The early 1930s were a challenging time for the Melbourne-based composer and pianist Margaret Sutherland (1897–1984). Despite having two young children and an increasingly unsatisfactory marriage, she continued to engage in all manner of musical activities: teaching, advocacy, performing and composing. As Jillian Graham demonstrates, the prevailing ‘picture that marriage and motherhood restricted Sutherland, and that her creativity increased greatly following her divorce’ was an oversimplification, and ‘her overall output during these years was not significantly lower than after her divorce’. Sutherland’s productivity during these years is further documented in Chérie Watters-Cowan’s 2006 thesis, which provides by far the most comprehensive list of Sutherland’s compositions to date, as well as gathering a great deal of primary material relating to their context and reception. At the time, Sutherland’s successes in the Australian Broadcasting Commission’s 1934–35 and 1936 ‘Competitions for Australian composers’ featured in major newspapers. *The Argus* in particular indulged in a profusion of pride and subheadings: ‘Australian composers’ … ‘Work is praised’ … ‘Miss Sutherland and Dr Burnard do well’ … ‘Commission’s awards announced’.

Nonetheless, it is from just this time that new evidence of her productivity has emerged, in the form of some unknown arrangements and a hitherto completely unsuspected original composition.

**The Stockigt Collection**

The Stockigt Collection is part of the Rare Collections of the Louise Hanson-Dyer Music Library at the University of Melbourne. It contains some 450 items of clarinet music acquired, or in some cases copied, by two distinguished clarinettists, Hugo Stockigt, active in Germany before coming to Melbourne in the late 1930s, and Isobel Carter, who married Hugo in 1938. The contents of the collection, mostly printed but some manuscript, date from the early 19th to mid-20th century, and include both concert repertoire and didactic material. The collection was donated to the library over two decades ago by Hugo and Isobel’s son Jim Stockigt, but remained uncatalogued and sparingly used. In 2009 funding became available for the cataloguing of various rare collections, and the Stockigt material was catalogued by Dr Jennifer Hill, Peggy Lais and this author. Many fascinating discoveries were made, but the initial one of interest here was a handwritten draft of a ‘Programme, Oct. 16th 1935’ in Margaret Sutherland’s hand, which emerged from a score of the Brahms Clarinet Sonatas, op. 120. More of this concert program presently, but for the moment suffice it to mention that it seemed to include two unknown arrangements by Sutherland of *Airs* by the French Baroque composer François Couperin (1668–1733).

As the cataloguing proceeded, the Louise Hanson-Dyer Music Librarian, Evelyn Portek, kept in regular communication with Jim Stockigt. Heartened by the progress being made, and reassured that the material was receiving the treatment it merited, he agreed to make an additional donation of a few special items he had kept back, specifically some manuscript arrangements for clarinet and piano by Margaret Sutherland. As Chérie Watters-Cowan observes, ‘Sutherland’s reworkings of other composers’ works have usually been excluded from catalogues to date; however, these compositions are of sufficient musical value to be considered a distinct genre in her output.’ This is all the more so now that three more complete arrangements can be added to the eight known to Watters-Cowan:
these two Couperin *Airs* and a Haydn *Arietta con variazioni*. The latter evidently dates from 1947 and is not discussed here, but certainly merits further study.11

What is very much of immediate interest, however, is a single folio inserted into the score of the Couperin *Airs*, which contains an otherwise completely undocumented original work titled *Two lyrics for clarinet solo*. In the apparent absence of any independent documentation, the context in which the work was found assumes greater importance, both the physical context of the score of the Couperin *Airs* and the context of Margaret Sutherland’s and Isobel Carter’s musical activities in 1935.

