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### Not Quite Cricket by Jon Rose: A Review

Jane Ulman

#### Abstract

In *Not Quite Cricket*, Jon Rose reaches into the well-known story of the first Australian cricket team to play at Lords and draws out a tragedy dressed up as music hall comedy, in what he calls a 'historical intervention'.

Rose is an Australian-based polymath creator: a musician, inventor, composer, improviser, educator and entertainer. Radio production is just one strand of his prolific body of work. Over decades he has forged an innovative style, a distinctive radio form. His work has always been a fusion of genres, a hybrid of fact and invention with composed and improvised music carrying its own narrative.

With music as a given, Rose has politics, history, and often sport in the mix. As an advocate of Indigenous language and culture he's worked with a number of Aboriginal elders, teachers and performers in his radio pieces, and projects over some years reflect this commitment. *Not Quite Cricket*, like other recent works, has the loss and partial restitution of Aboriginal language at its heart.

Cricket was the first white team game in Australia and squatters [land owners] soon had Aboriginal workers playing this quintessentially English game. It was an Aboriginal team with members recruited from the Western Plains of Victoria which, in 1868, toured the United Kingdom. Rose retells a tale that has often been represented as a triumph for Aboriginal Australians and his take isn't so positive. He challenges the assumption that this was a glorious moment for Indigenous sportsmen and reveals what's latent in the unquestioning versions of the tour; he views it as a titillating racial freak show, a historical record of racism, exploitation and brutality.

Jon Rose's striking music and characters conjure a palpable world. It's true radio virtuosity, playing with the medium and creating a radical, satiric review of history, using music and seductive humour to deliver a tough, sometimes shocking, message.

*Not Quite Cricket* is based on historical documents and aims to tell the story from the Aboriginal team's perspective. The author abandons conventional historical feature 'readings' and instead, from the archival accounts, creates characters larger than life, vital and engaging. The protagonist, Yanggendinyanyuk (played by Richard Kennedy), speaks in the Wergaia language. He's a strong,

dignified presence. The narrator (Warren Foster) is informal, spontaneous, full of energy and wry humour, speaking a kind of 'pidgin' English. The Master of Ceremonies (Andrew McLennan) is more music hall villain than anything else, taking a wicked relish in his appalling role. The program gains enormous strength from its fictional framework, opening up opportunities to explore undercurrents not normally considered in archival documents.

It's not just about the fate of that cricket team but about persistent racism and its ramifications in this country. Rose's program leaves a lasting impression of the havoc wreaked by white settlers. The tour becomes a metaphor for cultural conquest and white domination bringing with it the fragmentation, often obliteration, of crucial aspects of Aboriginal ways of life.

*DISCLOSURE: I need to say that I'm included in the credits for this program, having helped with some travel arrangements and in introducing one of the performers to Jon Rose. However, I took no part in the conception or creation of the work and feel free to write this review.*

#### **Keywords**

Jon Rose, Aboriginal cricket team, history, politics, music

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Rose is an Australian-based polymath creator: a musician, inventor, composer, improviser, educator and entertainer. Radio production is just one strand of his prolific body of work. Over decades he has forged an innovative style, a distinctive radio form. His work has always been a fusion of genres, a hybrid of fact and invention with composed and improvised music carrying its own narrative. With music as a given, Rose has politics, history, and often sport in the mix. As an advocate of Indigenous language and culture he's worked with a number of Aboriginal elders, teachers and performers in his radio pieces, and projects over some years reflect this commitment. *Not Quite Cricket*, like other recent works, has the loss and partial restitution of Aboriginal language at its heart.

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# NOT QUITE CRICKET

Produced for BBC Radio 3 Between The Ears by Somethin' Else,  
broadcast 21/1/2012.

Texts spoken and sung up by Richard Kennedy, Warren Foster, Andrew McLennan, and Jon Rose.

Musicians: Hollis Taylor - violin, Anthony Pateras - piano, Rishin Singh - trombone, tuba, Laura Altman - clarinet, Jon Rose - violin, piano.

Special thanks to Jane Ulman, Julie Reid, Nick Shimmin, Corinne Vernizeau, Adam Mountford.

Music and text composed or augmented by Jon Rose.

Executive producer - Joby Waldman.

Recorded on location in Victoria and New South Wales by Jon Rose.

Duration: 29' 07"

***Audio link at end.***

*In May 2012 Not Quite Cricket took third place in the Documentary category at the 16th Prix Marulic*

Like political propagandists, I've discovered with my own projects, if you want to rewrite the history of something... you can do a lot worse than pick the medium of radio. Apart from being accessible and cheap it parallels the nature of sound itself... always arriving and disappearing. How many times on listening to a radio programme have you said to yourself... did I hear that right, did he really say that? Then the moment's already disappeared into the ether.

