

## ***Songs of the South: A Song Cycle for Mezzo Soprano and Piano Based on Lyrics from the Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration***

Carolyn Philpott<sup>a\*</sup>, Scott McIntyre, and Elizabeth Leane<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup>*University of Tasmania, Australia*

### **Abstract**

Music played an important role in the expeditions of the so-called “Heroic Age” of Antarctic exploration (c.1897–1922), serving not only to entertain and occupy the men during long periods of idle time, but also to provide motivation to assist with duties such as sledging and perhaps most importantly, to lift their spirits in times of extreme difficulty and uncertainty. The original diaries and published accounts of the expeditions include detailed records of musical events and activities that took place in Antarctica during this period, such as concerts and more regular and informal “sing-a-longs,” and some also feature the lyrics of original songs that were composed in Antarctica – on board the vessels, in the huts and tents and/or out on the ice while sledging. Most of these song texts were designed to be sung to a pre-existing tune – often that of a popular song such as a music hall or musical theatre number – and some indicate a specific tune in their subtitles. While most of these song texts are now more than one hundred years old, few of them have ever been set to music or heard outside of the original environment in which they were composed.

The focus of this article is on one of the first song cycles to be composed outside of Antarctica that set song texts originating from the expeditions of the Heroic Age – *Songs of the South* (2014) for mezzo soprano and piano by Australian composer Scott McIntyre (b. 1968). In this article, we explore the historical contexts in which these intriguing song texts were conceived and then examine McIntyre's approach to setting five of them to music in *Songs of the South*, including his incorporation of musical quotation and allusion, and his use of compositional devices that had gained currency in Western art music in the period leading up to, as well as during, the Heroic Age of Antarctic exploration, such as the "omnibus progression" and serial techniques. Through our discussion of the compositional devices that McIntyre employs in *Songs of the South*, we aim to highlight some possible approaches that composers working with these song texts may take in the future to create a strong nexus between their music and the historical and geographical contexts in which the original songs of the Heroic Age were created.

\*Email address for correspondence: Carolyn.Philpott@utas.edu.au

## **Introduction**

During the ‘Heroic Age’ of Antarctic exploration (c.1897–1922), it was not uncommon for expeditioners to engage in musical activities such as singing, song writing, playing musical instruments, listening to gramophones and staging concerts, as well as other leisure pursuits, during periods of idle time.<sup>1</sup> Many of the original diaries dating from this period, as well as the written accounts of the expeditions that were published after the parties returned home, reveal that music was not only highly prized for its entertainment value, but also for its capacity to distract the expeditioners’ minds from the monotony and sometimes physical, mental and/or emotional pain that they experienced on journeys to and across the frozen southernmost continent. Apsley Cherry-Garrard, for example, in his classic account of Robert Falcon Scott’s last expedition, *The Worst Journey in the World*, writes: “It is necessary to be cut off from civilisation and all that it means to enable you to realise fully the power music has to recall the past, or the depths of meaning in it to soothe the present and give hope for the future.”<sup>2</sup>

Some of the surviving manuscript materials and published sources relating to the expeditions include stanzas of original lyrics that were written and performed in Antarctica during the Heroic Age. Most of these song texts were created for the express purpose of being sung to a pre-existing tune – often that of a popular song such as a music hall or musical theatre number – and some of the sets of lyrics indicate a specific tune in their subtitles. There is only one known collection of songs that includes original music that was composed in

---

<sup>1</sup> See Carolyn Philpott, “The Sounds of Silence: Music in the Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration,” *The Polar Journal* 3:2 (2013): 447–465; Elizabeth Leane, *Antarctica in Fiction: Imaginative Narratives of the Southern Continent* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012), ch. 4; and Jack Stuster, *Bold Endeavors: Lessons from Polar and Space Exploration* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1996), ch. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Apsley Cherry-Garrard, *The Worst Journey in the World: Antarctic, 1910-1913* (New York: Dial Press, 1930), 198.

Antarctica during the Heroic Age – *The Songs of the Morning*, which was produced by Gerald S. Doorly and some of his fellow officers on board the *Morning*, a relief vessel sent to resupply Captain Scott and company aboard *Discovery* as part of the British National Antarctic Expedition 1901-1904.<sup>3</sup> With this exception, almost all of the original songs composed in Antarctic during the Heroic Age exist now purely as texts, or sets of lyrics, without any musical notation attached to them. Some remain unpublished and most have never been set to music or heard outside of the environment in which they were composed.

This presents composers and researchers alike with a unique opportunity to take a rare glimpse at this fascinating period of exploration and discovery from new perspective, to gain further insight into the lives and experiences of the men who participated in the expeditions, and to make the original song lyrics available to a range of different audiences through a variety of musical and/or textual means. As interest in the field of ‘ecomusicology’<sup>4</sup> continues to increase among musicologists, and more and more composers are producing music in connection with Antarctica<sup>5</sup> (and with ties to notions of landscape, environment and place more generally), the original song lyrics dating from the Heroic Age of Antarctic exploration will no doubt provide a rich resource for musicological research, as well as for composers seeking to write new musical works that carry strong historical links to Antarctica.

The focus of this article is on one of the first song cycles to be composed outside of Antarctica to include song texts originating from the expeditions of the Heroic Age – *Songs*

---

<sup>3</sup> Gerald S. Doorly, *The Songs of the ‘Morning’*, transcribed by Edith Harrhy (Melbourne: Bread and Cheese Club, 1943). For more information on *The Songs of the Morning*, see Carolyn Philpott, “Notes from the Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration: Gerald S. Doorly’s *Songs of the Morning*,” *Context: A Journal of Music Research* 37 (2012): 3-35.

<sup>4</sup> See Aaron S. Allen, “Ecomusicology,” *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed 27 May 2014, <http://oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2240765>.

<sup>5</sup> See Valmar Kurol, “Antarctica Experienced Through Music: Capsule Comments on CDs about Antarctica,” The Antarctic Circle, last modified 3 Jan. 2014, accessed 27 May 2014, [www.antarctic-circle.org/valmar.htm](http://www.antarctic-circle.org/valmar.htm).

*of the South* for mezzo soprano and piano by Australian composer Scott McIntyre (b. 1968).

Composed in late 2013 and early 2014, this song cycle sets five song texts that were conceived during expeditions of the Heroic Age and was commissioned as part of a larger project that also includes research by Carolyn Philpott and Elizabeth Leane into sledging songs and other topical songs that were composed in connection with Antarctic expeditions of same period.<sup>6</sup> In this article, we explore the historical contexts in which these intriguing song texts were conceived and then examine McIntyre's approach to setting them to music, including his incorporation of musical quotation and allusion, and his use of compositional devices that had gained currency in Western art music in the period leading up to, as well as during, the Heroic Age of Antarctic exploration, such as the so-called "omnibus progression" and serial techniques. Through our discussion of the compositional devices that McIntyre employs in *Songs of the South*, we aim to highlight some possible approaches that composers working with these song texts may take in the future to create a strong nexus between their music and the historical and geographical contexts in which the original songs of the Heroic Age were created.

### **The Original Songs of the South**

McIntyre's song cycle *Songs of the South* draws on verses originally written during three separate "Heroic Era" Antarctic expeditions, as shown in Table 1. The context of production, their uses in the expeditions and their history of transcription differ in each case. Together, they illustrate the diverse purposes of occasional songs in exploration of the far south.

---

<sup>6</sup> This project received funding from C-Domain, a research initiative at the University of Tasmania. The song cycle *Songs of the South* was premiered on 10 May 2014 at the Conservatorium Recital Hall, University of Tasmania, by soprano Jane Edwards and pianist Jennifer Marten-Smith. A recording of this performance will be available on iTunes from mid-2014.

