

# Meet Jodie Blackshaw

Composer of  
*Letter from Sado*



Jodie Blackshaw was born and raised in the **Riverina** area of **New South Wales, Australia**.

New South Wales is located on the east coast of Australia. Two of the largest cities in Australia, Canberra and Sydney, are in New South Wales.



The **Riverina** is an agricultural bio-region. It is unlike other areas of Australia because it has flat plains (similar to the Great Plains in the U.S.), a warm to hot climate, but also a good water supply for irrigating crops. This makes Riverina a great place for farmers growing diverse crops.



The Murray River runs through the Southern part of New South Wales. This bridge crosses the Murray at Albury.



Blackshaw calls the Riverina a “beautiful place to grow and change.” It was a good place to live in because it allowed her a “great deal of freedom and exploration.”



Jodie's family lived in Bilbul, a tiny town with a population of about 100. Her Dad was the Principal of the Primary School which had only two teachers for Kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

Her family lived next door to the school. Four year old Jodie liked to go to school. She often “ran away from home” and ended up at school.

One day she “ran away” on picture day.

They just lined her up with the other children – Jodie was in the school picture even though she was not yet a student!



**Jodie Blackshaw, age four, sitting with the big kids for a school picture.**



Her family moved to Griffith, NSW. When Jodie discovered that the town had a youth band she was ready to sign right up! Although her family was not particularly musical, her parents supported the idea. She was launched into music!

Joining the band was a really good idea...

- She learned to play the clarinet.
- She found out about music camps. She went to one and learned to make even more music.
- She kept improving.
- She eventually auditioned and was accepted into a regional school ensemble – a top band that drew kids from many places.

The Griffith Band started Jodie on her journey towards a musical life.



After high school, she decided to study music in college and went to the Canberra School of Music. Canberra is the capital of Australia and a beautiful city of almost 400,000 people.



**Canberra City Center looking out from Mount Ainslie with Lake Burley Griffin and Mount Stromlo in the background.**



Jodie received a Bachelor of Music degree in Composition at the Canberra School of Music in 1992.

She started teaching instrumental music. She traveled to many different kinds of school in many places in Australia. Sometimes she taught in the remote Australian outback and other times in the inner-city of Sydney.

She taught students of all ages and conducted many different concert bands.

Whenever Jodie couldn't find a piece that was right for a particular band's skills and instruments, she would just compose or arrange a new piece.



**Australia National University, School of Music,  
Llewellyn Hall.**



Here is a photo of a band Jodie taught, the 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> band from St. Patrick's College, Sutherland, New South Wales. Jodie loved this group of students and says she learned a great deal from them. Many went on to become musicians. Her composition, *Terpsichorean Dances* is dedicated to them.



Jodie kept looking for new ways to teach and help band students go beyond just learning notes. She wanted them to know and really understand all of the elements and aspects of music making.

So she went back to graduate school and earned a Graduate Diploma in Education in 2001.

In grad school, Jodie learned about Orff-Schulwerk, a music teaching method created by Carl Orff (a composer) and Gunild Keetman. This approach builds musicianship in every student through integrating music with movement, speech, and drama.



**Here's Jodie in 2008, teaching clarinet to students in the small town of Yass, New South Wales, population 7000.**

Orff-Schulwerk was a great match with Jodie's teaching and learning philosophy. She calls her Orff inspired workshops for band students and directors "Off the Podium" sessions.

The music she composes are creative and innovative pieces. Jodie gives the players many opportunities to make decisions and choices about how they want to play the music she writes.

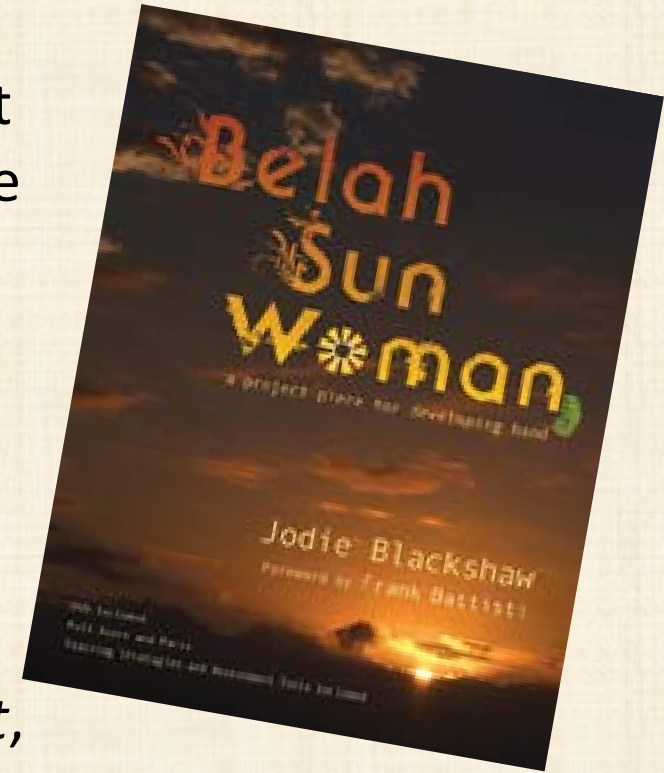


## Jodie is a prize winning composer.

In 2006 she won a first place in the Frank Ticheli Composition Contest for *Whirlwind*. A second work, *Terpsichorean Dances*, also won a prize in the same competition.

From 2009-2012 she developed an new BIG IDEA for pieces for younger bands call 'Project Pieces'. The Australian Band and Orchestra Director's Association, Queensland commissioned Blackshaw to write two 'project pieces' for the Australian National Band and Orchestra Conference in 1912. *Belah Sun Woman* and *Twist*, a work for high school band, were both premiered at the conference.

In addition to composing band pieces, Jodie Blackshaw presents workshops, judges band festivals, and works with bands all over the world.



Jodie goal as a composer is to create high quality, meaningful works for band. This is her mission and it fuels her work as a composer and teacher. She has said that she wishes her music to not just be "another piece, but an educational and spiritual journey for both the players and the director."

Jodie Blackshaw is a warm, friendly, and energetic woman whose music reflects her love for the young band members who play it.

She still lives in the Blue Mountains of New South Wales with her husband, David and daughter, Matilda.





## Photo Credits

slide. 1: <http://www.jodieblackshaw.com/>

slide 2: [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e0/Map of Australia.png](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/e0/Map_of_Australia.png)

slide 3: [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/31/Riverina bioregion.png](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/31/Riverina_bioregion.png) &  
<http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/1/17/BalranaldMurrumbidgeeRiver.JPG/405px-BalranaldMurrumbidgeeRiver.JPG>

slide 4: from Jodie Blackshaw

slide 6: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canberra>

slide 7: [http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/11/ANU School of Music, Llewellyn Hall.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/11/ANU_School_of_Music,_Llewellyn_Hall.jpg)

slide 8: from Jodie Blackshaw

slide 9: from Jodie Blackshaw

slide 11: <http://www.trbimg.com/img-51915fea/turbine/ct-ct-tl-district-64-composer-visit-2-jpg-20130513/600/600x448> This image could easily be swapped for one we have from the Rosemount Middle School.

slide 12: [http://static.wix.com/media/b8e057\\_2137b1409e9e4a64739704a8c28ab17d.png\\_256](http://static.wix.com/media/b8e057_2137b1409e9e4a64739704a8c28ab17d.png_256)