensive library collection did not include books on film techniques, screen writing, and the like. Fundamentally, White was a writer whose principal medium was the printed word: that 'gray prose', he called it.

White burrowed inside the minds of his characters not with a camera or a microphone, but with his pen. Intrinsically, he pursued a literary, almost forensic art, not a visual/seeing or musical/sounding one. In terms of the cinema and music, White showed himself to be an *amateur* – as he was with music –an enthusiast who, for all his pronouncements about film and music, politics and the environment, remained first and foremost a writer. Like Pattinson, others have found *The Monkey Puzzle* unwieldy and over-wordy, too stage-bound to make a successful translation to the screen.

7. Barry Humphries and/or Edna Everage

On 25 January 1974, Patrick White took the stage of the Melbourne Town Hall to accept a further honour, this one from the National Australia Day Council. Now 'Australian of the Year, 1973', the 62-year-old writer and Nobel laureate was uncomfortable having to appear on so public a platform. His address was almost calculated to discomfort the Councillors:

> I was born a pessimist. This at least means that when the best very occasionally happens, it comes as an agreeable surprise. After that I must out and say (to the disgust of many Australians) that Australia Day is for me a day of self-searching rather than trumpet-blowing … What gives me hope for Australia, however, is that during recent years men

[780] Appendix 1 (76). Since 1980, the Australian film director Michael Pattinson (born 1957) has directed over 40 films and television shows. In 1987, he directed the film *Ground Zero* which was entered in the 38th Berlin International Film Festival.
[781] The Mitchell Library in Sydney contains the Patrick White Bequest Collection (PWBC) of White's library.

> have emerged who are aware of our faults and gifted enough to warn us by drawing our attention to them in highly individual and forceful ways.[782]

One of these paragons was the historian Manning Clark. Another was the environmentalist, Jack Mundey, leader of the NSW branch of the Builders' Labourers Federation. The third figure in White's trinity was a man who had impressed him as 'an exceptionally perceptive Australian – one of the most original, scintillating minds we have produced':

> Ever since Sandy Stone started croaking, and Edna Everage dropped her first brick into Moonee Ponds, Barry Humphries too has been holding up a mirror for us to see ourselves. If the mirror is sometimes a distorting one, isn't distortion the prerogative of art?[783]



Illustration 64: Patrick White, Barry Humphries, Manoly Lascaris.
Photograph by Ken Thomson, Sydney, n.d.
printed in Marr, *A Life,* plate 67, pp. 376-7.

Just before Christmas 1977, White completed the final revision of *The Monkey Puzzle*. He now felt the script was ready to be sent to its leading man. He even sugar-coated the proposition: midway through the script, Will and Lalange make a spectacular entrance at a writers' dinner at a restaurant in Sydney's Chinatown:

> *Enter Will and Lalange, he dandified in white suit and enormous fedora. She in an outrageous dress, the colours of which blaze out against its drab surroundings … Expressionless, they parade solemnly and silently round the table. Writers, also silent, turning in their seats to follow the Garlick progress …* (p.59)

Only one actor could play that scene, without so much as a change of wardrobe: Barry Humphries.

[782] PW, Acceptance Speech as Australian of the Year, 1973. Melbourne Town Hall, 25 January 1974. See *Patrick White Speaks,* Sydney: Primavera Press, 1989, p. 47-8.
[783] PW, letter to Cynthia Nolan, 27 January 1974. Marr, *Letters*, p. 435.

In retrospect, the common interests between White and Humphries appear legion. Their theatrical roots were in vaudeville, revues and the West End. Both loved opera and the cabarets of the Weimar Republic. Both had forged their early careers in London.[784] Both were passionate collectors of LP recordings. Most of all, they shared a love of language and comedy, at times crude, crusty and scatological. It animated their conversations, correspondence and creative writing. Although they initially found their writing lives in London, life in Australia provided the creative inspiration for their writing. *The Monkey Puzzle* lampooned wider targets in the arts industry. Throughout the 1970s, Humphries had similar pomposity and pretensions in his sight in writing his column *Pseuds Corner* in the satiric fortnightly London magazine *Private Eye*.



Illustration 65: Mrs Edna Everage in the sitting room of her home at 36 Humoresque Street, Moonee Ponds, 1962. photographer unknown.
Gift of Barry Humphries, to the Arts Centre Melbourne, Performing Arts Collection, 1999. Image courtesy of the Arts Centre Melbourne.

On 19 December 1955, Mrs Edna May Everage (*née* Beazley) made her first stage appearance in a revue sketch called 'Olympic Hostess' at the Union Theatre at Melbourne University.[785] She first emerged as White was putting the finishing touches on *Voss*. Both appeared at the dawn of the television age in Australia, heightened by international attention at the time of the Melbourne Olympics, in November 1956.

One evening in May 1960, White and Lascaris threw one of their frequent dinner parties at Dogwoods. A guest brought a gift, a 10" EP of Barry Humphries performing soliloquies of two of his leading characters, Sandy Stone and Mrs Norm. Everage. White was delighted with the five songs on the recording.[786] 'He has crammed all the horrors of Australian suburbia into a very short space,' he marvelled. 'Really quite uncanny.'[787] When White first saw Edna, his delight turned to astonishment: White, the author of *The Season at*

[784] Humphries moved to London in 1959, and since then has been a constant presence on the London stage and in films. He had a long run as Fagin in the Lionel Bart musical *Oliver!* He appeared frequenly at Peter Cook's club 'The Establishment' and made regular contributions to the satirical magazine 'Private Eye' which featured his cartoon strip, *The Wonderful World of Barry McKenzie.* This led to the famous Bazza McKenzie films directed by Bruce Beresford. Barry Humphries played the role of Bazza's aunt Edna.
[785] The revue in which 'The Olympic Hostess' made her debut ran from 19 December 1955 to 9 January 1956 at the Union Theatre in Melbourne.
[786] Barry Humphries, *Wild Life in Suburbia.* POL 014, 1958 (also on 7" vinyl).
[787] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 13 May 1960. Marr, *Letters,* p. 165.

Sarsaparilla, and Humphries, the creator of Edna Everage, were mining the same lode of the Australian vernacular. Edna could almost have been White's creation, straight from the streets of Sarsaparilla! At the very least, Marr wrote to Humphries some years later, 'Edna and [Miss Docker] the Cheery Soul might have been sisters who [had] drifted apart'.[788]

Another Humphries' stage-show, *A Nice Night's Entertainment,* appeared in September 1962, just as White's play *The Season at Sarsaparilla* was being produced in Adelaide. White and Humphries first met several weeks later, at the close of the Melbourne season of *Sarsaparilla*. Its subtitle alone – 'a charade of suburbia' – was enough to seal their bond. From that time, White realized he and Humphries shared interests in more than the antics of suburban housewives.

Perhaps Miss Docker could not have been created without Edna, her 'long-lost sister'. It is not hard to imagine the two ladies sharing a good gossip over a cup of tea, echoing White's 'yell-and-shouts' over the phone with Desmond Digby [789].



Illustration 66: Robyn Nevin as Miss Docker and Pat Bishop as Mrs Custance in the STC/ Paris Theatre Company's 1979 production of *A Cheery Soul*.
Photograph: Branco Gaica, courtesy of the STC.

At one particularly dismal moment in *A Cheery Soul,* Miss Docker is especially disappointed that the Choir of All Saints, Sarsaparilla, has self-destructed:

> I haven't given up on the choir. The choir has given up on me. To be more exact, there's no choir any more. (*Pauses)* It's those women. That Miss Scougall's a ball of ego. (*Snorts)* Called herself a choir mistress too! Of course, when she walked out, Mrs Knight – she was the organ – could only follow suit, depending as she did for a lift in her sister's car. *So* ... we are disbanded.[790]

[788] David Marr, letter to Barry Humphries, 23 September 198(7?). NLA, Papers of DM, MS 9356.
[789] Almost every morning, around 9.00am, White would have a long telephone conversation with his friend, the theatre designer and director Desmond Digby (1933-2015), the 'D' of his Notebooks. Their often heated conversation comprised mostly gossip about friends and enemies but also encompassed events of the day, as conveyed in *The Sydney Morning Herald.* White was unaware that Digby kept notes of their 'yell-and-shouts'. These are now in his archive in the NLA, MS 10172.
[790] PW, *A Cheery Soul* (1963) in *Patrick White, Collected Plays, Volume I,* Sydney: Currency Press, 1993, p. 239.

Those lines could have been spoken by either Edna or Miss Docker.They share pauses and cadences, the same conspiratorial undertones that inflate minor local squabbles into matters of acute significance. Both Miss Docker and Mrs Everage clawed their way to theatrical prominence over three generations, both have aroused extreme reactions in critics and audiences. The astonishing parallels and revelationary exchanges between Humphries and White, these two 'fantastiks', have been explored by Bruce Bennett and Anne Pender. 'Cruelty and accuracy are hallmarks of the theatrical writing of both Humphries and White,' they wrote. 'Both of them were unafraid of experimenting with their characters'.[791]

In his daring use of language, Humphries was some distance ahead of White. In the early 1950s, with his improvised theatre antics and elaborate practical jokes played on an unsuspecting public, Humphries had introduced elements of Dada to Melbourne. Humphries dubbed his neo-Dada revue group 'Wubbo', a contrived pseudo-Aboriginal word meaning 'nothing'.[792] On the other hand, whilst he admired and even emulated the writing of James Joyce and Gertrude Stein, White shrank from anything so random and undisciplined as Dada.

White resolved to write 'something' for Barry Humphries, the 'potential genius' who had made Sarsaparilla a symbol of contemporary Australian life and culture. Initially, that 'something' came in the form of *Clay,* a short play.[793] White originally envisaged it as a two-hander vehicle for the two great actors he then most admired: Humphries and Zoe Caldwell.[794] Concurrently, White also envisaged this latest play as a film, the reversible process of film-play-novel being a continuing preoccupation. In 1963 White fashioned screenplays of several short stories that made up *The Burnt Ones* (1964), including *Clay*.[795] Webby and Harris maintain that these early film scripts pictorialize the short stories rather than transform them into truly effective film screenplays. White had yet to master the nuanced techniques of screenwriting.

So began a friendship that would stretch over two decades. Then, as so many friendships did, this one, so promising and full of potential collaborations, ended in tirades and tears. White and Humphries fell out in the mid-1970s when Humphries divorced his second wife. At the same time Humphries joined the board of the Sydney literary journal *Quadrant,* a

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[791] Bruce Bennett and Anne Pender, *From a Distant Shore: Australian Writers in Britain 1820-2012*. Chapter entitled, 'From Whinging and Crying to Cosmic Nannies: The Virtues of the Expatriate'. Melbourne: Monash University Publishing, 2013, p. 43-5.

[792] 'Wubbo' was captured in sound recordings made in 1952-3, making them perhaps the first examples of such sonic experimental work recorded in Australia. Segments of it have recently been released on *Artefacts of Australian Experimental Music, 1930-1973, volume 1*. http://www.shamefilemusic.com/artefacts.html [accessed 20 May 2015].

[793] *Clay* is in the Patrick White Papers deposited by Barbara Mobbs at the NLA in late 2006. Papers of PW, NLA, Manuscripts Collection, MS 9982/5.4/6, box 9.

[794] When White and Humphries first met, Caldwell was reprising her role as Nola Boyle in John Sumner's new production of *Sarsarparilla* for the UniMelb's Union Theatre Repertory Company.

[795] *The Burnt Ones* is a collection of 11 short stories published in 1964 by Eyre & Spottiswoode. It includes *Willy-wagtails at Midnight* (story #2), *Clay* (#4) and *Down at the Dump* (#11). It also includes an early version of *A Cheery Soul* (#6). The unpublished film scripts are in NLA, Papers of PW, MS 9982/5.4/7 & 8, box 10.

publication White loathed for its perceived right-wing editorial bias. White was also appalled at Humphries' support for right-wing political causes, notably the prime ministerial aspirations of Queensland Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen.

Humphries did not take up White's invitation to create the role of Will Garlick in *The Monkey Puzzle*. 'I think [Patrick] was hurt and disappointed about that,' Humphries reflected, some years later. Perhaps, he thought, it may have sown the seeds for the eventual dissolution of their friendship.[796] For his part, White acknowledged that Humphries had 'flashes of brilliance, but moments of despair'. White found the comic actor 'very difficult to assess', he confided to Geoffrey Dutton. 'He is such an actor one can't decide when the acting has stopped.[797]



Illustration 67: Luciana Arrighi (Chetwynd), PW's niece and theatre/film designer greetings to PW and ML, 27 July (1964?). NLA, Papers of PW, MS 9982/1-1/4

By 1980, White felt that Edna Everage had passed her use-by date. She should be retired, he thought. Worse: Edna had been upgraded by Prime Minister Gough Whitlam. The little housewife from Moonee Ponds was now 'Dame Edna Everage'. Not only monstrous, Miss Docker's long-lost sister was now too imperial for White's new-found republican taste.

[796] Barry Humphries, in conversation with Jill Kitson. *Quadrant*, Vol.37 no.4, April 1993, p. 54.
[797] PW, letter to Geoffrey Dutton, 27 July 1970. See Humphries, *More Please.* London: Penguin, 1993. p. 328.

Even though initial prospects for filming *The Monkey Puzzle* had seemed relatively bright, it is doubtful that White and Humphries could ever have collaborated on a stage or film project. For his part, Humphries found White very conservative, 'more Kensington than any man I know in Australia'.[798] White had become a parody of his own characters. He had absorbed 'the mannerisms and quasi-theatrical locutions of Sydney Camp: a particularly virulent strain of international poofery,' Humphries scoffed. White was '*un homme très difficile* and yet a novelist of extraordinary power and nobility'.[799]

In the end, it was the differences rather than the commonalities that made the two larger-than-life figures incompatible. White was Sydney, Humphries was Melbourne. White was gay, Humphries (despite Edna) was straight. White shunned the spotlight, Humphries relished it. White was a Whitlam supporter and increasingly left-wing in his political inclinations, Humphries supported right-wing causes such as the 'Joh-for-Canberra' campaign. White was dowdy, Humphries was a dandy. Humphries accused White of surrounding himself with 'a coterie of Sydney poofs', creatures which White's designer niece Luciana de Arrighi captured in her greetings cards.[800]

Perhaps, by the end, White had out-Edna-ed Edna. Whatever the case, without its intended leading man, it was unlikely that a film of *The Monkey Puzzle* was ever going to be made.

8. Oral History Interview II (*factual*)

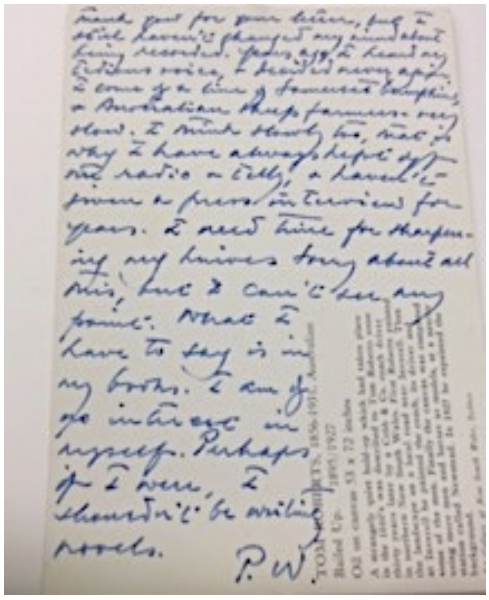
Just as Henrietta Birdsell had spent considerable time, energy and effort in dragging Will Garlick to her microphone, Hazel de Berg had spent some years in pursuit of Patrick White. For years, she had written to him requesting an Oral History interview for the NLA. As events transpired, de Berg did not get her interview with White; instead, White was interviewed for the NLA by a nun – the novelist had a very soft spot for nuns – Sister Veronica Brady, who had written her doctoral thesis about White whilst studying at the University of Toronto, Canada (1969).[801] The focus on their interview, less than 90 minutes in duration, is principally on political and environmental issues, passions of the interviewer herself as much of the 71-year-old frail interviewee. More a conversation than a conventional oral history interview, this interview did not follow the 'all-of-life' style of interviews laid down by Hazel de Berg.[802]

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[798] Barry Humphries, Letter to David Marr, 3 December 1987. NLA, Papers of DM, NLA. MS 9356.
[799] Humphries, *My Life,* p. 250.
[800] Appendix 1 (77)
[801] Brady (1929-2015) was a Loreto nun and literary scholar of international repute, She was also an outspoken Deputy Chair of the ABC. As Patricia May Brady (she took the name 'Veronica' when she joined the Loreto order of Catholic nuns), she completed her dissertation '*The hard enquiring wind : a study of Patrick White as an Australian novelist'* at the University of Toronto, Canada, in 1969.

[802] Sister Veronica Brady, Oral History Interview with Patrick White. 23 September 1983. NLA, Oral History and Folklore Collection, ORAL TRC 39782.

White was de Berg's conquest-in-waiting. Her slender folder in the NLA contains no record of her original request to White. There is however at least one record of contact: White's response to her several attempts to secure an interview with him. In January 1968, he dashed off a note on the back of a postcard of Tom Roberts's *Bailed Up* (1895/1927). White may have felt some sympathy with the hapless subjects of the famous painting; there was usually a note of irony or symbolism in his choice of postcard.



Thank you for your letter, but I still haven't changed my mind about being recorded. Years ago I heard my tedious voice & decided never again. I come off a line of country bumpkins & Australian sheep farmers – very slow. I think slowly too, that is why I have always kept off the radio & telly, & haven't given a press interview for years. I need time for sharpening my knives [trying] about all this, but I can't see any point. What I have to say is in my books. I am of no interest in myself. Perhaps if I were, I shouldn't be writing novels. P.W.[1]

Illustration 68: PW, postcard to Hazel de Berg, contained in an envelope dated 9 January 1968. NLA, Manuscripts Collection 2249, folder 4/13.

Midway through *The Monkey Puzzle,*
Hetty Birdsell picks at a raw nerve. In doing so, she unlocks the key to this chapter. She reveals Will Garlick's innermost feelings about music, 'violating' his innermost secrets. The reader finds himself eavesdropping on the musings of the Great Writer. In effect, Patrick White is interviewing himself.

'You haven't told me who your favourite composers are?'[803] Hetty's question seems innocuous enough – Hurtle Duffield puts the same question to Kathy Volkov in *The Vivisector* – but, inexplicably, Hetty's question unleashes an outburst from Garlick:

> WILL *(mumbling on a knuckle)* That's a question, isn't it? Like asking what you do together in bed.
>
> *... (Shot of Will settling the stylus in the desired groove.)*
>
> WILL *(cautiously)* I think I'd say…Satie…was almost my favourite composer. I admire him for his austerity—and at the same time—his hilarious acceptance of the unreason in life … Some might consider Satie intellectual. But he so often matches my own atrocious moods. I find great solace in listening—say, to his *Three Pieces in the Shape of a Pear*— or his *Veritable Flabby Preludes.*
>
> *(Cut to: Henrietta and Will. Henrietta regulating the tape-recorder.)*

[803] PW, *The Monkey Puzzle,* filmscript, p. 64

> WILL *(beaming at her):* Don't think it's Satie all the way. I have my Mahlerian moments too…

In that one brief exchange, Garlick/White places two composers – Erik Satie and Gustav Mahler – on his winning pedestal. A musically literate reader would find this astonishing. There could hardly be two figures less alike than Mahler and Satie, a composer who had not figured in White's writing before.[804]

White's lines require virtuosic delivery; in his mind, he could hear the voices of Humphries and Caldwell in verbal joust. The soliloquys from The Great Writer, dripping with hyperbole, beg the all-important question: is Will Garlick actually Patrick White? 'He is and he isn't,' Webby maintains, unable to arrive at a definitive answer or paint White with quite the same brush as his self-absorbed creation, Garlick.[805]

Garlick's well-ordered study groans in self-importance, his bookcases crammed with volumes of his biographies and own books, his walls lined with portraits and photographs of accomplishments and acquaintances of times past. White paints the classic portrait of an artist who is utterly self-absorbed. In these instances, Garlick veers away from White's persona of humility and generosity. They recall those great debates in his writing about intuition and the intellect, about the will to succeed and conquer.

