

THE  
NIGHT  
WITH...

SEASON

2026

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## *Ensemble Offspring*

Programme

**25th Apr - 8pm** | Doors 7:30pm

*Fruitmarket* [Warehouse]

45 Market St, Edinburgh EH1 1DF

**26th Apr - 7:30pm** | Doors 7pm

*The Stables*

Cromarty IV11 8XS

**27th Apr - 6:30pm** | Doors 6pm

*Anatomy Rooms* [Lecture Rooms]

Anatomy Rooms, Aberdeen, AB10 1AP

**28th Apr - 8pm** | Doors 7:30pm

*Civic House*

26 Civic St, Glasgow G4 9RH

Brenda Gifford - Mungala (Clouds)  
Seyoung Oh - Avian (w.p.)  
Felicity Wilcox - Call and (a) Response (w.p.)

**interval**

Alice Chance – Crimson Rosellas (w.p.)  
Caitlin Yeo – A Tawny Tale  
Robert Davidson – Bird Riffs - (w.p.)

**interval**

Matthew Whiteside – Beneath the Surface (2026) (w.p.)

## Mungala (Clouds) (2018)

Brenda Gifford

alto flute, percussion

6:00

Mungala is the word for clouds in composer Brenda Gifford's Yuin country, the South Coast of NSW. The music evokes the experience of watching the clouds build across the sea from a clifftop at Wreck Bay. The clouds dance across the sky bringing thunder and then the relief of gentle rain.

## Call and (a) Response (2022, arr. 2026)

Felicity Wilcox

**(Bird: Endangered Regent Honeyeater)**

flute, clarinet, vibraphone + backing track

8:00

Call, and (a) Response pays homage to the song of the critically endangered Regent Honeyeater (*Anthochaera Phrygia*), whose numbers have plummeted to an estimated three hundred individuals in a space of fifty years, bringing it to the verge of extinction. Land clearing, bushfires, habitat infiltration, and predators have affected its chances of survival. With not enough mature male birds to teach the young males the mating song to attract a mate, many Regents now imitate other birds, and its own song has become simplified and abbreviated. This composition is in three parts; it opens with Call, in which we hear a field recording by Ross Crate of the Regent Honey Eater's song, then overlaid with my musical transcription of the call notated for the trio. I gradually distort the birdsong until it becomes unrecognisable

from its source – a metaphor for its corruption, which now threatens its very survival. And is a sombre eulogy to the lost song and, and asks the question: 'where to from here?' Finally, (a) Response provides a possible answer: I play with motifs from the birdsong in a way that centres its beauty and translates it to offer a playful and reflective response to what is a dire reality for one of our most defenceless fellow creatures. This is the world premiere of my new arrangement for flute, clarinet and vibraphone for Ensemble Offspring. The original trio for soprano, clarinet and marimba was commissioned for 'Lost Song', an installation by artists Ro Murray and Mandy Burgess, which premiered at the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre – located in one of the few remaining habitats of the Regent Honey Eater.

<https://www.felicitywilcox.com/>

## **Avian (2026) W.P.**

Seyoung Oh

**[Bird: Yellow-faced Honeyeater]**

flute/alto flute, clarinet/bass clarinet, vibraphone/woodblock

5:00

This piece was started from the Australian bird, Yellow-faced Honeyeater (*Caligavis chrysops*) - this small 15cm-ish bird has a distinctive yellow facial stripe and they are abundant along the Eastern coast of Australia. The first 2 sections of the piece is based on the transcription of 2 birdsongs of the Honeyeater - first one is introduced with the imagery of the dawn song and the second section illustrates the sheltering of a nest and the gradual growth of life. Another characteristic feature of the Honeyeater is the migration - large flocks of Honeyeaters fly from tree to tree in the early morning towards the North in every autumn. In the last section, I focused on the energy and vigour of this collective movement, the sense of adventure and the gesture of these little creatures flying away. As I entered the later process of composing, I realised that the piece introduces the common behaviours of being avian as well as the particularities of the Honeyeater.

<https://www.seyoung-oh.com/>

## **Crimson Rosellas (2026) W.P.**

Alice Chance

flute, bass clarinet, vibraphone

6:00

This piece is inspired by the way that Crimson Rosellas, with their striking red and blue feathers, look a lot like they're in a royal uniform of some kind. The similarity is especially evident when you look at images of King Charles II and Crimson Rosellas side-by-side. These two pictures inspired the hybrid cartoon I drew for the cover page. In this piece I am embracing the unique Ensemble Offspring capacity for touches of theatre and humour in performance.

The first movement is a dramatic procession with baroque-style "double dotting", and the second is a buoyant jig evoking a royal banquet with several extravagant courses. While composing, I listened to a lot of Matthew Locke who was the King Charles the First's composer at the time, and especially took inspiration from his work, *The Tempest*. The result is a bright, cheeky piece that satirises the pomp and at times nonsensical customs of royalty and high society.

