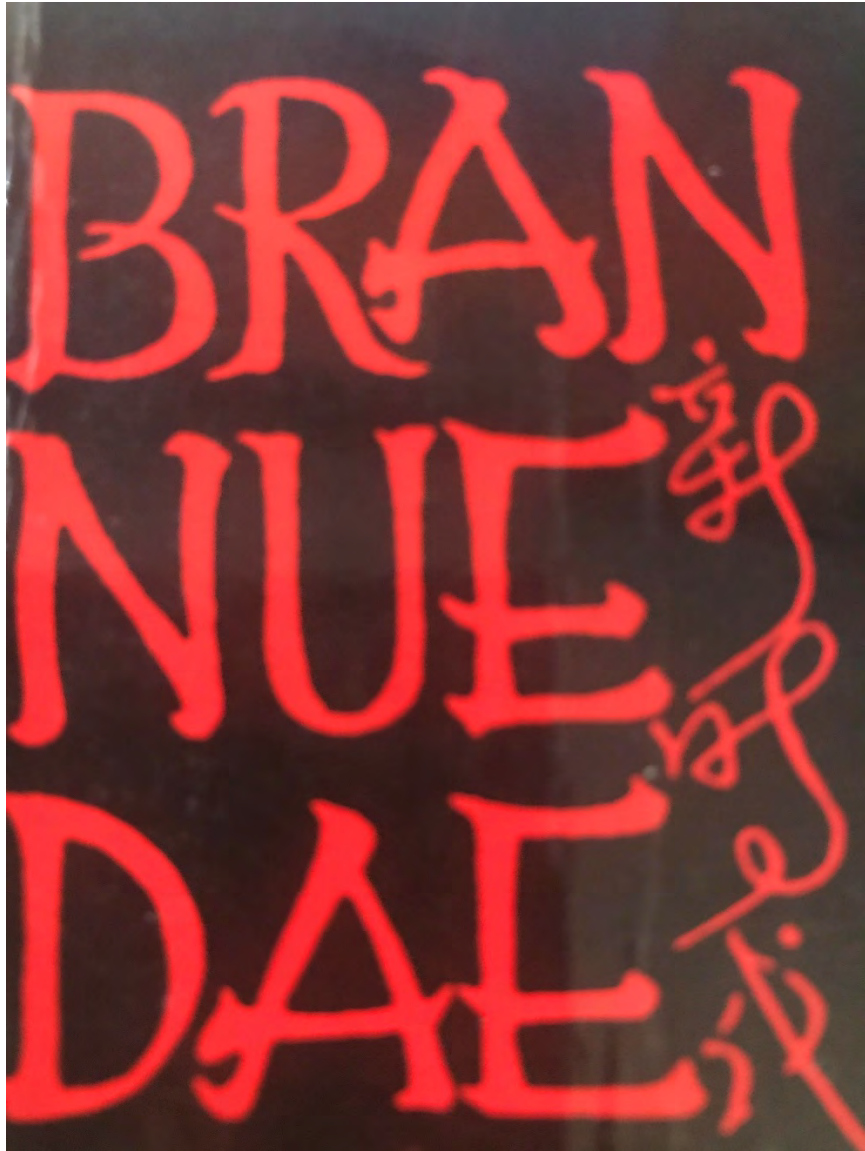


# Milliya Rumara:

Reflections and Homage, 30 Years On



Peter Botsman March 2020

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For Kevin Fong, the one true Mayor of Broome and Ronnie Rowe and Anne St and all the  
“*unacceptable coons*”

*"This is a story of how someone found his uncle and a whole lot besides."  
(Bibby 1991)*

"Bran Nue Dae" is kriol, pidgin spelling. There were so many different nationalities aboard the pearling luggers of late nineteenth and twentieth century Broome that a dialect had to emerge. Not only did a dialect emerge but so too did a unique cultural creativity that was busting at the seams to talk about justice, life and freedom. That is what is at the heart of Bran Neu Dae, perhaps Australia's greatest musical ever written to date.<sup>i</sup> (Wyllie Johnston and Wyllie Johnston 2019)

What must have Jimmy Chi been thinking when those words first came into his head? Did he spit them out in heavy Broome accent to his musical collaborators Michael Manolis, Stephen Pigram, Stephen "Baamba" Albert and the other members of the Kuckles band? What was driving his thoughts? An aboriginal, asiatic jumble of feelings, wading through a segregated hypocrisy, not fitting in, not wanting to fit in, seeking something better, not wanting to be disappointed once again:

*"Here I live in this tin shack  
Nothing here worth coming back  
To drunken fights and awful sights  
People drunk most every night  
On the way to a Bran Nue Dae  
Every body Every body say  
On the way to a Bran Nue Dae"<sup>ii</sup>*

These are far from optimistic or hopeful words. Was Jimmy thinking that the song and the play should be performed joyfully? Then the whole theme would be dipped in irony and sarcasm, like a dry Australian joke. Was that his intention? In 2020 have we failed to understand the deep irony and sarcasm? In the 1991 documentary made about the play<sup>iii</sup> there is some footage of Stephen Pigram and Jimmy Chi singing Bran Neu Dae with towns people near the sacred area of Kennedy Hill, they are full of anger and anguish. (Zubrycki, Chi et al.) Then the documentary turns to the Nookanbah protests about mining on sacred sites and Jimmy Chi talking about rigged ballots, unemployment and false hopes. Even now there is still so much feeling in those three simple kriol words Bran Neu Dae. (Stephenson 2005, Stephenson 2007)

It has been 30 years since the play was first performed and it truly is a brand new day for the town and region in which the play and the film is set but the rationale and passion remain. Jimmy Chi himself – the creative genius behind BND, a WA "Living Treasure" in 2004 and recipient of many distinguished awards<sup>iv</sup> - died tragically in Broome without adequate access to medical care in 2017. Other brilliant performers, members of the cast, like so many other Aboriginal Australians across the country, have also died way ahead of their time: Stephen "Baamba" Albert, Jojo Angus, Duncan Campbell, Sylvia Clarke, Lindsey Cox,

Syvanna Dolan, Bob Faggetter, Bob Juniper, Ningali Lawford Wolfe. Djunawong Stanley Mirindo and John Shananna. As Ernie Dingo said with deep sadness after the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary performance at the Riverside Theatre in Parramatta “so much remains the same”.(Dingo Jan 17 2020)

It's time to think deeply about Bran Neu Dae as a new generation of performers take up the mantle and make the show live again for new audiences. It is also about time that the greatest, not just, Aboriginal, but Australian musical theatre of our time is given its due. It is a show that deserves to be shown on Broadway in Beijing, Manila, Djakarta and Tokyo and in all of the world's cultural centres. That its quality is not well enough appreciated lies in the fact that Australia as a country still has a long, long way to go to give independence and self determination to the many, diverse nations of the oldest living culture on the planet. There is still irony in those words Bran Neu Dae as we contemplate the promises of treaties, Aboriginal land rights and social and economic self determination.

Where did Bran Nue Dae come from? How could it have been made? What were the thoughts in the mind of the creators? How did the marvellous music and song emerge? What gives the whole opus its magical and timeless qualities. Or maybe the most fundamental question about Bran Neu Dae is: Where could its originator Jimmy Chi, a man of Japanese, Chinese, Scottish and Aboriginal heritage, have been born and come to write the most successful Aboriginal theatre production of all time? Or more cogently: Where could this have possibly conceived and written in Australia? Answering these questions requires a deep dive into the azure waters of the North West and pondering the last hundred years of the red dirt life of Broome/Rubbibi and the Kimberley. One thing's for sure you can't really understand Bran Nue Dae until you have visited Broome and contemplated its multi-layered history and culture and in turn understood why the place and the people are so important for Australia, and the world.