*Table 1. Origins of the song texts used in McIntyre's Songs of the South*

Song No.	Song title in <i>Songs of the South</i> (2014)	Original song title/s	Expedition	Author/s	Source	Associated tune
1	"Scott's Northern party [sledging song]"	"Eastern Party Chorus", later renamed "The Northern Party's Sledging Song"	British Antarctic ( <i>Terra Nova</i> ) Expedition 1910-13	Raymond Priestley	<i>Antarctic Adventure</i> , by Raymond Priestley <sup>7</sup>	"Jim O'Shea was cast away upon a desert isle" <sup>8</sup>
2	"Tramp, Tramp, Tramp [sledging song]"	Untitled sledging song	Australasian Antarctic Expedition (AAE) (1911-14)	AAE Southern Party	AAE diary of Eric Webb	Unknown
3	"Southward [ballad]"	"Southward"	British National Antarctic ( <i>Discovery</i> ) Expedition (1901-04)	Gerald Doorly and J.D. Morrison (on board the <i>Morning</i> )	<i>Songs of the Morning</i> , by Gerald Doorly	Original tune by Gerald Doorly
4	"Christmas Day on the Trail"	"Christmas Day on the Trail"	AAE (1911-14)	Frank Hurley	AAE diary of Eric Webb	Unknown; probably conceived to be recited rather than sung
5	"Basilisk [a canine ballad]"	"Basilisk"	AAE (1911-14)	Xavier Mertz <sup>9</sup>	AAE diary of Charles Laceron	"Zwebery Om Pom Pom" <sup>10</sup>

The first of the five song texts to have been written, "Southward," was composed during Scott's *Discovery* expedition. Unlike the other lyrics used in *Songs of the South*, it was written not in Antarctica itself but in warmer climates, during the voyage from London in later 1902 of the expedition's relief ship, the *Morning*. "Southward" was the first product of an ongoing collaboration during the voyage between Chief Engineer J. D. Morrison, who

<sup>7</sup> Raymond Priestley, *Antarctic Adventure: Scott's Northern Party* (Melbourne: C. Hurst., 1974), appendix.

<sup>8</sup> This title appears in a version of the song included in the Sir Raymond Priestley Collection held at the Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge, England (MS 1097 27/1-3). However, the actual song it refers to is a well-known music hall song composed by Maurice Scott in 1909 (with words by R.P. Weston and F.J. Barnes) titled "I've Got Rings on My Fingers," the first line of which is "Jim O'Shea was cast away upon an Indian isle."

<sup>9</sup> Note: Mertz's diary version has the text "Won Won Won Won Won," rather than "Bow wow wow . . .", as used in McIntyre's song.

<sup>10</sup> See Charles Laceron, "South With Mawson" in *Antarctic Eyewitness* (Sydney: HarperCollins, 1999), 82.

enjoyed writing lyrics for topical songs, and third officer Gerald Doorly, a very competent amateur pianist who composed the accompanying music. The lyrics, with their emphasis on adventure at sea and nostalgia for home, are typical of British drawing-room ballads of the period.<sup>11</sup> They are nonetheless given a specifically Antarctic flavour, with the singer moving from the “sunlit summer sea” in the first verse to the “blinding sleet and snow” in the second. Morrison, writing in tropical latitudes, anticipates the “cold, dark ice-bound seas” that are the *Morning*’s destination.

Scott led a second expedition to the Antarctic, the British Antarctic (or *Terra Nova*) Expedition 1910-13. It would become famous for the tragic death of Scott and four companions in an attempt to reach the Pole. Lesser known are the experiences of his “northern party,” a group of six men exploring the area of Victoria Land to the north of Scott’s main base on Ross Island. They were originally intended to go east, but plans changed after an unexpected encounter with the Norwegian Antarctic Expedition. The party’s “Sledging Song,” which seems to have been largely the product of geologist Raymond Priestley, was already in progress by early 1911.<sup>12</sup> At this stage, the “Eastern Party” were still at the expedition’s main base on Ross Island, working as a team to sledge

---

<sup>11</sup> The music Doorly composed to accompany these lyrics shows the influence of his interest in the music of Gilbert and Sullivan and this is particularly evident in the opening vocal line of “Southward,” which bears a striking similarity to the opening chorus of Gilbert and Sullivan’s *The Gondoliers* (1889). See Philpott, “Notes from the Heroic Age,” 15-18.

<sup>12</sup> Sledging songs were usually made up “on the march” or in the tents during sledging expeditions and typically featured highly motivational texts, often expressing a united identity, and regular rhythms. When voiced in unison, sledging songs could help to encourage team synchronisation and efficiency, as well as to distract the men from the monotony and physical demands of long sledging journeys. The sledging songs usually had rhyming lyrics, which could help to aid memorisation and recall, and may have given the men a sense of control and order in what was an otherwise very unpredictable and potentially dangerous environment. This uniquely polar musical genre is closely related to another form of working song, the sea shanty, which was also popular on board the vessels that headed to the far south during the Heroic Age. See Leane, *Antarctica in Fiction*, 122-25 and Philpott, “The Sounds of Silence,” 461-62.

supplies from the ship to the hut.<sup>13</sup> In anticipation of their proposed mission, they titled their song the “Eastern Party Chorus.”<sup>14</sup> Additional verses were added over the following year, most of which the six men spent in a hut at Cape Adare. In early 1912, they were deposited by ship further south to undertake more sledging, but sea-ice prevented the return of the ship meant to bring them back to the main base. They were forced to spend the winter alone on an island they named “Inexpressible,” living in a small cave dug out of the snow, consuming largely seal and penguin meat. This irony of this fate, given that the men had been singing their sledging song to the tune they referred to as “Jim O’Shea was cast away upon a desert isle,” is considerable. Priestley later noted that “life was too hard ... for song-making” during the ice-cave period, although “singing was a main recreation.”<sup>15</sup> He included the lyrics of the song – slightly altered from his diary versions – in his narrative of the expedition, *Antarctic Adventure*.<sup>16</sup> Only a short excerpt (the first verse) of this final version is included in *Songs of the South*.

The three remaining “Heroic Era” songs that McIntyre draws on come from the Australasian Antarctic Expedition (AAE) (1911-14) led by Douglas Mawson. Mawson took about fifty Greenland dogs on his expedition, who made the journey from London on the expedition ship, cared for by Xavier Mertz and Belgrave Ninnis. Mertz named Basilisk after the mythical emblem of his home town, Basle. This dog, along with his mate “Ginger Bitch,” became the leader of the pack, and a favourite of Mertz’s.<sup>17</sup> A Swiss national, Mertz wrote

---

<sup>13</sup> Robert Falcon Scott, 5 Jan. 1911, in *Journals: Scott’s Last Expedition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

<sup>14</sup> Raymond Priestley, 5 Jan. 1911, Journal kept during the British Antarctic Expedition, 1910-1913, 26 Nov. 1910-7 Jan. 1911, MS 198 BJ, Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge.

<sup>15</sup> Raymond Priestley, “Sledging Song of Scott’s Northern Party,” MS 1097 27/1-3, Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge.

<sup>16</sup> Priestley, *Antarctic Adventure*, appendix.

<sup>17</sup> Beau Riffenburgh, “The Dogs of the Australasian Antarctic Expedition 1911-1914,” *Polar Record* 50 (2014): 129, 134.



his diary in German, but includes this song in English noting that it was his custom to sing it at night.<sup>18</sup> Another expeditioner, Charles Laseron, recorded a slightly different version of the song – now with the barking chorus and a specified tune – in his diary<sup>19</sup> and reproduced an excerpt (slightly different again) in his narrative of the expedition. Noting that Mertz had become “infected with the popular craze for song writing,” Laseron considered “Basilisk” to be “in a way ... a masterpiece, in spite of the fact that [Mertz’s] English was still rather limited.”<sup>20</sup> The lyrics reproduced in *Songs of the South* represent the first half the song recorded in Laseron’s diary; the rest deals with specific (human) personalities and incidents. It is not a sledging song, but rather a topical song, its light, comic tone typical of the men’s literary and musical production. The song takes on a new poignancy, however, in light of the deaths of both Basilisk (down a crevasse) and Mertz (due to a combination of exhaustion, starvation, and vitamin A poisoning) in a later sledging journey.

The remaining two texts were both produced during a sledging journey towards the South Magnetic Pole, undertaken over the summer of 1912-13. The “Southern Party,” a three-man team composed of chief magnetician Eric Webb, assistant magnetician Bob Bage (the team leader), and expedition photographer and cinematographer Frank Hurley, sledged close to 1,000 kilometres by the time they returned to base. The terrain was a fairly monotonous ice plateau, and the men would sing or compose songs to amuse themselves in their tent. About a month into the journey, Webb recorded an untitled and unattributed sledging song in his

---

<sup>18</sup> Xavier Mertz, 7 Apr. 1911, Diary 28 July 1911 – 1 Jan. 1913, Trans. Gabrielle Eisner, Mawson Collection, South Australian Museum.

<sup>19</sup> Charles Laseron, Diaries, 21 Nov. 1911 – 24 Feb. 1913, ML MSS 385, Mitchell Collection, State Library of New South Wales. Laseron’s diary and published account of the expedition include the tune title “Zwebery-Om-Pom-Pom” under the heading of “Basilisk.” Despite extensive searching, the authors have not been able to locate a specific song or tune with this title. Nevertheless, the phrase “Om-Pom-Pom” was commonly heard in popular music hall songs of the time, such as “I Do Like to be Beside the Seaside” (1907), and it is possible that “Zwebery” was Laseron’s own mistranscription of a German tune that Mertz used as a melody for “Basilisk.”