9. Musical Resources I: The 'Torrent-Flow' of Mahler - Berio

Garlick/White identifies the music of Gustav Mahler as the wellspring of the 'torrent flow'. Whilst the wellspring for this 'flow' might indeed be Mahler, the 'torrent' itself springs from a more contemporary source.

In 1968, the Italian composer Luciano Berio composed his *Sinfonia* (1968-9) for the 125th anniversary of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. It was dedicated to the Philharmonic and its then Music Director Leonard Bernstein. For the swirling torrent of the third movement of his *Sinfonia* ('*In ruhig fliessender Bewegung*'), Berio turned to the second movement of Mahler's *Symphony No.2 in c minor ('Resurrection'),* a monumental landmark in White's musical journey.[806] In its own way, *Time* magazine gushed torrentially:

> Berio's *Sinfonia* is a white-hot musical experience that invokes the malaise of the times better than all the sit-ins, beards, beads and clubbings that wrench contemporary life.[807]

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[804] Appendix 1 (79) PW, *The Monkey Puzzle*, Screenplay typescript, 1977, p.69-72. Emphasis added.
[805] Elizabeth Webby, in conversation with Vincent Plush, Sydney, 15 April 2014.
[806] White's long association with Mahler's *Resurrection Symphony* has been documented in previous chapters.
[807] *Time* magazine, author (Michael White?) and date (October 1968?) unknown, but cited in http://avantgardeproject.conus.info/mirror/agp83/Berio.pdf [accessed 19 November 2014].

Into his torrential collage, Berio tossed scraps of other music – Ravel, Debussy, Brahms, Richard Strauss, Boulez and Stockhausen, amongst others. These swirled around texts drawn from the street detritus of New York – newspaper banners, discarded subway tickets and the like, as well as fragments of Joyce, Beckett and street protests of the 1968 revolutionaries. In performance, these texts were sung, declaimed and even screamed by The Swingle Singers.

Luciano Berio and singer Cathy Berberian, the Italian composer's muse and former wife, came to Sydney in late August 1975. They headlined an event called *Music Rostrum,* the contemporary music festival in Sydney devised by Sydney-born pianist Roger Woodward. As already noted, White shared Berio's literary interest in collage and 'stream of consciousness' techniques, but it is disappointing that the personal association remained merely tangential.[808] White went to all Berio's concerts in Sydney in 1975, but the two men did not meet. [809]

Two weeks before *Music Rostrum* commenced, on 14 August 1975, Berio's *Sinfonia* was broadcast on Sydney's fine music station, Radio 2MBS FM. It was possibly the first time it has been heard on Australian radio. White immediately sought out a copy of the LP at Edels record shop. From this time, White may have been gathering thoughts and sources for his script some three years before he sat down to write it.

Although he had encountered this kind of 'stream-of-consciousness' collage technique before in literature – in writers such as Joyce, Miller, Beckett and Gertrude Stein – White had rarely heard this kind of music before. Stockhausen's *Momente* had helped him recreate the social chatter in *The Vivisector.* Now he had another model, one that tapped into his passion for Mahler:

[808] PW was present in the Opera House on 24 August 1975 when a voice-less Cathy Berberian appeared 'performing' Berio's *Thema.* It is disappointing he did not get to meet Berio during the composer's brief visit to Australia, nor is there any comment from White in his correspondence and archives about the several Berio concerts in Sydney that month.

[809] During Berio's visit to Sydney in August 1975, the author was assigned to assist Berio and manage his schedule. As manager of the composer's schedule, he was not aware there was any meeting between White and the visiting composer-conductor. When Berio was not involved with rehearsals or concerts or interviews, he was locked in his Kings Cross hotel room, composing *Fa-Si* (1975) a piece for solo organ with registration assistants. He had neither the time nor the inclination to meet with any creative figures in Sydney.

WILL *(beaming at her):* I have my Mahlerian moments too...

(Dissolve to: Previous eroded creek-bed becoming a tumultuous mountain stream matched by a grand symphonic outburst, Mahlerian massed choirs, at first full-blast, then muting, and gradually fading.)

WILL'S VOICE: When the flow is infinite … everything I've ever experienced … Much that I haven't … and all that I hope to WILL into existence …

(Image of Will at his desk writing madly as the mountain torrent continues flowing over and around him.)

WILL'S VOICE: Because art — like life — if you'll allow me to say so — is an act of almost pure — *(softly)* will.

(In the silent image, Will looks up for a moment from his foolscap as though mightily pleased with the epigram he has just coined. Then he continues writing away as the mountain torrent continues flowing.)

WILL'S VOICE: … and courage … the courage not to side step one's blemishes. And vices … all, ALL must be shown in what amounts to a gigantic orgasm of honesty …

(A violent boiling of the waters as they flow around and over the image of Will at his desk. Lush flowers, such as full-blown roses and peonies are carried onward by the torrent. Then it is as though the contents of a garbage bin have been emptied higher up: dead flowers, the dust-bag from a vacuum cleaner, prawn shells, a chicken's skeleton, disintegrating multi-coloured tissues, tins, plastic containers, rotten apples, a cat's corpse.)

WILL'S VOICE: … the excremental … *(Shot of sewage bubbling on the waters)* … as well as the purity of innocence …

At this point in the screenplay, Will sinks into reverie. As a boy, he and a little girl have been playing in the family garden. White fashions another Mahlerian image:

(Cut to: Little girl of infinite charm sniffing at a posy of spring flowers in an idyllic light, dew still visible on the flowers.)

Here, White gives the little girl the name 'Nelly de Milo'.[810] At the very close of the script, she re-appears, as Will recalls their childhood tryst. At this point though, there is something sinister about their play:

(Their skirts are raised. They are showing an absorbed interest in what is ther . Children drop their skirts and assume very prim expressions…)

[810] A triple-pun: the name 'Nelly de Milo' collates the name of Dame Nellie Melba, the ancient Greek statue of *Venus de Milo* (depicting Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty and love) and 'Milo', the chocolate drink that Australian children drank before bedtime.

WILL'S VOICE**:** … and sensuality …

(Cut to: The Mountain torrent, Will and Nelly de Milo rolling and rolled in it in a sensual embrace)

WILL'S VOICE: … not forgetting love …

(Cut to: The Garlick kitchen, Lalage seated at table holding her head as Will throws sausages and bubble-and-squeak out of the window, then tears glass and crockery from shelves and smashes it on the floor.)

WILL'S VOICE *(cry of pain):* … the wounds … oh, the bruises and the wounds …

As for death, it's anybody's guess. And how we guess! …
On sleepless nights … After diagnosing our own cancer …

(Cut to: Coffin staggering down crematorium ramp. Canned music. Neatly pleated curtains part in a proscenium arch to reveal the coffin. Faint smoke rising out of a fiery glow as coffin sinks ... Cut to: Mountain torrent. Behind it the image of Will writing away at desk.) (pp.73-4)

These directions suggest not only Berio's *Sinfonia* but also Ken Russell's film, *Mahler* (1974). In one memorable scene in that eccentric movie, the composer dreams the nightmare of his own death, pounding on the lid of his coffin as he is carried off to the funeral pyre.

In this short passage, White manages to invoke not only his own creative demons but also those of three figures who were critical influences on him in the 1970s: Berio, Mahler and Ken Russell.[811] More critically still, in this single climactic scene, White consigns his novel *Voss* to the flames.

A little further into the torrent of words and music in *Monkey Puzzle,* Garlick breaks from a further moment of reverie:

WILL'S VOICE : Sometimes the act of writing becomes so obsessive I wonder whether I'm not a novelettist at heart.

(Image of arrested water. Will stopped short. Pen frozen above the foolscap. Dissolve from: Mountain torrent to eroded creek-bed of before. Instead of the pink-pink [sic] *of piano music, the tick-tack of a typewriter is heard.)*

HENRIETTA'S VOICE : Do you sometimes use a typewriter? Or do you only do it with the pen?

[811] According to White, Ken Russell (1927-2011) was 'the only director who could make a film of *Voss*'. This was merely on the basis of his having seen Russell's movie of Frederick Delius, *Song of Summer* (1968). The NFSA blog by the author details the 'connection', such as it was, between White and Russell: http://www.nfsa.gov.au/blog/2011/11/29/ken-russell-and-aussie-film-never-was/ [accessed 18 February 2015]

> WILL *(turning to Henrietta):* Dear lady, you would have dried me up. If I hadn't already dried up. (p.73-4)

Yet again, White was writing from the experience of a writer's self-doubt. As he sat at his desk with his faithful Olivetti typewriter, year in and year out, 'reeling an endless deadly gray,' White confessed that he found words 'frustrating':

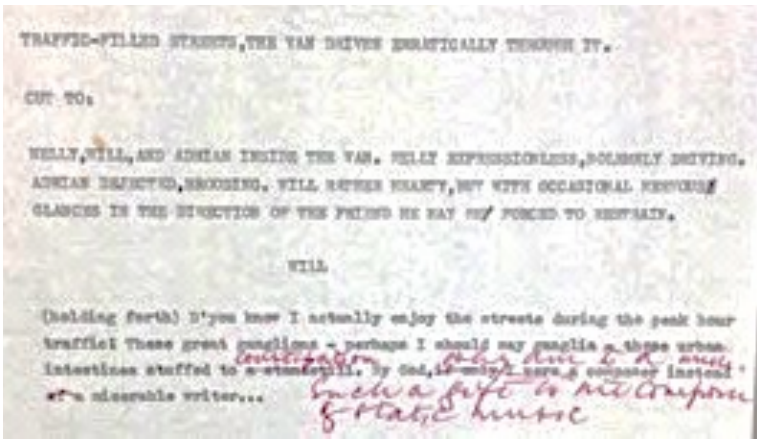
> I try to splurge a bit of colour — perhaps to get a sudden impact — as a painter squeezes a tube. But there isn't the physical relief a painter experiences in the act of painting. I wish I had been a painter or composer. Or I might have been able to solve my problems as a poet.[812]

At this point White and Garlick have merged to become 'the composer *manqué'*.

From time to time, Will Garlick would retreat from the world to the recesses of his darkened study, 'its window cluttered with branches of the Monkey Puzzle [tree]'(p.138). At one point, Garlick's creative musings are interrupted by the din of a hacksaw gnawing into metal: a plumber is at work. In an attempt to block out the rasping noise, Garlick places an LP on his record player, flops into an easy chair and prepares to savour the aural purity of Satie's *Three Pieces in the Shape of a Pear.* Satie can hardly compete with The Plumber. Ultimately, his excruciating cacophony defeats Satie's 'aural austerity'.

There are other moments where Garlick/White appears to relish noise. At one point, Garlick finds himself driving in dense traffic in the Sydney CBD. This time, however, the cacophony excites him.[813] In the second version of the script, there are several important amendments, hand-written in red ink, reproduced here in bold font.

WILL: (*holding forth):*


TRAFFIC-FILLED STREETS,THE VAN DRIVES ERRATICALLY THROUGH IT.

CUT TO:

WILLY,WILL,AND ADRIAN INSIDE THE VAN. WILLY EXPRESSIONLESS,DOLOROUSLY DRIVING. ADRIAN DEJECTED,BROODING. WILL RATHER HEARTY,BUT WITH OCCASIONAL FEVERISH GLANCES IN THE DIRECTION OF THE FRIEND HE MAY BE FORCED TO DESTROY.

WILL

(holding forth) D'you know I actually enjoy the streets during the peak hour traffic! These great ganglions - perhaps I should say ganglia - these urban intestines stuffed to a standstill. By God, if only I were a composer instead of a miserable writer...

D'you know…
I actually enjoy the streets
during the peak hour traffic!
These great ganglions
– perhaps I should say ganglia
these urban intestines
stuffed to [standstill] **constipation.**
Such a gift to the composer of static music.
By God, **why am I a writer?**
[indistinct]
if only I were a composer …
instead of a miserable writer … (p.57)

Illustration 69: from the script of *The Monkey Puzzle*

[812] PW, cited by Thelma Herring and Professor G.A. Wilkes, *Southerly*, pp. 138–139.
[813] Appendix 1 (80), first version of these lines.

Garlick is upset over his inability to translate his emotional responses and intellectual insights into sound/music. The imagery of this extract refers to the physiology of the body – the body of a living, sensate being. The city has become a living creature with its own body and a vibrant life of its own. The streets have become 'great ganglions' which are 'urban intestines stuffed to a standstill'. Small wonder White left all the driving to Lascaris: White did not even possess a driver's licence.

Even so, those lines remain obscure. It is possible that Garlick/White was familiar with such contemporary sounds as music, and that he knew *musique concrète,* and the rhythm-based music of Edgard Varèse or other composers of percussion music. He attended several concerts by the percussion group Synergy which was formed around 1977. (There are no recordings of this music noted in his Inventories.) White certainly knew the music of Stockhausen. He had listened to *Momente* to ramp up the chatter at the AGNSW segment in *The Vivisector.* He also went to a concert of Stockhausen's music in the Cell Block Theatre in 1970. He supported composer David Ahern and his groups, Teletopa and AZ Music, even to the point of bankrolling some of Ahern's concerts and travels.

If he should lose his eyesight, White suggested to Dutton, he could occupy the next decade of his life as 'a composer of static [i.e. electronic] music'.[814] It had no action that could be discerned, nothing to excite the physical imagination; therefore, to White, it was 'static music'.

By late 1977, as he was completing *The Monkey Puzzle*, White's experience of contemporary music had grown considerably. Just as his writing had been influenced by contemporary art some decades earlier, his experience of contemporary music now spilled into his own writing in great washes of sound, with passages inspired by Joyce, Beckett, Stein and the sound-text poet-musicians of the 1960s.

At this time, White's enthusiasm for what was then called 'new music' – post-Webern modernism, in the main – was on the ascendant. By extolling Garlick's desire to replace the misery of writing words with the delight of writing music, White now revealed himself not so much as 'the composer *manqué',* more a kind of composer-in-waiting.

10. Satie and Cage (via Nigel Butterley)

In the late 1950s, the Italian pianist Aldo Ciccolini launched his monumental set of recordings of the complete piano music of Erik Satie. This launched a worldwide surge of interest in this little known composer. From that time, many concert and radio programs

[814] PW, letter to Dutton, 9 September 1974. *Letters,* p.447. This was the fate that befell the Australian expatriate composer David Lumsdaine, who had contacted White about various unrealized projects.

played Ciccolini's recordings of the refreshingly simple, Greek-inspired *Gymnopédies* and the *Gnossiènes.* It was around this time that White's interest in Satie was aroused. [815]

White had come to Satie's music only gradually, through the performanes of his composer friends Nigel Butterley and Ian Farr. As a piano duo, they performed pieces like a four-hand version of *Trois morceaux en forme de poire* – mentioned specifically by Garlick – at concerts in the Cell Block Theatre in East Sydney, and also in the concerts Butterley curated for the Beecroft Music Club on Sydney's upper North Shore.

In October 1959, White invited Butterley to lunch at Dogwoods. 'I don't know what his music is like,' White confided to Glover, 'but [Nigel Butterley] seems very knowledgeable'.[816] Over lunch, they compared common interests in music, especially Satie's piano music. White's estimation of Butterley grew.

From the early 1960s onwards, Butterley's influence on White's expanding tastes in music was critical and cannot be under-estimated. It is possible that White also made his way to the music and theories of John Cage through Butterley. Over the years, Butterley's performances of Cage's *Sonatas and Interludes* for prepared piano became landmarks in the progress of new music in this country.[817] Butterley estimated he must have played the 70-minute cycle of pieces at least two dozen times in towns and cities throughout Australia, 'wherever there was a piano I was allowed to prepare'.[818] On one such occasion, in Sydney in March 1976, Butterley performed the pieces in the presence of Cage himself. The New York-based composer-philosopher-guru was making his first and only visit to Australia as 'pit musician' with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. Also in the audience on that occasion were White and Lascaris. No record of their conversation, if any, survives.

Unlike Cage and Cunningham who kept abreast of developments in technology until the close of their respective and intertwined careers, White was, in essence, a technical Luddite. He could barely tune a radio receiver or place an LP on a turntable. Compact discs did not arrive in Australia until the mid-1980s; by then, White was beyond caring about the quality of the sound of music he was listening to. He used a manual Olivetti typewriter; he could hardly manipulate an electric typewriter or a word processer, which began to come into prominence late in his life. As we have seen, White despised the television and for most of his life would not have one in his house.

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[815] Strangely, White's Inventory of LPs contains no reference to any recordings of Satie; the second Inventory, compiled by Barbara Mobbs, indicates that White owned volume 1 (EMI) and volume 2 (on Angel). The B-Side of Volume 1 (EMI 2C 069-10.780) opens with *Trois morceaux en forme de poire* (1903), and was released in 1966. Volume 2 (American Angel S 36459) was released in 1968.
[816] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 25 October 1959. NLA, papers of DM, MS 9356, Box 47, Folder 4.
[817] In 1993, Butterley's performance of *Sonatas and Interludes* appears on Tall Poppies, TP 025.
[818] Nigel Butterley, email to the author, 6 March 2010.

In *The Monkey Puzzle,* White examined the interior lives of his characters, not their external, visual/visible lives. 'It's true,' Lascaris once confessed to Dutton in a critical admission, 'Patrick can't see things and people, he can only see into them. He cannot recall a landscape, or features or clothes.'[819]

The original titles for 'Buster Trueman's' film – *Tape Worm* and *Holy Writ* – point to the importance of another 'player' in this scenario: the tape recorder. White, the techno-Luddite, had little time or patience for machines or the people who used them. In one scene in *The Monkey Puzzle,* Birdsell and Garlick do battle with an errant tape recorder. They try to thread the tape through its heads. Hetty constantly worries that the machine is not recording their conversation; she admits she 'once let Xavier Herbert talk out the whole side of a tape without realizing I hadn't switched it on' (p.8).[820] At another point, she frets she may not have enough tape. Moments such as these enable the film to deploy the device of 'voice-overs', with 'ironic contrasts between what [Will] says and what would have been seen on screen'.[821]

The tape recorder makes a cameo but critical appearance in *Willy Wagtails by Moonlight;* this is one of the collection of short stories published as *The Burnt Ones* (1964). In this short story, two couples, the Wheelers and the Mackenzies, settle down for a night of listening to tapes of birdsongs recorded by Arch Mackenzie.[822] 'Went up to Kurrajong on Sunday, and got the bellbirds,' Arch enthuses. 'I'll play you the lyrebird too. That was Mount Wilson'.[823] (This was territory White knew well, the blissful scene of childhood holidays.) The 'horrifying machine' begins to misbehave; first, it 'shuffles', then eventually it yields the song of the wagtail.

> 'There is nothing purer,' Nora [Mackenzie] said, 'than the song of a wagtail. Excepting Schubert,' she added, 'some of Schubert'.[824]

Having fulfilled its duty, the tape 'discovered silence'.



