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## **"No Human Ever Made a Cathedral Such as This": Scoping the Ecology of the Carols by Candlelight Effect in Australia's Open-Air Environments**

### **Cover Page Footnote**

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# **“No Human Ever Made a Cathedral Such as This”<sup>1</sup>**

## **Scoping the Ecology of the Carols by Candlelight Effect in Australia’s Open-Air Environments**

Robin Ryan

As we attend to making the images and sounds of our environment part of our worship, we will be urged to enflesh the gospel value of respect and harmony with creation. Is it not timely to move occasionally from the sacredness of our churches to worship in the sacred arena of God’s creation? Would we not perhaps more easily recognise the presence of God under the natural canopy of gum trees? Or one of our many pristine beaches at sunrise or sunset?

Sister Carmel Pilcher<sup>2</sup>

The vocal practice of carol singing, or “caroling,” has long been a vital tradition in Christian communities around the world. Congregations regroup annually to proclaim the story of the birth of Christ, alongside themes of charity and world peace. Through this annual proclamation, peace is accessible, although the vision is a distant hope in many parts of the world. The widespread practice of caroling in Australia—reinforced by commercial forms—renders it the most audible and visible form of Christian music performed nationally, with the possible exception of Hillsong’s praise and worship repertoire.<sup>3</sup>

Since the mid-twentieth century, caroling by candlelight has become a salient seasonal component of musical culture in a country where landscapes are characterized by open expanses with congregations of plants. Broadly probing the intersections of Christian belief and sacred voice with the poetics of open-air environments, this article presents the case for a national

caroling experience that captures—more holistically—the unique environmental flavors of Christmas in Australia. The nation’s homegrown Carols by Candlelight tradition may be conceptualized as a complete sensory experience: a collective local remembrance of the birth of Christ, performed al fresco. I will approach the topic in the light of some emerging conversations around ecomusicology<sup>4</sup> and ecotheology.<sup>5</sup>

*Cultural ecology* is the study of human relationships with and within biological and social contexts.<sup>6</sup> My *ecocritical* reading encapsulates a spiritual experience couched within a complex sensory experience of nature: part of a burgeoning culture of ecological perception that creates cultural meanings for nature through “communities of musical practice.”<sup>7</sup> Jeff Todd Titon famously theorized a *sound commons*, where all living beings enjoy a commonwealth of sound. The concept embodies the principle of sound equity, encouraging free and open sound communication, and playing its important part in environmental, musical, and cultural sustainability. In a sound community music is communicative, as natural as breathing, participatory and exchanged freely, strengthening and sustaining individuals and communities.<sup>8</sup>

Group performance has been conceptualized as a live, phenomenological field akin to an ecosystem in its connectedness and interdependence.<sup>9</sup> Carolers reignite public memory of the Christmas story as they move, sing, and act in outdoor venues. As networks of actors<sup>10</sup> engaged

in an established “ecology of practice,”<sup>11</sup> choristers and their audiences potentially form relationships with natural sites by becoming entrained to the floral aesthetics and faunal soundscapes that vivify them. It was this type of “entrainment” that led soul singer Nerida Vincent to compose *Nature’s Cathedral*.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines “cathedral” in three ways, the third being “something that resembles or suggests a cathedral (as in size or importance).”<sup>12</sup> Open-air sites comprising large, naturally magnificent spaces where communities gather are suggestive of cathedrals, even of ancient “proto-cathedrals” emanating from the authority of the Creator. Cultural botanist John Charles Ryan notes that the ancient Greek *agora* was an open place of assembly. The word *agora* contrasts with *claustrum*, referring to closed spaces, as in *cloisters*.<sup>13</sup> Thus, the acoustics and bodily experience of carolers positioned outdoors differ markedly from the enclosed venues used at Christmas.

I promote a performative context for caroling that expands the concept of “sacred space” to the wider dimensions of resonant outdoor spaces. All acts of music making—whether natural or built—are inextricable from environment. However, new communication technologies have expanded the range of formats in which carolers congregate. For example, singing from “inside the soundscape”<sup>14</sup> engages the resonances between participatory caroling and the poetics of Southern Hemisphere environmental sound. It expands awareness of the spectrum of human voices to include nonhuman voices: that is, the voices of other species.

The relationship between religion and environmental issues is becoming

increasingly important to conversations around ecology. Many ways of thinking about, and living with, the environment have roots in the Bible.<sup>15</sup> In this age of ecological crisis known as the Anthropocene—the name derived from the observed human influence and increasing dominance of climatic, biophysical, and evolutionary processes occurring at a planetary scale<sup>16</sup>—a need has arisen for improved understanding of religious engagement with natural environments. Composer David Dunn urges that “we need to embrace every tool we have to remind us of the sacred.”<sup>17</sup> Such advocacy underlies thinking about how people might live with the earth to respect and value spirituality and materiality. In the words of theologian Elizabeth A. Johnson, “The crisis of biodiversity in our day, when species are going extinct at more than 1,000 times the natural rate, renders this question acutely important.”<sup>18</sup>

In a recent book situating the natural world within the framework of religious belief, Rod Giblett promotes nurturing sacrality for the Symbiocene—that is, the hoped-for age superseding the Anthropocene.<sup>19</sup> The term *Symbiocene* was coined by Glenn Albrecht from the Greek word *sumbiosis*, meaning “companionship.” It implies the idea of living together for mutual benefit, a profoundly important concept and core aspect of ecological thinking that affirms the interconnectedness of life and all living things.<sup>20</sup> To consider caroling through this lens is to explore the meaningful spiritual efficacy that nature can add to the performative tradition. Recognizing mass caroling as a communal practice *grounded* in nature also promotes acute musicianship, opening new possibilities for the analysis of sound in worship.

## Objectives and Framework

The aims of this discourse connecting religion, music, sound, and our presence and copresence with nature are threefold. First, I theologize the innate function of carol singing. This ethos underpins a succinct history of Australia's Carols by Candlelight movement. Second, the enquiry turns to the ecological connections (dynamic points of encounter) between carolers and their landscapes in regional infrastructures that privilege amateur, rather than celebrity, voices—that is, community/congregational caroling as distinct from commodified caroling. A thick description of one event will exemplify the carols by candlelight “effect” as a concept and context for mediating caroling with natural sound before I urge sensitivity toward natural acoustic behaviors.

Third, I examine the body of original carols that couch the Gospel within a homegrown sense of Australia as *place*. The cultural meaning of *place* and how it defines the artwork has been studied in depth by Denise Von Glahn. Importantly, Von Glahn has demonstrated how the medium of music reflects the evolving sense of a unique national character over time.<sup>21</sup> The spiritual relationship between Indigenous Australians and nature is integral to Australian Aboriginal Christian theology.<sup>22</sup> It inevitably forms a subtheme of this study, as the article considers opportunities for First Nations Christians to proclaim their voice at Christmas.

