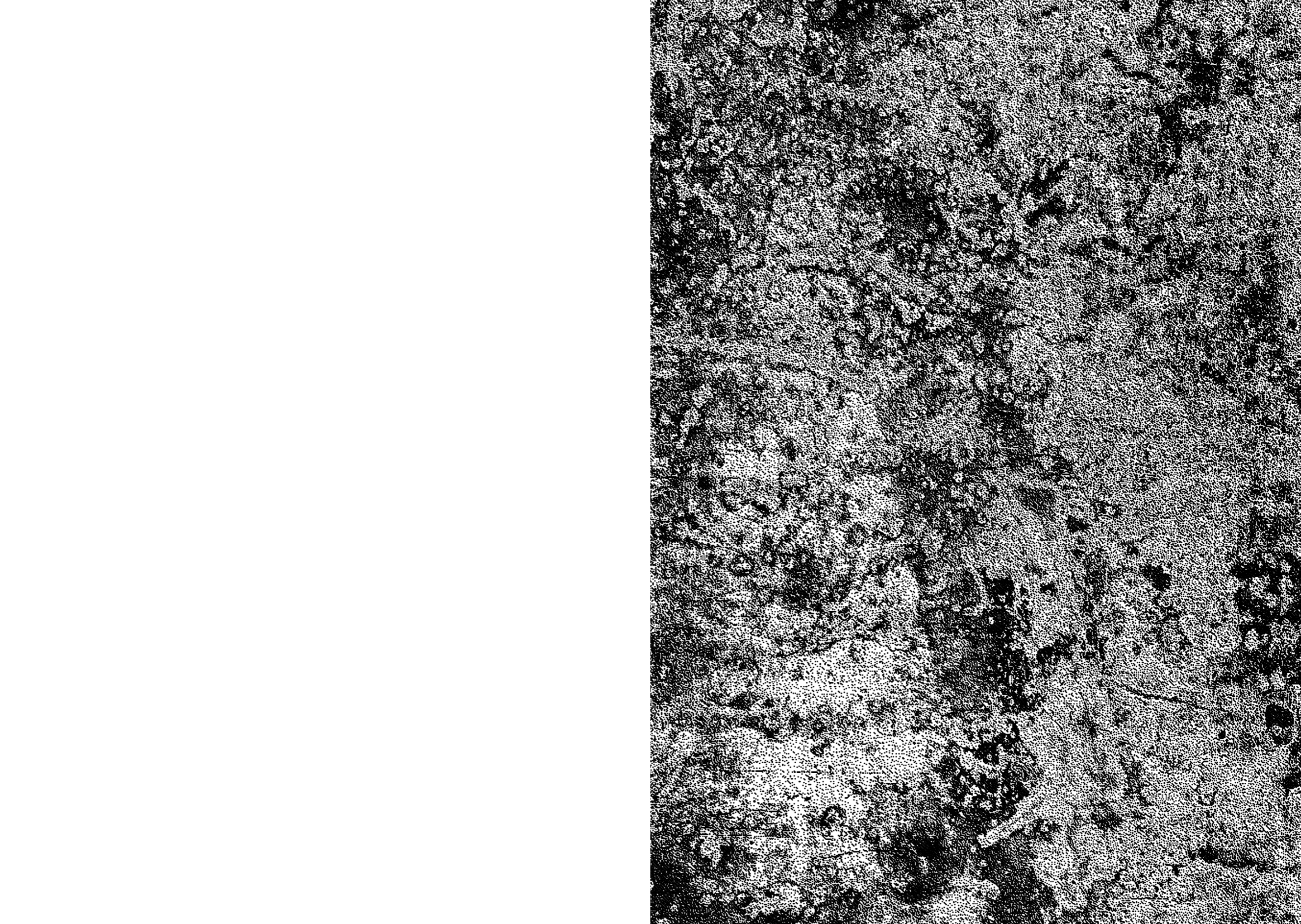


GHOST TUNES





CONTENTS

FOREWORD

- 06 Alasdair Campbell,
- 07 Madeleine Flynn and Tim Humphrey

CHAPTER 1: QUINIE

- 10 Sae Aye: with Arnold De Boer
- 12 Folk is a Feminist Issue: with Lucy Wright
- 19 Nawken: with Davie Donaldson

CHAPTER 2: THERESA SAINTY

- 26 milaythina tunapri (Country Remembers)

CHAPTER 3: CASS EZEJI

- 32 We Women (omitted from history)
- 34 On The Dumpers
- 36 George Square

CHAPTER 4: MADELEINE FLYNN & TIM HUMPHREY

- 41 Notes on Extractions

CHAPTER 5: CASS LYNCH & MEI SWAN LIM

- 44 First Summer
- 45 Creative Process
- 46 The Interviews
- 50 Birak
- 51 Ee-ow Eh Kui
- 52 Hungry Ghosts

INFO

- 54 Artist biographies
- 56 Ghost Tunes CD

FOREWORD

Alasdair Campbell

I suppose an introduction should tell us what Ghost Tunes is, who made it and why it exists. The work inside this publication is only one aspect of Ghost Tunes and I think it really speaks for itself.

Sitting in a wooden house in a large open field in rural New South Wales, near Cootamundra, as the flash floods drove water and red soil under the foundations of the house, (that's why it's on stilts), I was taken by how very different the landscape was to my home in Scotland. In many ways this is where Ghost Tunes germinated. Thanks to the initiative run by Wired Lab and Sarah Last, who invited a group of artists and myself to Cootamundra to immerse ourselves in the farming community and indigenous communities of the area, I found myself deep in rural Australia, a very different experience from the metropolitan living in Sydney and Melbourne. What was also interesting to me was Scotland's colonial relationship to Australia. All these Scottish place names which seemed to crop up around every bend, brought to Australia by the invading settlers, presumably to make themselves feel at home in a strange land. They obviously had names before the settlers arrival.

The two Scottish artists that embraced the project are two people I have known for some time now. Cass Ezeji performed at Counterflows when she was singing with Glasgow band Golden Teacher but it was a fortuitous meeting with Cass at the Women's Library in Bridgeton that allowed me to get to know her a little better. She was researching and writing an article about being of mixed race in Glasgow and it was also then that I found out that Cass was a Gaelic speaker. Cass's interests in language and race, her indomitable drive to speak out and her unshakeable drive for human justice made her ideal for the project. I got to know Josie through her artistic nom de plume Quinie, when I first heard tracks she had made for the independent tape label GLARC. Josie's interests in Scots' song and especially the singer Lizzie Higgins made me think about my own relationship with traditional Scottish cultures. Josie's exploration of the rights of the travelling community of Scotland with the Nawken Davie Donaldson addresses many of the issues related to Ghost Tunes.

Ghost Tunes looks at ideas around language and landscape in the context of Australian and Scottish cultural resonance. The six artists who ideas about place and where they find themselves living. This is especially pertinent during the last couple of years of our pandemic lifestyles. The CD accompanying the publication soars with the sound of the human voice with the rattle of different languages bouncing off each other. Even the instrumental tracks have a deep human resonance with the sounds of nature swirling around at the edges and slowly taking over as nature does.

As well as the CD and publication, Ghost Tunes will be presented at Counterflows 2022 as a sound and language installation. Initially of course, the idea was that we travel to each other's countries to share and experience each physical space. The plan is that when we can we will do this.

Any project only works if we approach the ideas and proposals honestly and openly and begin a dialogue with respect for others and with integrity and a willingness to share. I would like to thank all the artists who have done just that: Madeleine Flynn, Tim Humphrey, Cass Ezeji, Cass Lynch, Josie Vallely, and Mei Swan Lim.

FOREWORD

Madeleine Flynn and Tim Humphrey

We first became aware of a meeting of minds of some kind when Madeleine met Alasdair in Yokohama, Japan, in 2017. Then we travelled together when Alasdair came to Australia and was able to come with us to lutrawita (Tasmania) and to the district around guudhamangdhuray (Cootamundra) in Wiradjuri Country in early 2019.

Then Alasdair came to us with a proposition that we create a joint UK/Australia project using funds from the British Council supported season. We agreed that we should aim for the project to be a useful thing. Perhaps political. It set us to thinking.

We are both from the Anglo-settler community in this country, a diminishing majority that nonetheless still dominates the power structures here, and the Australian state remains established on that basis. Our focus, in making creative work in this place, is on striving to be allies in the struggles as identified by the First Nations for sovereign recognition, treaty, reparation, et al. Apart from the pursuit of basic principles of human justice, this struggle links to all of us literally being able to survive in the face of climate catastrophe.

When the UK/Australia initiative surfed onto the funding scene in the wake of Brexit, we asked ourselves, how can we navigate this? How to project a decolonising narrative into a project that, at least on the surface, seems propelled by a re-kindling of the Anglosphere?

The Anglosphere is a gigantic fiction, apart from the power structure that maintains this extractive privilege. A privilege placed in the hands of a few rich people who enjoy a stupendous and grotesque advantage; dominant international trade, tax haven status and extractive industry. How farcical, in this age, that we find ourselves living under the ridiculous spectacle of a head of state based in England. As artists, we work with the potency of symbols. This is a potent symbol of a destructive power structure imposed on unceded land and people.

So then, what is beneath this surface? Who actually has been or will be the toiling masses beneath the smarm of official UK/Australia relations? In the UK context, perhaps we can look to the likes of Gilroy, Hooks, and many others to

give a better picture of the real human story beneath the ideology of empire. The true histories of peoples dispossessed, enslaved, cleared, moved on, erased. In the Australian context, we see waves of indentured and enslaved labour, beginning and continuing with the First Nations peoples when they were first forced to give over their carefully-maintained country. Who were then worked as slave labour to establish the Australian pastoral industry.

In our quest for usefulness, in thinking about artists from the Australian continent, we were interested in the survival, reconstructions and vigour of the non-English languages, one place where resistance to Anglophile hegemony resides. A multitude of languages, maintained, and re-built in the face of prohibition, cultural genocide and other erasures, that still and will continue to thrive across the UK and here. They are precious knowledge maps of landscape and heritage, of sovereignty.

Alasdair asked us to think about some artists from Australia who might be making work that engages with the themes of language and landscape. We always think first about those artists with whom we have worked before, and whose work we deeply respect. Cass Lynch and Mei Swan Lim are artists and researchers living on unceded Noongar Country in the west of the continent. Their delicately powerful work is grounded in place, yet resonates generously across cultures with a nuanced and intersectional complexity.

We were honoured to work in 2020-21 with Theresa Sainty, a Palawa elder who has spent decades reconstructing the composite First Nations language of palawa kani through the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre. milathina kunapri (Country Remembers) is a kind of proclamation. For us, there is a sense of, and plenty of fervent wishing for, a groundswell across all communities here that is reclaiming the landscape in the name of the oldest continuing culture on Earth.

We are humbled to work with these artists, and with the Scottish artists Cass Ezeji and Josie Vallely, and of course, to create something special with our dear friend from Stirling.



CHAPTER 1 QUINIE

Quinie's contribution to *Ghost Tunes* explores how Scots language relates to place, tradition and connection. Alongside Gaelic and English, Scots is recognised as one of the three indigenous languages of Scotland, a regional or minority language of Europe, and a vulnerable language by UNESCO. In the 2011 Scottish Census, over 1.5 million people in Scotland reported being able to speak Scots. Scots has a strong song tradition which Josie draws from and builds upon in her work.

Here she presents three conversations that draw on different themes related to *Ghost Tunes*. The first, with Arnold De Boer (ZEA, *The Ex*), discusses the collaboration that led to the piece 'Sae Aye' which plays with language and tradition translation as well as building on previous work exploring the vocalisation of pipe music. The second, with Lucy Wright, explores the idea of folk tradition as feminism and challenges some of the ways in which we 'do' folk. The third, is an extract from a conversation with Davie Donaldson, Scottish Traveller or Nawken. This conversation was part of a two-part podcast series that Josie and Davie recorded for *Counterflows 2021*. It looks at the importance of place, access to land, and rights for Nawken people, in the song tradition.

