

Mrs. Beth Dean Carell
C/O Department of Internal Affairs
Rorotonga Cook Islands,
via New Zealand.

14th October, 1969

Dear Beth,

Thank you for your most interesting letter of 29th September which arrived last week. I am very glad to hear that you have found the material you want in New Zealand and the Cook Islands and congratulate you on your achievements. It is good to know that you and your husband are arranging for indigenous groups to take part in the Cook celebrations next year. This is indeed a large project and will, I know entail an enormous amount of preparation on your part.

You will be interested to hear that shortly before our ANZAAS talk, last August, Elphine and I were able to make a short trip to Groote Eylandt with a film unit from Monash University. A short sample was shown at ANZAAS. We arranged for a group of dancers & musicians to come to the island from Rose River and were able to film (with synch. pulse cameras in colour and from two angles at once) nearly two hours of "open" clan dancing by Nunggubuyu and Wanindilyaugwa men. A proportion of our film consists of Nunggubuyu Brolga sequences performed by some of the most talented Aboriginal dancers active in Australia at the present time. Our trip was made possible by grants from the Federal Office of Aboriginal Affairs, the Australian Council for the Arts and the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies. The films on which we are still busily engaged were taken especially for dance & music notation but I understand they are to be made available for other purposes through the AIAS.

As I find that I may be able to postpone my AAUW Fellowship in the U.S. until 1971, I now aim to complete my Ph. D. before I leave. This means that any field trips I make to the north before 1971 will be of an urgent kind and directly related to immediate research. As you know, I am especially interested in relationships existing between Aboriginal music and dance movement but at this stage do not feel free enough to ask the AIAS for a travel grant for any purposes other than that of the kind mentioned above. Despite this I shall be most happy to give you any help I can in the choice of representative performing groups from various parts of Arnhem Land. I do not know anything of the selections Stefan Haag may be making for Expo 70 but believe that there will be performers enough (including singers and didjeridu players) to go around.

You will realise of course that Arnhem Land in 1969 is not what it was in 1965, to say nothing about 1955. And with the exception of the oldest men the attitudes of many have changed. Despite this, song and dance traditions are still being kept alive to some degree in several places in the north and I would say that good representative

dancers are still to be found at Bamyili, formerly Beswick Creek Reserve, possibly at Maningrida and to some extent at Milingimbi, Yirrkala and Rose River. Among the three last-mentioned my preference would be Rose River. Outstanding Brolga dancers include Arrama (who is also a fine singer) and Malayu. We have them both on our film.

There is a talented young Gumatj dancer, Galarrwuy, at Yirrkala. Willi "Martin" of Mainoru (son of Paddy Bulman now deceased) is at present acting as master of ceremonies to Jolly Laywonga's dance troupe at Bamyili. Willi makes announcements and also joins in the dancing. Jolly has quite a large repertoire of Majali (Maielli) dances, "found" by himself.

We filmed Willi, Jolly and the rest of the Majali group at Bamyili in 1968 and Elhpine and I have notated several of these. There is also a Djawanj (Djauan) group which danced as well as the Majali at Open Day at Bagot, in 1968. As most of my trips have been further northwards I am not able to advise you about Central Australian dancing. There is considerable activity in the Kimberleys, also in parts of Cape York, but you may not have time to look at these places.

Your selections of individuals will be dependent on various factors not the least of which will be availability of the right singers and players for the dances selected. But such matters are best left to the people concerned.

I hope this letter reaches you before you leave the islands. Best wishes for your noble venture and my kindest regards.

Sincerely,

P.S. I hope you have been able to tape all songs heard on the Cook Islands. We are short of South Pacific music here! I should be glad to know if any of your recordings are available for copying.