## The Godly Intention of Carol Singing

The environmental humanities assert that ecological problems have resulted from thinking that posits the environment as external to culture.<sup>23</sup> Built architectural

settings variously shape the acoustic and social tenor of caroling, yet preclude characteristics of the broader landscape and soundscape that—clearly exhibiting the fingerprints of the Creator—can become conducive to a religious sphere of musical style and influence.

At Christmas, the challenge for a musical director is to find ways to draw the public into the narrative using the vocal musical experience. To this end, an understanding of the innate function of caroling can be advantageous. England's ninety-seventh archbishop of York, the Most Reverend and Right Honourable John Sentamu, applied the Gospel of St. Luke to explain how the first “carols” emanated from an open-air venue, above a hill near Bethlehem: “The heavenly host of angels sang to an audience of bewildered shepherds, who went and found the child and—because the nature of good news bears retelling—let others know what had happened.”<sup>24</sup>

As a unique form of voicing for understanding, the repeatability of the narrative derives from this first Christmas carol, or holiest of songs, sung by disembodied voices: “Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth peace, goodwill toward men.”<sup>25</sup> The godly intention or innate function of carol singing enshrines God's desire that people should be of one mind and one accord. In a Christian context, carol singing—or what can be imagined as entering into this *song from heaven*—reflects the joy of the caroling body of angels who promote peace making to resound with God's desire.

The world is a work in progress. Carols can positively impact the mood of a community, which can affect the mood of a nation and the desire for peace. Because of this universal message—the greatness of



Australia's Carols by Candlelight movement—the sacred and secular converge in every geographical setting and cultural milieu. Carolers could be likened to storytellers, as they weave the Christmas narrative back into place each year.

### The Origins of Carols by Candlelight

Carols by Candlelight began in Melbourne in 1938.<sup>26</sup> On Christmas Eve 1937, broadcaster Norman Banks passed a window and observed an elderly woman inside, her face lit by candlelight, singing along to *Away in a Manger*, which was being played on the radio. Wondering how many others spent Christmas alone, Banks conceptualized a large group of people gathering to sing carols by candlelight.

The first event was held at Alexandra Gardens in Melbourne the following Christmas and was attended by 10,000 people. Following the Second World War, this watershed event moved to King's Domain Gardens until, in 1959, the newly constructed Sidney Myer Music Bowl (see Fig. 1) provided a permanent venue. Nationally, this is the largest event of its

kind, and Christmas Eve 2017 marked its eightieth anniversary. The persistence of the Sidney Myer Music Bowl as a container for the experience has sustained the tradition by defining a space and territory for the celebration of Christmas.

In earlier years, "Carols by Candlelight" featured classical music, with the annual Sun Aria contest winner automatically invited to participate. The radio and TV simulcast of "Carols by Candlelight" on station 3KZ together with channel ATV-0 began in the 1960s. From 1980, it was telecast nationally through the Nine Network, and 3AW replaced 3KZ as the radio broadcaster. The event is also broadcast and telecast live to eastern Asia, many Pacific Islands, and New Zealand. These televised performances direct the religious flavor of "Carols by Candlelight" toward popular culture, such that the genres of voice, dance, and drama may be blended.

Based on the Melbourne event, "Carols in the Domain" is staged in Sydney on the Saturday evening before Christmas. It is simulcast over the Seven Network and Smooth FM. It began in 1950 in



**Figure 1:** The Sidney Myer Music Bowl, Kings Domain, Melbourne, photographed by Takver in May, 2005 and released under the GNU GFDL. Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sidney\\_Myer\\_Music\\_Bowl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sidney_Myer_Music_Bowl).

Hyde Park and lasted for a decade. It was revived in 1983 with a similar event that has been held annually in the Domain. The third-largest Carols by Candlelight event in Australia, Denis Walter's "Carols by the Bay," takes place at Eastern Beach in Geelong, Victoria.

Corporate packaging has secularized these mega events, which are now accompanied by large orchestras or concert bands. Many of the productions in Melbourne and Sydney have showcased stars of current musicals and, in recent years, incorporated solos from televised talent quests, reflecting the growing transnational significance of Anglo-American pop music. Many of the items sung at these events are not true carols; they may not have a strict alternating verse-and-refrain format.

At the turn of the century, Ten Network's *Australian Idol* television series began to monopolize the national media establishment. In 2004, media personality Paul McDermott quipped: "If all Idols release a Christmas track—which in the music industry is considered obligatory—then who can guess at the numerical and musical anomalies that may arise?"<sup>27</sup> The spectrum of voices began to revolve around the "who's who" of Nine Network's hit series *The Voice*. Dan Bigna reviewed the elaboration on familiar themes presented at Nine Network's 2010 "Carols by Candlelight" in the Sydney Myer Music Bowl:

The gushing delivery sometimes reached fever pitch almost painful to witness. Every facial expression and word was so carefully scripted that if the good Lord was to descend from the heavens, he/she would be ejected from the venue for not being on the set list. Missing was that little grain of unpredictability that makes good art such a fascinating proposition.<sup>28</sup>

Singer Kate Ceberano bemoaned the struggle to secure a spot on a show that is "a hot ticket for any performer." Having sung carols several times in Melbourne and Sydney, Ceberano describes the performances as "lovely events with different energies, because the two cities are very different." As conservative ecclesiastical allegiances to the Melbourne event declined, a moderate Pentecostal flavor emerged with the annual inclusion of Roma Waterman's Melbourne Gospel Choir.<sup>29</sup>

Christian beliefs associated with Christmas no longer wield hegemonic domination over this commercial time of year that is increasingly known, in Australia, as "the silly season." Yet the event has become an annual tradition for countless families, providing as it does a break from the bustle of the Christmas buildup and, if so desired, an opportunity to reflect on the deeper significance of the season.

### **National versus Local Forms of Caroling**

The Australian public has not resisted the Carols by Candlelight megagatherings. The televised productions described above furnish the generic template for clusters of events staged in other capital cities and regional communities. They are typically organized by councils (municipal governments), councils in conjunction with a church (see Fig. 2), or a group of combined churches that rotate annual management.

In her Introduction to *The Soundscapes of Australia: Music, Place and Spirituality*, Fiona Richards remarks: "From composers, performers and communities there are many different, always vibrant approaches to place, spirituality and music, and a divergence between those perspectives that are local, precise, miniature and those that are national, generic and large-scale."<sup>30</sup> The





**Figure 2:** Poster created by Elle Apopei for Carols by Candlelight, a combined event by the Town of Cottesloe and St. Philips Anglican Church, Dec. 22, 2013. Original image by Tom Wedge, courtesy John Macpherson, St. Philips Anglican Church, Cottesloe, Western Australia.

voicings of localized carol events differ from major events in terms of organizational structure (amateur versus professional personnel), scale of industry promotion, and public responsiveness to sacred–secular convergence culture.

