

‘So slide over here’: the aesthetics of masculinity in late twentieth-century Australian pop music

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Abstract

*For Australian men, the very act of appearing on stage has for much of the twentieth century aroused suspicion about their gender status and their sexuality. To aspire to the stage often implied homosexuality culturally in Australia. This has been evident in the evolving aesthetic of white Australian masculinity in pop music from the 1970s onwards. For most of that period, Anglo-Australian males who presented themselves in a rigid, almost asexual way dominated the aesthetic. The reality of urban Australia was ignored in their images, which were essentially confined to outback or coastal Australian settings. This paper examines that development as part of a continuum of twentieth century Australian male music performance that has variously been informed by the bush legend; a mythologised late nineteenth-century Australian masculine image, popularised in *The Bulletin* under the editorship of Archibald, that saw the urban as the feminine and the rural as the masculine. The paper considers how the combination of sexual anxiety surrounding male gender identity in Australian performance, and this rigid bush aesthetic, have encouraged the development of unstable male gender representations in Australian music that for the most part have come across as either caricatured male, sexless or anti-pop. The exception is the late Michael Hutchence whose performances were a clear departure from this in that on stage and in music videos he conveyed a star persona that was sexually charged and often ambiguous about its sexuality. It is for that reason alone that Michael Hutchence has been referred to as Australia's only international rock star (Carney 1997).*

Introduction

By the 1980s the Australian music industry had started to mature into an entity that readily produced male and female Australian born stars. Interesting though is that, in that period, for the most part, notable Australian male pop stars rarely incorporated sex and sexuality into their image to the extent that UK and US performers did. The exception here is the late Michael Hutchence, a performer that Carney (1997) referred to as Australia's only ever international rock star. Of course there have been others of whom the most recent would be Peter Andre, but none has thus far extended his performance to the sexual level that Hutchence did.

Although historically men have dominated pop music performance in Australia, they have ultimately done so within a narrow, almost asexual, ideal of the performing male. The possibility that this has in part been due to the notion in Australia of the arts as a safe haven for homosexuals, one that consequently

implicated men within its associated industries as being homosexual, is discussed below.

In Australian rock music, male performances have rarely built upon the sexuality of rock. Prior to Hutchence, male performance in Australian popular music generally speaking appeared in one of two ways where male performers have either presented themselves as caricatured males (Skyhooks, Mother Goose, Split Enz, Jimmy and the Boys, and Angus Young of AC/DC) playing up to the cultural perception of men on stage as being homosexual, or as a defence to that presumption playing down sexuality to the extent that it has been removed entirely from the performance (LRB, Crowded House, Air Supply, Men At Work). This accords with a normative Australian masculine aesthetic that has historically sought to distance itself from any association with the arts. It also reflects a potentially queer, unstable, normative masculine aesthetic which, organised as it is principally through the homophobic homosocial institution of mateship, is itself open to allegations of homosexuality (McGregor 1966; McGrath 1988; Schaffer 1996; Curthoys 1997; Tacey 1997). This is a potentially queer development in that homosexuality said or unsaid (Bech 1997) has effectively informed the institution and practices of mateship in a binary relationship of opposites (Barry 1995), such that it has consciously or subconsciously impinged upon the sexual aspect of male performance in Australian pop music.

Normative Australian masculinity

Firstly it is important to set the parameters for establishing what in fact constitutes normative masculinity in Australian pop music. Aesthetically this would be best represented by the predominance of rural and coastal associations in the imagery of Australian male pop performers contained in music videos, in which men as solo performers or as part of a band have generally preferred to sing to the desert, ocean or sky rather than to an audience of adoring fans. In this respect there is an apparent general lack of interest in presenting themselves as stars, let alone as recording artists. Collectively that aesthetic implies a strong reference back to the overarching aesthetic of the nineteenth century bush legend and the institution of mateship, which in combination have historically produced a rigid aesthetic of masculinity.

The late nineteenth century is seen as a pivotal moment in the emergence of popular texts on what defined and constituted Australian masculinity. It was in that period, some twenty years after the classification in Europe in the late 1860s of the homosexual as a type of individual, that Australians began in earnest to identify an Australian type. The popularised Australian was the bushman: a rugged male, with an abundance of physical and practical attributes (Ward 1958), fostered in a fashion not too dissimilar from the idealised American pioneer, but in a harsher, mostly arid, continent. The image was of men who depended upon each other – mates – and women were largely absent from that image. This imagery was popularised during the decade in which the trial of Oscar Wilde occurred. That trial has been identified as a key point in the vilification of homosexuals and homosexuality in English and Australian society.

In the Australian context, however, there is a strong undercurrent of implied, but rarely foregrounded, homosexuality in the figure of the bushman. This was perhaps most evident in the analysis of the core attributes of the bush legend contained in Russel Ward's (1958) seminal work *The Australian Legend*. The bushman was

a figure that was characterised by a form of ‘manly independence’ ‘whose obverse side was levelling, egalitarian collectivism, and whose sum was comprised in the concept of mateship’ (Ward 1958, p. 180). The suggestion by Ward (*ibid.*) that a bushman would necessarily sublimate the spiritual hunger caused by the absence of white women, and specifically of available white women whom many itinerant bush men could marry, through a sublimated homosexual relationship with a mate, or a number of mates, of his own sex, is of interest here. The salience of the mate relationships, Ward hypothesised, meant that Bushmen – the key masculine icons of nineteenth century Australian mythology and popular culture – ‘naturally denied this soft side of their nature by protesting, perhaps too much, their masculinity’ (Ward 1958, p. 100).¹

The possibility for same sex involvement between Bushmen is, however, generally subsumed in the literature by a preferred focus upon mateship, which is understood in Australian culture as close male friendship without sexual involvement (Buchbinder 1994). The foregrounding of the absence of sexual involvement amongst ‘mates’ reiterates a homophobic masculinist discourse that runs through mateship which is essentially designed to protect such friends from incurring ‘the penalties meted out to homosexuals in our culture’ (Buchbinder 1994, p. 38). It is precisely that lack of emotional involvement that patriarchy demands of males (Buchbinder 1994).

The legend as outlined by Ward propagated an aesthetically stoic masculinity where the physical rather than the intellectual was pivotal in the acceptance and inclusion of men, and their communication and relative power in relation to one another. Thus the intellectual and the artist were well outside the aesthetic expectations of the legend that became a hegemonic ideal in Australian masculine culture. That emphasis upon the physical is evident for example in the proportionally high participation of Australian men in sport and its coverage in national and international media as such.

In the context of daily life, sport clearly remained a strong signifier of the Australian masculine aesthetic well into the 1990s. This is evident for example in West’s (1996) identification that men often have to prove their masculinity to other males and that sport has played a central role in that process in Australian culture. His observation that the sporting arena has been one of the most important forums, for some the only one, in which Australian men have been able to express themselves emotionally, is pertinent. So too is the suggestion that sport has produced a complex emotional bonding between men in Australia, one where a largely homosocial experience, team sports, most often goes hand in hand with clear homophobic conditions/limitations upon that experience. West’s interviews with young, middle-aged and elderly men in Sydney’s Western suburbs, and outer Western suburbs, provide a useful perspective on how changes in the nature of work, employment and gender roles in twentieth-century Australia have impacted upon traditional notions of masculinity in those historically working-class communities. The persistence of these notions suggests that the type outlined by Ward has remained dominant, or hegemonic, amongst a gallery of types in Australian masculinity.