(1) Rose 1997

## INTRODUCTION

Listening options have changed a lot in the years since Rose wrote about the fleeting nature of audio disappearing into the ether, but a first hearing of his work can still have the same surprising impact. This 'rewriting of history' gains a lot from the unexpected and moves at a pace that gives little time for dwelling on that fugitive moment. From the first sounds I found myself asking 'is that what I thought it was'? There is never a sense of waiting for anything. It races along. The whole is like a colourful event – a fusion of documentary, music, theatrical entertainment.

## FRAMING DOCUMENTARY

In *Not Quite Cricket*, what he calls 'a historical intervention', Jon Rose reaches into the well-known story of the first Australian cricket team to play at Lords and draws out a tragedy dressed up as music hall comedy. In fact, that's the context in which he sets this radio documentary, the music hall show of the latter 19th century, involving comedy, popular song, variety entertainment and strange or ingenious speciality acts

The program begins with running steps, a bowler's run-up, and the 'thwak' of willow on leather, no mistaking that. Then repeated quickly it's a clap, a smack. The sound scrapes backwards, reversed recordings, smack/crack again, a ricochet, this time like the echoing decay of a gunshot. There's an unsettling ambiguity, a hint of menace. It sounds like cricket, but not quite. We need to be on our mettle. Is this a gentleman's game or a shooting party, with all that suggests to those familiar with Australia's colonial killing sprees?

The title itself is highly suggestive, and ambiguous. Is this 1868 Aboriginal team, playing the quintessentially English game, not quite the real thing? Is the team engaged in other not so gentlemanly activities, like novelty sports? Or perhaps the real question is why might the historic tour be seen as unsportsmanlike, unfair or not acceptable? Why is it 'not quite cricket'?

The tour has attracted a great deal of attention as a focus for racial attitudes of the time both in Australia and Britain. A quick search shows an abundance of commentaries on the tour itself and, more generally, the proliferation of Aboriginal teams on country properties just 20 years after the whites had taken possession. Each landowner had a team of black workers who were sought after because of their sporting prowess and they began playing station [farm] against station. As leading Aboriginal scholar Marcia Langton sees it:

The way that Aboriginal people were donned in traditional English cricket gear and lined up in teams...was a form of racist entertainment for the white settlers. You know, they were a circus exhibit. (2)

Some accounts are dispassionate, but at the extremes the tour has been seen as an event to be celebrated and mythologised (3), an opportunity for accomplished Aboriginal sportsmen to bask in the glow of the colonial 'civilising' influence (4) or a blatant exploitation of the black players as a commercial 'freak-show'. Writer and historian David Frith says that there was a lot of novelty cricket being played in England at the time, for example, people in outrageous costumes, the one-legged playing against the one-armed. He thinks it quite possible that the touring Aboriginal cricketers were expected to be equally freakish performers. (5)

It must have seemed a great opportunity for an unprincipled entrepreneur to choose a talented team of Aboriginal players and arrange an overseas tour, capitalising on the British craze for novelty. Rose's take is unequivocal.

The story is told that some white Pommie crook has the idea of 'hey let's tour a bunch of blackfellas to England, playing cricket, and it'll be like a sort of a titillating racial freak show'. And that's exactly what they did. (6)

*Not Quite Cricket* is based on historical documents and aims to tell the story from the Aboriginal team's perspective. The fictional framework Rose creates allows him to move out of the strictures of a faithfully historic piece and the leeway to uncover and highlight striking moments which show us events from a fresh perspective. There are no interviews with experts, no readings from documents of the time, but the text he's written reveals a wide knowledge of the tour itself and the progress and effects of white colonization in Australia.

Rose is a political artist. His work has a message. His method is deft and his touch light; often provocative, always playful, iconoclastic, radical. His tone is never dour. He doesn't preach, and is not didactic, there's no hint of the pulpit or the lectern. Though there are plenty of well-aimed jibes and some good-humoured clowning, this work is nothing if not serious. The collision of humour and horror is breathtaking. As an advocate of Indigenous language and culture he has worked with a number of Aboriginal elders, teachers and performers in his radio pieces and projects over some years reflect this commitment.

The text is tight and jam-packed with information; not a wasted word, not a missed opportunity. And from the archival accounts he creates archetypal characters, larger than life, vital and engaging; the dignified Yanggendinyanyuk, our genial Narrator, the gleefully wicked Music Hall MC. Between them they cover a lot of historical ground. They impart not just facts but also the spirit of the time and how the author sees it. We know there are many versions of the 'truth' even when documenters strive for objectivity. And fiction can often expose a surprising truth, getting to the essence of a motive or an idea.

