

Mr. F.D. McCarthy
Principal
Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies
P.O. Box 553
Canberra City, A.C.T. 2601

15th May, 1969

Dear Mr. McCarthy,

If it can be arranged, Elphine Allen and I would like to make a brief visit to Groote Eylandt next July to obtain synchronised material for music and dance notations. Technical assistance and the following equipment would be essential:-

two cameras , synchronised with the same tape recorder
one camera , for close-ups (facial expressions)
two tape recorders (a spare is essential), either Nagra 111NP or Tandberg 11NP

According to advice obtained from Audio-Visual Aids ,at Monash , three-way synchronisation should be possible.

The following information has been received from Groote Eylandt in answer to my preliminary and informal enquiries:-

1. The prospect of having the clan dances filmed has been welcomed by Guia, a leading Wanindilyaugwa man who has sung for me on several occasions. He has said that their council would raise no objections.
2. The dancing would be arranged especially for our visit. The occasion would be solemn , not secret. Wanindilyaugwa dancing occurs rarely. Normally it would be done " when babies die" and only if requested by mother or grandmother. Munggubuyu men dance more often than the Wanindilyaugwa (Ingura).
3. Songs provided for such dancing would be similar in style to many of the didjeridu-accompanied clan songs I have collected on the island (see Disc 4B), but with extra calls etc.

From the point of view of my studies in Wanindilyaugwa song style and structure, an opportunity such as this to investigate rhythmic correlations, or otherwise, in the singing during dancing would be especially valued. Miss Allen's own observations and dance notations would prepare the way for later studies in
OBSERVATIONS

ethnochoreology.

July has been chosen because it is the only month this year in which Miss Allen will have no commitments with the Australian Ballet Company. She will, however, still be teaching at the Australian Ballet School. If the dancing can take place on Groote Eylandt (Angurugu) during a weekend, two of us (myself and a film expert) may be able to arrive on the island during the preceding week to make the necessary negotiations and preparations. Miss Allen could then time her arrival for the day, or two days, during which the films would be shot. As you know, there are NMA flights from Darwin to Groote Eylandt six days a week.

It seems that there may be a possibility of obtaining some of the funds put aside for work of this kind by the Australian Elizabethan Theatre Trust. Miss Allen is at present making some enquiries about this. It may also be possible to obtain technical assistance, in the form of a field operator, from Audio-Visual Aids at Monash. Nothing can be done here, ofcourse, until these aspects of the project can first be discussed with you.

Would it be convenient for you to phone me some time next week?

Yours sincerely,