



INSIDE WAAPA

Western Australian
Academy of Performing Arts

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF PERFORMING ARTS, EDITH COWAN UNIVERSITY (ISSUE 43) MARCH 2016

NEVER STOP DREAMING

Page 6

Unmissable Art Song

Page 2

National teaching award for Tim White

Page 3

John Cleese visits WAAPA

Page 9





Unmissable Art Song

INTERNATIONALLY ACCLAIMED ARTISTS STAR IN ART SONG CONCERTS

From Saturday 2 July through to Sunday 10 July, WAAPA will host the annual International Art Song Academy, a week-long series of masterclasses in the training and performance of art song.

The Academy celebrates the performance of art song – poetry set to music, sung in a classical style – by bringing together internationally renowned practitioners with promising singers and pianists from around Australia.

This year the Academy will be led by two British experts in the field: acclaimed soprano Dame Felicity Lott and celebrated accompanist and coach par excellence Dr Graham Johnson OBE. In their 40-year partnership, Dame Felicity Lott and Dr Johnson have established themselves as the foremost English proponents of art song.

Dame Felicity Lott is one of Britain's best-loved sopranos, and has performed in the great opera houses and recital halls of the world. A noted exponent of French song, she has been awarded the title Officier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres and the Legion d'Honneur by the French Government. Among her many other honours, she was created a Dame Commander of the British Empire, has been awarded the Wigmore Hall Medal and, most recently, the 2016 International Classical Music Awards Lifetime Achievement Award.

Dr Johnson, a protégé of accompaniment doyens Gerald Moore and Geoffrey Parsons, has led a

distinguished career marked by frequent appearances in the great recital halls of the world, with many of the best international artists. His many accolades for his outstanding services to music include being conferred the rank of Chevalier de l'Ordre de Arts et des Lettres by the French government, and in Britain being awarded a Wigmore Hall Medal and an OBE.

Perth music lovers are invited to see this world-renowned pair in recital on Wednesday 6 July at 7.30pm in the beautiful surrounds of Perth's Government House Ballroom. In this benefit concert to raise funds for the WAAPA International Art Song Academy, Dame Felicity and Dr Johnson will take their audience on a journey through art song delights both exotic and well loved.

Then on Sunday 10 July, the Academy culminates in a Gala Concert at Government House Ballroom at 4pm. This afternoon concert will showcase performers from the week-long Academy, accompanied by Dr Johnson on piano. The German *Leider* will meet the French *Mélodie* as singers from around Australia perform the glorious music of Johannes Brahms, Franz Schubert, Gabriel Fauré and more.

Don't miss these wonderful concerts celebrating the best of art song – book your tickets now. For more information, go to www.waapa.ecu.edu.au/performances-and-events/performances/music



Dr Graham Johnson OBE



Dame Felicity Lott



Images of 2015 WAAPA International Art Song Academy Gala Concert performed at Government House Ballroom. Photos by Stephen Heath.

COMPOSER SCORES FACULTY MEDAL

On 30 January at ECU/WAAPA's graduation ceremony, highly respected Perth composer and jazz musician Dr Mace Francis was awarded the Faculty Research Medal.

This award is one of ECU's most prestigious research prize and is presented to a research higher degree, master or doctoral graduate who has completed a research thesis of the highest quality.

Dr Francis, who completed his Doctor of Philosophy degree last year and is a Lecturer in Jazz Arranging and Composition at WAAPA, says he is honoured to be acknowledged for his hard work.

"I didn't do very well academically at high school and was not strong at reading and writing, which is one of the reasons I was drawn to music," he says. "I worked hard at improving these skills over the last 15 years between my WAAPA undergraduate studies and my PhD. I'm really proud of myself to be able to turn some weaknesses into strengths and be awarded for it."

His thesis, entitled *Music in Site: Integrating Elements of Site-Specificity into Composition*, explores the way sounds reacting within a physical built space can provide inspiration for new music compositions.

Dr Francis says his research grew from an interest in composing music for the acoustic problems of performances rather than trying to resist them.

"The germ for the idea came about while my ensemble, the Mace Francis Orchestra, was performing at a large reverberant indoor concert venue," Dr Francis explains.

"The site proved less than ideal for live music performance as the sound bounced

repeatedly off the walls. While this was confusing and frustrating at the time, it did instigate interest in the possibilities of working with acoustic problems rather than trying to work against them."

Dr Francis used three urban spaces – a tunnel, a stairwell and a pedestrian bridge – as the inspiration for three original compositions, aptly named *Tunnel Listen*, *Stairwell to Fifteen* and *Traffic Rises*.

"Physical design features of spaces, not usually used for music performances, can become an integral part of new works that provide an important contribution to the possibilities of acoustic music," he says.

The Faculty Medal is the latest accolade for Dr Francis, whose recent MFO album *Music For Average Photography* won Jazz Work of the Year at the 2015 APRA/AMCOS Art Music Awards over luminaries Paul Grabowsky, Simon Barker and Daniel Susnjar.

MFO has recorded six CDs, toured nationally four times and performed with international artists Jim Pugh, Jon Gordon, John Hollenbeck, Satoko Fujii, Ed Partyka and Theo Bleckmann.

In addition to leading the 14-piece MFO, which celebrated its 10th anniversary last year, Dr Francis is Artistic Director of the WA Youth Jazz Orchestra. Since his appointment in 2008, he has implemented emerging composer commissions and guest artist programs.