**The concert of 16 October 1935**

Among the extensive ‘Social notes’ in *The Argus* of Friday 11 October 1935 the following item appeared: ‘Miss Isobel Carter and Miss Margaret Sutherland (Mrs. Norman Albiston) have issued invitations for a recital of clarinet and piano music at the British Music Society’s rooms, 465 Collins street, on October 16, at 8.30 p.m.’12 Margaret Sutherland was no stranger to the pages of this newspaper; just the day before she figured in a revealing concert review under ‘Entertainments’:

> Much interesting material was included in the programme of music for two pianos presented last night under the auspices of the British Music Society by Miss Margaret Sutherland and Miss Freda Manners-Sutton. But technical inequalities between the players affected to some extent the artistic standard of the performance. Even in those works in which Miss Sutherland undertook the role of second pianist the maturity and poise of her talent rendered her of necessity the senior partner … The clean glitter of the Mozart variations for a clockwork instrument—played in Miss Sutherland’s excellent arrangement—came out well … a group of sketches by Couperin displayed the brevity which does not inspire wit.13

There was also mention of the munificent gift of £10,000 given to the society by Mr. and Mrs. James Dyer. Louise Dyer, through the first publication of her *Editions de l’Oiseau-Lyre*,14 was also in part responsible for the presence of the Couperin pieces so disparaged by this critic,15 though not *The Age* critic, who noted that: ‘A charming Couperin group, drawn from the complete Lyre Bird Press Edition, held much attraction.’16 That Margaret Sutherland shared the higher opinion of Couperin’s ‘sketches’ is evident from her program for the concert with Isobel Carter a week later. Her handwritten draft is reproduced opposite.

> An Hour of Music was enjoyed by a very appreciative audience at the British Music Society’s rooms last night, when Isobel Carter and Margaret Sutherland played a programme of concerted music. Miss Carter, by excellent control of her instrument, makes the clarinet obedient.
to her will in the fashioning of musical phrases. Thus a means too often employed for mere tune and color becomes pliable in expression, capable of modulation and inflexion, an instrument by no means devoid of soul or fine tonal and characteristic distinctions. These essential qualities were most admirably demonstrated in a beautiful rendition of the Brahms Sonata in F Minor for Clarinet and Piano. The more modern Sonatine of Milhaud, for the same instruments, and Bartok’s piano sonatina were enjoyable novelties to most of the listeners.

With Miss Elise Steele, the artists played a trio by Margaret Sutherland, exhibiting not only refined execution, but also displaying to advantage another artistic achievement to the credit of a composer rapidly becoming known as one of the few creative musicians in Australia. Miss Sutherland’s ideas, charged with emotion sanctioned by her artistic impulse and couched in felicitous terms, appeal to mind and ear alike. The new work, original in conception and clever in structure, was well received.19
The Herald made particular mention of the response of a distinguished German ‘visitor’.20

Praise for the work of Miss Margaret Sutherland, of Melbourne, as composer and pianiste was expressed by the composer-conductor, Dr. Gerhard von Keussler, at the British Music Society rooms last night at the close of a meritorious recital by Miss Sutherland, Miss Isobel Carter (clarinet) and Miss Elise Steel [sic] (violin).

The well arranged programme included Miss Sutherland’s composition, ‘Trio in C Major’ for violin, clarinet and piano, and it won an enthusiastic reception from a capacity audience.

Describing this work, Dr. von Keussler said it revealed fine technique, and was an impressive composition. He hoped he would be given the opportunity of hearing more of the composer’s works before leaving Melbourne.21

The Couperin arrangements

All too often with Margaret Sutherland’s music there is the frustration of knowing about a work without being able to know the work itself, as is very much the case with the ‘well received’ Trio in C major. It was gratifying, then, that the discovery of the existence of her arrangements of two Couperin airs was followed within a few months by the re-emergence of the holograph score and parts. The score is neatly copied in a single folder, with a title page for the two airs together:

