

Chapter 5

Conclusion: Managerial Creativity

Artistic creativity and managerial creativity are interdependent. It is important that scholarly attention be given to the latter, and not just the former, because this will lead to numerous artistic and industrial benefits. Australian musicians often lack institutional protection and therefore the argument has been made that artists¹²³ have to be just as creative in the development of their career as in the creation of their music. Managerial creativity is necessary for artistic creativity to flourish. This thesis deconstructed the commerce versus creativity dichotomy through illuminating the cultural practices of a number of Australian artists and artist managers. There are numerous commonalities between artistic creativity and managerial creativity and these have been highlighted. This thesis has opened new areas for future research into popular music studies in relation to theorising collaborative processes within a confluence approach to creativity. Further research could analyse how artist managers create marketing strategies that involve new technologies such as ring tones, video websites such as Youtube, and online communities such as Myspace to supplement the avenues for exposure that have been explored in this thesis. For example, although Mitsui (2004) has comprehensively traced the popularity and profitability of ring tone music for mobile phones, more research into the social relevance of this outlet for music and into how artists and artist managers can further build this revenue stream is needed.

¹²³ Albeit artists who desire to make a living from their craft.

This thesis aimed to address an important scholarly issue; that music industry studies have tended to focus on the recording industry. This is a problem because failure is the norm for artists who are trying to obtain recording deals and for the majority of artists who do actually sign recording contracts. Thus music industry studies that prioritise the recording industry over other sectors are not vocationally relevant for the majority of artists. This is especially the case for artists when they are starting their careers; live performance is often where artists begin.

This issue has been addressed via a detailed study of artist management practices in the Australian music industry. An analysis of the artist/manager relationship has been useful for a broad understanding of the many facets of the music industry's complex system. This approach has led to the development of a more holistic view of the music industry that considers all five income stream groups in relation to artists', and artist managers', careers. This holistic view of the Australian music industry now exists in the Australian academic domain.

The primary need for an understanding of managerial creativity is artistically relevant; managerial creativity is the key to enhancing artistic/musical creativity. It is true that behind every new musical idea or musical product there is a person; however it does not follow that such a person has a single characteristic that is responsible for their creative output. Within the field of contemporary music in Australia, it is important to consider creativity not just as something happening within a musician, but as something generated through the relationships formed within a system. Artist management is creative because it involves building, developing and nurturing the relationships that form a system, art world or field that generates artistic products.

While the music industry tends to structure itself around the concept of the 'artist', this notion of 'solitary creative agency' is flawed because the creation of artistic products is reliant upon a network of people. Being creative in the field of contemporary music is more like being in a car accident: "There are some traits that make it more likely to be in an accident – being young and male for example – but usually we cannot explain car accidents on the basis of the driver's characteristics alone. There are too many other variables involved: the condition of the road, the other driver, the type of traffic, the weather and so on. Accidents, like creativity, are the properties of systems rather than individuals" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 45). It is the artist manager's role to build and manage those systems and therefore the study of artist management is important.

The educational rationale for this thesis is vocationally relevant. A primary outcome is that this research helps artists and artist managers to better understand the Australian and international music industries and their place within them. Education for artists and artist managers in this area limits the extent to which artists and artist managers let themselves be negatively exploited; it reduces depression, envy and career anxiety, it leads to artists and artist managers being driven and 'smart', and it builds knowledge that will help artists and artist managers be more organised and efficient. Through the study of artist management goals can be realised sooner. In addition, managerial creativity also enables artists in particular to allocate positive psychic energy to the 'flow'¹²⁴ (ibid. 110) of their artistic creativity. This is because

¹²⁴ For Csikszentmihalyi (1996), 'flow' is the psychological state that creative people experience during the process of creation. He argues that the state of flow is an "almost automatic, effortless, yet highly focused state of consciousness." (10). He posits that it is this 'feeling' that drives creative people (rather than money or fame). Flow often involves painful, risky, difficult activities that stretch one's capacity and that involve an element of novelty and discovery (ibid.).

they will use their own time more efficiently and because some artists can delegate duties to an artist manager.

