



Ngarra-Burria Gurung

Australian Music Resources for the
Primary Classroom

Featuring works by First Nations composers:
Brenda Gifford, James Henry, and Aaron Wyatt

Written and compiled by Dr Joanna Drimatis

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Acknowledgement of Country

The Australian Music Centre acknowledges First Nations people as the Traditional Owners and sovereign custodians of the lands on which we work and live.

We recognise their continuing connection to Country and their respective nations across this continent and pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

Disclaimer

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About this educational resource

This resource is to assist educators in accessing, understanding and teaching Australian music to students in the classroom environment. The resource is aimed for primary school students and can be incorporated in classroom programs from Years K-6. The content of this resource includes an introduction to the concept of musical stories, information and background to the focus works by Brenda Gifford, James Henry and Aaron Wyatt, lesson maps, worksheets and powerpoint slides. Each lesson map is focussed on key themes from the works and provides prompts to teach listening, performing and composition skills. This resource was written in consultation with the Australian Music Centre's Librarian and ATSI Lead Meeghan Oliver.

Syllabus links

The material in this educational resource is intended to align with topics and courses associated with the Australian National Curriculum, The Arts- Music F-10 (Version 8.4).

Years F-2	Years 3-4	Years 5-6
ACAMUM080	ACAMUM084	ACAMUM088
ACAMUM081	ACAMUM085	ACAMUM089
ACAMUM082	ACAMUM086	ACAMUM090
ACAMUR083	ACAMUR087	ACAMUR091

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that there is a significant collection of compositions by Indigenous composers held at the Australian Music Centre that are accessible to the wider musical community.²

This education resource gives attention to all the music performed on the album *To Listen, To Sing - Ngarra Burria: First Peoples Composers* with focus on three composers: Brenda Gifford, James Henry and Aaron Wyatt. Each of their works are written for small ensembles and exhibit both a simplicity and complexity in their compositional construct. The music on the album is performed by the innovative new music ensemble Ensemble Offspring.

2 How to use this resource

As mentioned this resource is intended to be used in the primary music classroom and may also be used by general classroom teachers who wish to play music to their class.

The link to the album is below *To Listen, To Sing, Ngarra-burria: First Peoples Composers* © ABC Classic

<https://www.abc.net.au/abcmusic/14112922>

Links to Whole Album

<https://snd.click/NgarraBurria?pid=3zIOYPehp7e>

<https://open.spotify.com/album/0zQ0dalu37ycsmRlqTmLBy> or <https://bit.ly/4as6LCM>

For each of the five featured works you will find:

- i. *Background Information:* on the composer and the composition which includes links to recordings and support materials.
- ii. *Lesson Maps:* each map includes a focus topic for class discussion plus 1-2 activities. It is not meant for each map to be used for an entire lesson but offered as a guide or prompt for teachers when delivering this material to the class.

² J. Drimatis. *Celebrating Ngarra-Burria: The First Nations Composers' Initiative* (AMC: Sydney, 2023) p. 5.

- iii. *Worksheets:* there are several worksheets for each composition that can be used after the information has been taught from the lesson maps. More worksheets and word searches are included in the Dropbox link in 'Further resources' (p78).
- iv. *Powerpoint Slides:* Educators may select the slides they wish to share with their class. These are also in the Dropbox link in 'Further resources' (p78).

It is vital that listening to each work is part of the lesson as well as including a short discussion and activity. Some of the activities have supporting worksheets that are included in this resource. It is also recommended for educators to listen to the complete album *To Listen, To Sing – Ngarra-Burria: First Peoples Composers* as the music performed has provided the inspiration to create this resource.

Biography taken from the links below.

<https://www.sydneysymphony.com/about-us/50-fanfares/brenda-gifford>

<https://www.sydneydancecompany.com/people/brenda-gifford/>

Brenda Gifford (b. 1968) is a Yuin woman, originally from Wreck Bay, south coast NSW. Brenda's compositions have been commissioned by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, the Canberra International Music Festival for her work *Gambambarawaraga* ('seasons' in Dhurgha language) and the Four Winds Festival.

Mungala/Clouds commissioned for American star flautist Claire Chase premiered at National Sawdust New York in 2019. She is First Nations Resident Composer with Ensemble Offspring in 2020 as well as completing a Master of Music at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music as part of the Composing Women program with Professor Liza Lim. Her ARIA nominated album *Music for the Dreaming*, a work tailored for children exploring Dreamtime stories, received multiple performances at the Sydney Opera House in 2019, co-presented by Ensemble Offspring, ABC KIDS Listen and ABC Classics. Her composition *Mungala* had its world premiere in New York with Professor Claire Chase performing it at National Sawdust in New York.

