

# The ripple effects of pedagogies and curriculum in Australian tertiary contemporary popular music guitar education

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## Abstract

Research suggests graduates from music courses in Australian tertiary institutions typically undertake portfolio careers that include a combination of performing and teaching. Both of these activities could have ongoing artistic ripple effects on the musical communities the graduates inhabit. This paper reports on a qualitative post-graduate research study using Inductive Thematic Analysis to address the question: How do the pedagogical practices and curriculum content of Contemporary Popular Music (CPM) courses influence their graduates' performance practices and how, in turn, do the graduates influence the local music communities in which they perform and teach? With a specific focus on tertiary CPM guitar programs the study investigated how graduates are being influenced by Australian and non-Australian content, in the form of repertoire for ensembles and recitals, and course design. Also, how they are, in turn, influencing the local music communities through their activities. The sample for this research included current students, alumni and educators of Australian Bachelor level CPM courses. The British Invasion and the influence of the Afro-American Blues have had a lasting impact on Australian popular music. The study was designed to investigate if the pedagogical practices and curriculum content of Australian CPM courses intentionally continue to embrace this historical phenomenon, or if new advances in tertiary music education are creating new waves with further ripple effects.

Keywords: Contemporary Popular Music, Guitar Pedagogy, Australian Tertiary Music Education

## Introduction

The incoming floodwaters of twenty-first century music marketing via online tools, including downloads and streaming, have the potential to provide new modes of global cultural influences on the music produced by the next generation of musicians. Online resources for music education and the use of online pedagogical practices may also be having a similar effect. Students of music in any part of the world can now quickly and easily access music from any other part of the world and be influenced by the wide range of musical cultures globally present (Barton 2018). This digital age cultural melting pot may have many positive outcomes unforeseen by previous generations. However, it also has the potential to

cause localised music sub-cultures and micro-communities to lose their unique characteristics as they are diluted by the global floodwaters.

This is seen as a real problem in cultures feeling overwhelmed by Westernisation (Otchere, 2015; Shah & Saidon, 2017) and culturally sensitive music education is seen as one method of ensuring local cultural flavours are sustained (Musaeva, Ching & Augustine, 2017; Putipumnak, 2018). A similar effect may also be occurring on the development of Australian music sub-cultures by curriculum content and pedagogical approaches used in Australian music education (Lee, 2018).

This article investigates the educational practices and music content in Australian tertiary Contemporary Popular Music (CPM) guitar programs to see what ripple effects they are having

on the local music communities their graduates inhabit. The primary research question is: How do the pedagogical practices and curriculum content of Contemporary Popular Music courses influence their graduates' performance practices and how, in turn, do the graduates influence the local music communities in which they perform and teach? The primary data collection was conducted via online surveys and interviews of students (n=41), alumni (n=38) and educators (n=37) of Australian Qualifications Framework level 7 (AQF7) CPM courses. Further data was collected from unit descriptors and unit outlines from every AQF7 CPM course and artefacts in the form of the products of guitar playing students and graduates of AQF7 CPM courses. Data analysis was conducted using Inductive Thematic Analysis techniques informed by Boyatzis (1998), Sarantakos (2013), and Braun and Clarke (2006).

Analysis of the data corpus indicated that there is little consistency of curriculum design among the various AQF7 CPM courses with a broad range of pedagogical approaches being employed. Some of the courses are structured in a similar fashion to the conservatoire model, including one-on-one instrumental tuition. Others have entirely different structures often featuring no instrumental tuition at all. Student centered learning, peer-to-peer learning, and teaching to holistic outcomes are among the pedagogical practices found in the courses examined.

Curriculum content, in the form of performance repertoire and musical exemplars was also found to be quite varied between the courses. Some courses concentrated on the students' own compositions and used these as exemplars in theory classes. Other courses included artefacts of the CPM industry. Among these there was also no consistent approach to the use of Australian content.

## Literature review

In this section we consider approaches to pedagogy, content and cultural relevance in music education discourse. At the 2016 Australian and New Zealand Association for Research in Music

Education (ANZARME) conference, hosted by the University of Auckland, Barry Lee introduced his research on the portfolio careers of graduates from Bachelor of Music courses (Lee, 2016). He discussed the prevalence of education being a common and major income stream for the cohorts in the scope of his research. Much has been published on the industry relevance of Australian tertiary courses in music performance (Carey & Lebler, 2012; Forrest, 1999; Watson & Forrest, 2011) and in particular contemporary and/or popular music tertiary education (Hannan, 2006; Lebler & Weston, 2015; Mantie, 2013). Findings include the success of pedagogical strategies using peer learning practices and student driven models. Bartleet, Bennett, Bridgstock, Draper, Harrison and Schippers' (2012) paper is worth highlighting here due to the focus on portfolio careers and the preparation of undergraduates for expecting to pursue such careers: "financial viability depends for many musicians not only on talent, but also on their own portfolio skills" (p. 35).