For his compositions, Dr Francis has been awarded an APRA Professional Development Award, the Italian international composition prize *Scrivere in Jazz*, was a finalist in the 2010 Freedman Jazz Fellowship performing at the Sydney Opera House, and in 2013 was nominated for an Australian Bell Award.

He has worked as guest composer and conductor with l'Orchestra des Jeunes Jazzmen de Bourgogne in France, Graz Composers Ensemble in Austria and Showa University of Music Big Band in Japan.

Japan is also where Dr Francis is currently building a big automated wooden instrument powered by a water wheel. "It's a really fun project," says Dr Francis. "I have plans to build one in Perth later in the year."

When he's not composing, conducting, performing – or building huge wooden instruments – Dr Francis spends his spare time learning new musical instruments. "It keeps the music making and creating exciting for me."



TEACHING EXCELLENCE RECOGNISED



Tim White (right) receiving his award from Senator Simon Birmingham, Federal Minister for Education and Training.

At the end of last year, WAAPA percussion Senior Lecturer Tim White was named as one of the best university teachers in Australia in 2015.

Tim received his award for teaching excellence in the Humanities and Arts category from the Federal Minister for Education and Training, Simon Birmingham, at a gala awards ceremony at Parliament House in December.

The award recognises Tim for having created "a generation of outstanding young percussionists who have gone on to challenge the world."

The citation read: "His inclusive and nurturing teaching approaches have enabled him to achieve outstanding success in graduate employment outcomes, and his students have established stellar careers in the percussion world due to their exceptional abilities and musicianship."

"Tim has long been recognised at WAAPA for his exceptional teaching," says WAAPA Director, Professor Julie Warn. "He is a true inspiration to his students, graduates and colleagues and I am thrilled that he has been acknowledged nationally through receiving this prestigious award."

This latest award comes after ECU received its seventh straight five star rating for teaching quality in the Good Universities Guide in August last year.

ECU Vice-Chancellor Steve Chapman congratulated Tim on being named among the best teachers in Australia.

"It's great to see an ECU educator has yet again been recognised for excellence in teaching and I congratulate Tim on his award."

ACCLAIMED MUSICIAN JOINS WAAPA



Professor Geoffrey Lancaster AM joins WAAPA's Music Department this year, having been awarded one of WAAPA's prestigious professorial research appointments.

The Australian classical pianist and conductor has been at the forefront of the historically-informed performance practice movement for 40 years. He was the first Australian to win a major international keyboard competition, receiving First Prize in the 23rd Festival van Vlaanderen International Fortepiano Competition, Bruges.

In his highly distinguished career, Professor Lancaster has won numerous accolades including being ACT Australian of the Year in 2006 and receiving the Order of Australia for services to the Arts.

Professor Lancaster has appeared with all of Australia's major orchestras and the Australian Chamber Orchestra, and as soloist with many international orchestras and at festivals around the world.

He is Artistic Director of Ensemble of the Classic Era and a member of the Council of the Australian Youth Orchestra, and was Director of the Tasmanian Symphony Chamber Players, and Chief Conductor and Artistic Director of La Cetra Barockorchester Basel.

His more than 50 CDs have won such awards as the Gramophone Best Recording, ARIA Best Classical Album, Sounds Australian Award, and Soundscapes Editor's Choice.

Former Curator of Musical Instruments at the Powerhouse Museum, he was an Australian Artists Creative Fellow from 1992-1996. He was awarded the HC Coombs Creative Arts Fellowship by The Australian National University and joined the ANU School of Music faculty in

2000, where he was Head of Keyboard until 2010 and served on ANU's Academic Board. He received ANU Top Supervisor awards in 2009 and 2012.

As a master teacher of keyboard and historical performance practice, Professor Lancaster has taught at music schools around the world. He is an Honorary Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities, and a Fellow of the Australian College of Educators.

At the end of last year, ANU Press published Professor Lancaster's book *The First Fleet Piano: A Musician's View*. This book traces the fascinating history of the square piano that, on Sunday 13 May 1787, departed from Portsmouth, England on board the *Sirius*, the flagship of the First Fleet, bound for Botany Bay.

Professor Lancaster's book delves into the history of who owned the piano, who played it and what became of it after its arrival on antipodean soil. He skillfully weaves the stories of the individuals whose lives have been touched by the instrument into an account of the First Fleet piano's journey from England to the early colony at Sydney Cove through to its place in modern Australia.

"Two extant instruments contend for the title of First Fleet piano, but which of these made the epic journey to Botany Bay in 1787-88?" asks Professor Lancaster. "My book answers this question, and provides tantalising glimpses of the social and cultural life in Georgian England and at Sydney Cove."

Professor Lancaster's current projects include researching the late-18th century London-based piano-making firm Culliford, Rolfe and Barrow. A recent overseas trip to take detailed measurements and photographs of the

extant square pianos made by this firm took him to New Zealand, Washington DC, Boston, London and the Hague.

Professor Lancaster is also tracking down the extant spinets and harpsichords made by the man he describes as "the genius of the firm", Thomas Culliford – and digging up fascinating pieces of history along the way.