Brenda has twenty years' extensive experience as a musician and is a composer, saxophonist and teacher. She was a member of the band Mixed Relations with Bart Willoughby from No Fixed Address and toured extensively to Aboriginal communities around Australia and internationally to Native American communities and the Pacific Islands. She has worked with Kev Carmody, on his album *Eulogy (for a black person)* playing saxophone on the track *Blood Red Rose*. She wrote the album sleeve notes for the reissued *The Loner Album* by Uncle Vic Simms. She has done over one hundred interviews and oral histories with Aboriginal musicians.³

³ J. Drimatis. *Celebrating Ngarra-Burria: The First Nations Composers' Initiative*. (AMC: Sydney, 2023) p19.

3.2 *Bardju (Footprints)* by Brenda Gifford

Year: 2017

Instrumentation:

Version 1: Alto flute, bass clarinet, vibraphone, cello.

Version 2 (2021) arr. Jessica Wells: string orchestra and percussion soloist.

Duration: 3'19"

Difficulty: Medium-Advanced

Commission: Commissioned by Ngarra-Burria

First performance: 3rd August 2017, Ensemble Offspring, Eora Centre, Sydney.

Sound Recording:

<https://soundcloud.com/ensemble-offspring/brenda-gifford-bardju-2017> or

<https://bit.ly/4apiv98>

Sound Recording: ABC Kids

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d-V3h_7T79s&t=4s

Interview on The Music Show with Andrew Ford- around 28 minute mark

<https://www.abc.net.au/listen/programs/musicshow/brenda-gifford-plagues-pandemics-mediaeval-aids/12293562>

About *Bardju (Footprints)*

Brenda Gifford writes:

*'Bardju represents our collective journey and tells us that we should tread lightly on Mother Earth; and it also represents my personal journey as a Yuin woman. Through this piece, I recalled my memories of Country. My music grounds me in, and gives voice to, my culture. I do not create in a vacuum, and my culture is at the core of my creativity.'*⁹

⁹ B.Gifford. *Bardju*, (Sydney: AMC, 2017).

Biography: <https://www.jameshenrymusic.net/bio>

James Henry is a highly sought-after composer and sound designer known for his unique fusion of traditional Aboriginal and contemporary musical genres. His versatile skill set has led him to compose for prestigious ensembles including the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Philharmonia Choir, Melbourne String Ensemble, and the Derwent Valley Concert Band. He has also held the role of musical director for notable events, including the Dreamtime at the G opening ceremonies and the Melbourne Festival Opening Ceremonies for 'Tanderrum.' James has lent his musical expertise to various theatre and dance productions and has received numerous commissions for his work.

In recognition of his exceptional talent, James earned a nomination for Best Documentary Score at the 2022 AACTA Awards for his outstanding work on 'Freeman.' James also earned his first Green Room Award for Sound Design in collaboration with Gary Watling and Lydia Fairhall.

James' music stands out due to its rich diversity. Beyond his composing endeavours, he is also a singer/songwriter and a seasoned covers performer. He has toured extensively across the country, captivating audiences as both a solo artist and a featured performer alongside renowned acts like the Black Arm Band and Buried Country. Additionally, he occasionally explores his creative prowess as a DJ and producer, working under the pseudonym Nurra and crafting House and Techno music.

James has immersed himself in the cultural fabric of various communities, playing an integral role in the revitalization of Indigenous languages through song. His recent fellowship deepened his understanding of traditional Aboriginal music, enabling him to seamlessly integrate it into contemporary contexts and genres. This unique ability allows him to explore musical landscapes spanning from

Techno to full orchestral compositions, all while maintaining cultural sensitivity and appropriateness.

As a singer/songwriter, James draws inspiration from 60's pop/rock/folk luminaries such as the Beatles and Simon and Garfunkel. Armed with his guitar, he effortlessly transitions from emotive power ballads to whimsical, light-hearted narratives and high-energy rock. While he primarily performs solo acoustic sets, James places a strong emphasis on lyricism in his stripped-down performances. His meticulously crafted songs aim to educate, inspire, and amuse. With a relaxed yet engaging stage presence, he bridges the gap between the stage and the audience, creating a deeply personal connection with his listeners. ©James Henry

5.1 *Zoom Meeting*

Year: 2020

Instrumentation: Flute, bass clarinet, vibraphone, cello

Duration: 3'01"

Difficulty: Medium-Advanced

Commissioned: Commissioned by Ngarra-Burria

Sound Recording/Video:

<https://on.soundcloud.com/KXXP8>

<https://open.spotify.com/track/1FcysAi51wCVoJScIEGHtv?si=88dfcff41f9a47e0> or

<https://bit.ly/4asHyZ4>

Other Resources:

Articles:

<https://limelight-arts.com.au/features/world-premiere-james-henrys-zoom-meeting/>

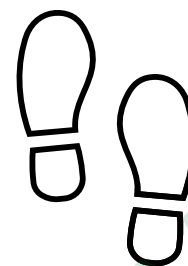
or <https://bit.ly/3TGTRti>

Australian Music Centre profile:

