

Olive Pink Opera

7 - 8 October 2022

PROGRAM



The Olive Pink Opera, produced by the Olive Pink Botanic Garden, and proudly presented at the 2022 Desert Song Festival by Central Australian Singing Inc.

WELCOME

My name is Doris Stuart Kngwarreye. I am Apmrereke Artweye (belonging to country) for Mparntwe (Alice Springs). My family are the children of this country, and through my father's family we are custodians for this country.



Claire Kilgariff, Doris Stuart Kngwarreye and Frances Kilgariff

Today we are here on the sacred site of Tharrarltneme (Annie Meyers Hill) to enjoy a heritage story about Olive Pink, a woman who lived here for many years. She fought for Aboriginal peoples' right to their ancient lands, and she established this garden, to protect our beautiful and delicate native plants. A lot of us Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal kids growing up together here in the Gap area, knew Miss Pink as a bit of a scary old lady. We didn't understand her vision and what she was trying to do.

The story of Olive Pink is a story that can be shared by Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. When people have something in common, they respect each other and listen to each other. That is why telling this story is important to Alice Springs. I ask you to join with me in acknowledging and respecting this country, and all it gives us every day we live here.

Mparntwe Arrernte Custodian Doris Stuart Kngwarreye

Olive Pink Botanic Garden acknowledges the Arrernte Custodians of Mpwernte and pay our respects to elders past and present. We are committed to working positively with and for the Aboriginal community.

THE STORY

Set in the Olive Pink Botanic Garden in the last decade of the founder's life, the Opera represents a day in Miss Pink's life, beginning before she awakes.

In a dream, her nemesis TGH (Ted) Strehlow appears alongside her old friend and mentor Daisy Bates. The disagreement between Olive Pink and Ted Strehlow over her ambition to establish a secular reserve for Warlpiri people is played out, and Olive and Daisy reminisce about their time together at Daisy's campsite at Ooldea on the Trans-Australian Rail line.

Miss Pink then wakes up and her Warlpiri gardener Johnny Jampijinpa arrives. Her morning is disrupted by the Gap kids accidentally causing a mob of horses to stampede onto her garden. In the afternoon, she hosts a tea party to celebrate the engagement of her friends Des Nelson and Pat Colley.

The day ends with Miss Pink reflecting on her life while watching the sun set upon Mt Gillen.



COMPOSER

Professor Emerita Anne Boyd AM



An award-winning and prodigious composer, Anne has enjoyed a distinguished career as a music educator, graduating from the University of Sydney (BA Hons) and the University of York (PhD in composition). A strong advocate for equality of women in academia, Anne was the first woman (and the first Australian) appointed Professor of Music at the University of Sydney. This followed her appointment as Head of the Department of Music at the University of Hong Kong and teaching at the University of Sussex. Anne's music is strongly influenced by landscape and Aboriginal and Asian traditions of storytelling. Her compositions are featured in many international music festivals, including the prize-winning Vale of Glamorgan Festival in Wales (2001, 2006, 2012), Edinburgh (1974), Warsaw (1974), Adelaide (1966, 1968, 2002), and Canberra (2016).

COMPOSER'S NOTE

Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's 2008 national apology to the Stolen Generations – Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children forcibly removed from their families under State policies since the beginning of the European occupation of Australia – inspired me to research historical figures who worked closely with Aboriginal people and whose stories might be told in opera. Three women, all of whom knew each other, seemed ideal: Daisy Bates, Olive Pink and Annie Lock. The Olive Pink Opera is the second of the opera trilogy.

In the opera, the beautiful Garden is given musical representation; a living character in its own right, offering not only the setting, but its colours, shapes, sounds and smells in recurring musical textures throughout the work. Olive Pink's spirit is captured particularly in the sound of the shakuhachi (Japanese bamboo flute), soaring above the rest of the ensemble.

FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

We are delighted to welcome you to the Olive Pink Opera, a masterwork by the incomparable Professor Emerita Anne Boyd AM. Olive Pink is a truly iconic Central Australian character who challenged the status quo throughout her life. Olive Pink's determination and perseverance gifted our community the heritage of this remarkable botanic garden, a place that is a treasured part of Mparntwe (Alice Springs).

