

**SOMETIMES  
HOME CAN  
GROW STRANGER  
THAN SPACE**

A suite of works by Peter Knight,  
Tilman Robinson and Andrea Keller

**AAO**

AUSTRALIAN ART ORCHESTRA

## Program

---

### **SHARP FOLDS**

by Peter Knight

### **I WAS ONLY A CHILD**

by Tilman Robinson

### **BENT HEART**

by Andrea Keller

All three works have been commissioned by the Australian Art Orchestra for this program.

Total duration: 75 minutes, no interval

## Personnel

---

<b>Georgie Darvidis</b>	Voice
<b>Lizzy Welsh</b>	Violin
<b>Peter Knight</b>	Trumpet/Electronics
<b>Aviva Endean</b>	Clarinets
<b>James Macauley</b>	Trombone
<b>Andrea Keller</b>	Piano
<b>Tilman Robinson</b>	Electronics
<b>Jacques Emery</b>	Bass
<b>Simon Barker</b>	Drums
<b>Jem Savage</b>	Live Sound/Audio Design
<b>Jerry Remkes</b>	Executive Producer

## World Premiere Season

---

- 2 November 2018 **Wangaratta Festival for Jazz & Blues (Victoria, Australia)**  
18 November 2018 **EFG London Jazz Festival (United Kingdom)**

**Sometimes Home Can Grow Stranger Than Space** is a suite of three works commissioned by the Australian Art Orchestra marking the centenary of Armistice Day 2018 in response to accounts recorded in the publication *World War One: A History in 100 Stories* by Bruce Scates, Rebecca Wheatley, and Laura James.

The stories of war that are most often highlighted are those that happen on the battlefield. **Sometimes Home Can Grow Stranger Than Space** focusses on the aftermath of war. On the stories of those who returned to Australia - the gassed, the crippled, the insane, all those irreparably damaged who tried to pick up their 'normal' lives after the war. These stories are much longer than the stories of the war itself and involve whole communities affected in profound ways by the echoes of violence from the battlefields of Gallipoli, the Somme, Passchendaele, and Verdun.

**Sometimes Home Can Grow Stranger Than Space** responds to the intimate accounts of lives remembered in fine grain detail away from the thrust of battle, and in this concert program are given musical expression in original compositions by three extraordinary Australian composers: Andrea Keller, Peter Knight, and Tilman Robinson.

**Sometimes Home Can Grow Stranger Than Space** was conceived from an original idea by Professor Paul Grabowsky AO, founding artistic director of the Australian Art Orchestra.

# SHARP FOLDS

Words and music composed by Peter Knight (2018)

Sharp Folds imagines a parent's grief. Garry Roberts and his wife Berta never recovered from the loss of their son, Frank, who was killed in action in September 1918. I was struck by the image of Garry sleeping in his son's bed for months after receiving that terrible news in the hope he might 'feel his son's presence again'. This all-consuming grief did not subside. Garry spent the rest of his life 'making memory' through working each day on scrap books and collections devoted to his son's life. He and Berta travelled to France to visit his grave near Pèronne and even raised a statue in his honour on the spot where Frank died at Mont St Quentin. Nothing assuaged their despair though, and 100 Stories records Garry dying in 1933 still mourning the loss of his son.

Bruce Scates mentions the 'tide of grief' that was set in motion by the Great War that washed through communities for decades after the war. As a parent of a teenage boy I find myself imagining mums and dads like Garry and Berta saying goodbye to their young boys. I imagine them trying to be brave at the moment of parting, and my mind goes to what it must have been like to wait, then to hear that their precious child would never return. These are not the stories of heroism in the face of impossible odds, mateship, and noble causes that drive the nation building myths that perpetuate war. These stories are the reality of war.

1. Sharp Folds Teeth Right Held Tight Sleep  
Bright Skin Mouth Taut Gold Set Soft Eyes  
Packed Nice Hair Straight Pale Hands Clean  
Sand Clouds Neat Lines Steel Feet Blue Smile Breath Warm Proud Pressed  
Still Air Dust Light Neat Bed Cut Boots Cool Sun Blood Chest Brave Lost Eyes
2. Warm Blade Tight Lines Brute Love Shoes Hard Ink Dream Moon Flesh Mud Frost  
Leaves Hair Clean  
Bone Touch Cold Kissed  
Proud Pressed Cold Kissed
3. Soft Blast Bright Night Hand Dirt Laced Steel Crisp Shirt Flame Mist Hair Touched  
Smile Straight Eyes Cold
4. Clean Gaze Stars Torn Dark Eyes Wind Salt Soap Dust Warm Hands Fly Child...
5. Blood Mist Lead Hands Wide Eyes Bone Dance His Smile Blue Sky Grey Street White  
Card Lead Hands

Peter Knight October 2018

# I WAS ONLY A CHILD

Composed by Tilman Robinson (2018)

I was Only a Child... remembers those that entered the war (and often exited this mortal plane) as children; lying on their enlistment form to say they were 18 when in fact they were younger. Recruiters largely turned a blind eye and welcomed them into the ranks. The piece contains a sample of an unknown school student conducting an interview with an unknown WWI veteran.