The legend and male pop music performance

This paper is not arguing that men in Australia slavishly live out that image of the bush or are enthralled by the cult of mateship. Instead it suggests that both remain

strong cultural points of reference for what in Australia, as indeed in most societies, is a society and culture generally characterised by masculinities (the plural form is key here) as opposed to a monolithic masculinity. This paper suggests that the endurance of the values that are central to mateship and the bush legend, not equally applied across all circumstances in daily life, is most evident in contexts where masculinities intersect with institutions and practices that have historically been gendered as feminine within the discourse of Australian popular culture. In this instance the focus is upon male performance in late twentieth-century pop, its continuums with male performance earlier on in that century, and the evidence of hegemonic ideals that have variously informed them all.

The arts: a safe haven for homosexuals

There is a popular but unsubstantiated perception that, historically, the performing arts have provided something of a 'safe haven' for male homosexuals, one which regarded the arts as an 'appropriate' career path for male homosexuals and which, moreover, sheltered them somewhat from the overt discrimination in mainstream society where same-sex sexual activity was illegal. In Australia that perception has arguably been perpetuated by the careers of a number of male performing artists who at some point in their careers have publicly presented themselves as homosexual. They would for example include Robert Helpmann in ballet, Graeme Murphy in contemporary dance and, more recently, classical music composer Carl Vine and the conductor the late Stuart Challander. Doubtless there are others, but the fact remains that for the most part the sexuality of male performers in Australian music and dance is rarely ever revealed explicitly as anything other than heterosexual. Indeed Challander's public revelation that he was homosexual only came about towards the end of his life when he declared that he was HIV positive. Within the performing arts, disclosure of one's homosexuality may be more evident than is the case in public life, but the lack of the former suggests that a career in the arts may still be less the haven for the homosexual than is often assumed.

Normative, hegemonic Australian masculinity, however, has historically assumed homosexuality to be a given for male performers. This has yielded two interesting outcomes. The first is that there appears to be a general lack of shock on the part of the Australian audience when the homosexuality of male performers in the arts is made public. Now this can be seen as a positive, if not a progressive aspect of the culture at large. However, when one observes the dominance of caricature and/or the general absence of sex, heterosexual or otherwise, in the image and performance of Australian men in pop music, for example, one realises that there is a clear possibility that the homosexual assumptions about the male performer have had a limiting impact upon the ability of Australian men to become stars. This second factor almost totally negates the progressive reading of the first.

A pre-history of unstable male gendered performance

Arguably there were few role models for aspiring rock stars in 1950s and 1960s Australia outside of what by then had become a pre-history of Australian male performance dominated by caricature. Australian masculinity, despite, or maybe because of its homophobic response to any implications of being homosexual, had a

history of encouraging the development of unstable, largely caricatured, Australian male gender representations in music performances and texts throughout the nineteenth century. *An Entertaining War*, Micheal Pate's (1986) examination of performances in the Australian military in both world wars, is a good overview of the role of cross-dressing in this process. Foremost in that regard is Pate's observation that Australian servicemen in both world wars, often donned a frock and entertained fellow servicemen. Pate identifies that for the digger in World War One stationed in 'Alexandria, Cairo, Port Said or other such cities the entertainment available was disappointing in a theatrical sense; and those other pleasures, readily and eagerly offered, often proved dubious if not downright dangerous to many a digger' (Pate 1986, p. 8). To compensate for the dearth of good, female theatrical entertainment, diggers turned to themselves. 'Throughout those years of the Great War . . . there were a number of concert parties which entertained the troops from time to time in various places, and one of the better known and remembered of these groups of sterling performers was called *The Smart Set Diggers Revue*. One of the members of this revue, female impersonator *extraordinaire* Eric Paige, not only thrilled the boys with his artistry in World War One, but repeated his act in World War Two with the sixth division concert party' (Pate 1986, p. 8).

The Smart Set were one of a number of Australian World War One military concert groups that continued to perform for up to ten years after the war as Australian touring shows (Garlick 1995). 'After the First World War, digger companies, which had begun as all-male soldier concert parties, toured main centres in Australia and New Zealand, clearly identifying their origins with names like the Gallipoli Strollers, the Hello Mimi Entertainers and *The Smart Set Diggers*. They were promoted as "warrior entertainers", and much was made of their war service and appearances before the Royal Family' (*ibid.*, p. 191). The orientation of these shows was towards glamorous female impersonation rather than caricatured female impersonation. Accordingly the shows relied on realistic female impersonation and glamorous cross-dressing and minimal sets. *The Smart Set Diggers* included five female impersonators (Pate 1986).

According to Pate, *femmes*, the term then applied to female impersonators, were similarly a mainstay of World War Two Australian and New Zealand military concert parties. In those shows, *femmes* would either appear as a caricatured ugly maiden character, alongside a 'straight' man, or as a sexy, glamorous woman 'looking for all the world as the real thing' (Pate 1986, p. 75). Many of those *femmes* were, prior to the war, popular drag identities in Melbourne and Sydney's emerging homosexual entertainment cultures of the 1930s (Wotherspoon 1991). These 'homosexual' entertainment cultures evolved well into the 1950s as an integral rather than separate part of the bohemian club cultures in both Melbourne and Sydney, and this yielded another layer to the sexual ambiguity of a history of masculine culture characterised by a high level of anxiety in regard to male performance, the stage as a safe haven for the disclosed but de-sexed queer male.

The boy from Oz

Stephen MacLean's *Peter Allen The Boy From Oz* (1996), a biography of the late Australian songwriter and performer Peter Allen, paints a picture of Sydney in the early 1960s that accords with the analysis in Wotherspoon (1991) of what was occurring in that city in the 1950s. MacLean's account of early 1960s Sydney as a city

open to adventure reinforces the thesis of French (1993) and Wotherspoon (1991) that the war impacted upon that city and its sexual taboos well into the 1950s. This was evident in city nightclubs. Accordingly, 'sexual prejudice went virtually unchallenged in the pre-lib days, but in certain sections of the Sydney night life scene, the various sexes were much more integrated than they would be after the days of enlightenment. There were no ghettos, simply one bohemia. Sydney was a 'small' big city roughly the same size as San Francisco, drawing together those libertarians who wanted, above all, to escape the suburban philistines' (MacLean 1996, p. 62).

In 1962, aged 18, Peter Allen left his Tenterfield home in rural Queensland for the opportunity to make a name for himself as a performer within Sydney's nightclubs and amongst the bohemia that supported them. That move proved to be a pivotal moment in Allen's decision to make camp a central tenet of his on-stage persona. The camp aspect of that burgeoning club scene, dominated by the presence of drag queens such as the infamous Carlotta, had its roots in the arts and movie theme balls that had gained a place in the calendar of Sydney's bohemia from the 1940s onwards.² According to MacLean, the most influential person in that transition for Allen was Frances Faye, an American female cabaret pianist and vocal performer, for whom the Allen Brothers, Peter and his stage partner Chris, were booked as support act as part of her 1962 season at Sydney's then premier nightclub, *Chequers*.