Examinations of popular music pedagogies in the twenty first century typically take into account the work of Lucy Green (2002, 2006, 2009) who discusses student-centered, authentic learning practices. Her approaches to pedagogy have since been adopted by many contemporary music programs worldwide including Musical Futures (Hallam, Creech & McQueen, 2017; Isbell, 2018; Jeanneret, 2010) a popular music program in Australian schools.

Vincent's research (2018) discussed a 25% quota of local content on Australian radio stations and the impact this has on the local music industry. As a participant in this research project she entertained the idea of a similar quota in education and how that might also positively influence the local music industry in many ways.

The research question regards the musical communities in which graduates of Australian CPM courses participate. It has been found that people's cultural identity and behaviors, which have traditionally been linked to geographical

communities, now extend to online communities (Spradley, 2016) and this is especially so in guitar communities (Bigham, 2013). Bigham discusses layers of influence and how guitarists translate influences into their own performance style. Baker, Hunter and Thomas (2016) note that the landscape for tertiary education has shifted significantly in recent years away from traditional, collegial models towards increasingly market driven, managerial models, and that one part of this shift was the change in the market to include new cohorts driven by online and blended models. Harris (2005) refers to this shift as; "The massification and internationalization of higher education" (p. 424), and Nagel and Kotze (2010) as "a boom in online courses worldwide" (p. 45).

Hill's 2009 study of the influence of tertiary music education in Finland reveals institutions do cause ripple effects beyond the scope of their immediate cohorts:

The cultural power wielded by academies is not limited to the application of a specific ideology within the institution's curriculum and courses. Rather, it has the potential to transform the perception, performance, and creation of music across a country, affecting relations with non-academy musicians and impacting the larger musical culture. (pp. 225-226)

The literature confirms the prevalence of portfolio careers among music graduates, that these graduates may thereby be influencing the local music sub-cultures and twenty-first century models are now influenced heavily by the presence of online education and online virtual, non-geographically located communities.

## Participants

The courses being examined in this study are Bachelor degree courses (AQF7), in CPM where a student has the option to major in performance with the guitar as their primary instrument. Data collection began during the first semester of 2018. At that time 23 courses existed in Australia that fit these criteria. There were 15 courses offered by Universities, three by Polytechnic or Technical

and Further Education (TAFE) colleges, and five offered by private institutions. Of these courses only five offered online delivery in any of their core units. Two courses could be completed entirely online. The course offered by the University of New England is only offered in a fully online mode.

Primary data was collected via online surveys and semi-structured interviews. There were 85 respondents to the online surveys, comprising 67 students or alumni, and 18 educators. Initial analysis of the survey data informed the following interview process. Thirty-two interviewees participated comprising 13 students or alumni, 17 educators and two participants who identified as both. There were representatives among the participant cohort of every institution offering a relevant course. Purposive sampling, where subjects chosen due to their relevance to the project are invited to participate (Sarantakos, 2013), was employed to recruit participants. Social media was found to be the most successful method of locating and recruiting participants by identifying them through Facebook Alumni pages. Snowball sampling (Sarantakos, 2013) also occurred when participants were asked to invite other members of their artist networks to also take part. The interview participants also included two industry personnel who have given masterclasses or workshops in tertiary settings. Table 1 shows the interview participants and their roles, please note that some participants agreed to be identified whilst others preferred to remain anonymous via the use of a pseudonym.

Figure 1 shows the geographical location of the participants and Figure 2 shows the institution type that the participants represented.

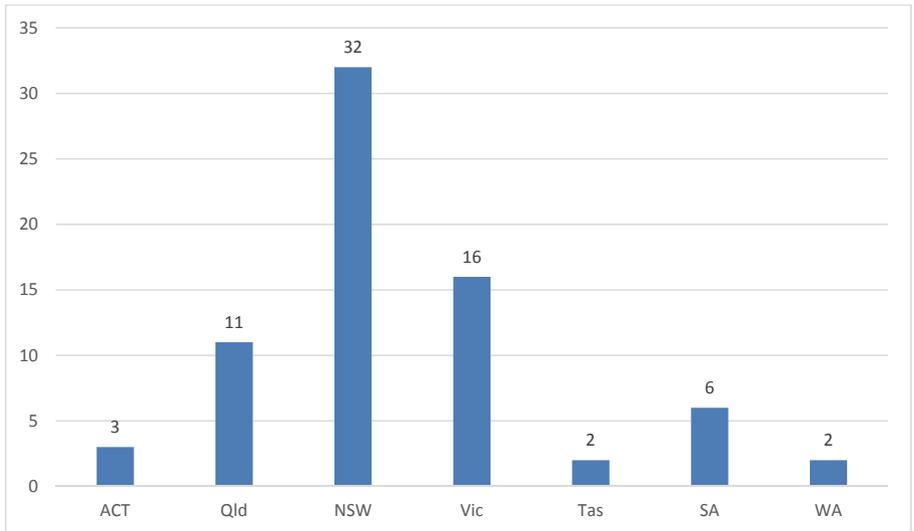
The numbers of the participants in figures one and two do not include participants who chose anonymity in the online surveys. Anonymity included the option of not stating the institution in which their learning/teaching was situated. The researchers maintain that these figures, showing basic participant demographics, demonstrates a reasonable sample representation of the industry for the purposes of this research.