Frances Kilgariff AM



CREATIVE CO-DIRECTOR

Nicole Evans

A Drama and English teacher, Nicole has worked in Arts Education since 1995. She has directed, produced and choreographed a large number of stage plays and musicals at schools in Queensland and Mparntwe (Alice Springs). In the community theatre sphere, she is regularly involved in directing, crewing, acting, singing and dancing in musicals, plays, play readings, light opera, and now, her first Opera. Most recently, she was Assistant Director for the musicals Matilda Jnr and Mary Poppins at St Philip's College, Alice Springs.



CREATIVE CO-DIRECTOR

Steve Kidd

Steve is a theatre producer, director, performer, technician and teacher. He has directed hundreds of plays and musicals with some highlights being Les Miserables, Jesus Christ Superstar, Spamalot, The Bald Prima Donna, Charley's Aunt, The Maids and Accidental Death of An Anarchist. In 2011, Steve directed The First Garden, staged at Olive Pink Botanic Gardens, and in 2023 he will direct Evita at the Darwin Entertainment Centre.



MUSIC DIRECTOR

Jonathan Tooby

Currently Chief Conductor and Artistic Director with the Darwin Symphony Orchestra, Jon is also a cellist and chamber musician. Trained at the West Australian Conservatorium and the Royal College of Music, London, he has conducted the West Australian Symphony Orchestra and worked with the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra as well as the West Australian Philharmonic. In opera, he was Assistant Conductor for Peter Grimes and La Sonnabula for the West Australian Opera. Jon has been Artistic Director and Conductor of the Etica Ensemble and Artistic Director and resident cellist of Darlington Chamber Music for the past 15 years, and led the development of Chamber Music Perth. He has worked with the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Halle Orchestra, BBC Symphony and Singapore Symphony, and joined the Arafura Music Collective in 2018.



PRODUCER and ASSISTANT MUSIC DIRECTOR

Claire Kilgariff

Claire is the Artistic Director of the Arafura Music Collective, Chair of Music NT, and Deputy Chair of the Darwin Symphony Orchestra. A founding member of NT Arts institutions such as the Darwin Symphony Orchestra, Centre for Youth Music, Darwin Youth Festival, Darwin Youth Orchestra and Arafura Music Collective. She has worked as a musician, composer, music director and producer of arts and cultural events across many genres. She plays baroque flute, shakuhachi (Japanese bamboo flute) and the modern silver flute. Born in Mparntwe (Alice Springs), she holds degrees in Music, Visual Arts and Leadership and Change, and has worked as an Arts educator and Executive leader in the NT Secondary and Tertiary sectors for over 40 years. Her work was recognised with the 1987 Women's Fellowship for Services to NT Women in the Arts, and she was recently awarded the prestigious 2022 APRA AMCOS Art Music Award, NT Luminary, for sustained contribution to Art Music through the Artistic Direction of Arafura Music Collective.

Illustration of Native Morning glory Ipomoea muelleri by Olive Pink

MESSAGE FROM THE PRODUCER

Finally bringing the Olive Pink Opera to the community of Mparntwe (Alice Springs) after three long years is a privilege and a joy. The story of Miss Pink is our story to share, discover, embellish, recreate, and challenge. Our sense of identity and connection to community is created by the stories we weave around our legends. Our communities have many stories, many legends, from the past and emerging now; let's celebrate them. I wholeheartedly thank the directors, the cast, musicians, and production team, most of whom have been working towards this production since 2019. They are committed passionate members of the arts community who create magic for us.

Claire Kilgariff

MASTER MUSICIANS

Riley Lee

SHAKUHACHI (Japanese bamboo flute)

Riley Lee is the recipient of two of the most venerated lineages of traditional shakuhachi and has been playing for over half a century. In 1975, he became the first non-Japanese shakuhachi Grand Master. Riley has a PhD in music from the University of Sydney, has released over 70 recordings and has registered approximately 400 compositions, co-compositions and arrangements for the shakuhachi with APRA-AMCOS and ASCAP. His music has been streamed on Spotify, as of mid-2022, almost 40 million times. His latest solo release (2022) is a 3CD set of the music of Hildegard von Bingen. He has often played at the Sydney Opera House, performing with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and others. In 2017 Riley and the Enigma Quartet commissioned some of Australia's most original composers to create new music for the combination of Eastern and Western instruments.



