



Latvian Radio Choir & Genevieve Lacey



Musica Viva Australia



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Bringing the finest artists of Australia and
the world to the Western Australian stage.



*Allan Clayton and Kate Golla,
A Winter's Journey*
Photo: Bradbury Photography

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the many lands on which we meet, work and live, and we pay our respects to Elders past and present — people who have sung their songs, danced their dances and told their stories on these lands for thousands of generations, and who continue to do so.

LATVIAN RADIO CHOIR

KASPARS PUTNIŅŠ
director

GENEVIEVE LACEY

recorders

BRISBANE

CONCERT HALL, QPAC

Wednesday 4 November, 7pm

- ▶ Pre-concert talk: 6.15–6.45pm, Balcony Foyer
- ▶ Meet the Artists after the concert

MELBOURNE

ELISABETH MURDOCH HALL,
MELBOURNE RECITAL CENTRE

Saturday 7 November, 7pm

- ▶ Pre-concert talk: 6.15–6.45pm, Eva and Marc Besen Suite
- ▶ Meet the Artists after the concert

PERTH

WINTHROP HALL

Tuesday 10 November, 7.30pm

- ▶ Pre-concert talk: 6.45–7.15pm, Lawrence Wilson Art Gallery

ADELAIDE

ADELAIDE TOWN HALL

Thursday 12 November, 7.30pm

- ▶ Pre-concert talk: 6.45–7.15pm, Prince Alfred Room

CANBERRA

LLEWELLYN HALL,
ANU SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Saturday 14 November, 7pm

SYDNEY

CITY RECITAL HALL

Monday 16 November, 7pm

- ▶ Meet the Artists after the concert

With special thanks to Ian Dickson AM & Reg Holloway for their support of this tour, and to our Concert Champions for their support of this tour within their state. We also gratefully acknowledge the Creative Development Collective for their generous support of new artistic projects, and the Amadeus Society for their support of the 2026 Concert Season.

This tour forms part of the Musica Viva Australia Creative Development Mentorship – an initiative, generously funded by the Ian Potter Foundation, aiming to strengthen and evolve Australia's chamber music sector through professional development opportunities for specialist production technicians. A special thanks to our sound engineer Jim Atkins, who collaborated with mentee Kate Norgren behind the scenes as part of the mentorship.



In mid-2019, newly appointed as Artistic Director of Musica Viva Australia, I began conversations with a slew of brilliant Australian artists about how we might collaborate, a process that accelerated the following year when COVID closed down concert halls, international flights and years of planning. You have seen on our stages the fruits of some of these conversations, in projects as diverse as Lindy Hume's astonishing staging of Schubert's *Winterreise* with Allan Clayton, Kate Golla and – in something more than spirit – Fred Williams, and Matthias Schack-Arnott's brilliant reimagining of John Cage's Sonatas and Interludes in collaboration with his team and the French pianist Cédric Tiberghien.

None of them took anywhere near as long to reach the stage as has this collaboration between Genevieve Lacey, Ēriks Ešņvalds, Alexis Wright, Hollis Taylor, Jon Rose, and the Latvian Radio Choir. My old friend Genevieve and I talked early on about an idea that had been preoccupying her for a while, though not yet fully in focus (these ideas are always the best!), a musical setting of prose by the visionary Australian author Alexis Wright. I knew Alexis's *Carpentaria* (2006) but had not yet read *The Swan Book* (2013), the text Genevieve had in mind. Anyone familiar with Alexis's work will know the scale of her imagination, the sheer ambition of each project. How to extract a settable prose poem from over 300 pages of dense, brilliant story-telling and powerful imagery?

Fortunately, everyone involved in this project has been as taken with this simple proposition as I was, the results of which you will hear on this premiere tour. The Grammy and Gramophone Award-winning Latvian Radio Choir has been to Australia before, though not under its new director Kaspars Putniņš, whose artistic response to the idea of this commission from his fellow countryman Ēriks, and to the program in which it would be embedded, has been merely one of the many pleasures of this long-awaited tour.

— Paul Kildea

Caroline SHAW (b. 1982)

And the Swallow (2017)

4 min

Jacob VAN EYCK (1590–1657)

Engels Nachtegaeltje (The English Nightingale)
(first published 1644)

4 min

Arvo PÄRT (b. 1935)

Magnificat (1989) and *Nunc dimittis* (2001)

13 min

Felix MENDELSSOHN (1809–1847)

Psalm XXII 'Mein Gott, warum hast du mich verlassen'
(My God, why hast thou forsaken me) (1844)

8 min

Hollis TAYLOR and Jon ROSE

Bird on Byrd (2026)

12 min

World premiere performances, generously commissioned by Donald and Kay Magarey

I N T E R V A L

Giovanni Pierluigi da PALESTRINA (1525–1594)

Pulchra es anima mea (Thou art beautiful, my love)
(first published 1584)
Recorder divisions by Francesco Rognoni (1570–1626)

5 min

Pēteris VASKS (b. 1946)

Mūsu māšu vārdi (Our mothers' names) (2003)

13 min

Hollis TAYLOR and Jon ROSE

Etheridge River for recorder and butcherbird (2026)

3 min

World premiere performances, generously commissioned by Donald and Kay Magarey

Ēriks EŠENVALDS (b. 1977)

Ceremony of Swans (2026)

20 min

Text by Alexis Wright from *The Swan Book*

World premiere performances, commissioned by Musica Viva Australia
and generously supported by Anita Anderson OAM & Graham Anderson,
Richard Cobden SC and Paula McLean.

