

The Winston Churchill Memorial Trust of Australia

Final Report

Rafael Karlen
2015 Churchill Fellow

The Dame Roma Mitchell Churchill Fellowship to undertake study in contemporary music composition, performance and ensemble directing - USA, UK, Holland, Denmark, Germany, Norway and Sweden.

I understand that the Churchill Trust may publish this Report, either in hard copy or the Internet or both, and consent to such publication.

I indemnify the Churchill Trust against any loss, costs or damages it may suffer arising out of any claims or proceedings made against the Trust in respect of or arising out of the publication of any Report to the Trust in which the Trust places in a website for access over the internet.

I also warrant that my Final Report is original and does not infringe the copyright of any person, or contain anything which is, or the incorporation of which in to the Final Report is, actionable for defamation, a breach of any privacy law or obligation, breach of confidence, contempt of court, passing off or contravention of any other private right or of any law.

Signed: Rafael Karlen

Dated: 10/9/16

Document Contents

Introduction	3
Acknowledgements	3
Executive summary	4
Itinerary	5
New York	6
Amsterdam	10
Copenhagen	13
Germany	15
Frankfurt	16
Cologne	18
UK: London/Oxford/York/Newcastle	19
Norway	22
Sweden	24
Conclusion and Recommendations	26

Introduction

The opportunity to travel to New York and around Europe to meet many of the finest musicians in contemporary improvised music and to spend time with exceptional ensembles was a life changing experience. This project provided me with expert guidance and direction to refine and further develop my skills as a composer, performer and ensemble director, allowing me to effectively gain a large amount of experience in a condensed time frame.

Through private tuition, interviews/meetings, performances and open rehearsals I gained invaluable insights from leading musicians in contemporary composition and arranging, ensemble direction and advanced music performance. These musicians and ensembles included Dave Douglas, Darcy James Argue, Tony Malaby (NY), Vince Mendoza, Metropole Orchestra (Holland), Palle Mikkelborg, Karl-Martin Almqvist, Danish Radio Big Band (Denmark), Julia Hulesmann, Jim McNeely, Florian Ross, HR Big Band (Germany), Christian Wallumrod, Tord Gustavsen, Arild Andersen (Norway), John Metcalfe, Tim Garland, Jason Rebello (UK), Ann-Sophie Söderqvist, Magnus Lindgren (Sweden). I also attended very many high-level performances and had many meetings with colleagues overseas and gleaned very useful and inspiring information from them.

Seeing many of the world's leading jazz and classical musicians perform at venues ranging from Carnegie Hall and Concert Halls to intimate Jazz clubs was an incredible experience and I am very inspired by the exceptionally high level of musicianship that I encountered.

Although it is easy to access an incredible amount of material that is readily available online, observing a world-class ensemble prepare, rehearse and deliver under the leadership of internationally acclaimed artists afforded me a truly unique and invaluable experience.

Acknowledgements

My sincere thanks go to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust for selecting me to receive the Dame Roma Mitchell Sponsored Fellowship, the Queensland and the Australian chapters of the WCMT and to all the incredible musicians around the world who I have been fortunate to have met and learned so much from on my travels. It is an incredible privilege to have been awarded this prestigious Sponsored Fellowship and to be amongst so many inspiring, focused and dedicated Fellows, both past and present.

I experienced sincere generosity and feel truly inspired by all the incredible people that I met during my Fellowship activities. Undertaking my Fellowship was a life changing experience and I have learned so much about being a better musician and person from all the people that I met, the concerts that I saw, the museums and galleries that I visited and from all the experiences that I was fortunate to have. There were many occasions during my trip when I actually had to pinch myself to make sure that what I was experiencing was real because it was like a really nice dream. Thank you!

Executive summary

Name - Rafael Karlen

Address - 47 Hayward Street, Paddington, QLD 4064

Occupation - Saxophonist, composer and arranger

Director Queensland Youth Orchestra Big Band

Lecturer Queensland Conservatorium of Music and the JMC Academy

Telephone - 0450 306 001

Email - rafaelkarlen@gmail.com

Project Description - To undertake study in contemporary music composition, performance and ensemble directing - USA, UK, Holland, Denmark, Germany Norway and Sweden.

Highlights

- Observing Vince Mendoza rehearse and perform with the Metropole Orchestra.
- Observing Jim McNeely rehearse and perform with Lionel Loueke and the HR Big Band.
- Observing Palle Mikkelborg rehearse, record and perform with the Danish Radio Big Band.
- Having private lessons or meetings with many of my musical heroes including Vince Mendoza, Jim McNeely, Dave Douglas, Tony Malaby, Darcy James Argue, John Metcalfe, Jason Rebello, Tim Garland, Arild Andersen, Tord Gustavsen, Christian Wallumrod, Trygve Seim, Magnus Lindgren, Julia Hulesmann, Florian Ross, Karl-Martin Almqvist and Ann-Sophie Söderqvist.
- Meeting and talking to colleagues and fellow musicians around the world to discuss their general approach to life and music and how they make things go around while pursuing creative goals.
- Attending dozens of concerts including performances by The NY Philharmonic and London Symphony orchestras, Keith Jarrett, The Vanguard Orchestra and the Danish Radio Big Band.
- Visiting major art galleries and museums around the world.

Major lessons

Knowledge and advice that I gained through the project included:

- Advice and insights on effectively rehearsing, leading and directing contemporary music ensembles of the highest international standard
- Compositional guidance and insights from many of Europe and America's most exciting contemporary composers of Jazz and Improvised music.
- Advice and insights on advanced performance from Internationally recognised musicians
- Exposure to a higher concentration of professional guidance, lessons, rehearsals and a constant influx of stimulus and inspiration than what is available here in Australia.

Dissemination and implementation in Australia

As I am very active as a performer, composer, ensemble director, lecturer and educator, there are already many existing outlets for me to disseminate the knowledge that I acquired on my Fellowship to a broad range of musicians, students and to the general public. Since returning to Australia I have already had major performances, composition commissions and educational roles where I have been able to immediately disseminate and apply the insights that I gained during my travels.

This includes rehearsing, conducting and performing my original compositions for the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, recording a new album and performing throughout Queensland in a variety of styles and ensembles. Following my return I have taught at several Primary and Secondary schools, lectured at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music and at the JMC Academy and continued to direct the Queensland Youth Orchestra Big Band. In July I toured with the QYO Big Band to and around Mackay where I conducted workshops and performances to and with local musicians and communities. The skills and insights that I was fortunate to receive from the world-class musicians have already begun to be relayed, shared and applied across a very broad spread of the cultural sector of Queensland.

