

Ngapa William Cooper



AUSTRALIAN YOUTH ORCHESTRA IN CONCERT

Llewellyn Hall | Canberra
Sunday 9 July, 5pm

Sydney Opera House | Sydney
Monday 10 July, 8pm

ayo Australian
Youth
Orchestra

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Australian Youth Orchestra in Concert

Nigel WESTLAKE

The Glass Soldier

(arranged by Nigel Westlake for orchestra, 2023)

Commissioned by Don Farrands

Nigel WESTLAKE

Beneath the Waves – Suite for Cello and Orchestra

Cello Soloist: Sharon Grigoryan

Commissioned by Australian Youth Orchestra

Nigel WESTLAKE, LIOR, Lou BENNETT, additional lyric
content Sarah GORY

Ngapa William Cooper

(arranged by Nigel Westlake for orchestra, 2023)

Commissioned by Australian Youth Orchestra

Original chamber version of *Ngapa William Cooper* was commissioned by Ulrike Klein AO and Adelaide Festival, in association with UKARIA and Finding Our Voice, with support from the Restart Investment to Sustain and Expand (RISE) Fund, an Australian Government initiative. Symphonic realisation commissioned by the Australian Youth Orchestra for the AYO Winter Season 2023.



Australian Youth Orchestra acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which the orchestra has rehearsed and performed during this program. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, and recognise and respect their enduring connection to land, waters and culture.

Ngapa William Cooper Lyrics

THE NEWS

I opened up the newspaper
Twenty years to the day
The war had ended
The war that took my son away
Twenty long years since he laid his life down
Now he is buried under northern stars
Whose stories I do not know

He had no land
And he had no rights
From a nation who made no distinction
Who it sent off to fight

But there was no mention of my Daniel anywhere
And in my sorrow
In the depth of my despair
Something strange yet familiar
Struck me and took hold of me
A wave of darkness
Gathering from across the sea

And I read
The night of broken glass
Bodies crouched in terror
Streets of blood and crystal shards
And I read
Skulls smashed
Synagogues burned to the ground
They say flames were still shooting into the sky at dawn

It does not matter you have done no wrong
It only matters to whom you were born

And I knew there was only one way the blade could fall
For I see it happen to my people

THE SILENCE

I return to the news every day
A silence I've learned all too well
Silence

I traded places
With a young man bleeding
On the streets of broken glass
And though he was half a world away
I could see him in my reflection
Clear as day
And I knew I was a ghost if I let him
fade away

I return to the news every day
A silence I've learned all too well
It grows

If all backs are turned
If all eyes look away
There will be no way to know we
are sinking
There will be no way to know we
are gone

YAKAPNA – NUK

For my family
I speak so we can live freely
So we can speak our language
Perform our ceremony

For my family
I work so they can rest upon the land
So they never have to hold guns
in hand
To meet another man's demands

My strength is my gentleness
Love will quell hate
My strength is my resilience
Do not harden your heart

Ngapa William Cooper Lyrics

THE MEETING

My dear friends
Thank you for joining me today
A heavy shadow has befallen me

Brothers and sisters
It has come to my attention
Of the gravest persecution
Taking its place in the heart of Europe

*“Like the Jewish people
Our people have suffered much cruelty,
exploitation and misunderstanding as a
minority at the hands of another people.
We are a small minority and we are a poor
people, but we must assure them of our
support in every way.”*

*“The Nazi government has a consulate
here on our land
Let us go there and make our protest known*

*Our pen is our spear
Let us have the courage to use it
For resistance is the refusal to yield to
silence.”*

Can you believe
That there are those who say
That there is nothing left to do
But smooth the pillow of a dying race
About the first people
So we will be the first to speak up
We will be the last to be silent

THE PROTEST

Our words are sacred
Our words are strong
They will outlive us when we are gone

Dressed in their Sunday best
Underneath the scorching southern sun
From the Maribyrnong to the Yarra they
marched
From the banks of the river
To the heart of the city
Marching down the boulevards

Straight into the smoke
People's gaze bearing down
William's aging frame
Heavy with justice on his back

Letter in hand
To these faceless arches of power
Towering above those unwelcome
Those unwanted

"On behalf of the Aboriginal inhabitants of Australia, we wish to have it registered and on record that we protest wholeheartedly at the cruel persecution of the Jewish people by the Nazi government in Germany. We implore that you would make it known to your government and its military leaders that this cruel persecution of their fellow citizens must be brought to an end."