Francis Diatschenko

GUITAR

A high-level freelance musician and music educator, Francis has performed in 15 countries and is signed to Australian Global ENT (Aus) and Barry Ball ENT (US). A prolific composer, arranger and recording artist working in a variety of genres, he was a guitarist for Yolngu musician Dr. G. Yunupingu, Murrungun musician Balang (TE) Lewis, Yolngu and non-Indigenous group Yothu Yindi, Arafura Music Collective and several other music groups. Some of his festival performances include OzManouche jazz festival in Brisbane, Darwin International Guitar Festival, Garma, Bali Arts (IND) Walking with Spirits, WOMAD Australia and New Zealand, Mundial Festival in the Netherlands and Latitude, UK. He has performed at The Egg (Beijing PRC), Queen Elisabeth Hall, Union Chapel (UK) and Carnegie Hall in New York City.

CAST



OLIVE PINK - Mezzo Soprano

Kristina Kidd

Kristina trained in classical singing at the Sydney Conservatorium, Victorian College of Arts and Melba Memorial Conservatorium. She has performed in The Merry Widow and Rigoletto, and in roles as diverse as Madame Pinkerton in Madam Butterfly, Fantine in Les Miserables and Miss Lynch in Grease. Since moving to Mparntwe (Alice Springs) in 2000, Kristina has been teaching voice to young artists and producing many local community theatre productions.



TGH STREHLOW – Light Baritone

Steve Kidd

A graduate of NIDA, Steve's acting credits include the national tours of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat, Anything Goes, Bran Nue Dae, I Do! I Do!, the world premiere of Only Heaven Knows and the Australian premiere of Assassins. He also has a long list of film and television acting credits, including Neighbours, Blue Heelers, Robbie Hood and MaveriX.



DAISY BATES and PAT COLLEY – Mezzo Soprano

Lisa-Marie Burgoyne

Lisa-Marie studied musical theatre at the University of Ballarat Arts Academy and has written and performed four one-woman shows staged in Alice Springs, Adelaide, and Melbourne. She directed the children's chorus for Opera Australia's Madam Butterfly in 2019 and pursues her career in music and performing arts by teaching singing.

CAST



JOHNNY JAMPIJINPA – Speaking Part

Nicholas Williams

A Western Arrarnta man from Ntaria (Hermannsburg), Nick is a member of the famous Aboriginal country music Williams family and grew up touring Australia with his legendary grandfather Gus Ntjalka Williams OAM and award-winning father Warren H. Williams. He joined the Central Australian Aboriginal Women's Choir in 2013 and has since performed at the Sydney Opera House, the Melbourne Hamer Hall and Recital Centre, various festivals and tours to Germany and the United States.



DES NELSON – Light Baritone

Daniel Milne

A graduate of the Actors Centre Australia and recipient of the BBM Drama Grant for study in the UK, Dan is a stage, screen and radio actor and performer. He has played Prince Valiant in Sleeping Beauty, worked in Phantom of the Opera, and various roles in Sydney community theatre productions. He has attended the New York Film Academy and London Academy of Dramatic Arts, and has a BA in Media, Screen Production and Radio Broadcasting.



MR HARGRAVE - Baritone

Scott Fraser

A native to Central Australia and graduate of the Flinders University Drama Centre, Scott teaches at St Philip's College, Mparntwe (Alice Springs). He has been involved in many local stage and screen productions, such as playing Henry Wardlaw/Harold Southam in The First Garden and title roles in Young Frankenstein and The Wedding Singer. Screen credits include 8MMM: Aboriginal Radio, Home and Away: Revenge, Pine Gap, and most recently, MaveriX.

CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S CHOIR (CAAWC)

Formed in 2010 under the artistic direction of Morris Stuart, the choir comprises constituent choirs from six remote Aboriginal communities in Central Australia: the Hermannsburg Ladies Choir (Ntaria), the Areyonga Ladies Choir (Utju), the Titjikala Choir, the Mutitjulu Choir, the Docker River Choir (Kaltukatjara) and the Mission Block Choir of Mparntwe (Alice Springs). The choir has gained worldwide attention and their 2015 tour to Germany is captured in the documentary The Song Keepers. They have since toured the United States and performed at prestigious Australian festivals and concert halls. They received a National Indigenous Music Award in 2018.

GAP KIDS CHORUS

Directed by Jessica Wright, the choir includes local schoolchildren from a diversity of backgrounds who attend the Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Catholic College Traeger Campus.





