

**WEST  
AUSTRALIAN  
OPERA**



**WUNDIG  
WER WILURA**

# CREATIVITY IN FLIGHT



As Principal Partner of West Australian Opera, Wesfarmers is proud to help Western Australian artists take flight.

From the creation of new works like *Koolbardi wer Wardong* and *Wundig wer Wilura*, to the compelling reimaging of the world's classic operas, West Australian Opera and Wesfarmers Arts are thrilled to connect audiences with the power of music and voice.

Wesfarmers Arts  
Commissioning Partner of  
*Koolbardi Wer Wardong* (2021)  
and *Wundig wer Wilura* (2024)  
and Principal Partner,  
West Australian Opera.



**Wesfarmers Arts**

PRINCIPAL PARTNER WEST AUSTRALIAN OPERA

PRODUCTION PHOTO: JAMES BOULDER - www.jamesboulder.com.au



# 9 - 15 February 2024

## His Majesty's Theatre, Perth

**Composers** Gina Williams and Guy Ghouse  
**Arrangement & Orchestration** Dr Chris Stone

**Conductor** Aaron Wyatt  
**Director** Matt Reuben James Ward  
**Choreographer** Ian Wilkes  
**Set Designer** Matt McVeigh  
**Costume & Cultural Props Designer** Peter Farmer Designs  
**Costume & Cultural Props Associate Designer\*** Rae Cottam  
**Lighting Designer & Video Content** Mark Howett  
**Sound Designer** Jeremy Turner  
**Digital Content Creator** Roly Skender  
**Repetiteur** Joshua Haines

**Wundig** Jarred Wall  
**Wilura** Jess Hitchcock  
**Mubarn (Clever Man)** David Leha  
**Bworan (Old Man)** Ronald Dick  
**Ngaank (Wilura's Mother)** Charley Caruso  
**Kabaarli Kalyat (Nanna Cheek, Wilura's Nanna)** Della Rae Morrison  
**Gulambiddi (Wilura's Betrothed)** Jarrad Inman  
**Mandi (Wundig's Betrothed)** Bella McGill  
**Maamyok (Wundig's Mother)** Teresa Moore  
**Kongk (Wundig's Father)** Tyrone Brownley  
**Maambart (Wilura's Father)** Rebeun Yorkshire

**Ensemble:** Jack Collard, Caitlin Collom, Rachael Colmer, Ronald Dick, Natasha Eldridge, Indigo Ellis, Julianna Marie, Alana McGaw, Kobi Morrison, Tristan Tucker, Olman Walley, Ian Wilkes  
**Children Ensemble:** Thomas McGill, Ziggy James Penfold, Winnie De Silveira, Chanel Young  
**West Australian Symphony Orchestra**

**Production Manager** Mandy Farmer  
**Stage Manager** Karen Farmer  
**Assistant Stage Managers** Rose Liggins, Holly Ballam  
**Head of Wardrobe** Nora Stelter  
**Cutter** Rose Finlay, Nicole Marrington  
**Dresser** Brooklyn Rowcroft  
**Wardrobe Maintenance** Amy Webb  
**Head of Wigs** Virginia Vona  
**Head of Make Up** Sharon Kyrwood  
**Surttitle Operator** Allison Fye  
**Child Chaperone** Chelsea Burns  
**Senior Mechanist** Glenn Collier  
**Head Technician** Jon Davey  
**Set Built by** Plumb Arts Workshop  
**Balga Trees built by** Sanjiva Giovanni Margio  
**Headdress made by** Holly Sansalone

Presented by West Australian Opera in association with Perth Festival - A Wesfarmers Arts Commission  
Information correct at time of publication. Subject to change.  
\*Supported by Bruce & Charmaine Cameron

West Australian Opera acknowledges the Traditional Owners of the land on which we work, the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

# WUNDIG WER WILURA

# Vice Regal Patron's Message

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**The Honourable Chris Dawson AC APM**

Governor of Western Australia

Vice Regal Patron, West Australian Opera

I am proud to be the Vice-Regal Patron of West Australian Opera, one of the State's leading arts organisations.

It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge the world premiere of *Wundig wer Wilura*, a Noongar opera by Gina Williams and Guy Ghouse.

This premiere performance is historically significant as both a locally commissioned work, and an opera written and performed in the Noongar language.

I hope that you will continue to support West Australian Opera, and its presentation of world-class opera and musical performances, education and community programs, regional tours, and young artist development through the Wesfarmers Arts Young Artist Program.





# Executive Director's Message

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## **Carolyn Chard AM**

Executive Director, West Australian Opera

Wanjoo, welcome to the world premiere of *Wundig wer Wilura*, a Wesfarmers Arts Commission.

Thanks and congratulations to Gina Williams and Guy Ghouse on this milestone achievement.

*Wundig wer Wilura* is presented in association with Perth Festival and together we are proud to bring this new work to the stage, sung in Noongar language by a wonderful cast.

