NOTICE OF 47th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting will be held in the Adelaide University Staff Club, North Terrace, Adelaide on:

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 26th, 1973 at 8 P.M.

Wines will be served from 7.30 p.m.

AGENDA

1. Apologies.
2. Confirmation of Minutes of Annual General Meeting held on Monday, November 27th, 1972 (see attached).
3. Annual Report – Honorary Secretary.
5. Resolutions or proposals submitted in accordance with Rule 20 (i) and (iii) of the Society's Rules and By-Laws.
   Members present at the meeting will be asked for suggestions regarding the programme for 1974, including content of the Ordinary Meetings and the number and type of field trips.
8. Presidential Address:
   Mr. R.D.J. Weathersbee will address the meeting on:
   "THE RACIAL ORIGINS AND CREATION MYTHS OF THE JAPANESE PEOPLE"
CULTURAL IDENTITY THROUGH MUSIC

Catherine Ellis

I am going to speak tonight about the Program of Training in Music for South Australian Aboriginal People. This program has been operating through the Department of Music, The University of Adelaide, for the past two years and is highlighting many of the special problems associated with Aboriginal education, since it concerns both tribal and urban people. The program arose as a result of many years' research in Aboriginal music, about some of which I will tell you to illustrate why I felt the program to be necessary and what aspects were essential for inclusion in the program.

First, then, a little about field work. This has been done almost entirely among the Andagarinja people, a great deal with the women. Originally, many trips were carried out by the Ellis family alone but it was soon clear that we were confronted with many technical difficulties:

*it is not realistic to expect one person to be a self-sufficient musician/anthropologist/linguist/recording technician/laboratory analyst.

*conditions for recording in the field are not exactly those of a good studio. Always there is wind, dust, dogs, children; often banging corrugated iron; groups of performers hundreds of yards apart; total darkness in which to operate in some sections of ceremonies; singers reversing direction during performances. We use a pair of Nagra recorders, running at 7½ i.p.s., and a Nagra Sound Mixer which enables us to record separated groups simultaneously. The wind shields over the microphones do not eliminate the distortion if the wind is strong, and it is then necessary to place the microphones in a hollow in the ground (the singers always sit on the ground). Many a time recordings have been interrupted by the riotous confusion resulting from dogs understanding that these microphones have been so placed for their convenience.

Normal broadcasting practice for recording involves three separate categories of workers - the balance officer who has the overall control of the
CULTURAL IDENTITY THROUGH MUSIC (Cont'd.)

recording, microphone position, placement of performers, etc., and the quality of the recording; the operator who is responsible for the control and operating efficiency of the technical facilities; while the responsibility of the recorder is to see that the performance is relayed to him is reliably captured. These technicians are not normally expected to work for more than three hours, but can be, in exceptional circumstances, called for as long as six hours.

In the field, however, the lone worker has to carry out all these tasks alone, and may have to work continually for exceedingly long hours for many days in succession.

We may record intermittently for, say, two hours, then have a break for an hour (during which the tapes have to be replayed and discussed), continue recording for another two hours, replay tapes, then continue unhurried discussion of the ceremony until evening. Next day (and maybe for three more days) the same procedure will be adopted.

In order to improve efficiency and obtain more comprehensive coverage of performances we worked first with a linguist and myself, subsequently with a group of women researchers.

This is necessary because, although performing time is relatively short in relation to the time span an anthropologist would be required to investigate, this short time contains compressed statements of information relevant to every facet of learning and living. It is therefore essential to capture a reliable and comprehensive record of events which then forms the basis of all subsequent research.

Before giving the details of musical analysis of one particular ceremony recorded by the group of women researchers, I want to mention briefly that before we moved to detailed study of tribal performing, we ourselves collected much non-tribal material and were greatly impressed by the musical
ability of performers, singing protest songs or parodies of popular songs from our own culture. We were troubled that these fine performers had no opportunity to improve their musical standards by benefitting from the best in either our own musical tradition or that of their own tribal musicians.

Our discovery of this Europeanized Aboriginal music came about almost accidentally as a result of our original field work where we sought out music of south-eastern Australia to determine the similarities and also the stylistic differentiations among different tribal groups. We not only learned that many fringe-dwelling Aboriginal people perform such Europeanized songs, but that traditional music had disappeared without trace in many areas.

When we began field work with Pitjantjara and Andagarinja people, the men, especially those who had known and worked with other researchers, were familiar with procedures for recording and recognized the value of the preservation of their songs. They stood by and encouraged the women performers, originally offering explanations of their songs. Soon the women became anxious to perform for me and show me much of their own traditions.

Women's Secret Ceremonies

The Emu Ceremony from Indulkana which I wish to speak about in detail was recorded by the group of women researchers in 1967. Briefly, it describes the behaviour of two emu women in the dreamtime.

