

# NYILAMUM

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT 2023

A FIRST NATIONS-LED PROJECT BY DR LOU BENNETT AM,  
PAUL STANHOPE AND THE AUSTRALIAN STRING QUARTET



AUSTRALIAN STRING QUARTET

The Australian String Quartet acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands upon which we meet. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land and their continued living culture and pay our respects to their elders.

*“Over the past five years, I have had the pleasure of working with the members of the Australian String Quartet to share my family stories across Australia through the power of music and song.” - Dr Lou Bennett AM*

## WELCOME

The Australian String Quartet (ASQ) is honoured to be performing alongside Dr Lou Bennett AM at the world’s largest celebration of the string quartet artform—the Amsterdam String Quartet Biennale (ASQB)—in January and February 2024.

Every two years the Amsterdam String Quartet Biennale brings together string quartets, composers and artists from around the globe. Their rich and diverse backgrounds help mould this dynamic and innovative festival consisting of eight days in the Muziekgebouw Amsterdam packed with over sixty concerts, talks, masterclasses and a lively fringe programme featuring 30 string quartets, soloists, composers and speakers. The ASQ’s invitation to this prestigious international festival is testament to the Quartet’s outstanding international reputation, its courageous artistic programming and its long-standing commitment to championing the voices of Australian composers.

The program will feature the World Premiere of *Nyilamum*, a First Nations-led work by Yorta Yorta Dja Dja Wurrung, Dr Bennett, with composer Paul Stanhope and the ASQ.

The ASQ shared an artistic residency with Dr Bennett and Iain Grandage at UKARIA in 2017, which supported the creation of *Jaara Nyilamum* for voice and string quartet with support from the Port Fairy Spring Music Festival and UKARIA. This has since been a regular fixture for broadcast across ABC channels, is available on all major music streaming platforms, and can be heard as part of the *Jaara Nyilamum* video installation at ACMI by Dr Romaine Moreton and Dr Bennett. It is a proud outcome of the ASQ’s Australian Anthology recordings, which demonstrate the Quartet’s commitment to celebrating Australian stories on the global stage.

Coming together through a thoughtful and inspiring year-long creative development process, the ASQ and Dr Bennett are joined by composer Paul Stanhope to create and premiere *Nyilamum*, an extended work for voice and string quartet that will explore in more detail Dr Bennett’s story of *Jaara Nyilamum*.

Following its World Premiere in 2024, the creative team will undertake stage two of the creative development process to prepare this work for its Australian Premiere in 2025.

## AUSTRALIAN STRING QUARTET

Since 1985, the Australian String Quartet (ASQ) has created unforgettable string quartet performances for audiences around the world. Dedicated to musical excellence with a distinctly Australian flavour, the ASQ’s purpose is to create chemistry and amplify intimacy through experiences that connect people with string quartet music.

Their distinct sound is enhanced by a matched set of 18th century Guaragnini instruments, handcrafted by Giovanni Battista Guaragnini between c.1743 and 1784 in Turin and Piacenza, Italy. These precious instruments are on loan for their exclusive use through the generosity of UKARIA.

**Dale Barltrop** violin  
**Francesca Hiew** violin  
**Christopher Cartlidge** viola  
**Michael Dahlenburg** cello

# DR LOU BENNETT AM

Yorta Yorta Dja Dja Wurrung, Dr Lou Bennett AM is a former member of the internationally acclaimed trio Tiddas. Bennett is a consummate performer, playing audiences worldwide. Bennett is a prolific songwriter/composer and during her ten years with Tiddas (1990-2000) penned some of the group's signature songs.

Bennett's work stretches over a vast area within the arts industry including her various roles as Performer, Songwriter, Musical and Artistic Director, Composer, Actor, Soundscape and Music Designer and Educator.

In 2006 Bennett was a co-founder of the iconic Black Arm Band and was an instrumental force in the company's transformative journey from being a one-off 'special project', becoming an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander governed, not for profit major performing arts company.

