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Malcolm Cole: James Cook University
Community music education in Cairns: 1920 to 1950

Abstract

Though the Queensland Department of Public Instruction attempted to deliver a comprehensive school music education through the introduction of a new and revitalised syllabus in 1930, the reality was that the most pervasive and effective music education for children and adults in the 20th century in Cairns, and indeed for most of Australian society, was provided by community music groups often supported by the work of private music teachers and/or significant families. This article documents community groups from the Anglo-Celtic, Aboriginal and Torres Strait cultures in Cairns which had strong senses of self-identity, relied on many donated hours of amateur and professional goodwill, involved cross generational music making activities that was most marked in particularly influential families, provided regular performance opportunities and gathered support and funds to supply instruments, rehearsal venues and ultimately, music education for their members. Bartleet, Dunbar-Hall, Letts and Schippers (2008) have identified similar significant factors including infrastructure, organization, social engagement, dynamic music-making, engaging pedagogy/facilitation and links to schools in the dynamics of successful community music making in contemporary Australia. Community music education was generally delivered through particular cultural methods and procedures. This paper documents the activities of a number of co-existing musical communities in Cairns in a multi-cultural population (where multi-cultural describes different cultural groups co-existing alongside one another rather than interacting with each other), each being largely independent and relatively narrow in its activities. Despite this, there is some evidence that shows that some musical activities tended towards intercultural musical processes and others were culturally imposed, such as Western music being taught in schools and churches to all cultures. The paper offers an insight into community music education practices in a remote country town in Australia as advances in the technologies of wireless, film and gramophone began to play increasingly pervasive and influential roles in formal and informal music education practices.

Keywords

Cairns, music education, history, music learning and teaching, community music, Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, Anglo-Celtic.

Warning: Indigenous Australians are advised that images or names of people now deceased are included.

Community music education in Cairns: 1920 to 1950

Music performance, learning and teaching occur in communities over a wide range of settings, contexts, styles and functions that relate to culture and cultures. Music making in pre-contact Indigenous societies on the Australian continent took place

82in both formal and informal settings. Since white settlement, formal and informal community music making in Australia has been practised in almost all regional and metropolitan towns and cities in many contexts and forms that include brass bands, choirs, orchestras, church music groups, Indigenous

groups and ethnic cultural ensembles such as Chinese opera groups. Bartleet, Dunbar-Hall, Letts and Schippers (2008, p. 21) describe contemporary community music making as encompassing:

a wide and diverse range of musics, which reflect and enrich the cultural life of the participants and their broader community. Common features of these activities are a primary focus on the specific competencies and ambitions of the participants (rather than didactic teaching of a predetermined repertoire), and a sense of social cohesion that supports musical development, often with a strong drive for excellence in process as well as product.

Many features of community music life in Cairns in the period of 1920 to 1950 resonate with this description as will be seen, and continue to do so to the present day. However, in contrast with the bracketed section of the statement above, there is evidence that didactic teaching of a predetermined repertoire was present in the period.

Bands, Choral Societies, Orchestras in Anglo-Celtic Cairns

The remote township of Cairns in Far North Queensland from 1920 to 1950 was musically active with numerous music groups operating regularly in the Anglo- Celtic community. These community music groups had strong, established traditions of rehearsal, recruitment and performance that had managed to withstand and also possibly benefit from, the increasingly musically invasive innovations in, and availability of, entertainment media technology such as radio and gramophones. These associated, registered organisations with constitutions, executive officers, rules, bank accounts etc. have provided and continue to provide organised, often sequentially graded music learning and performance opportunities for community members. It needs to be acknowledged that these musical groups were not the beginnings of a musical community in Cairns. Groups had been operating in Cairns since before the turn of the century and many performances were presented by church groups as well as some individual producers (Dawson, 1998). Community music groups were a feature of early Australian townships as Whiteoak (2003, p. 287) notes:

Wind band music has been part of Australian life from the beginning of colonisation. Reed and brass and all-brass bands became central to the fabric of the social and cultural life of a vast number of small and large communities beyond the chief cities.

The brass band movement of British origins, thrived on uniformity to achieve its musical goals. For example the three valve instrument design for all instruments excepting the slide trombone, allowed for ease of acquisition of skills that were transferable to other band instruments as required. Also, all parts were printed in the treble clef, including the bass instruments, to ensure all members developed the same skills (Whiteoak, 2003). This uniformity extended to the desired composition of each band being 24 male members, similar to the concept that a cricket or rugby team has a certain number of members, each with his own task to fulfill.

