

In Depth with David Hirschfelder and Burkhard Dallwitz

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The following is a transcript of discussions at the first Professional Development Seminar presented by the Australasian Performing Right Association (APRA) and the Australian Guild of Screen Composers (AGSC). My aim is to capture the ambience of the evening and, hopefully, for the reader to glean some new knowledge from these stimulating and informed discussions.

As composers, many of us have experienced the sense of isolation that can arise from prolonged solitary creative reveries with the muse. Whilst this introspection of writing, whether it be music or words, is a special and hallowed sanctuary, only known and understood by those who walk its corridors, the stimulation and appreciation of diversity that is achieved through the meeting of like minds is an important ingredient in the artistic and cultural development of the individual artist and the broader community.

It is to this end that APRA and the AGSC provide a constant fertile and rich breeding ground for the appreciation and growth of the profile of Australian composers, whether they be international players or those operating at a more grassroots level, composing music for the many different aspects of film, be it documentaries, advertising, multimedia performances, TV series or CD ROMs.

This seminar was an important event in the diary of Australian composers. Hosted by Martin Armiger, its audience was given an insight into the lives and music of its two guests, David Hirschfelder and Burkhard Dallwitz. The event was opened by Art Phillips, President of the AGSC.

Opening Address

Art Phillips (AP): This evening's event is quite exciting as we have the composer to composer discussions, hosted and convened by the illustrious screen composer Martin Armiger, whose credits include *Come in Spinner*, *Rescue*, *Stringer*, *Young Einstein*, *Seven Deadly Sins*, *Cody* and *The Crossing*. Martin has received numerous awards associated with these credits.

Our composer guests this evening are two high-profile Australian composers

working on both local and overseas productions.

David Hirschfelder's credits include the score to *Strictly Ballroom*, *Shine* (AFI Award for best music score, best score nomination in the Golden Globe Awards and Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences), *Elizabeth* (nominated for an Academy Award, received the BAFTA Award and APRA Award for best original score) and *Better Than Sex* (APRA Award for best original score).

Burkhard Dallwitz's credits include the feature film *The Truman Show*, TV series *Crash and Burn*, *The Dream* (Roy and HG / Seven Network), *Paperback Hero*, and music for the *Sydney 2000 Olympics* and *Salt Lake City Winter Olympics*. Burkhard has been awarded numerous awards and accolades with most of these credits.

This evening Martin will lead the discussion between these two high-profile composers in an attempt to look into the translucent creative tunnel that we, the composers, dwell in as we are swayed into inspiration.

[AP also spoke of the unique qualities that we have in the Australian environment for cultivating a healthy and diverse musical landscape, and of the growing international recognition of the specific qualities that Australian composers and landscape bring to a project.]

Discussion

Martin Armiger (MA): *'The Translucent Tunnel' is the subject of tonight's enquiry. How do you find your way in and out of that tunnel without getting lost, and where is that orifice in particular? These two composers have had a musical path before writing for screen, and I would like to know what happens between your other music and your film music and how you get from the music life that you lead into films? I ask both of you. I know David worked in record production before and I know Burkhard is a player, with quite a lot of music recording for his own purposes, not commercial purposes. I wondered what is the thing that got you out of that and into film music; when did it all start?*

Burkhard Dallwitz (BD): In retrospect, I was always looking for something to write music for, not just music for its own sake. I came to film being a fan fairly late in life. My older brother wasn't into cinema, so I didn't go along until I was probably 15 or 16. Before that it was music theatre that caught my attention, so for me, from a fairly early age, what really interested me was to write music for something. Even though I played in bands I don't know if I ever considered myself a songwriter. It was the fascination with instrumental music. I started looking at music and thinking, "If I'm not writing songs, then what can I write?" So film music became something that I was fascinated by.

Maybe some of you have seen that wonderful series called *Master Series*. It is basically a documentary where they highlight the making of one album. A couple of weeks ago I saw Meatloaf's *Bat Out of Hell*. At the time that it was released I was about 17 years old in Germany, and it spoke to me in lots of different ways, as I was interested in girls and romance.

