

COMPOSER'S NOTES: Pete M. Wyer

Nya Wah (13:50) is Mohawk, meaning "Thank You." The piece is inspired by the Mohawk Thanksgiving ceremony and is sung in Mohawk. The words are continuously thanking different elements of nature. It begins with singing 'ah-gwe-gu-a-ska' which means 'we all are one' – you'll hear they sing it on one set of 8 speakers, another set of 8, another set of 8 and then all together. I hired Amalli Nali who teaches Mohawk at the Freedom School in Akwasasne as the translator – and also went to some lengths to ensure that I wasn't offending anyone by making a piece of music in response to the Thanksgiving Ceremony (it was only ever greeted positively). The music is very western. It is (intentionally) not in any way Mohawk because I'm very western, and I wanted to respond authentically. I also felt that, while artists should always be extremely careful that they aren't creating something that is an act of cultural misappropriation, cultures thrive when they inspire and influence one another which is what I hope is happening with this piece. When I've described *I Walk Towards Myself* (the overall title of the piece) as a 'hymn of thanks to the earth,' this is primarily the piece I have in mind.

Open Your Ears (3:01) is those words sung in Mohawk. I created it as a separate track (it could easily sit within *Nya Wah*) because it is intended almost as a cry of the earth, or perhaps a warning. . .

Oseetah (11:10) is actually a Huron legend. I was reminded of Ovid: Oseetah is in love with the Chief, and the Chief is in love with her but betrothed. She goes out in a canoe one day, and the Chief follows her – she's torn. Eventually, unable to take it any longer, she throws herself into the river. The next day her tribe searches for her but find only a lily (Oseetah means 'lily'). She has become magically transformed, the white representing her purity and the yellow her love. So, in the piece, we only ever hear her name and the name Wayotah, the Chief, being called across the space – the memory of them calling to each other, or perhaps of the tribe searching for her after she is missing.

Storm Dance (6:04) is a made-up dance. I liked the idea of a dance that might be many thousands of years old, presuming the local human history to go back around 12,000 years. It's really a little speculation into the deeper history of the area.