I'm always thinking about tradition, what it means and what my relationship is with it. At the moment I'm thinking about the move away from the idea of 'tradition bearers' - the chosen ones who are deemed to be 'valid' conveyors of a tradition - toward an idea of a tradition builder, or driver. Which I suppose is anyone who looks at objects, practices or art forms that are representative of the past in contemporary life, but who rather than focussing on preserving them in a static state, just continues following the lines of enquiry that previous people were following, to see what remains relevant and of value.

I read a comparison of tradition being like a train - the 'tradition bearer' being the engine, and the community being its passengers. But I think I see it more like we are all little cogs. Maybe people who are tapped into traditions, or strongly identify with them, are slightly bigger cogs, but without all of us they just spin there in space. And it takes the coming together of the other cogs to make a system, and any of these little cogs can have influence over others once they are locked in and turning. And by the time there are lots of cogs, then if the big cog goes kaput, the others can keep spinning and being connected to one another. The tradition doesn't 'die', it just becomes, and is constantly becoming, churning along.

I see a phenomenon where people find belonging in the system of cogs spinning, and then the system keeps developing, and this is scary for them. They try to drag it back and reconnect it with the cogs they identify with. They justify this with claims of authenticity, that these are the true and valid connections between what was and what is now. But the cogs keep coming and turning, and we are all churning away connecting with old and new stuff all the time. So I gave up on trying to find a big cog to connect with and have just settled with the idea of creating, and trusting that I am being influenced and maybe I will go on to influence - making new things is a constant when it comes to tradition. So in this vein, based on my original interest in Lizzie Higgins and her singing being so influenced by pipe music, I wanted to continue my line of inquiry around vocalising pipe music. Last year I was focussed on piobaireachd and playing with structure. Canntaireachd Canntaireachd is Scottish Gaelic for

'chanting' - a vocal method of notating piobaireachd. The word 'piobaireachd' literally means pipe playing or pipe music, but is now used to describe the classical music of the Great Highland bagpipe.

This tune I chose to work with, Dear Irish Boy or An Buacaill Dileas Ua Eirinn, is an Irish slow air. The versions I was listening to were played on uilleann pipes. These pipes have a different tone and harmonic structure to the Highland pipes, and are a little 'sweeter'. The chanter, unlike most bagpipe chanters, it can be overblown to produce the higher octave so it has a range of two full octaves, including sharps and flats. It has three 'regulators' which have a very abrupt effect, because the sound stops completely when the piper's wrist comes off them. They sit alongside three drones that are open pipes; they constantly play three notes spread an octave apart. I played with these elements with my voice in the recording.

The abrupt yet sweet nature of these pipes translated well to the one sided telephone conversation that Arnold De boer (ZEA, The Ex) asked me to translate into Scots as part of his album project *Witst noch dat d'r neat wie*. This was a personal and intimate album with 15 songs, all acoustic, in Frisian. Every song has a connection to the outside, to the unknown and uncontrolled. In search of this, Arnold commissioned a different translation of lyrics for every song and got in touch with people all around the world making those specific translations. The album was accompanied by a book filled with stories and translations.

Quinie: *What was it that led you to want to have your lyrics translated into Scots, and why was it that you asked me to get involved?*

Arnold: I tried to look at my songs from an alien perspective, trying to see the link to the outside world, the unknown and the uncontrolled. For *Doch noch* the link should somehow sprout from the form of the lyrics; my words sound like one side of a reluctant telephone conversation with someone who makes a blunt request. Then for the word 'blunt' in Frisian we sometimes use 'skots', which also means Scottish. So there was my association and my link to the unknown 'otherness'.

Finding people to make these 'other transla-

tions' was not very hard. Most of the time I could just ask a specific person in my network of friends and musical colleagues, and then they would know someone. This was also the case with you. I asked Howie Reeve, English but well involved in the Glasgow music scene which is where he lives, and he immediately told me to contact you for a translation into Scots. I listened to your music on Bandcamp and read your website and then sent you an email with my request. I am very happy and thankful for the result!

The way that Arnold talks about Frisian and his relationship with singing it was something I could relate to with Scots. He explained in a great interview Richard Foster.

A My Frisian lyrics are much more personal than my English. It started when my mum died; I wanted and needed to write and play but it didn't make sense to do that in English, I had to do it in my mother tongue. And after I wrote that first song ('Ik kin der net by') about my mum being sick, my father taking care of her, and eventually her death, it was like a door in my mind opened to a room of which I did not know it existed. In that room I was able to write and play songs that were more intense, sober, stripped-down, and up-close and personal than what I had done so far, and they were in Frisian... And then, when I come across music and poetry that hits me right in the heart, that connects with my more sober and personal Frisian song writing, making a translation and making that song or poem my own isn't difficult at all. The moment I translate the words into Frisian, they get the same intensity as my own words and I can put them on like a warm coat.

Q *The way you talk about the musicality of Frisian resonate with how I think of Scots, that it kind of comes alive on the page for me in a way that English doesn't. The connection with your mum is poignant as I am now in the same situation, and this influenced my decision to work with an Irish tune to bring a bit of my mum's story into the frame. Is there a Frisian song tradition? And how does your work connect with that?*

A Hardly. I have a Frisian song book with ninety percent children songs which are great of course, and that tradition is still quite strong, somehow.

Parents still teach their kids the children songs they used to sing at school and home, even when they decide to speak Dutch with their kids and not Frisian.

There is one yearly music festival in Friesland that only books acts that sing in Frisian. The main music style there is some sort of Frisian country rock, not connected with traditional music styles from our part of Europe at all, but after 70 years becoming a tradition in itself I guess. There are a few groups who sing traditional songs with traditional instruments (like the lute, the lyre and the flute), but that's more really folk focussed from an archival or museum perspective. They do not really take part in the tradition and stories with an actual link to the 21st century and show no emotional involvement that connects to the hearts and souls of the listeners.

But there are some great Frisian-language acts and artists who reinvented music and poetry for themselves and in that way built on a tradition of songwriting. For me, I think I have made a connection more through poetry than through music, and there is a very lively poetry scene in Friesland. I think it's that tradition that I connect with most in this case.

Making this piece was challenging for me - it took me a lot longer than learning a song. But it led me to look at the music in lots of different ways and to stretch my voice to see where it could go, which I always find rewarding. Making music in this more inquisitive way, rather than trying to faithfully 'stick to a tradition', allows you to let go a little of the obsession with what is and what is not authentically 'Scottish'. Arnold put this nicely when he discusses his relationship with Frisian.

"I don't think we have to be 'proud' of our roots ... But it's good to know and be aware of how you do things and where you come from because only then you can be a partner in the conversation. If you're a uniform globalist you have no story to tell."

FOLK IS A FEMINIST ISSUE:

Quinie in conversation with Lucy Wright

I work with a lot of song material that comes from the Scottish Traveller tradition. I'm keen to explore what that means to be playing and learning within these folk traditions that aren't necessarily mine. I became aware of the 'Folk is a Feminist Issue' project by Lucy Wright. Her vision is of a new, more inclusive and far-reaching definition of folk that celebrates and empowers everybody, starting with women. To Lucy, this is a crucial step for folk to be recognised as the powerhouse that it is; not just as a musical genre, but as an agent for resistance and change in culture. I spoke to Lucy about her work and some of the themes we are interested in.

Quinie: *Where I have come to with my own practice, is that, while there are problems with the way that folk works, and there are complications in how tradition is discussed and dealt with, there is also value in engaging with it. It's not like we want to just say it's totally out of bounds, or put in hard and fast rules about who a song belongs to and who it doesn't belong to.*

Lucy Wright: It's tricky, isn't it? I sort of touch on it in the manifesta...one of the points is about not appropriating other people's folk. And I think there's a fine line between admiring something—being excited about it and wanting to share it, maybe even wanting to learn it for yourself, if that's appropriate— and, you know, claiming it as your own. There's examples where outsiders have become the most visible spokespeople for a practice whose community remains very marginalised and that seems wrong to me. If we're coming in from the outside—especially if we belong to a dominant group—our job is to hold the space for the people who are currently kept out of the spheres of power and influence. We need to be allies, not colonisers.

I'm not saying that there aren't ways for 'outsiders' to take part in and share culture that is not part of their own heritage or background—that's part of the way that cultures evolve—but it needs to be approached carefully and informedly. I think it's like academic citations... at the very, very least, you need to acknowledge your source and ideally state honestly what your relationship

to that material is.

What bothers me most is when middle-class, white, (usually) men use narratives of 'salvage' and 'protection' to describe their co-option of the cultural practices of marginalised communities as if they have somehow personally rescued them. I find that pretty insulting and erasing of those people who are already doing that work at a community level.

A lot of my past work has been with girls' carnival morris dancing which is form of morris that's unique to the Northwest of England and practised almost exclusively by working-class girls and women. It's been excluded from the histories of morris dancing in England for years, largely because it doesn't fit the image a lot of people want to have of 'folk'.

Girls' morris has very much evolved outside of a 'folk' aesthetic and you wouldn't find it at a folk festival or other folk revival event. The performers dance to pop music, they wear sequinned dresses and use pom-poms (called 'shakers') similar to cheerleaders: it's absolutely fantastic, a real feat of synchronicity and ingenuity, and I love it so much! But it's not my tradition. If I had grown up in the northwest, I might have done it as my background is similar, but I grew up elsewhere, and so it doesn't belong to me. I've written some of the only research about girls' morris and I've always felt like that's a huge responsibility. I don't want to be the only voice on it, so I've tried very hard to come up with ways to share that knowledge and that research in ways that are co-created with the community, rather than it just being me speaking on their behalf.

So I can understand the kind of tension that you feel coming from outside of a community. I think it's very possible to negotiate, but it needs continual adjustment and self-reflection. The important thing is to be aware of the issues and look for ways to raise others up, rather than appropriate from them.

Quinie: *One trend I have observed that continues in contemporary and mainstream folk industry is a replication of colonial attitudes of discovery and preservation that we see all the time in relation to marginalised communities. There are contemporary 'folk' musicians making a living*

QUINIE

from other people and other culture's work without recognising the colonial aspect of their actions. I have heard first hand of contemporary song collectors not keeping their commitments to communities and taking advantage of singers for their own career gains, taking personal contacts and damaging relationships with Traveller communities. It's not on and I am very happy to speak out against people doing that kind of work.

LW I think it can be very Othering. There is that persistent but flawed concept of 'folk' being about the culture of 'primitive people', 'unlettered' or illiterate people— people who are outside of regular society, whatever that means, and I just don't think that exists, and I don't think it ever really did exist. Even in the 19th century, people were always moving around and coming into contact with different cultural practices, so the idea that there were ever these totally isolated communities who might hold the key to an 'essential' national culture...well that's been roundly debunked in scholarship for years.

When I first set out to find contemporary folk practices, I was told repeatedly that there was 'nothing left to collect', but that was because people were working from those old assumptions about who 'the folk' are. I've found lots of great performances and customs that, for me, bear all the hallmarks of 'folk'— as in, self-organised and self-determining culture—but which don't form part of the established canon.

For me, 'folk' isn't a designator of a particular, heavily romanticised community. Instead it describes a way of approaching culture—the way we create our own entertainment and our own art and politics—that's open to, and inevitably applies to, everyone. Whether you're part of the dominant class or not, everybody will take part in some kind of folk culture. And to separate it out, to limit it to a specific musical genre, is to deny its wider application and power.

Q *Yeah, totally. I see time and time again a repeat of what has always happened - an academic middle class going in and selecting what they saw to be the important traditions. It's not like people are being encouraged to go and collect people's Adele covers, you know. And that's always happened. The singers that I love, like Lizzie Higgins who's*

a Scottish traveller, she sang incredible traditional songs, but she loved singing Elvis and contemporary music, but no-one ever recorded her Elvis covers, which is a great loss - I bet they were amazing.

LW Yeah, absolutely. People often have a very firm idea in mind of what 'folk' is. That means that when they encounter something that doesn't look like they have been led to expect, that practice is often ignored, or changed, or left out—and that's sort of how the present canon of 'folk arts' was created.

