

VOYAGE of MUSICAL DISCOVERY

EDUCATION KIT

RACHAEL BEESLEY & NICOLE VAN BRUGGEN CO-ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

NUMBER	01	TOPIC	DESIGN & INNOVATION
DATE	MARCH 2023		VIC

AUSTRALIAN
ROMANTIC
CLASSICAL &
ORCHESTRA

RICHARD GILL AO | FOUNDING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

LIVE

VOYAGE



IMAGE CREDIT Robert Catto

**Australian Romantic & Classical
Orchestra**

Nicole van Bruggen | Basses Clarinet
Rachael Beesley | Violin
Julia Russoniello | Violin
Simon Oswell | Viola
Daniel Yeadon | Cello

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART
Clarinet Quintet in A major, K.581

Sally Whitwell | Composer, Piano
Anna Fraser | Soprano
Katy B Plummer | Video Installation Artist

SALLY WHITWELL
WE ARE ALL ASTONISHINGLY WISE



IMAGE CREDIT Maja Baska

QLD

Monday 6 March, 11.30am

**St Peters Lutheran College,
Indooroopilly**

VIC

Thursday 9 March, 6.30pm

**David Li Sound Gallery,
Monash University**

NSW

Monday 13 March, 6.30pm

City Recital Hall, Sydney

Visit www.arco.org.au/voyage
for booking information

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INTRODUCTION

The *Voyage of Musical Discovery* presents musical works of different times, places and styles along with spoken explanations. The first half features orchestral and chamber music from the Classical and Romantic eras performed in a historically-informed style. The second takes recently-written Australian works performed by a guest ensemble, often including the composers themselves.

This **Education Kit** works as a stand-alone learning resource, but full educational benefit is achieved by working through the activities in conjunction with attending a live *Voyage* presentation.

TEACHERS

DESIGN & INNOVATION

How to integrate this material into the classroom

To gain an understanding of different aspects of *Design & Innovation* in music, this Education Kit consists of:

TASKS

Listening to, identifying and discussing specific features and compositional techniques of the following works:

WE ARE ALL ASTONISHINGLY WISE

Sally Whitwell

Clarinet Quintet in A Major, K.581

Mozart

ACTIVITIES

Testing some of the ideas through creative composition exercises

There is adequate material here for **two** or **three timetabled classes** – and more if you decide to expand the composition activities. For example, the resulting works could be built into wider performance events or recordings.

A specific composer, work and/or section is introduced and described, then the tasks and activities appear on the subsequent **left-hand / even-numbered pages**. It may be helpful to print or save these individually to share with the students.

The opposite **right-hand / odd-numbered pages** are guides for you – including suggested responses and tips for assisting with the practical activities.

CURRICULUM LINKS

Orange boxes like these contain extra related information and/or links

- clarification of terms
- useful when extending the material across multiple sessions
- offers possibilities for overlap with wider areas of learning

VIC

The activities in this Education Kit and in the live Voyage presentation address concepts of music through learning experiences in performance, composition, musicology and aural training within the context of a range of styles, periods and genres. To do this, core elements of composition, performance and musicology are introduced and discussed, and connections between current Australian music and Classical and Romantic repertoire are identified.

The kit materials are suitable for all secondary year levels, and specifically address the following areas of the Victorian secondary school music curriculum.

VCE

Unit 1 Organisation in Music

Unit 2 Effect in Music

Unit 3 Music Composition / Music Contemporary Performance

Levels 9–10

Explore and Express Ideas

Improvise and arrange music, using aural awareness and technical skills to manipulate the elements of music to explore options for interpretation and developing music ideas (**VCAMUE040**)

Manipulate combinations of the elements of music in a range of styles, using technology and notation to communicate music ideas and intentions (**VCAMUE041**)

Music Practices

Create, practise and rehearse music to interpret a variety of performance repertoire with increasing technical and expressive skill and awareness of stylistic conventions (**VCAMUM042**)

Plan, develop, and notate compositions with an understanding of style and convention (**VCAMUM043**)

