COMPOSER, WIFE AND MOTHER:
MARGARET SUTHERLAND
AS CONFLICTED SUBJECT

Jillian Graham

Fig. 1
Margaret Sutherland, c. 1904
(by Jane Sutherland)

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that the thesis presented by me for the degree of Master of Music (Musicology) comprises only my original work except where due acknowledgement is made in the text to all other material used.

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ABSTRACT

Margaret Sutherland (1897-1984) is regarded as one of the most innovative and influential Australian composers of the first half of the twentieth century. As early as the 1920s, she could be compared with contemporary composers in Europe who were reacting against aspects of the Romantic style of the nineteenth century.

Sutherland was brought up in the midst of a liberal, intellectual, creative and artistic family, in which her principal role models were single women and intellectual men, and her musical aspirations were encouraged and fostered. Having studied for two years in Europe (1923-1925), she returned to Australia, where she expected to develop her vocation as a composer. In 1927 she married, and had two children, the first in 1929 and the second in 1931. During her troubled marriage she experienced conflict beyond her expectations in combining the pursuit of her musical aspirations with her domestic responsibilities as wife and mother.

To date, an in-depth feminist biographical study of Sutherland has not been attempted, yet the challenges women face in successfully combining marriage, motherhood and career can only be revealed through closer inspection of this female experience. Using a methodology derived from contemporary feminist biographical theory, the basis for and manifestation of the conflict Sutherland experienced between her public, musical and her private, domestic roles will be explored.

It will be shown that in spite of the difficulties faced as a woman composer and in her private life, she managed to achieve a considerable amount, making contributions which should be valued, both in the private, domestic sphere, and in her public life as composer and champion of the interests of Australian composers and Australian music in general. The nature of her achievements suggests that she had the tenacity to avoid being smothered by the unhappiness of her circumstances, or to allow her individuality and ambitions to be thwarted by domesticity.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are a number of people who have assisted in this study to whom I would like to extend my thanks, especially my supervisor Dr Sue Robinson, from whom I have learned much about good scholarship. I am also grateful to Dr Kerry Murphy for her support and encouragement during the initial stages of my candidature. Lena Vigilante of the University of Melbourne Music Library is much appreciated for her continued interest and helpful suggestions with regard to resources. I am particularly grateful to Dr Kay Dreyfus, who provided the initial inspiration for my topic with her comments about the importance of feminist approaches to biography when approaching a subject such as Margaret Sutherland, which are contained in her essay “In Search of New Waters: Australian Music Studies in the 1990s”, *Essays in Honour of David Evatt Tunley*, edited by Frank Callaway (1995).

I would also like to thank Tony Bunney, Margaret Sutherland’s grandson and custodian of her estate, for his efforts and generosity in providing me with information and photographs from Sutherland’s Papers.

Finally I would like to thank those people who willingly offered their time to be interviewed. These were Pamela Bloom, Jane Bunney, Valerie Cohen, Madeline Crump, Helen Gifford, Mary Merewether, Stuart Rosewarne, Margaret Schofield, Elizabeth van Rompaey and Maureen White.
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INTRODUCTION

Margaret Sutherland (b. 20 November 1897, d. 12 August 1984) is regarded as one of the most innovative and influential Australian composers of the first half of the twentieth century. The now widely accepted view of her significance as an Australian composer was perhaps established by Roger Covell in his book *Australia's Music: Themes of a New Society* (1967):

But it was a woman composer, Margaret Sutherland of Melbourne, who really naturalized the twentieth century in Australian music. Long before World War II she was writing music which paralleled the neo-classical reaction against Romantic styles in most other European or Europe-derived societies.\(^1\)

Moreover, in *Australia's Contemporary Composers* (1972), James Murdoch highlighted her efforts in promoting other Australian composers and performers and music in general in Melbourne: “Probably no other person in Australia has worked, fought, lobbied and achieved so much for Australian music and the Australian composer”.\(^2\)

Margaret was referred to in survey publications about Australian composers as early as 1948, for example Isabelle Moresby’s *Australia Makes Music*. Moresby described her as an “original and fearless composer” who “has won distinction for her serious contribution to the musical literature of the world”.\(^3\) Laughton Harris contributed a chapter about her to *Australian Composition in the Twentieth Century* (1978), in which he echoed Roger Covell’s assessment.\(^4\) In Jane Weiner LePage’s chapter devoted to Margaret in *Women Composers, Conductors, and Musicians of the Twentieth Century: Selected Biographies*, Volume III (1988), she is referred to as the “undisputed first lady of Australian music as well as one of the earliest and most respected composers in the country”.\(^5\) The latest and most comprehensive study to date is David Symons’s book *The Music of Margaret Sutherland* (1997), in which he acknowledges that Margaret is “now generally recognised as one of Australia’s most important composers of the early and middle years of the twentieth century”.\(^6\)

Symons states that it was not his intention in his book to adopt a feminist approach. He says: “future studies may adopt other approaches including the pursuit of the gender issue at much

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\(^3\) Isabelle Moresby, *Australia Makes Music* (Melbourne: Longmans Green, 1948) 127.

\(^4\) Laughton Harris, “Margaret Sutherland”, *Australian Composition in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Frank Callaway and David Ewalt Tunley (Melbourne: OUP, 1978) 29.


greater depth".7 There are a small number of writings about Margaret which could be said to be written from a feminist perspective, most notably since they explore the impact of private on public life. Two such articles which address aspects of Margaret’s biography, including family background, are Thérèse Radic’s chapter from Double Time: Women in Victoria – 150 Years, entitled “Margaret Sutherland: Composer” (1985),8 and Helen Gifford’s article “Recalling a Lost Voice: Margaret’s Sutherland’s Sonata for Violin and Piano (1925)” (1995).9 Susanna De Vries also includes some of Margaret’s story in her chapter on Jane and Margaret Sutherland in the book Strength of Purpose (1998).10 However, an overall assessment of the current literature shows that a more in-depth feminist biographical approach to Margaret’s life has not yet been undertaken. Rather, there has been a greater concentration on her compositions and not so much on the woman behind them, her voice and the voices of those who knew her.11

Although a full feminist biography is not within the scope of this study, the intention is to address some issues of Margaret’s biography, with material drawn from a range of primary sources which have not yet been sufficiently tapped, such as Margaret’s own (mostly unpublished) written autobiographical reflections, interviews conducted by the author with relatives and friends, and interviews conducted by others. The latter include an interview by Mel Pratt in 1972 for the Oral History Programme being carried out at the National Library of

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7 Symons, The Music of Margaret Sutherland, ix.
11 It should be noted that there have also been several Masters and Ph.D. theses addressing aspects of Margaret’s life and works. Useful as background to this study in terms of biography and/or context are the following: Joyce Garrett, “Three Australian Composers”, M.A. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1963; Rita Crews, “An Analytical Study of the Piano Works of Roy Agnew, Margaret Sutherland and Dulcie Holland, including Biographical Material”, Ph.D. thesis, University of New England, 1994; Cherie Watters-Cowan, “The Solo Piano: Music of Margaret Sutherland: Context, Chronology and Compositional Style”, M.Mus., University of New South Wales, 1995. Other studies less useful to this study which focus primarily on analysis of her works include Ian Morgan’s “An Analysis of Margaret Sutherland’s Sonata for Clarinet and Piano” (1947), M.Mus. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1986; and Ann Patrick’s “The Young Kabbarli: Daisy Bates as Operatic Heroine”, M.Phil. thesis, University of Western Australia, 1996. Articles addressing specific works by Margaret have also been written by Ann Ghandar: “The Context of Chiaroscuro I by Margaret Sutherland” in One Hand on the Manuscript: Music in Australian Cultural History 1930-1960 (1995) 122-127, and “Condensed Clouds: Margaret Sutherland’s Sonata for Violin and Piano” in Repercussions: Australian Composing Women’s Festival and Conference, 1994, ed. Thérèse Radic (Clayton: National Centre for Australian Studies, Monash University, 1995) 66-71; and by David Symons: “Margaret Sutherland’s Violin Sonata: Landmark and Enigma” in Sounds Australian (Autumn 1994): 16-18.
Australia, and a long, unpublished typescript dating from 1978, which was written by Stuart Rosewarne following a series of interviews he undertook with Margaret with a view to preparing a biography of the Sutherland family.

It has also been possible to draw on a variety of secondary sources, which can be divided into three categories. The first category is those publications founded on feminist theory as it relates to biographical/autobiographical approaches and/or to musicology. Integral to this study are two such publications which focus on women's lives, many of which are relevant to Margaret's Sutherland's era and experience. The first is Writing a Woman's Life (1988) by Carolyn Heilbrun, which reformulates narratives of women's lives, and the other is Sarah Gilead's "Emigrant Selves, Narrative Strategies in Three Women's Autobiographies" (1988). Although the latter is about autobiography, it is still highly applicable to Margaret's situation, as it focuses on a subgenre termed "emigrant or pioneer autobiography" in which metaphors of enclosed and open spaces are used to articulate conflicting plots of movement away from and towards social conventions. Another useful model is Virginia Woolf's "The New Biography" (1927) for its discussion of the fictive and artful aspects of biography. Liz Stanley's two publications, "Biography as Microscope or Kaleidoscope?" (1987) and The Auto/Biographical I: The Theory and Practice of Feminist Auto/Biography (1992) stress the significance of considering the social context of both writer and biographical subject. The Challenge of Feminist Biography (1992), edited by Sara Alpern et al, is particularly inspiring because of its essays by American women biographers about the process of writing women's biography. Linda Wagner-Martin's Telling Women's Lives: The New Biography (1994) provides a clear exposé of the male-focused history of biography and the way in which women's less public contributions have previously been devalued. Drawing on these, but focusing specifically on the need for the

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12 Mel Pratt, transcript of taped interview with Margaret Sutherland, 5 April 1972, Oral History Section, National Library of Australia, TRC 121/31.
16 Gilead, "Emigrant Selves", 43-44.
discipline of musicology to address the nature of women’s contributions to music, are two highly relevant sources, namely Ruth Solie’s “Changing the Subject” (1993), and Jill Halstead’s The Woman Composer: Creativity and the Gendered Politics of Musical Composition (1997).

The second category of secondary sources includes biographies or autobiographies of other creative women of Margaret’s time. Particularly pertinent to the present study is Margaret’s cousin Stella Bowen’s Drawn from Life: A Memoir (1941), for its insights into the extended family, life in Adelaide in the late nineteenth century, and the psyche of the creative woman. Drusilla Modjeska’s Stravinsky’s Lunch (1999) is relevant because its subjects are creative Australian women of Margaret’s era, one being Stella Bowen. Pauline Petrus’s Ph.D. thesis on Esther Rofe (1995), Faye Patton’s Ph.D. thesis on Florence Ewart (1999), and Barbara Falk’s book D.J. (2000) are also relevant. Elizabeth Lutyens’s autobiography A Goldfish Bowl (1972), Meirion and Susie Harries’s A Pilgrim Soul about the life of Elizabeth Lutyens (1989), Judith Tick’s Ruth Crawford Seeger: A Composer’s Search for American Music (1997), and Adrienne Fried Block’s Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian (1998), provide useful comparisons, since their subjects each shared some experiences with Margaret Sutherland.

The third category of secondary sources comprises publications which provide relevant Australian social and historical context. The most important of these are essays contained in Worth Her Salt edited by Margaret Bevege et al (1982), Kathleen Fitzpatrick’s memoir Solid Bluestone Foundations (1983), Farley Kelly’s Degrees of Liberation (1985), Creating a

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33 Margaret Bevege et al, ed., Worth Her Salt — Women at Work in Australia (Sydney: Hale & Iremonger, 1982).
35 Farley Kelly, Degrees of Liberation: A Short History of Women in the University of Melbourne (Parkville: Women Graduates Centenary Committee, University of Melbourne, 1985).

The current study is important for two reasons. Firstly, it adds a new dimension to the scholarship currently available on a significant Australian composer. Secondly, it takes the view of current scholarship in feminist biography that it is important to consider not only creative product, but the life of the person behind the product.

This is especially important for women for whom, more than for men, the demands of marriage and family have traditionally affected their ability to develop careers outside the home, and whose contributions, in the private and public spheres, have in the past not been valued highly enough to receive the attention of scholars. As Jill Halstead points out:

Partners can be most influential in the life of a composer, and this is true for male composers. However, for women a close relationship or marriage can often restrict their work even to the extent that compositional activities are silenced.

Traditional research has most often omitted social commentary as being irrelevant to musical (and even biographical) matters. This omission renders invisible the important and influential social and domestic experiences of women composers and the consequences for their work. However, many of the problems directly affecting women’s participation in musical creativity are revealed only when common aspects of the female experience are exposed.

With particular regard to Margaret, Kay Dreyfus emphasises that taking a product-centred approach alone to such a woman is inadequate, since “clearly she was obliged to make decisions and sacrifices as a composer on the basis of personal needs and duties as a woman”, and “such critical intersections of biography and creativity” need to be addressed.

Methodological Background

The methodology for this study is derived from feminist biographical theory, although perhaps “contemporary biographical theory” is a more all-encompassing term, since although the methods of writing biography have broadened to reflect women's experience, many biographies of men now also exhibit this broader approach, and consider male gender issues.

18 Halstead, The Woman Composer, 73.
Modern biography in the English-speaking world began in 1791 with James Boswell’s *Life of Samuel Johnson*. At this time the subjects were prominent, usually white, in some way heroic, middle or upper class men. They were treated mostly in isolation from their social context, the narrative tended to be chronological and linear, the tone often hagiographic, and the emphasis laid on product and the external, public and historical events of a life. Although nineteenth-century women were writing biographies which highlighted their subjects’ personalities, motivations and inner lives, critics were suspicious and reviews mixed, if indeed the works were considered worthy of review, or noticed at all.\textsuperscript{41} History claims the form was modernised by British biographer Lytton Strachey, with his *Eminent Victorians* (1918) and *Queen Victoria* (1921). He appeared to be the first to illuminate his subjects’ personalities – to show them as flawed human beings. In the 1920s a trend towards psychoanalytic biography based on Freud’s theories attracted more women writers, but although there was more emphasis on subjects’ inner lives, the narratives were still constructed according to male models of achievement.\textsuperscript{42} They were still plots of adventure, dependent on public, historical events, rather than investigating and validating the domestic and private elements of subjects’ lives.\textsuperscript{43}

With the rise of contemporary feminism in the late 1960s, not only were more biographies of women written, but there was increasing acknowledgment of the fact that women’s lives were different from men’s, and that this difference needed to be visible. This led to stories being told in a greater variety of ways. Nancy Milford’s biography of Zelda Sayre, wife of F. Scott Fitzgerald, is generally credited with being the model for contemporary women’s biography.\textsuperscript{44} Milford reassessed her subject’s life. Instead of treating her as she had been previously, as an event in her husband’s life, the wife of a famous person, Milford placed her at the centre. Although she investigated the impact of family history, childhood and adolescence, husband and other family members and friends played subordinate roles in the narrative.\textsuperscript{45}

In highlighting the necessity for a different approach to women’s biography, the advocates of such an approach could be accused of essentialism. However, as Ruth Solie maintains, the problem of women’s biography has more to do with the categories of standard/other than it does with male/female. If women’s biography needs a different approach, it is not because of


\textsuperscript{45} Wagner-Martin, *Telling Women’s Lives*, 3, 135-137.
"essential" differences between men and women or their works, but rather because the experiences of women who attain the status required to become subjects of biographies have been radically different. These differences are quite familiar, the most obvious being that "marriage or its absence has been a more significant variable for women than for men, and parenthood a far more determinative condition". In the past the masculine viewpoint has been the normative one, but not, we now realise, a universal one. Therefore their female sex is always, in some way, central to a fuller understanding of women's lives.

What then, might the distinguishing characteristics of a so-called "feminist" biography be? Firstly, such biographers try to provide a view of the whole person, presenting negative and positive personality traits and life events, acknowledging that these elements contribute to or motivate the subject's achievements. They are mindful of the significant connections between private and public lives. Therefore they consider the impact of family relationships, domestic and family commitments and supportive friendships, and take into account internal as well as external change. They acknowledge, as Liz Stanley emphasises, that a subject does not exist in heroic isolation, but is a social product located within a social milieu, and an attempt should be made to investigate that social context and weave it into the narrative. The question should be asked: what was the environment in which the subject developed something other than a traditional life? Finally, a less linear, chronological narrative should be an aim, the emphasis being not only on when and what their subjects achieved, but how they achieved it.

In the construction of part or all of a life, it is also useful to be aware of processes which have previously been considered more central to fiction, but which became recognised as being relevant also to biography. Most notable are the creative use of language in the shaping of the narrative, the way in which the facts are ordered, and the careful selection of that material which best builds a believable picture of the whole subject. As Virginia Woolf wrote, it is when these skills of language, ordering and selectivity are creatively employed that the biography ceases to be a chronicle and moves closer to becoming a work of art. Central to this view is that many scholars now acknowledge that to a greater or lesser extent any biography is a narrative with a point of view. This is not to say that the biographer overtly inserts herself or himself into the

48 Stanley, The Auto/Biographical I, 8.
50 Woolf, "The Art of Biography", 231.
text so that an autobiographical element is hard to ignore, but rather that the biographer has
unavoidably provided a particular view of the subject. As Liz Stanley emphasises, the act of
biography is temporally located. The foundation upon which a biographer writes is the personal,
intellectual and social climate at the time of writing, understood from his/her own consciousness.
Thus there can be several plausible interpretations of one life, and readers are encouraged to make
their own judgments as to the degree to which any one version is plausible.

Thesis Outline

Chapter One will examine Margaret’s early life and pre-marriage years up until her return to
Australia following two years of study in Europe from 1923-1925. Given her family background,
influences and her own personality, it is not surprising that Margaret was ambitious for a career in
music and, more specifically, in composition. The aim is to illuminate aspects of the family
environment in which she grew up, including those people who influenced her, and events and
developments which formed the platform from which she could develop ideals and ambitions for
her future life and career, and which provided for the roles referred to by Sarah Gilead as
“culture-preserver” and “culture-threat”.