It's one of the myths of ethnographic research that collecting is some sort of objective activity, and that the person doing the research and doing the collecting doesn't bring a whole host of their own preconceptions and ideas and framings, but we all do that, unavoidably. Prior to the 'crisis of representation' in the humanities during the 1980s, that was not very well spoken about, but things have moved on since then. However, the canon of folk music and dance still hasn't been updated to reflect that.

Q *Yeah. I think one of the things that happens in Scottish culture is that traveller songs, music and stories were collected so long ago, and then 're-packaged' during the folk revival. They've kind of become cemented as Scottish traditions, not as Traveller traditions. And I think that then has led to a bit of confusion about who they belong to. And it's also meant that they have been swept up in this national project of tartan and shortbread tins. And that really, I think, is quite a scary thing when you realise how marginalised and discriminated against these communities are in Scotland and that as a nation, we're not willing to commit to providing basic rights for Traveller communities. But we do want to take what serves us from them.*

LW There are so many instances throughout history—and in the present day—where the culture of marginalised communities is highly valued—popularised and often heavily monetised—but this fails to benefit the people who originated it. I'm thinking right now of 'blackfishing' where certain cultural practices are highly stigmatised when they're embodied by black people, but can offer cache and 'cool' to white people who appropriate them.

I think that happens with working-class culture too. Darren Garvey speaks of it as a 'poverty safari'... The arts draws very heavily on working-class culture, but actually, working-class people are massively underrepresented in the arts. And things are getting worse, not better.

On a personal level, as an artist and a researcher, I am really fascinated by what people do, by other people's cultures. But I'm also acutely aware of how easy it is to overstep the mark, or just get it wrong. I find it really frustrating when people talk about how they have 'discovered' something because it's so important to remember that just because something is new to you does not mean it's new to the world, not least the people who are already practising it. It's like 'main character syndrome' played out across culture and theory!

I feel as though I see a lot of art which is very inspired by a perceived aesthetic of what folk is, and it's almost always quirky and quaint and weird and rustic and pastoral or creepy Gothic. I get that these things are kind of fun and seductive, but folk can also be mundane and ugly and urban... it's not always (or even very often) aesthetic and mystical!

Every now and again folk gets a tiny bit fashionable and then a whole bunch of people start making stuff about it. And probably next week, they'll do it about something else. Something that I really admire is when I see an artist or a musician or performer of any kind who has really spent some time really thinking about 'folk'—what it meant historically and what it means today. And then being really clear about their positionality on that. You know, is what you're doing part of the problem, or are you challenging the status quo?

Q I agree that knowledge of a tradition and a grounding of the systems that they are within is essential. But I'm wary of that then leading to performative displays of that knowledge - like badges of authenticity. What is authenticity in a performance of folk? Is it necessary? When I first started singing ballads, and was learning about this world of song, which I find really fascinating and rich, I was initially really drawn to the, like, catalogues of song. This idea that if you knew enough about that, then you

would be more authentic. And if you could quote The Roud number or whatever it was, of a ballad, and know its lineage, then maybe you would be accepted into the social scene of whatever was going on. That was something that was really encouraged in the traditional, competition scene.

LW Yeah, we don't really have that kind of scene so much in England—at least, not in my experience—but I know it's much more important in Scotland and Ireland.

Q Yeah, it's a big thing. And it's really interesting, because it's in itself a folk tradition, if you know what I mean. But I don't think that it's the folk tradition that it thinks it is. It's a different thing entirely. The idea of performing a bothy ballad in a competition setting is different from performing it in a bothy. And I think that links a lot to your work in terms of how traditions are formalised. That's grown out of the folk revival, and often eliminates women's contributions to the tradition in a major way. Initially I was really interested in that, about reasserting myself into the tradition as a woman and being like, I have a place here, I can sing these songs. But that led me to thinking not only I can sing these songs, but I can also like, dig backwards and find out where my tradition as a Scottish woman was, taken away from me, and how I can rebuild it.

LW I feel like I'm not the best person to speak on this as I'm kind of less interested in the 'folk' that is a reproduction of the canon. We already know that the canon of folk music and dance and customs is exclusionary, it doesn't include women, and it certainly doesn't include anyone who's not white. It's hardly been updated since the 1950s / 60s and those were not exactly a golden era for representation.

I recognise that there is a record store genre called 'Folk' which is largely based on that canon—and on a personal level, I grew up with that and I love it so much, BUT for me that's only a small fraction of what 'folk' as a term can be. I'm most excited about 'folk' as a word for the culture we create for ourselves, how it empowers us all to be artists and performers, rather than merely consumers, and potentially provides a route to challenge and destabilise dominant culture and politics. I feel like the folk scene can absolutely be a space for that to happen, and it already is in

some cases, but those scenes are not the extent of what 'folk' might apply to.

Q Something I found interesting about that is I think there can be a tendency towards identifying other people as being authentic. Seeing them as from a more 'primitive' folk tradition or a more 'pure' folk tradition, and then trying to attach to them. And I think that's something that some musicians have done. You know, talking a lot about a relationship with a particular Traveller. As if that then kind of gives you a free rein to do what you want with a tradition because you've kind of been given the go ahead by one person from within that tradition. But it's also kind of what I have done in terms of my interest in Lizzie Higgin's work, even though I have never met her.

LW I always feel that for professional folk musicians there's a whole thing around branding and marketing 'authenticity' and what that looks like. I think you can have an authentic engagement with a song or repertoire regardless of your background or who you have studied with, but it's undeniable that certain kinds of self-narration sell better than others, in those High Folk spaces you've mentioned like The Guardian.

I think we have to be wary of stories that in themselves reproduce assumptions about folk and rely on outdated beliefs in the primacy of the oral tradition and the existence of a special group of people, proximity to whom can confer status and validity.

For me, the most interesting folk practises are the ones that don't call themselves folk at all. As soon as something describes itself as 'folk', it tends to accrete a whole lot of assumptions that shape how it is read and practiced. I'm returning to my favourite performance—girls' carnival morris dancing—because they don't refer to what they do as folk and they don't have any significant connection to the contemporary folk revival. That's what has enabled that practice to evolve and stay relevant to that community. There's been less of an emphasis on preservation, and more on catering to the needs of the performers who keep it going. Girls' morris does have a long and fascinating history, but actually, the performance is very forward facing; it's always renewing, changing every single year. And that's why I think it con-

tinues to appeal to such a young demographic. I have this pet theory based on Jacques Derrida's concept of the 'marrano' about folk being 'a secret that keeps itself'—so that as soon as it becomes too self-aware it kind of loses something, but that's a difficult thing to pin down, I'm still working on it!

It's like the game that you lose when you remember you're playing it....

Q We have a magazine in Scotland, the Living Tradition. I always say, it is the only magazine I've ever read that opens with obituaries, every issue. The first feature is obituaries. I'm like, wow, this is a bold move. And the letter sections are full of people wondering why they can't get anyone to come to their folk club, or anyone to take over the organising roles of their folk club. And then having tried to get gigs at folk clubs, with a slightly different style to what they are used to, which is actually more similar in style in many ways to the original singers they want to celebrate, and you get rudely rejected. I just thought, oh, well, no wonder, and found opportunities elsewhere to share my work.

LW I was briefly in a band and we did play a lot of folk clubs. And it was one of the things that kind of made me sad because I also wanted to play to my own age group. I mean, we had some absolutely lovely audiences, but I did feel the lack of there being younger people in the crowd, except possibly at some festivals. And I thought, 'yeah, where are my generation within the folk scene?' They're out there, for sure, but maybe not so much in those formal settings.

Q Yeah, I think that's it. When you're performing folk music, or any kind of folk ritual or dance or whatever, you're doing it in an effort to connect socially with your community, aren't you? If you're investing in an art form and then going out to perform it and it's not fulfilling that need for connection, that social need, then it either becomes a purely business thing or you just give up.

LW And I think that's that's the thing - there's some kind of disconnect or tension between folk as a practice, process, concept, theory, and folk as a kind of genre of music. The kind of music that will be categorised as folk, with a capital F. The concerns of professional folk musicians are very

similar to those of anybody else trying to make a living in music. My rejecting of the aesthetics of folk goes back to this thing reminding us that folk musicians are ordinary people. And everybody can be a folk practitioner of some kind. I don't want that to be separated from everyday life.

Yeah. And I think that is partly why representation in folk is so monocultural and White—because actually, if you're not white, and you're making music, you're immediately classed as not folk. It's a self-perpetuating thing. It's not that there are no black people playing folk music, it's that our white community doesn't recognise that music as folk music with a capital F. You talk a bit about this in your manifesta. Can you chat us through that a bit?

I've been passionate about the same stuff for about a decade now, and the manifesta is just sort of the latest, hopefully most concise argument that I've put out to date. Some people have asked me, if 'folk', as a term has all of these problems and misunderstandings, why don't you just use a different word? My view is that 'folk' is such a great, powerful word and it deserves rehabilitation and reclamation. In fact, I feel as if we really need some form of 'folk' now more than ever!

I'd love to see folk cease being viewed as niche and 'special interest' and instead come to mean something really powerful and inclusive and radical, because it's the creativity that we already have, as opposed to the creativity that we need outsiders to kind of tell us how to do. I work for an arts institution, and I'm aware of how institutions have come to be the arbiters of what art is, what deserves funding and visibility, but what I like about 'folk' is that it allows for—and celebrates—all kinds of creativity.

And the important thing is just that we are making stuff for ourselves, whatever that is, it's important that we keep doing that, because we live in a world where buying stuff is constantly presented to us as a solution. And I think these opportunities that we have to make stuff whether it's on our own, or with others, are so important. It helps us see the world in a different way, helps us ask questions of those in power and envisage other ways forwards. That's what needs to be protected, that possibility. And that's what I focus on when people ask why I care about 'folk' so much.

FOLK IS A FEMINIST ISSUE MANIFESTA

Lucy Wright

1

As feminism is concerned with the emancipation of all beings, so folk is concerned with EVERYBODY'S right to make, take part, and self-organise.

2

Folk is the stuff we make, do and think for ourselves—and the radical potential of these things. Folk happens when people, alone or together, and regardless of anything, engage in culture they create for themselves. It's the communion we find with others on our own terms; the entertainments, spaces, structures, landmarks and high days that are meaningful to us, whatever the reason, the power to self-determine beyond any institution, corporation or hegemony.

3

Folk exists outside of and in spite of mainstream arts and cultural provision. It is the art we already make, irrespective of funding or endorsement and without needing to be jollied into it by professionals. It makes use of whatever [materials, people, time, energy] are readiest to hand. This doesn't mean that it doesn't need or deserve funding: actually it's the opposite.

4

Folk is too powerful a word to be owned by a single community: the set of practises currently identified as 'the folk arts' (e.g. folk music, dance + customs) are only a fraction of the term's full capacity. Those of us used to having ownership of 'folk' because we grew up with it or inhabit some of its present spaces must be willing to deterritorialize. This does not mean 'allowing' margin-

alised groups to take part in traditions that have always been dominated by white men; it's about recognising and celebrating the parallel—equal—traditions, practices, and structures belonging to women, LGBTQ+ communities, and black and brown folks.

5

The absence of records / visibility does not indicate the absence of activity. We know that the old folk collectors were biased and that many people and practices are STILL excluded from our cultural institutions and sites of power. If your folk only includes white men then you're part of the problem. (See: all-male festival line-ups, exhibitions, books written by men about men, all-male shortlists, conference panels etc.). Also, stuff isn't better when middle class people do it.

6

We should all be folk collectors, as well as folk artists! It is our job to help to uncover and hold the space for the things not historically considered important enough. BUT we must follow the golden rules:

- just because you haven't heard of it doesn't mean you discovered it;
- centre the voices of practitioners: don't appropriate someone else's folk;
- trust in the resilience of culture and the inevitability of change: if something is no longer relevant to the people who created it and they choose to replace it with something else, then this beautiful and a perfect part of the process. Seeking to artificially preserve something only speeds its obsolescence and demise.

7

The only thing worth preserving is the imperative to keep making things happen.

Folk isn't a value judgement. It's not inherently old or under threat, isn't a specific set of songs and dances once gathered by Victorian collectors on bicycles and promptly preserved in aspic. Stop stereotyping us as pedlars of comforting rural nostalgia or schlocky gothic wyrdness! Some practices have a longer history than others, but this says little about how meaningful they are to the people who perform them.

