

DARWIN & SYDNEY
AUSTRALIA

MAY 2024

ASIA'S LARGEST NEW HOTEL

SYDNEY'S NEWEST HOTEL

SYDNEY'S NEWEST HOTEL



Echoes of Earth

Exploring Indigenous Music and Healing



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A SONG OF HOPE

**POEM BY OODEGEROO NOONUCCAL
(KATH WALKER)**

LOOK UP, MY PEOPLE,

THE DAWN IS BREAKING

THE WORLD IS WAKING

TO A BRIGHT NEW DAY

WHEN NONE DEFAME US

NO RESTRICTION TAME US

NOR COLOUR SHAME US

NOR SNEER DISMAY.

NOW BROOD NO MORE

ON THE YEARS BEHIND YOU

THE HOPE ASSIGNED YOU

SHALL THE PAST REPLACE

WHEN A JUSTER JUSTICE

GROWN WISE AND STRONGER

POINTS THE BONE NO LONGER

AT A DARKER RACE.



FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to Echoes of Earth, where we delve into the rich tapestry of Indigenous music and healing traditions. This edition is a tribute to the resilience, creativity, and profound wisdom of Indigenous communities, particularly those in Darwin and Sydney, Australia. My recent journey to Australia as part of the Penn Global Seminar provided the inspiration and insights for this issue. Through the stories of powerful voices and sacred rituals, we offer a glimpse into the deep connections between land, spirituality, and identity that define Indigenous life.

As the editor and photographer, it has been an enlightening experience to bring together these stories that celebrate Indigenous heritage and challenge us to rethink our relationship with nature and each other. The themes of patience, deep listening, and respect for the natural world are woven throughout this issue, inviting readers to pause and reflect on the values that truly matter. Whether it's through the haunting sounds of the didgeridoo or the wisdom of elders, this edition aims to inspire a deeper appreciation for the timeless traditions that continue to shape our world.



Ximing Lu

EDITOR AND PHOTOGRAPHER



MIRIAM-ROSE UNGUNMERR-BAUMANN



Meeting Miriam Rose and absorbing her profound insights into the spiritual and cultural practices of her people leaves an indelible mark on one's understanding of time, presence, and connection. Her words about the intrinsic value of silence and the natural rhythm of life resonate deeply, reminding us how the modern world often disconnects from these elemental truths through its relentless pace and noise. Reflecting on Miriam's teachings draws attention to 'dadirri', a form of deep listening and quiet stillness that is not just a practice but a way of being. This approach encourages communion with the environment and a harmonious existence that is attuned to the natural world, fostering a profound connection with the Creator.

The contrast between Miriam's description of her people's relationship with nature—their patience in the unfolding of life's rhythms and their comfort in stillness—and the often hurried, superficial interactions that characterize modern life prompts a reevaluation of how we engage with the world. Her insights challenge the value placed on quick outcomes over meaningful processes and the quiet moments often overlooked in daily routines. It's a compelling invitation to embrace slowness, observe more keenly, and allow life to flow more naturally, respecting the processes that cannot be rushed and appreciating the waiting as much as the arrival.

MY PEOPLE ARE NOT THREATENED BY SILENCE

Miriam's teachings on patient waiting, inspired by the comfort her people find in silence, emphasize resilience and a deeper trust in life's natural pace. This approach challenges the rush of modern society, promoting patience and a mindful appreciation of life's diversity as essential virtues.



MIRIAM ROSE'S HOME

SACRED WATERS

EMBRACING HEALING AND HOPE

In the heart of the indigenous land, the water ceremony unfolds—a rite of profound significance, welcoming all who step onto this sacred earth. As the new dawn breaks, the air fills with the scent of burning herbs, a prelude to the ancient smoking ceremony that cleanses and purifies. This is a spiritual threshold, an invitation extended by the Traditional Owners to newcomers from across the globe, offering a bridge to the past and a gateway to mutual respect and understanding.

The water blessing, deeply entwined with the essence of the community, carries the whispers of ancestors. Each drop is imbued with memories and wisdom passed down through generations. It is not merely water that flows here but the lifeblood of the land itself, offering healing and solace to those who come seeking peace. As the elders chant their prayers, the water is sprinkled gently, a symbolic gesture that binds the guests to the land and its age-old legacy.

This ceremony is more than a ritual; it is a profound act of hospitality and an emblem of spiritual connection. For migrants far from their origins, it represents a beacon of hope—a promise that they, too, can find a new home on these ancient shores without losing the essence of their own ancestral identities. The elders teach that the land does not belong to us; we belong to the land, and in this belonging, we find our common humanity.

