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Foreword

One of the most difficult aspects of performing musicological research is finding ways to understand and interpret paradoxical data. This skill requires the ability to evaluate and interrogate standing scholarly debates on a particular subject, the willingness to seek out novel critical frames for analysis and the passion for finding language suitable for a clear description of complex and multi-faceted phenomenon. Indeed, embracing paradox in musicological research is one of the more challenging tasks we ask students to attempt at the undergraduate level and I am always impressed when presented with undergraduate work that rises to the challenge.

In this issue of the *Sydney Undergraduate Journal of Musicology*, we are publishing three articles that engage deeply with paradoxical musical phenomenon. In the first, written by Alisa Yuko Bernhard, we are given a path towards reconciling how similar aesthetic visions could yield such different musical products in the oeuvres of Liszt and Wagner. In the second, written by Shareeka Helaluddin, we are taken through a deconstruction of Desi Hip-Hop in which the political action undertaken by participants is shown to be deeply personal despite its appropriation of familiar hip-hop tropes. In the final article, written by Megan Morris, we are shown the cultural work (both positive and negative) performed by the “cool pose” in hip-hop and informed of its somewhat obscured origins in the rhetoric of the 1950s/60s Civil Rights movement. Each of these articles actively work to reshape our understanding of musical topics by charting out levels of complexity and ways of thinking so far unexplored in their scholarly arenas and therefore take concrete steps towards the formation of new knowledge.

It is again worth pointing out – as I have in previous forewords for this journal – that these articles have their roots in class assignments undertaken as part of coursework degrees at the Conservatorium. Each author has, on their own initiative, sought to develop these assignments through initial consultation with the journal editors and then through a period of independent research. Each article has been sent out for expert review and authors were asked to respond to readers’ reports before submitting their final

drafts for publication. The editors are excited that interest in this sort of extra-curricular work remains strong at the Conservatorium and wish to thank the expert reviewers for their time and support.

Dr Christopher Coady
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