Illustration 70: The manual for the tape recorder, purchased August 1957, used by Oral Historian Hazel de Berg (aka Hettie Birdsell), NLA, Oral History and Folklore Collection.

[819] Manoly Lascaris, cited by Dutton, *Out in the Open,* p. 392
[820] Xavier Herbert was high on White's 'enemies-list'.
[821] Webby and Harris, *Patrick White and Film,* p. 1.
[822] Possibly a parody of the name of Arch McKirdy (1924-2013). When he retired from his late night ABC radio programme *Relax with me* in December 1972, after 2,403 programmes, McKirdy had the largest listening audience of any radio presenter in Australia.
[823] PW, *Willy Wagtails by Moonlight,* in *Patrick White: Selected Writings,* ed. Alan Lawson. St Lucia, QLD: University of Queensland Press, 1994. p. 139.
[824] PW, *Wagtails,* p. 144.

11. *Moments musicaux I: Maman*

More than any other form of music, White drew inspiration from vaudeville and music hall. These vernacular forms of popular music set the tone for his novels and plays. Even as a schoolboy, White was creating plays, his enthusiasm fuelled by trips to the theatre, especially musical comedies where his 'vocation came closest to revealing itself …':

> … in the early bubblings of sexuality, and expeditions through the streets observing, always observing. I was happiest visiting elderly literate women, bookshops [and] the smell of books, the feel of them, the titles I read, intoxicated, and most of all, during the hours I spent at 'the pitchers,' either at [Kings] Cross or down George Street.[825]

Ruth White did not approve of what the lower classes called 'the pitchers'. Films hurt the eyes, she maintained; besides, cinemas existed mainly to provide popular entertainment for the *hoi poloi,* not for the erudite classes of Elizabeth Bay. For all this, she did not seem to object to her son going to the cinema, nor, in the days before screen censorship or restricted classifications, did she seem to care what he saw on the silver screen. Perhaps, she reasoned, her 'peculiar son could come to [no] serious harm at the cinema'. As Webby has pointed out, given 'their often antagonistic relationship', the fact that Ruth White 'could not take the cinema seriously' may well have increased its attraction and value for her son.[826]

From her vantage point in Lulworth, Ruth White relished the buzz of the social calendar which rallied around Wartime relief efforts. Well-to-do ladies presented *soirées* in their expansive homes. (Maie Casey would later call such ladies 'the pink poodles'.[827]) Many of their activities revolved around the Harbourside mansions of Ruth's great chum Ethel Kelly.[828]

In May 1918 Mrs Kelly mustered her friends for a project to benefit the Red Cross War Drive: a silent film, *Cupid Camouflaged* was filmed in the gardens of Yaralla in Concord West. It is highly likely that the six-year-old Paddy White was in the audience in the Theatre Royal on 31 May 1918 to see Mrs Kelly's friends in this short film. Among the bevvy of society extras was Ruth White. Having seen his mother on film – albeit an amateur-made, early silent film – White may have seen another future for himself as a player in this new medium of film. If he could not act before the cameras, or call the shots behind the cameras, he might at least write scripts for a medium that was to become a passion, even an obsession for his old age: film.

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[825] PW, *Flaws*, pp. 21-22.
[826] Webby and Harris, *Patrick White,* p. 1.
[827] Marr, *Life,* p. 490.
[828] As noted earlier, Ethel Kelly was married to Thomas Herbert Kelly (1878-1918). 'THK' had made his fortune in metals and was an amateur violinist and music-lover. After his death, Ethel donated his considerable library to the University of Sydney,



Illustration 71: Cupid Camouflaged (1918)
directed by Alfred Rolfe or P.J.Ramster (?), Lacey Percival, cinematography.
Released 31 May 1918. Cast including Mrs. T.H. Kelly Mrs Victor [Ruth] White.
https://canadabayconnections.wordpress.com/2013/08/30/cupid-camouflaged/
[accessed 5 May 2015]

12. *Moments musicaux II*:
from Vaudeville to 'The Tiv' and Back.

In one of his reveries, Will Garlick is transported back to a show he and Lalage attended some years earlier at the Tivoli – '*Glow-worms on Broadway* – or some-such nonsense'.As he fiddles with her ear, her head droops on his shoulder. Just like old times, they agree. With music swooning from the orchestra pit, Will coos to his wife, 'We were happy then. Yes – I think we were happy' (p. 29). Then follows a 'spectacular revue'. In pure escapism, White revisits his favourite haunt, a theatre in the West End in the 1930s:

> Showgirls descending stairs in elaborate costumes, some in rose-petals, others in sequins, or feathers, or shining armor, all with appropriate headdresses (p. 29).

At this point, White begins to hear music. His screen directions suggest music 'of the same level' as *A Pretty Girl is like a Melody* or, more telling still, *You Stepped Out of a Dream.* This latter song, with lyrics by Gus Kahn to a syrupy tune by Nacio Herb Brown, was the centrepiece of the 1941 musical *Ziegfield Girl*, in which Tony Martin swoons at an image of screen goddess Lana Turner gliding down a staircase. It is a recollection of White's post-War experiences. [829]

[829] *Flaws,* p. 111.



Illustration 72: A scene from *Ziegfield Girl* (1941)
There is a movie clip at
http://www.tcm.com/mediaroom/video/661244/Ziegfeld-Girl-Movie-Clip-You-Stepped-Out-Of-A-Dream.html
Accessed 5 October 2016.

For all its froth and bubble, the song conceals a more sinister scenario. During the War, White spent a year in Palestine. Night after night, a cabaret 'churned into action' under the windows of the hotel where he had been billetted. On other evenings, at another hotel, an artiste with the unlikely stage-name of Berlin, seduced her khaki-clad audience with her version of *You Stepped out of a Dream …*

> … the dream in which we were all walking – of true love, peace, permanence, an Israel visualized by all the Jews, from the tragic European forced settlers … to the tough new race of *sabras* born in the land of their forefathers.[830]

A little further along in the closing pages of the script, White resurrects trysts between Garlick and that mysterious former flame, Nelly de Milo. At this point he draws on the lubricious memories of those cabarets in Haifa, along with the music halls and 'the Tiv' in the West End:

> *Practically naked showgirl as She-Devil rises backstage in clouds of smoke. Mashers turn with lustful expressions, prepared to pounce on her. She-Devil warns them back, while summoning her satellites … Chorus Girls in scarlet tights with gold pitchforks burst on from either side. After performing a brief routine, the minor Devils proceed to fork the revelers into hell through an opening in the stage, smoke and flames issuing as they descend. Sounds of applause from audience*. (p.30)

[830] PW, *Flaws,* p. 111-2. Such sentiments advocating a Jewish homeland spurred the writing of *Riders in the Chariot* (1960).

This sequence collates a number of moments in Sydney theatre White may have experienced over three decades of theatre-going in 'Tinseltown': the gaudy, show-girls of gay clubs like *Les Girls* and *Capriccios* in Kings Cross, many established by gangsters; early Jim Sharman productions such as *Hair* (1969) and *The Rocky Horror Show* (1973); the opera designs and productions of Desmond Digby; and the designs of Kristian Frederikson for early SDC productions dance-theatre pieces like *Poppy* (1977). Indeed, Graeme Murphy created that very 'Tiv' scene in his 'dance musical' piece *Tivoli* (2000)

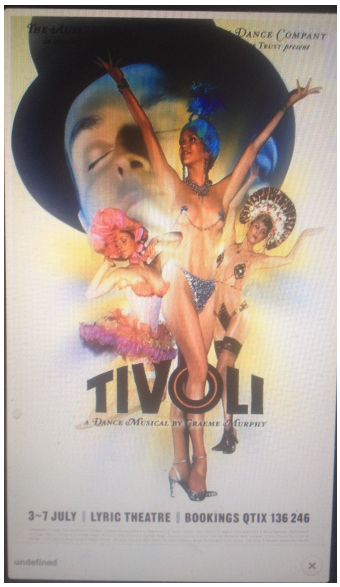


Illustration 73: Kristian Frederickson (1940-2005)
Poster design by for *Tivoi,* joint production by Graeme Murphy for The Australian Ballet & the Sydney Dance Company, 2000.
http://graememurphy.com/wordpress/?p=966
[accessed 22 November 2015]

> *Curtains part revealing a spectacular scena on stage. The singer is now heard singing the words of 'Life is just a bowl of cherries'. On stage an enormous glass bowl (Lalique) filled with coloured balloons is revolving. Girls emboss the sides of the bowl, naked except for their diamante G-strings … Music damped slightly.*

WILL'S VOICE: … Nelly, alas, was only a cherry …

> *For an instant, the bowl's revolutions are halted and a spot picks out Nelly de Milo: pretty face, blonde hair, small but voluptuous breasts of a cuddlesome dolly* (p.32).

In the closing moments of *The Monkey Puzzle,* White revisits that trivial little song. In a shaky truce, Will and Lalage stand on their front porch 'in the shadow of the monkey tree … their attitude and moist-eyed expressions freeze into those of guilty, doubt-ridden child-adults', those 'Kidults' (p.48).[831] They wave goodbye to Hetty and her tape-recorder, both of which have resurrected so many *geists* in Will's life.

[831] PW, *Kidults* (1986) was another short (unproduced) film script. In it White wrote satirized the lives of a young suburban Australian couple who go to their local Hoyts cinema to see a version of *King Kong.* Before the feature, they see a trailer for 'a 19th century soap opera,' a parody of *My Brilliant Career,* Gillian Armstrong's 1979 film based on the 1901 novel by Miles Franklin.This was one of the Australian films set in colonial periods which White loathed.

Mission accomplished, Hetty drives back into the city. The camera follows her journey home, the car radio playing a familiar tune. White has given 'the last word' of his screenplay to the lines of that vacuous tune, confected to lift people from their Depression-era blues:[832] Slowly, Garlick's memory returns to a song routine so banal he can barely bring himself to say its title aloud:

> Life is just a bowl of cherries
> Don't take it serious, it's too mysterious
> You work, you save, you worry so
> But you can't take your dough when you go, go, go …

The audience first heard *Life is just a Bowl of Cherries* over the opening titles of Buster Trueman's 'major motion picture' *Holy Writ.* Now it reappears, like an earworm, under the closing titles of *The Monkey Puzzle*. White does not need to say any more about Sydney's film society; it's all in the lyrics of that feel-good American show tune.

When White showed Sharman the script of *The Monkey Puzzle,* the director decided to pass on it, even though he did agree to deliver it to Humphries. (As Webby has noted, Sharman seemed more interesting in directing another new screenplay from White, *Last Words*.) [833] To this date, it has not been picked up by the younger generation of directors – people like Neil Armfield, Benedict Andrews and others, who have brought White's stage plays to younger generations and audiences. They have left it to languish 'in the bottom drawer'.

Armfield has taken up Sharman's directorial baton as the leading contemporary exponent of White's plays. In September 2012, in a tribute to celebrate White's centenary, Armfield observed that the writer sometimes threw caution to the wind. Especially in his later years, White tended to 'let his hair down'. It was often left to Sharman – the surrogate son, as Marr has characterised the director – to tidy things up.

It was Sharman who dissuaded White from releasing the ghoulish photos which were intended to accompany the publication of *Memories of Many in One.* It was Sharman who persuaded White to change White's projected title for his final play *The Budgiewank Experiment* to the more classically refined *Shepherd on the Rocks* (1987).

These late film scripts reveal that,from time to time Patrick White did indeed 'let his hair down'. Quite late in life, he had nothing to lose. Of all his excursions onto the stage or screen, *The Monkey Puzzle* is his most egregious offence against 'good taste' and thereby least likely to be produced. Perhaps this is the reason why members of White's inner circle – Mobbs and Sharman, in particular – have not wished to see it produced.[834] Perhaps they

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[832] *Life Is Just a Bowl of Cherries* was published in 1931. Ethel Merman first introduced this Ray Henderson/Buddy DeSylva/Lew Brown number song in George White's *Scandals of 1931.* A version sung by Rudy Vallee – the best man at Percy Grainger's wedding in the Hollywood Bowl - spent five weeks in the top 10 music charts.

[833] Film historian Elizabeth Webby, in conversation with Vincent Plush, Sydney, 14 April 2015. White himself reported to David Marr that Sharman was more interested in directing a film version of *The Twyborn Affair* but 'needed to hurry up because the actor he had in mind was growing up'.

[834] Barbara Mobbs, as White's principal doorkeeper, has been reluctant to allow complete publication and propagation of *The Monkey Puzzle* script. Mobbs's attitude, according to Elizabeth Webby, is

feared its consequences on other White projects. To White, it did not matter how the Australian public might respond to seeing its leading novelist and only Nobel literary laureate wallowing in what at times seemed to descend to the level of sophomoric entertainment. Nor would he have cared what Ruth White might have thought. Perhaps that was the point: White may have been sounding yet another note of revolt against the 'good taste' of his mother and his Eastern suburbs upbringing.

Film was potentially a *risqué* medium in which White could take sanctuary from good taste. He could be as vulgar as he liked, reflecting what Humphries called the author's scorn for 'the transcendental vulgarity of Australian life'. At the same time, Humphries reminded White's readers that White himself figures as a central – if silent and shadowy – character in all his books, plays and screen plays. They were 'always about him'.[835]

15. Summary

Like so many other film projects, *The Monkey Puzzle* was destined not to appear on the screen for several reasons: no financial backing, the absence of its intended leading man, and the intransigence of a writer whose screenplays were increasingly irrelevant to the film community and contemporary box office spread-sheets. The story of *The Monkey Puzzle* remains incomplete until such time as it appears as a film or in some other form. This 'comedy for the screen' was White's first major script written especially for the seductive medium of film. This chapter has highlighted the role of music in framing this script and, by extension, has focussed on music's role in his writing generally.

The Monkey Puzzle is barely known to scholars and thespians, or theatrical people of any stripe. To this point, its scripts have remained largely hidden in archives in Canberra. There are some who would prefer to see them remain there, undisturbed.

In terms of interrogating the role of music in the writing and life of Patrick White, *The Monkey Puzzle* is a critical text. It reveals – foreground and background – the 65-year-old author's true tastes in music in mature, later life. These encompass a wide gamut from Mahler to Music Hall, from Satie to Stockhausen. In *The Monkey Puzzle*, White assembled this unlikely collection of composers and musical styles in the one opus, a film script yet to be seen or read by most of his readership. The next chapter, the Conclusion, will draw together the strands of this study.

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uncompromising: 'it never appeared outside [White's home in] Centennial Park, and it never should.' Partly through her intervention, though, the copies of the script were deposited in the collections of two national institutions.

[835] Barry Humphries, *Quadrant*, Vol.37 no.4, April 1993, p. 56.

Chapter Eight:

Conclusion

This study has explored Patrick White's knowledge and use of music. It has investigated how he derived his experience of music and how his tastes in music developed and changed throughout his life. It has also demonstrated how specific composers and compositions influenced his writing and how he acknowledged that influence, if at all.

The study has also examined how White used music in his own work. It has brought to light how music appeared or sounded not just in his literary creations, but also how it figured in those periods of contemplation, research and planning leading into the writing process.

Rather than attempt a detailed musico-literary analysis of White's entire oeuvre – a prospect as daunting as it is unwieldy – this study has focused on four key works. These were chosen as examples of his approach, as his career and experience of music grew and as it changed focus from the 19th century symphonic repertoire through to music composed by his contemporaries, many from Australia.

Throughout his writing career, White turned to music with two purposes in mind. He could use it to set a general mood or tone. He called this a 'logical' process, but it may be better understood as a narrative or 'surface' presence. It could also suggest formal procedures for building his own creations. In such instances, music appears on a more structural level, usually in the background. (White never allowed this veil to drop: he kept his readers guessing.) This provided White with a technical framework for his work or for fleshing out specific characters or situations.

In drawing together the threads of this study, it is possible to make several general observations:

1. There are elements of music in every novel, play and poem by Patrick White.

2. Only in a few instances did White directly identify the music encapsulated in his writing.

3. Despite the *seigneurial* tone of many of his pronouncements about music, White remained essentially a non-professional. His love of music was that of a true *amateur.* In other words, he occasionally made mistakes with respect to musical terms. These mistakes could have been avoided, had he consulted his musicians friends.

4. Although his love of music and a select roster of musicians was sincere, White felt somewhat uncomfortable around musicians. Being the true *amateur,* he realized he could not share the depths of insights and experiences of a true musician in a discussion about

music. 'I have always found it difficult to talk to musicians,' he wrote in 1981. 'A musician is his music.'[836]

5. Music remained a retreat, an antidote to the rigours of writing. Here, the observation of Aldous Huxley is worth recalling once again: 'When the inexpressible had to be expressed, Shakespeare laid down his pen and called for music.'[837]

6. Throughout his life, White yearned to be many things, almost anything other than a writer. Occasionally, he fantasized about being a conductor or a singer and even, on several occasions, to be a composer. 'Composers and musicians come closer to the presence of God,' he confided to the Swedish scholar Ingmar Björkstén. 'It is the writer who deals in stubborn, colourless words who is always stumbling and falling.'[838]

   In the Introduction to this study, the issue of fragmentation was discussed. Riddled by self-doubt and loathing, White declared himself to be 'a monster'. More than that – as he anticipated the response to David Marr's biography, which he had read and which he sanctioned shortly before he died – he was 'the monster of all time'.[839]

   Reviewing the course of his life and the roll call of his creations, it is feasible to suggest that White viewed music as a way to keep that monster in check – 'Music hath charms …'.[840] Music also enabled him to explain the 'monster' to himself in intently personal, interior ways that did not involve the interpretation or intervention of others. In White's view, music – that art without words – did not need explanation or confession; it was simply there, to be resourced, savoured or spurned as the mood required.

   Like the sounds of Orpheus's lyre, music drew the writer deeper and further into his imagination and soul. It would be a cliché to suggest that it enabled him to embrace what might be called his 'inner demons' but it certainly illuminated aspects of his character, that extraordinary admixture of venomous spleen and unbridled generosity. With Almeria in Congreve's play, White might well have wondered, 'Why am I not at Peace?'[841]

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[836] PW, *Flaws,* p. 152.
[837] Aldous Huxley (1894-1963), *The Rest is Silence,* see *Music at Night and Other Essays,* London: Chatto & Windus, 1931. p. 137.
[838] PW, letter to Ingmar Björkstén, 21 January 1973. Marr, *Life*, p. 410.
[839] PW, letter to David Marr, 20 August 1990. Marr, *Letters,* p. 651.
[840] William Congreve (1670-1729), *The Mourning Bride* (1697). Congreve's much-quoted maxim, 'Musick has charms to soothe the savage breast' is often mis-quoted as 'Music hath charms to soothe the savage beast'. No doubt, White would have enjoyed this common misquotation.
[841] Congreve, *The Mourning Bride*. Act I, scene 1: Almera's speech.