Brass band music activity, or 'banding', began soon after the white settlement of Cairns in 1876. According to the historian of the Cairns Municipal Band,

“Photographic records show the commencement of banding in the late 1880s which has continued in an unbroken line of community and cultural activity since.” (Cairns Municipal Band, 2001) A number of bands operated in Cairns and district throughout the 20th century including The Cairns and Citizens Municipal Brass Band, The Yarrabah Brass Band, The Cairns Concert Band, The Cairns Railway Band, The Cairns Boys’ Band (later to become the Cairns Combined Schools Band), and the visiting Army Concert Band. There was also a Cairns Pipe Band (Highland pipes).



Plate 1: Cairns Railway and City Concert Band 1923: note the boys in the front row. Photograph from the Cairns Historical Society collection. City Place, Cairns.

In the early 1930s, the Cairns Citizens Band changed its name to include “51st Battalion” to reflect its association with the local militia. In 1936, this band travelled to New Zealand and won the New Zealand National Championships under the baton of James Compton, said to be “one of Australian’s finest cornet players” (Greaves, 1996, p. 66). Compton was recruited from his role as conductor of the Bondi Beach Concert Band to Cairns to conduct the Cairns band and to teach some of its junior members. The enormity of this international trip and its musical implications were reflected in an article in *The Cairns Post* in November of 1935 that included excerpts from a letter from the secretary of the Wellington Brass and Pipe Bands’ Association:

I feel I would be lacking in my duty as the representative of approximately 400 bandsmen in Wellington, if I did not do all in my power to ensure the success of such a courageous undertaking as the visit to New Zealand band contests, and the terrible amount of hard work and self sacrifice that you no doubt have already put in . . . 2

The Schipke family were, and still are, central to the success story of brass banding in Cairns. Brothers Fred and George Schipke, now both in their 80s,

still play the cornet and trombone respectively in Cairns' bands. Their grandfather was the conductor of the Cooktown Rifle Club Band before moving to Cairns in 1930. As a young boy Fred had lessons on cornet with James Compton.



Plate 2: The 51st Battalion Band marching in Cairns, 1934. Photograph from the Cairns Historical Society collection. City Place, Cairns.

George Schipke, born in 1930, recalled that at his first rehearsal with the Cairns Combined Schools Boys' Band, he had no idea how to read music or play the trombone: "as you learned to play the instrument, you learned to read music" (Schipke, personal communication, 2011). This band rehearsed under the Schipke family home in Upward St. in the late 1930s. George went on to win Solo Australian Champion of Champions at the national championships in the 1950s while only having limited private lessons on trombone. He has also won Champion Tenor Trombone Solo at the Queensland Band Association competitions in 1952, 54, 58 and 79. Almost all of his learning and development occurred in the band rehearsals. This is a story of a completely developed musician who has been engaged musically at a high level all his life. George came to teaching later in his life when in his 60s, and he is acknowledged by Greg Aitken, Lecturer in Euphonium at the Queensland Conservatorium, as being one of his teachers (Bone & Paull, 2007). The Cairns Boys' Band provided instruments, sheet music, weekly lessons and rehearsals for a small fee to auditioned recruits from three local State schools.

² It is possible to hear recordings of both James Compton (1927) and the Cairns' Citizens Band (1936) on the Soundabout Australia double CD *The Great Bands of Australia*.



Plate 3: The Cairns Combined Schools Boys Band in 1936. George Schipke's older brother Fred, is in the back row, 6th from the left. Fred still plays Principal Cornet with the Cairns Brass Band at 88 years old. He has been an active member of Cairns Brass for 80 years. Photograph from the Cairns Historical Society collection. City Place, Cairns.



Plate 4: The Cairns Pipe Band is shown marching in the 1930s. The marching Pipe Band appears to be of adult males in full uniform, complete with band master, spats and sporrans. Photograph from the Cairns Historical Society collection. City Place, Cairns.

