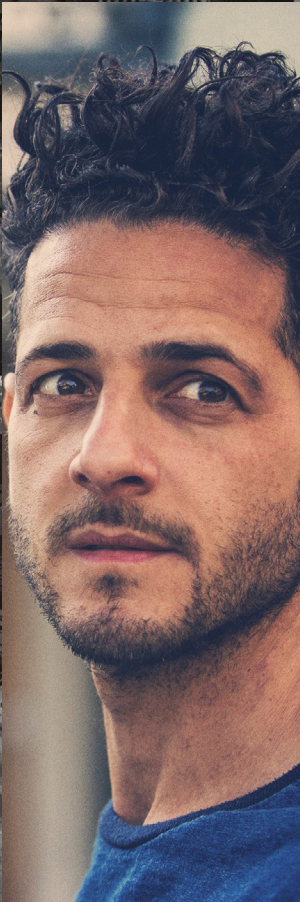


23 May, 2024

NGAPA WILLIAM COOPER



“SYDNEY”
“SYMPHONY”
“ORCHESTRA”

Principal Partner



SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

PATRON Her Excellency The Honourable Margaret Beazley AC KC

Founded in 1932 by the Australian Broadcasting Commission, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra has evolved into one of the world's finest orchestras as Sydney has become one of the world's great cities. Resident at the iconic Sydney Opera House, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra also performs in venues throughout Sydney and regional New South Wales, and international tours to Europe, Asia and the USA have earned the Orchestra worldwide recognition for artistic excellence.

The Orchestra's first chief conductor was Sir Eugene Goossens, appointed in 1947; he was followed by Nicolai Malko, Dean Dixon, Moshe Atzmon, Willem van Otterloo, Louis Frémaux, Sir Charles Mackerras, Zdeněk Mácal, Stuart Challender, Edo de Waart and Gianluigi Gelmetti. Vladimir Ashkenazy was Principal Conductor from 2009 to 2013, followed by David Robertson as Chief Conductor from 2014 to 2019. Australian-born Simone Young commenced her role as Chief Conductor in 2022, a year in which the Orchestra made its return to a renewed Sydney Opera House Concert Hall. The Sydney Symphony Orchestra's concerts encompass masterpieces from the classical repertoire, music by some of the finest living composers, and collaborations with guest artists from all genres, reflecting the Orchestra's versatility and diverse appeal. Its award-winning education program is central to its commitment to the future of live symphonic music, and the Orchestra promotes the work of Australian composers through performances, recordings and its commissioning program.

PERFORMING IN THIS CONCERT

FIRST VIOLINS

Harry Bennetts

Associate Concertmaster

Alexandra Osborne

Associate Concertmaster

Sophie Cole

Léone Ziegler

SECOND VIOLINS

Emma Jezek

Acting Associate Principal

Victoria Bihun

Emma Hayes

Maja Verunica

VIOLAS

Justin Williams

Assistant Principal

Rosemary Curtin

Andrew Jezek*

CELLOS

Catherine Hewgill

Principal

Kaori Yamagami

Principal

Timothy Nankervis

DOUBLE BASSES

Kees Boersma

Principal

David Campbell

PERCUSSION

Rebecca Lagos

Principal

Bold Principal

* Guest Musician

° Contract Musician

† Sydney Symphony Fellow

2024 CONCERT SEASON

CLASSICS IN THE CITY
Thursday 23 May, 7pm

City Recital Hall,
Angel Place

NGAPA WILLIAM COOPER A STORY OF COMPASSION

NIGEL WESTLAKE conductor
BRENT GRAPES trumpet
LIOR vocals
LOU BENNETT vocals
ANDREA LAM piano

ARVO PÄRT
Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten (1977)

NIGEL WESTLAKE
Psyche: Concerto for Trumpet and Chamber Orchestra (2024)
i. *Goddess of the Soul*
ii. *Launch*
iii. *Mars Gravity Assist*
iv. *Arrival*

INTERVAL

**NIGEL WESTLAKE, LIOR AND LOU BENNETT WITH
ADDITIONAL CREATIVE LYRIC CONTENT BY SARAH GORY**
Ngapa William Cooper (Grandfather William Cooper) (2023)
i. *Exile/Call to Ancestors*
ii. *The News*
iii. *The Silence*
iv. *Yakapna (Family)*
v. *The Meeting*
vi. *The Protest*
vii. *At the End of My Days*

Post-concert Q&A

With our guest artists live on stage, following tonight's performance.

Estimated durations

Pärt – 10 minutes
Psyche – 21 minutes
Interval – 20 minutes
Ngapa – 35 minutes

The concert will run for approximately one hour and thirty minutes

Cover image

Background: Melbourne in the late 1930s, looking north east from South Melbourne. Source: State Library Victoria.