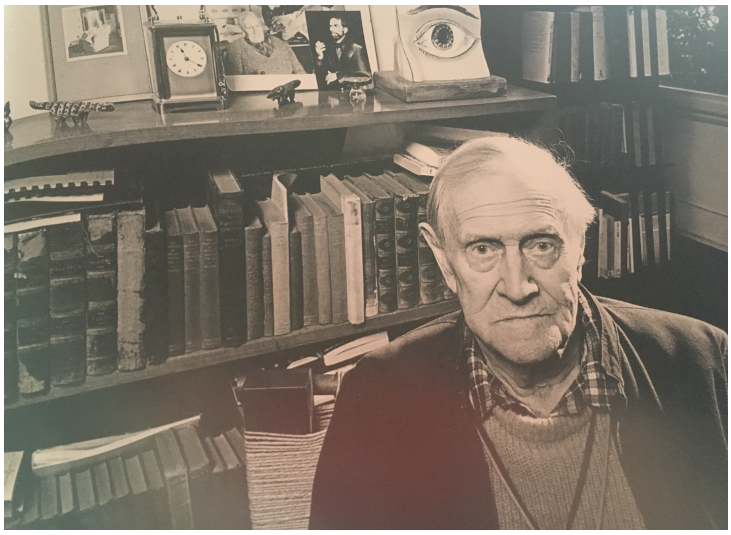


Illustration 74 : PW in the living room at home in Centennial Park, Sydney, 1988.
Photograph by William Yang, *The Late Years,* Sydney: Macmillan, 1995. P. 77.
By kind permission of William Yang.
Note the photograph of Geoffrey Chard as Voss on the mantelpiece
behind PW's right shoulder.

Patrick White's creative career as a writer spans the half-century from, roughly, 1935 to 1985. During that lifespan, his output was considerable, in a measured kind of way. It was uniquely impressive not just in terms of its scope and diversity, but also in the worldwide interest it aroused, the critical and public response it generated, the laurels accorded to it and the influence it exerted on other writers and, of course, the deep pleasure it continues to give to many dogged readers around the world. 'I find it endlessly fascinating,' David Malouf has said, 'and will always remain so'.[842]

This study has illustrated that White's work contains countless direct references to music, as well as ample evidence of music concealed or overt, teasing and playing in the background. 'Along with art,' one of his associates observed recently, 'music was his greatest love, and source of inspiration and calm'.[843]

This study has not just brought to light but also has 'raised the volume' on music in the life and work of Australia's most celebrated writer. Only when the role of music in his work is acknowledged will the full genius of his writing be manifest.

[842] David Malouf, in conversation with the author, Sydney, 15 April 2015.
[843] Kim Williams, himself a former composer and now a semi-retired media executive, in conversation with the author, Adelaide, 13 August 2016.

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Appendix 1:

Supplementary Texts

Chapter 1: Music in the Life of Patrick White

1. Without losing her native innocence, she did acquire quite a lot as she junketed up the Nile and across the Aegean, gyrating in Budapest, Vienna, Paris and London, always London, something of this determination must have transferred itself to the embryo in her restless womb…[All this] resulted in [my being able to recite] the European capitals at Mummy's bedside when I burst in early to disturb her sleep. There were the French irregular verbs too, but that was later.[844]

2. It was Waldo who learned to play, with care, from Miss Olive Fischer of Barranugli, *The Raindrop Prelude, The Turkish Rondo,* and *Für Eliza*. [White's misnaming of Beethoven's most famous piece for solo piano *Für Elise* must be deliberate. 'Eliza' would have been forefront in his mind too, as he approached his version of the Eliza Fraser story in *A Fringe of Leaves,* published as a novel in 1976.] … But Mother was determined Arthur [her other son] should be a genius. She sat beside him remembering all that she had learnt – sometimes of an evening she would flop down on that hard stool and play the Paderewski minuet, crossing her wrists at the moment they were waiting for – but sat beside Arthur stiff and stern to supervise his scales. Arthur's hands became ungovernable then. He could manage the angular scales, though of course he could hear, he could *see* in advance the splotches of sound. If he could only have moulded music like he knew how to work butter and knead the dough. Or add up the notes until they made a musical whole. He couldn't. And Mother gave up.[845]

3. Sometimes I get fed up to the teeth here in the country, where the type of Australian one encounters is the most uninspiring, unintelligent, deadening specimen to be found on earth. Although you will meet many charming people here, I detest the average Australian who is little more than a cheap imitation of the American.

   There is quite a lot of amusement to be found in life in Sydney, but it is a rattling, jangling affair from morn till night. It makes one long for London, and the smooth, gliding feeling which it has. I haven't been to a show for ages, not a real show with professional West End finish. The only serious work [here] is done by amateur theatres where you can see O'Neill, Tchekov (sic), Strindberg, and other good stuff credibly acted. But they haven't the time, nor the money, nor the public, to do anything on a large scale. The professional stage is

[844] PW, *Flaws,* p. 9.
[845] PW, *The Solid Mandala.* [London, Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1966]. Hammondsmith, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1969. pp. 231-2.

peopled by provincial companies in musical comedy and American farce, things which induce one to stay at home.[846]

4. I've just come across a good remark by Philip Larkin a propos invitations to appear at seminars and move in as 'poet in residence'. "I don't want to go around pretending to be myself." That is how I feel when dreary academics and intense thesis writers want me to discuss my 'life and work'. Ugh![847]

5. White has evolved a highly compressed language in which verbal art worked out to the last detail and constantly aiming for a maximum of expressive effect … Here beauty and truth are closely allied or completely fused together: a beauty radiating light and life, evoking the poetry inherent in things, in nature and in all manner of phenomena, and truth which exposes and liberates … Patrick White is a social critic mainly through his depiction of human beings … a bold psychological explorer, [with] ideological views of life or mystical convictions … His relationship to himself, like his relationship to his fellow beings, is complex and full of contradictions … He is constantly assailed by doubts concerning the capacity of thought and art, even though he is indefatigable in his high-minded pursuit of both.[848]

6. Of course, I suppose also I have not got the technical flair for a play. And that does rankle. Particularly as I know when someone else has done something wrong. I still feel sometimes I would like to pull it off, just once, to show myself, and perhaps your letter has pandered to that ambition![849]

7. It gave many people the shock of their lives, and liberated many more after shocking them. One forgets really that the average Australian has seen so little. He can have heard quite a lot and read quite a lot, but on the visual side, he is a complacent Victorian.[850]

8. When White first began writing of this social territory, his readers shared his savage delight as he slashed his way through the values, the speech patterns, the affections and affectations of mid-suburban Australia. The consensus is that he was wickedly accurate. He had the mannerisms down pat (pat is good), and he knew just how to expose the public vulgarities. (They) were easy game … What he really understood was the language – the inside implications, the precise meaning of innuendo. He had discovered the subtleties of the demotic, he knew the vulnerable spots, and long before anyone else, he recognized the

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[846] PW, letter to Jean Scott Rogers, 16 March 1931 [from Bolano, Adamimby, via Cooma, NSW]. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356, Box 47. This is one of the earliest surviving letters in the White/Marr archives.
[847] PW, letter to Randolph Stow, 22 December 1979, cited in Suzanne Falkiner, *Mick: A life of Randolph Stow*. Crawley, WA: University of Western Australia Press, 2016, p. 613.
[848] Nobel Prize, citation from the Presentation Speech by Artur Lundkvist, President of the Swedish Academy, Stockholm, 10 December 1973. *Nobel Lectures, Literature 1968-1980*, Tore Frängsmyr and Sture Allén (eds.), Singapore: World Scientific Publishing Co., 1993 http://archivalclassic.sl.nsw.gov.au/album/albumView.aspx?acmsID=421658&itemID=852956 [accessed 1 May 2014].
[849] PW, letter to Keith Michell, 5 January 1957. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.
[850] PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 1 May 1953. Marr, *Letters,* pp. 90-91.

prevalence of the veiled threat, the latent violence within the community. He had an exact ear for idiom, but more than that, he understood the true function of gossip in a social group, the definitions that small talk established.[851]

9. Fritz was a quiet man, but 'very alert, sensitive and easily hurt. When roused, Fritz loved to argue and was a stubborn opponent. [His house was] an outpost of Europe where all the rules of polite Australian conversation were flouted, the crowd at the Kriegers talked religion, politics and money.[852]

10. Last time in Sydney I went looking at radios-cum-hifi, but found nothing satisfactory. One of the great drawbacks is that the shop which sells the machines normally only has about three worn-out records of a kind we would not play … The best they could produce was a record of brass and another thing called *Baton and Bows*? [PW probably meant Dinah Shore's version of the popular 1947 song *Buttons and Bows*.] Even if I had been prepared to spend that amount of money, I did not like what I had heard, although it may have been our record; tone seemed more unpleasant. A Phillips machine for 195 guineas, less obnoxiously 'antique', did not seem a great advance in tone, although once again it may have been our record, a tinny worn-out Beethoven Sonatas with Kempff playing. So I don't know what to do. Have you any ideas? [853]

11. Have just got a very interesting and fanciful piece by Hindemith for piano, brass and harps [Paul Hindemith, *Konzertmusik.Op.49* (1930)]. Also a recording of piano-violin music with one each of Hindemith, Stravinsky and Bartók. Rosalyn Tureck playing Bach *Partitas* is touchingly perfect. And I now have the [Bach] *B Minor Mass* conducted by Karajan, with Schwarzkopff and a team of singers who make this perhaps the peak of music. So how can one really listen to Malko and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra at its lowest ebb? [854]

12. Patrick seemed to feel that, as a relative youngster, I needed detailed guidance in how to keep my awareness of the world beyond music in order. He took to ringing me at fairly regular intervals at 7.30 in the morning. I would be woken from sleep (usually after a late night filing a review [for the *SMH*]) and would try to sound reasonably alert. Then followed a full half-hour of intellectual and artistic guidance: which films I should see, which books I should read, which theatre performances I should attend, and so on. As an admirer of the vision behind his books I listened with the greatest respect and in virtual silence. Whenever I tried to make a small comment Patrick would plough on determinedly with his next recommendation or instruction. Then, when he considered his task was complete, he would ring off with the briefest of farewells, leaving me in a state of numbed

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[851] Adrian Mitchell, *Eventually, White's Language: Words and More than Words.* See *Patrick White: A Critical Symposium.* Flinders University, Adelaide: Centre for Research in the New Literature in English, 1978, p. 14.
[852] Marr, *Life*, p. 293.
[853] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 8 September 1958. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.
[854] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 29 July 1959. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356.

satiety while recognising that his impulse was a mixture of opinionated overlordship and generosity.[855]

13. The Elizabethan Theatre Trust has asked me to consider writing the libretto for an opera to open the Sydney Opera House. I have an idea [to adapt *The Fringe of Leaves*] but it will depend on whether I can accept the composer. There are some truly dreadful ones at large.[856]

14. If I bring up [*Pelléas*] I am told by the experts it was something which happened at a certain point in music, and we have gone on irrevocably from there. They could well be right. I feel that opera today, and in Australia, should develop more out of the idiom and mentality of a Berg, and of course the Mrs Fraser story does not connect up with that. I think perhaps in the end we must hope for somebody who will connect up with us and it and the present; it might be done as one isolated work.[857]

15. On Saturday night… we were unwise enough to let ourselves in for a musical evening given by the Contemporary Music Society. We once went to a very interesting concert of theirs, and I naturally thought the party might be interesting too, that we might have met some of the young musicians who performed on that occasion. But you have never seen such a gathering. It was held at the house of … an old girl [dressed] in the oriental style whom one often sees at concerts. She is, I think, a Jewess from here, with a bird's-nest of Japanese hair, and a little mouth straight from the prints. She has an old husband whom she always calls 'Daddy', a very small, very Central European Jew… The company was of the strangest: mostly assimilated Jews, with a few of a very woolly order, [John] Antill the composer, and, of course, the Walter Bunnings. [Though they were almost exact contemporaries, John Antill (1904-1986) and White seem to have had no association, according to Antill's daughter, Jill Antill-Rose. Walter Bunning (1912-1977) was the eminent architect and town planner, most famous for his design of the NLA (1968), the first great civic building to be erected along Lake Burley Griffin.]

… Almost nobody appeared the least bit interested in music. Least of all the patroness [who didn't] seem to have a clue. In trying to make conversation, I remarked that the Musica Viva were consistently disappointing in that, every season, the best quartets withdraw at the last moment. To which [she] replied: 'Are they paid artists, dear?'

Professor Peart made rather a rambly introductory speech before playing a record of an American composer, Carter Ellis or Ellis Carter. [It was] not conspicuously contemporary, [a] very boring piano sonata which did not please the senses in spite of the triangular teak stools on which we were sitting. [The *First Piano Sonata* (1946) by Elliott Carter (1908-2012) would later become an important part of the early repertoire of Carl Vine.] … We

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[855] Roger Covell, email to the author, 22 December 2015.
[856] PW, letter to Ben Huebsch, 17 February 1963, *Letters*, p. 219.
[857] PW, letter to Sidney Nolan, 14 May 1964. Marr, *Letters,* pp. 255-6.

crept away after the supper, although we had been promised some 'much more disruptive music' by Professor Peart. [858]

Chapter 2: Music in the Work of Patrick White

16. As Palfreyman is by innocence and instinct the essential Christian, I can see his death depicted after Greco's *Burial of the Conte de Orgaz*, though in the Sidney Nolan manner, with the members of the expedition lifting up his body, and instead of Greco's heavenly choirs, the detached blacks standing in judgment on a cloud of mist in the background.[859]

17. He had gone into a church, he did not know why, it was an ordinary church …The organ was playing a Bach fugue. He knew it was Bach because he had picked out bits of Bach on the piano at home. And then he was at home again, but not at home, it was in the church in the neighbourhood of the Luxembourg, it was in France, with old German Bach streaming out of the organ loft, and the War had stopped, and he was losing his breath, he was losing …

Then he sat very still. He supposed he was breathing. He did not know. But he knew he was crying. He did not care if he cried; there was nothing wrong with this sort of crying and nobody would see. The music came rushing out of the loft, unfurling banners of sound. You could touch it. You could feel it. You could feel stillness and music all at once. You were at once floating and stationary, in time, all time, and space, without barrier, passing with a fresher knowledge of the tangible to a point where this dissolved, became the spiritual.

The organ never stopped playing … She had never heard anything like this, and was at last frightened to accept what she was experiencing. The organ lashed together the bars of music until there was a whole shining scaffolding of sound. And always the golden ladders rose, extended and extended, as if to reach the window of a fire. But there was no fire, only bliss, surging and rising, as she herself climbed upon the heavenly scaffolding and placed still other ladders, to reach higher. Her courage failed before the summit … For an instant she floated in the cloud of indecision, soothed by the infinitely kind fingers. So, in the end, when the organ stopped, she was dazed and sweating.[860]

18. I don't know anything like music. I suppose music affects people in all sorts of ways. I know more people like it as a game. For me, I'm one of the ones who need music because of its ability to make me quiet. You see, I don't want to loathe people, to cause injuries, plan revenges – that would be hard enough. And I don't want to be haunted by the past, to have it in me like one sustained uninterrupted nightmare … All the time, I shout in pain

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[858] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 14 March 1960. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 9356
[859] PW, letter to Sidney Nolan, 7 March 1957. Marr, *Letters,* p. 112.
[860] PW, *Riders in the Chariot,* [London: Eyre & Spottieswood, 1961] Hammondsmith: Penguin Modern Classics, 1974. Fourth edition, p. 236.

when it lifts me up, as it does from time to time when I'm tormented or bothered by things which do not trouble others.[861]

19. There was a purpose, a stability in Bach that translated itself to your hands, as you tied pyjama strings, as you opened the bed. There was a purpose, caught from the music, even in the personal mistake. He did not regret these. Lying in bed, there was perhaps even an ultimate pattern, woven partly from mistakes.[862]

20. Of course, I do not mind if I cannot 'understand' music, poetry, novels, paintings, provided I am able to react to them. Your attitude to the Bach *Partitas*, for instance, is quite incomprehensible to me. It made me feel you should take a course in Zen Buddhism. That, I am sure, is the right approach, unless one wants to play surgeon with the arts.[863]

21. Clapclop. Clipclap. Clappyclap.
Goodgod heney erheard inall.
Deaf bald Pat brought pad knife took up.
A moonlight nightcall; far: far.
I feel so sad. P.S. So lonely blooming.
Listen!
The spiked and winding cold seahorn. Have you the?
Each and for other plash and silent roar.
Pearls: when she. Liszt's rhapsodies. Hissss.
You don't?
Did not: no, no: believe: Lidlyd. With a cock with a carra.
Black.
Deepsoundind. Do, Ben, do.
Wait while you wait. Hee hee. Wait while you hee.
But wait!
Low in the dark middle earth. Embedded ore.
Nameinedamine. All gone. All fallen.
Tiny, her tremulous fernfolils of maidenhair.
Amen! He gnashed in fury.
Fro. To. Fro. A baton cool protruding.
Bronzelydia by Minagold.
By bronze, by gold, in oceangreen of shadow. Bloom. Old Bloom. [864]

22. Presently, Waldo asked Dulcie: 'Don't you still play the piano?'

'Yes,' she answered guiltily.

'Can you play us the *Moonlight Sonata*?'

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[861] Manning Clark, undated and unpublished notes under 'Short Stories'. NLA, Papers of Manning Clark, MS 7550, Box 160, 19/1.
[862] PW, *The Living and the Dead,* p. 82.
[863] PW, letter to Frederick Glover, 6 April 1960. NLA, Papers of David Marr, MS 8601/1/3.
[864] James Joyce, *Sirens,* Episode 11 of *Ulysses.* Hamburg, Germany: Odyssey Press, 1935. [PWBC 732] Berio used these same lines in his tape composition *Thema (Omaggio a Joyce),* based on a recording of the voice of Cathy Berberian reading those lines and assembled in the Studio Phonologica of Milan (1958-9).

… ‘It might be disastrous.’ Dulcie said …

The moon was rising, however jerkily, as Dulcie began to play.