"Culliford's daughter married Charles Barrow," relates Professor Lancaster. "Eventually Culliford, Rolfe and Barrow went bankrupt, and Charles Barrow joined the Navy pay office. Charles Barrow's daughter Elizabeth married one of Charles' colleagues at the Navy pay office, John Dickens. Their second child was the author Charles Dickens. Charles Barrow embezzled money from the Navy, and fled English law to the Isle of Mann, where he lived a comfortable life as organist of St. George's church in the town of Douglas!"

In May, WAAPA audiences will see the results of another of Professor Lancaster's projects: the reconstruction of the music to Henry Purcell's famous opera, *Dido and Aeneas*.

Although the earliest surviving libretto for this poignant tale of ill-fated lovers dates from 1689, sections of the music have been lost. By sensitively reconstructing the music, Lancaster has restored the masterpiece to its original dimensions.

Opening on 2 May, *Dido and Aeneas* will be performed by the Classical Vocal, Music and Dance students under the direction of Glenda Linscott, with music direction by Professor Geoffrey Lancaster and choreography by Andries Weidemann.

Photos from left: Professor Geoffrey Lancaster AM; covers of his 2 volume book, *The First Fleet Piano: A Musician's View*; the First Fleet piano

A STAR IS BORN

SINGER/SONGWRITER KARIN PAGE HAS WON COUNTRY MUSIC'S MOST PRESTIGIOUS NATIONAL AWARD

After competing against 10 other finalists, including fellow WAAPA graduate Kate Hindle, Perth singer/songwriter Karin Page took out the prestigious Star Maker Award at this year's Tamworth Country Music Festival in January.

The 2010 Contemporary Music graduate was presented with the Star Maker award by previous winner and country music star, Lee Kernaghan. In addition to Kernaghan, the legacy of Star Maker boasts a roll call of winners that includes the likes of Keith Urban, James Blundell, Beccy Cole, Darren Coggan and last year's winner, Mickey Pye, in its 37-year history.

Star Maker aims to help establish an up-and-coming performer as a professional artist. The prize package includes recording, releasing and promoting an EP (three new singles) and a series of festival and performance dates around Australia, as well as performances at the country music festival in Nashville, US, in June.

Karin also receives a Toyota supplied by the sponsors with a 12-month unlimited fuel card to get her from gig to gig, a brand new Maton guitar and many other prizes.

Here Karin talks to *Inside WAAPA* about her win and the ups-and-downs of touring:

IW: Some incredible musicians have won the Toyota Star Maker title in the past. What does it mean to you to win this award?

KP: This is a huge step forward for my career. What I had hoped to achieve in the next 3 to 5 years is being fast-tracked and will now definitely be achievable in the next 12 months. Knowing that I can record and tour without funding it all on my own for a change is a huge help. Having such a wonderful team of people to work on my music goals with me is also a dream

come true. It's really tough trying to do it all on your own so having that support is invaluable.

IW: You've recently toured around Australia for 18 months with your two-piece act, China Doll. What did you enjoy most about that?

KP: There were so many highlights of the tour, but using my music to connect with all kinds of people, both young and old and from all walks of life, was pretty special. We also took time out to explore our beautiful country and this is something that I think more people should do...so much time and money is spent searching for 'paradise' overseas, and yet it's right here on our doorstep. For instance, the Kimberley region in WA was one of the most beautiful and spiritual places we visited and playing some shows there was a truly magical experience.

IW: What did you enjoy least?

KP: Not having our own shower or toilet! Eighteen months of random toilet stops and public amenities definitely became testing at times.

IW: You're about to move to the East Coast. Where will you be based?

KP: My partner [guitarist Adam Nyeholt] and I will be basing ourselves between Perth and Byron Bay, but realistically I'm not sure how much time we will actually be spending in either place, as the touring schedule for the next 12 months is pretty hectic.

IW: What did you love most about being at WAAPA?

KP: Being inspired and learning from all the amazing lecturers. My singing teachers, Sue Kingham and Victoria Newton, helped me so much with my vocals and I am forever grateful for my time working with them.



Photo by Qin Ding

NEW FANFARE CELEBRATES 25 YEARS

Edith Cowan University's graduation ceremonies in January this year were distinguished by a new fanfare written by Perth composer and WAAPA graduate Rebecca Erin Smith.

Commissioned as part of the university's 25th anniversary celebrations, Rebecca's idea for her composition *Vision's Vault* was selected from a shortlist of WAAPA music graduates.

Rebecca says the composition process began by brainstorming through piano improvisation using a few key images.

"I liked the idea of education being forward-looking, a sort of bridge to a better future and something that broadens your understanding of the world. It's almost like a vast web that encompasses us; hence the title *Vision's Vault*," Rebecca explains.

"Perhaps that sounds a bit grandiose, but then again, what is a fanfare but a little grandiose and resplendent," she says.

It was a piano teacher in high school who first ignited the spark in Rebecca to study music composition at university and write her own pieces.

"Studying composition was a great meeting place for all my musical interests. It gave me a means to explore performance from a different angle and to direct my curiosity for instruments I didn't play and how they interact," Rebecca says.

"Most importantly it gave me the opportunity to collaborate with other disciplines like theatre and dance, both of which played a big part in my upbringing."

Rebecca graduated from WAAPA with Honours in 2012. She was awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to study at the Manhattan School of Music where she recently graduated with a Masters of Music and was also awarded the Nicolas Flagello Award for most outstanding composition graduate.