Through the water and smoke, the community communicates a powerful message of continuity, resilience, and shared future. It is a vivid testament to the belief that everyone, regardless of their origins, can be woven into the fabric of this vibrant cultural tapestry. Here, in the sacred rituals passed down by the Traditional Owners, lies a universal call to unity and healing—a call that resonates deeply in those who participate, bridging worlds and healing spirits.



WATER CEREMONY



STRONG INDIGENOUS WOMEN



Tess Atie, through her leadership of Northern Territory Indigenous Tours, exemplifies the impactful role that Indigenous women can play in both preserving and promoting their cultural heritage while fostering sustainable development within their communities. Her work not only offers visitors an insightful glimpse into the rich traditions and ecological wisdom of her traditional lands but also creates meaningful employment opportunities for young Indigenous people. By integrating cultural education with environmental stewardship, Tess contributes to a larger narrative of Indigenous empowerment and resilience.

Indigenous women like Tess are pillars in their communities worldwide, often leading efforts to safeguard their traditions, languages, and lands. They play a crucial role in transmitting ancestral knowledge and skills that are essential for community well-being and environmental management. Moreover, these women are increasingly taking on leadership roles that challenge historical injustices and advocate for social and ecological justice. Their influence is felt in various spheres, including politics, education, and activism, where they push for changes that not only benefit Indigenous populations but also contribute to global discussions on sustainability and human rights. In doing so, Indigenous women are not just preserving their heritage but are actively shaping the future.



"ALWAYS WAS, ALWAYS WILL BE ABORIGINAL LAND"

The family on their cattle farm symbolizes a deeper narrative of resilience and connection to the land that is central to Indigenous Australian culture. The successful land settlement they have achieved is not just a personal victory but resonates widely as a triumph for Indigenous rights and land reclamation. Such settlements are crucial in the ongoing effort to rectify historical injustices and reaffirm Aboriginal sovereignty, enabling Indigenous families to regain control and stewardship over their ancestral lands. This is essential not only for economic sustainability but also for the preservation of cultural practices, languages, and spiritual traditions tied deeply to the land.

In the context of Australian Aboriginal culture, land is more than just a resource; it is a living entity that sustains, defines, and is intrinsically linked to the identity of its people. Securing land rights is therefore pivotal in the journey towards self-determination and cultural revival for many Indigenous communities. It allows them to manage natural resources, protect sacred sites, and continue traditional practices that have been passed down through generations. This family's accomplishment in winning a land settlement is a beacon of hope and a source of inspiration for other Indigenous groups fighting for recognition and rights, showcasing the enduring spirit and collective resolve of Aboriginal Australians in preserving their heritage and contributing to a more inclusive society.