Our words are sacred
Our words are strong
They will outlive us when we are gone

It does not matter what message
you bring
It only matters to whom you were born

Dark is the heart that closes its doors

AT THE END OF MY DAYS

At the end of my days
I want to know I spoke up when I saw
wrong
At the end of my days
There'll be no doubt I stood up for what
was right
And that courage led the way
To the end of my days

At the end of my days
My conscience will have been my guide
To see the world through different eyes
I will have crossed the divide

Like a river red gum tree
My roots will hold me up in shifting
sands
And point me towards the sun
Though some will try and break me
And ignorance may try to erase me
They will not weaken my resolve
For my bearings are true and strong

At the end of my days
I want to know I spoke up when I saw
wrong
At the end of my days
There'll be no doubt I stood up for what
was right I will be proud of my name
At the end of my days

About the Australian Youth Orchestra



The Australian Youth Orchestra (AYO) is among the world's most prestigious and innovative training organisations for young pre-professional musicians. As one of the Arts8 organisations, AYO is integral to Australia's identity as a nation of artistic excellence. Over the last 75 years, AYO has celebrated the wealth of talent found here in Australia, nurturing the musical development of young instrumentalists across metropolitan and regional Australia.

Every year we create tailored training and performance programs for aspiring musicians, composers, arts administrators and music journalists. From AYO Young Symphonists to the flagship orchestra and beyond with Momentum Ensemble, AYO provides outstanding young performers on the cusp of their professional lives opportunities that enable them to launch a multi-faceted career.

AYO understands that creativity and excellence needs a strong start. We are committed to improving the quality of music education in classrooms around Australia. To meet this need, distinguished music educator the late Richard Gill AO launched the National Music Teacher Mentoring Program (NMTMP) to support classroom teachers in building their skills and confidence in teaching music.

This year the organisation celebrates its 75th anniversary with performances in Perth and Canberra, as well as a return to the iconic Sydney Opera House. Recent performance highlights include tours that have attracted superlatives from the ranks of internationally acclaimed artists and musical leaders such as Christoph Eschenbach, Vladimir Ashkenazy, Hélène Grimaud and Joshua Bell. In 2019, the orchestra won critical acclaim for their performance in Victorian Opera's production of Wagner's Parsifal at Melbourne's Palais Theatre before undertaking a nine-concert tour of Europe, China and Australia with pianist Jan Lisiecki and conductor Krzysztof Urbanski. In 2022, after a three-year hiatus, the orchestra made a triumphant return to the stage with an Australian tour led by legendary British conductor Sir Mark Elder CH CBE, some 40 years after his first collaboration with AYO at the 1982 Adelaide Festival.

In 2025, AYO will resume its role as a cultural ambassador, launching the 24th international tour since 1970. The tour allows AYO musicians to connect with our global community, create exceptional music and celebrate Australian excellence and is one of the reasons countless AYO alumni are members of the finest professional orchestras worldwide.



