

to folklore studies. Although the award itself went elsewhere, this book stands as a deserving tribute to one of our most revered tradition bearers.

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***Memories of Musical Lives: Music and Dance in Personal Music Collections from Australia and New Zealand.* Rosemary Richards and Julja Szuster, eds. Melbourne: Lyrebird Press, 2022. 218+xiii pp. ISBN 9780734037992 (paperback) or 9780734038005 (ebook).**

Music is light and easy to pack when it travels in the memory, or when condensed by hand into a few notebooks of favourite melodies. Edited by two Australian musicologists, the essays in this book explore how Scots and other emigrants recorded the music that was important to them, how it helped them survive the heartache of exile far from home, and how subsequent generations used their musical inheritance, remembered from abroad and recirculated in a new environment, to build mature communities and define an emerging colonial identity. Closer to our own time, these articles provide readers with a sense of what might be at the heart of this ‘roots’ music for descendants of the Scottish diaspora in post-colonial Australia and New Zealand.

While some of the case studies in this book explore print evidence, it is the account of how emigrants preserved their musical memories in handwritten manuscripts that will be of particular interest to readers of *Scottish Studies*. Manuscript scrapbooking, or ‘commonplacing’, is not unique to the colonial world. Almut Boehme, Music Curator at the National Library of Scotland, comments in the book’s preface that before the arrival of the photocopier, manuscript circulation was a pragmatic solution for sharing music: ‘composite volumes allow insights into musical tastes of the owner, musical ability, availability of instruments, and thus music making in the owner’s household’ (ix). These patterns were not unique to Australia and New Zealand, but perhaps even more necessary in areas far distant from European publishers. This review will focus on those essays that assess what we can learn from the personal libraries of antipodean emigrants of Scottish heritage.

Rosemary Richards’ essay, entitled “‘Heart, my heart, why so sad?’: Two migrants to Melbourne and their manuscript music collections’, draws on her doctoral research into the ‘home-bound’ music albums associated with Georgiana McCrae (1804–1890), illegitimate daughter of George Gordon, Marquis of Huntly.¹⁵ McCrae spent most of her childhood with her mother in London, but was exposed to Scottish music in happy interludes spent with her Gordon relatives as well as during her early adult life in Edinburgh, where she developed a reputation as an accomplished portrait painter. When she left Scotland aged thirty-six with her children to join her husband in Australia, she took with her not only clothes and furniture, but also music books containing handwritten transcriptions of her favourite songs, part of an extensive collection of music books that she eventually compiled and collected in her new home, the McCrae Homestead on the Mornington Peninsula in the state of Victoria, now [a site run by the Australian National Trust](https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/places/mccrae-homestead/).¹⁶ Scottish music constituted only part of her extensive library, although it is the part that will interest us here.

Comparing McCrae’s efforts to reproduce the Scottish drawing-room music-making of her youth with the collection made by another emigrant, Englishman Robert Wrede (1817–1857), Richards shows how both were interested in a similar range of European ‘fashionable’ music: operas, songs and dance. McCrae’s collection is distinctive, however, for revealing her interest in traditional music. One highlight in her library, in an album entitled the ‘Chaplin Music Book’, is a handwritten copy of a bagpipe lament, originally titled in Gaelic, that she may have encountered in Patrick MacDonald’s *Collection of Highland Vocal Airs* (1784). McCrae’s handwritten version combines this tune with a

¹⁵ Rosemary Jean Richards, ‘Georgiana McCrae’s Manuscript Music Collections: A Life in Music.’ (PhD diss. University of Melbourne, 2017), <https://minerva-access.unimelb.edu.au/handle/11343/192295>, accessed 10 April 2024. ‘Home-bound’ refers to personal collections of music – manuscripts, printed sheet music, or both – that were assembled and hand-bound into volumes by their owners.

¹⁶ <https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/places/mccrae-homestead/>.

set of English lyrics, 'Farewell to the mothers that bore us', taken from an 1858 English play; if you turn the sheet upside down, the same score has additional lyrics taken from a different theatrical source that refers to prisoners exiled to Siberia. This palimpsest, included in the illustrations, helps us understand how manuscript creation was not simply a matter of copying and transcribing, but allowed the owner to express her feelings of exile and nostalgia. While Richards does not suggest as much, it seems likely that McCrae, surely aware of the widely-disseminated tropes of exile common in Jacobite songs, may have intentionally repurposed that sentimentality in the context of her own colonial experience of displacement.

In an essay entitled 'Laing, Findlay and Baillie: Identifying Scottishness in the music collections of three Scottish Australian violinists', Shane Lestideau considers the Australian careers of three Scottish violinists and composers active between the late eighteenth and the mid-twentieth centuries. While all three men collected and composed tunes reflecting the standard sixteen- or thirty-two-bar structure of Scottish dance music, their approaches to composing and performing reflected the growing aspirations of Scottish-Australians over nearly 150 years, and the increasingly confident projection of their Scottish identity in the colonial and post-colonial periods. Lestideau's attempt to distil the essence of the sound of 'Scottish' music for Australian readers may seem rather naïve to us in Scotland, but she sensibly recognises how the evolution of both repertoire and performance style reflected changing relationships between the colonists and Scotland over time, and shows how – whether at country fairs styled as 'Highland Games' or performances of Scottish music within the art-music contexts of 'concerts' – such efforts helped to perpetuate and to raise the cultural profile of Scottish musical traditions in Australia.

The first composer discussed by Lestideau, Alexander Laing (1792–1868), was a convict who settled and farmed in Tasmania and never fully overcame the difficult circumstances of his arrival. His collection was substantially prepared, either as a gift or a commission, for a neighbour. In addition to remembering and writing down Scottish music, particularly dance tunes associated with Niel and Nathaniel Gow, Laing also composed tunes in a Scottish idiom that he named for people and places in Tasmania. These efforts helped him not only to compensate for the challenges of his own exile, but also to build networks with others of shared ethnicity.