Levels 7 and 8

Explore and Express Ideas

Experiment with elements of music, in isolation and in combination, using listening skills, voice, instruments and technologies to find ways to create and manipulate effects (**VCAMUE033**)

Develop music ideas through improvisation, composition and performance, combining and manipulating the elements of music (**VCAMUE034**)

Music Practices

Create, practise and rehearse music to develop listening, compositional and technical and expressive performance skills (**VCAMUM035**)

Structure compositions by combining and manipulating the elements of music and using notation (**VCAMUM036**)



SALLY WHITWELL

Sydney-based Sally Whitwell is a freelance pianist, performer, conductor, composer and educator.

Sally Whitwell performed the world premiere of the Philip Glass Complete Piano Etudes at the Perth International Arts Festival and Ten Tiny Dancers – an all-singing-all-playing-all-dancing cabaret piano recital for the Famous Spiegeltent season at Arts Centre Melbourne. In 2014 she travelled to Los Angeles and New York City to perform in-person with Philip Glass, in addition to performances for the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney as part of a recent exhibition of portraits by American artist Chuck Close.

As a solo recording artist, Sally has four albums to her name. Her debut album *Mad Rush: solo piano music of Philip Glass* won her the 2011 ARIA for Best Classical Album. *The Good, the Bad and the Awkward* is a unique compilation of film music where she plays not only piano but toy piano, harpsichord, recorder and melodica. *All Imperfect Things; solo piano music of Michael Nyman* won the 2013 ARIA Award for Best Classical Album as well as Best Engineer for ABC Classics' very own Tonmeister Virginia Read, the first time that a woman has won this award. Her most recent release *I was flying* is a collection of her own compositions in art song, choral and chamber music genres, which enjoyed five weeks in the top ten of the ARIA Core Classical Charts, and was nominated for the 2015 ARIA Award for Best Classical Album.

She is currently Music Director of Sydney based community chamber choir Coro Innominata. Her choral and vocal ensemble compositions have been performed by Juice vocal ensemble, Gondwana Choirs, VOX (Sydney Philharmonia Choirs' youth ensemble), Moorambilla Voices, Leichhardt Espresso Chorus, Luminescence, Hunter Singers and the Woden Valley Youth Choir. Further composition projects include commissions for the Acacia Quartet, Ensemble Offspring and Gondwana Voices.

WE ARE ALL ASTONISHINGLY WISE

This work is a collection of short songs for voice and piano. They follow the art song tradition, in that both voice and piano have equally important roles to play.

The first song was originally part of another collection entitled *Pictures at an ExHERbition* – a feminist response to Mussorgsky's 1874 work for solo piano *Pictures at an Exhibition* – and in the meantime it has expanded to become a whole song cycle of its own.

The songs are, in the composer's words:

Responses to works by a host of my favourite Australian women artists over the last century or so until now: Grace Cossington-Smith, Thea Proctor, Margaret Preston, Ethel Spowers... and so many more. I reached a point where I realised that all the artists I'd written about were long dead, so I decided I needed to investigate some contemporary artists. One of the artists I chose is Katy B Plummer.

Katy B Plummer is a video artist who created a [virtual set of oracle cards](#). Sally's song texts grew outwards from the cards, making the creative process a collaborative as well as multidisciplinary one.

WE ARE ALL ASTONISHINGLY WISE – Katy B Plummer

Music and additional text by Sally Whitwell

Briskly walking in sturdy shoes – 0.50

Ghosts in a Hallway – 1.15

Messages Transmitted Received – 0.55

Someone Else's Jacket – 0.55

A handful of diamonds tossed into the sky – 1.50

Ancient Women Knitting – 0.50

A picnic under a friendly tree – 1.00

From their homes they dream – 1.10

Putting on red lipstick – 1.10

The great calm evening – 1.10

A Gold Clasp – 0.55

A sustained note sweetly held – 1.20

Flies washing in milk – 1.20

Things hidden in your pocket – 1.55

A Coin Wrapped in a Handkerchief – 0.40

Pigeons Choose Their Queen – 1.10



To see and hear some of Sally's work –
see [this list of YouTube clips](#)

SONGS

TASK

What is a song?