She has worked in a compositional capacity with the Manhattan School of Music Symphony Orchestra, Western Australian Symphony Orchestra, WA Youth Orchestras, Australian Youth Orchestra, and LINK Dance Company as well as new music ensembles in USA and Australia.

Karin Page with Lee Kernaghan, photo courtesy of Toyota



NEVER STOP DREAMING

MAKING THE MOST OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY IS THE KEY TO KARLA HART'S SUCCESS

Where the arts are concerned, Karla Hart is a woman who is happy to give anything a go. She has worked as an actor, singer, dancer, radio announcer, writer, director, producer, film maker, teacher and festival director – her 'can-do' attitude has given her career an incredible richness of diversity.

"I just take every opportunity that comes my way," the dynamic 37-year-old says. "I haven't ever thought 'oh I can't do that'. I never, ever think that I can't do something and I take every opportunity to learn as much as I can."

The awards Karla has garnered over the years attest to the versatility of her artistic achievements. She has won a 2009 NAIDOC Artist of the Year Perth award; a 2011 National DEADLY Community Broadcaster of the Year award; a Fringe Festival Perth 2013 WA Emerging Artist award; a Writer/Director Magic Quandong award for Best Short Film Factual at the 2014 WA Screen Awards; was voted Best Supporting Actress at the 2015 Performing Arts WA Awards for her role in Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company's production of *King Hit*; Best Indigenous Filmmaker for West End Film Festival Brisbane 2015; and was nominated for a 2015 WA Screen Award for Best Short Film Factual for *Sharing Caring*, which she wrote and directed.

Karla graduated from WAAPA's Aboriginal Theatre course in 2005.

"Being at WAAPA really inspired me, it is such a special place," she says. "I learnt a lot from that course and it gave me really great direction to think about what I wanted to do. The work that [Aboriginal Theatre Course Co-ordinator] Rick Brayford does there is invaluable. He's so supportive, even now he's still there at the end of the phone line for advice and support."

At the start of this year, Karla added a Bachelor of Contemporary Arts majoring in Contemporary Performance from Edith Cowan University to her academic qualifications.

In the decade in between, she has turned her hand to numerous projects, yet at the core of all her artistic undertakings is her passion for her culture.

"I feel like it's my responsibility in the arts to not only tell my stories but to tell my people's stories as well."

Karla was raised by her grandmother in the town of Gnowangerup in WA's Great Southern region.

"My grandmother had a hard life, as Aboriginal men and women did in those times. She had her children stolen from her, she wasn't allowed in school, she couldn't read or write English but she was fluent in Noongar language and was a very cultured woman. So I learnt a lot from her."



Karla Hart performing traditional dance.
Photo by Lawrence Hillary Photography

Karla always knew she wanted to be a performer. As a child, she would make her cousins and friends perform in dance shows with her.

"Now, when I'm singing and dancing Noongar songs, I'm putting my paint on, I'm teaching other women – it's soul food for me, it makes me feel grounded and connected to my people and my community."

Karla's love of dance has led her to manage and perform with the Noongar women's dance group Kwarbah Djookian since 2007. The group performs regularly at events, festivals and in schools throughout WA, and has toured to China. Karla has represented her Noongar people in dance twice in the USA in 2012 and 2014. Karla also teaches traditional and contemporary dance and dreamtime story creation to school students.

This year in February, Karla recorded a traditional song and was the female dance leader in *Home*, the spectacular festival opening for the Perth International Arts Festival that drew an audience of 30,000 people.

At last year's PIAF, Karla performed for Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company – of which she is also a proud board member – as part of the French street theatre company Royal De Luxe's epic outdoor entertainment, *The Incredible and Phenomenal Journey of The Giants to the Streets of Perth*. Karla composed a song in Noongar that she sang to the 'little girl' Giant twice a day during the three-day event, which attracted up to 1 million people.

"It was so special to see all those people come out for art," says Karla. "Just the wonder of it. Just seeing people jam-packed in the city,

there were people up in the buildings, kids on parents' shoulders... the look of wonder on people's faces at these puppets was so beautiful."

For the past four years, Karla has worked on the other side of the festival process as co-ordinator of the City of Fremantle's Wardarnji Festival. Last year she successfully changed the format of the event to a two-hour evening corroboree that celebrated Noongar dance, making the festival one-of-a-kind in Perth.

Karla also loves telling stories. She worked for two and a half years as a drive time presenter for Noongar Radio 100.9FM, during which time she introduced the first Noongar language program to the station. She has dabbled in performance poetry, reaching the state finals of the Australian Poetry Slam competition. Karla writes scripts for theatre and film. Her newest script *Toolly* was accepted into the prestigious Yellamundie Festival in Sydney and was developed and read at CarriageWorks in August 2015.

"I usually write characters that I can act so that was weird to see other actors reading the script!" Karla laughs. "I love acting but you can't expect to continually get work as an actor, so if you have the talent to apply yourself to different art practices, then you should."

True to her word, Karla has recently ventured into the world of film, directing eight documentaries, six of which she wrote. Her current project sees her take on the roles of co-executive producer and shooter/director on the new six-episode documentary series *The Rules*, commissioned by Screen Australia, NITV and ScreenWest. *The Rules* will be screened on SBS early next year.