<sup>20</sup> Charles Francis Laseron, *South with Mawson: Reminiscences of the Australasian Antarctic Expedition* (Sydney and London: Australasian Publishing and George G. Harrap, 1947), 113.

diary, noting that there had been “great production of songs last evening” which kept the team up late.<sup>21</sup> It belongs to a subgenre of sledging songs in which the focus is on the (considerable) annoyances of the march. McIntyre has used the whole of Webb’s text, with minor amendments, in *Songs of the South*.

“Christmas Day on the Trail” is far more exuberant, celebrating a brief period of indulgence in an otherwise bleak stretch of the journey. Bage’s team did not reach the South Magnetic Pole; low on food, they turned back from the Pole a few days before Christmas, still some distance from their goal. Having postponed Christmas until 27 December in order to reach a particular depot, they celebrated with a spectacular feast followed by a “wine” brewed by boiling raisins in the alcohol they used for their primus stove. In early January, bad weather and low visibility seriously impeded their progress, and often confined them to their tent. Unable to locate an expected depot, they reduced their rations. By 6 January 1913, Hurley was working on a humorous poem about the feast to cheer them up and while away time: “Have been writing dogerell [sic] Xmas day on the trail. [R]ather difficult to write of Xmas feasts when you are feeling pretty hungry [...] Still could be worse.”<sup>22</sup> By the next day, he had finished the verse,<sup>23</sup> which Webb transcribed into his diary. This is the version used by McIntyre, although he has condensed the long poem, leaving out a large section describing the meal. “Christmas Day on the Trail” is not itself a sledging song (the phrase “singing our sledging song” refers to another piece they created to sing on the march). Composed in the claustrophobic, static atmosphere of the tent, its fast-pace rhythm and exuberant celebration of the meal belie the men’s grim situation: at the time it was written they were, according to

---

<sup>21</sup> Eric Norman Webb, 10 Dec. 1912, Sledging Diary, 10 Nov. 1912 – 11 Jan. 1913, ML MSS 2895, Mitchell Collection, State Library of New South Wales.

<sup>22</sup> James Francis Hurley, 6 Jan. 1913, Sledging Diary, 10 Nov. 1912 – 10 Jan. 1913, ML MSS 389/1/1, Mitchell Collection, State Library of New South Wales.

<sup>23</sup> Webb, 7 Jan. 1913, Sledging Diary, 10 Nov. 1912 – 11 Jan. 1913, ML MSS 2895.

Webb, fearing for their survival.<sup>24</sup> Their companions at base clearly appreciated the verses, as they later included them in the expedition “newspaper” *The Adelie Blizzard* produced over the winter of 1913, even though both Webb and Hurley had by this time returned home.

### **Scott McIntyre’s *Songs of the South* – Background and Approach to Composition**

*Songs of the South* is Scott McIntyre’s fourth composition that is related to the theme of Antarctic exploration and is, according to the composer, the most intimate and personal of those settings. The previous three works are *The Ice Barrier* (2010) for baritone and orchestra or baritone and chamber ensemble, *Fire on the Snow Suite for 13 solo strings* (2010) and the opera *Fire on the Snow* (2012), which is based on the radio play of the same name by Douglas Stewart. In late 2009, McIntyre was approached by Sydney actor and playwright, Paul Weingott, who had secured the rights to Douglas Stewart’s play, *Fire on the Snow*, written in the 1940s about the demise of Robert Falcon Scott. Work on converting the radio play into a libretto commenced in early 2010 and this then became the basis for McIntyre’s opera of the same name, completed in early 2012 and presented in a truncated concert version in July of the same year. Unused portions of the libretto formed the setting for *The Ice Barrier* (2010) in both chamber and orchestral versions; the work presents a poetic dream by Scott, taking place during his last, dying moments. *Fire on the Snow Suite for 13 solo strings* (2010)<sup>25</sup> was also adapted from the opera score. In each of these works, the idea was to paint the environment in an orchestrational sense. McIntyre’s approach to composing the opera focussed on pitting various timbral forces against each other and then exploring the tension and interplay that this created. Strings, keyboards and percussion were employed to paint stark, cold sonorities that clashed with and eventually overcame the

---

<sup>24</sup> Webb, 10 Jan. 1913, Sledging Diary, 10 Nov. 1912 – 11 Jan. 1913, ML MSS 2895.

<sup>25</sup> The title of this work was inspired by Witold Lutosławski’s *Preludes and Fugue for 13 solo strings* (1970-72).

warmth of voices and brass. The idea of the cold defeating the warmth of animal bodies is central to the main theme of the opera, as well as to the other pieces it has since generated. McIntyre's approach to composing these works, as well as *Songs of the South*, was also inspired by the use of limited aleatory in the music of Witold Lutosławski (1913-1994). "Limited aleatory" is a term applied to music whose composition and/or performance includes some aspects that are deliberately undetermined by the composer.<sup>26</sup> This music often employs unconventional methods of notation in at least part of the work to give more choice to the performer/s. Lutosławski used *ad libitum* in the limited aleatory sections of his compositions, calling for the conductor to give a downbeat for these sections and then, depending on the instructions in the score, wait for the players to "run through" their parts unsynchronised, or proceed to another *ad libitum* section. The result allows for the interactions of the ensemble to create complex composite rhythms without the need for the inordinate difficulty of coordinating complex notated rhythmic patterns. Many of the rhythms of the individual parts are often quite simple, such as in Lutosławski's Symphony No.3 (1973-83) and *Mi Parti* (1976).

McIntyre chose to incorporate similar techniques of limited aleatory into his opera *Fire on the Snow* because he believed they would be particularly well suited to his setting of texts relating Antarctica and, in particular, to Robert Falcon Scott's fateful expedition to the South Pole. The use of non-synchronised repetition in *Fire on the Snow* gives the effect of controlled chaos and is particularly successful in evoking icy, brittle textures and blinding blizzards in the opera. Whilst the main purpose of the libretto of *Fire on the Snow* is to tell the story of one of the twentieth century's most enduring tales of courage and tragedy against

---

<sup>26</sup> For a detailed definition of "aleatory," see Paul Griffiths, "Aleatory," *Grove Music Online*, Oxford Music Online, Oxford University Press, accessed 5 June 2014, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/00509>.

a dramatic musical narrative, McIntyre decided that a more intimate musical setting that still draws on techniques of limited aleatory would provide a more suitable backdrop for song texts that detail the intimacies of daily life on the snowfields of Antarctica. Example 1 shows an excerpt from the fourth song in *Songs of the South* – “Christmas Day on the Trail” – in which McIntyre’s employs procedures of limited aleatory in both the vocal and piano parts, with the latter including the instruction: “disregard meter, try to play each hand unsynchronised.”<sup>27</sup>

1

vocals to be executed ad lib and at as rapid a pace as can be handled. Pitches to be chosen ad lib from piano harmony

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system features a vocal line on a single staff with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. The piano accompaniment is on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The piano part begins with a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic and consists of two hands playing a series of chords in a non-metric, unsynchronized fashion. The vocal line consists of a series of notes, some of which are beamed together, indicating a rapid, ad lib performance. The lyrics for the first system are: "I al-ways like Christ-mas for it re-minds me of the trail, And if you'd care to lis-ten I'll re-". A downward-pointing triangle labeled "Cue for harmonic change" is positioned between the two systems. The second system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The piano part shows a change in the harmonic structure, with the two hands continuing their unsynchronized, non-metric playing. The lyrics for the second system are: "late my Christ-mas tale. It hap-pen'd down An - tarc - tic way down in the fro - zen South, It's".

I al-ways like Christ-mas for it re-minds me of the trail, And if you'd care to lis-ten I'll re-

late my Christ-mas tale. It hap-pen'd down An - tarc - tic way down in the fro - zen South, It's

Example 1. An extract from McIntyre’s “Christmas Day on the Trail,” showing his use of procedures of limited aleatory.

<sup>27</sup> Scott McIntyre, *Songs of the South* for Mezzo Soprano and Piano, unpublished manuscript (2014), 26-27.  
*International Association for Academic Research*

Other pre-compositional influences came from McIntyre's engagement with the types of music that the expeditioners listened to and created in Antarctica during the Heroic Age. In the early stages of preparing *Songs of the South*, McIntyre approached Philpott and Leane to discuss the role of music during the expeditions of the Heroic Age and to source appropriate song texts. Philpott and Leane had previously conducted independent research in this area and their discussions with McIntyre helped to inform and shape his approach to crafting the style of the songs in the cycle and also played a role in influencing him to incorporate quotations of and allusions to pre-existing musical works. As McIntyre relates:

Boredom, hard work and lack of entertainment had led the expeditioners to make up songs and ditties, which they quite likely sung to popular tunes and songs of the day. Few of the [original] songs had music composed for them so an idea formed wherein I would attempt to provide some musical context for these tuneless creations.