Chapter Two will provide an overview of Sutherland’s situation during her marriage (1927-
1947). In order to shed light on the struggle and achievements of these years, descriptions of
Margaret’s troubled marriage, her personality, opinions and ideals will be provided which have
been gleaned from a number of mostly unpublished autobiographical notes that Sutherland left,
and from interviews the writer has conducted with people who knew her or her husband, Norman
Albiston. A discussion will be included of reasons for her choice to marry, have children, and
remain married for 21 years, followed by an exposé of the friendships which sustained her and the
social milieu in which she operated. The many public activities she was involved in during her
marriage will be illuminated, followed by an appraisal of her compositional output during her
marriage.

32 Stanley, “Biography as Microscope or Kaleidoscope”, 22.
33 Examples of women who have had several biographies written about them are of course Virginia Woolf,
who has been the subject of about 38 biographical studies published between 1940 and 2000. Closer to
home is subject Dame Nellie Melba, who has had around 25 biographical studies of varying lengths
devoted to her between the 1930s and the 1990s.
34 Gilead, “Emigrant Selves”, 43.
Thesis

In her study of the patterns of feminist biography, *Writing a Woman's Life*, Carolyn Heilbrun reminds us that, in the past, narratives of women's lives were shaped according to one predominant plot. This was the conventional "marriage or erotic plot", which assumed that the ultimate destination for a woman was the safety and closure of marriage, in which a man, his career and their children became the centre of her life. Women could not be seen to strive overtly towards their non-domestic ambitions, or to assume power over their lives. It was more acceptable for men actively to seek careers, which were then uninterrupted, and to lead adventurous lives.55

This was the cultural environment in existence when Margaret Sutherland was young, in the early years of the twentieth century. However, neither the marriage nor the career plot is entirely suited to a biography of her. In contemplating her life, the question arises as to what sort of "plot" or "plots" could be constructed which adequately represent/s her particular experience. Margaret did to some extent submit to the predominant female vocation in that she married at the relatively late age of 29 and had two children, as was her wish, but from an early age, she also actively sought an unusual vocation for a woman of her time. Her years of marriage and child-rearing formed a period in her life when she experienced the highest degree of personal conflict, in which she struggled to focus on a career as a composer, while conforming to the accepted female roles of wife and mother. She experienced "the pain of any 'normal' woman attempting to live a life beyond the boundaries of the script".56 In her article examining three autobiographies by women, Gilead defines "the conflicted subject", a woman who:

... dramatizes not only universal problems of identity, the desiring self forced by the exigencies of civilization to relinquish or rechannel desires, but the particular problems of women who in patriarchal societies are cast into the contradictory roles of culture-preserver and culture-threat. [There are] conflicting desires to escape the burden of traditional limits on self-concept and ways of living, yet to retain links to traditional culture and its capacity to lend historical and social significance to the self.57

Sources relating to Margaret's years of marriage and child-rearing suggest she lived this conflict. As a musical creator ambitious for a career she was unconventional "culture threat"; as wife and mother she was conventional "culture preserver". She attempted to play a dual role, to succeed in both the public and private spheres. This thesis will explore the development and manifestations

56 Solie, "Changing the Subject", 61.
57 Gilead, "Emigrant Selves", 43-44.
of these "polar concepts", referring where useful to relevant issues of social and historical context. It will be concluded that Margaret’s idealistic, intellectual, encouraging upbringing provided the foundation and expectations for her to develop a successful, creative musical career in the public sphere. On the other hand, the society into which she was born formed her need to succeed in the private, traditional female domestic domain of marriage and family. Although a conflict between career and domesticity was apparent, Margaret’s idealism, determination, strength of character and her overwhelming drive to compose meant she pursued her ideals and goals in spite of the obstacle of an unfortunate marriage and the conflict she experienced in attempting to play two roles.

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CHAPTER ONE

Early Life

Margaret grew up in the midst of a bourgeois family in which creative and intellectual endeavours were a part of daily life. Her principal, early role models were her musical, artistic, single aunts, and her intellectual father and uncles. She was surrounded by lively discussion on such subjects as the evolutionist theories of Darwin and Huxley, and benefited from a specialised musical education which started at an early age. She acknowledged her debt to the family in a later reflection on her upbringing:

One has to be about eleven or twelve years of age, I believe, to begin to see for oneself the significance of ideals and principles, their activating forces, and the philosophy of life that stems from them. A gradual, undefined realisation came to me which has stayed with me through all the endless ups and downs of a fairly choppy existence. It was the concept that true greatness is simplicity, and that simplicity is the essence of all greatness. And I know positively that it came to me through the opportunity that was mine to hear much lively discussion and see life lived in the fullest sense.59

These words reflect Margaret’s idealism, for which she also felt indebted to the family, whose brand of idealism she referred to as “down-to-earth”.60 This seemed to spawn an ability within the family to question the societal status quo. An example of this is what Margaret referred to as an abhorrence of “irritating inconsistencies and glaringly outworn dogma”, which caused her parents and her father’s four siblings to leave the Presbyterian Church in a body around 1885 in order to join a breakaway group led by The Reverend Charles Strong,61 referred to as the Australian Church.62 The family’s idealism, and the conversations about Darwin and Huxley, were obviously absorbed by Margaret, who commented:

I well remember that Aunt Jane told me that she revered Christ for what he was as a man. Yet each and every one of them was actually more “Christian” in their lives than many a noted cleric.63

59 Margaret Sutherland, “Young Days in Music”, Overland 40 (December 1968): 24-25.
60 Sutherland, “Young Days in Music”, 25.
61 The Reverend Charles Strong arrived in Melbourne from Scotland in 1875 to lead Scots Church, the principal Presbyterian church in Victoria. His liberal, intellectual, rationalist views and those of his sympathisers caused a schism in the Presbyterian church which eventually led to the formation of the breakaway Australian Church in 1885. See C.R. Badger, The Reverend Charles Strong and the Australian Church (Melbourne: Abacada Press, 1971).
62 Sutherland, “Young Days in Music”, 25.
63 Sutherland, “Young Days in Music”, 25. Another interesting example of the streak of idealism running through the family was the fact that one of Margaret’s uncles, John, worked for 14 years as an actuary for T&G Mutual Life Assurance, and apparently refused pay rises due to him, because he felt he had enough money for him and his family. See Margaret Sutherland, unpublished notebook, 1966, private collection of
Margaret’s Parents, and the Early “Gala Days” in Adelaide

Margaret’s father, George Sutherland, was born in Scotland in 1855. In 1864, his family migrated to Sydney, and moved to Melbourne in 1870, where George completed a Master of Arts at Melbourne University (1879). Along with his brothers and father, he taught at Carlton College in Melbourne, which was a school founded by his brother Alexander in 1876 incorporating the religious and philosophical ideals of the Australian Church. In 1879, the family moved again, this time to Adelaide.

George was a man who thought it unnecessary to conform to social conventions without question, and he disapproved of idleness, preferring short rests to proper holidays. He was a historian, journalist and inventor with interests in music, art and photography, and together with his older brother Alexander, wrote a number of scholarly books. George also produced some historical tales for children, generally aimed at instilling in young people the sense of Australia as a land of opportunity. He believed the Australian outback was not only the source of the country’s wealth, but contributed to the formation of a unique Australian character. He favoured a scientific approach to agricultural settlement, and in 1881 obtained a job with the South Australian newspaper The Register, where he wrote accounts of rural industries in the name of what he referred to as “technological journalism”.

George’s decision to move to Adelaide appears to have been influenced by the comparative progressiveness displayed there in the fields of arts and education, although in her memoir Drawn

Tony Bunney, 9; Margaret Sutherland, unpublished undated autobiographical typescript, James Murdoch papers, Australian Manuscript Collection, National Library of Australia, MS 8372.
65 Sutherland, “Young Days in Music”, 24.
68 These included the History of Australia (1606-1876) (1879), History of Australia and New Zealand (1606-1890) (1901), History of Australia and New Zealand (1606-1911) (1913); other books included Tales of the Goldfields (1880), Australia, Or England in the South (1886) about the social and cultural development of Australia, a history of The South Australian Company (1898), and Twentieth Century Inventions—a Forecast (1901). See Mellor, “Sutherland, George”, 223.
69 One such book was Sixteen Stories of Australian Exploration and Settlement (c. 1880), which includes stories with titles such as “Captain Cook’s Landing place”, “Captain Sturt’s Black Friend”, “The Burke and Wills Expedition”, “The Roof of Australia” and “A Story of Queensland”, among others.
70 Among his inventions was a rapid-printing newspaper portraits process which was used by The Register and subsequently introduced by other Australian newspapers. See Rosewarne, “The Sutherland Family”, 1-3.
from Life, his niece by marriage, Stella Bowen (1893-1947), referred to Adelaide as “a queer little backwater of intellectual timidity—a kind of hangover of Victorian provincialism.” However, Adelaide University was the first to admit women on equal terms with men in 1876, and George was keen to associate himself with such a forward-thinking institution. The National Gallery of South Australia had been opened in 1881, and a number of art schools set up in the 1880s. Musical and dramatic evenings were becoming a more regular feature of society, and George gained access to these through his association with The Register, the major advertising forum for cultural events in Adelaide.

![Fig. 2](image1.jpg) George Sutherland, c. 1882

![Fig. 3](image2.jpg) Ada Bowen, C. 1882

It was at such an event, a Bach Society meeting, where George met his future wife, Ada Bowen, whose family was prominent in the cultural life of the city. Ada was the sister-in-law of Robert Kyffin Thomas, who was on the Board of The Register (and later the newspaper’s proprietor) and a keen patron of the arts. Ada and George shared interests in music and painting,

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71 Stella Bowen grew up in Adelaide, but in 1914, at the age of 21, and after her mother died, she went overseas to study, and never returned to Australia. She married writer Ford Maddox Ford, and developed a career in Europe. Her life and experiences are detailed in her own memoir, Drawn from Life: A Memoir (Sydney: Collins Publishers, 1941, repr. Sydney: Picador, 1999), and in a biography by Drusilla Modjeska, Stravinsky’s Lunch (Sydney: Pan MacMillan, 1999).
72 Bowen, Drawn from Life, 4.
75 Rosewarne, “The Sutherland Family”, 4.
and were married in 1882 when George was 26 years old and Ada only 18. Through this marriage, George was drawn more into the social and cultural life of Adelaide. Their first child, Ruth was born in 1884, followed two years later by Alfred, then Douglas in 1888, and Dorothy in 1889. Margaret was the youngest by nearly eight years, born in 1897 in Adelaide.

Ada’s sister Harriet had married Frederick William Bullock, whose family residence was St Helen’s, located in Prospect just north of North Adelaide, and the home was the centre of family gatherings and cultural events. Ada’s brother Tom was an artist, and introduced his children, nieces and nephews to art at St Helen’s. His daughter (and Margaret’s cousin) Stella was later to become a well-known painter, and Ruth also took up painting as a career, no doubt inspired by Tom Bowen as well as by her Aunt Jane, a painter of the Heidelberg School.

It was considered a social requirement at this time for a young lady to add to her education by learning the piano or singing. Ruth and Dorothy both started early to learn the piano, and Margaret would try when she was very young to imitate their playing. She refers to piano-playing being “a routine affair of mine, as indeed for all our family”.

In her memoir, Stella Bowen stressed the high value placed on music within the extended family. When referring to her art lessons at the School of Design in Adelaide, she added:

But these classes stopped when I began to work for school exams. Not so the music, however, since my mother felt that had a social value far beyond anything I could get from Art.

In spite of George’s many interests and activities in other areas, he managed to spend a lot of time with his children, partly because his work as a journalist allowed him to work in the evenings rather than during the day. The youngest by several years, Margaret particularly benefited from this, having her father to herself in the mornings when her older siblings had gone to school.

As Carolyn Heilbrun points out, “for girls, childhood is often the happiest and freest time...accounts of childhood were somehow freed from the terrible anxieties induced by adult female ambition and encounters”. Margaret’s accounts of her early years indicate that her recollections of childhood were positive. She had several memories of her first four years of childhood, spent

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76 Prospect was one of several Adelaide municipalities which by the 1890s was quite intensively settled. See Whitelock, Adelaide, 233.
77 Rosewarne, “The Sutherland Family”, 6-7.
78 Rosewarne, “The Sutherland Family”, 5-7.
79 Sutherland, unpublished undated autobiographical typescript, James Murdoch Papers, 1.
80 Bowen, Drawn from Life, 13.
81 Sutherland, “Young Days in Music”, 23.
in Adelaide before the family moved to Melbourne in 1901. The picture is of a contented early childhood she described as “placid enough”.\textsuperscript{83} She especially valued the time she had with her father, whom she obviously respected, after her siblings had left for school:

Before I went to school—at nearly seven—I was with my father a great deal in the morning. He went to the paper at midday—he was making a billiard table. I had a feeling that he thought a lot while he was doing it. It seemed to be a tremendous thing to embark upon—but he enjoyed such things.\textsuperscript{84}

The next thing was to go inside and strum on the piano, often trying to piece together bits of the music my two older sisters practised. Sometimes also my father, who spent his mornings at home, would play to me—short movements from some of the early Beethoven sonatas. Those were gala days.\textsuperscript{85}

Unfortunately less information is available about Margaret’s mother Ada, than about her father. Ada is seldom talked about by Margaret, though never disparagingly. As already mentioned, she was interested in music; Margaret referred to her sweet, plaintive, singing voice, and to her singing such songs as Grieg’s \textit{Solveig’s Song} in the evenings when Margaret was in bed.\textsuperscript{86} As Ada was only 18 when she married, and, in Margaret’s words “had no training to fall back on”,\textsuperscript{87} she was destined for a life of domesticity, and was apparently prone to bouts of depression.\textsuperscript{88} Her sister-in-law, Tom Bowen’s wife and Stella’s mother, obviously had a similar lack of opportunity outside the domestic sphere. In \textit{Drawn from Life}, Stella commented about her mother: “She lived entirely for us children. Even her activities as secretary to the Mother’s Union were but an extension of her own parenthood”.\textsuperscript{89} For both Margaret and Stella, the influence to lead lives beyond the domestic sphere came from the father. Margaret’s observations of the impact on her mother’s life of the lack of alternative choices for married women of the era is likely to have contributed to her resolve to seek broader fulfilment.

Throughout the late 1880s and 1890s women, led by the morally conservative but politically radical Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), were actively seeking the vote, and South Australia was the first of the Australian states to grant the vote to women in December 1894.\textsuperscript{90} George and Ada were broad-minded enough to support the concept, but were less approving of the puritanism encouraged by the WCTU.\textsuperscript{91} Oddly enough, the first election in which women voted, in 1896, was also the beginning of an era of conservatism in South

\textsuperscript{83} Sutherland, “Young Days in Music”, 23.
\textsuperscript{84} Sutherland, unpublished undated autobiographical typescript, James Murdoch Papers, 5.
\textsuperscript{85} Sutherland, “Young Days in Music”, 23.
\textsuperscript{86} Sutherland, “Young Days in Music”, 23.
\textsuperscript{87} Sutherland, unpublished undated autobiographical typescript, James Murdoch Papers, 5.
\textsuperscript{88} Helen Gifford, interview with the author, 16 September 1999.
\textsuperscript{89} Bowen, \textit{Drawn from Life}, 19.
\textsuperscript{90} Whitelock, \textit{Adelaide}, 285-86.
\textsuperscript{91} Rosewarne, “The Sutherland Family”, 9.
Australia. This, together with George’s older brother Alexander’s projected return to Melbourne following his resignation as overseas correspondent for The Register, the death of his mother in 1901 and his sister Jane’s heart attack probably contributed to his desire to return to live in Melbourne near his family. Family ties were strong at this time, and the Sutherland family was no exception. In 1901 the family moved to Melbourne, where George took up a position on the editorial staff of Melbourne’s leading daily, The Age.

Ada was initially unhappy with George’s resolve to move to Melbourne, since it meant leaving her family in Adelaide; she particularly disliked the idea of leaving her sisters, to whom she was very close. The decision to leave their two sons, aged 15 and 13, behind to complete the school term probably also saddened her, though the prospect of 17-year-old Ruth being able to attend the National Gallery Art school might have been encouraging. It is also possible to surmise that an added stimulus may have been the contribution Marshall-Hall was making to music in Melbourne through his directorship of the Albert Street Conservatorium.

The Creative and Intellectual Influences of Family Life in Melbourne

Margaret described the move to Melbourne as being “the first memorable jolt in my young life”. However, it was in Melbourne that Margaret experienced the positive influences of her father’s side of the family. After arrival, the family divided up into smaller groups to stay with relatives until a family home was found. Margaret went with her parents to stay in the house in Stawell St, Kew where her three unmarried aunts, Jane (1855-1928), Julia (1801-1929) and Jessie (1869-1936), and two uncles, William (1859-1911) and James (1863-1916) lived. Dorothy and Margaret felt very welcome there, and were encouraged by their relations to share and develop interests.

Jane was a painter who had been one of the first students to enrol at the National Gallery School of Design in Melbourne. She exhibited at prestigious venues such as the Victorian Academy of Arts (1878), the Australian Artists’ Association, and the Victorian Artists Society (formed in 1888) until 1911. She was elected to the council of the Society in 1900, and was one of the first women elected to the Buonarotti Society in 1894. Jane was considered the leading

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92 As evidenced in books such as Kathleen Fitzpatrick, *Solid Blistone Foundations and Other Memories of a Melbourne Girlhood 1908-1928* (Melbourne: Macmillan, 1983).
93 Sutherland, “Young Days in Music”, 24.
94 Rosewarne, “The Sutherland Family”, 8-10.
95 Rosewarne, “The Sutherland Family”, 11.
96 Sutherland, “Young Days in Music”, 23.
97 Rosewarne, “The Sutherland Family”, 11.
woman artist in the group of Melbourne painters known as the Heidelberg School, whose
members sketched and painted directly from nature, breaking with the nineteenth-century
tradition of painting in the studio. Unfortunately Jane suffered a heart attack shortly after
George and Ada's family arrived in Melbourne, after which she could no longer paint large
canvasas, due to chronic heart illness. However, Margaret recalled sitting as a model for Jane
(see Fig. 1 on cover), and appears to have had great respect for her aunt:

I also well remember the number of times I sat as a model for Aunt Jane, who, though she
had had to give up painting in oils, often would use pastel, and/or water color, sitting with a
box on her knee. She often captured an atmosphere of the utmost serenity. Sometimes she
added figures, mostly children. I remember so clearly how she never failed to light up and
grow animated when she talked of her active painting days. The feeling of painting in a
group seemed to have a particular significance, for there was so much discussion,
comparing-of-notes, and tireless experiment.100

![Fig. 4]
Jane Sutherland, c. 1885

Julia, Dorothy and Margaret's first piano teacher, was an accomplished pianist who had
studied with Louis Pabst, a pupil of Anton Rubinstein (who also taught Grainger). Margaret
described her lessons as follows:

Aunt Julie had an unusual way of teaching. As I love the songs of Schubert and Schumann,
she taught me to read quite quickly by letting me play the singing part on top of the
accompaniment. It sounded so grown-up, and egged me on—I remember too some Bach
Chorales and small Bach pieces which I loved.101

99 Frances Lindsay, “Sutherland, Jane”, 140.
100 Sutherland, “Young Days in Music”, 24.
101 Sutherland, unpublished undated autobiographical typescript, James Murdoch Papers, 4.
Jessie was a trained singer who specialised in lieder, while William had a Master of Arts degree from the University of Melbourne, a Bachelor of Science from London, and had established an international reputation as a physicist. He was particularly keen on gardening, and years of bushwalking had given him an extensive knowledge of wildlife, which Margaret obviously respected and enjoyed:

There were also occasional chop picnics in the hills, for his long years of tramping through the bush had given Willie a good knowledge of the choicest spots—and the birds, and all the wildlife that haunted the areas. A few children trailing after him seemed always welcome; he appeared to be pretty well the same age as we, and always on for an adventure. We felt no awe—only spontaneous comradeship.  