We are proud to collaborate with composers Gina Williams and Guy Ghouse, arranger and orchestrator Dr Chris Stone, conductor Aaron Wyatt, director Matt Reuben James Ward, choreographer Ian Wilkes, set designer Matt McVeigh, costume & cultural props designer Peter Farmer Designs, costume & cultural props associate designer Rae Cottam, lighting designer Mark Howett, sound designer Jeremy Turner, digital content creator Roly Skender, repetiteur Joshua Haines, the cast, the West Australian Symphony Orchestra, stage management, crew and backstage teams.

At West Australian Opera, our dream is to speak to the heart through the human voice and to unite people through the joy of music.

The excitement of taking your seats for a performance, the anticipation of the curtain rising, and the drama that is set to unfold on stage makes live performance such a special experience.



# Chairman's Message

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**Andrew Pascoe**

Chairman, West Australian Opera

We are grateful for the continued support of the federal government through Creative Australia, the State Government through the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, and highly valued Principal Partner, Wesfarmers Arts. We thank Major Partners City of Perth, Lotterywest, Healthway, MM Electrical, and JCDecaux for their valued contributions. We acknowledge and appreciate the significant contribution of the Roberts Emerging Artist program which supports developing young talent in WA.

Presenting opera is made possible with the support of you, our audience members, our partners, patrons, trusts, foundations, donors, and government funders.

The Board, management, company, and artists give thanks to the opera family who enable us to continue to share the power of music. We acknowledge your support which plays an important role in the life of West Australian Opera and its ecology within the arts and cultural landscape of Western Australia.







Jarred Wall (Wundig) and Jess Hitchcock  
(Wilura) in rehearsal.  
Photo: West Beach Studio

# Composers' Notes

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## **Gina Williams and Guy Ghouse** Composers

We respectfully acknowledge we are on the sacred boodja of the Whadjuk Moort. Whadjuk people have held this country for 3000 generations. Today, we honour the elders of this land, with hearts filled with love and gratitude for the strength, tenacity, wisdom and grace you have always held, and because of which our beautiful language prevails.

We want to especially thank and honour Dr Marion Kickett, Tracey Kickett, Merle Goodwin and Audrey Nettle, traditional Balladong owners from York, for their support and love shown for this work, and in turn for us. We hope you will be honoured by this work, and that we have made you proud. Ultimately, this is our love offering to you.

Wundig and Wilura lived and walked on this country. Their story shows us that love takes many forms, each as passionate as each other. Romantic love, love of country, love of our families, even tough love and the wars we wage in the name of love are demonstrated with equal commitment.

It is always important to remember that our choices and our actions can affect others; we have power to both wound and heal.

We thank West Australian Opera again for its trust and generosity in the creation of this work. Thank you to Carolyn Chard AM, Chris van Tuinen for your incredible kindness and grace. Thank you, Terasa, Mandy, Danielle, Scott and all the crew at West Australian Opera. Sitting in that space between the two hills while we ran through the first reading of this work is a moment we will never forget.

Matt Reuben James Ward, your deft hand in directing this work, elevating it to the high standard it demands, always keeping the integrity and beauty of this language, music and story at the fore; we cannot thank you enough. What a privilege it is to work with you ngooni (brother).



We are deeply honoured to have Peter Farmer and his team weave magic into the glorious costumes.

Chris Stone, you are, as always, a delight to work with, our koorda (friend).

To the musicians and artists on and off stage, we are so excited to see you bring this story to life. Thank you for the care and commitment you have shown to this work.

We hope you enjoy seeing Wundig wer Wilura. This is a story which has waited thousands of generations to be told. We are grateful for the opportunity to be able to share this story through song. We hope you fall in love with this, as we have.

Kalyakoorl, ngalak warangka (Forever, we sing).



# Conductor's Notes

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**Aaron Wyatt**  
Conductor

It could be straight from the pen of William Shakespeare. Two star-crossed lovers, already otherwise betrothed, who fall instantly into a forbidden love that ultimately tears their families apart and ends in their deaths. Love. Jealousy. Betrayal. Tragedy. Instead, it's a much more ancient tale that plays out on the ancestral lands of the Ballardong Noongar people. *Wundig wer Wilura*, Gina and Guy's second opera, builds on the work of *Koolbardi wer Wardong* in bringing traditional Noongar stories to life through music. Aided by Dr Chris Stone's orchestration, we feel the emotional turmoil of the narrative as it drives towards its inevitable conclusion. The longing and desire of Wundig and Wilura. The defiance of Mandi in the face of the heartbreak and shame that Wundig, her betrothed, has brought upon her. The jealousy and rage of Gulambiddi, Wilura's intended. The anger of the fathers and the dismay of the mothers at the escalating fight. We feel it all.

