

AMM:JS

Ethnomusicology Section

23rd November, 1967

Dr. Benjamin Suchoff,
Curator of Bela Bartok Archives,
333 East 79th Street,
NEW YORK. 10021

Dear Dr. Suchoff,

I have been experimenting in a preliminary way, and so far inconclusively, with a coding system for vocal (monophonic) music, one which might be applied to notations of Australian Aboriginal music. On hearing recently of your work, especially on rhythmic patterns, I have been naturally very interested and should be glad to learn more about it.

Jack Heller, whom Mrs. Georgette Silva of the Linguistics Section of this University recently met in New York, telling him something of my work, has suggested that I write to you.

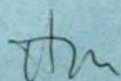
As a research fellow sponsored by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, I am at present attempting to establish, with the help of a research assistant, a library of tape-recorded Aboriginal song items and to accumulate related information for future scholars who may be attracted to this field. Our ultimate aim is the classification of single song-items according to intervallic, rhythmic and other characteristics deemed to be of outstanding stylistic importance, and by means of a coding system which might be utilized later in a computer-aided project.

The identification process is, in the first instance, aural work. At the present time it depends almost wholly on my own staff notations. I realise that such work is open to attack from those who maintain that aural transcription must be replaced by "objective" measurements. For matters of musical style, however, I would maintain that an aural approach is still quite satisfactory, especially for distinguishing the characteristics which I hope can be adequately coded and ultimately will be retrievable according to a computer program.

The recent publication of your work on Bartok's Rumanian Folk music has already come to my notice and I look forward immensely to the opportunity for reading and studying this valuable work.

I should be happy to supply you with samples of my own recordings and music notations if these would be of any interest to you.

Yours sincerely,



(Mrs.) Alice M. Moyle,
A.T.A.S. Research Fellow