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102 Sutherland, "Young Days in Music", 25.
James had a Master of Arts, also from Melbourne University, and was a science teacher at Camberwell Grammar, but in Margaret’s opinion “had no talent for children, and rather crept into his shell”.103 The youngest brother, John (1867-1914), married and had two sons. He and his family lived in St Kilda, and Margaret sometimes stayed there during holidays. He too had a Masters degree from Melbourne University, and was very fond of music. He had a photographic memory, which gained Margaret’s admiration:

He had a quite fantastic memory and I can well remember my amazement when he could read a page from any book—unknown at the time to him—and straightaway recite it backwards. He absolutely fascinated me, and I was in great awe of him because of it.104

For a short time immediately after the family moved to Melbourne, Dorothy and Margaret were sent to stay at their Uncle Alexander’s residence (now known as University House at the University of Melbourne). Alexander was a man of diverse talents, who had since September, 1901 been Registrar of the University and Acting Professor of English. The eldest of the family, he was born in Scotland in 1852, and became one of Australia’s better-known scholars. Prior to his appointment to Melbourne University, he taught mathematics at Scotch College from 1875-1877, during which time he completed a Master of Arts at Melbourne University (1876). He became Headmaster of Carlton College in 1877, and was Honorary Secretary of the Royal Society from 1878-1885, where he delivered papers on a wide range of topics. He was also, briefly in 1898-1899, overseas correspondent for The Register before taking up his position at Melbourne University. He was perhaps best-known for his book Origin and Growth of the Moral Instinct (1898), an attempt to establish that moral development conformed to evolutionary theory, and considered a pioneer work in its field.105 Alexander owned a mansion at Arthur’s Seat near Dromana called “Heronwood”106, where he planned to retire early to devote himself to “literature and scientific investigation” and where he wrote Origin. Margaret had vivid memories of childhood visits there.107

It seemed, that as we trundled over the unmade roads, we had reached the end of all civilisation. This fairy-spot, near Dromana, seemed a veritable paradise as we rocked and jolted in the pony-cart. Goodness—what excitement! Just to tear about, and see the outside

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104 Sutherland, unpublished undated autobiographical typescript, James Murdoch Papers, 5.
105 Gifford, “Recalling a Lost Voice”, 111.
106 Heronwood was built c. 1871, and since September, 1973, has been classified by the National Trust. Its gardens and café can be visited each weekday, but the house, a private dwelling, is only open to visitors on Melbourne Cup Day and Australia Day Weekend. (This information gathered from a brochure available at Heronwood.)
of the house that seemed to me redolent of Knights in Armour, was intoxicating. The fairy-palace had steps that led to it. All kinds of nooks and crannies emerged into view, with tiny balconies giving one a broad view of that wonderful, never-ending stretch of blue sea that, further out, turned into lazy, rolling breakers, before it merged in the canopy of sky beyond.\footnote{Sutherland, unpublished undated autobiographical typescript, James Murdoch Papers, 3.}

![Fig. 7 Heronswood](image)

Margaret found the surroundings at University House quite daunting at first, and recalled a particular event which demonstrates well the comfort she derived from the presence of her older sister, Dorothy, the sibling to whom she was most close:

Then I gasped, and froze. The thing that confronted me startled me nearly out of my wits. It was the huge skeleton of what seemed to be some sort of pre-historic animal, probably from outer space. Actually it turned out to be that of a whale. But there it was, and my blood seemed to curdle. I stood transfixed. That, you might rightly surmise, was a dramatic beginning. I looked around wildly for some sort of anchor. Fortunately, Dorothy and I were sharing a room she was a haven of refuge—a comforting big sister. I snuggled in with her, and fell asleep.\footnote{Margaret Sutherland, “Three Universities in One”, unpublished undated typescript, Australian Manuscript Collection, National Library of Australia, MS 2967.}

Margaret recalled another event, which was a dinner party. After the “grown-up” dinner, Dorothy and Margaret were sent for so Dorothy could perform a difficult \textit{Impromptu} for piano by Schubert. Margaret followed that up by performing her own version of another \textit{Impromptu} by
Schubert, which she had learned by ear. In later years she wondered at her “effrontery” and
mourned the loss of “youthful courage” and “brazenness” as one gets older.\textsuperscript{110}

Shortly after her stay at the University in 1901, Margaret’s Uncle Alexander became the first
of his brothers to die of a heart attack (1902). By 1916, all the brothers would be dead as a result
of cardiac illness, and all at around the age of 50. George died in 1905, William in 1911, John in
1914 and James in 1916. Alexander’s family moved out of the house at the University, and
“Heronswood” had to be sold. Even though only five years old, Margaret seems to have sensed
the tragedy:

It seemed impossible to imagine it. The family moved out of the house at the University—
lovely Heronswood was sold. And everything had a tragic hush about it. At five one could not
imagine how changed things were.\textsuperscript{111}

During the 1960s and thereafter, Helen Gifford visited Margaret almost weekly, and
confirms that the deaths of her father and uncles had a lasting impact on Margaret. At some stage
during every visit, Margaret would broach the subject: “One by one they died, all around the age
of 50.”\textsuperscript{112}

Alexander’s wife Lizzie and their four children remained in Melbourne, but Lizzie was not
close to her in-laws, so family ties weakened after his death, much to the disappointment of the
rest of the family.\textsuperscript{113} This “unusually strong bond” that existed within the Sutherland family led
George and Ada to seek, and eventually to find, a home in Kew near Stawell Street where her five
single aunts and uncles lived. This meant that Margaret spent a great deal of time with them,

\textsuperscript{110} Sutherland, “Three Universities in One”.
\textsuperscript{111} Sutherland, unpublished undated autobiographical typescript, James Murdoch Papers, 4.
\textsuperscript{112} Helen Gifford, interview with the author, 16 September 1999.
particularly before she started school, often "inviting herself" to visit them with her father in the mornings.\textsuperscript{114}

Fig. 9
Margaret, c. 1904

Education, Wider Influences and the Beginnings of Adversity

Margaret's schooling began when she was seven, at a small, private school in Denmark Street in Kew called "Baldur". The aim of the school was to "educate in the true sense, and instruct without cramming", and a thorough grounding was provided in a wide range of subjects.\textsuperscript{115} Although Margaret remembers a discussion as to whether she should go to a state school,\textsuperscript{116} it was decided she should attend Baldur, mainly because of its music teacher, Mona McBurney (1862-1932). McBurney gained a Bachelor of Music from the University of Melbourne in 1896, the first woman to do so. She composed and became a concert pianist, and was a friend of aunts Julia and Jessie. McBurney's opera \textit{The Dalmation}, finished in 1905, was given an incomplete performance with piano accompaniment in 1910, the first opera by a woman to be staged in

\textsuperscript{113} Rosewarne, "The Sutherland Family", 14.
\textsuperscript{114} Sutherland, "Young Days in Music", 24.
\textsuperscript{115} This is taken from an advertisement which appeared with others in the last pages of Francis G. Barnard, \textit{The Jubilee History of Kew, Victoria, Its Origin and Progress 1803-1910} (Kew: E.F.G. Hodges "Mercury Office", 1910).
\textsuperscript{116} Sutherland, unpublished undated autobiographical typescript, James Murdoch Papers, 5.
McBurney taught Margaret piano, harmony, counterpoint and composition, and although her style of composition does not appear to have influenced Margaret's directly, they became lifelong friends, and she provided a role model for Margaret of a woman who became a notable composer. Margaret described her as "a beautiful woman, erudite, charming though shy and retiring, a wonderful linguist possessed of a driving enthusiasm that inspired her students", and said she looked back "with gratitude and affection to her friendship and interest which lasted until her death".

George died, as mentioned, in 1905. Ruth had recently become very ill with peritonitis, and the worry surrounding her illness may well have contributed to his already poor health, culminating in a heart attack which killed him instantly. Margaret therefore lost her father when she was only eight, and although the remaining uncles William, James and John provided all the support they could, the death of her father understandably made a big impact on her and her family. Margaret describes the period immediately after her father's death as:

"a nightmare period during which I was allowed only on to the fringe. I was frightened, and lonely, mostly at the grief of my mother, for she was stricken, and tragically bereft. She was quite unlike what I had known before—a person I scarcely recognised."

Of major concern was the fact that no-one else in the family was earning at that time, and it became necessary for all able bodies to seek work immediately. When Ruth recovered, she started holding art classes, Douglas got a job as a junior reporter on the Ballarat Star, Alfred apparently found work as a clerk, Dorothy began looking for piano pupils, and Ada took in boarders.

Margaret's sister Ruth and her aunt Jane were among the many painters who exhibited in the First Australian Exhibition of Women's Work held in Melbourne during October and November of 1907 at the suggestion of Lady Alice Northcote, the Governor's wife. Lady Northcote was a generous patron of the arts, particularly of music, and was clearly aware of the significant role women had played in the development of culture in Melbourne. As well as in the areas of music and art, the domestic occupations, applied arts, needlework, dressmaking, cooking and horticulture attracted large numbers of contributors. In her article "Opportunity and Success: The Music of the Women's Work Exhibition (1907)", Catherine Wilson states:

119 Sutherland, "Young Days in Music", 25.
120 Sutherland, "Young Days in Music", 24.
121 Rosewarne, "The Sutherland Family", 16.
The exhibition’s primary objective was to recognise the contributions of Australian women to society by exhibiting the multifarious avenues of women’s work, and to complement previous exhibitions which had consistently emphasised the handiworks of men.\textsuperscript{122} Wilson also points out that in the musical sphere, women broke new ground through the exhibition. The musical contribution of the 3000 female musicians involved challenged the stereotypical image of the female musician as amateur rather than serious, and stretched the boundaries of what had been considered suitable musical activity for women. The exhibition enabled many women to be involved in performances, which they took very seriously, and were generally of a high standard. Indeed the music received extensive press coverage in the major Melbourne newspapers, and most concerts and recitals enjoyed considerable acclaim.\textsuperscript{123} An all-woman orchestra was formed by Florence Ewart and Mona McBurney. 1300 women formed a choir, and Australia’s first female brass band was featured.\textsuperscript{124} Two of Margaret’s female cousins, daughters of her uncle John, were among those who started careers as musicians. Women obtained the vote for the State legislature in 1909, and the Exhibition could well have played a small part in this.\textsuperscript{125} Margaret would almost certainly have been aware of the Exhibition and its aims, given the involvement of her sister, aunt, cousins and music teacher.

During her years at Baldur, Margaret’s love for music increased, but when she was ready to leave school at the end of 1913 at the age of 16, the headmistress was very surprised when Margaret announced that she wanted to pursue a career in music:

When I decided to leave Baldur, the Headmistress said “You should be a Doctor”. I was horrified—then she asked me what I thought of doing; I said “Music”. She simply could not believe it.\textsuperscript{126}

In spite of the understanding and advice of her aunts, Margaret felt they had led secluded lives, and that she would need to “strike out somehow”. One of the pieces of advice Julia gave her, however, was not to submit herself “to an institution just to be turned out as one of the standardised products”.\textsuperscript{127} This attitude may well have contributed to the firm views Margaret developed about education at all levels.

At the end of 1913 a scholarship was offered to study piano at the Marshall-Hall Conservatorium in Albert Street with the Czech pianist Edward Goll (1884-1949). Both Mona McBurney and aunt Julia encouraged Margaret to apply. Aunt Julia in particular felt that the

\textsuperscript{123} Wilson, “Opportunity and Success”, 441.
\textsuperscript{124} Wilson, “Opportunity and Success”, 442, 445-47.
\textsuperscript{125} Rosewarne, “The Sutherland Family”, 17-19.
\textsuperscript{126} Sutherland, unpublished undated autobiographical typescript, James Murdoch Papers, 7.
\textsuperscript{127} Sutherland, “Young Days in Music”, 25.
University Conservatorium was not the place to study music seriously, because in her opinion it was staffed by second-rate teachers from Britain who were more concerned with exams than with musical development. Not only did Margaret win the scholarship, but won another to study composition with English composer Fritz Hart, who was at that time running Albert St in Marshall-Hall’s absence overseas. Her “youthful Sonata for Piano” obviously made an impression when she played it as part of her audition. Margaret found her lessons with Goll and Hart stimulating, but unfortunately Goll was denounced by the Albert Street Con., as it was known then, as an enemy alien at the end of 1914. She thought that the attitude at Albert Street towards Goll was “outrageous nonsense”, and at 17 it made her “stonly defiant”. In 1915, Goll was offered an appointment at the University of Melbourne, and when he accepted, Margaret moved with him, undertaking single subjects in the years 1914-1919.

Margaret attended university at a time when the majority of women still did not further their education past high school level. The concept of a right to university education for women or men did not exist in the early years of the twentieth century, and a student’s entry into university was mostly dependent upon parents’ ability to pay. Most students, like Margaret, came from non-government schools, although the financial situation of her family meant that she would certainly not have been able to attend university unless she had obtained a scholarship. In her essay about Women in Ormond College, which she views as a microcosm of the whole

128 Rosewarne, “The Sutherland Family”, 28. The second Ormond Professor of Music, Franklin Peterson, arrived in Melbourne from Edinburgh following his appointment at the end of 1900 following Marshall-Hall’s dismissal. He made several, conservative changes to Marshall-Hall’s curriculum, and brought practical studies into the official degree course. Students could then earn a bachelor degree by sitting a performance exam instead of undertaking a composition exercise. When the need to raise external funds arose, Peterson decided to create an Australian public examination system (which developed into the Australian Musical Examinations Board—AMEB). The aim was to not only to provide additional income, but also to provide the Conservatorium with a controlling influence over the musical education of children from a young age. However, the AMEB came under criticism from its inception for the rigidity and conservatism of its syllabuses, and teachers at the Conservatorium apparently lamented the fact that students would arrive having studied their requisite pieces, but having no deeper knowledge of the music or of their instruments. See Peter Tregear, The Conservatorium of Music, University of Melbourne: An Historical Essay to Mark its Centenary 1895-1995 (Melbourne: CSAM, University of Melbourne, 1997) 39-41.

129 Margaret Sutherland, “Three Universities in One”. Marshall-Hall had appointed Eduard Scharf as Acting Director in his absence, and Hart was to give his lectures. Scharf subsequently took a position at the University Conservatorium, leaving Hart in charge. Hart took full control in 1914 when he thought Marshall-Hall intended to close the institution. See Peter Tregear, “Fritz Bennicke Hart: An Introduction to his Life and Music”, M.Mus. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1993, 28.

130 Sutherland, “Three Universities in One”.

131 Sutherland, “Young Days in Music”, 25.

132 Sutherland, “Young Days in Music”, 25.

133 Unfortunately, University of Melbourne archival student records do not reveal any information about scholarships or grades achieved by Margaret during her time at the University.

134 Fitzpatrick, Solid Bluesstone Foundations, 149.

University, Sarah Stephen discusses well-founded observations that in the early years following admission of women to the university in 1881, male and female students operated in different spheres; their habits differed according to their sex, and the arrival of women at Ormond had gone largely unmarked, women having maintained a certain amount of compliance in entering what they realised had previously been a man’s world. Towards the end of the 1890s and into the early twentieth century, however, once the reality that the women were there to stay set in, and they were obviously excelling academically, the men’s concern to defend their preserves became more evident. The university that Margaret entered in 1915 remained largely a male domain, and there were still more restricted career expectations for female than male graduates. Many women became schoolteachers, and female music graduates were no exception. Most women who did study music at the University of Melbourne did single subjects only, as Margaret did, but became teachers rather than performers or composers. However, Kathleen Fitzpatrick, in her book *Solid Bluestone Foundations*, stresses that Australia then was more obviously than nowadays a man’s country, and the women who managed to go to university were the exception rather than the rule, relishing being in an atmosphere in which they were not seen as inferior. Margaret was thus immersed in a comparatively privileged environment in which intellectual and creative pursuits were the norm.

Interestingly, during World War I, the time when Margaret was a student there, with many male students away fighting, the places available for women at the University of Melbourne increased, and the proportion of women grew from 14 to 32%. Margaret describes the atmosphere in Melbourne at the declaration of World War I as “thick with anxiety and horror”. Her two brothers enlisted, and her cousin Dallas (Alexander’s son) was killed in action. With so many men away at war, women moved into increasing political, economic and social prominence, but it is generally agreed that, overall, it was men’s status that was really enhanced by the war. Drusilla Modjeska, in her book *Stravinsky’s Lunch*, discusses the generation of young creative women who, like Margaret, arrived at adulthood at a time of the loss of many men in combat—a time of extreme masculine crisis. She exposes the possibility that the seemingly increased prominence of creative women was enhanced because of a “breach of the male order”. It is unclear whether Margaret’s recognition as a creative woman was greater because of the war, yet the possibility should be borne in mind.

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138 Sutherland, “Three Universities in One”.
Isolation from Europe during the war and the enmity towards anyone of European origin meant that Hart was successful in his aim to introduce the work of contemporary British composers to his students, including Margaret of course. Edward Gull, too, through his recitals, was introducing much new music to students and music-lovers who had previously been accustomed to conservative programmes. The Musical Society of Victoria's traditional annual concert of Australian compositions received the unanimous approval of critics from 1914 on, and the scope was widened to include consideration of compositions by non-members. This change in attitude towards contemporary music brought about by the war could well have strengthened Margaret's resolve for a musical career.