Australian Youth Orchestra

VIOLIN 1

In Yi Chae
Concertmaster

Theonie Wang

Haneulle Lovell

Jordan Hall

Miriam Niessl

Luke Hammer

Nicholas Miceli

Lucy Clarke-Randazzo

Jasmine Middleton

Sara Barbagallo

Emily Ampt

Aaron Ooi

Najia Hanna

Beverly Kwan

Sophia Jones

Yoyo Zhou

VIOLIN 2

Jasmine Milton
Principal

Catherine Jang

Jessica Li

Lily Song

Lili Stephens

Jonah Spriggs

Emma Richardson

Olivia Spyrou

Adina Lopez

Ezra Uxó Williams

Hannah Kim

Hannah Tyrrell

Natasha Paran

Tahlia Williams

VIOLA

Jamie Miles
Principal

Ella Pysden

Sebastian Coyne

Sarah Zhu

Sandra Ionescu

Hanna Wallace

Mattea Osenk

Angelina Kim

Helena Burns

Felix Hughes Chivers

Emma Amery

Daniela Edwards

CELLO

Reena Oh
Principal

Noah Lawrence

James Monro

Milo Duval

Joshua Jones

Fergus Ascot

Disa Smart

Angela Shin

Mahalia Shelton

Francesca Masel

DOUBLE BASS

Oakley Paul *Principal*

Rio Kawaguchi

Julia Magri

Harry Young

Alyssa Deacon

Maddison Furlan

James Arthur

Allan McBean

FLUTE

Anna Rabinowicz
Principal

Jessica Scott

OBOE

Harry Wagstaff
Co-Principal

Phoebe Xu
Co-Principal

CLARINET

Jes Broeren
Principal

Oliver Crofts

BASSOON

Tasman Compton
Principal

Hayden Burge

HORN

Stefan Grant
Principal

Tom Allen

Calen Linke

Henry Langley

Alec Berg

TRUMPET

Arkie Moore
Principal

Jade Park

Jude Macarthur

TROMBONE

Jeremy Mazurek
Principal

Tate Cassells

BASS TROMBONE

Angus Pace *Principal*

TUBA

Max Castor *Principal*

TIMPANI

Jack Peggie *Principal*

PERCUSSION

Leah Columbine
Principal

Aditya Bhat

Owen Bloomfield

Steven Hartley

Emily Moolenschot

HARP

Paul Nicolaou *Principal*

PIANO/CELESTE

Ronan Aparcar *Principal*

Our Future — Powered by You

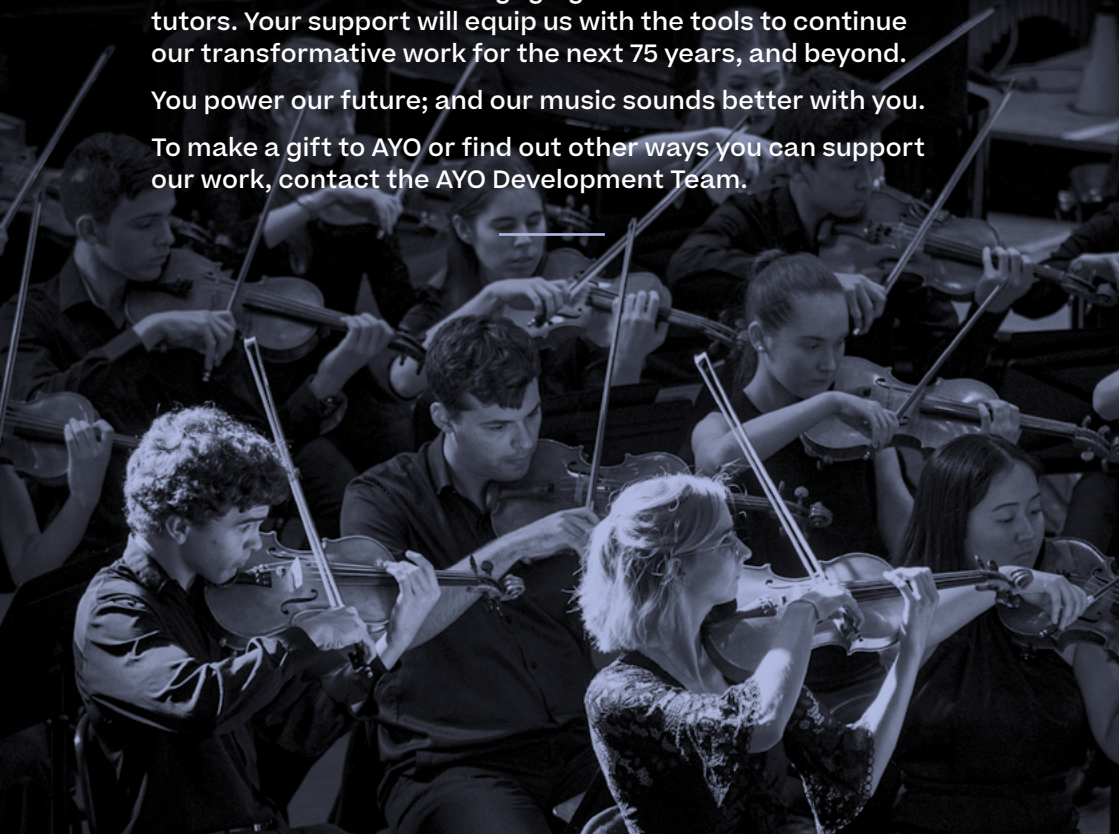
The Australian Youth Orchestra has been at the forefront of orchestral training and teaching for 75 years. Since 1948, our successes have been made possible by the generosity, support, and spirit of our community.

From our humble beginnings to the 88 musicians on stage this evening, AYO has ignited the imagination of thousands of talented, young Australians and has been devoted to providing exceptional opportunities for the next generation.

As we look to the future, it is this spirit of generosity that will ensure we can continue engaging the finest conductors and tutors. Your support will equip us with the tools to continue our transformative work for the next 75 years, and beyond.

You power our future; and our music sounds better with you.

To make a gift to AYO or find out other ways you can support our work, contact the AYO Development Team.



*From the bottom of my heart,
thank you all for your support of
the Australian Youth Orchestra.*

*You have helped us all create
life-long memories, which we
cherish very much, and your
generosity has supported many of
us to continue doing what we love.*

*We hope we create an
unforgettable experience every
time you sit in the audience.*

Thank you!

Oakley Paul, Principal Double Bass,
AYO 2023 Winter Season

To learn more about how you can support our important
work, please contact the Development Team.

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CONDUCTOR

Nigel Westlake



Nigel Westlake's career, spanning almost five decades, began as a clarinetist touring Australia and the world with many orchestras, ensembles and bands.