Faye had an immediate impact upon Peter and one that would largely inspire him and his stage persona for years to come (MacLean 1996). Accordingly, on 'opening night they went out and did their usual stuff to the usual reaction. But when the gold, scalloped *Chequers* curtain went up on the Brooklyn-born headlining act Frances Faye, Peter saw his future' (MacLean 1996, p. 64). Faye's act was full of innuendo from the start "'My name is Frances Faye, gay-gay-gay'", the female entertainer hollered, pumping her piano on top of bongos and sax, with the aid of poppers (a sniff of amyl nitrate was *de rigueur* before curtain)' (*ibid.*).

Faye's act was a triumph in Sydney where she maintained a six-month season. The woman who had 'made a very nice income oscillating between New York, Miami and Los Angeles' (*ibid.*, p. 64), now added Sydney to that list. Faye's ability to relate to the *Chequers* audience is evident in the footage of one of her performances there, which is included in the video based on MacLean's biography of Allen. One scene opens with Faye playing the chords to *Waltzing Matilda*, pausing, and then commencing the song. 'Once a jolly swagman camped', she stops immediately, looking perplexed by the double entendre contained in the word camped (Faye was well versed in the language of Australian popular culture at that time, for it was the word camp, not gay, which then commonly signified a homosexual male in Australia). For one second there was silence in the crowded bar, then the place erupted with laughter as the significance of the moment was realised by all in the audience. Herein lies perhaps the other most important influence upon Peter Allen at that time: the preparedness for *Chequers'* essentially mixed, Australian audience to identify with Faye's queer subtext, consciously or unconsciously, as a reflection of their own, at times precarious, role in a gender system that was slowly revealing its instability.

That Faye's subtext was not lost on her Sydney audience suggests that she opened the door to a potentially queer reading of an icon of Australian masculinity, the jolly swagman, that had been there for the taking for some time. Peter Allen saw it, absorbed it, made it his own and went on to become an Australian song-writing and performing legend who, in the early 1970s, became A&M (USA) records first known homosexual recording artist (MacLean 1996). This never involved drag. Rather

Allen's queerness was, like Faye's, in his dialogue with the audience. His utterance 'are there any Gays in the audience tonight?' Would be met with an emphatic 'yes' from the audience, to which Allen would reply, 'Ok are there any Helens?' But there is little to suggest that Allen's on-stage persona was altogether risqué as such, for in the wider scheme of normative Australian masculinity outlined above it could be seen to represent confirmation of the male performer as yet another masculine caricature, albeit in this instance with an emphasis upon the queer assumption of the male performer, but still ultimately sexless as such.

The 1960s: A Brit pop impetus for reluctant Australian male pop performers

What is clear is that, like Hollywood before it, when it came to establishing a stable of stars to launch the Australian pop music industry in the 1960s, the impetus came from Britain. In the Australian context, this was not the result of any clear policy on the part of the government or key players in the music industry. Rather it grew out of a circumstance where immigration policy, heavily weighted as it was towards attracting British nationals through assisted passage in combination with affordable housing programmes and assured industrial placement, culminated in a massive influx of British-born working-class migrants into Australian cities and towns.

The main catalyst for the emergence of the Australian pop music industry in the 1960s was the unprecedented arrival of British-born migrants, and in particular their concentration in the South Australian industrial 'new towns' of Elizabeth and Salisbury and metropolitan Adelaide (Zion 1987). Those places subsequently became the centres of origin for a large proportion of Australian bands that became household names in the 1960s and later established themselves as the vanguard of Australian rock in the 1970s. Such acts include Cold Chisel (Jimmy Barnes, Ian Moss, Don Walker), John Farnham, Rick Springfield, The Angels, Twilights, Mississippi, Little River Band and the Masters Apprentices. The Easybeats, Australia's most successful rock act of the 1960s, were made up of Dutch and English migrants that met in the Villawood migrant hostel in Sydney's west (Zion 1987).

Zion's (1987) analysis of the origin of the Australian music industry in the 1960s provides some interesting points from which we can examine the lack of sexuality in the images of notable male Australian pop performers, of which there were few from the 1950s up to the mid-1960s. Late 1950s Australian rock star Johnny O'Keefe was by the mid-1960s a lone figure in an otherwise absent landscape of Australian rock music performers. The other star of note in that period was Rolf Harris. His international hit, 'Tie me Kangaroo Down Sport' arguably became the benchmark of what long-term Australian international stardom might look like – an affable, pleasant, but ultimately sexless, cultural stereotype.

Zion (1987) attributes the 1964 Australian tour of the Beatles as pivotal in the forming of the migrant fronted bands, largely because, like the Beatles, many of them were made up of men who were from Liverpool. Reproducing the sound of the Beatles gave them a voice that enabled them to reach out of their often-remote urban locations in their new country and into the televisions and radios of Australian baby boomers who were eager to find a closer association with the culture of Mersey Beat. In a sense, the lack of Australian-born players at the helm in those bands points to a culture that, although it readily purchased it, was reluctant to actively engage in the creation, performance and reproduction of popular music styles and formats that originated in

the US and UK. There is, however, no consideration in Zion (1987) that hegemonic Australian masculinity's suspicion of the sexuality of male performance may have informed this reluctance.

The 1970s and the caricatured male in Australian pop

It was not until the 1970s that the first wave of native-born Australian bands with large national followings emerged. However, despite the precedent the Bee Gees and the Easybeats established in the 1960s for producing rock/pop music that was both nationally and internationally marketable, and that slotted well into the global pop aesthetic of the day in terms of sounds and image, native-Australian rock in the 1970s still retained a preference for caricature.

Australia's most successful band of the early 1970s was Skyhooks. Their popularity was assured when their debut album *Living In The Seventies* was released and subsequently became the biggest-selling album ever in Australia up to that moment (Beilby and Roberts 1981). Two points on Skyhooks are worthy of queer analysis. The first is their image, which, particularly in the case of guitarist Red Symons, was at times close to being transgender. This type of androgyny in Australian pop owed much to Glam, a British rock genre popularised by bands such as T-Rex and the Sweet. But Skyhooks' lyrics never suggested anything remotely queer, with songs such as 'Mercedes Ladies' ('You just like me 'cos I'm good in bed') and 'Women in Uniform' merely recounting male heterosexist ideals about sex. Where, for example, Bowie, Bolan, and to a certain extent Jagger before them, played up to a sexually charged ambiguity in their performance, this was notably absent in Skyhooks' predominantly male caricature-dominated imagery. Even more bizarre was the fact that although their heterosexual lead vocalist, the late Graham Strachan, was known publicly as 'Shirley' or 'Shirl', he managed to carry off that otherwise potentially feminine aspect of his image as a 'blokey' rather than a queer attribute.

Seemingly from the beginning, the name Graham disappeared from Strachan's public persona and was replaced with Shirley. Some years after Skyhooks split, reformed and split again, Strachan became the host handyman on a leading TV home renovation show and within that hegemonically male role he remained 'Shirl' rather than Graham. His Australian audience, who never carried any reading of him or his band as being queer as such, did not question this aspect of Strachan's public persona. This in itself is a queer phenomenon, quite possibly one that is unique to Australia, one where the fear of the queer on the part of some heterosexual male pop performers has, perhaps through the process of mateship itself, enabled them to de-sex even the most obvious transgressive gender appropriation and remain a bloke in the process. This is a twist of sorts on the notion of taking the bull by the horns, one where the perception of the arts as gendered feminine and the sexual suspicion directed at men within it is deflected by making the caricature of that perception a core part of male performance. This has generally resulted in a sexless image on the part of such performers, one that by virtue of this has enabled such male performers to maintain a rapport with the normative expectations of an often-homophobic hegemonic masculinity that may otherwise have distanced itself from them.