This thesis described how artist management in Australia works, what it is and why the study of it is important. Although, in breaking new ground, many creative persons must create careers for themselves, this is especially true for musicians. Artists within the field of contemporary music in Australia are often left to their own devices. They are exposed to the vagaries of market forces and changing tastes and they are often not able to rely on the protection of institutions (ibid. 199). Many promising Australian contemporary musicians give up and take refuge in teaching, composing for advertisements, or they leave the field altogether rather than flounder forever in the uncharted seas of such a vague profession. Those who persevere and succeed must be creative not only in their artistic practice, but also perhaps even more in shaping a future for themselves (ibid.). It is the artist manager's role¹²⁵ to aid the creation and nurturing of a career that will enable such artists to survive financially while continuing to create Australian music.

Location within an art world or 'symbolic domain' is necessary for artistic creativity in contemporary Australian music to occur. Such a domain plays a crucial role as it is this field that determines whether a particular creative work is worth recognition rather than another. As is well known, only a very small percentage of the great number of musical works produced within the contemporary music industry will eventually become a part of the culture. Of the millions of items (CDs, DVDs, MP3s, videos, live shows, T-shirts, hats, beanies, hooded jumpers, beer coolers, badges,

¹²⁵ If the artist is self-managed then the responsibility for this creation is theirs alone.

stickers, flyers, posters, street press advertisements, television advertisements, radio advertisements, songs, beats, brand images, CD-ROMS, web-casts, Pod-casts, still photographs, magazine articles, band websites, music-related books and lyrics) that are produced in Australia each year, only a tiny fraction will become a part of the contemporary music canon.¹²⁶ This suggests that the competition between such memes is as fierce as the competition between the units of chemical information we call genes. The music industry in Australia operates through a form of 'artistic Darwinism'. In order to survive, cultures and industries must eliminate most of the new ideas their members produce. Cultures are conservative, and for good reason. No culture could assimilate all the creative works people produce without dissolving into chaos (ibid: 42). No person can afford to pay attention to more than a very small fraction of the new artistic products produced and managerial creativity is the means through which artists and managers attempt to bring their artistic products to the attention of consumers so that these 'memes' can survive, multiply and proliferate.

Consumers can only afford to expend a scarcity of attention consuming all of the new contemporary Australian music produced. A consumer has to be selective; one remembers and recognises only a few of the works produced. This makes the role of the artist manager in contemporary music easier in some respects and more difficult in others, and it really depends at which level of the industry one is operating. It is hard for a new artist to break through the 'clutter'; however, the ubiquity of artistic products ensures that hierarchies of value are maintained and therefore some artists and managers benefit from the star system.

¹²⁶ The word 'canon' originally referred to the list of books that was accepted by the Church. It is being used here to mean 'the accepted, standard musical works that are located at the top of the hierarchy of value that exists within the field of contemporary Australian music.'

In the field of contemporary music studies, arguments have been made that deconstructionism has deconstructed all possibility of singularity¹²⁷ (Smith, 2001: 1) and that relativism has destroyed essentialism (ibid), and therefore there can be no absolute meaning or hierarchy of value in this field. However, in the field of artist management, one is surrounded by absolutism. There are (albeit temporary) hierarchies of artistic merit prevalent in contemporary music and there are canons of 'great works' presented in record stores and on radio – there are powerful (though constantly evolving) constructs in place. If we believe that culture is what makes a community different – if the culture of an area can be defined as the signature, personality or feel of the place as well as the artistic activities that happen there – then systemic hierarchies of value are necessary for the music industry to function.