He began composing from 1980, receiving offers to write for radio, theatre, circus, TV and film and was appointed composer in residence for ABC Radio in 1984. From 1987-1992 he was a core member of the Australia Ensemble (resident at UNSW) and in 1992 was invited by guitarist John Williams to join his septet Attacca as performer and composer.

His film credits include *Babe*, *Ali's Wedding*, *Paper Planes*, *Miss Potter*, *Babe – Pig in the City*, *Children of the Revolution*, *The Nugget*, *A Little Bit of Soul*, *Blueback* and the IMAX films *Antarctica*, *Solarmax*, *The Edge* and *Imagine*. His television credits include numerous documentaries, telemovies, news themes and station idents.

He writes extensively for the concert hall, receiving commissions to write for orchestras, ensembles and soloists and has received many awards, including two ARIA Awards, 15 APRA awards across both Classical and Screen categories, the 2022 APRA Distinguished Services to the Australian Screen Award and the Gold Medal for Best Original Music at the New York International Radio Festival.

He is a two-time winner of the prestigious Paul Lowin Orchestral Prize 2013 for *Missa Solis – Requiem for Eli* and in 2019 for *Spirit of the Wild – Concerto* for oboe and orchestra. In 2020 he was awarded the Albert H. Maggs Composition Award by the University of Melbourne for his third string quartet, *Sacred Sky*.

He has conducted all the major symphony orchestras in Australia in performances and recordings of his own works, and in 2016 made his US conducting debut at the Lincoln Centre with the New York Philharmonic and his European debut with the RTE Symphony at the National Concert Hall in Dublin in 2018.

He holds an honorary doctorate in music awarded in 2013 by the University of NSW and was the recipient of the HC Coombs Creative Arts Fellowship at the Australian National University in 2004.

In 2008 he founded the Smugglers of Light Foundation with his family in memory of his son Eli, to promote cultural awareness and empowerment through education via the mediums of music and film in youth and indigenous communities.

SOLOIST

Sharon Grigoryan



Sharon Grigoryan moved to Adelaide in 2013 to take up the position as cellist with the Australian String Quartet – a position she held until December 2020.

Prior to this, she was a member of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and Melbourne Chamber Orchestra and has been guest principal cellist of many of the Australian orchestras.

From 2011 Sharon toured regularly, both nationally and internationally with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, and whilst living in Berlin in 2012 and 2013 Sharon toured Europe with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra and Spira Mirabilis Chamber Orchestra.

Sharon was the artistic director of the “Barossa, Baroque and Beyond” Festival from 2015-2021, has performed with the Australian World Orchestra since 2015, and plays in a duo with guitarist and husband Slava Grigoryan. In chamber music, Sharon has collaborated with performers including Timo Veikko-Valve, Pieter Wispelwei, Vilde Frang, Torleif Thedéen, Lawrence Power, Richard Tognetti, Konstantin Shamray, William Barton, Sara Macliver, and Christopher Moore.

Sharon enjoys dabbling in other genres in music such as jazz and folk, and first met Lior when she was in university where she had the privilege of playing in his string group on many tours.

Since July 2021, she has been guest Associate Principal cellist with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra. Outside of her musical life, Sharon enjoys sharing her time between her family, friends, two cats, eight chickens, and ever expanding number of plants in her garden.

It is such a joy for her to be back with the AYO in this capacity. Having been a student at AYO’s National Music Camp, and a former member of the AYO, it is particularly poignant to be back performing with this stellar group.

VOCALIST

Dr Lou Bennett AM



Yorta Yorta Dja Dja Wurrung, Dr Lou Bennett AM is a former member of the internationally acclaimed trio Tiddas. Bennett is a consummate performer, playing audiences worldwide. Bennett is a prolific songwriter/composer and during her ten years with Tiddas (1990-2000) penned some of the group's signature songs.

Bennett's work stretches over a vast area within the arts industry including her various roles as Performer, Songwriter, Musical and Artistic Director, Composer, Actor, Soundscape and Music Designer and Educator.

In 2006 Bennett was a co-founder of the iconic Black Arm Band and was an instrumental force in the company's transformative journey from being a one-off 'special project', becoming an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander governed, not for profit major performing arts company.

Bennett completed her PhD by project at RMIT Melbourne in October 2015. Bennett's dissertation discusses the importance and relevance of Aboriginal language retrieval, reclamation and regeneration through the medium of the Arts to community health and wellbeing and explores the importance of Indigenous epistemology, methodology and pedagogy in artistic and academic contexts.

Bennett uses her own languages of Yorta Yorta and Dja Dja Wurrung, extending to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages that can be retrieved, reclaimed and regenerated through songs, stories and performances.