1. Air tendre
2. Air de diable

Couperin
arr. by M. Sutherland.21

This layout gives the appearance that the Air tendre and Air de diable had always been planned as a matching pair, but the less orderly clarinet parts suggest otherwise. There are in fact four separate parts, each on a half-page of music paper: two versions of the Air tendre, one of the Air de diable and one of La noble fierté (Sarabande), marked with a cross in red pencil. No corresponding score for this last item is currently known, nor is it necessary to assume that a final score comparable to the score of the Airs ever existed. The parts of the Air de diable and La noble fierté are taped together, suggesting that originally they were tried out as a pair, but that La noble fierté was rejected (perhaps the key sequence—B-flat major to E minor—was considered unacceptable) and replaced by the Air tendre. The two copies of the part for the Air tendre differ in that one has a key signature of one sharp and Couperin’s name and the tempo indication entirely in capital letters (like the other two parts) and the other does not. Couperin’s original of the Air tendre is written with the ‘Dorian’ key signature of one flat for a work in G minor, which Sutherland carries over to her arrangement.

François Couperin, arranged by Margaret Sutherland, Air de diable (first page of score, below, and clarinet part, left), manuscript, 1935. RB MS SUTH 33, gift of Dr Jim Stockigt, 2009, Louise Hanson-Dyer Music Library Rare Collections, University of Melbourne.
Evidently she initially transposed the key signature for the clarinet literally, with a sharp which then has to be cancelled repeatedly, before deciding that the Baroque 'Dorian' notation only made sense in a flat key. This part also has the following written to the right of the title and composer's name: '(B Clarinet) (arr. from original for 2 clavecins)'. Both score and part of the Air de diable have extensive pencilled additions in the hands of the respective performers.

In fact both Airs are from Les Goûts-réunis, ou, Nouveaux concerts, which are 'a l'usage de toutes les sortes d'instrumens de Musique' (meaning that they can be played by any sort of musical instruments—Couperin's version of Percy Grainger's 'elastic scoring'), not two harpsichords specifically. The Air tendre is from the eighth suite, 'dans le goût théatral', which, as Peter Holman has convincingly demonstrated, is very probably adapted from an orchestral suite. The revealing use of the three C clefs typical of the parties de remplissage occurs in this very movement. Margaret Sutherland cannot have been aware of this, of course, but her arrangement of the Air tendre does make freer use of changes of texture and register than her arrangement of the Air de diable. Both are very much re-workings rather than mechanical transcriptions or realisations for modern instruments, reinforcing the scope for an exploration of the compositional processes behind Sutherland's 'arrangements'.

Two lyrics

Inserted in the score of the two Couperin Airs was another clarinet part, this time clearly not an arrangement but an original composition. Little else is clear, however, about the origins or nature of the Two lyrics for clarinet solo, nor the reasons for this work's apparent abandonment, given that it does not appear in 'Names, descriptions and principal themes of works by Margaret Sutherland. Mar. 1939'. The composer's hand is unmistakable. At the bottom left of Lyric 1 there is a fragmentary sketch, not in Sutherland's hand, and the bottom of the page bearing Lyric 2 has had a small rectangle excised (illustrated on pages 48 and 49 respectively). It is not apparent whether these changes occurred before or after the Two lyrics were written.

The very title of the work raises a major problem—not the faintly paradoxical use of 'lyric' for an instrumental work, which is unusual but not unprecedented, but the phrase 'for clarinet solo'. For a work by a serious 20th-century composer this wording is likely to indicate that it is unaccompanied, as is the case with works by Stravinsky and Tailleferre among others. Sutherland's major work for clarinet and piano is, by contrast, specifically titled 'Sonata for clarinet or viola and piano'. The absence of a score might seem to confirm this interpretation. There are, however, several considerations which suggest that there was an accompaniment. At the upper left of the title page the word 'Clarinet' is written by itself, redundantly if there were no other instrument involved. There are some rests which seem implausibly long.
Margaret Sutherland, _Two lyrics for clarinet solo_, manuscript, 1935[?]. RB MS SUTH 32, gift of Dr Jim Stockigt, 2009, Louise Hanson-Dyer Music Library Rare Collections, University of Melbourne.