You don't like how something looks, or who is doing it? Tough, it's still folk. Folk is not another name for your snobbery.

8

But folk is also not inherently a force for *good*. Other people's folk will sometimes include things we find abhorrent (e.g. racism, sexism, transphobia) and we should absolutely challenge this whenever and wherever we find it ****ESPECIALLY within our own spaces**** Not because it isn't folk, but because these things have no place in a civilised society. However, whenever we sing together, or build something to share, or create change in our communities, we are holding onto a thread that ties us to our ancestors.

9

Folk is political. In a world that values only what can be bought and sold, folk is resistance. It means rejecting the old ideas, systems, and cultures of power, and our roles as [consumers / subjects]. It means recognising EVERYONE.

...because there exists within each of us this drive to make and collaborate and whoever dared to tell us that some creative expressions were worthier than others? And who dared to tame and institutionalise the things that (some of us) made? That power belongs to us. We need it to create new traditions for our broken planet.

Reclaim folk for women
 Reclaim folk for the poor / benefit class
 Reclaim folk for the queer and Other
 Reclaim folk for radical politics, community-making, and care
 Reclaim folk for the environment
 Reclaim folk for art

NAWKEN: RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN LANGUAGE, PLACE AND PEOPLE

Quinie in conversation with Davie Donaldson

Davie Donaldson is Nawken (Scottish Traveller). In 2021 Davie and myself had a chat about the current situation for Scottish Travelers in Scotland today. We chatted a little bit about language, and how important the cultural artefacts of song and storytelling are to people's sense of place. Crucially, Davie outlines how intrinsically linked a place is to these kinds of cultural outputs that we then see in archives or collected by settled people, or institutions.

Davie Donaldson: I define as a Scottish Traveller or a Nawken (pronounced Naa Ken) in our language. Our community is broadly understood as indigenous to Scotland. We are a minority community, a recognised ethnic minority, but still a very seldom understood community with very little of our culture, and our way of life, being fully understood by the state. We've existed in Scotland for at least 900 years, with many claiming we go back a lot further than that. And during that time, we've played a crucial role in contributing to Scottish society, and to Scotland's economy. In almost every story that makes up Scotland's fabric, you can find Travellers within that. And that's everything from influencing Robert Burns right on to the fantastic oral traditions that we kept alive, particularly the ballads and some of the Gaelic tradition.

Names for Travellers include Ceàrdannan which is Gaelic for craftsman - so we are people who are crafting things, right? So things like baskets, or umbrella makers even or, you know, people who made things. We did a lot of stuff that might be now be deemed heritage crafts, but to this day Travellers are still craftsmen, we're still people who make things. So we've now moved on from making baskets and making corn spins.

We're making driveways, fixing roofs and making gardens look even more beautiful. A few stereotypical trades there, but traditional trades nonetheless! The key thing for us is being a nomadic people, and that can be nostalgically nomadic. And by that I mean living through the story of generations that came before us who were roadside people who lived on the road. Perhaps even if we were settled now, we've still got that in our mindset, and making up our own identities. The ability to travel is still a very, very important pillar of our identity for many young Travellers. Many continue to travel throughout Scotland. And the ability to take our economy, to take our trade, and move it from place to place is crucial.

So that's a little bit about us, we have our own languages, of course, Beurla-reagaird, and the Cant, which is most commonly spoken and the one I speak myself, but yeah, we're still a community that is very alive and well in Scotland. That said, we do face a number of socioeconomic inequalities. And so I spent a lot of my time emphasising the importance of recognising my culture and my community, but also raising the importance of challenging inequalities we continue to face.

Quinie: *What kind of intersections are there between different Travelling people, different nomadic people? You've got Show People, the Roma community, Irish Traveller, all these different identities. I think sometimes people find it hard to get their heads around.*

DD Totally, it can become complex. I mean, when you have communities that are very similar in many ways, over a few 100 years of migration, that can become very complex to try and disentangle the communities from each other.

Broadly speaking, Show People are distinct from Gypsy Roma and Traveller communities, as

an occupational Traveller group. Many would attest to Show People being regarded as an ethnic minority. While they don't yet have that status, I know some Show People are kind of pushing for that. A lot of Showman families come from the Industrial Revolution. Some of those families were originally Romani people, were originally Travellers, and all they done was diversified their trade, and they perhaps moved into circus or show work. We do have a lot of research going right back to the 1600s. At the very early fairs, we have examples of what we would now call Show People. It'd be disingenuous of me to talk to that narrative as I'm not a Show person. What I do know is that Travellers and Show people have had a very close relationship for a very long time. My granny, her people were horse dealers, and travelled around the country, but part of what they done when they travelled to Appleby to sell their horses, was they would sell the horses at Appleby and then they would buy china in Cumbria. And they would, when they were coming back up the road again, they would hawk it round all the crofts. Because folk in the crofts couldn't get that type of china because then very few settled people travelled as far as that back then. Now when she would hawk the china round, she would also sell it to Show People, and Show People would use it as prizes, for their fairs and the rides and things and their games. So there's very close economical links, and because of that a lot of Show People married Travellers, and vice versa.

Now, Irish Travellers indigenous to Ireland, the earliest records of them going right back to the fifth century, and they are termed the 'na lucht siúil' or walking people. Again, a lot of intermarriage. Gypsies and Roma are slightly different kettle of fish. And the reason for that is, by and large, all Gypsy communities and Roma communities go back to the exact same place. And so unlike Scottish Travellers and Irish Travellers that are regarded as distinct communities right back to their origin, English Gypsies go back to the same place as Roma originally, and that's vastly considered to be the Punjab region of northern India. When the Roma left India a long, long time ago, they travelled up through Eastern Europe, settling as they went and that's

why you've got large pockets of Roma in places like Bulgaria, Romania. Of course Roma do not only come from Romania and have nothing to do with the term Romania, Roma comes from the term Rom, a very old Roma word meaning man. They travelled through Eastern Europe through Scandinavia, and then, of course, arrived in Scotland around 1490. We think the first recorded instance of what we now would call Gypsy, then was Egyptian, happened in Stirling in 1502, or four, I think. Now, the word Gypsy only comes into being in Western Europe. The reason for that is when Roma first arrived in Scotland and other Western European countries, they claimed to be Christian pilgrims from Egypt. And because of that, they thought they would be treated better by Christian Kings, and of course they were. So in the first records of a Roma and Gypsy people, in Western Europe, they're classed as Egyptians, which eventually became Gypsies.

While there's a lot of mixing and intermarriage, we're all quite distinct in our own ways. And there's uniquenesses to each. One of the key uniquenesses as you can find for Scottish Travellers is that ballad tradition, is that story tradition, which harkens back to a Scotland that perhaps didn't have the same relationship with Travellers, as it does now. That harkens back to that, you know almost nostalgic time where Travellers were treated with great, great respect and were welcomed into communities.

Q Could you tell us a little bit about language, because obviously that is very influential in the songs. A lot of the songs that I'm singing, I think of as being in Scots, but I know that there's again intersections between what is Scots and what is Cant or Beurla-reagaird or other languages.

DD Cant isn't our original language. And what I mean by that is, you know, you had a pre-existing, as we were then called, Tinker class who lived in pre-Celtic society. A lot of academics would back this up, and it's my personal belief that this is the timeline of events. Now that craftsman people, the Tinklers or the Ceàrdannan or whatever the hell you want to call them, when they were cuttin aboot, they had their own language. We don't entirely know what that language is, it's

my belief and the belief of some others that that language was closely linked to Beurla-reagaird. Beurla-reagaird is a language which has a similar grammatical construct to Gaelic. I've been told by Gaelic speakers that they don't understand it, so it cannot be understood by Gaelic people. But it is mostly spoken today by Elder Travellers or Travellers on the west coast of Scotland or the Highlands, or traditionally Gaelic speaking places. I'm not a speaker of it, I know one expression, I know how to say it's raining. The way you say it's raining translates to 'the water is coming on to me'. So it's a Gaelic construct. Whereas to say it in Cant is much more literal, it means 'look at the rain' or 'look at the waterfall'.

Many Travellers have spoken about the two languages - Sheila Stewart, for example, she speaks about the Cant being the market language that her family would use. And then they would use their own words, she doesn't tell us what the language is, but she says we would use our own words when they came home. So she makes the example of the word Gadgie which in the Cant, and a lot of Scottish slang now, means man. Now in the Stewart family, they wouldn't use the word Gadgie at home, they would use the word Kul. So you know, there's a lot of these examples of words in the Cant that are dual and it's my belief that that's leftover words from our original language, whatever that was, that's been left over into our language and because of that, you've got some families who use some words for some things and other words for other things. So the Cant's a very diverse language. And anyone that says they can speak the whole comprehensive Cant fluently is lying, because every family has certain words they use and certain words they don't use and meaning they attribute to some words. And so because of that, you know, we are quite diverse linguistically.

Q I think a lot of what I thought was Scots, I'm now learning is Cant. A lot of the Scots that I would actually use more like, because I'm east coast, like shan (mean, cruel) and chore (steal). Seemingly a lot of them are Cant.

DD There's an expression that we use. It's like 'oh my oh my', but it's 'Shana Shanice'. Not en-

tirely sure what translates to. But that's where we think Shan comes from like 'oh my oh something really bad', right? Different families translate it to different things. Chore, comes from chorel, which is actually Romani, and chorel originates in Sanskrit in northern India. So you know, it's bled through into Cant because, of course, the Cant, I should have said, is thought to have come around in the 1500s, after the migration of Romani to Scotland.

Travellers, young Travellers, tend to use words that you'd only find in older settled people, like wireless instead of radio, right, or courtin instead of dating. So you can still see that happening. And no doubt in a few 100 years, people will look and say 'courtin' - what a Traveller word. But it's not - there's a lot of mishmash when it comes to linguistics! That's why, when it comes to tracing origins with linguistics, it can be very, very difficult. But with a community that is so oral, we don't have a lot of tangible artefacts, or, you know, physical documents that talk about us, it can be very, very difficult to date where the Travellers come from. And that's why there's so much controversy around it. What we can say, of course, is that there's one document from the 1100s. It explicitly talks about a nomadic class of people who we now believe were Traveller. So there is some of that, but you know, with any indigenous people, or even more so with any marginalised people, it is very difficult to get a real grip on the history. But in many ways, it doesn't really matter, because it's the felt identity to me that's most important.

Q I think that's really interesting, the importance of what's happening now. I think, in this field, if you could call it a 'field' from a settled person's point of view, of exploring Traveller culture, learning about Traveller life, you can fall into a trap of spending all your time rooting around in archives. Seeing it as something that's happened in the past that has produced a bunch of artefacts, whether they're songs, stories, photographs - but they exist in the past. It's so important to keep sight of the contemporary situation for Travellers at the moment, and the way that culture plays out for them rather than constantly going back to the same archival materials.

Where does the value of those archival materials sit?

The value of those pieces, the value of those files, is not the item itself or the unit of culture, but it is the people and the context that it has come out of. I have this strong feeling that as an artist, musician, whatever, you shouldn't separate Traveller culture from Travellers. And you can't separate Travellers from the places that their culture is rooted in.

DD I think we're wrongly portrayed a lot of the time, as you know, these people who sit around the fire, singing songs, and it's almost forced. It's not, it's very, very natural, you know, we could get sang a song as we're fishing or as you're going to get water for to wash the babies. It's much more organic than is made out. It's not bonded to a fire and that kind of scene. But one of the things that always helped me to shape my own identity as a Traveller growing up was those stories and songs. When I went to school, I had to make a very difficult decision to not tell folk that I was a Traveller at school, and that was to protect me and my brothers and sisters from getting bullied or from getting treated differently by teachers. So for me going on the road was an escape. And there's a beautiful word in the Gaelic – from my knowledge, it can be defined in English as a longing to go somewhere where you have deep rootedness. It's almost like homesickness for somewhere. And that's how I felt whenever I thought about going on the road. It was a release, when I did go on the road, and I could hear these stories and I could be told no, you belong. You know, at school, you may feel like you don't belong. But in these places you do belong, and your people belong to you for a long, long time. So I really gravitated to the stories and the songs, whereas other Travellers gravitate towards other elements of identity.