I would like you to take particular note of the structural inter-relationships in this performance. Music is central to all teaching in Aboriginal culture and these intricate structures give us an insight into patterns of thought completely different from our own. They highlight the need for careful evaluation before we introduce our own thought patterns, which, in many instances are much less refined.

In the special sphere of analysis of our own music it is
CULTURAL IDENTITY THROUGH MUSIC (Cont'd.)

interesting to note that a recent development has been to identify information-carrying content; we can then find that a late Mozart symphony conveys more than an early one - this can be shown analytically. Secret songs of Aboriginal people convey more than non-secret ones because of the tightness of overlay of structures, each symbolizing a different aspect (e.g. melody, the ancestral line; rhythm, the meaning of the text). Children's songs are less complex than women's; women's less complex (but more difficult to analyse) than men's. Aboriginal music in general compresses more meaning into a smaller scale of notes and a smaller time span than anything found in western music. Hence the great difficulties of interpretation for the non-Aboriginal listener.

Experience with structures of this complexity gained from many different Aboriginal musicians has come to be very humbling in the light of my own personal experience as a professional musician. Awareness of the great knowledge possessed by these performers, and the difficult situation of gifted non-tribal performers, made possible the development of the Program of Training in Music for South Australian Aboriginal People.

As stated at the outset, its aims are:

1. The musical education of Aboriginal and part-Aboriginal people in South Australia in order that they will have a greater appreciation of their own music; its unique and its universal techniques; music's function in the community.

2. Possibilities for development of new Aboriginal musical expressions based on the common techniques of Aboriginal and European music.

3. The finding of a wider musical identity.

4. To make musicians more aware of the musical skills of the Aboriginal musicians thus enabling Aboriginal musicians the opportunity of influencing musical thought in the total community. They could be placed in a situation where their great musical skills can be recognized and appreciated by white people.
CULTURAL IDENTITY THROUGH MUSIC (Cont'd.)

In short, this Program is a comprehensive coverage of music in connection with Aboriginal people in South Australia. It was intended to work with one group in each of the known situations and develop an appropriate musical expression which would act as a creative outlet, a source of education, and a means of increasing self-awareness.

PURE RESEARCH covers a wide spectrum and great diversity of activities. Transcribing of song texts and explanations of these texts by Leslie Mingkili, Wintinna Mick, Gordon Ingkatji and his wife Tinimai, and other Aboriginal people from tribal areas have all assisted; this work making it possible to publish valuable material.

URBAN CHILDREN have (through help given at the School of Music, and with the assistance of players from the Sunday Night Group) progress to the establishment of the Adelaide Aboriginal Orchestra now receiving its first invitations to play in public under the direction of Mr. M. Ellis, Urban Music Officer. Music camps have also made a valuable and worthwhile contribution to the social as well as music aspects of the urban Aboriginal children.

URBAN ADULTS work continues with activities in the Aboriginal Friendship Club. The Ethnic Music Research Project has established a library of tapes and cassettes of the music of other cultures, recorded by urban Aboriginal workers, which may be borrowed and which have helped give urban Aboriginals a sense of pride in recognizing that Aboriginal people have a unique culture amongst many others in the world. The Institute of Narrative and Music of Aborigines incorporated on 16th August, 1972, provides training sessions for its workers who in turn are bringing in others from the urban Aboriginal community so that Aboriginal people themselves are underwriting their own work of lecturing on Aboriginal culture in schools, colleges, churches and other institutions, and also acting as agents for the sale of instruments made by tribal people.

TRIBAL MUSIC OFFICER - appreciation has been expressed by the tribal people for the contribution in this area of
CULTURAL IDENTITY THROUGH MUSIC (Cont'd.)

Bauxhau Stone who has shown the tribal men how to make African drums for re-sale, with the Institute of Narrative and Music of Aborigines acting as agents.

With the establishment of the Intalkanya Inma Centre now shifted from Indulkana to Mimili (Everard Park) has come a request from tribal elders to establish training of their own children in the traditions, culture and music of their people instead of the normal education at the Government schools. They recognize the need for mutual co-operation in education but wish at this stage to carry out all work themselves. Closer co-operation has been established with the urban Aboriginal group (I.N.M.A.) and they have now been invited by the tribal people to come in rotation and instruct tribal people in European-type skills; in return to be given an in-depth sharing of tribal teaching. This has been a very real step forward - the bridging of a gap between the two primary cultures of Aboriginal and European peoples and the discovery of pride in the traditions and heritage of Aboriginal people for those who are urbanized. A further development has been the request that Aboriginal people themselves now fill the position of Tribal Music Officer.