Itinerary

New York:	8 - 21 February
Amsterdam:	21 February - 2 March
Copenhagen:	2 - 7 March
Berlin, Frankfurt and Cologne:	7 - 14 March
London, Oxford, York, Newcastle:	14 - 28 March
Oslo:	28 March - 5 April
Stockholm:	5 - 13 April

New York

Lessons with:
Dave Douglas
Darcy James Argue
Tony Malaby

Holland

Lessons/meetings with Vince Mendoza
Observed rehearsals and a concert with the Metropole Orchestra

Denmark

Lessons with Karl-Martin Almquist
Observed rehearsals and a concert with Palle Mikkelborg and The Danish Radio Big Band

Germany (Berlin, Frankfurt and Cologne)

Lessons with:
Julia Hulesmann
Jim McNeely
Florian Ross
Observed rehearsals and a concert with the HR Big Band, Lionel Loueke and Jim McNeely

Norway

Christian Wallumrod
Tord Gustavsen
Arild Andersen

England

Lessons with:
John Metcalfe
Tim Garland
Jason Rebello

Sweden

Lessons with:
Ann-Sophie Söderqvist
Magnus Lindgren

New York

The first destination of my trip was New York where I spent two weeks living in Harlem. I attended a heavy schedule of concerts, had private lessons with Dave Douglas, Darcy James Argue and Tony Malaby, had meetings with colleagues and attended several museums and art galleries. Galleries and museums included the Guggenheim Museum, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museum of Modern Art and The American Museum of Natural History.

I also attended a rehearsal for a concert of new music by 5 Female Japanese Jazz Composers showcasing many of New York's rising young talent.

Dave Douglas is one of the most active and well-respected trumpet players in the world. He is very busy as a performer and composer and also runs his own label, Greenleaf Music. Dave was the Artistic Director of the International Workshop in Jazz and Creative Music in Banff, Canada which I attended in 2009 so I was very excited to meet up again for a lesson/consultation.

Darcy James Argue is one of the major contemporary composers of big band music on the scene today. He has a very recognisable style of writing which incorporates different elements in to his music and appropriates them to fit in with his objective. I first saw Darcy conduct his music with the Jazzgroove Mothership Orchestra in Melbourne a few years ago as part of the Melbourne International Jazz Festival.

I met the saxophonist Tony Malaby when I attended the International Jazz workshop in Banff, Canada in 2009. Tony is a highly respected musician and has worked with many of the finest improvising musicians in the world as a leader and as a sideman.

New York has an abundance of incredible musicians but I was particularly drawn to these musicians as they have all very clear musical and professional identities even though they often drift between different styles across the contemporary improvised world. They still manage to retain their personality and have refined their music and lives to support their creative agendas.

I went to each lesson with a list of questions that I wanted to hear their views on. Many of these questions were quite technical and included the following:

- Advice on finding a balance between composing and playing
- Planning form in large-scale compositions. Blurring the sections/seams
- Making a balance between music and administration
- Switching hats easily between different styles and roles
- Was there a clear objective early on about what you wanted to achieve and how?
- Recording approaches
- Balance between composed material and open-ended aspects in compositions
- Conducting in jazz: technique, role, function ?
- Freedom/openness vs being descriptive...how much openness do you like to leave in the score?
- Compromises of larger ensembles vs smaller groups
- Planning the recording process
- Dealing with deadlines and managing stress along the way
- Being firm vs nice in rehearsal
- Advice on getting young bands/ensembles playing together and grooving
- Advice on how to approach working as a sideman in a variety of musical contexts
- Advice and considerations on when to support directly or when to support movement through contrast and bring something new to the table in improvisatory contexts

Advice and insights that gained from my lessons included:

Directing advice

- Watch choral conductors- how do they cue?
- Problem solve- what is the root of the problem?
- Be diplomatic- use a different strategy each time to address issues
- Consider what is hard and why it is hard- how can I make it easier?
- Be small and clear with your conducting. Stay small
- Use your strong hand- R and L are unequal
- Don't rush or hold back when marking different sections
- Lock in with the drummer
- Be present- sing along. They can tell if you're not feeling it!
- Don't over complicate section markings
- Know your stuff. Can you sing your part? Prove that you know your stuff

Writing

- Set up big projects to always have something to work towards. Make rehearsals to ensure that you finish writing
- Be smart- write things that you know will be played. How can you best ensure future performances?
- Write for your outlets
- Block out time to focus on writing- don't accept gigs during this time
- Get efficient with your workflow whether it be a music notation software or the administrative side of things
- Set limits and boundaries to help with 'real expectations'
- Detail on the score can vary considerably and may be as open as hinting at contour, dynamics, density and pitch
- Every project is different- start from scratch and reinvent
- Take time to deliberate, scheme and plan
- Determine an appropriate design/framework and objective and stick to it. Detail comes later
- Define your territories.
- Knowing the final structure implies a path
- Always consider the bigger picture- don't get lost in the detail
- Question all elements- how do things work and fit together? This will give direction
- Consider and define the roles in an ensemble and in a composition
- Consider what to write to make classical players sound like they are grooving
- Don't be shy to use aleatoric sections to add excitement
- If I am to use improvisation, why am I using it and where?
- What's the theme, what will bring structure?