(and uncharacteristic for Sutherland) at the indicated tempos, for instance in bars 10–12 of _Lyric 1_ or bars 12–13 of _Lyric 2_. If the ‘3’ on the stave in _Lyric 2_ indicates a three-bar rest, which is a strong possibility, this argument alone would be decisive. The length of the final note, and the change of time signature immediately preceding it, also suggest that there is some other musical activity continuing at this point.

Regarding the phrasing ‘for clarinet solo’ without ‘and piano’, in the draft concert program reproduced on page 45 Sutherland distinguishes between ‘Clarinet & Piano’ and simply ‘Clarinet’ for works all of which involved both instruments. The distinction appears to be based on her judgement of whether a work is a true duet or an accompanied solo, and is also found in the printed program for a concert given by Carter and Sutherland in 1947.29 Further circumstantial evidence on this point comes from another concert 12 days later, a piano recital by Samuel Shiffron on 28 October 1935, with Carter and Sutherland as assisting artists. No fewer than five reviews appeared the following day.30 Between them, these reviews establish that several clarinet and piano pieces were played in two brackets, but only one work is named. After discussing
Richard Excell, ‘Unsung lyrics: Recent Margaret Sutherland discoveries’
as a pair, since Lyric 1 lies far too low for the flute. It does not, however, lie too low for the violin. Indeed the lowest note, sounding g, is exactly the lowest note of the violin, but a fourth above the lowest note of the clarinet. Again, there appears to be an example of such an alternative scoring in a clarinet version of the Ballad for violin and piano, although the absence of a score makes this case less clear. Her published arrangement of a Rameau Rigaudon, currently lost apart from the cover or title page, also specified ‘Clarinet in B flat (or Violin) & Piano’.

If Two lyrics had been composed earlier for a different instrument, and the ‘solo’ part merely transcribed for clarinet, Sutherland’s apparent willingness not to pursue a performance is more understandable. On the one hand the effort invested in preparing the material for a trial rehearsal would have been less, while on the other hand the likelihood of that trial being deemed unsuccessful, or at least unpromising, would have been greater. Whatever the original conception of this work, there remains the question of why it apparently never saw the light of day in any form. It does not appear in the composer’s own thematic index of 1939, although it seems to be at least comparable in scope and maturity to several works which do appear there. It is possible that the surviving clarinet part is all that was ever prepared in a fair copy. The complete lack of dynamic indications suggests that it was copied from a draft score in which some compositional choices at least had not been settled.

There were further opportunities for performing the works for clarinet and piano (and violin), as indicated for instance in a notice in The Argus in June 1936: ‘Miss Elise Steele, Miss Isobel Carter, and Miss Margaret Sutherland are visiting Adelaide, where they will give a series of recitals including in the programmes a number of Miss Sutherland’s compositions.’ Sutherland’s visit to Adelaide a decade earlier is well documented by Watters-Cowan, who reproduces a page of the composer’s scrapbook, but by 1936 she seems to have been too busy to keep a scrapbook. She may well have been too busy also to keep track of all her compositions, especially those never performed in public.

Conclusion

The Margaret Sutherland material in the Stockigt Collection at the Louise-Hanson Dyer Music Library, University of Melbourne, makes a modest but valuable contribution to Sutherland’s known body of compositions, both original works and arrangements of earlier composers’ works. It testifies further to her indomitable productivity in the face of difficult personal circumstances. Unfortunately, but all too typically of this composer, this material also raises new uncertainties and exacerbates the frustrating absence of so many of Sutherland’s works.

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Richard Excell is a musicologist and librarian who holds the position of Rare Music Cataloguer at the University of Melbourne. He has a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) degree in music and a Master of Arts (Librarianship) from Monash University, and is a member of the medieval music ensemble Aed. In 2009–11 he is located in Budapest due to his wife’s employment, and is working remotely part-time for the University.


