Cultural Years was a seven-part radio series which discussed 'Music, the Arts and Society around the time of seven of the great 19th- and 20th-century International Exhibitions' (see below). In examining the ideas which lay behind all the arts in a given era - in fashion, architecture and landscaping, interior decoration, fine and decorative art, literature, philosophy, social theory and music - I was able to discover the similar aesthetic principles determining the production of works of art and especially music as part of the complete picture of Western Cultural History during the period, following Professor Warren Allen's statement that 'one disappointing, although tacit assumption is that the history of music can be divorced from contemporary events', and the comment of social music historian Henry Raynor: 'With all a reflection's power of candid criticism, music and art mirrors the real face of the society to which it belongs'. Thus I have attempted to promote the appreciation of all the arts of the recent past by illustrating the connection between them, in order to redress the imbalance caused by modern specialization.

Part 2 of this series: 'Music, the Arts and Society at the time of the Vienna World Fair of 1873' is enclosed.

CULTURAL YEARS

Part 1: Music, the Arts and Society at the time of the Great Exhibition in London of 1851.
(90 min.)

Part 2: Music, the Arts and Society at the time of the Weltsausstellung Wien of 1873.
(90 min.)

Part 3: Music, the Arts and Society at the time of the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1889.
(100 min.)

Part 4: Music, the Arts and Society at the time of the Paris Exposition Universelle of 1900.
(120 min.)

Part 5: Music, the Arts and Society to the eve of the First World War (Exposition Universelle et Industrielle, Ghent - 1913).
(90 min.)

Part 6: Music, the Arts and Society at the time of the Exposición Internacional de Barcelona in 1929.
(90 min.)

Part 7: (Final) Music, the Arts and Society at the time of the Exposition Internationale des Arts et Techniques dans la Vie Moderne in Paris of 1937.
(90 min.)
CULTURAL YEARS
An Artistic Treasure Hunt
by Jonathan Little

Not to know the events which occurred before one was born is always to remain a child. Thus noted Cicero, Roman orator, statesman and man of letters. Cultural Years, a new fortnightly series starting Sunday, April 1 at 10.30pm on 3MBS-FM, seeks to put this profound statement into perspective. It presents the cultural history of a given set of years, noting contemporary developments and theories in such as fine art, architecture, literature, science, society, and of course, music. Threads are woven in order to draw together the above – by finding the ideas which are common to all. In this way we learn to listen to the very heart of music. Art becomes a sum of more than its parts, and for a brief time we re-experience the human emotions or “flavour” of an era as it is recalled encapsulated in its music – music which has the magical quality of being able to suspend real time. Thus we may again communicate as it were with this frozen spirit of the past when we are totally absorbed in its art. More importantly, we recall and are forced to rethink the ideas that gave it life.

The first few programmes of Cultural Years focus around the years of the great 19th century industrial exhibitions. The dissemination of ideas which these provoked, together with a powerful interest in the past, gave birth to pastiche, “improved”, and hybrid artistic forms. Diverse influences gave rise to a multitude of “schools” and “isms” affecting all society. From the years around the turn of the century alone musical styles emerged or had emerged which we label nationalism; impressionism/symbolism; expressionism; neoclassicism; serialism; primitivism; ex-Gesamtkunstwerk (“total artwork”) – which sought to integrate the arts of set design (art and architecture), drama, and music, so that each art is inseparable from the other. As historian Jacques Barzun rightly points out, the 19th/20th centuries and “Romanticism” are so hard to define because they are the centuries of the “crowding of ideas”. This age attempts the brave task of coming to terms with all experience. Nineteenth century explorers were rediscovering ancient civilizations and exotic locations – indeed the whole of the external world with and without the aid of a microscope – as well as the internal world of the mind. Thus it was that Gustav Mahler echoed his age by claiming a “symphony must express the world”.

Perhaps it is ambitious to hope that we may one day see a society which places importance on the role of the “Neo-Renaissance man” – he/she who is a little versed in, and appreciative of, that great unifying thread which lies behind all art and science. Besides enlightening the listener to the other arts through music, we will see that there is no such thing as a new and original idea. Ideas exist always. It is the human being who through perception takes up an idea and by application to the circumstances (priorities) and technology of his age fashions some work which we deign to call unique. The painter Tom Roberts had it thus: “I believe that by making art the perfect expression of one time and one place, it becomes art for all time and of all places”.