As distinguished theatre and radio director René Farabet writes:

The maker of documentaries is a sort of dramatist of reality... his job does not consist of reproducing the facts of life, but in pointing to them. By cutting out, arranging sound images, making dialectic use of the 'sound-syntax', he shows us the world as a 'show' we have to understand and interpret. (7)

*Not Quite Cricket* is a 'show' with many levels. The elements of story, character, language, music and sound are tightly bound, the structure integrated. All the language in this piece is significant; the Narrator's bantering Aboriginal argot (with the unconventional addition of the author occasionally in the background supporting and enthusing with the Narrator), the Music Hall MC's fruity and fulsome spruiking and Richard Kennedy's use of Wergaia

language in the role of Yanggendyinyuk. Like some of Rose's other recent productions (8) this work has the loss and partial restitution of language at its heart.

Rose explains:

The key character is Yanggendyinyuk who was a Wotjobaluk from the western plains in Victoria in the 1860s. Wergaia was Yanggendyinyuk's language and it's been more than 100 years of silence that marks the destruction of the Wergaia peoples and their culture.

Anyway the great-great-great-grandson, Richard Kennedy, I found him. I was looking for speakers of the Wergaia language and I was told 'there's a woman who's trying to help this group, this family in the Western Plains, restore their language'. And I thought that's unbelievable. But sure enough they're pulling together the language. It's very important to have Wergaia in the piece. And it's Richard who begins to relate the story of this obscure oddity in the colonial narrative. (6)

## USE OF MUSIC

The use of music is distinctive and integral. It is a narrative strand. In the world Rose creates the music has a logical place, like incidental music underscoring and illuminating the action, as a band might have done on a music hall stage. As a radio narrative device it's wonderfully flexible, whether it jollies us along or creates unease. It has character, a voice, a viewpoint and makes scene transitions simple.

The kind of thing we're talking about was pretty violent and aggressive and dangerous and rough and so I wanted the music to reflect this. I took popular music from the time and rewrote it and arranged for a band. So you can imagine there might have been a band on stage with violin, piano, clarinet, euphonium and a drum. So you've got the atmosphere of the music and it interests me to engage with history like that and to rewrite the music how I'd like it. (6)

The instrumentation is innovative, the effects often quirky. Its function is arterial, delivering information, conjuring images with clarity and immediacy. It's also an energetic driving force; sweet and sour, carnival, whimsical, ominous, religious, dolorous, military and deadly by turns. It avoids the cliché of adopting Aboriginal instruments and is a reminder that one of the 'civilising' influences of the white colonials was Western music. Missions across the country had Aboriginal brass bands and choirs, just as the station owners had cricket teams.

## DECONSTRUCTION

The piece starts at a cracking pace with dramatic, ambiguous cricket sounds, immediately followed by a trombone, playing something like an ancient brass fanfare, which accompanies and almost converses with Richard, as the voice of Yanggendyinyuk. He begins in the Wergaia language, sounding dignified, formal, authoritative. It's a declaration.

Next is the Narrator who, in an economical 20 seconds or so, draws a first sketch of the hero and gives us a clue about conquest, language and cultural domination.

The trombone continues.

1.00 Narrator: Yeah, that's him, Yanggendyinyuk. It mean 'running feet' in the whitefella tongue. He run really fast. Run rings around all of us...we have our own game like marngrook [a football game from the Western Plains of Victoria], but whitefella say 'nah' you gotta get with the new game, cricket. It's how it's gotta be in time of whitefella.....

The Narrator is Warren Foster, a Yuin man, a performer/ teacher from the New South Wales south coast. Like the other characters, information in the Narrator's story is gathered from 19th century contemporary documents but his delivery is cheeky and modern. The Narrator's style is spontaneous, informal. He speaks a kind of pidgin, a 'blackfella' argot. His version of the invaders' language highlights the foreignness foisted upon him. But the text is subtle, full of wit, playful self-irony and mockery of the whites. His cheerful, up-beat banter is well calculated to keep listeners engaged. His tone is sometimes amused, sometimes bemused, sometimes a little sad as he describes the crazy behaviour of the whites. He's like Puck, girdling the earth.

We're on a cricket field, or in a music hall or sitting around a campfire with him relating how it was to be on this tour.

1.24 Then there's a cheerful music hall melody, played by the ensemble, with unusual flutter on the brass before the piece is cut by percussive discords on a prepared (or ruined?) piano and a bassy rumble. The jolly music gone, there's more than a hint of something amiss, something out of key.

2.06 Yanggendiynanyuk again. He whispers urgently in language, then we hear him sotto voce testing the foreign word 'crik-et', sounding it out carefully as though to make sense, not only of this single word, but the culture which it represents. Yanggendiynanyuk's presence is dramatic, intense, has gravitas. His delivery is sometimes declamatory and sometimes very quiet, even at times, an almost inaudible whisper. He is both the Wotjobaluk warrior and the colonised man.