What are some different types of songs – historical or in various styles?

Does a song need to tell a story?

Make a quick list of three songs you listened to recently – title, artist and year it was recorded or released if you know it.

A SONG

- generally a piece written for and performed by a **singer**
- involves a **text** or words of some sort
- often there is a role for one or more **instruments**

DIFFERENT TYPES

Lied or **Lieder** (German singular and plural – pronounced *leed*)

art song (from the classical-music tradition with an equally important piano part e.g., Schubert)

Chanson (French)

standard (as in jazz standard – frequently a show tune or popular song)

pop song

hymn (associated with prayer)

folk song

aria, recitative (generally associated with opera)

STORY?

No, a song may also express a mood or situation that goes beyond the direct meaning of the text.

In this way, a song can resemble a poem. Attention is placed on how the words feel – their rhythm, rhyme, repetition and associations – rather than only on what they mean.

SUGGESTIONS (links go to YouTube)

[*Running Up That Hill*](#)

Kate Bush, 1985

[*Lady Marmalade*](#)

Patti LaBelle, 1975

[*Nowhere Man*](#)

The Beatles, 1965

Messages transmitted received

text by
Sally Whitwell
after Katy B Plummer

music by
Sally Whitwell
2 May 2022

$\text{♩} = 132$

p un poco meccanico

Mes-sa ges_ trans - mit-ted, re- ceived

p

7

trans - mit-ted re-ceived mes-sa-ges_

mf 3

fp

12

mf 3

p piu legato

mes-sa-ges_ Mes sa-ges trans - mit - ted_

sfz *p subito*

Red.

16

trans-mit-ted re - ceived Once u-pon a time we could

The musical score is written for voice and piano. It features a complex rhythmic structure with frequent changes in time signature, including 5/8, 2/4, 6/8, 3/4, and 4/4. The piece is in a minor key, indicated by the key signature of two flats. The vocal line is characterized by slurs and dynamic markings such as *p*, *mf*, *fp*, and *sfz*. The piano accompaniment consists of rhythmic patterns in the left hand and chordal textures in the right hand. The score is divided into four systems, with measure numbers 7, 12, and 16 marking the beginning of new sections. The lyrics are interspersed with the musical notation, often with a line underneath to indicate phrasing.

20

ne-ver, ne-ver con - ceive of in - vi - si - ble let - ters_

24

car - ried_ in air And stored in a cloud

29

when no mists were there

35

mp

COMBINATIONS

Have a look at the music on the previous two pages.

What mood is established by the short, zigzagging rhythmic units at the beginning?

How and where does the texture – piano and/or solo voice – change throughout the song? What happens?

What about the harmony? Can you identify any recurring chords or distinctive and repeating melodic motifs in the vocal part?

Choose one of your songs from above, and try to work out what it is about the interaction between vocal and instrumental lines that makes it special.

Answering some of the following questions may help:

What is innovative in the overall design?

Does the mood shift?

Does the tempo/dynamic stay the same throughout?

What instruments are involved?

How do the instruments support or interact with the voice? Or vice versa?

Identify where the different sections begin and end – e.g., intro, chorus, verse, solo, outro etc.

Which parts are repeated?

What are the surprises or unexpected events in the music?

Where do these occur and what effect do they create?

One of the main methods for a composer or songwriter to create a mood or set a scene in a song is in the way that the voice and instrument/s **interact**. Innovation in a song's design often involves creating unusual or new combinations between the different lines of instrument/s and voice/s. And like a new interpretation of a classic recipe, the ingredients themselves do not need to be exotic or expensive for the resulting combinations to be groundbreaking and surprising.

We can see this in action by looking at existing songs. You might already get an idea of the sound of this song by looking at the score, otherwise play some or all of the piano part and/or vocal phrases.

