

THE AUSTRALIAN LANDSCAPE OF ONLINE BACHELOR OF MUSIC COURSES PRE-COVID-19

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The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns and safety precautions resulted in many Australian higher education music courses being taught online. However, it has yet to be established to what extent were music courses offered online pre-pandemic in Australia. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to identify online music program offerings at the bachelor level in Australia before COVID-19, identify similarities of pre-COVID online music class offerings in Australian universities, and provide implications and recommendations resulting from the findings. Using a document analyses method, findings indicated 20% of Australian bachelor of music (BMus) programs offered one or more core and/or elective music courses for music majors via online (asynchronous) learning prior to January 2020. This implies that during the online teaching that occurred due to 2020–2021 lockdowns in Australia, 80% of BMus programs in Australia were limited in preparedness for the required pivot to online teaching. The implications of online Australian BMus courses are addressed as are the opportunities for supporting music students' digital literacy through online music course offerings. Finally, the paper highlights recommendations for student preparedness, academic staff development, and areas for future research.

KEY WORDS: online learning, Australia, undergraduate, music education, teaching approaches

1. INTRODUCTION

It is reasonable to state that higher education music teaching has been greatly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Across the world, music programs from grade school to higher education institutions faced a pivotal question during 2020: Do we teach music using an online delivery mode, or do we temporarily pause our on-campus programs until lockdowns are lifted and students can safely return to campus? Strategic responses and inquiries into program and policy considerations became poignant for music programs (Daubney & Fautley, 2020; Norman, 2021). Pedagogical approaches to teaching music online require adopting new teaching techniques when compared to face-to-face music teaching (Johnson, 2017, 2022). Programs opting for a return-to-campus teaching approach faced COVID-19 in-person

performance policies for vocalists, brass players, and woodwind players (e.g., aerosol droplet dispersion rates) as noted by Vance et al. (2021).

Recent studies have further elucidated the resulting challenges of the rapid shift to online music learning (Cheng & Lam, 2021) and identify higher education programs that moved to teaching music online during the pandemic (Hash, 2021). It is evident that the disruption of COVID-19 supported students and teachers with both positive outcomes (e.g., focus of learning, flexibility of access, and using Universal Design for Learning for decreasing student anxiety) (Blackburn & McGrath, 2021; Bowman, 2021; Johnson & Merrick, 2020), along with reiteration of the known challenges when learning music online (e.g., latency, technology skill levels, and teacher preparation) as described by Biasutti et al. (2021) and Ritchie & Sharpe (2021).

However, to adequately recognize the magnitude of the shift to online learning (OL) during the pandemic, we must first identify the availability of online music classes pre-COVID. That is, what Bachelor of Music (BMus) classes were available for students in a fully online version prior to January 2020? With the established baseline of use, future researchers can explore the extent of change occurring [i.e., Rogers (2003) diffusion of innovation]. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is threefold: (i) identify online music program offerings at the bachelor level in Australia pre-COVID-19; (ii) identify similarities of pre-COVID online music class offerings in Australian universities; and (iii) provide implications and recommendations resulting from the findings.

1.2 Learning Music Online in Australia

To identify the landscape of online music learning in Australia, we first identify a boundary definition for OL. Online courses (i.e., a weekly asynchronous class that takes place across a 12- or 13-week semester) have been described as web-facilitated, blended, hybrid, and distance across the research literature. Johnson (2019) defines online courses as “a form of distance education where the primary delivery mechanism is via the Internet. These could be delivered synchronously or asynchronously. All instruction is conducted at a distance” (Johnson, 2019, p. 4).

Given the live performance aspect of music, we further quantify the definition of an online music course to be one wherein “at least 80% of the course content is delivered online” (Allen & Seaman, 2016, p. 7).

