



## The 'Lost' Shall be Found

*The Consolidated Legacy Music Recordings database in the ABC*

Lynne Carmichael – Oct 2014

We sometimes hear about musical scores that have been hidden in archives suddenly being recognised for what they are. The scores have never really been 'lost' – someone has carefully maintained them (sometimes for centuries) – but until they can be 'located', they can't be used. Archives are complex places so finding things can require tenacity and not a little luck. I've spent some time over the last 10 years trying to provide a bit of help to searchers.

For me it has been the job I do between other jobs – sometimes boring, sometimes fascinating. Why have I done it – like Mallory, just because the 'mountain' is there! So far it's been a 10 year journey, and it is by no means over!

# Outline



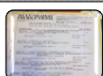
The database



Finding the data



Finding the music

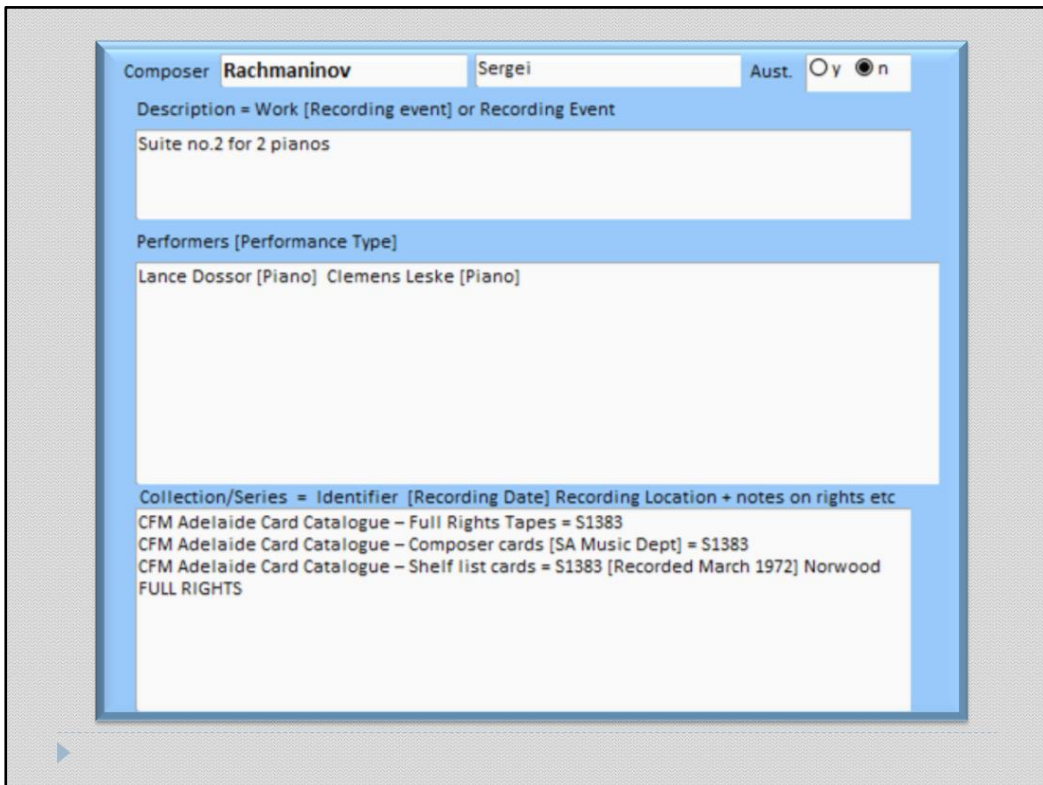


Recordings of interest



Where next?

In this paper I'll be looking at what the database is – how it came about, what it covers and so on and then we'll look in more detail at how the data was collected and where the music recordings are located. There are some gems in the collection so we'll have a look at some of the items of interest and how they have been used. Finally I'll look at where this might lead in the future.



The CLMR database is just what it says – a database about legacy recordings in the ABC (i.e. recordings made by the ABC prior to the 1990s)

Firstly – I should stress that this is not a sophisticated database. It's a FilemakerPro database that lives on a departmental Fileshare. It is not supported by our IT department and is not generally available - but a few people in the ABC do use it via the 'backup' file that I create – which is also on the departmental fileshare in another folder.