Then again, the horn sounds.

2.18 At first Yanggendiynanyuk say 'no, no' to play cricket 'the game belong whitefella'. Then the elders say 'you show them what blackfella can do'.

The players were given European soubriquets: for example 'Ballrinjarrimin became known as Sundown, Bripumyarrimin as King Cole, Grongarrong Mosquito, Lyterjerbillijun Jim Crow and Yanggendiynanyuk (or Jungumjenanuke) was called Dick-a-dick'. (9) Replacing traditional names with nicknames was part of the process, adopted by colonisers, of eradicating identity and language. Rose's wit is sharp and oblique. Instead of acknowledging offence at the practice of re-naming, his Narrator shrugs it off with an ostensibly playful, but telling, dig at the whites.

2.30 Whitefellas are a little deaf so they call him Dick-a-dick. And that's how it was, how it still is and we call him Dick-a-dick too. What you say? Can't you hear me? You...deaf? Rose is in background tossing questions to the Narrator.

Trombone punctuations.

2.57 He also top tracker. He find whitefella kids one time lost in bush. The whitefellas say 'no more Dick-a -dick. He now King Richard'. Cop that!

The music transforms to a stately medieval flourish with an unorthodox rough bowed ending. It's just a few seconds of music but it creates an instantaneous image - the black tracker, the king; pictures flash before us and then the bowing moves us on.

Then, keeping up the tension, there are violin punctuations through the next few sentences. The Narrator's voice is in three cuts, and three positions in the image. The voice has a sense of spatial movement, and temporal progress. We are with him in the moment, then the moment has passed. A nuance, a 'thick' descriptive detail like many, in the production.

3.17 Captain Boss, gather the blackfella team together one time. We had to put our mark on a piece of paper – whitefella law. No blackfella can read or write so we don't know what the paper say.

The focus shifts. The Narrator's voice changes perspective and position from right to centre. As though sadly shaking his head, he says:

No matter. Boss ran off with all the money.

Then with reverb, his voice comes from the left. He ran off with all the cricket money.

The music hall melody begins again, a little less sweet; there's an insistent repeated high note, almost like a heart monitor, which flatlines. The sustained note is accompanied by cricket sounds (close, clear, bat on ball) and continues as we hear Yanggendyinyuk, muffled then emerging from the sounds. He is whispering urgently in Wergaia with the awkward 'crick-et' being sounded again, fading up and becoming more intense.

And I wanted to relate this Aboriginal notion that everything is bound up in the same culture, so the law, the song, the dance the texts, the activity, absolutely everything is bound up. So why not sport too. And of course, they had all these sports that we've never heard of. There's no separation between sport and art. So I wanted that buried in the whole atmosphere of the thing. (6)

4.24 Mr William Hayman, Big Boss, say "this is the law". "It lasts for ever. We stand by the law" says him (laugh). Yanggendyinyuk say "blackfella law belong the land, probably last plenty longer that the whitefella law on a little piece of paper".

Violin phrases punctuate the Narrator's differentiation of white law and black law. The exposition is simple. The significance of the story widens. We're invited to think about the fundamental differences between English and

Aboriginal concepts of law and therefore of life, the way it is lived, the sense of connectedness and cosmology.

The story keeps accruing meanings and significance, and the case against the white managers develops. By the end of the piece there's a catalogue of offences; concentric stories of exploitation, racism, of cultural loss, exile from country and the pillaging of sacred burial sites for the 19th century scientific bone trade.

Commercial exploitation and fraud began with Captain Gurnett embezzling the team's funds even before they boarded the ship. Then the Aboriginal players were taken from country and dumped half a world away in an inhospitable climate. The narrator is cold to the bone in England.

6.50 There's a cacophony ending in a sigh, like a fairground calliope running out of steam. Then the sound of a creaking violin bow through the next section.

Narrator: (parodic shaking) England bad place. We all bloody freezing... Our bones are shakin' something terrible. We all sick, Boss. He say 'you play the cricket or you get no tucker.' Every day we play the cricket. Every day them white fellas come laughing and clapping at what we do.

The players were certainly serious and talented cricketers, with Unaarrimin and Yellanach gaining particular praise. The side won 14 matches, lost the same number and drew on 19 occasions. During the tour they were on the field for 99 out of a possible 126 days. (10)

Besides the punishing schedule of matches, the team had to put on a sports show including novelty races. They were dressed in costumes which made them look naked and had to take part in a running backwards race. A joke about the Antipodes perhaps? There was also a dangerous crowd pleaser in which spectators were invited to throw cricket balls at one of the players.