Indeed, the Australian music industry has a definite hierarchy of value. For artist managers who are located in the upper echelons of this hierarchy, the processes of elimination (that this value system enable) make their jobs easier, while this value system means that the goals of artist managers who are located at the bottom of this hierarchy are extremely difficult to realise. The role of the artist manager in the Australian contemporary music industry is therefore either to manage an established canon of artistic works, or to try to become part of the canon of Australian popular music. Each case study featured in this thesis reflects one of these two underlying premises.

¹²⁷ The notion of a singular, absolute and definitive meaning existing within a musical work is challenged by postmodern theory which instead argues that the meaning of a musical text is constructed through language and discourse. Therefore there is no singular meaning or 'value' that can be attained as it is relative to one's perspective (i.e. it is 'polysemantic') and it can therefore be 'deconstructed'. The artist management theory being presented here works back against postmodern theory; the idea that there are essentialistic and dominant hierarchies of value needs to be acknowledged when considering managerial practices.

Although there are hierarchies in place, the relativity of artistic values also needs to be understood in relation to artist management practices within the Australian music industry. The content of the canon of works that constitutes Australian music culture changes over time. The canon of works is not absolute; it just appears to be from time to time. Australian artists and artist managers who struggle for recognition during their lifetimes, and do not receive it, may be well placed within the Australian contemporary music canon after their deaths; their work may then be removed from this canon as swiftly as it was placed within it. According to Csikszentmihalyi: "If creativity is more than personal insight and is co-created by domains, fields, and persons, then creativity can be constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed several times over the course of history" (ibid. 30). Although the canon of contemporary Australian music is constantly changing, an artist manager needs to try and manage a part of it and/or get their artist to become a part of it. This is why Australian artist managers often cite musical fashions, trends and luck as being the most crucial, yet uncontrollable aspects of their jobs.

Much of an artist's career cannot be controlled directly. Artist managers can only 'influence' artistic career trajectories. A considerable facet of managerial creativity therefore involves influencing and delegating to the people in the industrial context the artist is operating in so that they use their own initiative and thus feel empowered. Moreover, it is crucial that the people who become empowered within the artist's art world or system possess memes that are in line with the evolution of the industry.

Without artist management the music industry could not function; however, it could function without record companies due to the substantial number of alternative revenue streams. Influential international artist managers such as Michael McMartin

(2005) and Jazz Summers (2005) believe that the future will depend more on creative managers' and artists' abilities than record companies'. Pascal Grierson (2005), on the other hand, asserts that technology moves much faster than the related business and the legal systems do, thereby creativity in artist management and in the selection of progressive memes is crucial.¹²⁸

Thus an additional outcome of this thesis is the notion that artist managers' creativity is crucial for the survival of this industry. David Hesmondhalgh¹²⁹ (2005) argues that there is nothing unprecedented about the recent crisis in the recording industry and that indeed the recording industry is in perpetual crisis. He notes that there have been three periods of downturn in the global recording and publishing industries: 1929, 1970 and 1999 – 2005. Australian artists could not survive, either now or in years to come, without managerial creativity. The evolution of the music industry involves changes in artistic and technological memes. If the right memes within the industry are selected and nurtured by managers then their artists survive; otherwise they do not. Good artist management involves selecting the knowledge, the values and the behaviours that will lead to a brighter future for the artist. Such knowledge, values and behaviours are contained within the minds of the people with whom the manager forms relationships on the artist's behalf.

If correct, the above hypothesis – that creative artist managers and artists will carry the responsibility of ensuring the music industry's continuing survival – and the

¹²⁸ He notes by way of an example that there have been "5.5 million iPods sold in quarter 1, 2005. This is a 1000% increase in the sale of MP3 players." (p/c June 2005)

¹²⁹ All comments attributed to David Hesmondhalgh, Michael McMartin, Jazz Summers, and Pascal Grierson in this chapter are, unless otherwise indicated, taken from personal correspondence with the author conducted in May, June and July 2005.