Administration

- You are your best manager. Re-asses all parts of your business
- Get help with things that you don't have the time to do or things that other people can do better
- Bandleaders need to set the right vibe. Value everyone. Try to make everyone comfortable at every moment
- There is often a long list of different things that need to be done- delegate and break down into manageable sections

Recording

- Consider a strategy for takes and order of tunes to record
- Make everyone comfortable
- Present things that are easy to get together
- Be as prepared as possible- material, strategy, order, mics.
- Musicians' and engineers' comfort is premium

Playing

- Find and develop your strengths
- Find yourself in whatever you are doing
- Find your own balance
- Make solos and writing compelling
- Make a session with heavy players to experience playing at that level
- Don't take the initial response. Hear them, visualise responses, then choose a response
- Practice playing so there is no difference
- Immature free playing is when everyone pounces on the same idea
- How do you capture a musical zone? How do you write these layers down? Then you can start there next time
- Stay in control
- Be far away from the expected, be informed. Avoid habit. Respond to that
- Practise with a "double lip" embouchure for throat position and flexibility
- Practise with different throat settings (oo/Ahh) over range
- Change your 'palette' and improvise with it
- Practise the Fmaj scale in overtones
- Practise matching high F,E,Eb
- Practise playing with the 8ve key on and play low and softly
- Practise playing with barely any mouthpiece in your mouth and vice versa
- Play with distance. Remove yourself, give space
- Never honk

Concerts

Keith Jarrett solo concert - Carnegie Hall
New York Philharmonic performing Mahler Symphony no. 6 - Lincoln Centre
Tosihiko Akiyoshi and Lew Tabackin - Lincoln Centre
Vanguard Orchestra - Village Vanguard
Lucas Pino Nonet - Smalls
Chris Potter Quartet - Village Vanguard
Dave Holland - Village Vanguard
Joel Frahm, Kevin Hayes and Ari Hoenig - 55 Bar
New Music by 5 Female Japanese Jazz Composers - Shapeshifter Lab
Al Foster and Bob Cranshaw - Smoke
Mingus Big Band - Jazz Standard
Dan Weiss Large Ensemble - Jazz Gallery
John Ellis Ice Siren - Jazz Gallery
Brandee Younger - Dizzy's Club
L'Histoire du Soldat - Le Poussin Rouge
Gilles Naturel, Danny Walsh, Victor Lewis

Meetings with:

Miho Hazama
Matt Jodrell
Georgia Weber
Pablo Massis
Marc Hannaford
Damien Sim
Graeme Norris

It was very useful speaking to many musicians about their rehearsal, practice and work ethic.

Useful things that I was given from colleagues included:

- NY is hard...you have to look at the music. If you don't know it you won't get called back
- Be clear, talk through any surprises before commencing a rehearsal- structure and plan the rehearsal
- Be committed to making the music as good as possible...time, dynamics, articulation, balance, listening etc.
- Look into different approaches to living and promotion
- Consistently release video, audio...create a youtube identity and explore different funding models. Explore the Patirion platform
- NY forces you to specialize. People can tell if you're not there with what you do
- What's important to you?
- Make a wish list of things that you would like to do
- There is a high level of professionalism here- people will prepare for everything.
- If it's not perfect, it's not there yet
- Sometimes if you don't get a call it can be that you don't fit, not that you can't play
- Australia is too forgiving- it's a good deal easier to get away with not being in form there
- Play and be brave
- When running a tight ship, but still being a good person, the key seems to be to give and command respect. Run rehearsals efficiently, respect times, be clear, expect professionalism
- Everything you do is helping you as a musician- listening, study etc.
- A famous Jazz musician advised to practise one hour everyday. There can be more playing but no more practise!

Amsterdam

After New York I flew to Holland to spend a week in Amsterdam. It was very beautiful staying in Jordaan, near the Westerkerk and the Anne Frank Museum. I was very fortunate to spend 5 days watching Vince Mendoza conduct and rehearse the Metropole Orchestra. This is a unique orchestra in that it consists of a Big Band and an orchestra as one ensemble and they are very comfortable performing in a variety of contemporary styles including hip hop, jazz, pop and film music. The Metropole Orchestra had just been awarded a Grammy Award for their album with Snarky Puppy so they were in good spirits.

Vince Mendoza is one of the most successful and versatile arrangers in the world. He has received 6 Grammy Awards and 25 nominations and has worked with artists including Joni Mitchell, Sting, Melody Gardot, Elvis Costello and Bjork to Joe Zawinul, the Yellowjackets and the GRP All-Stars. He was the chief conductor for the Metropole Orchestra for six years. It was an incredible experience watching Vince conduct and rehearse and to hear his arrangements come to life by the Metropol Orchestra. Vince's charts are so detailed, balanced and well considered with each individual player having an interesting part to play and contribute with

The Orchestra were preparing for two different concerts while I was there. The first was a concert featuring the award-winning vocalist Cecile McLorin Salvant and the second concert was a performance of music from film soundtracks. The orchestra and Cecile sounded absolutely incredible.

Writing new arrangements of pieces for a featured singer and a large ensemble is very challenging. There is a fine line with knowing how much to change and add while keeping the essence of the original work intact. Vince has written arrangements for many of the biggest names in the music world so I was very excited to hear his thoughts on writing and directing.

I went to the daily rehearsals in Hilversum (just outside of Amsterdam) and was very lucky to have two small meetings with Vince where I could discuss some of my questions.

I was very interested in hearing Vince's thoughts on the following:

- Finding a balance between being conservative or adventurous in arrangements
- Making detailed plans prior to writing?
- Writing efficiently- fitting in everything when things are busy
- Do most arranging projects have a similar shape and progression?
- Thoughts on being a strict conductor in rehearsals
- Adjusting material to make it more user-friendly
- Word painting, how obvious to make it?
- Colour choices with doubles and cross-section voicings
- What's most precious- writing, arranging or conducting
- Who to listen to for effective counterpoint writing
- Do most composing/arranging projects have a quick turnaround?
- Tips for directing orchestral players as opposed to Jazz players

Advice and insights that I gained from talking to Vince and watching the rehearsals with the Metropol Orchestra included:

- Write for the orchestra, space and context. Be aware of who is playing, where it will be performed and how many rehearsals you will get prior to the performance.
- The level of risks taken in arrangement is dependent on who the project is for
- Whatever is due first takes precedence.
- Create mental sketches of parts, themes, places, moods, shapes and then print the form on a sheet and write
- Sometimes orchestras or players feel that pop/commercial or film music is banal so it can be difficult to get everyone to commit to every project with equal levels of enthusiasm

- The Metropole Orchestra are great with crossover projects because they are used to playing with a drummer and on the beat as opposed to other orchestras where the time feel might not be as clear
- Consider what you can offer and what can you bring that is uniquely you? Where are your skills?
- Write for the project. Make it as user-friendly and practical as needed according to the players, rehearsal times and context
- Doubling choices are made after considering weight and balance, what do you want the listener to hear?
- Colour and orchestration choices are often guided by trying to make things sound new
- Voicing across sections is interesting because it removes an identifiable source
- Word painting- the lyrics are the first thing, this will then guide the arrangement and head the arrangement in a certain direction
- Trust the arranger. People generally give them license to do their thing
- 'How much of me can I put into it?' is an important question to return to
- Paint with broader strokes for projects where much of the writing will be lost in the production. Why agonise over counterpoint when you can't hear it?
- 2 or 3 days for a chart is common.
- Joni Mitchell was big on word painting. Don't illustrate everything but punctuate things that need to be brought out.