Photo of Lior by Carlo Santone; Lou Bennett by Dr Romaine Moreton; Nigel Westlake by Steve Forrest.

This performance has been generously supported by the Oranges & Sardines Foundation.

Principal Partner



CONCERT DIARY

Visit sydneyssymphony.com for more information,
or call our Box Office on (02) 8215 4600

JUNE 2024

Great Classics

Saturday 22 June, 2pm

Sunday Afternoon Symphony

Sunday 23 June, 2pm

Concert Hall,
Sydney Opera House

ALEXANDER MELNIKOV PERFORMS SHOSTAKOVICH

ORCHESTRAL FIREWORKS

Pianist Alexander Melnikov is celebrated for '...Shostakovich playing on a level of inspiration I have only heard in my dreams.' (*Gramophone*). Don't miss the virtuosity of this astonishing artist in this concert full of orchestral fireworks, from spellbinding Shostakovich to energetic and charming Strauss.

SHOSTAKOVICH

Festive Overture

Piano Concerto No.1

R STRAUSS

Don Juan

Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks

GIORDANO BELLINCAMPI conductor

ALEXANDER MELNIKOV piano

DAVID ELTON trumpet



International Pianists in Recital

Monday 24 June, 7pm

City Recital Hall

ALEXANDER MELNIKOV IN RECITAL ROMANTIC MASTERPIECES

With three Romantic masterpieces performed by a modern-day master, this concert is a treat for anyone who loves the piano.

SCHUBERT Fantasie in C, Wanderer

BRAHMS Seven Fantasies

DEBUSSY Preludes: Book II

ALEXANDER MELNIKOV piano



Classics in the City

Thursday 27 June, 7pm

City Recital Hall

HANDEL'S WATER MUSIC

SPARKLING BAROQUE

This concert, directed by the brilliant Erin Helyard, is a celebration of the spectacular, and a rare chance to hear our musicians shine in a smaller orchestra, with each virtuosic line ringing out into the City Recital Hall.

PISENDEL Imitation des caractères de la danse

HANDEL Water Music

ERIN HELYARD harpsichord/director



ABOUT THE ARTISTS

NIGEL WESTLAKE conductor

Nigel Westlake's career, spanning almost five decades, began as a clarinetist touring Australia and the world with many orchestras, ensembles and bands.

He began composing from 1980, receiving offers to write for radio, theatre, circus, TV and film and was appointed composer in residence for ABC Radio in 1984. From 1987-1992 he was a core member of the Australia Ensemble (resident at UNSW) and in 1992 was invited by guitarist John Williams to join his septet Attacca as performer and composer.

His film credits include *Blueback* (2023), *Babe*, *Ali's Wedding*, *Paper Planes*, *Miss Potter*, *Babe: Pig in the City*, *Children of the Revolution*, *The Nugget*, *A Little Bit of Soul* and the IMAX films *Antarctica*, *Solarmax*, *The Edge* and *Imagine*. His television credits include numerous documentaries, telemovies, news themes and station idents.

He writes extensively for the concert hall, receiving commissions to write for orchestras, ensembles and soloists, and has received many awards, including two ARIA Awards, fifteen APRA awards across both Classical and Screen categories, the 2022 APRA Distinguished Services to the Australian Screen Award and the Gold Medal for Best Original Music at the New York International Radio Festival.

He is a two-time winner of the prestigious Paul Lowin Orchestral prize, in 2013 for *Missa Solis – Requiem for Eli* and in 2019 for *Spirit of the Wild – Concerto for oboe and orchestra*. In 2020 he was awarded the Albert H. Maggs Composition Award by the University of Melbourne for his third string quartet, *Sacred Sky*.

He has conducted all the major symphony orchestras in Australia in performances and recordings of his own works, made his US conducting debut at the Lincoln Centre with the New York Philharmonic in 2016 and his European debut with the RTÉ Concert Orchestra at the National Concert Hall in Dublin in 2018.

He holds an honorary doctorate in music awarded in 2013 by the University of NSW and was the recipient of the HC Coombs Creative Arts Fellowship at the Australian National University in 2004.



Photo by Simon Westlake

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

BRENT GRAPES trumpet

Brent Grapes is the Associate Principal Trumpet of the Sydney Symphony. He received his musical training in his hometown of Perth, Australia, and at the Juilliard School in New York, studying under Raymond Mase, and Mark Gould.

Brent served as the Principal Trumpet of the West Australian Symphony Orchestra from 2013 until 2022. Prior to this, he was the Principal Trumpet of the Auckland Philharmonia Orchestra (2009-2013) and a member of the Australian Army Band Corps as both a reservist and full-time musician (2002-2007).

