



Image: Paul Tadday

**AUSTRALIA**

**CAT HOPE**

# **SPEECHLESS**

**26 FEB – 3 MAR 2019**

**SUNSET HERITAGE PRECINCT**

**A PERTH FESTIVAL CO-COMMISSION  
WORLD PREMIERE**

Produced by Tura New Music

**PERTH FESTIVAL**

Founder



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Image: Paul Tadday  
Pictured are the hands of the four soloists, Tara Tiba, Sage Pbbbt, Judith Dodsworth & Karina Utomo.

# SPEECHLESS

## SUNSET HERITAGE PRECINCT

**Tue 26 Feb – Sun 3 Mar 8pm**  
**Duration 70mins**

**Post Show Panel Discussion**  
Tue 26 Feb 9.10pm  
**Post Show Conversation**  
Sat 2 Mar 9.10pm

**Wheelchair accessible**

**Please note:** Contains smoke or haze effects, strobe lighting and loud sounds

Commissioned by Tura New Music and Perth Festival

In 2019 Perth Festival presents seven world premieres of daring new work by Western Australian companies co-commissioned by the Festival and proudly stamped **MADE IN WA.**

We invite our audience and visitors from across the country and around the world to our Festival city to discover the brilliant work being made here in Western Australia.



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**Artistic Director** Wendy Martin  
**Executive Director** Nathan Bennett  
**Perth Festival Board Chair** John Barrington

*Perth Festival and Tura New Music acknowledge that our events take place on the lands of the Noongar people.*

## LOOKING FOR SOMETHING TO DO AFTER THE SHOW?

Wind up or down and grab a drink and bite to eat with artists, friends and strangers at the onsite Sunset bar or one of our Festival hubs.

**CHEVRON GARDENS**  
**at Elizabeth Quay**  
Kick back under the stars to enjoy late-night DJ tunes Thursday–Sunday.

**BAR UNDERGROUND**  
Venture down below at the State Theatre Centre and slide into the late-night world of Perth Festival open every night until late.

# CREDITS

## An Opera

**Composed & Devised by** Cat Hope

**Soloists** Judith Dodsworth, Karina Utomo, Tara Tiba, Sage Pbbbt

**With** Australian Bass Orchestra & Decibel New Music Ensemble

**Cello** Tristen Parr, Anna Sarcich, Miranda Murray-Yong, Stephanie Jeffries, Cameron Wright

**Double Bass** Phil Waldren, Sarah Claire, Ebony Lim, Djuna Lee, Joshua Cusack

**Electric Bass** Leon Ewing, Theo Bird

**Bass Flute** Kirstin Smith, Emily Clements

**Bass Clarinet** Oliver Crofts, Eljo Agenbach, Shoshana Rosenberg

**Contra Bass Clarinet** Lindsay Vickery

**Contra Bassoon** Stephanie Sheridan

**Euphonium** Natalie Mandry, Cameron Harries

**Bass Trombone** Rob Coleman, Ewan Potter

**Tuba** Steven Harmer, Wafi Zainal

**Drums** Tina Havelock Stevens

**Percussion** Louise Devenish, Carissa Soares

**Harp** Catherine Ashley

**Piano** Gabriella Smart

**Electronics** Stuart James

**Soloist Understudies** Caitlin Cassidy & Rachel Singer

**Musical Director** Aaron Wyatt

**Assistant Director** Rakini Devi

**Sound Designer** Guy Smith

**Lighting Designer/Scenography** Matthew Adey

**Lighting Design realised by** Andre Vanderwert

**Costume Designer** Alex McQuire

**Hair & Makeup Consultant** Steph Elkington

**Produced by** Tura New Music

**Producer** Annalisa Oxenburgh (Tura New Music)

**Production Management** Tracey Shaw, Tristen Parr, Guy Smith

**Stage Manager** Sue Fenty Studham

**Deputy Stage Manager** Laura Boynes

**Production Assistant/Lighting Board Operator** Ben Nelson

**Set Construction** Tahlia Cole & Tessa Laing

The post show panel discussion on Tue 26 Feb includes Cat Hope, social justice lawyer Melissa Parke and Amnesty International Regional Campaign Organiser for My New Neighbour Claire Birch

## Acknowledgments

The 2017 workshop of *Speechless*, produced by Tura New Music, was held in Port Adelaide with the support of Development Partner Vitalstatistix.

Enormous thanks to Wendy Martin, Anna Reece, Jessica Darlow, Stephen Bevis, Georgia Malone, Fiona Smith, Ellie Murray-Yong, Andi Lawson-Moore and all at Perth Festival; Dan Little, Jasmine Romeo, Joanne Vinci and Paul Vallerius; Deborah May, Sally Richardson, Alice Hui Sheng Chang, Kusum Normoyle, Jazmine Hope-Scuderi, Dan Thorpe, Emma Webb and the team at Vitalstatistix for the 2017 Adelaide workshop; Amanda Morrison, Roslyn, and Komixx Perth office; Ella McNeill and the Minderoo Foundation; Becky Chilcott and Betty Richards at Chil3; Nimrod at Kazoomies; Vanya at Cullen Wines; Megan Salmon; Paul Tadday, Peter Baker, Karl Ockelford.