OL has continued its positive adoption across higher education institutions around the world. Part of an annual survey series, Seaman et al. (2018) reported 6,359,121 students took at least one online course in fall 2015 in the United States. Their report described OL as firmly embraced by students with “31.6% of all higher education enrollments” (Seaman et al., 2018, p. 11) in the United States taking an online course. Canada has continued its steady increases in online enrollments (Johnson, 2019), as has Australia (Austral. Gov., 2019a). Sixty-seven percent of academic leaders in American higher education institutions rated OL outcomes to be comparable to traditional face-to-face delivery; 90% of academic leaders

cited the scheduling flexibility of OL to be superior to that of traditional instruction (Tallent-Runnels et al., 2006).

Research in OL demonstrated that a fully online form of learning is comparable and equivalent in the learning outcomes and deliverables of a traditional face-to-face teaching mode (Delialioğlu & Yildirim, 2008; Guiller et al., 2008). Online courses were increasingly recognized by higher education institutions for their accessibility, flexibility, and long-term financial savings (Bowen et al., 2013).

In Australia, there were 1,562,520 students overall in higher education (Australian Gov., 2019b). Of this number, the data further identified 447,434 students (29%) who were engaged in some form of distance learning—a blanket category that included external and mixed mode delivery. Without the Australian government statistics outlining an exact number of online students, data collected by the IBIS 2018 industry report states OL in Australia “is expected to grow at an annualised rate of 2.5% over the 10 years through 2023-24” (IBIS, 2018, p. 11). This growth is attributed to OL within universities.

Furthermore, IBIS (2018) suggested that Coursera, an American-based massive open online course (MOOC) provider, will continue to supply MOOCs from Australian universities, which have included the University of Melbourne, University of New South Wales, and University of Western Australia. Pre-COVID-19, the adoption of OL continued its trajectory in Australia. Yet, what was the pre-COVID-19 OL landscape for BMus programs in Australia?

1.3 Online Learning in Music

Online learning in music can be defined as students learning music (i.e., performance, theory, history, etc.) through an Internet-based environment for 80% or more of their coursework. Increased adoption of OL in music is an outgrowth of both faculty and student acceptance and carefully considered online instructional design. This means specialized disciplines, like music, require discipline-specific teaching approaches that can be realized in the online environment. For example, constructivism and social constructivism are essential in music learning (Scott, 2006). This suggests that when music is taught online, the learning design should support collaborative learning (i.e., socially situated), exemplify scaffolding in content construction, and provide meaningful interactions between student and content, student and teacher, and student and student (Johnson, 2017; Keast, 2009).

In the United States, asynchronous OL was evident in undergraduate and graduate music program prior to COVID-19. Groulx & Hernly (2010) identified that 4.5% (i.e., nine out of 200) accredited music programs were taught through an online delivery mode. Johnson (2021) further outlined that online music courses were offered across accredited National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) programs in the United States at an exponential rate of increase since 2012. Her study evidenced 40% of NASM music programs offered online music classes in 2015. Data from McConville & Murphy (2017) further corroborate the growth in online music course adoption in NASM schools since 2013. Recent research outlined how

music educators across the world, Australia included, shifted or changed teaching modality to undertake OL as a response to COVID-19 (Daubney & Fautley, 2021; de Bruin, 2021).

Many factors influence the adoption of technology and OL across the diverse range of higher education music courses, whether private lessons or larger music-based classes. However, one of the main challenges often cited is the “alarming fact (of itself) that in Australia while academic qualifications are required for appointment to the position of university lecturer, no formal teaching qualifications are necessary for instrumental teaching” (Mitchell, 2020, p. 103). As Mitchell's writing further described, this challenge is not Australia-specific. Given the limited training of academics in instrumental and vocal one-to-one lessons, and ensemble teaching, it is understandable that a shift to teaching music online not only requires practical changes to one's teaching approach, but involves additional upskilling in OL and instructional design.

