

AUSTRALIA

MUSIC

DANCE

# BUNĠUL

GURRUMUL'S MOTHER'S BUNĠUL  
GURRUMUL'S GRANDMOTHER'S BUNĠUL  
GURRUMUL'S MANIKAY

## EDUCATION RESOURCE



Image: Jacob Nash

**PERTH  
FESTIVAL**

Founder



Principal Partner



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Perth Festival respects the Noongar people who remain the spiritual and cultural birdiyangara of this kwobidak boodjar. We honour the significant role they play for our community and our Festival to flourish.

# CREDITS

**Music** Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu, Michael Hohnen & Erkki Velthiem

**Directors** Don Wininba Ganambarr & Nigel Jamieson

**Creative Producer** Michael Hohnen

**Musical Director** Erkki Veltheim

**Designer & Creative Associate** Jake Nash

**Cinematographer** Paul Shakeshaft

**Video Designer** Mic Gruchy

**Lighting Designer** Mark Howett

**Sound Designer** Steve Francis

## **Performers**

### *Yirritja*

Phillip Yunupingu, Jamie Yunupingu, David Yunupingu Robert Burarrwanga, Shane Dhawa Bukulatjpi, Nebuchdneear (Nebbie) Nalibidj, Nelson Yunupingu

### *Dhuwa*

James Gurruwiwi & Terrence Gurruwiwi

**Producer** Anna Reece

**Producer – Skinnyfish Music** Mark Grose

**Production Management** dplr

**Stage Manager** Erin Daly

**Front of House Engineer** Guy Smith

**Head of Sound & Systems Engineer** Cam Elias

**First Camera Assistant** Scott Wood

We thank and pay our respects to the Yolngu people of North East Arnhem land with whom this work has been created and their country this work has been created on. We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which we live, learn and work and pay our respects to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders.



# A NOTE FROM THE CREATORS

The artistic vision for Gurrumul's last album *Djarimirri (Child of the Rainbow)* was to bring traditional Australian music to the mainstream in our societies. We presented the highest forms of musical and artistic expression in both cultures - the classical tradition of an orchestra (in this instance in a range of styles, including minimalist) and the Yolŋu song style and Yidaki style which is also repetitive.

But the music and album alone only tell a part of a story. Yolŋu live in a world where all the natural elements of the earth are connected through dance, painting, song, land and ancestral stories.

The show *Bungul* brings all of those elements together, carefully curated by the Yolŋu, with songlines related to land forms related to dances related to painting styles related to musical patterns told through deep poetic language expression to bring us an equal of high art in this country from some of the most precious people who still live here.

Gurrumul's family dance, sing, improvise and direct this insight into a world we should all know a lot more about. We thank his family for their trust, commitment and homage.

**Mark Grose & Michael Hohnen, Skinnyfish Music**

Geoffrey's songs became famous the world over. People were touched and moved by the beauty of his voice, his own songs and the songs of his mother and grandmother which he sang. But they did not know the really important part of these songs - their meanings. And that is what we seek to do now, as a gift to Geoffrey, as a gift to the world. To tell a little of the meanings that lie behind these songs.

To the Yolŋu, our songs, paintings and dances are our books - they tell us where we have come from and where we are going to. They follow the songlines that weave us together. They are our maps, our law books, our title deeds and our family history. They connect us to the land and to the animals with which we share it and of whom we are a part. They are woven into our hearts.

**Don Wininba Ganambarr, Director**

For 200 years, Australian society has blocked its ears to the remarkable Indigenous cultures that are our inheritance. As the urgency grows daily to find a more sustainable way to live with the fragile land that supports us, it is surely time to take stock and learn from the extraordinary cultures that have always been around us, cultures such as the Yolŋu. It is time to listen.

It has been a humbling and breathtaking experience to walk on Country with Don and Gurrumul's family, and to get a glimpse into their profound sense of connection and knowledge of the landscape, plants and animals who are their kin. We hope our work together offers a small window into this exquisite world, and a different way of seeing our lives and our destiny.

**Nigel Jamieson, Director**



Image: Anna Reece

# ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE

Music legend, Quincy Jones called Gurrumul 'one of the most unusual and emotional voices that I've ever heard'. Gurrumul Yunupingu toured internationally, sang with Elton John, Sting, Paul Kelly and performed for the Queen. He sang in multiple languages such as Gaalpu, Gumatj or Djambarrpuyngu, a dialect related to Gumatj, and in English.