**Table 1 Interview Participants**

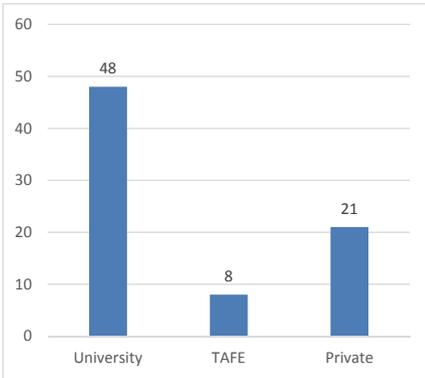
Name	Role	Name	Role
Ivan*	TAFE & University Alumnus, University Tutor	Alain	University Alumnus
Denis	University Lecturer/Tutor	Chrissie	Private Institution Lecturer
Don	University Lecturer	Ben	Private Institution Lecturer
Michael H	TAFE & University Lecturer	William*	University Student
Mike	University Tutor	Michael N	Private Institution Alumnus
Robyn	University Lecturer	Jack	University Student
Kevin	Artist/Guest Lecturer	Barry	University Alumnus, & Lecturer
James	Artist/Guest Lecturer	Paul	Private Institution Tutor
Warren*	University Student	Matt	University Student
Renaldo*	TAFE Alumnus	Bruce	University Lecturer
Aleta	Private Institute Lecturer	Samuel	Private Inst & University Student
Adam V	University Alumnus	Adam S	TAFE Lecturer
Dan	University Lecturer & Tutor	Donna	University Lecturer
Rueben	University Student	Erica	University Alumnus
Asher	University Student	Brad	University Lecturer and Tutor
Jamie-Lee	University Student	Samantha	University Lecturer

\*pseudonym allocated as request by participant

**Figure 1: Geographical location of participants by State or Territory**



**Figure 2: Institution type of participant**



## Findings and Discussion

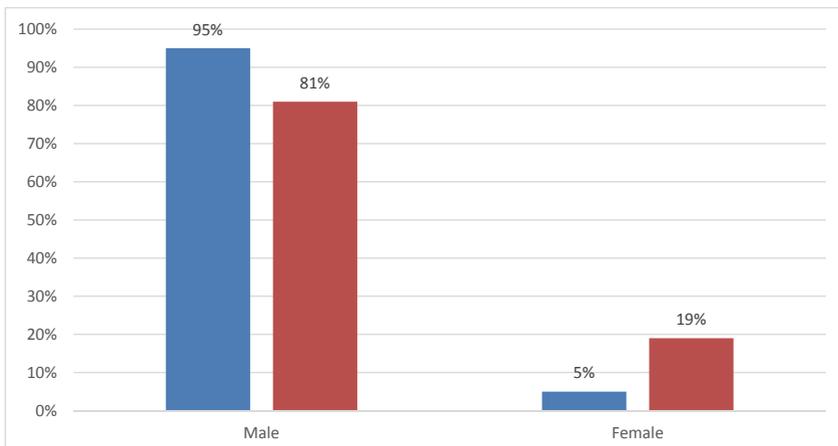
The first finding noticeable in the data before any deep analysis was applied was the significant gender imbalance amongst participants. It was found that participants in guitar cohorts among AQF7 CPM courses in Australia are male dominated. Figure 3 illustrates this imbalance in the participant cohort. This question in the survey was optional and had a non-response rate of 23.7%.

The researchers suggest that these figures are indicative of the industry's gender imbalance (Lee, 2019) and this is also supported by the qualitative data. Interviews revealed that participants from these institutions are generally aware of this imbalance and in some cases are taking steps to address the issue: "the whole gender thing I think is really important too, so that we're not privileging one gender over the other gender, that we're inclusive" (Brad, University Lecturer, 22/8/18, Interview). Erica mentioned the significance of having a female role model in her learning journey: "It just gave me the extra level of confidence like yeah look, there's a girl actually doing it, playing as well as any of these other guys" (Erica, University Alumnus, 19/8/18, Interview). She sees herself now, in the six years since graduating, as taking on a mentoring, or role model position to younger female guitarists, demonstrating a ripple effect of her own education.