Brent has performed as a guest Principal Trumpet for the Australian World Orchestra and as a member of the Australian Brass Quintet. As a soloist, Brent has performed concerti in Australia, New Zealand, China, and the United States. In 2022, he premiered a newly commissioned trumpet concerto by the renowned Australian composer Nigel Westlake. Brent also won the Juilliard School concerto competition in 2007 and the US National Trumpet Competition graduate soloist division in 2007 and 2008.

When not practicing the trumpet, Brent loves to spend time with his kids, kicking the footy, or bowling at the cricket nets. Brent is also a keen student pilot and enjoys taking to the sky whenever he gets the chance.



Photo by Jez Smith

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

LIOR vocals

Lior burst on to the Australian music scene in 2005 with his debut album *Autumn Flow*, achieving high rotation on Triple J, which cemented this album into the hearts of the Australian public. *Autumn Flow* achieved Platinum status and went on to become one of the most successful independent debuts in Australian music history. A swag of accolades followed, including three ARIA Award nominations as well as a nomination for Album of the Year in Triple J's prestigious J Awards. Recorded and released entirely independently at a time when that was still a rarity, Lior paved the way for a model that is now deemed common place.

Lior's 2008 sophomore album, *Corner of an Endless Road*, debuted at #2 on the Australian Albums chart and topped the Independent charts for several weeks. The album gave a greater indication of Lior's rich cultural background with a number of tracks featuring Middle Eastern influences. Lior picked up another two ARIA Award nominations including Best Independent Release.

Lior has released a further three studio albums – *Tumbling Into the Dawn* (2010), *Scattered Reflections* (2014) and *Between You and Me* (2018). These albums traverse broader territory and showcase Lior's fertile musical palate.

Over the past decade, Lior has toured extensively both in Australia and internationally and has been a regular performer at WOMAD and art festivals around the world, including an entire season at the Edinburgh Festival. Alongside his own tours, Lior has also toured in collaboration with artists such as Melbourne vocal group Invenio, headed by Gian Slater, as well as several visual artists, string quartets and full symphony orchestras nationally. Lior is renowned for the exceptional quality of his live performances.

Aside from writing and releasing original albums, Lior has developed a keen interest in collaboration and diversification. In 2013, Lior collaborated with renowned composer Nigel Westlake in writing *Compassion*, a song cycle for voice and orchestra consisting of original melodies and orchestration set to ancient Hebrew and Arabic texts centred on the idea of compassion. Commissioned by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, the work was premiered by Lior along with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra at the Sydney Opera House in late 2013 and subsequently went on to tour nationally with all the major state orchestras, including a performance at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in early 2014. A recording of *Compassion* was released in 2014 and went to #1 on both the Classical and Classical/Crossover charts. Lior and Nigel went on to win the ARIA Award for Best Classical Album in 2014. In 2016, Lior premiered *Compassion* in the US with the Austin Symphony Orchestra and went on to win the Austin Table Critics' Award for Best Symphonic Performance of 2015-16 for this performance.



Photo by Carlo Santone

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

DR LOU BENNETT AM vocals

Yorta Yorta Dja Dja Wurrung, Dr Lou Bennett AM is a former member of the internationally acclaimed trio Tiddas (1990-2000). A prolific songwriter/composer, she penned some of the group's signature songs. In 2006, she was a co-founder of the iconic Black Arm Band.

Lou's work stretches over a vast area within the arts industry including her various roles as performer, songwriter, musical and artistic director, composer, actor, soundscape and music designer, educator and board member (Chair of the Australia Centre at the University of Melbourne; Board Member for RISING).

She completed her PhD by project at RMIT Melbourne in October 2015.

Lou uses her own languages of Yorta Yorta and Dja Dja Wurrung, extending to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages that can be retrieved, reclaimed and regenerated through songs, stories and performances.



Photo by Dr Romaine Moreton

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

ANDREA LAM piano

Pronounced a 'real talent' by the *Wall Street Journal*, New York-based Australian pianist Andrea Lam performs with orchestras and leading conductors in Australasia, Japan, China and the United States, including the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra, Hong Kong Philharmonic, and all major Australian symphony orchestras. From New York's Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center to the Sydney Opera House, she has played for Sydney Festival, Musica Viva's Huntington Festival (Australia), Orford Festival (Canada), and Chelsea Music Festival (USA) with works from Bach, Schumann and Chopin to Aaron Jay Kernis, Lilya Ugray, and Nigel Westlake.

The 2024 season includes soloist engagements with Queensland Symphony Orchestra with conductor Umberto Clerici, New Zealand Symphony Orchestra with conductor André de Ridder, Sydney Symphony Orchestra for works by Nigel Westlake and Lior, and with Orchestra Victoria for Arts Centre Melbourne. Chamber concerts include a return with the Australian String Quartet at UKARIA, and the Australia Ensemble@UNSW (Sydney), as well as solo performances of Matthew Hindson's new works, including at Melbourne Recital Centre.