Drawing on widespread attendance at candlelit events in Western Australia, Victoria, New South Wales, and the Australian Capital Territory, I have scoped ways in which a Christmas soundworld can be integrated into local place. I reason that community happenings thrive in their own innovative, mediatized formats, as the public interacts with singularity of physical and social space. For example, 2018 marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of “Carols by Candlelight” presented by St. Philips Anglican Church Cottesloe in cooperation with the seaside municipal Town of Cottesloe, Western Australia. The event has attracted up to 3,000 people in recent years, requiring much in the way of staging, sound, lights, and logistical support.

A pageant takes place on the Civic Centre’s landscaped terrace garden. It overlooks a blazing pink sun setting above the Indian Ocean. For the beholder, the sunset endows visual agency to the power of the moment. A magical environmental ambiance is created as the community gathers for a relaxed picnic, illuminated by the light of hundreds of candles. Sound is the primary medium of caroling, but this joyous narrative art form lends itself to a broader artistic palette. Parishioners erect a platform in front of a sandstone cliff on which they present dance and drama (Fig. 3) in combination with carols and a message delivered by Rev. Malcolm Potts.



**Figure 3:** Angels Ashleigh Holgate (left) and Alana Macpherson (right) perform at Cottesloe’s “Carols by Candlelight,” Dec. 18, 2005. Image by Jonathan Holgate, courtesy John Macpherson, St. Philips Anglican Church, Cottesloe, Western Australia.

As a human network, the dancers perform in ecological relationship at the level of embodied gesture.<sup>31</sup> The music program comprises traditional, modern, and “world music” items, supplemented by a short musical drama based on the Christmas story. Musical director and master of ceremonies John Macpherson (see Fig. 4) has written about 50 songs for the event and rearranged old favorites, including *While Shepherds Watched*.



**Figure 4:** John Macpherson prepares to introduce Cottesloe's "Carols by Candlelight," December 18, 2016. Image by Ian Love, courtesy John Macpherson, St. Philips Anglican Church, Cottesloe, Western Australia.

Caroling is a strong catalyst for binding local community to *place*. Children delight in singing the lyrics of *Cottesloe Jingle Bells*, commodified by Macpherson to suit Perth's iconic beach. The lead singers harmonize or present solos, accompanied by Macpherson's band. The drama is lip-synched over a soundtrack of prerecorded character voices and songs. Macpherson's wife, Ellie, choreographs the songs and carols and creates a drama concept, for which Gary Davidson makes the scenery. This major commitment from a small team of volunteers and the parish garnered an Australia Day award in 2012 from the Town of Cottesloe for Community Group of the Year.

Carols performed by candlelight in country towns are easily identifiable as

Christian when event management is rotated annually by the combined churches. An evangelistic rhetoric often circulates, as specific contexts mediate the aesthetics of Christmas vocal performance. A statewide database sample (see Appendix below) cameos the sight and sound of grassroots caroling. The following section offers an ecocritical reading of these events.

### Scoping the Carols by Candlelight Effect

As defined by June Boyce-Tillman, the material tools of making music comprise not only voices, but also the instruments and properties of performance spaces, which can have a profound effect on performers and performances.<sup>32</sup> As Mark Pedelty has



noted, different anthropogenic ecosystems produce dramatically different soundscapes due to the complex, reciprocal, and systemic relationships among social, cultural, and material factors.<sup>33</sup>

In an explanation of how voice locates religion in embodied practice, effect, and acoustic space, Jeffers Engelhardt noted that “as an aggregate of individual voices and bodies, the congregation is a voice and body that, to different degrees, subsume the sounds of individual voices.”<sup>34</sup> Marissa Glynias Moore envisages this unifying power of hymn singing as affirming the participants’ place within the universal church: the “body of Christ.”<sup>35</sup>

Clare V. Johnson visualizes the physical environment as being a key constitutive element of the social environment and culture of a people:

Each localised physical environment or “context” consists of an “organised whole in space and time of physical aspects, social activities and symbolic aspects or meanings,” which are particular to that place and which influence the mode of human behaviour and the mediation of meaning via sense experiences occurring in that place.<sup>36</sup>

Christmas in Australia is characterized by warm, balmy weather and a star-studded sky that makes Carols by Candlelight a numinous activity. Landscape and skyscape offer cultural and spiritual images, respectively. These elements furnish a pictorial way of representing, structuring, or symbolizing surroundings.<sup>37</sup> The act of holding a candle is not required to make the music matter. It does not enhance the affective power of voice and verbal text. However, in a compelling example of space transformed through human action, a combination of carols, candlelight, and scenery encourages young children to

engage physically by holding glow-stick candles (see Fig. 5),<sup>38</sup> singing, or dancing on the grass.



**Figure 5:** Children hold their glow-stick candles at Cottesloe’s “Carols by Candlelight,” 17 December, 2006. Image by Phil Hirst, courtesy John Macpherson, St. Philips Anglican Church, Cottesloe, Western Australia.

Caroling by candlelight thus projects an aestheticized, gentler equivalent of a secular open-air concert or festival. In its more inspiring moments, nature and the redemptive word of God cohere with enlivening sonic and visual agency. From a Christian perspective, one becomes absorbed by the immensity that spells out the glory, handiwork, speech, and knowledge of God.<sup>39</sup> The words of the carols sound forth as people hear, see, feel, and smell Creation (and arguably, for a believer, the “presence of God”). Sounds from the undergrowth reverberate around the natural “cathedral” as the pervading scent emitted by eucalyptus trees (commonly called “gum trees”) fills the air. The event might be described as a celebration of eternal and local story.

The sensory modality of hearing is a valid source of ethnographic information for comprehending nature’s innate musicality. Rather than allowing human song to impede peoples’ ability to hear the natural soundscape, natural sounds can be cherished when they expand into carols. Birdsong, cicada humming, and

cricket chirping blend with the sounds of other bush creatures, wind rustling through trees, or waves breaking on the shore. Our existence in the Anthropocene renders the intrusion of mechanical noise into this blended soundscape inevitable. Even unnatural sounds draw listeners into a sound commons that is, arguably, profounder than the managed, manicured performances constructed within the confines of church walls.