MOOD

The oracle card that gave the song its title suggested to Sally the early forms of digital communication – the blips and beeps of 8-bit technology from the 1980s. It's constructed to sound unpredictable – groupings of twos and threes, mixed meter, along with short and dry articulations (*staccato* and *un poco meccanico*).

TEXTURE

From **Bar 14**, the text considers how inconceivable the idea of digital communication – *invisible letters* – would have been for people of an earlier generation. Some rhythmic momentum remains, but the chords are flattened out and the added pedalling blurs the harmonies. Then at **Bar 26** it changes again – a single floating chord appears to suggest the digital cloud.

HARMONY

From **Bars 4–9** the melody oscillates around a **G**, making the arrival to a **C** in **Bars 10 and 12** feel significant (where it is also marked at a louder dynamic). Then from **Bar 14**, the melody draws our ears to the shift between **A-flat** and **A-natural** – creating a sort of major-minor dialogue while the chords go through a four-bar cycle of **Fmin⁷ – Dmin⁷ – Fmin⁷ – Amin** that repeats twice. Because the **F** is prominent in the first three chords, the **Amin** could be heard as an **Fmaj⁷** (even without an **F**).

The *cloud* chord at **Bar 26** is **Cmin** and the melody adds an **F** and **D** to these tones. The final descent to a low **C** works as a reflection to the higher **C** earlier. The final bar is a brilliant culmination of everything – ripping up from **Cmin** to **Amin**.



Watch [Rick Beato's 8-minute analysis](#) of *Running Up That Hill*

Rick neglects to mention the importance of the Fairlight, calling it simply the synth. Kate Bush was one of the first adopters of the Fairlight and the whole instrumental track was made with it. The machine was the world's first digital music sampler and was invented and built in Australia in the 1980s. [The story is fascinating](#) (19-minute docu on YouTube)

ACTIVITY

SONG SKETCH

1. Select a title/subject from [Katy B Plummer's digital oracle](#)

2. Write a short text that expands from the oracle

3. Set the text to music

Look for clues in the construction of the words – built-in rhythms, rhymes and hints of melodic shape. Mimic the meanings of words – called word painting – i.e., do with the pitch or rhythm what the words say..

Save any drafts or abandoned ideas – they might come in handy later.

Work quickly, and don't worry if it isn't perfect.

Writing a whole song will probably take longer than just a part of one class. Come back to this activity later and complete the sketch – but remember, the aim is not to create the next big hit or masterpiece but to try out the tools.

Text examples by Sally Whitwell:

A picnic under a friendly tree

A picnic under a friendly tree
Olives and crusty bread
Strawberries and pink lemonade
A cornucopia on a checked blanket
(Waterproof, of course)
Thank heavens that one of us is good at adulting

A handful of diamonds tossed into the sky

A handful of diamonds
Tossed into the sky
Reminding me that energy
Is not born and does not die
Kinetic to electric
I launched them up on high
From whence you gaze upon me
Your single shining eye

The great calm evening

The great calm evening
Soothes the human hive, but still
The neon's blinking

- the text doesn't need to be completely logical
- imply rather than explain
- be topsy-turvy as in a dream or a children's picture
- poetic mixture of everyday objects in unusual situations
- start with a random word and add others in quick succession

Word painting examples by Sally Whitwell:



Bouncy introductory personality



Rhythm becomes broader; literally stretched



Intervals of fourths and fifths – jutting out like elbows



Rests as holes in the music, then repeated notes like insistent poking fingers

The songs also do not need to be long – some from **WE ARE ALL ASTONISHINGLY WISE** are under one minute. The recording medium originally determined song length – with early 78rpm vinyl records having maximum 3' capacity, then 45rpm singles less than 5'.

MOZART

With our senses attuned to the multitude of media and styles of the 21st century, Mozart's sound may come across as standard classical music. However, up close we can observe that he was one of the great trailblazers and experimenters. He changed, adapted and developed his style from work to work and year to year and led the way in design and innovation in music. And even though society has changed significantly since the late 1700s, his influence and brilliance are still relevant today.

How?

The Clarinet Quintet provides many clues.