In 2023, Andrea featured in acclaimed performances of Schumann and Rachmaninov concerti with the Sydney and Melbourne Symphony Orchestras with conductors Sir Donald Runnicles and Jaime Martín, and featured in Adelaide Festival in both the Chamber Landscapes weekend curated by Paavali Jumppanen, and the *Ngapa William Cooper Project*, commissioned by UKARIA and Finding Our Voice, composed by Lior and Nigel Westlake and performed with the Australian String Quartet. Engagements also included Sydney Opera House' Utzon Music Series, Newcastle and Sanguine Estate Music Festivals, with the Australia Ensemble@UNSW, in recital at Elder Hall (Adelaide) with violinist Emily Sun, alongside several regional concerts. In 2022 Andrea toured Bach's *Goldberg Variations* nationally

for Musica Viva Australia alongside Paul Grabowsky, performed as soloist with the Sydney, Adelaide and Tasmanian Symphony Orchestras, as pianist alongside baritone Bo Skovhus at Sydney Opera House, and for Sydney Opera House' 2022 International Piano Day livestream, as well as numerous solo concerts and masterclasses in regional and metropolitan centres Australia-wide.

Andrea Lam was a semi-finalist in the 2009 Van Cliburn Competition, Silver Medallist in the 2009 San Antonio Piano Competition, and winner of the ABC's 'Young Performer of the Year' Award in the Keyboard section, and the Yale Woolsey Hall Competition. Recently appointed Lecturer in Piano at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music, Andrea holds degrees from both the Yale, and the Manhattan Schools of Music. Recordings include Mozart concerti with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, with cellist Matt Haimovitz (Pentatone Oxingale), and as part of New York's acclaimed Claremont Trio. Pianist for violinist Emily Sun on the ARIA-nominated album *Nocturnes* (ABC Classics), earning a rare 5 star review in *The Australian* and described as 'a winner on every count' (*Sydney Morning Herald*), Andrea's next album features solo piano works by Matthew Hindson, due for 2024 release.



Photo by Keith Saunders

ABOUT THE MUSIC

ARVO PÄRT

Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten (1977)

At the time he wrote *Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten*, Arvo Pärt had never met the great British composer, and, living then behind the Iron Curtain in Soviet-occupied Estonia, was hardly familiar with his music.

It is a work that begins quietly – a gentle bell, soft strings – before plunging to the very depths of grief. Pärt said of the piece:

Why did the date of Benjamin Britten's death – December 4, 1976 – touch such a chord in me? During this time I was obviously at the point where I could recognise the magnitude of such a loss. Inexplicable feelings of guilt, more than that even, arose in me. I had just discovered Britten for myself. Just before his death I began to appreciate the unusual purity of his music...And besides, for a long time I had wanted to meet Britten personally – and now it would not come to that.

This deceptively simple piece evokes such tragedy that it was chosen by Michael Moore as the soundtrack to the scene, in his film *Fahrenheit 9/11*, where the twin towers of the World Trade Center crash to the ground. Terrible images, matched with music so powerful it needs no visual accompaniment to create images of mourning, sorrow and pity.

Cantus in memoriam Benjamin Britten is an early example of the 'tintinnabulation' style Pärt developed in 1976. He describes tintinnabulation thus:



Arvo Pärt

I have discovered that it is enough when a single note is beautifully played. This one note, or a silent beat, or a moment of silence, comforts me. I work with very few elements – with one voice, two voices. I build with primitive materials – with the triad, with one specific tonality. The three notes of a triad are like bells and that is why I call it tintinnabulation.

A bell sounds, very quietly, three times, before the first violins begin their sad descent on an A minor scale. One by one, each level of strings enters, each one an octave lower and twice as slow as the one before, so that by the time the double basses enter, their pace is one-sixteenth that of the first violins. Eventually, the strings come to rest on the notes of the chord of A minor. And all the while a bell tolls its despair, lingering even after the notes of the strings have faded into the ether.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

NIGEL WESTLAKE

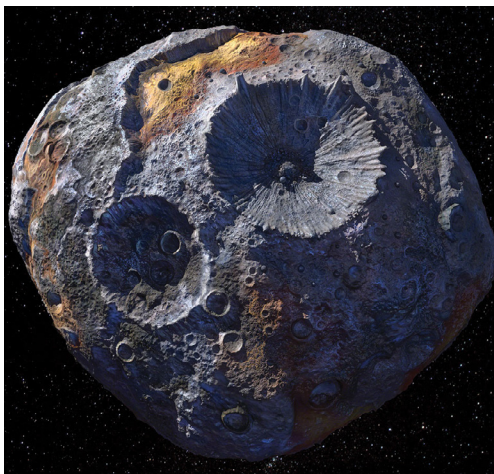
***Psyche*: Concerto for Trumpet and Chamber Orchestra (2024)**

Nigel Westlake writes:

The rare metal asteroid known as 16 Psyche lies in the main asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter. Named after the ancient Greek Goddess of the soul by the Italian astronomer Annibale de Gasparis in 1852, Psyche was the sixteenth asteroid to be discovered.