## Pedagogical approaches used in CPM courses

The first part of the research question considers pedagogical approaches being used in the courses under examination. The common theme

**Figure 3: Gender identification of participants.** *Blue columns – Survey Respondents; red columns – Interviewees.*



from the data is the predominance of student-centered music pedagogy approaches (Gilbert, 2016; Hansen & Imse, 2016) where the intended learning outcomes are derived from the student's perspective (Biggs & Tang, 2007): "I tend to work with the students and see where their own emphases are, where they want to go and perhaps even where there might be deficiencies in their technique or knowledge and try to plug that with repertoire in some way" (Paul, Private Institution Tutor, 17/7/18, Interview).

Libertarian approaches, where the traditional teacher/student hierarchy is abandoned in favour of a co-collaborator, co-creator, or even co-learner relationship (Freire, 1996), were also observed within AQF7 CPM courses: "staff as mentor and in some cases staff as co-collaborator as opposed to that hierarchy of teacher-student being so explicit [...] where students are creating original music they're doing it with staff in sort of a co-writing kind of approach" (Brad, University Lecturer, 22/8/18, Interview).

Group creativity, allowing for the development of what Gardner describes as the "wisdom of the crowds" (2008, p. 92), where the sum of the productivity exceeds the cumulative capacities of the individual group members is ubiquitous within the courses examined. For example, respondent 85, an educator in a N.S.W. university mentioned how his cohort was different every semester, containing students from various mixes of cultural backgrounds, and he needed to regularly adjust his group learning approaches accordingly: "Curriculum is in constant development, [...] developed approaches to group work and continual assessment of their work in the class to cater for the particular group environment that we have" (Respondent 85, University Tutor, Educator Survey). The difference between declarative and functioning knowledge as outlined by Biggs and Tang (2007) was addressed by educators and also guest lecturers in the interviews with a strong trend toward favouring functioning knowledge: "because musicianship is about doing it in the moment and

it's a hands on do it thing" (Aleta, Private Institution Lecturer, 17/8/18, Interview), over the declarative approach: "it takes three years to get over that education, to actually open their ears up to music" (James, Guest Lecturer, 21/7/18, Interview).

## Active Learning

Active Learning was a pedagogical approach strongly evident in data. Active Learning has been defined as "any activity encouraging students to participate in learning approaches engaging them with course material and enhancing critical thinking as they make applications beyond the classroom" (Lumpkin, Achen & Dodd, 2015, p. 122). The important aspects of Active Learning stated by Settles, Brachman and Dietterich (2011) are allowing the student[s] to pose questions and choose the data from which they learn. Erica felt her education gave her the tools and incentive to actively continue her learning journey post-graduation: "I knew if I wanted to get better I had to take in some other information not just find it in myself, ... it's given me the tools to be able to explore that on my own" (Erica, University Alumnus, 19/8/18, Interview). Adam V found the course helped him discover musics that he would not have considered studying had he not been enrolled. He states that this enabled him to explore further: "I think the course really pushed me and challenged me musically, [...] like I was able to look at all that stuff and just take little parts of it that I might want to use in my own music" (Adam V, University Alumnus, 17/8/18, Interview). This reveals the potential for outgoing ripple effects of CPM course content via active pedagogical practices not just beyond the classroom physically or geographically, but also in time and context.

One of the designers of the course at Griffith University, discussed the use of student-centered popular music education pedagogical methods now common practice since the 2002 publication of Lucy Green's book *How Popular Musicians Learn*. However, this course was first offered in 1999, three years before Green's book was published. He states:

"We'd actually learned popular music with our friends, from our friends, from listening to records of our heroes, through recording ourselves, listening back to those recordings and finding things to do better next time we did it. That was in common for all three of us, so the assumption was that was how popular musicians learned. Our principal pedagogical position was not to institutionalise, but to try and emulate popular music practices within a higher education setting" (Don, University Lecturer, 19/2/18, Interview). This Australian course design, which employs student-centered learning models, has the potential to reciprocate into the wider communities if the graduates engage in teaching activities as part of their portfolio careers and also engage with this practice.

## **Social Constructivism and peer-to-peer learning and assessment**

Social constructivism was another pedagogical approach that was evident in the data. Milutinovic states that proponents of social constructivism "are interested in interactions among people which are observed as the ways through which shared versions of knowledge are constructed" (2011, p. 177). This is fundamental to how popular music has been shared among its progenitors since the inception of the current genre form and is synonymous with peer learning practices (Green, 2002). The use of terms relating to peer learning is an indicator of social constructivism pedagogical practices. The frequency of the term 'peer' in the data indicates that this pedagogical approach is common in the AQF7 CPM courses. Educator interviewees and/or unit outlines from 63% of the courses examined in this study made specific reference to peer learning practices. It must be noted that this does not mean that 37% of the courses do not use peer learning practices, it simply indicates that this was not clear from keyword analysis of data.