When he was in the process of setting Douglas Stewart's radio play *Fire on the Snow* to music, McIntyre considered it very important to place the original work in its historical context, whilst simultaneously retaining a contemporary edge in the musical language. Although he drew on Lutosławski's models of limited aleatory and followed a detailed pattern of serialized composition, he also purposefully incorporated quotations from and allusions to a number of canonic musical works dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century – the time of the Heroic Age. In particular, allusions to the music of Edward Elgar, Anton Bruckner, and Gustav Mahler were laced throughout the score. Incorporating musical influences and known works from the period were important to McIntyre as he attempted to encapsulate the era and provide accurate historical markers through the music. He explains:

*International Association for Academic Research*

Had I written an opera in a contemporary late twentieth or early twenty-first century setting then a thoroughly modern setting would have been justified. The placement of the events of *Fire on the Snow* during 1910-1912 called for an approach that could accommodate both new and older music. The vocal style adopted was deliberately reminiscent of English folksong and art song, particularly that of Ralph Vaughan-Williams.

McIntyre's approach to composing *Songs of the South* also involved processes of alluding to, and sometimes quoting directly, specific pre-existing musical works. On this occasion, he turned to musical source materials that he knew would have been accessed by the expeditionary parties in Antarctic during the Heroic Age. As Philpott discusses in her analysis of music in the expeditions of the Heroic Age,<sup>28</sup> the members of various expeditions used music as an integral part of daily life for both work and entertainment. Most of the music they listened to and created during the expeditions was a reflection of the types of music that they would have engaged with back at home – the popular musical styles of the day. The acts of creating and sharing such music became means of reminiscing about life back at home and of feeling more “at home” in what was an extremely alien environment.<sup>29</sup> It could help to relieve the drudgery of daily tasks and chores that were necessary to ensure the expedition's success and the survival of its members. Numerous men from various parties took musical instruments with them to Antarctica and/or were proficient singers. Pianos were taken down south on a number of expeditionary vessels and regular concerts were held both on board the vessels and also inside some of the huts that were erected on the

---

<sup>28</sup> Philpott, “The Sounds of Silence” and Philpott, “Notes from the Heroic Age.”

<sup>29</sup> The practice of participating in the creation of music in this way had its origins in naval traditions and polar exploration. Arctic explorers and whalers regularly engaged in such activities to create “microcosms of home and family” that may have helped them to cope psychosocially during long periods away and also may have helped to prepare them to re-integrate with their families and wider communities upon their return home. See Phyllis Johnson and Peter Suedfeld, “Coping with Stress Through the Microcosms of Home and Family Among Arctic Whalers and Explorers,” *The History of the Family: An International Quarterly* 1:1 (1996): 41-62.

ice – they were included, for example, as part of the *Discovery*, *Terra Nova* and Australasian expeditions.<sup>30</sup> The latter two expeditions also took gramophones and hundreds of records on board their vessels that had been donated to them by The Gramophone Company.<sup>31</sup> For example, the *Terra Nova* was stocked with several hundred 10-inch 78 rpm records, which included a range of classical recordings by then-celebrity singers such as Caruso and Melba, popular orchestral pieces, music-hall songs and musical theatre numbers.<sup>32</sup> The original diaries and published accounts of the expedition include references to specific recordings – as well as original songs – that had become favourites among the members of the expeditions. Knowledge about the music enjoyed as part of the *Terra Nova* expedition has led to the recent production of a collection of recordings associated with Scott's last expedition – the 2012 EMI release *Scott's Music Box*.<sup>33</sup> This double CD set is a digital re-master of some of the original recordings taken to Antarctica on board the *Terra Nova*. It includes recordings of music-hall songs by some of the leading performers of the day, such as Florrie Forde and Harry Lauder; excerpts from musical theatre shows such as Gilbert and Sullivan's *Iolanthe* (1882), *The Mikado* (1885) and *The Gondoliers* (1889), as well as Edward German's *Merrie England* (1902); extracts from marching band music and hymns; and excerpts from more serious, "classical" works such as Handel's *Messiah* (1741), Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (1787), Bizet's *Carmen* (1875) and Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* (1904). Understanding the importance of such music to the men who participated in the expeditions of the Heroic Age, McIntyre planned to weave influences from these types of music into the musical fabric of the *Songs of the South*, as he recalls:

As the texts of the original songs most likely germinated during the expeditioners'

---

<sup>30</sup> See Philpott, "The Sounds of Silence," 450-52.

<sup>31</sup> Tony Locantro, liner notes to *Scott's Music Box*, EMI 50999 6 44949 2 0 (2012) (2 compact discs), 9-11.

<sup>32</sup> See Philpott, "The Sounds of Silence," 450-52.

<sup>33</sup> *Scott's Music Box*, EMI 50999 6 44949 2 0 (2 compact discs).



working hours to relieve physical stress and boredom, it seemed appropriate that existing songs and popular music from that time should form a musical backbone for the songs that I set in *Songs of the South*. In most cases, there was only text available for each song so it seemed likely that the members of the expeditions had practiced their own words against pre-existing tunes, perfecting the verse with time. Indeed, some of the texts actually suggested or pointed to specific songs. These tunes became important as a starting points for the composition of the songs in the cycle. Although not musically presented as originally written, the characteristics of the original tunes have been embedded in the structure of *Songs of the South*.

### Selecting the song texts

The original concept for *Songs of the South* was to set a series of six songs into a twenty-minute song cycle. On closer inspection of the song texts during the selection stage, it became apparent to McIntyre that most of the original song lyrics contained many verses and even after some trimming, many of these songs would still be of a considerable length. While the focus of many of the existing texts is on sledging or working, McIntyre decided to choose a representative sample of texts that included both work and entertainment. He states:

The focus of these songs would not be on one expedition as the opera had been but more of a sample of the many expeditions conducted in the first two decades of the twentieth century. Emphasis on musical shape was important – a dramatic and emotional shape across the songs to help structure the work as a whole. I was also keen to tie in some of the influences from the opera [*Fire on the Snow*]; especially thematic devices that would help convey the sense of cold and isolation.

He also provides us with insight into his choice of song texts for the cycle:

I chose a set of lyrics from Raymond Priestley's exploration narrative *Antarctic Adventure* (based in turn on verses written down in his diaries), as he was part of Scott's ill-fated *Terra Nova* expedition. *The Northern Party's Sledging Song* provides

an interesting summation of the Northern Party's expedition up the coast of Victoria Land after previously encountering Amundsen's ship, the *Fram*. Frank Hurley, Eric Webb and Bob Bage were members of the Mawson expedition and the lyrics to their untitled sledging song, from Webb's diary, afford us a look into some of the equipment used and the practical tribulations associated with trying to use that equipment in the freezing conditions. A ballad seemed appropriate as part of the narrative of the songs and Gerald Doorly's *Southward* [with lyrics by J.D. Morrison] contained enough emotive references to a love in a faraway land that dominated the thoughts of the narrator's waking hours. The link to Scott is also evident here as Doorly was part of the mission to resupply Scott and his companions on board the icebound *Discovery* as part of the British National Antarctic Expedition 1901-04. *Christmas Day on the Trail* was again taken from Webb's diary and seemed fitting as a possible "patter song."<sup>34</sup> Given that the music of Gilbert and Sullivan appears to have been widely known among the English-speaking expeditionary parties that ventured to Antarctica during the Heroic Age, it seemed appropriate for this poem or verse with its staggering number of lines and stanzas to be set to a song style that is designed to rapid-fire hundreds of words and syllables. The sheer number of lines meant that I had to truncate the story told to a few important items, as there were many more lyrics than I could realistically use. The verses written by Xavier Mertz, a Swiss explorer who lost his life as part of the Mawson expedition in 1913, describe the daily life of the expedition as told from the point of view of one of the huskies, Basilisk. I chose to set this particular text as it was written from the point of view of one of the many non-human members of the Antarctic expeditions, who otherwise were not able to "voice" their thoughts about their experiences down south.