This de-sexing of the queer perception of the male performer is something that Strachan similarly shared in the 1970s with Ian Meldrum, Australia's rock guru of the 1970s and 1980s, who then, as well as now, was known in Australian public life as 'Molly' Meldrum. Today Meldrum is one of a number of Australian public figures

that have voluntarily included themselves as out homosexuals in Melbourne-published gay magazine *Outrage*. However, in the 1970s and 1980s Molly was not an out gay male.

Projecting the limits of Australian male performance to a wider world

The global success of Men At Work in the early 1980s ushered in a more structured, marketed and well-crafted version of the male caricature aesthetic that had emerged in 1970s Australian pop. In a sense, Men At Work offered the first global opportunity to tell the tale of the anxieties that were implicit in the familial foundations of Australian masculinity, firstly with their hits 'Down Under' and 'Who Can It Be Now?', and more explicitly in the song 'Be Good Johnny'. The focus of the latter song, a play on the 1950s US rock song line 'Johnny Be Good', was the inherent constraints of the idealised attributes of boyhood in post-war suburban Australia, attributes that were also evident in the 1990s, as outlined above in West (1996). The adult voices in that song stress the importance of not 'slipping up' on the golden rules of being a boy in Australia, implicitly to play either cricket or football, hopefully both. The warning from the parents to the child, Johnny, is that to not participate in either of these sports would be to 'play the fool', implicitly to be less than a boy, a sissy, and therefore an embarrassment to his family and their neighbourhood. This is evident when the boy states to the parental voices that he wishes neither to play cricket nor football and the adult voice tentatively asks, 'then what kind of boy are you Johnny?' Johnny's reply is that 'I only like dreaming all the day long, where no one is screaming, be good, be good, be good, be good, be good, be good, be good, be good, be good Johnny'. The subtext is that perhaps the songwriters themselves were harangued for daring to have an interest in music rather than sport. By implication they slipped up, played the fool, and were derided by peers and parents for doing so. Queerness abounds in that song's lyric in that it presents a male gender, which exists on a precarious, narrow, playing-field of masculinity, sport to be exact. The song, an Australian national top-ten hit, clearly held itself up as a mirror to its buying public who recognised and so shared that observation. However, ultimately the somewhat comic-book aspect of Men At Work, reinforced no doubt by their topical focus upon Australian stereotypes, effectively sidelined sex from their image such that they too generally conformed to the normative aspects of male performance outlined above.

INXS: Sexing the fear of the queer

Men At Work's critique on the pursuit of music over sport as a sign of maladjustment in an Australian boy was not lost on other bands. Up until the early 1980s, few bands dealt with this issue as poignantly as Men At Work. From metal to melancholy there was little evidence of the explicit desire for fame and sexual notoriety as a core ingredient or motive for being in an Australian band, let alone for fronting the band, until INXS.

When the Farriss brothers recast themselves as INXS in the late 1970s they were a hard-working funk-edged pub rock band of brothers and mates. By the early 1980s this was giving way to a band with a mission for global fame and a clear desire to make explicit sexual references to the constraints of the masculine aesthetic that had, for so

long, worked to keep at bay any semblance of sex or sexuality in Australian male pop performance; a strategy for taking their appeal beyond the pub and into arenas of national and international stardom.

INXS's 1983 album *Shaboo Shooobah* contained an explicitly queer subtext in its inner cover which featured a photograph of the band members asleep, side-by-side, with a white loincloth strategically draped across their groins. Vulnerable in the state of sleep, that image contrasted with the aggressive cock-sure imagery of the band's name and its Oz rock roots. That album and the follow-up album, *The Swing*, took INXS to legendary status in their home market. However, despite producing a string of hits thereafter, the band were not able to translate that success into a significant international force until the late 1980s.

Mates, music videos and absent stars

In the early 1980s, music video and the apparent willingness of Australian bands to incorporate it into their international marketing seemed to offer an opportunity for new Australian aesthetic spaces to emerge in global pop music. Indeed, the success of Men At Work, and INXS's comparatively moderate inroads, in the US charts in the early 1980s, has most often been attributed to their use of music videos at the beginning of the MTV revolution (Este 1997). However, what most Australian pop music historians fail to recognise is that despite making the switch to video early in the MTV revolution, most Australian bands, INXS included, were slow to adapt to the increased focus upon the star, as opposed to the band, that music videos ushered in. Instead they preferred to sell their image/brand with the well-worked mythology of the hard-working Australian pub band comprising a team of talented affable larrikin mates rather than talented sexually available/desirable young men.

Throughout the 1980s and well into the 1990s, the Australian comparative advantage that was propagated in the popular music press was the pub band as the purveyor of authentic, heteronormative masculine music, versus the inauthentic binary opposite that was the 'overseas' video lip-synching star. This equally correlated to the associated Australian normative masculine aesthetic of strength through the team in a hard unforgiving environment, in this context a live audience. That version of authentic pop music, informed as it was by an aspect of mateship which was itself still sensitive to the gendered feminine and queer reading of Australian male performance, produced a culturally imposed limit to the process of producing and marketing Australian pop stars globally.

The under-examined: Australian new wave and new romantics bands

Australia's contribution to new wave and the new romantics movement is in a sense the most under-examined or referenced chapter in Australian popular music. That absence is curious because in the period 1983–1987, the time in which INXS and Midnight Oil were painstakingly trying and failing to mirror the early 1980s success of Air Supply and Men At Work by reaching key US, European and UK charts, it was new wave-/new romantics-inspired groups such as Icehouse ('Street Café', 'Hey Little Girl', 'Crazy', 'Electric Blue'), Real Life ('Send Me An Angel', 'Catch Me I'm Falling', 'Always') and Pseudo Echo ('Listening', 'Funky Town') that were doing just that. The relative success of two of those bands, in the early 1980s, Melbourne's

Pseudo Echo and Real Life, and their almost immediate tagging as 'haircut bands', warrants an examination within this context. Both bands were Australian incarnations of British new-wave acts such as Duran Duran, Visage, Flock of Seagulls, Simple Minds and Spandau Ballet.³

The experience of new wave- and new romantic-inspired Australian bands in the 1980s demonstrates well the difficulty in escaping the normative expectations of male rock performance in Australian pop. Their influences came broadly from the new wave and new romantic movement of Berlin and London, and the Munich sound of Giorgio Moroder that preceded each of these in the mid-1970s. A central component of these bands was their initial preference for analogue and digital synthesizers over the guitar as the core definers of their sound. Such bands included Icehouse, Real Life and Pseudo Echo. The central place of fashion in their image and their preference for synthesizers over guitars would ultimately prove to be sticking points in their public relations with a fraternity of rock-and-roll artists and journalists alike who essentially saw such music as inauthentic and ultimately emasculating. Aesthetically, these bands also tended to ignore the outback in their videos, preferring instead ambiguous cityscapes, woodlands and coastal settings that were ambiguous in that they tended not to explicitly identify them as Australian locations.