We'd see many of our ancestral camps getting blocked off. That was really hurtful, because you'd be expecting to be able to stay in these very important places, learn about belonging and ourselves. And it's like standing at the foot of a grave, because you know, that all of the stories and songs bonded to that place, if you can't access that place, they'll die. You know, so it's really emotional and really difficult.

I remember I was doing a recording project. And I was recording all Travellers and songs and

things. And, of course, the natural place I went to was to my Grandfather. I say this "Granddad canna record you singing a song or telling a story or something?". My Grandda is an older man now. Lives in Blairgowrie, and he lives in a wee house. And he said, "Nah laddie I don't ken no songs". What about a wee story? "Dinnae ken nae stories laddie." My father was with me and I looked at him and he says "I've got an idea." He says "Mon wi me da" and we go in the car, right. And we drive up through Perthshire. And there's a wee glen in Perthshire called the Sma Glen. And it was a really important route north for all Travelling folk, but for my family, it was one of our haunting grounds, that was where we would travel north and have a lot of family memories. We were driving up the wee road and my Granddad started. And my dad said, "on you go" and I clicked my recording button on my phone, and he never stopped for two hours, right, and I just had all this recording – it was a long time. It never stopped, reelin off stories and songs, making us stop at the side of the road to look at this big rock, which was important because of this and that, make us look at this ruin of a cottage where it was burkers (body snatchers who would murder people to sell to anatomists) and all these things. And when we got back to the hoose, a says "Granda, I'm not trying to be disrespectful, but I asked you if you knew any songs or stories and you said No!" He said, "those songs and stories don't belong here." At the time I didn't quite understand, but now I recognise what he meant by that. What he meant was through the telling of these songs, and stories, in the place in which they have importance gives you the meaning, it gives you the importance of telling that song or story. Otherwise, it's pointless telling them.

Essy Stewart, she talks about her grandfather taking on the mantle of the characters in his stories. Of course, what's meant by that is he was living their spirits when he was telling those stories. And so they're not just stories to be told for entertainment, but it's an actual act. A really important act of identity creation. And I think that's something that's wrongly, or rather not often, understood about Travellers, and the importance of travel. It's our travelling for many of us which is

the way that we create, and we live our identities, physically, but actually mentally as well.

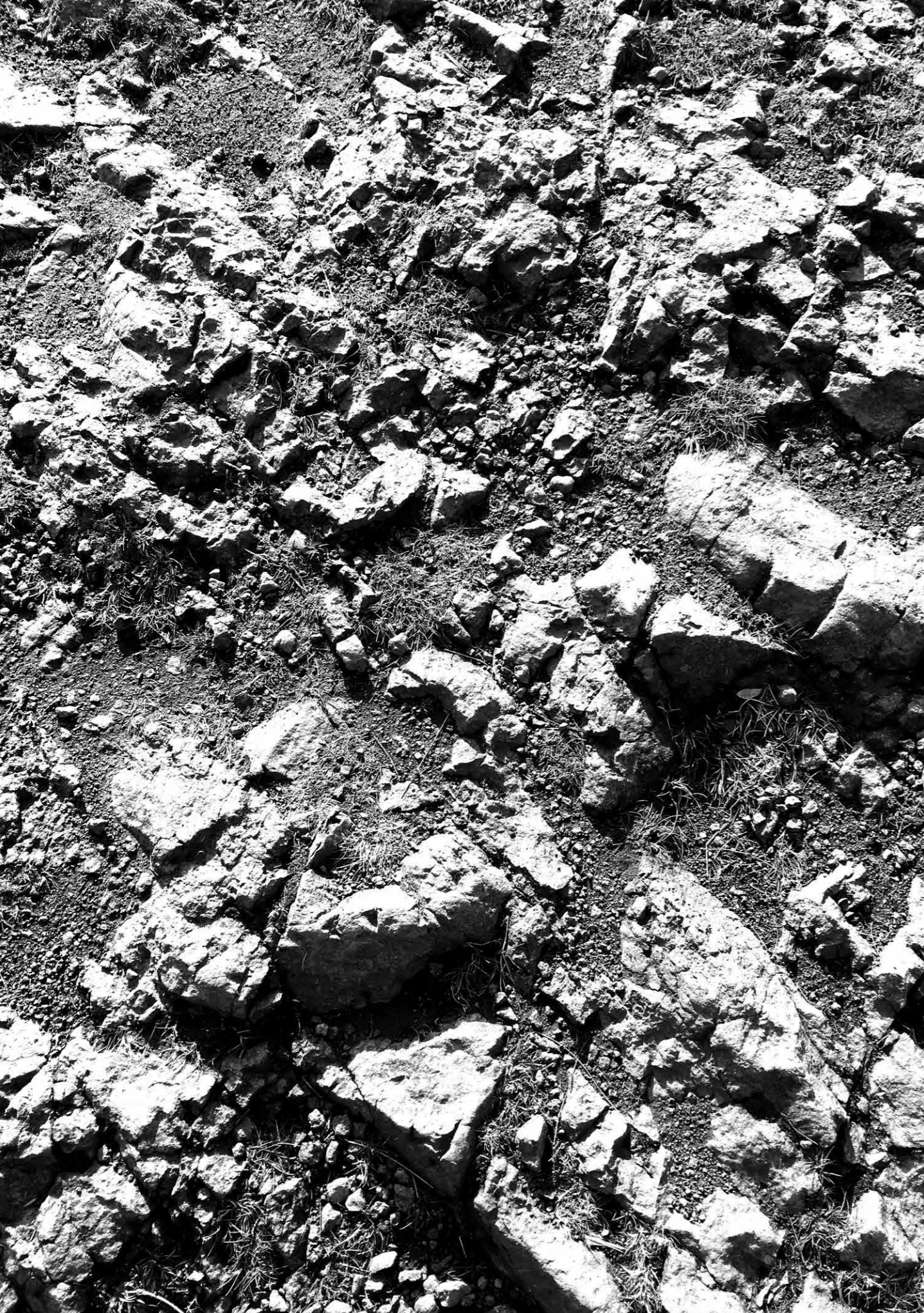
Q *I think that really highlights where the gap is – in this idea, you often see, in the ballad / song collecting / archive scene. I think it perpetuates this idea that these songs live in individual people, and those people are going to die, and then those songs will be lost. But I really like what you're saying – it's more about fighting to continue, or to reinstate, the right to be able to have access to those places in which the stories or songs live. And then that's how the next generation of people will learn the songs. Because they're contextual.*

DD That's it. You need to be able to live in those physical places. For example, there's a camp on the west of Scotland, my family camp. And it's just beside the road, just a wee patch of grass, anyone would drive past that not thinking of it. But to my family, that was a very important camp, because it's halfway between where we would take horses or cattle or whatever it was that we were dealing with, from Mull to Lochaline, and then down, and then cross over to Fort William for the markets and things. So we continue to go there. We don't deal with horses anymore. We don't sell cows, right. But the key thing is we are reliving those ancestral memories by travelling to that space. And when we go there, we're learning these stories and we are learning these songs. Now recently, that's been dug up with trenches dug all the way down there, and we can't access it. So for the last couple of years, we've not been there. And so for the last couple years, I still know the songs and stories in my head, right? But because they've been disconnected from the landscape, a landscape that has no physical – nothing tangible – which tells you those stories, or tells you those songs in that place. They eventually lose their meaning because they're just stories about a place which you've never lived in and you've never travelled to. And so eventually, a generation stops telling them because they've not got any meaning, you know, and then that's when stories and songs die. So it's much less about having the words to songs, and it's much more about having the meaning to them.

You know, because there's a lot of collectors

going about, you know, they collected the words to the songs. What they didn't do was collect why they were meaningful, what the context was. We have some great researchers who towards the end of their career did start to recognise this, started to ask more about, 'when would those songs be sung? Why were they started, you know, why do you sing it? You know, why did your granny sing? Those types of questions which started to bring out the meaning. But more and more often, it's just how old is that song? You know, and once they've got the age in the words, that's it protected. Well, it's not. I've got books there of songs that were collected from Travelling folk, you know, by settled people, I don't know any of them. And to be honest, I don't think I ever will. Because they don't mean anything to me. So it's pointless me learning them.

You know, it's the very reason for singing I don't think was fully appreciated when it came to collectors. And I think that unless we do start to have a society which appreciates this, not only for Travellers, I am a big believer that many communities have this type of connection with the music that they sing or make, but unless we have that recognition that it's the very meaning, it's the places in which those things belong. It's the culture in which it belongs, or the act of living our culture, such as travelling, it's protecting those things that inadvertently protects the music. But if we don't do that, and if we solely focus on the words of the music or getting a recording of that music, it will still die.



CHAPTER 2
THERESA SAINTY

milaythina tunapri (Country Remembers) by Madeleine Flynn, Tim Humphrey and Theresa Sainty was commissioned by MONA FOMA in Lutruwita (Tasmania) for their 2021 Festival as the central component of Relay/Country Remembers Her Names, which was performed at the opening and closing of the Festival in Launceston and nipaluna (Hobart) respectively.

Theresa Sainty - Writer/director

Theresa Sainty is a Pakana woman, from Lutruwita (Tasmania), and is part of a very large, well-known Tasmanian Aboriginal family. Theresa has worked extensively with Aboriginal Education Services, DoE, where she co-developed and provided Aboriginal Cultural Awareness training, and produced curriculum resources focusing on Pakana culture, translated script and coached actors in the film *The Nightingale*, collaborated on various films and projects: and has been an Aboriginal Linguistic Consultant with the palawa kani Language Program of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre since 1997. Theresa recently began a Senior Indigenous Research Scholarship at UTAS (University of Tasmania).

Daisy Allan - Vocalist

Daisy is a Language Worker, in the palawa kani Language Program of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre. The Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre has represented and advocated for the political and community development aspirations and entitlements of the Tasmanian Aboriginal community across the state since the early 1970s. The revival of the original languages has been a strong element of the TAC's heritage maintenance work since the 1990s; palawa kani is the only Aboriginal language spoken in Tasmania today and has been learnt by three generations of children.

Further information regarding palawa kani may be found here:

<http://tacinc.com.au/programs/palawa-kani/>

<http://tacinc.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Policy-and-Protocol-for-Use-of-palawa-kani-Aboriginal-Language-2019-1.pdf>

Ol' Cape Barren is a song by the late Uncle Ronnie Summers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9h1eO2cDUFU>



wukalina-ta, tayritja-tu

warr! warr! warr!
 luna-rrala-mana-mapali tayaritja-ta
 lakapawa waynapuni wungana
 ningina kani-mana-mapali nina-tu
 wungana tiyuratina milaythina wurangkili
 waranta putiya tunapri nina
 milaythina putiya tunapri nina
 (Plinparina; Pularilpana; Watamutiya; Watanimarina; Tikul;
 tami; Wapati; Watikawitja; – trailing off in the winds)

From (ATOP) wukalina to the islands in Bass Strait

warr! = 'to draw attention to something'
 Our strong women on the (Bass Strait) Islands
 See the smoke from our fire as it twists and turns
 Bringing our words to you
 as it twists and turns on the winds of Sky Country
 We will never forget you
 Country remembers you

truwana-ta, wukalina-tu/rruni lakarana (the big island)

warr! warr! warr!
takariliya-mana-mapali
waranta tuylupa
lupatin Pakana-mana-mapali
waynapuni rayakana-mana-mapali
ningina nina-tu wungana tiyuratina milaythina wurangkili
waranta kanaplila fiddle tunes-tu tayraitja
waranta putiya tunapri
milaythina putiya tunapri
(Born on ole Cape Barren.... – and trail off)*

truwana/Cape Barren Is – wukalina/the big island

warr! = 'to draw attention to something'
My people
We light a fire/lit a fire
The flames are our people
And the smoke brings our songs to you as
it twists and turns on the winds of Sky Country
And we dance to the fiddle tunes of the islands
We will never forget
Country remembers

wukalina – kunanyi

warr! warr! warr!
patrula Pakana puni Muyini + Rrumitina pumili Palawa
kani milangkani kuntana;
kani Milaythina-ti paywuta manta;
lupatin patrula Pakana paywuta manta
waynapuni ningina paliti Pakana + kani
rruni-mana-mapali Lutruwita paywuta manta
nina lakapawa.....rrukani Milaythina-tu
Pakana putiya tunapri
Milaythina tunapri tunapri paywuta manta

wukalina – kunanyi

warr! = 'to draw attention to something'
Pakana fires have been burning since Muyini + Rrumitina
made Palawa – the first black man.
Language was born from the earth;
names of places have always been there, in Country
The flame of the Pakana fires will endure
The smoke from the fires will always carry the spirit
and language of Pakana on the winds of Sky Country
across our island Lutruwita
Can you hearcall out to Country
So our People will never forget - because
Country will always remember her names.
(lumaranatana; wukalina; lingtinga; pilawaytakinta; kanamaluka;
tulinakali; pataway;
trailing off into the winds of Sky Country...)