Gurrumul was a member of Yothu Yindi, a self-taught musician who played guitar (upside down), drums, keyboard and didgeridoo. He was born without sight and grew up in Galiwin'ku, a settlement on Elcho Island, in Arnhem Land off the north coast of Australia. His songs reflect his deep connection to family, the land and animal life. *Bungul* is a performance made under Yolŋu law and co-directed by Gurrumul's brother-in-law, Don Wininba, a senior of his clan. A *bungul* is a ceremony, a meeting place of dance, song and ritual.

Created on country in North East Arnhem Land with the Yunupingu family, *Bungul* is a ceremonial celebration of one of the transcendent albums of our time. You're invited to experience the traditional songs, dances and paintings that inspired Gurrumul's final album, *Djarrimirri (Child of the Rainbow)*, in a live performance by Yolŋu dancers, songmen and the West Australian Symphony Orchestra. This is a rare opportunity for teachers and students to immerse themselves in music from one of the oldest cultures in the world, blended with Europe's rich musical heritage.

## MAJOR THEMES

### CONTINUITY OF CULTURE

Gurrumul's daughter, Jasmine Yunupingu, wants her son to know his culture, including ceremonial dances that are central to life at Galiwin'ku. Jasmine sees *Bungul* as a way for others to see her culture. Discuss ways in which music and song can preserve and express a culture.

### PRESERVING LANGUAGE

Most of Gurrumul's songs are sung in Galup, Gumatj or Djambarrpuyngu, which are all languages of the Yolŋu people of North East Arnhem Land. English was his third or fourth language. Discuss the importance of language in his music.

### TOGETHERNESS AND RESPECT

Gurrumul said 'When I first started playing solo I was surprised when I was getting standing ovations ... when I write music and play it, it gives me a place in both cultures'.

<https://www.creativespirits.info/resources/music/geoffrey-gurrumul-yunupingu>

How does music transcend cultural and language barriers?

## RESOURCES

<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/xbjqa2>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GO7Rv4c8fMA>

<https://www.skinnyfishmusic.com.au/gurrumul>

<https://www.goveonline.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/yolgnu-english-dictionary.pdf>

# STORIES ON THE SONGS IN BUNĠUL

The Yolŋu wold is defined by two opposite sides, Yirritja and Dhuwa, within which individual clans have different identities.

Both halves are required to find balance. For instance, Yolŋu people must marry someone from the opposite half. The whole world is made up of these balanced and specific identities, which all have very specific relations with every other thing in the world.

The moon, the north wind, the hammerhead shark, the emu, the Milky Way are Yirritja. The sun, west wind, tiger shark, bustard and Venus are Dhuwa. Whilst in North Arnhem Land, everywhere that you go you will be either on Dhuwa or Yirritja land and every Yolŋu person you meet, every native species or plant or animal you see will be one of these identities.

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## BÄRU

The Bäru Manikay celebrates the songline of the Yirritja Ancestral Crocodile Bäru, beginning his journey in the swamps near Biranybirany, South of Yirrakala, and making his way to the Ocean. An important and powerful totem to the Gumatj, the dance captures the crocodiles protecting their nest and their association with Fire, which Bäru gifted to the Yolŋu. The Fire is represented by the diamond pattern painted on the dancer's chest and in paintings documenting Bäru's ancestral journey. The Bäru paintings featured in the film content were painted on country at Biranybirany by Dhakuwal Yunipiŋu and make up a part of the historic bark painting collection Saltwater recording the maritime rights of the Yolŋu.

## WÄK

This Dhuwa Manikay is about Wäk – the Crow – and belongs to the Galpu, Gurrumul's mother's clan. Wäk is also the sound of the crow crying, which we hear picked up by the Dhuwa Dancers. In this Manikay Wäk descends from the heavens towards Djapanuruana and glides across country. The Manikay goes on to tell of his close kinship with Matjkuŋjuwu, the file snake, and the Galpu clan lightning snake. The featured painting is by famous Galpu artist Mithinari Gurruwiwi.

## DJARIMIRRI

Djarimirri – the Olive Python or Rainbow Serpent – is a powerful Dhuwa totem spirit. The sun shining against the snake's scales forms a prism of light like a rainbow, a significant message about beauty and transience. In this Manikay, a mother sings of the birth of her child 'covered by rainbow', fully formed within her womb, of laying the new born child down to be dried by the sun at the sacred place where women give birth, near the termite mound, home to the Olive Python. The featured painting is by Dju'djul Gurruwiwi, Mithinari's daughter, whose work frequently depicts the Olive Python, Djaykun the Filesnake and Guḍurrku the Brolga.