So it wasn't just cricket. It was a freak show, the worst tasteless imaginable stuff. This is only like 20 years before the bullshit science of eugenics came in.

What I also wanted to engage with was the sheer racism that existed in music hall in that epoch. They probably wouldn't have thought of it as such but if you read the lyrics of the music hall music, it's unbelievable stuff. The 'N' word is in there all the time.

And you had this increasing use of blackface. It was a major part of the music hall and it was a major part of why this cricket thing took place. People were going to go and laugh and amuse themselves looking at golliwogs. That was the gig. And I thought about this and another thing entered my head. I remember seeing the Black & White Minstrel Show on BBC mainstream television in 1968. It was still going. Mick Jagger with that ecstatic strutting around the stage, that's all black face minstrelsy from 100 years earlier. (6)

7.50 Enter the third major character, preceded by a brass fanfare and a prolonged bass rumble (could we imagine stamping feet?).

'Milords, Ladies and Gentlemen, it is with great gratuitous pleasure, yet tasteful propriety, that I propose to you this day an authentic entertainment the likes of which have never been witnessed on our fair shores.

Andrew McLennan plays the energetically malign Master of Ceremonies with relish. He has only four speeches but they pack a real punch. It's through his character that we're given Rose's satiric vision of the racist Victorian psyche. We can just about hear the twirl of his waxed moustaches, see the glint of his teeth, smell the Macassar Oil which plasters his hair. His speeches are delivered with exuberance and careful elocution. Rolling the fantastic words around, he takes pause for huge theatrical breaths - the better to titillate. Alliteration, hyperbole, clichéd bigotry rise in crescendo to a mock hysterical pitch, almost in falsetto. It's highly entertaining, this ghastly glee, until we remember that this isn't some fanciful pantomime and (allowing for some exaggeration to heighten the absurdity and drama) this really happened. (10, 11)

I bring you from the outward reaches of our glorious empire, a team of colonial natives, raw in their exotic, sumptuous splendor, from an antipodean place, so distant that even the heavens seem upside down; from a primeval wilderness, empty of all civilization, from a land where the savages' terrifying brow, is as I speak, being soothed by the civilizing virtue of our great queen's grace, and may God have mercy on their top order batsmen.

He takes elaborate pleasure in his own joke about the top order batsmen. The laughter continues into the sound of applause and trilling music which morphs

into what sounds like an unruly fife band with drum, playing *Pop Goes the Weasel*. Fife and drum, a military band, would have played some of the earliest British music heard in the Australian colonies.

With great economy of language, a few close clean cricket sounds, some background voices and always the chameleon music, Jon takes us onto the field and into the lives of the team. There's anticipation, a drumroll panned from side to side. The MC's speeches are leavened with more innocently playful scenes with the Narrator describing and enjoying the prowess of the Aboriginal team, and Yanggendyinyuk dodging his team mates' spears: 'we just playing'. The Narrator vocalises the sounds of whizzing long shot balls, 'woossh', putting us in the moment, in the scene. There's the crowd's appreciation, the Narrator mimicking 'well played... well done Sonny Jim'. After a day of triumph for Yanggendyinyuk on the field, slap-up tucker at 'the place belong tea', the Narrator concludes 'yeah, that cricket business, he may not be so bad'. We're off our guard, lured into believing that the show might just be harmless fun after all. And then:

17.06 Gentlemen, at this juncture and for those sporting a strong arm, we do invite you onto the field of play to throw cricket balls as hard as you can at the aborigine's chief, so named Dick-a-dick. (A luxurious intake of breath, relish). Now he's a cunning young rascal and difficult to hit. Go on, knock his black head off. Ah ha ha haha.

The cricket balls crack again like guns as they're thrown at Yanggendyinyuk and parried. The Narrator vocalises the sounds and with defiance and great satisfaction tells us 'them white fellas they never hit him. They never hit (with slow emphasis) Yanggendyinyuk'.

Some historians report on this part of the performance with bland acceptance. (13, 14) This is the moment of truth. Rose has framed the story in such a way that we can no longer interpret the MC's attitude as being merely patronising, arrogant and misguided. He is malevolent. Humour and horror collide. It's breathtaking. If we were seduced before by the comic verbosity of the MC we are now totally shocked by the vehemence with which he invites members of the crowd to 'knock his black head off'. Okay, this is Rose's artistic licence but the reality, if we think about it, is also shocking. The sinister side of the tour is a brutal freak-show. The 'civilised' game has been subsumed into a circus show, fair play has been subverted by the temptations of 'fair game', with Yanggendyinyuk being treated as a human coconut shy.