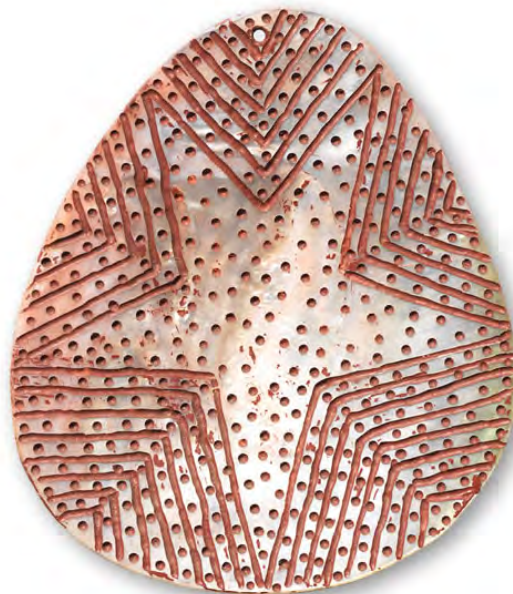
The joy of the music of Bran Neu Dae comes from something deep in the life force of Broome - the closest thing we could ever have had to an Australia without the white Australia policy. It is our New Orleans. It is our true melting pot. It was never perfect, never without its trials and problems but it is an inspiration for a future outward looking Australia. It is a guide for what life might be like without a narrow, European, colonising world view.

Every year over 300,000 people visit Broome, permanent population 15,000. Most come from southern Australian cities escaping the winter from April to October. A growing number of international visitors by-pass Melbourne and Sydney and come direct to Australia's North West. This year ***The New York Times*** placed Broome at number 5 on the 100 places to visit in the world. No other city, town or region in Australia made the cut.<sup>v</sup>

The visitors are a curse and a blessing. They bring with them potential prosperity but also great challenges in a long series of great challenges. Will the new Broome have its rich culture washed away by real estate investors and holiday makers? Some people argue that it already has. Will tourism be another extractive industry that rapes the country and leaves a series of problems behind for future generations to deal with? Understanding these challenges is the point of why Bran Neu Dae is important and why there should be a whole literature and scholarship about its themes and issues. These questions also resonate across the whole of Australia and the whole history of colonisation.

Broome has a jealous rivalry with the rest of the Kimberley region. There are many places like nearby Derby that are equally beautiful and alluring. But Broome holds a unique heritage in the history of Australia primarily because of pearl shell<sup>vi</sup>. Pearl shell was carved and traded for thousands of years within the network of Aboriginal communities from Port

Hedland in the South to Wyndham in the North West and across to the Torres Strait. Carved and tattooed<sup>vii</sup> it was traded to far flung places and ended up even as far away as Yorta Yorta country in Victoria. As colonial society began to place value on pearl shell Aboriginal people were enslaved to work in the industry. Aboriginal men and women were taken from inland and coastal communities like Beagle Bay and forced to dive for pearl shell.<sup>viii</sup> In 1871 the renowned Aboriginal women 'bare pelt' divers were banned from the industry and slavery was prohibited but demand for pearl shell boomed and the harsh cruelty within the industry did not diminish. Pearling in these early periods had a very destructive, detrimental effect on native peoples in Western Australia and in the Torres Strait that has never been fully documented or studied rigorously.<sup>ix</sup> By 1910 Broome was the largest pearling centre in the world and pearlers, divers and merchants from all over followed the revenue. From 1899-1961 54,958 tonnes of pearl shell was extracted from the ocean in the North West and processed in Broome.<sup>x</sup> For most of the twentieth century Europeans in Broome were a minority group although they held every ace in terms of citizenship, land title, economic ownership, and in effect, social dictatorship. Despite hardship and discrimination Japanese divers and merchants, Chinese traders, Koepanger, Malay, Filipino workers and many other nationalities including Indians, West Indians and Torres Strait Islanders were the major forces within the pearl shell industry. Of Broome's total pearl industry workforce of 67,797 from 1899-1961, 62,836 were from the Asiatic archipelago.<sup>xi</sup> (For more detail see appendices) During the roaring days between 1900 and 1920 Broome resembled a cosmopolitan Asian city like Singapore. Every attempt to 'whiten' the work force failed<sup>xii</sup> until after WWII when the cultured pearl industry emerged. While it was incredibly perilous and tough Jimmy Chi's grandparents' generation prevailed. The price was that over 900 Japanese, Chinese and other pearl divers are buried in Broome's famous and iconic cemetery. These were the strongest of people: "stand back you shallow water man, let a deep sea diver through".<sup>xiii</sup>



Aubry Tigan, Riiji, 2009, National Gallery of Australia

Broome defied the paranoia and parochialism of an Australian community fuelled by Laborism that sought white purity in the most vile eugenic sense of the word. The deep historical sentiments of a modern day zealot like Pauline Hanson were reflected in mainstream ideas of the 1890s and also the formation of the Australian Federated Nation. William Lane, first editor of **The Worker** wrote “Are the white men of Australia willing to permit their woman and children to be inoculated with loathsome diseases and polluted by the swarming hordes of Asia? Will the white people who are engaged in business pursuits without a protest suffer themselves to Javanese, Syrians, Chinese, or Japanese? Should all white people unite to save their race and civilisation from going down before black, brown and yellow invaders”.<sup>xiv</sup>

Against the greatest social Darwinist forces of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the strong nationalist feelings unleashed by WWII - when Broome and Darwin were both bombed by Japanese planes, a defiant, palpable true multi-culture formed in Broome that still exists and is strong. This was not a government ideology but a lived experience. European ideas, thinking and ways of doing were often seen to be irrelevant, second-rate, unfair or at best unconsciously ignorant. As Fong Sam’s (see above) great grandson, Kevin Fong puts it, people in Broome learned to think and speak in ten different ways.<sup>xv</sup> Broome was, and remains, truly cosmopolitan in a world of white flour and sugar. This is what Jimmy Chi and the Kuckles carried within when they wrote Bran Nue Dae. In a sense this was a “Town by the Bay” that had seen the whole panorama of world cultures. To add to all this it was a classical extractive industry town with booms and busts, huge opportunities and great losses and disappointments. Now with cultured pearls, the mature sustainable side of pearling has come to Broome. Pearling does not employ thousands, as it once did, but at its heart is a high value commodity that is an important source of income, knowledge and history. The multi-million dollar pearl industry owes so much to the workers and entrepreneurs of these earlier periods and this is why the the famous “liyan” (heart-felt feeling) of the town is celebrated each year in the Shinju Matsuri festival.

In all of this it is no accident that there was a deep fraternity within Broome between the communities of Asiatic origin and first nations communities. After all, there was a common enemy, namely the deeply racist Australian system of laws that did not recognise them as legitimate citizens and most importantly deemed them ineligible to do business, hold land, have bank accounts or to be legitimate members of civic life and government. Against all these things non-White people in Broome battled for many decades. Their struggle was an un-documented version of the US civil rights movement or the struggles of South Africa or of Ghandi’s fight against the British on the sub-continent. A fully fledged, locally based research project is badly needed on Broome and its place in Australian history. And that alone is one of the reasons why Bran Nue Dae itself is sometimes so under appreciated and misunderstood.





