

WA PIANO PEDAGOGY

DIVERSIFYING MUSIC PEDAGOGY

CONFERENCE 2025

18-20 July 2025 | UWA Conservatorium of Music



KAWAI



YAMAHA

Conservatorium
of Music



UWA Conservatorium of Music and the West Australian Music Teachers Association (WAMTA) proudly present the 2025 West Australian Piano Pedagogy Conference: Diversifying Music Pedagogy.

WAPPC invites educators and practitioners to explore the theme of diversity in pedagogical practices. In 2025, one of the aims of the conference is to address the evolving landscape of piano pedagogy and music education more broadly, emphasizing the search for greater diversity and inclusivity in content, methods, and community.

CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

Friday 18 July

6pm: Welcome reception

7pm: Gala Recital - Liam Wooding | Waiting for the Aeroplane

Saturday 19 July

9am - 6pm: West Australian Piano Pedagogy Conference

7pm: Conference Dinner (Additional charge)

Sunday July 20

9.45am – 12.30pm: West Australian Piano Pedagogy Conference

1pm - 5pm: UWA Day of Piano

5.30pm: AMEB High Achievers' Concert

PROGRAM

Friday 18 July 2025

Time	Session
6pm	Welcome Event Percy Grainger Courtyard
7pm	Gala Concert Callaway Music Auditorium

Liam Wooding - Waiting for the Aeroplane

Join New Zealand pianist Liam Wooding for an evening of captivating virtuosity and emotion. Alongside favourite works by Bach, Haydn, and Liszt is John Psathas's evocative *Waiting for the Aeroplane*.



Saturday 19 July 2025

Time	Session
9.00am	Registrations Student Common Room
9.20am	Welcome Callaway Music Auditorium Dr Adam Pinto
Session 1	
9.30am	Valerie Lang Callaway Music Auditorium <i>Developing fundamentals of piano technique through exploring popular and eclectic piano styles.</i>
10.30am	Nicholas Williams Callaway Music Auditorium Lessons from Liszt's Studio: Individuality, Accessibility, Holistic Education
11am	Carly McDonald (Yamaha Music Australia) Callaway Music Auditorium Teaching the First Lesson
12pm	Lunch
Session 2	
Time	Session
12.30pm	Dr Tonya Lemoh Callaway Music Auditorium Expanding horizons: a survey of compositions for piano by composers of African descent.
1.30pm	Tim Topham Callaway Music Auditorium Cracking the Code: Studio Business Lessons from my Chiropractor
2.30pm	Dr Gaby Gunders Callaway Music Auditorium Teaching Courage: Helping Students Overcome Performance Anxiety with Science
3.30pm	Afternoon Tea

Session 3

Time	Session
4pm	Jocelyn Kotchie Callaway Music Auditorium Nailing Scaling – A holistic approach to the teaching of scales, triads and arpeggios. Extremes and Polarities – Extending the Teenage Palette
5pm	Liam Wooding Callaway Music Auditorium Commissioning new works for piano technique development: exploring the Fit 4 Piano Etudes
7pm	Conference Dinner at Itsara

Sunday 20 July 2025

Time	Session
9.45am	Dr Gaby Gunders and guest panel Behind the Closed Door: What Happens inside an AMEB Exam Room and How Can We Best Prepare Our Students for it?
10.30am	Julian Morgan-Smith (Yamaha Music Australia) Callaway Music Auditorium Under the Lid
11.30am	Adam Pinto & Emily Green Armytage Callaway Music Auditorium AMEB Duets in Focus: Come and join us in a hands-on session to celebrate a diverse range of works for two-pianists (or more) on one piano
12.30pm	Lunch
1-5pm	UWA Day of Piano Callaway Music Auditorium, Eileen Joyce Studio, Wigmore Studio Masterclasses for all levels and repertoire presented by Dr Cecilia Sun, Dr Adam Pinto, and teachers from the Conservatorium Junior Music School.
5.30pm	BBQ
5.30pm	AMEB High Achiever's Concert Callaway Music Auditorium Hear performances from AMEB WA candidates with outstanding results through its High Achiever's Concert Series. Performing and sharing one's craft is a vital component of developing artistic talent and building community within the arts. This series offers candidates the opportunity to perform in a professional venue amongst family and peers.

PRESENTERS AND ABSTRACTS

Emily Green Armytage & Adam Pinto

Emily studied at UWA, the Royal Conservatorium of The Hague, and privately in London. She completed a Master of Music in Performance at UWA and has performed widely with her ensemble Intercurrent. She regularly adjudicates and examines for AMEB.

Adam Pinto lectures at UWA and performs with WASO. His album *In Memoriam* features collaborations with young Australian composers. He also explores genre-crossing work through ensembles like Mix't and Rompduo and has recorded the music of Roger Smalley.