Margaret was delighted when Marshall-Hall returned to the University of Melbourne in 1915 to take up the position of Ormond Professor again. Her esteem for him and her acknowledgment of his power to inspire her is revealed in her recollections:

All Marshall-Hall's very great gifts as a lecturer, his infectious enthusiasms, his wide knowledge, his catholicity of taste, his special talent for real communication of the sort that is all too rare, had been denied the students at the University Conservatorium for sixteen years. Now he was being "pardoned". The effect of such clashes on a young mind can be quite profound. He was a big man in every sense of the word, and an inspiring one.

It was around this time that Margaret says she "got to know, and greatly admire, Lorna Stirling" (1893-1956), a violinist at the Conservatorium whose studies also included viola. She noted that Lorna was also greatly inspired by Marshall-Hall, who:

seemed to provide her with the stimulus of a musical champagne—she really lived. The course of her musical life was set—not as a violinist, but as a "catalyst" to write on musical matters, and to explain a number of knotty points—to others.

Unfortunately, Marshall-Hall died in June of that year of an appendicle abscess, which left "an aching void" for Margaret, and caused her to seek advice about her future. She felt that the course at the University of Melbourne Conservatorium became out-moded following Marshall-Hall's death. She thought this curriculum, which consisted of first and second practical studies,

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141 The Musical Association of Victoria, formed in 1861, and The Musical Artists and Organists Society of Victoria, formed in 1877, amalgamated in 1892 under the name of "The Musical Society of Victoria". One of the primary objects of the Society since its inception was to encourage original compositions by its members. Margaret Sutherland and other composers such as Alfred Hill, Percy Grainger, Louis Lavater, Linda Phillips and Dorian Le Gallienne had works performed there. See Stella Nemet, History of The Musical Society of Victoria 1861-1981 (Melbourne: The Musical Society of Victoria, 1981) 7, 27.

142 Marshall-Hall had been dismissed in 1900 for writing and publishing a seemingly provocative book of verses called Hymns Ancient and Modern, and in the interim had founded the Albert Street Conservatorium. Margaret referred to "the quite maniacal jealousy of another member of the university staff who had schemed" to bring about his downfall. See Sutherland, "Three Universities in One".

143 Sutherland, "Young Days in Music", 26.

144 Sutherland, "Three Universities in One".

145 Sutherland, "Young Days in Music", 26.
harmony, counterpoint, history, aesthetics, form and analysis, had been proved in Europe to “dry up any spark of genuine creativity because of rigidity and lack of spontaneity”. She acknowledges that her own background, where she had been surrounded by music from an early age, made this method of study particularly irrelevant:

One naturally seeks out information if one has lived in an atmosphere of music, reads on these lines, goes to important rehearsals, listens with experience in one’s ears. The pieces of the puzzle seem to come together by means of a kind of magnetic attraction, rather than their having to be put into place laboriously.\(^{147}\)

While at university, Margaret had been taking on private pupils, whom she taught in their homes, and as her teaching practice was beginning to grow, she did not have the time to undertake a full course, so she had good reason to study only those single subjects which would fulfill her needs, a decision that was encouraged by Edward Goll.\(^{148}\) In 1916, the Belgian violinist and conductor Henri Verbruggen arrived in Sydney to take up a position at the State Conservatorium, bringing with him his string quartet. Margaret said that “at once, all sorts of things began to happen”. Verbruggen was frequently in Melbourne, staying and playing music with Edward Goll, and Margaret had many opportunities to listen. She was invited to play Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 4 with his orchestra in Sydney, which must have inspired her confidence. She felt that Verbruggen provided an “enormously stimulating force” to music, even in Melbourne, but his plans for the betterment of the State Conservatorium in Sydney were not accepted, and he left reluctantly in 1922 with his quartet for Minneapolis. In spite of the fact that the music scene in Melbourne had improved during the war, Verbruggen’s departure left Margaret “inconsolable”.\(^{149}\)

With all her uncles now dead, Margaret needed to earn money. In 1918, while still a student at the University of Melbourne, she was appointed to the music staff of the Presbyterian Ladies College in East Melbourne under the directorship of Edward Goll.\(^{150}\) She was not well-paid, and found the job relentless and trying, particularly since every student was expected to learn, but not all had aptitude. She was also doing understudy work for Goll at the Melbourne University Conservatorium when he was on tour, and gave piano recitals.\(^{151}\) However, she had always been conscious of the fact that piano-playing and teaching, with its constant repetition, could never satisfy her. She became more determined to compose:

\(^{146}\) Sutherland, “Young Days in Music”, 26.
\(^{147}\) Sutherland, “Young Days in Music”, 26.
\(^{148}\) Sutherland, “Young Days in Music”, 26.
\(^{149}\) Sutherland, “Young Days in Music”, 26-27.
\(^{151}\) Sutherland, “Young Days in Music”, 26.
On the other hand to pluck music from the air, and fashion it according to one's own whim, is quite another thing. That was what made my heart beat faster. And that was what I longed passionately to have time and opportunity to do. But the means were lacking.\textsuperscript{152}

Expanding Horizons—To Europe to Study

Margaret dreamed of studying overseas, as her sister Ruth had also wanted to do, though the latter had been thwarted in her attempts, as she became ill (with peritonitis) while in the process of painting a picture to compete for a travelling scholarship.\textsuperscript{153} Their cousin Stella travelled to England and Europe, leaving Australia in 1914 and never returning, finding her artistic home in Paris.\textsuperscript{154} Margaret’s ambitions were boosted when Goll decided to spend 1923 abroad, and she took over his teaching at the Conservatorium on full fees. She also maintained her own teaching and went on country tours for the Conservatorium. It was on one of these tours that she met her future husband, Dr Norman Albiston (b. 21 September 1894, d. 17 July, 1979). It was he who met her at the station at Port Fairy and, following the concert, drove her to her next venue in Warrnambool. He clearly had a great interest in music, and mentioned that his first wife, also a doctor, had recently left him.\textsuperscript{155}

In the same year Dorothy, the sibling to whom Margaret was closest, and whom she greatly admired, suffered what appears to have been a depressive illness:\textsuperscript{156}

Dorothy was a lovely looking girl, with soft nut-brown hair and large grey-blue eyes, and I recall that she was altogether very ill. I cannot recollect details of the illness, but know that she was out of action for a long time, as many things seemed to go wrong as well. Indeed she never did return to robust health at any time afterwards, but remained delicate and vulnerable to all kinds of upsets. She passionately longed to be strong, for mentally she had tremendous vigor. Eventually she returned to teaching and had a great talent for it. Her general reading too covered a wide field, and she had also the kind of gift for friendship which brought her friends rallying round.\textsuperscript{157}

\textsuperscript{152} Sutherland, “Young Days in Music”, 27.
\textsuperscript{153} Sutherland, “Young Days in Music”, 24.
\textsuperscript{154} Bowen, Drawn from Life, 27.
\textsuperscript{155} Sutherland, “1920 and So On”, unpublished undated typescript, Sutherland papers, Australian Manuscript Collection, National Library of Australia, MS 2967; Margaret Sutherland, unpublished autobiographical note, November 1960, private collection of Tony Bunney.
\textsuperscript{156} Helen Gifford, interview with the author, 16 September, 1999.
\textsuperscript{157} Sutherland, “Young Days in Music”, 24.
While nursing Dorothy in September 1923, Margaret’s mother Ada died of Bright’s Disease, having, selflessly, never previously mentioned her illness to the family. For Margaret, “the feeling of desolation was crippling”, but she had already booked a passage abroad, and the family encouraged her to cement her plans, though she herself was apathetic about it. No doubt her opinions about the state of music in Australia at that time provided an added incentive to continue her plans. She felt that “creative music in Australia at that time had never developed beyond being a pale reflection of the merest fringe of music abroad”, and that the impact of enormous changes in Europe was not reaching Australia.158 This opinion is echoed by Helen Topliss, who points out that Australia’s isolation during the First World War helped foster a nationalist identity in Australia, but at the same time encouraged a sense of paranoia about the old world. The arrival of Modernism in art, for example, caused reactionary forces to “combine in an effort to eradicate what was considered a foreign disease”.159 Helen Gifford suggests that Melburnians were more enlightened about contemporary developments in Europe in the 1880s and 1890s than in the 1920s, since more of them had been born in Europe and had recent experience there.160 Also, with the economy worsening following World War I and unemployment increasing,161 there was little money available to support the creative arts, and people were otherwise preoccupied.

Having saved enough money, Margaret left for England in December of 1923.162 England was a natural choice, not only because there was the possibility of studying composition with

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158 Sutherland, “Young Days in Music”, 27.
159 Helen Topliss, Modernism and Feminism: Australian Women Artists 1900-1940 (Sydney: Craftsman House, 1996) 110.
160 Gifford, “Recalling a Lost Voice”, 110.
161 Grimshaw et al, Creating a Nation, 219
162 Sutherland, “Young Days in Music”, 27.
well-known teachers and discovering European musical developments. It was the dream of many middle-class women at that time to travel "Home". In Stella Bowen’s words:

Going to England was called “going home”, even by people who had never been there and whose fathers had never been. We all talked with varying degrees of Australian accent, of which we were ashamed when we became aware of it. We regarded a real English accent with positive reverence.\textsuperscript{163}

![Stella Bowen, Self Portrait, c. 1928](image)

It was extremely unusual for women to travel overseas unchaperoned,\textsuperscript{164} as Margaret did. It was much more common that they were accompanied by their mothers (as Peggy Glanville-Hicks was in 1932). Margaret’s cousin Stella also travelled overseas alone, but unlike Margaret, could not have thought of the freedom of travel until her mother was dead. There is no indication that Ada would not have encouraged her daughter to study overseas, but Stella’s mother intensely disapproved of her daughter’s wish to do so.\textsuperscript{165} As her mother’s health failed, Stella felt it was “not possible to suggest leaving her”.\textsuperscript{166} The fact that Margaret was apathetic about leaving Australia so soon after her mother’s death, and the impossibility for Stella even to contemplate leaving until her mother had died, reflects the prevailing attitude that for women, the duty to family came first. The adventurous lives and uninterrupted careers that men could expect could

\textsuperscript{163} Bowen, \textit{Drawn from Life}, 6.
\textsuperscript{164} Fitzpatrick, \textit{Solid Bluestone Foundations}, 179.
\textsuperscript{165} Bowen, \textit{Drawn from Life}, 19.
\textsuperscript{166} Bowen, \textit{Drawn from Life}, 26.
not be the destiny of women unless such duties were in some way obviated.\textsuperscript{167} Stella herself supported this argument, imagining that:

It is probably reasonable to suppose that I should have ended by marrying some serious young man and settling down for ever in Adelaide, if it had not been for my mother’s death.\textsuperscript{168}

Shortly before her departure, Margaret had received a letter from Albiston informing her that he had given up his medical practice and was coming to Melbourne to discuss his plans to travel to England to follow up his own musical interests. He did in fact follow Margaret on a later ship, working as ship’s doctor to pay for his passage,\textsuperscript{169} and they spent quite a lot of time together during Margaret’s two-year stay in Europe.

Margaret shared a flat in Swiss Cottage with Rachel Gillespie, a Melbourne friend who was studying medicine. Rachel was out most of the day, leaving Margaret with the flat to herself and peace in which to work. Not surprisingly, given her opinions on institutional learning, and the fact that she had already spent five years in tertiary institutions, Margaret had no urge to embark on a course of formal study, believing private lessons in composition to be more worthwhile: “I didn’t really go to any institution, because by this time I realised that it was not the right thing”.\textsuperscript{170} This attitude was unusual, however, given that there was a strong feeling then (as there still seems to be now) that in order to reach one’s full musical potential, formal study overseas was necessary, and the Royal College of Music in London, which Margaret could have selected, was considered to be a prestigious institution by many aspiring Australian composers.\textsuperscript{171} Indeed, a number of Sutherland’s successors, including Esther Rofe, Peggy Glanville-Hicks, Miriam Hyde and Dulcie Holland all had periods of study there in the early 1930s. Each, of course, had different motivations, but pianist and composer Esther Rofe (1904-1999) provides a useful comparison with Margaret in some regards (although she never married) since she had a similar liberal upbringing in Melbourne, and a family that was interested in music and encouraged her in her musical endeavours. Like Margaret and her aunts, Esther’s mother had a prejudice against institutional learning, and before she travelled overseas in 1932 at the age of 28, Esther was largely, though not completely, self-taught; therefore the prospect of study at the Royal College of Music was probably more attractive to her than to Margaret because of the opportunity it

\textsuperscript{168} Bowen, \textit{Drawn from Life}, 25.
\textsuperscript{169} Sutherland, “1920 and So On”.
\textsuperscript{170} Mel Pratt, transcript of taped interview with Margaret Sutherland, 5 April 1972, Oral History Section, National Library of Australia, TRC 121/31, 6.
afforded her to undertake the sort of formal compositional training she had not previously experienced. Like Margaret, Esther worked hard at various jobs to earn money prior to travelling overseas, in her case performing, accompanying, ensemble playing and orchestral work. She did not travel overseas until 1932 at the age of 28, as lack of money had prevented her doing so until then.\textsuperscript{172}

Hart had given Margaret letters of introduction to John Ireland and Vaughan Williams, and she also approached Gustav Holst, with whose music Hart had made her familiar. At this time a number of English composers were making deliberate efforts to establish an English-inspired idiom by using traditional folk music in a more serious way, though Margaret disliked what she considered to be “dressed-up folk song”.\textsuperscript{173} She was unimpressed by John Ireland, believing his approach to be too mechanical, but managed to have some orchestration lessons with “an interesting woman composer”;\textsuperscript{174} possibly Dorothy Howell, who became Professor in Harmony and Composition at the Royal Academy of Music in 1924.\textsuperscript{175} Although most English music of this period did not interest Margaret,\textsuperscript{176} she said she had “heard a great deal of music by Arnold Bax—more and more I wanted lessons from him”.\textsuperscript{177} In 1925 she decided she would approach him. Aged 42 when Margaret encountered him, Bax (1883-1953) was an experienced and respected composer with many compositions to his name, including orchestral works, chamber and instrumental music, songs for voice and piano, piano, pianola, harpsichord and organ solos, and choral music, both unaccompanied and with organ.\textsuperscript{178} Symons describes his music as “essentially that of the British post-impressionist and pastoral variety” of romanticism, though “more relatable to the “Celticism” of Fritz Hart’s work, thus forming a link with Sutherland’s own earlier musical associations”.\textsuperscript{179} Margaret also admired his style of teaching and his character, saying:

I tried to go to several people but I didn’t find this was worthwhile, because they always had some prop to give you, and then at last I found the one that I really wanted to go to and it made all the difference. Just to be able to talk with somebody who thought in the same way and didn’t pontificate in the usual way, you know.\textsuperscript{180}

\textsuperscript{172} Petrus, “Esther Rofe: Theatre Musician”, 79-80, 83-85.
\textsuperscript{173} Sutherland, “Young Days in Music”, 27.
\textsuperscript{174} Sutherland, “1920 and So On”.
\textsuperscript{175} Celia Mike, “Howell, Dorothy”, The New Grove Dictionary of Women Composers, ed. Julie Anne Sadie and Rhian Samuel (New York: Norton, 1994) 231; There is no clear evidence in Margaret’s writings or those of others that Dorothy Howell was the “interesting woman composer” to whom Margaret referred, but Gifford suggests it was likely to have been her. See Gifford, “Recalling a Lost Voice”, 114.
\textsuperscript{176} Sutherland, “Young Days in Music”, 27.
\textsuperscript{177} Sutherland, unpublished undated autobiographical typescript, James Murdoch Papers, 10.
\textsuperscript{178} Lewis Foreman, Bax: A Composer and His Times (London: Scular Press, 1987) 410.
\textsuperscript{179} Symons, The Music of Margaret Sutherland, 13.
\textsuperscript{180} Pratt, transcript of interview with Margaret Sutherland, 5 April 1972, 6.
She also noted that at concerts which included his music, “He would sit right in the back of the hall, and when it was over, he disappeared by a back door. Other composers came to the platform for their plaudits. Not so Bax.”\(^{181}\) Although he had no official students, considering himself to be “hopeless as a teacher”, a few students did approach him for lessons, including Australian Arthur Benjamin.\(^{182}\) He also agreed to take Sutherland on, and she found his input helpful and stimulating.\(^{183}\)

Perhaps the attitude evident at the Royal College of Music at this time also influenced Margaret’s decision not to study there. Composing women were allowed access to the College, but were largely segregated from their male colleagues, since their motivations and aspirations were considered different, and they were not considered in any way to be men’s direct competitors.\(^{184}\) This prevailing somewhat negative attitude towards women composers in Europe was made obvious in Cecil Gray’s *Survey of Contemporary Music* (1924), in which he said “A woman’s composing is like a dog’s walking on his hind legs. It is not done well, but you are surprised to find it done at all”.\(^{185}\) However, the Society of Women Musicians, founded in 1911 by the musicologist and critic Marion M. Scott, with Gertrude Eaton and others, to represent the interests of women in music and to give concerts, especially of works by women,\(^{186}\) must have provided much-needed support. It was at the Society that Margaret’s Sonata for Violin and Piano, written in 1925 during her stay in London, received its first performance with Leila Doubleday\(^{187}\) on violin and Margaret at the piano.\(^{188}\) A conference which Margaret attended organised by the Society brought together many distinguished women musicians, and would have been a strengthening experience.\(^{189}\)

As well as studying composition, Margaret aimed to hear as much music performed as possible. She spent time in Austria and France, and had exposure for the first time to the music of

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\(^{181}\) Sutherland, unpublished undated autobiographical typescript, James Murdoch Papers, 10.


\(^{183}\) Sutherland, unpublished undated autobiographical typescript, James Murdoch Papers, 10.


\(^{187}\) Leila Doubleday (1894-c. 1988) was an Australian violinist who had studied at the University of Melbourne Conservatorium prior to Margaret. She travelled to Vienna to study, and with her husband, Max Pirani, toured with the Pirani Trio from 1923-1940 in Australia, South Africa, Canada, India, the USA and throughout Europe. See Bruce Boile, ed., “Leila Doubleday”, *The International Cyclopedia of Music and Musicians*, 11th edition (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1985) 591.