Bennett received the McKenzie Postdoctoral Research Fellowship from the University of Melbourne and was inducted onto the Victorian Women's Honour Roll for 2017. In 2018 Bennett accepted a member of the Order of Australia. Bennett received a Westpac Research Fellowship in 2021 and completed her research in Sovereign Language Rematriation through Song Pedagogy at the University of Melbourne's School of Social and Political Science in January 2023. Bennett has been appointed an ongoing position as Senior Lecturer Indigenous Studies (Partnerships) delivering the flagship course On Country Learning created by her skin father Dr Wayne Atkinson and continues to work closely with First Nations communities supporting their endeavours in Sovereign Language Rematriation. Bennett was ministerially appointed to the RISING board in 2020 and in 2022 was appointed as the Chair of the Australia Centre at the University of Melbourne.

VOCALIST

Lior



Lior is one of Australia's most treasured singer songwriters renowned for his beautiful voice and songs that radiate truth and sincerity. He burst on to the Australian music scene in 2005 with his debut album - *Autumn Flow* - which has become one of the most successful independent debut releases in Australian music history. That year Lior earned three ARIA nominations including 'Best Male Artist' as well as Triple J's 'J Award' nomination for 'Australian Album of the Year'. He has subsequently released five more albums whilst remaining a completely independent artist. He has earned a total of seven ARIA nominations and is a two-time ARIA award-winner.

He has toured extensively both in Australia and internationally. He has been a regular performer at arts festivals and WOMAD festivals internationally, including an entire season at the Edinburgh Festival.

He has written songs for film and television and is a recipient of an APRA Award for 'Best Original Song Composed for Screen'.

Lior's hunger for new challenges has led to collaborations on various classical crossover works and theatre projects. In 2016, he completed his first theatre score with *The Wider Earth* - a play tracing the personal voyage of Charles Darwin. Premiering at the Queensland Theatre Company it was the first ever play to perform an entire season at the London Natural History Museum. Lior received the Matilda Award for 'Best Original Theatre Score' at the Queensland Theatre Awards that year.

In 2014 Lior collaborated with Nigel Westlake on *Compassion*, a symphonic song cycle for voice and orchestra set to ancient texts in both Hebrew and Arabic centred around the wisdom of compassion. *Compassion* has been performed with major Australian symphony state orchestras. The recording won the 2014 ARIA for 'Best Classical Album'. In 2016 Lior premiered *Compassion* with the Austin Symphony Orchestra (USA) and subsequently won the 2016 Austin Table Critics' Award for 'Best Symphonic Performance'.

In 2019, Lior toured internationally as the featured vocalist for the Australian Chamber Orchestra's *Luminous* concert series. Lior was recently awarded the prestigious Sidney Myer Creative Fellowship for displaying outstanding excellence and courage in music.

PROGRAM NOTES

The Glass Soldier

NIGEL WESTLAKE

The Glass Soldier

Symphonies of Glass

White Birds Fly Over the Valley of the Somme

I Was Blinded – But Now I See

The Glass Soldier was commissioned by Don Farrands in memory of his grandfather N.H. Ferguson, and in honour of his contribution to art and his virtuous life.

In four movements, the suite is inspired by Hannie Rayson's epic play of the same name which tells the story of Nelson Ferguson's misfortune in war and his ultimate triumph against adversity.

The Glass Soldier

Beginning slowly and tentatively, this is a portrait of the young Nelson, an artist imbued with dignity and optimism as he embarks upon his journey to France, an ill-fated adventure that will change his life forever.

The low-register trumpet phrases in the final bars suggest an apprehension of the fate awaiting Nelson and his comrades that lies over the horizon.

Symphonies of Glass

Escaping from the horror of the trenches, Nelson has carved out a moment in time (on leave) and finds himself inside an ancient village church somewhere in the French countryside. He admires the grandeur of the stained-glass windows and lovingly communes with the spirits of the artisans responsible for such beauty, empathising with and marvelling at their work – their search for beauty, for colour. Basking in the play of light, the music opens with a reference to the 15th-century French Advent plainchant *Veni, veni Emmanuel* over which is superimposed a filigree texture of harp arpeggios, celesta, crotales (pitched metal discs) and solo violin.

Nelson reflects on the meaningless slaughter of the war and berates the Almighty for allowing such atrocities to occur. The orchestral texture is expanded and intensified, exploding at the peak of his anger as a stray bomb lands on the roof of the church, covering Nelson in broken glass as the windows



collapse upon him. Engulfed by mustard gas, he experiences panic and a deep awareness exploding in a sense of catastrophe. He is hurled into darkness. His visual world is destroyed and his life with it. He is buried alive, suffocated by helplessness and claustrophobia. The mustard gas takes his sight.