Choral Societies provided somewhat more accessible forms of community music making experiences than bands since instruments did not need to be purchased, maintained, taught and practised, and women could also participate. The Cairns Choral Society was formed in 1923 and has

maintained an almost unbroken record of activities since that date. Through the 1920s and 30s the Choral Society performed primarily at the North Queensland Eisteddfod as well as staging a “Grand Concert Series” of three concerts in Cairns over a year in association with the Lyric Orchestra. At one of these concerts, a “visiting artist” would perform, often a vocalist or violinist. Such artists were brought to North Queensland by a networked, collaborative effort between the Townsville, Cairns and Charters Towers Choral Societies where the artist would perform at many concerts in a tour of North Queensland. Works on one program in 1933 included an orchestral overture to open each Act, choir items by Parry, Elgar and Davidson, a madrigal by Morley, other duets and solos, and operatic arias and other songs of the era performed by the guest artist Miss Gwladys Evans who was billed as a “Dramatic Soprano from Sydney”.



Plate 5: Cover of the 1933 Cairns Choral and Orchestral Society Second Grand Concert. The program is a presentation of “serious” music taken from the art music canon that required a high degree of skill and preparation and would not have been viewed as light entertainment. Miss Evans’ final bracket of songs by Hughes of settings of nursery rhymes may have been the lightest musical offering for the evening.



Plate 6: Cairns Choral Society, Women's Chorus, 1934 with Mr. Victor Ennis, conductor. Photograph from the Cairns Historical Society collection. City Place, Cairns.

Plate 6 is a formal photograph that shows adult women in similar but not identical white dresses, black shoes and haircuts. As with the brass bands, the wearing of a uniform or uniform type of clothing was a feature of community music performance groups that helped to promote a strong sense of identity.

At the same time, community orchestras were also functioning in Cairns. The *Cairns Post* reported in 1924 of the Lyric Orchestra that “the orchestra will exist for the sole purpose of giving assistance at public functions and at entertainments in aid of deserving institutions.”



Plate 7: The Cairns Lyric Orchestra, portrait in 1950 Symphony Concerts program.

The Cairns Amateur Operatic Society was formed in 1928 by Mr. Victor Ennis for “the purpose of producing Musical Comedy, firstly to educate, secondly to assist charity.” (Dawson, 1998, p. 91) It is interesting to note that the first

reason for producing musical comedy was seen to be for community education rather than entertainment. The Lyric Operatic Society operated during the 1930s and finished around or before 1937 with the Cairns Operatic Society operating somewhat in competition with it. In a promotional article in *The Cairns Post* in May, 1935, for an upcoming Cairns Choral and Orchestral Society Third Subscriber's Concert, the supporting orchestra was described as being comprised of "young players, many of these are following in their parents' footsteps and making music their hobby." This indicates strong family commitment to community music.

Community music was supported by the ongoing work of private instrumental teachers. Private teachers taught students in their own homes or in hotel lounges during school lunch hours, before and after school, and on weekends on a weekly basis for a negotiated fee. Private teaching was not regulated in any way with a teacher's reputation being built from successful outcomes in Australian Music Examinations Board (AMEB) and other boards' examinations and Eisteddfods.

Eisteddfods

Like the AMEB, the Eisteddfod movement regulated and defined formal music education, but through the competition of community ensemble and solo public performances. Eisteddfods were administered by committees under a Constitution as music festivals. The committee oversaw events, selected repertoire that was linked with graded standards of performance, organised adjudicators and set rules and procedures. The AMEB and Eisteddfod movement relied heavily on the work of the private, suburban music teachers noted earlier, who were, and continue to be, central to the workings of these organisations. Eisteddfods began in North Queensland in 1888 when the first "Musical and Literary Festival Eisteddfod" was held in Charters Towers, at that time Queensland's second largest city. The North Queensland Eisteddfod Council was formed in 1921 to oversee annual competitions staged at Easter and which, as far as road and weather conditions would allow, rotated the event among the townships of Charters Towers, Ayr, Townsville, Innisfail and Cairns. This tradition is still enacted today. In February 1924, the *Cairns Post* commented that "inter city competition of this kind will tend more than anything to raise the standard of music in Cairns, and with it add considerably to the social amenities of life in the Far North." Winners were noted in the local press.

The Objects of the Constitution of The Eisteddfod Council of Queensland in 1939 were:

(a) The promotion and regulation of Eisteddfodau in Queensland. (b) To foster and promote in every worthy manner the love of music, art and literature. (c) To establish scholarships of bursaries to aid the development of musical, artistic and literary talent.