Jim Steinman talked about what motivated him into writing that music, that he wanted to write something that was like grand rock opera. To me it made sense because when I looked at the albums that I was influenced by early on, they are all not really conventional songs. There was something a bit more escapist, so for me, now looking back, it is quite a natural progression.

David Hirschfelder (DH): The first time I felt I wanted to write music for film was when I was about 14 or 15 and I was watching one of the many re-runs of *Ben Hur*, which is still my favourite film because it is so big, and the score is huge. The opportunity to really make a big noise and yet at the same time be also the wallpaper of something even bigger, so that you are speaking to the audience not as a concert composer where the people sit down.

I guess the twentieth century brought this new artform which is so taken for granted and probably the most powerful and universally popular artform. So I think wanting to be part of that artform

and at the same time, at the age of 15, being already a certified piano nerd, practising piano when I should be out kicking a football.

Music was always an opportunity for me to feel incredibly fulfilled. But then I thought, "What if I just get up on stage and I'm fulfilling myself but no one else is? Is that enough for me?" And I thought, "Can I handle that pressure?" From a purely business and career motivation there was a part of me that somehow wanted to plug into society and do something that is part of society, not just part of music culture. That is what threw me into it.

From the age of 18 to 28 I found myself being an accidental tourist in the rock and roll industry. I started out wanting to be a jazz-fusion master, and I still actually miss performing, and that is something I am going to get back into. I think it is important to have a balanced diet. I've come to the conclusion that it is good to do lots of different things.

From an early age I always had my sights set on being a film composer and it actually took quite some time before I got my first break, and that happened through a friend of a friend, who knew a friend of a producer and they couldn't afford anyone, so this was my big chance. I happened to have cassette tapes of lots of things I had done in my bedroom, mainly for my own enjoyment, but also because I was making a showreel of projects I hadn't done yet.

MA: *When you were a keyboard player, arranger and producer, you were called a 'sideman' for various artists. Now as a film composer you've become completely invisible, and yet you miss performing. Where's the moment that that happens for you? Is it like sitting in the studio when you are thinking of it or is it actually hearing it back on the screen?*

DH: When you are composing it is a little like performing, but it is procrastination because you can perform a little bit of an idea and then sit back and play with it like putty until it sounds good. In a sense, walking on a stage and either performing something that is semi-rehearsed or totally ad lib, as in the case of the jazz concept.

One of the most impressive statements I ever heard from a musical luminary at a seminar I went to once was, "Composing is jazz improvisation slowed down".

In fact that is what it is in a way. When you improvise on an instrument or vocally you are totally in the moment and you have your bags of tricks and musical language, whatever that is, to draw from. So, having now composed exclusively for the last 10 years and doing very little live performance, I now miss that part of the balance as being on the spot, as I am now, and saying, "Here you go, here's the microphone, come up

with something, express yourself now in this moment without judgement, and without prejudice and preconceived notions of what it should be". I think that the training I had in the jazz tradition always brings me back to that kind of happy moment when I realise, I'm just here in this moment

coming up with something out of thin air and we'll work out later whether it is any good.

MA: *When people ask me how to get into films I just say hang around with people that make them. What is your response to this?*

BD: I was at La Trobe [University] doing a music degree and cinema studies as a minor subject, so I was very much cued into trying to do something in that area and, in the end, didn't think of really how to go about it. I met my wife-to-be

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who was a film editor. There wasn't a great plan behind it. I just went out with her and mixed with people she worked with and eventually one of them said, "We've got \$500, can you do something?"