## GAPU

Gapu means fresh water, which determined Yolŋu's journey across country. This Dhuwa Manikay and dance, which belongs to Gurrumul's mother and her Galpu clan, is a celebration of the energy and life giving force of clear running water. The footage was filmed at Guwatjurrumuru West of Yirrakala. The featured painting is by acclaimed artist Malaluba Gumana and depicts the Galpu clan designs of Dhatam, the Waterlilly, painted on her Homeland of Gängän.

## GOPURU

Gopuru is a large salt water fish, a little like a blue fin tuna. This Gumatj song celebrates Gopuru jumping up through the water and feeling the North West Wind brushing against its gills. Fishing still plays an important part in Yolŋu life – often flowering plants or trees are used to indicate when it is an appropriate time to fish for a particular species.

## MARAYARR

Marayarr refers both to the masts of the sailing ships of the Maccassans from Sulawesi, with whom the Yolŋu have traded and maintained a deep cultural relationship for some 500 years, and the masts that are carved and then raised at ceremony and funeral sites. The pole represents the strength of Yolŋu culture and the body – the painted top at the very top of the pole representing the brain and knowledge of the person. The Gumatj Flag, which flies upon the Marayarr, with its image of ropes and an anchor, again gives testimony to the closeness of cultural ties with the Makassans.

## GALIKU

This Yirritja Manikay celebrates the Calico Fabric that the Yolŋu traded with the Makassans, formed into coloured flags indicating different Yolŋu clans. These flags accompany ceremony and are flown at burial sites, in this instance filmed at the site of Gurrumul's grave, where the colours denote his cultural connections.

## DJOLIN

This manikay celebrates the sounds of the musical instruments the Madhukin (mouth organ) and the Djolin, a single-stringed Macassan instrument played by a Djinarra (gifted musician). The joyous Gumatj song is used today to celebrate a range of instruments including contemporary electric guitars.

## NARRPIYA

This song is about a powerful and revered totem in Yolŋu culture – the Octopus. The eight limbs of the Octopus denote the Yolŋu clans and their close spiritual connections. Narrpiya also has a strong connection with the North West Wind and the Djapana Sunset Manikay and Songline. The performance on screen was filmed unrehearsed and as a single take and features a young Yirritja dancer's interpretation of the orchestral setting of this song.

## DJILAWURR

This Yirritja song is about the Djilawurr Scrub Turkey. Its carefully tended nests of sticks and leaves are a ubiquitous site in North East Arnhem Land and the Djilawurr is regularly featured at the commencement of ceremony and funerals. It represents the clearing and cleansing of the ground in preparation for Ceremony. The dancer's steps exquisitely capture the scratching of the birds as they build their nests and clean the site around them. The featured painting is by the Gumatj artist and ceremonial leader Yumutjin Wununmurra.

## DJAPANA

Djapana is a particular sunset precious to the Yolŋu. It involves a glowing red sun slowly dropping into the Ocean, viewed here from the Yirritja country of Nawingu, Milarr and Gundjamir. The song is both about ending and renewal, the image of the setting sun counter-pointed by a dance about a sick person who feels the North West Wind revive them.

## WULMINDA

This powerful Dhuwa Manikay has many layers of inter-connected meanings. Wulminda are Dark Clouds that form out across the ocean, associated with the coming monsoon. The Manikay sings of the darkening clouds, lightning, thunder and loss but also the promise of soft gentle rain. Wulminda also references the mind, and all the knowledge of the mother country and clan stored there. The film content features Guy Maestri's Archibald Award-winning portrait of Gurrumul and a dance, dramatising tiny insects that move up through the earth during Ceremony, to finally feel the rays of the sun and north west wind upon them.

# BEFORE THE SHOW

## RESEARCH

Below is the trailer for the documentary Gurrumul. This provides insight into Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunipirju's life, family and achievements. If teachers can access the documentary it is well-worth getting students to watch in part or full.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TXa3gw3g4C4>

Allow students access to the following article: <https://www.sbs.com.au/nitv/article/2018/04/25/why-gurrumul-australias-most-important-documentary>

### Questions for students:

1. Where is Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunipirju from?
2. How many languages did he speak?
3. How many instruments could he play?
4. Gurrumul was considered to be a messenger between which two worlds?
5. What are the 'manikay' that Gurrumul brought to life through his music?
6. Name some of the significant influences on Gurrumul's music.
7. Gurrumul toured internationally and performed with many artists. Name three of the artists that he performed with.