It is evident from the open-air performances, recordings, and writings of David Rothenberg that it is personally nurturing for musicians to make music with the nonhuman world.<sup>40</sup> When human voices blend into the natural soundscape, they become decontextualized, as the sphere of sound creates a hybrid aural environment. Dunn has suggested that “music may be a conversation strategy for keeping something alive that we now need to make more conscious, a way of making sense of the world from which we might refashion our relationship to nonhuman living systems.”<sup>41</sup>

Sounds produced by natural acoustic behaviors enable mediatory language between listener and environment. As defined by Barry Truax, a natural acoustic community is one in which sound functions positively to create a unifying relationship within an ecosystem. It is necessary for sound to be heard clearly in the area, and to reflect the community. A community with good acoustic definition can easily recognize, identify, and derive meaning from the soundscape.<sup>42</sup> For a soundscape to be distinctive and varied, acoustic features are required: sound signals, keynotes, and “soundmarks.” A soundmark is a community sound that is specially regarded or noticed by people in that community.<sup>43</sup>

Entomological “music” dominates the bush soundscape during the Christmas season. Cicadas and crickets are the dominant soundmarks. As male cicadas (*Homoptera cicadidae*) alight on trees and bushes, they emit a shrill, metallic sound that can be likened to a human chorus. Some species sound together in tempo, with separate patterns that interlock to create one rhythm. It is common for mole crickets (members of the insect family *Gryllotalpidae*) to pulse loudly out of the ground in “galleries” (chambers or burrows shaped by the crickets to maximize frequency). As they stridulate (rub their wings together), their subdivisions of sound build to a chorus.

Australian birds are likely to be aggressive, loud, and melodious. I have often heard laughing kookaburras (*Dacelo novaeguineae*) override human musical sound at open-air concerts. The white and brown plumage of this, the world’s largest kingfisher, blends seamlessly into the environment. The chuckling voice that gives the species its name is a common and familiar sound throughout the bird’s range. The loud *koo-koo-koo-koo-kaa-kaa-kaa* is often sung in chorus with other individuals; a shorter *koooa* sound at other times.<sup>44</sup>

Caroling thus fits into Henry David Thoreau’s concept of an interactive community communicating presence in sounds, with human music an artful echoing of vibrating nature.<sup>45</sup> Nerida Vincent describes nature as “general revelation” (as opposed to the Bible’s “special revelation”): “It is our setting, our backdrop, the arms that embrace our daily life, the stage on which we live.”<sup>46</sup> Elizabeth A. Johnson expounds the notion that love of the natural world is an intrinsic element of faith in God, with ecological

care at the center of moral life.<sup>47</sup> Drawing on Pope John Paul II's declaration that "respect for life and for the dignity of the human person extends also to the rest of creation,"<sup>48</sup> Johnson concludes: "our neighbor is the entire universe. We must love it all as our self."<sup>49</sup> When environmental sites are transformed into performance venues, it is essential that their significance and integrity are protected. Thus, outdoor caroling demands an environmentally considerate, ethical noninterference with nature.

### Environmental Iconicity in Australian Carols

Place can inspire carols, just as carols can affect our understanding of place. Once mediated to Australia, the Anglo-European carols that objectify national cultural identities serve a universal transcendent role. Music historian John Whiteoak observes that Australian Christmas music reproduces, reinforces, or builds upon traditional Christmas music, besides promoting American imports such as Irving Berlin's song *White Christmas* (1942).<sup>50</sup> As Dorothy McRae-McMahon suggests, many Australians feel comforted by imaginary reindeer and imitation snow on Christmas trees in a country that has neither.<sup>51</sup>

The repeatability of mediatized carol events thrives on public consumption of carols that reinvolve bygone years. Since the public do not regard traditional carols as "cultural baggage," it could be reasoned that producers of Carols by Candlelight have successfully programmed imported and homegrown Christmas music. Some carols resonate with fresh meaning, others package the same message in a fresh guise. Few of Australia's original carols incorporate a biblical view of environmental

or social justice—areas in which Aotearoa-New Zealand hymn writers have excelled,<sup>52</sup> although Julie Rickwood reports a regard for nature in the environmentally aware repertoire of Australian songs performed by community choirs.<sup>53</sup>

Culture and context animate the essence of faith. Carmel Pilcher's contention that "our natural liturgy should be reading the environment"<sup>54</sup> echoes Clare V. Johnson's call for a more symbiotic Christian relationship with the land:

Attempting to interpret our lived experience of Christian time through a northern-hemispheric lens of nature is inauthentic to our actual southern lived experience and downplays the potency and significance of the *logos spermatikos* [the "seed of the word" present in all peoples and their cultural expressions] that is present and identifiable in our own austral position on the globe.<sup>55</sup>

McRae-McMahon even suggests that landscape can influence the *soul* of a people.<sup>56</sup> Elizabeth J. Smith calls for didactic, theologically robust songs that evoke the particular beauties of the Australian land and demands for environmental stewardship.<sup>57</sup> Her original hymn *Celebrate Your Landscape* permits congregations to do this:

Where wide sky rolls down and  
touches red sand,  
where sun turns to gold the grass  
of the land,  
let Spinifex, mulga, and  
waterhole tell  
their joy in the One who made  
everything well.<sup>58</sup>

In 1983, Leigh Newton set Mary Philip's carol *Boomerang of Flowers* to music, and recorded it on his album *Christmas in the Scrub* (1984). The first verse and chorus draw on images of Australia's unique biodiversity.

A child is lying cradled here,  
 Beneath the slender gum;  
 The God of might has left his home,  
 And to Australia come.  
 The kookaburra laughs with glee,  
 The shy koala peeps,  
 The magpie carols blissfully,  
 As little Jesus sleeps

#### Chorus

What shall we give our infant king?  
 A boomerang of flowers?<sup>59</sup>  
 To say come back and stay with us  
 And be forever ours. (repeat)

Philip's privileging of natural images extends the orthodox belief in a God who "so loved the world" (usually interpreted to mean humans) to encompass the *entire* world, that is, not only humans but also nonhumans and the physical environments that house them. Another example, *The Star and the Cross: An Australian Carol* by Leslie Rusher, references the "clear Southern Cross" of the night sky, set to the tune of *Away in a Manger* (W. J. Kirkpatrick).

Many of the items based on Australian culture – of which few could be described as "carols" – may appear banal in comparison. The novel lyrics of children's carols reference Antipodean animals, scenery, towns, and traditions. Songwriter Colin Buchanan is a popular guest performer at community carol events. To correct a national dearth of accessible up-tempo carols, Buchanan reapplied Australian characters and animals to *The Twelve Days of Aussie Christmas*.<sup>60</sup> He also "Aussie-fied" a line in *Jingle Bells* in 1992, changing "dashing through the snow" to "dashing through the bush."

