

BUNGUL

GURRUMUL'S
MOTHER'S
BUNGUL

GURRUMUL'S
GRANDMOTHER'S
BUNGUL

GURRUMUL'S
MANIKAY



We give thanks and pay our respects to the Yolŋu people of North East Arnhem Land with whom this work has been created, and on whose country this work has been created.

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.

"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 song lines 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
Djungaya of Gumatj Clan and Leader.
Director of Bungul

CREDITS

Music

Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu, Erkki Veltheim, and Michael Hohnen

Directors

Don Wininba Ganambarr and Nigel Jamieson

MSO Musical Director and Conductor

Erkki Velheim

Concertmaster

Veronique Serret

Creative Producer

Michael Hohnen

Executive Producer

Anna Reece

Design and

Creative Associate

Jacob Nash

Lighting Designer

Mark Howett

Associate Lighting Designer

Chloe Ogilvie

Sound Designer

Steve Francis

Video Design

Mic Gruchy

Cinematographer

Paul Shakeshaft

PERFORMERS

Nebbie Burrarrwanga, Robert Burrarrwanga, Mark Guruwiwi, Terence Guruwiwi, Jaimie Yunupingu, Teo Yunupingu, David Yunupingu, Kyle Yunupingu, Nelson Yunupingu

PROGRAM NOTES

The Yolŋu world 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.

Buku-Larrŋgay Mulka Centre

BÄRU

The Bärü Manikay celebrates the songline of the Yirritja ancestral crocodile Bärü, beginning his journey in the swamps near Biranybirany, south of Yirrkala, 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 Bärü gifted to the Yolŋu. The fire is represented by the diamond pattern painted on the dancer's chest and in paintings documenting Bärü's ancestral journey. The Bärü paintings featured in the film content were painted on country at Biranybirany by Dhakuwal Yunupingu and make up a part of the historic bark painting collection 'Saltwater' recording the maritime rights of the Yolŋu.

WAAK

This Dhuwa manikay is about Waak – the crow and belongs to the Galpu, Gurrumul's mother's clan. Waak is also the sound of the crow crying, which we hear picked up by the Dhuwa dancers. In this manikay Waak descends from the heavens towards Djapanjuruana and glides across country. The manikay goes on to tell of his close kinship with Djaykuŋ, the file snake, and the Galpu clan lighting 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 solo dancer represents a young python searching for its mother. The featured painting is by Djul'djul Gurruwiwi, Mithinari's daughter, whose work frequently depicts the olive python, Djaykuŋ 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 Guwatjorumurru, west of Yirrakala.

The featured painting is by acclaimed artist Malaluba Gumana, depicting the Galpu clan designs of Dhatam, the waterlily, painted on her homeland of Gängän.

GOPURU

Gopuru is a large saltwater 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 the flowering plants or trees indicate when it is an appropriate time to fish for a particular species.

MARRAYARR

Murrayarr refers both to the masts of the sailing ships of the Macassans from Sulawesi, with whom the Yolŋu have traded and maintained a deep cultural relationship for some five hundred 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 tip at the very top of the pole represents the brain and knowledge of the person. The Gumatj flag, which flies upon the Murrayarr, with its image of ropes and an anchor, again gives testimony to the closeness of cultural ties with the Macassans.

GALIKU

This Yirritja manikay celebrates the calico fabric which the Yolŋu traded with the Macassans, 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 Madhukin (mouth organ) and the Djolin, a one-stringed Macassan instrument played by a Djinjarra (gifted musician). The joyous Gumatj song is used today to celebrate a range of instruments including contemporary electric guitars. The featured painting is by Gumatj clan leader and artist Munggurrawuy Yunupinju.

ŊARRPIYA

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. Ŋarripiya also has a strong connection with the north west wind and the Djapana sunset manikay and songline. The performance featured on screen was filmed unrehearsed and as a single take of a young Yirritja dancer interpretation of the orchestral setting of this song. The featured paintings are by Yirritja artist Shane Dhawa Bukulatjpi and Gumatj artist and ceremonial leader Yumutjin Wunujmurra.

DJILAWURR

This Yirritja song is about the Djilawurr scrub turkey. Its carefully tended nests of sticks and leaves are a ubiquitous sight in North East Arnhem Land and the Djilawurr is regularly featured at the commencement of ceremony and funerals, representing 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 Wunujmurra.

DJAPANA

Djapana is a particular sunset precious to the Yolŋu, involving a glowing red sun slowly dropping into the ocean, viewed here from the Yirritja country of Nawingu, Milarr and Gundjamer. 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.

WULMIŊDA

This powerful Dhuwa manikay has many layers of inter-connected meanings. Wulmiŋda 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. Wulmiŋda 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.



Photo: Anna Reece.

SUPPORTERS

This project was initiated by the Yunupingu family and Skinnyfish Music

Produced by Skinnyfish Music

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Djarimirri (Child of the Rainbow) the album was produced by Skinnyfish Music with musical orchestrations and compositions by Erkki Veltheim.

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