The real strength and beauty in Gina and Guy's writing lies in their melodies. It's hard to come away from rehearsals without having at least one number stuck in your head. They're incredibly infectious while still conveying the severity of the unfolding drama, and the folk, jazz, and cabaret pedigrees of their writers shine through. Beyond that though, they seamlessly merge the modern and ancient, stepping between Western and Indigenous traditions. Particularly in the lines of Mubarn and Kabaarli, we hear the influence of traditional Noongar chant with their melodic contours inspired by these timeless songs. They transport us instantly to our story's setting, and with their uncomplicated, reverential character they feel as if they are drawn from the very land itself. They bring with them the sense of dignity that this story deserves.



And ultimately that's the important thing about both this new opera and *Koolbardi wer Wardong*. (Along with the slowly growing collection of operas written by other Indigenous composers.) Stories are powerful. They connect us. They are universal. And tales like this are a part of our shared heritage. They shatter the notion that our culture began with an act of colonisation, imported from a distant land, and they do this at such a crucial juncture in our history. (Which I won't delve into, because this needs to be 400 words, not 4000 words.) That is the impact that projects like this can have on our national discourse, and I applaud West Australian Opera for their vision and commitment here.

# Director's Notes

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## **Matt Reuben James Ward**

Director

For thousands of years, Walwalling and Wongborel have rested opposite each other. For thousands of years, the Balladong people have lived against these two hills. Today, many of us know this place by another name, York, and these two hills as Mount Bakewell and Mount Brown. It was there, on Balladong Noongar country, thousands of years ago, that this story took place.

Together as a creative team, we first visited Walwalling in winter, braving the early hours of the morning to ascend and capture the sunrise. I remember how we sat in silence, taking in the view. Legs dangling off brazen granite rocks. Wongborel arising from the horizon. A bed of mist rolled out across the river below, dividing handsome Walwalling and beautiful Wongborel.

It was here Balladong elder Dr Marion Kickett, retold the story of handsome Wundig and beautiful Wilura. I remember thinking: How many tellings of this story have been repeated over the years? How many generations have lived, held and told this Balladong story? I pay my respects to these elders, past, present and future. I say thank you for allowing me, and us as a company, to be a part of this ancient tradition.

Wundig wer Wilura is a story about desire. Desire so strong it defies ancient lore, rejects family and runs towards the unknown. A desire so beautiful, that for Wundig and Wilura the world starts to sparkle and shift with voluminous emotion.

Our production plays with elements of a familiar reality, articulated with fresh, bold and brave interpretation. Gina Williams and Guy Ghouse's music, inspired by the ancient and contemporary, emboldens our physical storytelling, punctuated by Ian Wilkes' choreography. In this, we explore Wundig and Wilura's ecstatic "love at first sight" heart flutter and unequivocal shared desire.



Collaborating with the design team, Peter Farmer Designs, Rae Cottam, Mark Howett, Matthew McVeigh and Roly Skender, we have sought to interweave layers of the familiar and fresh, ancient and contemporary. Our set design sculpts powerful geographic forms out of mirrored silver and black - referencing the glimmer of stars, Balladong water and speckled granite. Against this, prismatic fabric designs symbolise and express ancient knowledge, country and flora. Floating within this space, cinemagraphic portals glow with familiar perspectives of Noongar Boodja.

In all this, we have been empowered by the age-old tradition of storytelling through song, dance and visual art combined. Ultimately, we hope to honour the generations of people who have lived, held and told this story.

# Synopsis

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## WUNDIG WER WILURA

Wundig wer Wilura is a very old love story of the two hills, Mt Bakewell and Mt Brown in York, Western Australia.

A very long time ago, there was an old man who was a much loved and respected Burdiya (leader) of his Moort (family). He made sure his Moort and the Boodja (land) they lived on was well taken care of.

As time passed, the family grew very big and it was becoming unsustainable for a group so large to stay in one place. The Burdiya sent his sons out to the hills to see if the land would be able to support them and grow their families. The sons went away and returned with a wide variety of food, showing their father the land was abundant and they would be ok to set up camps elsewhere.

The sons and their families were sent away with blessing of the Burdiya; the families continued to grow this legacy of living harmoniously on country with each other.

The Burdiya grew very old and as it became apparent his passing was imminent, the sons were called back to pay their respects to their father.

The sons and their families returned to the valley, bringing food with them and gathered to celebrate their Burdiya's life with music, dance, storytelling and sporting contests. The old man passed, surrounded by the love, respect and care of his descendants.

Those who remained agreed to come back regularly to celebrate with sporting contests and music and dancing to commemorate their much loved burdiya. The families continued to meet in this way, until a time when things went irreparably wrong.

Wundig came down from the hills with his family. He was a good hunter; he was known for having "moorditj mart" (good legs) and for being able to run fast.

Wilura was from the valley people, she was beautiful, but she was related to Wundig.

But oh, the heart's desire! Wundig loved Wilura and Wilura loved Wundig. The two youngsters took off without telling anyone.

The valley people went up the hill to look for their daughter. The hills people thought Wundig was with them. The valley people didn't believe them, and a massive fight broke out.