Mozart wrote the Clarinet Quintet for his close friend Anton Stadler. The two often got mixed up in dodgy financial dealings, yet they obviously worked well as musical collaborators.

Together with instrument maker Theodor Lotz they developed a new instrument – the basset clarinet, which the quintet as well as clarinet concerto were written for. The basset clarinet's extra keys enabled additional lower notes and the shape added resonance to the sound.

Audiences in the day were fascinated by this different looking and sounding instrument.

Unfortunately, Stadler lost both the instrument and the scores for the concerto and quintet while travelling, or so he said! Mozart's wife, Constanze, was convinced that he had traded or sold them them to pay off gambling debts. In any case, neither the clarinet nor Mozart's scores survived. It wasn't until the mid-20th century that researchers began to piece together the original scores, and this led to building a version of the original instrument that could play the extra low notes and with a timbre closer to what Mozart would have had in mind. As recently as 1992, a musicologist spotted the above drawing on an historical concert flyer and today's instrument closely resembles that.



Nicole van Bruggen with basset clarinet

Clarinet Quintet

1. Allegro

Right from the beginning there is no doubt that this is a chamber work – all five instruments have important roles. It even occasionally seems like the clarinet needs to be encouraged by the other instruments to find its voice and sing. Then gradually and cheekily it steps into the spotlight for just a moment – before nipping back into the ensemble texture. See if you can identify some of these moments. There are no right or wrong answers to this question – while some of the spots are certainly written in, others will depend on spontaneous decisions by the performers, as well as what a listener notices on a particular day.

[listen to Movt. 1](#)

2. Larghetto

This movement is the epicentre of the whole work, and guess what: it's a song! But not just any song. Mozart has managed to create music that moves from sadness and longing to reassurance and daydreams – all in a gentle dialogue of being listened to and taken seriously. Rather than missing words, the dialogue is instead open to many interpretations and scenarios.

This is what music does really well, and in the words of Richard Gill AO:

*Music does not narrate. Music does not tell stories.
Music evokes, music suggests, music implies.*

Our imagination based on our personal experiences fills in the gaps. These don't need to be translated into official labels of expression or words – it can all stay flexible. This is also the main reason that this music from hundreds of years ago is still relevant and fresh for many people around the world.

[listen to Movt. 2](#)

3. Menuetto – Trio I – Trio II

The menuetto and trios move the quintet from song to dance. Listeners at the time would have recognised qualities of *Ländler* – a style of dance popular in southern Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Slovenia. But Mozart is not just going rustic and folksy for light entertainment. The string quartet as an entity comes across more prominently in this movement as the clarinet ducks and weaves around a virtual doorway – it's quite possible Mozart is implying a subtle criticism of the us-and-them mentality of Vienna's aristocracy.

[listen to Movt. 3](#)

4. Allegretto con Variazioni

For the final movement Mozart ditches the customary Rondo in favour of Theme and Variations. The effect is brilliant – it sounds like a matchbox opera with a whole cast of odd characters quickly changing costumes, wigs and accents before rushing back on stage. The caricatures spring to life more and more with repeated hearings, and new details of their imagined discussions come in and out of focus. This is Mozart at his best, and he reminds us even from the grave – Don't. Take. It. All. Too. Seriously.

[listen to Movt. 4](#)

FACTS & FIGURES

Composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

From Austria

Born 1756 in Salzburg

Died 1791 in Vienna (age 35)

Instrumentation basset clarinet, 2 violins, viola, cello

Duration approx. 33 minutes

Key A major

KV (Köchel catalogue number) 581

Composed 1789

Published 1802

Subtitle Stadler Quintet

Dedicated to Anton Stadler

TASK
CLARINET

This task is to go down a clarinet rabbit hole. Start with Google or Wikipedia, with the aim of finding an exciting, unusual, or significant piece written for and performed on the clarinet. We are not looking for videos explaining how the instrument works, but audio or video tracks of works where it is featured. There are many, and for this we have Mozart to thank for championing this versatile instrument!

If there is a clarinetist in the room – speak to them.