Music in higher education requires specialized and practice-based instruction. Traditionally, core and elective courses in a bachelor of music program often subscribe to lecture-based formats and one-to-one instrumental lessons. Teaching music online (i.e., either asynchronously or synchronously) requires the pedagogical blending of music education and OL fields of research (Johnson, 2017). Individual online music lessons provide opportunities to explore new technologies to enrich music listening, student practicing, and development of performance skills (Damon & Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2018; Pike, 2020; Pike & Shoemaker, 2015). Concepts traditionally relegated to one- or two-hour lecture formats become transformed into short video segments and authentic, project-based learning activities (Johnson et al., 2018; Johnson & Lamothe, 2018).

1.4 Benefits and Challenges of Online Music Learning

Benefits of learning music online include the provision of accessibility for students living in rural and regional areas. Through the OL environment, these students are able to gain access to local and international experts and mentors of their music discipline regardless of geographical location. Furthermore, with access, institutions can accommodate and enroll more students, leading to long-term financial savings (Bowen et al., 2013). Increased flexibility of scheduling provides students with family and work commitments a reduction or elimination of time needed to travel to campus.

The challenges of teaching music online focus on technical and software considerations (Koutsoupidou, 2014; Pike 2020) and its associated stigma of lower quality learning (Hodges et al., 2020). Although technological advancements have been made steadily across the years, entrenched faculty perception and apprehension toward online music learning can pose a stumbling block for departments keen on embracing this form of delivery. Tallent-Runnels et al. (2006) suggested that increased positive attitudes among students with regard to OL enimates from students having prior experience with computer instruction and some proficiency in computer literacy. Therefore, supporting students with digital literacy skills may enhance and benefit online music learning outcomes.

Success of student learning outcomes comes from supportive online teaching design. “Good learning comes from good teaching. More and better learning and greater achievement for everyone require being able to find and keep more good teachers” (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012, p. 13). Effective teaching, whether on-campus or online, “is about undertaking difficult, inspiring work; constantly trying to improve practices and working with all the collective might and ingenuity of professional colleagues to do so” (p. 22).

For online music learning to successfully support music student learning outcomes, online music educators need to understand effective online music pedagogy (Johnson, 2017; Pike, 2020), constructivist course design (Keast, 2009), and authentic music assessment for the online environment (Johnson & Lamothe, 2018).

Challenges noted by higher education music educators when responding to the COVID-19 pivot to online teaching (Cheng & Lam, 2021; de Bruin, 2021) highlight the limited use of online teaching approaches prior to 2020. This research further described a shift to online teaching. This description suggested that, prior to COVID-19, there were very few programs offering online music courses. However, previous research did not indicate explicit data on pre-COVID-19 (i.e., pre-2020) online music offerings at Australian institutions. Therefore, this current study explored the pre-COVID data in Australia that administrators can use to better understand, identify, and strategize future pathways of supportive professional development.

2. METHODOLOGY

Document study (i.e., physical or virtual documents) is used across social science research and its various subsets. Bowen (2009) outlined the process of using text and documentation for analyses can provide qualitative insights that may not be available from a single person (e.g., interview) or group. Through textual representation, we can explore the understanding of groups within specific social contexts to better elucidate a social phenomenon.

Online media (i.e., websites) can archive virtual documents, which become supportive data sources used to construct and depict social experiences (Knox, 2007). The collecting of such documents can “serve as receptacles of evidence for some claim or other” (Prior, 2003, p. 146). Furthermore, as Prior logically outlined, documents also revealed what has or has not occurred.

Therefore, the process of systematically reviewing documents through “finding, selecting, appraising (making sense of), and synthesizing the data contained” (Bowen, 2009, p. 27) can be a rigorous research method.

Research methodologists, Merriam (1998) and Yin (2014), identified the use of document analyses as a substantive means to exploring a social phenomenon. Public media (i.e., online or physical documents, newspapers, and photographs) are items that can be collected as evidence of an educational phenomenon. That is, document analyses of media across a period of time become historical data points (e.g., student enrollment numbers, types of course offerings, etc.). Therefore, document analyses was used to provide insight on the curricular offerings of online music courses available in Australia pre-COVID.