My deepest thanks to Ensemble Offspring, especially Claire Edwardes, for the enthusiastic embracing of this idea and their commitment to new Australian music.

<https://alicechance.com/>

## **A Tawny Tale (2025)**

Caitlin Yeo

**(Bird: Tawny Frogmouth)**

flute/alto flute, clarinet/bass clarinet, vibraphone

6:45

This summer, on most nights, a solitary Tawny Frogmouth would visit my home in Marrickville and settle high in the tallwood tree. There, I would catch a glimpse of its silhouette, watching over the dark, silvery river, its rhythmic call - "oom oom oom" - filling the air. For this work, I wanted to capture the Tawny Frogmouth's elusive, yet cheeky nature. The composition uses a simple motif, repeated and transformed throughout, to mirror the Tawny's mischievous spirit, incorporating moments of light-hearted playfulness alongside the bird's more mysterious presence. The persistent pulse of its call weaves through the music, while the vibraphone shimmers, conjuring the quiet magic of the night. Fast, arpeggiated wind passages evoke swift, soaring movements, while snappy musical gestures mimic the bird's playful strikes as it catches insects under the stars. Together, for me, these elements embody the Tawny Frogmouth's loveable personality and the mystical world it inhabits.

<https://www.caitlinyeo.com/>

# Bird Riffs (2024)

Robert Davidson

**(Birds: Magpie, Raven, Kookaburra)**

flute, bass clarinet, vibraphone + backing track

10:30

Bird Riffs gets musicians to play along with three birds: magpie, kookaburra and Australian raven. The musicians carefully adapt to the recorded melodies of the calls of the birds. I also regularly have visits from kookaburras on my balcony. Kookaburra Riff takes a snippet from a field recording of two kookaburras in chorus. The musicians play along with the birds, with rhythms that keep switching between 5, 3 and 4 notes per beat. It's a rhythm I find very attractive and oddly grooving. As the riff continues to repeat, the players weave new melodies into the repeating chord progression and take turns soloing, and coming into unison with the birds. The raven's call is treated as if it's something of a lament (with a surprisingly catchy melody). I know I'm anthropomorphising like crazy here, but I am not claiming to be giving an accurate rendition of a bird's interior state; I'm merely having fun by having humans make music with bird calls. I hope you also have some fun with these birds and musicians. Each morning and afternoon, I get to hang out with magpies on my balcony - a group of three we like to call "the teenagers". They make a splendid sound; it's one of my favourite sounds that exists. I remember the excellent Melbourne composer Warren Burt telling me the reason he originally moved to Australia from his home in San Diego. On his first landing in Australia, he got off the plane and heard a magpie, and immediately said "I've got to move here. I want to live in a country where the birds sound like synthesisers!" (or words to that effect). Magpie riff uses two short phrases, looped throughout the music, picking out a catchy riff from a magpie in an Australian front yard (trying to eat some cheese on the ground), with some percussion added to keep everyone together with the recording. The magpie recording, made by Digifish Music, is used with permission.

<https://www.robertdavidson.org/>

## Beneath the Surface (2026) (w.p)

Matthew Whiteside

flute, bass clarinet, percussion, cello, backing track

25:00

Beneath the Surface is an audiovisual work shaped by my love of scuba diving and the experience of being underwater. Using footage gathered from dives around the world, it brings music into dialogue with moving image and text to reflect on the beauty, stillness and vulnerability of the world below the surface and our impact on it.

The film has been created by my long-term collaborator Marisa Zanotti, with text responses by First Nations poet Lucy Norton and Scottish writer David Overend.

[www.matthewwhiteside.co.uk](http://www.matthewwhiteside.co.uk)

# Beneath the Surface Text Responses

## by Lucy Norton

scattered particles reflect light  
an otherworldly confetti  
for the submerged,  
a foreign body and a flag  
to announce presence /  
even on the other side of the world  
Country is adaptable  
human wreckage mingled among  
housing for crustaceans  
after enough time, they become  
something new to make a life in /  
puddles of starfish litter the floor  
as if they rest even in direct

torchlight, unafraid of visitors  
quietly gliding in the dark  
navigating the layer  
between this world  
and the one above /  
science says the ocean has memory –  
if stories are held in the landscape  
what great hands shaped the  
bottom of the sea?  
nothing left untouched,  
becoming a strand  
in the braid of unending  
oceanic consciousness

# Halocline

by David Overend

When salinity changes rapidly with depth, a shimmering layer appears, as freshwater slides over saltwater. This is the halocline.

## Dive

Close to the surface, things have already shifted.

Body suspended

Close to freezing

Neoprene skin

Diving in Scotland means slipping into murky waters; welcoming in the unknown. Sometimes, there is detritus. Microplastics, fibres from fishing nets and ropes.

But mostly, the haze is caused by runoff from the mountains: silt and sediment transported from the land and stirred up by the tide; and tannin-loaded peat, carried here by the rivers.