Aboriginal Housing, Broome, 1958

“The sun rises, wind blows, grass grows, the tide comes and goes. No-one can ever take your land” Paddy Djiagweenxvi

Aboriginal people and those of mixed race were at the bottom of the Broome hierarchy – living in tin shacks, not allowed to come into the main town. A fence, originally used to keep out cattle, segregated them, the “common gate” formally excluded aboriginal people from the municipality until 1967xvii. The segregated world of races was highly policed but Aboriginal people formed strong relationships with many different communities. Through the peak pearling years Broome was divided into Ambonese, Japanese, Manilamen (Filipinos), Chinese, Malay, Koepangers (West Timorese), Macassan, Indonesian, Polynesian and European sectors. In 1923 the “white residents of Broome” petitioned against any town lots being sold or leased to Asiatics, Aboriginals or half castes” otherwise coming generations would face “a difficult problem from ‘a moral standpoint and hygienic standpoint’ and would be “totally opposed to our ideas of a pure white race”xviii. But in Broome through the roaring years and up until WWII “Japtown” prevailed. Strange mixes of fortune occurred, the St John of God sisters from County Wexford via Subiaco were instructed to be self-sufficient by their Mother Superior. They survived thanks to Manilamen and the Japanese and Chinese communityxix. Broome was no place for the faint hearted. Resembling the 1921 race riots of Tulsa, Oklahoma in severity, in the lugger lay off periods of 1907, 1914 and 1921 serious war erupted between Japanese, Koepanger and other pearling crews and workers. Over the season resentments would arise particularly between



the elite Japanese divers and the other workers who cleaned and packed pearl shell and cooked its flesh. Peace treaties had to be drawn up and over 2000 men were involved in the fight of 1920 resulting in 4 deaths and hundreds of severe injuries. The white police chief died of shock and stress. xx All this was way outside the imagination of the rest of Australia, Broome had its own dynamics and stories that are still little known. Children in Broome were told blood curdling stories of these times at bed time, reminding them to behave themselves and keep out of troublexxi. After the decline of the wild and hectic pearl shell industry Broome began to revert to a regional Australian town, but nothing could change the heady mix of Broome's earliest heritage.

Nothing too could ever erase the aspirations of those, at the very bottom of the Broome hierarchy, the Aboriginal families living in the tin shacks outside the town. The culture stayed together. Great custodians of land and culture like Paddy Roe, Paddy Djagween, Albert Barunga and many others waited for the tide to turn, survived and left a lasting ancient legacy for future generations.

“...when the blacktop came that changed everything...”<sup>xxii</sup>

Tumultuous, terrible, crazy things happened in Broome and the Kimberley from the first contact with Europeans and particularly from the Federation of Australia until now. Diabolical mistakes still occur. But a lot of good things happened as well. Sometimes when you try to suppress something, stronger feelings of resistance rise up. The remembrance of death and suffering often manifests in future generations as extraordinary creativity and power. This was very much the case in Broome and part of BND’s magic stems from that resilience. <sup>xxiii</sup>

A remarkable generation came into adulthood in Broome during the 1960s and 1970s. It was as if they were fuelled and made by all that happened to their parents and grandparents. There were an older generation of extraordinary people such as Yai Hong Tai, Fong Sam, Phylis Bin Baker, Pearl Hamaguchi, Uncle Kiddo Taylor, Eric Pigram, Paddy Roe, Paddy Djiagween, Tom Wiggan to name just a few, from a unique history that remains to be written. But it was their offspring that was to be given opportunities and possibilities that they could never have dreamed of. The younger generation had to confront an ignorant and intolerant world and when the time came they took power with both hands. Leaders like Patrick Dodson, Mick Dodson, Jimmy Pike, Vanessa Poelina, Peter Yu, Maxine Chi, Mark Bin Baker, Sandy Dann, Anne Poelina, Kevin Puertollano, Jimmy Chi, Stephen Baamba Albert, Stephen and Alan Pigram and their family, Pat Torres, Michael Manolis, Kevin Fong and many others emerged. They were destined to make their mark in music, film, theatre, politics, law, culture, art, civil society and more. Broome based creativity understandably stood out and made a mark on the developing Australian Aboriginal polity. And when they entered the national and State stage other significant Aboriginal leaders also became part of the family. Ernie Dingo from Mullewa Western Australia had been known to many of the Broome mob at school. Baamba met Gary Foley in Melbourne and included Eddie Mabo and many others into his National Aboriginal Education Committee in Canberra. Dot West came to Broome So many connections were made.

Timing and a confluence of changing tides was everything. After the 1930s Broome came off the boil. During WWII the Japanese leaders of the pearl shell industry were either forbidden or interned.(Piper) In the 1950s plastic replaced pearl shell, pearls, not pearl shell, were starting to emerge as an industry. These developments changed the demography of Broome dramatically. (See Appendix) But the mark of the older generations could never be erased even after so many internees and indentured workers could never return. At the same time a generation of Aboriginal leaders was experiencing new freedoms and being exposed to the blandness and mediocrity of Australian institutions.

Broome’s “remarkable generation” were coming through mainstream school for the first time. I use the term remarkable advisedly because this group of young emerging leaders were required to move from the local, to the State and national and even to the international arena with very little preparation and they did so remarkably. In the past young people had to survive the notorious 1905 Native Welfare Act of AO Neville now they

had to survive the Christian Brothers of Clontarf and the Palotine Fathers and Brothers and schooling at other Southern boarding schools. In the same period big changes started to roll through the town in the 1960s. The Broome Beats played dances learning new songs and styles from the radio. Despite Western Australia casting the strongest no vote against recognising Aboriginal people as citizens, the quarantining of Aboriginal people as second-class citizens outside the town formally ended after the referendum of 1967. A lot of pain and suffering was caused by the denial of Aboriginal people from their own country but in reality they could never be denied or lose their land and more powerful than any administrative law was the overwhelming forces of nature that occurred when you had thousands of men working on luggers, working shift work for eight to twelve weeks at a time, unable to bring their own families to Australia. Associations had to form 'behind the common gate' and many of these "liaisons" were quite wonderful, supportive and transgressive of all of the narrow confines of White Australia.

But all this in itself was sometimes a huge burden to carry for the younger generation coming through.<sup>xxiv</sup>

The young leaders of Broome had lived with the traumas of colonisation but they were also empowered by a myriad of cultural learning from Aboriginal, Japanese, Chinese, Malay, Filipino step fathers and extended families. Broome was a segregated town but the dynamism of the racial inter-change was probably made more wondrous and powerful as a result. It was far more powerful than the Perth based European administrations could ever have imagined.

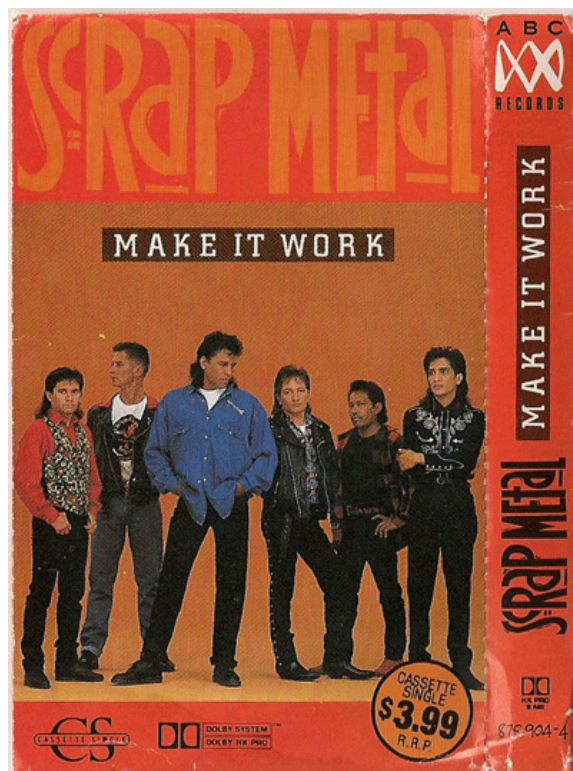
Stephen "Baamba" Albert and Jimmy Chi were school mates together at Rossmoyne, a Catholic hostel in Perth run by the Palotine. Their lives were to be inter-twined through good and bad times in remarkable ways that, now they are gone, we can only wonder at.