The hills people were too good on their own patch and the valley people were being wiped out. The valley people, realising they were at risk of being wiped out, retreated and called on their Mubarn (spirit man) to deal with the situation.

The Mubarn stopped the fight – turning the hills men into Balga (grass trees).

Now that the fighting had been dealt with, the Mubarn turned his attention to the two lovers. He banished Wundig's spirit to Walwalling (the place of tears) and Wilura's spirit to Wongborel (sleeping woman). Before their deaths, the Mubarn told them they would not be reunited unless the two hills crumbled.

He sealed this division by making the river run between the two hills.

Today, Walwalling is known as Mt Bakewell, and Wongborel is known as Mt Brown. Nowadays, you cannot go up Walwalling unless you are prepared to go all the way up to the top.

# Biographies

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**Gina Williams AM**  
Composer

Gina Williams AM is a rare performing artist who captures hearts and imaginations by connecting deeply through the power of song.

Gina and her musical partner Guy Ghouse have been wowing audiences all over the world with songs and stories from Noongar boodja.

They bring a modern take on ancient traditions, matching powerful storytelling, with that incredible, incandescent voice, to create music which represents a celebration of life through connection.

Because love, loss, joy all mean the same in anyone's language.

Her love of the language of the land she calls home, has grown a heart that simply refuses to surrender her voice and those it represents to silence.

With Guy, Gina has written four albums; Kalyakoorl (Forever, 2014), Bindi Bindi (Butterfly, 2018), Koorlangka (Children, 2020) and Koort (Heart, 2021). In 2021 they made their opera debut with Koolbardi wer Wardong.

This year, she is humbled and deeply honoured to return to the West Australian Opera with *Wundig wer Wilura*.



**Guy Ghouse**  
Director

There are few guitarists who connect to their music and perform without compromise like Guy Ghouse, as a producer, composer, collaborator or any role where his guitar and music has a place. A third generation musician, Guy has played at festivals and venues across the USA, UK, Europe and Asia including a guitar pilgrimage to Seville, Grenada and Malaga in Spain, and the Bath Guitar festival in the UK. In 2001 he produced his first Indigenous language album for the Bidyadanga community in the Kimberley, sparking a passion for preservation of Languages through music. In 2020, he was awarded Guitarist of the year by the Western Australian Music Industry Awards and became a featured artists with Australian Cole Clark Guitars.

Together with Gina Williams, they have released four Albums, toured both nationally and internationally, released a song book, performed at over 700 schools sharing Noongar language, performed at the 2021 AFL Grand Final, and continues with his passion for preserving language through music.





**Dr Chris Stone**  
Arrangement &  
Orchestration

Dr. Chris Stone is a genre breaking violinist, composer, researcher, and artistic director who began his musical journey playing fiddle barefoot at folk festivals around Australia. In 2009 he founded renowned chamber-folk trio The String Contingent and toured five albums of original compositions nationally and internationally. Chris joined Canberra's new music group The Griffyn Ensemble in 2014 and also composes, arranges, and produces for the group. In 2017 Chris became Artistic Director of string music camp Stringmania which explores and celebrates Australia's cultural diversity through music.

In 2021 Chris arranged and orchestrated the first Indigenous language opera *Koolbardi wer Wardong*, composed by Noongar singer Gina Williams and Guy Ghouse for the West Australian Opera, and has continued this collaboration with their new opera *Wundig wer Wilura*. Chris holds a PhD from the Australian National University, where he researched alternative fingerboard navigation for improvisation, and is the co-Artistic Director of the National Folk Festival.



**Aaron Wyatt**  
Conductor

Aaron is a violist, violinist, conductor, composer, programmer, and academic. Originally from Perth, he spent many years as a regular casual with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra before moving to Melbourne to take up an assistant lecturer position at Monash. A member of the award-winning Decibel New Music ensemble, he also develops their animated graphic notation app for the iPad, the Decibel ScorePlayer.

In 2021 he became the first Indigenous Australian to conduct a state symphony orchestra in concert, and has since gone on to have engagements with the Melbourne, Adelaide, and Sydney Symphony Orchestras. (And will soon conduct one of his own works for the 2024 WASO season opening.) As an opera conductor, he was nominated for a Helpmann Award for his role as musical director of the premiere season of Cat Hope's opera, *Speechless*, at the 2019 Perth International Arts Festival. And he conducted the premiere of Gina and Guy's first opera, *Koolbardi wer Wardong*, and the first live performances of Deborah Cheetham Fraillon's opera, *Parrwang Lifts the Sky*.

# Biographies

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**Matt Reuben  
James Ward**  
Director

Matt has created and directed numerous performances, with commissions from plays to research and development programs, having collaborated with Royal Philharmonic Orchestra Glyndebourne, Operasonic UK, Royal College of Music Sparks Family Orchestra & Chorus London, BBC Symphony Family Orchestra & Chorus and BBC Proms Sing Plus.