My performing career was never very illustrious. It never got beyond playing in pubs. I had just come from Germany. Three years of doing full-time study and playing in Melbourne pubs three or four nights a week, lugging around a Yamaha CP-70. I had no qualms about giving up performing. It made me determined to become an invisible backroom player and, through those first couple of jobs, everything I earned went into buying gear. Initially four-tracks, digital delay, etc. To me, that was a godsend: being able to sit there and do my own stuff and fix my mistakes. I was never really such a great player. Now the thought of having to perform would send me into absolute turmoil because I am so used to being able to play something and fix it up later.

MA: *When you sit down with a film for the first time, how do you get your first ideas? Is it a matter of sitting down at the piano and playing, or thinking about the film?*

DH: It varies. Sometimes I have to watch a film many times to get the structure of the movie, and so I can focus on the big picture of what it is. Usually the first ideas that come to me come very suddenly after a long, agonising wait where I am racked with self-doubt. Every project I go into I think, "Is this the one? Is this the one I can't think of anything for?" I go through about a week of purgatory, although I've got it down to two or three days. So I'm working on one day for the next project. Then, once I've discovered one idea, it might just be a few notes on a piano. Piano is my personal voice. I think the piano was designed more as a writing tool, it's now being put on a pedestal as an instrument, but it really is the original orchestra in a box in terms of having all the notes laid out, your scales are split into 12 nice, neat, well-tempered matrix to write on. And it has quite a good sound where if you hit one note, even if the piano's not

that good, it just sounds great. So I started with that acoustic model and then transferred that onto the electronic keyboard. Playing an electronic keyboard always feels like having sex with a condom on after playing a piano. But having said that, the facility that you have at your disposal with the technology now is fantastic.

I must admit I grew up in the '80s when everyone was saying, "Wow synthesisers, what a concept", and now they seem to be just stock standard tools of trade. But I still think of it as a joyful, magical thing to make the synthesisers sound kind of like an orchestra, and it gives me the chance of a bit of gratification after spending a few hours on something, where I can sit back and listen to a whole miasma of things that are going on, and think, "Well, that sounds OK". Also, it's great to be able to show your collaborators what is going on in your brain. I abandoned using pencil and paper about five years ago.

With the advent of technology I just thought, "What's the point", because with a bit of editing it looks like ready-to-publish music. There are some really good programs out there now. I've had the joy of being on the cutting edge, and sometimes it's been the leading edge with technology.

MA: *Where does your voice come through? I just watched the Master Album Series and Robbie Robertson was saying how his voice came through on the guitar.*

BD: I never really got to a high standard with piano. I started as an eight-year-old with classical piano and I persevered with that for about ten years. That is the only instrument that I can actually play. I can't even master two chords on the guitar but, as David was saying, with the advent

of synthesisers, plus the fact that I was actually quite influenced by electronic music, and by that I mean electronic music of the '70s. Particularly growing up in Germany, whether it was Kraftwerk, Tangerine Dream, other European things like Jean Michel Jarre, and Vangelis, to me that was what I was looking for and hearing, whether it was *Bat Out of Hell* and various other things where you had a rock instrumentation, they took it one step further and made it something bigger. Of course when you took that it was fused with electronic sounds, the space of the sounds became altered completely, so that immediately took me. Now it is a bit of both worlds, where I sometimes really enjoy and do purely electronic things and don't try to go into the orchestral area at all, and other times where I use it for mock-ups. As David was saying, technology has become better and better, so you're trying to refine it so that you can really

write orchestrally without being too influenced by the sounds. That was something that I was aware of, initially. I seem to cut corners or write certain things because that's what the sound let me do, which is, of course, not the right way to go about it, so I have pursued collecting the right sounds so that I can hopefully cover all

the bases so I can really write whatever I want to do without worrying about whether this sample will only work in this register.

MA: *When you sit down and are still hanging on this initial moment of dealing with the film, what is the first thing you are looking for? Is it a tune, texture, notes, approach? Are you looking for music straight away or do you look at the film as story and characters? What are you looking for in the film that is going to push you into the music?*

I must admit I grew up in the '80s when everyone was saying "Wow synthesisers, what a concept", and now they seem to be just stock standard tools of trade.

