

MEDIA KITS

KOORLANGKA SUITE

GINA WILLIAMS & GUY GHOUSE
GOVERNMENT HOUSE, THU 13 FEB
TICKETS: \$39

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KOORLANGKA

Award-winning music duo Gina Williams and Guy Ghouse perform their fresh, modern take on a suite of children's songs and lullabies performed in Noongar. With guitar brilliance and beautiful vocals, Koorlangka Suite showcases and connects one of the world's oldest language with our younger generations.

There is a saying that "it takes a village to raise a child," but what happens when the village is burned down and the songs are taken away?

Those who remain write a new script and we sing it back to life.

A musical performance of rare Noongar language, matching the glorious strings of the Dolce Ensemble and the piano genius of Russell Holmes with award winning music duo Gina Williams and Guy Ghouse is connecting one of the world's oldest languages with our youngest generations. Koorlangka is a suite of children songs and lullabies in Noongar language written by Gina and Guy, and will be premiered at the 2020 Perth International Arts Festival on February 13, the anniversary of Kevin Rudd's landmark apology to the Stolen Generations.

But this is no children's show. Koorlangka works off a simple premise that 3000 generations of cultural practice was interrupted at colonisation – so to bring healing to the intergenerational trauma that ensued, we must find ways to reconnect future generations to old ways.

Traditionally, music was used to preserve and pass on language, lore and culture. For 60,000 years, mothers and grandmothers, fathers and grandfathers sang to their children, creating songlines which span from the north to the south, from the east to the west.

Nowadays the beautiful languages, songs and stories of the land have been reduced to a whisper; almost wiped out by policies and governments determined to assimilate Aboriginal people.

On Noongar country, less than 1% of our people speak our language...but by engaging all generations of our entire community (both Noongar and Nyidiyung) through music, we are starting to rewrite that script.

This performance links storytelling, lullabies and children's songs which showcase Noongar language and culture.

At preview shows at Karijini National Park and the Denmark Festival of Voice, Koorlangka has proven to be a spectacular way to continue to push this renaissance of Noongar language; to take this rare

language and showcase it in the most beautiful and compelling way on stages all over the world. Noongar language underpins the values, ethos and aspirations of our community, and this production weaves stories of love and loss, of joy and triumph, celebrating the things we have in common.

Koorlangka is the first instalment of a four-work contemporary Noongar song cycle (Kalyakoorl, which translates to Forever). Each of the works is informed by four principles of Koort (Heart), Moort (Family), Boodja (Land) and Koorlangka (Children/Legacy).

It is imperative we start with Koorlangka. As legacy work, we welcome everyone to come and “sit at our campfire” and share our songs and stories. We hope our work will inspire others to sing Noongar language.

The songs have been written first in Noongar, then back-translated to English.

Koorlangka (Children)

The opening lullaby (with a hint of “Coraline” thrown in for good measure) sets the intent of the suite. This lush track brings promises of glorious language songs layered with divine textures of piano, strings and guitar.

Ngoonyoony Nindjan (Sweet Kiss)

Quirky fun track where we shower our children with love and affection and “sweet kisses” to ward off any bad thoughts before bedtime.

Keyen, Koodjal, Daambart (One, two three)

A hat tip to the days of Ella Fitzgerald, Keyen, Koodjal, Daambart pays tribute to the joy of being home with family, singing, “here is handsome, handsome dad” and “beautiful mum.”

Djinda-Djinda (Star-Star)

A cover of two verses of Twinkle Twinkle Little Star. Direct translation of the second verse is;

Kalaang ngaank baal wort-koorliny

Hot sun she goes away

Wer worl-ak moordangabiny |

And the sky becomes dark

Ninny-karnangoor noonook

You shine a little

Djinda djinda kedalak

Star, star night

Djinda djinda karnangoor

Star star shining

Ngany kadijiny naatj noonook

I think what you are

Ngarda Mikang Kanangoor (Under the shining moon)

Most activity in the animal kingdom on Noongar country happens at dawn and dusk, when the light is soft and the earth is cool. With echos of Billie Holiday, we sing about the animals making their way home to rest.