Because it is in Filemaker it is very easy to produce PDF output – which I do in response to enquiries about recordings but I also (from time to time) send extracts or complete exports to Classic FM staff and some colleagues in Content Services to make sure that they are aware that the database exists and can be used for research.

# Series descriptions

*CFM Adelaide Card Catalogue – Full Rights Tapes* = Single drawer of cards [11x16cm] – Full rights tapes available to CFM – mainly SA and Victorian material. Transcribed Aug. 2012 [cards located in SA sound Library]

*CFM Adelaide Card Catalogue – Composer cards* = From SA CFM [A5 size – white cards – handwritten] retrieved from CFM storeroom. To be transferred to TRIM. Tapes from 1980s to 1990s. Prefix SAM [1 box].

*CFM Adelaide Card Catalogue – Composer cards [SA Music Dept]* = From SA CFM [11x16 cm – orange cards – typed] retrieved from CFM storeroom – Assumed to be from the SA Music Department [some items listed on both this set of cards and CFM Full Rights cards have the not 'held by SA Music Department']. To be transferred to TRIM. Recording date not included in the data.

*CFM Adelaide Card Catalogue – Shelf list cards* = Same format as the CFM Adelaide Card Catalogue – Composer cards but in tape order [includes dates played/returned and erased] [2 boxes]

In addition to the database I keep a document in TRIM [our Records Management system] which outlines in detail what is covered by the database and explains the 'series' or 'collection' details used in the database. This is essential given the number of 'series' or 'sources' that have been used to compile the database.

The information about sources could be kept in a 'related' database but that's a bit tricky (and I'm lazy) so the separate document is easier to manage. The document also includes a lot of 'miscellaneous information' about locating music in the ABC, so this way works well for now.

Keeping a file of 'miscellaneous stuff' may seem an odd thing to do, but it's a habit of mine to keep a kind of 'personal WIKI' as an insurance against 'failures of memory' but also a useful resource for anyone trying to pick up my role. Possibly a sign of my age – it's a very 'pre-internet' way to work!

# Database Overview

## Filemaker Pro

- Available
- Easy to use

## Origin

- Accidental origin
  - Media Archive Solution [MAS] project
- 'Fills the gaps'

## Statistics

- Sources – 40+
- Database records – 26000+
- Date range – 1940s – 1990s
- Recordings located
  - Audio - 6900+
  - Video – 4900+
- Australian Compositions – 5100+
- Performances involving composer – 680+

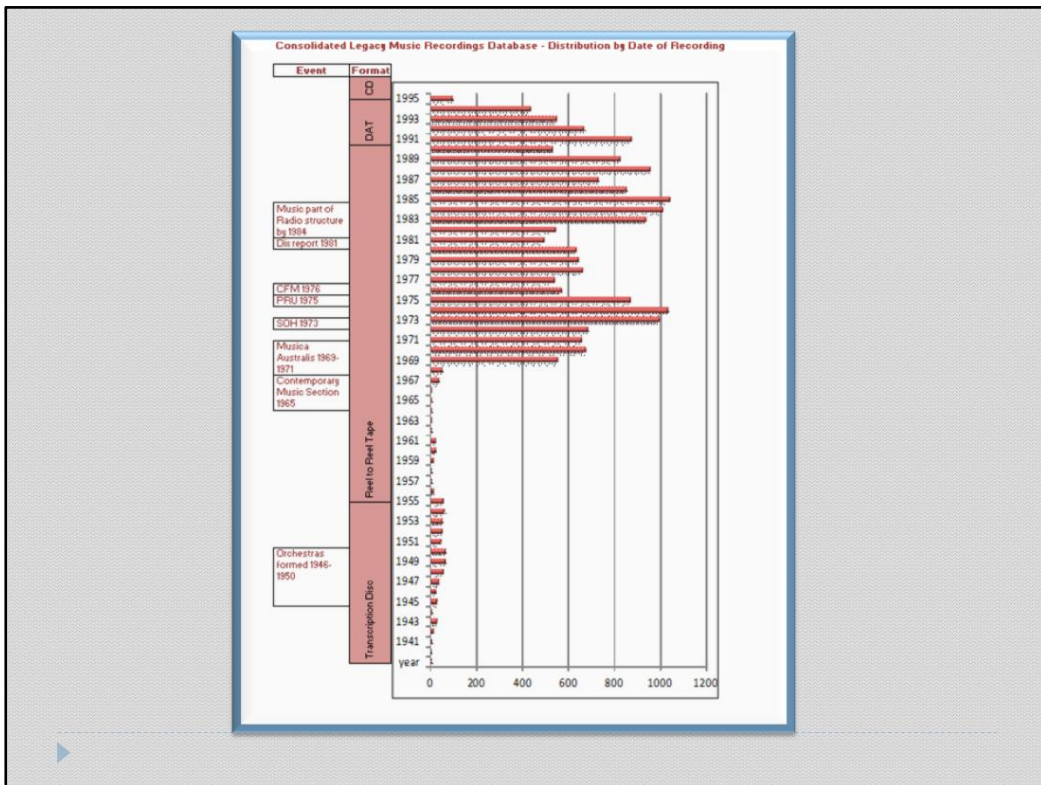
To an overview of the database and I guess the first question might be 'why Filemaker?' To be honest, because it was available on my computer.. but it is very easy to use. I'm entirely 'self taught' in relation to FMP and I've managed to do most of the things that were necessary.