\(^{188}\) Gifford, “Recalling a Lost Voice”, 114. This must have been one of the rare occasions when Margaret performed, since it was not one of the aims of her sojourn abroad to play in public. See Pratt, transcript of interview with Margaret Sutherland, 5 April 1972, 7.

\(^{189}\) Rosewarne, “The Sutherland Family”, 40.
the major European composers of the early twentieth century, including Debussy, Ravel, Stravinsky, Bartók, the Viennese School and the French “Six”.190

As Symons discovered, there is nearly a complete absence of identifiable works from this period of Margaret’s life.191 Those known about appear to have been mostly solo songs. Unfortunately, only about four of these prior to 1925 are still in existence and available for analysis. It is therefore difficult to establish a pattern of Margaret’s stylistic development from youth to maturity, and makes the sophistication displayed in her Sonata for Violin and Piano all the more of an achievement. The work makes it clear, however, just how much Margaret’s composition advanced during her two years overseas, where she had the time and space to develop in the musical environment of Europe. Indeed Bax was impressed with the work, saying it was “full of remarkable ideas”,192 and “the best work by a woman I know”.193 It was certainly a turning point in her career, because although she had felt sure of her composing ability before her departure from Australia, and was determined to follow it through, this work must have made her feel justified in the knowledge of her own potential.

Apart from Margaret’s Songs for Children, which were published by Allans in 1929, significant publication of her works did not occur until the mid-1930s, when a number of compositions were published by Louise Hanson-Dyer’s Lyrebird Press.194 Some unison and part songs for girls’ voices to texts by John Shaw Neilson and others saw the printed page in 1934 and 1936, and in 1935 the Sonata for Violin and Piano was published. However, the proportion of Margaret’s entire oeuvre that has been published was only around 25% (see Appendix – List of Works). As Monique Geitenbeek stresses, publication is “a measure of status and achievement within the musical community”, which “maintains and preserves the reputation of composers and their contribution to their musical heritage”.195 There are several reasons why a notable number of women composers of the early and middle years of the twentieth century appear not to have pushed for publication of their works. The first is that their works were generally less likely than men’s to be accepted for publication. As late as 1952, for example, Margaret’s Concerto for

191 Symons, *The Music of Margaret Sutherland*, 34.
192 Sutherland, “1920 and So On”.
193 Foreman, *Bax*, 220.
194 Louise Hanson-Dyer (1884-1962) was a well-known Melbourne musical patron who left Australia in 1927, and founded the publishing house *L’Oiseau-Lyre* in Paris in 1932. She and Margaret had met at the Albert St Conservatorium when Margaret was a student of Edward Goll. They were involved together in a number of projects in Melbourne, and Hanson-Dyer became a strong supporter of her work. See Jim Davidson, *Lyrebird Rising: Louise Hanson-Dyer of L’Oiseau-Lyre, 1884-1962* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press at the Miegunyah Press, 1994) 75, 241.
Strings (c. 1948) by “M. Sutherland” was submitted to Boosey and Hawkes in London for publication, but rejected when it was discovered that “M. Sutherland” was a woman,\textsuperscript{196} contributing to the justification of the reflective comment Margaret made in 1972 that she had endured “frightful prejudice” as a woman.\textsuperscript{197} From the 1930s, however, the AMEB encouraged the publication (by Allans) of compositions by women and men composers by inviting some, including Margaret, to submit compositions toward their syllabuses, but the works of women composers were not used with the frequency that men’s were.\textsuperscript{198}

A second reason is that many women had restrictions on their time, juggling family and creative lives, and, before the advent of photocopiers, the preparation of multiple copies for publication or performance was extremely time-consuming. Many also gained enough satisfaction and fulfilment from the process of composition and performance, and did not give much consideration to being published.\textsuperscript{199} Marcia Citron has argued that there could be psychological consequences for a woman composer of circulating her work to the public, because it places “a woman and her subjectivity in the open” and highlights the “contradictions between ideology and her professionalism”.\textsuperscript{200}

Each of these scenarios applied to some extent to Margaret’s situation, although later in her career after her marriage ended she made a trip to Europe in 1951-1952, one of the reasons apparently being to investigate possibilities for the publication of her works.\textsuperscript{201} At this stage of her career she seems to have felt that local publishers were not giving enough support to women composers, as she founded a publishing company, Kurrajong Press, in the 1950s.\textsuperscript{202}

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Return to Australia—An “Uphill Journey”
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By November 1925, the money that Margaret had saved to support her during her time overseas was running out and she was quite ready to return to Australia, which had “haunted” her all the time she was away.\textsuperscript{203} The source of intellectual and creative stimulus for her father, uncles and aunts had been Australia, and so it was for her. She wanted to see Australian music develop a national idiom, and by this time felt equipped to contribute to that. Composition now “mattered

\textsuperscript{196} Symons, \textit{The Music of Margaret Sutherland}, 23.
\textsuperscript{197} Pratt, transcript of interview with Margaret Sutherland, 5 April 1972, 14.
\textsuperscript{198} Geitenbeek, “Reaching a Public”, 32.
\textsuperscript{199} Geitenbeek, “Reaching a Public”, 33.
\textsuperscript{202} Kay Lucas, “Celebration for a Composer”, \textit{Bulletin} (December 9, 1972):44.
\textsuperscript{203} Sutherland, “Young Days in Music”, 27.
above everything” to her.\textsuperscript{204} Her chief ambition on her return was to concentrate on writing music; however, having been so steeped in composition while she was away, she was initially shocked by “the barrenness, the absolute vacuum at home”, which she said “hit me and hurt me”.\textsuperscript{205} It was virtually impossible for a composer in Australia, male or female, to make a living solely by composing so-called “art” music. Composers had to make compromises in order to support themselves, and earned money by performing, teaching, arranging, and/or being prepared to write commercial music.\textsuperscript{206} Margaret’s ideals would not have allowed her to write commercial music. Her views on this are well exemplified in her comments on Peter Sculthorpe, about whom she initially had a high opinion, “but then I thought he was just out for commercial gain. He’s only written really one thing because it’s over and over and over and over, all the time.”\textsuperscript{207} Margaret did have to compromise, though, by continuing public performances and teaching, which she found increasingly incompatible with composing.\textsuperscript{208}

Soon after her return to Australia, a recital of Margaret’s works at the Assembly Hall in Melbourne on 12 March 1926 was organised by friends, including Louise Hanson-Dyer. Her songs were performed by Margaret herself and the singer Violet Somerset, and the Sonata for Violin and Piano was performed by Bernard Heinze, newly-appointed Ormond Professor at the University Conservatorium, with Edward Goll accompanying. Given Margaret’s commitment to making her career in Australia, it is understandable that the initial reaction of some people to her Sonata was very disappointing:

The recital was well attended. But no-one appeared to know what I was driving at. A frequent comment was “straight from the sub-conscious you know” and I began to feel I was

\textsuperscript{204} Sutherland, “Young Days in Music”, 27.

\textsuperscript{205} Sutherland, “Young Days in Music”, 27.

\textsuperscript{206} It is useful to compare Margaret with some of her contemporaries and close successors in this regard. For example, Esther Role went to England in 1932, and supported herself there until her return to Australia in 1940 by copying and arranging. In Australia she taught composition at the Melba Conservatorium in 1941, then worked at the ABC as a balance officer. In 1943 she accepted a position as an arranger for the Colgate Palmolive Radio Unit in Sydney (1943-1948), which meant a departure from classical music into a semi-popular idiom. See Pauline Petrus, “Esther Role: Theatre Musician”, 85, 88, 90. She was, of course, more able than Margaret to take on full-time jobs, since she was single and had no children; however, as mentioned, Margaret, single or married, would not have been prepared to work with the “semi-popular idiom” Role did for Colgate Palmolive. Phyllis Batchelor (b. 1915) taught, performed and in the 1940s worked as a programme coordinator for the ABC. See Monique Geitenbeek, “Composer-Pianist Phyllis Batchelor: An Introduction”, Sounds Australian (Autumn 1994); 33. Moneta Eagles taught and worked as a composer of film music for the Department of the Interior Film Unit in Sydney; Dulcie Holland also composed film music for the same Department, taught, and was an examiner for the AMEB. See Geitenbeek, “Reaching a Public”, 30-31, 33. Miriam Hyde (b. 1913) performed, taught, and was an examiner for the AMEB. See “Hyde, Miriam Beatrice”, The Oxford Companion to Australian Music, ed. Warren Bobbington (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1997) 287-288; and Geitenbeek, “Reaching a Public”, 33.

\textsuperscript{207} Pratt, transcript of interview with Margaret Sutherland, 5 April 1972, 17-18.

\textsuperscript{208} Rosewarne, “The Sutherland Family”, 45.
some sort of Freudian freak. I knew then that it was going to be a desperately heart-breaking uphill journey, and I felt cold and dismayed.²⁹⁹

However, these reactions reported by Margaret were not echoed in the review in the *Australian Musical News* of the March concert; she would at least have been happy with the perception of her originality expressed in the review:

> Miss Sutherland came back well equipped for the evening of original works she gave in the Assembly Hall. The most imposing of these was her Sonata for violin and piano. Miss Sutherland has been imbibing freely at the best modern tonal sources, and thus her thematic beginnings have a genuine spirituality, though in the development she does not reach out much beyond a constant succession of wave-like modulations and occasionally for some very abrupt changes. The whole Sonata may be taken not only as a token of cleverness on Miss Sutherland’s part in handling extremely difficult tonal mediums, but even more gratefully as an evidence that Australian musicians are determined to quit the easiest roads.³¹⁰

Indeed these words appear to validate Margaret’s important position in Australia’s musical life at the time, and indicate that she had reached the summit of the vocational ambitions she had as a single woman. These ambitions were a natural consequence of growing up with a family background which provided her with intellectual, idealistic and creative stimuli of unusually high intensity, which encouraged both her awareness of alternative life choices and the development of her individual potential. It was also an environment in which she was free to develop her strong personality, and use it to her advantage. Even before she left Baldur, her determination to pursue a creative vocation was clear.

Margaret valued her upbringing in a world in which the marriage plot was not the only one she need envisage for herself. No-one in her immediate circle appeared to require that she, and her talent, should follow conventional paths, leading only to marriage and domesticity. As the youngest in the family by eight years, she was often surrounded by high-achieving relatives who were significantly older than she was, who took her seriously, and included her in most activities.

Her aunts, sisters and Mona McBurney encouraged her, and acted as role models of single women with creative vocations. In spite of the fact that her father died when she was quite young, he provided a strong male influence in her life which her uncles continued after his death. They were fine examples of men who actively pursued intellectual careers and interests, but more importantly, were present in her early life.

²⁹⁹ Sutherland, “Young Days in Music”, 27.
³¹⁰ “Margaret Sutherland’s Works”, review in *Australian Musical News* 1 April, 1926: 25.
The illness of her sisters and the deaths of her father, uncles and mother before her mid-twenties made her familiar early with the concept of a woman having to earn her own living, and contributed to the development in her of a maturity beyond her years. At this stage, it appeared a difficult yet promising creative future lay ahead for Margaret.

By the middle of 1927, however, she was married to Norman Albiston, and by 1931, had two children. How marriage and family both enriched and complicated her life will be explored in Chapter Two.
CHAPTER TWO

The Married Years

“All the Hideous Years” of Marriage

Little is known about relationships Margaret may have had with men before her marriage. She did not leave such records, and it appears there were few romantic liaisons, if any. However, Gifford feels there may have been an attraction between her and her piano teacher, Edward Goll:

She adored Goll, but she was quite a bit younger. She used to hold a handkerchief for him to wipe his hands on when he was performing, and Goll loved her, because she was an attractive young girl. But nothing happened—Margaret was altogether too correct. If she’d married Goll, I’m sure it would have been really happy. But Goll needed a rich wife. Margaret had many male admirers, but didn’t have lovers. 211

Further evidence of this attraction is the fact that Goll presented Margaret with a photograph of himself in 1918 with the caption “To my very gifted pupil with all my wishes for the future.” 212

Fig. 12

Edward Goll, 1918

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211 Helen Gifford, interview with the author, 16 September 1999.
212 It is unclear whether the photograph was given to Margaret to mark a particular occasion. It is unlikely to have been on the completion of her studies at Melbourne University, since she remained a student in 1919. It is possible Goll presented it to her before departing on one of his tours, during which she would take over his teaching responsibilities.
Margaret met her future husband, Dr Norman Albiston, during a country concert tour she made to Port Fairy in June 1923, when his first wife had recently left him. As she recorded it,

NAA and I met in Port Fairy, June 1923. I was on a country tour for the Melbourne Conservatorium. He drove me to Warrnambool where our next recital was to be, and told me his wife had gone off a couple of weeks ago. He seemed depressed.\textsuperscript{213}

Although Norman had a strong interest in the arts, he was given three career alternatives by his father, a professor of Theology at the University of Melbourne—the Church, law or medicine. He chose the latter, but followed Margaret to London in the 1920s, apparently with the idea that he might also pursue studies in music.\textsuperscript{214} However, this did not happen, and he spent some time qualifying as a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons. According to Margaret, Norman then decided that surgery was “just glorified carpentry” and undertook further medical study in London to become a psychiatrist, working at Maudsley and Epsom Mental Hospitals, and staying in London a year longer than Margaret did. The divorce from his first wife was finalised in May 1927 and the couple married in Melbourne on 30 July of that year, Margaret aged 29 and Norman three years older at 32. Norman’s father financed the purchase of a small practice in East Malvern for which they paid rent, and two children were born there—Mark in early 1929, followed by Jennifer in mid 1931. In later years Margaret reflected on her earlier anticipation of an ideal marriage, a dream which sadly remained unfulfilled:

I remember being absurdly starry-eyed at the thought of working things up from an extremely meagre beginning.\textsuperscript{215}

\textsuperscript{213} Margaret Sutherland, unpublished autobiographical note, November 1960, 1, private collection of Tony Bunney.


\textsuperscript{215} Sutherland, unpublished autobiographical note, November 1960, 1.
Fig. 13
Norman Albiston, Self Portrait, c. 1950

Fig. 14
Margaret, c. 1937

Although it was traditional for a middle-class wife to provide her husband with emotional and domestic support, it was less common for her to provide financial support through paid work. Prior to World War II, if a married woman worked, it was seen as a negative reflection on her husband’s ability to support her. Margaret was unusual in this regard, as she continued teaching to earn money for nine years after her marriage, covering major expenses herself, so that Albiston could establish himself in his career as a psychiatrist:

For the first 9 years I had paid all household expenses, dressed the children myself and paid for their schooling – this because I thought it would give him more of a chance to establish himself. (It did, of course, not work out that way.)

The reason Margaret was able to continue earning a little money while her children were young was that she had a housekeeper to help with some of the domestic duties, which freed some time for teaching and other activities. Although women’s lives earlier this century were still dominated by the domestic responsibilities they were expected to take on as a result of marriage


218 Sutherland, unpublished autobiographical note, November 1960, 3.

and children, domestic help was not uncommon in middle-class families, and certainly necessary if women were to find any time to themselves.\textsuperscript{220}

It seems that the marital situation was troubled from quite early on, and increasingly the two went their separate ways. Margaret provided evidence of early difficulties, including affairs Norman had with other women:

N. never rose before the little waiting room had several patients. There would have to be shamefaced apologies and uneasy promises of a visit in the near future. Then came an affair with a nurse in the district, and more serious, the episode of an angry husband peeping through a blind to see N. kissing his wife. From then on E. Malvern was an unhappy place.\textsuperscript{221}

After five years, when the children were aged three and one respectively, Norman decided that he would establish a psychiatric practice in the city, and shared rooms in Alcaston House, Collins Street. After this move, he usually did not return home until late in the evening, preferring to “fill in his time at the Masonic Club playing solo”.\textsuperscript{222} He was soon asked to vacate his Alcaston House rooms because of information the janitor provided giving evidence of affairs with patients,\textsuperscript{221} after which he found new rooms in the city. At this time the couple was renting a house in Berkeley St, Hawthorn. Once the children were at school, they saw little of their father, a situation which “continued all through their school life”.\textsuperscript{224}

There followed another affair with his nurse (previously a patient), which increased Margaret’s perception of what struck her as Norman’s “sadism”:

It was then that I became acutely aware of N.’s sadism—I had thought before that he was cruel because he was unhappy. But I began to have more and more proof that he got satisfaction—even more—out of inflicting pain.\textsuperscript{225}

Margaret gave two further examples of such “sadism”. Apparently after she gave up teaching (in 1937)\textsuperscript{226}, it was very difficult to extract money from her husband for household expenses:

The paying over to me of housekeeping allowance caused a lot of misery. If I asked for it he would say I could not have it because I asked. If I did not ask, he would say that was the reason it was not forthcoming. Generally eventually it was not given to me, but left somewhere round the house, where I was to find it in due course.\textsuperscript{227}

\textsuperscript{220} Modjeska, “Rooms of their Own”, 332.
\textsuperscript{221} Sutherland, unpublished autobiographical note, November 1960, 1-2.
\textsuperscript{222} Sutherland, unpublished autobiographical note, November 1960, 4.
\textsuperscript{223} Sutherland, unpublished autobiographical note, November 1960, 2; Helen Gifford, interview with the author, 16 September 1999.
\textsuperscript{224} Sutherland, unpublished autobiographical note, November 1960, 4.
\textsuperscript{225} Sutherland, unpublished autobiographical note, November 1960, 3.
\textsuperscript{226} It is unclear from sources exactly why Margaret ceased to teach at this time, but possible reasons are the fact that she had never found teaching entirely satisfying, Norman was now established in his career, and she wanted to devote what little time she could find to composing.
\textsuperscript{227} Sutherland, unpublished autobiographical note, November 1960, 3.
As well as paying all the household and children’s expenses for the first nine years of marriage, she had bought a car when they had first married, and Norman apparently attempted to control her usage of it. There were times when he would not allow her to take the car to do some shopping, but would drive alongside her as she walked, taunting her as he went, and when the shops came within sight, he would drive off.\textsuperscript{228} Given that driving a car provides not only a sense of mastery and competence, but also enables activities to be pursued outside the immediate environment, Albiston’s behaviour in this regard can be seen as an attempt to control her, and also to curtail her freedom.\textsuperscript{229}

According to Pamela Bloom, a friend of Albiston’s who had herself experienced his intense interest in people with careers in music, his first wife had become rather annoyed with his avid musical interest, and Pamela felt, too, that he may have interfered too much in Margaret’s work, as if requiring some sort of ownership of or control over it.\textsuperscript{230} This, coupled with the fact that he was talented enough himself to be aware of her gifts, but apparently not talented enough to match them, could well have led to resentment on his part. It is reported that he was overheard early in the marriage to say that he wanted to “take her down a peg or two”, because although he thought her beautiful and wanted to marry her, he felt she had too many airs and graces.\textsuperscript{231} This, along with Norman’s treatment of Margaret over the car, and his directives to her over how she should mother her children, is further evidence of a need on his part for control over his wife. It should be acknowledged, however, that Norman was a man of an era when women were expected to achieve fulfilment through their husbands and children in families where the man was in control, and as Maureen White emphasised, doctors tended to demand and expect to receive respect: “Medicos were like the great almighty”.\textsuperscript{232}

\textsuperscript{228} Margaret Sutherland, “1920 and So On”.
\textsuperscript{229} Penelope Scott, “Psychological Consequences of Inequalities in Transport”, \textit{Worth Her Salt}, 191-192.
\textsuperscript{230} Pamela Bloom, interview with the author, 12 October 1999.
\textsuperscript{231} Helen Gifford, interview with the author, 16 September 1999; Jane Bunney, interview with the author, 20 January 2000.
\textsuperscript{232} Maureen White, interview with the author, 14 June 2000.
Margaret never wrote about her relationship with her daughter Jenny (killed in a car accident in the early 1970s) but they were reported to have been very close.\textsuperscript{233}

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Margaret and Jennifer, c. 1937
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She had more to say about her son Mark, with whom she seems to have had a more difficult relationship, especially after her eventual divorce from Norman.