A photograph of the Chalk Hill winery building, a modern structure with large windows and a corrugated metal roof, set against a backdrop of trees and a clear sky. The text 'CHALK HILL' is overlaid in a large, white, sans-serif font.

CHALK HILL

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Musica Viva Australia is passionate about sharing outstanding music and artists with communities across regional and remote NSW. Our Regional Featured Artists change each year and include dynamic young ensembles as well as established musicians at the peak of their careers.

We collaborate and partner with a wide range of presenters including regional conservatoria; music societies and clubs; festivals; and independent venues. We are grateful for funding which allows us to level the playing field for regional presenters, through supporting costs of touring and logistics.

Masterclasses

Musica Viva Australia creates opportunities for Australian and internationally acclaimed artists to share their experience and expertise with talented early-career artists and young music students, creating an enriching learning experience.

Musica Viva Australia's Emerging Artists program, including Masterclasses, Strike A Chord and FutureMakers programs, is supported by:

Tom Breen & Rachael Kohn AO
Nicholas Callinan AO & Elizabeth Callinan
Lorna Chapman
Caroline & Robert Clemente
Rowena Danziger AM[^]
Di Jameson Family Foundation[^]
Elisabeth Hodson & the late Dr Thomas Karplus
Mercer Family Foundation
The Morawetz Family in memory of Paul Morawetz
Marjorie Nicholas OAM
Patricia H Reid Endowment
Craig Reynolds
Andrew Sisson AO & Tracey Sisson
Kay Vernon
Youth Music Foundation of Australia
Anonymous (2)

Musica Viva Australia Masterclasses are also supported by Wesfarmers Arts in Western Australia, Monash University in Victoria, University of Queensland, and the Australian National University in Canberra.

[^]Founding members of the Strike A Chord Consortium.



Pianist Paul Lewis giving a closed masterclass to students at Monash University Melbourne in October 2026.





The Latvian Radio Choir is a unique, award-winning collective of professional singers that offers an extraordinarily wide repertoire to its audience. It has performed all over the world, from Amsterdam's Concertgebouw and Muziekgebouw, the Elbphilharmonie in Hamburg, and the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris to the Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, and the Walt Disney Concert Hall. The choir has worked with the Lucerne Festival Orchestra, Ensemble intercontemporain, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Camerata Salzburg, and Concerto Copenhagen.

The choir has been a guest at many prestigious music festivals, including the BBC Proms, the Salzburg Festival, the new music festival Klangspuren, the Lucerne Festival, Klangvokal in Dortmund, the Baltic Sea Festival in Stockholm, Australia's OzAsia Festival and the Spring Arts Festival in Monte Carlo, as well as earning significant acclaim in North America for its appearances in the White Light Festival in the US and Soundstreams in Canada.

The Latvian Radio Choir has received multiple awards. It was one of the featured choirs on the ECM recording of Arvo Pärt's *Adam's Lament*, which received a Grammy award, and in 2023 won the Gramophone Choral Award for its recording *John Cage: Choral Works*. The choir is a repeat winner of Latvia's highest national award for achievements in professional music, the Grand Music Award, as well as the winner of the Republic of Latvia Cabinet of Ministers Award. In late 2022, the choir received the Latvian national Excellence Award in Culture.

The Latvian Radio Choir was founded in 1940 by the legendary Latvian conductor Teodors Kalniņš, who led it until his death in 1962; Kaspars Putniņš took on the role of Artistic Director in 2024.

Kaspars Putniņš has been Artistic Director of the Latvian Radio Choir since 2024. From 2020 to 2026, he was Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the Swedish Radio Choir and held the position of Chief Conductor of the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir from 2014 to 2021.

Kaspars regularly appears with the RIAS Kammerchor Berlin, SWR Vokalensemble Stuttgart, Collegium Vocale Gent, Danish National Vocal Ensemble & Choir, Netherlands Radio Choir, NDR Vokalensemble Hamburg, Flemish Radio Choir, and Choeur Accentus, most recently in Paris (Théâtre de la Ville), La Seine Musicale in Boulogne-Billancourt and Rouen.

Kaspars Putniņš is recipient of the Latvian Grand Prix of Music and the Latvian Council of Ministers Award for Achievements in Culture and Science. For his devoted activity in the music life of Estonia as chief conductor of the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir Kaspars Putniņš was given the Annual Award of the Cultural Endowment of Estonia in 2019.

Kaspars Putniņš director

Ilze Paidere-Staķe manager

Sopranos Iveta Apine, Ilona Dzērve, Nora Kalniņa, Agnese Pauniņa, Agate Pooka, Inīta Vindava

Altos Ilze Konovalova, Gundega Krūmiņa, Lauma Malnace, Inga Martinsons, Dace Strautmane, Shino Yamasaki

Tenors Jēkabs Bernāts, Rūdolfs Bērtiņš, Jānis Kurševs, Daniels Pelnēns, Jurgis Rāts, Serhii Zadorozhnyi

Basses Aldis Andersons, Gundars Dziļums, Emīls Gilučs-Lācis, Jānis Kokins, Vītālijs Stankevičs, Vilhelms Vācietis



GENEVIEVE LACEY

Musician and arts advocate Genevieve Lacey connects people and ideas through sound, creating and performing multi-artform pieces that combine her skills as performer, composer, and curator, which are experienced in concert halls, public art installations, film, theatre, dance, radio, TV, and the digital realm.