"Even now I'm still learning," Karla says. "I'm being taught to shoot in this series, and I never thought I'd be carrying a camera around, learning about angles... I never thought I'd be doing that but I didn't say 'no' either. I knew it would only further my career and give me another skill so I always just think, 'why not?'"

The Rules will keep Karla busy for most of this year. Yet because she loves to juggle multiple projects, Karla has returned to Noongar Radio to do a volunteer fortnightly show called *The Arts with Hart*. And in between her filming commitments, she thinks she might write a novel.

"I often think back to when I was lying in my room in my grandmother's house dreaming of travelling and performing and sometimes I have to pinch myself and go, 'gee that little girl from Gnowangerup has come a long way'."

"But I never stop dreaming and thinking what can I do next!"

SMALL SCREEN STORIES



Photo by Vince Valitutti



Photo courtesy Nine Network

ACTING GRADUATES ENJOY STARRING ROLES ON THE SMALL SCREEN

Two graduates from WAAPA's Acting course lit up Australia's small screens in February.

Geraldine Hakewill starred alongside Rebecca Gibney in Channel 7's drama series *Wanted* while on Channel 9, Camilla Ah Kin played matriarch Mariam Habib in the new comedy series, *Here Come the Habibs*.

Wanted is a six-part series that tells the story of two women Chelsea (Hakewill) and Lola (Gibney) who are on the run from authorities after a fatal carjacking. The cast also included Steve Peacocke, Nicholas Bell and Ryan Corr.

Shot over 10 weeks in 60 locations, *Wanted* was Geraldine's first big television gig. She describes it as a giant road trip that was a huge learning experience.

"I loved how fast it moved because it meant that I had to flex all my acting muscles and get good at dropping into different states very quickly."

Geraldine credits her time at WAAPA as being a perfect training ground for this demanding way of working.

"What has stayed with me is the immense variety of ways we were given to tap into a character or to explore a text," she says. "I now have the capacity to think so laterally – whether it's through animal work, vocal and accent shifts or even martial arts – and this means I can make far more interesting choices. The teachers encouraged us to keep being curious and to never stop inquiring and I think that has served me well."

Since graduating in 2008, Geraldine has excelled in theatre work. She made her main stage debut in 2011's *Baal* at Sydney Theatre Company. She was then directed by Andrew Upton in *Fury* and played Cecile in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* with what she describes as a

'dream cast' of Hugo Weaving, Pamela Rabe and Justine Clarke. She played Wendy in Belvoir Theatre's production of *Peter Pan* which toured to New York, and was a standout in Bell Shakespeare's *Tartuffe*. In February Geraldine performed with the Darlinghurst Theatre Company in *The Pride* by Alexi Kaye Campbell.

Geraldine has roles in two movies being released later this year. The first is a magic-realism romantic drama called *The Pretend One* that was shot on a cotton farm in western Queensland. Geraldine plays the female lead role, a young woman who grows up with an imaginary friend. The second is the true-crime drama, *Joe Cinque's Consolation*, based on Helen Garner's book of the same name. Currently she is shooting the second series of the ABC comedy, *Soulmates*.

Camilla Ah Kin, who graduated from WAAPA in 1989, has created a versatile career as an actor, teacher, director, producer and dramaturg. Three years after WAAPA, she was awarded a French cultural scholarship to study at L'ecole Internationale du Theatre Jacques Lecoq in Paris.

Since then, Camilla has appeared in productions for numerous companies including Bell Shakespeare, Belvoir, Sydney Theatre Company, Melbourne Theatre Company, WA Theatre Company, Ensemble Theatre and Griffin.

She also completed an MA (Research) thesis at the University of Sydney on the metaphor of family in theatre, *A Chance Gathering of Strays: The Australian Theatre Family*.

Most recently, Camilla appeared as Lois Caleo in the 2015 Australian film, *Holding the Man*, directed by Neil Armfield.

In a recent interview, Camilla said that working on the six part series *Here Come the Habibs* was "a joy".

"One of the reasons I was really happy to be in the show is because the writers very cleverly set the stereotypes up and then subverted them through the whole series," she said.

"They are a beautiful, warm, kooky, funny Lebanese family and hopefully audiences will have either lived next door to them or would want to live next door to them..."



Clockwise from top: Geraldine Hakewill and Rebecca Gibney in *'Wanted'*; Camilla Ah Kin and Michael Denkha in *'Here Come the Habibs'*; Camilla Ah Kin; Geraldine Hakewill.

GUITAR JOURNEYS

A DECADE AFTER LEAVING WAAPA, CLASSICAL GUITARIST DUNCAN GARDINER HAS MANY STRINGS TO HIS FLOURISHING MUSICAL CAREER

Since March 2011, when Japan was devastated by an earthquake/tsunami disaster, a Perth musical duo has been performing regular charity concerts for the Japanese Red Cross.

Five years later, classical guitarist Duncan Gardiner and pianist Setsu Masuda – better known as mimi duo – travelled to Japan to perform as guest artists at the official 5th Anniversary Memorial Concert for the victims of the disaster, held on 11 and 12 March.

Mimi duo presented the Japanese premiere of Duncan's original composition, *A thousand cranes beat their wings*.

"I started writing it the very night of the disaster," says the 2006 Classical Music graduate. "It started as an improvised piece and I recorded it on my phone."