On 12 October 2023, NASA launched a 3.6 billion km, 6 year mission to Psyche in the hope of providing a window into the evolution of the solar system and to examine its mysterious metallic exterior (the ore of which is thought to be valued at around \$10 quintillion.)

The concerto is an imaginary fantasy which uses the idea of the NASA expedition as a departure point with which to explore a dialogue between trumpet and chamber orchestra.



Artist's impression of Psyche asteroid

i. *Goddess of the Soul*

Opening with a gentle slow moving elegy, the first movement is a token of remembrance for Paul Goodchild, Associate Principal Trumpet with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra from 1979 to 2021. Written the day of Paul's funeral in April 2022, the solo is played offstage thereby conjuring an elusive and other worldly presence.

ii. *Launch*

The NASA launch of the Psyche mission is reimagined here in musical form, offering a brief, intense burst of driving energy and pulsing 5/8 rhythms that support an agile trumpet solo characterised by rapid fire articulated note groupings & dexterous flourishes.

iii. *Mars Gravity Assist*

Appearing to be suspended in space (despite travelling at 21,000 kph), the craft is tentatively pulled toward Mars where, using the red planets gravity to swing itself toward the outer part of the main asteroid belt, it gathers momentum and continues its journey toward Psyche's orbit.

iv. *Arrival*

Depicting the safe arrival of the NASA spacecraft, the upbeat finale is based on a series of typical 'clarion call' trumpet motifs that are teased and exchanged between soloist and orchestra in a playful dialogue. The forward momentum of the music is driven by the use of strong displaced accents and irregular time signatures.

Psyche was co-commissioned by the Melbourne Chamber Orchestra (with soloist Owen Morris) and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra (with soloist Brent Grapes) and is a reworking and development of my Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra, which was commissioned for the West Australian Symphony Orchestra and soloist Brent Grapes by Geoff Stearn and Janet Holmes á Court AC.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

The story of *Ngapa William Cooper* By Sarah Gory

Ngapa William Cooper is the culmination of years of thinking, writing and creating, alone and together. The pandemic and subsequent lockdowns slowed the process of creation, which turned out to be a blessing in disguise. It allowed ideas to percolate slowly and the collaborative elements to come together organically. Lyrically and musically, *Ngapa William Cooper* is textural and layered — a reflection of the story that it weaves. Thematically, *Ngapa William Cooper* is a continuation of Lior and Nigel's acclaimed *Compassion* collaboration and yet at the same time it stands on its own, greater than the sum of its parts.

Above all, *Ngapa William Cooper* is a testament to Yorta Yorta activist Uncle William Cooper, and the importance of continuing his legacy of resistance, solidarity and empathy.

While the histories of Indigenous Australians and Jews are divergent and unique, they share common elements. Both peoples have been subject to genocide, displaced from their lands, marginalised and persecuted. Both have also shown great resistance, proudly continuing their culture through stories, learning, song and family, often in the face of great odds. *Ngapa William Cooper* is a reminder that our voices raised together are powerful instruments, in more ways than one.

Kristallnacht

On the night of 9 November 1938, civilians and Nazi authorities ransacked and destroyed Jewish homes, shops and synagogues across Germany and Austria. This series of coordinated pogroms became known as Kristallnacht - 'Night of Broken Glass' — named so for the shattered windows that littered the streets the next morning. Kristallnacht marked the escalation of anti-Jewish violence in Nazi Germany, and the beginning of the end for European Jewry and Yiddishkeit culture as it once was. Almost one hundred Jews were murdered that night, and some thirty thousand Jewish men were rounded up and sent to the now infamous concentration camps of Eastern Europe. Their families would soon follow them, on and on until the cities and towns were emptied of Jews and the skies choked with the smoke of their collective funeral pyre. Kristallnacht made front page news around the world.

The Silence

Two days after the events of Kristallnacht, on 11 November 1938 (also known as Remembrance Day in Australia, for Australian soldiers who have died in combat), William Cooper opened the newspaper in his Footscray home, perhaps hoping to remember his son. Private Daniel Cooper was killed in Belgium during World War I, fighting for a country and commonwealth that continued to deny him the most basic of human rights, citizenship.

Instead, what William Cooper found were accounts of the violence in the streets of Berlin and Vienna, stories of Jews being rounded up and taken away. What he saw in the days and weeks that followed was the world turning its back on the Jewish people. Barely a week after Kristallnacht, glass shards still caught in cracks on the sidewalk, an editorial in Melbourne newspaper *The Argus* read: 'What will become of the wandering Jews? Nobody wants them [...] It is in reality not a problem for Australia, but for Europe.'