The music becomes slow and hymn-like, with the voice of an old piano leading the other instruments. Yanggendiynanyuk is whispering, slowly, distinctly. Is it a funeral oration? Then in a whisper the Narrator confirms it. 'King Cole, he died from tuberculosis and we bury him in the Tower Hamlets place, poor bugger.'

So Bripumyarrimin (King Cole) was buried abroad, his bones forever exiled from country. (15) Two other players were very ill and returned to Australia before the end of the tour. (16) We were given a hint that something like this might happen with the Narrator's earlier comments about the climate and the players' vulnerability: England bad place. We all bloody freezing... Our bones are shakin' something terrible. We all sick, Boss. This raises fundamental questions of great importance to Aboriginal people about not being able to go home, being exiled from country and culture. We can think of this event as a metaphor for the widespread dislocation and destruction suffered at the hands of white settlers back in Australia.

But the show's not over yet; there are more dramaturgical twists and more narrative turns before that.

19.00 The narrator informs us that two more of the team were sick and died after returning home. This information, shockingly, is immediately juxtaposed with a burst of laughter and crowd applause. A dramatic musical sequence follows, then close, hyper-real multiple wickets falling, like fiddle sticks, and we find ourselves transported to the present.

22.06 This scene is something like a largo, a lull, conjuring a green field, creams, a slow sunny Sunday afternoon. It's a cut-up cricket commentary interspersed with trombone and Yanggendiynanyuk popping up in the other channel; a kind of seesaw between cultures and between the past and now.

It's completely insane as everyone who listens to cricket knows... commentary in cricket is almost an art form in itself. It's beautifully surreal. It's a time-based medium of insane proportions. (6)

Is this cut-up an indulgence? Perhaps, but the fantastic and unexpected lexicon of cricket commentary exposes us to another language as foreign to those who don't know cricket as the English of the colonizers was to the Aboriginal peoples. Rose keeps taking us by surprise, turning an idea around and asking us to think.

At 23.55 there's a fragmentation of voice, a mash up of Wergaia and English with snippets of 'cricket' and 'pitch' and laughter. It's like a language lesson: Richard is recovering his traditional voice.

25.22 Narrator: We never see the cricket money from Boss, Mr Lawrence... him disappear quick. (16)

Piano, music hall melody with comic comments from the brass.

25.49 Narrator: Yeah me trying to understand this cricket business white fella say (mimics) 'fair play' (mimics again)'well played old chap, yeah the old chaps are playing really well'.

Piano discord, bass rumble, urgent Wergaia. A music hall melody is stuck up again, becoming sour and ending with a tuba blurt. This is the light relief before the final colonial blow. Having taken tradition, language, country, and life from Indigenous Australians, what more could be wanted? Sounds of digging bring us back to earth, in fact into the earth, to imagine the generations of anthropologists, archaeologists and ethnologists exhuming and removing Aboriginal remains. The ransacking went on unchecked for more than 150 years. Some remains have been returned to country and while the process continues there are still those in the scientific community who are loath to relinquish them.

Having Andrew McLennan play both MC and (with his voice sounding a little older but no wiser) the royal academician, may have been a measure of expedience. But it has the effect, surely anticipated on Rose's part, of making us understand that across white society from musical hall spruiker to learned scientist, there's the same sense of superiority, ingrained racism, and the same exploitation. The money-hungry showman and the fame-seeking scientist are equally racist and equally exploitative.

27.07 "Ladies and gentlemen I am delighted on behalf of the Royal Society to accept this superb collection of Aboriginal bones and artefacts, including 10 splendid skulls in mint condition if I may say so, to be utilized for scientific inquiry into primitive races and their backward intellectual and spiritual condition."

The Narrator, speaking with some bewilderment and outrage, but no trace of sentimentality, has the last words:

27.37 “Not good when we come back to country. Our mob dying all over. Then we hear the white fella mob are digging up all our old people and takin’ them bones to England. What kind of crazy people do that for? Old ones belong country. Arhh that’s plenty bad, nothing more bad than that one. HIM JUST NOT CRICKET.”

## CONCLUSION

Rose’s program leaves a lasting impression of the havoc wreaked by white settlers. The tour becomes a metaphor for cultural conquest and white domination bringing with it the fragmentation, often obliteration, of crucial aspects of Aboriginal ways of life. It’s not just about the fate of that cricket team, but about persistent racism and its ramifications in this country. He reminds us of issues emerging from the past and catapulting us into the relationships which still exist today.