characterisation of artist managers being in a vulnerable position within the music industry, appear to be contradictory. However, this contradiction will not derail the music industry because of what drives artist managers. Artist managers are not only driven by economic forces, such as generating income to pay their rent, or working towards the chance that they will see a large financial return from their investment of time and energy. Artist managers also derive enjoyment out of the 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996: 110) of creativity in management. It became clear from talking to the many artist managers featured in this study that what kept them motivated was the quality of experience they felt when they were involved in the activity of artist management. Moreover "this feeling didn't come when they were relaxing, when they were taking drugs or alcohol, or when they were consuming the expensive privileges of wealth. Rather, it often involved painful, risky, difficult activities that stretched the person's capacity and involved an element of novelty and discovery (ibid)." It is the optimal experience generated by the challenge of artist management that drives many artist managers and, like creativity in music, creativity in management is inexhaustible. For all the discussion of the structural aspects of music industry operations in this thesis, this single factor links the motivation (and potential satisfaction) of managers to the motivation of those musicians who embark upon arduous careers in the Australian contemporary music industry.

In summation, the keyword for this thesis is 'context'. The way in which the commercial context facilitates creativity in Australian contemporary music has been analysed and through this process the commerce versus creativity dichotomy has been reconceptualised. The broader industrial context that the Australian music industry is located within has also been considered. In this age of increasing privatisation, the

paradigm shift from products to brands has led to an increase in the use of contemporary music to add meaning to various corporate products. Branding theory has not only been useful for an understanding of how the music industry fits within this broader industrial context; it has also been useful in an analyses of effective artist management practices that enable the artist managers and artists discussed in this thesis to manage an established canon of works, or to try to become part of the canon of Australian popular music. In addition to this, an artist manager's strategies are more derivative of the context they and their artists are located within than their own individual personalities. This is because managerial creativity, like artistic creativity, stems from a system and therefore cannot be solely attributed to an individual artist manager.

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Discography

Audrey Auld	<i>The Fallen</i> , Reckless Records, 2000.
_____	<i>Losing Faith</i> , Reckless Records, 2002.
_____	<i>Texas</i> , Reckless Records, 2006.
Catherine Britt	<i>In the pines</i> (self-released EP), 2001.
_____	Dusty Smiles and Heartbreak Cures, ABC Country, 2002.
_____	<i>Too Far Gone</i> , BMG Music/ABC Country/Warner Music Australia, 2006.
Dion Jones and the Filth	<i>Velvet Fever</i> , Filth Productions, 2005.
Grinspoon	<i>New Detention</i> , Universal Music, 2003.
Lee Kernaghan	<i>Lee Kernaghan: The Big Ones: Greatest Hits Volume 1</i> . ABC Country/Universal 2004.
_____	<i>Lee Kernaghan: Access All Areas</i> (DVD), ABC Country/Universal (2004).

Appendix 1: List of international music conferences and trades fairs.

A2A Music Conference - Amsterdam, Holland - September -
<http://www.a2amusic.com>

Atlantis Music Conference - Atlanta, GA - August -
<http://www.atlantismusic.com>

The Caribbean Music Expo - CME - March -
<http://www.cme.com>

CMJ - New York, NY - September - <http://www.cmj.com>

CMW - Canadian Music Week - Toronto, Canada -
February - <http://www.cmw.net>

Eat-M - Emerging Artists and Talent in Music - Las
Vegas, May - <http://www.eat-m.com>

KanawhaPalooza - West Virginia - January -
<http://www.kanawhapalooza.com>

Millenium Music Conference - Harrisburg, PA - February -
<http://www.musicconference.net>

Music Busines Conference - Nashville, TN - October -
<http://www.2nmc.com>

NEMO - Boston, MA - April - <http://www.nemoboston.com>

NXNW - Portland, OR - September - <http://www.nxnw.com>

NXNE - Toronto, Canada - June - <http://www.nxne.com>

SXSW - Austin, TX - March - <http://www.sxsw.com>

The Winter Music Conference - Miami, FL - March -
<http://www.wmcon.com>

Appendix 2: List of Lee Kernaghan's awards.