New wave versus cock rock

Superficially, the pantomime aspect of the image of these bands resembled the caricature aspects of Skyhooks, Split Enz and Mother Goose before them. However, in Australia, as in the United Kingdom also at that time, the high degree of self importance that these bands projected, coupled with their punk-informed style-over-substance attitude, effectively removed caricature as a motive. The absence of any clear reference to caricature, or indeed any other motive for their focus upon image at the expense of music, meant that such bands were often derided for their perceived lack of purpose as such. However, what is interesting in the Australian context, and particularly for Real Life and Pseudo Echo, is the relative angst that was directed at these bands from a generally heterosexist/masculinist fraternity of rock reviewers and performers, one that revealed a high level of anxiety amongst that fraternity about the threat this new aesthetic represented to the role of rock music as a marker or signifier of both masculine-gendered identity and 'Australianess' as such.

The rock press of the day contained countless innuendos in relation to the sexuality and gender of the essentially heterosexual members of both Real Life and Pseudo Echo, which were largely based on their use of keyboards over and above their predilection for fashion. Much of this was evident in the interviews and concert reviews of these bands that were published in *Juke*. In the 1980s, Melbourne-based *Juke* was Australia's main national weekly rock newspaper. The Performing Arts Museum in Victoria contains a large collection of this newspaper, including archives on Real Life and Pseudo Echo, each of which contains consistent references to fashion.

In one of their first interviews in *Juke*, Pseudo Echo themselves made reference to the fact that dressing up was central to the relationship the band had with its live audience in Melbourne's inner-city nightclubs. After the success of their first single, 'Listening', Pseudo Echo's lead vocalist and songwriter, Brian Canham, said 'the nice thing is that our newer crowd, since the hit single, are into dressing up as much as we do [sic], which is a buzz for us' (Coates 1984, p. 21). Coates concluded that Pseudo

Echo's success came 'at a time when audiences were looking for a modern and visual act – fresh as compared to the dinosaurs who'd been around for too long' (*ibid.*). Underlying Coates' view was a clear derisive, heterosexist subtext in his reference to *Pseudo Echo*'s origin as one of a number of fleeting Melbourne 'new romantic' bands. On this, Coates asked the band 'Was it a bitchy scene?' This was a fatuous question in relation to the band and their music. Questions or indirect references to the band as masculine outsiders occurred more often than not in the Australian rock press. Like the bands above that employed caricature as a deflector of the queer implications of being a male performer, writers, such as Coates also sought to deflect the possibility of being labelled queer by association. They did this through pejorative references to the hair-dos, clothing and use of keyboards by the bands in question, foregrounding them as incomplete masculine attributes in relation to the normative masculine ideals outlined above. This effectively coded the bands as queer. That writers such as Coates did this repeatedly suggests that they too sought to deflect any potential queer reading of themselves by their assumed heterosexual male readership through their proximity to these bands.

Clearly the sounds and images of these bands were a threat to a masculine culture that had itself only belatedly come to accept rock music as part of its normative framework, a comfort zone in which it was prepared to perform onstage. The relative immobility and therefore assumed passivity of the gendered feminine keyboard synthesizer (the Hammond organ for some reason managed to avoid this predicament) as compared to the up-front and active aspect of the rock guitar and its phallic qualities was central to this threat. Such a reading of the keyboard synthesizer was not confined to Australia. However, in Australia, synthesizers carried another layer of meaning; one that by way of its synthetic aspect, and its inauthenticity as such, potentially threatened to undermine the foundations of the mythology of the bush legend and its endurance as an informer of the images and frames of reference of a normative masculine ideal predicated upon the outback, and nature specifically, as the maker and shaper of men.

In 1987, *Pseudo Echo* scored their only significant international hit with their cover of the late 1970s hit, 'Funky Town'. That song had a Prince-inspired guitar riff and this in itself was symbolic of the band's shift away from their new romantics roots towards funk rock. Their decision in 1987 to 'knock back an offer to join Madonna on her extensive American tour' (Coates 1987) carried a clear message that this was not conducive to the shift in audience that they anticipated with their change of image. It suggested that having shaken off the haircut band and its queer associations, the band feared another feminine association by way of Madonna. Lead singer and songwriter Brian Canham's claim that *Pseudo Echo* 'didn't feel that a Madonna audience correlated with their ideals to attract a "thinking" crowd' (*ibid.*) marks a point where the band began to reproduce the homophobic and ultimately sexist discourse that had been levelled at them by the Australian rock press. The decision marked the beginning of the end for *Pseudo Echo*, who ultimately caved in to the derision, reclaimed their guitars and released *Race*, their last and least successful album. In that process, only two of the four original members remained. *Pseudo Echo* ditched their successful transition from new wave to funk rock. In the process they abandoned the logical cross-promotion that a tour with Madonna would have ensured in favour of an already old-hat stadium rock sound inspired by Van Halen and Styx. In the tradition of the celluloid rock spoof *Spinal Tap*, *Pseudo Echo* became a caricature of their former selves.

Pseudo Echo's image and their eventual acquiescence to the derision they faced in the Australian rock press is a reminder of how even the most transgressive aesthetic gender practices are constrained by the discursive practices of normative expectations and frameworks (Butler in Jagose 1996). It is useful also to consider how Butler's notion of performativity applies to all of the examples above, and the endurance of overarching ideals such as the Bush legend as points of reference that enable and limit performativity as such. For Butler, performativity is neither theatrical self-presentation nor voluntarist but 'a ritualized production, a ritual reiterated under and through constraint, under and through the force of prohibition and taboo, with the threat of ostracism . . . controlling and compelling the shape of the production, but not . . . determining it in advance fully' (Butler in Jagose 1996, p. 87). The somewhat reflective interviews that followed on from Pseudo Echo's return in the 1990s to Melbourne's live scene appeared to reveal a strong correlation to the limiting aspects of performativity outlined above in relation to the wider discursive practices that inform it. This was evident, for example, in an interview with Brian Canham, their lead vocalist and songwriter, in which he shed some light on the band's image in the 1980s and in particular his own personal motive behind adopting it. Of this he said:

I grew up out in the suburbs with four older brothers who were real blokes and played footy. I took to that feminine image as a rebellion against my upbringing. (Canham in *DNA* 2000, p. 19)

The unnamed interviewer in *DNA* suggested that in the 1980s, 'everyone who was attractive and vaguely groovy was thought to be gay' (*DNA* 2000, p. 19), and then asked Canham 'did that happen to you?' 'Totally. All the time' was Canham's reply, and he then went on to stress that he did not see it as a negative rather that it 'was good. And I deliberately generated an asexual appeal' (Canham in *DNA* 2000, p. 19).

As defiant as it was of the hierarchy of masculinity that projected a hegemonic ideal upon him, one that he apparently did not identify with or relate to, Canham's effeminate pop identity was clearly informed by that overarching ideal. Indeed, his desire to project an asexual image, one that may or may not have succeeded in its ambitions, linked him and his band to the majority of their male Australian cock-rock adversaries at the time, who rarely engaged their audience directly through pop music videos or presented themselves as objectified males for the gaze of an adoring audience.

More than Pseudo Echo, it was Real Life that were most often scrutinised in *Juke* for their associated image (Eliezer 1983, 1984_{A, B}; Beaumont 1984; Toni 1984). A whole year before Pseudo Echo made the Australian charts, Real Life scored a hit in Australia with 'Send Me An Angel'⁴ and the flack began in earnest. But, unlike Pseudo Echo, Real Life regularly fought back (Eliezer 1983, 1984_{A, B}). An interview with their lead singer during the band's 1990 Australian release, *Lifetime*, saw them give a less defensive response to the lingering tag of being tagged a 'haircut band'.