Speaking about the history of music and culture, Rose said:

My point is that you can and should research and write your own history – if it has content, it will ring true. It might also provide the materials with which to challenge the future. (17)

As a coda, and considering the relevance of Rose’s work, we might turn our attention to a headline news story of just a few weeks past. Issues of racial vilification and crowd manipulation are still very publicly active in the crucible of professional sport. In case we’re inclined to feel a bit complacent about the progress we’ve made in humanitarian terms, lest we feel more enlightened and superior to the crowds at Lords who were delighted with the cricket ‘show’ and prepared to throw cricket balls at Yanggendyinyuk, Australians have recently had our own freak-show, with modern MCs (shock jocks and sensationalist commentators) manipulating crowds into hurling insults and racist mass bullying. We’ve witnessed the cruel and shameful treatment of Indigenous athlete Adam Goodes, AFL star player and 2014 Australian of the Year. Quoted in the Australian edition of *The Guardian* of July 29, retired Swans premiership player Michael O’Loughlin said Goodes was battling with the ongoing booing:

“He is really struggling mentally and physically. There’s only so much a man can take before his legs start to buckle. This isn’t a WA thing or an AFL thing – it’s an Australian issue. To be called an Abo, a nigger, a black so and so, for your entire life, and then expected to sit there and accept it, it’s a reflection on Australia and where we are as a country.”(17)

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**[FIND AUDIO HERE:](http://www.jonroseweb.com/sound/h_radio_not_quite_cricket_extract.mp3)**

[http://www.jonroseweb.com/sound/h\\_radio\\_not\\_quite\\_cricket\\_extract.mp3](http://www.jonroseweb.com/sound/h_radio_not_quite_cricket_extract.mp3)

*The entire program is available here although the URL is identified as an ‘extract’. Please note that the clip is provided for LISTENING ONLY. It may not be downloaded or used for commercial purposes.*

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(3) For example there’s a film, directed by Bob Ellis, called *Dreaming of Lords*, “about the 1988 pilgrimage to the home of cricket, Lords in England, by 17 Aboriginal cricketers marking 120 years since their predecessors went. It seemed a story that was such a great one, but it's not celebrated. No one can take away that awesome experience and the history we created”.—Mark Manion, producer of *Dreaming of Lords*. *Dreaming Of Lords - Aboriginal movies - Creative Spirits* [https://www.google.com.au/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&rlz=1C1CHMD\\_enAU560AU560&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=creative+spirits+dreaming+of+lords](https://www.google.com.au/webhp?sourceid=chrome-instant&rlz=1C1CHMD_enAU560AU560&ion=1&espv=2&ie=UTF-8#q=creative+spirits+dreaming+of+lords)

(4) Bernard Whimpress: "Cricket has been upheld as the most noble of games and the one which epitomises 'fair play'. But it has also been seen as a game invented by, and for, white men. The relationship between white Australians and Aboriginal people has undergone several changes of meaning... Initially cricket was used in the 19th century as an agent of civilization." ( Whimpress, B (1992). "Few and Far Between: Prejudice and Discrimination Among Aborigines in Australian First Class Cricket 1869 to 1988", *Journal of the Anthropological Society of South Australia*, volume 30.)

(5) Frith, D (2001), "1868 Aboriginal Cricket team", *The Sports Factor*, ABC Radio National, August 17, 2001 Retrieved 28 August 2015 from <http://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/sportsfactor/1868-Aboriginal-cricket-team/3490236>

(6) Rose, Jon (2015), interview with Jane Ulman, Springwood, New South Wales, March 2015.

(7) Farabet R (1997). Boundless Sound Festival, 1997, Program Notes "Documentary IS Drama".

(8) *Ivories in the Outback* (2008 - Producing organisation/s: Somethin' else for BBC Radio 3) with Dr J. G. Gumbula, a Yolgnu elder from Galwinku, Elcho Island; a sonic and dramatic survey of the pianos and organs of colonial Australia, sent via bullock dray or camel to the outback - based on documents and the imagination. What did the indigenous peoples of Australia think of this artefact of empire as their land was taken from them? *Salvado* (2009- Producing organisation/s: Somethin' else for BBC Radio 3) The main means of communication between Bishop Salvado (who arrived in Western Australia in 1846) and the local Aboriginal Nyungah was through music; notably, the establishment of an Aboriginal string orchestra and then a brass band. What the Nyungah thought about this has never been assessed - till now.

Rose's recent project *Ghan Tracks* (2014) which Rose called 'live radio' a multi-media experience performed in collaboration with the Performance Space at Carriageworks in Sydney. A radiophonic version was broadcast in Soundproof on ABC Radio National in February this year. It includes a story related in the Arrrente language. It's a version of the Ghan's arrival into Alice Springs told by Peter Paltharre who relates the Indigenous story of the wild dog from the south that comes to destroy their land and culture.

