

programme notes:

- i. Warrior Spirit I
- ii. Songman Entrance
- iii. Bleached Bones
- iv. Warrior Spirit II
- v. Spirit of Kalkadunga

The history of the Kalkadunga people, based around what is now Mount Isa in Queensland, and European settlers is by no means a happy one. The Kalkadunga tribe were renowned as fierce and determined warriors. They maintained a 15 year guerilla campaign against the incoming pastoralists and colonial authorities. The unfortunate conclusion to this conflict took place in 1884 with the combined attack by the Queensland Police on the Kalkadungu tribe as retribution for the killing of a pastoralist and five troopers. As many as two hundred tribespeople were killed in this battle, and according to some accounts, the bleached bones of the dead could be seen lying on the ground up to fifty years later.

William Barton is a member of the Kalkadunga tribe. This composition is based upon a song written by William in his native language at age 15. The song was written when William was in the Kalkadunga country and was inspired by his culture and the landscape. It is concerned with the passing of culture from one generation to the next, as and such, forms the starting point for this work which aims to combine Australia's rich cultural heritage within a cultural context, as well as exploring the general subject of past, present and future songlines.

Kalkadungu is organized into a number of sections. The opening of the piece is entitled "Warrior Spirit I", and as such is characterised by a generally aggressive mood. There is much playing of the sections of the orchestra in rhythmic unison, combining perhaps like battalions of armed forces facing off in battle. The combined troopers' whistles signal an abrupt change to the second section, "Songman Entrance", which includes the recitation of William's original song upon which the entire work is based. This section concludes with a link to contemporary culture through a short electric guitar solo based upon the song, which is abruptly concluded to make way for the third section, "Bleached Bones". This section, featuring viola and cor anglais solos, is inspired by the vision of survivors of the Kalkadungu attack mourning for the loss of their kin, their tribe and their culture. The electric guitar again enters, creating a link with the present day in a more extended improvised solo passage - the contemporary descendent in commentary. "Warrior Spirit II" again evokes the legendary fierceness of the Kalkadunga people and the events of 1884, but this section is not as long as Warrior Spirit I: it is as if these events have now become a violent flashback. The drama of Warrior Spirit II prepares the entrance of the didgeridu, which is later joined in a primal duet with a bass drum in "Spirit of Kalkadunga". This extended section is continued by the orchestra to the work's conclusion in a manner that aims to reflect upon the relationship between Aboriginal and European cultural practice in contemporary Australia. The conclusion to *Kalkadungu* is not especially triumphant or grand - this would not be appropriate given the programmatic content of the work with its historical and contemporary cultures - but nonetheless paves the way for something of an optimistic outcome.

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