2.1 Method

To evidence the degree to which phenomena (i.e., online music classes) are occurring, a specific point in history must be investigated. Each of the 43 universities ($N = 43$) identified by the Australian government websites (Austral. Gov., 2019b) were searched in January 2020, before the COVID-19 pandemic was declared. Serendipitously, this project was initiated in late 2019 and set to gather data for January 2020, which was timely considering the changes that occurred in online course offerings in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic faced by Australians and the rest of the world.

Using document analysis, this study used a basic web search function to explore each institutional website from the 43 universities identified by the Australian government (Austral. Gov., 2019b). All university website handbooks were searched for bachelor of music programs (or their similar degree). Once a program was located, their subsequent music course offerings were identified for an on-campus or online delivery mode. Those courses identified as online delivery mode were categorized by university name, semester, music area, class name, allocation of course as core or elective function, and specific course code. University website addresses are listed in the Appendix A for future studies.

Document data from the university webpages were copied directly and transferred into a spreadsheet. To ensure trustworthiness and reliability of data (Crewsell, 2014), only data from official university handbooks were used. Document gathering was completed in January 2020. It is noted that, as of February 2021, some of the website URLs that contained the BMus handbook data are now obsolete due to universities updating program offerings and policies in unprecedented response to the March 2020 shift to OL.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings from the data provide an in-depth understanding of course offerings available for Bachelor of Music degree study from Australian universities (Austral. Gov, 2019a) as of January 2020 ($N = 43$). On the basis of the themes arising from the data collected, the findings were organized into broad categories of music program offerings, (i.e., BMus and other bachelor program in music) and then examined within subsets to illuminate further detail regarding online music class offerings. Using graphic modeling, documents were also analyzed for trends across the sample, as well as for similarities across university offerings.

3.1 Australian Universities Offering Music-Specific Degrees

The initial data identified the range of music-based degree program offered across Australia. These degrees included BMus, bachelor of arts/fine arts with a major in music (BA), and forms of a bachelor of creative/contemporary arts in music.

The government of Australia's Universities Australia website (2019a) officially recognizes 43 educational institutions as universities. Depicted in Fig. 1, 17 universities (i.e., 17 out of 43

universities, or 39.53%) were identified to offer a full BMus degree. Universities also offered some form of an undergraduate degree for music majors but not a BMus degree program. It was found that five universities (i.e., five out of 43 universities, or 11.63%) offered a bachelor of arts/fine arts (music), and eight universities (i.e., eight out of 43, or 18.6%) offered a bachelor of creative/contemporary arts (music). There were 13 universities (i.e., 13 out of 43 universities, or 30.23%) that did not offer some form of an undergraduate degree (music major focus) for the 2020 Australian school year.

