

WEST  
AUSTRALIAN  
OPERA  
2022



# KOOLBARDI WER WARDONG

GINA WILLIAMS & GUY GHOUSE

# KOOLBARDI WER WARDONG

**Saturday 17 September 2022**  
**Esperance Civic Centre**

Composers **Gina Williams and Guy Ghouse**  
Arrangement and Orchestration **Dr Chris Stone**  
Director **Matthew Reuben James Ward**  
Music Director and Repetiteur **Adrian Soares**  
Bendat Family Foundation Artist Movement Director **Olman Walley**  
Set and Costume Designer **Matt McVeigh**  
Lighting Designer **Mark Howett**  
Sound Designer **Jeremy Turner**

Wardong **Jarred Wall**  
Koolbardi **Jarrad Inman**  
Djidi Djidi **Tyrone Brownley**  
Miss Djidi Djidi **Natasha Eldridge**  
Ngaank Boodja **Gina Williams AM**

The Jazz Band  
Guitar **Guy Ghouse**  
Double Bass **Dr Nick Abbey**  
Percussion **Dr Daniel Susnjar**  
Piano and Clarinet **Adrian Soares**

Featuring **Esperance Children's Chorus supported by Lotterywest**  
Regional Choir Director **Neville Talbot**  
Assistant Regional Choir Director **Sandra Walker**

Regional Tour Coordinator **Chelsea Burns**  
Head Electrician / AV **Jon Davey**  
Head Mechanist **Eoin O'Briain**  
Stage Manager **Karen Farmer**  
Assistant Stage Manager **Finlay Pedler**  
Assistant Stage Manager **Erryn Hanson**  
Head of Wardrobe **Nora Stelter**  
Make Up / Wigs **Sharon Kyrwood**  
Surtitled Operator **Jillian Halleron**

Set build by **Plumb Artsworkshop**  
Scenic cloths painted by **Jo Darvall**

Special thanks to the staff and students of Nulsen Primary School.

*Koolbardi wer Wardong* is a Wesfarmers Arts commission.

Information is correct at the time of publication but may be subject to changes.

# ESPERANCE CHILDREN'S CHORUS

Supported by Lotterywest

## REGIONAL CHOIR DIRECTOR

Neville Talbot

Summer-Lee Turner

Carla Lang

Grayden Rawlins

Indi Jamieson

Ashley Harthill

Sophee Arnold

Daniella Edengal

Jorja Laing

Vala Hinds

## ASSISTANT

Sandra Walker

Lisa Greatz

Ariella Ward

Riley Nelson

Damon Mader

Isabella Green

Sarah Jane Garvin

Rubi Balman

Sophia Rangitakatu-Hillman



*Photo shows Jarrad Inman as Koolbardi and Jarred Wall as Wardong. Photo by Alison Rodrigues.*

## Composers' Notes



We respectfully acknowledge we are on the lands of an ancient people. We honour Elders, past and present, with hearts filled with love and gratitude for hosting us.

*Koolbardi wer Wardong* is rightly held with great affection by the Noongar community. It is a wonderful story with a universal message: pride always comes before the fall. It is important we stay humble in all things. Because when one of us succeeds, then it is good for all of us.

We thank the West Australian Opera for incredible ongoing support of this work. Thank you to Carolyn Chard AM, Chris van Tuinen and all our Opera moort (family). This has been such an incredible experience thanks to all of you.

Matt Reuben James Ward, Jarred Wall, Jarrad Inman, Tyrone Brownley, Natasha Eldridge, Adrian Soares, Dan Susnjar, Nick Abbey, you mob keep putting the oooOOOooo into moorditj! It's a privilege to work with you.

Our beautiful Barna Chorus would not be possible if it weren't for the work done by local champions and the parents who have supported these young people at rehearsals.

We are thrilled to bring *Koolbardi wer Wardong* to you, and we hope you enjoy this celebration of language and storytelling, because ultimately, this is our love offering to you.

Kalyakoorl, ngalak warangka (Forever, we sing).

**Gina Williams and Guy Ghouse**

## Synopsis

*Koolbardi wer Wardong* is based on a traditional Noongar story.

*Koora Koora, nyittiny boodja...*

This story begins a long time ago when the earth was cold. Ngaank Boodja (Mother Earth) comes to tell this story to the barna, the other animals.

Koolbardi the Magpie and Wardong the Crow were once close, like brothers. They would hunt and fish together, spending all their time happily playing and laughing. Both birds had white feathers and were very beautiful - and they both knew it. They were secretly jealous of one another.

Koolbardi is the more outgoing of the two. He loves attention and thrives on praise, sometimes taking credit for things he hasn't done. He thinks Wardong is boring and too preoccupied with catching fish.

Wardong is quieter and considers himself more intelligent. He thinks Koolbardi is a terrible show off. Wardong also thinks he is a better hunter and tries to order his brother around.

One early morning at the river, the two brothers are fishing. As usual, Koolbardi has no luck whilst Wardong catches lots of fish. Nearby, two Djidi Djidi come to watch and tease Koolbardi. Seeing his brother become upset, Wardong offers Koolbardi some of his catch. He reasons that all is not lost - together they can feed the others at camp and be admired by the other barna.

Naughty Koolbardi steals all the fish and races back to camp, leaving Wardong empty handed.

Ngaank Boodja sees how upset Wardong is and they talk about what has happened. Even though he is angry, Ngaank Boodja reminds him that it is unfair to keep forcing his brother to do something he doesn't like and isn't good at.

Wardong sees her point and calms down. Collecting his thoughts, he returns to camp to find Koolbardi. Much to his dismay, his brother is in the middle of the camp bragging and boasting about catching all the fish.

Koolbardi asks the barna "Ngiyarn baal kwobidak? Who's the prettiest? Who's the best?"

The barna, unaware of what has happened, excitedly sing back, "Oh Koolbardi, there's nobody finer than you!"

Wardong is furious. The brothers fight, and the scuffle ends when they both land in the fire.

This is where the change happens. Wardong lands in the fire and all his white feathers turn black. Koolbardi tries to escape, flying high into the air, but is caught by the ashes and the smoke, turning him black and white.

Warra kedala nidja, koora moorditj koorda! Bad days come here to those who were once solid friends.

Ngaank Boodja intervenes, sending the two brothers in opposite directions, never to be friends again. In this bittersweet moment, she reassures the rest of the barna that this is for the best, and to never forget that pride always comes before the fall.

# THANK YOU

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Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries  
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This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.

# CREATIVITY IN FLIGHT



As Principal Partner  
of West Australian Opera,  
and commissioning partner  
of Koolbardi wer Wardong,  
Wesfarmers is helping Western  
Australian stories take flight.

Celebrating the  
indigenous culture of this  
place on Nyungar Country,  
Koolbardi wer Wardong  
speaks uniquely to this  
land, time and place.

Wesfarmers Arts is privileged  
to commission major  
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crisis of COVID-19, resilient,  
re-invigorated and connecting  
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West Australian Opera acknowledges the Aboriginal peoples of Western Australia as the Traditional Custodians of this land and we pay our respects to Elders past and present.