Waldo at once knew how wrong he had been to encourage her to make an exhibition of herself. Needn’t have accepted of course, if she hadn’t wanted to. But it was going to be a heroic struggle. Not in the beginning, not in the *Adagio what’s-it.* There she could lay the atmosphere on, and did, in almost visible slabs … If she had started humbly, the music had made her proud. It was kidding her all over again in becoming the genius she was never intended to be, dissolving the bones in her arms with a promise of release, offering a universe of passion, instead of plunkety-plunk on the home upright … With less logic than tenacity, Dulcie began to shape the *Allegretto.* The paper moon was dangling … Dulcie plainly wasn’t prepared, and never would be, for Beethoven’s pestiferous night. It made her lunge at the piano as if to crack, to tear the walnut open. Her arms lashing. Her fingers clutching at the keyboard. From the muscles in her neck, her throat must have been swelling, knotting, reddening, strangling with the poetry which had got into it.[865]

23. It was strange to sit [wearing] one’s hat, and I felt rather naked as I was the only man in hundreds who was not wearing a shawl. Apart from these formalities, everything was very informal. The members of the congregation made conversation during the service and children ran up and down between the body of the Synagogue and the gallery where the women sat, carrying messages between parents and relations. At one point the buzz rose to such a pitch, the Chief Rabbi had to make a speech about the difficulties of carrying on a service at the same time. When it was all over, everybody scuttled about shaking hands with everybody else, wishing each other a Happy New Year, and looking much happier than Christians do after a Church service.[866]

24. To move the feet by some miraculous dispensation to feel sand benign and soft between the toes the importance of the decision makes the going heavy at first the same wine stirring the balconies of cloud as blows between the ribs it would explain the howling of what must be the soul not for fear that it will blow away in case it will but in anticipation of its first experience of precious water as it filters in through the cracks of the cavities of the body blue pyramidal waves with swans waiting by appointment each a suppressed black explosion the crimson beaks savaging those born to a different legend is what frightens most people more than cold water climbing mercifully towards the overrated but necessary heart a fleshy fist to love and fight with not to survive except as a kindness or gift of a jewel.[867]

25. The dancing had begun, and soon the kissing. The twangling of the [Spanish] guitars broke the light into splinters. The slurp of claret stained the jokes. The [English teddies from the

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[865] PW, *Mandala,* p. 136.
[866] PW, letter to Peggy Garland, 5 October 1959. Marr*, Letters,* p. 159. *Photograph:* Interior of The Bimah of The Great Synagogue, Sydney. Photograph by wmpearl, 2011. Wikipedia Creative Commons https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_Great_Synagogue_in_Sydney,_bimah.JPG#file [accessed 06 November 2016].
[867] PW, *The Eye of the Storm,* p. 532.

ocean liners] danced. The grazier danced the Spanish dances … He danced bare-headed, and in his lesbian hat. He danced in his shirt and, later, without … 'Hooray for love, it rots you,' Miss Slattery sang … Then everybody was singing everything they had to sing, guitars disintegrating, for one could not compete against the syrup from Tibby Szabo's compulsive violin.[868]

26. The young chap – the wag of the bunch – stood on the landing at Xanadu with a bit of an old fan he had found, and there, amongst the lazy sunlight which the trees allowed to filter on to the brown wallpaper and dustmarks, improvised a dance which celebrated the history of that place. How the young labourer became inspired enough to describe those great sweeping arcs with his moulted fan, nobody understood, nor did the artist himself realize that, for all its elasticity of grimace and swivelling impudence of bum his creation was a creaking death dance. But the young man danced. For the audience, his lithe thighs introduced an obscenity of life into the dead house. The candid morning did not close down on his most outrageous pantomime. The people hooted, but in approval. Until at the end, suddenly, the tattered fan seemed to fly apart in the dancer's hand, the tufts of feathers blew upward in tufts of greyish-pink smoke, and the young man was left looking at a few sticks of tortoiseshell.[869]

27. The dance at first moved haltingly: the stumpy arms hesitated to fling an impulse skyward. This was a dance she had never performed before: every twig on which she trod, alarmed: leaves turning to metal tore at her sleeked hair. So she ducked her head. While her 'public' was reaching out to snatch her back into their midst: paws fringed with reddish hair or alternately, the white lollipop imitation of fingers, were preparing to tweak her nipples and evaluate her undersized breasts, her conic-sectional hips. Because this is what the dancer had experienced of life she was tempted to continue clodhopping amongst familiar swine though it might not be what her mentor expected of her. The metronome was growing erratic. 'Is this what we're paying for? There's too much of yourself tonight.' The emeralds glared.[870]

Chapter 3: *The Aunt's Story*

28. [In Part One] Theodora Goodman walking over the green hillside and among the sepia-coloured rocks. These are volcanic. T.G. sitting by the window in the drawing room after her mother died. Other members of the family come to the house – the awed embarrassed faces of the children prevented to be [indistinct] Milly [Theodora] in tears, Jack as superfluously helpful as only a brother-in-law can be on these occasions. But Theodora remains detached, as she always has done, remote from the [suffering] of other people's emotions, from entanglement in any personal relationship. To the children she is a strange symbol of family. To Milly [Theodora is] an elder sister, to Jack an unattractive old maid.

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[868] PW, *Miss Slattery and Her Demon Lover*, *London Magazine* No.1, vol 3(8). pp. 10-19.
[869] PW, *Riders,* p. 465.
[870] PW*, Eye of the Storm,* p. 525.

Theodora sits by the window in her dress of cool, crème voile with the pale-green stripes [indistinct: the piece of her lies outside]. It is the shapeless resigned garment of an old maid, also a source of disapproval, for it is not black. Every time Milly looks at Theodora's dress, she thinks of her mother again, and her bosom fills with conventional middle-class emotions. But Theodora has always been odd, unlike anyone else. She did things without reason. And if sometimes you thought there might be a reason behind an act, you did not ask for an explanation, in case you might not know what Theodora meant. Milly believed in caution where Theodora was concerned.

[In Part Three] Theodora and Jake. This is one of the irrational [indistinct?] satisfactory relationships. [In the evening] Theodora discovers so many of her own desires accomplished. The point where Jack and Theodora both become convinced that the other is mad. This brings them even closer. The mad are both human and not human. You can confess to the mad things that you would never admit to the sane. So driving through the desert they cling to each other in a way. All the tenderness that nobody has ever asked from Jack is expended by Theodora over this maniac boy. Jack becomes the protector of this crazy old maid, to whom he has attached himself without knowing why. In a hostile world, symbolized by the desert and the pursuing police car, they satisfy their fundamental desire for personal happiness that they may have hoped to find in sex, power or in any of the vague search for the abstract through the material.[871]

29. She played took possession of the piano, she possessed Chopin, they were hers while she wanted them, until she was ready to put them down. Only, watching the hands of Mother, which always did what they wanted to, Theodora was not moved. The music had lost its meaning, even the meaning that lay in he stiff up and down, the agonizing angularity that Chopin was never meant to be, but was part of some inner intention of her own. [872]

30. You see, I am a peasant … I am very conscious of the shape of [my] country. I come from the Peloponnese. It is a rich, fat, purple country, but underneath you can feel the bones. Many people were killed there. Greeks die often ... Greeks are happiest dying. Their memorials do not reflect this fatality. All the Greek monuments reflect a continuity of life … [But] the Greeks are born to die.[873]

31. '*Notre jardin exotique,'* [its *Maïtre*] Durand said, but his pronoun possessed only diffidently … This was a world in which there was no question of possession. In its own right it possessed, and rejected, absorbing just so much dew with its pink and yellow mouths, coldly tearing at cloth or drawing blood. The garden [being largely cactus] was untouchable.[874]

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[871] NLA, MS 9982 Papers of Patrick White, 1930-2002 [manuscript]. Series 2: Literary notebooks, Item 2: Notebook, c.1939-1941 (186 parts).
http://www.nla.gov.au/apps/cdview/?pi=nla.ms-ms9982-2-2 [accessed 25 April 2016].
[872] PW, *The Aunt's Story,* p. 28.
[873] PW, *The Aunt's Story,* p. 108.
[874] PW, *The Aunt's Story,* pp. 140-1.

32. His voice smelled of *caporal bleu* [*Gauloises,* the French cigarettes]. He was smoothed down. She could feel his dark vanity soothed, smoothed at last, to the consistency of discs, as in the words of his tango, its *rêves* and *fiêvres* [dreams and fevers] dulled the sound of forks.[875]

33. Even in summer … the valleys were full of mist and orange fungus. Brown, wooden men acted a jolly pantomime to please the *Gesellschaft* [tradition]. They also came to the castle to hear the music that Rudi [her husband] ordered as his duty towards *Kunst* [art]. In the summer evenings, by torchlight, in the yard of the castle, we listened to more myths. We caught the sickness of the violins. Music dripped, coating the walls with glistening moisture of sound.[876]

34. Sometimes against the full golden theme of corn and white pizzicato of the telephone wires there was a counterpoint of houses. Theodora Goodman sat. The other side of the incessant train she could read the music off. There were the single notes of houses that gathered into gravely structural phrases. There was a smooth passage of ponds and trees. There was a big brass band. All the square faces of the wooden houses, as they came, overflowed with solemnity, that was a solemnity of living, a passage of days. Where children played with tins, or a girl waited at a window, or calves lolloped in long grass, it was a frill of flutes twisted round a higher theme, to grace, but only grace, the solemnity of living and of days. There were now the two coiled themes. There was the flowing corn song, and the deliberate accompaniment of houses, which did not impede, however structural, because it was part of the same integrity of purpose and of being.[877]

35. Though there have been fan letters, [I imagine] that there were many … who do not like it. There are certain states of mind that one does not apprehend, just as one does not respond to pure music or abstraction in paint. Rational explanations don't help.[878]

36. With Helen Morse in the leading role, the intimacy and immediacy of the Belvoir was well suited to White's expressionistic plays and their mad and contradictory tumble of eccentric souls, deluded characters and portly patriarchs and ghosts. The burnt-out shell and domestic remnants of Dale Ferguson's set, combined with Gavan Swift's lighting and Peter Sculthorpe's score accompanying transitions and colouring the play's psychological dimensions, make *The Aunt's Story* a richly evocative experience.[879]

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[875] PW, *The Aunt's Story,* pp. 140.
[876] PW, *The Aunt's Story,* p. 166.
[877] PW, *The Aunt's Story,* p. 259.
[878] PW, letter to Jean Scott Rogers, 26 September 1948. Marr, *Letters*, p. 73.
[879] Bryce Hallett, *Sydney Morning Herald* (16 August 2002), p. 14.

Chapter 4: *Voss*

37. *Es ist genug;*
Herr, wenn es dir gefälit.
So spanne mich doch aus!
Mein Jesu kömmt;
Nun gute Nacht, o Welt!
Ich fahr ins Himmelshaus,
Ich fahre sicher hin mit Frieden,
Mein grosser jammer bleibt danieden. Es is genug.

It is enough:
Lord, if it pleases You
Then release me!
My Jesus comes;
Good night now, O world!
I journey to heaven's house,
I go there securely in peace,
my great suffering remains behind. It is enough.[880]

38. The gods had planted in [Leichhardt] both the mind of a scientist and the creative imagination of an artist. He wanted to find the answer to Faust's question: what held the world together in its innermost parts. He wanted to achieve 'something exceptional on a grand scale'; he wanted a 'heroic friendship' with another man; he wanted to play the piano well; he wanted to purify his soul and to bring it to perfection. He wanted also to study all the lechery and beastliness in man, because, like Schiller, he was puzzled why God should plant in the heart of the same creature both a vision of His throne, and the insect of sensual lust.[881]

39. So far departed from that rational level to which [Laura] had determined to adhere, her own thoughts were grown obscure, even natural. She did not care. It was lovely. She would have liked to sit upon a rock and listen to words, not of any man, but detached, mysterious, poetic words that she alone would interpret through some sense inherited from sleep. Herself disembodied. Air joining air experiences a voluptuousness no less intense because imperceptible.[882]

40. There is probably no piano factory in the world so completely self-contained as the Beale factory at Annandale, NSW [established in 1893]. Certainly there is none in the British Empire that produces nearly so many parts used in piano making.[883]

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[880] *Es ist genug,* from the cantata *O Ewigkeit, du Donnerwort,* BWV 60 (1723). Surprisingly, this Cantata is not listed in the inventories of White's LP recordings.
[881] Manning Clark, *A History of Australia, Volume III: The Beginning of an Australian Civilization, 1824–1851,* Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1973, p. 338.
[882] PW, *Voss,* p. 223.
[883] http://www.australismusic.com.au/brands/beale/ [accessed 19 September 2016].

41. ‘I try to visualise your life in this house,’ said Voss, facing the honeycomb of windows, in some of which dark figures burrowed for a moment before drowning in the honey-coloured light. ‘Do you count the linen?’ He was truly interested, now that it did not seem to affect him in some way not yet accounted for. ‘Do you make pastry? Hem sheets? Or are you reading novels in these rooms, and receiving morning calls from acquaintances, ladies with small waists and affectations?’[884]

42. Sussex Street was not yet set so rigid that a cock might not shatter its importance, or blunt-nosed bullock, toiling over ruts, snuff at the dusty urban air, or piano scatter its distracted notes, from the house of Topp, Professor of Music, which was situated halfway down … Although he taught the pianoforte, visiting select homes during the morning hours, Topp played the flute for pleasure. Exquisite, pearly, translucent notes would flower on that unpromising wood, and fall from the windows as they faded, causing bullock teams to flick their tails, or some drunkard to invoke Jesus Christ. On days when Topp played his flute the dumpy house was garlanded with music, and it did sometimes happen that people passing in the street, through dust or mud, would grow gladder without thinking to discover why. To Johann Ulrich Voss, lying on the iron bed in one of the two upper rooms for which he paid the music master, the music was also homage of a kind. At intervals he might lift a hand, graciously acknowledging a phrase, but out of that great distance to which he was so often withdrawn.[885]

43. One of my fellow passengers was a music teacher, a young married man with no children … When we arrived he took a house at the exorbitant rent of 1000 *rix* [about £143] per year. As he had a small room to spare, he asked me to lodge with him to help him meet his expenses. Now, in my room, simply but comfortably finished, I find myself very contented.[886]

44. This exquisitely plaintive dirge is now within reach of all lovers of true harmony … Mr Nathan’s investiture of the elegiac verse is rife with the rarest inspirations of that genius which rendered him so long a proud and all prominent favourite amid the distinguished composers of the metropolis of the world. Whatever is touched by a man of genius is certain to be imbued with a portion of his brilliance, and in the present work, Mr Nathan, it is evident, has given full scope to the riches of his luxuriant fancy. The harmony is enchanting, and, as if the composer were thoroughly imbued with the poet's fond imaginings, the melody is marked by deep and powerful tenderness, its plaintive strains varying with the varying of the words, gliding, almost imperceptibly, from the sepulchral to the gentle wails of sorrow, whilst the accompaniment describes as it were the birds, the flowers, and other features of the imaginary borne of the lost traveller's repose. This monody will, we doubt not, be classed with Nathan’s proudest triumphs, and attain a

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[884] PW, *Voss,* p. 92.
[885] PW, *Voss,* pp. 29-30.
[886] Ludwig Leichhardt, letter to Carl Schmalfuss, 23 March 1842, cited in *The Letters of Ludwig Leichhardt,* ed. Marcel Aurousseau. London: Hakluyt Society, Cambridge University Press, 1968. Volume II, p. 439.

circulation commensurate with its author's deservings. We trust, speedily, to hear it adequately performed. The dirge is published and may be had of Baker, King street.[887]

45. Then God in all His glory comes into sight. A wondrous light strikes us to the heart. All is quiet and blissful. Lo and behold: there is no judgement, no sinners, no just men, no great and no small; there is no punishment and no reward. A feeling of overwhelming love fills us with blissful knowledge and illuminates our existence.[888]

46. Whatever one felt about Stokowski, it was a stupendous occasion which the Albert Hall almost failed to contain. Still, I prefer my Klemperer recording, which I feel is closer to Mahler. Klemperer struggles up the mountains, Stokowski made it just a little bit too easy.[889]

Chapter 5: *The Vivisector*

47. They began to wade through the Paganini-Rachmaninov, Tchaikovsky and Tchaikovsky. A girl in what her mother would have described as 'sea-green' chiffon wafted daringly into '*Ocean Thou Mighty Monster'.* A young man, the paler for his black, sank his teeth in Boris [Godunov] and couldn't get them out again, chin stuck alarmingly, your own chin straining with his; because by now every agony was yours.[890]

48. A poet makes himself a visionary through a long, boundless, and systematized disorganization of all the senses. All forms of love, of suffering, of madness; he searches himself, he exhausts within himself all poisons, and preserves their quintessences. Unspeakable torment, where he will need the greatest faith, a superhuman strength, where he becomes all men the great invalid, the great criminal, the great accursed – and the Supreme Scientist! For he attains the unknown … and if, demented, he finally loses the understanding of his visions, he will at least have seen them![891]

Chapter 6: *The Monkey Puzzle*

49. [It] is so disappointing a project that one can't avoid asking where it went wrong. Certainly too much is attempted within the limitations of the medium. But the real flaw is one of

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[887] Unknown author, *The Australian,* 9 September 1845, p. 3.
[888] A short section of a programme note written by Mahler to accompany a performance of his *Symphony No.2 in c minor* (1888-94), the '*Resurrection* ' in Dresden, 1901. http://gustavmahler.com/symphonies/mahler-symphony-2.html [accessed 300516].
[889] PW, letter to David and Gwen Moore, 14 August 1963. NLA, Papers of David Moore, MS 8601/63.
[890] PW, *The Vivisector,* p. 393. *Ocean …* was a favourite aria of Maria Callas (and aspiring Callas-sopranos) from Carl Maria von Weber's opera *Oberon,* first performed at Covent Garden in April 1826.
[891] Arthur Rimbaud, *The Systematic Derangement of the Senses,* from *Letter of a Seer* (15 May 1871). http://www.mag4.net/Rimbaud/DocumentsE1.html [accessed 10 October 2016].

attitude, the feeling of condescension that comes through every frame. Everything about the film seems intended to show that the film makers are in no way related to the people or the society they are delineating. It is an aloof and unforgiving stance, throwing a cold shadow over the film.[892]

50. Cinema is much more sophisticated than that…[White's screenplay] reflects much about this celebrated author's evolution and life, but to me it seems also to reveal how little a writer with an avowed love of film understood about the medium itself … It's evident that White's attempt to tell a story in a visual medium is simplistically peppered with easy abstract images and thin characters who simply strut their politic across the screen ... In theatre, the players stand erect and profess what they think and feel about the world, but in cinema, intellectual [equates with the] simplistic and cheap, because dialogue cannot be relied upon to carry the day. Action and dialogue are the only tools the screenwriter has to tell a story. The novelist has other tools which can't be relied upon when writing a script for a film. Unlike a play, the cinematic Catch-22 is that none of the dialogue can actually mean what a character says – *ergo,* it must be more multi-purpose. [893]

51. Of all complicated men, White was the most complicated. He was at one stage a generous friend … and by the time he shrivelled up and died, there were few friends – save a handful of old dykes and pansies – to whom he spoke. He, who so often railed against the vitiating effects of flattery upon the artist, was himself the most susceptible to sycophancy. He became naively political and surrounded himself with a circle of lisping crawlers and brown-nosers … [Patrick had] adopted a queenly attitude of disproval towards my new marriage, my political allegiances – such as they were – and my perseverance with the character of Edna, whom he believed to be a spent force … He had always assumed an absurdly magisterial role in the lives of his friends, and when they behaved in a manner contrary to his tastes or wishes his wrath knew no bounds. By the time he died in 1990 he had stopped speaking to almost all the men and women who had formerly numbered amongst his dearest friends. One way or another we had all failed to meet his expectations. The artists Lawrence Daws, Brett Whiteley and Sidney Nolan, the poet and writer Geoffrey Dutton, and Bruce Beresford whose friendship I owed to Patrick's introduction: we were all replaced by a little claque of toadies.[894]

52. HENRIETTA *(doing her duty)* You haven't told me who your favourite composers are.

WILL *(mumbling on a knuckle)* That's a question, isn't it? Like asking what you do together in bed.

HENRIETTA: Oh, come! Is it any worse than being asked your favourite food or author? And having to answer scrambled egg—or …

WILL *(restraining her)* Don't! I'd hate you to humiliate either of us …

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[892] Martha DuBose, 'Opening Choice an Act of Faith: *The Night the Prowler*: Sydney Film Festival', *The Sydney Morning Herald,* 5 June 1978, p. 7.
[893] Michael Pattinson, email to the author, 8 May 2016.
[894] Barry Humphries, *My Life as Me: A memoir.* London: Viking, 2002, p. 249-50.

(Scene receding, Voice fading as … Cut to … Will in study.)

I only meant to imply that music is more a mystery than art.

(Shot of Will settling the stylus in the desired groove.)

WILL *(cautiously)* I think I'd say … Satie … was almost my favourite composer. I admire him for his austerity — and at the same time — his hilarious acceptance of the unreason in life.

(Cut to: An eroded creek-bed in time of drought. A few pools of stagnant water. Carcass of a sheep higher up. One or two drops trickle out of drying pool and become absorbed by the drought-stricken earth as piano music is heard pinking [sic] *away.)* [895]

Some might consider Satie intellectual. But he so often matches my own atrocious moods. I find great solace in listening — say, to his *Three Pieces in the Shape of a Pear*—or his *Veritable Flabby Preludes* …

(Cut to: Henrietta and Will. Henrietta regulating the tape-recorder.)

WILL *(beaming at her):* Don't think it's Satie all the way. I have my Mahlerian moments too ...