Jimmy was picked out as the 'Noel Pearson' of his day. He was the first of his family and community to attend university. He was dux of Aquinas College in Perth. High hopes and pressure, then a car accident in 1969 at the age of 21 that left him unconscious for three weeks, led him to discontinue university and come home. It was in this convalescent period that Jimmy gained consolation from music and the songs that were to become Bran Neu Dae began to form. Baamba and Jimmy, and their generation were living, walking manifestations of the feelings and complications of the Broome diaspora. They were meant to be "acceptable coons"<sup>xxv</sup> but they carried within them the hopes of a very different future. Jimmy was baptised by Father Ernest Ailred Worms, who in himself carried a kind of crazy mix of Christian mission and anthropological preservation and protection of the many languages and belief systems of Broome and the Kimberley.<sup>xxvi</sup>

Baamba was equally remarkable. Post 1967 Baamba and Jimmy Chi had benefited from the Aboriginal Secondary Scholarship Scheme and Aboriginal Study Grants that enabled them to complete their education in Perth. They were in the first wave of Aboriginal high school graduates. In the 1970s the seminal Aboriginal Consultative Group had recommended that "Aboriginal people should be involved in their own education at all levels" and that a national Aboriginal education voice be established. (Holt 2016) Baamba had by this time enrolled at the South Australian Institute of Technology and become involved in the

National Congress of Tertiary Students. When a position came up to chair a national Aboriginal Education Committee advising the Commonwealth government Baamba was judged by his peers as the most suitable for the job.

At the age of 27 Baamba found himself as the permanent chair of a major Commonwealth government committee which would profoundly influence the development of Aboriginal education over the 1970s and 1980s and beyond. (Holt 2016) p. 111 For those who knew him as a performer and musician in later life it was not really surprising that he brought a unique, unifying style to the work that connected to grass roots Aboriginal communities. It is hard to under-estimate the contribution of Baamba and his colleagues to the way in which Aboriginal students are now progressing through primary, secondary and tertiary education. It was a very rare time in which a majority Aboriginal government committee profoundly influenced the whole course of policy for some decades to come. (Holt 2016) Baamba, from Canberra, in his own unique way also enabled Jimmy Chi and the Kuckles to get the formal help at Adelaide's Centre for Aboriginal Music (CASM) that would allow Bran Neu Dae to emerge.<sup>xxvii</sup>, CASM was and is unique (Yengi Apr/ May 1982) and what gave expression to the formative music was the sudden change in Australian national politics that occurred with the Whitlam Revolution in 1972. Stephen told me that on the train going to Adelaide he and Jimmy and the Kuckles imagined themselves as the Beatles. It wasn't too far-fetched. Scrap Metal which included all of the future Kuckles was the first Aboriginal band to do an international tour outside of Australia<sup>xxviii</sup>. CASM was also the melting pot for Us Mob, No Fixed Address and Coloured Stone. Broome musicians were inspired by their musical heirs people like Mikey Mathews and "the boss of the harmonica"<sup>xxix</sup> Kiddo Taylor who had entertained the town since the 1920s. The Whitlam government provided funding for arts organisations and the vibrant musical culture in Broome began to shine, it was a unique time.



“Too many King Kongs not enough buildings to climb”<sup>xxx</sup> and “I hope you have left your paddles outside the room”<sup>xxxi</sup> are expressions from Broome style management and leadership. Bran Neu Dae, Australia’s greatest musical, was not a fluke. 26 unique songs, a highly entertaining and enthralling script emerged from a unique, disciplined collaboration. Always the Broome mob emphasised family and the team and they made their mark on the national stage as a result. Always they were prepared to listen and learn from others. The music and the theatre were part of a dynamic community building its own Aboriginal, poly-cultural enterprises.

Paddy Roe(Botsman 2011), like Albert Barunga(Dix 1993), and so many of the senior Aboriginal leaders of the Kimberley, saw into the future. These wise men aligned with anthropologists and started to document their heritage. Albert Barunga expressed the feeling of the times: “He’s getting a hiding, the Aboriginal is, and that’s why Aborigines suffer so much. He’s getting a terrible hiding, and sometimes he feels it would be better if you’d beat him with a whip, you’d finish him off. If only the white man would ask first and let the Aborigines know what he was doing then things would be alright.” (Dillon 1983) The 1967 referendum and the ending of segregation in towns like Broome were one thing but the thing that really mattered was the preservation of the cathedrals and churches of the land. Mining, urban development and greed threatened sacred places across Western Australia and the feelings of the old people and the new-found skills of the remarkable generation of Broome young leaders came together around Nookambah. (Rowse)

Jimmy Chi and Michael Manolis’s *Listen to the News* catches the fever of these tumultuous times and the hope that the rightful balance was going to be re-established. It was then, and is now, a big if:

*“Man of the gun  
Come shot up the sun  
And the girl and the child and the mother  
But the child is the sun and the sun is the child  
And the winds sing the song of the right and the wrong  
And scatters the tunes and the meaning  
And the passage of time just follows the line of the law of the land and the  
dreaming”<sup>xxxii</sup>*

This was a time of hope. The protest to stop the drilling of sacred hills at Nookambah galvanised the entire Kimberley region and the Kimberley Land Council was formed and there was a feeling of freedom in the passionate work of the remarkable generation of Broome leaders. (Hawke and Gallagher 1989)

It was also a time to stand up against the injustices that had been the norm in North Western Australia and around Australia. Micky Manolis’ Linjoo “Police” Blues is a seemingly light hearted song about being in gaol. Broome houses the regional gaol close to the main China town area. But like all the other songs in Bran Neu Dae it packs a punch. On the

journey home to Broome from Perth you have to pass through the town of Roebourne. On 28 September 1983 off duty policeman assaulted a young 16 year old Aboriginal boy John Pat and dragged him into a police vehicle. He and three Aboriginal men were severely beaten at the police lock up. John Pat's autopsy revealed "... a fractured skull, haemorrhage and swelling as well as bruising and tearing, of the brain. Pat had sustained a number of massive blows to the head. One bruise at the back of his head was the size of the palm of one's hand; another, above his right ear, was perhaps half that size. Five other bruises were visible on the right side of the head. In addition to the head injuries, he had two broken ribs and a torn aorta, the major blood vessel leading from the heart." (Grabosky 1989)

Following John Pat's violent death the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody was established by the Hawke Government to examine the deaths of 99 Aboriginal persons who had died in police custody and prison custody between the period of January 1980 and May 1989. Pat Dodson's job was to review the underlying issues giving rise to the deaths of Aboriginal people in custody in Western Australia he highlighted the systemic disadvantage and institutional racism that contributed to the disproportionate rates of imprisonment of Aboriginal people. It is an issue that has never gone away.(Dodson 2016)

The poly cultural spirit of Broome was reflected in the way a mix of community service organisations, semi-commercial enterprises, cultural organisations and economic development organisations were organically formed often way ahead of the recognition of the mainstream community. Many of these organisations were path breakers that other Aboriginal communities around Australia used as models. A renaissance of enterprise innovation began in the early 1970s<sup>xxxiii</sup>. Two of the three existing Kimberley focused organisations Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre (KALACC) and Kimberley Language Resource Centre (KLRC) were initially established and incubated in Broome at this time with Kimberley wide support. Similarly Broome Aboriginal Music Association/Goolarri Media Enterprises and Mamabulanjin Resource Agency became emblematic flag ships that incubated music, television, film, outstations with little formal support. For a time there was great optimism as Lord McAlpines Cable Beach Zoo went broke, Aboriginal enterprise began to rise in the ashes.