We joke about that ourselves. We always call ourselves a haircut band because other people used to, and we know how untrue it is and we get the biggest laugh out of it. The other day at rehearsals we were taking the piss out of each other. Someone had a hair dryer in their bag and I said 'quick don't let the other bands see that'. But then I was messing around later trying to gaffer it to my mike stand just to have a bit of a joke and I got sprung. (Sterry in Andrew 1990, p. 7)

A queer reading is ever present in articles on Real Life (with titles such as: 'Real Life Bopping to the sound of cocktail rock' [Toni 1984] and 'The real men behind Real Life' [Beaumont 1984]). Where the queer subtext really comes through in the *Juke* archives

on Pseudo Echo and Real Life is in their reportage on the subsumed role that the electric guitar, male phallic symbol of rock (Frith and McRobbie 1978), had in both bands. Hitherto, pop music in Australia, as indeed in England and the USA, had been dominated by an aggressively white masculine pop music genre that Frith and McRobbie identified as 'cock rock'. Accordingly, cock-rock performers were defined as 'aggressive, dominating, and boastful males' whose live shows are about male sexual performances such that 'mikes and guitars are phallic symbols' (Frith and McRobbie 1978, p. 374).

Queering music technology

Clearly, the 'cock-rock' fraternity, performers and critics alike, saw keyboard synthesizers as implicitly feminine instruments, whose use amongst emerging bands rendered them as inauthentic in performance and masculine terms. Indeed, when Real Life's synth-propelled 'Send Me An Angel' became a top-five hit in Australia, Angry Anderson,⁵ lead singer with Australian cock-rock band Rose Tattoo, suggested that its songwriters 'should be strung up by their balls for supposing the song was a valid piece of music for an Australian band' (Eliezer 1983, p. 11).

In the early 1980s, it was clear that men with make-up and big hairdos seated behind synthesizers did not an Australian band make (Eliezer 1983, 1984_{A,B}). This was particularly evident in live reviews of Pseudo Echo and Real Life.⁶ On two separate occasions, a year apart, *Juke* reviewer Scott Brandreth derided both bands largely on the basis of their use of technology. In 1985, he reviewed Pseudo Echo in Perth, facetiously stating 'how amazing it was that a band armed with such a huge array of electronic software couldn't tap the potential . . . Sadly, we found ourselves watching the emergence of a test tube band' (Brandreth 1985). In 1986, Brandreth opened his review of a Real Life show in Adelaide stating, 'one would surely have to thank the highly and brilliantly skilled Japanese electronics experts, who created the huge array of programmed electronic gadgetry, which kept Real Life from sinking into a miserable mish mash of drivel on this night' (Brandreth 1986, p. 25). References to fashion were omnipresent in both reviews. Of Pseudo Echo in 1985 he opened the review by stating, 'aren't Pseudo Echo a wonderful piece of pop packaging? Up to date hairstyles, pretty boys that don't look threatening . . . more electronic gadgetry than you can poke a stick at' (Brandreth 1985). A year later in Adelaide he had this to say about Real Life: 'Like many bands in the same musical, or in this case, fashion genre, Real Life have chosen to throw together a well programmed set of synthesizers and drum machines, and then presented them in a farcical package fronted by an equally farcical fashion/haircut image' (Brandreth 1986, p. 25). On both occasions, Brandreth used the term 'boys' pejoratively. In the case of Pseudo Echo, the derision extended to their audience, whom he referred to as 'a legion of pubescent damsels who swoon at their very movement' (Brandreth 1985). This was effectively a sexist statement in that it suggested that a female-dominated fan base was somehow less credible than one that was dominated by males.

That these tensions were ever present in interviews and reviews suggests that for the most part they remained unresolved. For the bands, this is evident in their failure to effectively counter such attacks and, in the case of Pseudo Echo, actually caving in to them. Clearly these bands represented a break with the hegemonic aesthetic outlined above. However, they were less successful at deflecting the queer

meanings assigned to them by hegemonic masculinity and its doubts as to their authenticity as such.

Michael Hutchence: mateship and the making and unmaking of a star

By the late 1980s, INXS emerged as the only Australian act that managed to successfully renegotiate the queer assumptions of the male performer in Australian pop music, to foster an aesthetic that fore-grounded the urban and the sexual in its image, and to build a global audience in that process. Furthermore, they did so with a clear incorporation of sequenced keyboards into a sound that could best be described as pop rock funk fusion. As indicated above, throughout much of the 1980s, INXS were inconsistent in their attempts at making it into the global pop arena. A lot of this rested with their failure to resolve whether they wanted to present themselves as a bunch of mates or a pop band fronted by a star. This perspective is vindicated by the fact that their pop glory did not eventuate until 1987, ten years into their music career, when, with the release of the album *Kick*, the band clearly placed Michael Hutchence firmly in front where he forever remained until his untimely death, as Australia's only true rock 'n' roll star (Carney 1997; Morrissey in Ruben 1997). In the video to 'Need You Tonight', *Kick*'s first and biggest single, Hutchence addressed the camera with a degree of confidence in sexuality that no other male Australian pop musician had done before. Bare-chested, draped in a black leather jacket, shoulder-length hair and a soft sultry stare, Hutchence pleaded to his desired girl, 'I need you tonight'. The song ended with an element of sexual ambiguity in its last line: 'I've got to let you know you're one of my kind'. The front cover of *Kick* saw Hutchence similarly in the foreground, but strategically placed to the right side of the image, in the same clothes, with the same sultry, sexy stare that was evident in the 'Need You Tonight' video.

The role of mateship in Hutchence's rise to the position of star is implicitly evident on the cover of *Kick*, where Hutchence's direct gaze in the 'Need You Tonight' video is replaced with his gaze away from the camera and across to the other band members on his left. That potentially queer gaze also contained the clear possibility that the band were connected with, rather than removed from, Hutchence's new-found star, something that they had achieved together as mates. In effect, the cover implied that Hutchence's stardom was conditional upon his connection with the other band members, that the band and the star were inextricably linked.

Kick was INXS's most successful album nationally and internationally (Carney 1997). However, Hutchence's up-front image did not last long; five years and two albums later the whole band became the focus once again and their videos and cover art moved back into the traditional location of Australian male pop, the desert. From that point onwards, INXS's star faded into the global pop wilderness.

In the case of INXS, one could well map the rise and fall of the band to the periodic recurrence of mateship in their public image as a group and, despite their queer critique of that institution's homophobic defence of its homosocial foundation, their desire to be seen to be a part of that hegemonic ideal. The inflected queer image outlined above existed uneasily alongside a strong discourse of homophobic mateship that informed hegemonic masculinity in Australian pop music in the 1980s and 1990s; a discourse that arguably even INXS themselves were to succumb to when their hits stopped coming and the resultant doubt as to their star, and implicitly their masculinity, set in. The image of the band on the cover of their album *Full Moon, Dirty*

Hearts, and the associated PR campaign of a back-to-their-pub-roots tour to promote it, smacked of such anxiety; a plain image of a group of non-descript mates sitting in between the open doors of the back of a Bedford-type touring mini van that contained their instruments.