For West Australian Opera Matt has directed La Boheme, The Nightingale, Hansel & Gretel (Opera in the Park), Koolbardi wer Wardong, Our Little Inventor, rehearsal director for Tosca, and Hansel & Gretel Reimagined for West Australian Opera's education program. In 2025 Matt will revive his recent production of La Boheme for Opera Queensland. Matt is currently Artistic Director of Breaksea, a multi-artform performance company and has directed Fairy Queen, Magical Weedy Seadragon, Caretaker of Lost Selves, Thunderstorm, Drift & By Other Eyes. Matt studied at the West Australian Academy of Performing Arts and the Royal College of Music London (Master of Performance, Yvonne Wells Award).



**Ian Wilkes**  
Choreographer

Ian (Moopa) Wilkes is a Noongar man from Perth, WA, with connection to the Wadjuk and Ballardong people. He is a theatre-maker, director, performer, writer, dancer, and a graduate of Aboriginal Theatre at WAAPA. Ian is also a recipient of the Perth NAIDOC award for Artist of the Year. In 2021 he was co-director and lead performer in Galup and Galup VR. Moopa has a long association with Perth Festival. In 2023 he co-created and directed the festivals opening event – Djoondal.

He has directed several other plays including York in collaboration with Black Swan State Theatre, Yirra Yaakin's Boodjar Kaatijin, Hobo and Songbird, and recently directed the 2023 Dare to Dream program for Jute Theatre in Cairns and Face to Face for Clancestry in Brisbane.

He has performed numerous roles including Yirra Yaakin's Hecate which premiered in Perth Festival, also The Tempest and Barracking for the Umpire with Black Swan. Ian is also a regular performer in the long running WA show Bindjareb Pinjarra and a leader in traditional noongar dance and culture.



**Matt McVeigh**  
Set Designer

Matthew McVeigh is an interdisciplinary artist that graduated from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts 2008, majoring in Design for Live Performance.

Matt's practice is best described as process and collaboratively driven, working across theatre, public art and community art. He has worked in the areas of dance, physical theatre, musicals, opera and puppetry. Matt has designed for Black Swan State Theatre, Yirra Yaakin, Steam Works, Spare Parts Puppet theatre, West Australian Ballet, Performing Lines and Barking Gecko. He has been assistant designer for the Australian Ballet and Victorian Opera as well as designing for many other independent companies. In the community sector he has worked in correctional facilities, with youth at risk, disability services and remote Aboriginal and regional communities. Matthew was the recipient of Outstanding costume design for his debut show with West Australian Opera - *Koolbardi Wer Wardong* at the 2022 Performing Arts Awards WA.

Matthew continues to work on the Wu Rut Woorat in a studio on a heritage site on the banks of the Derbarl Yerrigan on Whadjuk Nyoongar country.



**Peter Farmer Designs**  
Costumes and Cultural  
Props Designer

With tertiary qualifications majoring in print-media & fibre & textiles, Peter Snr's arts practice was initially a slow path. Forming Peter Farmer Designs, with wife Miranda, helped with growth.

Over the past few years, Peter Jnr's creative innovations in graphic designs, as well as a promotions team, has fostered greater diversity. Peter Farmer Designs applied for Public Art Commissions under the state's "Percent for Art" program, along with the development of Aboriginal graphic designs & textiles in the fashion space.

Throughout the journey some highlight's have been, a collaboration with Professor Jimmy Choo on the first Aboriginal designed couture shoe (WAMUSEUM). As well as the production of tour apparel for international performing artists COLDPLAY in November 2023, for the Perth leg of their world tour.

It has been a pleasure and privilege for our team to be now working with the West Australian Opera on the long awaited Noongar Opera, *Wundig wer Wilura*.

# Biographies

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**Rae Cottam**  
Costumes and Cultural  
Props Associate Designer\*

Rae is Wongki and a former Local Government Councillor who is passionate about the Environment, Sustainability, and Future Generations. Rae is a practicing Artist, Traditional and Contemporary, her mother taught her dot painting and weaving from a very young age, since then she has experimented with many types of textiles and mediums. In her spare time, she can be found out bush collecting materials for her next creations.

To her, Art and Expression is a way of life and living. Her greatest achievement is her work on *Wundig wer Wilura* whilst collaborating with Peter Farmer Productions and the West Australian Opera team. Rae feels very honored to be part of such a talented team bringing to life a magnificent yet tragic love story which has shaped the landscape of Noongar Boodja, and has been waiting to be told, heard and seen for at least ten thousand years. Rae feels privileged and would like to acknowledge and thank the Traditional Owners and Custodians of this story, the family and living descendants of Wundig wer Wilura. Woola!