### **Harmonic Material of *Songs of the South***

Most of McIntyre's music to date has been written using serial methods of composition. He has always been interested in the systematization of pitch and the context and subtleties

---

<sup>34</sup> A "patter song" is a comic song in which the humour comes from fitting the largest possible number of words into a phrase. Commonly found in opera from the second half of the eighteenth century onwards, patter songs are also prevalent in the operettas of Gilbert and Sullivan that were composed in the years leading up to the beginning of the Heroic Age of Antarctic exploration.

presented in sequences of pitches.<sup>35</sup> Most systems he has employed in his compositions utilize strings of note sequences usually derived from alpha/numeric combinations and can have complex sequences comprising upwards of ten thousand notes in a sequence. Most recently, McIntyre has begun to explore stacking groups of these pitches into chords and subsequently re-arranging them into chosen interval classes to maximize the dissonant tensions inherent in vertical chords. His serial practices have, therefore, moved from a linear polyphonic style towards a preference for vertical chord stacking. McIntyre's PhD research into the music of Witold Lutosławski revealed that the latter's music is not so much about limited aleatory as it is about the movement of twelve-note chords in intervallic combinations.<sup>36</sup>

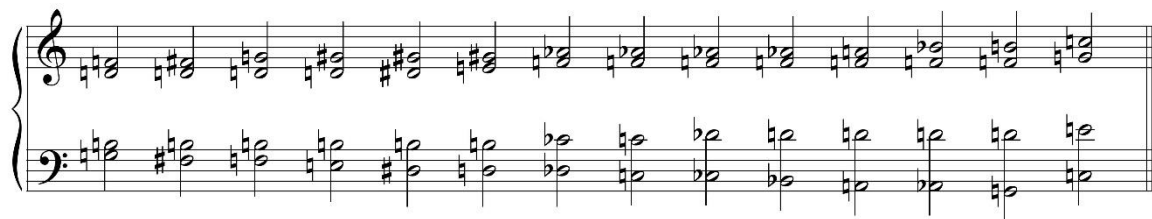
As in his setting of *Fire on the Snow*, it was important to McIntyre that his approach to the composition of *Songs of the South* gave a "nod" to the music of the past. He realised that if he was dealing with song lyrics written by, in most cases, those untrained in the musical arts, then a more "popular" harmonic approach may be suitable. Simultaneously, he believed that in order to establish a recognisable historical context for the songs, a musical language that reflected nineteenth-century approaches to harmony would also be highly appropriate. The omnibus progression – a harmonic device that found favour among a number of prominent composers in the nineteenth century – seemed to McIntyre to be a good place to start the compositional process. The omnibus progression is a specific sequential succession of chords that has typically been used for colouristic purposes to harmonise a nonfunctional

---

<sup>35</sup> See Scott McIntyre, "The Simplification of Complex Notation Presented in Aleatoric Forms" (PhD diss., University of Tasmania, 2013), 41.

<sup>36</sup> Whilst limited aleatory is a very important feature of Lutosławski's late period, it is more of a bi-product that is used to resonate his chords and intervals in what he referred to as aleatoric-polyphony. See McIntyre, "The Simplification of Complex Notation Presented in Aleatoric Forms," 23; and Miguel Roig-Francoli, *Understanding Post-Tonal Music* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008), 287-91.

chromatic bass line.<sup>37</sup> It was used occasionally in Classical and Romantic period music, but appears more frequently in Post-Romantic music, such as in Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov* (1868-69) and Richard Strauss's "Allerseelen," op. 10, no. 8 (1885). A form of "chromatic wedge progression" the omnibus, which is illustrated in Example 2, exploits the dual resolution tendencies of the German sixth chord and the major-minor seventh chord.



*Example 2. A fourteen-chord example of the omnibus progression.*

In *Songs of the South*, McIntyre utilised a fourteen-chord omnibus progression from G<sup>7</sup> to C, as illustrated in Example 2. He then applied a random number filter in binary (zeros and ones) to transpose certain chords in the bass up a whole tone. This process was used to create chords fifteen to twenty-eight in the series (see upper stave in Example 3), taking into account that the chords in the original progression in Example 2 are considered to be chords one to fourteen. To create the next sequence of chords – numbers twenty-nine through to forty-two – McIntyre then took the previous set of fourteen (chords fifteen to twenty-eight) and applied the same method of transposition to the chords in the treble stave. This sequence was then repeated, each time raising the bass or treble notes by a whole step until the

---

<sup>37</sup> For more information on the omnibus progression and its use through history, see Victor Fell Yellin, *The Omnibus Idea* (Warren, Michigan: Harmonie Park Press, 1998); Paula Telesco, "Enharmonicism and the Omnibus Progression in Classical-Era Music," *Music Theory Spectrum* 20:2 (1998): 242-79; Stefan Kostka and Dorothy Payne, *Tonal Harmony: With an Introduction to Twentieth-Century Music*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000), 470; Bruce Benward and Marilyn Saker, *Music in Theory and Practice*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed., vol. 2 (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2009), 236-37; and Robert Gauldin, "The Theory and Practice of Chromatic Wedge Progressions in Romantic Music," *Music Theory Spectrum* 26:1 (2004): 1-22.

composer had a sequence of eighty-four chords. Next, these eighty-four chords were converted to ninth chords in a four-part configuration either by re-voicing these chords after their subsequent transpositions, or by adding appropriate notes to convert existing triads or seventh chords to ninth chords. This step was then repeated to convert the chords to eleventh chords and finally, to thirteenth chords, all voiced according to four-part voice leading. These experiments resulted in four lots of eighty-four sequenced chords, which were then arranged to align vertically on staves that had been stacked in order of chord type (ranging from triads/sevenths on the top grand staff to thirteenth chords on the bottom, as shown in Example 3). Each vertical column of chords was then assigned a number according to the order that it appeared in the series of chords and these numbers were placed at the top of the chord chart (see Example 3).

*Example 3. The expanded omnibus chord series (chords 1-28) utilised in the composition of Songs of the South.*

In the composition of *Songs of the South*, the choice of chords from this series was then

determined according to serial procedures, with the “prime row” (of chords) of each song purposefully designed to spell out a particular word of significance derived from within the corresponding text.

McIntyre’s interest in alphanumeric combinations, which has been influenced by the works of Harrison Birtwistle (b. 1934) and Chris Dench (b. 1953), has generated much of the raw data for his compositional practice. The conversion of letters into numbers has helped him to tie personal connections into his music, such as the names of close friends or performers for whom certain pieces have been written. For each song in *Songs of the South*, McIntyre selected a word related to the central theme or idea that the corresponding text focuses on and then converted the letters into numbers using a basic letter-number substitution cipher (i.e. A = 1, B = 2 and so forth). For example, prior to writing the third song in the cycle, “Southward,” McIntyre converted each letter of “S-O-U-T-H-W-A-R-D” to its numerical equivalent until he arrived at the following sequence of numbers (sequence “A”):

S	O	U	T	H	W	A	R	D
19	15	21	20	8	23	1	18	4

In this example, each letter has been converted to its numerical equivalent to form a sequence of nine numbers from nine letters. Further to this, a representation of the same series of letters from the lowest in value to the highest in value can be sought, as follows:

S	O	U	T	H	W	A	R	D
6	4	8	7	3	9	1	5	2

This method of labelling of the letters in order of their appearance from the lowest in

numerical order to the highest also provides a unique series of numbers from one through to nine (sequence “B”).

In addition to the first two examples provided above, yet another sequence can be generated by adding the value of each letter shown in the first numerical sequence (sequence “A,” in which each letter was substituted for the number of its position in the alphabet) to the next one. In other words, letter S with a value of nineteen is added to the value of O (fifteen) to get thirty-four, then the value of U (twenty-one) is added to thirty-four to get fifty-five and so on. The value of 129 is the cumulative total of adding up all nine numbers. The “series” of numbers that results from this process is as follows:

S	O	U	T	H	W	A	R	D
19	34	55	75	83	106	107	125	<b>129</b>

McIntyre then used this series in composing the song “Southward” to select specific chords from the chart of eighty-four chords in the expanded omnibus progression that he had created previously (the first part of which is shown in Figure 3). However, due to the fact that there are only eighty-four chords to select from and the “series” generated by adding up the numerical value of the letters of the word “Southward” ends with 129, McIntyre applied a filter to the series that condenses the values of the numbers down to fit within the number eighty-four. Given that eighty-four is approximately sixty-five percent of 129, each number in the above cumulative series was reduced to sixty-five percent of their original value to create the following series of rounded numbers: 12-22-36-49-54-69-70-81-84. Each number in this reduced series was then placed within a matrix, as shown in Example 4.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
A									12
B									22
C									36
D									49
E									54
F									69
G									70
H									81
I	12	22	36	49	54	69	70	81	<b>84</b>

*Example 4. Matrix showing the reduced series of “Southward” on the x and y axes.*

After the numbers of the “reduced” series were placed on the X and Y axes of the matrix, as shown in Example 4, the matrix was then used to construct a numerical ‘slider’ that demonstrates an incrementally sliding value for each row. To create the slider, the value of A9 (12) was divided by the value of I9 (84) to extract the percentage of 14.3%. This percentage was then applied to each number in row I to calculate the respective values of the numbers in row A, so that each number added to row A was approximately 14.3% of the



value of the corresponding number in row I (see Example 5).<sup>38</sup> Rounding the numbers to integers gives row A the sequence shown in Example 5, which slides up to the number twelve. Given that the numbers in the X and Y axes are identical, column one also matches row A.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
A	2	3	5	7	8	10	10	12	12
B	3								22
C	5								36
D	7								49
E	8								54
F	10								69
G	10								70
H	12								81
I	12	22	36	49	54	69	70	81	<b>84</b>

*Example 5. Matrix for “Southward” showing the sliding value of row A.*

This method was then repeated until the entire matrix was complete – i.e. the value of B9

---

<sup>38</sup> Each number in row I was multiplied by 0.143 and then rounded to the nearest whole number.