White Birds Fly Over the Valley of the Somme

Solo cello is featured in a slow lament for the aftermath of the battle of Villers-Bretonneux in northern France (24-25 April 1918) in which Nelson, a stretcher-bearer, was embroiled.

The image of white birds juxtaposed over a desolate landscape devastated beyond recognition is a metaphor for hope, the title inspired by a scene from Hannie Rayson's original play. As Nelson surveys the killing fields of the Somme he yearns to be back in the arms of his true love, Madeleine. The sweet sounds of her piano-playing inhabit his daydreaming and offer a glimpse of hope amongst the scarred earth and mud-filled trenches.

I Was Blinded – But Now I See

This is the struggle of a man plunged into darkness to find the light. Literally and metaphorically. For Nelson, blindness is akin to being a lost man, caught up in turmoil and anxiety and unable to be the author of his own life. With extraordinary tenacity, the trumpet cadenza charts Nelson's journey as he sets about the process of regaining control. Optimistic and uplifting, this finale speaks of hope and rebirth, the regeneration of the human spirit.

PROGRAM NOTES

Beneath the Waves

***Beneath the Waves* – Suite for cello and orchestra**

Based on music from the motion picture *Blueback*

NIGEL WESTLAKE

SHARON GRIGORYAN, CELLO

Beneath the Waves

The Sea Creatures Gather

Whale Song

We Come From Water

My father taught me about the ocean.

Navigator, fisherman, sailor, boatbuilder and avid environmentalist, he was an incurable romantic regarding all things nautical and would head to the coast at any opportunity to weigh anchor and immerse himself in the prevailing tides and breezes of the east coast.

In between his day job as a symphony musician he managed to clock up thousands of nautical miles on coastal voyages from the roaring forties of Tasmania to the wet tropics of northern Queensland. His enthusiasm was infectious and as a young boy I was a willing accomplice, no matter what the destination and regardless of the weather.

Many years later when Robert Connolly introduced me to *Blueback*, Tim Winton's charming and deeply moving fable, I was overcome by a strong sense of déjà vu. I could taste the salt spray of the Indian Ocean and was primed for a seascape adventure of a different design. Truth is, I had been harbouring a secret desire to write a score for a Tim Winton movie ever since I began collecting his books in the 1980s – and here it was, a dream come true.

The music from *Blueback* traverses a narrative of deep sadness concerning the fragility of life and the state of our coral reefs and threats to the ocean through climate change. This is contrasted with moments of hope and optimism celebrating humanities ability to accomplish

a meaningful connection with nature in the face of the immense environmental challenges of our times.

Beneath the Waves uses these themes as a foundation from which to explore and construct a virtuosic concert suite for Sharon Grigoryan, one of Australia's finest cellists.

I am indebted to Colin Cornish (ex CEO of AYO) for his invitation to create this work and also to Sharon Grigoryan for her invaluable advice and input into the design of the cello part.

Sadly my father passed away during the writing of the *Blueback* score and I would like to dedicate *Beneath the Waves* to him for so generously sharing with me his deep respect for the ocean and all the magnificent creatures therein.

For Don with love and admiration.

Beneath the Waves – Suite for Cello and Orchestra is based on the score for the movie *Blueback* (2023) directed by Robert Connolly. It was commissioned by the Australian Youth Orchestra for Sharon Grigoryan and the AYO 2023 Winter Season.

© Nigel Westlake



PROGRAM NOTES

Ngapa William Cooper

Composed and written by Nigel Westlake, Lior and Dr Lou Bennett AM with additional creative lyric content by Sarah Gory

LIOR, VOCALS

DR LOU BENNETT AM, VOCALS

Exile/Call To Ancestors

The News

The Silence

Yakapna – Nuk

The Meeting

The Protest

At The End Of My Days

ABOUT THE WORK

Ngapa William Cooper is an astounding and emotionally powerful new Australian work.

It is based on a true story of protest and how a single voice for justice, when standing up to the horrors of one of the darkest periods in human history, can have an impact on future generations.

Created by a team including three of Australia's most accomplished and critically acclaimed musicians; composer Nigel Westlake, singer/songwriter Lior and Indigenous singer/songwriter Dr Lou Bennett, *Ngapa William Cooper's* universal message of standing up for the oppressed, regardless of the consequences, is as pertinent today as it was almost 90 years ago.

Yorta Yorta is the name of the language of the Yorta Yorta Nation including 10 tribes. My tribe is Walithica, which means we are the people from the meeting of the three rivers: dungala (Murray), gaiyla, (Goulburn) and yakoa (Campaspe). The town name Echuca derives from our Tribe's name. Uncle William Cooper was my Grannie Ada's brother. Their mother, my Nanny Kitty, has been found in numerous historical documents sharing our language. Now, as her great, great, great granddaughter, it is with great honour I share some Yorta Yorta with you.