Of the corpus of Australian carols drawing on the imagery of a southern "austral" place, the most seminal examples remain the two sets of *Five Australian Christmas Carols* (ca. 1948) composed

by William G. James to words by John Wheeler. In carols that are unequivocally Australian, the pair opened a window into the creative process whereby familiar scenery and soundscape holistically inform the story of Christ's birth. The second set of the original Chappell & Co. Ltd. version is prefaced by the following comment:

It is not suggested that these Carols should take the place of those which have come to us from the Old World. Familiar from childhood, they will always remain a cherished possession. But the Carols of the Old World owe much to the local background of the countries which produced them, and it is surely fitting, therefore, that we should have our own Australian Carols, with their own local colour.<sup>61</sup>

Wheeler and James collectively portray scenes of bell-birds chiming, black swans flying, boobooks (owls) calling, brolgas dancing, currawongs chanting, magpies caroling, and wild dogs (dingos) howling. They evoke the quieter sounds of chanting creeks, fluttering brown moths, murmuring sheep, and whispering trees. We imaginatively glimpse an outback station in the summer heat, surrounded by brown grass, red dust, burning hills, flaming ranges, and trumpeting winds. The night scene paints a red-gold moon and points to the silver stars of the Milky Way. The lyricist contrasts the colorful native Australian Christmas bush with the mulga that grows in dense thickets throughout the interior. And in depicting the "carols of bushbirds rising and falling," he uses the Aboriginal word *Orana* to "welcome" in Christmas Day (*Carol of the Birds*, Vol. 1). In connecting First Nations peoples to "God's space," Uniting Church minister Chris Budden contends that "God had a story with these peoples, and the God who



comes to us in worship is also the God who comes to them. God has entrusted the care of this place to First Peoples, and so they are hosts (and Second Peoples are guests).<sup>62</sup>

### **Toward Inclusivity in Caroling Events**

Every part of Australia has Indigenous creation stories and Indigenous community connections.<sup>63</sup> Together, art and conservation preserve the created order. First Nations spirituality is embodied, experiential, and performative, arising from an Indigenous ecological awareness. Fiona Magowan explored the power of spiritual singing and dancing emanating from the ancestral land- and seascape of the Yolngu people, describing its influence on the spiritual awareness of ecology in their Christian songs. She reported that their *place-essences* were conveyed through musical structures, just as they are in traditional songs.<sup>64</sup>

German Lutheran missionaries arrived in the Central Desert in 1887, founded choirs, and learned the local languages.<sup>65</sup> In the 1950s and 1960s, Pitjantjatjara people performed Christmas and Easter pageants using traditional music, spinifex-grass fires, camels, and donkeys.<sup>66</sup> In 1971, Western Desert Pitjantjatjara women at Ernabella Mission (est. 1937) set the Christmas story to their own tunes. In a measure of how Christianity was incorporated into Pitjantjatjara life, youthful gospel groups began composing songs with guitars, through dreams.<sup>67</sup>

Over 50 children comprised the first Indigenous children's choir to sing at Adelaide's "Carols by Candlelight."<sup>68</sup> In 2007, the Ernabella Praise and Worship Singers recorded a Christmas album featuring traditional carols sung in their language.<sup>69</sup> Members of the Central

Australian Aboriginal Women's Choir preserve the songs of four generations of song women. A documentary film, *The Song Keepers* (2017), follows the 32-voice choir as they embark on a three-week tour of Germany. Their mission is to take back the hymns that were given to their great-grandparents by German missionaries, in their Western Arrarnta and Pitjantjatjara languages.<sup>70</sup>

Despite the validity of adverse evidence associated with British colonization and missionization, Australia's 2016 census recorded that Christian faith is more evident and alive in Indigenous communities than it is in Settler society. Since a national Aboriginal Evangelical Fellowship formed in 1970, Indigenous Christian leaders have been self-determining in their worship of God. First Nations artists produce vast bodies of visual art themed around Christmas: paintings with vital colors, natural elements of the biota, and remote landscapes.<sup>71</sup> The intense palpability of place in their work challenges Indigenous singer-songwriters to portray the same experience in sound.

Data from the 2016 census highlights the increasing cultural and social diversity of Australia. The Australia Council's landmark report *Connecting Australians: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey*, published in June 2017, confirmed the essential role of the arts in reflecting this diversity to promote inclusive public life.<sup>72</sup> The Australia Council for the Arts's 2017 report *Showcasing Creativity: Programming and Presenting First Nations Performing Arts* (March 8, 2017) indicates that performing arts by First Nations peoples are underrepresented in Australian mainstream venues and festivals. The report stresses the need to build cross-cultural engagement between mainstream presenters and First Nations artists and

communities. The inclusion of previously silenced voices at high-profile caroling events would enhance public understanding of Australia's past and present in view of a long-standing "cultural cringe."<sup>73</sup>

Singing is a principal means of communication at Christmas, through which Australians connect with the lifestyles, rhythms, and tensions of the island-continent. A homegrown tradition of mass caroling by candlelight furnishes potential pathways for connecting with biota. Viewed nationally, caroling events produced in a plenitude of sites suggest ways in which human voices might blend imaginatively into a local sound commons. Consciousness of place is evident in the lyrics of original "austral" carols that reference the physical loci of Creation in settings of beach, bush, and outback.

The case for a more authentic Australian caroling experience is a compelling one. Consideration of the land- and soundscapes of caroling reveals how the practice operates to facilitate new modes of congregating. A wider study could determine how the consumption of caroling operates between social groups, in terms of age and ethnicity. This could be based on the set of indicators and measures used for the Australia Council's

research and knowledge management. Further study might contrast traditions of alfresco caroling in the Southern and Northern Hemispheres.

The ecological potential of open-air caroling remains underdetermined. In recommending that producers rethink its paradigm, I have noted that Carols by Candlelight sometimes represents a watered-down version of Christmas in Australia—not only through a transplantation of Northern Hemisphere iconicity, but also through a representational deficit of cultural hybridity. A philosophy of inclusiveness balances programs of traditional Christmas music with Indigenous musical forms and the caroling traditions of the many newly imported cultures that speak to a broad cross-section of Australian society—as is expected of the arts.

A pluralistic voice realistically mirrors the nation's present moment and faithfully reflects the angelic proclamation: "I bring you good news of great joy that will be for *all people*."<sup>74</sup> Crucially, expanding into ambient sound makes people of all ethnicities more present in a place, and—from a Christian perspective—more connected to the larger whole of Creation that sounds forth the eternal story in its original language.

## Appendix: Statewide Database Sample

### Adelaide

"Carols by Candlelight," Elder Park, on the banks of the Torrens River.

### Brisbane

Lord Mayor's "Carols in the City," Riverstage, City Botanic Gardens (Nine Network).

### Hobart

Three major carol services at St. David's Park, Hobart, Clarence, and Glenorchy.

### Perth

"Carols by Candlelight," Supreme Court Gardens, Perth. Large gatherings at Cottesloe Civic Centre, Claremont, Scarborough, and Rockingham. "Candlelight Carols" at South Beach, Fremantle, invites the community to "sing along, or swim along."