By now it's probably pretty clear that the development of this database has not been a well planned exercise! In fact it started almost by accident – as a by product of the ABC's MAS project. My job involves a few odd projects and for one of these I was asked to assess a list of Transcription Discs for transfer (to sort out as far as possible what was music as opposed to interviews etc). The recordings were then turned into digital files in the MAS [the Media Archive Solution].

The list of discs to consider came in a very large spreadsheet and - to make it easier to handle - I made a 'quick and dirty' Filemaker file and imported the data so that I could edit it more easily. To quote Paul Kelly – it was very much a case of 'From little things big things grow'. This will become more evident when we look at where the data comes from (there are more than 40 sources listed in my 'personal WIKI' document – and I know of others that I haven't managed to get to yet).

Despite its accidental origins, the database does fulfil a very useful role in the ABC. There is no other consolidated source for this information – and tracking it down can be a challenge (especially where it is not in an electronic format). Music is listed in a number of other databases in the ABC but none of them are designed to handle music information so the data available in the other databases can be somewhat sketchy. In addition, the other databases cover recordings actually in existence whereas my data includes recordings that were made - whether we have a copy or not. This may sound an eccentric thing to do, but recordings do turn up that are already described in my database and then we have information about them easily available for transfer into the 'inventory' databases. The other major use of the CLMR database is for answering queries about older recordings –

being able to quickly identify that we haven't located a recording (or that it was deleted) saves time.



Why this particular date range? Essentially it is from the earliest recordings that we have to the end of the 'tape' era.

This graph (from my 'personal wiki' document) shows the distribution of database entries with a rough indication of the predominant format and some significant events that affected the production of music and music recordings in the ABC.

Until about 1937 (when recording equipment was available in the ABC in all states) music performances were usually 'live to air' and no music recordings are known to exist from the 1930s despite the importance of music on radio at the time (see the timeline handout)

Early recordings (1940s and 1950s) were on 'transcription discs'. These were commonly used in the radio world of the 1940s – they could look like normal 78s or they could be 16 inch monsters which needed to be played from the inside out rather than from the outside in. They were very vulnerable to damage (scratching and breakage, of course, but some shed the recording layer and became unplayable). Transcription discs were used for some 'permanent recordings' into the 1970s – by that time they were in LP format and treated in the ABC as 'sound library' formats so they don't appear in my database except as tape 'masters'.

When reel-to-reel tape replaced discs (from the later 1950s), it was very expensive so it was often re-used many times to save money and many recordings were lost. The recordings that were retained placed particular emphasis on the work of Australian composers and the ABC orchestras.