"It was the natural thing for anybody" claims the veteran interviewed in this piece. But why did Australian boys feel compelled to fight and die for the ideals of their elders; older men from thousands of miles away who threw them uncaringly into the fray? Were they proving their worth as men?

The interview repeats and phrases lose their meaning, becoming instead rhythmic material. Words become melodies, and the meaning of the words is lost as clarity dissolves. War becomes the subject of nostalgia as humans struggle to make sense of destruction. The words' meanings are lost, and the world reforms its powder kegs - first in the 1930s and repeating over & over until the present day. Calamity verges on repeating. We have learned nothing from our broken children.

In memory of Maud Butler (17), Bernard Haines (14), Rowley Lording (16), Samuel Mellor (17), Rufus Rigney (16) and George Seager (17), whose childhoods were destroyed, and whose lives are described in World War One: A History in 100 Stories.

Tilman Robinson October 2018

# BENT HEART

Composed by Andrea Keller (2018)

Bent Heart reflects four stories of women whose lives were inexorably impacted by World War I, either through their service, or the service of those they loved.

## I – LONELY VIGIL

For Olive Pink - a woman ahead of her time, she moved to Alice Springs and was an advocate for the environment and the rights of Aboriginal people. Olive lost her love in the Great War and never re-partnered. Every ANZAC Day long before the service commenced, she placed a bunch of native flowers at the foot of the town's war memorial. She lived to be 91.

Text/Lyric: "Bearing grief alone, needing no words, nursed in reverent silence."

## II – TREASURED ANGELS

For Mary Chomley - who established the Red Cross POW department. She referred to the POW's as her "big family of boys", and packed and delivered parcels and letters to them, creating a lifeline to Australia. The soldiers claimed she kept them alive, "we will treasure you forever in our memories".

Credit for the POW department was given to a man.

Text/Lyric: "Angels. Treasured Angels. In our memories for ever."

## III – BROKEN DOLL

For Margaret Broadhurst & Rachel Pratt – two vastly different stories connected, however, through shared experiences of profound loss, fear and loneliness.

Margaret Broadhurst was abandoned by her fiancé who fell in love with a British nurse during his time wounded in the war. In her words, he had left her "a broken doll." At that time, female fulfilment was only seen as being possible through becoming wives and mothers. The war had created a surplus of women due to a lost generation of men; the women that never married because of the war were described as 'imaginary widows'. Margaret sued her ex-fiancé upon his return, and won.

Rachel Pratt was a nurse. "She wrote hundreds of letters home to Britain, New Zealand and Australia, assuring grieving mothers that the sons they loved had not died alone, had not died in pain, had died bravely." Severely wounded herself in a bombing attack, she continued to nurse her patients until she collapsed. She was awarded the Military Medal 'for bravery under fire' (the first Australian woman to receive the Military Medal, and one of the few nurses to be decorated), but enjoyed little of the limelight. She never recovered from her injuries and upon her return developed what the medical authorities called 'war neurosis'. Admitted to hospital for the mentally ill in 1938, she died there in 1954, never having returned to civilian life. Every ANZAC day she is celebrated as a hero, but only half her story is told.

Text/Lyric: "Depressed and melancholic... Worried the whole of her waking hours... Unable to face anything... Lost all self-confidence... Has no companionship... No practical purpose in life... suicidal... Prospects of ultimate recovery must now be regarded as improbable". (Quotes from doctors' assessments of Rachel Pratt).

## IV – CRY HEART BUT NEVER BREAK

Epilogue - a prayer for all.

Text: "Cry heart, but never break. Let your tears of grief and sadness help begin new life."

Text taken from Cry, Heart, But Never Break by Glenn Ringtved, illus. by Charlotte Pardi, and translated by Robert Moulthrop. Used with permission from Enchanted Lion Books.

Andrea Keller October 2018

## Peter Knight

---

Australian trumpeter/composer/sound artist, Peter Knight, is a multidisciplinary musician who has gained wide acclaim for his distinctive approach, which integrates jazz, experimental, and world music traditions. Peter's work as both performer and composer is regularly featured in a range of ensemble settings, he also composes for theatre, and creates sound installations.