### Melbourne

A number of untelevised metropolitan events attract up to 25,000 people. For example, "Carols by Candlelight" staged by the City of Monash in Jells Park, Wheelers Hill. The City of Yarra stages an event in Abbotsford Convent Gardens; the City of Manningham in Ruffey Lake Park; and the City of Wyndham on the lawns of historic Werribee Mansion. In 2016, Melbourne's Cross Generation Uniting Church led "Carols under the Ironbarks" at the Ironbark Hut, La Trobe University Wildlife Reserve.<sup>75</sup>

### Canberra (Australian Capital Territory)

"Carols by Candlelight" is staged at Commonwealth Park. The picnic was designed for families to enjoy a peaceful, joyful night of community singing.<sup>76</sup> *The Canberra Times* supplies songbooks for advance practice of European and American carols, the William G. James Australian carols, and fun songs like *Christmas by the Pool*.<sup>77</sup> "Carols under the Tree" at the National Library of Australia features homegrown carols, followed by bell ringing at the National Carillon on Christmas Eve.<sup>78</sup> In suburban Gungahlin, the Anglican Church congregation perform Colin Buchanan's original carols.

### Sydney

The Leichhardt Espresso Chorus perform "Carols on Norton," accompanied by a tinsel

orchestra (an orchestra dressed up in Christmas outfits) and a lantern parade. Director Michelle Leonard encourages "spontaneously combusting caroling"—that is, going into shops to share the joy of music, ensuring that live music is valorized over canned music.<sup>79</sup> In 2017, Leonard directed 51 children from regional New South Wales (NSW) to record the Christmas album *Yindyamarra: A Prospect of Peace*.<sup>80</sup> She commissioned Josephine Gibson to compose the title track to lyrics in the Wiradjuri language of NSW,<sup>81</sup> to fill a gap in the Christmas choral repertoire for children. Leonard singled out a moment when the children create a soundscape of birdcalls: "They literally bring their landscape into the studio and to life in this recording."<sup>82</sup>

### Carols under the Martin Place Christmas Tree

Leonard's Moorambilla Voices choir sing at Sydney's Martin Place Christmas Tree Concert. They are joined on stage by soloists from the Seven Network. Children from regional NSW take part in this City of Sydney concert.

### Carols under the Sydney Harbour Bridge

This event is held at Bradfield Park and typically includes a Bible talk. A jazz band entertains on stage during a sausage sizzle provided by scouts.

### North Sydney Community Carols

This event is held at the Civic Park Twilight Food Fair. Young hip-hop and jazz dancers perform with Kids Covers Band and a dance group. Community carols are led by the North Sydney Girls High School choir.<sup>83</sup>

### Carols by Balmoral Beach

St. Clement's Anglican Church, Mosman, NSW, organizes Balmoral's "Carols by Candlelight." Families picnic under the stars at the Rotunda on Balmoral Beach. They arrive on a free shuttle and pay AUD5 for a candle pack and songbook.<sup>84</sup>

### Caroling in Outback Mining Towns

For relief from the heat, many people in the opal-mining town of Coober Pedy live in desert "dugouts." Congregations of Christians gather underground in resonant spaces, including the Catacomb Anglican Church, named after the Roman catacombs where early Christians met and buried martyrs. They participate in

Combined Churches “Carols by Candlelight” celebrations. Western Australia’s isolated mining town of Newman hosts a mixed population of residents and shift workers. Anne Richmond, who worked at the town library in 2010, recounted her Christmas experience:

A new Baptist pastor was in town, an ex-gang member covered in tattoos. I joined a singing group formed for Christmas. It was difficult to get people to practice. They had little concept of choir or blending, although there were some good voices, about 16 in all. I recruited two of the pastor’s sons to sing the first verse of “Once in Royal David’s City.” They had sweet voices, but were shy of the microphone, and the idea of it all was not familiar to the crowd. My boss complained that it was *all too religious*, and that people wouldn’t come next year. By next year we were gone, and I have no idea how the carols went.<sup>85</sup>

#### **A Bush Christmas**

Perth’s Collegium Musicum Choir performed the costumed tableau *An Australian Bush Christmas* in 2008. Dr. Margaret Pride conducted nine traditional carols and five Australian carols by William G. James. A narrated tableau depicted the attempts of pioneers to adapt their Christmas customs to their new environment.

#### **Carol Singing by Refugees**

Perth’s first attempt to engage refugee artists with mainstream presenters took place in 2017, when Burundi Peace Band joined Voicemale to present carols in Fremantle, Western Australia.<sup>86</sup> Harvest Gospel Flavour Choir from Blacktown, NSW, performed a cappella songs from refugee camps in West Africa, where they worshipped

and prayed for a better future. The choir sing at Sydney’s Combined Churches Christmas Spectacular. In 2010, their leader, Jeremiah, explained on television:

This Christmas is different from the way we were in a refugee camp. The difference here is that we have freedom, and we are happy. It has to do with your emotion and you communicating with God, especially with worship songs. It’s like you are linking the congregation to God because God loves worship.<sup>87</sup>

#### **Caroling for Charity**

Reinforcing the *Good King Wenceslas* tradition of recognizing one’s good fortune, the Salvation Army collect alms for the poor. They sing familiar carols, the basis of their musical repertoire for over 120 years. Graeme Press, director of Sydney’s Salvation Army Christmas Choir, includes people from drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs in their performances.<sup>88</sup>

#### **Carols Performed around Water**

In many communities where homes adjoin small bays or canals, large boats or ferries cruise around on Christmas Eve. Organizers play carols through a public-address system, or feature concerts by live choirs. Accompanied by a fleet of private power cruisers, the boat of singers exhibits decorative lights to enhance the atmosphere.<sup>89</sup> On Christmas Eve 2018, I attended “Carols by the Boardwalk” on the shores of Lake Curalo in far southeast New South Wales. In a most unusual manifestation of a sound commons, a long-nosed bandicoot (*Perameles nasuta*) suddenly darted out of the bush. It whistled and shrieked loudly, scooting across the lawn where small children were dancing about to the carols.<sup>90</sup>



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## NOTES

1 “No human ever made a cathedral such as this” is a line from the song *Nature’s Cathedral* (1998), composed by Nerida Vincent of Canowindra, New South Wales, included on her album *Living Desert* (2000). Nerida is now better known as Nerida Cuddy ([www.nerida.info](http://www.nerida.info)). See <https://blog.cornerstone.edu.au/nerida/2014/02/23/natures-cathedral/#comment-2199>. I thank Nerida for her inspiration, Pastor Ossie Cruse for support, and John and Ellie Macpherson, Phil Hirst, Lorna Kaino, and Anne Richmond for their contributions. I am indebted to Aline Scott-Maxwell for direction, and to my two anonymous referees for useful advice. The Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, Edith Cowan University, provided the initial edit of this article.

2 Carmel Pilcher, “Marking Liturgical Time in Australia: Pastoral Considerations,” in *Christian Worship in Australia: Inculturating the Liturgical Tradition*, ed. Stephen Burns and Anita Monro (Sydney: St. Pauls Publications, 2009), 56–57.