"There's nothing I would rather be..."<sup>xxxiv</sup> is Jimmy Chi's joyful expression of these times. The rules had changed. As Willy runs out of the door of Rossmoyne a whole new world emerges. Broome was very much a national leader in establishing Aboriginal owned and run enterprises and this feeling of self determination ran through everything from music to the development of Aboriginal enterprises..<sup>xxxv</sup>

## VII

*“Guitars and ukuleles, squeeze boxes and mandolins, tea chest bass and mouth organs.. these were the sounds I grew up with living in a two story corrugated iron shack on the highest hill in Broome in the 1950s” Baamba Baad, album notes, 2015*

Long after all memory of the specifics of the 1970s and 1980s are gone, the melodies and lyrics of the songs of Bran Neu Dae will live on. The play is subtitled “a musical journey” and the songs have their own pathway into the future. Where will they lead? Just as Bran Neu Dae deserves its scholarly history, so too does its music. (Lawe-Davies 1993) (Dunbar-Hall 2001) Books could be written about each song and song writer and musician. The links back to the poly cultural roots of Broome music are a musicologists dream. The way in which Mississippi John Hurt influenced Stephen Pigram’s guitar picking and in turn the way in which Alan Lomax search for the roots of the blues and folk music influenced Broome music are all rich areas for exploration, not to mention the pathways to traditional culture and song. These pathways back have only been partially walked. (Worms Dec 1950) (Benterrak, Muecke et al. 1984) And there is the whole history of Broome’s remarkable musical and cultural institutions such as Broome Aboriginal Musical Association(BAMA) the founders of Goolarri Media Enterprises that remain to be written. It is vital that this history be recorded. BAMA/Goolarri is the Australian equivalent to Stax records and much more. It is a foundation stone of Aboriginal radio, film and television.<sup>xxxvi</sup> As the funding cycle constricts and requires an ever more Canberra based bureaucratic formula the special qualities of these creative institutions should never be forgotten . There are histories of Aboriginal country music (Walker 2000) but something of the order of Joel Rudinow’s *Soul Music* could be written about Broome music alone. (Rudinow 2010)

The Broome style that complements the Torres Strait Islander songs of Seaman Dan, the Black Image band of Hopevale and the Walker family of Mossman, North Queensland has become a signature. Stephen and Alan Pigram and their family have taken the songs to new places, complemented them and built upon them. <sup>xxxvii</sup> Baamba’s *Baad*<sup>xxxviii</sup> recaptured the era of the *Broome Beats* and the new generation in the form of the *Little Piggies* released *Dreaming in Broome* in 1997.<sup>xxxix</sup> The genre is ever rich and expanding. Every year *The Taste of Broome* offers performers the chance to re-interpret and re-discover lost ideas and meanings. (Botsman 2013) The new cast members of the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary production have Bart Pigram in his father’s place leading the band and then there are the second and third generation members of the family. As Ernie Dingo has said of the new cast: ‘In the old days there was the musicians, the actors and the dancers. These young ones can do it all’. (Dingo Jan 17 2020)

There were 26 songs in the original productions of Bran Neu Dae and most are timeless. The lamentations of Bran Neu Dae are unforgettable treasures. So much of the lyrics from Jimmy Chi and Stephen Pigram are about longing for home. Baamba would talk about looking over the water seeing the pearl luggers go out to sea and then return eight weeks



later. It was a perpetual saga. But there was the sorrow of being far from home, of being at boarding school and the perpetual feeling of being an outsider in ones own land.

*"These lugger sails are moving to slowly"<sup>xi</sup>*

*"Light a light leave it in the window"<sup>xli</sup>*

*"I'm a long way away from my country"<sup>xlii</sup>*

*"Feel like going back home"<sup>xliii</sup>*

Then there are the love songs always with a backdrop of forbidden love. Love across the segregated divides gives us our West Side Story on a profound scale. There is a buried story that makes the love stories even more poignant. "Where were our Aboriginal warriors?" Stephen Pigram once pondered. "Did they all die in battles untold?" The fearless Broome matriarchs were left to bring up the next generations and to find a way through the cultural divides.

*"Why are you crying my pretty Colleen"<sup>xliv</sup>*

Then there are the songs that the sons have written to their mothers on behalf of their lost fathers.

*"Cos i love you, now I love you until,*

*The arrajina djarindjin hills*

*Arrajina ungarrabin goolil"<sup>xliv</sup>*

Stephen Pigram's Mimi is the ultimate love song to a grandmother from a grateful grandson torn from his culture but safe and somehow connected through stars, winds.

*"imajalajalan, imajalajalan ngaiyu".<sup>xlvi</sup>*

There is nothing like an all night Broome sing a long when there are songs like these, no one leaves. The songs written for homesick pearlers who find solace in the arms of a forbidden love.

*"I know, I know its hard for you,  
You know darling its hard for me too"*

*"Some day, some day we will have it all  
Because you know darling you make me stand tall"<sup>xlvi</sup>*

And then there are the songs that recall Broome's roaring days:

*"Is you mah baby, is you?"<sup>xlviii</sup>*

Then there is the sheer glory of love.

*"We will bask together in the after glow"*

And in the wee small hours everybody is searching for kuckles.

*"Poppa he looking for kuckle  
Poppa he looking all day  
Mumma bin say he got kuckle  
Poppa bin sing out hoo ray  
Gip me while you rip me  
Rip me when you gip me."<sup>xlix</sup>*

As the dawn comes up all the songs about land have been played.

*"Don't have no white picket fence, dont have no green English lawn  
Just got heat waves dancing for me, on the red dirt where I was born".<sup>l</sup>*

Maybe around mid afternoon someone will have been out for crabs in the mangroves and the music will start again. Perhaps the last words on the music should go to Shane Howard who co-produced *Saltwater Country* with Alan Pigram: "I never made an album before that was more dependent on the ebb and flow of the king tides and the salmon winds, rather than the deadlines imposed by a record company".<sup>li</sup> And maybe that is what in the end keeps us drawn over and over again to the songs of Bran Neu Dae and Broome, they have their own rhythms, they draw their styles from a rich poly-culture but ultimately they below with the stairway to the moon in Broome and the Kimberley and to truly experience their majesty means

## VIII

*“Now this fella longa Canberra, he been talking about a Bran Neu Dae – us people bin waiting for dijiwun for 200 years now. Don’t know how much longer we got to wait, and boy its makin me slack”. Tadpole, last scene, Bran Neu Dae.*

It is now a new era in Broome. It is far more mundane, and yet revolutionary than anyone could have comprehended in the 1970s and 1980s. Then purist ideological academics debated in highly esoteric language whether this or that Aboriginal band or musician or playwright or advocate was true to their cause and people. Bran Neu Dae was given the tick because it neither reduced Aboriginality to a one dimensional “essence” and allowed for a modern songline. (Makeham 1996) In fact Jimmy Chi’s use of the musical from West Side Story to Sound of Music was very pragmatic and it picked up the spirit of the future – a time when Aboriginal cultural life would be part of the mainstream. In a way that has happened in Broome and the Kimberley.

In April 2006 the *Yawuru* community comprising 1273 prescribed body corporate members won back native title ownership of 530,000 hectares in and around Rubibi/Broome. The claim area covers 5,298 sq km of country from Yardoogara (near Saddle Hill) in the south to Waterbank Station in the north. It also encompasses the Broome town site and the Roebuck Plains and Thangoo pastoral leases. Two thirds of the determination area is exclusive possession native title land.

The native title system is far from perfect and from the outset has been antagonistic to traditional first nations relationships or cultural laws, many of these things remain to be resolved. But the opportunity now exists for first nations groups to work in the main street of Australian communities not in the tin shacks segregated from the main commercial, cultural and social dimensions of regional life. The tide has turned. Now if you want to do business in regional north west Australia then your first point of call will increasingly be the offices of the prescribed body corporate offices of first nations representatives. They will be the major partners and investors in the key industries of the future.