BD: My biggest fear is always getting the first cue happening. I can never relax until I've got the first idea. So I tend to not spend too much time looking at the overall film, but simply from the brief, the information that has been fed to me, and obviously by the time you are starting on the film you have had numerous conversations with the director, etc. I try to focus on one area where I think that is what they are after, and that correlates with something that is happening in my brain, and immediately get started. Not worry about the rest and how it will work out structurally, will it become a theme, or will it just be a one-off incidental cue, but simply latch onto whatever comes into my mind where I think, "Yes, I've got an idea", and then approach it like a jigsaw puzzle where I make various decisions because the parameters are mapped out by that stage and things will start making sense. Then I can see that this will become a theme that is working here or there. It is always the fear of the blank page, like any writer's.

MA: *Do you make note of the point of view of the music? Whether it is P.O.V. of a particular character, or storyteller? How far it is in or out of the film? Do these sort of questions come up?*

DH: It varies from project to project. For example, in *Elizabeth*, the first idea that I had was warmly received by the director, so much that he shot the film to it. I actually did a mock-up in my studio, and he really hammered me. He kept ringing me once a week and saying, "Where's my tape?" He actually inspired me to write something that was like a portrait of the character before he shot the material. I came up with that idea very quickly and put that down and he said he loved it. Once I eventually had the courage to send it to him, because I never worked that way before, I realised that you don't always have to write to the picture. You can actually take the images away, whether you have seen them or it's just a rough cut, or you've just concocted your own images from the script. Forget the film, just write the music.

The most successful writing session I've ever had was sitting at a piano. I went into a studio in London. There was a beautiful big Bosendorfer piano, that's when I fell in love with Bosendorfer pianos. We sat there and just pressed record and we recorded everything I played, and we also recorded everything he asked me to do. I felt like I was going through a therapy session. He would say, for example, "I want the sound of monks having a satanic orgy on the piano, burning all the incense, dancing around naked". I knew that it wasn't going to be in the movie, but that was how he got me going.

It's always a great feeling when you've got the opening theme. I'm never satisfied until I have it. The theme that sums up the piece. I never go chronologically.

MA: *When you do something like Elizabeth, when you've got a period piece, is it always a question of whether you steep yourself in the music of that time?*



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DH: I wanted to, but I got shot down in flames on that way of thinking in the first meeting because I started talking about a consort of viols and reinventing the sound. He said, "No, no this is a modern movie, I want modern music, I don't want any early music". And, in fact, I have been criticised. There was an article in the *LA Times*, which canned the use of non-period music and period songs. He was a professor from UCLA and he used two examples. One was *Elizabeth* and one was *Henry VIII* in which the composers wrote a great deal of music which didn't have a lot of period resonances. The reviewer said how terrible this is and what beautiful music it was. My answer to that, I actually wrote into the *LA Times* and said, "It doesn't matter what we think as academics and composers, I would have loved to take my viol consort and put it through twelve Marshall amps or something and make it modern, whatever, or do something really interesting". But what the director wanted was something that framed the film in a contemporary feeling and that's what he wanted to do with the music, so that it looked like you were looking into the camera in the past but you're feeling it as a time of story. So, to answer your question, it really depends on what the brief is. I think the brief is 'it's their film'. They're the director and that's the excitement and sometimes the shock and horror of this job is that the brief isn't always what you think it is.