Cultural Years will be broadcast on alternate Sundays at 10.30pm, beginning April 1.
CULTURAL YEARS
Promo Script 2

This Sunday night at 10.30 [p.m.] can be heard the next program of the fortnightly series Cultural Years, written and presented by Jonathan Little. Cultural Years examines the aesthetic and social concerns of the years around seven of the great 19th- and 20th-century Industrial Exhibitions.

The second episode focusses on 'Music, the Arts and Society at the time of the 1873 Vienna World Fair', and features the music of Liszt, Bizet, Saint-Saëns and Tchaikovsky.

Join me, Jonathan Little, as we delve again into Cultural Years - this Sunday night at 10.30 [p.m.] on 3PBS-FM Fine Music Melbourne.

CULTURAL YEARS
Script 2 (of 7) - 1873
Music total : 59 min.; script total : 31 min
(ratio 2:1); overall : 90 min.

(Intro. cart.)

A very good evening to you from Jonathan Little and welcome to the second program of a fortnightly series entitled Cultural Years. Cultural Years examines the aesthetic and social concerns around seven of the great nineteenth- and twentieth-century Industrial Exhibitions. Tonight : 'Music, the Arts and Society at the time of the Vienna World Fair of 1873.' (Fade up and out : intro. cart.)

The idea to hold an exhibition in Vienna originated from the year 1852, in the wake of the euphoria following the success of the 1851 Great Exhibition in London. It was the fifth international exhibition since 1851, both London and Paris having hosted two each. An Imperial decree set the date of the Vienna exhibition originally for 1859, but wars with France, and then Germany and Italy in 1866 prevented its realization until May, 1873, the choice of venue being the Prater near Vienna. A former hunting park of Maximilian I and now a public Volkspark, the Prater provided a fantastic setting. The general object of the exhibition was 'to promote present-day culture and economic conditions as a whole as well as their further advance.' Spacious parking areas for coaches and carriages were distributed around the grounds while the effect of the palaces and halls was maximized through contrast to surrounding nature. A contemporary native of Vienna lightheartedly observed that it would take forty days to visit all the things on show.
(Begin Handel background music). The exhibition opened punctually at noon on the 1st of May, 1873, to the accompaniment of cannonades and cheers as the Austrian and German Imperial couples drew up in their coaches before the iron-structured Palace of Industry, crowned by a Rotunda twice the height of the Dome of St. Paul's Cathedral in London. Speeches and words of thanks followed, rounded off with a rendering from Handel's 

**Judas Maccabaeus** with words specially added for the occasion:

> Ring out bells, fly flags on high  
> On this great festive day!  
> Greet with consecrating choirs  
> This all-complete array!

(Fade up and out: Handel) 'This all-complete array' was not an entirely accurate description as everywhere around the exhibition grounds work was still in progress and not actually completed until the second half of June.

In the field of the fine arts, Germany was represented by its best contemporary painters, and England prominently displayed the works of Turner and other water colourists. Among all the oil paintings and water colours of different nations were to be seen an excessive array of paintings of historical and battle scenes. Of prominent French artists were works by Daubigny, Erison, Corot and Breton. Among French artists not represented was Edouard Manet, who nonetheless submitted pictures to the annual Paris Salon of 1873. In the following year, a group of artists continually rejected by the Salon decided to organize their own exhibitions. These artists were Monet, Renoir, Sisley, Pissaro, Degas and Berthe Morisot. Their first and most famous exhibition was held in April, 1874. It also included work by Cézanne whom they had invited to join them. A picture by Monet of 1872 entitled **Impression: Sunrise** led a journalist, in a painfully facetious article, to play constantly on that word 'impression'. It now stuck to the work of this new Artists' Society as a term of ridicule, which is practically all they got out of the exhibition. The press was violently unfavourable and the public stayed away. The critic of the Figaro wrote: 'The impression which these Impressionists achieve is that of a monkey who might have got hold of a box of paints.' We have heard that many times since.
Impressionism was a form of pure aestheticism, of art for art's sake. In painting fifteen views of the same haystack under different conditions of light for example, Monet was aiming at the impossible: the fixing of the transient. But even Monet's famous eye could not perceive the change in light every moment. The impression of an object changing through time could more easily be conveyed by a medium which does move through time — music. One man who attempted to do this was a musical innovator right up to his death in 1886 — Franz Liszt. The third volume of his *Years of Pilgrimage* for piano was completed in 1877, and the fourth piece is one of the masterworks of a new musical impressionism so advanced for its time that it had no successor until Ravel composed a piece similarly inspired some thirty years later. Liszt's inspiration lay in the deep and spellbinding spectacle made upon him by fountains at the Villa d'Este at Tivoli outside Rome. These cascading fountains Liszt turned into mystical symbols, for halfway through the score, as the music commences its long approach to a bubbling climax, Liszt quoted this verse from St. John's Gospel:

> But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

Liszt's friend, Cardinal Hohenlohe, placed his magnificent residence which was the Villa d'Este at Liszt's disposal whenever he visited Rome. The Villa still has some of the most magnificent gardens in the world, renowned for their beautiful cypress trees and the ceaseless play of their hundreds of fountains. André Watts now plays Liszt's masterpiece of impressionistic atmosphere, *Les Jeux d'Eaux à la Villa d'Este* — the cascading, upward-shooting fountains being represented on the piano at the opening, to set the mood of the entire work.

(Play Liszt CD; cue Bizet CD)

(This script: 7 min.; music: 8 min.; progressive total: 15 min.)
An impressionistic musical representation of the play of the many fountains at the Villa d'Este performed by André Watts and composed by Franz Liszt. At the same time Liszt was working on the seven pieces in his third volume of the Years of Pilgrimage, from which this work was taken, Claude Monet had returned from a stay in London and was living at Argenteuil on the Seine near Paris, and he remained there until 1876. No place is more closely associated with the Impressionists - almost all of them worked there at some time, frequently in one another's company. In 1873 Monet painted a picture now in the Courtauld Institute in London entitled Autumn at Argenteuil, in which there is no formal definition and reflections are as important as the objects reflected. This picture is all vibrations of light and colour, of evanescent textural variety and interpenetration - it reveals for the first time the full Impressionist technique and the full Impressionist naturalism.

In the same year as the Weltsausstellung Wien - the Vienna World Fair - Paris hosted a major exhibition of art from Japan, China, India and Java at the Palais d'Industrie. A year earlier in 1872, Jules Claretie of the Comédie-Française became one of the first to describe the influence of a new artistic movement - 'le japonisme'. 'Le japonisme' became part of the French cultural milieu and the movement peaked in the 1880's. The Georges Petit Galleries exhibited three thousand pieces of Japanese art, including prints from private collections. Siegfried Bing, a German dealer, went to Japan in 1875, and returned to Paris to open a shop in 1877, where he hosted monthly meetings of the 'Japonistes'. The brothers Theo and Vincent Van Gogh organised an exhibition of Japanese woodcuts at the Café le Tambourin in 1887, and Vincent Van Gogh wrote to his sister of this Japanese art that 'By strengthening all colours, one obtains something similar to Wagner's music.' Soon Japanese-influenced objects were being produced: fans, parasols, combs, textiles, jewellery, glass and ceramics. These objets d'art triggered a new movement: 'art nouveau', similar to William Morris's craft movement in Britain. 'Ukiyo-e', a term often used to describe the floating world of Japanese art, led to
Toulouse-Lautrec's illustrations of the world of entertainment; theatres and cafés, picnics and boating-parties, busy street scenes. In England it was Whistler more than any other single person, who was responsible for introducing the Japanese fashion, particularly in interior decoration. Later the work of Aubrey Beardsley was heavily influenced by Whistler and the study of Japanese prints. Curiously, Baudelaire and another literary figure, Champfleury, along with painters, Fantin Latour and Vallotton - all four eminent Wagnerites - became promoters of Japanese art in France. Although strange bedfellows, the avant-garde in literature and art sponsored Wagner as well as the vogue for things Japanese. Meanwhile, at the Vienna World Fair, it was also Japan, so proficient at the art of showing off its craftsmanship to such splendid effect, that stole the show in the field of decorative art.