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Norman and Mark, c. 1935
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\textsuperscript{233} Helen Gifford, interview with the author, 16 November 1999; Maureen White, interview with the author, 14 June 2000.
Margaret believed Mark suffered through not seeing enough of his father, drifting through school life, and following very strongly his father's "trail" of "starting things and never carrying on". According to Margaret, Norman used his psychiatric knowledge to attempt to educate Margaret on how to raise her son:

From his early babyhood, I was warned incessantly by N. over the (supposedly) heinous crime of establishing an Oedipus complex (in my maternal relations with a son), which may have been a contributing factor to some of his later difficulties. Under no circumstances was I ever permitted to let him come into bed with me. His cot was beside me, and if he were wakeful at night, I felt his hand feeling out for my hair which he would clutch and ruffle, and play with. I never knew what pronouncement would have been made by N. over this, because he didn't know it happened. But many many times in later years I could not help feeling that all this unnatural, sterile kind of conditioning could have brought about Mark's lack of feeling for other people and his unhappy, fruitless egotism. It was the era too when the psychologists said one did not say NO to children. N. even went so far as to say, if I wanted to correct manners in any way: "Leave him alone. He'll find out when he's ostracised by society". What could be crueller? 235

Indeed, indications are that Norman and Margaret each held strong views which differed in their ideals and aims in raising and educating children. This seems to have led to further friction. Margaret expressed her ideals in a number of notes:

The happy people are those who consider the other fellow while still going their own way, conscious that they must not, under any circumstances, foul the other's pitch, nor wangle things to their own advantage. This, I feel, just about sums up what our credo should be. These things have to be started early. Kindergartens, I do say, go a long way towards inculcating fairplay into the young mind. 236

She was very critical of parents who disrupted their children's lives by pushing them too hard and/or pressuring them into unnatural and unsuitable careers:

For all the innumerable crimes constantly committed against children, to my way of thinking, the conscious exploitation of the unusually gifted child is one of the most horrible. It starts, in most cases, at such an early age, and the younger, conditioned so rigidly and so tirelessly as to be utterly defenceless, is tragically alone. 237

Good Heavens, what cruel and damaging decision about children's ultimate careers have been made by strong-minded, cruelly dominating parents, who, because of a whim of their own, catapult their offspring into some calling utterly unsuited to their talents. 238

234 Sutherland, unpublished autobiographical note, November 1960, 4.
235 Sutherland, unpublished autobiographical note, November 1960, 4-5, 8.
237 Margaret Sutherland, "Different Difficulties: The Prodigy", unpublished undated typescript, private collection of Tony Bunney, 1.
238 Margaret Sutherland, "Changing Horses in Mid-Stream", unpublished undated note, private collection of Tony Bunney.
Ending the Marriage

It was in 1946, after sixteen-year-old Mark’s obvious sexual relationship with the 15-year-old girl next door that Margaret said Norman “could not carry on his work”, and joined a party of medical men who were chartering a ship with crew to take them for a five-week trip to the Barrier Reef.\(^{239}\)

It was during this trip that he met 30-year-old Valerie Cohen, the woman who was eventually to become his third wife. At a particularly physically and emotionally vulnerable time of life, Margaret became aware of the affair in 1947 by discovering letters:

> The strain over Mark, plus my entering the menopause, made it difficult to carry on. I asked N. to make up his mind one way or another. This he would not do, but preferred living at home and spending all available time with her. My cousin (Mimi Scales) came to stay with us. She sensed the trouble and asked N. about it. He informed her that he was “giving himself 6 months to make up his mind”. This I could not consent to. I could not go through another 6 months of it. I was by this time pretty ill—having daily rigors which left me completely exhausted.\(^{240}\)

She finally confronted him about the affair, and in his anger he gathered up all her music and threatened to throw it in the river. It took a solicitor’s order to persuade him not to destroy it.\(^{241}\)

Margaret moved herself and her clothes into the spare room, and upon returning home late one night to discover this, Norman knew the marriage was finally over, packed his bags and left.\(^{242}\)

The angst involved in Margaret’s eventual decision to end the marriage in early 1948 may have been eased by the knowledge that her sister Ruth had provided a model for her of life as a creative divorcee. Ruth’s husband, Charles Neylon, was employed in the construction industry, which was one of the first to be affected in the Depression of the 1930s. He was retrenched, and when the couple could no longer keep up payments on their house, they were forced to separate. Charles went to the country to live with his widowed mother, and Ruth and their son Geoffrey were taken in by Margaret. Ruth had all but given up painting during her marriage, and before buying the house in Balwyn in 1925, Ruth and Charles had lived in an isolated Murray River settlement, where there were few possibilities for getting involved in related activities such as writing exhibition reviews. However, after the separation, Ruth set out to re-establish her career. She renewed earlier acquaintances in the art world, found a teaching position in a convent, and in 1940 joined the Melbourne Society of Women Painters.\(^{243}\)

\(^{239}\) Sutherland, unpublished autobiographical note, November 1960, 5.
\(^{240}\) Sutherland, unpublished autobiographical note, November 1960, 6.
\(^{241}\) Sutherland, unpublished autobiographical note, November 1960, 6.
\(^{242}\) Sutherland, “1920 and So On”, unpublished undated typescript, Sutherland papers, Australian Manuscript Collection, National Library of Australia, MS 2967.
\(^{243}\) Rosewarne, “The Sutherland Family”, 50-52.
Albiston’s third wife appears to have been happily married to him for many years, and, not surprisingly, paints a kinder picture of him. She thought him warm and caring with a wide interest in the arts, and did not see him as a person with a strong need to conform to societal norms.\textsuperscript{244} Jane Bunney described Val, in turn, as having a strong character, being sociable and easy-going, and independently wealthy. She feels Val would not have put up with being treated badly by Norman, and would not have hesitated to confront him openly if he behaved wrongly. “Poor Margaret would have taken it inwardly”.\textsuperscript{245} This relationship appears to have been a lot more successful, perhaps due to the wisdom of age, a different blend of personalities, fewer financial constraints, the fact that both had already established independent careers, and that there was no intention to have children.

**The Choices to Marry and to Mother**

Bearing in mind Margaret’s upbringing, ambitions, determination, and troubled marriage, it is pertinent to reflect (from the perspective of today’s social climate) upon why she might have conformed to the “marriage plot” to the extent she appears to have done. Indeed marriage, with its safety and closure, previously held out to be an ideal of female destiny,\textsuperscript{246} obviously did not live up to Margaret’s expectations, as especially evidenced in her comment that she had been “absurdly starry-eyed”.\textsuperscript{247} She was ambitious, and wanted a broader, more adventurous experience of life. She found it difficult to fit completely the then-existing socially prescribed, submissive role for a married woman, which included as its most important task the provision to her husband of emotional and domestic support to enable him to pursue his career unimpeded. As Helen Gifford emphasises, women were not expected to be rivals to their husbands, but to live their lives through their husbands and children.\textsuperscript{248}

Although it is impossible to discover the whole truth about such a complex entity as the marital relationship, it is possible, based on available information, to suggest some reasons for Margaret’s choice to marry and have a family. Why did such a woman marry such a man and have children, particularly given that she did have strong role models of creative women who remained single?

\textsuperscript{244} Val Cohen, interview with the author, 25 January 2000.
\textsuperscript{245} Jane Bunney, interview with the author, 20 January 2000.
\textsuperscript{247} Sutherland, unpublished autobiographical note, November 1960, 1.
\textsuperscript{248} Helen Gifford, interview with the author, 16 September 1999.
Norman is reported to have been a handsome, witty, charming, urbane, cultured man, who was involved in the rather new and rare field of psychiatry, and who would have been seen as a “bit of a catch”. Moreover, he obviously pursued her tenaciously. Von Rompaeys confirms:

There were only three psychiatrists in Melbourne at the time—it was rare. I think that he wore her down. He chased her to London.\textsuperscript{249}

Helen Gifford agrees:

Psychiatrists were the rage. It was the glamour of Freud from World War I on—the mind was thrilling—it was a new area of discovery. Norman was considered one of the best-looking men of his generation—a stunner.\textsuperscript{250}

The anticipated financial security could also have been attractive to Margaret given that it was (and still is) hard to make a living as a composer. She was certainly familiar with the experience of living in financially precarious circumstances, given that her father and four uncles had all died relatively young of the same heart condition, and she and her family had to earn their own incomes. At the time when Margaret and Norman met, Margaret’s sister had been ill and her mother had recently died, and Norman’s first marriage had dissolved. Thus both would have been experiencing a degree of emotional vulnerability, and might have derived some comfort from the affection provided within a new relationship.

Remaining single was not necessarily an attractive option. Drusilla Modjeska describes the disadvantages of spinsterhood in her article about the domestic situation of women writers between the wars:

It was no solution to remain unmarried. Unmarried women who were dependent on support from a relative, usually a father, faced many of the disadvantages, though none of the advantages of marriage. Unmarried daughters living at home were expected to take over domestic responsibilities as their parents grew old; it was the unmarried daughters who most usually nursed their parents through their last years. Those who supported themselves in one of the limited professional capacities open to them, were tied to a frequently unsatisfactory job, with low pay. It was not common, or easy, for unmarried middle-class women, especially when young, to establish their own household and most were forced to live at home.\textsuperscript{251}

The experience of motherhood appears to be one Margaret wanted, since she herself had alluded to the mother instinct being the “life blood of any nation, and the world must go on going round, mustn’t it?”\textsuperscript{252} It appears Margaret had at least a partial intellectual awareness that some career sacrifices needed to be made if marriage and children were to be a part of her life, since

\textsuperscript{249} Elizabeth Von Rompaeys, interview with the author, 7 October 1999.
\textsuperscript{250} Helen Gifford, interview with the author, 16 September 1999.
\textsuperscript{251} Modjeska, “Rooms of their Own”, 346-347.
\textsuperscript{252} Margaret Sutherland, “How to Live in a Room-and-a-Bit (and Still Keep Your Reason – and your piano)”, unpublished undated note, private collection of Tony Bunney, 3.
she acknowledged that her uncle John’s view that domesticity was unavoidable had influenced her own.\footnote{253}

Margaret brought up her children in an era when new responsibilities and standards for housewives and mothers were being imposed from outside the home and the local community, both in Australia and elsewhere\footnote{254}. Nancy Chodorow, among others, has drawn attention to this:

Women’s family role became centred on child care and taking care of men. Women of all classes [were] now expected to nurture and support husbands in addition to providing them with food and a clean house.\footnote{255}

The 1920s was a decade of rapid suburban expansion, and Barbara Cameron noted that:

From about 1922 there was a backlash against post-war emancipation, successfully persuading women that their place was in the home, rearing healthy young Australians to populate the country, and this pressure increased throughout the decade.\footnote{256}

Literature directed at women prepared by government and professional agencies gave explicit advice on how to run a household and manage a family, with an emphasis on women’s role in realising the stipulated standards.\footnote{257} Middle-class and working-class women were a concern for the advocates of this new domesticity, and were often blamed for the dwindling birth rate, as well as being reproached for their selfishness.\footnote{258} Although it is difficult to assess the degree to which Margaret was influenced by these expectations, it is important to be aware of social pressures she may have found difficult to avoid.

**“Hope Dies Hard” for 21 Years**

A further question can justifiably be asked. Given the unhappy circumstances of the marriage, why did Margaret remain married for as many as 21 years?\footnote{259}

An obvious reason was provided by Margaret in a reflection on her earlier hopes for the survival of the marriage:

\footnote{253} John took a less rigorous approach to Social Darwinist evolutionary theory than had his brother Alexander, and, albeit to a lesser extent, Margaret’s father George. John maintained that women were not inferior, and acknowledged that the domestic role was a barrier to women’s social and intellectual development. However, he did uphold the idea that women’s domestic role was unavoidable because of their responsibility to preserve the race. See Rosewarne “The Sutherland Family”, 49.


\footnote{256} Barbara Cameron, “The Flappers and the Feminists—A Study of Women’s Emancipation in the 1920s”, *Worth Her Salt*, 265.

\footnote{257} Kerreen Reiger, “Women’s Labour Redefined”, *Worth Her Salt*, 73, 81-83.

\footnote{258} Anthea Hyslop, “Agents and Objects—Women and Social Reform in Melbourne 1900 to 1914”, *Worth Her Salt*, 241.
Hope dies hard in me—much too hard, I fear, and I pinned a lot of it on some change in outlook over the years. For that reason I confided in no-one, for I felt if the change were to come, all the hideous years would be forgotten.  

Additionally, although between the wars expectations were changing and marriage was starting to be viewed more critically, the stigma of divorce, particularly for couples with younger families, was strong, and the divorce laws less favourable to women. Margaret would have been concerned about custody of the children, given that doctors had a particularly high standing in the community, and Albiston's view may have been respected more than hers. She obviously felt the responsibility to protect her children, since she did not want to end the marriage while the children were young, but finally initiated divorce when they were 18 and 16, by which time she considered them "old enough to examine things for themselves".

Social Milieu and Sustaining Friendships

According to Ruth Solie, "historically, female friendships and access to communities of women have been crucial factors in women's success". This statement was certainly true of Margaret, who always had good female friends. Although she did not often speak with friends of her troubles, her close friendships during her marriage replaced some of the intimacy missing from the marriage, and helped distract her attention from her difficult domestic situation. Margaret also had male friends; however, she operated predominantly in an environment of mostly single, strong and supportive women. This was naturally so at the Lyceum Club, which she joined in 1923. Margaret played a very active role in the musical life of the Club, contributing musical programmes and organising funny stage shows, mock operas and pageants along with other...
friends and members. She was eventually awarded Honorary Life Membership, granted to those who had given outstanding service to their fellow members or attained special distinction. The Lyceum was also a venue where she could have some of her compositions performed. According to Schofield, "she had a lot of admirers there who would want to hear what she had written."

The Catalysts, who used the Lyceum Club as their meeting place, and many of whom were Lyceum members, was a particularly supportive group of women for Margaret. This group was formed in 1910 "to discuss and study intellectual and cultural subjects in the pleasant social atmosphere of lunch-hour or evening meetings".

One very close friend of Margaret's who was also an active member of the Lyceum, particularly in the 1930s and 1940s, was Lorna Stirling. As mentioned, the two had met in 1915 when they were students at the University Conservatorium, and they became lifelong friends. Lorna studied overseas in Germany, France and London, and on her return to Melbourne in 1931 became well-known for lectures and broadcasts on music and its history, as well as being a newspaper music critic. According to Dorothy Miller, "her friendship was treasured by a wide circle of people with the most diverse interests". Lorna often played Margaret's compositions, and the two were involved together in the "Women of the University" war effort, and later in the Combined Arts Centre Movement. Other members who were friends included musicians Mona McBurney (Margaret's former teacher), Una Bourne and Dorothy Miller, who, with Margaret, had been involved with the Club's Music Circle since its formation in 1925, and became Honorary Life Members of the Club. Writer Mollie Turner Shaw (also a Catalyst) and neighbour Lady Yseult Bailey, both of whom Margaret was involved with in the "Women of

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265 Gillison, A History of the Lyceum Club, 70, 72, 77, 99.
266 Schofield Schofield, interview with the author, 4 October 1999.
268 Symons, The Music of Margaret Sutherland, 21.
269 Quoted in Gillison, A History of the Lyceum Club, 72.
270 Symons, The Music of Margaret Sutherland, 21.
271 Pratt, transcript of interview with Margaret Sutherland, 5 April 1972, 10.
274 Symons, The Music of Margaret Sutherland, 20.
the University Patriotic Fund” during World War II, were good friends.275 The one-time progressive principal of Merton Hall, Dorothy Ross, who was also a Lyceum member and a Catalyst, was a friend during and after Margaret’s marriage, and her views on education were certainly shared by Margaret.276

Another friend and member was Lady Maie Casey,277 who wrote the libretto for Margaret’s opera, The Young Kabbarli (1964). Ex-kindergarten teacher Maureen White, daughter of Tom White, who had played clarinet in some of Margaret’s chamber compositions, recalls going sometimes (during the 1940s) with her father to Margaret’s home for rehearsals or social visits. She remembers having encountered some of Margaret’s friends, including Lady Casey, and that they would have morning or afternoon tea in a “genteel but alternative” atmosphere.278

A close friend, who was to become quite influential in Margaret’s life, was Constance Duncan. Con had been Director of the Wartime Refugee Programme in Australia during World War II, and Margaret had initially got to know her through her involvement with the Women of the University Patriotic Fund. Con had been advised by friends in London of the secret departure of a boatload of refugees on the “Dunera” from England. As she prepared for the boat’s arrival, the Army threatened her with imprisonment for allegedly contravening secrecy regulations. However, Con stood firm against the Army, ignoring their threats, which were eventually withdrawn. This incident had greatly enhanced Margaret’s respect for and trust in Con, even before they became close.279

As Margaret said, she confided in no-one for many years about her situation, which might have appeared unique to her, bearing in mind that such problems were usually borne in silence. However, during interviews with Stuart Rosewarne in the 1970s, Margaret described how she eventually confided in Con about her unhappy marriage at the Lyceum Club early in 1947. She obviously felt she could trust Con, and it may have been easier to confide in a woman who was single, and seems not to have held strong views on the permanence of marriage. Con suggested to Margaret that she distance herself from the situation for a few days, and invited Margaret to spend some time with her at her holiday retreat in Olinda. It was in this atmosphere of calm that Margaret grew more comfortable talking to Con, and revealed the conflict she had experienced

275 Margaret Sutherland, “Three Universities in One”, unpublished undated typescript, Australian Manuscript Collection, National Library of Australia, MS 2967.
277 Lady Casey (1892-1983) was a noted patron of the arts, and wrote two volumes of poetry, a biography of Nellie Melba and three autobiographical works, as well as the libretto for The Young Kabbarli (1964). See “Casey, Maie (Ethel Marion Sumner)”, John Arnold and Deirdre Morris, eds, Monash Biographical Dictionary of Twentieth Century Australia (Melbourne: Reed, 1994) 94.
278 Maureen White, interview with the author, 14 June 2000.
279 Rosewarne, “The Sutherland Family”, 90-91.
between motherhood and career, the frustrations of domestic life and her feelings towards a husband whose career was not obstructed by the parenthood role, but who had resented the fact that his wife had determinedly pursued her interests in music. The relief of having been able to talk about her difficulties to a non-judgmental friend helped to strengthen Margaret’s resolve to bring the marriage to an end. After the marriage finished, Margaret and Con shared a house, and travelled overseas together.