Phytoplankton blooms turn the water into greenish soup.

Light falls away

Leaving spaces to hide

This place is not without its dangers: sea urchins; weever fish; snakelocks anemone; lions' mane jellyfish. But suits and caution protect, and spikes and poison can usually be avoided.

Watching without touching.

The greater risk is the water. Divers can become disorientated, the cold can cause shock, hypothermia. Pressure can change too quickly. Equipment can fail.

Better move slowly, then.

It is important to remember that we are guests here.

Fleeting visits

Life supporting systems

Borrowed time

## Deeper

The halocline is a boundary line: a space between history, marked in salt.

River water flows into the sea; and despite all the churning organic matter that it brings, the newer arrival has less density than that which lies below.

This contrast keeps two bodies apart. Their stratification remains and at the meeting point, two or three meters below the surface, an oily border appears.

What kind of line is this?

Etched in water

Thin as air

It can be crossed without resistance

When the wind and the tides make their move,

One layer collapses into the other.

A pact is broken

Diving is the art of transgressing. It takes a body from its safe and stable origins and tests how far removed it can become. Above are social contracts, expectations and obligations. These remain with the sunlight.

The first displacement is from usual patterns of breathing. A tank of compressed air makes inhalation a careful, measured and considered thing. A new rhythm is established. Now, there is a focus and seriousness to every movement.

The second displacement is atmospheric. Stepping, rolling, diving, pulled downwards by the weight of a body and the pull of the Earth. The shift is to a new medium. It resists and holds. Movement is altogether different here. Direction is blurred and reference points fall away.

The third displacement is perceptual. Sound is softer and light is dispersed. Senses follow the pull of the current, the tightness of the drysuit, the bulk of the cylinders. Communication becomes gestural. Words matter differently here.

The fourth displacement is imaginative, and a new language is needed. What words can speak to a place that is so strange, unknowable and distant. Who could not come back from here changed?

## **Deeper, still**

Five meters, six, and darkness takes over. Colours drop out of the spectrum and scarcely any light penetrates the upper level.

In clearer waters, red goes first, then orange, then yellow, then green, until all that is left is a blue glow.

Blue is always at the edges of things.

But here, all the colours leave together with the light.

## **Float**

At the interference layer, two worlds come together and are held, suspended in a fragile equilibrium.

It takes nothing and everything to reach the other side.

Below the buffer zone, where the water is cold and clear, the dark is almost complete.

Torch light

Cutting through voids

Seabed cities

Now the beam picks out heavy red crabs; spiny starfish; tentacled anemones, tiny octopuses, flat squat lobsters with their tails curled beneath them. Bioluminescent copepods and vibrant nudibranch sea slugs. A scuttling, swaying, swirling sublayer.

## Look

Among the rocks and the sand and the kelp forests;  
Beyond the passage of salmon, eel, and dog shark:  
Pipelines, mooring chains, rubbish and wrecks.

Here are the waste products of an advanced capitalist economy.

A cache of abandoned mayonnaise jars.

Look closely and see that they have been colonised. Hermits and gobies have moved in, protecting their soft bodies and their eggs in hard-walled caves. Barriers against a hostile environment. Thousands of tiny encrusting organisms lace patterns across the glass; barnacles and sponges anchor themselves to filter plankton. Soft corals grow and branch.

On anthropogenic structures, on marine pilings and sunken vessels, benthic islands are built into the mud, shored up by sand and empty shells.

Down here is life in all its opportunistic complexity.

Where is the halocline between this fragile microworld, from which reefs might grow, and the above-ground buildings that can reach further into the clouds than the hardiest of divers might venture in the opposite direction?

Diving deeper down here might seem to counter the hubristic sky reach of modernity.  
A moment suspended in unaccountability.

But look.

The further travelled the closer reached.

## Rise

Because time here is limited and this can only be a temporary fix.

Leave the pulsing, glowing, crawling depths,  
And look up.

A perceptible difference in the inky water is the only sign of an exit.

Feel for the guide rope  
Check the gauge  
And follow the bubbles, which always go up.

Equipment should be trusted over instinct.  
Ascent takes time, and air is counterintuitively released, since depth expands that which is stored within the suit.

Vent.  
Then wait.

And listen for the faint echo of care and responsibility  
These mark the way back, too.

Back to the boundary line, where clarity and visibility fall away.

Back to the interference layer, where thoughts are muddied and priorities shift  
Back to the boil of soil and sand  
Back to the surface  
To the air  
The sun

Back to the light.

## **Return**

Nothing material is brought back from a journey like this.  
Nothing tangible.

Only lessons from discarded receptacles.

These are lessons about bodies, containers and transitions;  
These are lessons about technology, visibility and habitat;  
These are lessons about knowledge, capacity, caution and care;  
These are lessons about venturing out  
And returning home.

2027



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