ABOUT THE MUSIC

The Protest

In the face of this silence, a group of Aboriginal men and women known as the Australian Aborigines' League convened a meeting on Kulin Nation Country. During this meeting, a resolution was passed condemning the actions of the Nazi Government and protesting the treatment of the Jews in Nazi Germany. On 6 December 1938, less than one month after Kristallnacht, the Australian Aborigines' League — led by their secretary, William Cooper — dressed in their Sunday best, marched from Cooper's home in Footscray across the Maribyrnong River to the Nazi German Consulate in the heart of Melbourne city to deliver a formal petition condemning the persecution of Germany's Jews and calling for it to end.

In 1938, Aboriginal people across Australia continued to be persecuted and dispossessed, denied citizenship and basic human rights on their own land. Yet, in the face of all odds, the members of the Australian Aborigines' League refused to stay silent, raising their voices in solidarity with a group of people distant in culture and geography: 'We are a very small minority, and we are a poor people, but in extending our sympathy to the Jewish people we assure them of our support in every way.'

William Cooper and his comrades were denied entry by the Nazi German consul, who refused to receive their petition.

Uncle William Cooper

William Cooper was a Yorta Yorta activist, political campaigner and one of the most important figures in twentieth century Australian history. Born in 1861 at the heart of his Country, upstream from the junction of the Murray and Goulburn Rivers, Cooper spent his early years at Maloga Mission and Cummeragunja Reserve, where he learned to read and write — and where he would first encounter the struggle for Aboriginal rights.

In 1933, Cooper moved to Melbourne, where he could continue to fight for his people. It was there that he drew up his now-famous petition to King George V. His demand for Aboriginal representation in parliament, in the form of a federal MP chosen for and by Aboriginal people, echoes through history in the Uluru Statement from the Heart's current-day call for a 'voice to parliament'. Cooper also founded the Australian Aborigine's League during his Melbourne years, which in its current guise as the Aboriginal Advancement League is Australia's oldest still-operating Aboriginal rights organisation. The League was instrumental in promoting the first Day of Mourning on 26 January 1938, an event that evolved into what we know today as NAIDOC week — and whose legacy remains well and truly alive in the 'Change the Date' campaign.

Throughout his life, William Cooper wielded 'the spear of the pen' to great effect and impact. In his many letters and petitions, written to politicians and representatives of the crown, we hear a voice ahead of its time. Cooper called for equal rights for Aboriginal people while asserting the uniqueness of their culture and claim to land. He fought stridently for all Aboriginal people to be free of persecution and despite this never being realised in his lifetime, in his final years he still saw fit to stand in solidarity with the Jewish people across the seas.

Cooper's legacy of determined struggle and enormous empathy remains as pertinent today as ever.

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Program Note

By Dr Lou Bennett AM

Yorta Yorta is the name of the language of the Yorta Yorta Nation including ten tribes. My tribe is Walithica, which means we are the people from the meeting of the three rivers: dungala (Murray), gaiyla, (Goulburn) and yakoa (Campaspe). The town name Echuca derives from our Tribe's name.

Uncle William Cooper was my Grannie Ada's brother. Their mother, my Nanny Kitty, has been found in numerous historical documents sharing our language. Now, as her great, great, great granddaughter, it is with great honour I share some Yorta Yorta with you.

In each section, you will hear Yorta Yorta. I have used the language sparingly and my translations here will be based in story and poetic form as direct translations become misleading and taken out of context. The creative practice of call and response between Yorta Yorta and English has been used to further another level of understanding.

Like many First Nations languages, the words can be multiple in meaning. When the Europeans wrote our languages in lexicons and word lists, there was a disruption to this multiple value, often rendering our languages to one meaning. Using the language artistically gives the opportunity to place multiple meanings back into the language.

A special acknowledgement to Yorta Yorta Elder, damangalya (Dr Wayne Atkinson) for his cultural knowledge and for narrating Uncle William's letters.

i. *Exile/Call to Ancestors*

Calling the Ancestors into our space before a gathering or ceremony is an old tradition and one shared by many. Here I share with Lior a prayer to *dhama yenbena* (Old people), *dhama mulana* (Old spirit) and *garra* (now).

ii. *The News*

The term *dhoma* is used in multiple ways from dearest love to feeling sorry for someone who is less fortunate. I use it as a term for a loved one, Uncle William and Auntie Agnes' son Daniel.