(Dissolve to: Previous eroded creek-bed becoming a tumultuous mountain stream matched by a grand symphonic outburst, Mahlerian massed choirs, at first full-blast, then muting, and gradually fading.)

WILL'S VOICE: When the flow is infinite … everything I've ever experienced … Much that I haven't … and all that I hope to WILL into existence …

(Image of Will at his desk writing madly as the mountain torrent continues flowing over and around him.)

WILL'S VOICE: Because art — like life — if you'll allow me to say so — is an act of almost pure — *(softly)* will.

(In the silent image, Will looks up for a moment from his foolscap as though mightily pleased with the epigram he has just coined. Then he continues writing away as the mountain torrent continues flowing.)

WILL'S VOICE: … and courage … the courage not to side step one's blemishes. And vices … all, ALL must be shown in what amounts to a gigantic orgasm of honesty …

(A violent boiling of the waters as they flow around and over the image of Will at his desk. Lush flowers, such as full-blown roses and peonies are carried onward by the torrent. Then it is as though the contents of a garbage bin have been emptied higher up: dead flowers, the dust-bag from a vacuum cleaner, prawn shells, a chicken's skeleton, disintegrating multi-coloured tissues, tins, plastic containers, rotten apples, a cat's corpse.)

[895] A parody of Sidney Nolan's drought paintings which White had first seen in Sydney in 1954.

WILL'S VOICE: … the excremental … *(Shot of sewage bubbling on the waters)* … as well as the purity of innocence …

(Cut to: Little girl of infinite charm sniffing at a posy of spring flowers in an idyllic light, dew still visible on the flowers.) [896]

53. It's not just the sexual pathology that he writes about, though of course he sometimes wrote about that. He felt always, I think, a divided person … in that British tradition of serious English homosexual artists who had to somehow come to terms with this in a creative way. He did it very well and, finally, with a kind of humour and a sort of nobility in his best work. But there's a lot of torment there too … There's also a great deal of beauty and, of course, *a love of music comes through. Patrick's knowledge and feeling for music is a very strong thread in his art.*[897]

[896] PW, *The Monkey Puzzle*, Screenplay typescript, 1977, p. 69-72. Emphasis added.
[897] Barry Humphries, *Quadrant*, Vol.37 no.4, April 1993, p. 56. Emphasis added.

Appendix 2

Chronology in the Life of Patrick White

28 May 1912 Patrick Victor Martindale WHITE is born in Knightsbridge, London, United Kingdom.

1917 Five-year-old Paddy White is sent to a kindergarten in Woollahra, and then on to Cranbrook, the boys' school in Bellevue Hill.

1919 At The Art Salon in Sydney, Roy de Maistre, Roland Wakelin and Adrien Verbruggen display an exhibition called *Colour in Art.*

1920 Paddy White is installed as a boarder in Tudor House near Moss Vale, in the Southern Highlands, about an hour south of Sydney. He develops a crush on his music teacher, and studies the piano for several months.
In 1925 he is Dux of the School.

1925 On May 28, Paddy's thirteenth birthday, the White family arrive in London. Within a few months, PW begins secondary school at Cheltenham College in Gloucestershire, a four-year ordeal that is made tolerable only by weekend trips to London theatres.

1926 With his family, PW makes his first trip to Paris, travelling with them subsequently on train-trips throughout Europe and the British Isles.

1929 PW take summer holidays to France with his best school chum, Ronnie Waterall.

With financial assistance from his mother, PW's first book of poems *Thirteen Poems* is published privately under the pseudonym 'Patrick Victor Martindale'.

PW's parents, nervous that he may become 'a man of the theatre' summon him back to Australia where he is sent to the Monaro district as a jackeroo for two years. He begins to write his first novel *Happy Valley.*

1932 On 6 October, PW enrolls at Cambridge, and takes up residence at Kings College.

1934 On his first trip to Germany, PW sees Kirsten Flagstad sing in *Die Walküre* at the old Semper (Opera) House in Dresden. He experiences the rise of Nazism then and in the following spring (1935) when he and his sister Suzanne visit various European capitals.

1935 In June, PW graduates from Cambridge with a Bachelor of Arts degree (II,i) with the Tripos in Modern Languages (French and German).

During his period visits to London, PW rents rooms from the expatriate artist Roy de Maistre (1894-1968) at 68 Erbury Street and later at 13 Eccleston Street, fashionable addresses, within walking distance of West End theatres. De Maistre becomes PW's 'intellectual and aesthetic mentor' and lover and under his tutelage, PW launches his long interest in art galleries and paintings. Erbury Street is the setting of PW's second novel, *The Living and the Dead* (1941).

His early plays *Bread and Butter Women* and *The School for Friends* are produced at Bryants Playhouse in Darlinghurst, Sydney (January 1935 and April 1937).

1937 Victor Martindale (Dick) White (1868-1937), PW's father, dies in Sydney, while PW is still in London. His estate enables PW to live and travel relatively comfortably in Europe.

PW makes his stage debut as a writer with a skit *Peter Plover's Party*, a part of *Nine Sharp, a* revue at the Little Theatre on The Strand.

1939 In an attempt to find a publisher for *Happy Valley,* PW visits America, travelling extensively by rail across country to San Francisco then down to New Mexico where in Taos he falls in love with the minor poet-publisher 'Spud' Johnson. He returns to London. In May 1940, back again in New York, he meets the publisher Ben Huebsch, 'the rock on which his career in built' (DM).

1940 During the Blitz in London, the 28-year-old PW reads the journals of the explorer Edward John Eyre. The seeds for a novel about an Australian explorer are sown and the characters of Eyre and Prussian scientist-explorer Ludwig Leichhardt morph into the future fictional persona of Johann Ulrich Voss.

On 15 November, PW is commissioned in London into the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve and is assigned to the Administrative and Special Duties Branch. He serves as an Operation Intelligence Office with the RAF at Allied headquarters in North Africa, the Middle East and Greece. He is promoted to the ranks of temporary flight lieutenant (1943) and acting Squadron Leader (1944). He is de-mobbed in London on 7 May 1946.

1941 In late July, at an afternoon tea in the *Quartier Grec* in Alexandrina, PW, then serving in the Royal Australian Air Force, meets the 22-year-old Emanuel (Manoly) Lascaris. They then live together in Cairo and Greece for six years, before returning permanently to Sydney in 1948.

1947 PW's play *Return to Abyssinia* (1948) is produced in London. Later, PW writes his first substantial dramatic work, *The Ham Funeral* in London, based on a painting by William Dobell. PW starts writing his novel *The Aunt's Story,* first published by Viking (1948, New York) and Routledge & Keegan Paul (1948, London).

1948 PW and ML arrive back in Sydney on the *Orion,* permanently now. They purchase 'Dogwoods', a small farm on six acres at Castle Hill, on the western outskirts of Sydney. It becomes 'Sarsaparilla', the fictional location setting of so many short stories and plays.

1949 In March, PW views the Queensland paintings of Sidney Nolan in the David Jones gallery in Elizabeth Street, Sydney. He returns to see them in March 1950.

1952 Inaugural season of the Melbourne Film Festival. The Sydney Film Festival follows the next year.

1954 The Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust is formed to honour the visit of Queen Elizabeth II, amid calls for the creation of 'a national theatre'.

In November, Otto Klemperer conducts four performances of Mahler's *Resurrection Symphony* in the Sydney Town Hall. PW appears to have been too ill to have been present, but caught the ABC radio broadcast.

1955 TCN Channel 9 becomes the first television station in Australia to begin regular transmissions from studios in Gore Hill, Sydney.

On 19 December, Mrs Edna May Everage, from 36 Humoresque Street, Moonee Ponds, makes her first stage appearance in the revue sketch 'Olympic Housewife' at the Union Theatre at the University of Melbourne. PW caught up with her (and her *alter ego* Barry Humphries) about a year later at a Phillip Street Theatre revue in Sydney.

PW continues to build his collection of LPs, details of which he annotates in a small Inventory (cq.1955-60).

1956 In April, Sir Eugene Goossens, the SSO's Chief Conductor, leaves Sydney precipitously after a scandal. He is replaced with a string of mediochre *maestri,* causing PW to lament the decline of SSO standards.

On 22 November, the Duke of Edinburgh opens the Summer Games of the XVI Olympiad in Melbourne. They run until 8 December, and change the nature of Australian society forever.

After intensive research at the Mitchell Library, PW's novel *Voss* is accepted for publication by Eyre & Spottiswoode (1957, London).

1958 On April 2 at the Rural Bank in Sydney, PW accepts a cheque for £500 from Prime Minister Robert Menzies as the Inaugural Miles Franklin Award for Australian Literature (for *Voss*).

With funds from various awards and royalties, PW and ML make an extended visit to Europe, to visit their aged mothers and to attend concerts and operas and art exhibitions.

1960 In March, the first Adelaide Festival of the Arts is launched, founded by John Bishop, the Elder Professor of Music at the University of Adelaide, and Sir Lloyd Dumas, Chairman of Advertiser Newspapers Ltd. The Drama Board rejects PW's *Ham Funeral* for inclusion in the festival program, launching an acrimonious relationship between the author and the Festival over several years. *Ham Funeral* is first produced by the University of Adelaide Theatre Guild in November 1961.

1961 In November, Stravinsky and Robert Craft conduct two concerts in the Sydney Town Hall. PW attends both and sits alongside IS at a post-concert dinner. PW meets Curt and Maria Prerauer, who become his new 'guides to music'. *Riders in the Chariot* is published by Eyre & Spottiswoode.

1962 On 11 September, *The Seasons at Sarsaparilla,* produced by the Adelaide University Theatre Guild and directed by John Tasker, begins a run of six performances at the Union Theatre.

1963 John Hopkins is appointed the ABC's Federal Director Music, ABC orchestral concerts begin to become more interesting, with the Proms and the Gold Series concerts. PW's interests though have shifted to chamber music and he now subscribes to Musica Viva seasons.

1966 Ruth White dies in London. Her estate is divided between various cultural causes and her two children, Suzanne Peck and her brother PW.
In June, PW and ML move into a new house at 20 Martin Rd, Centennial Park, their home for the ensuing four decades until ML's death.

1970 *The Vivisector* is published by Jonathan Cape (London) and Viking Press (New York).

1972 On December 5, Gough Whitlam is elected Prime Minister and becomes Minister of the Arts.

1973 On 28 September, The Australian Opera presents it first opera in the Opera Theatre of the new Sydney Opera House, a controversial production of Prokofiev's *War and Peace.* On 22 October, the Opera House is formally opened by Queen Elizabeth II who attends a performance of Beethoven's *Choral Symphony* that evening in the Concert Hall. PW is not invited to any of these events. Even so, he is so enraptured by the experience of opera there, becoming an enthusiastic 'opera buff'.

In that same week of October, the Swedish Academy announces that its Nobel Prize for Literature has been awarded to Patrick White 'for his epic and psychological narrative art which has introduced a new continent into literature'.

On December 10, in Stockholm, Sidney Nolan kneels before King Carl Gustav XVI to accept the Nobel Prize for Literature on PW's behalf.

1974 On 25 January, PW, as 'Australian of the Year' lauds the achievements of Humphries, historian Manning Clark and unionist Jack Mundey.

In May, the Adelaide Festival Centre is opened by Prime Minister Whitlam.

In December, the Music Broadcasting Society of New South Wales launches its 'fine music radio station' 2MBS-FM from tiny studios in St Leonards in Sydney. PW and ML become early subscribers to the first community broadcaster in Australia.

1975 In July, the Australian Chamber Orchestra, founded by John Painter, gives its inaugural concert in Sydney. In August, Music Rostrum Australia brings Luciano Berio and others to Sydney. PW attends almost all 12 concerts, but does not meet Berio.

On November 11, the Governor-General Sir John Kerr dismissed the government of Gough Whitlam. The future of many arts projects falls into doubt, PW 'maintains the rage' and returns his Order of Australia (AC) in protest.

1976 In March, John Cage visits Australia with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company. PW attends a performance by Nigel Butterley of Cage's *Sonatas and Interludes* for prepared piano and meets Cage.

1977 On 27 July *Big Toys,* directed by Jim Sharman in a production for the Old Tote Theatre Company, opens in the Parade Theatre, Kensington.

1978 On June 2, Jim Sharman's film *The Night the Prowler* opens the Sydney International Film Festival. PW writes the screenplay. It receives poor reviews from press and public, but PW's enthusiasm is not dampened.

1979 In Italy, Peter Hemmings, new General Manager of TAO, meets writer David Malouf in Italy to discuss the transformation of *Voss* into an opera, to music by Richard Meale. PW is at first skeptical, but gives the project its blessing.

1981 PW's 'self-portrait' *Flaws in the Glass* (Jonathan Cape) is published, unleashing a torrent of verbal spats between PW and some of his 'victims', notably Nolan, sundering a 20-year friendship.

1982 In March, at the Adelaide Festival directed by Jim Sharman, White's newly commissioned play *Signal Driver,* directed by Neil Armfield, is premiered. As part of a 50th birthday concert for Richard Meale, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra performs 'The Garden Scene' from the still incomplete opera *Voss.*

1983 On 11 June, *Netherwood* is premiered by Lighthouse, the State Theatre Company, in the Playhouse of the Adelaide Festival Centre.

1986 On March 1, the opera *Voss,* directed by Jim Sharman, opens the Adelaide Festival. PW does not attend, but does so on 7 June in the Sydney Opera House. He had 'a stupendous evening'.

1987 On 9 May, PW's last play *Shepherd on the Rocks* is premiered by the State Theatre Company at the Adelaide Festival Centre, the seventh of PW's eight plays to be premiered in Adelaide.

1988 PW refuses to have anything to do with The Australian Bicentennial celebrations and helps a publisher speed-publish his collection of short stories *Three Uneasy Pieces* before 'the abominable Bi' occurs.

1990 At 5.20am on 30 September, PW dies at his home in Sydney, aged 78.

1991 DM's biography *Patrick White: A Life* is published by Random House Australia. In the weeks before his death PW reads Marr's manuscript for which he offers only minor corrections. 'I think the book should be called 'The Monster of All Time,'' he declares. 'But I am a monster…'

1994 DM's collection *Patrick White: Letters* (Random House Australia) assembles about 650 from PW's enormous correspondence (possibly up to 5,500 letter over the period 1918-88).

2003 On 30 November, Manoly Lascaris, life partner of PW since 1942, dies at 'Lulworth', the nursing home which was originally PW's first childhood home in Sydney.

2006 In November, PW's literary executor Barbara Mobbs delivers a trove of PW material to the NLA, long thought to have been destroyed by the author. It includes the mss of an incomplete novel, *The Hanging Garden,* and the mss of the screenplay *The Monkey Puzzle.*

2009 In May, *The Voss Journey* joins 15 national institutions in Canberra in an intensive investigation and celebration of PW's novel, and the opera and readings from the film scripts.

2011 On 23 July, Fred Schepisi's film adaptation of PW's novel *The Eye of the Storm* opens the Melbourne International Film Festival.

2012 In May, in PW's centenary month, the NLA opens its exhibition *The Life of Patrick White,* initially in Canberra and then moving to the Mitchell Library in Sydney. *The Hanging Garden* is published, to international acclaim.

Appendix 3:

Chronological List of Works

(+ indicates works not sighted for this study)

+Thirteen Poems (ca 1929)
Printed privately, under the pseudonym 'Patrick Victor Martindale'

+The Ploughman and Other Poems (1935)
Sydney: Beacon Press, 1935

+Bread and Butter Women (1935)
Unpublished play, first performed Bryants Playhouse, Sydney, January 1935

+The School for Friends (1935)
Unpublished play, first performed Bryants Playhouse, Sydney, April 1937

Happy Valley (1939) *novel*
London: George G.Harrap, 1939
New York: Viking Press, 1940

The Living and the Dead (1941) *novel*
New York: Viking Press, June 1941
London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1962

+Return to Abyssinia (1948)
Unpublished play, first performed London 1947

The Ham Funeral (1947) .... *See* ***Four Plays***

The Aunt's Story (1948) *novel*
London: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1948; Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1958
New York: Viking Press, 1948

The Tree of Man (1955) *novel*
New York: Viking Press, 1955
London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1956

Voss (1957) *novel*
London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1957
New York: Viking Press, 1957

Riders in the Chariot (1961) *novel*
London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1961
New York: Viking Press, 1961

The Season at Sarsaparilla (1962) ... *See* ***Four Plays***

A Cheery Soul (1963) *... See **Four Plays***

The Burnt Ones (1964) *collection of short stories*
New York: Viking Press, 1964
Melbourne: Penguin Books Australia, 1964
London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1964

Night on Bald Mountain (1964) *... See **Four Plays***

Four Plays (1964) *.... See above*
– Comprises *The Ham Funeral, The Season at Sarsaparilla, A Cheery Soul,* and *Night on Bald Mountain.* – Republished as *Collected Plays,* volume 1
New York: Viking Press, 1966
London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1965

The Solid Mandala (1966) *novel*
London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1966
New York: Viking Press, 1966

The Vivisector (1970) *novel*
London: Jonathan Cape, 1970
New York: Viking Press, 1970

The Eye of the Storm (1973) *novel*
London: Jonathan Cape, 1973
New York: Viking Press, 1973

The Cockatoos (1974) *collection of short stories*
London: Jonathan Cape, 1974
New York: Viking Press, 1975

+Poems (1974) *collection of poetry*
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada: Soft Press, 1974

A Fringe of Leaves (1976) *novel*
London: Jonathan Cape, 1976
New York: Viking Press, 1976

The Night the Prowler (1978) *screenplay*
London: Jonathan Cape/Penguin Books, 1978

The Monkey Puzzle (1978) *unpublished screenplay*

Big Toys (1977) *play*
Sydney: Currency Press, 1978

The Twyborn Affair (1979) *novel*

London: Jonathan Cape, 1979
New York: Viking Press, 1979

Flaws in the Glass: A self portrait (1981) *memoir*
London: Jonathan Cape, 1981
New York: Viking Press, 1986

Signal Driver: a Morality Play for the Times (1982) *play*
Sydney: Currency Press, 1983

Netherwood (1983) *play*
Sydney: Currency Press, 1983

Memoirs of Many in One (1986) *novel*
Published under the pseudonym 'Alex Xenophon Demirjian Gray'
London: Jonathan Cape, 1986
New York: Viking Press, 1986

Three Uneasy Pieces (1986) *collection of short stories*
Melbourne: Pascoe Publishing, 1987
London: Jonathan Cape, 1988

Shepherd on the Rocks (1987) *play*
Sydney: Currency Press, 1988

Patrick White Speaks (1989) *miscellaneous public addresses*
London: Jonathan Cape, 1990
Sydney: Primavera Press, 1989

The Hanging Garden (2012) *incomplete novel, published posthumously*
Sydney: Random House Australia, 2 April 2012

Appendix 4:

White's Collection of LP Recordings

This Inventory attempts to re-constitute Patrick White's collection of LP recordings from, roughly 1950 to 1986. It has been assembled from three sources:

(a) Patrick White's own Index to Recordings (c.1955-1960) contained in his archive in the National Library of Australia. Papers of Patrick White
Index to Recordings (c.1955-1960), MS 9982-10-1 Series 10, Folder 1
(see Chapter 2).

(b) Index of recordings prepared by Barbara Mobbs, White's literary executor, in preparation for sale as 'a job lot' to an unknown buyer, possibly around 1991; these recordings are indicated by #, before the record label

(c) Specific reference to recordings (usually compositions and performers) mentioned by White in his correspondence.