Metropole Orchestra rehearsals

The repertoire that the orchestra was preparing for the movie soundtrack concert included music from Jurassic Park, Star Wars, Indiana Jones, Superman, Gladiator, the Godfather and the Hateful 8. Many of these themes were reminded me of my childhood so I had a very big smile on my face when the orchestra began to rehearse this material. There was so much detail in the music that I'd never heard before.

Vince had a very clear way of rehearsing and was very gentle with how he made and achieved changes. He has worked with this orchestra for many years so there is an existing, comfortable relationship there. It was very helpful for me to hear and see how he went about making changes to assist with clarity, balance, phrasing, intonation and rhythmic accuracy.

General observations:

- Vince would be breathing with phrases while conducting and was always calm and grounded
- The orchestra would always play through each piece in its' entirety unless there were changes to be discussed first. The orchestra would be so much better by themselves by the second read through
- Generally bringing the dynamics down resulted in more control, polish and greater balance
- Vince would tweak arrangements- revoice a chord or change the weight of it, simplifying awkward parts, adding a chord in the strings etc.
- Vince would emphasise and focus on bigger shapes and phrases.
- Vince changed the bowing in the strings to sound jazzy and emphasis the upbeat. Asymmetrical phrasing.
- 'Don't play a big beat one in Jazz- before or after the beat is more important'
- Vince would provide clear cues for the vocalist
- Subtle backgrounds- I didn't notice entries. They often start before sections. This blurred the edges and kept the momentum moving forward.
- An effective tool was to start an idea and repeat it elsewhere, moving things across sections.
- Vince would make a list of things to fix as he went on then addresses them one by one
- Consider what to prioritise and focus on as a conductor and how to delicately make changes it.
- Observations on scores: Big Time Signature cues in coloured pencil, different colours for tempo changes and for instrument cues
- Vince's left hand counted down to cue tricky entries
- Great variety, contrast, lines, shape, orchestration in Vince's arrangements. So lush and colourful!

- "A little longer than short" -Thad Jones/Mel Lewis
- 'Say what you need to say and then get out of the way for long notes'
- 2 days per project is what the rehearsal schedule allows for. It used to be 5 but the funding changed recently

In regards to playing together and in time, useful comments and approaches were:

- Play softer and lighter. Playing softly but with intensity is the challenge
- Direct the attention to the moving part (quavers in violins for example so that we don't drag)
- Don't relax on the rest
- Vince would make eye contact to lock people in with the time
- Don't give all the accents- this will keep it light
- Lighter on beat 2 and 3 to keep it moving in 3/4
- Less focus on the semiquaver triplet-aim for the beat
- Bringing the dynamic down made things much more in time
- Vince checked out 15 versions of Strauss to see how other people did it
- Keep it light enough to lock in
- Change the count in when people weren't together (3+4+ instead of 3,4)
- Conducted 2/2 to lock in the time more in fast 4/4

I was busy during the day watching rehearsals and the evenings were mostly spent studying scores so I didn't get to see as many concerts and galleries as I would have liked. In addition to seeing the concert with Cecile McLorin Salvant and the Metropole Orchestra conducted by Vince Mendoza, I did go to see a concert at the Bimhaus by Alex Hamilton from UK and a jam session at Cafe Nel. I also went to the Rijksmuseum which was so beautiful. Walking around the streets of Amsterdam was a very nice way to explore the special city too.

Copenhagen

After arriving to Copenhagen I went straight from the airport to the Danish Radio to see the last two of hours of tracking for the new recording of the Danish Radio Big Band featuring the music of Palle Mikkelborg and special guests. Palle Mikkelborg is a very important Danish Jazz musician and this was his 75 birthday week so the DRBB were recording and performing his music for big band with special guests. Palle was very happy and kind to me and it was very inspiring to meet him and to hear him direct and perform his music with a large ensemble of great musicians.

It was incredible exploring this huge building and arriving into the control room for the final part of their recording. Gerard Presencer was playing a blistering trumpet solo. Wow!

It was a nice surprise seeing Marilyn Mazur on percussion too. Marilyn has played with artists ranging from Miles Davis to Jan Garbarek and I remember seeing her perform when I was 16 at a really beautiful and memorable concert.

Palle had written and arranged music to showcase different sides of his musical life. He featured a large big band (5 saxes, 5 trumpets, 5 trombones, guitar, piano, bass, drums and percussion) with a harp, glass organ, 50-voice boys choir and himself on trumpet. This was a very impressive undertaking and he managed to bring all these different elements together in a very natural way.

In addition to seeing the last few hours of the recording that the DRBB were making I also managed to see them rehearse and then perform their show. I also saw Jasper Blom and Gerard Presencer at Cafe Montmartre, and a jazz night at La Fontaine.

Gerard Presencer was on my list of people to try to meet as he is an incredible musician who is capable of playing anything on his instrument and has a rare combination of lyrical and melodic playing coupled with phenomenal technique. He was unfortunately too busy to meet with me for an official lesson but it was great to hear him perform and to chat after his gig.

The only gallery that I visited during my stay was Glyptoteket, a very beautiful sculpture museum.

Karl-Martin Almqvist is a tenor saxophone player who I have known since 2005 when I had a few lessons with him in Stockholm. Karl-Martin is a beautiful player who has worked with many internationally recognised musicians and is currently playing in the DRBB. It was really nice meeting up for a lesson and to play together again. I enjoy his playing because although he has formidable technique and a sophisticated understanding of harmony, he can still play very melodically and expressively.