At Ben's institute, the third-year students sometimes conduct masterclasses for the lower year level students, thereby instituting a reciprocal,

peer-to-peer approach: "Sometimes the masterclass will be much more peer-driven learning and it might involve students at the higher levels doing some mentoring of students at a lower level" (Ben, Private Institution Lecturer, 3/7/18, Interview). A theme that is present in the data is the common use of peer assessment methods. Concepts of peer assessment, peer critique or peer feedback appear in 35 of the unit outlines collected during this research. These represent 14 of the 23 institutions offering AQF7 CPM courses and were found among all three institution types. Peer feedback is also present in non face-to-face settings as found in the course offered by the University of New England. The unit information for MUSI540 Advanced Creative Portfolio states: "Students choose to specialise in either music performance, composition or technology and are provided with staff and peer feedback to support the development of their project" (UNE, 2018, para 2).

Autonomy, also referred to as agency (Griffin et al., 2017; Monk et al., 2013), is also an integral aspect of student-centered pedagogies (Green, 2006) and was found to be prevalent in AQF7 CPM courses. One of the ways educational practices can have ongoing ripple effects on the communities graduates inhabit is through the autonomy divested to students. Graduate and student interviewees stated that when repertoire for exams and recitals has been restricted or mandated this has influenced their selection of material they choose to perform beyond the confines of the institution, both during and after completion of the course, by including those tunes in their typical performance repertoire. Where Australian tunes were included in the course repertoire the data shows that they have, in some cases, also been included in the graduates' external performances: "Yeah, especially from the Aussie Rock component, like Chisel and AC/DC" (Michael N, Private Institution Alumnus, 6/7/18, Interview).

The interview data collected from educators shows a strong theme of autonomy of repertoire selection in the AQF7 CPM courses: "I encourage students to be 100% invested in what their

interests are as opposed to what my interests are" (Bruce, University Lecturer, 10/8/18, Interview). This was also found in the student data: "We're all encouraged to be true to our own musical endeavors" (Asher, University Student, 15/8/18, Interview).

In one particular case a student of Macedonian heritage attended an AQF7 CPM course expecting to learn exclusively western popular music. However, his guitar tutor encouraged him to engage with his cultural heritage and bring music from that culture into the course and also take what he was learning in the course and apply it to his cultural roots with interesting outcomes: "Here was someone who basically was ignoring his own cultural heritage and he's now sort of proud of it, investigated it, creating within it, and I guess adding to the cannon so to speak" (Adam S, TAFE Lecturer, 15/8/18, Interview).

Social networks formed in music courses have the potential to influence the musical material and playing styles of the students and graduates beyond the walls of their institutions (Bigham, 2013). The influence of these networks has been shown to continue beyond the enrolment years: "The main way it influenced me, to be honest, just the networking with my class mates and their extended networks which, the course finished eight years ago, I'm still a part of now" (Renaldo, TAFE Alumnus, 13/8/18, Interview). One student stated that whenever he is beginning a new musical project and looking for other musicians to participate he will turn to the network he formed at his university because he knows those musicians will be well trained and up to the task: "Most people that I play with in a live setting, I met them all at Uni. I know they're great players, they're switched on because they're at Uni" (Jack, University Student, 11/7/18, Interview). The importance of networking, and the development of communities, is also found in the data from educators: "I think a lot of those kind of events and those things that start to happen that do build community, they happen through those connections that people do make, through

coming together at universities. Because it's like who knows who, and its word of mouth, and its 'Oh this person is doing this' and they come along to gigs and it sort of builds from there" (Donna, University Lecturer, 24/8/18, Interview).

## Teacher training

In the literature it was found that the majority of graduates from Bachelor of Music (BMus) courses go on to form portfolio careers, and these careers often include a teaching component (Bartleet et al., 2012; Lee, 2016). This was strongly supported by the data in this study: "Most of our students get jobs as music teachers" (Aleta, Private Institution Lecturer, 17/8/18, Interview). Since this is the case, the training of students enrolled in AQF7 music degrees in basic pedagogical practices would seem a sensible industry-relevant topic that would have ripple effects on the communities the graduates inhabit. However, out of the 23 courses investigated in this study only five contain core units in music education/teaching. There are elective options available in many courses that include pedagogy, however, it is not possible to quantify the influence of these elective options as no data was collected regarding how many participants had enrolled in teaching electives. The range of elective options spans a wide spectrum with three courses offering no elective options, one course only offering electives in music subjects, and one institution having over 700 possible elective options.

A common theme from the data is that both the educators and student cohorts feel the courses give them a thorough grounding in music theory and practice, setting them up with a knowledge base from which to teach: "There was never really any sort of direct focus on teaching or education, but I certainly learnt a lot of things that I could then go on and teach my students" (Adam V, University Alumnus, 17/8/18, Interview); "We give them all that grounding in music theory, performance, ensemble, all the kind of things that they'd probably find themselves teaching. Then we help them with

things like getting an ABN and building a website and some basic advertising and marketing” (Ben, Private Institution Lecturer, 3/7/18, Interview).