*\*supported by Bruce & Charmaine Cameron*



**Mark Howett**  
Lighting Designer  
& Video Content

Originally from Busselton, Western Australia, Mark Howett is proud to stand on Noongar Boodjar. In 1982, he was awarded a scholarship by the Department of Culture and the Arts to study Theatre Design under the tutelage of Jennifer Tipton at the School of Drama, Yale University. Mark is a multi-Greenroom and Helpmann Award-winner who has worked as a lighting designer and a video and set designer for international productions in theatre, film, dance and opera. Including numerous West End credits to his name. Winning the Helpmann Award for Cloudstreet, and Kura Tunga, The Greenroom Award for Roadkill, Love of Three Oranges, and the Secret River.

He has also directed and conceived many works and was the artistic director for Ochre Contemporary Dance Co. from 2016 to 2019. Mark is a founding member of Bangarra and the Farm. Mark was the Coordinator of Lighting at WAAPA. Designs for West Australian Opera, include Koolbardi wer Wardong, Tosca, Elijah, and Bran Neu Dae.





**Jeremy Turner**  
Sound Designer

Jeremy Turner is a sound engineer and designer, who for the last 15 years has worked behind the scenes of many of Western Australia's iconic events. While training in classical music performance, he developed an interest in the technical aspects of music production and changed paths into sound engineering, studying at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts. He has designed sound for *Koolbardi wer Wardong*, *Iolanta*, *Our Little Inventor*, Opera in the Regions (West Australian Opera), *Noongar Wonderland* (Perth Festival), *Panawathi Girl* (Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company), and was Digital Systems Coordinator for Boorna Wanginy, Djoondal, and Projections at City of Lights (Perth Festival). He is currently studying web development and works as a Sound Engineer for ABC Classic and Arts & Culture Trust.



**Roly Skender**  
Digital Content Creator

Roly Skender is a Western Australian audiovisual artist, producer and musician working with digital design, video projection and new media technologies. His video projection work augments urban and natural environments, capturing the public imagination via mesmerising light-powered spectacles. Public artworks such as the award-winning interactive digital performer 'The Virtual Busker', the large-scale projection intervention on local landmarks, 'If Buildings Could Speak' and the immersive digital ocean of 'LightWaves' use moving images and sound design to provoke curiosity and conversation as ephemeral public displays. Under the umbrella of his personal production studio, Frankensound, Skender also creates visual design for theatre and performance while continuing to explore the crossroads of technology and art in public, private and in-between spaces.

# Biographies

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**Jess Hitchcock**  
Wilura

Jess Hitchcock is a Melbourne-based Indigenous singer-songwriter who has stirred the Australian music and performing arts scene as a genre-defying force. Her powerful voice and knack for storytelling has seen her shine across pop, country, folk, opera and music theatre, sharing the stage and studio with some of Australia's favourites.

One of Jess's most notable collaborations is with legendary Australian singer-songwriter Paul Kelly. Together they performed and recorded Paul's song, 'Everyday My Mother's Voice', earning standing ovations across the nation.

When Jess is not on stage with her own band, performing songs from her new album *Unbreakable*, or joining forces with Australian music legends, Jess lends her mezzo-soprano vocals to select performing arts companies, including MSO, SSO, Bangarra Dance Theatre, Victorian Opera and Opera Queensland.

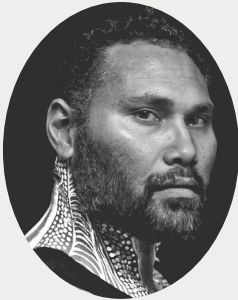
Born with heritage from the Torres Strait Islands and Papua New Guinea, Jess's artistic diversity and adroitness are seldom seen in someone as young as her. The way she navigates her creative path is a rare find and nothing short of inspirational.



**Jarred Wall**  
Wundig

Jarred Wall also known as Boox Kid, is a First Nation Noongar Singer Songwriter and cross genre artist. With his family (Hill) hailing from Wadarni Bibbulmun country, he has always been proud of his culture. Described as Dreamy Electronic Pop, his original self produced music has been playlisted on numerous Spotify and Apple playlists and he has worked on advertisement campaigns for City of Perth and TourismWA. Recent performances include BIGsound 2023, West Coast Blues and Roots and opening support for International star, George Ezra (2022).

In 2021, Jarred traversed the world of theatre and Opera and starred as Wardong in the Gina Williams and Guy Ghouse's *Koolbardi wer Wardong* for West Australian Opera. He also starred in Breaksea's Shakespeare adaption of *The Fairy Queen* in August 2022 and acted in *Carmen* for West Australian Opera at Perth Festival 2023. Signing with Cut Above Collective (Live Nation / Mellen Events) management and bookings, Boox Kid is set to release his debut E.P. in March 2024.



**David Leha**  
Mubarn  
(Clever Man)

David Leha who also performs as Radical Son is a concert artist, equally at home with classical ensembles.

David is one of the mightiest voices and most compelling performers currently rising on the Australian concert, festival and dramatic stage. A Kamilaroi man with Tongan heritage, his work draws immense power and resolve from a challenging past. He is a strong man with a strong stage presence & a mesmerising voice that punches your soul and ignites your heart.

