Gallipoli Symphony

1 Gelibolu 7'16
Music and words by Omar Faruk Tekbilek b. 1951
Turkey

2 He Poroporaoki (Farewell) 5'47
Music by Gareth Farr b. 1968 and Richard Nunns b. 1945
New Zealand

3 The Voyage 7'24
Music by Graeme Koehne AO b. 1956
Australia

4 Thoughts of Home 4'58
Music by Peter Sculthorpe AO OBE 1929-2014
Australia

5 The Landing 6'26
Music by Elena Kats-Chernin b. 1957
Australia

6 The Invasion 5'04
Music by Kamran Ince b. 1960
Turkey

7 God Pity Us Poor Soldiers 5'17
Music by Ross Harris b. 1945
New Zealand

8 The August Offensive 8'05
Music by Andrew Schultz b. 1960
Australia

9 The Trenches Are Empty Now 4'57
Music by Ross Edwards AM b. 1943
Australia

10 Hope of the Higher Heart 1'56
Music by Demir Demirkan b. 1972
Turkey

11 Future 9'30
Music by Graeme Koehne AO b. 1956
words by Des Power AM
Australia

12 One Hundred Seconds for One Hundred Years 3'08
Music by Christopher Latham b. 1966
Australia

The Gallipoli Symphony was premiered in Istanbul on August the 4th, 2015, at Hagia Irene in Topkapi Palace, by the Istanbul State Symphony Orchestra, Istanbul State Opera and Ballet Chorus, and St Joseph’s Gregory Terrace and All Hallows’ Gallipoli Choir conducted by Jessica Cottis, with seven soloists representing Australia, New Zealand, the UK and Turkey. It was broadcast live on ABC TV and released as a DVD.

The Australian premiere occurred in Brisbane on November the 24th, 2015, in the Concert Hall of QPAC in Brisbane with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, The Australian Voices and St Joseph’s College and All Hallows’ School Gallipoli Choir, with the same soloists and conductor and was broadcast live on ABC Classic FM and released as a CD.

Soloists
Omar Faruk Tekbilek (Turkey) vocals, ney, zurna
William Barton (Australia) didgeridoo
Horomona Horo (New Zealand) taonga pūoro
Michael Askill (Australia) percussion
Julian Jackson (UK) chromatic harmonica
Bahadir Sener (Turkey) kanun
Ozan Arslan (Turkey) baglama

The Gallipoli Symphony was commissioned by the Australian Government Department of Veterans’ Affairs.

Created by Des Power AM
Musical Director: Christopher Latham
The Gallipoli campaign

After the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914, Allied troops were sent to Egypt in order to protect British interests in the Middle East and the Suez Canal. After four months of training near Cairo, troops from Australia, New Zealand, Britain and France departed by ship for the Gallipoli peninsula. The objective of this deployment was to assist a British naval operation which aimed to force the Dardanelles Strait and to capture the Turkish capital, Constantinople. As an attempt by the Navy to force the Dardanelles had failed on 18 March, an attempt was to be made by ground forces to secure a passage for the naval vessels. Australians and New Zealanders landed at what became known as Anzac Cove on 25 April 1915, led by the Third Brigade of the Australian Imperial Force. Members of the 9th Battalion, raised in Queensland, are believed to have been the first to land at Ari Burnu. The Anzacs established a tenuous foothold on the steep slopes above the beach. During the early days of the campaign the allies tried to breach the Turkish lines and the Turks, desperately fighting to protect their homeland, in turn tried to drive the Allied troops off the peninsula. The initial battles ended in stalemate. Concerted but unsuccessful Allied attempts to breakthrough in August included the Australian attacks at Lone Pine and the Nek and the New Zealand assault on Chunuk Bair. All endeavours ended in failure for both sides, and the positions remained unchanged for the remainder of 1915 until Allied forces withdrew in December 1915 and January 1916.