Most of the recordings (and information about them) are from the Music Department (also known as Broadcast Music) which existed from 1936 to 1984 when 'music' became part of the Radio management structure. From 1976, many of the recordings have come from Classic FM sources.

From the mid 1990s on data about recordings is held in a CFM database [CANE] which is well maintained, so I don't reproduce that data in my database.

I can't go into too much detail about this but there is a handout for anyone who wants it that provides a rough timeline of music recording in the ABC which goes some way to explaining the distribution of recordings and information about them.

## Why 'consolidated'?



So it is a database of 'Legacy' recordings (in obsolete formats – transcription disc and tape, including some DAT).

Why 'Consolidated'? For two reasons – as I've noted, data to date has come from at least 40 different sources.

It also, however, covers various stages of the recording 'process' from the taping of the performance through to either its 'release' as a commercial recording or to its retention as a full rights, 'permanent' recording for in-house use.

The stages of the 'process' mean that there are multiple versions of a recording, and these might be identified by different 'series' of tape numbers for a local tape, or national tape or a permanent recording. Series are usually identified by a 'prefix' to the tape number – but identifying a particular 'performance of a work' is rarely as simple as relying on the series prefix and the number – so 'date of recording' is a vital help in pinning it down. There are sometimes relationships between the series and, again, my 'personal WIKI' is the source for details about any relationships that I've managed to 'tease out'.



# Raw data sources



card catalogues



consignment lists



finding aids



databases



recording logs



tape boxes



external sources



credits and idents

I've mentioned that there are 40+ 'Sources' - Having started almost by accident, my little database grew as I became aware of more and more hard copy sources of data – I already knew about card catalogues in a couple of locations and a colleague in our document archives made me aware of some consignment lists (that is, lists of consignments of ABC recordings to the National Archives of Australia) and finding aids.

Once I started to gather information (in between other projects ...) I started seriously checking some of our databases to locate recordings that I already knew about – but this led me to yet more recordings....

Along the way, as staff retired or left - or as storerooms in various locations became full - various other sources came my way in the form of recording logs and the tapes themselves.

Where the data is incomplete, I sometimes supplement it by checking external sources – in particular online newspaper archives are very handy for filling in performer details. For items actually in our MAS system, when all else fails I resort to downloading the file and checking for idents [verbal or visual] or end credits.

Some of the sources are neat, typed or printed listings but some are scrappy hand written notes - of questionable accuracy - Notice that even the ident has a typo - in the English, not even in the French!

I use 'authority lists' and try to confirm names/spelling etc so data entry can be a slow process (particularly for performers who had left the public sphere before the internet age). This is a particular problem when you are working with an 'aural' identification (which can be the case even with videos as we haven't always got the captioned version of the vision).



Finding the recordings comes about in two main ways – finding them in one of our ‘inventory databases’ – for film, audio, vision etc - that is the work I do at my desk.