This list does not attempt to detail all specific references to particular compositions in White's writing – his novels, plays, screenplays and poems – simply in his correspondence.

The information contained here details, as far as possible, the following:

- Composer name (FAMILY name, followed by given name/s)
- Title of composition (in original language, and commonly used translation in English)
- Year of completion of composition (or first production)
- Performers, including orchestras/ensembles with conductors
- Recording label and catalogue numbers (in the edition acquired by PW, wherever possible; alternative catalogue numbers may be given for re-releases in later years.
- Year of recording release (in the edition acquired by PW).

This should not be considered the complete and definitive list of all the LP recordings White acquired during his lifetime. (*For example:* Although he was very enthusiastic about Stravinsky's music from around 1960 onwards, the Inventories list only two recordings of music by Stravinsky. He would surely have acquired more, but there is no record of what they were or what became of them.) David Malouf has suggested that he would often give recordings and books to friends as gifts. Sometime around 1960, he seems to have ceased listing his LP acquisitions, possibly because by that stage he was acquiring too many to tabulate.

Here, then, is the most comprehensive list that can be assembled to this point.

(**Arias)**

Arias from Aïda, Cavalleria Rusticana, La Gioconda, Tosca, Il Trovatore, Turandot:
Verdi, Giuseppe (1813-1901)
Il Trovatore: *D'amor sull'ali rosee.*
Aïda: *Ritorna vineitor*
And *Gloria all' Egitto* and *Qui Radammès verrà!... O patria mia.*
Ponchielli, Amilcare (1834-1886)
La Gioconda: *Già ti veggo* and *Suicidio.*
Puccini, Giacomo (1858-1924)
Tosca: *Vissi d'arte.*
Turandot: *In questa reggia.*
Mascagni, Pietro (1863-1945)
Cavalleria rusticana: *Voi lo sapete.*
Grieg, Edvard (1843-1907)
Hjertets melodier: *Jeg elsker dig.*
Tosti, F. Paolo (Francesco Paolo)(1846-1916)
Good-bye.
Ronald, Landon Sir (1873-1938)
O lovely night.

(Dame) Eva Turner (1892-1990), soprano; various orchestras and conductors.
#His Master's Voice: HQM 1209. Originally recorded 1926, 1928 & 1933.
Released ca 1970.

(ANDALUSIA, Songs of)

Music from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance
Victoria de los Angeles (1923-2005), soprano
#EMI/HMV SAN 184. Recorded 1968.

BACH, Johann Sebastian (Germany, 1685-1750)

Mass in b minor, BWV 232
Elizabeth Schwarzkopf, soprano; Marga Höffgen, contralto; Nikolai Gedda, tenor; Heinz Rehfuss, bass-baritone.
Society of Friends of Music,Vienna' Herbert von Karajan, conductor
First released on Columbia 33CX 1121 through 1123, recorded 1952-3.

Magnificat in D, BWV 243
Gewandhaus Orchestra & Choir of St Thomas Church, Leipzig.
Kurt Thomas, conductor.
Berlin / Leipzig Classics Eterna, recorded June-December 1959.

Weinachts Oratorium, BWV 248 ('Christmas Oratorio')
RIAS Kammerchoir, Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra,
Fritz Lehmann/Gunther Arndt, conductors
Archiv Produktion. 14101/03, recorded 1954-55.

Cantata No.170: Verguegte Ruh, beliebte Seelenlust, BWV 170 (Trinity VI, 1726)
Cantata No.54 : Widerstehe doch der Suende, BWV 54 (Trinity VII, 1713)
with *Agnus Dei,* from *Mass in b minor*
Alfred Deller, counter-tenor; Leonhardt Baroque Ensemble; Gustav Leonhardt, conductor
The Bach Guild/ Vanguard, recorded May 1954.

Cantata No.1: Wie Schoen leuchtet der Morgenstren, BWV 1(for the Feast of the Annunciation, 1725)
Berlin Motet Choir; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra; Fritz Lehmann, conductor
American Decca DL 9671, recorded 10 June 1952.

Cantata No.4: Christ lag in Todes Banden, BWV 4 (Easter, 1707?)
'Christ lay in death's dark bonds'
Frankfurt State School of Music Chorus; Gottingen Bach Festival Orchestra; Fritz Lehmann, conductor
American Decca DL 7253, recorded August 1950

Cantata No.87: Bisher habt ihr nichts gebeten in meinem Namen, BWV 87 (Rogate, 1725)
Vienna State Opera Orchestra; Anton Heiller, conductor. No further details.

Cantata No.209: Non sa che sia dolore, BWV 209 (unknown, 1729)
Orchestra of the Bach Guild [PW lists as 'Vienna State Opera Orchestra'];
Anton Heiller, conductor
Vanguard Classics/Amadeo AVRD 6004. Recorded 1952.

Cantata No.39: Brich dem Hungrigen dein Brot, BWV 39 (Trinity I, 1726)
Bach Festival Orchestra; Fritz Lehmann, conductor
American Decca DL 9672. Rec. 10 June 1952

Cantata No.108: Es ist euch gut, dass ich hingege, BWV108 (Cantate, 1725)
Bach Festival Orchestra; Fritz Lehmann, conductor
American Decca DL 9672, recorded 12 June 1952.

Sonatas for Solo Violin, volumes 1 & 3
Yehudi Menuhin, violin solo
EMI/HMV, recorded 1938-54.

Partitas for Solo Violin, Volumes I & 3
Yehudi Menuhin, violin solo.
Volume 1 contains the *Chaconne*
HMV ALP 1512, released in 1956, but originally recorded by Menuhin in 1932-3.

The Well-Tempered Clavier [sic]
Rosalyn Tureck, piano.

Partitas Nos.1 & 2, 3, & 6
Rosalyn Tureck, piano
Philips, New York.

Goldberg Variations, BWV 988 (1741)
Italian Concerto in F, BWV 971
Fantasia and Fugue in d minor, BWV 903
Wanda Landowska, harpsichord
RCA Victor Red Seal LM 1080, 1951.

Brandenburg Concertos 1-6, BWV 1046-51 (1721?)
Group from the Schola Cantorum of Basle; August Wenzinger, director
Archiv Produktion AP 13 016, 1954

Concerto in d minor for 2 violins and string orchestra
David & Igor Oistrakh, violins

Sonata in C, for 2 violins and harpsichord, BWV 1037
David & Igor Oistrakh, violins; Hans Pischner, harpsichord
DGG LPM 18393.

Das Musikalische Opfer ('The Musical Offering'), BWV 1079 (1746?)
ORTF orchestra (*Radiofusion française*), Igor Markevitch, conductor.

Der Kunst der Fuge ('The Art of the Fugue'), BWV 1080 (1745?)
Helmut Walcha, *organ*
Archiv, 1947-52.

Orgelbüchlein ('Little Organ Book'), BWV 599-644 (1708-17)
Helmut Walcha, *organ*
Archiv, 1947-52.

Prelude & Fugue in G Major, BWV 541
Prelude & Fugue in a minor, BWV 543
Fantasia & Fugue in g minor, BWV 535
Fantasia in c minor, BWV 562
Helmut Walcha, *organ*
Archiv, 1947-52.

BANKS, Don (Australia, 1923-1980)

Four Pieces for String Quartet (1975)
Carl Pini String Quartet
#Cherry Pie LA 07724. 1978.

BARTÓK, Bela (Hungary-USA, 1881-1945)

Suite from the ballet *The Miraculous Mandarin*. Op.19 Sz.73 (1918-24)
Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati, conductor
Mercury MG 50038, released in 1955
#Qualiton.

Duke Bluebeard's Castle, Op.11 (1911)
Cantata Profana, Sz.94 (1930)
Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, baritone; Hertha Töpper, contralto
RIAS Chamber Choir; Choir of St Hedwig's Cathedral,
German Orchestra of Berlin; Ferenc Fricsay, conductor
#DGG Originals Mono/Stereo 457-756-2, 1951/1958.

Suite from *The Wooden Prince*, Op.13, Sz.60 (1914-16)
Symphonic poem, *Kossuth,* Sz.21 (1903)
Hungarian National Philharmonic Orchestra; Zoltan Kocsis, conductor
#Hungaraton, 1968.

Concerto for Orchestra. Sz.116 (1943)
Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra; Antal Dorati, conductor
Mercury MRL 2521. 1955.

Violin Concerto [No.1, Sz.361] (1907-8)
Yehudi Menuhin, solo violin;
Philharmonia Orchestra, Wilhelm Fürtwangler, conductor
London Records LLP302 (1950) and in Australia on HMV ALP 1121 (1954).

Violin Concerto No.2 (1937-38)
Yehudi Menuhin, solo violin;
Philharmonia Orchestra, Wilhelm Fürtwangler, conductor
EMI Classics, released 1957.

Six Duos, from *44 Duos for 2 violins,* Sz.98 (1922-31)

Yehudi Menuhin & Neil Gotovsky, violins
HMV ALP 2281, released 1966.

Viola Concerto, Sz.120 (1945, *op.post.)*
William Primrose, solo viola; Concertgebouw Orchestra, Otto Klemperer, conductor
a live performance in Amsterdam, recorded on 10 January 1951.
Archiphon.

String Quartet No.1 (1909)
Hungarian String Quartet
DGG 158 650 (1962?).

String Quartets 1-6
Volume 1: Quartets 1-2 CCX 1245 (1955) mono
Volume 2: Quartets 3-4 CCX 1267 (1955) mono
Volume 3: Quartets 5-6 CCX 1285 (1955) mono
Vegh Quartet
#Columbia (as above), 3 LP set, released in Australia by the World Record Club 6101.

Contrasts for Piano, Violin and Clarinet, Sz.116 (1938)
Jack Brymer, clarinet; Wilfrid Parry, piano; Frederick Grinke, violin
Argo RG 89, released in 1956.

Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion (1936)
John Ogdon & Brenda Lucas, pianos; James Blades & Tristan Fry, percussion.
#Argo/EMI ASD 2347, recorded in March 1967.

Music for Strings, Percussion and Celeste, Sz.106 (1937)
Dance Suite, Sz.77 (1923)
London Philharmonic Orchestra; Georg Solti, conductor
#Decca Eclipse ELS 533, released in 1969.

Concerto for Orchestra, Sz.116 (1943)
Two Portraits, Op.5 (1903)
Dance Suite, Sz.106 (1937)
Mikrokosmos, and *From the Diary of a Fly*
London Symphony Orchestra; Antal Dorati, conductor
#Mercury Classics 432 017, released in 1962.

Das Klavierwerk, Vols I & III
From 'For Children'; Sonatina on a Theme of Bauern von Transsylvanian; from 'Mikrokosmos'; 15 Hungarian Bauernlieder (1914-17); Piano Sonata (1926); 3 Rondos on Hungarian Folk themes; Rumanian Christmas Songs (1915) Suite, Op.14
Andor Foldes, piano
DGG LPM 18270/73, recorded in 1960.

Piano Concerto No.2 in G, Sz.95 (1930-1)
Piano Concerto No.3 in E, Sz.199 (1945)
Edith Farnadi, piano
Vienna State Opera Orchestra; Hermann Scherchen, conductor
Westminster HiFi XWN 18277, recorded in 1956.

Piano Concerto No.3 in E, Sz.199 (1945)
Julius Katchen, piano
Suisse Romande Orchestra; Ernset Ansermet, conductor
Decca LXT 2894, released in 1954/1960.

*Sonata for Solo Violin, Sz.*117 (1944)
Andre Gertler, violin
#Columbia 33 FCX 297. 1961, issued in Australia by World Record Club 37-6037 (MONO).

Second Sonata for Violin and Piano, Sz.76 (1903)
Wolfgag Schneiderhan, violin: Carl Seeman, piano
DGG LPM 18400.

BEETHOVEN, Ludwig van (Austria, 1770-1827)

Symphony No.3 in E Flat, 'Eroica', Op.55 (1806)
Leonora Overture No.1 in C, Op.138
Leonora Overture No.2, Op.72b
Philharmonia Orchestra, Otto Klemperer, conductor
EMI, released in 1955-7.

Symphony No.5 in c minor, Op.67 (1806-84)
Philharmonia Orchestra, Otto Klemperer, conductor
EMI Classics, released in 1955.

Symphony No.9 in d minor, Op.125 *'Choral'* (1824)
Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, soprano; Elisabeth Höngen, mezzosoprano,
Hans Hopf, tenor; Otto Edelmann, bass.
Bayreuth Festival Choir & Orchestra; Wilhelm Furtwangler, conductor;
EMI Classics, recorded live on 29 July 1951.

Violin Concerto in D, Op.61 [1806]
Yehudi Menuhin, violin; Philharmonia Orchestra; Wilhelm Furtwangler, conductor
HMV Classics, recorded in 1947.

Piano Trio in B Flat, Op.97 (*'Archduke')* [1811]
#Columbia.

Piano Trio in D, Op.70 No.1 *('The Ghost')* [1809]
Piano Trio in E flat, Op.70 No.2 [1809]
#Supraphon?.

String Quartets Nos. 1-6, Op.18
Quartet in F, op. 18, no. 1
Quartet in G, op. 18, no. 2
Quartet in D, op. 18, no. 3
Quartet in c minor, op. 18, no. 4
Quartet in A, op. 18, no. 5
Quartet in B flat, op. 18, no. 6
Hungarian String Quartet. #Columbia (3 LPs)

String Quartets Nos. 7-9, Op.59 *('Rasumovsky')*
Quartet in F, op. 59, no. 1
Quartet in E minor, op. 59 no. 2
Quartet in C, op. 59, no. 3
Koeckert String Quartet. DGG boxed set.

String Quartet No.10 in E, Op.74 *('Harp')*
String Quartet No.11 in F minor, Op.95 *('Serioso'*)
Koeckert String Quartet. # DGG.

String Quartet No.12 in E Flat, Op.127
Hungarian String Quartet. #Columbia.

String Quartet No.13 in B Flat, Op.130
Hungarian String Quartet. #Angel.

String Quartet No.14 in c sharp minor, Op.131
Koeckert String Quartet. # DGG.

String Quartet No.15 in a minor, Op.132
Koeckert String Quartet. # DGG.

String Quartet No.16 in B flat, "Grosse Fuge", Op.133
Hungarian String Quartet
#Columbia/Regis RRC7011, recorded in 1953.

String Quartet No.17 in F, Op.135
Hungarian String Quartet. #Columbia.

Septet in E flat, Op.20 (1800)
#Members of the Vienna Octet.

Piano Quintet in E Flat, Op.16 (1796)
Walter Gieseking, piano; Philharmonia Wind Quartet
#Testament/Warner Classics 3532262, released in 1955.

Piano Sonata No 14 in c sharp minor, Op.27 No.2 (*'Moonlight')* [1801]
Piano Sonata No.21 in C, Op.53 (*'Waldstein'*) [1804]
Piano Sonata No.8 in c minor, Op.13 (*'Pathetique'*) [1798]
Wilhelm Kempff (1895-1991), piano
Deutsche Grammophon DGG 138 935 (1951) [139 300 SLPM, 1965].

Piano Sonata No.23 in f minor, Op.57 (*'Appassionata'*) [1804-6]
Wilhelm Kempff, piano.

Piano Sonata No.17 in d minor, Op.31 No.2 [1801-2]
Piano Sonata No.18 in E Flat, Op.31 No.3 [1798]
Solomon, piano. #HMV/EMI Classics

Piano Sonata No.29 in B flat, Op.106 *('Hammerklavier')* [1818]
Wilhelm Backhaus, piano. #Decca

Piano Sonata No.31 in A Flat, Op.110 [1820-22]
Piano Sonata No.32 in c minor, Op.111 [1820-22]
Wilhelm Kempff (1895-1991), piano
Deutsche Grammophon DGG 138 935 (1951) [139 300 SLPM, 1965]

BERG, Alban (Austria, 1885-1935)

Lulu, opera in three acts to a libretto by Franz Wedekind (1929-35, perf incomplete 1937)
Teresa Stratas, soprano (Lulu); Yvonne Minton, mezzosoprano (The Countess), Kenneth Riedel, tenor; Hanna Schwarz, mezzosoprano; Franz Mazura, bass-baritone (Dr Schoen)
Opera de Paris, Pierre Boulez, conductor
#Deutsche Grammophon 4636172 (4 LP set), 1979.

Lulu-Suite (Five Symphonic Pieces) (1934)
Helga Pilarczyk, soprano; London Symphony Orchestra; Antal Dorati, conductor
#CBS/ Mercury Living Presence 432 0062.

Violin Concerto (1935)
Andre Gertler, violin; Philharmonia Orchestra; Paul Kletzki, conductor
Columbia FCX 297
Released in Australia by The Record Society.

Three Pieces for Orchestra, Op.6 (1913-15)
London Symphony Orchestra; Antal Dorati, conductor
#CBS/ Mercury Living Presence 432 0062.

Piano Sonata, Op.1 (1910)
Jeanne Manchon-Theis, piano
#Ducretet-Thomson MEL94008, released in 1954.

Chamber Concerto for Piano, Violin & 13 Wind Instruments (1923-5)
Jacques Monod, piano; Roland Charny, violin
Paris Chamber Orchestra (PW lists as 'Leibowitz Instrumental Ensemble');
Rene Leibowitz, conductor
Felsted / Soundmark Records 48010.

BERIO, Luciano (Italy, 1925-2003)

Sinfonia (1968)
The Swingle Singers; New York Philharmonic Orchestra; Luciano Berio, conductor
Columbia MS 7268. 1968

BERLIOZ, Hector (France, 1803-1869)

Grande messe des morts, Op.5 (1837) ('Requiem Mass')
Ronald Dowd, tenor; London Symphony Chorus & Orchestra; Colin Davis, cond
#Philips, rec. 1970.

Nuits d'été, Op.7 (1841-56) ('Summer Nights')
Victoria de los Angeles, soprano
Boston Symphony Orchestra; Charles Munch, conductor
RCA Victrola – LM 1907. 1957.

BERWALD, Franz (Sweden, 1796-1868)

Piano Quintet No.1 in c minor (1853)
Piano Quintet No.2 in A (1850-7)
Robert Riefling, piano; Benthein Quartet
Accord (France)/Nonesuch H-71113.

BLOCH, Ernest (Switzerland-USA, 1880-1959)

String Quartet No.1 in b minor (1916)
String Quartet No.2 (1945)
String Quartet No.3 (1952)

String Quartet No.4 (1953)
Griller String Quartet
#Decca/London LLA 23, recorded in June-July 1954.

Second Violin Sonata: Poème mystique (1924)
Jascha Heifetz, violin; Brooks Smith, piano
#RCA Classical Masters 88765440152.

Quintet for Piano and Strings (1923)
Quintetto Chigiano: Riccardo Brengola, violin; Mario Benvenuti, violin II; Giovanni Leone, viola; Lino Filippini, cello; Sergio Lorenzi, piano
#Decca LXT2626. Recorded in 1951.

BORODIN, Alexander (Russia, 1833-1887)

String Quartet No.2 in D (1881)
Borodin Quartet
#Decca SXL 6036, 1962.

BOULEZ, Pierre (France, 1925-2016)

Le marteau sans maître (1955) (‘*The Hammer without a Master’*)
Margery MacKay, alto; Arthur Gleghorn, flute; Donald Muggeridge, oboe; Donald Leake, english horn; Donald Christlieb, bassoon; William Ulyate, clarinet; Milton Thomas, viola; William Kraft, vibraphone; Dorothy Remsen, xylorimba; Theodore Norman, guitar; Walter Goodwin, percussion; Robert Craft, conductor. Columbia ML 5275Vega/Odyssey. 1967?