<http://www.jonroseweb.com/>

(9) Information about European names replacing traditional ones found at [www.CreativeSpirits.info](http://www.CreativeSpirits.info), Aboriginal culture - Sport - Aboriginal cricket teams, retrieved 27 August 2015

Source: <http://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/sport/aboriginal-cricket-teams#ixzz3jxmXC72h>

(10) Based on an article by sports journalist Olly Ricketts dated 9 July 2013. Retrieved 28 August 2015 from [www.bbc.com/news/magazine-23225434](http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-23225434)

(11) Olly Ricketts 9 July 2013 writes: 'The Minutes of the MCC (Marylebone Cricket Club) from 1868 show the Committee was dead against the idea of "tribal demonstrations" following any potential match, stating that "the exhibition was not one suited for Lord's ground". There followed a heated debate within the Committee, though the Treasurer concluded by noting that "the performance seemed to give general satisfaction and the public would have been much disappointed if the sports had not taken place".' Retrieved 28 August 2015 from [www.bbc.com/news/magazine-23225434](http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-23225434)

(12) "The team provoked mixed reactions from the English public. The Times described the tourists as 'the conquered natives of a convict colony' and a 'travestie upon cricketing at Lords'. The matches, however, were well attended by a curious public with the first event at the Oval drawing 20,000 spectators. The entertainment included demonstrations of boomerang and spear throwing as well as cricket." Quoted from an article about collection items on the National Museum of Australia website. Retrieved 28 August 2015 from [http://www.nma.gov.au/collections/collection\\_interactives/cricketing\\_journeys/cricket\\_html/the\\_australian\\_eleven/the\\_australian\\_eleven\\_the\\_first\\_australian\\_team](http://www.nma.gov.au/collections/collection_interactives/cricketing_journeys/cricket_html/the_australian_eleven/the_australian_eleven_the_first_australian_team)

(13) "Dick-a-Dick became an undoubted star of the tour because of his skill at 'dodging'. Spectators threw cricket balls from 10 paces, which Dick-a-Dick 'dodged' using a parrying shield and leangle (an Aboriginal war club). He was hit just once on the entire tour." Retrieved 28 August 2015 from [www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-23225434](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-23225434)

(14) "A great athlete, Dick-a-Dick would arm himself with a parrying shield and a leangle (killer boomerang), and for the price of one shilling would challenge all and sundry to throw a cricket ball at him from a distance of ten paces. If a challenger got a ball past Dick-a-Dick and struck him anywhere on his body, the ball thrower would be paid ten shillings. At The Oval in May 1868, seven men threw in unison at one point, but not one ball found its mark. The balls aimed

at his head and chest he easily parried with his shield, and those thrown below the waist were deflected by skilful use of the leangle.” Ashley Mallett

Retrieved 28 August 2015 from

[www.espncriinfo.com/magazine/content/story/554060.html](http://www.espncriinfo.com/magazine/content/story/554060.html)

(15) “One of the cricketers, Bripumyarrimin (King Cole) died from tuberculosis early in the tour and was buried at Victoria Park Cemetery (Tower Hamlets) in London”. Retrieved 28 August 2015 from [www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=87056192](http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=87056192)

(16) Two other members of the team suffered bitterly after Bripumyarrimin’s death, and returned to Sydney in September, a month before the tour ended. *Sporting Life*, 28 October 1868 cited in Tatz C. (1987), *Aborigines in Sport*, Lutheran Publishing House: Adelaide p. 26.

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(18) Retrieved 28 August 2015 from

<http://www.theguardian.com/sport/2015/jul/29/adam-goodes-contemplating-retirement-from-afl>

NOTE: Jon Rose book:

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IMAGE: JON ROSE'S NEW BOOK OF COLLECTED WRITINGS BY VARIOUS  
MUSICIANS

## **rosenberg 3.0**

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**CURATED BY JON ROSE**

## JANE ULMAN

Jane Ulman was a producer/director with ABC Radio Arts for many years and is now a freelance sound artist and program maker. She has produced documentary, drama, poetry, music, radio mix and soundscape projects and fusions of these forms. She has won success at the Prix Italia on five occasions, at the Prix Marulic on four and New York Festival twice. She has received numerous other awards and commendations, both in Australia and internationally, and her work has been heard in many countries.

Jane has an abiding love of the Australian outback and has been recording and documenting wildlife for years, With Phillip Ulman she released a series of environmental soundscapes on CD. Another main interest is in ethology and animal protection.

As a sound artist she has collaborated on installations with painters, photographers, sculptors and dancers and has created sound tracks for film and theatre works. She has also produced sound installations for public spaces including works at The Rocks in Sydney, on Cockatoo Island, the Museum of Beijing and the Museum of Melbourne.

She has taught at several universities and led workshops at international conferences, covering subjects from cultural studies to creative writing, directing performers and radiophonic production.