Major works include *Of Ice and Stars* (incorporating early music, contemporary and commissioned works, premiered with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra), *Breathing Space* (a permanent installation at the National Museum of Australia, Canberra), *Bower* (a musical haven, a gentle experience of music and light with Marshall McGuire), *Pleasure Garden* (a listening garden), *Soliloquy* (a radical reinvention of the solo recital featuring Telemann's *Twelve Fantasias for Solo Flute*), *Recorder Queen* (a semi-animated documentary film), and *one infinity* (a cross-cultural, participatory performance piece).

This year Genevieve continues in her role as curator of the Sydney Opera House's Utzon Room Music Series and the Boyd Music Series at Bundanon, makes her debuts with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra in *Labyrinth of Time* (Classics in the City, at City Recital Hall, Angel Place) and at Aldeburgh Festival, UK, and chamber music engagements include Castlemaine Festival, Melbourne Chamber Orchestra at Daylesford, McClelland Gallery and Peninsular Music Society.

As a recorder virtuoso, Genevieve makes regular appearances with Australian and international orchestras and has commissioned and premiered works by composers including Brett Dean, Elena Kats-Chernin, Paul Grabowsky, Liza Lim, Erkki-Sven Tüür (Estonia), John Surman and Max de Wardener (UK), Jan Bang (Norway) and Wang Peng (China). Collaborators include writer Alexis Wright, visual artist Amos Gebhardt, composer Mary Finsterer and Antarctic scientist Steven Chown.

Genevieve has been artistic director for *Finding Our Voice*, artistic advisor to UKARIA Cultural Centre and the inaugural director of Musica Viva Australia's FutureMakers program. Her curatorial expertise has been sought out by LiveWorks (Performance Space 2020–22), Rising (2019–20), Adelaide Festival (2019), and Melbourne Recital Centre, (artist-in-residence 2018). She serves on the board of A New Approach and was Chair of the Australian Music Centre (2016–21). Her extensive discography has won her ARIA, Helpmann and Green Room awards, Churchill, Freedman and Australia Council Fellowships, the Melbourne Prize for Music (Outstanding Musician Award), and the Sidney Myer Individual Performing Arts Award.



HOLLIS TAYLOR

Violinist/composer, zoömusicologist, and ornithologist Hollis Taylor is Research Fellow at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. Taylor rethinks pied butcherbird repertoire for other human instruments and voices. Central to her compositional ethos is celebrating avian achievements rather than adding human improvements.

Recent commissions include works for Kronos Quartet, Ensemble Offspring and a birdsong concerto for recorder, performed by Genevieve Lacey and the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, London Sinfonia, and Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, supported by Creative Australia.

JON ROSE

Violinist/composer Jon Rose's life's work is the development of a total artform based around one instrument: *The Relative Violin*. Jon has appeared on over 100 albums and CDs, working with many of the innovators and mavericks in contemporary music such as Kronos Quartet, Derek Bailey, Alvin Curran, Otomo Yoshihide, Ilan Volkov, Christian Marclay, and John Zorn.

In 2012 Jon was honoured with the Australia Council's prestigious prize, the Don Banks Award for outstanding and sustained contribution to Australian music. He curates the Rosenberg Museum, his own violin museum of more than 1000 artefacts.

Hollis Taylor and Jon Rose are recipients of the 2025 APRA AMCOS Art Music Award's Richard Gill Award for Distinguished Services to Australian Music.

ĒRIKS EŠENVALDS

Ēriks Ešenvalds is one of the most sought-after composers working today. Performances of his music are heard on every continent and his works are widely recorded. Ēriks is a popular public speaker, which he often combines with leading masterclasses and conducting. Born in Priekule, Latvia in 1977, Ēriks is a graduate of the Latvian Academy of Music where he today heads the Department of Composition.

Ēriks' music has been performed in major venues around the world including Carnegie Hall, the Royal Albert Hall, Sydney Opera House, Philharmonie Berlin, the Gewandhaus in Leipzig and Tokyo Opera City Concert Hall. *Nordic Light*, his multimedia symphony on the folklore and mythology of the northern lights, has been performed in the US, Canada, Germany, Sweden, and Switzerland. His full-scale opera *The Immured* was premiered at the Latvian National Opera and Ballet.

ALEXIS WRIGHT

Alexis Wright is a member of the Waanyi nation of the southern highlands of the Gulf of Carpentaria. She is the author of the prize-winning novels *Carpentaria*, *The Swan Book* and, most recently, *Praiseworthy*. Wright's books have won numerous literary awards, including the Miles Franklin Literary Award, James Tait Black Memorial Prize and the Queensland Literary Award for *Praiseworthy*.

Wright is the first author to win the Stella Prize twice, and *Praiseworthy* is the only book to have received both the Stella and the Miles Franklin Awards. She is the inaugural winner of the Creative Australia Award for Lifetime Achievement in Literature and the winner of the 2024 Melbourne Prize for Literature.