Interest in the exotic was in part a symptom of the nineteenth-century spirit of universal enquiry. But the exotic often had a special architectural appeal because it demonstrated the use of colour. In 1877, Frenchman César Daly brought out two volumes on examples of the work of interior decorative painters, illustrated most frequently by a magnificent private town house built about 1873 in the Boulevard Exelmans near the Bois de Boulogne. The style of its architecture borrows from the past styles of many periods and countries, and the interior decorations are correspondingly synthetic in style, also featuring Arabic and Chinese ornament. Owen Jones, another nineteenth-century writer on ornament, completed a work on the Alhambra in 1844, while there was extensive coverage of Chinese and Islamic buildings at the Paris 1867 Exhibition. Writers like Daly and Owen were addicted to travel - making notes from New Orleans to Cairo on artistic styles and ornament. The influence of the Orient is a theme we will return to in our next program.

The nineteenth-century effort to understand the world embraced extremes in science and aesthetics, and when artists were not looking to exotic and fantastical lands for inspiration, they were exploring the colours of their own national and provincial folk traditions, or shocking their audiences with an unheard-of realism depicting low-life and poverty, as well as the corruptions of the wealthy and powerful. But even this realism was often made a
little fantastical, just as many Western concepts of oriental lands were idealized and not at all based on fact. Georges Bizet was suffering from the failure of his Egyptian-inspired opera Djamileh, when he wrote the incidental music for Alphonse Daudet’s play l’Arlésséienne. Daudet’s play is a ‘regional’ romance of Provençal local colour. The French continued to use the term ‘orientale’ to apply not only to the music of the Far East, but also to the music of India, the Near East, Persia, Turkey, Arabia, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. The seven-hundred-year stay of the Arabs in Spain and the proximity of Russia to Turkey and Persia help to explain the various ‘oriental’ pieces that originated with composers of both of these countries. Daudet’s play concerning the woman of Arles can also be termed ‘oriental’ for Arles is almost on the Mediterranean across which were French colonies in North Africa, and it is also relatively close to Spain. Thus the Provençal local colour is necessarily infused with oriental influence. With lack of documentary evidence of Eastern music at hand, Bizet instinctively stylized the music of oriental lands. Bizet died at thirty-seven, and never lived to see the full, final success of his last ‘oriental’ work – the Spanish-inspired opera Carmen, written between 1873 and 1874, at the same time Manet began painting scenes of the bullring. Even the incidental music to l’Arlésséienne had no success, but an orchestral suite from it of 1873 was immediately liked in the concert hall.

The Prelude of the l’Arlésséienne Suite opens with a Provençal tune dating from the eighteenth century. This march is followed by an Andante, the theme of which is played on the saxophone, one of the first orchestral uses of this instrument, first invented in 1846 by Adolphe Sax, who displayed the instruments he had invented at the London 1851 Great Exhibition, and also subsequent exhibitions. Here now is Sir Thomas Beecham conducting the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in the suite Bizet compiled in 1873 from the incidental music he wrote for the play by Alphonse Daudet, l’Arlésséienne.

(Play Bizet CD; cue Saint-Saëns record)

(This script: 9 min.; music: 20 min.; progressive total: 44 min.)
we heard Sir Thomas Beecham conducting the Royal
Philharmonic Orchestra in the suite from Bizet's incidental music
to *l'Arlesienne*, compiled in 1873. I'm Jonathan Little and you're
listening to *3MB5-FM Fine Music Melbourne* for the second part of
a seven-part fortnightly series entitled *Cultural Years* - this
week, 'Music, the Arts and Society around the time of the Vienna
World Fair of 1873.'