## Australian music curriculum content

One way this project intended to gauge the ripple effects of the Australian CPM courses on the graduates’ local music communities was to investigate the extent of Australian content in the form of repertoire for ensembles and solo performance exams or recitals. There is no theme in this regard evident in the data. However, a concentration on the creation of original compositions was found to be present. One university program had a quota of 50% original material to be performed at the students’ final recitals, but many institutions have no set repertoire with the students being allowed to freely choose the compositions they wish to study or perform. One university in New South Wales allows the students freedom of choice, however, the selection of tunes must meet certain quotas. One of these, to keep the music contemporary, is 50% of the tunes students choose to perform in exams and recitals must be less than five years old. Another quota is 50% must be Australian compositions. This has been met with some resistance by the students; “It’s proving unpopular with the students funnily enough” (Barry, University Lecturer, 13/7/18, Interview).

William, a student at a university in Victoria, independently came up with a similar idea when asked what he thinks the institutions could be doing: “at least five Australian compositions by different Australian composers” (William, University Student, 4/7/18, Interview). However, there is some difficulty in defining what is, or is not, an Australian composition and no formal system has been devised to address this issue: “Funnily enough, I couldn’t find anything that defined this is what an Australian artist is” (Chrissie, Private Institution Lecturer, 3/7/18, Interview). The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) has designed a system for defining a

Canadian song using the acronym MAPL. To qualify as a Canadian composition a song must meet at least two of these conditions: the music (M) was composed by a Canadian, the music or the lyrics are performed by a Canadian artist (A), the performance (P) or recording was conducted in Canada, or the lyrics (L) were written by a Canadian (CRTC, 2009). There is no parallel system in Australia designed to determine exactly what is, or is not, an Australian song (Vincent, 2018).

A result of including non-Australian content, discovered in the data, was a sense of cultural diss-connect. Warren, a current university student, expressed a feeling of a lack of authenticity when performing tunes from outside the music which he feels forms the core of his cultural identity: “All of that is based in America and the U.K. It’s only played out to us as like a, I dunno, like a stone dropping in the water and ripples coming out to us. It wasn’t really authentic for us, I had to emulate other people, not people that I knew” (Warren, University Student, 25/6/18, Interview). When Australian compositions have been imposed upon students there is evidence in the data to suggest that students have not always engaged with the material. When one participant was asked to list the Australian tunes in his course’s repertoire he could not remember them: “Some, none that I remember by name” (Participant 40, Private Institution Alumnus, Student Survey).

## Local Music Communities

By way of combatting the floodwaters of the influence of online music streaming it was found that the educators feel the need to encourage their students to engage with the local live music scene, rather than entirely with the online environment. Paul, a private institution tutor, mentioned he found students were not naturally engaging with the local community and needed to be told to do so: “What I try to do is get students directed to hearing live music that is around them” (Paul, Private Institution Tutor, 17/7/18, Interview). Jamie-Lee, a university student, found doing so

was a valuable learning experience: "I think if you're surrounded by something, if you're studying something, it's just going to bring it out more I guess. Which is where I think it's very important that universities sort of embrace that and make that part of the course" (Jamie-Lee, University Student, 1/8/18, Interview).

It is anticipated that this engagement with the local musicians would have generational influence in the local geographical area by connecting the students with their local communities including older musicians. In turn, when the graduates perform, they will connect with younger musicians. This is supported in the data by guest artist interviewee Kevin: "You have people that are like minded so that they like to jam together. There's always a lot of jam sessions going on. Usually if you live in close proximity [...] You've got a young guy coming up and going 'how do you do that?' and 'what do you do?' and 'I want to do it' and all this sort of thing" (Kevin, Guest Lecturer, 6/6/18, Interview).

One interviewee expressed the value of this experience as she grew up in a rural environment with no internet in her home. She was engaged with, and influenced almost solely by, the local communities and it wasn't until she went to university that she was fully exposed to the global music influences: "My experience in having more international guitarists influencing me came when I went to university, it's funny when I realize how focused I was on the local scene" (Erica, University Alumnus, 19/8/18, Interview).

## The Australian Voice

One question the online surveys and interviews addressed was whether or not there actually is any recognisable or valuable Australian voice in the global popular music guitar community worthy of preservation by the tertiary institutions. The responses were almost unanimous that there was one, however the participant cohort could not articulate with any sense of coherence exactly what it is. The most frequently cited voice

in Australian guitar culture within the data is AC/DC with 11 references in the interviews and 15 references in the surveys. Demonstrating the position this ensemble holds in the culture, when asked to list iconic songs in the Australian guitar community one respondent replied; "any AC/DC song" (Respondent 31, University Alumnus, Student Survey). When interviewees were asked to identify what it is about AC/DC that is important in the Australian guitar culture a common response was the driving rhythm guitar playing of guitarist Malcolm Young: "It's the hypnotic powerful rhythm, ah, rhythm. And the rhythm guitar mainly and the, you know, and the other guitar playing with it to double it up. I think that's a very Australian Rock approach that really" (Kevin, Guest Lecturer, 6/6/18, Interview).