About the music

Grammy and Pulitzer award-winning composer **Caroline Shaw** has built a career on cross-genre collaborations; among many others she has produced work for Rosalia, Phoebe Bridgers, and the vocal ensemble Roomful of Teeth, of which she is a founding member. Her polished style embraces a range of extended vocal techniques. *And the Swallow* is a beautiful setting of Psalm 84 ('How beloved is your dwelling place'), expressing a yearning for home and for safety; Shaw has said that she was thinking of the Syrian refugee crisis when she wrote this piece. The music contrasts homophonic statements of the text (where all voices sing in block chords and identical rhythm) with more expansive *mmm* and *ahh* vowel sounds, culminating with a directive for the singers to emulate the sound of falling autumn rain.

© LUKE IREDALE

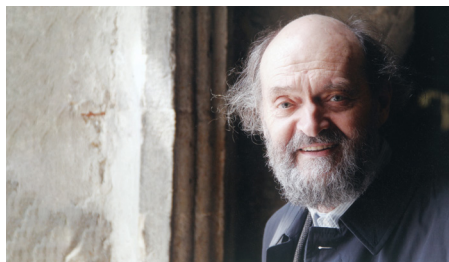


how beloved is your dwelling place,
o lord of hosts
my soul yearns,
my heart and my flesh cry
the sparrow found a house,
and the swallow her nest,
where she may raise her young
they pass through the Valley of Bakka,
they make it a place of springs
the autumn rains cover it with pools

Psalm 84

Jacob van Eyck was one of the most prolific composers of music for solo recorder. A well-known nobleman and musician of the Dutch 'Golden Age', van Eyck was blind from birth. Amongst his many fine achievements, van Eyck was a virtuoso recorder player and his *Der Flytten Lust-hof* (*The Flute's Pleasure Garden*) remains the single largest collection of works for a solo wind instrument. *The English Nightingale* is drawn from this collection and fits beautifully into the bird-inspired themes of this evening's program. Though van Eyck intended it for the instruction of amateur musicians, it is a challenging and atmospheric work, imitating the call of the nightingale through its piercing tone-colour, precise stop-start rhythms and elegant Baroque ornamentation.

© LUKE IREDALE



The Magnificat and Nunc dimittis are the two best-known canticles of the New Testament; together they form the centrepiece of evening prayer services in the Christian liturgical tradition and have been set to music by thousands of composers.

Estonian-born **Arvo Pärt**'s setting of the Latin Magnificat text is a meticulously constructed, controlled and mostly introverted work, except for a series of unrestrained, magnificent outbursts of choral sound. Emotionally and technically pared back, this work is notable for its solemnity of text setting, which is largely in the form of recitation with no repetition of the text. It treads an essentially static harmonic path, yet interest is

maintained through a clever orchestration of the voices, and carefully placed dissonances to colour the harmonic palette.

The Magnificat is representative of the 'tintinnabuli' style for which Pärt is renowned. Influenced by his experiences with chant music, the style combines two distinct voices: one outlines the notes of the tonic triad while the other moves in mostly step-wise motion, creating a hypnotic musical effect.

Pärt's *Nunc dimittis* is a later work, commissioned and premiered in 2001 by the Choir of St Mary's Episcopal Cathedral in Edinburgh. The music employs the tintinnabuli technique but in a less spare way than the Magnificat; instead Pärt richly follows the content of the text, notably (and most famously) at the word *lumen*, 'light', where the music explodes into a radiant C-sharp major chord, designed to fill every corner of the cathedral with sound.

© NATALIE SHEA / LUKE IREDALE

Magnificat anima mea Dominum, et exsultavit spiritus meus in Deo salutari meo. Quia respexit humilitatem ancillae suae; ecce enim ex hoc beatam me dicent omnes generationes. Quia fecit mihi magna qui potens est, et sanctum nomen ejus, et misericordia ejus a progenie in progenies timentibus eum. Fecit potentiam in brachio suo; dispersit superbos mente cordis sui. Deposuit potentes de sede, et exaltavit humiles. Esurientes implevit bonis, et divites dimisit inanes. Suscepit Israel, puerum suum, recordatus misericordiae suae. Sicut locutus est ad patres nostros, Abraham et semini ejus in saecula.

My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour. For he has looked upon his handmaiden in her lowly state: behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he who is mighty has made me great, and holy is his name. And his mercy is upon those who fear him, from one generation to the next. He has shown strength with his arm, he has scattered the proud in their innermost thoughts. He has cast down the mighty from their thrones and lifted up the humble.

He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty. Mindful of his mercy, he has come to the aid of his servant Israel. As it was promised to our fathers, Abraham and his descendants for ever.

Luke 1: 46-55

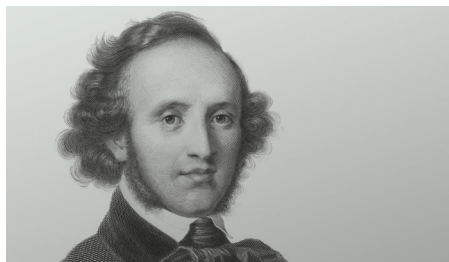
Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine, secundum verbum tuum in pace, quia viderunt oculi mei salutare tuum, quod parasti ante faciem omnium populorum, lumen ad revelationem gentium et gloriam plebis tuae Israel.