1993

APRA Song of the Year – *Boys from the Bush*
Album of the Year – *The Outback Club*
Male Vocalist of the Year – *Boys from the Bush*

1994

APRA Song of the Year – *Three Chain Road*
Album of the Year – *Three Chain Road*
Male Vocalist of the Year – *Three Chain Road*
Vocal Duo of the Year – *Leave Him in the Longyard* (with Slim Dusty)

1995

Top-Selling Album – *Three Chain Road*

1996

Album of the Year – *1959*

1997

Top Selling Album – *1959*
Vocal Collaboration of the Year – *A Bushman Can't Survive* (with Tania Kernaghan)

1999

Top Selling Album – *Hat Town*
Album of the Year – *Hat Town*
Male Vocalist of the Year – *Goondiwindi Moon*
Heritage Song of the Year – *Changi Banjo*
Vocal Collaboration of the Year – *Tough Job* (with Colin Buchanan)

2002

Vocal Collaboration of the Year – *Thank God I'm A Country Boy* (with Josh Arnold)

2003

Album of the Year – *Electric Rodeo*
Top Selling Album – *Electric Rodeo*

Other Awards

1992 ARIA Best Country Album – *The Outback Club*
1993 ARIA Best Country Album – *Three Chain Road*
1996 CMAA Entertainer of the Year
1999 Australian Achiever of the Year
1999 CMAA Entertainer of the Year
1999 Hit Maker of the Decade
(sourced from <http://www.leekernaghan.com.au/>, accessed 15/11/04)

Appendix 3: List of interview subjects.

Interviews were conducted with the following individuals as part of research for this thesis:

Audrey Auld – Artist (phone i/v September 2003)

John Brewster – Artist (Sydney, January 2004)

Catherine Britt – Artist (phone i/v July 2002)

Steve Britt – Father of Artist (phone i/v July 2002)

Marshall Cullen – Artist Manager (Sydney, May 2005)

Gregg Donovan – Artist Manager (Sydney, November 2003)

Pascal Grierson – Radio Producer (London, England: July 2005)

Roger Grieson – Record Company Executive (Australian branch of the Music Managers Forum's annual conference in Sydney in October 2003)

Chris Harper – Artist (Sydney, February 2004)

Daniel Henessey – Artist Manager (Sydney, May 2005)

Reid Hunter – Artist Manager (New York City, June 2005)

Peter Jenner – Artist Manager (London, England: July 2005)

Dion Jones – Artist (Sydney, October 2003; Sydney, January 2004; Sydney, February 2004)

Andrew Kelly – Artist (Sydney, February 2003)

John Lomax III – Music Critic (phone i/v July 2002)

Michelle Margherita – Artist (London, England, July 2005)

Michael McMartin – Artist Manager (Sydney, December 2004; and St Johns, Canada: June 2005)

Catherine Moore – Music Business Scholar (New York City, June 2005)

Brett Oaten – Solicitor (Australian branch of the Music Managers Forum's annual conference in Sydney in October 2003)

Tim Prescott – Senior Vice President and Chief Marketing Officer Sony/BMG (New York City, June 2005)

George Stein – US Attorney and Artist Manager (New York City, June 2005)

Jazz Summers – Artist Manager (London, England: July 2005)

Kim Thomas – Artist Manager (Australian branch of the Music Managers Forum's annual conference in Sydney in October 2003)

Todd Waggstaff – Artist Manager (Sydney, March 2002)

John Watson – Artist Manager (Australian branch of the Music Managers Forum's annual conference in Sydney in October 2003)

Keith Welsh – Song Publisher (Sydney, August 2005)

Steve White – Artist Manager (Sydney May 2002; and phone i/v August 2004)

John Woodruff – Artist Manager (Australian branch of the Music Managers Forum's annual conference in Sydney in November 2002)