**Maintaining an Active Public Life**

While coping with a difficult marriage and bringing up children, Margaret found time for many other things. Her public activities during this time seemed to provide her with a sense of worth she did not experience in her marriage, and to help take her mind off the troubles at home. Margaret herself admitted that her determined struggle for the Arts Centre, for example, could well have had something to do with her unhappiness in other aspects of her life.

Margaret composed, taught and gave recitals she organised herself and/or with the help of patrons such as Louise Hanson-Dyer through the British Music Society, and Ivy Brookes of the Lady Northcote Trust. As mentioned, she was an active member of the Lyceum Club and the Catalysts. She also found time to lobby ceaselessly for the Australian composer and music in general, and fought for the improvement of standards in music education. From 1927, Margaret was a member of the Ladies’ Committee which promoted the interests of contemporary Australian composers through concerts of the University Symphony Orchestra and the Lady Northcote Permanent Orchestra Trust.

In 1933, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) initiated competitions for composers, a step Gifford describes as “enlightened”, and particularly important in creating opportunities for wider recognition of the work of Margaret and other women composers:

> At that time a woman needed some sort of official notice or sanction for her work to justify a regular commitment to something as singular and unremunerative as music composition—and finally this was given by the ABC with their programme of competitions providing just the incentive that she needed.

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281 Pratt, transcript of interview with Margaret Sutherland, 5 April 1972, 8.
282 Secretary of the Ladies’ Committee, letter to Margaret Sutherland, 16 April 1927, Herbert and Ivy Brookes Papers, Australian Manuscript Collection, National Library of Australia, MS 1924.
Margaret took advantage of this opportunity, and in 1933 won awards in three categories: Section 3—Suite for String Orchestra (overall award), Section 14—Violin or Cello solo (special prize—Victoria), Section 15—Song or Duet (Victorian award). In 1935 she won awards in six categories: Section 5—Chamber Music Compositions for Three or More Instruments (Trio for Violin, Clarinet and Piano [1934]), Section 7—Unaccompanied Vocal Work for Male Voices, Section 9—Two-part song for Children’s Voices, Section 10—Unison Song for Children’s Voices, Section 14—Piano Solo, and the special State prize.

During World War II Margaret helped organise and administer a day nursery in Kew for children whose mothers had joined the workforce, and became Secretary of the “Women of the University Patriotic Fund”, a position she held for two years until it was necessary to employ a full-time, paid secretary because of the increasing workload. The Fund’s organising head was Yseult Bailey, a neighbour and friend. For the “Women of the University” she also became intimately involved in organising a series of regular lunch-hour recitals to raise money for the Red Cross Prisoner of War Fund. She described the series as follows:

During the war we gave midday concerts for the Red Cross every week—we got through a tremendous lot of literature. We had a constant following, and sometimes we were packed out. When I saw a list of the works we performed it absolutely staggered me. Only about 40 or 50 minutes. In aid of POW Red Cross, only a silver coin. There were no expenses except the hall because I had been lent this piano—a Bechstein—which I left there permanently. The others gave their services free.

These concerts included works by Australian composers, and a series of “Concerts for Young People”. A note in which she expressed her opinions on the current musical culture in Australia explains the philosophy behind these concerts:

Music must cease to be an awe-inspiring stunt. It must develop as an interchange of ideas—for after all, what is it but a language? It must begin to live within the minds of simple people who think simply—not in big headlines. People who like to know not only who plays, but also who composed a piece of music. In short, we must enable those “simple people” to grow up on intimate terms with music. The Young Peoples’ Saturday morning concerts have been instituted as a modest beginning.

Margaret felt strongly about the development of musical life in Australia. In an article written in 1943, she stated:

Until recently music has been largely an imported commodity. Most of our musical life centred around the visits to this country of artists from abroad. In other words, it was imposed on, rather than growing within, the community. All this is a stimulus of sorts; but it

284 [List of ABC Composition Competition Awards], Australian Musical News, 1 August 1933, 21.
285 [List of ABC Composition Competition Awards], Australian Musical News, 1 October 1935, 10.
286 James Murdoch, transcript of taped interview with Margaret Sutherland, 3 April 1968, James Murdoch Papers, Australian Manuscript Collection, National Library of Australia, MS 8372.
287 Margaret Sutherland, unpublished typescript, 1943, Sutherland papers, Australian Manuscript Collection, National Library of Australia, MS 2967.
has some very grave disadvantages. It puts the accent heavily upon limelight, publicity, excitement, lion-hunting, rather than on music-making for its own sake. 288

She felt the war had given Australian music an opportunity to become less of an “imported commodity”, and to develop towards a national idiom, which led to the most notable achievement of ensuring that the site of the Victorian Arts Centre would be used for its current public purpose, rather than being sold to private enterprise. The Combined Arts Centre Movement (CACM), led by Margaret with her good friend Lorna Stirling and John Lloyd, a public servant in the Victorian Titles Office, fought this battle for 13 years from 1943, and were eventually successful. Their efforts are explained in the following description by Mollie Turner Shaw:

In a year of intensive promotion [1943] these two, Lorna Stirling and Margaret Sutherland, continued to take leading parts. A number of groups joined in, nineteen societies representing music, nine representing literature and drama, three painting, one ballet, and others, such as the Housewives Association, to a total of fifty. Funds were raised by music recitals, art exhibitions, drama festivals. Ultimately, in 1944, John Lloyd, Lorna Stirling and Margaret Sutherland headed a deputation of fifty representatives and presented to the Chief Secretary a petition signed by forty thousand people. The cause, once established, was followed up by a great deal of work by a great many more dedicated and influential people before the idea of the Arts Centre became a reality and the first building, the National Gallery, was opened in 1968. Lorna Stirling and Margaret Sutherland must be regarded as the key figures in its inspiration. 290

This Movement was linked with Margaret’s involvement with the Council of the National Gallery Society, of which she was a founding member, and which held annual music recitals as part of its activities. Also during the 1940s, she helped found the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA), later the Arts Council of Australia. She had also lobbied the Federal Government to set up a Ministry of Fine Arts when Labour Party politician John Curtin was Prime Minister (1941-1945). Unfortunately this idea was abandoned after Curtin’s death when Ben Chifley became Prime Minister (1945-1949). 290

“Breaking Out”—the Will to Compose

As Jill Halstead has written, even nowadays “a woman is still found to be dependent on her husband’s attitude to her work, and this can be the case no matter how well educated and informed the wife or husband may be.” 291 Margaret was certainly an example of this, saying that Albiston “didn’t really understand what the writing of music was about”. 292 He was

289 Mollie Turner Shaw, quoted in Gillison, A History of the Lyceum Club, 73.
290 Murdoch, transcript of interview with Margaret Sutherland, 3 April 1968.
292 Pratt, transcript of interview with Margaret Sutherland, 5 April 1972, 7.
unsympathetic to her need to compose, partly because he thought her libido was directed more towards composition than to him. It has previously been perceived that Margaret’s compositional output during her marriage was not high, with the implication that the years of Margaret’s marriage were wasted in terms of her output. For example, in 1970 Laughton Harris wrote:

Her marriage in 1926, and the demands of a growing family of two children, gave less time for composition. In fact, it was not until after 1948, when she and her husband had parted, that her composition blossomed with renewed vigour in the most productive phase of her life.

Margaret herself propagated this view:

I really gave the whole thing up but every now and again I’d break out. I didn’t write very much until the children were sixteen and eighteen. Sometimes I went to stay with somebody just to write, you know. It didn’t work at all.

However, it seems that Margaret’s own comments are more a reflection of her struggle to find not only the time, but the intellectual and creative space to write, rather than a reflection of the actual number of compositions she produced. An examination of the most up-to-date list of her works published in David Symons’s book *The Music of Margaret Sutherland*, yields quite a surprising result (see Appendix—List of Works). The overall number of compositions (around 77) written during the 21 years of her marriage was in fact higher than the number written from 1948, when the couple separated, until 1968 when she ceased being able to write music because of having suffered a major stroke (around 51, see Table 1 below). After her divorce she wrote fewer vocal works, chamber works, and works for theatre. It was only in the orchestral genre in which she produced a higher number of compositions. Her interest in orchestral composition had been awakened in the late 1930s and increased during the 1940s prior to her divorce, but most of her orchestral works were of quite modest dimensions.

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293 Rosewarne, “The Sutherland Family”, 55.
294 Laughton Harris, “Margaret Sutherland”, *Australian Composition in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Frank Callaway and David Evatt Tunley (Melbourne: OUP, 1978) 31. There are further examples. In her Masters thesis of 1963, Joyce Garretty said: “She married Dr Norman Albiston, a psychiatrist, and for the next twenty years divided her life between rearing two children and writing when she was able—a period she calls a hiatus as far as composition was concerned for she had no real leisure or privacy for writing; and although she wrote many songs and some chamber works, it was not until the 1940s that there was opportunity to write more and larger works”. See Joyce Garretty, “Three Australian Composers”, M.A. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1963, 51. A third example is from a 1988 article by Jane Weiner LePage, who wrote: “When she and her husband parted in 1948 Sutherland went to Europe for a period of time and began the most productive two decades of her creative life”. See Jane Weiner LePage. “Margaret Sutherland, 1897-1984: Composer, Pianist, Teacher”, *Women Composers, Conductors, and Musicians of the Twentieth Century: Selected Biographies*, Volume III (New Jersey: The Scarecrow Press, 1988) 254.
295 Pratt, transcript of interview with Margaret Sutherland, 5 April 1972, 7.
296 Symons, *The Music of Margaret Sutherland*, 70, 74, 131, 191-201. Margaret’s move towards writing works for larger groups later in her career can be partly attributed to the apparent pressure on women composers to write larger works in order to be taken seriously. Unfortunately, the fact that more women
Table 1: Productivity During Marriage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENRES</th>
<th>Before Marriage (1927)</th>
<th>1927-1948 (During Marriage)</th>
<th>1949-1968 (After Divorce)</th>
<th>Sub-Totals Genres</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theatre Works</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orchestral Music</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chamber &amp; Instrumental</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocal and Choral</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-Totals – Life Periods</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td><strong>77</strong></td>
<td><strong>51</strong></td>
<td><strong>Total 142</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Certainly while her children were young in the early 30s Margaret was not as productive musically, but did write music for a number of songs for children. She lamented:

I didn’t try to do anything on a scale I couldn’t cope with. You can’t with interruptions, you simply can’t. I wrote a quartet for Piano, Clarinet, French Horn and Viola, simply because there were the players available.

Indeed Margaret always enjoyed performing chamber music. She loved the intimacy of writing for a small group, and valued this more than writing for a big orchestra. She said:

A woman can contribute in a special kind of way. I don’t think that women want to write the same type of things as men, but their contribution is no less important. They [men] seem to have the same yardstick all the time, this symphonic business.

An Exceptional Woman—Perceptions of Margaret’s Personality

It is clear that Margaret was idealistic, determined, strong-willed, and someone who held firm opinions, even as a young woman. Adjectives used to describe her by people who knew her during her married years further confirm these perceptions. They include arrogant, ambitious, venomous, horrible, sarcastic, bitter, impatient, dogmatic, determined, definite, charming, nurturing, soft, quiet, and depressive.

Composers than men preferred composing in smaller forms encouraged accusations that they were portraying only their essential nature, and confirmed beliefs about the feminine temperament. The music of women could then be perceived as different from men’s, and judged on different terms, and their “natural” position as inferior reinforced. Women who ventured into genres considered masculine could on the one hand be condemned as being unnatural, but on the other judged to have attained the status of a male composer rather than their contributions being valued in their own right. See Halstead, *The Woman Composer*, 143-44.

297 These include (9) *Songs for Children* (1929), words by Ethel Martyn; *Nod* (Before 1930), words by Walter de la Mare; and *Cradle Song* (Before 1930), words by Louis Elson.

298 Murdoch, transcript of interview with Margaret Sutherland, 3 April 1968.


300 Murdoch, transcript of interview with Margaret Sutherland, 3 April 1968.

301 Margaret Schofield, interview with the author, 4 October 1999; Elizabeth van Rompuy, interview with the author, 7 October 1999; Jane Bunney, interview with the author, 20 January 2000; Madeleine Crump, interview with the author, 30 March 2000; Stuart Rosewarne, interview with the author, 26 April 2000; Maureen White, interview with the author, 14 June 2000.
Like her mother and sister Dorothy, Margaret was prone to bouts of depression, and according to her daughter Jenny, had two nervous breakdowns during Jenny’s lifetime. Her difficult marriage had much to do with the severity of her depression, yet Helen Gifford feels this condition was not entirely due to her domestic situation:

Everyone knew that Margaret was a deeply passionate, emotional person. I think Margaret was always going to be a very emotional person, as her mother was, and as her sister was—it was in the genes.

Friends, acquaintances and students who admired Margaret noted her strong personality. Gifford agreed that:

Margaret was rather confrontational. In her very ladylike way, she was rather confrontational, and she didn’t mind calling someone a weak reed if they weren’t going to support the cause she was supporting. She was one of the strongest women I have ever met. She would organise people into putches, sometimes for political reasons. She was a passionate Labor supporter.

Von Rompapey admitted that “Margaret’s failings or characteristics could really get up your nose sometimes”, but was most admiring of her teaching methods, as was friend and observer Maureen White:

Of course being in touch with a person like Margaret, if you were receptive to what she said, it really did set your mind tingling. You’d go out of that lesson pleased and happy and feeling that you knew something a little bit more than you did an hour before. Margaret had wonderful imagery and freedom of thought. She was such a broad person. Her mind never stopped. She was full of imagination, and, to me she was just one of these marvellous creatures who I was so proud, I suppose, to have known. We got on well as people and that’s terribly important, of course.

She had that ability, like a lot of women of that era, of drawing out the skills that children had.

It appears Margaret evoked extreme opinions in those who knew her—she was either loved or hated. However those who disliked her still maintained that she had a truly original style of composition. Margaret Schofield is one of the latter, recalling that:

She either antagonised people, or else she had this little coterie of close people who thought she was a genius, but I still admire some of the things that she wrote. She had original gifts.

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302 Reported to Helen Gifford and repeated in her interview with the author, 16 September 1999.
303 Helen Gifford, interview with the author, 16 September 1999.
304 Helen Gifford, interview with the author, 16 September 1999.
305 Elizabeth Von Rompapey, interview with the author, 7 October 1999.
306 Elizabeth Von Rompapey, interview with the author, 7 October 1999.
308 Margaret Schofield, interview with the author, 4 October 1999.
Schofield attests to the fact that Margaret would remonstrate with musicians whom she felt could not perform her music as it ought to be performed. It was clear to her that Margaret felt Schofield had "lacks as a musician", and "didn’t think highly of [her] talents as a player".  

Margaret did not hesitate to criticise other composers, especially those whom she felt won more recognition than they deserved (and more than she had been fortunate enough to enjoy). As mentioned, about Sculthorpe she said that he was only out for commercial gain, and that he wrote one work called Sun Music, and then the same thing over and over again. Although she did not name anyone in particular, Margaret was very critical of the number of people who persuaded themselves they could write real music when she considered they were simply "making up a lot of haphazard sounds that bluff a lot of people that they are composers". She felt it was only a very few who had the genuine creative impulse, and that composers who gave their efforts an importance they did not merit were just confusing the issue.

The unhappiness of Margaret's domestic situation, and the sense of a lack of freedom to compose she experienced during her marriage, no doubt contributed to the manifestation of the more negative attributes described above. However, exceptional women earlier in the twentieth century like Margaret who stood out from the crowd were often seen as bad according to one or other of society's rules. Some qualities attributed to Margaret described above are likely to have been perceived by some, including her husband, as unwomanly. Anger, for example, was not encouraged in women; neither was overt ambition or a desire for power over their own lives. However, such qualities were necessary for a highly talented female composer trying to survive in a country where local composition was still undervalued, where new musical ideas were not easily received, and where there was little sympathy for the notion of a woman wanting to make a career as a composer.