Like the Police and U2, INXS employed a hard and soft approach to marketing their name and music. The name gave them the normative male rock aesthetic and with it perhaps an element of danger to a sound that was more funk pop than rock at times, and with that room to move into masculine discourses which were often outside of the rigid discourse that informed the normative masculinity outlined above. However, in hindsight, on the basis of the consistency of their relative global versus national chart success, it would appear that this was a harder divide for INXS to master than for the Police and U2, for example. The tension between outback and city as signifiers of masculine and feminine, and a desire to realign their image with the normative masculine hegemonic ideal, were clearly evident at the end of INXS's career, when as if anticipating a crisis, the band placed themselves in the familiar hegemonic masculine space of outback Australia, foregrounding the band and not the star as the main vehicle for their music.

Conclusion

Today it would appear as if male performance in Australian pop music has come full circle. The derision afforded to Real Life and Pseudo Echo in the 1980s for their image and preference for synthesizers were, for example, conspicuously absent from critiques of Australia's most successful act of the 1990s, Savage Garden. That band's image was at times perhaps more androgynous than either of the two aforementioned bands, and the sound is very much that of electronic pop. Their large female fan base and their appearance on the front cover of the now defunct Australian gay magazine *Outrage*, raised none of the suspicion about the gender status of either of the two males that are Savage Garden that Real Life and Pseudo Echo received in the 1980s.

Contemporary Australian pop is still inconsistent in its ability to make its mark in the international charts. When it does chart, Australian pop appears to be doing so with a more diverse pop aesthetic than it did in the 1980s, a time when it seemed to be preoccupied with defining authentic, credible Australian pop as music which had grown out of pub venues in the big cities and towns across the nation. There are still artists such as Ben Lee, Invertigo and Taxi Ride that prefer to place their image in the desert in preference to the urban context of their essentially urban songs. But there have been others such as Madison Avenue whose point of reference is unapologetically an Australian city, Melbourne, with a clear reference in their name to the US origins of the sound and aesthetic that they have incorporated. In 1999, with their song 'Don't Call Me Baby', Madison Avenue became the first Australian pop group to achieve a number-one position on the UK top 40 since Men At Work in 1983. For singer Cheyenne Coates and her song-writing partner Andy Van, the club scene and café culture of Melbourne were as integral to the image and music of Madison Avenue as were the sampled grooves that they incorporated out of the global pop music cultures of New York City and London.

The derision of music technology or dance that dominated the commentary and reviews of Real Life and Pseudo Echo in the 1980s are largely absent in contemporary Australian reviews and interviews with groups such as Madison Avenue, and artists such as Josh Abrahams and his overseas alter ego Puretone. Likewise, the notion of

rock versus dance music as the site of real/authentic Australian pop music has also largely disappeared from discourse in the popular music press. The *Mad Max* outback-inspired video that accompanied Puretone's 2002 UK release of 'Totally Addicted to Base' suggests that the desert and the open skies, formerly the exclusive domain of Oz Rockers singing to themselves, has in a sense now been reclaimed as a more inclusive site for the promotion of dance music, a genre that had previously been excluded as urban Australian and therefore inauthentic.

There is much in the history of popular music and performance in Australia to indicate that Australian masculinity, despite, or maybe because of its homosocial institutions, has at various points in time discouraged and encouraged the development of unstable male gender representations throughout this century. This paper has illustrated but a handful of such examples, potential points of reference to build upon our understanding of mediated masculine identities in music performance. This approach can help us to understand how the popular myth of the arts as the haven of the homosexual in Australia, for example, has at times manifested itself in a less-than-confident or stable approach to the music and dance performance of men in that country and an inconsistency in producing male pop stars. Clearly, that myth is still informing the masculine aesthetic of Australian pop music. Regurgitator's 'I Sucked a Lot of Cock to Get Where I Am', and 'I Will Lick Your Arsehole', are evidence that the suspicion of male performers' gender status and sexuality remain.⁷

The foregrounding of implied homosexuality and homosexual identity on the part of Australian male performance, coupled with the homophobia of the normative male discourses that have informed this through mateship, have clearly impacted upon the ability of Australian men to develop as global pop stars. This is the outcome of a complex interplay between histories of unstable male performance that have been both enablers of alternative representations of masculinity and, because of their preference for asexual caricature over sexualised performance, have also acted as limiters. This circumstance also reflects a cultural preoccupation with the male performer as implicitly homosexual by a normative masculine culture that, informed as it has been historically by a homophobic defence of its homosocial foundation, has sought to remove sex from male pop performance as a means of deflecting the queer potential of that circumstance. This has also extended to homosexual performers who, with the exception of Peter Allen, have generally remained hidden and sexless.⁸

Although historically men have dominated pop music performance in Australia, they have ultimately done so within a narrow, almost asexual, ideal of the performing male.⁹ This could well be a case of a 'fear of the queer', based upon the threat of social exclusion from mates and mateship and its centrality in masculine identity, and in the general discourse of power of hegemonic masculinity and the associated economic exclusion that one may encounter as a consequence of this. Likewise, it also suggests that Butler's notion of advocating parody as a resistant strategy (Jagose 1996) may require some revision within the context of a history of Australian male performance which has historically used parody to both reflect and deflect queer assumptions that audiences have made on the part of the performer.

Endnotes

1. Those observations lend themselves to an analysis of Australian masculinity based on absent homosexuality and queer theory. The

Australian Legend may have been devised, for example, to satisfy the morality of the prevailing British-financed monopoly capitalist state and