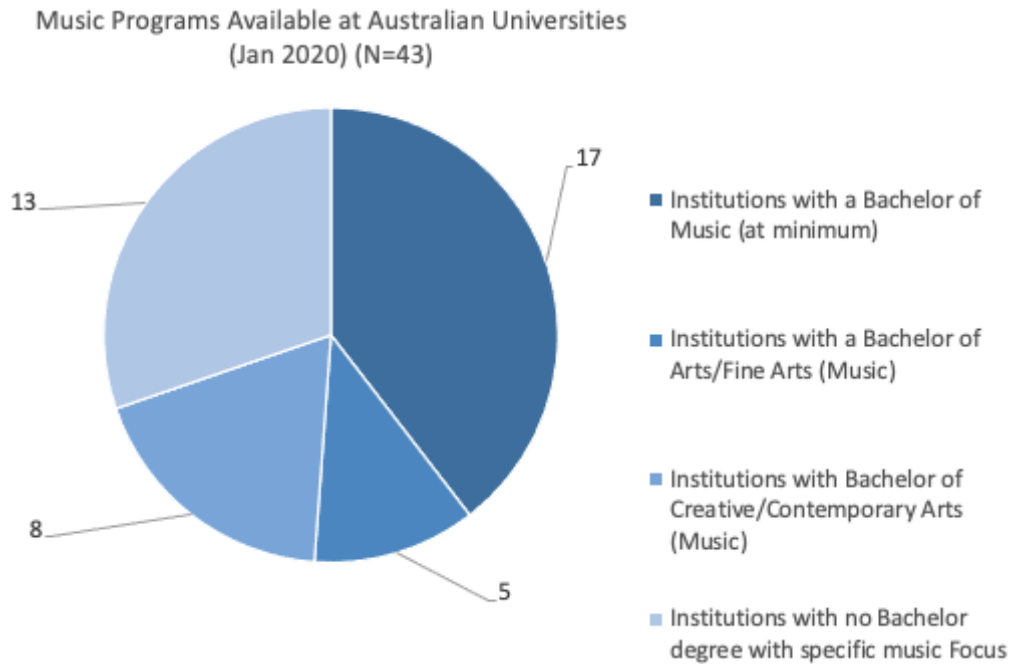


FIG. 1: Number of Australian Universities offering all forms of music degrees as of January 2020

3.2 BMus Programs in Australia

There were 17 BMus degree programs offered by Australian universities (see Table 1) in January 2020. Their programs were situated within music conservatoriums, schools of music, a performing arts academy, and creative arts departments, or units as outlined in Section 3.3.

3.3 Online Course Offerings across Australian BMus Programs

Of the data from the 17 universities offering a BMus program (see Fig. 1), three universities (i.e., Central Queensland University, University of New England, University of Tasmania) offered online music courses (i.e., full semester-long core and elective classes) in their BMus program (i.e., bachelor-level music majors). This finding suggests < 20% (i.e., 17.6%, or three out of 17 BMus universities) had an online music course prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Comparatively, the United States had ~ 40% of BMus programs offering at least one online

TABLE 1: Australian BMus degree programs available in January 2020

BMus Offered within			
Music Conservatorium Allocation (n = 7)	School of Music Allocations (n = 3)	Performing Arts Allocation (n = 1)	Other Creative Arts Departments or Units (n = 6)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Queensland Conservatorium of Music, Central Queensland Univ. (Ooralea, QLD) • Conservatorium of Music, Univ. of Tasmania (Hobart, TAS) • Elder Conservatorium, Univ. of Adelaide (Adelaide, SA) • Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, Univ. of Melbourne (Melbourne, VIC) • Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith Univ. (South Bank, QLD) • Sydney Conservatorium, Univ. of Sydney (Sydney, NSW) • UWA Conservatorium of Music, Univ. of Western Australia (Perth, WA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School of Music, The Australian National Univ. (Canberra) • School of Music, Univ. of Queensland (Brisbane, QLD) • Sir Zelman Cowan School of Music and Performance, Monash Univ. (Melbourne, VIC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Western Australia Academy of Performing Arts, Edith Cowan Univ. (Joondalup, WA) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University of New England (Armidale, NSW) • Macquarie Univ. (Sydney, NSW) • Melbourne Polytechnic (Fairfield Campus) (Fairfield, VIC) • Univ. of New South Wales (Sydney, NSW) • The Univ. of Newcastle (Newcastle, NSW) • Victoria University (Footscray, VIC)

music course prior to 2020 (Johnson, 2021). Therefore, this study suggests over 80% (i.e., 82.3%) of Australian BMus programs had to immediately adapt their teaching to “emergency remote teaching” (Hodges et al., 2021, paragraph 1) in response to COVID-19.

Two of these three Australian universities—Central Queensland University and University of New England—offered fully online BMus programs (i.e., all requirements for a BMus program of core and elective courses were offered online). Both programs had different approaches to private music tuition within the online program. Central Queensland University had music

performance tuition (i.e., music lessons) credit hours/units completed as part of their online program via video technology, while the University of New England had students achieving credit for private tuition through host institutional partnerships.[†]

The University of Tasmania had three elective online music courses (i.e., Music and History; The Arts and Dementia Care; and Music and the Western Church) and one core online music course (i.e., Music Research Methodology).