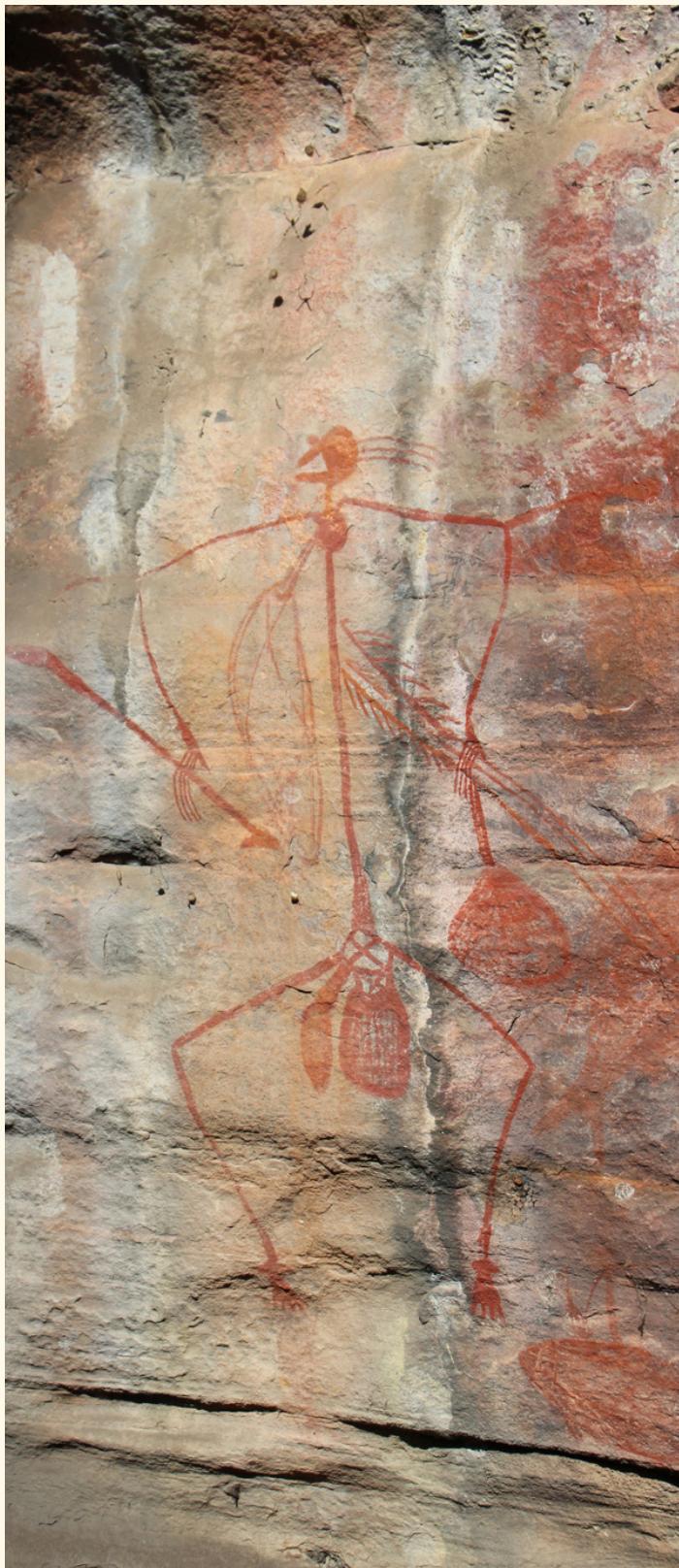
THE FIGHT FOR LAND

The fight for land rights remains a pivotal issue for Indigenous Australians, who seek to protect their ancestral territories and secure legal recognition. The 1992 Mabo decision marked a significant turning point by overturning the doctrine of terra nullius and acknowledging Indigenous connections to the land. This led to the Native Title Act of 1993, which provides a framework for Indigenous peoples to claim their traditional rights. Despite these legal advances, challenges persist, including mining pressures, environmental threats, and complex bureaucratic processes. Indigenous communities continue to advocate for the protection of their sacred sites and the preservation of their cultural and ecological heritage, emphasizing the importance of respect and legal acknowledgment of their rights to their lands.



COWS ON A CATTLE FARM

PRESERVING CULTURE



Rock art in Kakadu National Park offers a window into the ancient cultural practices of the Aboriginal people, with paintings that date back over 20,000 years. These art sites, such as those at Ubirr and Nourlangie, provide insights into the spiritual and everyday life of the area's Indigenous inhabitants, showcasing their deep connection to the land.



BROCK, SON OF TESS, WITH
THE INDIGENOUS
DIDGERIDOO INSTRUMENT



SOUNDS OF AUSTRALIA

The haunting sounds of the didgeridoo are emblematic of Australia's rich cultural tapestry, resonating through the air with deep, reverberating tones that capture the essence of the ancient landscapes. Crafted from hollowed-out eucalyptus trunks naturally hollowed by termites, this indigenous wind instrument is traditionally played by Aboriginal Australians in ceremonial gatherings and has become a powerful symbol of connection to the land. Its unique sound, characterized by a complex mix of droning and rhythmic patterns, is not merely musical; it is an auditory journey through the stories and spirits of the Australian bush, evoking images of vast, arid deserts and lush rainforests. The didgeridoo's deep, earthy vibrations are a timeless echo of Australia's natural and cultural heritage, serving as a reminder of the profound spiritual links between the Aboriginal people and their ancestral territories.



VIVID SYDNEY



The Sydney Opera House, an iconic emblem of cultural and architectural excellence, hosts over 1,500 annual performances, showcasing a wide spectrum of the arts from opera to dance. This UNESCO World Heritage Site, known for its unique shell-like design, is a hub for major global cultural festivals and events, reflecting Australia's rich cultural scene.

Vivid Sydney transforms the city every year from late May to mid-June with spectacular light shows, especially at the Opera House. This festival blends art with technology, featuring immersive light installations and performances that draw international artists. It highlights creativity and promotes discussions on cultural and social issues, making it a key event in Sydney's cultural calendar.



ARCHITECTURE



The architecture of the Sydney Opera House is a stunning testament to 20th-century modernist design, conceived by Danish architect Jørn Utzon. Its most distinctive features are the multiple sail-like shells that form the roof structure, an innovative design that was ahead of its time due to its complex geometric form and the use of precast concrete panels. These shells are supported by a massive platform and are covered in more than one million white ceramic tiles, creating a shimmering facade that mirrors the sky and sea. This iconic design not only enhances the scenic beauty of its waterfront setting but also solves acoustical challenges, making it a marvel of both aesthetic and functional engineering. The Opera House has since become a global symbol of architectural ingenuity and an enduring icon of Australian culture.