3 Hillsong Music Australia—the best-known musical export from the Australian church to the world—has released four albums of contemporary Christmas songs, mostly reworkings of traditional carols, with the occasional original carol. These have not gained much traction within Australian churches despite considerable online attention. A significant album, *Christmas in Australia*, was released by Hillsong’s foundational songwriter, Geoff Bullock, in 1997. The cover typifies a summer beach scene on Christmas Day.

4 A field most succinctly defined as “the study of music, culture, and nature in all the complexities of those terms.” See Aaron S. Allen, “Ecomusicology,” *New Grove Dictionary of American Music*, vol. 2, ed. Charles Hiroshi Garrett (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), for perspectives on how ecomusicology considers musical and sonic issues, both textual and performative, related to ecology and the natural environment.

5 Ecotheology reconsiders the manner in which we imagine God that recovers a sense of connection to the world of Creation. After Rod Pattenden, “Mapping the Liturgy: Seeing Sacred Space,” in Burns and Monro, *Christian Worship in Australia*, 218.

6 Definition according to Aaron S. Allen and Kevin Dawe, eds., *Current Directions in Ecomusicology: Music Culture, Nature* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 288. Cultural ecology orients the processes by which societies adapt to environments.

7 Ecocriticism is the critical study of literary and other artistic practices in relation to environmental concerns (*ibid.*, 289).

8 Jeff Todd Titon, “Exhibiting Music in a Sound Community,” *Ethnologies* 37/1 (2015): 23–41, <https://www.erudit.org/en/journals/ethno/2015-v37-n1-ethno03047/1039654ar/>. See also “A Sound Commons for All Living Creatures,” *Smithsonian Folkways Magazine*, “Sounds and Soundscapes” issue, March 2013, <https://folkways.si.edu/magazine-fall-winter-2012-sound-commons-living-creatures/science-and-nature-world/music/article/smithsonian>.

9 See Wendy Arons and Theresa J. May, eds., *Readings in Performance and Ecology* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

10 Term introduced by Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005). In Latour’s “sociology of associations,” nonhuman entities can act and can be actants, as the focus shifts from the actor to the network that incorporates and folds about actants.

11 Randall Harlow recently proposed that every act of musicking amounts to a construction of a network of actors that define an “ecology of practice.” “Ecologies of Practice in Musical Performance,” *MUSICultures: Journal of the Canadian Society for Traditional Music* 45/1–2 (2018).

12 <https://www.merriam-webster.com/thesaurus/cathedral>.

13 John Charles Ryan, *Green Sense: The Aesthetics of Plants, Place and Language* (Oxford: Trueheart Academic, 2012), 3.

14 Term coined by Hildegard Westerkamp, “Speaking from Inside the Soundscape,” in *The Book of Music and Nature*, ed. David Rothenberg and Marta Ulvaeus (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2001).

15 For examples, see Rod Giblett, *Environmental Humanities and Theologies: Ecoculture, Literature and the Bible* (New York: Routledge, 2018).

16 Definition by Glenn Albrecht, “Exiting the Anthropocene and Entering the Symbiocene,” *Minding Nature Journal* 9/2 (Spring 2016), <https://www.humansandnature.org/exiting-the-anthropocene-and-entering-the-symbiocene>.

17 David Dunn, “Nature, Sound Art, and the Sacred,” in Rothenberg and Ulvaeus, *The Book of Music and Nature*, 98.

18 Elizabeth A. Johnson, *Ask the Beasts: Darwin and the God of Love* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), inside cover sleeve.

19 Giblett, *Environmental Humanities and Theologies*.

20 Albrecht, “Exiting the Anthropocene and Entering the Symbiocene.”

21 Denise Von Glahn, *The Sounds of Place: Music and the American Cultural Landscape* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2003).

22 See Graham Paulson, "Towards an Aboriginal Theology," *Pacifica: Australasian Theological Studies* 19/3 (2006): 310–20.

23 Ryan, *Green Sense*, 26.

24 John Sentamu, "Change the World, Don't Give In to It," *Weekly Telegraph*, "News Review," Dec. 26, 2007–Jan. 1, 2008: 5.

25 Luke 2:14 (King James Version).

26 An earlier format began in South Australia in 1865, when Cornish miners working in Moonta gathered on Christmas Eve to sing carols with lighted tallow candles stuck to the brims of their safety hats. This tradition spread to Adelaide from 1928. See John Whiteoak, "Christmas Music," in *Currency Companion to Music and Dance in Australia*, ed. John Whiteoak and Aline Scott-Maxwell (Sydney: Currency Press, 2003), 138.

27 Paul McDermott, "Society in Danger of Worshipping False Idols," *The Age*, Sept. 22, 2004: 2.

28 Dan Bigna, "Keith's Risk a Catalyst for Experience," *Canberra Times*, Dec. 30, 2010: 8.

29 Dorothy McRae-McMahon notes that Pentecostals currently comprise the fastest growing religious denomination in Australia, having successfully engaged consumerist culture in what is now arguably the most secular country in the world. Dorothy McRae-McMahon, "Liturgy in the Southern Hemisphere: The Australian Context," in Burns and Monro, *Christian Worship in Australia*, 132.

30 Fiona Richards, ed., *The Soundscapes of Australia: Music, Place and Spirituality* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2007), 3.

31 A concept articulated by Harlow in "Ecologies of Practice in Musical Performance."

32 June Boyce-Tillman, *Experiencing Music—Restoring the Spiritual: Music as Well-Being* (Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang, 2016).

33 Mark Pedelty, *Ecomusicology: Rock, Folk, and the Environment* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012), 118.

34 Jeffers Engelhardt, "Editorial Introduction: Voicing Religion," *Yale Journal of Music & Religion* 4/1 (2018): 3.

35 Marissa Glynias Moore, "Sounding the Congregational Voice," *ibid.*, 37.

36 Clare V. Johnson, "'Relating Liturgical Time to 'Place-Time': The Spatiotemporal Dislocation of the Liturgical Year in Australia," in Burns and Monro, *Christian Worship in Australia*, 40. Johnson is quoting from Mirilia Bonnes and Gianfranco Secchiaroli, *Environmental Psychology: A*

*Psycho-Social Introduction*, trans. Claire Montagna (London: Sage Publications, 1995), 160.

37 After Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels, eds., *The Iconography of Landscape* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

38 Short-term light sources used in sacred and secular celebrations around the world.

39 After Psalm 19:1–4 (KJV).

40 See, for instance, David Rothenberg, *Bug Music: How Insects Gave Us Rhythm and Noise* (New York: Picador, 2013).

41 Dunn, "Nature, Sound Art, and the Sacred," 97–98.

42 See Barry Truax, *Handbook for Acoustic Ecology* (Vancouver, BC: ARC Publications, 1978); and *Acoustic Communication*, 2nd ed. (Westport, CT: Ablex Publishing, 2001).