Points of interest in the 1939 Cairns program are that the Welsh National Anthem was to be sung at the commencement of each session of the Eisteddfod and that all performers, excepting conductors and accompanists, must be amateurs (Eisteddfod program, 1939). The level and breadth of community involvement and interest in the Eisteddfod can be gauged by the

number of advertisements in the official programme for teachers, accompanists, beauty shops, hat shops, dance and drama studios and more. Eminent and successful musicians were engaged to travel to North Queensland to take on the role of adjudicators, thus maintaining links with musical society in metropolitan centres.

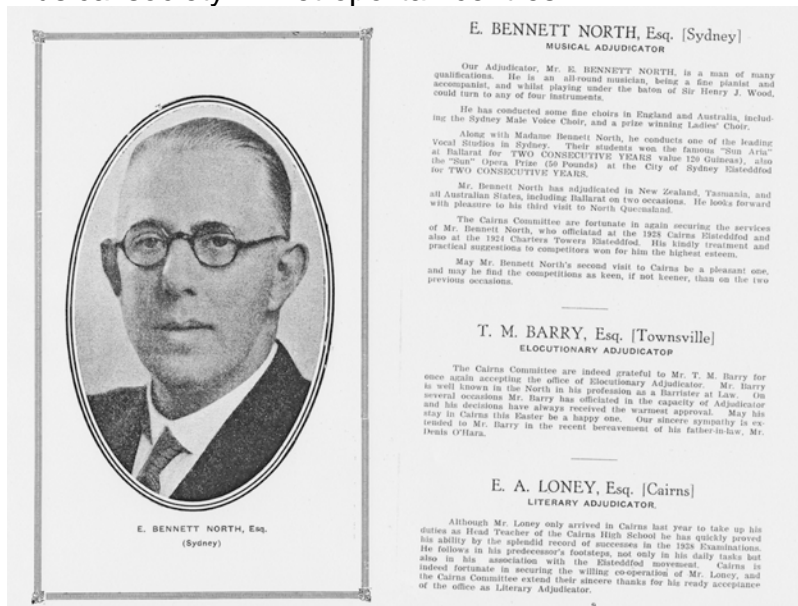


Plate 8: The 1932 First Cairns and District Schools Eisteddfod program featured Mr. North from Sydney as the adjudicator.

Churches

Music and religious ritual are deeply connected in almost all cultures. By the 1930s in Cairns, there were many churches operating regularly. Church services, Masses and special events, all contained a musical element to some degree. An article in the *Cairns Post* of October 19, 1929, described the music provided at a Pontifical High Mass at St. Monica's Cathedral on the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone for St. Augustine's College: "The choir, under the baton of Miss Eileen O'Hara, B.A., L.A.B., rendered Gounod's Convent Mass. Mr. A. W. McManis was the organist and Mr. R. Ryan rendered the chanting." Gounod's Convent Mass would provide a major challenge to any SATB choir (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and would require clear direction and reasonably skilled choristers to present such a work.

In 1938, the combined choirs of the Central Methodist Church and St. Andrews Church presented a performance of "The Messiah". As with the Choral Societies' Grand Concerts, the combining of community groups assisted in providing the necessary numbers and expertise to produce large scale works under the direction of a single conductor.

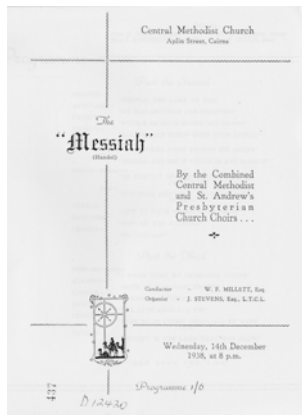


Plate 9: Cover of the program for the Central Methodist Church "The Messiah" 1938.

It is apparent that the combined choirs were to present the whole of this well known and popular oratorio that requires complex, four part singing, and vocal solos along with competent organ playing. This would have been a major project that would have required great commitment in time and energy to prepare from all those involved. A member of this choir recalled that she was occupied every night of the week and all weekend in some form of community music making (Kelly, personal communication, 2010). From the presentation of such works, it is obvious that the collective community desire to present complex liturgical works was present. Without recordings of these choirs to refer to, it is almost impossible to determine the standard of performance that was reached.