* The tune Ol' Cape Barren



CHAPTER 3
CASS EZEJI

We Women (omitted from history)

Cass Ezeji

Our names are Doll, Mary, July , Hope, Easter,
Classindra, Eliza, Tuesday, Sarah and Emma.
Some of us have forgotten our names, lost our names or have two names. Some were renamed, chose
our own names or have no names at all.

Our skin is black, brown, red, yellow and golden, our skin is aging, youthful and tired.
Our skin is unscoured, light, dark, youthful and powdered

Our skin is our destiny.

Our backs are strong, bent, buckled, scarred, soft, arched and aching.
our scent is of earth and fields, hibiscus and tobacco leaves,
our scent is of gifted french perfume, of blood and toil.
Our scent is of sex and stale sweat.

We speak in wolof, igbo and yoruba.
We speak mende, guyanese creole and jamaican patwa .
We speak Queen's english, français and español.
We speak scots, gàidhlig and nederlands. We do not speak at all.
We speak a pidgin you have never heard before.
We speak in tongues.
We speak only when spoken to

We work the land.
We stir the pots, we prepare the salted herring sent from Scotland to sustain us.
We roast the pigs for mas' supper, we make the beds, we pick the fruit.
We cut the cane.
We wash the linen, we sing the songs, and tend the children that are not our own.
We heal the sick.
We spread our reluctant legs

We are from Nigeria, St Kitts, Nevis, Cromartie, Guyana, Edinburgh, Trinidad, Glasgow, Suriname
and Inverness.
We do not know where we come from.
We are from our mother's womb.

We are slaves, servants, maids, free women of colour, the born-free children of free women of colour.
We are the wives of wealthy men, poor men, we are parallel wives. We are no one's wives. We are wom-
en of the night, mothers of children who are taken from us, mothers of many, mothers to full grown
men. We are barren, we miscarry.
We are women with gifts, knowledge and secrets.,
we count our money and our blessings.

We are women with a mind for business, we are women without money.
We are women who cannot read or write but can read faces and minds.

We whisper sweet talk just to survive,
sweet-empty talk, full-fine talk,
powerful talk,
trust -me- I'm -yours -talk.

We die young, we die old.
We die suddenly on straw pallets.
We die slowly in silks and velvet,
we die during childbirth and we die at the whip

We die drowning, we die starving.
We die without a penny to our name.
We die draped in gold,
and gowns made of crisp banknotes from Englan',
and peacock feathers in our hair.
We die with our grey hair in two long braids
We die with our hair wrapped tight and hidden.

We die having only just survived,
having lived full lives.
We are given burials, we are given nothing at all.
We die before our time. We die at the hands of someone else.
We die in our sleep and by our own hand.
We die slaves,
we die free, having once been slaves.
We die owning slaves.

We die in the sun under familiar heat,
we die under flies that eventually swarm us.
We die alone in a cold country we crossed an ocean to get to,
oceans ago

We die loved, unloved,
forgotten, remembered,
rediscovered.

Our souls rise and stir
Our souls are unflinching and cease to exist,
Our souls are stuck, drowning in the wretched triangle that bore us.
Our souls are free,
as they once were, oceans ago.

Now you know our story
Who will lay flowers for us?

On The Dumpers

Cass Ezeji

“Castlemilk and different places wir aw openin’ up an’ they wir still workin wae the dumpers. So ah get tae talkin’ wae wan ae these guys, ah says, whit kinna money ye gettin? He says, we git four pence mare th’n whit you get and wur guaranteed an oor every day more. They caw’d it greasin’ time.”

Most of my knowledge about the history and construction of Glasgow comes from my Granda, George McNally. I visit him regularly and we chat about where he grew up, his school days (or lack thereof... he liked to skive!), and working on the dumpers. The audio piece in the space is a recording of one of these conversations. In the piece, I try to find his childhood home using Google Maps, a technology he hadn’t encountered before.

Our family name, McNally means ‘Son of the poor man’, this is the title of one of the songs I recorded for the album accompanying the zine. McNally is the anglicised form of the Irish Gaelic Mac an Fhailghigh.

The rose in full bloom refers to my granny, Rose McNally.

The song is short, a remaining fragment of things remembered and things lost.



GEORGE SQUARE

The square is a changing site of demonstrations, Christmas markets, political gatherings, school trips, fairgrounds, and concerts.

The first time you visit, it's an ice rink. You wear your silver puffa jacket, a hand-me-down from your sister. It smells of her, like hair pomade. You reach inside your pockets and feel the shape of her belongings, kirby grips and a half-eaten packet of bubble gum. You move uneasily onto the ice, taking baby steps. You can't bear the humiliation of falling flat on your face. The music is loud and the kids from other schools whiz by with ease. You fall, scream, and laugh with the other girls in your class, you pay no attention to the history that surrounds you.

When you're seven, your mum takes you to the fair at the same spot. It's a winter treat. You ride the carousel on the plastic white horse adorned in a ribbon with your name on it. It's your own horse, in the middle of the square. You ride round slowly, grinning from ear to ear. The old-fashioned looped music repeats as you grip the pole. Your small nose is filled with different aromas; ginger bread, hot chocolate, mulled mine, and burger meat sizzling. Children scream with joy on the fast rides. Everyone's teeth are rotten from candyfloss that sticks to the roofs of their mouths like a chapel wafer during Holy Communion. You beg your mum for some with no joy. You imagine sitting on a sugary pink cloud.

When you turn fifteen, your friends begin to hang out in the square. They sit on patches of grass next to all the other moshers. They listen to music and smoke under the statues. You don't like that music or the syrupy taste of bucky and you drift apart.

School trips to the square come and go; a tour of the City Chambers, a Comic Relief assault course, music events, and in primary seven, a drug awareness campaign. Eventually you get a tour of the square itself. You learn about the twelve statues that sat high on their plinths, the men were once important bankers, merchants,

soldiers, and poets. You were told they are heroes who helped build the Dear Green Place.

You're seventeen when a Hollywood film begins filming in the square. You're told it resembles the financial district of Philadelphia and that it's cheap to shoot in Glasgow, it puts our city - and us - 'on the map'. The production needs 'people of colour' on set, to make things more 'authentic'. You and your friends apply to be extras. Everyone you know is at the square and you're chuffed to be earning 'real' money. You pay no attention to the history around you.

You're twenty two when you and your friend book a walking tour of the square as part of Black History Month. You learn about the twelve statues, the men accumulated their wealth from slave labour in the Caribbean. You learn that Glasgow is built on money from slavery. You wonder why no one mentioned this before. You don't understand how the statues could have got there. After years of school trips to improve your 'understanding of the city,' you hadn't even come close. You need to unlearn most of what you've been taught. The square is never the same again.

You're twenty four when you become aware of people using the phrases 'decolonising history' and 'looking through a decolonial lens'. You wonder why it's always Londoners new to the city talking like this.

You're twenty five and you chose to enrol as a 'mature student' at Strathclyde University, you are embarrassed of your age. You cut through the square twice a day, everyday. You pass the brooding men carved from bronze, covered in pigeon shit. At lunch times you eat alone, where the moshers used to sit. Glasgow is more multi-cultural than it has ever been. You watch people pass by.

You're twenty six when one of the statues is vandalised at a Black Lives Matter protest. You don't know how the girl in the silver puffa would feel.



CHAPTER 4
MADELEINE FLYNN
&
TIM HUMPHREY

NOTES ON EXTRACTIONS

Our pieces for the Ghost Tunes project were made in a former quarry at Beech Forest, unceded Gadubanud Country, near to the remnant forests and harvested plantation named the Otway Ranges by the settler community. Abandoned quarries are the lingering and widespread mark of the continuing colonial exploitation of the Australian landscape. Extractive industries are the spinning blade of the colonial economy, and it is a challenge to discover any area of Land, Water, or nearby Sea that hasn't either already been turned over, or reserved by a Resource Exploration Permit.

The quarry we and our colleague, Jen, inhabited for a week in December 2021 is tiny, an insignificant representative of a massive scale of extraction across the country that sees entire mountains, 46,000 year-old sacred sites, and fertile landscapes disappear. The stone at the quarry was blasted, crushed, and distributed on roads in the surrounding district, before it was deemed too low-grade to carry modern transport.

The current occupiers have imagined and are implementing a vision for remediation as a site for artistic exploration; proposing an alternative economy of creative industry that will respect and nurture the incredibly rich ecology of land, creatures, and heritage that underlies and continues at this place.

The Gadubanud themselves inhabited an extensive area of Country surrounding the site, before being subjected to dispossession and massacre as the land was stolen for extractive endeavour by settlers. This endeavour continues apace today, while Gadubanud descendants are continuing to live in the area. The land is under the custodianship of the Eastern Maar Corporation, whose strategic vision Meerreengeeye Ngakeepoorryeeyt (meaning "our country") details a healing vision for the traditional owners, as well as an offer for the settler community to engage and ally with that vision.

The first hint at anything special came after we spent a night camping on site, allowing our city ears to adjust, and after our busy conversations regarding a collaborative art project had taken a short breather. We woke to an awe-inspiring dawn chorus; richer, denser, and more present than either of us had ever heard before. This tapestry of small, medium, and larger birds, several species of frogs, and

insects was re-inhabiting and vibrating this space, with a vengeance. The creatures were lending their soundtrack to a process of lush re-vegetation, from moss and lichen on rock through to cascading rain-forest regeneration in this area of nearly 2,000mm average annual rainfall. We later had an extensive discussion with Lee Morgan from the Eastern Maar Corporation, a respected musician, about different ideas around vibration as an approach to the healing of culture and land. The creatures at the quarry appear to have realised this big time.

So we place our little recording devices, like teaspoons in the ocean, to make recordings over the days and nights of our stay. On the final day, we venture to make our own sounds with the creatures and the amphitheatre that had been created as the aftermath of the quarrying. A stationary Moog Sub-Phatty synthesiser, a re-orienting trumpet, and the creatures constitute our impulsive responses to the quarried landscape.

Making a work like this feels a little like its own kind of sonic extraction, something out-of-place and out-of-time, a reflexive and reflective statement that leaves open the question of just how we should come to learn and live with, and on, this place, this Country. So, similarly, we leave it open for anyone to imagine if the textures are incidental or intentional, heard or unheard, imagined, or staged narratives and dialogues with the place. A few of the well-known birds heard in the recordings are sulphur-crested cockatoo, crow, and yellow-tailed black cockatoo. You might want to investigate within the texture what other of the 244 known bird species from the region are also making their voices heard.

We made four short pieces from our original recordings. A remark from a colleague in the UK regarding the "human-like" quality of bird song when it is slowed down is reflected in the "slowing" treatment that we added to the texture. Birds-becoming-human/trumpet-becoming-tuba/Moog-becoming-the low vibration of longer timespans, and subaural transformations. This is an ancient landscape, cared for by its traditional owners for tens of thousands of years. It always was and always will be.

