

Lyn Williams AM

Since establishing the Sydney Children's Choir in 1989, Lyn has completely transformed the choral landscape in Australia by harnessing the incredible musical and expressive power of young voices through her world-renowned children's choirs: The Sydney Children's Choir, Gondwana Voices and the Gondwana Indigenous Choir. This has grown into the organisation, Gondwana Choirs, which puts the vocal power of young voices at the centre of its impressive and wide-reaching artistic program.

As a conductor, Lyn could have easily chosen to pursue a career working exclusively with the nation's symphony orchestras. Instead, she forged her path to create the instrument of a children's choir in Australia like no one had done before. Her approach was, and remains, premised on treating young people with complete respect as musicians. This is reciprocated by her singers being willing and able, through her choral training, to charter previously unknown artistic territory.

Lyn is in constant pursuit of the new and the exciting and draws interesting and meaningful connections between artists. In addition to her ongoing work with the Sydney Children's Choir and Gondwana Voices, for the past ten years Lyn has been devoted to the creation and evolution of the Gondwana Indigenous Choir (GIC). Through Lyn's support, the singers see choral music as an ideal vehicle for the preservation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island languages and cultures. Lyn has developed strong relationships with Indigenous elders and cultural custodians across Australia and has brought together these cultural custodians with composers to create new works for the choir. This work would not be possible without Lyn's artistic vision, cultural respect and integrity and this remarkable ensemble makes a unique contribution to Australia's cultural life.

Recently, Lyn's work with singer-songwriter Felix Riebl and the singers of Marliya (present and past members of the GIC) has resulted in the critically-acclaimed festival show *Spinifex Gum*, which has featured at almost every Australian arts festival, since its premiere at the Adelaide Festival in 2018. This work is political, challenging, and uplifting and evinces that our young Australians should be at the centre of our national discourse. Lyn conducts Marliya on their two albums – *Spinifex Gum* (2017) and *Sisters* (2019).

Lyn continues to maintain connections with professional orchestras as Music Director of several significant national events and as a trusted chorus master. She is frequently engaged to speak and lead workshops at international events such as Europa Cantat (2018) and Africa Cantat (2020).

Lyn's choirs have shaped the course of thousands of lives, with alumni now performing in opera houses and concert halls across the world, completing ground-breaking medical research or as skilled and passionate leaders of non-profit organisations.

Lyn's dedication and contribution to the Arts has been acknowledged on multiple occasions: with the Excellence by an Individual at the 2019 Art Music Awards; the Australia Council for the Arts' prestigious Don Banks Music Award in 2017 for outstanding and sustained contribution to music in Australia in recognition of her lifework as founder and director of Gondwana Choirs; the Medal of the Order of Australia (2004); Member of the Order of Australia (2019). She is also a composer,

winning the 2009 APRA-Australian Music Centre Vocal/Choral Work of the Year for her work *A Flock of Stars*.