

The Great Barrier Reef

composed for the 18th International Handbell Symposium 2018 in Cairns, Australia,
and inspired by the Yindiji creation story of the reef



composed for 3 - 5 octave handbells/handchimes
with optional bass guitar and percussion
(ocean drum, claves and suspended cymbal)

by

Timothy Sherlock

www.timothysherlock.com

The Great Barrier Reef

Stretching 2300 kilometres down the coast of Queensland, Australia, the Great Barrier Reef is the largest living structure on Earth. It is home to a diverse and unique community of marine life, from the tiniest of coral polyps to magnificent stingrays and green turtles. The reef forms an ecosystem which is vital to the health of the planet's oceans and it is a place of incredible natural beauty.

The Gimuy Walibara Yidinji people from the Cairns region have lived alongside the reef for thousands of years and many of their current traditions originated in ancient times. Legends, stories and dances have been passed down from generation to generation and one Yidinji story tells of how the Great Barrier Reef came into existence.

The story begins with a fisherman entering the calm waters off the coast of Gimuy (Cairns) to hunt for fish. Spear in hand and navigating the waters in his canoe, the fisherman sees something glittering under the water and he spears what he thinks is a fish. The fish turns out to be the sacred fish, the stingray, and it rises up creating a tumult in the waters, causing the sea to rise.

Damarri, son of the Creator god, Bullurru, knows the law has been broken but he also knows the remedy for the rising sea levels. He tells the people to gather large stones from the mountains which he then throws into the waters. This action stops the waters from rising and swallowing the land.

Recent scientific research has uncovered evidence that the Great Barrier Reef was formed due to a geologic event around 10000 years ago at about the same time that the Gimuy Walibara Yidinji people started telling their creation story. This is an astonishing example of how ancient folk memory can align with a scientific event that happened thousands of years ago.

My handbell composition inspired by this creation story is structured into 5 sections: The Calm (the calmness of the waters); The Hunt (the spearfishing hunt and the spearing of the sacred fish); The Remedy (the throwing of stones to calm the waters); The Reef (the beauty and mystery of the newly-created reef); and The Future (the future of the reef, encouraging positive action and awareness to preserve the health, future and beauty of the reef).

I acknowledge and thank Yidinji elder, Henrietta Marrie, and Yidinji dancer and artist, Carl Fourmile, for granting permission to interpret the traditional Yidinji story through the art of handbells. I also thank Carmel Daveson, President of the Handbell Society of Australasia, for her ongoing encouragement and passionate advocacy for the development of handbells in Australasia.

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Handbells used: 35 [43] [53]

optional

Handchimes used: 33

The Calm

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♩ = 78

1 LV 2 // 3 LV 4 // 5 LV vib. 6

mp *vib.* *vib.*

The Hunt

7 LV 8 LV // 9 ♩ = 112 10 11

p *vib.*

+ + + + + + + + + +

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12 13 14 15

Musical score for measures 12-15. Measure 12 is a whole rest. Measures 13-15 feature a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the right hand and a bass line of eighth notes in the left hand. Fingerings are indicated by '+' signs.

16 17 18 19

Musical score for measures 16-19. Measures 16-19 continue the rhythmic pattern from the previous system. Fingerings are indicated by '+' signs.

20 21 22 23

Musical score for measures 20-23. Measures 20-23 continue the rhythmic pattern. Fingerings are indicated by '+' signs.

24 25 26 27

Musical score for measures 24-27. Measures 24-26 continue the rhythmic pattern. Measure 27 features a change in the bass line, with a horizontal line above the notes. Fingerings are indicated by '+' signs.

m. 29 to 52: 5 octave choirs double top notes 8va

The musical score is presented in four systems, each containing four measures. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The tempo and dynamics are marked *mf*. The notation includes a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. Above the treble clef, there are five staves representing octave choirs, with notes marked with '+' signs. The piano accompaniment consists of chords in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. Measure numbers 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, and 43 are indicated at the beginning of their respective measures. The score shows a consistent rhythmic pattern of eighth notes in the piano part and a melodic line in the octave choirs.

6 44 45 46 47

subito *p*

48 49 50 51

mf

52 53 Sk 54 Sk 55 Sk 56 Sk

pp *p* *mp* *mf*

Sk Sk Sk Sk

The Remedy

m. 57 to first three beats of m. 89: 5 octave choirs double top notes 8va
 m. 57 - 64: treble clef notes stems up to play RT unless indicated by R

57 58 59 60

f

RT R RT R RT

61 RT R 62 RT 63 64

subito *mp*

The Reef

$\text{♩} = 62$

65 // 66 67 68 69

ff // *mp*

+

LV

70 71 72 73

LV

74 75 76 77

LV LV

78 79 80

LV LV LV

81 **rit.** **A tempo** 82 83

LV R LV LV

84 85 86 87

LV LV LV R mf

88 89 90 91 92

f mp