<https://cv.vic.gov.au/stories/aboriginal-culture/nyernila/gadubanud-pirt-koorrook/>



CHAPTER 5
CASS LYNCH
&
MEI SWAN LIM

THE FIRST SUMMER

Writer and researcher Cass Lynch and sound artist Mei Swan Lim are frequent collaborators on audio artworks that reflect the life and vitality of Noongar Country – the sovereign unceded Indigenous territory in the southwest corner of Western Australia. The ‘Birak’ suite of audio pieces comprises four tracks that respond to the Noongar season of Birak, the ‘First Summer’, which encompasses December and January.

‘Birak’ (1-4) is in four parts. ‘Birak 1’ is a song created from samples of field recordings collected during the season of Birak, as well as Mei’s voice. ‘Birak 2’ is a fragment of an interview with native plant propagator Richard McDowell about how the cracking open of seedpods on hot days is a hallmark of Birak. ‘Birak 3’ is music made from samples, with a human voice mimicking the tones of native frogs. ‘Birak 4’ is a fragment of an interview with Ballardong Whadjuk woman and poet Lola McDowell about the effect of land clearing on her spirit, followed by Cass Lynch performing her poem ‘Birak,’ written for this project. The poem is given an extra sensory dimension with a soundscape made from field recordings and synths designed by Mei.

Noongar Boodja, or Noongar Country, is a crescent-shaped Aboriginal territory on the southwestern corner of the Australian continent. It is unceded land and home to approximately 40,000 Noongar people who live alongside a broader population of two million people. Noongar Country contains fourteen dialect groups, and the Noongar language, once banned, is in the process of revitalisation. Cass Lynch, a Noongar woman, speaks Noongar in her poem ‘Birak’, and she is indebted to the efforts of Elders and community members who have kept language alive. The Noongar language is inseparable from place, and has been developed and grown over tens of thousands of years in response to the varied and wonderful landscape. Noongar language sounds like Noongar Country, and has been an essential inclusion in an audio artwork that is capturing the sound of a Noongar season.

There are six identified seasons in the Noongar year: Boonaroo (Feb/Mar), Djiran (Apr/May), Mookaroo (Jun/Jul), Djilba (Aug/Sep), Kambarrang (Oct/Nov), and Birak (Dec/Jan). Each Noongar season has a colour, a suite of stories and ceremonies, and an association with a point in the human lifecycle. Birak’s colour is orange, it is associated with childhood, and it is the focal point of Cass Lynch and Mei Swan Lim’s audio artwork ‘Birak’.

The field recordings for ‘Birak’ (1-4) were collected at Lake Joondalup, a body of water that forms part of the north-south oriented wetlands that dot the Swan Coastal Plain upon which Perth sits. The area sits on Whadjuk Noongar territory, one of the fourteen dialect groups. Two of our interviewees, Elder Noel Nannup and poet Lola McDowell, are points of light in the Whadjuk kinship system, and are sovereign people on the land where we collected the field recordings. Their human voices have been as important to include as the sounds of the animals, insects, plants, and weather. Interviews with native plant propagator Richard McDowell were essential to understanding what plants are making the classic ‘snap, crackle and pop’ sounds so often heard during Perth summers.

CREATIVE PROCESS

Cass and Mei approached this project with the idea of using the human voice in different ways. ‘Birak’ (1-4) contains singing, interviews, human voice replicating animal and plant voice, and the performance of poetry. Cass and Mei describe their creative process below:

Birak 1

“Before composing and recording this track, I sung a lot in the bush. I took a lapel mic and recorder along with me on bush walks, and sung in response to surrounding sounds and pace of footsteps. I practiced making different sounds, letting words come, and humming. In the studio I made a steady beat of sampled cicada calls, pitched up and down. The hums in the track keep the steady motion while the melodic line is free to come and go as it pleases. It was important for me that the singing wasn’t confined to the studio, but was very much active in place, contributing to the sounds of the bush and also being an active listener.” - Mei

Birak 2

“It was a revelation to hear from native garden expert Richard McDowell that the dry rattle we associate with Perth summers was not just cicadas but the cracking of seed pods as well. We collected sound samples of native wisteria seed pods cracking open on site at Lake Joondalup, and included this in the musical score. It made sense to include a snippet of interview with Richard as we were on site and hearing these sounds in real time.” - Cass

“I tried to capture the crunchiness of ‘the long dry’ – our long and dry summer. I sampled dry grasses in my hands, the sound of Zamia palm seeds knocking, the crushing of wattle seed casings, fire lazily crackling, footsteps, and of course cicadas.” - Mei

Birak 3

“I improvised three vocal takes over one another. The first track I practiced a few recurring sounds, trying to figure out what my ‘call’ should sound like. Whilst singing, I was thinking about the bounce of Pobblebonks frog calls and the horn and wind instrument qualities of swan calls.

Then I recorded another track on top of that, listening to the previous one and responding, sometimes singing in sync by chance, other times mimicking the sounds or trying to find the harmony. By panning the three takes to left, right and centre the listener can differentiate between them and it makes it sound like there’s 3 ‘callers’. After the 3 recordings I listened back and picked the bits that made sense, the ones that best represented the tonality of the calls, copying and pasting multiples.” - Mei

Birak 4

“I wrote the first draft of the ‘Birak’ poem at Lake Joondalup while we were collecting field recordings. It was mid-morning on what would be a very hot and windy day, and the noise was incredible, we felt like we were in a storm of dry leaves. Every gust was a crescendo of brittle dryness, underscored by the rhythmic rattle of cicadas. The airy flute voices of the pink n grey galahs could be heard piercing through the wind and the poem wrote itself. The inclusion of Lola McDowell’s lament for the blameless plants and creatures of Noongar Country is an important segment that precedes the poem, and in that moment it seemed insane that any human would want to clear bushland like this that was so full of life.” - Cass

The following are snippets of interviews conducted with community members that informed the audio pieces 'Birak 1-4'. Cass Lynch interviewed Noongar Elder Noel Nannup on 10/12/2021 at Wireless Hill in the suburb of Ardross in Perth. Cass Lynch and Mei Swan Lim interviewed Ballardong Whadjuk woman and poet Lola McDowell, and her husband, native plant propagator Richard McDowell, on 18/12/21 by the shores of Lake Joondalup, a wetland in the northern suburbs of Perth. The interviews have been edited for clarity.

Noel on the Noongar season of Birak (Dec/Jan)

Noel – And Birak, you see we talk about children, it's the time the children are born, you know, so it's about...young people. And it's also a time when you know, they would call it the first summer in English. And it's warming up, your regular rain patterns have fallen away.

Richard on invasive weeds:

Cass – *You reckon this is... this is a degraded landscape?*

Richard – Oh it's very degraded. It's hugely degraded.

Mei – *So what's happened to it? What do you reckon was the...*

Richard – So basically the introduction of overseas foreign grasses and weeds. There's probably been a bit of attempted agriculture through the area over the years.

Cass – *Because it's near water?*

Richard – Yeah it's near water. So weed invasion is a huge factor. You can see that you've basically lost all the understory. It's basically gone.

Cass – *The trees and the zamias are hardy, and they don't really need...*

Richard – Yeah but I mean the trees are always gonna be the last, you know the big old trees have been here for a long time but you can see they've lost all the understory here. You can see that it's worse near where the carpark is?

Cass – *Oh yeah.*

Richard – But if you go deeper in away from human interference, you'll find a lot of the understory stuff, I mean if we went down in there for example, you'll find that it'll get better and you'll get the species back. So anywhere where there's been a lot of interference, urban development, infrastructure going on then weed encroachment comes in, what we call garden escapees. So upwards of 80-90% of weed species have actually come in as garden plants, and then they've jumped the fence as it were. And they set so much seed. Prolific, prolific seeders. Very easy to establish and then they just go crazy and they push out the native species.

Lola on the changes in Perth:

Lola – Yeah, Perth has changed drastically. Not just Perth, the countryside as well where I come from. Cos I was raised in the country, born and raised.

Richard on the sounds of seeds popping:

Richard – Yeah so we're looking at Birak plants so we're gonna go off track, just watch for snakes. (footsteps)

Cass – *Are snakes a problem?*

Richard – Nah snakes aren't generally, if they hear you coming they're long gone. They're not worried. They're more scared of you than you are of them if that makes sense.

Cass – *So what's this...*

Richard – Ah! That's exactly what I'm looking for!

(all laugh) Right so this is hardenbergia comptoniana, so this is our local native vine! So when we get a really hot day, these will crack open but we can do that ok, so we'll try and do that, you've got your microphone there so if you listen carefully, (pop!) there, try another one, and again (pop!) So this is the hardenbergia comptoniana cracking open. (pop!) it's a bit soft (pop!) and then what they do on a hot day, so on a hot day when they do that, they will crack open like that and then this will fly open and all these seeds will go flying through the bush everywhere, everywhere. Um yeah so..

Mei – *woooow, oh, they're beautiful! I've never seen one inside. I mean I've seen one before, but...*

Richard – We'll grab another one, get a few more examples of them.

Mei – *Interesting, it's a good percussive sound.*

Richard – Yeah.

Cass – *Can I ask again what kind of tree this is?*

Richard – Oh it's a vine, that's a vine, hardenbergia comptoniana. So ok ready? We'll try one again (pop!) (snap, snap) that one doesn't want to do it. (Pop) There..you get a recording of that? See if I can find another one.

Mei – *It's nice because your fingers on the seed pod sound very dry too.*

Richard – Yeah, there's a couple of the other things I'll see if I can find, now that you've got me thinking about noise, cos usually it's visual but now it's like noise it's a bit different. So there's still a few things I might be able to get some sounds going with.

Mei – *(inaudible)*

Richard – Yeah. So the heat, the warm like if you're out in the sun now you can actually feel the heat, the warmth.

Cass – *Yeah.*

Richard – And that's what'll pop 'em, so you'll actually hear them go snap, boomp, crack, you'll actually hear them go on a warm day.

Lola on the impact of land clearing on her spirit:

Lola: It is. I don't remember it being like this before. It's always from my memory growing up, it's always been stinkin' hot. 'Cos I hate hot weather – I prefer the cooler weather, but yeah. I'm loving the change, even though it's not normal when you think about it.

Cass – *Does it bring a little bit of uncertainty? Because people, even when the weather is different, oh its climate change.*

Lola – For us, but what's it doing for the animals? If they're not used to it, they're used to this time of the year being so hot, everything being different.

Cass – *Cos Noel said that he associates Birak with children, because the birds are showing their babies how to fly and stuff. And um there's lots of baby magpies that are big and fluffy and whinging at their parents, probably getting ignored so they get booted out eventually to go and look after themselves. So imagine it might be tougher to do that in weather like this. You know?*

Lola – And uh I was walking through our car park back to my car and I saw a dead koolbardi [Australian Magpie], a baby one. Bit unusual. I... as far as changes go, when I've seen Perth change over the... my life living here and how the bush and that is shrinking. Whenever I see things like that happen it... it effects me deeply. We had a gum tree in our front yard, which was massive. But we had to chop it down because it was proving to be a danger to the power lines and the house, and the day they did that I cried. Brings me to tears when I see them bulldozing bush, or even if I see dead native animals on the road. Sometimes if I can I will pull up to take off the concrete or pavement, and I'll put it on the soil so that the earth

can take back, where it can't if it's on the cement. Pavement. Tarmac.

Noel on the colour and activities of Birak:

Noel – Then that highlights that each season has its own colour. There's six major colours and orange is this one now.

Cass – *Is orange Birak?*

Noel – Yep.

Cass – *Well that makes perfect sense.*

Noel – And you've got the flickering flames cos it's time to burn too.

Cass – *Oh really!*

Noel – And you burn, like you've had a bit of rain, and you burn the dry grass cos you've got green grass shooting and coming along behind it, but burn the dry, and that gives you a cool burn. Doesn't go above your shoulders or waist in the Country, in the mosaic patterns you can do. In between, you know, cos you got wind this way, so you get fire traveling this way, and you get wind this way, so you're gonna get fire traveling that way. They're just opposite one another. And then all you do is just burn the little bit in between giving the mosaic pattern which allows all your biota that's mobile to move from one to the other to the other. If it's not mobile in its own, under its own steam, then it'll be the wind. If it's not the wind, then it'll be the reptile that eats a certain seed and takes it and drops it, or it'll be a bird, does the same. So it all moves around and it doesn't have to move very far. And that way you've still got your biota functioning as it needs to. And that's all part of the totemic system, burning at the right time. Etc.