Observations from the Danish Radio Big Band technical run and concert performance:

- Amazing concert hall at the Danish Radio
- It took 18 months prepare, plan and organise this show
- It had one sold-out show at the 1800 capacity Danish Radio Concert Hall
- Useful to have a rehearsal studio downstairs with the same stage dimensions for the technical run
- All the charts were modified and Palle was very open and fluid in the rehearsal.
- 50-voice boys choir opened and closed the concert like a bookend
- There were beautiful soundscapes and textures as interludes between pieces
- The overall musical progression was really considered and well thought out
- Palle's writing style was open: he wrote for people and provided enough description but plenty of freedom
- Effective orchestration and beautiful playing
- Nice use of the ensemble and textural transitions and interludes.
- The overlapping of soloists was a nice touch
- Palle stood close to people to engage the soloists
- Specific sections were written to feature and showcase soloists

- Writing dissonant harmony in the woodwinds and brass against diatonic rhythm section figures was exciting
- The Reggae in 7/4 was a nice surprise
- Cueing the drummer so that he can cue/set up the next section was an effective directing technique

Advice and insights from speaking to and playing with Karl-Martin

- Play with extremes, e.g. sub-tone playing and fortissimo playing to bring contrast into your playing
- Hold the sustain pedal on the piano and explore improvising over each chord one at a time.
- Play the minor ii of the tritone substitution and make it appear earlier to bring more dissonance to a solo
- Set up other progressions to imply different changes eg. C7 D7 E7 F#7 to F and C7 Bb7 Ab7 Gb7 to F in the first 5 bars of a Blues in F
- Train your ear to hear these substitutions
- Just play exploring inflections and always play using a full sound

Germany

My travel in Germany was more complicated than the previous destinations as I had organised to meet people and ensembles in Berlin, Frankfurt and Cologne all in the space of one week. This part fell into place quite late in the picture and I made a few last minute changes so that I could meet Jim McNeely in Frankfurt. Jim lives in NY but has a very busy schedule so I was very happy to be meeting up with him and thrilled when I found out that he was working with the HR Big Band and Lionel Loueke as a guest.

I flew to Berlin where I was to meet pianist and composer Julia Hulesmann and also visit Australian saxophonist Adrian Tully. Adrian is a classical saxophonist who was in the year above me at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music and has since moved on to live and study in Paris, Amsterdam and now Berlin. He was already an exceptional musician while we were studying together and has worked very hard in the years since we graduated. Adrian is part of the Sonic-Art Quartet, which is Berlin-based saxophone quartet. I attended a rehearsal with this ensemble and was very impressed by their dedication, balance, blend, technique and musicality.

Julia Hulesmann is very interesting pianist and composer who has a very individual approach to music. In addition to asking questions about finding a musical identity and compositional processes I was very interested in hearing Julia's approach to setting lyrics and text to music as this is something that she is very experienced in.

I was looking forward to hearing Julia Hulesmann's thoughts on the following:

Compositional processes and concepts

Ways to specialise without feeling guilty for not doing other things

Ways to specialise without putting yourself in a corner

Selecting texts and adding music to these

Advice and useful things that I learned from Julia included:

- Everyone explores and plays around with ideas when composing. Pieces seldom come out fully formed.
- When stuck think about: what's the idea, what's in it, explore it and generate material
- Explore process: inversions, retrograde patterns. What is in the idea, how can I use it?
- Be efficient, use every minute. 5 or 10 minutes here and there. Use time well
- There are so many ways to be a musician!
- Don't feel guilty about not being able to do the other things. Stand behind your work. Do your own thing. Have your angle
- When looking for a poem, ask does it resonate? Is the it a suitable length? Decipher meaning- will they be suitable? Which way will you take it?
- Björk used the same poem in one of her pieces
- Start with atmosphere/vibe then consider structure (possible repeats and some freedom)
- Write the rhythm of the text
- How will/can you start? New form?
- Start somewhere new to stimulate ideas
- The only variables are melody, harmony, rhythm, form, sound (people, texture, vibe)
- Text: Public domain is easier
- Where do you put your energy? Administration, standards, writing? Be proactive
- Julia would write very specific charts. Very detailed but everything is up for grabs
- Writing out notes, not chord symbols can be clearer

Frankfurt

From Berlin I travelled to Frankfurt where I was to see the HR Big Band rehearse and perform with Jim McNeeley and Lionel Loueke. Jim is one of the major big band arrangers in the world and teaches at the Manhattan School of Music. He is also a very accomplished pianist and has played with musicians ranging from Stan Getz to the Village Vanguard Orchestra with whom he has worked with for several decades. Jim had arranged Lionel Loueke's music for this big band and I arrived on the third day of their rehearsal with all the players and the music sounding really great. Lionel is an incredible guitarist and composer from Benin and is currently busy working with Herbie Hancock in addition to an intense schedule as a soloist. The HR Big Band is one of the major Big Bands in Germany and they have a long history of projects with Jim McNeely. I did have one hiccup while I was staying in Frankfurt when my credit card was skimmed and my other card was blocked. This made life tricky as it took a long time (several weeks) before the money which someone had managed to withdraw in Sri Lanka was replaced. It was an interesting challenge trying to pay for hotel rooms when all one's bank cards are blocked.

While in Frankfurt I watched one rehearsal and one concert with the HR Big Band and had one meeting with Jim McNeely. I also visited two beautiful art galleries, the MMK 1 and the Städel museum.

Observations from the rehearsal

- Lionel's playing is so open, it can go in any direction at any time
- Lionel's playing is so fluid but rhythmically secure. He is always listening to what is going on in the ensemble
- Strong and clear. He left space in his solos for interaction
- Lionel has worked hard to be so solid and creative with his own thing
- His comping was very supportive but understated
- Lush orchestration, beautiful linear writing and inventive arrangements by Jim
- Jim would cut sections from the charts or drop backgrounds as required
- There were clear cues from Jim

Nice chat to Lionel

- Asked about how Lionel thinks of harmony vs thinking of lines. He said that he tries to follow an idea and not pay too much attention to harmony but resolve at some point
- Lionel would often record himself and jam then count and figure out the tune later. All tunes are double digit time signatures but would feel natural despite the odd times/phrases.

I was looking forward to hearing Jim's thoughts on the following:

Writing processes- is it all planned etc.

Advice on how to be efficient!