Wanhal nyinyi guwiga? *Where is my son?*
Wanhal nyinyi guwiga? *Where is my son?*
Dhoma nyinyi yalka, dhoma nyinyi yalka -
My dear child, my dear child
Dhoma nyinyi yalka, dhoma nyinyi yalka -
My dear child, my dear child

I opened up the newspaper
Twenty years to the day
The war had ended
The war that took my son away
Twenty long years since he laid his life
down Now he is buried under northern
stars Whose stories I do not know

He had no land
And he had no rights
From a nation who made no distinction
Who it sent off to fight

But there was no mention of my
Daniel anywhere
And in my sorrow
In the depth of my despair
Something strange yet familiar
Struck me and took hold of me
A wave of darkness
Gathering from across the sea

ABOUT THE MUSIC

And I read
The night of broken glass
Bodies crouched in terror
Streets of blood and crystal shards
And I read
Skulls smashed
Synagogues burned to the ground
They say flames were still shooting into
the sky at dawn

It does not matter you have done no wrong
It only matters to whom you were born

And I knew there was only one way the
blade could fall
For I see it happen to my people

iii. The Silence

The term *ganbina* is also multiple in
meaning. It could mean get up, rise, grow,
even fly. It's vital that our languages
are not taken as literally as the English
language.

Gukul gukul *Silence, silence*

Gukul *silence*

Ganbina... *Rise...*

Gakana... *Comes...*

Ganbina... *Rise...*

Gakana... *Comes...*

Ganbina-n, gabina-n ganbina-n...

It rises, rises, rises...

I return to the news every day
A silence I've learned all too well
Silence

I traded places
With a young man bleeding
On the streets of broken glass

And though he was half a world away
I could see him in my reflection
Clear as day
And I knew I was a ghost if I let him fade away

I return to the news every day
A silence I've learned all too well It grows

If all backs are turned
If all eyes look away
There will be no way to know we are sinking
There will be no way to know we are gone

iv. Yakapna (Family)

Yakapna (yercupna) means family. I
believe Uncle William's strength was his
family. We are taught at a very early age
that we are all connected, and it takes a
strong spirit and heart to remain loving.
This is one of the most important teachings
of my Old People.

Chorus:

nyinyi dungadja gowola – My big kindness
dhomi gow-it – love overtakes

bida marreda – hatred

nyinyi dungadja gowola – My big kindness

dhomadhoma-nga – I love you

ngalnyan-uk yamutj – goodness

gathana manma mathi ngangwurra –

don't make a bad heart

For my family
I speak so we can live freely
So we can speak our language
Perform our ceremony

For my family
I work so they can rest upon the land
So they never have to hold guns in hand
To meet another man's demands

My strength is my gentleness

Love will quell hate
My strength is my resilience
Do not harden your heart

v. The Meeting

My dear friends
Thank you for joining me today
A heavy shadow has befallen me

Brothers and sisters
It has come to my attention
Of the gravest persecution
Taking its place in the heart of Europe

*'Like the Jewish people
Our people have suffered much cruelty,
exploitation and misunderstanding as a
minority at the hands of another people.
We are a small minority and we are a poor
people, but we must assure them of our
support in every way.'*

ABOUT THE MUSIC

*'The Nazi government has a consulate here on our land
Let us go there and make our protest known
Our pen is our spear*

*Let us have the courage to use it
For resistance is the refusal to yield to silence.'*

Can you believe
That there are those who say
That there is nothing left to do
But smooth the pillow of a dying race
About the first people
So we will be the first to speak up
We will be the last to be silent

vi. The Protest

There are times when I sing, I can feel my
Ancestors voices surge in me and my voice
changes from sweetness to assertion, from
young to old.

Lior sings, 'Dark is the heart, the heart,
that closes its door'. I chose to be creative
and to find words that I could hear my Old
People speaking.

*Djimunuk birrama djimunuk birrama –
Coward, go away, coward go away*

*Djimun mathimatj ngangwurra –
Cowardly cruel heart*

Our words are sacred
Our words are strong
They will outlive us when we are gone

Dressed in their Sunday best
Underneath the scorching southern sun
From the Maribyrnong to the Yarra they
marched
From the banks of the river
To the heart of the city
Marching down the boulevards

Straight into the smoke
People's gaze bearing down
William's aging frame
Heavy with justice on his back
Letter in hand
To these faceless arches of power
Towering above those unwelcome
Those unwanted

*'On behalf of the Aboriginal inhabitants of
Australia, we wish to have it registered and
on record that we protest wholeheartedly at
the cruel persecution of the Jewish people
by the Nazi government in Germany. We
implore that you would make it known to
your government and its military leaders
that this cruel persecution of their fellow
citizens must be brought to an end.'*

Our words are sacred
Our words are strong
They will outlive us when we are gone

It does not matter what message you bring
It only matters to whom you were born

Dark is the heart that closes its doors

vii. At the End Of My Days

We believe that death is not the end; it is a
rebirthing, a transitioning of the spirit. We
still grieve, we cry for the loss of our loved
ones, however, we know in our hearts that
life force is eternal.