The conditions in which men fought and died at Gallipoli were frightful. Packed so densely with the living and the dead in such a small area, there were perfect conditions for the spread of disease. By June more men were leaving the peninsula due to illness then were being evacuated with wounds. Terrain and climate also played crucial roles in the battle. From the landing through until the evacuation, conditions during the eight-month-long campaign varied greatly. The changing seasons bathed Gallipoli in pleasant spring sunshine, baked the dusty, fly-blown trenches with tremendous heat in summer, lashed the peninsula with Autumn storms and covered the battlefield in snow as winter setting. Throughout all these phases, men struggled against the elements and each other. Shared sufferings and hardship created a mutual respect among the combattants; one that, uniquely, has grown over the years to strong bond of friendship between Australia, New Zealand and Turkey.

By the time the campaign ended, more than 130,000 men had died. Deliberately was a costly failure of the Allies, with 27,000 French and nearly 115,000 British dominion casualties. New Zealand suffered around 8,000 casualties, including 2,779 dead. Australia’s 28,000 casualties included more than 8,700 fatalities. The Turkish soldiers paid a heavy price for their victory: and estimated 250,000 men were killed or wounded defending their country. For the survivors, families and communities, the effects of the campaign would last for many years.

The Gallipoli campaign has great significance for Australia, New Zealand and Turkey. In Turkey, the campaign marked the beginning of national revival. The hero of Gallipoli, Mustafa Kemal, would eventually become known as Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founding President of the Republic of Turkey. For Australia and New Zealand, the Gallipoli campaign played an important part in fostering a sense of national identity. Those at home were proud of how their men had performed on the world stage and the reputation they earned in difficult conditions. Their legacy continues to this day.

(text courtesy of the Department of Veterans’ Affairs)

The making of the Gallipoli Symphony

It is curious how life lays clues in your path that foretell your destiny. How when we look back on our life, we can often see, like a trail of breadcrumbs, a path leading us directly to our true calling. As a child, the word Constantinople had a mysterious grip on my imagination. The idea that the Roman Empire had gone on more than 1,000 years after the sack of Rome by the barbarians, with its capital now in Constantinople, was a revelation to me. That the Emperor Justinian could build the Hagia Sophia in 532 in the middle of an earthquake zone, making it the tallest cathedral in the world until Seville Cathedral (1520), seemed remarkable. In 2005, I was finally given the chance to see that ancient capital, now Istanbul, with my own eyes, having been asked to prepare two prelude concerts for the 90th anniversary of the Gallipoli landings. In coming to terms with this heady overlay of ancient and modern history, where the Christian and the Islamic worlds had clashed together over and over again, with the result that the two had become somehow intermeshed, I discovered a very interesting fact. No Australian composer had written a major orchestral work about Gallipoli. To fill the 2005 Prelude concert programs, I had to commission works, arrange works, beg, borrow and steal things to have enough music to fill the 45 minute timeslot.

The experience of that first dawn service touched me deeply. All of us wondered what it would be like to experience the 100th anniversary, and so I blithely proposed that we should commission a symphony in ten parts, written over ten years, to premiere in 2015, and was amazed when everyone agreed that yes indeed, we should do that. Des Power, the creative director, swiftly created an excellent ten part narrative, and I was tasked with picking the composers from Australia,
New Zealand and Turkey and guiding them through the writing of their respective chapters, one piece a year, for a decade. What I had omitted to mention, however, was that the history of multi-author works was beyond dire. I didn’t know of one successful multi-author work. They were all stylistic mishmashes with no aesthetic cohesion, because all the works were created simultaneously, with the end form largely being a function of chance.

In 2008, Peter Sculthorpe provided an important clue. While we were talking about his piece, he noted that the only melodies that seemed to have the necessary golden quality which we were searching for, were made of open intervals. Fourth and fifths, the notes we know best from the Last Post. That tiny piece of information became part of the DNA of the piece and seemed to tie all the material together on a cellular level. I also spent those years shaping and reshaping the form of the piece, just as the old master luthiers did, placing the outline of a cello or a violin on the wall, slowly altering it over time, to perfect its form. Having a decade to refine the piece was the greatest gift of all.

The shape, given by historical events, would have to be a double humped camel. The landing and the Turkish counterattacks were followed by a joint ceasefire to bury their dead, followed by a furious new offensive in August involving the battles at Lone Pine, Chanuk Bair and the charge at the Nek which would end in stalemate and gradual decline, and ultimately an furtive evacuation in the dead of night, before winter could decimate the Allied troops.