(22) was then divided by the value of I9 (84) to fill in row B, then the value of C9 (36) was divided by I9 to complete row C, and so on (see Example 6).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
A	2	3	5	7	8	10	10	12	12
B	3	6	9	13	14	18	18	21	22
C	5	9	15	21	23	30	30	35	36
D	7	13	21	29	32	40	41	47	49
E	8	14	23	32	35	44	45	52	54
F	10	18	30	40	44	57	58	67	69
G	10	18	30	41	45	58	58	68	70
H	12	21	35	47	52	67	68	78	81
I	12	22	36	49	54	69	70	81	<b>84</b>

*Example 6. The complete matrix for “Southward,” showing the sliding values of the rows.*

As can be seen in Example 6, each row in the matrix ends incrementally higher than the previous one and each column mirrors the same sequence. This sequence of increasing nine by nine numbers can be used for pitch or in this case, the eighty-four chords in the expanded omnibus sequence.

Similarly, the sequence of numbers from one through nine (labelled sequence “B” previously) was used to construct another type of matrix (see Example 7).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
A	6	4	8	7	3	9	1	5	2
B	4								
C	8								
D	7								
E	3								
F	9								
G	1								
H	5								
I	2								

*Example 7. Matrix with “Southward” sequence “B” along the x and y axes.*

In this sequence, the number six is followed by a four, which is two steps lower, and then the next number is four steps higher than four (eight). The matrix for sequence “B” was filled in by replicating the pattern of “steps” in the initial row (A) within each new row form, although only utilizing the numbers one to nine (see Example 8). As before, the order of numbers

within a given row is matched in its corresponding column (i.e. row C is identical to column 3).

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
A	6	4	8	7	3	9	1	5	2
B	4	2	6	5	1	7	8	3	9
C	8	6	1	9	5	2	3	7	4
D	7	5	9	8	4	1	2	6	3
E	3	1	5	4	9	6	7	2	8
F	9	7	2	1	6	3	4	8	5
G	1	8	3	2	7	4	5	9	6
H	5	3	7	6	2	8	9	4	1
I	2	9	4	3	8	5	6	1	7

*Example 8. Full matrix for “Southward” sequence “B.”*

Completing this matrix resulted in nine by nine rows with the same pattern and direction of steps and with each column and row containing all the numbers from one to nine. In order to determine the choice of chords (from the extended omnibus progression) to be used in

“Southward,” the composer then used the row forms in the matrix of sequence “B” (in Example 8) to serialize the order of the numbers within the corresponding rows in the slider matrix for sequence “A” (Example 6). For example, row A from the matrix for sequence “B” (Example 8) was used to re-order the same row form (row A) of the matrix for sequence “A” (Example 6) and this process resulted in the new ordering for row A shown in Example 9.

Row A from sequence “B”	6	4	8	7	3	9	1	5	2
New order for row A of sequence “A”	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>

Example 9. *Row A of “Southward” sequence “A,” after it has been serialized by Row A of sequence “B.”*

This process resulted in configurations of the row that were more “jumbled” than the slider rows of sequence “A” alone. In other words, rather than row A of sequence “A” simply displaying numbers in order from lowest to highest, the re-organisation of the row means that the sixth number of the original A row appears first (the number ten), then the fourth number appears second, the eighth number third and so on. From one sequence of nine numbers, complex patterns of repetition and re-organisation of a simple chord sequence began to emerge.

A further rearrangement of the sequence “B” matrix was then used to determine the choice of chord types in “Southward.” As each numbered stack of chords in the extended omnibus progression in Example 3 contains four different possible chord types (triads/sevenths, ninths, elevenths and thirteenth), a filter was applied to select which variation of each chord to use. Using the numerical (sequence “B”) matrix, numbers one to three were converted to the

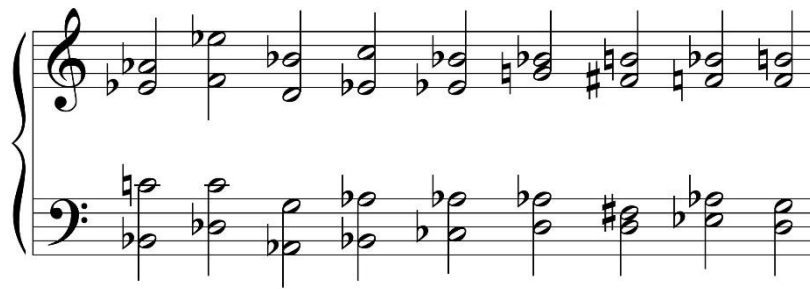
number one, numbers four and five were converted to the number two, numbers six and seven were converted to three and numbers eight and nine were converted to four. Each row of nine, therefore, contained three lots of ones and two each of twos, threes and fours in the same order as the sequence “B” matrix (see Example 10).

3	2	4	3	1	4	1	2	1
2	1	3	2	1	3	4	1	4
4	3	1	4	2	1	1	3	2
3	2	4	4	2	1	1	3	1
1	1	2	2	4	3	3	1	4
4	3	1	1	3	1	2	4	2
1	4	1	1	3	2	2	4	3
2	1	3	3	1	4	4	2	1
1	4	2	1	4	2	3	1	3

*Example 10. Matrix used to determine choice of chord type in “Southward.”*

Out of the possible eighty-four chords in their four variations, this now gave the composer a method for determining the order of the chord types to be used in “Southward,” with the number “1” representing a triad/seventh chord, the number “2” a ninth chord, the number “3” an eleventh chord and the number “4” a thirteenth chord. Example 11 shows the completed

harmonic structure for the first section of nine chords used to create “Southward.” It has utilised the version of row A shown in Example 9 and row A of the matrix in Example 10 to select from the numbered chords in the omnibus series shown in Example 3. Example 12 shows the opening bars of “Southward,” which draws on the series of chords shown in Example 11.



*Example 11. Section one of the chordal map for “Southward” (1 of 9).*

3. Southward [ballad]  
(Lyrics by G. Doorly)

1  $\frac{5}{4}$  ♩ = 56  
Profondément calme (Dans une brume doucement sonore)

The musical score for 'Southward' by McIntyre, bars 1-4, is presented in 5/4 time with a tempo of 56 beats per minute. The score includes a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a 'ppp' (pianissimo) marking and a '8va' (octave) marking. The lyrics are 'Profondément calme (Dans une brume doucement sonore)'.

Example 12. McIntyre, “Southward,” bars 1-4.<sup>39</sup>

On the surface, the chordal map for “Southward” looks like a possible functional harmonic progression that contains some extended harmonies. The serial construction of the chords has been disguised by the raw material used. This serial approach is usually used by McIntyre with more chromatic raw data or occasionally, micro-tones, in his music. In *The Songs of the South*, the serialization of the omnibus progression creates an ordering of the sequence that is strictly controlled. Combined with the use of rhyme in the song lyrics – which in itself

---

<sup>39</sup> McIntyre, *Songs of the South*, 20.



suggests order and control<sup>40</sup> – the serialized omnibus progression provides an effective musical backdrop for the setting of song texts composed in Antarctica during the Heroic Age. In a highly unpredictable environment, music and song lyrics that were tightly structured and controlled no doubt would have been highly favoured. Not only does the strict control of the harmonic material suggest a sense of order and control over the music (and perhaps also, the Antarctic environment), but it also provides a suitable contrast to the use of limited aleatory in some passages within the songs. The use of both of these modernist devices – the employment of a serialized omnibus progression and procedures of limited aleatory – is also highly relevant to the Antarctic environment in light of Stephen Pyne’s observation that modernist approaches to the arts seem like “perfect complements” to the icescape due to their capacity to provide the “words and images and perspectives necessary to venture into the interior of Antarctica” with its “ready-made” modernist landscape.<sup>41</sup>

The modernist composition methods described above were used in each of the five songs within *Songs of the South*, yet each varies considerably in terms of mood and musical character. This is due at least in part to the differences in the texts that they set, but it is also a result of McIntyre’s incorporation of musical quotation and allusion in order to create further links between the songs and the historical contexts in which their lyrics were originally crafted.