AMEB Duets in Focus

A practical session exploring duet repertoire for AMEB Grades 5–8. Attendees will be invited to participate and play excerpts together to discover the creative possibilities of four-hand piano teaching.

Gaby Gunders

Gaby was born in Jerusalem and started studying the piano at the age of six with Professor Sonia Valin of the Rubin Academy. She graduated with a Bachelor of Music (Hon) degree in Piano Performance, electing to explore many collaborative opportunities during her studies. Post-graduation, Gaby specialised in collaborative piano playing and enjoyed a thriving career as a collaborative pianist, chamber musician and corépétiteur across three continents over the next twenty years.

Gaby teaches piano at the University of Western Australia, has a successful private piano teaching studio in Perth, and is an examiner and the Senior Academic Advisor at the Australian Music Examination Board in Western Australia. She has completed her MMus degree in collaborative piano, and her PhD in music and psychology at UWA, focusing on performance anxiety. Following her doctoral research, Dr Gaby Gunders recently launched the Performance Courage Lab, where she works with performers and music teachers on optimal performance skills. Beyond her musical work, Gaby is a longtime volunteer with Lifeline Australia and travels with her family on scuba diving expeditions.

Teaching Courage: Helping Students Overcome Performance Anxiety with Science

Topics to be covered:

- 'Music Performance Anxiety' – definitions, physiological and emotional phenomena
- Stress Response – physiology of stress and its stages, benefits and costs of stress, and ways to manage it
- Anxiety Theories
- Mindsets and music performance anxiety
- Performance Courage strategies: techniques for the three stages of performance: prior to, during, and following the performance

Panel Discussion | Behind the Closed Door: Demystifying the AMEB Experience

What really happens in the exam room? This session lifts the lid on the AMEB process, offering a clear breakdown of each exam component — from repertoire to sight-reading, aural tests, and general knowledge. Parents and teachers often don't get to see what goes on behind closed doors — this is your chance to find out, with plenty of time to ask questions

Jocelyn Kotchie

Jocelyn 'Jo' Kotchie is a Western Australian composer and music educator with a career spanning 50 years and diverse experience across many areas of music education, including early childhood and secondary school curriculum development (Steiner). As one of Australia's leading pedagogical composers, Jo has written more than 400 works for children of all ages—from fun songs for young children, piano and instrumental music at all levels, to vocal and instrumental ensemble work for school students, and both sacred and secular choral works for all sizes and styles of choir.

In writing for young people, her philosophy is simple: to create music that engages the imagination while guiding the child or teen toward technical facility and challenge according to their capability. Where music can influence so many aspects of a developing child's life, Jo seeks to make that a joyful experience accessible to all children—not just those physically, intellectually, or psychologically capable of managing the technical and interpretative requirements.

She does this by crafting music that stimulates—rhythmically, melodically, dynamically, and most of all, imaginatively, creating a picture the child can bring to life.

Flights of Imagination – Engaging the Tweens

In a perfect world, children come to piano lessons with joy and enthusiasm, connect instantly with their teacher, engage happily with the music they are given, and learn easily. The teacher is experienced, patient, and feels an immediate rapport with the child. Parents are supportive and follow up at home in harmony with the teacher's guidance.

In reality, one or more of these elements is often missing, and each missing piece affects the child's experience. We can't control everything, but we can choose to make lessons joyful and bring a magical experience through the music we help children choose. We can make a conscious effort to connect intuitively and work within various limitations to spark imagination.

This session presents a range of pieces from late elementary to mid-intermediate level—crafted to meet diverse needs and nourish the psyche. Discussion includes:

- Music to engage and direct children with a need for speed
- Music to encourage expressive playing and tonal beauty
- Managing jazz rhythms
- Managing differing articulations across two hands

The presentation focuses on ages 8–12 and includes video performances from students. Audience interaction and discussion are encouraged.

Valerie Lang

Valerie Lang is an experienced music educator with a background in piano performance, pedagogy, music education, and community music. She facilitates vibrant piano learning experiences that deliver strong assessment outcomes and has a passion for mentoring new teachers. Valerie has been a tutor and guest presenter at UWA, the University of Notre Dame, and WAAPA, and studied forte piano with Geoffrey Lancaster and Bart Van Oort. She was formerly the Academic Development Officer at AMEB (WA).

Currently, Valerie runs a successful private studio, tutors at Perth College, is an AMEB examiner, and adjudicates at various school and music festivals.

Developing Fundamentals of Piano Technique Through Exploring Popular and Eclectic Styles

Are your students secretly practising anime, gaming, film or trending TikTok piano music? Worried they're skipping over the traditional technique repertoire?

