



MELBOURNE RECITAL CENTRE

Media Alert

Melbourne Recital Centre announces

MERLYN MYER

MUSIC COMMISSION 2019



Melbourne Recital Centre is delighted to announce the recipient of the Merlyn Myer Music Commission 2019: Yorta Yorta woman, soprano, composer and educator Deborah Cheetham AO. The Merlyn Myer Music Commission was initiated to celebrate the work of Australian female composers in collaboration with Melbourne Recital Centre.

Deborah's new work, the product of the commission, will receive its world premiere on 27 May 2019 when it is performed by award-winning contemporary music group Syzygy Ensemble. The Centre's Director of Programming, Marshall McGuire, says, 'Melbourne Recital Centre is delighted to be able to support outstanding creative talent, and we congratulate Deborah Cheetham on being selected as the 2019 recipient of the Merlyn Myer Music Commission, generously funded by The Aranday Foundation and The Yulgilbar Foundation. Deborah is well known to audiences at Melbourne Recital Centre and is a renowned opera singer and advocate for young Indigenous musicians. We are so pleased to be able to support her talent as a composer and look forward enormously to seeing and hearing the results of her collaboration with Syzygy Ensemble. Deborah was selected from a competitive field and the selection panel felt that her proposed project was fresh and original, had a direct connection to Melbourne Recital Centre through its inspiration of the *Dulka Warngiid* tapestry, and offered an opportunity for her to showcase her skills and creativity in the course of her busy creative life. In our 10th Anniversary year in 2019, this commission speaks strongly to our contemporary Australian cultural life, bringing together Indigenous stories, multi-artform collaboration, national and international connections, and a strong connection between performers and composer.'



MELBOURNE RECITAL CENTRE

Media Alert

Deborah Cheetham explains her project: ‘The second level foyer of Melbourne Recital Centre holds one of Melbourne’s secret treasures - the magnificent *Dulka Warngiid* (Land of All) tapestry, and I will compose a work which speaks to this incredible work of art. The Australian Tapestry Workshop has nine tapestries on loan to Australian embassies around the world, each based on artworks by Indigenous Australian artists and I will visit each one over the next two years, composing a suite of nine pieces of music responding to the tapestries, their original designs and where they are currently displayed. The *Dulka Warngiid* tapestry will make the ideal companion piece to this suite of nine international works.’

About Deborah Cheetham AO

Deborah Cheetham, Yorta Yorta woman, soprano, composer and educator has been a leader and pioneer in the Australian arts landscape for more than 25 years. In the 2014 Queen’s Birthday Honours List, Deborah was appointed as an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO), for ‘distinguished service to the performing arts as an opera singer, composer and artistic director, to the development of Indigenous artists, and to innovation in performance’. In 2009, Deborah established Short Black Opera as a national not-for-profit opera company devoted to the development of Indigenous singers. The following year she produced the premiere of her first opera, *Pecan Summer*. This landmark work was Australia’s first Indigenous opera and has been a vehicle for the development of a new generation of Indigenous opera singers. *Pecan Summer* has now been performed in Mooroopna, Melbourne, Perth and Adelaide, and in 2016 became the first Indigenous opera to be presented at the Sydney Opera House. In March 2015 she was inducted onto the Honour Roll of Women in Victoria and in April 2018 received an Honorary Doctorate from the University of South Australia for her pioneering work and achievements in the music.

About the Dulka Warngiid Tapestry

In 2007, The Hugh Williamson Foundation commissioned the vibrant tapestry *Dulka Warngiid* for the Centre and the Victorian community. Based on a large-scale collaborative work by seven women artists from Bentinck Island and held by the National Gallery of Victoria, the painting represents the country of each woman in a combined work of vibrancy and deep meaning. The artists are based at Mornington Island Arts and Craft in the Gulf of Carpentaria. ‘We each painted our country area which was special for us. Our painting is all of our country. That’s what the title means - country, place, land - land of all.’

In 2019 Melbourne Recital Centre celebrates its 10th Anniversary that includes the commissioning of 10 new works supported by a generous group of donors. The Merlyn Myer Music Commission 2019 is funded by the Aranday Foundation and the Yulgilbar Foundation.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES:

Di Rolle

di@dirolle.com | 0419 001 068 | [Download media assets](#)

Melbourne Recital Centre
Cnr Southbank Blvd & Sturt St
Southbank VIC 3006

P 03 96992228
F 03 9207 2662
melbournerecital.com.au



MELBOURNE
RECITAL
CENTRE

