

# YITZHAK YEDID

## MOTHER TONGUE

Inspired by Jenna Richards  
for viola duo



Pic by Dani Ehrlich

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**Mother Tongue**, for Viola Duo, is a work that deals with the feeling of people whose Mother Tongue was subject to linguicide (language killing). The loss of a language is the death of a tradition and cultural heritage, and a world without traditions is like a tree without its roots.

Linguist Professor Ghi'ad Zuckermann writes that in Australia "Out of 330 Aboriginal languages, only 13 are alive and kicking today." And "Since colonisation, Indigenous Australian people have suffered the effects of wide-scale linguicide".

In writing this piece I was inspired in particular by Jenna Richards, who is a Barnjarla Aboriginal woman of Port Lincoln, South Australia. Jenna is involved in a reclamation project reviving her stolen mother tongue. Jenna writes: "It is a story about my grandmother's mother tongue that was being stolen from her family through acts of genocide and linguicide and how now, that I am a mother myself, I alongside my community working towards reclaiming the language that was once considered sleeping". Jenna is bringing back her stolen mother tongue to her children so that they can keep it alive and surviving for future generations.

My three main motivations to compose Mother Tongue are: Ethical, Aesthetic and Utilitarian. In Ethical, I refer to the importance of collaborating with people who struggle to reclaim their linguicided mother tongue. I feel that my music could support the idea of righting the wrong of the past. In Aesthetic, I refer to the beauty of ancient languages and that our world would be a better place with diversity rather than with monolingual mindset. In Utilitarian, I refer to the fact that when people reclaim their heritage tongue, it improves their wellbeing as they feel empowered when reconnecting with their spirituality, cultural autonomy and intellectual sovereignty.

Mother Tongue is a personal musical response and in no way represents an Aboriginal perspective. This writing was approved by Jenna Richards from the Barnjarla Language Advisory Committee (BLAC).

Mother Tongue has five parts:

**Warna Yoolalyidi** (Grieving, signs belly)

**Ngaidyara** (Hunting Party)

**Ngaldi Ngoodarridhi** (Grieving, Broken Liver)

**Noornigidi** (To Break the Neck of an Animal)

**Warna Gooridi** (Belly Turning Around, Out of Rage)

**Yitzhak Yedid** is an Israeli-born Australian orchestral and chamber-music composer, improvising pianist, researcher and educator. Yedid is a Sidney Myer Creative Fellow (2018-19).

Yedid's music described as: “eclectic, multicultural and very personal style that combines jazz and Jewish cantor music, classic European and avant-garde, randomness and a blend of techniques.” (Davis ‘17). American musicologist **Ronit Seter** wrote "**Yitzhak Yedid**, an Israeli-born Australian composer, amalgamates in his music his ancestral Syrian- and Iraqi-Jewish cantillation, Israeli East-West encounters, European and American avant-garde compositional techniques mixed with free jazz ones, and selected Australian influences, all infused with his insights as a concert pianist and improviser to create an experimental, highly expressive yet alluring modern style. Yedid’s music is therefore multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and consequently, transnational." (2019)

"Over the past couple of decades or so, Yedid has put out an almost bewilderingly eclectic range of works and recordings. His disciplinary backdrop takes in Western classical music, free improvisation, Arabic music and liturgical material. His compositions are generally viscerally and cerebrally engaging, and often visually striking, with the piano- playing role requiring a certain amount of calisthenic activity and a significant dosage of emotional and technical investment." (Barry ‘17).

His awards include: The 2019 Azrieli Prize, the Israel Prime Minister’s Prize for Composers (’07) and the Landau Prize for Performing Arts (09). In 2008 he was awarded first composition prize at the 17th International Harp competition. In 2009 his poly-stylistic composition Oud Bass Piano Trio was nominated for Germany’s Echo Award. Yedid was awarded a composer-in-residence position at the Judith Wright Centre (Brisbane, ’10).