ENSEMBLE CONCERT MASTER

Jessica Wright

Jessica is a violinist, fiddler, singer-songwriter and music educator who teaches performing arts in Mparntwe (Alice Springs). A Music Education graduate of the Sydney Conservatorium, she has won awards for academic scholarship and composition. Jessica released her debut EP this year and her busy and diverse performance schedule has seen her perform with Alice Spring's World Chamber Orchestra, Kasey and Bill Chambers, and Western Arrarnta musician Warren H. Williams. She was recently featured by Paul Kelly, showcasing her school choir performing in a clip filmed in the West Macdonnell Ranges with recording, mixing, vocals and guitar by Jessica.

OPERA ENSEMBLE

The musicians of the Opera Ensemble are primarily drawn from the Mparntwe (Alice Springs) community and Darwin. They are dedicated, classical musicians who perform in local music groups ranging from Classical to Celtic, klezmer to rock and roll, techno, rap, indie and country and western. Many teach in Alice Springs schools and others work as scientists, lawyers, doctors, and in other careers.

Conductor and Music Director - Jonathan Tooby
 Repetiteur - Tsun-En Cheng
 Leader Violin 1 - Jessica Wright
 Violin 1 - Glenys Rae
 Violin 11 - Netanela Mizrahi
 Violin 11 - Rob John
 Viola - Jane Coleman
 Viola - Micha Jackson
 Cello - Harshini Bartlett
 Cello - Michael Bardon
 Double Bass - Joan Wright
 Flute - Katharine Adams
 Clarinet - Caleb Keane
 French Horn - Peter Gilham
 Alto Saxophone - Callum Kruske
 Percussion - Paul Box and Tsun-En Cheng
 Keyboard - Marg Collins



CENTRAL AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL WOMEN'S CHOIR DIRECTOR

Morris Stuart AM

A retired Pastor originally from Guyana, Morris came to Mparntwe (Alice Springs) for an extended stay in 2006. He decided to start a choir singing African freedom songs, recruited the first members by inviting people in the streets of Alice Springs to join, and the choir soon had 50 members. He returned to Alice Springs every year, and by the third year the choir had 100 members. He first worked with Western Arrarnta and Warlpiri women singers at the Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Tertiary Education, and after working with six Aboriginal remote community women choirs, he formed the now internationally successful Central Australian Aboriginal Women's Choir in 2010. Morris received a Member of the Order of Australia in 2022 for significant service to the Indigenous community and to choral music.

PRODUCTION and CREATIVE

Producer and Assistant Music Director
 - Claire Kilgariff

Creative Co-Director
 - Nicole Evans

Creative Co-Director
 - Steve Kidd

Assistant Director
 - Maali Kidd

Designer
 - Rebecca Adams

Production Management
 - Dreamedia Events

Site Managment
 - Tryptic Events

Stage Managment
 - Tiana Bateman

Costume Team
 - Marg Johnson
 - Franca Frederiksen
 - Gillian Tedder
 - Gail Liston



Olive Pink Opera

THE GARDEN

The Olive Pink Botanic Garden was gazetted in 1956 as the Australian Arid Regions Flora Reserve after intense lobbying by Olive Pink. She wished to call it Alchera-Jugulba, honouring the ancestral origin stories of Arrernte and Warlpiri people alike. With her Warlpiri gardeners, she spent the next two decades battling drought and meagre funding, planting an eclectic collection of native Central Australian trees and shrubs as well as cacti, garden flowers and introduced trees. After her death in 1975, the NT Government took over the Reserve and opened it to the public in 1985 as the Olive Pink Flora Reserve. Renamed the Olive Pink Botanic Garden in 1996, it is now home to more than 600 Central Australian plants, 40 of them rare or threatened. It is listed on the Register of the National Estate, the NT Heritage Register, and is part of the Land for Wildlife conservation program.

GRATEFUL THANKS

The Olive Pink Botanic Garden is deeply grateful for the financial and other support given to us by the Australian Government, the NT Government, the Alice Springs Town Council, Desert Song Festival, Pam Usher, Tony Smith, Libby Prell, St Philips College, along with our other generous philanthropists who stayed with us every step of the way. We thank our community of volunteers and supporters and the exceptional artists who have dedicated their time and energy.

Cultural Consultants Arrernte Senior Custodian Doris Stuart Kngwarreye and Peter Renshaw.

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