However, the fact that there were conductors, singers, instrumentalists and others who were prepared to work towards presenting such music, that copies of the sheet music had to exist in Cairns, and that there was enough common cultural knowledge familiar with the genre reveals that the culture of liturgical singing was quite advanced and widespread. Churches also ran junior choirs that provided a steady stream of choristers into the adult choirs. A photo of the St. Andrews Presbyterian Church Junior Choir in 1935 shows Reverend Smith as the conductor.



Plate 10: St. Andrews Presbyterian Church Junior Choir 1935. Rev. Smith is on the right side in the hat. Photograph from the Cairns Historical Society collection. City Place, Cairns.

The music activities of the Anglo-Celtic community were in essence, transplanted structures from traditional Anglo-European cultures. Modes of transmission tended towards the analytic and literate except perhaps in the case of the young recruits to the Boy's Band who were forced to learn by immersion, therefore tending towards holistic and aural learning styles when they began rehearsing (Schippers, 2010, p.136). Continuing this trend sees musical interactions that were strongly gendered and highly organised with long-term goals as seen in the male only brass bands and lengthy rehearsal periods required to present *The Messiah* and major concerts.

Aboriginal communities

In contrast to the static, monocultural and notation-based type of transmission which best describes most Anglo-Celtic music teaching and learning styles, Aboriginal groups in Cairns largely used aural/oral teaching and learning processes. At the Lyons St. Aboriginal settlement, a photograph from the 1940s shows players posing in playing position and holding a clarinet, three guitars of which two are held horizontally, a banjo mandolin, and a button accordion. There is one woman in the middle with no instrument, identified by Bill Ellwood as a missionary³, and a range of ages present. George Skeene (2008, p. 39), growing up in the Lyons St. Aboriginal reserve remembered:

Grandad Harry played the piano accordion and harmonica. My father played the guitar, the accordion, banjo mandolin, steel guitar, ukulele and harmonica. My father taught Mick and me to play the guitar and banjo mandolin. . . we never read music, we played by ear.



Plate 11: Lyons St music group, 1940s. Photograph from the Cairns Historical Society collection. City Place, Cairns.

³ Bill Ellwood is an Irikandji man living in Cairns.

George recalled being taught English songs and dances at school along with lessons on reading music but he “never picked it up” (Skeene, personal

communication, 2011). Retired Bishop James Leftwich (Leftwich, personal communication, 2011) recalled that music was an integral part of community and church life in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community he grew up in during the 1940s and 1950s:

Aunty [learned to play the accordion] at Bible college in Brisbane, she then taught the other Aunty Joan. Uncle Kevin just picked it up. A lot of people were playing those instruments at social engagements, in the church, steel guitar, accordion, ukeleles, mandolins. They were quite keen and good with it. I don't remember anyone getting taught by any professionals, they played by ear, there was no sheet music.

Interestingly there was no Indigenous cultural practice allowed in his church even though it was run and attended by Aboriginal people. If Aboriginal people wanted to sing and dance their traditional songs and dances, this was done on special social or recreation days. While the music groups within the Aboriginal community were not formal like European music groups, their constant musical interactions in a variety of family, social and religious settings were integral to this community's music learning and teaching processes. Such processes related more to holistic and aural modes of transmission than to segmented, sequential, notation based teaching and learning.

Torres Strait Islander communities

Prior to World War II, the first migration to Cairns from the Torres Strait had occurred on only a small scale. Many of Cairns' Torres Strait Islanders lived in a small community about a kilometre away from the centre of town called Malaytown, which does not exist today. Malaytown was where most non white residents of Cairns lived, including also South Sea Islanders, 'Hindus', Chinese, Japanese, Jamaicans, Filipinos and some Aborigines (Hodes, 1998). Facilities and infrastructure such as electricity supply at Malaytown were not as sophisticated as in Cairns city and it was a place free from official European surveillance, creating a relaxed tropical ambience. Much informal music making happened in the unique community atmosphere that prevailed there. Pearling and trochus boats came to Cairns and the crews would visit Malaytown, much as they did at the nearby mission settlement of Yarrabah, and spend the evenings dancing and singing. "The music and songs and the beating of the drums, mostly on kerosene tins created a very happy atmosphere. Even the white people who lived in Bunda and Kenny streets would wander down to listen and watch."(Guivarra, 1996, p.4) Malaytown was a geographically, socially and culturally separate area from Cairns and many Cairns residents were not aware that it existed.