Margaret wanted a supportive marriage which included children, while continuing to fulfil her compositional aspirations. However, her marriage was difficult from early on, and she found no encouragement from her husband to pursue her creative passions. Close friendships and an

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309 Margaret Schofield, interview with the author, 4 October 1999.
310 Pratt, transcript of interview with Margaret Sutherland, 5 April 1972, 2.
312 Solie, "Changing the Subject", 57
313 Heilbrun, Writing a Woman's Life, 13.
314 It is difficult within the scope of this study to provide valid comparisons between Margaret and other married, Australian, female composers with children. Each person's life experiences are unique, and without in-depth research, it is hard to get close to the truth, since people's motives in telling their stories are different and complex. However, some basic comparisons with two of Margaret's close successors are possible, which highlight the more intense nature of Margaret's struggle. Miriam Hyde, although obviously wary of what marriage might do for her musical career, was married in 1939 to businessman Marcus Edwards, an accomplished violinist who also composed a little. Unlike Margaret's autobiographical
intimate involvement with various public activities sustained her through the difficult years of marriage, and her compositional output remained relatively high. Margaret was an exceptional woman, who, in spite of adversity, managed to achieve a considerable amount, making extremely valuable contributions, both as a composer and in other areas.

writings, Hyde’s autobiography contains no indication that she felt her career was hampered by marriage to Edwards, or that he did not encourage her in her work. She appears to have maintained her respect for him in spite of an affair he had which took him to Zürich for a period later in their marriage; indeed her autobiography is dedicated to her husband, “with loving gratitude for our long life together”. She states that when their two children were young, it was almost impossible to accept interstate recital or teaching engagements except those which took place at weekends, but that she continued to “pour out compositions” and teaching material. See Miriam Hyde, *Complete Accord* (Sydney: Currency Press, 1991) 4, 89, 121, 199. Phyllis Batchelor was also married to a violinist, who apparently was always encouraging and supportive of her career. She seems not to have felt that her composing was inhibited by her other commitments of teaching, performing and raising a family, and judging by her comment “I achieved what I wanted to—as a musician, a wife and a mother”, she appears to have been satisfied. See Monique Geitenbeek, “Composer-Pianist Phyllis Batchelor: An Introduction”, *Sounds Australian* (Autumn 1994): 33.
CONCLUSION

It seems that Helen Gifford’s claim that Margaret’s upbringing “led her to have unduly high expectations about her prospects as a composer in Australia at that time” is justified. Not only did her upbringing raise her hopes of gaining due recognition as a successful composer, but it also encouraged her to believe in the value of marriage and children, thus heightening her desire and determination to be good wife, mother and composer, and predetermining the personal conflict she experienced during the years of her marriage.

The influential role models in Margaret’s life were creative, single women and intellectual men. There were no significant role models for her of married women with children who successfully combined family and creative life. In contrast, men had always had examples of the “great” male composers who had formed the “canon” and made satisfactory careers from composition. Marital and parental status had much less impact on the progress of men’s careers, since they were not expected to shoulder the responsibility of providing emotional and domestic support to spouse and children. Stella Bowen summed up women’s situation in this regard with her comments about painters and writers, which can as well be applied to composers:

Pursuing an art is not just a matter of finding the time—it is a matter of having a free spirit to bring it on. Any artist [or composer] knows that after a good bout of work one is both too tired and too excited to be of any use to anyone. To be obliged to tackle other people’s problems, or merely to cook their meals, the moment one lays down pen or brush, is intolerably hard. That is why a man writer or painter always manages to get some woman to look after him and make his life easy. A professional woman, however, seldom gets this cushioning unless she can pay money for it.

Margaret did not expect when she married and had children that she would be able to pursue her musical ambitions unimpeded. However, she did expect that marriage would at least provide an emotionally supportive foundation to allow her creativity to flourish. A higher level of financial support would also have been necessary to alleviate concerns about money and free her mind for creativity. Autobiographical reflections and the recollections of friends have shed light on the difficulties Margaret faced in trying to combine her “conflicting desires” of domesticity and career within the confines of a marriage that did not provide the anticipated supportive background for her creative endeavours, and in a cultural environment in which the “marriage” or

315 Gifford, “Recalling a Lost Voice”, 110.
317 Indeed she did not receive her first fully professional commissions until 1967, at the age of 70. These were Extension for piano, commissioned by the Australian Musicians’ Overseas Scholarship Fund, and her Third String Quartet, commissioned by APRA. See Symons, The Music of Margaret Sutherland, 178.
“erotic plot” was the predominant expectation for a woman. The conflict she experienced in attempting successfully to fulfil a dual role is expressed in a reflection on parts of her life:

I now look back upon three separate slices of my life, and somehow have difficulty in fitting myself—in thought—back into them. Can I really have been there? Is it possible that I actually undertook that? But it seems it must have been so. In retrospect one feels at times that one must perhaps have been a dual personality. However, life is so often like that ... 318

Although Margaret suffered in difficult circumstances, the nature of her achievements in different spheres suggests that she had the tenacity to avoid being smothered by the unhappiness of her circumstances, or to allow her individuality and ambitions to be entirely thwarted by domesticity. That being said, with marriage and child-rearing behind her, there is no doubt that Margaret, to use the autobiographical construct of Adrienne Rich, “gave birth to a recognisable, autonomous self, a creation in poetry (or music in this case) and life.” 319 This she encapsulates herself in a commentary on her experience following divorce:

I had to make a completely new life. Bit by bit it grew. And I really began being grateful for a life that mattered. Music came more and more possible. And music got written. There were of course some ghastly things, but life could sometimes become wonderful. It kept going ... 320

318 Margaret Sutherland, “Three Universities in One”, unpublished undated typescript, Australian Manuscript Collection, National Library of Australia, MS 2967.
320 Margaret Sutherland, “1920 and So On”, unpublished undated typescript, Sutherland papers, Australian Manuscript Collection, National Library of Australia, MS 2967.
APPENDIX

MARGARET SUTHERLAND

LIST OF WORKS
(Taken from David Symons, *The Music of Margaret Sutherland*, 1997)

THEATRE WORKS

During Marriage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORK</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>PUBLICATION</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Dithyramb</em> (short ballet)</td>
<td>1939/41?</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Midsummer Night's Dream</em> (incidental music)</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Knight of the Burning Pestle</em> (incidental music)</td>
<td>1946</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>The Selfish Giant</em> (ballet in one act)</td>
<td>1947</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL: 4

After Divorce

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<tr>
<th>WORK</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>PUBLICATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>The Young Kabharli</em> (opera in one act)</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Sydney: Albert, 1972</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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TOTAL: 1
**ORCHESTRAL MUSIC**

**During Marriage**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>WORK</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>PUBLICATION</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pavan for harp and strings</td>
<td>Before 1930</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Suite on a Theme by Purcell</em></td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prelude and jig for strings</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concertino for piano and orchestra</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Suite of Five Pieces (arr. from M.N.D. incidental music)</em></td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pavan</td>
<td>Early 1940s</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concerto for flute, harp and orchestra</td>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL:** 7

* Arrangement from incidental music to *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

**After Divorce**

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<tr>
<th>WORK</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>PUBLICATION</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concerto for Strings</td>
<td>1949?</td>
<td>Sydney: APRA, 1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haunted Hills (symphonic poem)</td>
<td>1950</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Four Symphonic Concepts</em> (later <em>Four Symphonic Studies</em>)</td>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Air Piece</td>
<td>1953?</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#Homage to John Sebastian</td>
<td>1953?</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#Pastoral</td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#Walking Tune</td>
<td>1955?</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bush Ballad</td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ballad Overture</td>
<td>1956?</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rondel</td>
<td>1956?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Overture</td>
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<td>Concerto Grosso (vln, vla, h'chord/piano, strings, percussion)</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fantasy for violin and orchestra</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
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<td>Concertante for oboe and strings</td>
<td>1961</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
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**TOTAL:** 14

# Also grouped together as *Threesome I*, and counted as one complete work.
# Chamber and Instrumental Music

## Before Marriage

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<th>WORK</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sonata for piano</td>
<td>1913</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prelude, Pavan and Passacaglia for piano</td>
<td>Before 1926</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodnymph and Satyr for piano</td>
<td>Before 1926</td>
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**TOTAL: 4**

## During Marriage

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<tr>
<th>WORK</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>PUBLICATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Air for piano</td>
<td>Before 1930</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bagatelle for piano</td>
<td>Before 1930</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burlesque for two pianos</td>
<td>Before 1930</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trio in C major for clarinet, violin (viola), piano</td>
<td>1934</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freya for clarinet and piano</td>
<td>Before 1935</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quintet (&quot;The Argument&quot;) for clarinet, string quartet</td>
<td>1935?</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Chorale Preludes for piano</td>
<td>1935</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonata for cello (or saxophone) and piano</td>
<td>1936?</td>
<td>Melbourne: Allans, 1936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantasy Sonatina for saxophone and piano (possibly Alternative title for Sonata for cello/sax. above)</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
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<tr>
<td>Holiday Tunes for piano</td>
<td>1936?</td>
<td>Sydney: Palings, 1937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Suite for piano</td>
<td>1937?</td>
<td>Melbourne: Allans, 1937</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>String Quartet No. 1</td>
<td>1937?</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suite for violin alone</td>
<td>1938?</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonatina for piano or harpsichord</td>
<td>1938?</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Pieces for Cembalo</td>
<td>1938?</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Pieces for violin and piano</td>
<td>Before 1939</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dusky Serenade for violin solo</td>
<td>Before 1939</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arietta for violin solo</td>
<td>Before 1939</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyric for violin solo</td>
<td>Before 1939</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miniature Sonata for piano</td>
<td>c.1939</td>
<td>Melbourne: Allans, 1940</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fantasy for wind (or string) quartet</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Five Pieces for violin and/or piano</td>
<td>1940?</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Dialogues for 2 violins</td>
<td>Early 1940s</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adagio for cello and piano</td>
<td>Early 1940s</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quartet in G minor (&quot;House Quartet&quot;) for clarinet (or violin), viola, horn (or cello) and piano</td>
<td>1942</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ballad for violin and piano</td>
<td>1944?</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six Profiles for piano</td>
<td>1947</td>
<td>London: Augener, 1953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonata for clarinet (or viola) and piano</td>
<td>1948?</td>
<td>Sydney: Currency, 1993</td>
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</table>

**TOTAL: 33**

* Arrangement from incidental music to *A Midsummer Night's Dream.*
### After Divorce

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>Year(s)</th>
<th>Location/Notes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#Serenade for oboe and string quartet</td>
<td>1950?</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adagio and Allegro giocoso for 2 violins and piano</td>
<td>1953?</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contrasts for 2 violins</td>
<td>1953?</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion for string quartet</td>
<td>1954</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonatina for oboe (or violin) and piano</td>
<td>1954?</td>
<td>Melbourne: Kurrajong, 1958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trio for oboe and 2 violins</td>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six Bagatelles for violin and viola</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Melbourne: Kurrajong, 1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonatina for piano</td>
<td>1955-56</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quartet for cor anglais and string trio</td>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Sydney: Albert, 1974</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Pavan for 2 pianos</td>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Melbourne: Kurrajong, 1958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Canonical Piece for 2 pianos</td>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Melbourne: Kurrajong, 1958</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Movement for 2 pianos</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divertimento for string trio</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonata for piano</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>(listed for publication)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>String Quartet No. 3</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quartet for clarinet and string trio</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simple String Pieces (12, with Esther Rofe)</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Sydney: Albert, 1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension for piano</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chiaroscuro I and II for piano</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voices I and II for piano</td>
<td>1967</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Short Duets for 2 treble instruments</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Sydney: Albert, 1977</td>
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</table>

**TOTAL:** 23

# Possibly arrangement or re-working of Serenade for wind quintet (with solo oboe part).

~ Orchestrated by Robert Hughes as *Three Temperaments.*
**VOCAL AND CHORAL MUSIC**

**Before Marriage**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORK</th>
<th>WORDS</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>PUBLICATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Silence, Beautiful Voice!, voice, piano</td>
<td>Alfred Tennyson</td>
<td>1913?</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Night Wind, voice and piano</td>
<td>Emily Brontë</td>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wind in the Woods, voice and piano</td>
<td>Emily Brontë</td>
<td>1914?</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawthorn Blossoms, voice and piano</td>
<td>Winifred Howard</td>
<td>Before 1926</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I've Been out Playing, voice and piano</td>
<td>Winifred Howard</td>
<td>Before 1926</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edelweiss, voice and piano</td>
<td>F. Wilmot</td>
<td>Before 1926</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Strove with None, voice and piano</td>
<td>W. Savage Landor</td>
<td>Before 1926</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Yet, voice and piano</td>
<td>Ethel Martyr</td>
<td>Before 1926</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To a French Marigold, voice and piano</td>
<td>Ethel Martyr</td>
<td>Before 1926</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Songs, voice and violin</td>
<td>Francis Thompson</td>
<td>1926?</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL:</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
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**During Marriage**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORK</th>
<th>WORDS</th>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>PUBLICATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Songs for Children (9), voice and piano</td>
<td>Ethel Martyr</td>
<td>1929?</td>
<td>Melb: Allans, 1929</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab Love Song, voice and piano</td>
<td>Francis Thompson</td>
<td>Before 1930</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nod, voice and piano</td>
<td>W. de la Mare</td>
<td>Before 1930</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cradle Song, voice and clarinet</td>
<td>Louis Esson</td>
<td>Before 1930</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September, voice and clarinet</td>
<td>D.M. Stewart</td>
<td>Before 1930</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalm 121, 2pt girls’ voices, piano</td>
<td>W. de la Mare</td>
<td>Early 1930s</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Scribe, 2pt/unison girls’ vv, piano</td>
<td>M. Sutherland</td>
<td>Early 1930s</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the Dim Counties, SATB 4tet/choir</td>
<td>John Shaw Neilson</td>
<td>c.1934</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
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<tr>
<td>Break of Day, 2pt girls’ vv and piano</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Green Singer, 2pt girls’ vv, piano</td>
<td>John Shaw Neilson</td>
<td>c.1934</td>
<td>Paris: L'O-I, 1934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quietly as Rosebuds, 3pt girls’ voices</td>
<td>John Shaw Neilson</td>
<td>c.1934</td>
<td>Paris: L'O-I, 1934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Meeting of Sighs, voice and piano</td>
<td>John Shaw Neilson</td>
<td>c.1934</td>
<td>Paris: L'O-I, 1934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Land Where I was Born, 3pt girls’ voices</td>
<td>John Shaw Neilson</td>
<td>c.1935</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They Called Her Fair, voice and piano</td>
<td>Esther Levy</td>
<td>c.1935</td>
<td>Paris: L'O-I, 1935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lament for Early Buttercups, 3pt girls’ voices</td>
<td>John Shaw Neilson</td>
<td>c.1935</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Places, 2pt girls’ vv and piano</td>
<td>Eiluned Lewis</td>
<td>c.1936</td>
<td>Melb: Allans, 1936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Blue Slippers, 2pt children’s vv and piano, or unison</td>
<td>Ethel Martyr</td>
<td>c.1936</td>
<td>Melb: Allans, 1936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Songs, voice and piano</td>
<td>John Shaw Neilson</td>
<td>c.1936</td>
<td>London: OUP, 1948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Orange Tree, voice, clarinet, piano</td>
<td>John Shaw Neilson</td>
<td>c.1938</td>
<td>Melb: Lady Northcote Perm. Orch. TF, 1954</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## During Marriage (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Passing, mezzo, female choir, orch.</td>
<td>L. Rawsley</td>
<td>1938</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Who am Dead a Thousand Years, voice and piano</td>
<td>James Elroy Fleck</td>
<td>Before 1939</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenny Kissed Me, voice and piano</td>
<td>Leigh Hunt</td>
<td>Before 1939</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*The Bush, voice and piano</td>
<td>J.L. Cuthbertson Hum</td>
<td>Before 1939</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fiddle and the Bow, voice and piano, later setting for SATB choir</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strange Requiem, voice and piano</td>
<td>Esther Levy W. Shakespeare</td>
<td>c.1935</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You Spotted Snakes, voice and piano, later setting for SATB choir</td>
<td>W. Shakespeare</td>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O Mistress Mine, voice and piano</td>
<td>W. Shakespeare</td>
<td>Early 1940s</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blow Blow, Thou Winter Wind, voice and piano</td>
<td>W. Shakespeare</td>
<td>Early 1940s</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Soldier, female choir and string orchestra</td>
<td>John Shaw Neilson</td>
<td>Early 1940s</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom O’Bedlam’s Song, voice and piano</td>
<td>Anon.</td>
<td>c.1946</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song of the South, unison vv and piano</td>
<td>Robert Garran</td>
<td>c.1948</td>
<td>Melb: Allans, 1948</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL:** 33

*Has also been titled Blue of Australian Skies; there is also a version titled Australian Skies for 2pt girls’ voices and piano published by Allans in Melbourne, 1955.

## After Divorce

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composition</th>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Publisher</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Pathfinders, SATB choir</td>
<td>Vance Palmer</td>
<td>c.1950</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth and Age, SATB choir</td>
<td>Vance Palmer</td>
<td>c.1950</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Zoo, 5pt female choir</td>
<td>Vance Palmer</td>
<td>c.1950</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart of Spring, 3pt girls’ vv and piano or harpsichord</td>
<td>Hum</td>
<td>c.1950</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six Songs: Settings of Poems by Judith Wright, voice and piano</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petticoat Green, 2pt girls’ vv and piano</td>
<td>Judith Wright</td>
<td>1, 4-6 1950</td>
<td>Melbourne: Allans, 1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Gentle Water Bird, voice, violin and piano</td>
<td>John Shaw Neilson</td>
<td>2 and 3 1952</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And Now Mr Ferritt, voice and piano/SATB choir</td>
<td>John Shaw Neilson</td>
<td>1953?</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Blake Songs, voice and piano</td>
<td>John Shaw Neilson</td>
<td>1954?</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The World and the Child, voice and string trio/piano</td>
<td>Judith Wright</td>
<td>1956?</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequence of Verse into music, speaker, flute, viola, bassoon, percussion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Company of Carols (5), men’s/boys’ vv and piano or solo voice and piano</td>
<td>William Blake</td>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chez Nous: Tobruk, SA vv and piano</td>
<td>Judith Wright</td>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maie Casey</td>
<td>1964</td>
<td>Unpublished</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Private, details unknown</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL:** 13

**Totals:** Before Marriage: 14; During Marriage: 77; After Divorce: 51
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[List of ABC Composition Competition Awards], Australian Musical News, 1 October 1935, 10.

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Author/s: GRAHAM, JILLIAN

Title: Composer, wife and mother: Margaret Sutherland as conflicted subject

Date: 2001

Citation: Graham, J. (2001). Composer, wife and mother: Margaret Sutherland as conflicted subject. Masters Coursework thesis, Faculty of Music, The University of Melbourne.

Publication Status: Unpublished

Persistent Link: http://hdl.handle.net/11343/39253

File Description: Composer, wife and mother: Margaret Sutherland as conflicted subject

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