Cass – *Cos a wildfire is not that natural.*

Noel – No, no no no. It used to be, until our mob got the burning right.

Richard on the need for native diggers:

Cass – *It blows my mind to read about Noongar stories in Perth of honey possums. I tend to associate them with the south coast, we've got them in the national parks around Albany. And that there were honey possums in Perth as well as pygmy possums. These beautiful little creatures that live on banksias. They've nearly disappeared here, what a loss for the people who live in this area.*

Richard – And not only little possums and stuff but a lot of things like the quendas, the bandicoots you know they've had a bit of a comeback, they've become a little bit more popular now. But there's a whole suite of other little animals, and this is an interesting point too that with weed invasion over the years and the amount of litter that's in our urban, suburban bushland areas, even in the jarrah forest, we don't have the the little animals anymore that would actually turn that leaf litter over and create like a natural compost so that a lot of the leaf litter builds up, and then becomes a fire hazard. And then you throw in prescribed burns but I'm not even going there.

Cass – So it gets into fire, cos you hear them they get called ecosystem engineers, these little digging animals and it impacts fire.

Richard – Yeah because those little digging animals aren't turning the leaf litter and detritus, they're not turning it over. If you go in to, go down to Craigie Bush for example, where the quenda population has exploded over the years, you can't walk off track down there without breaking an ankle almost, because you can actually see, it looks like somebody's gone through with a little digger, and turned all the stuff over.

Cass – *So you can actually see the impact they're having?*

Richard – Oh yeah

Noel on the healing power of tuning into nature:

There's so much about our old world that just has so much for our new world, you know? And you

just listen to a flock of cockatoos going through, there is nothing that you and I can teach them. Nothing. They know everything about being a flock, about being a community, about eking out an existence, about the language they use to connect and talk to each other.

BIRAK

Cass Lynch

the dry rustle of Birak
the Noongar First Summer
when Easterly breezes from the desert
bring warm winds blowing through tree hollow homes
the roar of a million dry leaves moving on a tide of air

djidar meka baal wooyan worl-ak nyininy
a morning moons hangs in the cloudless sky
pale face watching the flock
of pink n grey galahs flying below
their soft piping whistle competing with the rattle of cicadas

Snap Pop Sssssssshhhhhhhhh

the trees of the coastal plain are sighing in the heat
expanding breathing
seed pods cracking
releasing seeds to the air

Birak is the Noongar season associated with the young
fledgling birds venture from nests into winds filled with life
the courage of the new generation
feathers and seeds, heat and hope

Cass Lynch uses the Marribank orthography when writing in the Noongar language and is indebted to the efforts of Noongar Elders who have kept language alive.

Ee-ow Eh Kui

Hokkien read by Li Cheng Lim, English by Mei Swan Lim

Translated by Hoc Hoe Tan

Jiak huan choo heoh/
Eating sweet potato leaves/

Puod tor kar siang lui kong/
Belly rumbles with thunder

Keh si cho tar por/
thie tau/
Pretending to be a boy/
shaved head/

Dau bi ti cheng khi suar/
Hiding in Penang Hills/

Ah Mi, Ah Pa, Kiu Mor, kar wah/
Mum, dad, Kiu Mor and me/

Changkrit kiao ka jit si kay/
Cicada calls slice the air/

Bay ki kam kar lor.
Then fall to cover my footsteps.

During the Japanese occupation of Penang in the 1940's, to avoid the new lawlessness, my Ah Mah (grandmother) hid in a tapioca plantation, surrounded by the forest of the Penang Hills. She was about 14 years old. Her head was shaved to look like a boy, she survived on sweet potato leaves and no one knows how long she was there for, who exactly she was with, or what eventuated. So much is unknown. Only the bare bones of the story could be collected, mostly over the dinner table and on WhatsApp. The rest, the details, the flesh, has since decomposed with the bodies of those who hold the stories. So I wrote this poem, trying to fill in the blanks, imagining what it may have been like for my young Ah Mah in hiding, cloaked by the sounds of the surrounding forest.

Hungry Ghosts

Mei Swan Lim

My mother tells me, stay quiet.
She shaves my head, to hide her girl.
We sit in the plantation, eating leaves of silence.

Hiding from hungry ghosts.

Belly rumbles with thunder.
The sky says it won't fall.
Careful, footsteps.
Cicada calls cover us.

Hiding from hungry ghosts.

Rain comes to release tears,
River banks burst,
Spilling over cheeks,
Pooling in depressions,
Forming silver mirrors,
Surfaces of light
And I'm picking up the slivers.
They send me all across the sky,
Unfolding my life,
As I take my time,
I'm hoping and I'm praying,
I can run like the water back to you.



Quinie

Quinie, aka Josie Vallely, is based in Glasgow. She sings primarily in Scots, with a style inspired by the traditions of Scottish Traveller singer Lizzie Higgins (1929-1993). Recent work includes 'Thyme Piobaireachd', an exploration of the solo voice in dialogue with the compositional structure of the Piobaireachd. A collaboration with percussionist Laurie Pitt on snare drum, it was released on Cafe Oto's Takuroku Label in April 2021. Quinie voiced composer Rufus Elliot's *A/am/am*, the debut solo release by Elliot of the *OVER / AT* project and label: a trans music-making world. Ostensibly a one act play in music composed by Elliot with Lea Shaw, imagining a never ending beach. Drawing from Greek mythology Scots and Middle English, the piece uses hybrid language and inventive instrumental character work to imagine two protagonists in love and conflict at the end of the world. Quinie's experiments with composition and vocal techniques create a dialogue between pipes and voice. Her work has a strong sense of place and is rooted in an imagined Scotland.

Theresa Sainty

Theresa Sainty is a Pakana woman, from Lutruwita (Tasmania), and is part of a very large, well-known Tasmanian Aboriginal family. Theresa has worked extensively with Aboriginal Education Services, DoE where she co-developed and provided Aboriginal Cultural Awareness training, and produced curriculum resources focusing on Pakana culture; translated script and coached actors in the film *The Nightingale*, collaborated on various films and projects and has been an Aboriginal Linguistic Consultant with the palawa kani Language Program of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre since 1997. Theresa recently began a Senior Indigenous Research Scholarship at UTAS.

Cass Ezeji

Cass Ezeji is a singer and performer of critically-acclaimed bands Laps and Golden Teacher. She is interested in Scotland's role in colonialism and its erasure from our national psyche. Her essays and prose reinsert black and mixed-race narratives into the Scottish context and call for accountability. She is informed by her Nigerian, Irish & Scottish heritage and growing up in a Glasgow tenement with her mother. As a Gaelic speaker, she seeks to fill historical voids that omit the experiences of black and mixed-race Gaels, seeking to enhance the ways in which we think about Gaelic language and culture.

Madeleine Flynn & Tim Humphrey

Madeleine Flynn and Tim Humphrey are Australian artists who create unexpected situations for listening. Their work is driven by a curiosity and questioning about sound in human culture and seeks to evolve and engage with new processes and audiences, through public and participative interventions. Their practice intertwines local, national and international relationships. Their current areas of interest are existential risk, artificial intelligence in public space, and long form socially engaged public art interventions. We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land the Woiwurrung Wurrundjeri and Boonwurrung people of the Kulin Nation on whose unceded land we live and work. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

Cass Lynch

Cass Lynch is a writer and researcher living on Whadjuk Noongar Country. She has recently completed a Creative Writing PhD that explores deep memory features of the Noongar oral storytelling tradition; in particular stories that reference the last ice age and the rise in sea level that followed it. She is a descendant of the Noongar people and a student of the Noongar language. She is the co-founder of Woylie Fest, an all-Aboriginal culture-sharing and literature festival, and through the associated Woylie Project she facilitates bringing Noongar stories into print. Her Noongar language haikus, published in *West-erly 64.1*, won the 2019 Patricia Hackett Prize. Her audio storytelling works have been featured at Perth Festival, Arts House Melbourne, Cool Change Contemporary, and PICA. Links to her poems, essays and short pieces can be found at casslynch.com. Her short story 'Split', a creative impression of deep time Perth, can be found in the UQP publication *Flock: First Nations Stories Then and Now*.

Mei Swan Lim

Mei Swan Lim is a practising sound designer and visual artist whose work centres on the environmental, emotional and spiritual importance of place, inter-cultural investigation and storytelling. She is also an electronic musician who has been performing and writing under the name Mei Saraswati since 2010.

GHOST TUNES CD

COLOPHON

01 - Sae Aye	Quinie (Josie Vallely)
02 - Milaythina Tunapri (Country Remembers) 1	Theresa Sainty
03 - Tìr nam beinn Guyana	Cass Ezeji
04 - Extractions 1	Madeleine Flynn & Tim Humphrey
05 - Birak 1	Cass Lynch & Mei Swan Lim
06 - Birak 2	Cass Lynch & Mei Swan Lim
07 - Birak 3	Cass Lynch & Mei Swan Lim
08 - Birak 4	Cass Lynch & Mei Swan Lim
09 - Bones	Cass Ezeji
10 - Extractions 2	Madeleine Flynn & Tim Humphrey
11 - Milaythina Tunapri (Country Remembers) 2	Theresa Sainty
12 - Psalm 139	Cass Ezeji
13 - Ee-ow Eh Kui	Mei Swan Lim
14 - Hungry Ghosts	Mei Swan Lim
15 - Extractions 3	Madeleine Flynn & Tim Humphrey
16 - Son of the Poor Man	Cass Ezeji
17 - Extractions 4	Madeleine Flynn & Tim Humphrey
18 - Milaythina Tunapri (Country Remembers) 3	Theresa Sainty

* * *

Ghost Tunes is a collection of sound and song created in collaboration between Australian artists Madeleine Flynn, Tim Humphrey, Cass Lynch & Mei Swan Lim and Scottish artists Cass Ezeji & Josie Vallely. Brought together to explore their overlapping interests in language, landscape and culture, they collaborated over the course of a year and developed pieces which explore the physical world as cultural swales and swirls around language, time and ecologies.

Mastered by Oli Barret.
CD production by John Garrad/ Akcentmedia
Released April 2022 as part of Counterflows Festival
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Credits (in order of track listing)

Cass Ezeji credits: Tìr nam beinn Guyana is an adaptation of the traditional Gaelic love song 'An tèid thu leam a Mhàiri?' by Iseabail NicAsgaill. My rewritten lyrics make reference to the colonial past of the Gàidhealtachd and reimagines the circumstances between the two protagonists.

Madeleine & Tim Credits: Lee Morgan & Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation, Joseph Norster and Millie Cattlin from The Quarry, Gadubanud Country. Thor Macintyre Burnie and Professor Raoul Mulder for their insights into human impacts on bird song. Live on-site ambisonic recordings of

Moog Sub-phatty, Trumpet, Birds, Frogs and other creatures. Theresa Sainty credits: Recorded during a session in January 2021. Writer and director Theresa Sainty, vocalist Daisy Allan, Producer Alison Wilkes and recording engineer Jack McLaine. Commissioned by MONA FOMA for relay/country remembers her name with Madeleine Flynn and Tim Humphrey. Theresa Sainty Writer/director Daisy Allan Vocalist Jack McLaine Recording engineer

Sae aye: With thanks to Arnold De Boer and Stevie Jones.

Cass & Mei: Audio interview snippets by Lola McDowell and Richard McDowell. Printed interview snippets by Noel Nannup, Lola McDowell and Richard McDowell. Poem performed in Noongar and English by Cass Lynch. Soundscape, music and recordings by Mei Swan Lim.

Psalm 139 is from the sermons of the Free Church of Scotland, introduced to me by playwright Elspeth Turner. There are various versions of Psalm 139, including to the tune of Walsal which can be listened to on the Tobair an Dualchais online archives.

Mei: Poem performed by Li Cheng Lim, translated by Hoc Hoe Tan.

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Copyright resides with the artists

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