Chancing upon the unfinished composition when going through his old recordings, Duncan decided to develop it into a piece for mimi duo – which loosely translates in Japanese as 'to listen' as well as being a word for 'friends'.

In addition to their performance at the Memorial Concert, another highlight of mimi

duo's 13-concert tour of Japan was a concert at the famed Gendai Guitar salon, Japan's premiere performance space for classical guitarists.

Duncan recently released his fourth album of original compositions, *Falling Like Tears*. Written for mimi duo, Duncan's inspiration for the CD came from the book *The Rose, the Butterfly, the Bee and the Moth* by indigenous author and playwright, Jane Harrison, with illustrations by artist Jo Darvall.

Duncan also performs in the ensembles Duo Caliente with flautist Rebecca Guy, and the Perth Guitar Quartet with fellow WAAPA graduates Melissa Fitzgerald, Chris Kotchie and Jameson Feakes.

His trio Fiddlesticks, with Duncan on guitar, Pascale Whiting on violin and Sophie Curtis on cello, has been part of the Musica Viva in Schools program since 2012. In May this year Fiddlesticks will tour to Hong Kong for three weeks, followed by stints in Melbourne and the remote WA Kimberley region.

"We anticipate giving 120 school shows this year. It's crazy but fun doing three shows a day," laughs Duncan.

As a composer, Duncan has had his work performed at the Sydney Opera House, the Sydney Conservatorium and Perth Concert Hall. His most recent commission by Rossmoyne Senior High School will see his new large-scale work for orchestra and choir, *Lost Lakes*, premiered in Perth in April. The piece will then be performed across Italy in 2016 as part of the school's international music tour. Three more of Duncan's compositions are slated to premiere in Perth later this year.

Most recently, Duncan has been invited to play guitar with the Western Australian Opera and the WA Symphony Orchestra in Iain Grandage's opera *The Riders*, which opens on 13 April at His Majesty's Theatre.

While it may have been a decade since Duncan studied at WAAPA, he still believes his time there was 'a dream come true'.

"It's such an inspiring place to be as an artist, surrounded by other artists. At WAAPA you're totally immersed in the arts. You live and eat and breath music all day, every day and you grow and develop so much. It was invaluable to me."



Photo by Gregory Paul Photography



HAVE FELLOWSHIP, WILL TRAVEL

In December last year, 2010 Acting graduate Claire Lovering was one of eight young Australian theatre artists to be awarded a Mike Walsh Fellowship.

The award of \$8,000 that Claire received for the fellowship will go towards flights, course fees and accommodation for a five-week Chekhov Intensive Summer Course at the Stella Adler Studio of Acting in New York this July.

For the last 20 years, the Mike Walsh Fellowships have afforded young arts practitioners the opportunity to enhance their skills and progress professionally within the local industry.

Awarded to graduates of NIDA, WAAPA or the VCA, the fellowships aim to give the recipients the opportunity to travel abroad to gain a wider knowledge and experience of theatre.

Claire Lovering graduated from WAAPA in 2010, winning both the Leslie Anderson Award for Most Outstanding Acting Showcase and the Sally Burton Award for Best Female Performance of a Classical Text.

She made her professional theatre debut in Tim Winton's first play, *Rising Water* for the Black Swan Theatre Company and the Melbourne Theatre Company, for which she received a Best Newcomer nomination at the WA Equity Guild Awards. For BSTC, she has also starred in the premiere of David Williamson's *Managing Carmen* (a Queensland Theatre Company co-production), *The Damned* and *Day One, A Hotel, Evening*. In 2013, she played Elaine Robinson in the national tour of *The Graduate*, starring Jerry Hall.

Following a sold-out Sydney season, Claire toured her self-penned, one-woman show *River* to the 2015 Perth and Adelaide Fringe Festivals, where it won the Adelaide Fringe Weekly Award for Best Theatre. Most recently Claire won the inaugural Spectrum Now Blue Rooms Series Award for most promising emerging theatre talent. Claire has also performed with Darlinghurst Theatre Company, ATYP and Sport for Jove.

Claire's screen credits include the web series *Event Zero*, Network 10's popular television series *Wonderland*, and the 2015 film *San Andreas*, starring Dwayne Johnson.

Claire will next be seen in the ABC comedy pilot, *The Let Down*.

For more information on the Mike Walsh Fellowship, please visit www.mikewalsh.com.au/fellowships/



CONNECTING THE MOVES

DANCE GRADUATES TAKE OUT FRINGE FESTIVAL AWARDS

At the end of February, the month-long Perth Fringe Festival wound up in style with an evening of awards celebrating the best of the festival.

The 2016 Fringe World Award for Dance and Physical Theatre was awarded to *Awkward Connections*, a double bill of original contemporary dance pieces that was created, produced and performed by WAAPA graduates.

Rikki Bremner and Trihedral Sector – a working partnership between Sarah Chaffey, Scott Elstermann and Ezgi Gungor – were responsible

for creating the show, producing it through crowd-funding, marketing it and performing it.

“It was such an overwhelming moment when we found out we had won the award,” says Rikki Brenner. “It truly was reassuring that we were doing the right thing at this point in our careers and that we were able to create an experience that was both memorable and enjoyable for our audiences.”

Rikki choreographed the work *How to Connect* and performed it with fellow graduates Scott Elstermann, Natalie Kolobaric and Russell

Thorpe; Trihedral Sector choreographed and performed *It's Getting Awkward*.