Across the Kimberley other native title has been won in several regional areas including the *Balanggarra* (Wyndham area), *Bardi Jawi* (Dampier Peninsula), Bindunbur and Jabirr Jabirr/Ngumbarl (middle Dampier Peninsula), *Birriman-gan* (Crown land between the Yawuru (Rubibi), Nyikina Mangala and Karajarri determination areas), *Bunuba* (Fitzroy Valley areas including Leopold Downs pastoral lease, Fairfield pastoral lease, portions of other pastoral leases, small areas of reserve land and unallocated Crown land, and Windjana Gorge National Park and Tunnel Creek – the home of Aboriginal warrior Jandamarra), *Dambimangari* native title covers 27,932 sq km of country from King Sound, Camden Sound and Montgomery Reef across the islands of the Buccaneer Archipelago through to Hall Point and Horizontal Falls, *Giniyjawarni Yoowaniya Riwi* (GYR) which includes Gooniyandi, Kija and Gooniyandi/Kija identifying people covering approximately 2,212 sq km in the central Kimberley, *Gooniyandi* native title area covers 11,200 sq km of land and water and includes

the Indigenous-owned pastoral leases of Bohemia Downs, Mt Pierre and Louisa Downs, and portions of the non-Indigenous owned Christmas Creek, Gogo, Fossil Downs, Larrawa and Margaret River pastoral lease, the *Goorring* native title is still being determined in the East Kimberley, *Jaru* native title covers 23,591 sq km of country and includes exclusive possession native title in reserves held in trust by the Aboriginal Lands Trust, Lamboo pastoral lease, a number of Aboriginal-held leases over communities, and part of Carranya pastoral lease which is inside the determination area, the *Karajarri* native title determination area extends along the eastern edge of Roebuck Bay south of Broome, down the coastline south to 80 Mile beach, and inland towards the Great Sandy Desert, the *Karajarri Yanja* claim covers an area of 68.4 square kilometres, the *Koongie Elvire* covers 1,016 sq km and includes an area north of Halls Creek and south of Kununurra in the east Kimberley, the *Kurungal* native title claim is located to the south east of Fitzroy Crossing and covers 890 sq km of country including a portion of the Christmas Creek pastoral lease and the Ngumpan and Wangkatjunga communities, the *Malarngowem* native title claim covers a 7,529 sq km area north of Halls Creek and towards Warmun, *Mayala* native title covers the islands and sea of the Buccaneer Archipelago, north of Derby. Almost all of the islands are held under exclusive possession native title by the Mayala native title holders, *Miriuwung Gajerrong* #1 native title determination covers 7,095 sq km and includes parts of the township of Kununurra in the east Kimberley, Lake Argyle, the Keep River and the Ord River irrigation area, the *Ngarrawanji* native title claim covers 4078 sq km and includes the Moola Bulla pastoral lease and small areas of unallocated Crown land around Halls Creek, The *Ngurrara* native title determinations cover a vast area in the southern desert region of the Kimberley and includes 77,814 sq km of the Great Sandy Desert and a section of the Canning Stock Route, *Noonkanbah* native title covers 1,811 sq km in the central Fitzroy Valley region of the Kimberley over the Noonkanbah Station pastoral lease. The Yungongora Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC administers the native title rights and interests on behalf of the Noonkanbah native title holders, the *Nyikina Mangala* native title area covers more than 26,000 sq km and extends from the mouth of the King Sound south of Derby, along the Fitzroy Valley to Noonkanbah and south into the Great Sandy Desert, *Purnululu* native title claim covers 4,587 sq km across the Purnululu National Park in the east Kimberley, the *Tjurabalan* native title claim covers 26,000 sq km of land south of Halls Creek into the Great Sandy and Tanami Deserts and eastwards to the Western Australia/Northern Territory border. It also includes part of the Canning Stock Route and the Aboriginal communities of Ringer Soak, Billiluna, Mulan and Balgo, “Uunguu” means “our living home”, *Uunguu* determination covers 25,909 sq km. Most of the determination area is exclusive possession – the strongest form of native title rights, *Warrwa Combined* claim covers an area from King Sound east to the Lennard River and north to the northern boundaries of Meda and Napier Downs pastoral leases, where Warrwa country is bounded by the northern Kimberley distinct ranges, rivers and plateaus. Warrwa’s neighbours include Ngaringyn and Unggumi speakers to the east, Worrorra speaking and identifying people to the north, Bunuba speaking people to the southeast and Nyikina speakers to the west and south, *Warrwa Mawadjala Gadjidgar* claim covers an area across Point Torment in the west Kimberley, including part of the waters of King Sound which surround Point Torment, the *Wilinggin* native title claim is located in the heart of the Kimberley along the iconic Gibb River Road and covers more than 60,150 sq km – an area the size of Tasmania and the *Yurriyangem Taam* native title claim covers 23,258 sq km of country from the north-east of Fitzroy Crossing towards Kununurra in the east Kimberley..

What does native title mean? It would be wrong to think that the journey is over or that it is easier for Aboriginal communities. There are the pressures of the world: The map of the Kimberley is full of all sorts of ownership relationships and the riches beneath the land and the sea have their temptations for Aboriginal native title holders. The challenges of custodianship are profound in a world greedy for resources.<sup>lii</sup> There are pressures of managing traditional relationships to land: The way in which a mainstream court recognises those who are eligible members of land body corporates also creates an ongoing challenge for native title organisations. And then there is the matter of those groups who have been denied native title rights because they have not maintained their cultural heritage which in the spirit of Bran Neu Dae is an absurd concept. There is no one way forward and the denouement of Bran Neu Dae – the continual search and wait - is appropriate. There is also the ongoing problem of being buoyed up and let down by promises: In many ways the waiting for Canberra is over. The golden era of government funding is gone. Now all Aboriginal community organisations try to find independent sources of funding or die and the task of developing an Aboriginal “private sector” that is capable of creating enterprises that can sustain a livelihood that is in keeping with Aboriginal cultural obligations is ongoing with many failures. There are also big issues like the concept of an Aboriginal voice that will link up the many Aboriginal communities around the country in the way that Baamba’s NEAC did in the 1980s or the way in which ATSIC functioned in regional centres in the 1990s and 2000s.

The remarkable generation of Broome and Kimberley leaders did stay strong and true to their ancestors and families but they have also moved into a highly complex world where management and the pressures of development, not to mention the profound effects of modern culture on their children, are constantly pressing. How will all this play out?

*“Well the good things come and the good things go  
Fancy suits and shoes, oh bro?  
And in the lives of young and old  
Freedom well its just like gold”<sup>liii</sup>*

*“...you want to know about Aboriginal culture, we will make you smile.. we will get you to sing along with these fabulous songs.. then like Jimmy Chi does we will hit you with a sledgehammer.. that man was an absolute genius”. (Dingo Jan 17 2020)*

in its best form ***Bran Nue Dae*** makes no attempt to talk to mainstream White Australia. Nor does it try to universalise the Australian Aboriginal experience. What makes it so refreshing and wonderful is also what makes it so elusive. It is really a conversation between a bunch of Broome locals, if you don't get it, too bad, figure it out and you might learn something important. Like all great pieces of writing and theatre, it has deep, multi-layered meanings and appeal, everyone can hop on for the ride, but if the edgy Broome wildness is directed out of the production then you lose a lot. If you make things easy you lose detail, timbre, richness and much more. Every Director has to make a choice between keeping the best of the local culture and entertaining a more mainstream audience. The 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary performance does not disappoint. Many of the members of the cast are relatives of the original cast, writers and musicians. They carry on and add something to the production.<sup>liv</sup>

Bran Neu Dae is about much more than Broome. For me two “Broome outsiders” Ernie Dingo a Wajarri man and the late Ningali Lawford Wolfe a Walmadjari woman epitomise the something extra there is about the whole ethos of Bran Neu Dae. Ultimately the message is “outsiders” become part of the family and when they do the world changes.

I never saw Ningali in the show but anyone who knew her and her family know that special spark she had was there in the pictures of performances and some of the rehearsals that were filmed in 1991.(Zubrycki, Chi et al.). Her spark sticks to the Bran Neu Dae women's ensemble. What is it? How can you define it? Its that spark when she lit up the screen in Rabbit Proof Fence (2002), Rachel Perkins' film version of Bran Neu Dae (2009) and Last Taxi from Darwin (2015). Great actors don't have to speak. There is something in their very presence that gets you. Its an invitation to learn and think beyond our own lives. Ningali, Baamba, Ernie Dingo have that special something and Bran Neu Dae is the dramatic form that invites directors, actors and musicians to try to portray our great national tragedy in a meaningful way - a national theatre that finally reflects this land, our mistakes and hopes and our future.