MA: *One of the ways that directors communicate is to use 'temp tracks' and both these composers bought us some films to look at where we are going to look at a progression of a piece of film from the director's sketch through to the final product. How do you find temping as a way of working?*

BD: The temp music issues have been around for a while now. I think the thing is that temp tracks are here to stay, so the whole issue of trying to fight it or say you can't work with it is counterproductive because it's not going to change. So I don't think it is necessarily the trouble with temp music,

per se., it is the way temp music is perceived and used by the director, and there can be good ways and bad ways. The positives of temp music, if I can start with that, is often, to me, it cuts down a lot of the waffle from directors where it is like pulling teeth to try and get them to say what they like or don't like or what they want. I'm sure everybody's heard a director who hasn't said in the first five minutes, "Look, I don't know how to express myself in music, and I don't know what I like or what I don't like". And by the time you play them the first cue you get a twenty minute response. "I hate flutes and I don't like this." So a lot of the time, when directors pretend not knowing or being able to verbalise what they want, playing the temp music can reduce it down to twenty seconds where I can usually get what they are on about and what they like. If I don't understand why they have used that style of music it gives me the chance to ask very specific questions. Or, if I see where it is going and that makes sense to me, then trying to forget it and keep the information that was essential to me from that.

Of course, where it can be a big problem is where directors fall in love with the temp music and play it 500,000 times during the course of post-production and editing, and everyone around them including yourselves get completely used to perceiving a scene with this particular music, and then you've got a battle on your hands, particularly if you don't want to slavishly copy it. So I have had different experiences with temp music where I've realised, after going through it, where there was something that was not quite working, and I don't think the director knew what wasn't working, and it takes those things to finally work it out. But I think even if you didn't have temp music then you'd be the one who first offered your vision or your interpretation of the director's vision and that would be your starting point.

I think the only real problem I have is when they temp films with your own music and then you have to rewrite your own music. I think that can be really difficult because when it is your own

music there is so much of your own personal language involved and then it becomes very hard.

[BD shows a cue from the film, and says it was a progression of slowly working out what the scene needed.]

BD: It was the one time where I rewrote the cue about five times. It wasn't actually a fight in terms of what was and wasn't working. What is quite interesting about this scene is that it is not a very music-dominant scene, it is fairly much in the background. However, it was the opening theme of this particular film and it was temped with a track by Enya, and the problem was that it was for *The Truman Show* and Peter Weir had used Enya in his last film, *Green Card*, and he obviously liked the sound. But, because it was the opening scene where you have quite a lot of intimate dialogue, there were problems.

Jim Carey's character is talking to himself in the mirror and does this fantasy thing, then you get the 'mockumentary' of Ed Harrison's character, where the characters in the cast are talking about their roles in the *The Truman Show*, so there was quite a lot of dialogue and, obviously, the first mechanical problem to me was that you had a song which had lyrics playing underneath a scene that had quite intimate dialogue. It immediately draws the attention away from the dialogue because some people might actually try to listen to what the voices are singing. I tried to take the elements of it, it was one of those lilting percussive tracks, and I focussed very much on the pulse of it because I felt that was basically what was represented by the track. I wrote my original submission of the scene where I had elements of that, but then placed it more particularly to the change of scenery in between Jim Carey's character talking to the mirror and intercutting with the mockumentary which the song didn't do.

Peter Weir was quite happy with it, but eventually, when it came to seriously looking at the scene, he said that it wasn't working. So I said, "Fair enough", but he liked certain aspects of

it, so I continued along the line but made changes to it, but he still didn't think it was working. By that stage I had written other cues and, when it came to a particular cue that I had written for another scene, he said, "That might be our cue for the old theme". So he gave it to his music editor and they cut it up and placed it and he was really happy with it. I had my doubts, but because I still had so much other writing to do, it was the least of my worries. I thought, "He's happy, that's good". Then I was nearly ready to record, and he said, "About that opening scene: it's out. You have to come up with something else, or I have to license Enya". So I said, "Go ahead and license it, and find out it is going to cost you \$160,000 US dollars for a minute of Enya".

He was quite up-front about a number of scenes where he had temp music, and he said, "Look, I'll be honest with you, if you don't come up with something better, I'm going to license this". So at least I knew what I was up against.