*Speechless* will be supporting the following charities during the Perth Festival season:

Amnesty International



[action.amnesty.org.au/donate](http://action.amnesty.org.au/donate)

We call out injustice, wherever it happens, and work together with people just like you to stand for human dignity- we believe that together, we can create a world where the most basic human rights are enjoyed by all

The Centre for Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Detainees (CARAD)



[givenow.com.au/caradappeal](http://givenow.com.au/caradappeal)

The Centre for Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Detainees (CARAD) is an independent, not-for-profit organization that represents a community of people who support the rights of asylum seekers, refugees and detainees in Western Australia.



## Tura New Music

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Tura thanks the following for their support of this production: The Bux Foundation, Melissa Parke and Warwick Hemsley.

And the At the Heart donors, helping to put women at the heart of Tura's programming: Irene Lawson and Brendan Kissane, Feilman Foundation, Katrina Chisholm, Zelinda Bafle, Mariana Atkins, Ros de Souza, Helen Rusak, Elizabeth Fong, Emily Green-Armytage, Anonymous.

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Tura's Annual Program and *Speechless* are supported by the State Government through the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries, in association with Lotterywest and The Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding advisory body.

Tura acknowledges the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts at Edith Cowan University, CCA Productions, Elite Audio Visual Productions, One20 Productions, and Audio Technik.

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## **Tura New Music**

Established by founder and artistic director Tos Mahoney in 1987 as a producer and champion of new music and the sonic arts, Tura New Music is a multi-award-winning Australian arts organisation.

With its expansive range of city-based and regional programs, Tura works with both high profile and emerging artists to ignite the disruptor in music through artistic risk and discovery. Tura is not about the conventional or the expected, but rather what can be born from nurturing daring and embracing boldness.

Due to the diversity of its programs, in designing them, Tura provides an arena for the constant development of globally significant artworks that reflect Australia's energy, diversity and sense of place. In doing this, Tura creates an essential pipeline for Australian new music and the sonic arts.

Tura paves the way for exceptional and curious encounters with unique sound worlds.



# A NOTE FROM THE COMPOSER

I have been concerned about what processes our elected Australian government apply to asylum seekers coming to Australia, the attitudes they have toward Indigenous communities, the apparent disregard for the equality of women and those suffering domestic violence. These are groups who, as a result of being spoken for by others, are left without a voice in the decisions affecting their lives. I started to question what I could possibly do, as an artist, in the face of these issues. I believe music can be a conduit for contemplating difficult subjects, responding to them in a different way than a news report, overcoming the communication limits and barriers of words or the cold realism of a photograph.

Opera is a large-scale, multimedia yet music-based form that has proven a historically successful medium for transmitting stories throughout history. I believe it can represent the stories of my time too, in a way that is poignant and relevant to us today, using musical materials familiar to most of us. Whilst I have retained the humanist dilemma at the core of opera – and its framework of overture, arias, recitatives, interludes and music driven action – I have applied them to a more diverse range of musical and performative approaches more familiar to my own practice.

Witnessing the politicised response to the Human Rights Commission's 2014 report 'The Forgotten Children: National Inquiry into Children in Immigration Detention' inspired me to use it as a libretto for my opera about voicelessness. But rather than setting the words in the 315-pages to music, as one would normally do in an opera, I extracted source material from the report to create a graphic score. I copied and manipulated colour schemes, drawings, tables, photographs and even the graphic design of the report to create the score, leaving the

singers without words. In this way, the score provides both the libretto and music score simultaneously. The musicians, and as a consequence, the audience, re-read this report through my adaptation of it into music.

The colour scheme of the set and costumes is drawn from drawings in the report, and the directorial approach references migration, government facilities and formalities, adapted possessions, historical turning points and the seeking of objects for comfort, contrasted with an installation based approach to scenography.

I was keen to write the opera for the Australian Bass Orchestra, who only play notes in the low end of the sound spectrum. Low frequency sound is quite unique when isolated from other frequency ranges – it has a warmth and depth that can be felt in the body, creating a physical response to the music for the listener, strengthening engagement with the thematic material.

Members of the local community are involved in each performance, so that their own voices become part of the work. The orchestra is made up of musicians from Perth and surrounds. A Noongar man is the music director. Engaging vocalists and local community choirs with radically different stylistic practices give the opera a contemporary sound. There are short moments where the performers improvise freely, offering them an opportunity to highlight their own musical language.

Music's power is in the abstract. It is not my intention to speak on behalf of anyone – rather, I have used music to describe my personal response to one of the great humanitarian crises of Australia today.