One of the significant Australian sub-cultures that was identified in the interview data is the Grunge scene in Brisbane which has been documented as being globally influential (Dubrow, 2014). A university student from Queensland supported this observation: "There's a certain type of Grunge/Garage that's going around, certainly in Brisbane and Melbourne at the moment, that's very sort of fresh and Australian" (Jamie-Lee, University Student, 1/8/18, Interview). The data acknowledges that there is an Australian voice and that it is felt to be important for the institutions to recognize it in order to help sustain or preserve it: "It is important for us to be finding our own Australian voice [...] and I think I'm seeing Australia come of age, it's starting to find its own identity and I've seen that over the last twenty-five years or so" (Aleta, Private Institution Lecturer, 17/8/18, Interview). The constant narrative found in the data is that the Australian voice is at risk of drowning in the floodwaters of the global online music community and that universities have an obligation to take an active role in preserving it: "actually get people to really study our own culture, and rather than be a nation of covers bands, to actually understand and be able to perform and celebrate the musical contributions that Australian composers,

songwriters and musicians have made” (Barry, University Lecturer, 13/7/18, Interview).

## International students and guest lecturers

It is common for the courses examined in this study to invite people from the music industry to present single, or a short series of, workshops or masterclasses as guest lecturers. This is an example of a traditional Master/Student learning model (Johnson & Pratt, 1998) being used in the AQF7 CPM courses. These were found to be extra-curricula in some cases, and in other cases they were organized to be incorporated into the formal teaching program: “We had guests each week from different areas of the music industry, that spanned the entire music industry” (Matt, University Alumnus, 8/6/18, Interview). This study investigated the frequency of inviting international guest lecturers as it is suggested this would also have ripple effects on the shaping the identity of the Australian voice, or at least a musical dialect, in local communities. The practice of inviting international guest lecturers has, in other studies, been found to result in “readily visible and audible” (Hill, 2009, p. 225) changes in the resulting music of contemporary musicians and has been described as an “anti-nationalist, pro-transnational ideology” (Hill, 2009, p. 225). It was found that the majority of invited guest lecturers in AQF7 CPM courses were Australian artists and typically from the local area, usually due to fiscal constraints. However, when budgets allowed, international artists were invited: “They’re usually Australian because the APRA and AMCOS funding is about Australian artists. But having said that when we have had a budget, we have had overseas artists come through” (Barry, University Lecturer, 13/7/18, Interview). In one case the international artists were the ones that had the most lasting influence on the student: “We’ve had international ones and, trying to think... , to be honest I can’t remember if there has been Australian artists” (Asher, University Student, 15/8/18, Interview).

Fifty-four per cent of the educators interviewed said they had international students enrolled in their courses. The interview data suggests that these students are encouraged to engage with, and collaborate with, the Australian students bringing music from their own cultural backgrounds into the mix within a peer-to-peer pedagogical framework: “We encourage them to [bring their material], feeding off each other, learning from each other” (Brad, University Lecturer, 22/8/18, Interview); “There’s also a few students from Somalia and Sudan, places like that and they’ve definitely played music from their traditional culture [...] into the performances that they’re collaborating with other students on” (Warren, University Student, 25/6/18, Interview). It is suggested that this would have specific influence on each individual cohort as the students would influence each other with their own explicit cultural heritage. Also, in reverse, the Australian students would influence the international students having ripple effects on the local communities the international students return to, if they do, after graduating. However, there is some evidence in the data that collaboration and interaction between Australian and international students did not always occur: “Maybe one or two, but they really like never interacted” (Samuel, Private Institution and University Student, 16/8/18, Interview).

## Industry relevance

There is a strong theme in the existing literature advocating for twenty first century music courses to be industry relevant (Carey & Lebler, 2012; Forrest, 1999; Hannan, 2006; Lebler & Weston, 2015; Mantie, 2013; Watson & Forrest, 2011). This theme was also found in the data collected for this study. A sub-theme is the role of the internet and how students access and learn music. Industry skills now being taught in AQF7 CPM courses often include online marketing and technological skill development in place of traditional musical artistic skills: “Well the internet is now really the very core of the music industry but it’s also the

way a lot of students are learning their music. [...] If we're supposed to be designing people for a career in the music industry, do we teach people how to successfully and quickly upload things to YouTube and SoundCloud, or do we focus more time on sight-reading and arranging in terms of the Western classical tradition?" (Barry, University Lecturer, 13/7/18, Interview).