WAAPA graduates also featured in the production team, including composer Dane Yates and costume designer Lea Goodall for *It's Getting Awkward*.

“The entire experience was a true eye opener as we saw a whole new side to putting on a dance production,” says Rikki. “It was daunting but of course so rewarding to choreograph, produce and perform our own work with the amazing assistance given from The Blue Room Theatre and support from everyone, especially through our pozible crowd funding campaign.”

Another WAAPA graduate collaboration, *Brainchild*, won the WA Award for Dance and Physical Theatre. *Brainchild* featured choreography by Samantha Crameri-Miller and Cameron Lansdown-Goodman, with dancers Dominik Mall, May Greenberg and Robert Alejandro Tinning, and music by Shai Martin on one piece in the double bill.

Photo from left: Sarah Chaffey, Scott Elstermann, Ezgi Gungor and Rikki Bremner



On Thursday 10 March, students had the chance to peek into the unconscious mind of a comedy legend when John Cleese spoke to them about a topic close to his heart: creativity.

The *Monty Python* and *Fawlty Towers* star shared insights into his creative process with WAAPA and WA Screen Academy students at an event to celebrate ECU's 25th anniversary.

“Creativity is extraordinarily important, whether you are in the arts or in business. All creativity comes from the unconscious,” he said.

“There are some extremely intelligent people, much brighter than I am, but they're not creative, because if you're logical in your

thinking process, the result is not going to be creative.”

“To be creative you've got to create space. You need boundaries of space and boundaries of time, because if you're interrupted it's a disaster.

“You need to get yourself into a nice dreamy state, feeling nice and relaxed and calm, and then let your mind walk around the subject,” Mr Cleese said. “If you can do that, then ideas will come.”

Mr Cleese urged the students to be adventurous in their ideas. “Try new things, and start as soon as you can. The thing about writing is that it's hard to start and it's also hard to stop.”



Photos by Kathy Wheatley



From left: Costume student Larisha-Jane Taylor, volunteer knitter Val Ferguson and Design student Tyler Hill. Inset: Production photo of *Coriolanus*.



KNITTING TOGETHER

An unusual project happened in Perth over the summer months. A request from WAAPA went out to the Friends of the Academy and family members of WAAPA students for knitters to help make costumes for the March production of William Shakespeare's political tragedy, *Coriolanus*.

British actor and director Michael Jenn, supported by the Mindaroo Foundation, returned to WAAPA to direct the 3rd Year Acting students in Shakespeare's searing tale of political manipulation and revenge. The play centres on the legendary Roman general, Caius Marcius, who has been awarded the honorary title of *Coriolanus* for his heroic defence of Rome but whose arrogant pride leads to his downfall.

Design student Tyler Hill designed the *Coriolanus* costumes around Michael Jenn's brief to create a universal, non-period specific world for the play.

The challenge of creating the look of real chainmail for the costumes was solved when Tyler discovered that knitting wool with a garter stitch proved a comfortable, light-weight solution.

The eleven volunteers who offered their services – Margaret Adamson, Jeanne Mary Ashton, Carolyn Bye, Val Ferguson, Ruth Glick, Mary Anne Newsome, Celia O'Grady, Judy Paxman, Chris Trus, Valerie Waghorn and Dorothy Warren – knitted nine 'chainmail' tunics and headwear for the actors.

"After months of hard work all our keen knitters created high-quality sets of chainmail," says Tyler. "The chainmail was then dyed and art finished with silver paint

and foil by first and second year Costume and Design students."

When Friend of the Academy Celia O'Grady saw the call for knitters, she thought it was an intriguing request and was delighted to experience first-hand how the costumes for a theatre production are made.

"I was curious about the project," Celia says. "I enjoyed meeting the people from the costume/wardrobe departments of WAAPA and seeing the process of development, from idea to costume."

Val Ferguson, whose granddaughter Tiffany Blight was a 2015 WAAPA student, also signed up for the project.

"I love knitting and am always looking for things to knit, this was different and it felt good to help."

Like Celia, Val appreciated seeing the work behind the scenes. "I loved hearing about the production and seeing the sketches of the costumes, the students are very talented people."

WAAPA's Wardrobe Supervisor Cathryn Ashton says the efforts of the volunteer knitters were most appreciated.

"The costume department would like to thank the volunteer knitters who assisted with making chainmail for *Coriolanus*. This assistance has been invaluable in allowing us to realise Tyler Hill's costume designs to the highest possible standard."

Coriolanus, directed by Michael Jenn, was performed by the 3rd Year Acting students in WAAPA's Roundhouse Theatre in March.

GIVING SPIRIT

Wendy Court has been attending concerts and performances at WAAPA for more than 15 years and joined the Friends of the Academy over a decade ago. An avid arts lover, she enjoys supporting the students' shows and appreciates the vibrant atmosphere of the campus.

"The students are absolutely marvellous and extremely talented," Ms Court says. "They have a fantastic work ethic and wonderful energy which is most stimulating for the audience. The artistic backdrops, scenery and lighting are amazing."

"WAAPA produces wonderful entertainment at very reasonable prices."

In late 2013, Ms Court took her commitment to WAAPA even further by becoming a donor and arranging a bequest in her Will to provide a scholarship for a rural Classical music student.