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto, sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Lord, now you let your servant depart in peace, as you promised. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared for all to see: a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of your people Israel.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Luke 2: 29-32



'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me...' So commences the tenor soloist at the outset of **Mendelssohn's** setting of Psalm 22 for double choir. Composed during Mendelssohn's time in Leipzig in the 1840s, the set of three Psalms, Op. 78, displays the influence of German church music, particularly J.S. Bach, that was so paramount to Mendelssohn's music and to his own legacy. Indeed, without Mendelssohn's rediscovery

and performance of a near-forgotten *St Matthew Passion*, Bach may never have re-entered the Western consciousness in the way that he did.

Mendelssohn in this well-loved eight-part setting elects for rich homophonic writing alongside pleading interjections for soloists, helping to give prominence to the text. Associated in the Anglican tradition with Maundy Thursday, Psalm 22 is initially despairing but moves to hopefulness in the nineteenth verse: *But do not be far from me, Lord. You are my strength; come quickly to help me.* It is at this point that Mendelssohn modulates from gloomy E minor to bright E major, the soprano soloist beautifully underlining this shift in tone. The composer maintains the sense of gratefulness until the work's end, as the two choirs bounce antiphonally off one another, coming together satisfyingly at the conclusion.

© LUKE IREDALE

Mein Gott, mein Gott, warum hast du mich verlassen? Ich heule, aber meine Hilfe ist fern. Mein Gott, des Tages rufe ich, so antwortest du nicht; und des Nachts schweige ich auch nicht.

Aber du bist heilig, der du wohnest unter dem Lobe Israels. Unsre Väter hofften auf dich; und da sie hofften, halfest du ihnen aus. Zu dir schrieten sie, und wurden errettet; sie hofften auf dich, und wurden nicht zu Schanden.

Ich aber bin ein Wurm, und kein Mensch, ein Spott der Leute, und Verachtung des Volks. Alle, die mich sehen, spotten meiner, sperren das Maul auf, und schütteln den Kopf: Er klage es dem Herrn, der helfe ihm aus, und errette ihn, hat er Lust zu ihm. Ich bin ausgeschüttet wie Wasser, alle meine Gebeine haben sich getrennt. Mein Herz ist in meinem Leibe wie zerschmolzenes Wachs. Meine Kräfte sind vertrocknet wie eine Scherbe, und meine Zunge klebt am Gaumen, und du legst mich in des Todes Staub. Denn Hunde haben mich umgeben, und der Bösen Rotte hat sich um mich gemacht; Sie haben meine Hände und Füße durchgraben. Sie teilen meine Kleider unter sich, und werfen das Loos um meine Gewand.

Aber du, Herr, sei nicht ferne. Meine Stärke, eile mir zu helfen. Errette meine Seele vom Schwert, meine Einsame von den Hunden. Hilf mir aus dem Rachen der Löwen, und errette mich von den Einhörnern. Ich will deinen Namen predigen meinen Brüdern, ich will dich in der Gemeinde rühmen.

Rühmet den Herrn, die ihn fürchtet! Es ehre ihn in aller Same Jacobs, und vor ihm scheue sich aller Same Israels, denn er hat nicht verachtet noch verschmäht das Elend des Armen, und sein Antlitz nicht vor ihm verborgen, und da er zu ihm schrie, hörte er es. Dich will ich preisen in der großen Gemeinde; ich will meine Gelübde bezahlen vor denen, die ihn fürchten. Die Elenden sollen essen, dass sie satt werden; und die nach dem Herrn fragen, werden ihn preisen; euer Herz soll ewiglich leben. Es werde gedacht aller Welt Ende, dass sie sich zum Herrn bekehren, und vor ihm anbeten alle Geschlechter der Heiden. Denn der Herr hat ein Reich, und er herrscht unter den Heiden.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? I cry out, but help is far from me. My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, nor am I silent at night.

Yet you are holy, you dwell in the praise of Israel. In you our fathers put their trust; they trusted and you delivered them. To you they cried out and were saved; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

But I am a worm, not a man, scorned by everyone, despised by the people. All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads: 'He trusts in the Lord, let the Lord rescue him! Let him deliver him, if he takes delight in him.' I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has melted within me like wax. My mouth is dried up like a piece of broken pottery, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death. For dogs have surrounded me, a pack of villains encircles me; they have pierced my hands and my feet. They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.

But do not be far from me, Lord. You are my strength; come quickly to help me. Deliver my soul from the sword, my precious life

from the power of the dogs. Rescue me from the mouth of the lions; save me from the horns of the wild oxen. I will declare your name to my people; in the assembly I will praise you.

You who fear the Lord, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob, honour him! Revere him, all you descendants of Israel! For he has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him, but has listened to his cry for help. I shall praise you in the great assembly; I will fulfill my vows before those who fear you. The meek will eat and be satisfied; those who seek the Lord will praise him — may your hearts live forever! All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him, for dominion belongs to the Lord and he rules over the nations.