Perpetually curious, Peter's practice defies categorisation; indeed he works in the spaces between categories, between genres, and between cultures: "Hard to categorise... hauntingly memorable" *The Wire* (UK). "Falling into an utterly genre-less wormhole" *Cyclic Defrost*. "Honest, inventive and original" *Hour Magazine* Montreal. "A serious work of stringent originality" *BBC Jazz on 3*. "If trumpet is an element then Knight is an alchemist" *New York City Jazz Record*.

Peter is the recipient of numerous awards including recently the Albert H. Maggs Composition Award, the Age/Music Victoria award for Jazz Album of the Year, and a Green Room Theatre Award (with Tamara Saulwick). In 2013 he was awarded a prestigious Australia Council Music Fellowship. He is the recipient of two Bell Jazz Awards, along with nominations for the Australian Music Prize (AMP, for *Daughter's Fever*), APRA/AMC Art Music Awards, Green Room Theatre and Helpmann Awards (sound design), and AIR Independent Recording. He holds a doctorate from Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University and was awarded Alumnus of the Year in 2013.

## Tilman Robinson

---

Tilman Robinson is an Australian composer, producer and sound designer, creating electro-acoustic music across a range of genres including classical minimalism, improvised, experimental, electronic and ambient. Academy trained in the fields of both classical and jazz composition, Tilman's diverse output focuses on the psychological impact of sound.

Tilman has received major work commissions from broad sources including Arts Centre Melbourne, PBSFM, Australian Art Orchestra, Perth International Arts Festival, and APRA; accolades including nominations for APRA/AMC Work of the Year, two Australian Bell Awards, a Music Victoria Genre Award and was a finalist in the 2016 Melbourne Prize for Music Development Category.

## Andrea Keller

---

Andrea Keller is one of Australia's most celebrated composers and pianists and is lauded for originality and expressivity. She has received three ARIA Awards, five Australian Jazz 'Bell' Awards, two Art Music Awards, an APRA Professional Development Award, and fellowships from the MCA/Freedman Foundation and the Australia Council.

With a growing body of work traversing styles, Keller has been invited to compose and arrange music for *The Sydney Women's Jazz Collective* (2016), *The Letter String Quartet* (2016), *The Song Company* (2015), *Marshall McGuire (harp)* (2015), *Zephyr (string) Quartet* (2015 & 2014), *Black Arm Band* (2012-current), *Genevieve Lacey & James Crabb Duo* (2014), 'Poetica' *ABC Radio National* (2013), *Genevieve Lacey (recorder)* (2013), *Four Winds Festival* (2010), *ANU Canberra* (2010), *Claire Edwardes (percussionist)* (2010), *Melbourne Women's International Jazz Festival* (2010, 2003, 2000), *Seraphim Trio* (2009), *Ten Part Invention* (2009), *Royal Children's Hospital* (2008), *Mike Nock* (2002), *Australian Art Orchestra* (2002).

## The Australian Art Orchestra

Music made of many influences, exploring the meeting points between cultures and disciplines

With an emphasis on improvisation, the Australian Art Orchestra (AAO) explores the meeting points between disciplines and cultures, and imagines new musical forms to reflect the energy and diversity of contemporary Australia.

Founded by Paul Grabowsky in 1994 the AAO is one of Australia's leading contemporary ensembles. Now led by prolific composer, trumpeter, sound artist, Peter Knight, its work constantly seeks to stretch genres and break down the barriers separating disciplines, forms and cultures. It explores the interstices between the avant-garde and the traditional, between art and popular music, between electronic and acoustic approaches, and creates music that traverse the continuum between improvised and notated forms.

The AAO features some of Australia's most celebrated improvising musicians and collaborates with artists from around the world, including recently Bae Il Dong (Korea), Nicole Lizée (Canada), Keiichiro Shibuya (Japan) and Alvin Lucier (USA). The 10-piece group tours regularly both locally and internationally and has won numerous awards for its diverse range of collaborations.

The Australian Art Orchestra has won numerous awards and much praise for the work creates including three Australian Jazz Bell awards, two AMC/APRA Art Music Awards for 'Excellence by an Organisation' and 'Performance of the Year', a Helpmann Award, a Sidney Myer Performing Arts Awards, the H C Coombs Creative Arts Fellowship, and a Classical Music award for 'Outstanding Contribution to Australian Music in a Regional Area'.

**"Ingenuity, virtuosity and awe...Thrilling and daunting in equal measure confirmed that the AAO's boldness of vision remains intact as it heads into its third decade"** The Age

### PRESENTERS

Wangaratta  
**festival**  
of jazz & blues



### SUPPORTERS

The development and presentation of **Sometimes Home Can Grow Stranger Than Space** was supported by:



CREATIVE VICTORIA



### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Australian Art Orchestra acknowledges the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation as the first owners of the country on which this work had been developed, and recognise that sovereignty was never ceded. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