Year by year, the pieces were written, filling out Des’s narrative. Omar Faruk Tekbilek wrote Gelibolu, a Turkish lament for our shared tragic history. Gareth Farr and Richard Nunns evoked the leaving of New Zealand by blending Maori and European instruments and musics. Graeme Koehne painted The Voyage burnished gold, depicting the 20 mile convoy of troopships leaving Albany with full orchestral brass. Elena Kats-Chernin captured the grey cold and fearful dread of the pre-dawn in The Landing. Kamran Ince depicted the chaos and violence of the Turkish counterattack, and Ross Harris, the bleak task of both armies coming together to bury the 4,000 dead in No Man’s Land. Andrew Schultz wrote the August Offensive, and Ross Edwards, the aftermath, The Trenches are Empty Now. Finally Demir Demirkan wrote the Hope of the Higher Heart, the shared hope for peace, and Graeme Koehne’s finale spoke to The Future.

However, how to end the piece? It could not be anything clichéd or filmic, and ending softly seemed a weak option after such a long build-up. Then, as the work was being completed, Peter Sculthorpe died. He had hoped he could hang on long enough to hear the premiere. It was a great blow to everyone but it gave me the ending. It would be a homage to him and his great 1969 third-stream work, Love 200, which first brought together a rock band with an orchestra. The Gallipoli Symphony which had fused Ottoman and modern Turkish music, Indigenous and modern Australian music, Maori and Pakeha New Zealand music, in many ways trailed in that 1969 work’s slipstream, and so I wrote the final movement, 100 Seconds for 100 Years, as a way of farewelling my friend.

I hope that in the future the piece will be being played around Anzac Day. Its power comes from its demonstration that Christian and Islamic cultures can join together harmoniously and that we are richer for that cultural blending. To all the composers, to Peggy Polias who assisted me, to the Department of Veterans’ Affairs who commissioned the work, to all the musicians and soloists who played the works over the last decade and the ABC who helped to nurture it, I offer you my heartfelt gratitude and thanks.

About the music

The Gallipoli Symphony was proposed in 2005 following the 90th Anniversary commemorations of the Gallipoli campaign, as a work that could be created over the subsequent decade to mark the centenary of the battle. The work retells the story from the point of view of Turkey, Australia and New Zealand, by following a narrative arc, designed by Creative Director Des Power, where each piece functions like a chapter
in a book, describing one element of the campaign. The works were commissioned by the Department of Veterans’ Affairs, Australia and the writing of all the pieces was overseen by Christopher Latham, with each work in chamber arrangements being premiered by him at Gallipoli between 2005 and 2014.

1 **Gelibolu** by Omar Faruk Tekbilek, Turkey (pictured above)

This piece, featuring traditional Turkish instruments, is a lament for the past as the singer contemplates the ravages of war. He sings of the shared blood, spilt into the soil, speaking from a modern Turkish perspective about the tragic events of one hundred years ago. The composition blends Turkish traditional instruments seamlessly with didgeridoo and orchestra.

*Words by Omar Faruk Tekbilek*

2 **He Poroporaoki (Farewell)** by Gareth Farr and Richard Nunns, NZ

On 16 October 1914, the largest body of men (and horses) to ever leave New Zealand departed from Wellington to join the war in Europe. Many of the soldiers were the sons of those who came to New Zealand from England, Wales, Ireland and Scotland. For the Maori soldiers, it was a journey to places many had never heard of - a journey from a place that had always been home. On that day, thousands of New Zealanders – parents, children, relatives and friends - lined the wharves to bid farewell, singing *Now is the Hour / Po Atarau*, as the ships steamed away, while fervently wishing the safe return of their loved ones. This composition combines traditional Taonga pūoro (Maori instruments) with western instruments, in order to capture the feeling as the Kiwi troops departed their home shores.

3 **The Voyage** by Graeme Koehne, Australia

At the outbreak of war, Australians in their thousands rushed to join up for what they hoped would be the adventure of a lifetime. The Australian and New Zealand troops would come together in Albany Harbour at the end of 1914 to form two enormous convoys, the largest to depart from Australia during the Great War, transporting 40,000 soldiers, and nearly 17,000 horses, half way around the world in 54 ships.