This session explores how popular piano pieces align with the technical goals of traditional classical repertoire at intermediate levels. We'll look at developing:

- Legato
- Rotation for projecting melody
- Managing melody and accompaniment layers
- Chord technique and navigating 3rds
- Scale passages

Popular music can keep students engaged and support technical growth. We'll provide strategies, resources, and opportunities for questions and participation.

Tonya Lemoh

Tonya Lemoh is an Australian/Sierra-Leonean pianist who has performed globally as a soloist and chamber musician. She taught on the piano faculty at Copenhagen University for over a decade and is currently Head of Classical Piano at WAAPA. Tonya is a passionate advocate of Australian music and recorded the complete piano works of Raymond Hanson for Naxos.

She has received a National Library creative fellowship and released multiple solo CDs. Her recent ABC Classics album *I Dream a World* includes works by Coleridge-Taylor and Florence Price.

Expanding Horizons

Join Dr Tonya Lemoh in an exploration of piano music by composers of African descent. This rich and often underrepresented repertoire will expand your cultural awareness and teaching resources.

Composers include Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Joseph Bologne (Chevalier de Saint-Georges), Florence Price, William Grant Still, and Margaret Bonds. The session will include discussion and live excerpts performed by Dr Lemoh.

Carly McDonald

Carly McDonald is an Australian pedagogue, consultant, writer and presenter. She founded Novar Music in 2005, now with 25 teachers across four locations. She's the author of *Creative.Piano.Professional*, Yamaha Education Outreach Clinician, and co-editor of the *I Want To Play That* series. Carly holds a black belt in karate, is neurospicy, and lives with two teens and an energetic puppy.

The First Piano Lesson

We all bring our own curriculum to teaching—but what about the very first lesson?

In this session, Carly shares practical advice and free resources to help teachers create a strong and engaging first lesson. Topics include:

- Questions to ask parents before the first lesson
- Building a first-lesson plan
- Other essential firsts in the learning journey

Julian Morgan-Smith

Julian is Piano Technical Manager for Yamaha Music Australia and Vice President of the Piano Tuners & Technicians Guild of Victoria. He trained at the Australasian School of Piano Technology and later at Yamaha's Piano Technical Academy in Japan, where he achieved Grand Master and Concert Master status.

Under the Lid

Piano teachers increasingly need to understand the instrument itself. Julian explains:

- How to advise students on piano quality and common issues
- Why tuning is only part of the story: how voicing and regulation change sound, colour, and playability
- What a good technician can do to support teaching

Tim Topham

Tim Topham is the founder of TopMusicCo and a leader in music education innovation. He's spoken internationally and is the author of *No Book Beginners*. He holds a Bachelor of Music, Diploma of Education, MBA in Educational Leadership, and a Distinction-level AMusA.

Cracking the Code: Studio Business Lessons from my Chiropractor

Running a successful music studio isn't just about great teaching—it's about smart business strategies. But what if some of the best business insights didn't come from the music world at all? In this unexpected and thought-provoking session, Tim shares surprising parallels between chiropractic care and running a thriving studio.

From more effective marketing to improved student retention and innovative pricing strategies, discover how simple mindset shifts and strategic "adjustments" can transform the way you run your studio teaching business.

Whether you're looking to get more students in the door, simplify your operations, automate repetitive processes, or just save time and reduce your admin burden, this session will challenge the way you think about business. Expect fresh perspectives, practical takeaways, and a few laughs along the way.

And to ensure the changes you make are as easy to implement as possible, Tim will demonstrate how AI can be your perfect (and free) virtual assistant.

Get ready to crack the code and realign your studio for growth!

Nicholas Williams

Nicholas Williams is a Perth-based pianist, researcher, and teacher. His PhD (2025) focused on pianist Arthur Friedheim, a student of Liszt. He has performed and presented internationally and earned his Master's researching Liszt's *Hungarian Rhapsodies*.

Lessons from Liszt's Studio: Individuality, Accessibility, Holistic Education

Liszt was more than a virtuoso—he was a progressive teacher. This session explores:

- Liszt's inclusive and community-based teaching model
- His free masterclasses open to anyone who asked
- Extracurricular activities and holistic learning
- How Liszt's legacy continues through pupils like Friedheim

Liam Wooding

Originally from New Zealand, Liam Wooding now teaches and performs in Perth. He's taught at WAAPA, University of Waikato, and several schools, and works with WASO.

Commissioning New Works for Piano Technique Development: Exploring the Fit 4 Piano Etudes

Fit 4 Piano is a multimedia e-book by Rae de Lisle focused on injury-preventative technique. This session explores:

- Selected etudes commissioned from 12 composers
- Technical and stylistic skills embedded in each work
- How the etudes support movement-based learning and skill development
- How they serve as a bridge to more advanced repertoire