I had to record the rest of the cues and we were final mixing and it was two days before the end of final mixing and I was sitting there and it was a 35-degree day in Melbourne and I was doodling on the keyboard and it suddenly occurred to me that what was wrong with the temp track and everything that I had done from that point was that I had approached it from this percussive pulse element of the Enya track. Whereas, if you have seen the *Truman Show*, Jim Carey's character does this thing where he wants to climb a mountain. I'm sure that's why Peter Weir went with this kind of music, because it had this adventure element in it. I thought, "It's all about Jim Carey's character being like a child, being in front of the mirror reading a bed-time story". So, I said, "What it needs is like a nursery rhyme". So I played this very simple melody on the piano, didn't develop it that musically, put a gentle pulse behind all that. I went down to Soundfirm in Melbourne and used the audio FX to send it to Sydney. By the time I got back, I had it established that if he liked something he would ring, if he didn't the music editor would ring. I get home and I knew that as soon as I got home the telephone would ring. And, of

course, five minutes after I walked in the door, it rang and it was the music editor. My heart sank. He said, "Not all is lost, he's pacing. There might be something there".

I had to go back to Sydney the next day because we had to do a tech check on all the other things. Basically, we decided that I would go back to Melbourne and record it and go back up on the final day of the mix. Then he said, "I have my doubts", and for the first time I said, "Look Peter, do you want to alienate half of your audience with an Enya track that has just been used on Ansett and soap commercials? Why do you want to run that risk?" He said, "You're absolutely right. We're going with your track!"

[BD then shows samples of his work in progress with *The Truman Show*. The Enya track, his original submission, his adaptation, the cue he took from another scene.]

MA: *Most musicians that I know think that their first thought is their best thought. Having considered what is going on, they come up with a solution that they think is probably the best. But we all know, having worked in film, that quite often your first solution will be rejected cruelly, brutally, or will need to be adjusted in some way that you can't quite work out. I want to ask Burkhard how he deals with rewriting.*

BD: It depends on the nature of the rewriting. In the example I talked about previously it was a fairly fluid, non-confrontational process and my work as a composer started as an instinctive one. With the last rewrite, it was a case of not thinking about anything, not what I'd done before, really letting the mind wander. Put the scene on a loop and let the melody come out. That seemed to feel right.

There are other cases where a rewrite can be easy. One example was when the temp music that the director had chosen was completely rejected by the studio in the States. This threw the director, because he had his mind set on this approach as far as the music was concerned. When he could see that the opposition was such (mind you, it was temped with twentieth-century, avant-garde, electronic music for a 7 mm Hollywood sci-fi film), you could see where the panic stations started setting in. But this director was unable to come up with a new scenario. He handed it over to the young producers who were involved in the project who came from a completely different angle anyway. They hadn't said anything because this was a veteran director and he was obviously going to get his way initially, so, in that case, it was such a 360 degree turn around that it wasn't all that difficult.

And then other times I've had

situations where it has been a real struggle because I really didn't understand. I had a situation last year with a director in Germany and he kept saying to me, "That's a bass and I can hear the notes". I would say, "Yes, that's a bass and you can hear the notes". He said, "Can't you take this note and that note

out so it doesn't sound like a linear melody any more? I don't want anything that suggests music". I found out that he was the son of one of the founding members of Tangerine Dream. Very early on in Tangerine it went totally avant [garde], and that explains it. I had a really hard time trying to work with him because, unless you are given a really concrete set of examples of "this is what I don't like", the rhythm or instrumentation, it is very hard to reconceive.

MA: *You have done a lot of pictures where it is not just the score, it is the*

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source. Strictly Ballroom for example, where you have to come up with music before the film actually shoots and then score on top of that. Shine is like that. There is a given there that there is a piano player who is going to play a repertoire and you've got to get your head around that and work out how that is going to be performed and recorded and then add a score to that. To my mind, that is a good way to do it, but it also has a lot of problems. How do you find that? Do you find rewrites and critiques coming in those sorts of situations?