3.4 Online Course Offerings in Non-BMus Music (Music-Major) Programs

As previously outlined, 13 universities offered non-BMus (music major) programs. From these universities, three of the 13 universities (i.e., 23%) had online music courses. These universities were University of Southern Queensland, University of Western Australia, and Charles Darwin University.

The University of Southern Queensland's bachelor of creative arts (music) degree program had all music courses available for their 2020 school year program online except for ensemble classes. Specifically, the University of Southern Queensland website (2020) stated: “Special requirements for ONLINE STUDENTS ONLY: Students are required to join or form an ensemble in their local area to fulfil the ensemble component of this course. Students are free to continue with their ensemble from MUI3005. Students' progress in this course will be supervised by an on-campus lecturer at regular intervals throughout the semester through ePortfolio, email and/or Skype.”

This documentation evidenced that bachelor students were not receiving online performance tuition courses in January 2020. Performance studio lessons only occurred at the graduate coursework level. Interestingly, the February 2021 version of the University of Southern Queensland's website promoted a fully online BMus program. Again, the ensemble components of the course were achieved through “local area” participation.

Charles Darwin University's bachelor in creative arts and industry (music performance) program offered six online music electives (i.e., Digital Composition, Music Making and Theory I–IV, and Digital Sound Recording and Design). The University of Western Australia (bachelor of arts with music specialization) identified one online core music course in its curriculum offering (i.e., Introduction to Music Research).

The top Australian university providers in online education are Charles Sturt University, University of Southern Queensland, and University of New England, respectively (University Rankings, 2020). All three of these universities have some form of bachelor music program for music majors and include at least one online music course in their degree program offering.

3.5 Types of Online Music Courses

The findings indicate Australia had two fully online BMus degrees (i.e., Central Queensland University and University of New England). This shows an optimism for offering fully online music degrees when compared to the United States. For example, according to McConville & Murphy (2017), the NASM had six online BMus programs out of a total of 657 institutions (i.e., 0.09%). Meanwhile, Australian universities had two out of 17 (i.e., 11.8%) fully online BMus programs available for students.

Using data comparisons of online music course offerings [i.e., Johnson (2021) and McConville & Murphy (2017)], findings from this current study show Australia had a similar range of online music course offerings. Specifically, Australia's online course topics included musicology, music theory, and music technology, and analyses identify musicology and music theory to be the most common categories for online course offerings in Australia. Interestingly, musicology and music theory were the most common online courses in U.S. NASM accredited institutions, according to findings from Johnson (2021).

Australia presents unique online music course offerings when compared to the United States. For example, Australia had online courses in music therapy and music research. Neither of these two music areas were represented in McConville & Murphy's (2017) national 2016 U.S. survey on online music courses. This suggests that Australia's student population may warrant different interests and music foci.

When comparing the range of music topics offered in a fully online teaching mode, music theory, music history, and music research are the most common (i.e., four out of six, or 67%) as outlined in Table 2.

TABLE 2: Music topics offered in Australia online course offerings

	Music Theory Course	Music Research Course	Music History/Musicology Course	Music Technology/Digital Music
Central Queensland University	X		X	X
Charles Darwin University	X			X
Southern Queensland University	X		X	X
University of New England	X	X	X	X
University of Tasmania		X	X	
University of Western Australia		X		

3.6 Historical Timeline of Online Courses

From the abovementioned data, it is evidenced that the six universities offered online music courses from 2019 or earlier. Data collected identified that Central Queensland University, University of New England, and University of Southern Queensland had online music courses offered as far back as 2017. University websites did not provide further yearly data for Charles Darwin University, University of Western Australia, and University of Tasmania. However, this data further codify that students continued to enroll in online music courses across years.