Bindi Bindi (The Butterfly)



Just as the caterpillar thinks it's all over and everything goes to black, she gets her second act as the Butterfly. This journey has parallels to Noongar language, in that our language has been reduced, but it isn't dead, it's just been sleeping, and now we are witnessing a magnificent renaissance.

Koorlbardi wer Wardong (Magpie and Crow)

Based on a traditional Noongar story, this is a cautionary tale of what happens when jealous brothers become too full of their own importance.

Djidi-Djidi (Willy Wagtail)

A rollicking number for the Willy Wagtail. He's the BIGGEST of the dreamers, sitting up in the tree thinking about the day when he gets to be the "king of all he surveys." He says "Ngiyan baal moorditj? Ngany baal moorditj!!!" (Who's solid? I'm solid!!!)

Benallaby

Written in Benalla on tour in 2018 (and inspired by a wind chime!), this is one of our favourite lullabies. Go gently now, our child, lay down to sleep. Your mother and father now, they're here in your dreams. Bad spirits run away, good spirits come to stay. So lay down to sleep, our child, family is here always.

Meenak Bilya (Moon River)

A beautiful cover of a favourite standard. Bring your best singing voice (and tissues).

Maawitt (Baby)

Dream, baby, lay down to sleep. Your father keeps home fires burning on heartland, close to your heart. We dream under the stars. Dream, baby, lay down to sleep, your mother sings. Beautiful child, sleep now, dream well. We dream under the stars.

Ngoorndiny, Ngoorndiny (Sleep Sleep)

Sleep now sleep oh beautiful baby, beautiful baby your mama holds. Night time, sweet dreams are coming, lay down to sleep in your mama's arms.

Koorndarm (Dream)

Song about the different ways we dream. Under stars, all through the night. Dream on cold country (nyittiny boodja). Dreams of plenty, good dreams, here on heartland, of the ocean, of the hills, of warm fires, under moonlight, dreams that shine, dreams of rivers flowing, dreams of this country, dream well.

Kedalak Baal Koorliny (Evening is coming)

A sweet and heartfelt way to end our musical journey. "And all of us, we hold onto most beautiful dreams, now all of the little children lay down to sleep."

GINA WILLIAMS & GUY GHOUSE

WINNER: 2018, 2016, 2015, 2014, 2013: INDIGENOUS ACT OF THE YEAR

Western Australian Music Industry (WAMi) Awards

INDUCTEE: 2018 West Australian Women's Hall of Fame (Gina)

ABORIGINAL CATEGORY WINNER, 2017 WEST AUSTRALIAN OF THE YEAR

Guitar brilliance and incandescent vocals. These exceptional performers connect and capture



audiences through the power of song. And it's made even more special when it's sung in rare Noongar language.

Gina Williams and Guy Ghose have firmly established a reputation for bringing a fresh, modern take on ancient traditions; merging evocative sounds, natural acoustic instruments, poignant stories with that incredible, beautiful voice. The natural rhythms of the language are perfectly captured and represented, and there's an onstage connection and charisma that comes from two good friends who simply won't quit.

Australian Indigenous music Icon and National Treasure, Archie Roach, has likened Gina to being a modern day Edith Piaf, telling his audiences that Gina "takes this old, old language, writes and sings these beautiful songs so that we in the audience cannot help but fall in love with the romance of it all."

Gina is a Balladong daughter; one of the 14 clan groups which make up the Noongar nation, covering the south west corner of Western Australia. By official records, Noongar language is critically endangered (there are less than 400 recognised fluent speakers left). Her mother and grandmother, both part of the Stolen Generations were never allowed to speak their languages. Gina wasn't stolen, but was relinquished as a baby for adoption.

Telling her story and singing these beautifully crafted songs in language is deeply personal. "I grew up not knowing anything about my true history. I've had to go back as an adult and learn. I don't regret this, but it means I've had to claw territory back. I wanted to learn the language, to write songs so that I could teach my children. It's an incredibly beautiful language – when I hear Noongar language I hear music, it literally sings to me."

Performing with the all-important blessings of her elders and her community, this Balladong songbird will leave you breathless!

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