



Notre Dame
Nulungu
Talking Heads
Seminar Series

A New Partnership, William Roe, 1994

Making Junba good in the Kimberley:

Applied (ethnomusicological) research and its discontents

Wednesday 10th July 2019

Venue: UNDA NDB11-101

12:30pm – 1:30pm

Presenters: Sally Treloyn, Johnny Divilli & Rona Charles

Abstract

In 2007 the Junba Project was conceived of by elder Ngarinyin practitioners of the Junba dance-song genre in the northcentral Kimberley in conversation with ethnomusicologist Sally Treloyn, in response to a decline in youth participation and concerns for youth social and emotional wellbeing. Elder song man and composer Scotty Nyalgodi Martin declaimed “Without culture we will all be lost”, referring not just to members of his own community but to all Australians and indeed humanity in general. Since that time the Junba Project, in partnership with elder and youth leaders, the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre, Kimberley Language Resource Centre, Mowanjum Art and Culture Centre, and various other community organisations, has sought to identify and develop community-led approaches to sustainability and musico-cultural resilience. Guided by a participatory research model, the project has emphasised an approach to collaboration marked by participation across generations of practitioners, and reiteration and collaborative reflection, with an aim to identify strategies to sustain endangered Junba dance-song practices in changing twentieth and twenty-first century environments.

Research has revealed an improvement in the vitality markers of Junba from 2012 and the present. These positive impacts can be largely attributed to long-term collaboration between researchers and community and repatriation, a tool for reparation, social justice, knowledge production, and revitalisation. However, this work operates in shadows of loss, trauma and injustice. Indeed, any return is predicated by something being stolen. As such,



intercultural ethnomusicological research in Australia has the potential to awaken and perpetuate passive violence. In this talk, we recount the processes and outcomes of the Junba Project. We provide a model for song revitalisation and look upon an applied ethnomusicology as an opportunity for wurnan, difference, and dialogue in the repatriation and reparation process as we try to make Junba good.

Biographies

Rona Charles

Rona Googninda Charles (Ngarinyin and Nyikina) is a cultural officer at Winun Ngari Resource Centre in the Kimberley, Western Australia, and has held key roles as cultural consultant and mentor at the Wilinggin Aboriginal Corporation and Mowanjum Art and Culture Centre. Charles has collaborated with Treloyn since 2008 on the Junba Project and has published and presented widely on intercultural collaboration and community-based strategies for cultural maintenance in Australia and Canada.

Johnny Divilli

John Nyunjuma Divilli (Ngarinyin and Nyikina) is a youth leader, dancer and emerging singer in the Junba tradition, learning from elder Matthew Dembal Martin and his father the great composer Scotty Nyalgodi Martin. Divilli has presented at conferences and universities in the USA, Canada, Perth and Melbourne, on youth experiences of and perspectives on cultural maintenance research.

Sally Treloyn

Sally Treloyn is an Australian Research Council Future Fellow and Co-Director of the Research Unit for Indigenous Arts and Cultures in the Faculty of Fine Arts and Music at The University of Melbourne. Treloyn has conducted research with practitioners of Junba in the west and northcentral Kimberley since 1999, collaboratively documenting the Junba tradition and developing community-based strategies to support its vitality across generations. Treloyn's current research, in the Kimberley, west Pilbara, southeasters Australia, and Uganda, focuses on the ethics of repatriation and digital environments of Indigenous song.