Les soleils des eaux (1947) (‘The Suns of the Waters’)
BBC Symphony Orchestra; Pierre Boulez, conductor. # HMV ASD 639. 1965.

BRAHMS, Johannes (Germany, 1883-1897)

Piano Concerto No.2 in B Flat, Op.83 (1878-81)
Rudolf Serkin (piano), Philadelphia Orchestra, Eugene Ormandy, conductor
Columbia Masterworks (USA), ML 4014,
recorded in the Broadwood Hotel, Philadelphia, 1960.

Symphony No.1 in c minor, Op.68 (1855-1876)
Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of New York; Bruno Walter, conductor
Columbia ML 5124, recorded on 30 Sept 1953.

S*even Songs*, from Op.32
Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, baritone; Hertha Klust, piano
DGG 459021

BRITTEN, Benjamin (England, 1913-1976)

Les Illuminations, Op.18 (1940)
Serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings, Op.31 (1943)
Peter Pears, tenor; Barry Tuckwell, French horn;
London Symphony Orchestra; Benjamin Britten, conductor
Decca SXL 6449, 1964

Three Cantatas [PW lists as Canticles, perhaps from *Five Canticles?*]
Canticle I: My beloved is mine, for tenor and piano (1947)
Canticle II: Abraham and Isaac, for alto (or countertenor), tenor, and piano (1952)
Canticle III: Still falls the rain, for tenor, horn and piano (1954)
Peter Pears, tenor; John Hahessy, alto; Barry Tuckwell, horn; Benjamin Britten, piano.
Decca/London Records 5698, 1961.

BRUCKNER, Anton (Germany, 1824-1896)

Symphony No.7 in E (1881-3/1887)
Concertgebouw Orchestra; Eduard van Beinum, conductor
<Decca Eloquence>. May 1953.

Symphony No.8 in c minor (1867/1890)
Concertgebouw Orchestra; Eduard van Beinum, conductor
Philips (2 LPs).

Symphony No.9 in d minor (1896) original version
Pro Musica Symphony Orchestra of Vienna; Jascha Horenstein,conductor
Vox PL 8040, recorded in 1953.

String Quintet in F, WAB 112 (1887-9)
Koeckert Quintet, with Georg Schmid, viola
DGG LPM 18042, recorded in 1952.

Mass No.1 in d minor, WAB 26 (1864)
Choir and Orchestra of Bavarian Radio; Elmar Schloter, organ; Eugen Jochum, conductor
DGG 2530 314 / The Record Society, released in 1972.

DEBUSSY, Claude (France, 1862-1918)

String Quartet in g minor, Op 10 (1896)
not listed in PW's inventory, but on same LP as Ravel Quartet
Budapest String Quartet
Columbia MS 6015

Le martyre de Saint-Sebastien (1911) 'The Martyrdom of St. Sebastian'
Various soli; Philharmonia Orchestra; Guido Cantelli, conductor
EMI Classics, recorded on 4 June 1954

La demoiselle élue (1888) 'The Chosen Woman'
Victoria de los Angeles, soprano
Boston Symphony Orchestra; Charles Munch, conductor
RCA Victrola – LM 1907, recorded in 1957.

DES PRES, Josquin (1450? – 1521)

Missa de beata Virgine : La déploration de Jehan Okeghem
Sydney University Chamber Choir; Nicholas Routley, conductor
#Music Broadcasting Society of NSW (formerly 2MBS-FM) MBS 3
Recorded at concerts given in the Great Hall of Sydney University, 1978-79.

DVORAK, Antonin (Czechoslovakia/Bohemia, 1841-1904)

Symphony No.2 in B flat, Op.4 (1865)
[possibly Symphony No.7]
Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra; Ferdinand Leitner, conductor. DGG.

Cello Concerto, Op.104 (1894-5)
Pierre Fournier, Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, George Szell, conductor.
Deutsche Grammophon 138 755. Recorded in 1938.

FRANCK, César (France, 1822-1890)

Symphonic Poem, *Psyché* (1886-8)
Concertgebouw Orchestra; Eduard van Beinum, conductor
#Decca 421 40 2. Recorded in 1950?

Greek Folk Songs *(listed under 'Miscellaneous') … see also KAROMIRILS, Manolis*
Performed by Litsa Liolni, Zoe Vlakopoulous, Elli Nicolaidou.

HAYDN, Franz Josef (Austria, 1732-1809)

Symphony No.88 in G, Hob.1/88 (1787)*Symphony No.92 in G, 'Oxford',* Hob.1/92 (1789)
missing from PW's Inventory
Symphony No.104 in D, 'London', Hob.1/104 (1795)
Cleveland Orchestra; George Szell, conductor
United Archives . 9 April 1954 (88&104); 27 April 1949 (92).

String Quartet No.72 in C, Op.74 No.1 (1793)
String Quartet No.74 in g minor, Op.74 No.3 (1793)
Amadeus String Quartet.

HENZE, Hans Werner (Germany, 1926-2012)

'*Concerto for Brass'?*
possibly Variations for Brass Quintet (1981)?
OR
Der langwierige Weg in die Wohnung der Natascha Ungeheuer
(*The Tedious Way to Natascha Ungeheuer's Apartment*) (1971)
'a show for 17 performers'
William Pearson, baritone; Philip Jones Brass Ensemble; Fires of London; Stomu Yamashta, percussion; Hans Werner Henze, conductor
DGG, rec. September 1971.

HINDEMITH, Paul (Germany-USA, 1895-1963)

Concert Music ('Konzertmusik') for Piano, Brass and Harps, Op.49 (1930)
Monique Haas, piano; Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra; Paul Hindemith, conductor.
DGG 474 770-2. Recorded Berlin-Dahlem, Jesus-Christus-Kirche, October 1957.

Symphony, *Die Harmonie der Welt ('The Music of the Spheres')* (1951-7)
Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra; Paul Hindemith, conductor
DGG 474 770-2. Recorded Berlin-Dahlem, Jesus-Christus-Kirche,
September-October 1957.

Concerto for Orchestra, Op.38 *(1925)*
Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra; Paul Hindemith, conductor
DGG 474 770-2. Recorded Berlin-Dahlem, Jesus-Christus-Kirche,
September-October 1957.

Amor – Psyche: Ballet Overture for Orchestra (1943)
Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra; Paul Hindemith, conductor
DGG 474 770-2. Recorded Berlin-Dahlem, Jesus-Christus-Kirche,
September-October 1957.

Violin Sonata in C, Op.31 No.1 (1939)
Wolfgang Schneidermann, violin; Carl Seeman, piano
#Decca DL9980, no date.

HONEGGER, Arthur (Switzerland, 1892-1955)

Symphonie liturgique - Symphony No.3 (' Liturgical'), H.186 (1946)
Paris Conservatoire Orchestra/Robert F.Denzler
Decca ECS 640, recorded in 1956.

JANACEK, Leos (Czechoslovakia, 1854-1928)

String Quartet No.1 – 'Kreutzer Sonata' (1923)
Carl Pini String Quartet
#Cherry Pie LA 07724, released in 1978.

String Quartet No.1 – 'Kreutzer Sonata' (1923)
String Quartet No.1 – 'Intimate Letters' (1928)
Janacek Quartet
#Supraphon SUA 50556, released in 1963.

Jewish Music *(listed under 'Miscellaneous')*

Ceremonial Music of the Synagogue
performed by the Cantor, E. Haçmann.

KALOMIRIS, Manolis (Greece, 1883-1962) … see also 'Greek Folk Music'

Greek songs
Litsa Liolni, Zoe Vlakopoulous, Elli Nicolaidou.

KODALY, Zoltan (Hungary, 1882-1967)

Variations on the Hungarian Folksong, 'The Peacock' (1939)
Chicago Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati, conductor
Mercury MG 50038, released in 1955.

Variations on the Hungarian Folksong, The Peacock (1939)
Suite, 'Hary Janos'
Dances of Galanta
Psalmus Hungaricus, Op.13 (1923)
William McAlpine, tenor; London Philharmonic Choir
London Philharmonic Orchestra, Georg Solti, conductor
#Decca Eclipse ECS 533, released in 1954.

KOECHLIN, Charles (France, 1867-1950)

'Les Bandar-Log', Op.76 (1940) symphonic poem after Kipling's *The Jungle Book*
BBC Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati, conductor
HMV ASD 639. Released in 1965.

LISZT, Franz (Hungary, 1811-1886)

Piano Concerto No.1 in E flat, S.124 (1830-1849)
No details

MAHLER, Gustav (Austria, 1860-1911)

Symphony No.2 in c minor ('Resurrection') (1888-1894)
Vienna Symphony Orchestra, Otto Klemperer, conductor.
Live performance 18 May 1952.
#Festival/Testament SBT2 – 1456 [possibly 78rpm ?]

*Symphony No.4 in G (*1899-1900)
Margaret Ritchie, soprano; Concertgebouw Orchestra; Eduard van Beinum, cond.
#Decca 421 40 2. 1950?

Symphony No.8 in E flat ('Symphony of a Thousand') (1905-10)
Soloists, choirs, Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Rafael Kubelik, conductor
#DGG – studio recordings 25-26 June 1970.

Symphony No.9 in D (1908-9)
Vienna Symphony Orchestra; Jascha Horenstein, conductor
Vox CDX2 5509. Recorded in 1952 (Mono).

Das Lied von der Erde ('The Song of the Earth') (1908-9)
Kathleen Ferrier, contralto; Julius Patzak, tenor
Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, Bruno Walter, conductor
Decca LP LXT 2721-2722) recorded in 1952.
Remastered in 2003 by Mark Obert-Thorn (Naxos Historical 8.110871)

Das Klagende Lied ('The Song of Lamentation') (1878-80; 1899 version)
Hartford (CT) Symphony Chorale & Orchestra; Fritz (sic) Mahler, conductor
#Vanguard. Recorded in 1959.

Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen ('Songs of a Wayfarer') (1884)
Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, baritone
Philharmonia Orchestra; Wilhelm Furtwangler, conductor
HMV XLP 30044, recorded in 1959 (same LP as below).

Kindertotenlieder ('Songs on the Death of Children') (1901-04)
Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, baritone
Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra; Rudolf Kempe, conductor
HMV XLP 30044. 1959 (same LP as above).

MESSIAEN, Olivier (France, 1908-1992)

Quatuor pour le fin du temps ('Quartet for the End of Time') (1941)
Olivier Messiaen, piano. Olivier Messiaen, piano. Jean Pasquier, violin. Etienne Pasquier, cello. Andrew Vacellier, clarinet.
#Record Society Ltd RS 14 (Accord) 461744-2.

Louange à l'Immortalité de Jésus
Final movement from *Quatuor pour le fin du temps* (1941)
Praise to the immortality of Jesus, for violin and piano.
#Telefunken.

Vingt regards sur l'enfant Jesus ('Twenty Glimpses of the Infant Jesus') (1944)
Yvonne Loriod, piano solo
#Westminster (2 LPs)- Erato 4509 91705 2

Turangalîla-symphonie (1948)
Yvonne Loriod (piano); Jeanne Loriod (ondes martenot);
ORTF Orchestra; Maurice le Roux, conductor
#Vega/Accord, Boxed set (supervised by Messiaen), recorded in 1961.

Chronochromie (1960)
BBC Symphony Orchestra, Antal Dorati, conductor
HMV ASD 639, recorded in 1965.

MONTEVERDI, Claudio (Italy, 1567-1643)

Marien-Vespers ('Vespers of the Blessed Virgin Mary') (1610)
Soloists; Monteverdi Choir of Hamburg; Concentus Musicus of Vienna;
Jurgen Jurgens, conductor
#Telefunken Das Alte Werk 6.35045 FA, (boxed set) rec. October 1966, Vienna.

MOZART, Wolfgang Amadeus (Austria, 1756-1791)

Divertimento No.11 in D, K251 (1776)
#Sarec.

Piano Quintet in E Flat, K.452 (1784)
Walter Gieseking, piano; Philharmonia Wind Quartet
#Testament/Warner Classics 3532262, recorded in 1955.

PROKOFIEV, Sergei (Russia, 1891-1953)

Symphony No.5 in B Flat, Op.100 (1944)
Philadelphia Orchestra; Eugene Ormandy, conductor
Columbia MS recorded in 1958.

Piano Concerto No.3 in C, Op. 26 (1914-21)
Julius Katchen, piano
Suisse Romande Orchestra; Ernset Ansermet, conductor
Decca LXT 2894. 1954/1960.

*Sinfonia Concertante in e minor, O*p.125 (1952)
Mstislav Rostropovich, cello
Royal Philharmonic Orchestra; Sir Malcolm Sargent, conductor
EMI Classics, recorded on 15 April 1957.

RAVEL, Maurice (France, 1875-1937)

String Quartet in F (1903)
Budapest String Quartet
CBS MS 6015

RIADIS, Emilio (Greece, 1885-1935)

Greek songs
No details

ROUSSEL, Albert (France, 1869-1937)

Piano Concerto in G, Op.36 (1937)
No details

SATIE, Erik (France, 1866-1925)

Piano Music Volume 1, including
Trois morceaux en forme de poire (1903)
Aldo Ciccolini, piano (1926-2015)
#EMI 2C 069-10.780, recorded in 1966.

Piano Music Volume 2
Aldo Ciccolini, piano
#American Angel S 36459, recorded in 1968.

SCHOENBERG, Arnold (Austria-USA, 1874-1951)

Five Pieces for Orchestra, Op.16 (1909)
London Symphony Orchestra; Antal Dorati, conductor
#CBS/ Mercury Living Presence 432 0062.

Verklaërte Nacht, Op.4 ('Transfigured Night') (1899)
Hollywood String Quartet (Sextet?)
Testament SBT 1031. Hollywood, CA. Recorded in August 1950.

Piano Concerto, Op.42 (1942)
Alfred Brendel, piano; S.W.German Radio Orchestra of Baden Baden;
Michael Gielen, conductor.
#Vox/Turnabout TV 340515. 1958/19 (as below).

Violin Concerto, Op.36 (1936)
Wolfgang Marschner, violin; S.W.German Radio Orchestra of Baden Baden;
Michael Gielen, conductor.
#Vox/Turnabout TV 340515. 1958/1969 (as above).

Waltz, No.5 from *Five Piano Pieces,* Op.23 (1923)
Jeanne Manchon-Theis, piano
Ducretet-Thomson MEL 94008, released in 1954.

SCHUBERT, Franz (Austria, 1797-1828)

Symphony No.3 in D, D.200 (1815)
Concertgebouw Orchestra; Eduard van Beinum, conductor
Philips, recorded in June 1955.

String Quintet in C, D.956 (1828)
Hollywood String Quartet (Quintet?)
Testament SBT 1031, Hollywood, CA. recorded in January 1951.

Piano Quintet in A, D.667 Op.114 ('Trout') (1819)
Clifford Curzon, piano; Members of the Vienna Octet [*PW lists as Vienna String Quartet]*
#Decca LXT 5433.

Octet in F. D.803 (1824) *[PW lists in the key of F sharp]*
Berlin Philharmonic Octet
#DGG.

SCULTHORPE, Peter (Australia, 1929-2014)

Irkanda IV (1961)
Leonard Dommett, solo violin; Melbourne Symphony Orchestra;
John Hopkins, conductor.
ABC/World Record Club R 00028 / S FRAM 1(also Odyssey, USA).

String Quartet No.6 (1965)
Austral String Quartet
World Record Club SA-601.

String Quartet No.9 (1975)
Carl Pini String Quartet
#Cherry Pie LA 07724. 1978.

SHOSTAKOVICH, Dmitri (Russia, 1906-1975)

String Quartet No.8, Op.110 (1960)
Borodin Quartet
#Decca SXL 6036, 1962.

SIBELIUS, Jean (Finland, 1908-1957)

The Swan of Tuonela (1895) from the *Lemminkäinen Suite* Op. 22,
Valse triste, Op.44 No.1 (1903)
The Philadelphia Orchestra. Eugene Ormandy, conductor
Sony 88697689752

STOCKHAUSEN, Karlheinz (Germany,1928-2007)

Nr.5 *Zeitmasse* (1955-56)
Hollywood musicians? Robert Craft, conductor
Odyssey, NY 1959

Momente (1962-64/1969) (1965 version)
Martina Arroyo, soprano; Alfons Kontarsky, Hammond organ; Aloys Kontarsky, Lowrey organ; chorus and members of the orchestra of Radio Cologne (WDR); Herbert Schernus, choir master; Karlheinz Stockhausen, conductor.
Studio-Reihe neuer Musik.
Wergo WER 60024 (LP).

STRAVINSKY, Igor (Russia-USA,1882-1971)

Duo Concertant (1932)
Wolfgang Schneiderhahn, violin; Carl Seemann, piano
Decca DL9980, n.d.

Concerto in E flat ('Dumbarton Oaks') (1937-8)
Dumbarton Oaks Festival Orchestra, Igor Stravinsky, conductor,
Record Society, recorded 28 May 1947.

TARTINI, Giuseppe (Italy,1692-1770)

Trio in E major for 2 violins and harpsichord
David & Igor Oistrakh, violins; Hans Pischner, harpsichord.
DGG LPM 18393, recorded in 1957.

VERDI, Giuseppe (Italy, 1813-1901)

Requiem Mass (1874)
Soloists with St Hedwig's Cathedral Choir
RIAS Orchestra of Berlin; Ferenc Fricsay, conductor
DGG 447 442-2. Recorded. at Jesus Christus Kirche, Berlin, in September 1953.

VIVALDI, Antonio (Italy, 1678-1741)

Concerto in a minor for Two Violins
Concerto grosso in a minor, Op.3 No.8 *from 'L'estro armonico'*
David & Igor Oistrakh, violins; Gewandhaus Orchestra; Serge Koussevitsky, conductor
DGG 18393, recorded in 1957.

WAGNER, Richard (Germany, 1813-1883)

*Tristan und Isolde (*first perf. 10 June 1865)
Kirsten Flagstad, soprano; Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, baritone; Ludwig Suthaus, tenor; Blanche Thebom, mezzosoprano; Josef Greindl, bass; Rudolf Shcock, tenor
Chorus of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden
Philharmonia Orchestra; Wilhelm Furtwangler, conductor
EMI Classics (boxed set) [Naxos Historical 8.110321-24] recorded in June 1952.

Liebestod, from *Tristan und Isolde* ('Love-Death')
Kirsten Flagstad, soprano
Philharmonia Orchestra; Wilhelm Furtwangler, conductor
EMI/HMV Classics. 1952 (as above)

WEBERN, Anton (Austria, 1883-1945)

Complete works, directed by Robert Craft
Columbia Masterworks, K4 L 232,1957,
re-released by Naxos on three CDs 8.501402 (1989).

Five Pieces for Orchestra, Op.10 (1910)
London Symphony Orchestra; Antal Dorati, conductor
#CBS/ Mercury Living Presence MLP 432 0062

Variations for Piano, Op.27 (1936)
Jeanne Manchon-Theis, piano
Ducretet-Thomson MEL94008, released in 1954.

WEILL, Kurt (Germany-USA, 1900-1950)

Berlin Theatre Songs
Lotte Lenya, *chanteuse*. Ensemble unknown
Perhaps from '*September Song and Other American Theatre Songs of Kurt Weill'*
#Coronet, to Columbia KL 5229, recorded August 1957.

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[898] Unpublished typescript. Papers of Patrick White, 1930-2002. National Library of Australia, MS-MS9982, Series 5.8, folder 13.

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