<https://www.australianmusiccentre.com.au/work/henry-james-zoom-meeting>

Lesson Map 4: *Bardju (Footprints)* by Brenda Gifford

<https://soundcloud.com/ensemble-offspring/brenda-gifford-bardju-2017> or <https://bit.ly/4apiv98>



Class Discussion: Ostinato

1. What is an Ostinato: **a repeated short musical motif or rhythm. The cello is playing an ostinato.**
2. Can you walk to the melody/rhythm? How are you moving to this melody/rhythm?
3. How is the cello playing the 'ostinato'? Is it with the bow or plucking with their fingers.
4. There is a special word for plucking the strings with the fingers on a cello or violin. **It is 'pizzicato'**

Bardju
(Footprints)
Composed by Brenda Gifford

The musical score is for the piece 'Bardju (Footprints)' by Brenda Gifford. It features four staves: Alto Flute, Bass Clarinet in Bb, Vibraphone, and Violoncello. The Alto Flute, Bass Clarinet, and Vibraphone staves are marked with a '4' time signature and contain rests. The Violoncello staff is marked with a '4' time signature and contains a repeated rhythmic pattern. A blue box highlights the first measure of the Violoncello staff, which is marked 'pizz.' (pizzicato) and 'mf' (mezzo-forte). A blue arrow points from the word 'Ostinato' to the first measure of the Violoncello staff.

Ostinato

5. The ostinato or 'footprints' can tell a story. Talk about the story of where the students' have travelled. What have they done today? Where have their feet taken them?

What speed did they travel with their feet?

Were their footsteps moving with an even step or a little uneven?

Are the footsteps/footprints in the 'Bardju' moving evenly or a little unsteady?

Lesson Map 8: *Zoom Meeting* by James Henry

<https://on.soundcloud.com/KXXP8>

<https://open.spotify.com/track/1FcysAi51wCVoJScIEGHtv?si=88dfcff41f9a47e0> or

<https://bit.ly/4asHyZ4>

Class Discussion- Call and Response

The opening bars to the piece are below so the educator can see the energy in the music through the active interplay of the instrumental parts. Note that the vibraphone starts with the melody.

Instrumental effects: tremolos, flutter tongue, slap tongue, accents, dynamics, pizzicato in strings

Slap Tongue- demonstration - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UIWIQnjlf8&t=78s> or <https://bit.ly/49tWvZi>

Zoom Meeting

Composed by James Henry

The musical score for 'Zoom Meeting' is written for four instruments: Flute, Bass Clarinet in Bb, Vibraphone, and Violoncello. The score is in 4/4 time with a tempo marking of quarter note = 70. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The Flute part begins with a forte (f) dynamic and includes a 'tr' (tremolo) marking. The Bass Clarinet part also begins with a forte (f) dynamic and includes a 'slap tongue' marking. The Vibraphone part begins with a forte (f) dynamic and plays the main melody. The Violoncello part begins with a forte (f) dynamic and includes a 'pizz.' (pizzicato) marking. The score is marked with a large 'A' in a box at the beginning of each staff.

Play the work for the students.

Ask the students to listen carefully to the work and identify how many instruments and ask if they can identify what they are.

The instruments: flute, bass clarinet in B flat, vibraphone and cello.

Talk to the students about what is a 'Zoom Meeting' and ask them to describe what may happen in a 'zoom meeting'.

For example, there are often delays when people communicate, also the sound can sometimes buzz.

Example 1: Bars 5-8, the buzz is represented in the tremolo- rapid movement on one note. Time: 00:11"- 00:12"

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Example 2: Sometimes it is like four people talking- bars 53-56. Notice the motifs flow into another indicated by the arrows. Time: 1'27"-1'34".


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Activity 1: Call and response- Rhythm- all year levels

*Don't Clap this One Back*¹⁹



Students to sit in a circle.

Teacher or a lead student is to clap this rhythm 'don't clap this one back': 

The other students respond in turns to the rhythm but each time creating their own.

The teacher can scaffold the rhythm syllables used depending on the abilities of the students.

Activity 2: Call and response-Pitch- all year levels

This could be done in solfa

Sing through the pentatonic scale as a reminder: Do- re – mi - so la

Do- re – mi

Students could sing the opposite: mi-re-do

Or Do- re – mi - students sing – so la so

This could occur in any combination and you can use 'C' as doh

This could also be a game between two students to see who is unable to respond. They must respond differently each time.

¹⁹ R. Leach, *Key Stage 2 BrightSparks Concert Teachers' Pack*, May 2023. London Philharmonic Orchestra.
<https://lpo.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/Key-Stage-2-BrightSparks-May-2023-The-Firebird-Teachers-Resources-FINAL.pdf>. Accessed 1/04/24.