James Findlay (1821–1905), also a farmer, was wealthier and better-educated than Laing. After emigrating by choice to the Sydney area, he worked to develop new farming estates. Findlay's collection included literary works by Burns and Walter Scott as well as music, and his contributions to his local community in Australia appear to have included organising social dances at which this music might be played. In its mixture of Scottish material with more generalised British songs of love and war, his collection is that of an educated man who aspires to prosper in his new environment.

Robert 'Ballantyne' Baillie (1886–1954) arrived in Australia in 1912 as a professional violinist. He worked as performer and violin teacher in an environment where classical music infrastructure had reached a point of relative maturity, and where being a particular kind of musician ('Scottish Australian') helped to position him in an increasingly competitive professional milieu. In addition to being a classically-trained musician, Baillie also presented himself as a tradition bearer. His transcriptions and arrangements, complete with bowing marks, of strathspeys and reels demonstrate his awareness of James Scott Skinner's mingling of Scottish tradition with European virtuosity, and his own compositions display confidence in transforming simple folk melodies into long-form, soloistic pieces with piano accompaniment: Scottish music presented as art music.

In a chapter entitled 'Dance music in nineteenth-century owner-bound albums', Heather Blasdale Clarke examines a book of dance music owned and compiled by a Scottish woman, Lucy Havens (c. 1798–1825). Comparing Havens' album with similar collections made by other women in nineteenth-century Australia, Clarke asks us to consider what such albums tell us about changing tastes in social dancing. Colonial dances gave young people opportunities to demonstrate their awareness of home-country fashions and identities, and thus tended to follow European trends. Born in Monimail in Fife but raised in the northwest of England, Lucy Havens enjoyed a reasonably affluent life in Sydney, married first to a local politician and then to a minister. Her music albums include dance music by

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Nathanial Gow, Clarkson, Davie, and Morris, which she arranged for the piano. While her description of this as ‘country dance’ music may strike Scottish readers as somewhat blunt, Clarke presents evidence that Scottish tunes regularly featured in early colonial social dances along with the specialist choreography associated with particular strathspeys and reels.

By the second half of the nineteenth century, however, fashions had changed. The Scottish and, indeed, English ‘country dance’ had been displaced by the French quadrille, the pan-European (originally Polish) polka, and the Austrian waltz, reflecting what was probably a similar fashion in Britain at the time. Nineteenth-century Australians also enjoyed the “schottische” – a European version of a Scots-snap dance similar to the polka that had little to do with Scottish tradition and more to do with European taste for romantic novels (in translation) by Walter Scott – Scottish identity as seen through a lens of romantic ‘othering’. Exceptionally, a fashion for the marginally more authentic-sounding ‘highland reel’ was sparked by Queen Victoria’s second son, Prince Alfred, during his tour of Australia in 1867, where on one occasion he apparently requested that dance. The prince’s request appears to have been for a particular dance tune rather than a whole repertoire, and its subsequent popularity probably said more about Australia’s affection for the royal family than about its Scottishness.

The other essays in this book, less relevant to Scottish studies, demonstrate how Australian music responded to new waves of music from jazz-age America. Influences from Asia, and indigenous populations, are not explored; the essays focus on a literate tradition of music curation, using western musical scores to reconstitute remembered repertoires. The two chapters dealing with New Zealand do not focus on the experiences of the many Scots who settled there, but rather upon the wider European repertoire featured in emigrant collections more generally. Clare Gleeson’s essay, ‘Those who played and bound: Bound volumes of piano music as an indicator of social change’, discusses how the popularity of the piano grew in New Zealand as in Australia, and includes anecdotes of fathers giving daughters pianos when they married as a mark of aspiring gentility – a theme that will remind some readers of New Zealand filmmaker Jane Campion’s 1993 film *The Piano*, about a fictional emigrant.

Finally, Matthew Stephens’ essay ‘From piano stool to library shelf: reconnecting library and museum owner-bound music collections with audiences’ brings us full circle. As curator of the 2019 exhibition ‘Songs of Home’ at the Museum of Sydney, Stephens collaborated with academics at Glasgow University and Southampton University in an AHRC-funded project that, although principally focused on the musical life of New South Wales in the first seventy years of its existence, highlighted the importance of Scottish music as one strand in the weave of Indigenous and diasporic identities in modern Australia. Here in Scotland, awareness of Australian musical connections has fed into recording projects like Concerto Caledonia’s *Songs of Home and Distant Isles: Music from Scotland in the Early Australian Colonies* (2020), which includes material from Georgiana McCrae’s collection, illustrating the middle-class Lowland Scottish music-making that Georgiana knew from her youth and which she tried to preserve in her new home. Stephens’ insights, like those of the other writers who contributed to this book, help us become aware of how these Scottish emigrants ‘curated’ the sounds of home, and thus allow us to imagine what that home world might have sounded like.

JANE PETTEGREE

***WEBSPINNER: Songs, Stories, and Reflections of Duncan Williamson, Scottish Traveller.* John D. Niles. Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2022. Pp. 343+ix. Maps; illus. [ISBN \(hardback\) 9781496841575](#).**

The present work adds to a considerable body of published literature, both academic and mainstream, documenting the life and traditions of the Scottish Travellers, and in particular the gifted singer and storyteller Duncan Williamson (1928–2007). But while acknowledging the most important of these earlier works, John D. Niles deliberately avoids duplicating information or materials that they contain, or that are otherwise widely available. As it turns out, the world of Duncan and his fellow Travellers