His transformational life journey has led him to a unique place on Australia's cultural landscape, a captivating soul voice and commanding presence leading us to a new level of contemplation through his hard-won personal insights. He will not leave you unmoved.



**Ronald Dick**  
Bworan  
(Old Man)

Ronald is a Yamaji-Noongar young man born and raised in Perth Western Australia. Ronald has never doubted what his future career choice would be from a young age. Ronald had a passion and still does for the theatre and being on stage. He describes it as a place he can be himself, his happy place.

After performing on stage in several different musicals, over the years he has proved to be a talented young man. Ronald also studied at APAN and WAAPA.

His ultimate dream is to make it to Broadway. Hooked on opera and musical theatre since the age of seven years old, Ronald knew that he wanted to make a name for himself. Over the years, Ronald stepped away from the stage and now has come back for Gina Williams and Guy Ghouse's opera *Wundig wer Wilura*. It marks the first show that Ron has done after 4 years.

# Biographies

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**Charley Caruso**  
Ngaank  
(Wilura's Mother)

Charley Caruso is a singer-songwriter who goes by the artist name ABRYNZ. She is currently studying Electronic Music and Sound Design at the University of Western Australia and enjoys writing/producing music for other artists, productions and television/film such as *Family Rules* by Karla Hart and *Woolah* for Yirra Yaakin.

Charley sings with Della mob and is a backup vocalist on songs for Phil Walley Stack and "Meeka Waaliny" by Ian Wilkes, Josh Hogan & Ned Beckley. Charley previously taught in the Aboriginal Theatre course at the West Australian Academy of Performing Arts and is a passionate Co-founder/Director of Boss Arts Creative.



**Della Rae Morrison**  
Kabaarli Kalyat  
(Nanna Cheek,  
Wilura's Nanna)

Della Rae Morrison is a Bibbulmun woman of the Nyoongar Nation of the South West of WA, with 30 years of experience in the arts in Australia. Della first started with Jimmy Chi's Aboriginal musical *Bran Nue Dae* in 1989 and has never looked back. She went on to perform in *Headspace* with Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company, *Jimmy & Pat Meet the Queen*, *Red Alert* and *Bratwurst & Damper* with Deckchair Theatre Company, Perth Theatre Company production of *An Oak Tree*, *Fifty Shades of Black* with Yorga Waabiny, she played the part of Mrs Egg in the Australian Television Series *Lockie Leonard* originally screened on the Nine Network in 2007, *Shakespeare Sonnets in Nyoongar* with Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company, Mudskipper Production of *Banned* for the Perth Fringe Festival 2018, performed in the Tasmanian Performs production of *The Season 2018* and most recently thoroughly enjoyed performing as *Hecate* in Yirra Yarkin Theatre production of *Hecate* for PIAF 2020.

Della is the Music Director for the Madjiti! Moorna Choir and looks forward to upcoming performances around Perth.





**Jarrad Inman**  
Gulambiddi  
(Wilura's Betrothed)

Jarrad Inman is a Noongar man raised in Kinjarling/Albany, Western Australia. Jarrad was born in 2001, the youngest of three brothers whom he credits for getting him into music. Now at the age of 23, Jarrad has been performing in various ways since the age of 11. Jarrad is passionate about his music and plays on the Perth music scene under the name Ricky Neil Jr.

He cites David Bowie, Prince, and Freddie Mercury as his major inspirations in music and stage performance. Jarrad's acting career started in Albany at the age of 16 when he joined ALOTCO (Albany Light Opera Theatre Company) and would continue throughout the years in Albany.

Jarrad's most prominent role with West Australian Opera to date was the part of "Koolbardi" in Gina Williams and Guy Ghouse's opera, *Koolbardi wer Wardong*, starting back in 2021, a role he is immensely proud to have played.



**Bella McGill**  
Mandi  
(Wundig's Betrothed)

Bella McGill is a proud Ballardong woman, who is also descended (through her great grandmother) from the Kija people of the East Kimberley.

Bella has been singing and performing for most of her life. She made her official singing debut in 2013, recording backing vocals on the album *Kalyakoorl* (Forever), by Gina Williams and Guy Ghouse. She subsequently sang on their second album *Bindi Bindi* (Butterfly). In 2021, Bella sang alongside her sister Lauren and Gina Williams and Guy Ghouse in *Koort* (Heart) a work which premiered in the gardens of Government House for Perth Festival. In 2022 Bella played the role of Miss Djidi Djidi in the West Australian Opera's Kalgoorlie production of *Koolbardi wer Wardong*.

Off stage, Bella is studying to become a secondary teacher. Bella is thrilled to be playing the part of Mandi in the premier season of West Australian Opera's production of *Wundig wer Wilura*.

