

Ngarra-Burria 2019 program notes

01 Sainsbury: Bardo ('fresh water'), for three flutes

Bardo ('fresh water') is a work for three flutes, written at the invitation of Mark Xiao for the Australian Flute Festival. It was first performed at the festival in July 2019 at the Sydney Conservatorium. The work is refreshing like cool running water, it 'trickles and gushes in various directions throughout'. For the title I draw on a word from my own Indigenous language, Dharug, of the Sydney region.

02 Sainsbury: Djagamara, for flute and harp

Djagamara is dedicated to an Indigenous friend who passed on too early, James Djagamara MacLeod. His family endorse the piece and were present for the first performance at a Sorry Day concert in Canberra in 2018 where it was performed by the Griffyn Ensemble featuring Kiri Sollis on flute. The piece is melancholic in nature and serves as a piece to mourn for those who've passed on. The last few bars are played quite lightly, suggestive of the spirit of the lost one returning to the above.

03 Sainsbury: Dying River Party, for solo clarinet

Dying River Party features impressions of the Darling River in 2018. Locals there (both black and white) told me in 2018 that the river is in trouble from drought, from mining and from poor farming practices by some. The various movements are:

- 1 - Black and White Protest (1'03). I went to an exhibition in the Broken Hill gallery and there was a photo of non-Indigenous and Indigenous protesting together about the state of the river. I also use two bird songs in this short movement, one a magpie.
- 2 - Old Fella Murray Cod (2'35). In the odd deep pool in the river the cod lies waiting it out, although many have died.
- 3 - Dying River Party (1'26). Perhaps that's a good name for one of our political parties today!
- 4 - Bindara (2'39). This is a cattle station where we visited and stayed. It's quiet, yet the industry of the land hums along.
- 5 - Crying tree (2'15). The dead tress along the river (and even many of the alive ones) look so mournful.
- 6 - The Pooncarie Emu Dash (1'10). This is about an emu racing alongside the car. It's where rockabilly meets classical clarinet music!

04 Henry: Today's the Day, for saxophone quartet

Today's the Day is a fun little toe tapping tune with a combination of rich full horn lines, sweet melodies and some tasty solos. (Thus writes Kamilaroi-Yuwaalaraay, Yorta-Yorta and Yuin composer, singer-song writer and sound designer James Henry.)

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05 Simpson: Wilga's Last Dance, for saxophone quartet

Wilga's Last Dance refers to the only traditional Yuwaalaraay melody ever recorded. to Yuwaalaraay composer Nardi Simpson: The piece is about that last melody, about how can we keep breath in that. And to remember Fred Reece, the person that held onto it and kept it for us. So that we can know that song, that language and a bit about that ceremony, and bring life to it in a new way. I also love the juxtaposition of the Royal Australian Navy Band playing that. Because to me it shows when time folds in on itself. And everything you know is just in this kind of mixing pot of humanity.”

06 Avery: Saxophone quartet

Eric Avery is a Ngiyampaa, Yuin, Bandjalang and Gumbangirr violinist and composer. He wrote this saxophone quartet as part of his participation in Ngarra-Burria 2019. (No composer program notes currently available.)

07 Gifford: Home, for saxophone quartet

Yuin woman Brenda Gifford’s saxophone quartet *Home* was written for the 2019 Museum of Sydney exhibition ‘Songs of Home’. It was first performed in studio by members of the Royal Australian Navy Band for ABC Classic’s recording for the exhibition. URL - <https://sydneylivingmuseums.com.au/stories/contemporary-first-peoples-composers> (No composer program notes currently available.)

08 Henry: Wahabindeh Banghanelha, for voices, clapping-sticks, flute, clarinet, trombone, double-bass and percussion

Wahabindeh Banghanelha comes from a traditional Aboriginal melody notated in the Dharug language at the turn of the 19th century. I arranged it to show what it would have been like to have a more harmonious meeting of cultures when the British first arrived here in Australia.

09 Simpson: Galidhalibaa, for flute, clarinet, trombone, double-bass and percussion

‘Galidhalibaa’ means ‘without water’ in the language of Nardi Simpson’s people, the Yuwaalaraay of northern NSW. Simpson says, “it’s about the drought. My dad was born in Walgett where the two rivers meet. And there’s no water in the rivers. And we’re freshwater people, we’re river people. So if there’s no river, then what are we? That piece is questioning those things with new sounds.”