## MUSIC

Bapa means Father in Yolngu. The song 'Bapa' is about the grief Gurrumul experienced after his father's passing away; and it is also a tribute to his father's, memories and legacy.

- Ask students to listen to two versions of 'Bapa'

**Version 1 Live, Enmore Sydney:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gyAa1-jOZpl>

Analysis of the music:

The music features two guitars, double bass which is bowed (arco), plus string quartet. The string quartet features a violin countermelody. The song is in 4/4 time. Gurrumul is plucking or picking the guitar – arpeggios, not chord strumming. It is grouped as 8 quavers per bar with accents on 1, 4 and 7. The verse starts in G major. There is a short minor key section, which we could call the chorus, in E minor – the relative minor. It ends back in G major, the tonic. Note that Gurrumul is left handed.

**Version 2:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MKC-Jd7KN64>

Analysis of the music:

This version includes a backing vocalist who sings a harmony part in thirds below the lead vocal. It includes a cello countermelody, similar to the violin solo from version 1. Both versions start in G Major and have the same structure or form – verse 1, bridge/chorus which starts with a minor chord (E minor). Then verse 2 and the same chorus ending. The song ends back in the tonic key of G major.

### Questions for students after listening to both versions of 'Bapa'

1. What do you think the song is about? Consider the mood.
2. What instruments / voices are heard in both versions?
3. In version 1, what instrument plays the countermelody?
4. In version 2, what instrument plays the countermelody?
5. Does it start in a major or minor key?
6. What is the overall form in terms of sections A and B?
7. Is the main guitarist playing picking notes from a chord or strumming chords?
8. Is the main guitarist left handed or right handed?
9. In version 1, how does the double bass player play his instrument (plucking / pizzicato or bowing / arco?)

# PERFORMANCE PROTOCOLS

## MAKING THE MOST OUT OF THE PERFORMANCE

These activities are intended to maximise the theatre experience for all audience members. These activities guide students through a series of engagements intended to get them thinking about how and why they should behave in particular ways and what their behaviour means in this context.

### OBJECTIVES

Students will develop their awareness and understanding of:

- Theatre etiquette
- Appropriate behaviour for an audience
- Relationship between performers and the audience

### DISCUSSION POINTS

Live performance involves performers acting and interact in real time, before your eyes. The audience is active in the way they view the performance. The performers on stage can hear and see you; your reactions and your behaviour can contribute to, disrupt or disturb their performance. The audience can have a big influence on the energy, pace and vibe of the actors and the performance as a whole.

### ACTIVITY

Talk to your students about whether they have been to the theatre before. Use the following questions to guide their discussion:

- What show did you see?
- Who did you go with?
- Where did you see it?
- What was the show about?
- Were the performers professional or amateur?
- What did it make you think about?

Split the class into small groups and ask them to create a list of behaviour they consider appropriate and inappropriate for different settings. Assign the groups the following settings:

- Footy match
- School assembly
- Cinema
- Rock concert
- Theatre

Come back together as a whole group and ask groups to feed their thoughts back to the group. Create a matrix that compares different kinds of behaviour across each setting. For example:

	Footy Match	Assembly	Cinema	Rock Concert	Theatre
Talking	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Eating					
Walking in and out					
Laughing / crying					
Booing / shouting					
Using your mobile phone					

Based on the above, discuss the conclusions students have come to about attending a live performance and compile a series of protocols to guide their behaviour. Ensure elements in the appendix at the end of this document are included.

# AFTER THE SHOW

## DISCUSSION

Following attendance at *Bungul*, encourage students to consider the overall production through the following points:

- What is the effect of blending ancient language and music with Western Classical instruments?
- Identify the mood and atmosphere. How was mood and atmosphere created? Consider music, dance and design.
- What was the overall audience impact? What did you leave the show feeling and thinking?

## POST SHOW ACTIVITY

Students will write and present a narrative speech that examines the work of an Indigenous artist or arts organisation. Through this investigation students will identify how the art work expresses Aboriginal cultural identity and conserves significant aspects of First Persons' culture.

### TASK

Students are to write a narrative speech that summarises the role of this person or group and the valuable contribution that they have made to conserving Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and language.

A narrative speech is not the same as a persuasive speech. The facts should be presented without using language techniques to manipulate the listener to accept the message. It is simply a speech that presents factual information in a logical order.