Psalms 22: 1–8, 14–16, 18–28



Bird on Byrd, by **Hollis Taylor** and **Jon Rose**, brings together two seemingly impossible modes of music making: an Australian songbird and the British Renaissance master William Byrd (1540–1623). Thirteen million years ago, Australian pied butcherbirds diverged from a corvid ancestor and evolved a striking preference for song — reminding us that humans are latecomers to melodic invention. Each spring, individuals perform nocturnal long songs lasting up to seven hours, transforming their material annually with new phrases, variations, and even mimicry of other species and sounds.

This birdsong (re)composition began with a detailed transcription of a nocturnal solo recorded at Yipirinya School, Alice Springs. Here, the recorder mediates between bird

and choir, sometimes mimicking avian complexity, sometimes offering a distinctly 16th-century line, and occasionally joining the choir in a typical Renaissance texture. It connects the avian and human musics, celebrating rather than ‘improving’ upon birdsong.

This early Byrd piece survives only in a table-book manuscript; aside from section titles, it is wordless. Its counterpoint has been thinned to create space for bird and recorder, opening new layers and sonic relationships.

© HOLLIS TAYLOR & JON ROSE



Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina lived and worked in Rome and, apart from two books of madrigals, wrote exclusively for the Catholic church. His music is often held up as the epitome of Renaissance polyphony and the ideal approach to setting sacred texts. Indeed, it has become a model for teaching composition, analysed and imitated by everyone from Bach and Mendelssohn to today’s first-year conservatorium students. His music is still frequently performed as part of choral liturgies by church and cathedral choirs all over the world.

Pulchra es, amica mea (‘You are beautiful, O my love’) is a setting of text from the Old Testament’s *Song of Songs*. It is impeccably clear-textured and expressive in its melodic lines. In this concert Genevieve Lacey performs diminutions — an embellishment whereby long notes are divided or shortened — by the Italian composer Francesco Rognoni. The ornamentation of Palestrina’s vocal lines throws the motet’s satisfying harmonic motion into relief.

© NATALIE SHEA / LUKE IREDALE

*Pulchra es, amica mea,
suavis et decora sicut Jerusalem,
terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata.
Averte oculos tuos a me,
quia ipsi me avolare fecerunt.*

You are beautiful, O my love,
sweet and comely as Jerusalem,
terrible as an army set in array.
Turn away your eyes from me,
for they have made me flee away.

Song of Songs 6:3–4a



© Janis Porietis

The career of **Pēteris Vasks**, doyen of Latvian composers, has not been without its challenges. Born into the family of a Baptist pastor in Soviet-occupied Latvia, Vasks was unable to study composition in his home country due to the Soviets' repressive policy towards Baptists. Trained as a violinist, Vasks played in several Latvian orchestras before moving abroad to study composition with Valentin Utkin at the State Conservatory in Vilnius, Lithuania. Following the restoration of Latvia's de facto independence in 1991, Vasks' music came to be known beyond the borders of Latvia, due in part to the enthusiastic support of violinist and conductor Gidon Kremer. Today, Vasks is lauded as one of the most influential contemporary European composers, whose use of chance elements, minimalism and muscular Western harmony in his music has made for a colourful and varied oeuvre. He numbers among the 'holy minimalists' — also including Pärt, Górecki and Tavener — whose reimagining of plainsong and other liturgical traditions, blended with slow-moving, modal harmony, has created a sound which is sensual but distinctly modern.

In *Our Mothers' Names*, Vasks thoughtfully sets a secular text by Latvian poet, writer and journalist Māris Čaklais, exploring themes of nature and of various birds' names which are traditionally used as affectionate nicknames in Latvia, especially for women. The through-composed eight-part work fits an extraordinary range of dynamics and vocal sounds into only 12 minutes: from an attention-grabbing *forte* opening to soft, luminous cluster-chords and barely-there passages for very low basses. In a particularly arresting mid-section, the addition of bird-like hoots and calls, sung by each of the singers in their own time as the repeating sibilance of the underlying text bubbles and froths, creates a mood of ratcheting tension, like dozens of conversations happening at once. Sweeping, chaotic *glissandi* from the voices set up a forceful climax before Vasks dials the dynamic right back for the final lines: *Leave the treetop to the birds, to settle themselves upon.*

© LUKE IREDALE

*Dzīlna, tu dzirdi mani?
Cielava, atsaucies!
(Tramvaji rībedami
rīta pusmiglā dziest.)*

*Ja vien varētu, aizietu
cauri gadiem (un neliktos daudzi),
kur Grieze griež bērniem maizi,
kur Vālodze lietu sauc,*

*siltu laiku kur sadzied aube
(ai, spārnu sasvītrots logs!).
Bet zeme ir virsū uzbērta,
un virsū uzstādīts koks.*

*Kādu roku un klēpju
paglābts manas dzīvības trauks?
putni — noslēpuma slēpēji,
putni un kapulauks.*

*Ai, smagā, zinošā zeme,
ai, vēji, plēsēji, graužēji,
ņemiet ņemamo, visa ņēmēji,
tikai galotni nenolauziet,*

*lai palika galotnīte,
kur putniem uzņemties.*

© MĀRIS ČAKLAIS

Woodpecker, do you hear me?
Wagtail, answer.
(Streetcars, rumbling,
Fade away in morning fog.)

If it were possible I would go back
through all the years (there don't seem
to be so many),
where the quails quarrel over food
for their children,
the oriole summons the rain,

the blackbirds sing out the warm weather
(or, windowpane from birds besmeared).
But earth has been poured over it,
and on top, a tree is planted.

