

# LUKA LESSON

*INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS POETRY PROGRAM*



WITH OVER A DECADE OF EXPERIENCE IN POETRY EDUCATION BOTH IN AUSTRALIA AND ABROAD, LUKA LESSON HAS DESIGNED WORKSHOPS AND RESIDENCIES SPECIFICALLY SUITABLE FOR AUSTRALIAN & INTERNATIONAL SCHOOLS.

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**When we put process first,  
the outcomes are lasting.**

*“Disengaged, disenfranchised, disheartened. These are the students who stunned us all with the power of poetry. It was my wish that Luka Lesson visit my school to increase student interest in poetry. I could never have imagined that in one week he could create a group of courageous young leaders who would stand and deliver words laden with truth, humour and desire. He graciously offered not only his talent, but his heart to young people on the verge of being lost.”*

*- Kylee Owens, Lead Teacher, Hastings’s Secondary College*

## LUKA LESSON - BIOGRAPHY

Luka Lesson is an Australian poet and rap artist of Greek heritage. Luka's work engages with stories of survival, the mythology of his family homeland, political resistance and the power present within the act of sharing our vulnerabilities. An author of two independently published collections, Luka has been commissioned by the National Gallery of Victoria, had poems published in a number of international anthologies, and toured with the likes of Dr Cornell West (USA), Akala (UK), Tiki Taane (NZ), Nahko and Medicine for the People (USA) and Shane Koyczan (Canada). Most recently Luka was commissioned to write and perform a new work with composer Gordon Hamilton for The Queensland Symphony Orchestra. In 2017, Luka established his very own annual poetry retreat program in his grandfather's village on the Greek island of Rhodes. Over the course of his career, Luka has always used his work as a touchstone for education programs in schools and universities. In fact, his poem 'May Your Pen Grace The Page' will appear on the NSW Australian high school English curriculum from 2019 to 2024 - the first time 'performance poetry' has appeared in an Australian curriculum.

### Major Works / Career Highlights

- 2011 Australian Poetry Slam Champion
- 2012 'Please Resist Me' album release
- 2012 National Gallery of Victoria commission
- 2013 Masters Sound Design (Poetry Performance) VCA
- 2013 'The Future Ancients' publication
- 2014 EXIT album release
- 2015 'Antidote' album release
- 2016 Sydney Conservatorium of Music residency
- 2017 'Living Artefact' single release
- 2018 Queensland Symphony Orchestra commission

*"Poetry has become a touchstone I have constantly turned to for guidance."*  
- Luka Lesson



## PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

### INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL RESIDENCIES

- 2013 International School Beijing
- 2013 Hong Kong International School
- 2014 International School Beijing
- 2015 Hong Kong International School
- 2015 Canadian International School of Hong Kong
- 2015 Western Academy Beijing
- 2015 South Saigon International School
- 2017 Renaissance College Hong Kong
- 2017 Western Academy Beijing
- 2017 South Saigon International School
- 2017 Renaissance International School Saigon
- 2017 Hong Kong International School
- 2018 Shanghai International Community School
- 2018 United Nations International School, Vietnam
- 2018 Hong Kong International School
- 2018 Mont'Kiara International School, Kuala Lumpur
- 2018 Garden International School, Kuala Lumpur
- 2018 International School of Kuala Lumpur



### AUSTRALIAN RESIDENCIES AND EDUCATION BACKGROUND

2006 - 2018

Visits and residencies to over 500 schools, education centres, university campuses and private colleges. Starting with Milpera State High School in 2006, and most recently completing a week-long residency at Roseville College, Sydney. These years include developing the Xavier College Poetry Slam program, education tours of all major cities and being included in the 'Positive Schools' conference tours in across Australia and Singapore.

### AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

From 2019 to 2024 Luka Lesson's poem 'May Your Pen Grace The Page' will be included in the NSW year 12 English curriculum. This is important not only because of being recognised as one of Australia's major poets, but also because it is the first time the words 'performance poetry' have been used in Australian curriculums - meaning that the genre has finally been recognised and legitimised by the country as a whole through Luka's hard work and tenacity over the past decade.

## ENGAGEMENT OPTIONS

Luka Lesson poetry residencies range from 2 days to 10 days in length.

Best practice sees Luka performing for the entire school or year level on his first day on site, then leading to break out workshops in school classrooms, theatre or library spaces. Each classroom experiences 3 workshops one for introduction/writing, one for writing & editing, and one for performance technique. At the end of the residency a chosen number of students perform their work in front of a large group - this can be a Slam competition or a simple recital. This standard plan can be adjusted as needed.