Select one of the following artists or arts organisations to focus on:

- Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company
- Bangarra Dance Company
- ILBIJERRI Theatre Company
- Ochre Contemporary Dance Company
- Yothu Yindi
- Emily Wurramara
- The Medics

Students should:

- Make a strong introduction by naming and explaining facts about the identity of the person / group.
- Provide information regarding their work. This could be presented via video or PowerPoint.
- Identify three aspects of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values / culture / attitudes that are explored in their work?
- Finish with a general assessment of this artist's contribution to conserving culture and cultural awareness.
- Acknowledge all resources in a bibliography.

# REVIEWING LIVE PERFORMANCE

There are many different ways to write a review, as reviews express an individual's thoughts and feelings about a show.

Traditional reviews will often:

## **Give the reader brief background information about a production**

- Title of show (mention playwright or choreographer if relevant)
- Is it an adaptation of another text? An original work?
- Identify the company presenting or performing the show
- Where is this show being performed?

## **Briefly outline plot and themes**

- Make sure not to include any spoilers
- Were the themes/issues effectively conveyed to the audience?
- How do the characters and relationships communicate these?
- Does the design (e.g. set, costumes, lighting, sound and filmic elements) contribute to the conveyance of themes/issues? Consider symbols and metaphors.
- How do style and form play a part in communicating these?

## **Provide an idea of what the design elements are**

- Think about set, lighting, costume, filmic elements and sound
- How did the design choices convey place, time and situation (dramatic meaning or context)?
- What atmosphere and mood were the creative team aiming for?
- How successful were they in achieving their goals?

## **Evaluate the writing, production and performances**

- You might consider things like: Were there any stand out performances or design elements? Why? What were the technical aspects of the production that stood out?

Reviews should reflect how you felt about a show, not what you think you should have felt.

In the digital age, the act of reviewing has changed immensely. It has enabled platforms for a broad range of voices to participate in the reviewing process that previously would not have been heard.

Have a go at writing a 140-character Twitter review of the work.

# SPECIFIC LINKS TO CURRICULUM

## MUSIC

### Connections to Year 9 and 10 Music: Analysis and Context

- identification, comparison and evaluation of a variety of music with an understanding of cultural and historical features, stylistic characteristics and associated conventions and music practices. (Year 9 Music)
- identification, analysis and evaluation of connections between social, cultural and historical influences and musical developments; and analysis of how the use and combination of the elements of music define stylistic characteristics and cultural and historical features. (Year 10 Music)

### Connections to Year 11 ATAR Music: Composers

- influences upon prominent composers
- contributions made by composers to the development of the genre over an appropriate range of eras (minimum of two).

### Connections to Year 11 ATAR Music: Musical characteristics appropriate to the era, genre and works studied

- form/structure and use of thematic material
- instrumentation and orchestration – score order, all terms, instrumental techniques and timbres relating to the designated works
- use of tonality, melody, rhythm, harmony, phrasing, tempo and texture
- use of dynamics and expressive elements compositional devices.

## ABORIGINAL & TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HISTORIES AND CULTURES

### HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES LEARNING AREA STATEMENT

The diverse cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples are explored through their:

- long and continuous strong connections with Country/Place and their economic, cultural, spiritual and aesthetic value of place, including the idea of custodial responsibility. Students examine the influence of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples on the environmental characteristics of Australian places, and the different ways in which places are represented.
- experiences before, during and after European colonisation including the nature of contact with other peoples, and their progress towards recognition and equality. In particular, students investigate the status and rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, past and present, including civic movements for change, the contribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to Australian society, and contemporary issues.
- exploration of how groups express their particular identities, and come to understand how group belonging influences perceptions of others.

The use of primary and secondary sources, including oral histories, gives students opportunities to see events through multiple perspectives, and to empathise and ethically consider the investigation, preservation and conservation of sites of significance to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

# APPENDIX

## **Latecomers**

The show will start promptly and latecomers will not be admitted until an appropriate break in the show. Be aware that for many shows, you will not be admitted if you arrive late.

## **Lock out**

If you leave your seat during the performance, you may not be allowed back in. Make sure you go to the toilet and have a drink of water before the performance and/or during the intervals.

## **Noise**

Food wrappers and plastic packets make a lot of noise. It is generally accepted that the audience does not eat during a performance. If you absolutely have to have lollies (such as a cough lolly), ensure it is out of the wrapper prior to the performance.

## **Mobile phones**

Please ensure mobile phones are turned off. If your phone rings during a performance, it can be very embarrassing for you and very distracting for the performers. It is inappropriate to receive a text during a performance.

## **Talking**

Allow everyone – performers and the audience – to focus on the performance by not talking. Talking is annoying for other audience members and can be very distracting for performers.

## **Photographs**

Taking photos, videos or audio recordings is not allowed.