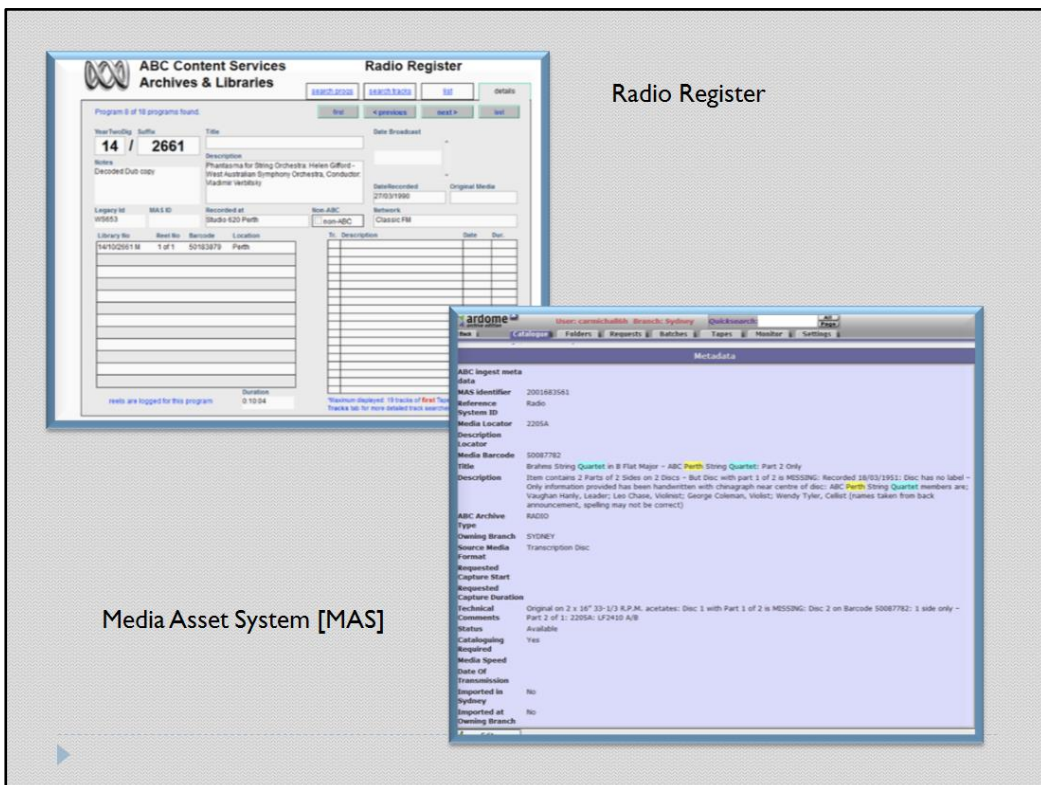
For anyone getting the idea that my job is entirely deskbound, these pictures are mementos of some ‘jeans and tee shirt’ projects. These happen when storerooms get too full or have to be used for something else and people suddenly remember there is an archives!

Sometimes things are boxed and labelled ... sometimes even neatly labelled...  
{Melbourne and Adelaide storerooms and Mal Stanleys Jazztrack CDs}



sometimes they are not.... and this is where having the data already in the database can be extremely handy!

The Adelaide storeroom has at least been essentially tidied up but the Melbourne one is an 'ongoing' project that I'll need to attack once I get back to work after the conference (in particular Jazztrack and Music Deli recordings)



Radio Register

Media Asset System [MAS]

Where a recording is located it will normally be consigned to the NAA and the data transferred to Radio Register database (another Filemaker database, as it happens). If the item is recalled from the NAA for use, it will be digitised and data recorded in the Ardome MAS system. MAS then allows us to download an audio or video file in either low or high resolution versions.

Both these systems treat music as either a radio or TV program or part of a program – so the music data is sometimes limited in scope.

The reason for this relates to the purposes of these databases. Broadcasting programs is a charter obligation of the ABC. The NAA accepts music from the ABC because of its context as part of a broadcast program. The metadata used to describe music at NAA and in Archives databases (Radio register and MAS) is therefore from the records management/broadcasting worlds (for instance name of program in which a music recording was broadcast, date of broadcast etc) rather than music metadata (composer of work, performer, performer type).

The CLMR describes music using music data models not program data models – which makes it much better for answering music enquiries.

# Recordings

Menotti: Amahl and the night visitors [Recorded 1958]

- Earliest surviving Australian TV opera

Musica Australis series [Broadcast 1969-1971]

- 46 programs covering early Australian (pre-Federation) music
- NAA series C5435 – CD copies

Beethoven: Symphony 9 – SSO/Eugene Ormandy [Recorded 1944]

- Ormandy wrote to Charles Moses that he was 'really proud of the performance'

Stravinsky: Rite of Spring – SSO/Willem van Otterloo [Recorded 1978]

- Last recording by Willem van Otterloo

As I mentioned at the beginning, there are some gems in the database – and we have recordings of all the ones that I have used as examples.

Just to give a bit of a taste of some of the items that might be of particular interest:

# Early recordings



Joan Sutherland

• 1950 – 24 years old



Jacki Weaver [acting role]

• 1963 – 16 years old



Brian Gilbert [acting role]

• 1963 – 13 years old



Slava Grigoryan

• 1991 – 14 years old



David Tong

• 1992 – 9 years old

There are many recordings from Young Performers Awards concert and the Young Australia program – and some recordings that just happen to be early recordings of people who became very well known.