Finding a balance between safe and adventurous arrangements and creative license

Juggling playing, writing, leading and organising

Advice and insights for Jim included:

- Think about the form and the flow of the concert
- Make a master list of repertoire and soloists
- Fit in to the soloists' concept
- Consider how much rehearsal time. Often it can be a 2 day turnaround for 10 tunes
- Start with a leadsheet, think about the soloist, play along
- Work on a lead sheet with extra staves for ideas. Make a template- 7 lines, map form with notes, guides. Print that and write by hand
- Make adjustments. All the material (lines, melodies, voicings are all there). All the formatting is in the same place
- Meticulous on mapping out form

- Workflow: complex and hard charts to be done first. Not everything should be dense and complex
- This way it's easier to smash out a few easier charts near to the deadline
- Writing helps playing hearing-wise. Jazz practice is often learning to hear which is something that we sharpen and use when we write
- Consider solos as a structural function
- Thinking about the project lays the groundwork
- Remember: Have you ever not delivered? This can be a reassuring thought
- Panic is common
- 2 people write a work: an artist and a guy with a gun!
- Deadlines help with decision making. Good enough is often enough
- The Vanguard Orchestra would often play 3 sets at the Village Vanguard and the last set could be used for reading through new charts.

Thoughts on the HR Big Band Concert with Lionel Loueke, arranged and conducted by Jim McNeely in Aschaffenburg

- It was in a beautiful old Hall. Perhaps 600 capacity?
- Great sound. Sat next to Norbert (an amazing sound technician)
- The band sounded great and was exciting to listen to
- Lionel draws you in with every phrase. Surprising and engaging
- Jim's arrangements are really supportive but understated
- Discrete but with plenty of movement and shape
- Strong, catchy and clear writing
- Tunes often sounded simpler than they are. Tricky harmony, rhythms and phrases
- Surprising tunes 4/4 + 4/4 + 4/4 + 3/4 or 6/4 + 7/4 or 5 bar phrases etc
- Funk in 9/4!
- Unrushed- always well paced
- The tenor saxophonist Tony Lakatos has a very big sound...a beautiful tone
- Norbert follows his marked score with coloured cues for soloist and important sections
- Lionel's solo introduction was incredible- wow! So creative, amazing independence

Cologne

Florian Ross is a pianist and composer who I have been wanting to meet with for several years. His writing has been very important to me and I have spent many hours studying his recordings so it was great to finally meet with him in Cologne. I also met with Shannon Barnett who is an Australian trombonist who is now playing with the WDR Big Band in Cologne and doing very well. While at a jazz club in Cologne I met a very inspiring 60 year old teacher from Brittany who lives for travel. He has been travelling every year since he was seventeen!

I was looking forward to hearing Florian's thoughts on:

Turnaround times for big band charts

Compositional approaches

Classical approaches and differences

Advice and thoughts from Florian:

- Florian doesn't sketch anymore
- Set a limit or something. Limitations help. Choose something. Be more decisive to increase efficiency. Think intersection after intersection
- 3 days total for a charts and finished parts is common
- Arrangements are so much easier than original compositions. Fit in to what is needed, mould and shape the arrangement to complement and bring this out
- Interesting reworking of a movement of 'Dumbarton Oaks' by Stravinsky where the rhythm and orchestration remained but with new notes! Added soloing over interesting sections
- Accommodate the soloist- what do they do well?
- Specific people like specific things- sometimes no backgrounds when soloing
- Be specific but be aware that you might not get it
- Detailed mock-up with Garriton samples for the band to check out.

UK: London/Oxford/York/Newcastle

The next destination was the United Kingdom where I was to spend most of my time in London with a few excursions to Oxford, York and Newcastle for lessons and meetings. I undertook postgraduate study in York in 2011-12 so it was nice to be back in England for the first time since then.

There were several people that I was hoping to meet up with but due to schedule clashes they were unable to meet with me after all. I did manage to meet with John Metcalfe, Jason Rebello, and Tim Garland along with many other informal meetings with musician colleagues now living in the UK. John Metcalfe is a viola player and a very unique arranger who, among other things, worked on Peter Gabriel's album *Scratch My Back* which is an album that I have studied for a long time and been constantly amazed by the inventiveness in the arrangements. It was a real thrill meeting with John in Oxford for a lesson. I also met with Jason Rebello who is one of England's most important jazz pianists and has been in Sting's and Jeff Beck's bands for a long time. Talking about music and life with Jason was really inspiring! Tim Garland is a saxophone player and composer who has written for ensembles ranging from the London Symphony Orchestra to small jazz groups and has been a member of Chick Corea's bands for many years. These three musicians were all very generous and lovely people with beautiful perspectives on life and music and I feel very inspired by their approach to music and life. I also attended many special concerts including performances by Evan Parker, Gwylim Simcock and The London Symphony Orchestra conducted by and playing Thomas Ades. It was beautiful visiting major art galleries and museums including the Tate Modern, Tate Britain and the British Museum.

Meetings

Jon Brigg - Composer and conductor

Dave Smythe - Drummer

Andrew Oliver - American Jazz pianist now living in London

Chris Pearson - Australian bassist now living in London

James Cave - Composer and singer

Kim Macari - Trumpet player and booking agent involved with Jazz Up North

Riley Stone-Lonegren - Saxophonist

John Stringer- Conductor

Belle Chen - Australian classical pianist now living in London

Burke Turner - Ex Australian trumpet player who is now very savvy with entrepreneurship

David Meier - Swiss drummer who was currently touring through London

Oxford - Lesson with John Metcalfe

I was looking forward to hearing John's thoughts on:

Arranging processes, briefs, time frames

Creative license- how much freedom do you allow yourself?

Asking about the recording process

Ways to achieve a balance between playing and writing

Advice and insights from John included:

- Make changes to your workspace. Changes from without. Different room, table, walk, change things
- Challenge yourself
- Overdub, record. Use free ideas.
- Try Brian Eno cards to get into a new headspace
- Know the mindset of a player and write for them
- Give the players nice parts to play
- Pop music has the sanctity of the vocal line
- Simple and direct. Distill and refine
- Make horizontal lines, challenge the vertical default

- Nice to work from just a vocal line so that the everything else is up for grabs
- Don't lose sight of the vocal line and lyrics
- Make discrete windows of productivity and then move on. Make constraints. 30 minutes per chart!
- Generate plenty of material and then prune. Get as much down early on and prune
- Remember this is enough, this is where I'm at
- Your eyes are different to mine
- Have an idea of overall context and flavour
- Write very clear string parts- Sonore, flautando, peasant, cantabile
- Be playful- add a melody here if there needs to be something there
- Switch roles between players
- Energy has to come from somewhere
- Use the material. Squeeze the material, make it go somewhere

London - Lesson with Jason Rebello

I was looking forward to hearing Jason Rebello's thoughts on:
 Finding a balance between doing your own thing and surviving as a musician
 Finding focus and sincerity in different styles, genres and musical situations
 Momentum, routine and practise
 Switching hats between different styles
 Balancing music and administration
 Managing nerves