The voyage was a long adventure itself, shared by men who would become staunch friends - mates - many of whom would not return home. The music captures the slow rolling motion of the troopships as they sailed across the Indian Ocean. Their ultimate destination was kept from the troops; they thought it would be France. Few anticipated that they would instead be called upon to invade Turkey, a country about which most of the young Australians and New Zealanders knew very little.

4 **Thoughts of Home** by Peter Sculthorpe, Australia

The movement was influenced by the first piece of music Peter Sculthorpe vividly remembered hearing, *The Last Post*, and utilises the one instrument that many of the troops were able to carry with them - a simple
mouth organ. Its melancholy sound echoed the feelings of many of those soldiers as their thoughts turned back to home, during the long voyage. His piece captures that last moment of sunny innocence before the troops would come shockingly face to face with modern warfare. Sadly Peter Sculthorpe passed away in 2014. He had hoped to live to see the completion of the Gallipoli Symphony, which he felt was a unique project, and one that he supported enormously with his advice and his advocacy.

5 The Landing by Elena Kats-Chernin, Australia

An unusually slow and steady accelerando takes the listener on the long voyage of the Anzacs in their rowboats as they are first towed through the cold darkness, and then cast off and left to row to the shore. The speed of their heartbeats steadily increases as they approach the beach, where they would come under fire as they raced forward through the shallows, across the beach and into the low scrub.

The sea was as smooth as glass; the moon had sunk below the Aegean; there was the first hint of the new dawn. It was the setting for one of largest amphibious landings in military history. But the attack in the dim light would not take the Turks by surprise. As the small craft approached the pebbled beaches they came under fire. The cliffs and gullies that had appeared daunting from the boats, were revealed as even being even more so when the men finally landed. Most made it to shore. Those that did not stained the pristine coastline with their blood. A vicious campaign had begun which would last for eight months. Turkey was being invaded and it was fighting back. On all sides, the sacrifice in those first hours was horrendous.

6 The Invasion by Kamran Ince, Turkey

This work speaks of the Allied invasion from the Turkish perspective and features a melody played on the ney, an instrument often played alongside the troops as they marched across the countryside towards the battlefields. The tune, peaceful at first, undergoes a series of transformations as the psychological torment and stresses of battle increase, to a point where the melody is utterly overcome by the overwhelmingly chaotic noise of war. The piece ends with a depiction of the counterattack on 19 May 1915, when Turkish troops attacked in waves through the night, in a desperate attempt to drive the Anzacs from their positions back into the sea.

The Turkish armies fought with great determination to save their beloved country from invading forces, as they had done repeatedly over several centuries. Here in a place of ancient civilisations and the ruins of Troy, seldom have so many countries of the world, races and nations, sent their young men to fight in such a concentrated space - almost the entire ANZAC battlefield could be seen from the heights.

The Turkish determination to press home the attack that night resulted in some 10,000 Turkish casualties, of which 3,855 were killed over the course of six hours, with at least 3,000 lying dead between the lines. Lance Corporal Clifford Mervyn Geddes wrote “as the dawn began to break, before our eyes, it seemed as if an army lay asleep in the grass before us.”

7 God Pity Us Poor Soldiers by Ross Harris, New Zealand

This piece for strings depicts the ceasefire on 24 May 1915, when soldiers of both sides gathered to bury their dead. From this moment on, both sides of the campaign experienced mutual affinity born of shared discontents and intertwined destinies. From the first day of the landing to the final evacuation, both sides’ list of casualties grew. They fought and died on the hottest of days and froze on the coldest. As they buried the dead during the ceasefire, the troops of both sides looked at one another, wondering about their fate and whether any of them would ever make it home. At the end of the day they shook hands with their opponents and wished them well. Captain Aubrey Herbert, who helped broker the truce, surveyed the scene with a Turkish captain, who said: ‘At this spectacle even the most gentle must feel savage, and the most savage must weep ... God pity all of us poor soldiers.’