French musicians generally resented the incursions of all
foreigners on their cultural scene, and they had little
sympathy for Wagner. But the artists and theorists who first
discovered Wagner through his theories and prose writings -
without having heard a note of his music - were overwhelmed by
his concepts and were determined to put them into practice in
their own country. The impact of Wagner on music, art and
literature in France is probably the greatest single phenomenon
of the period. *Le wagnérisme* commenced in 1870 to reach its
apogee in the 1890's and decline only with the advent of the First
World War. The rise of this vogue occurred despite Wagner's fall
from grace during the Franco-Prussian war. Some apologized for
his behaviour, while others simply agreed that one should separate
the man from his music. ([Begin Wagner background music.]) The
French composer Charles Camille Saint-Saëns had met Wagner in 1860,
and the twenty-five-year-old Saint-Saëns astonished Wagner with his
facility at score reading. Saint-Saëns knew *Tristan* by heart,
which delighted Wagner. However after France's humiliating defeat
in the Franco-Prussian War, many Frenchmen felt a strong revulsion
toward Wagner and all things German, and Saint-Saëns, who was
formerly an ardent Wagnerite, now came to view Wagner as a mega-
lomaniac, the epitome of the nation's enemy, corrupting French
culture with his unhealthy music. ([Fade up and out: Wagner].)
In November 1870, during the siege of Paris, Wagner wrote *Fine
Capitulation*, a parody of the besieged and starving citizens of
Paris which first appeared in print in 1873. He had also written
five stanzas in which he glorified the Germans as a nation of born
conquerors, insulted the French, and hailed the creation of a new
German Empire. That Wagner should still need to bring the
humiliation of the French to general attention astonished even his
friends. His total insensitivity in this regard and the publication

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of wine Capitulation was for the French, the last straw.

The 28th of January 1871 was the date when Paris capitulated and France signed an armistice with Germany, ending the Franco-Prussian War. Less than a month later, the course of French musical history was changed with the formation of a totally new organization furious at their persistent rejection by the authorities, and angry that German music had so long replaced their home-grown compositions in concert halls and that Italian opera had usurped their position on the stage. Saint-Saëns and the singer Romaine Bussine formed the Société Nationale de Musique, specifically geared to the promotion and dissemination of French music, taking for their motto 'Ars gallica'. Together with the building of a new opera house in 1875, the efforts of the organization were ultimately responsible for the revival and efflorescence of French music.

Almost from its inception, the Société Nationale counted about 150 members. Their first concert was given on November the 25th, 1871, and although the organizers would have liked to present their initial concerts with an orchestra, they made do with pianos. During an early Sunday performance for example, the ubiquitous Saint-Saëns, assisted by his pupil Gabriel Fauré, presented his Marche héroïque and Rouet d'Omphale on two pianos. When the official French government-sponsered organizations realized that this group of young musicians presented a united front, their attitude toward them changed. Saint-Saëns conducted a full orchestral performance of his symphonic poem Rouet d'Omphale or Omphale's Spinning-Wheel in the next season of 1872. This is a subtle, gracefully-crafted study in crescendo, and depicts the elegant irony of the enslavement of the unwilling Hercules by Omphale, queen of Lydia. Saint-Saëns headed the score 'the subject of this symphonic poem is feminine seduction, the victorious struggle of weakness over strength.' As a champion of modernity, Saint-Saëns promoted the form of the symphonic poem in France. The spinning-wheel is an anachronism and pretext on which to base the motion of the piece, the wheel suggested by the wavering dialogue between violins and flutes. Omphale mocks Hercules' strength and through her bewitching charms vanquishes the hero, making him spin at her feet until the god is exhausted, and the wheel spins to a halt. Here's Charles Dutoit conducting
the Philharmonia Orchestra in Saint-Saëns' Omphale's Spinning Wheel.

(Play Saint-Saëns record; cue Tchaikovsky record).
(This script: 7 min.; music: 8 min.; progressive total: 59 min.)

Charles Dutoit conducted the Philharmonia Orchestra in Saint-Saëns symphonic poem - Omphale's Spinning Wheel - first performed in 1873, with the composer conducting.

As with painting, the most important novelists of Third Empire France called themselves Naturalists, since they believed that the modern novel should provide a naturalistic account of the social world, often observed with pitiless exactitude. Émile Zola dramatized his own novel Thérèse Raquin in 1873 and this became the first 'slice of life' drama in France. Zola also sought to become the literary historian of his age in writing what he called 'The Experimental Novel' in which he gave each book a separate subject. Thus his series on the rise and fall of a family, written over 20 years from 1871 to 1893, included the life of a Parisian market in Le Ventre de Paris of 1873, a coal mine and its effects on its workers and owners, and even the growth of a great department store that transforms and devours a whole district.

