

Keeping Score

The National Library's music collections, says Robyn Holmes, range across printed music, unpublished manuscripts and archival sound recordings

When the music of Delta Goodrem's *Innocent Eyes* finds its way into the National Library's music collection, it may be without Delta knowing at all! Hundreds of items of current Australian sheet music arrive in the Library each year courtesy of the music publisher, not the artist.

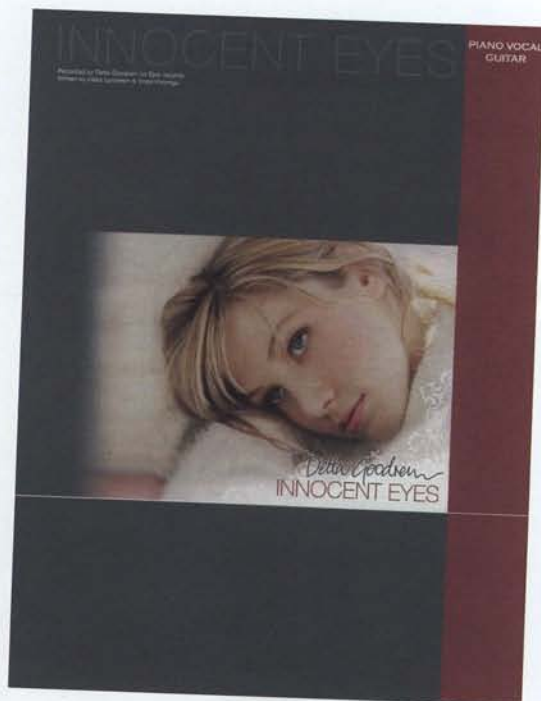
Hot-off-the-press printed music, just like books, comes to the Library from publishers under the Legal Deposit provision of the *Copyright Act 1968*, as well as through a second purchased copy. Yet, the search remains to fill in the historical gaps in collections that existed well before the days of Legal Deposit. That's why we rummage through boxes of music at book fairs, wade through grandmothers' music stools, haunt secondhand shops, scour old businesses, track down collectors, or locate musicians or music organisations who have old music stashed away in cupboards or sheds. Most surprising has been the increasing number of people offering 'old' music, or new information about composers, as a result of the Library making its sheet music available on the Web through the Digital Music Collection.

How different is this scenario from the donation or purchase of manuscript music from artists themselves, a fragile

collecting process that evolves through personal contacts and trusted relationships. When composer Peter Sculthorpe, now 75, finally stood in the Manuscript Collection surrounded by his life's work, stored in 115 boxes, it was with an acute sense of understanding that he was handing over the stuff of his creative, working and personal life to his 'beloved' Australia. It is extremely rare to find so prominent a figure as Sculthorpe with such a rich, comprehensive and organised collection of papers, from childhood to the present. From handwritten sketches to a final manuscript copy of *Sun Music*, the collection provides a glimpse into the creative process of the artist. Sculthorpe's correspondence, memorabilia, designs and portraits portray, too, a world of artistic collaboration and friendship with those choreographers, writers, artists, and performers who have been at the centre of Australian cultural life for 60 years.

When is the 'right time' for such an artist to donate their materials, or for the Library to actively seek to acquire them? Some composers, like Sculthorpe, are instinctively collectors at heart, meticulously preserving and organising every aspect of their work until later in life when the breadth and quality of the artistic achievement becomes apparent.

Larry Sitsky, composer, pianist, and researcher, epitomises the kind of musician who generates so much activity and documentation in the course of his work that every five years he gives it to the Library for safe-



Delta Goodrem and Vince Pizzinga
Innocent Eyes
Spit Junction, NSW: EMI Music
Publishing (Aust), 2003
MUS NL mbd 783.242 G654
Artwork reproduced courtesy of Sony Music

keeping. The latest boxes arrived as the bushfires in Canberra in January 2003 threatened Sitsky's home. The just-completed 100-minute film score for *The Sentimental Bloke* (1919), commissioned by ScreenSound Australia to accompany the digitally restored and tinted silent film, was just one work at risk. Recreating the style of accompanying silent film with music of the day, this new composition for 12 chamber players weaves together piano music by older Australian composers, meticulously researched in the printed and unpublished music collections of the Library. In the course of the research process, Sitsky himself found 'lost' Australian music that has resulted in new acquisitions for the Library.

Thank goodness, too, for those major organisations who have managed to create and keep Australian unpublished music scores, instrumental and vocal parts as a by-product of their core business. Building relationships with musical organisations in Australia is imperative if the Library is to acquire and archive unpublished music that might otherwise not survive. The Australian Music Centre, the Australian Performing Rights Association, the



Australian Youth Orchestra and the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) are prime examples.

During the ABC's years developing orchestral life in Australia, the national broadcaster facilitated the composition, performance and broadcast of works by Australian composers. The ABC's Federal Music Library preserved many of the musical scores and parts at a time when archiving Australia's musical history was not a significant consideration for any national institution. This resulted in a collection of Australian musical works, dating from 1912 to the 1970s. When, in 2001, the Australian orchestras moved out of the ABC structure, Symphony Australia deposited the collection in the National Library. Miriam Hyde's second Concerto in C Minor, written

in London in 1934, is just one of more than 1000 unpublished works by 78 Australian composers and arrangers represented in the collection.

Music pervades our lives: from the collective and public worlds of music-making—including national festivals, concerts, broadcasts and historical or celebratory events—to the private, intimate worlds of the verandah and the lounge room. The Library ensures that records of memorable musical events and commissions, not usually available commercially, are documented and acquired in various musical forms. By contrast, committed individuals and their tape-recorders (now digital) lie at the heart of our ability to capture the music and stories of Australians, living in all kinds of social situations.

David Franklin (1934–1994)
Portrait of Miriam Hyde 1988
 gelatin silver on fibre-based paper;
 30.6 x 46 cm
 Pictures Collection nla.pic-an12019360
 (This image is not on display in the exhibition.)

The nation's 'future memory' of our music and musical experiences is dependent on both published music and the unique collecting programs that range across printed music through to unpublished manuscripts and archival sound recordings. Acquisition of music and music-related materials thus forms a significant part of the Library's record of Australian culture.

ROBYN HOLMES is the National Library's Curator of Music

Be a Part of Australia's 'Future Memory'

The National Library of Australia works to preserve the nation's memory and tell Australia's ongoing story. Your donation or bequest will help us to collect, maintain and make Australia's documentary heritage accessible to future generations.

For more information about how you can help us preserve Australia's 'future memory', please contact the Library's Development Office.

NATIONAL
LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA

T 02 6262 1141
F 02 6273 5483
E development@nla.gov.au