Twelve CDs of Yedid’s compositions have been released by prestigious international publishers and distributors including Challenge Records International, Sony, Naxos, -btI-, Muse, MCI and Kaleidos.

to Stefanie Farrands

# MOTHER TONGUE

VIOLA DUO

(2019)

שפת אם  
לצמד ויולנים

I  
WARNA YOOLALYIDI  
GRIEVING (SIGNS BELLY)

יצחק ידיד  
YITZHAK YEDID

Grave, sorrowness

*non vib.*

Viola I  
*pp* < *p*

Viola II  
*p*

II  
(b) *mp*

4

III  
(b) *mp*

*accel.* ----- *a tempo*

*f* ----- *ff*

Vla I  
*p* *mp* *p*

Vla II  
*p* *mp* *p*

7

II  
(b) *poco*

*ppp* *pp* *ff*

*ca. 78*

Vla I  
*ppp* *pp* *ff*

Vla II  
*ppp* *pp* *ff*

III -----

10 *freely* = ca. 66 *accel.*

= ca. 66

Vla I *f* *fff*

Vla II *f* *fff*

A

11 *a tempo*

Vla I *p*

Vla II *p*

13

= 66 *accel.*

Vla I *pp* *ff*

Vla II *pp* *ff*

15

= 66

Vla I *fff*

Vla II *fff*

\*) pressure

*poco accel.* \*) pressure

*a tempo*

17

IV  
III

*p*

Vla I *fff* *pp* *p*

Vla II *sub. pp*

\* Pressure on the strings behind the bridge.

II  
NGAIDYARA  
HUNTING PARTY

Vivacissimo staccatissimo ♩. = 160 or faster

Vla I  
Vla II

3

Vla I  
Vla II

5

Vla I  
Vla II

7

Vla I  
Vla II

A

9

Vla I  
Vla II

11

Vla I

Vla II

13

Vla I

Vla II

15

Vla I

Vla II

**B**

18

Vla I

Vla II

20

Vla I

Vla II



21

Vla I

Vla II

23

Vla I

Vla II

C

24

Vla I

Vla II

25

Vla I

Vla II

27

Vla I

Vla II

29

Vla I

Vla II

31

**D**

Vla I

Vla II

*ff*

*ff*

33

35

37

39

Vla I

Vla II

This system contains measures 39 and 40. The first staff is for Violin I (Vla I) and the second for Violin II (Vla II). Both are in bass clef. Measure 39 begins with a treble clef change for the Vla I part. The music consists of eighth notes with accents (>) and some beamed sixteenth notes. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

40

Vla I

Vla II

This system contains measures 40 and 41. The first staff is for Violin I (Vla I) in treble clef, and the second for Violin II (Vla II) in bass clef. The rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents continues. The key signature remains one sharp (F#).

III

NGALDI NGOODARRIDHI  
GRIEVING (BROKEN LIVER)