The English economist John Stuart Mill died in 1873, the man who had made himself the spokesman of the Utilitarian Theory, or the philosophy of social usefulness, its aim being the greatest possible provision of happiness for the greatest possible number of people - an idea that was to inspire many nineteenth-century reformers. Two years earlier in 1871, Charles Darwin explicitly included man as an evolved animal in The Descent of Man and his evolutionary theories were seized upon by cartoonists. An Austrian wit depicted the evolutionary development of a cellist as he gradually adapted himself to his functions, turning from a man into a cello in six drawings - his feet become the spike for example, and his hair the strings.

There seemed to be two huge waves rolling over Western civilization in the nineteenth century, the one Socialist and the other Nationalist. Nowhere did they seem more likely to merge than in Germany, which had begun to achieve national freedom
accompanied by a measure of democratic reform. National unification was at last achieved in 1871, but Prussian militarism developed simultaneously, and Liberal aspirations were hard pressed by powerful reactionary forces. Twenty years earlier Karl Marx had asked the following question:

What else does the history of ideas prove, than that intellectual production changes in proportion as material is changed? Does it require deep intuition to comprehend that man's ideas, views and conceptions, in a word man's consciousness, changes with every change in the conditions of his material existence, in his social relations and in his social life?

With the increasing pace of material change, artists began questioning the true nature of reality and human perception. This became a priority in late nineteenth-century thought and was evidenced by an increasing 'inward-turning' to explore the workings of the mind. While we can accept that economic and material circumstances greatly affect our perception of the world, perhaps Marx failed to grasp that such factors as health, instinctive emotion, and morality also affect each human being's perception of the world, and that the artist develops a world view, above and beyond all aspects of material existence. Even the artist's material production is but symbolic of some deeper emotion or human condition, pointing the way to Truth.

Algermon Charles Swinburne, like Shelley before him, broke with the beliefs and dictates of his own aristocratic class and published Songs before Sunrise in 1871 in which he attacked monarchical tyrants all over Europe and championed the democratic cause. In Russia the artist Ilya Repin painted The Volga Boatmen in 1873, a powerful work portraying the desperate struggle of these poor boatmen. Repin's work provided a model for painters of the later Soviet socialist realist movement. Four years earlier Leo Tolstoy had produced his first masterpiece, War and Peace, an historical novel glorifying not the great leaders but the common Russian people. In his old age Tolstoy suddenly left home one night, to die in a lonely railway station. Among the last words of this man who sought to capture the feelings of the common people in his art were: "The peasants - how do peasants die?"

At the other end of the scale was a total escape from Realism.
By 1873 Tchaikovsky had composed the second of three quite independent Shakespearean fantasies, this latest entitled The Tempest and following a detailed programme. The work opens with a wonderfully evocative portrait of the sea, inspired by the famous opening of Das Rheingold. It was actually in the following year, 1874, that Wagner completed his tremendous tetralogy Das Ring der Nibelungen. In Tchaikovsky’s programmatic work we hear the fluttering sprite Ariel, the power of the elements, the love theme of Ferdinand for Miranda, and finally Prospero reappearing majestically in the brass, laying aside his magic powers and departing from the enchanted isle, to leave us again alone with the sea. Here now is Eliahu Inbal conducting the Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra in Tchaikovsky’s symphonic fantasy after Shakespeare – The Tempest.

(Play Tchaikovsky record; cue outro cart.)

(This script: 7 min.; music: 23 min.; progressive total: 89 min.)

Eliahu Inbal conducted the Frankfurt Radio Symphony Orchestra in Tchaikovsky’s symphonic fantasy after Shakespeare, The Tempest, of 1873.

1873 was also the date when the English writer and first director of the Royal College of Music, George Grove, began his editorship of the Dictionary of Music and Musicians; the Carl Rosa Opera company, later the ‘Royal’ Opera, was founded for the production of opera in English; and Walter Bagehot applied the theory of evolution by natural selection to the evolution of human customs and institutions.

(Outro cart.) You’ve been listening to Cultural Years, a seven-part fortnightly series written and presented by Jonathan Little for 3MBS-FM, 103.5 Mz, Fine Music Melbourne. Do join me again on April the 29th at 10.30p.m., when we examine ‘Music, the Arts and Society at the time of the 1889 Paris Universal Exposition’. (Fade up and out: outro cart.)

(This script: 1 min.; overall total: 90 min.)