"Soulful, shimmery feel-good vibes."



INDIGENOUS SINGER, SONGWRITER AND RAPPER **KAIIT**

Kaiit Waup, Australia's shining star of the neo-soul genre, is set to captivate audiences at the iconic Sydney Opera House with her debut performance. Known for her soulful, shimmery vibes and magnetic stage presence, Kaiit is unveiling a fresh chapter in her musical journey. With the introduction of her all-new character, Lil Mama, she continues to push the boundaries of creativity and expression. This event not only marks her first performance at such a prestigious venue but also heralds the beginning of her "hotly anticipated new era," promising fans a unique and enthralling musical experience as part of Vivid LIVE.

The Sydney Opera House debut of Kaiit is an event filled with anticipation and excitement. Infused with the "feel-good vibes" that are a hallmark of her style, Kaiit's music blends intricate beats with a lyrical depth that resonates deeply with her audience.

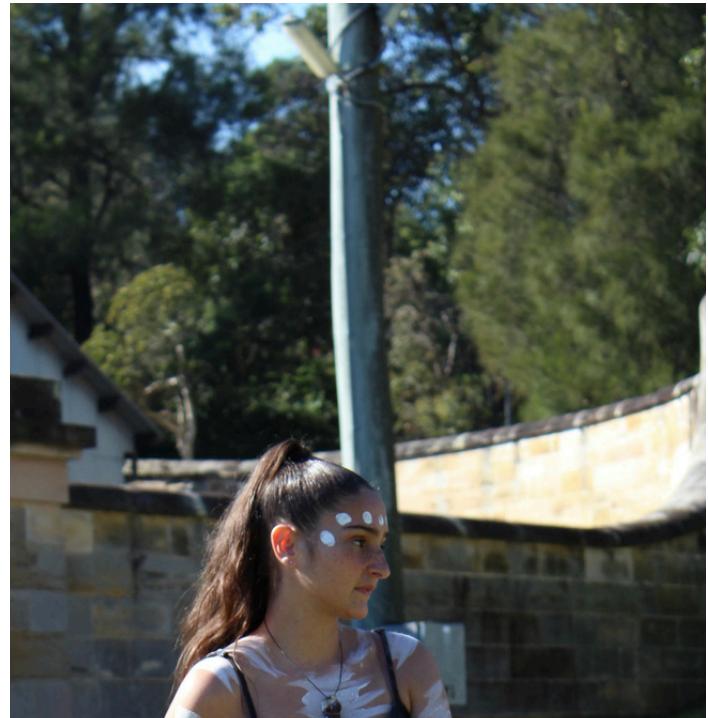
This performance is a significant moment for Kaiit as she introduces the world to Lil Mama, a character that embodies her artistic evolution and depth. The show is set to be a theatrical and immersive experience, reflecting Kaiit's dynamic and evolving artistry. Having already received accolades and recognition, including an ARIA award and praise from international artists like Jill Scott, Kaiit's career is on a remarkable trajectory. Her Sydney Opera House debut during Vivid LIVE is not just a concert; it's an invitation to witness the rise of Australia's neo-soul queen as she steps into a new era of her musical expression.



INDIGENOUS YOUTH

Goat Island, located in Sydney Harbour, epitomizes the enduring influence of Indigenous culture within Australia's urban settings. Here, Indigenous youth performed a cultural dance as an assertion of their Aboriginal identity. Their movements narrated their community's history and spiritual connections to the land, emphasizing a living tradition amidst a contemporary backdrop.

This performance underscores the crucial role of the younger generation in preserving Indigenous culture. Through dance and music, they act as stewards of their heritage, ensuring that their community's rich traditions continue to thrive and meld into the broader narrative of Australian culture. Such events serve dual purposes: they celebrate cultural continuity and foster greater understanding and appreciation among wider audiences. By stepping forward as the new bearers of their culture, Indigenous youth are vital links connecting their past with the future.