Grave, sorrowness  
*sul tasto non vib.*

Vla I *p*

Vla II *p*

4 *ord.* III *mp*

II III IV *p*

*8<sup>va</sup> irregular pitch variation*

*weeping sound*

*III 3 tones bending*

*IV 4*

Vla I *mp*

Vla II *p*

*ord.*

*sul tasto*

*mp*

*ord.*

7 *sul tasto*

II

Vla I *sul tasto*

Vla II *sul tasto*

10 *ord.* *8<sup>va</sup> irregular pitch variation*

*weeping sound*

**A** baroque choral like ♩ = ca. 60

*mp-mf*

*ord.* baroque choral like ♩ = ca. 60

*mp-mf*

Vla I *sfz sfz sfz sfz*

Vla II *mp-mf*

12

Vla I

Vla II

14

Vla I

Vla II

16

Vla I

Vla II

18

**B** *a tempo*

*3/4 tones bending*

Vla I

Vla II

*p*

20 *meno mosso*

Vla I

Vla II

III

*ppp*

*p*

# IV NOORNIGIDI TO BREAK THE NECK OF AN ANIMAL

♩ = ca. 102 groovy

Vla I *f*

Vla II *f*

4

Vla I

Vla II

6

Vla I

Vla II

7

Vla I

Vla II

A

9

Vla I

Vla II

*ff* *al tallone, harsh, use heavy vertical movement*

*irregular tremolo and pitch variation sul pont.*

*free impro*

*s. pont.*  
*irregular tremolo*  
*and pith variation*

**11** *sim. bow stroke ord.*

Vla I

Vla II *sim. bow stroke*

*free impro*

**13** *sim. bow stroke ord.*

Vla I

Vla II *sim. bow stroke*

*free impro*

*free impro*

**15**

Vla I

Vla II *free impro*

*free impro*

*free impro*

*free impro*

**B**

**17**

Vla I *f*

Vla II *f*

**19**

Vla I

Vla II

20

Vla I

Vla II

This system contains measures 20 and 21. The Violin I part (Vla I) is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. It features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, and includes accents and slurs. The Violin II part (Vla II) is in bass clef and provides a harmonic accompaniment with similar rhythmic patterns and some sustained notes.

21

Vla I

Vla II

This system contains measures 21 and 22. The Violin I part continues the melodic development with various articulations. The Violin II part maintains its accompaniment role, with some notes being sustained across measures.

22

Vla I

Vla II

This system contains measures 22 and 23. The Violin I part has a more active melodic line with frequent slurs and accents. The Violin II part continues with its accompaniment, featuring some chromatic movement.

23

Vla I

Vla II

This system contains measures 23 and 24. The Violin I part shows a continuation of the melodic theme. The Violin II part provides a steady accompaniment with some dynamic markings.

24

Vla I

Vla II

This system contains measures 24 and 25. The Violin I part concludes with a final melodic phrase. The Violin II part provides a concluding accompaniment, ending with a double bar line.



C

25

al talone, harsh, ese heavy vertical morement

Vla I *ff* *s. pont.* *ord. sim. bow stroke*

Vla II *ff* *s. pont.*

27

Vla I *ord. free impro*

Vla II *ord. free impro* *s. pont.* *ord. free impro*

*irregular tremolo and pitch variation*

29

Vla I *free impro* *s. pont. highest possible notes* *ord. free impro* *sim.*

Vla II *s. pont.* *ord.*

31

Vla I *free impro* *s. pont.* *ord.* *s. pont.* *ord. sim.*

Vla II *s. pont.* *ord. sim.*

D

33

Vla I *f*

Vla II *f*

35

Vla I

Vla II

37

Vla I

Vla II

39

Vla I

Vla II

E

Vla I

Vla II

43

Vla I

Vla II

45

Vla I

Vla II

Measures 45 and 46. Both staves feature a melodic line with triplet eighth notes. The key signature has one sharp (F#). Measure 45 ends with a fermata. Measure 46 continues the triplet pattern.

47

Vla I

Vla II

*mf*

Measures 47 and 48. Measure 47 starts with a *mf* dynamic. Both staves feature a melodic line with triplet eighth notes. Measure 48 continues the triplet pattern.

48

Vla I

Vla II

Measures 49 and 50. Both staves feature a melodic line with triplet eighth notes. Measure 49 ends with a fermata. Measure 50 continues the triplet pattern.

**F**

49

Vla I

Vla II

Measures 49 and 50. Measure 49 starts with a **F** dynamic. Both staves feature a melodic line with triplet eighth notes. Measure 50 continues the triplet pattern.

51

Vla I

Vla II

Measures 51 and 52. Both staves feature a melodic line with triplet eighth notes. Measure 51 ends with a fermata. Measure 52 continues the triplet pattern.