Ernie Dingo brings his own search for a father he never knew into his performances.(SBS Television 2018) and in so doing brings in every son or daughter looking for an elusive, absent father. Originally it was his fame as an actor that brought recognition to the original show, now something more profound is happening. The show is returning a favour and giving a greatness to Ernie as an actor. His every little gesture and smile is worth watching. If there is any other reason to see the show again in 2020 then it is his performance. In a speech after the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary performance at the Riverside Theatre he said movingly “there is a song we sing in the last scene of the show “for only the truth remains, for all things are just the same, accepting's part of the truth, when I give my heart, give my heart to you” that epitomises what Indigenous people have been going through in struggle for a

long, long time".(Dingo Jan 17 2020) One day that generous, ever forgiving heart will be accepted with respect, good grace, humility and honour, and it will be a better day for all of us.



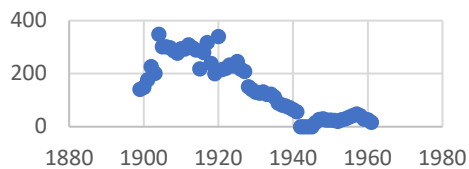
## Appendices

### 1 The Broome Pearl Shell Industry at a glance



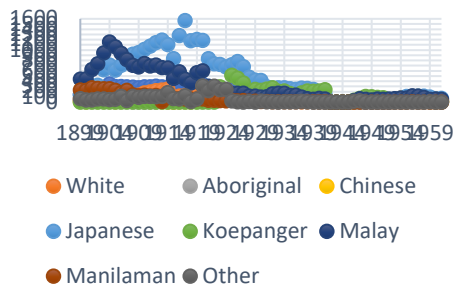
Pearling Vessels Broome  
1891-1961

Source Susan Sickert, Beyond the  
Lattice Broome's Early Years,  
Fremantle Arts Centre Press, pp....



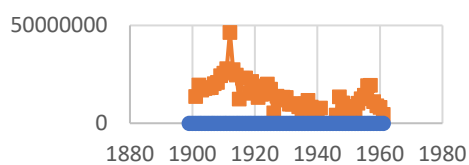
Pearl Industry Broome: Workers by  
Nationality  
1899-1961

Source Susan Sickert, Beyond the  
Lattice Broome's Early Years,  
Fremantle Arts Centre Press, pp.  
176-179



Value of Broome Pearl Shell  
Exports  
1891-1961

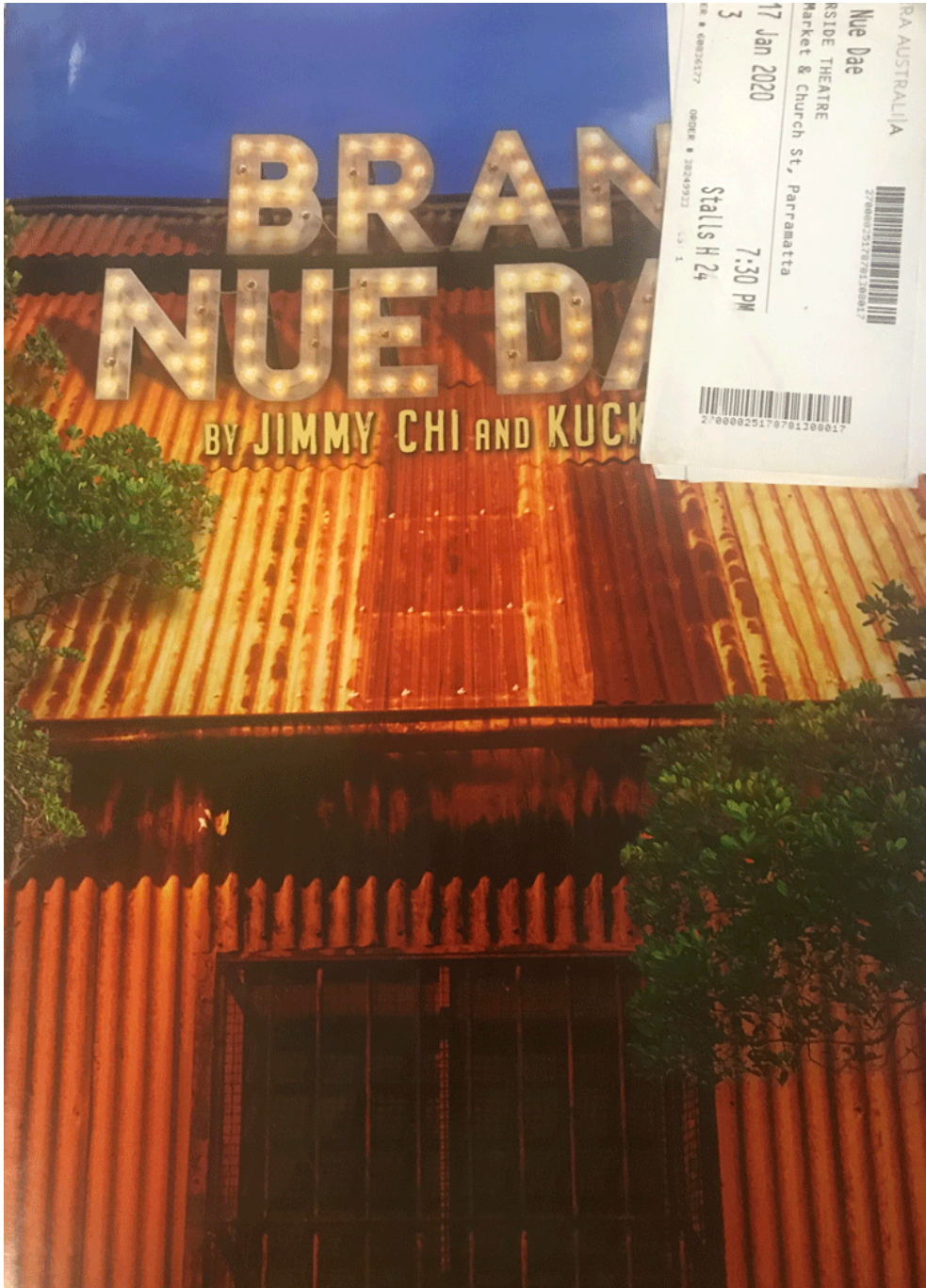
(Converted to 2019 Dollar Values)  
Source Susan Sickert, Beyond the  
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## Endnotes

<sup>i</sup> It's a big claim but my argument is that much of the context and meaning of Bran Neu Dae is only now being understood. The grand story and the richness of the music are in my view un-matched. As a form in the future new directors will take the script and the song into new domains just as many shows are revived for new audiences. For more on the Australian musical see Wyllie Johnston, P. and P. Wyllie Johnston (2019). The Australian musical : from the beginning, Allen & Unwin.

<sup>ii</sup> Jimmy Chi, Michael Manolis, Bran Neu Dae, 1979, 1990, Bran Neu Dae Productions

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPgJ4HadVwY>

<sup>iv</sup> See

<https://www.dca.wa.gov.au/Documents/Resources/Living%20Treasures/State%20Living%20Treasures%202004.pdf>

<sup>v</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/travel/places-to-visit.html> Bart Pigram, guitar player in the Bran Nue Dae band and son of the legendary Stephen Pigram, and his tour Narlija Adventures are singled out for praise.

<sup>vi</sup> See on the history of the pearl shell industry <http://museum.wa.gov.au/explore/lustre-online-text-panels/finding-shell> and <http://museum.wa.gov.au/explore/lustre-online-text-panels/saltwater-cowboys>

<sup>vii</sup>

<sup>viii</sup> Paddy Djaigween in Keffe, K. and Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. Paddy's road : life stories of Patrick Dodson.pp. 40-41

<sup>ix</sup> See Beckett, J. (1977). "The Torres Strait Islanders and the Pearling Industry: A Case of Internal Colonialism." Aboriginal History 1(1): pp77-104.

<sup>x</sup> Susan Sickert, **Beyond the Lattice Broome's Early Years**, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, pp. 176-179

<sup>xi</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xii</sup> See Affeldt, S. (2019). ""The White Experiment": Racism and the Boome Pearl Shelling Industry." Angelica 3(28): 43-58.