In each section, you will hear Yorta Yorta. I have used the language sparingly and my translations here will be based in story and poetic form as direct translations become misleading and taken out of context. The creative practice of call and response between Yorta Yorta and English has been used to further another level of understanding.

Like many First Nations languages, the words can be multiple in meaning. When the Europeans wrote our languages in lexicons and word lists, there was a disruption to this multiple value, often rendering our languages to one meaning. Using the language artistically gives the opportunity to place multiple meanings back into the language.

A special acknowledgement to Yorta Yorta Elder, damangalya (Dr Wayne Atkinson) for his cultural knowledge and for narrating Uncle William's letters.

© Dr Lou Bennett AM

EXILE/CALL TO ANCESTORS (opening stanza)

Calling the Ancestors into our space before a gathering or ceremony is an old tradition and one shared by many. Here I share with Lior a prayer to **dhama yenbena** (Old people), **dhama mulana** (Old spirit) and **garra** (now).

THE NEWS

The term **dhoma** is used in multiple ways from dearest love to feeling sorry for someone who is less fortunate. I use it as a term for a loved one, Uncle William and Auntie Agnes' son Daniel.

Wanhal nyinyi guwiga? Where is my son?

Wanhal nyinyi guwiga? Where is my son?

Dhoma nyinyi yalka, dhoma nyinyi yalka - My dear child, my dear child

Dhoma nyinyi yalka, dhoma nyinyi yalka - My dear child, my dear child

THE SILENCE

The term ganbina is also multiple in meaning. It could mean get up, rise, grow, even fly. It's vital that our languages are not taken as literally as the English language.

Gukul gukul - Silence, silence

Gukul - Silence

Ganbina... - Rise...

Gakana... - Comes...

Ganbina... - Rise...

Gakana... - Comes...

Ganbina-n, gabina-n ganbina-n... - It rises, rises, rises...

YAKAPNA (FAMILY)

Yakapna (yercupna) means family. I believe Uncle William's strength was his family. We are taught at a very early age that we are all connected, and it takes a strong spirit and heart to remain loving. This is one of the most important teachings of my Old People.

Chorus:

nyinyi dungadja gowola - My big kindness

dhomi gow-it - Love overtakes

bida marreda - Hatred

nyinyi dungadja gowola - My big kindness

dhomadhoma-nga - I love you

ngalnyan-uk yamutj - Goodness

gathana manma mathi ngangwurra - Don't make a bad heart

THE PROTEST

There are times when I sing, I can feel my Ancestors voices surge in me and my voice changes from sweetness to assertion, from young to old.

Lior sings, "Dark is the heart, the heart, that closes its door". I chose to be creative and to find words that I could hear my Old People speaking.

Djimunuk birrama djimunuk birrama - Coward, go away, coward go away

Djimun mathimatj ngangwurra - Cowardly cruel heart

AT THE END OF MY DAYS

We believe that death is not the end; it is a rebirthing, a transitioning of the spirit. We still grieve, we cry for the loss of our loved ones, however, we know in our hearts that life force is eternal.

Oooh dhama yenbena, dhama yenbena - Oh Ancestor

Oooh ganbina mulana, ganbina mulana - Fly spirit

Oooh nyuwanda dama yenbena-ruk danu, danu - We cry, cry for you Ancestor

Birra-ma yanyabak dhama yenbena-l muma, birrama birrama garra...

- Go away walk with the Old Ones now...

Ganbina-n, gabina-n ganbina-n... - It rises, rises, rises...



The Story of Ngapa William Cooper

© Sarah Gory

Ngapa William Cooper is the culmination of years of thinking, writing and creating, alone and together. The pandemic and subsequent lockdowns slowed the process of creation, which turned out to be a blessing in disguise. It allowed ideas to percolate slowly and the collaborative elements to come together organically. Lyrically and musically, *Ngapa William Cooper* is textural and layered — a reflection of the story that it weaves. Thematically, *Ngapa William Cooper* is a continuation of Lior and Nigel's acclaimed *Compassion* collaboration and yet at the same time it stands on its own, greater than the sum of its parts.

Above all, *Ngapa William Cooper* is a testament to Yorta Yorta activist Uncle William Cooper, and the importance of continuing his legacy of resistance, solidarity and empathy.

While the histories of Indigenous Australians and Jews are divergent and unique, they share common elements. Both peoples have been subject to genocide, displaced from their lands, marginalised and persecuted. Both have also shown great resistance, proudly continuing their culture through stories, learning, song and family, often in the face of great odds. *Ngapa William Cooper* is a reminder that our voices raised together are powerful instruments, in more ways than one.