Bennett completed her PhD by project at RMIT Melbourne in October 2015. Bennett's dissertation discusses the importance and relevance of Aboriginal language retrieval, reclamation and regeneration through the medium of the Arts to community health and wellbeing and explores the importance of Indigenous epistemology, methodology and pedagogy in artistic and academic contexts.

Bennett uses her own languages of Yorta Yorta and Dja Dja Wurrung, extending to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages that can be retrieved, reclaimed and regenerated through songs, stories and performances.

Bennett received the McKenzie Postdoctoral Research Fellowship from the University of Melbourne and was inducted onto the Victorian Women's Honour Roll for 2017. In 2018 Bennett accepted a member of the Order of Australia. Bennett received a Westpac Research Fellowship in 2021 and continues her research in Sovereign Language Rematriation through Song Pedagogy at the University of Melbourne's School of Social and Political Science. Bennett was ministerially appointed to the RISING board in 2020 and in 2022 was appointed as the Chair of the Australia Centre at the University of Melbourne.

# PAUL STANHOPE

Paul Stanhope, an accomplished Sydney-based composer, conductor, and educator, has gained global recognition for his compositions, performed in major venues across the UK, Europe, Asia, and the Americas. After studying with influential Australian composers, he received the Charles Mackerras Scholarship, allowing him to pursue further studies at the Guildhall School of Music in London.

His notable achievements include winning the Toru Takemitsu Composition Prize in 2004 and receiving multiple APRA/Australian Music Centre Art awards, as well as the David H. Tribe memorial Symphonic Prize in 2021. Stanhope was the inaugural recipient of a Sidney Myer Creative Fellowship in 2013 and 2014.

His music has been featured at prestigious festivals and performed by renowned ensembles globally. He's composed significant works, such as Jandamarra: Sing for the Country, hailed as a milestone in Australian composition.

Stanhope's diverse body of work includes a Piccolo Concerto, a Cello Concerto, an award-winning Trombone Concerto, and recent pieces Giving Ground and Spin Dances.

In 2021, his Requiem premiered with the Sydney Chamber Choir, earning the title of "Choral Work of the Year" at the 2022 APRA/Australian Music Centre Art Awards.

Paul Stanhope holds academic positions at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, the University of Sydney, and is actively involved in various musical organisations.



Dr Lou Bennett AM  
Photo by Dr Romaine Moreton



Paul Stanhope  
Photo by Jason Catlett



The Australian String Quartet with Lou Bennett (centre) and Paul Stanhope (centre) during creative development for *Nyilamum*.

## JOIN OUR COMMISSIONING CIRCLE

The Australian String Quartet is seeking to raise \$100,000 to directly support the commissioning fees and creative development costs for the creation and World Premiere of this significant new work. We invite you to join the *Nyilamum* Commissioning Circle with an investment of \$5,000 or more.

Commissioning Circle supporters will receive an invitation to attend the World Premiere of *Nyilamum* in Amsterdam, and associated events; a preview of the work; opportunities to stay connected with the work's Australian Premiere in 2025; along with other unique project opportunities.

We invite you to join us, together with your friends, to assist the Australian String Quartet in meeting this ambitious aspiration ahead of the *Nyilamum* World Premiere in January 2024. For more information, please contact:

Michelle Richards  
Development Manager  
0413 212 040  
mrichards@asq.com.au  
[asq.com.au/donate](https://asq.com.au/donate)

## NYILAMUM AT THE STRING QUARTET BIENNALE

[Extending String Quartet: Quartet & Country](#)

Wed 31 January 2024, 2.15pm  
Grote Zaal Muziekgebouw

[Evening Concert: Lou Bennett/Paul Stanhope, Mozart, Britten](#)

Thu 1 February 2024, 8.15pm  
Grote Zaal Muziekgebouw

To find more information visit <https://sqba.nl/en/>

Front and back cover photos by Elise Idiens