8 The August Offensive by Andrew Schultz, Australia

Five months into the campaign, the Allies mounted a complex plan to take control of the higher ground on the peninsula including Sari Bair Ridge, Hill 971 and Chunuk Bair. The fighting at The Nek and Lone Pine was unmatched for brutal intensity. At Lone Pine alone, over 2,000 Anzacs and 7,000 Turks
were killed or wounded. Victory for the Allies would prove impossible. The Turks would call it *Kanli Sirt* – Bloody Ridge. It was a month of sheer carnage.

This movement depicts the terrible final attempt by the Anzacs to break through the Turkish positions in August 1915. The August offensive saw some of the bloodiest fighting of the campaign, resulting in a modest gain of ground of little strategic value, but at immense human cost. Enduring everything the Allies could throw at them, the Turkish defenders held firm and the nature of the conflict barely changed. Following the offensive, the stalemate resumed and would last until the final evacuation.

9 **The Trenches Are Empty Now** by **Ross Edwards, Australia**

This newly cast movement for the *Gallipoli Symphony*, originally commissioned by the Ian Potter Foundation, featuring didgeridoo and orchestra, depicts the vast silent and vacant landscape after the evacuation of the Allied forces. The battles are over and the invaders have departed. The war will continue, but not at Gallipoli. The trenches are empty. Snow falls, covering the unburied dead. There are reminders of the eight months of fighting: kilometres of trenches and roadways scarring the land, stretching as far as the eye can see. Clusters of crosses and mounds of earth mark where soldiers were hurriedly buried, and in some places their bones poke out of shallow graves. Discarded supplies tell the tale of the rapid evacuation. The men have gone, but their traces remain, even to this day, carved into the landscape over which they fought and where so many gave their lives. While the noise of battle has ceased, the reminders of the war lie everywhere on the land, and in the hearts of those nations who fought there.

10 **Hope of the Higher Heart** by **Demir Demirkan, Turkey**

This movement, leading without break into the next, features traditional Turkish instruments, and speaks to the heartfelt hope that humanity might rise above its instinct for war, and move towards peace.

11 **Future** by **Graeme Koehne, Australia**

This work looks forward, with the knowledge of our shared past, to our shared future. While we will always remember, and hold close the memory of those who gave their lives, new generations now lead us towards a greater understanding of one another, where tolerance and harmony prevail. Let them ask that we do not forget, and that we may learn from the past to come together in peace.

12 **One Hundred Seconds for One Hundred Years** by **Christopher Latham, Australia**

Marked “Vale Peter Sculthorpe”, this ending combines Western and Turkish tuning systems and Islamic and Christian cultural markers, demonstrating through music the coming together of Ottoman and modern Turkey, Maori and Pakeha New Zealand cultures, Indigenous and Modern Australian cultures into a harmonious whole. This musical demonstration of harmonious co-existence is a tribute to Peter Sculthorpe whose career was defined.
by bringing together different cultures through music, an alchemy he believed enriched us all.

Recorded live in Brisbane on November the 24th, 2015 with the Queensland Symphony at QPAC

**Sound** Bob Scott  
**Assistant to the Music Director,**  
**Typesetting** Peggy Polias

**ABC Classics**  
**Executive Producer** Toby Chadd  
**Publications Editor** Natalie Shea

---

**Anzac Cove**

There’s a lonely stretch of hillocks:  
There’s a beach asleep and drear:  
There’s a battered broken fort  
beside the sea.

There are sunken trampled graves:  
And a little rotting pier:  
And winding paths  
that wind unceasingly.

There’s a torn and silent valley:  
There’s a tiny rivulet  
With some blood upon the stones  
beside its mouth.

There are lines of buried bones:  
There’s an unpaid waiting debt:  
There’s a sound of gentle sobbing  
in the South.

Leon Gellert (1892-1977)

Leon Gellert, an Adelaide school teacher, enlisted in the AIF at the outbreak of the First World War and took part in the landing on Gallipoli. He fought on the Peninsula until evacuated sick in July 1915. The publication in 1917 of a volume of his poems, *Songs of a Campaign,* established his reputation as the poet laureate of the Australian infantry soldier.