Advice and insights from Jason Rebello included:

- What is music for?
- View things as provisional- it's supposed to be fun
- That's where you are at that point, accept it
- Play from the heart- enjoy it
- Embrace what you love vs trying to keep up
- Am I enjoying this? Or do I think that I should?
- Be kind to yourself, you're doing your best
- Be gentle. Don't be too serious
- Be patient, trust that it will happen
- It's a mistake to wish that you were elsewhere
- It's jazz, most people won't like it anyway
- Enjoy playing! It's the same enjoyment now as when I was 11. Have fun, that's the point. Everything else is secondary and spoils it
- There needs to be enjoyment. The flavour is spoiled otherwise
- The process is the result
- It's easy to forget why we're doing it
- When you practise your craft in a genuine way in generates energy- you don't need to hustle. Administration and hustling spoils it
- Go back to the music and everything works out
- If you like it, do it
- Playing together is like having a chat
- If you're doing something then do your best. Try to get into it and enjoy it.
- Fit in the world of the leader. Enjoy different styles
- Learn the the key ingredients of each style- learn their world
- You learn a lot- new angles
- Learn from each situation
- Your heroes are people too. They may not have worked it all out. This deflates the myth of idolisation
- The awareness will always build

I was looking forward to hearing Tim Garland's thoughts on:
Structure, planning and form
Find a balance between playing, writing and teaching
Constructing shapes and gesture in writing for orchestra.

Newcastle - Lesson with Tim Garland

Advice and insights from Tim included:

- Set your stall like in a play. Make it coherent to your design
- Consider why, what, how? This will demand a good answer from you
- Integrate orchestral language
- Study Metaboles by Dutilleux, Shadows of time
- Explore overlaying modes
- Use language of use to you in improvisatory contexts
- Equivalent- what transfers between styles?
- Study 'Death of an Angel' by Piazzolla
- Make a passing chord the starting point
- Imitation, emulation and assimilation!
- Consideration informs you. Assist the objective effectively
- Harmony, rhythm and melody- toggle the balance
- Look for and create an internal narrative
- Anchor chords- make a scent, the more you play it the more gravity it gets
- Clear doubling of important notes or melodies. The chord should be balanced
- Validate yourself and keep going
- Aim to make money from writing- royalties build up
- Know where you are in the chord for tuning
- We make value judgements on what we consider beautiful
- Keep your eyes on your target and build your track to it, one piece at a time
- Time feel as a player is so important
- Deliver- write enough and write more
- Question where you are weak and fix it
- Direct your focus
- Four corners/ opposites: Loud vs soft, dense vs sparse, rhythmic, harmony etc. Ensure variety
- Not all teachers are failed players. It's rewarding talking about what you love
- Prepare your life for what you want it to be and live, dress, behave like it's already happening
- Be able to make fun of yourself

Composition and conducting advice from colleagues included:

- Just deliver. Some it will be ordinary and that's ok. Do what you can and accept that it is all at it was able to be
- Get better at trusting your early judgements
- Keep things central in your frame
- Be aware of pattern and size
- Show energy in the beat
- Represent painting the sound when conducting

Norway

Oslo was my next destination. I was hoping to make it to Bergen or Trondheim but the timing didn't work out as many of the ensembles and people that I wanted to meet with were away at the time. I therefore organised to meet with more people in Oslo instead. For the first time in my trip I was quite unwell and was in bed with a high fever for two days which wasn't very much fun.

I was very excited to be meeting pianists and composers Tord Gustavsen and Christian Wallumrod, saxophonist Trygve Seim and the bass player Arild Andersen. Oslo is not a big city but it has a very creative music scene and Norway has a very strong and distinctive musical identity in the contemporary European Jazz scene. The four musicians that I had organised to meet with are all very active as performers and composers and all have very individual, identifiable musical voices. I first met Tord Gustavsen when he headlined at the 2015 Brisbane International Jazz Festival while he was touring Australia. While I was studying in England I saw Christian Wallumrod perform with his ensemble and I have been a big fan of his music ever since. Both Tord and Christian have very distinctive musical identities and although they are very different from each other, they both draw on influences from Western Art music and adapt it to fit into their improvisatory contexts. I have studied their compositions and playing intensively as I find myself very engaged by their melodic, harmonic and textural approaches. Arild Andersen is one of Norway's most important Jazz musicians. He has been active as a musician since the late 1960s and has performed throughout the world with musicians ranging from Jan Garabarek to Sonny Rollins and Chick Corea so it was a great privilege to meet with Arild.

I also attended an album launch by the very creative drummer and percussionist Per Odvar Johansen, attended several jam sessions and visited art galleries and museums including the Astrup Fearnley, the Munch Museum, The National Museum of Art and Frognerparken.

I was looking forward to hearing Tord Gustavsen's thoughts on:
Composing while still allowing flexibility and openness in the piece
Ways to achieve balance between playing and writing
Knowing, believing and following your own thing
Administration and planning

Advice and insights from Tord included:

- The right kind of complexity- what opens us up? Which players will respond to this?
- Explore and develop one idea
- Writing can close or open the players
- What resonates?
- Feeling the complexity- where does it come out naturally?
- Soundcheck is the main arena- new material is printed and sparked here which can be developed later
- A successful piece often resembles the development that would happen anyway
- While studying in Trondheim everyone had to sing over chords, even drummers. This was great as singing forces you to understand harmony
- Admin 80%, Art 20%
- The practice is performing- do concerts!
- The level of administration hasn't changed
- Develop thick skin

I was looking forward to hearing Christian Wallumrod's thoughts on:
How much information on the score?
How much flexibility is there?
Is there a healthy balance of playing and writing at the moment?
Were you clear about your thing early on?