NGURAMBANG YALI – COUNTRY SPEAKS

POEM BY JEANINE LEANE

IT'S BEEN TOO LONG SINCE I SAT ON GRANITE IN MY
COUNTRY AND THOUGHT

TOO MANY YEARS SINCE I BREATHED THIS AIR—

BUNYI-NG—GANHA

FELT THIS DIRT—NGAMANHI DHAAGUN

SMELT THIS DUST—BUDHA—NHI BUNAN

LISTENED FOR THE SOUNDS OF HER WORDS THAT SAY

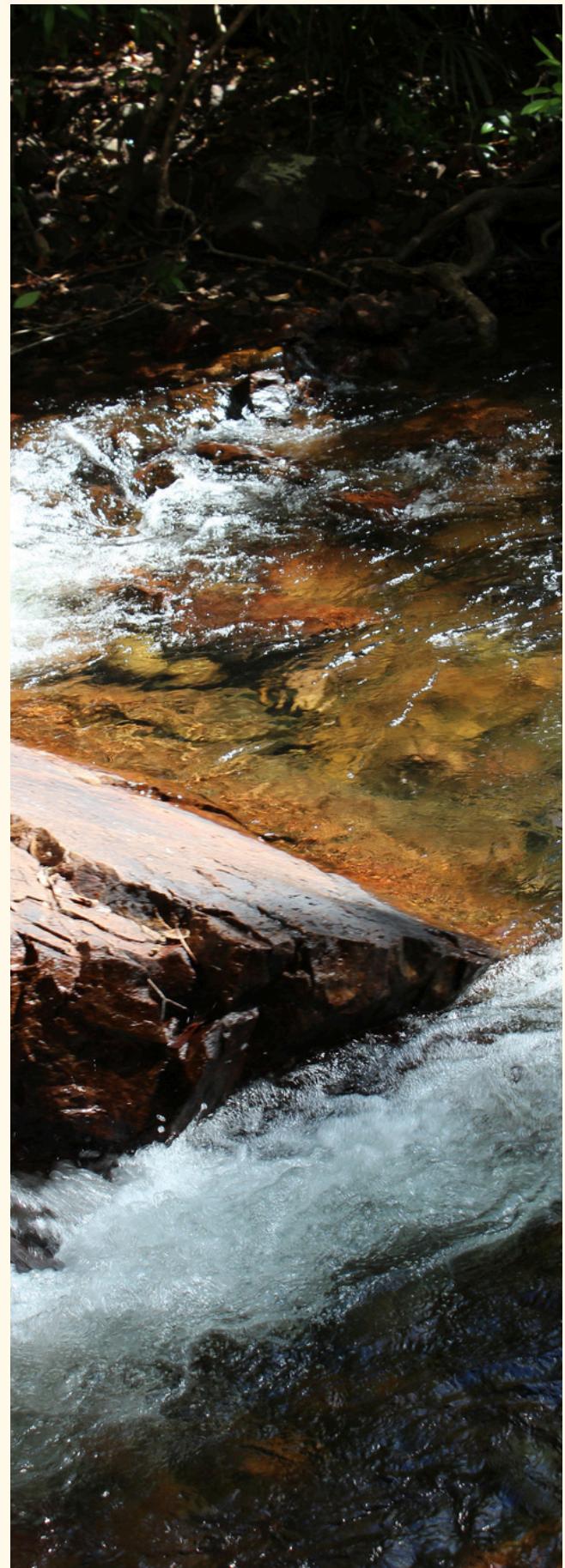
'BALANDHA—DHURAAY BUMAL-AYI-NYA WUMBAY

ABUNY (YABOING)—HISTORY DOES NOT HAVE THE

FIRST CLAIM. NOR THE LAST WORD.

NGHINDHI YARRA DHALANBUL NGIYANHI GIN GU

'YOU CAN SPEAK US NOW!'



CLOSING REMARKS: DEEP LISTENING



In a world that often prioritizes speed and efficiency, the practice of deep listening stands as a powerful counterbalance. My project Echoes of Earth has underscored the importance of taking the time to truly listen—to the land, to the stories of our ancestors, and to each other. Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr-Baumann's teachings on 'dadirri,' or deep listening, remind us that there is profound value in silence and stillness. It is through these quiet moments that we can connect more deeply with our surroundings and gain a greater understanding of the world around us.

The sacred water ceremonies and the resilient voices of Indigenous women highlighted in this issue further illustrate how deep listening is integral to healing and community. These traditions are not just cultural practices but are vital processes that foster unity and respect. By embracing the wisdom passed down through generations, we can learn to honor the rhythms of nature and the intrinsic value of patience and mindfulness.

As we close this project, let us carry forward the lessons of deep listening into our daily lives. Let us strive to create spaces where silence is not just tolerated but cherished, where every voice is heard and respected. In doing so, we contribute to a more compassionate and harmonious world, where the essence of humanity is celebrated in its fullest expression.

Thank you for joining my journey through the echoes of earth. May these stories inspire you to listen more deeply, to pause, and to connect more profoundly with the world and the people around you. May you find peace and wisdom in the practice of deep listening.