---

<sup>40</sup> Poet Bill Manhire has commented on the relevance of rhyme to the Antarctic landscape, stating, “rhyme [is] also a way of asserting order in an environment [that does not] always offer easy evidence that such a thing [is] possible.” See Bill Manhire, “Tourism Benefits from a Personal Creative Perspective,” Proceedings of the Antarctic Tourism Workshop, Antarctica New Zealand, 23 June 2000 (Christchurch: Antarctica New Zealand, c. 2000): 31-35.

<sup>41</sup> See Stephen Pyne, *The Ice* (London: Phoenix, 2004), 114-15, 154-55.

### **Musical Quotation and Allusion in *Songs of the South* (2014)**

In addition to employing contemporary compositional techniques, McIntyre also sought to establish ties between the music of *Songs of the South* and the historical period in which the lyrics were written through the use of musical allusion and/or quotation to provide cultural markers in each song. Where possible, songs were selected that already carried associations with pre-existing tunes; some of the other texts required a more creative approach. *Scott's Music Box* (discussed above)<sup>42</sup> presents a unique insight into the collection listened to by the expedition leader and members of his party in Antarctica and became a useful source of inspiration for the composer.

The first song in *Songs of the South*, titled "Scott's Northern party [sledging song]," sets a text by Raymond Priestley. This particular text was selected because of its association with members of Scott's team and the connection with the opera that McIntyre had composed about Scott, *Fire on the Snow*. Much of the thematic music material used this song is derived from the opera, especially from the marching motives that appear through the opera as seven-note or chord repetition. The constant oscillation in the song between septuplet figures and seven quavers beginning on the off-beat of the bar was to suggest the constant physical torment and struggle of marching in freezing and often unpredictable conditions. The suggested song for these lyrics, "I've Got Rings on My Fingers," is occasionally hinted at in the melodic shape of the vocal melody. The accompaniment remains in a fairly somber mood, which was a direct juxtaposition to the cheeriness of the original tune. A grace-note figure in the bass register of the piano serves to provide a stumbling motion to the momentum, while the contrast between the high and low figures that are featured at the opening of the song represent the icy brittleness of the expeditioners' surrounding conditions.

---

<sup>42</sup> *Scott's Music Box*, EMI 50999 6 44949 2 0.

One of the challenges in scoring the opera had been the representation of cold sonorities; in order to achieve this, McIntyre used what he considered to be “cold” instrumental timbres from the strings, piano and percussion. In contrast, he used a brass quintet to represent the five members of Scott’s expedition to the South Pole in the opera. These brass instruments, which were powered with warm breath, were made to fight against the rest of the orchestra and at times their warmth was over powered by representations of ice, snow and blizzards. Given that *Songs of the South* was to be scored for voice and piano only, McIntyre needed to evoke such timbres in a different way. The shifting harmonic language achieved through the serialization of the omnibus chords help to skew the harmonic focus away from any notion of resolution and mostly maintained a harmonic détente of dissonances. Heavy chromaticism in the vocal line with melodic characteristics more likely to be found in Schubert or Mahler further blurred the sense of consonance. Considering that the original songs were conceived for entertainment and to provide relief from boredom, McIntyre felt that a hyper-real dramatic approach was needed to transport the song texts to a more operatic realm. This was achieved through the employment of chromaticism, as well as through punctuations of declamatory recitative.

The second song in the cycle, which McIntyre titled “Tramp, Tramp, Tramp [sledging song],” sets an untitled sledging song by the AAE Southern Party. Given that there is no tune specified in Webb’s transcribed version of this song, McIntyre decided to use rhythmic devices and shapes similar to those employed by Ralph Vaughan Williams in the second movement of his *Sinfonia Antartica* (Symphony No.7, 1949-52), which suggests the

waddling of penguins.<sup>43</sup> The vocal part of this song is a mock-heroic march that breaks into comedic cadences that describe the narrator's exasperation and annoyance with much of his equipment. These are more-light hearted versions of the recitative passages found in the first song and they are accompanied by similar keyboard flourishes. The song ends with a preview of what is to come in song three.

"Southward" by Gerald Doorly was the only complete song that McIntyre used in the cycle. The original music was discarded and the lyrics retained in favour of a more somber version of the original. The version by Doorly is a love song to his sweetheart in a far-off land, the narrator being instead comforted by firstly the warmth of the tropics then the cold conditions of the southern nights and deep oceans. McIntyre planned his version to reiterate the chromaticism of the opening song and to make allusion to Debussy's piano prelude, *La Cathédrale Engloutie* ("The Sunken Cathedral," 1910). The accompanying tempo indication, *Profondément calme (dans une brume doucement sonore)*, is taken directly from Debussy's score. A sense of drowning and images of dark cold water are prevalent in this song, as are allusions to several of Debussy's works, including *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* ("Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun," 1891-94), *La Mer* ("The Sea," 1903-5) and *Nocturnes* (1897-99), within the harmonic shifts of the song.

The fourth song in the cycle, "Christmas Day on the Trail," contains the most examples of allusion and cultural markers. As mentioned previously, techniques of limited aleatory were employed in this song in order to create chaotic musical events that were nevertheless controlled by a tight harmonic plan and formal structure. This idea was carried over from McIntyre's opera, *Fire on the Snow*, in which he had utilised similar devices to suggest

---

<sup>43</sup> For a detailed analysis of Vaughan Williams's *Sinfonia Antartica*, see Daniel Grimley, "Music, Ice, and the 'Geometry of Fear': The Landscapes of Vaughan Williams's 'Sinfonia Antartica,'" *The Musical Quarterly* 91:1/2 (2008): 116-150.

flurries of snow and blinding blizzards. While these are techniques that were gaining currency in the twentieth century, the style of vocal delivery employed for “Christmas Day on the Trail” was a more direct reference to the period leading up to the beginning of the Heroic Age of Antarctic exploration. Given that many members of the expeditions were amateur singers and musicians,<sup>44</sup> they no doubt would have been very familiar with the style of “patter songs” included in the operettas of Gilbert and Sullivan, among other popular “light” operatic works, and may indeed have sung such songs themselves in amateur productions back at home. The long, drawn out text for this particular song seemed to McIntyre to be well-suited to the style of vocal delivery typical in a “patter song.” Further to this, Christmas was an important event on the expeditionary calendar and the opportunity to celebrate a “feast” together was perhaps even more highly valued in Antarctica than back at home – therefore, the inclusion of a text associated with Christmas was important to McIntyre. It also presented an opportunity to allude to Christmas themes in the music and the composer did this by incorporating the sound of sleigh bells (performed by the vocalist), as well as references to Christmas-related music, including *Jingle Bells*, *Joy to the World*, J.S. Bach’s *Christmas Oratorio* (1734) and the opening sleigh-bell motive of Mahler’s *Symphony No.4* (1899-1900). The inclusion of sleigh bells in *Songs of the South* also seemed fitting considering that although most of the expeditioners would have had some musical experience, there were some who were not particularly musical and/or could not hold a tune. Some of these men instead played simple percussive instruments, such as cans, triangles and various other objects, and therefore the inclusion of sleigh bells in this song about Christmas was deemed highly appropriate.

---

<sup>44</sup> See Philpott, “Notes from the Heroic Age” and Philpott, “The Sounds of Silence.”  
*International Association for Academic Research*

In the final song of the cycle, “Basilisk,” the text by Xavier Mertz is a narrative written from the point of view of the alpha male husky in the dog sledding team. The lyrics describe aspects of daily camp life, along with his various antics and observations about life in the far south. In the setting of this particular song, McIntyre chose to incorporate more quotation, rather than just allusion. The vocal line follows the melody of the British music hall favourite “Stop your tickling, Jock!,” which was made famous by the Scottish music hall singer and comedian Harry Lauder (1870-1950). Diaries from the *Terra Nova* expedition reveal that the men of that expedition listened to Harry Lauder gramophone recordings in Antarctica and it is quite likely that the AAE was supplied with similar, if not exactly the same, recordings by The Gramophone Company, given the close timing of the two expeditions.<sup>45</sup> In “Basilisk,” this melody is accompanied by a different tune in the piano part – this time one that references “Tiddley-Om-Pom-Pom,” a choice that was inspired by Laseron’s inclusion of the unknown tune “Zwebery-Om-Pom-Pom” in his diary of the AAE.<sup>46</sup> Considering that the lyrics are expressed from the point of view of a dog, it seemed fitting that there should be confusion about which song is being sung, as well as a gradual drifting away from the correct key in the vocal part. The song, and the cycle as a whole, ends with the singer whistling or humming the tune of the vocal line as she slowly exits the stage. The piano continues to play a passage that is reminiscent of the opening of the song cycle, until an audio sample begins to be heard. The composer has written the following about the effect of the conclusion of the work:

The inclusion of the audio sample at the end of the piece is an attempt to capture a sense of the loneliness and alienation experienced by the explorers and of the feelings of nostalgia that they must have experienced for the familiarities of home. The click

---

<sup>45</sup> This song is included in *Scott’s Music Box*, EMI 50999 6 44949 2 0.