*Ooooh dhama yenbena, dhama yenbena –
Oh Ancestor*

*Ooooh ganbina mulana, ganbina mulana
– Fly spirit*

*Ooooh nyuwanda dama yenbena-ruk
danu, danu – We cry, cry for you Ancestor
Birra-ma yanyabak dhama yenbena-l
muma, birrama birrama garra... Go away
walk with the Old Ones now...*

*Ganbina-n, gabina-n ganbina-n... It rises,
rises, rises...*

At the end of my days
I want to know I spoke up when I saw wrong
At the end of my days
There'll be no doubt I stood up for what
was right
And that courage led the way
To the end of my days

At the end of my days
My conscience will have been my guide
To see the world through different eyes
I will have crossed the divide
Like a river red gum tree
My roots will hold me up in shifting sands
And point me towards the sun

ABOUT THE MUSIC

Though some will try and break me
And ignorance may try to erase me
They will not weaken my resolve
For my bearings are true and strong

At the end of my days
I want to know I spoke up when I saw wrong
At the end of my days
There'll be no doubt I stood up for what
was right I will be proud of my name
At the end of my days

Ngapa William Cooper was commissioned by UKARIA with support from Ulrike Klein AO and the Adelaide Festival as part of Finding Our Voice, which was supported by Restart Investment to Sustain and Expand (RISE) Fund, an Australian Government initiative.

Program notes by Justine Bashford (Arvo Pärt) Symphony Australia © 2005; Nigel Westlake (*Psyche*) © 2024; Sarah Gory (*The Story of Ngapa William Cooper*), Dr Lou Bennett AM (program note) © 2024. Lyrics by Lior.



William Cooper

Source: Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS)

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Learn more here



FROM THE ARCHIVES



Donald Westlake and Heather Sumner, parents of composer Nigel Westlake and long-serving members of the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

THE WESTLAKES

Tonight the Sydney Symphony Orchestra performs music by Nigel Westlake, the latest in a long line of close artistic collaborations with the Australian composer. But the connection between the Westlakes and the Sydney Symphony is a multi-generational one.

Nigel's mother, violinist Heather Sumner, was invited to join the Sydney Symphony Orchestra by our first Chief Conductor, Eugene Goossens, in the late 1940s, remaining with the Orchestra on and off for many decades. While a member of the Orchestra Sumner met Donald Westlake, who had been appointed Principal Clarinet, a post he held (after further studies in Europe) from 1960 until 1978.

'My mother was 17 years old when she won the ABC's Concerto and Vocal competition, and a year later, was invited by Eugene Goossens to become a member of the Sydney Symphony,' explains Nigel. 'My father came over from Perth in the 1950s, and he shared First Place in the Concerto and Vocal competition with Max Olding – the father of Dene Olding, who was of course the Concertmaster of the Sydney Symphony for many years, and a very dear friend of mine.'

'I've got many, many memories of going to concerts, seeing my parents in the orchestra together. I have very fond memories of hearing my father play, including a performance of the Copland Clarinet Concerto conducted by Aaron Copland.

'This is what inspired me to become a musician. Coming as a young boy, hearing your dad out the front thinking, 'Well, that's the coolest thing I could ever imagine. I want to do that!'

Nigel's own playing career meant that he got to perform in the Orchestra with his parents in 1978. 'One of the first recordings I did was *The Rite of Spring* under Willem van Otterloo,' recalls Westlake with a smile. 'My mom was playing violin, my dad was Principal Clarinet, and I was playing second bass clarinet beside Peter Kyng, the Principal Bass Clarinet at that time.'

'It's a very long history. Whenever I come to the Sydney Symphony, it's always like coming home.'

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PERCUSSION

MUSICIAN PROFILE



KAORI YAMAGAMI

Principal Cello

How long have you been playing with the Sydney Symphony?

Just since the beginning of this season!

What has been the highlight of your Sydney Symphony career so far?

I love playing in the orchestra so far, but the way to work everyday certainly adds to the glamour of it!

If you didn't play your instrument, what instrument would you like to play – and why?

Double bass or French horn. Bass was and still is my favourite string instrument. Horn, my favourite wind instrument, I played for a few years as a child (sadly not very well!) and I absolutely adore the sound of a group of them in a Brahms symphony, for example. To die for!

What do you like to do with your spare time when you aren't playing or practicing?

All things food related interest me. Cooking, especially baking, eating etc. Seeing a good movie, reading, and/or wandering around a good modern art museum always tickles my fancy.

What was the last book/podcast/TV series you really loved?

Curb Your Enthusiasm. Larry David is a genius!

What is your idea of a perfect day?

If I collapse in bed at the end of the day from positive exhaustion, I know I've had a good day. Doesn't have to have been any specific activity.

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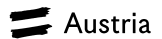


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