Residency days can include a number of workshops and performances, with only one hour for lunch and one hour of extra free time per day. This usually results in 4 to 5 workshops/performances per day, depending on period lengths at your school.

Please contact Luka Lesson directly for a quote relative to your school or university's needs.

Please note, all bookings outside of Australia must include flights, accommodation and per diems, bookings inside Australia can be negotiated on a case by case basis.

Contact: [luka@thefutureancients.com](mailto:luka@thefutureancients.com) | +61 421 888 127 | [www.lukalesson.com.au](http://www.lukalesson.com.au)



## “ TESTIMONIALS REGARDING LUKA LESSON’S WORK

*“Disengaged, disenfranchised, disheartened. These are the students who stunned us all with the power of poetry. It was my wish that Luka Lesson visit my school to increase student interest in poetry. I could never have imagined that in one week he could create a group of courageous young leaders who would stand and deliver words laden with truth, humour and desire. He graciously offered not only his talent, but his heart to young people on the verge of being lost.”*

*- Kylee Owens, Lead Teacher, Hastings Secondary College*

*"Luka is a genuine artist of high quality whose poetry is powerful and poignant. I salute his prophetic witness!"*

*- Dr Cornel West*

*"Luka Lesson is one of those people who changes the weather; who by his very presence makes the landscape seem more possible, more holy, more livable. I don't know where he came from or how he got to be so magic. What I do know is that I am better for having experienced him. A better writer. A wider girl. More true of heart. Words make worlds. Luka knows this. His mouth is a creation story...and we are all better for it."*

*- Dominique Christina, National Poetry Slam Champion and two-time Women of the World Poetry Slam Champion (USA)*

*"I'm not really into hip hop—I'm too old, I guess—but Luka Lesson is a sonic literary genius, and THAT is what I love. So if he is hip hop, then I guess I love hip hop after all."*

*- Taylor Mali, 4-time National Poetry Slam Champion and former president of Poetry Slam, Inc. (USA)*

*“Luka Lesson is quickly becoming one of the most powerful artists of our medium. A rare writer that practices what he preaches and in turn passes that same integrity onto those he teaches and performs for. All comments about awesome word play and clever lines aside his work is most importantly simple, honest, rebellion. The stuff that all great art is made from. His poems are fistfights with history, the truthful telling of it, honest Hellenic hip hop anthems sung from between the parts of your textbooks your teachers warned you about. I am lucky to call him my ally, and my friend.”*

*- Ken Arkind, Minor Disturbance Youth Slam, Colorado*

*"Luka is the kind of poet other poets want to be. Other poets want to be honest."*

*- Shane Koyczan*

*"Luka Lesson is a sonic literary genius."*

*- Taylor Mali*

# A LESSON IN PATIENCE: REFLECTIONS ON BECOMING A POET.

BY LUKA LESSON

Born to Greek migrants in a small city in Australia, my world always felt so small. With the bravery of migration, also comes the deep fear of the unknown and the hurtful words that always seem to coincide with new people arriving in contested spaces. So too comes the need to enclose ourselves and become insular, so that the outside world could no longer hurt us. I always wanted to shake this sense of claustrophobia - to run to the end of the block when my parents told me not to, to cross the street on my own, to go to universities in other cities, to get to know the world and all of its aromas. Now, I have carved a path for myself most of the world says is impossible, but the choice to become a full-time poet was always an easy one - I really had no choice, it is who I am.

Along my journey poetry has become a touchstone I have constantly turned to for guidance. Somehow being handed a translated copy of the Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu at 10 years old made me understand that poets were the ones who dug deeper, looked harder and searched more vigorously than others. Growing up on a steady diet of hip-hop made me appreciate the power of words for social change and their brutally honest journalism of the streets first lead me to write verses for myself. Again and again I fell deeply in love with the wordsmiths and storytellers, the rappers and holders of all of the various codes of oral traditions.

Moving to Melbourne in 2010 is what really gave me the chance to cut my teeth and push the boundaries of who I am. The stage became that one place where I felt most at home, that welcomed me and let me be seen for who I am, vulnerable and true. I eventually won the Australian Poetry Slam and toured to the great Nuyorican Poets' Cafe in New York City - a Mecca for the modern poet. A dream had been fulfilled, and a journey had finally, officially, begun.

Now I work to make sure my learnings are passed on, so that the younger generation can use, reinterpret and create their own forms of passionate, powerful storytelling.

With respect,

Luka 'Lesson' Haralampou.

*“Self-love is a  
dying art,  
Not dying  
for your art.”  
~Luka Lesson*

