

and the world in the late 1960s. Black liberal civil rights leaders leapt to offer their service as agents of direct diplomacy during the conflict, seeking to preserve Nigerian unity; grassroots activists from New York to Kansas organised food-drives, concerts and awareness campaigns in support of humanitarian aid for Biafran victims of starvation; while other pro-Biafran black activists warned of links between black “genocide” in Biafra and the US alike. This thesis is the first to recover and analyse at length the extent, complexity and character of such African American responses to the Nigerian Civil War. Drawing on extensive use of private papers, activist literature, government records and especially the black press, it charts the way African Americans conceptualised, over time and in complex ways, their varied understandings of issues such as black internationalist solidarities, territorial sovereignty and political viability, humanitarian compassion and great power *realpolitik*, as well as colonial and neo-colonial influence in Africa.

The thesis initially explores the longer twentieth-century history of African American engagement with Nigeria by way

of establishing context, before providing in-depth analysis of the key initiatives and events that comprised African American engagement with the civil war. Chapters move chronologically and thematically to discuss direct diplomatic efforts to broker peace, African American responses to alleged genocide in Biafra, the rise and fall of pro-Biafran political support, and the latter’s loss to what emerged as a stronger political bloc of those supporting Nigerian political unity. Situated methodologically and historiographically at the intersection of scholarship on black internationalism and the international history of the Nigerian Civil War, this thesis demonstrates the way the civil war not only provoked intense activism, but did so in ways that fundamentally connected with the central ideas, themes and concerns of the black freedom struggle in the United States.

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## Sounding out the past

Andrew Harrison

Abstract of a thesis for a Doctorate of Philosophy submitted to  
Australian National University, Canberra

This thesis explores the relationship between music composition and historical narrative, and considers whether

creative works inspired by historical events offer an alternative perspective on the past.

To test this idea the thesis focuses on two significant, though unrelated, moments in history: Australia's involvement in World War One, and the shifting social and economic chronicle of Detroit since the mid-twentieth century. I address these two periods of history from a number of perspectives. Firstly, I analyse how other composers have creatively engaged with and reflected upon each moment. In particular, I examine the musical language of Australian composers who have been inspired by World War One, and American composers writing Detroit-focussed works, to show how their musical language underpins the histories they aim to reflect. I also assess critical responses to various works, demonstrating how the reception of music can differ depending on current social and political factors.

I then seek to establish my personal and creative connection to each of these historical narratives, outlining the historical research I undertook prior to writing compositions, *Gassed Shell (Severe)* and *Hum*. These works, premiered in Melbourne and Detroit respectively, represent a major component of the

thesis. Their scores are included in full. The connective tissue between these elements is a detailed exploration how my research informed and shaped my creative practice. Moreover, I provide insight into the musical techniques and decisions I made to fulfil my compositional intentions and, in turn, to gain fresh perspectives on the historical events. I seek to push beyond a conventional exegesis to self-reflexive analysis. In conclusion, I frame the music of composers dealing with the past through an interdisciplinary lens, drawing upon cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz's idea of "thick description" to recontextualise these creative processes as akin to historical practice, and, as such, potential methods for obtaining new viewpoints on history.

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## Investigating undergraduate nurse responses to simulated interruptions during medication administration — a qualitative multi-method study

Carolyn Hayes

Abstract of a thesis for a Doctorate of Philosophy submitted to University of Technology, Sydney

**Aim:** The aim of this thesis is to explore undergraduate nursing student responses to interrupted medication administration

and to facilitate new insights into interruption management strategies.