# Biographies

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**Teresa Moore**  
Maamyok  
(Wundig's Mother)

Teresa Moore is a proud Noongar and Yamitji woman who graduated from WAAPA's Bachelor of Arts (Acting), during which she performed the roles such as 'Tituba' in *The Crucible*, 'Eunice' in *A Streetcar named Desire* and 'Condoleezza Rice' in *Stuff Happens*.

Additionally Teresa was invited to perform at Ryerson University in Toronto in *Home*, written and directed by Peggy Shannon; 'Rosie' in *Bran Nue Dae* (Opera Australia), and 'Ada' in musical *Panawathi Girl*, written by David Milroy.

While at WAAPA, Teresa was cast as 'Jaz' in S1 the TV series *Mystery Road*, working alongside Judy Davis. Other TV credits include *Black Comedy S5*, *Doctor Doctor* and *Play School*.

Teresa was previously an Associate Artist at Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company, for which she was also the Creative Producer & Writer of the Ngalaka Daa Ensemble 2023 program. Teresa also produced the WOOLAH! Exhibition for Yirra Yaakin's 30th Anniversary and was a part of 2023 Yirra Yaakin Writing Festival as a Narrator.



**Tyrone Brownley Kongk**  
(Wundig's Father)

Singer and Songwriter Tyrone is one of four members of 2017 WAM Song of the Year winners: The Brownley Gospel Singers. The group consists of Tyrone, his parents Trevor and Marcia, and his brother Linden.

Through his Mum Marcia, Tyrone is proudly connected to the Wadjuk, Yued and Ballardong tribes of the Nyungar nation, and through Dad Trevor, Tyrone is connected to the Waljen, Madduwongga and Nyanganyatjarra tribes of the Wangkatha/Ngaanyantjarra nations of the Western Desert.

Tyrone's musical career has seen him share the stage with artists such as Eskimo Joe, Steve Grace, Bill Chambers plus international artists, such as The Afters, Mathias Duplessy and the Violins of the World, and the Min Livites. Tyrone looks forward to returning to West Australian Opera to perform in *Wundig wer Wilura* following Tyrone's previous performances as the infamous cheeky Djidi Djidi for Gina Williams & Guy Ghouse *Koolbardi wer Wardong* across 2021, 2022 and 2023.



**Rebeun Yorkshire**  
Maambart  
(Wilura's Father)

Rebeun Yorkshire is a visual artist, dancer, stage combat choreographer, and actor who is well known for his performance as Banquo in the award-winning production of *Hecate* (Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company). After graduating from the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) in 2010, Rebeun performed in shows *Kep Kaatijin* (2015), *Boodjar Kaatijin* (2016 – 2017), *Djinda Kaatijin* (2017) and *Kaarla Kaatijin* (2018) for Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company. He also performed in West Australian Youth Theatre Company's award-winning Fringe World show, *Rest* (2019).

Rebeun was a key collaborator on Boomerang and Spear's Noongar Wonderland presented at the 2022 Perth Festival, co-choreographing a series of dances for a new collection of Noongar-language dance tracks by Maatakitj (Clint Bracknell). He worked as fight choreographer on the productions *Hecate* (Yirra Yaakin 2020) and *Conversations with the Dead* (Yirra Yaakin 2017). Rebeun has also completed a range of public art for corporate, major festivals and education institutions. His voice is featured on the ground-breaking language reclamation film *Fist of Fury Noongar Daa* (2021).



Photo: West Beach Studio





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# Ensemble

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**Jack Collard**



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**Ronald Dick**



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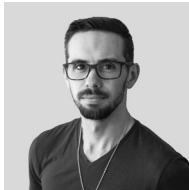
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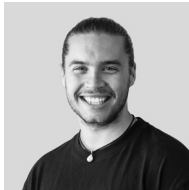
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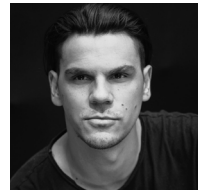
**Kobi Morrison**



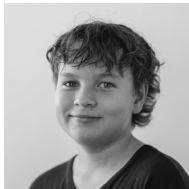
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# West Australian Symphony Orchestra

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Riley Skevington  
*Associate Concertmaster*

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Rebecca Glorie  
Christina Katsimbardis  
Akiko Miyazawa  
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Sam Wickramasinghe

## **Second Violins**

Zak Rowntree  
Kate Sullivan  
Amy Furfaro  
Lucas O'Brien  
Melanie Pearn  
Jane Serrangeli

## **Violas**

Daniel Schmitt  
Alex Brogan  
Kierstan Arkleymith  
Nik Babic  
Rachael Kirk

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Isaac Davis  
Oliver McAslan  
Fotis Skordas  
Tim South

## **Basses**

John Keene  
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Giovanni Vinci

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Jonathan Ryan

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Som Howie  
Alex Miller

## **Bassoons**

Adam Mikulicz

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Francesco Lo Surdo

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Koominka

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Ronald Dick and cast in rehearsal.  
Photo: West Beach Studio

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