**Cat Hope**

# BIOGRAPHIES

**Cat Hope**  
**Composer & Director**



Cat Hope is a composer, performer, songwriter, noise artist and researcher. Her work as the artistic director of Decibel led to her being awarded the APRA/AMC Award for Excellence in Experimental Music in 2011 and 2014. She has been a resident at the Peggy Glanville Hicks composers house, as well as at Civitella Ranieri and the Visby International Centre for Composers. She is also a Churchill Fellow. Her work has been discussed in books such as *Loading the Silence* (Kouvaris, 2013), *Women of Note* (Appleby, 2012), *Sounding Postmodernism* (Bennett, 2011) as well as periodicals such as *The Wire*, *Limelight*, *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* *Shaft* and *Gramophone Magazine*, who called her 'one of Australia's most exciting and individual creative voices'. Her monograph CD on Swiss label Hat Hut won the German Record Critics prize in 2017. An advocate for Australian music and gender diversity, she is also the co-author of *Digital Art – An Introduction to New Media* (Bloomsbury) and Professor of Music at Monash University.

**Karina Utomo**  
**Soloist**



Indonesian born Karina Utomo is the vocalist for Australian metal band High Tension, with members Matt Weston (The Nation Blue), Lauren Hammel (Tropical F\* Storm) and Mike Deslandes (YLVA). High Tension's critically acclaimed releases have been nominated for ARIA and AIR awards for Best Heavy Album and received *The Age* Music Victoria Award. High Tension has toured with Refused, Sick Of It All, The Bronx and performed at Laneway, Splendour in the Grass, Download and Dark Mofo festivals. Utomo is a regular fill-in host on Triple J's metal program 'The Racket' and hosts a regular monthly segment.

**Judith Dodsworth**  
**Soloist**



Judith Dodsworth has come to be regarded as one of Australia's finest interpreters of contemporary vocal repertoire. A graduate of the Australian National University and the Australian National Academy Of Music she has a Masters degree in performance from the University Of Melbourne and has studied in Vienna and London, including with legendary new music soprano Jane Manning.

## **Tara Tiba**

### **Soloist**



Tara Tiba is one of Australia's most distinctive and significant musical voices. Born in Iran and based in Western Australia since 2012, Tiba has been acclaimed as an expatriate trailblazer for her extraordinary voice and repertoire that fuses traditional Persian singing with jazz, latin, contemporary and experimental music. Prohibited from performing in public as a female singer Tiba released her debut album, *A Persian Dream*, in Australia in 2014. Since then she has toured extensively internationally with shows including at New York's The MET, National Auditorium of Madrid and the 2016 Perth Festival opening event *Home and Siren Song* in 2018.

## **Sage Pbbbt**

### **Soloist**



Sage Pbbbt's singing practice takes inspiration from Tuvan and Mongolian overtone singing, Inuit throat singing, sound poetry and her ongoing exploration of extra-normal vocal techniques. She also draws on industrial musick, trance, and drone; insight meditation practice, urban/industrial shamanism and chaos magick; feminist, queer and trans praxis; and Discordianism. She has performed both as a soloist and in various bands and collaborations for over 17 years.

## **Australian Bass Orchestra**

The Australian Bass Orchestra was founded by Cat Hope in 2014. It is a scratch orchestra that comes together from the city where the performance occurs and follows a single manifesto, that states: 'The Australian Bass Orchestra is a group of bass range instrumentalists from any instrumental group or family that perform scores written for the group. There may be any number of instruments from a minimum of 15. No pitch above middle C (or 262Hz) should be played by the orchestra. Instruments can be established, invented, electronic or acoustic'. Highlight performances have been at the Perth Institute of Contemporary Arts and the Now Now Festival (NSW) in 2014.

## **Decibel New Music Ensemble**

Founded in Western Australia in 2009, Decibel are world leaders in the integration of acoustic instruments and electronics, the interpretation of graphic notations and pioneering digital score formats for composition and performance. Decibel have commissioned over 70 new works since their foundation in 2009, have toured Europe, Japan and Australia, recorded for ABC Classic FM and SWR German Radio, and released five albums to date on Australian and international labels. The ensemble has developed and commercialised the Decibel ScorePlayer iPad App, a score reading program incorporating mobile score formats and networked coordination of performance environments, used in the opera. Decibel are Cat Hope (artistic director, flutes, bass), Lindsay Vickery (reeds), Stuart James (electronics, keyboards), Aaron Wyatt (viola), Tristen Parr (cello) and Louise Devenish (percussion).

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## SUPPORT FOR MADE IN WA

Sunset, Le Nor, Speechless & Desert River Sea have been supported by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body; and the Government of Western Australia through the Department of Local Government, Sport and Cultural Industries. Desert River Sea has also been supported by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and the Royalties for Regions program. Sunset has also been supported by City of Perth.

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Adrian and Michela Fini

## PATRON EDUCATION

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