ROBBIE JAMES

String Quintet No. 3

Dreaming in the Sand



BENTLEY STRING QUINTET

Live at New Benner Theatre

String Quintet No. 3: Dreaming in the Sand by Robbie James

I. **Dreaming in the Sand (part one)** 3′55″
II. **Kangaroo** 3′41″
III. **Ghost on the Beach** 4′15″
IV. **Kangaroo Rides the Desert Skies** 2′22″
V. **The Gentle Warrior** 2′22″
VI. **Suzannah Sails** 3′52″
VII. **Dance on the Divide** 4′17″
VIII. **The Crow and the Irishman** 3′22″
IX. **Dreaming in the Sand (part two)** 4′38″

Premiere performance recorded live at Restrung Festival, New Benner Theatre, Brisbane, Australia

Recorded by
Brett Cheney
Noise reduction by
Kieran Kenderessy
Mastered by
Geoff McGahan
Edited by
Robbie James
Cover art original painting:
String Quartet With Muses by
Geoffrey Stapleton

BENTLEY STRING QUINTET

Camille Barry – *Violin I*
Eugenie Costello-Shaw – *Violin II*
Charlotte Burbrook de Vere – *Viola*
Danielle Bentley – *Cello*
Chloe-Ann Williamson – *Bass*

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"Alas, there was only one performance of this inspiring work."
Rose Lane - Westender

For the displaced…

Pages flip in the wind
Stories end and begin…

James' third string quintet debuts with a raw emotive performance by Bentley String Quintet laying bare the essence of the composer's vision.

String Quintet No. 3: Dreaming in the Sand visualises the early stages of colonisation through a dream of a nation founded on inclusivity. This enduring dream continues to shape Australia today.

The piece opens with ***Dreaming in the Sand (part one)***, an ode to the Australian landscape, the ancient traditions and the ongoing aspiration for an unreservedly symbiotic relationship between two diverse cultures. The next movement mimics a day in the life of the ***Kangaroo*** until a pivotal moment at Kamay (Botany Bay) when James Cook's arrival in Australia is depicted as a ***Ghost on the Beach***. Following this epochal event, the ***Kangaroo Rides the Desert Skies*** as it embarks on a journey to the next world, symbolising the country's transition to a new era.

In this narrative, ***Suzannah Sails*** with the First Fleet to the southern land and develops a profound connection with an original inhabitant named Wadni, who awaits her arrival on the shore. Discovering his unique abilities, Suzannah came to describe him as ***The Gentle Warrior***. Their bond is expressed by the ***Dance on the Divide***, representing the joining of two disparate worlds and the quest for peace amidst conflict. This theme persists through to the next movement, ***The Crow and the Irishman***, which highlights fleeting moments of unity amidst discord, calling to mind the music the Irish convicts would play to remember the culture they left behind. The composition concludes with ***Dreaming in the Sand (part two)***, reaffirming the enduring nature of the dream and pays homage to the ancient Map of Songs that began the story of our nation thousands of generations before the coming of the ships.

This optimistic work is driven by the words that unite Suzannah and Wadni: *"If we can dream of a beautiful world made from two different cultures, then it must be possible."*

ROBBIE JAMES

"In an age of musical diversity, few Australian musicians can lay claim to Robbie James' multifaceted lineage."
Philip Pogson - Music Trust

Apart from his classical music, James has been Australian band GANGgajang's lead guitarist and one of their songwriters and producers since 1985. Their iconic song *Sounds of Then (This is Australia)* remains a cherished anthem resonating across generations, encapsulating the essence of Australian life. He was also a touring member of Yothu Yindi for several years from 2001. Yothu Yindi are the first band to put Aboriginal culture on the world stage. He was a key songwriter on Wendy Matthews' first two platinum selling albums for which she won two ARIA awards. He is also a member of Scattered People who are a group of local and asylum seeker musicians. James produced, co-wrote, and performed on their album *Sugarmill Road*, the subject of the 2021 documentary film *Scattered People*.

His solo albums portray the diversity and depth of his artistry. They include the pop album *Secrets in the Sand*, the guitar and voice jazz-pop album *24 Hours a Night* and his debut classical album *String Quintet No.4*, *The Marree Sisters*. It was this debut release through ABC Classic in 2022 that brought his classical music to a wider audience, confirming his place amongst notable Australian composers. In 2023 he became a represented composer at the Australian Music Centre.

"The Marree Sisters speaks directly to the listener. It is sincere, credible and well-crafted music that desaerves to be judged on its own terms."





DANIELLE BENTLEY

Award-winning cellist Dr Danielle Bentley specialises in Australian art music and is co-leader of indie-classical trailblazer Ensemble Sooon. Danielle was Australian Arts Fellow at Omi Music Residency New York (2018) & is a recipient of an APRA-AMCOS Art Music Award for Excellence. She works across multiple genres. Classical contexts include QSO, Auckland Philharmonia, Camerata and Paris Opera Ballet. She was a Director of art music ensemble Collusion for 7 years during which they produced several critically-acclaimed chamber ballets commissioned/performed over 40 Australian works and released three albums. Danielle has worked extensively in the commercial sector with over 100 international and Australian headliner artists. Bentley Strings has performed for Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh.

A portion of the proceeds from this album will be donated to Uncle Jimmy Thumbs Up! to help improve health outcomes for Indigenous Australians.