To support discussions on the timeline of online music course offerings in all higher education music programs in Australia, it is remarkable that the findings identify five of the six universities (i.e., 83%) with more than three online music courses. Of these universities, the University of New England's BMus is acclaimed as the "first in Australia designed to be delivered fully online" (University of New England, n.d.). As noted by the website, music tuition is completed in partnership with "New England Conservatorium of Music in Armidale (NECOM), Central Coast Conservatorium of Music and Tamworth Conservatorium" (University of New England, n.d., paragraph 6).

It is noted that the University of Western Australia's current website describes its BMus program as "not available in 2020" in its 2020 archived handbook (see Appendix A). This suggests that the program did not run during the 2020 Australian COVID year.

3.7 Online Music Courses in Australian Conservatoriums

Of the seven conservatoriums located in Australia, three of them offered at least one online music courses for music majors in January 2020. They were Central Queensland University (i.e., fully online BMus program), University of Tasmania (i.e., total of four online courses), and University of Western Australia (i.e., total of one online course).

Findings further identified two conservatoriums offered online music courses to non-music majors. For example, University of Melbourne's Melbourne Conservatorium of Music offered three electives for non-music majors (i.e., Music, Mind, and Wellbeing; Creativity, Genius, Expertise and Talent; and Music Performance Science). The University of Sydney, Sydney Conservatorium, offered three two-credit OL Environment Units to non-majors (Music Theory and Notation Essentials; Writing about Music; and Music and Australian Indigenous Identities) in January 2020.

3.8 Implications

The findings evidence a small grouping of Australian universities teaching music online at the undergraduate level prior to the required shift to emergency lockdown in response to the

COVID-19 pandemic (i.e., three BMus program and three non-BMus program for music majors offered varying online music courses). Overall, these programs indicate Australia had already entered into an adoption phase of “early majority” [see Rogers' (2003) *Diffusion of Innovation* model for adopter groups].

3.8.1 Implications for Australian Universities

Six out of the 30 Australian universities with a music degree program at the bachelor level (e.g., BMus, BA, BFA, BCA) offered music majors core or elective online music courses prior to COVID-19. These program were developed in non-pandemic circumstances. However, when one considers the limited opportunities for learning music online in Australian universities prior to COVID-19, it is reasonable to suggest the immediate transition to OL in music was uncommon and gave many the opportunity to experience how OL can provide many with connectivity across small and large distances (i.e., urban and rural locations). Furthermore, the study also undergirds that some universities were poised to provide online music learning on a larger scale than their current offerings given that two degree programs were already fully online in January 2020.

While influences for why certain music areas were chosen as online courses in Australian universities is beyond this study, it is evident there are common offerings (see Table 2). This insight suggests that music history, musicology, and music theory classes may have more application for an online delivery mode. Furthermore, there are implications for what music areas universities may choose to continue to teach, or offer, via an online delivery mode outside of the COVID-19 teaching scenario.

3.8.2 Implications for Students

Students enrollment course data are not available from university websites. However, with the combination of data from this study and the steadily increasing 2020/2021 research on online music teaching outcomes, it is posited that online music courses will continue into the future. For example, we can see the sustained offerings of online music courses across years (see Section 3.6) suggest there is a continued need and desire for learning music online in Australia. Given the large geographic expanse of Australia and its rural populations, students may prefer more online offerings, in general.

The social-constructivist nature of music outlines the need for online music courses to include active learning (i.e., have opportunity to interact, reflect and respond with their music learning). Therefore, there must be careful attention given to the overall curriculum design of online music courses. Research-informed protocols for designing online music classes, mentorship for teachers new to online teaching, as well as professional development for higher education music teachers become necessary supports to implement.

3.9 Recommendations

The outcomes of this study provide support for recommendations on student preparedness, academic staff development and leadership, and future research.

3.9.1 Student Preparedness

From the above-outlined implications, students taking online music courses have the opportunity to explore their craft in a technology-enhanced environment. This prepares students for both current and future music career planning and skill development. As outlined in the music areas offered in an online mode, the areas of music theory, music history/musicology, and music technology/digital music suggest opportunities for students to engage with technology for direct music application. Therefore, those universities that have yet to fully embrace online music learning should consider one, if not all, of these areas as an online offering in their degree program.