DH: Those two films it was the case that I was very much the musical director or, as the music supervisor, as I was the composer and normally the music supervisor does things that you're not always happy with. If they want to license a song and they can't afford it. That was the case in *Strictly Ballroom*. There was a whole lot of songs, and Baz had to choose one because of the budget, and he chose *Time After Time*. Having talked Miss Lauper into a modest fee, because it was a small arthouse film, he milked it for all it was worth, using several minutes of it in various orchestrations. That was fun. I liked doing that. I like arranging, it's fun because someone else has written it and you can make it sound better, I also enjoy the opportunity of melding all the different styles.

In the case of *Shine*, where the styles and music were pretty formidable, it was an interesting proposition. Which way do I go in terms of how do I find my voice, how do I find the emotional subtext of the movie, which is giving a very meaningful support, without actually being a musical voice unto itself that distracts you, and how do we blend all those elements? In that sense it becomes a collage, you become a sound designer of music in the same way that a sound editor works with a whole lot of sound effects and brings them together to make a symphony of textures that support a movie in an abstract or, sometimes, in a very real way.

With the music, I liked the responsibility and the challenge of having to meld all those styles together and, to

answer the question of rewrites, I've often found rewriting very difficult, and there is one example in *Shine*. Two days before the recording session, Scott, the director, after having a theme called Catherine's theme, which I had written several weeks before, finally confessed to me, he said, "David, I don't think that Catherine's theme is right. It's just not emotional enough, my eyes don't well up in this scene as they should. You need to rewrite it". This is not just one cue, it is a whole theme, which is several cues, and was one of the most important themes. So instead of being in a beatific transcendental state of inspiration, I was in sheer panic because we had booked all the players and it had to be done in two days, not only rewritten but orchestrated as well. So I chained myself to the piano. It's amazing. I don't know how I wrote it, but my manager still tells me it is one of the best things I've ever written, the most heartfelt things.

So I think sometimes sheer pain and panic and torture can actually produce results. So, as much as we try to avoid them and stick to a comfort zone of everything being nice and rosy and transcendental and "I'm entering the blue light where I am going to receive the gracious sounds of the cosmos", it doesn't always work like that. Sometimes it is a very down-to-earth, pragmatic, hard core situation where someone has told you at the last minute to do it again and you have got no time to justify or argue. Your job is to be able to let go of the thing you held dear and say, "Well, I liked writing that and I love that, but I have to let go of that and do it all again, really, really quickly".

Editorial Conclusion

David Hirschfelder's words have a strong resonance: to be able to let go, and do it again really quickly. This in fact seems to be at the core of many artistic disciplines and, indeed, pivotal to the process of making music for film which is subject to the director's demands and constantly changing needs.

To be able to identify what is precious and what isn't can be a difficult question, when all music springs from the well of creativity and, to that end, each note is

unique and valid. However, at the end of the day, we all tend to need a context, and perhaps this is why writing for film is such a rewarding skill. To be able to seamlessly weave evocative textures and nuances into a tapestry of colour and vision, culminating in being a vital part of a greater process. This is both rewarding and challenging.

Many lessons are learned by viewing the world from someone else's eyes. The process of listening to and transcribing these anecdotes of David Hirschfelder and Burkhard Dallwitz has given me a broader understanding of the trials and tribulations that are all part of the artistic process of making music for film. To comprehend the stress of deadlines, the inevitable disappointments of rejections and failures, and the triumph of finally completing the project and hearing one's original music on screen, is something that can only be gained through experience.

What we gain from these seminars is another perspective and a shared camaraderie. The opportunity to learn from two of Australia's most-experienced composers is an invaluable one. Fortunately, through projects such as this, a solid foundation of diverse, yet united, screen composers is emerging as one of the faces of contemporary Australian musical culture.

Music and theatre were originally designed as healing rites for the community, a way to bring together otherwise disparate sections of society and the broader collective. By reflecting on strategies and disciplines with which to improve and develop the climate for and conditions of Australian composers, an impetus for the creation of an even stronger Australian contribution to the international world of film and music-making is achieved. ■