Which hands and lap
Have saved my life?
Birds — dealers in secrets,
Birds and burial grounds.

Oh, earth, heavy knowing earth,
oh wind, flayer and gnawer,
take what you must, you who take everything,
only don't break the treetop,

leave the treetop to the birds,
to settle themselves upon.

TRANSLATION © LAURIE ANNE MCGOWAN

Hollis Taylor and Jon Rose describe their work *Etheridge River*:

The Gulf Developmental Road guarantees just a single lane of bitumen. Drivers in this part of far north Queensland must keep constant watch for oncoming traffic and wandering stock, ready to pull off onto gravel-and-red-dust shoulders at a moment's notice. Acres of termite 'tombstones' line much of the road's 442 kilometres. After several hours heading west, a long bridge crosses the dry Etheridge River. Here, a cut-out of a huge Brahman steer with floppy ears welcomes (and farewells) visitors to Georgetown, population 250. You could say it's an unlikely place for us to stage our encounter — but Australia is full of surprises.

© HOLLIS TAYLOR & JON ROSE



© Jurgis Rikvelis

Composer **Ēriks Ešenvalds** writes:

It has been a great privilege to write *Ceremony of Swans* for Musica Viva Australia, bringing together the extraordinary voices of the Latvian Radio Choir and the artistry of Genevieve Lacey. I know the remarkable colours and subtleties the Latvian Radio Choir can create, while Genevieve's different instruments offered me another wonderful palette of sounds to explore.

I was equally honoured to set words by Alexis Wright, whose *The Swan Book* creates a world suspended between sleep, memory and dream. A girl hears the strange music of black swans and gradually seems to enter their world. Her longing for freedom becomes something real: she steps into their waters and skies, learns their song, and experiences the miracle of being airborne.

The music follows this transformation. At first, the choir sings largely homophonically, allowing the words to tell the story and establish the landscape from which its mystery and magic can emerge. Gradually the sound-world changes: the singers produce overtones and imitate birdsong, while Genevieve's instruments intertwine with their voices. I have also created spaces where the choir recedes, allowing her playing to come to the foreground and shine.

Nature has always been central to my music, and here I wanted to evoke wings, distant calls, water, changing light and the energy of swans in flight. Above all, *Ceremony of Swans* follows that beautiful moment when the girl is no longer simply watching the swans, but is flying with them.

ĒRIKS EŠENVALDS © 2026

Ceremony of Swans

A little girl was lost.

In a silent world, she [the girl] slept for a very long time among a tree's huge woven roots.

Locked in the world of sleep, only the little girl's fingers were constantly moving, in slow swirls like music, writing stanzas in ancient symbols, forming words that revealed the twittering of bird song speaking about the daylight.

She heard the strange song of the swan, the music of migratory travelling cycles, crossing seas with spanned wings pulsing to the rhythm of relaxed heartbeats.

The swan was searching for its soul.

The girl thought that she could hear ghost music, black swans whispering to each other, arriving from nowhere, more and more of them descending in never-ending ribbons from the sky, gathering into flocks of thousands.

Guardian angels roosting on every rooftop.

The swans dived through invisible crevices to other worlds, dreaming their own names: Goolyen, Connewerre, Dungorong, Muru-kutchi, Kuluin, Mulgoa, Kungair, Koonwaarra, Byahmul.

She could feel the miracle of being airborne.

I feel so light now.

EXCERPT FROM *THE SWAN BOOK*
© ALEXIS WRIGHT
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Interview

BY KATHERINE KEMP

Genevieve Lacey is a recorder player, a storyteller, and a creative catalyst. She brings together ideas and people and weaves them into new visions. Both new works in tonight's concert began as tiny kernels of an idea which have, over the course of nearly ten years, grown into major new works. Musica Viva Australia's Director of Concerts & Communities, Katherine Kemp, asks Genevieve about the genesis of these projects.

How did you meet Jon Rose and Hollis Taylor? What do you find inspiring about them and their music?

Jon and Hollis are legendary figures in contemporary music. I met them first through their iconic work, which I admired as an avid listener and audience member. I was delighted when Hollis invited me to record a handful of her solo pieces, which are inspired by her lifelong study and celebration of pied butcherbird song. That led to me asking Hollis and Jon to write me a concerto, *Absolute Bird*, which I premiered in 2017 with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra and Paul Kildea conducting, and subsequently performed with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and City of London Sinfonia.

Jon and Hollis are inspiring people and artists. They have brilliant imaginations, fierce intellects, and have created singular lives in music.

How did you meet author Alexis Wright? Why did you suggest her words would be ideal for a Latvian composer to set?

I met Alexis through the remarkable ensemble Black Arm Band, with whom I had the privilege of working from 2008, for about a six-year period. Alexis and I share a love for music and words (I'm a voracious reader, and she's a great listener), and she's very generously allowed me to use her texts in a couple of projects since the Black Arm Band days, including *Breathing Space*, the permanent sound installation I created for the National Museum of Australia.

I thought that text from Alexis' novel *The Swan Book* — which refers often to sound and music — would suit this program and project. And the idea of pairing the best of contemporary Australian writing with the best of contemporary Latvian composition feels like a joyful meeting and celebration of two cultures.