"I believe in philanthropy and the whole idea of giving back to the community if one is able," she says. "I have always been an advocate of education, training the mind and the learning of strong values."

Ms Court grew up on a wheatbelt farm in a small town in rural WA. As a small child during World War II, she recalls the hardships of food rationing, limited water supplies, petrol shortages and no fresh vegetables.

"How brave were my parents," says Ms Court. "Somehow they cleared the land and created a farm. I will never forget the huge debt I owe them."

Given the difficulties of life on the land, Ms Court considers herself lucky to have come from a

musical family. Ms Court received 'spasmodic' violin lessons from a farmer friend of her father's before, at the age of 12, she was sent to Perth to board at Methodist Ladies' College. Here her musical interests were encouraged: she became a dedicated violinist and, through the initiatives of a progressive Headmaster, developed a passion for orchestral music.

It is this early love of music that underpins Ms Court's philanthropic spirit. She happily admits to having a favourite quote: 'Music washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life'.

WAAPA is extremely grateful to generous donors such as Ms Court for helping WAAPA retain its position as one of the world's top performing arts academies.

Specialist performing arts courses are expensive to teach so the support and involvement of the wider community is crucial to bolster Government funding.

Whether you are a graduate, a friend, family or a supporter, by giving to WAAPA you too have the opportunity to help WAAPA students achieve their artistic dreams.

You can give to WAAPA in a number of ways: as a one-off gift, a regular gift, a pledge or by making a bequest in your Will. Making a bequest is an uncomplicated way to help underpin the future growth and development of WAAPA and is a gift that will live on, providing long-term benefits for future generations.

For further information, please contact the Office of Development and Alumni Relations on 6304 2761 or email supportingwaapa@ecu.edu.au



From left: Masters student Madeleine Antoine, Wendy Court and WAAPA Head of Strings Alexandr Da Costa.

TURNING WATER INTO GOLD

A STAGE MANAGEMENT GRADUATE TURNS HER FINAL YEAR SECONDMENT INTO AN EXCITING JOB

Last September, in her final year of studies at WAAPA, Stage Management student Oriana Papa undertook a secondment with *The House of Dancing Water*.

What started out as six weeks of work experience for Oriana has turned into a full-time position as assistant stage manager.

"They needed someone to cover another assistant stage manager and I guess I was at the right place at the right time," says Oriana. "I showed the company that I would be a good addition to the team."

The House of Dancing Water, performed at the City of Dreams resort on the Cotai Strip in Macau, is the world's largest water-based show.

Created by award-winning producer Franco Dragone, the show opened in 2010 and since then has been performed over 1,000 times and seen by over 2 million spectators.

Described as "part *Singing in the Rain*, part Chinese folk tale, part synchronised swimming competition and part Evil Knievel stunt show", this truly unique production features over 80 gymnasts, circus artists, dancers, divers, actors and motorcyclists.

The performers work alongside 160 production staff, technicians and professional scuba divers from around the world.

"It is such a technical and large scale show that I knew if I got a chance to be here I could learn so much and better myself as a stage manager," says Oriana.

Oriana describes how, because the cast and crew hail from all parts of the world, a special closeness is created between them.

"The thing I love most about this company is how welcoming everyone here is. The people who you work with here become your family away from home."

This inclusive company attitude extends to allowing family and friends to be

backstage or sit in the control booth during shows. The company also takes in interns and students every year to further their educational studies.

Because of the size of the production, Oriana describes how the stage management department has six 'tracks' that run at every performance, which break down the complex backstage processes into workable components.

Being a multi-level performance, there are three tracks that deal solely with the lower levels backstage and one that operates on the higher levels. The lift track controls the backstage lift to make sure the artists get to the stage on time and are able to manage their quick changes. There is a track that has been created to show family and friends of company members backstage during a show. The final track is that of the show caller, who calls the cues for the show's technical elements from the control booth.

Working on a large-scale show means two performances a day plus stage training time. Oriana's daily schedule starts at midday when for two and a half hours the cast and crew practise acts from the show or the artists work on new tricks. This is followed by two shows at 5pm and 8pm.

"During my time here I have learnt so much, grown as a person and a stage manager and made a lot of life-long friends," says Oriana.

For more information on the backstage world of *The House of Dancing Water*, visit <https://www.instagram.com/calltopreset/>

Production photos from *The House of Dancing Water*.
Inset photo: Oriana Papa



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

A GLIMPSE OF WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING ON STAGE AT WAAPA



Three Sisters



The Drowsy Chaperone



A Midsummer Night's Dream



Coriolanus



Three Sisters



The Drowsy Chaperone

THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS



Government of Western Australia
Department of Training
and Workforce Development

Major Partner

KOSMIC

Supporting Partner

Allens & Linklaters

Instrument and Equipment Partners

YAMAHA

Concert & Corporate Productions

Media and Marketing Partners

Jon Green Photographer

303 MULLENLOWE

Hospitality Partner

DRIFTWOOD

Civic Partner

City of Stirling

Community Partner

City of Fremantle

Philanthropic Supporters

JACKMAN FURNESS

minderoo

Cover Credits

Front Cover

Karla Hart and Dr Richard Wally ORM

Photo by Laurence Hillary Photo graphy

Back Cover

Production photos by Jon Green Photographer



The Drowsy Chaperone



Three Sisters



Coriolanus



A Midsummer Night's Dream



Coriolanus