Advice and insights from Christian included:

- Ask yourself 'what is the reason that I am doing this or that?' Question everything
- Typical Jazz skills can be a boring starting point
- Finding a sound together- blend
- Christian questioned what he wanted to do early on. He was playing totally free, and then considered what could be in-between
- Try to get closer to a language which felt more relevant
- Not using the skills in an expected way
- It's not about which notes fit or not- explore textures, areas, gestures, rhythmic activities
- Most of what is around now sounds the same
- Always come in well prepared for each session.
- Be specific but open. Have specific ideas but be flexible with where they happen
- Soloing in a traditional way is not what it's about for me
- Function of a solo voice vs collective voice. Why should one person shout and the other accompany?
- Don't be precious and dogmatic about the material
- Be aware of when the writing can't give anymore information- do it another way, ie. good players
- Now there is less information on the score
- Explore from your end and notate the outcome.
- You can get bored by limiting the music by deciding everything
- Combination of my decisions and opening things up
- Get away from the standard conventions to find different solutions
- Dynamics, forms, rhythms, colour, harmony- all these are up for grabs

I was looking forward to hearing Arild Andersen's thoughts on:

Different head spaces when playing free and open vs some structure or straight ahead jazz.
Knowing and following your own thing

Advice and insights from Arild included:

- The sound needs to grab you, not the facility, not smart lines over smart changes
- Interplay is essential
- The tone/sound is your personality
- Let the sound float- Peacock, Miroslav
- Is it a trio or is its leader with accompaniment?
- Shorter and Miles' rhythm section is open, not just accompaniment
- How can one achieve movement without time
- There needs to be some thread somewhere
- Free jazz has been around for 50 years now, like Dixie in the 80s

Advice and insights from Trygve

- Play beautifully!
- We just played music together and I learned so much about sound, inflections and phrasing from improvising together. Trygve has a very beautiful and expressive sound and I was very inspired by his musicianship. I also tried two of his vintage instruments and have actually changed my instrument after trying his very special Conn saxophone from the late 1920s. I have since purchased an old Conn Transitional tenor saxophone from the 1930s and am enjoying the very different tonal characteristics, flexibility and warmth that it is giving me.

Sweden

The final stop for my Fellowship activities was Stockholm, Sweden. Although I have grown up in Australia, Stockholm is where I was born and where most of my family are. I lived in Sweden in 2005 and 2011 so I had a clear list of the musicians that I wanted to meet with. Ann-Sophie Söderqvist is a trumpet player and composer who teaches at the Royal Academy of Music. Magnus Lindgren has been a musical idol for me since I was 15 and Joakim Milder has a very unique approach to composition and saxophone performance. I had met with Ann-Sophie for a lesson in 2011 and have since spent more time studying her music and her recordings. She has a very nice approach to big band writing and I like how open and well-crafted her writing is. Magnus Lindgren is a saxophonist, composer, arranger, flautist and clarinetist. He is very prolific and accomplished composer and has performed all over the world and worked with musicians ranging from John Scofield to Herbie Hancock. Joakim Milder is a very interesting musician in that he successfully manages to balance very creative improvised music on one side of his life and writing commercial arrangements for rock and pop groups on the other. Joakim didn't have time for an official lesson but it was great to spend an hour or so talking informally and hearing his views on music and life. One big thing that I got out of this chat was that writing can be like improvising and that improvising can be like writing, it doesn't matter what style. I also attended two of my favourite art galleries, the Fotografiska Museet and Moderna Museet. After two months of traveling I was beginning to feel pretty tired.

I was looking forward to hearing Ann-Sophie Söderqvist's thoughts on:
Methods for planning big forms
General compositional approaches and processes

Advice and insights from Ann-Sophie Söderqvist

- Plan micro and macro levels
- Play around with the material- explore voicings and the harmony. You might not get much use of it but it opens up more things. This sets a language and spectrum for the piece
- Plan the overall program
- Consider how to capture the life of a small group and transplant this to a longer form
- The players (and choice of) are part of the composition
- Steer the soloist by backing figures
- How will the soloist be heard? Consider dynamics etc.
- How do you write successfully? Communicate your intentions via different mediums
- What language are you using to describe what you want and where is the relevance?
- Leave space and room for the melody to be heard in the spectrum
- Does the melody stand on its' own without chords?
- Does the top line stand on its' own without chords?
- Alternate section and soloists. Get tuning and balance separately

I was looking forward to hearing Magnus Lindgren's thoughts on:
Working on switching between different instruments
Finding a balance between writing and playing
Music vs administration balance
Were you clear with how you wanted to balance playing and writing early on?

Advice and insights from Magnus

- Magnus has so many different projects on the go- small group, duo, sinfonietta, big band
- Doubling isn't too much of an issue. Switching between instruments is a good rest on the chops.
- Short and intense work on administration. 15 minute intervals etc.
- Made music that he wanted to make
- 80% of his playing is outside of Sweden
- Magnus has help with the administration now
- Giggled recently with Scofield- arranged and directed!

- Important not to overcook writing
- Styles don't matter- fit in to whatever
- Write for the band and the context- room, players, strengths
- Position players in the right place, i.e. bass and percussion
- It can be hard to know when there isn't a clear path

Conclusion and Recommendations

Dissemination and implementation

The aim of my Fellowship was to further develop my skills at ensemble directing, composition and performance. I was very fortunate to meet with many of the leading composers, performers and ensemble directors in the world and the increased awareness that I gained during my travels will continue to inform every area of my professional life. It is impossible to un-learn and un-know so everything that I experienced has raised the bar and shown me what is possible and indeed expected at an international level.

I am in an ideal position to share these insights through my professional activities as a performer, composer and ensemble director and through my roles as an educator. In addition to the immediate contribution to the musical education of younger musicians through my position as Director of the Queensland Youth Orchestra Big Band and as a lecturer at the QLD Conservatorium of Music and at the JMC Academy, there will also be the ongoing benefit to professional cultural sector of Brisbane, Queensland and Australia through my activities as a composer and performer with many of Australia's leading improvising musicians. These and many more activities are scheduled to continue so there is a direct line of what I have learned to my colleagues, to the younger generation of musicians and to a broad selection of the general public. I feel very lucky to compose for and perform with many outstanding Australian musicians in a variety of styles and I was thrilled that after returning from my travels, the Berardi/Foran/Karlen Trio that I am part of received two major awards. Firstly the Queensland State Award for Excellence in Jazz at the Australian Art Music Awards and also the QMA Jazz Composition of the Year. Following my return to Brisbane I have also been fortunate to write for and play with musicians and ensembles ranging the Queensland Symphony Orchestra through to Big Bands, small Jazz groups, Pop bands and singer/songwriters.

I feel very excited to share the insights and advice that I was so fortunate to receive from the world-class performers, composers, arrangers and conductors that I met with in New York, Holland, Denmark, Germany, England, Norway and Sweden.