3 Chérie Watters-Cowan, Reconstructing the creative life of Australian composer Margaret Sutherland: The evidence of primary source documents, PhD thesis, School of Music and Music Education, University of New South Wales, 2006.

4 Watters-Cowan and Graham both draw heavily on the pioneering monograph by David Symons, The music of Margaret Sutherland, Sydney: Currency Press, 1997.

5 A reference to the Adelaide-born composer Dr David Alexander ‘Alex’ Burnard MBE (1900–1971).


7 The Australian branch of the family has dropped the Umlaut.

8 A Couperin arrangement already held by the library (the source of which was identified when the item was catalogued) is cited in Watters-Cowan, ‘Reconstructing the creative life’, p. 306.

9 Watters-Cowan, ‘Reconstructing the creative life’, p. 74.

10 A printed program for a concert presented by the Geelong Association for Music and Art on 26 March 1947 is inserted in the holograph score (Joseph Haydn, arranged by Margaret Sutherland, Arietta con variazioni, manuscript, [1947?]). RB MS SUTH 34, gift of Dr Jim Stockigt, 2009, Louise Hanson-Dyer Music Library, University of Melbourne.

11 In addition to Sutherland’s holograph, with many pencilled emendations also in her hand, there is a copy in the hand of Hugo Stockigt (Joseph Haydn, arranged by Margaret Sutherland, Arietta con variazioni, manuscript, [1948–55]). RB MS SUTH 35, gift of Dr Jim Stockigt, 2009, Louise Hanson-Dyer Music Library, University of Melbourne).


15 The identity of the critic is unclear.


17 All that is currently known of the music itself is in the entry (reproduced in Watters-Cowan, ‘Reconstructing the creative life’, p. 45) in the composer’s manuscript ‘Names, descriptions and principal themes of works by Margaret Sutherland. Mar. 1939’, located at the Australian Music Centre.

18 The copy of The Argus, 17 October 1935, as digitised at http://newspapers.nla.gov.au is wanting pp. 3–4. However there is no such review in [Scrapbook of press clippings ... no. 3].


20 Dr Gerhard von Keussler (1874–1949) had in fact worked in Australia since 1932, and had been appointed director of choirs at St Patrick’s Cathedral in Melbourne in 1934. He returned to Germany in 1936.


22 François Couperin, arranged by Margaret Sutherland, Air tendre; Air de diable, manuscript, 1935. RB MS SUTH 33, gift of Dr Jim Stockigt, 2009, Louise Hanson-Dyer Music Library, University of Melbourne.


25 There are examples by Frank Bridge and George Dyson.


28 Margaret Sutherland, Sonata for clarinet or viola and piano, Sydney: Currency Press, 1993. The wording of the title is the composer’s.

29 The Geelong Association for Music and Art presents Isobel Carter and Margaret Sutherland in a recital of music for clarinet and piano in the Norman Morrison Hall, Geelong College on Wednesday evening, March 26th, 1947, [Geelong: The Association, 1947]. This program may document the occasion for the clarinet arrangement of Sutherland’s Ballad for violin (cf. Watters-Cowan, ‘Reconstructing the creative life’, p. 482).

30 In The Age, The Argus, The Herald, The Star and The Sun. These reviews are preserved in [Scrapbook of press clippings ... no. 3].

31 ‘A gifted pianist: Mr Shiffren’s recital’, The Argus, 29 October 1935, p. 10. In The Star it is a ‘delightfully free flowing melodic essay with a decidedy English flavour’, while The Sun’s critic notes: ‘Of the rich-toned clarinet contributions by Isobel Carter, the one with the most character for the instrument was Margaret Sutherland’s Freya, which she played perfectly.’

32 These pencilled additions appear to be in Isobel Carter’s hand rather than Margaret Sutherland’s.


34 Watters-Cowan, ‘Reconstructing the creative life’, pp. 157–8, 482.

35 Margaret Sutherland, ‘Names, descriptions ... Mar. 1939’.