What are you looking forward to, in working with Kaspars Putniņš and the Latvian Radio Choir?

I'm looking forward to being wrapped in their velvety sound. They're musically incredibly flexible, performing newly commissioned works and absolute classics with equal elegance. Kaspars is a beautifully thoughtful programmer and conductor. They've already been warmly welcoming of my unusual instruments and the ideas central to this project, so I can't wait to have the joy of meeting and rehearsing with them in Riga, and touring with them across Australia.



What kind of discussions have you had with Ēriks Ešenvalds?

Ēriks and I have talked about the characters of my instruments (I'll play multiple recorders in his piece), and Alexis' text. He has been so sensitive and respectful in his setting of Alexis' words, and the qualities of my instruments. Seeing the score emerge has been thrilling.

You've built a stunning career out of such imaginative musical adventures — but do you ever wake up feeling like you'd like to do something really bog-standard for once? Why or why not?

Bog-standard isn't my natural inclination. I've a mind and an imagination that don't sit still, and I feel fortunate to be able to use those traits daily. I love trying new ideas with a range of people with different skills and sensibilities, and I hope there will be many more adventures ahead.

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Adriana and Robert Gardos hiking in the Dolomites in Italy.

WHY WE SUPPORT MUSIC EDUCATION

Adriana Gardos has had such a long association with Musica Viva Australia that she still pronounces the name of the organisation in the way her Italian mother used to.

‘My mother used to go to Musica Viva concerts — so that was when we were introduced to it,’ Adriana says. ‘Musica is Italian for music, and my mother only spoke Italian to us when we were growing up. My father always had classical music going at home. He didn’t play an instrument but he was very keen. His favourites were probably Chopin, Tchaikovsky and Beethoven.’

Adriana’s husband, Robert Gardos, started coming to Musica Viva concerts when he was at high school, beginning what has become a life-long love of music. Today, the couple are frequent concert-goers in Sydney and are generous donors to music education programs delivered by Musica Viva Australia In Schools.

Having seen the benefit to children of being involved in music, Adriana and Robert are keen to spread the word about music education and the resources that are needed to ensure as many children as possible can take part. They want to encourage other donors, big and small, to get behind Musica Viva Australia’s Giving Day on Wednesday 18 November, when donations will be directed to music education.

‘Music in schools is more than education,’ Robert says. ‘It gives children the opportunity to do things as a team, they learn discipline, learn to listen, to move to music. Children enjoy it, it gives them an amazing skill, and I think every child should be given that opportunity.’

Adriana says: ‘It’s a no-brainer as far as I’m concerned. I like the fact that kids get enjoyment from it, and the knowledge of music is important to me. I think it has a ripple effect — you concentrate on

education, and then the students go out and maybe become educators as well, and it spreads.'

While Adriana did not have the opportunity to learn an instrument when she was growing up, she and Robert made sure their two children, David and Vanessa, were involved in music from a young age. David is now a professional musician, working in and teaching musical theatre. Vanessa is involved in education programs at the Australian Museum in Sydney.

'Vanessa learned two instruments, David learned three,' Adriana says. 'So I had five music lessons a week, as well as sport. They were very involved in music and both enjoyed being in their school bands.'

Adriana and Robert have directed their support for music education to areas where children may not otherwise have access to it, including regional and remote parts of Australia and First Nations communities. This year they increased their already generous donation to Musica Viva Australia In Schools to help fund programs in Western Australia and the Northern Territory.

'We have seen how disadvantaged people are when they are far from the main areas,' Robert says. 'We have seen it in Indigenous communities, and we've seen it in other communities — we look at the facilities available in the big cities compared to how little those people have, in a country that should be able to provide much more equitably.'

Adriana is also an ambassador for the Australian Indigenous Education Foundation, and has twice been to the Garma Festival in East Arnhem Land with that organisation. Robert until recently was the chairman of

PKD Australia, a charity to support research into polycystic kidney disease. Robert and Adriana helped establish PKD Australia after learning that a family that they knew well had this inherited genetic condition.

They were introduced to Musica Viva Australia In Schools when they attended a school performance in Sydney by Wyniss — a group from the Torres Strait Islands that is hugely popular with young audiences.

Adriana and Robert regard music education not only as a fun activity, but as a vital preventative measure against some of the problems that can afflict individuals and society. Children who are engaged with music, using their brains, cooperating with others and expressing themselves creatively cannot, at the same time, be doom-scrolling on their phones. Robert says it can help develop a child's resilience and social skills, helping support their mental wellbeing.

'There must be a way to get through to governments, to say that music is not really a discretionary activity,' he says. 'I genuinely believe that it is a preventative, and governments seem to shy away from prevention — they always want to cure problems. I think that's way too late. We can't afford to wait for the problems to happen, if there is a ready "vaccine" available, that is music.'

Adriana says it gives her immense pleasure to know that her support for Musica Viva Australia In Schools is bringing joy and educational benefits to children in some far-flung parts of the country. 'I think we get more out of it than the kids get, just to see the impact it's making,' she says. 'It's a very worthwhile thing to contribute to. It is everlasting, it changes people's lives.'

Join Adriana and Robert this **Giving Day:**
WEDNESDAY 18 NOVEMBER

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