Once you have found your work – introduce it to the class by playing it or a section of it for everyone and briefly explain why you chose it, and why you think we should all hear it. Move beyond descriptions such as *oh, I like it* or *it's funny* and make at least one observation about the sounds, the structure, or the theatrics etc. In other words, in your opinion:

How is it designed and what is innovative?

TEACHERS

SUGGESTED CLIPS TO SHARE WITH STUDENTS

Björk *Atopos* (2022)

Björk is an undisputed expert at finding unusual combinations of sounds and putting the right people together to make them. The writing as well as staging, costumes, and filming of this piece are all incredible.

[Watch the clip](#)

GRP Big Band *Sing Sing Sing* (1993)

With the rise of bebop in the 1950s, the clarinet got a bit left behind as it was seen more as a relic from Dixieland and the Swing era. Here, a modern big band pays tribute to the clarinet's vintage jazz persona in a shiny arrangement of a Louis Prima song from 1936 made famous by Benny Goodman.

[Watch the clip](#)

The technical developments of the instrument in the years since Mozart are examples of advancements in music technology. For this reason, referring to digital tools and electronic instruments as music technology is incorrect and misleading.

Stockhausen *In Freundschaft* (1977)

Central to much of Karlheinz Stockhausen's music was the idea of sounds moving physically through a space. The choreography in this work (*In Friendship*) is an integral part of the composition – where is a sound going, and where did it come from? Yasmina Spiegelberg shows us...

[Watch the clip](#)

ACTIVITY

Take the song sketch from above and think now about adding an additional layer.

The challenge here is to think less in terms of accompaniment and more in terms of adding a new colour to the mix.

It might help to see the role as a sound effect or sound design – something percussive or played on an object rather than an instrument. Design – like a DIY hack – is often brilliant and innovative not because it is an entirely new invention, but due to the ingenious repurposing of an existing everyday thing.

Write for someone you know, and if you do choose a conventional instrument, find some way of turning it upside down sound-wise – make a low instrument high, a melody instrument percussive, or a loud instrument soft. Think about disguising the sound, so that if someone were listening without watching the musicians, they might not know exactly what it is.

Also, your score can be in any form you wish – the main thing is that the ideas are somehow stored for later. It can be written instructions above the words, diagrams with arrows, or even oracle-style cards containing smaller parts of a larger work that can be assembled later. Or make a lead sheet like a jazz standard – some scaffolding that will be built on and brought to life by the players.

Finally, consider the words of Katy B Plummer:

When order crumbles, everything can be an oracle...

REMINDERS

- Sally Whitwell's songs are in the art song tradition, meaning that they are for voice and piano not voice *accompanied* by piano. This means that both parts are equally important – they interact and make each other complete.
- Mozart's work is a chamber work – the clarinet is featured prominently but the other instruments also have prominent soloistic roles.

Sally's advice for getting the balance right – to communicate observations, emotions, and ideas with clarity, dense poetry requires there to be space musically, while very complex music requires little text.

Ask the students what their preferred method of working is in other subjects – do they methodically plan or jump in and trust their instincts?

As an experiment, encourage them to work with an approach opposite to what they would normally follow.

Being open to something new can be a path to innovative design!

Look at [Oblique Strategies](#) – a set of cards originally designed in 1975 by musician and artist Brian Eno and multimedia artist Peter Schmidt. Each card provides a short prompt or idea to help artists and musicians overcome blocks in the creative process.

Listen to Erena Terakubo playing *I'll Remember April* (written in 1941) These players know the music inside out by studying its history and development – they make it sound contemporary without being nostalgic.

[Watch the clip](#)

IDEAS for PERFORMANCE

Take Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* a step further and have the players move around the room as they perform. Or let the listeners walk around the music as they would in a gallery. Many groups around the world had to quickly come up with new ways to perform during COVID – such as smaller concerts or having the audience spread out. Some of these initiatives have proven so successful and popular, that now even with restrictions easing, they are continuing.

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CULTURAL NARRATIVES

JUNE 2023

MUSICAL IDENTITIES

AUGUST 2023

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