43 Truax, *Handbook for Acoustic Ecology*.

44 Derived from <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/native-animals/native-animal-facts/laughing-kookaburra>. I have been swooped by a kookaburra during a concert. It scavenged food from my mouth, causing my lips to vibrate for some time afterwards.

45 After Jeff Todd Titon, "Why Thoreau?" in Aaron S. Allen and Kevin Dawe, eds., *Current Directions in Ecomusicology: Music, Culture, Nature* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 78.

46 Nerida Vincent, "Loving Life in Beautiful Canowindra," blog post, Feb. 23, 2014.

47 Johnson, *Ask the Beasts*, inside cover sleeve.

48 Pope John Paul II, "Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All of Creation, World Day of Peace Message January 1, 1990," in "And God Saw That It Was Good": *Catholic Theology and the Environment*, ed. Drew Christiansen and Walter Grazer (Washington, DC: U.S. Catholic Conference, 1996), 215–22, cited in Johnson, *Ask the Beasts*, 281.

49 Johnson, *Ask the Beasts*, 281.

50 Whiteoak, "Christmas Music," 138.

51 McRae-McMahon, "Liturgy in the Southern Hemisphere," 137.

52 The flourishing culture of Aotearoa-New Zealand's hymn writers and composers, led by Colin Gibson and Shirley Murray, is represented in three significant volumes. Of relevance is the songbook *Carol Our Christmas: A Book of New Zealand Carols* (Raumati Beach, NZ: New Zealand Hymnbook Trust, 1996), containing 52 popular contemporary carols.

53 Julie Rickwood, "Choralecology?: Community Choirs and Environmental Activism," *Social Alternatives* 33/1 (2014): 30–38. Rickwood coined the term *choralecology* for this emerging field of critical inquiry.



54 Pilcher, "Marking Liturgical Time in Australia: Pastoral Considerations," 56.

55 Johnson, "Relating Liturgical Time to 'Place-Time,'" 42.

56 McRae-McMahon, "Liturgy in the Southern Hemisphere," 134.

57 Elizabeth J. Smith, "Crafting and Singing Hymns in Australia," in Burns and Monro, *Christian Worship in Australia*, 193.

58 Opening stanza of No. 188 in *Together in Song*, ed. Wesley Milgate (East Melbourne: Harper Collins Religious, 1999), set to the tune HANOVER.

59 An imaginary wreath of flowers in the shape of the Australian Aboriginal curved throwing stick. Boomerangs are also clapped together to accompany Indigenous songs and chants.

60 Fran Knight, blog post review of *The Twelve Days of Aussie Christmas*, by Colin Buchanan, illustrations by Glen Singleton.

61 London and Sydney: Chappell & Co. Ltd., ca. 1948.

62 Chris Budden, "Acknowledging First Peoples in Christian Worship in Australia," in Burns and Monro, *Christian Worship in Australia*, 65.

63 Annie Clarke and Chris Johnston, "Time, Memory, Place and Land: Social Meaning and Heritage Conservation in Australia," paper presented at the *Scientific Symposium, ICOMOS 14th General Assembly, Zimbabwe, 2003*, 3–4.

64 Fiona Magowan, "Spirit, Place and Power in Arnhem Land Traditional and Christian Music," in Richards, *The Soundscapes of Australia*.

65 Emily Nicol, *The Song Keepers: A Strong Family of Song*, National Indigenous Television, July 16, 2018.

66 See Fiona Magowan, "Christian Influences on Indigenous Arts," in Whiteoak and Scott-Maxwell, *Currency Companion to Music and Dance in Australia*, 136–38.

67 Peggy Brock, *Indigenous Peoples and Religious Change* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 146–47.

68 Australian Broadcasting Corporation, "Outback Kids to Sing at Adelaide Carols," *ABC News*, Dec. 16, 2011.

69 *Jesunya Iti Wirkankuntja*, The Ernabella Praise and Worship Singers. Pitjantjatjara Christmas Hymns Recorded by Steven Fraser in Kane Hall, Pukatja, South Australia. A Ngapartji Ngapartji Community Project, Tracks of the Desert, Inc., ER-EPWS-04C, 2007. Sound recording.

70 Naina Sen, Trisha Morton-Thomas, and Rachel Clements, *The Song Keepers*, 2018. DVD.

71 For plentiful examples, see Louise Sherman and Christobel Mattingley, *Our Mob, God's Story: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Artists*

*Share Their Faith* (Sydney: Bible Society Australia, 2017).

72 Australia Council, *Connecting Australians: Results of the National Arts Participation Survey*, June 2017.

73 The term "cultural cringe" was coined in Australia after the Second World War by the social commentator A. A. Phillips to describe an internalized inferiority complex that causes people in colonized countries to dismiss their culture as inferior to the cultures of other countries.

74 Luke 2:10–11 (New International Version).

75 Ironbark is the common name for a group of species in the genus *Eucalyptus*.

76 Based on Lucy Baker, "A Capital Christmas," *Canberra Times*, Dec. 17, 2010: 5.

77 Melanie Clark, "Singing by Candlelight," *Canberra Times*, "See Canberra: Share the City You Live In" (supplement), December 2010: 12.

78 Michael Inman, "Christmas Bells to Ring Out over the Lake," *Canberra Times*, Dec. 24, 2010: 4.

79 Australian Broadcasting Corporation, "Sounds Like Christmas," *Compass*, Dec. 23, 2017. ABC Religion & Ethics (TV), prod. Kim Akhurst.

80 Michelle Leonard, *Yindyamarra: A Prospect of Peace*, a Christmas album performed by the Moorambilla Voices (Sydney: Australian Broadcasting Corporation, 2017). CD. Yindyamarra means "the wisdom of respectfully knowing how to live well, in a world worth living in."

81 Wiradjuri elder Stan Grant, Sr., gave permission to use text connected to his country.

82 Quoted in Lliane Clarke, "Writing Music for Yindyamarra: A Prospect of Peace," *Limelight: Australia's Classical Music and Arts Magazine*, Sept. 29, 2017.

83 Matt Heazlewood, "Waxing Lyrical about Caroling," *Mosman Daily*, Dec. 2, 2010: 37.

84 Ibid.

85 Anne Richmond, personal communication, July 3, 2017.

86 Lorna Kaino, personal communication, Jan. 7, 2018.

87 Australian Broadcasting Corporation, "Sounds Like Christmas."

88 Ibid.

89 Adapted from <http://twww.id.au/christmas/carols.html>.

90 The bristly-coated bandicoot is a marsupial with pointed ears, a short tail, grey-brown fur, a white underbelly, a humped back, large hind feet, and a long pointy snout. An image of a bandicoot may be viewed at <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/animals-and-plants/native-animals/native-animal-facts/bandicoots>.