<sup>46</sup> See Laseron, “South With Mawson” in *Antarctic Eyewitness*, 82.

and loop in the sample seeks to recreate the strange atmosphere at the end of “Neptune, the Mystic” from Holst’s *The Planets* (1914-1916). I also thought about the final soprano lament that caps off Vaughan Williams’s *Sinfonia Antartica*, accompanied by the sound of the wind machine. The whistling or humming, which gradually fades as the singer exits the stage, also suggests something of the finality that many men faced through death in that environment.

The gradual fading of sound experienced at the conclusion of the song cycle is also appropriate for this particular song, “Basilisk,” in light of the deaths of Mertz and Basilisk while out on the march. In this context, the fading of sound can be interpreted as representing the dying Mertz (who liked to sing songs from his student days while out sledging)<sup>47</sup> and also the death of Basilisk, who fell down a deep crevasse and hence, any last sounds he made would also have faded into silence.

## **Conclusion**

Antarctica has long been considered a “blank canvas” that is open to a myriad of different artistic interpretations and representations. Indeed, the vast range of musical works that have been composed in connection with Antarctica since the dawn of the Heroic Age is testament to the fact that no one approach has been favoured by composers working in this area to date. Yet, as Stephen Pyne and others have observed, modernist artistic approaches to representing Antarctica seem to be particularly apt due to their capacity to match the frozen continent’s blank, abstract and minimalist landscape.<sup>48</sup> As one of the first song cycles to include song lyrics written during various expeditions of the Heroic Age, Scott McIntyre’s *Songs of the South* presents a unique opportunity to hear these original lyrics set against a modernist

---

<sup>47</sup> Beau Riffenburgh, *Racing with Death: Douglas Mawson – Antarctic Explorer* (London: Bloomsbury, 2008), 114.

<sup>48</sup> Pyne, *The Ice*, 114.

backdrop that nevertheless creates strong links to the time and place in which they were conceived. His use of musical quotations from, and allusions to, music that was composed in the period leading up to and during the Heroic Age, as well as his employment of compositional devices that had gained currency during the same timeframe (such as the “omnibus progression” and serial techniques), is innovative and may serve as a model for future composers who choose to set texts from the same fascinating era of exploration and discovery. Current work in this area by composers, as well as other creative artists, is particularly timely given the celebration of the centenaries of various expeditions of the Heroic Age that are taking place around the world. It is through such artistic products that wider audiences can learn more about and in turn, come to appreciate, Antarctica and the importance of human connections with the region, both historically and today.



## **Bibliography**

- Allen, Aaron S. "Ecomusicology." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed 27 May 2014, <http://oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2240765>.
- Benward, Bruce and Marilyn Saker. *Music in Theory and Practice*, 8<sup>th</sup> ed., vol. 2. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2009.
- Cherry-Garrard, Apsley. *The Worst Journey in the World: Antarctic, 1910-1913*. New York: Dial Press, 1930.
- Doorly, Gerald S. *The Songs of the "Morning."* Melbourne: Bread and Cheese Club, 1943.
- Doorly, Gerald S. *The Voyages of the Morning*. London: Smith, Elder, 1916.
- Gauldin, Robert. "The Theory and Practice of Chromatic Wedge Progressions in Romantic Music." *Music Theory Spectrum* 26:1 (2004): 1-22.
- Griffiths, Paul. "Aleatory." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed 5 June 2014, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/00509>.
- Grimley, Daniel. "Music, Ice, and the 'Geometry of Fear': The Landscapes of Vaughan Williams's 'Sinfonia Antarctica.'" *The Musical Quarterly* 91:1/2 (2008): 116-150.
- Hurley, James Francis. Sledging Diary, 10 Nov. 1912 – 10 Jan. 1913. ML MSS 389/1/1. Mitchell Collection, State Library of New South Wales.
- Johnson, Phyllis and Peter Suedfeld. "Coping with Stress Through the Microcosms of Home and Family Among Arctic Whalers and Explorers." *The History of the Family: An International Quarterly* 1:1 (1996): 41-62.
- Kostka, Stefan and Dorothy Payne. *Tonal Harmony: With an Introduction to Twentieth-Century Music*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000.
- Kurol, Valmar. "Antarctica Experienced Through Music: Capsule Comments on CDs about Antarctica." The Antarctic Circle. Last modified 3 January 2014. Accessed 27 May 2014. [www.antarctic-circle.org/valmar.htm](http://www.antarctic-circle.org/valmar.htm).
- Laseron, Charles. Diaries, 21 Nov. 1911 – 24 Feb. 1913. ML MSS 385. Mitchell Collection, State Library of New South Wales.
- Laseron, Charles Francis. "South With Mawson." In *Antarctic Eyewitness*. Sydney: HarperCollins, 1999.
- Laseron, Charles Francis. *South with Mawson: Reminiscences of the Australasian Antarctic Expedition*. Sydney and London: Australasian Publishing and George G. Harrap, 1947.

- Leane, Elizabeth. *Antarctica in Fiction: Imaginative Narratives of the Far South*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Locantro, Tony. Liner notes to *Scott's Music Box*. EMI 50999 6 44949 2 0, 2012 (2 compact discs).
- McIntyre, Scott. *Fire on the Snow*. Unpublished manuscript, 2010-12.
- McIntyre, Scott. *Songs of the South* for Mezzo Soprano and Piano. Unpublished manuscript, 2014.
- McIntyre, Scott. "The Simplification of Complex Notation Presented in Aleatoric Forms." PhD diss., University of Tasmania, 2013.
- Mertz, Xavier. Diary 28 July 1911 – 1 Jan. 1913, Trans. Gabrielle Eisner, Mawson Collection, South Australian Museum.
- Philpott, Carolyn. "Notes from the Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration: Gerald S. Doorly's *Songs of the Morning*." *Context: A Journal of Music Research* 37 (2012): 3-35.
- Philpott, Carolyn. "The Sounds of Silence: Music in the Heroic Age of Antarctic Exploration." *The Polar Journal* 3:2 (2013): 447-465.
- Priestley, Raymond E. *Antarctic Adventure: Scott's Northern Party*. Melbourne: C. Hurst., 1974.
- Priestley, Raymond. Journal kept during the British Antarctic Expedition, 1910-1913, 26 November 1910-7 January 1911. MS 198 BJ. Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge.
- Priestley, Raymond. "Sledging Song of Scott's Northern Party." MS 1097 27/1-3. Scott Polar Research Institute, Cambridge.
- Pyne, Stephen. *The Ice*. London: Phoenix, 2004.
- Riffenburgh, Beau. *Racing with Death: Douglas Mawson – Antarctic Explorer*. London: Bloomsbury, 2008.
- Riffenburgh, Beau. "The Dogs of the Australasian Antarctic Expedition 1911-1914." *Polar Record* 50 (2014): 128-37.
- Roig-Francoli, Miguel. *Understanding Post-Tonal Music*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2008.
- Scott, Robert Falcon. *Journals: Scott's Last Expedition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Stuster, Jack. *Bold Endeavors: Lessons from Polar and Space Exploration*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1996.
- Telesco, Paula. "Enharmonicism and the Omnibus Progression in Classical-Era Music." *Music Theory Spectrum* 20:2 (1998): 242-79.

Webb, Eric Norman. Sledging Diary, 10 Nov. 1912 – 11 Jan. 1913. ML MSS 2895. Mitchell Collection, State Library of New South Wales.

Wilson, David and Roger Wilson. Liner notes to *The Songs of the Morning: A Musical Sketch*. Reardon 1-873877-52-8, 2002 (compact disc).

Yellin, Victor Fell. *The Omnibus Idea*. Warren, Michigan: Harmonie Park Press, 1998.