Plate 12: Malaytown on a tributary of the Cairns inlet in the 1930s. Photograph from the Cairns Historical Society collection. City Place, Cairns.

95

Writer, unionist, female liberationist, traveller, Communist Party member and activist, Jean Devanney wrote about the dynamic music making at Malaytown in 1938:

The natives' orchestra supplied the best dance music in Cairns. Its rhythm was an incitement, its personnel intriguing. A grand orchestra for dancing beneath tropical skies! The melody was pure and true as a bell. Music for sensuous and languorous dancing, the waltz time always in the Italian beat...the accordion, the clarinet, the guitars and violins. (Devanney, 1944, p.69)

This quote describes an intriguing intercultural musical scene where displaced Torres Strait Islanders are playing European dance music on European instruments in remote tropical North Queensland. In her unpublished memoir, Nancy Guivarra recalled:

Most Saturday nights, dances would be held . . . and the whole community would gather there to dance to the lively music; supplied by the Jacobs and Pitt families. We had Benny Jacobs on the turtle back mandolin, Doug Jacobs on the steel guitar, also Tom Guivarra, Francis Guivarra on the banjo mandolin and Arthur Pitt on the Spanish guitar. Now and again the boys would switch and play Spanish. It was here I learned to dance (waltz) and sing some beautiful songs. And it was here the Pitt sisters, (Dulcie, Sophie and Heather) made their singing debut singing "Pidgin English Hula". (Guivarra, 1998, pp 1-2)

Douglas Pitt, a former resident of Yarrabah, was a noted musician who played in the Yarrabah Brass Band as well as singing and playing the accordion. His daughters, Heather, Dulcie and Sophie and son Wally, formed a singing group called *The Harmony Sisters* who became popular on a national scale. After

successful performances in Sydney in 1944, the group disbanded with Dulcie then adopting the stage name of Georgia Lee. She continued her singing career to become an international performer and recording artist who was to become the first Indigenous Australian to record a full LP record (Walker, 2000). Dulcie Pitt's niece, Wilma Reading, who spent her childhood in Cairns, has also performed and recorded internationally in an extraordinary career covering several decades. She is now living and teaching music in Cairns (Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2011). These are clear examples of how the dynamic community music making of Malaytown laid the foundations for future music making at national and international levels.

The second wave of migration occurred in 1942 when some of the Torres Strait Islands were evacuated. All women and children were forced to leave Thursday, Horn and Hammond Islands due to the imminent threat of warfare, while most of the men remained behind and enlisted. ⁴ A third migration wave was to occur from the 1950s onwards. It was the evacuations of 1942 that would accelerate intercultural music transmission in Cairns as there were also large numbers of American defence personnel based in Cairns at this time. The American services provided live music performances to boost morale and had bands stationed at major bases along the East coast. In Cairns, the US Services Pacific Band was led by Bob Lyons (Walker, 2000). Many of the Americans had musical skills and played jazz and blues:

The 'coloured evacuees' organised their own entertainments to keep their spirits up. With the massive American military presence along the coast, and greater exposure to radio and movies, American, and more especially, Afro- American and hula musical influences were more pervasive than ever (Mullins & Neuenfeldt, 2005, p. 115).

⁴ There were to be 800 Torres Strait Islander men in the Australian Defence Forces.