3.9.2 Academic Staff Development and Leadership

The challenges of learning to teach music online have been difficult for many, because it requires requires time and forward planning to ensure authentic experiences. It is recommended that administration and leadership provide constructive staff development through multiple learning models, such as workshops, mentorships, coaching, and asynchronous training modules. Building academic staff understanding and confidence in teaching online and its effectiveness can positively impact teaching, learning designs, and teacher retention (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012). Furthermore, implementing technology directors or leaders within a music unit or department can facilitate the championing of OL and technology use from a department-level grassroots effort.

3.9.3 Future Research

The complexities involved with why and how each university chose to initiate online music courses is not evidenced in this document analyses, yet they are key areas to be explored in the future. Given the very different landscape of music teaching due to COVID-19 lockdowns, future studies should investigate the longitudinal increase or decrease in online course offerings across the 43 Australian universities. Furthermore, research into the teacher preparation for teaching music online, as well as why students choose to take music courses online, warrant further investigation to support the enhancement of course design and availability.

4. CONCLUSION

Australian universities were already teaching music online at the bachelor level prior to the COVID-19 national lockdowns. More specifically, prior to the disruption, three of the 17 Australian universities with BMus degree programs offered one or more online music courses for its music majors. Two of these three universities already had a fully online BMus degree in January 2020. Three additional Australian universities (i.e., non-BMus degree programs) offered online music courses for their music major students enrolled in some form of bachelor degree in arts or fine arts with a specific music major. In total, there were six Australian universities offering one or more online music courses for their undergraduate music major students prior to the March 2020 national lockdown.

The findings also identified music theory, music history/musicology, and music technology/digital music as the most common music areas represented in a fully online course. The six universities offered their online music courses for at least two years or more, and three out of the six universities (50%) have offered online music courses since 2017 or longer. Together, it is realized that online music courses have been offered in Australia prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and over a period of years.

Implications from this study suggest that the COVID-19 pandemic provided an opportunity for a majority of Australian universities and their music teachers to experience teaching music in a fully online environment. Furthermore, students in online music courses are further exposed to career preparation and future-proofing of music livelihoods through the use of technology in OL. Design and development of online music courses will be furthered through future research on the initiation and impact of universities adopting online music courses and programs, and student satisfaction in online music learning. The reality of online music learning in Australia can now be realized through this defined landscape of online music teaching in a pre-COVID context.

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APPENDIX A: UNIVERSITY WEBSITES

University Name	University Website URL
Univ. of Tasmania	https://www.utas.edu.au/courses/cale/courses/13o-bachelor-of-music?year=2020&SQ_CONTEXT_NAME=2020&SQ_ACTION=set_context
Univ. of Southern Queensland	https://www.usq.edu.au/handbook/current/creative-arts-media/BCAR.html
Univ. of New England	https://my.une.edu.au/courses/2020/courses/BMUS/program-of-study.html
Southern Cross Univ.	https://www.scu.edu.au/study-at-scu/course-search/?keyword=music&year=2020
Charles Darwin Univ.	http://stapps.cdu.edu.au/f?p=100:31:::NO::P31_SEARCH_COURSE,P31_SEARCH_YEAR,P31_SEARCH_VERSION,P31_TAB_LABEL:WARTS2,2020,1,Course%20Structure
Central Queensland Univ.	https://handbook.cqu.edu.au/he/courses/view/CG51/HT1/2020
Univ. of Western Australia	https://year2020.handbooks.uwa.edu.au/coursedetails?id=b8

† On January 26, 2020, the University of New England (UNE) website (<http://www.une.edu.au>) stated, “*Units marked with an asterisk ‘*’ must be undertaken in partnership with an approved host institution that has an established agreement with UNE. Students should only undertake these units if they are able to meet the attendance requirements of the approved host institution.” ↩