KRISTALLNACHT

On the night of 9 November 1938, civilians and Nazi authorities ransacked and destroyed Jewish homes, shops and synagogues across Germany and Austria. This series of coordinated pogroms became known as Kristallnacht - 'Night of Broken Glass' — named so for the shattered windows that littered the streets the next morning. Kristallnacht marked the escalation of anti-Jewish violence in Nazi Germany, and the beginning of the end for European Jewry and Yiddishkeit culture as it once was. Almost one hundred Jews were murdered that night, and some thirty thousand Jewish men were rounded up and sent to the now infamous concentration camps of Eastern Europe. Their families would soon follow them, on and on until the cities and towns were emptied of Jews and the skies choked with the smoke of their collective funeral pyre. Kristallnacht made front page news around the world.

THE SILENCE

Two days after the events of Kristallnacht, on 11 November 1938 (also known as Remembrance Day in Australia, for Australian soldiers who have died in combat), William Cooper opened the newspaper in his Footscray home, perhaps hoping to remember his son. Private Daniel Cooper was killed in Belgium during World War I, fighting for a country and commonwealth that continued to deny him the most basic of human rights, citizenship.

Instead, what William Cooper found were accounts of the violence in the streets of Berlin and Vienna, stories of Jews being rounded up and taken away. What he saw in the days and weeks that followed was the world turning its back on the Jewish people. Barely a week after Kristallnacht, glass shards still caught in cracks on the sidewalk, an editorial in Melbourne newspaper *The Argus* read: 'What will become of the wandering Jews? Nobody wants them [...] It is in reality not a problem for Australia, but for Europe.'

THE PROTEST

In the face of this silence, a group of Aboriginal men and women known as the Australian Aborigines' League convened a meeting on Kulin Nation Country. During this meeting, a resolution was passed condemning the actions of the Nazi Government and protesting the treatment of the Jews in Nazi Germany. On 6 December 1938, less than one month after Kristallnacht, the Australian Aborigines' League — led by their secretary, William Cooper — dressed in their Sunday best, marched from Cooper's home in Footscray across the Maribyrnong River to the Nazi German Consulate in the heart of Melbourne city to deliver a formal petition condemning the persecution of Germany's Jews and calling for it to end.

In 1938, Aboriginal people across Australia continued to be persecuted and dispossessed, denied citizenship and basic human rights on their own land. Yet, in the face of all odds, the members of the Australian Aborigines' League refused to stay silent, raising their voices in solidarity with a group of people distant in culture and geography: 'We are a very small minority, and we are a poor people, but in extending our sympathy to the Jewish people we assure them of our support in every way.'

William Cooper and his comrades were denied entry by the Nazi German consul, who refused to receive their petition.

UNCLE WILLIAM COOPER

William Cooper was a Yorta Yorta activist, political campaigner and one of the most important figures in twentieth century Australian history. Born in 1861 at the heart of his Country, upstream from the junction of the Murray and Goulburn Rivers, Cooper spent his early years at Maloga Mission and Cummeragunja Reserve, where he learned to read and write — and where he would first encounter the struggle for Aboriginal rights.

In 1933, Cooper moved to Melbourne, where he could continue to fight for his people. It was there that he drew up his now-famous petition to King George V. His demand for Aboriginal representation in parliament, in the form of a federal MP chosen for and by Aboriginal people, echoes through history in the Uluru Statement from the Heart's current-day call for a 'voice to parliament'. Cooper also founded the Australian Aborigine's League during his Melbourne years, which in its current guise as the Aboriginal Advancement League is Australia's oldest still-operating Aboriginal rights organisation. The League was instrumental in promoting the first Day of Mourning on 26 January 1938, an event that evolved into what we know today as NAIDOC week — and whose legacy remains well and truly alive in the 'Change the Date' campaign.

Throughout his life, William Cooper wielded 'the spear of the pen' to great effect and impact. In his many letters and petitions, written to politicians and representatives of the crown, we hear a voice ahead of its time. Cooper called for equal rights for Aboriginal people while asserting the uniqueness of their culture and claim to land. He fought stridently for all Aboriginal people to be free of persecution and despite this never being realised in his lifetime, in his final years he still saw fit to stand in solidarity with the Jewish people across the seas.

Cooper's legacy of determined struggle and enormous empathy remains as pertinent today as ever.

Thank you

The Australian Youth Orchestra gratefully acknowledges the support of all who enable us to discover, train and inspire the next generation of Australian musicians. In addition to those listed below, we also thank those generous individuals who choose to remain anonymous.

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