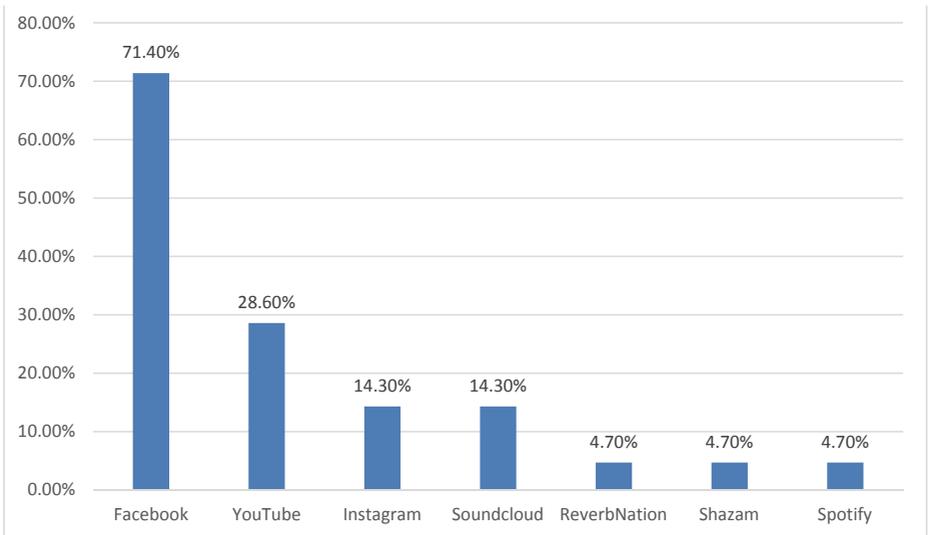
Chrissie, an educator in the private sector felt that it is not enough for the institutions to ensure the course content is industry relevant, but it was important for the institutions to actively engage with the industry. She feels educational institutions can play a significant role in maintaining the commercial music industry's wellbeing on a local level ensuring the students have somewhere to go when they graduate: "I think that it's important that we maintain Australian cultural significance [...] if the Australian music industry is not a healthy industry then all of these students [...] are not going to have a viable industry to go into" (Chrissie, Private Institution Lecturer, 3/7/18, Interview).

Another process the study used to ascertain the ripple effects of the AQF7 CPM courses

was to investigate the online presence of the graduates. It was found that 62% of the participant graduates had an online presence which featured their musical products. These online presences are globally accessible and the ripple effects of these students and the courses they undertook could potentially influence not just their local communities but have far reaching influence upon guitarists in communities in other global locales. Online platforms featuring products of respondents include Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Soundcloud, Spotify, Shazam, and ReverbNation. Facebook is the most frequently used platform with 71.4% of respondents with an online presence stating they used it to showcase their musical products. Figure 4 shows the spread of platforms used by student or alumni online survey respondents to market their musical products.

It was not uncommon for a single student/ alumnus to have multiple pages for different projects on the same platform. 33% of Facebook users had more than one account for their various bands or musical acts. It was also not uncommon for a single student/alumnus to market the same

**Figure 4: Online platforms used for music marketing**



musical product on a range of platforms. 43% of the respondents used accounts on more than one platform to market their music. Marketing students' musical products to online platforms based in China was found to be a topical focus at one Queensland university.

## Conclusion

There are 23 Bachelor level (AQF7) courses offered by Australian tertiary institutions where a student can choose to major in contemporary popular music (CPM) performance with the guitar as their primary instrument. There is, however, little uniformity in curriculum design and pedagogical approaches among these courses, with a very wide range of pedagogical methods, course designs, and curriculum content being evident. Among the non-conservatoire models student-centered pedagogies are frequently adopted as are peer-learning practices in both learning and assessing. Active-learning is common and a concentration on producing original compositions can be found in the data. Online delivery is not common as it is typically felt that face-to-face learning is best suited for performing arts subjects. In regard to Australian content in repertoire for ensembles or instrumental studies or for use as exemplars in music theory subjects there is no commonality across the corpus of courses. When Australian tunes have been included in course curriculum content it is common, but not ubiquitous, for graduates to continue to perform these tunes after completion of their studies, helping perpetuate a pre-existing Australian music culture.

This study supported findings of other research suggesting graduates of AQF7 CPM courses include both performing and teaching as major sources of income streams in their post-graduate portfolio careers. Therefore, the influence of the courses on the graduates' repertoire and playing style will have ripple effects on the local communities the graduates live, teach and perform in. Participation in online music communities by students and

graduates also enables outgoing ripple effects of Australian courses to a worldwide audience.

An almost unanimous opinion of both the students and educators surveyed and interviewed in this study is that there is a unique and recognisable Australian voice in guitar communities at both local and global levels which is worthy of maintenance and invested development. The opinion of the participant cohort seems to be that the tertiary institutions have an obligation to take an active role in researching the voice for the purposes of preservation and future artistic development.

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