Joan Sutherland at 24 – just after winning the Sun Aria award and before going to England – sang Australian Song of Festival by Alex Burnard [accompanied by Raymond Hanson].

Jacki Weaver and Brian Gilbert went onto illustrious careers as an actor and director respectively. They acted together in the 1963 TV production of Hansel and Gretel by Humperdinck. Hansel was played by Brian Gilbert to voice of Marilyn Richardson [ca 27 years old at the time] Gretel was played by Jacki Weaver to the voice of Janet Rutledge.

Two performers from the Young Australia program were:

Slava Grigoryan [guitar] was just 14 when he performed at the Doncaster Gallery

David Tong [pianist] who was only 9 when he performed for a studio recording

# Database uses

## Production

- Resurrection Symphonies
- Rewind [website]

## Research

- 2-3 enquiries per month

## Other databases

- Radio Register [consignment to NAA]

Before looking at its future – what is the database used for?

Where the recordings actually exist, it is a useful resource for content production – it was very valuable for the series Resurrection Symphonies [earning an on air credit!] and the producers of the Rewind website have made use of the recordings. I rather hope it can be used more consistently in the future – making it more widely available might help there.

Enquiries come from within the ABC but also from our audience and from musicians and composers who are looking for works that were broadcast on the ABC. Unfortunately, this doesn't always mean that they were actually recorded or that the recording still exists, but sometimes it is useful just to have details about the performers or the date etc.

Where tapes are found and are being consigned to the National Archives of Australia, they need to be recorded in our Radio Register database. The staff who do this often check my database and can copy the data they need from there. Tapes often have minimal data on the box, so it is really useful to have the data that has been consolidated from all the various sources.

# Future?

## Edit

- Improve consistency of data
  - Value lists
  - Review of field structure
  - Image field for external data sources

## Ongoing accrual of data

- NLA lists of concert recordings
- ABC Annual reports
- Concert programs...

## Publishing options

- Intranet
- RDF?

As I mentioned at the beginning, I have been working on the database in order to improve both the consistency of the data and the data structure. The lack of design at the start was compounded by the fact that the database was 'unofficial' so I never felt that I could spend time 'tweaking' it. Nowadays it is accepted as 'valuable' and publication is a realistic option and I am close to the end of a major edit of the database designed to make it easier to publish.

There may be an option to publish this database alongside other Filemaker databases on our intranet site. This would make it available to people who don't actually have Filemaker software on their computer and it would certainly enhance security issues. This is an attractive option even though I would, to a large extent lose control over its future.

There are sources that I know still need to be 'gathered in' – including lists of concert recordings from the earliest days of the ABC until the separation of the symphony orchestras – these have been scanned by the NLA and are available online. The ABC Annual Reports are mostly available online (via the ABC Intranet) and provide valuable supplementary information that is yet to be harvested. The concert programs are a wonderful resource (they are often included in tape boxes to provide information about the tapes) but they are only available in hard copy and need to be retrieved from the NAA, so they are the most difficult resource to access. It seems I may have to work until I'm about 90!

There is also a possibility that we can turn the data into a series of RDF triples and publish in the linked data world – which would be very exciting.





I rather like this photograph from 1956 – in fact I have it on the wall above my desk. It's a reminder that we have recordings from the past because \*someone\* has made sure that they are not only found but made available for the future – from cylinder to disc or tape – from tape to audio file.

But without the information about these recordings, they are of very limited value – not much more than noise. So – as I approach my 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary with the ABC (and as retirement looms!) I hope that my 'legacy' to the ABC will be a consolidated collection of data about recordings for future researchers and broadcasters - so that the music that could have been 'lost' will be found and given a new life.

{From Document Archives Photo Database: [1956] DW Haddon, Sydney Museum of Applied Arts, plays 55 years old aboriginal recording to Newton Hobbs, ABC Transcriptions, and Prof GM Lawton, Adelaide University. [WAS thought to show conversion from cylinder recording, Tindale collection, Hobart 1949 - see email in TRIM, D09/19473. [MAS item no 2001470453]}