53

Vla I

Vla II

Measures 53-54. Violin I and II parts. Measure 53: Violin I has three triplet eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) followed by eighth notes (C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4). Violin II has triplet eighth notes (G3, A3, B3) followed by eighth notes (C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3). Measure 54: Violin I has eighth notes (C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4) followed by eighth notes (B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3). Violin II has eighth notes (C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3) followed by eighth notes (B2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2).

54

Vla I

Vla II

Measures 54-55. Violin I and II parts. Measure 54: Violin I has eighth notes (C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4) followed by eighth notes (B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3). Violin II has eighth notes (C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3) followed by eighth notes (B2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2). Measure 55: Violin I has eighth notes (C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4) followed by eighth notes (B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3). Violin II has eighth notes (C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3) followed by eighth notes (B2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2).

55

Vla I

Vla II

Measures 55-56. Violin I and II parts. Measure 55: Violin I has eighth notes (C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4) followed by eighth notes (B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3). Violin II has eighth notes (C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3) followed by eighth notes (B2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2). Measure 56: Violin I has eighth notes (C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4) followed by eighth notes (B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3). Violin II has eighth notes (C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3) followed by eighth notes (B2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2).

56

Vla I

Vla II

Measures 56-57. Violin I and II parts. Measure 56: Violin I has eighth notes (C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4) followed by eighth notes (B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3). Violin II has eighth notes (C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3) followed by eighth notes (B2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2). Measure 57: Violin I has eighth notes (C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4) followed by eighth notes (B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3). Violin II has eighth notes (C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3) followed by eighth notes (B2, A2, G2, F2, E2, D2, C2).

*meno mosso*

57

Vla I

Vla II

Measure 57. Violin I and II parts. Both parts start with a glissando (gliss.) leading to a half note (C5 for Violin I, C4 for Violin II). The dynamic is *p-mf*. The notation includes a second octave sign (II<sup>8va</sup>) above the notes.

V

WARNA GOORIDI  
BELLY TURNING AROUND (OUT OF RAGE)

ca. 98

Octatonic semitone tone scale  
C, C#, D#, E, F#, G, A, A#

Vla I *sfz f* *Octatonic tone semitone scale*  
C, D, D#, F, F#, G#, A, B

Vla II *sfz f*

3

Vla I

Vla II

5

Vla I

Vla II

7

Vla I

Vla II

9

Vla I

Vla II

11

Vla I

Vla II

13

Vla I

Vla II

15

Vla I

Vla II

*sim.*

17

Vla I

Vla II

19

Vla I

Vla II

*sim.*

21

Vla I

Vla II

23

Vla I

Vla II

*sim.*

25 *accel.*  
Vla I *ff*  
Vla II *ff*

27 *a tempo* *accel.* *a tempo*  
Vla I  
Vla II

29 *accel.* *a tempo*  
Vla I  
Vla II

31 *accel.* *a tempo*  
Vla I  
Vla II

33 *accel.* *poco rit.*  
Vla I  
Vla II



35 *accel.* *poco rit.* *accel.*

Vla I  
Vla II

Detailed description: This system contains measures 35 and 36. Measure 35 is marked *accel.* and measure 36 is marked *poco rit.*. Both measures are in 5/16 time. Measure 37, which begins with *accel.*, is also in 5/16 time. The music consists of eighth-note patterns with accents on the first and third notes of each pair.

37 *rit.* *poco accel.* *rit.*

Vla I  
Vla II

Detailed description: This system contains measures 37 and 38. Measure 37 is marked *rit.* and measure 38 is marked *poco accel.*. Measure 39, which begins with *rit.*, is in 12/16 time. The music consists of eighth-note patterns with accents on the first and third notes of each pair.

39 *poco accel.*

Vla I  
Vla II

Detailed description: This system contains measures 39 and 40. Measure 39 is marked *poco accel.* and measure 40 is in 14/16 time. The music consists of eighth-note patterns with accents on the first and third notes of each pair.