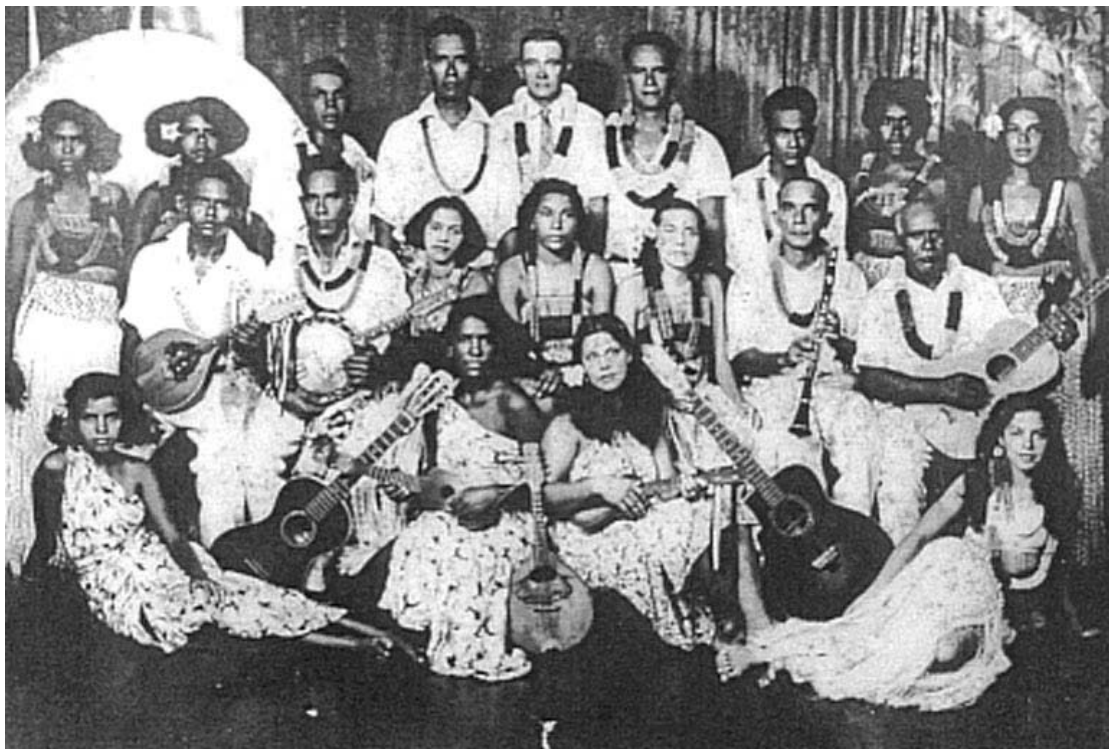


Plate 13: The Tropical Troubadours from Malaytown. Photograph from the Cairns Historical Society collection. City Place, Cairns.

The large music and dance group pictured above were called the Tropical Troubadours and performed in Malaytown in the 1940s. Note the ukuleles, guitars, mandolins, clarinets, banjo-mandolins, grass skirts and laes. The men would provide the instrumental music while the women would sing, dance and also play ukuleles out in front. The Pitt sisters and members of the Guivarra family are in this photo. "Hula" music was regularly performed and developed by Torres Strait Islanders in Cairns during the war and was influenced by Islander interactions with black American soldiers based in Cairns. Black American soldiers were not permitted to drink in mainstream hotels and therefore socialised with the Islander community in Malaytown. Auntie Mary Bowie, an enforced evacuee from Horn Island to Cairns, remembered hearing black American soldiers singing the blues in a striking example of an intercultural, informal, aurally based style of learning:

(We) Learned all by ear, we heard the American soldiers sing, and in the movies, and on the radio. Singing TI (Thursday Island) songs as well "The old TI". There were weekend dances at a certain house with all the TI people. Played guitars and banjos and got their guitars in Cairns. Everyone knew each other (Bowie, personal communication, 2009).

Conclusion

The formal activities of the Anglo-Celtic bands, orchestras, choral societies and church choirs promulgated, maintained and developed traditional Western musical forms whereas the more informal community music groups in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities of Cairns and Malaytown showed more openness to musical change than adherence to a static tradition. However such divisions were not exact, with some formal music groups demonstrating informal learning processes and vice versa. The formal groups were inclined to the standard, inherited musical canon while the Indigenous informal groups appear to have been more experimental across a range of styles. Learning was more likely to be holistic and aural among the Indigenous groups, with little formal authority recognised in teaching, as opposed to the highly stratified authority inherent in the AMEB/Eisteddfod model except where members of the Indigenous church were required to learn church songs in English.

Two significant features emerge from the operations and successes of the community music groups mentioned in this article. The first is that leading roles were played by influential outsider experts such as Compton and the American soldiers, who facilitated and provided engaging pedagogies in music making processes, and the second is that local, well known musical families such as the Schipkes and the Pitts, with several generations involved, provided sustained high quality contributions to the activities of the community.

Cairns today has a vibrant community music culture that exhibits remarkably similar traits to those documented in this paper and identified by Bartleet et al (2008). New community groups such as junior choirs and string orchestras, and the staging of community music workshops in a range of 21st century styles, run by the government agencies for youth, Indigenous peoples and

others, have appeared. School music education practices have developed profoundly since the 1920s yet community music groups continue to play an influential, educational and forming role in the development and lives of musicians, young and old in Cairns.

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99

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