- private corporations that came to dominate public life in nineteenth-century Australia (McQueen 1970).
2. One event that built a reputation for femmes throughout the 1930s, World War Two and up to the 1950s was Sydney's annual Artists Ball, 'sometimes referred to as the Drag & Drain Ball' (French 1993, p. 86). French identifies that these balls were not exclusively homosexual events, but that homosexual males and drag queens were present at them. The musicians employed to perform at Artists Balls were not necessarily homosexual. It was the presence of men in ballroom drag that is of interest here.
 3. Three things differentiated new wave rock bands from their 1970s predecessors, these were: (i) their use of synthesizers and digital sequencers as lead musical instruments; (ii) their exaggerated use of fashion and hitherto female-associated fashion accessories such as make-up and hair gel – hence the tag 'haircut bands'; and (iii) their increased propensity to write lyrics that drew upon cinematic themes and symbolic locations for no apparent reason other than to work within a music video.
 4. 'Send Me an Angel' went to number one in Germany and New Zealand and it was the first of three songs to make the US top 30 for Real Life.
 5. Anderson later experienced his biggest hit outside of the cock-rock genre when he scored a UK number one with 'Suddenly', the wedding song for Charlene (Kylie Minogue) and Scott (Jason Donovan) in the Australian soap opera *Neighbours*.
 6. See, for example, Scott Brandreth's scathing review of a Real Life concert in Adelaide in the 1 February edition of *Juke*, 1996, p. 25. Brandreth's review of Pseudo Echo live in Perth, published in the 2 March edition of *Juke* in 1985, expressed similar sentiments.
 7. The perception of the homosexual as other, something outside of the category of being a man, makes this a neurotic preoccupation. That notion was evident, for example, in a recent article on Richard East, one of Australia's leading pop music managers. East, currently a co-producer of the East End smash hit ABBA musical 'Mama Mia', has managed Australian pop acts such as Jason Donovan, Australian Crawl, Real Life, John Farnham and Kate Ceberano. In that article, East outlined how 'Mama Mia' was targeted at women and gays in the first instance because 'Men don't say "Wow gotta go out and see Art"' (East in Bunbury 1999, p. 18). So here you have a leading Australian show business manager in the 1990s who clearly does not see gay males as men. References to the pink dollar in alternative and mainstream media reports such as this read as tolerance, through economic exploitation, rather than acceptance of homosexual men as men, and serve to perpetuate a hierarchy of masculinity as such.
 8. Historically, it has been at the individual level where the contribution of gay or lesbian performers to music and dance in Australia has been hardest to identify. Look up, for example, the late Sir Robert Helpmann in the *Oxford Australian Reference Dictionary* and you will find it says nothing about his sexuality. Few Australian solo popular music artists identify themselves as gay. Tasmanian singer-songwriter Monique Brumby is one of the few Australian performers who have made public their homosexuality. Her decision to do this was likely aided by the fact that Canada's k.d. Lang and the US's Melissa Etheridge managed to do so without any evidence of a commercial backlash against them. However, both artists rarely approach their sexuality directly and unambiguously in their lyrics. This reflects the fact that Australian record companies, and ultimately Australian consumers, still deride music that unambiguously addresses homosexual and lesbian sexuality in its lyrics (Te Koha 1997). That few gay men have been able to commence their recording or performing careers as explicitly homosexual and enjoy the public success such as Lang and Etheridge have, may point to an industry which is still predominantly controlled by heterosexual men who for whatever reason find female homosexuality less threatening to their own sexuality than male homosexuality. Now it is on this point that I believe the analysis of the contribution of homosexuals to music and dance in Australia must surely begin.
 9. Internationally it has been Australian women that have, in contrast to Australian men, more successfully adapted to the pop music video to disseminate their image and music. Kylie Minogue, Tina Arena, Geena G, Natalie Imbruglia, Merril Bainbridge, Vanessa Amorossi and more recently Holy Vallance are recent examples of a long line of female Australian recording artists that includes Helen Reddy, Olivia Newton John and Chrissie Amphlett, who each made the transition from national to international success. Why it has been women rather than men who have most often been successful at making the transition from national to international pop stardom is still not clear. There is the possibility that the historical exclusion of women from Australian popular imagery and institutions has paradoxically enabled them to escape the shackles of that imagery. For example, where Australian men have traditionally felt compelled to reproduce the bush legend *ad infinitum*, shooting videos in the desert, singing to an audience of rocks, women have been less inclined to do this, preferring to incorporate images that are essentially urban and reflect the cosmopolitan nature of Australian society. There is also the concurrent possibility that the dominance of men and the exclusion of women on the home front has been so strong that women have felt more compelled to leave Australia for the UK and the US in search of opportunities than have Australian men.

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Discography

INXS (Sydney)

Albums referred to:

- Shaboo Shooobah*, produced by Mark Opitz. AUS Mercury, CHL Mercury, EUR Mercury, JAP WEA, USA Atco. 1982
- Kick*, produced by Chris Thomas. AUS WEA, CHL Mercury, EUR Mercury, JAP WEA, UK Mercury, USA Atlantic, USA Rhino 78204 (remastered re-issue 2002, four bonus tracks). Single referred to from this album: 'Need You Tonight', Produced by Chris Thomas. 1987. Video of the single directed by Richard Lowenstein, September 1987
- Full Moon, Dirty Hearts*, produced by Mark Opitz and INXS. AUS East West, CHL Mercury, EUR Mercury, UK Mercury, USA Atlantic. 1993

Madison Avenue (Melbourne)

- Single referred to: 'Don't Call me Baby', produced by Andy Van and Cheyne Coates. AUS Vicious Grooves, UK Virgin, EUR Sony, USA Sony. 1999/2000

Men At Work (Melbourne)

- Singles referred to: 'Who Can it be Now', 'Down Under' and 'Be Good Johnny', all taken from the album *Business As Usual*, produced by Peter McLan. AUS CBS, AUT CBS, CAN Columbia, JAP CBS, UK Epic, USA Columbia, HOL CBS. 1981

Pseudo Echo (Melbourne)

- Autumnal Park*, produced by John Punter and Peter Dawkins (LP only). AUS EMI, HOL EMI, USA EMI (entitled 'Pseudo Echo'). 1984. This was a key Australian new wave-/new romantics-influenced album. What the songs lack lyrically they make up for melodically; all are driven by an abundance of synth riffs sympathetically layered with guitar and a none-too-over-the-top use of Simmons drums. *Autumnal Park* has never been released on CD but many of the tracks from the album can be found on the 1995 album *Best Adventures* released in Australia on EMI.
- Love an Adventure*, produced by Mark S. Berry, Brian Canham and Ross Fraser. AUS EMI (re-issue 1987, added 'Funky Town [Dance Mix]'). 1985. Single referred to: 'Funky Town' (Produced by Brian Canham) came out in Australia a year after the album in 1986 on EMI. The single was released in the US, UK and Europe in 1987 and it appeared on the 1997 US and German release of *Love an Adventure*.
- Race*, produced by Julian Mendelsohn, Brian Canham and Brian Malouf. AUS EMI, GER RCA, USA RCA. 1989
- Teleporter*, produced by Brian Canham. AUS Independent release. 2000

Puretone/Josh Abrahams (Melbourne/Sydney)

- Single referred to: 'Totally Addicted to Bass', produced by Josh Abrahams. AUS Festival/Mushroom (1998 & 2002), UK Rough Trade (2002), USA BMG (2002). 1998. Video for the single referred to in the text produced by Dan Austin of *Exit Films*, Richmond, Melbourne, Australia. 2001

Real Life (Melbourne)

Album referred to: *Lifetime*, produced by Real Life, Steve Hillage and Nigel Wright. AUS Curb/RCA, USA Curb. 1990

Singles referred to: 'Send Me An Angel', produced by Ross Cockle. AUS Wheatley, GER Curb, USA Curb. 'Catch Me I'm Falling', produced by Steve Hillage. AUS Wheatley, GER Curb, UK Curb, USA Curb. 1983.

Both singles appeared on the album *Heartland*, produced by Steve Hillage, AUS Wheatley Records, GER Curb, USA Curb. 1983

Regurgitator (Brisbane)

Songs referred to: 'I Sucked a Lot of Cock to Get Where I Am' from the 1996 album *Tu Plang*, AUS Eastwest, EUR Warner, JAP Warner, USA Warner (issued 1997). 'I Will Lick your Arsehole' from the 1997 album *Unit*, produced by Magoo, AUS Eastwest, JAP Eastwest/Warner (issued 1998), UK (issued 1998)

Sky Hooks (Melbourne)

Living In The Seventies, produced by Ross Wilson. AUS Mushroom, NZL Interfusion (issued 1975). 1974.

Singles referred to: 'Mercedes Ladies (You Just Like Me Cos I'm Good In Bed)', 1975, USA Mercury.

'Women in Uniform (Don't Take Your Lurex to the Laundromat/Do the Hook)', 1978. AUS Mushroom, UK United Artists (1979), Holland United Artists (1979), Germany United Artists (1979), Canada United Artists (1979).