<sup>xiii</sup> Lyric attributed to Uncle Mickey Mathews and made famous in the Pigram Brothers song "Saltwater Cowboy", Saltwater Country (1997) Jigil Records

<sup>xiv</sup> William Lane, **The Worker**, 15 May 1897, cited by Markus, A. Fear and hatred : purifying Australia and California, 1850-1901.

<sup>xv</sup> Personal communication

<sup>xvi</sup> Keffe, K. and Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. Paddy's road : life stories of Patrick Dodson., p. 301

<sup>xvii</sup> See Dodson, P. (2014). Rights, Recognition and Reconciliation. Lowitja Donohue Oration.. In 1967 Aboriginal Australians were finally recognised for the first time by the Australian constitution and afforded minimal rights of citizenship including free access to Broome although it took many years for the segregated community to fully end.

<sup>xviii</sup> Sickert, S. (2003). Beyond the lattice : Broome's early years. Fremantle, W.A., Fremantle Arts Centre Press., p. 60

<sup>xix</sup> (1923). "Death of Mother M. Antonio." The Catholic Press (5 Apr 1923): 9.

<sup>xx</sup> See Choo, C. (1995). "Asian men on the west Kimberley coast, 1900 – 1940." Asian Orientations: Studies in Western Australian History 16: 89-111, Black, D. S., Sone; (2009). An Enduring Friendship: Western Australia and Japan – past, present and future. Westerly Centre, University of Western Australia..McGann, P. (1990). "Malays as indentured labour: Western Australia 1867 – 1900." Labour History 5: 35–54. , Meaney, N. (2007). Towards a new vision: Australia and Japan across time. Sydney, University of New South Wales Press..Schaper, M. (1995). "The Broome Race Riots of 1920." Asian Orientations: Studies in Western Australian History 16: 112–132.

<sup>xxi</sup> Personal communication, Sandy Dann, 2020

<sup>xxii</sup> Bishop Chris Saunders reflecting on changes in Broome 1970s, Coombs, A. and S. Varga Broometime. p93

<sup>xxiii</sup> Peter Yu summed up the way in which Australia's racist white Australian foundations threw people together in Broome in a unique way as follows: "The Australian nation was conceived from Anglo racist ideology. Australia's 1901 Constitution gave the Federal Parliament and the national government a head of power – Section 51, (xxvi) – to legislate on issues concerning race. The Australian Parliament used that power only weeks after the Australian nation was born when it passed the Immigration Restriction Act, the legislative



backbone of the White Australian policy, which fundamentally remained in force for seventy years. For sixty six years, the Race Power in Australia's Constitution contained a clause that prohibited the Federal Parliament from making laws regarding Aboriginal people, thereby leaving Aboriginal people at the mercy of genocidal State Government policies. For much of the twentieth century, Australian legal power was used to exclude Asian and non-Western people from living in Australia whilst attempting to bring about the disappearance of Indigenous people. The relationship between Aboriginal and non-white people is entwined by Australia's racist past Yu, P. (2014). "Aboriginal People and Multi-cultural Australia The Potential of Broome Highlights Australia's Bigger Potential." Australian Mosaic, (36).

xxiv Peter Yu sums it up this way: "Broome's multicultural society was, and remains, a creative place, no better highlighted than through the wonder of music. 'Broome sound', 18 a mixture of various Western musical genres, combined with the richness of Aboriginal and Asian storytelling, is a cultural and social product of Broome's unique character. However, this seemingly joyous life has masked a grim reality where the corrosive power of the dominant society sought to relentlessly assimilate us, humiliate our families and ridicule our values. It is a power that wares down individuals, families and communities. I am in my 50s and most of my childhood friends are no longer here; their lives tragically shortened through grog and drugs, suicide and sickness", *ibid*, pp. 18-19

xxv The lyric is "They taught me the white ways, and bugger the rest, cause everything white is right and the best. So learn all the white things they teach you in school, And you'll all become acceptable coons."

xxvixxxvi See H Nekes, H. W., E.A. (1953). "Australian Languages." Anthropos 48(5/6): 956-970., Worms, E. A. (Dec 1950). "A Myth of the Bäd (West Kimberley Australia)." Anthropos 45(4/6): 641-658.

xxvii "Jimmy and them went to Adelaide to do their music lessons and to learn how to read music and produce music – Jimmy, Steve Pigram, the Kuckles band. And while they were in Adelaide I was able to get funding for them through the Aboriginal Studies Grants because I was in charge. But the cycle returns, because years later when I was broke they gave me a job in the show". Stephen "Baamba" Albert Coombs, A. and S. Varga *Broometime*. p. 152

xxviii Third International Cologne Song Festival, March, 1982, with Wandjuk Marika playing yidaki, Stephen Pigram, personal communication, 2020

xxix Baamba quoted in Coombs, A. and S. Varga *Broometime*.p. 195

xxx Personal communication Kevin Fong

xxxi Stephen Bamba quoted in Holt, L. (2016). The Development of Aboriginal Education Policy in Australia - Voices of the National Aboriginal Education Committee. Ph.d, University of Newcastle.p, 116

xxxi Jimmy Chi, Michael Manolis, *Listen to the News*, 1980,1990 Bran Neu Dae Productions

xxxiii During the two decades following the 1967 referendum Broome (Rubibi) Aboriginal organisations were established that focussed on a range of diverse interests: Music and media services including radio stations, event management, film and media production, Accounting and bookkeeping services, Medical, primary and preventative health services, Childcare Services, Funeral Services and bereavement support, Affordable white goods and household furniture, Women's Development and Support, Economic Development, Outstation Infrastructure Support Services, Housing and land support, Book Publishing House, Cultural and ceremony support and Artefact production Initially organisations were created to deal with a perceived local need and creating an organisation to deal with the issue was a way in which groups of people could provide a structure with which to manage their planning, research, receive funding and govern the management of resources acquired and received, either from grants, philanthropy or generation of wealth.

xxxiv Jimmy Chi, "Nothing I would rather be", Music and Lyrics, 1987, 1990 Bran Neu Dae Productions

xxxv "There's nothing I would rather be"...Music and Lyrics Jimmy Chi, Bran Neu Dae Productions, 1987,1990

xxxvi This would be an important supplement to Clinton Walkers history of Australian independent music Walker, C. (1996). Stranded : the secret history of Australian independent music, 1977-1991. Sydney, Pan Macmillan.

xxxvii Saltwater Country (1997), Jiir (2001), Under The Mango Tree (2006), Live at the Pearl Luggers, Broome DVD (2007), Jimmy Chi, Pigram Brothers, Kuckles & Friends, Corrugation Road (Soundtrack) (1999)

xxxviii <https://www.isx.org.au/projects/baamba-baad>

xxxix Pigram Music, PO Box 1012 Broome

xl Stephen Pigram, *Saltwater Cowboy*, Pigram Brothers *Saltwater Country*, Pearl Shell Studios, 1997

xli Jimmy Chi, "Light a Light" ", 1983,1990 Bran Neu Dae Productions

xlii Jimmy Chi "A Long way away from my country" ", 1983,1990 Bran Neu Dae Productions

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- <sup>xliii</sup> Stephen Pigram, *"Feel like going back home"*, 1984,1990 Bran Neu Dae Productions
- <sup>xliiv</sup> Jimmy Chi, *"Town by the Bay"* ", 1983,1990 Bran Neu Dae Productions
- <sup>xlv</sup> Stephen Pigram, *Nyul Nyul Girl*
- <sup>xlvi</sup> Stephen Pigram *Mimi Wanderer 2013*
- <sup>xlvii</sup> Jimmy Chi, *Nyul Nyul Girl*.
- <sup>xlviii</sup> Stephen Pigram, Jimmy Chi, *"Is You Mah Baby?"*, ", 1983,1990 Bran Neu Dae Productions
- <sup>xlix</sup> Jimmy Chi, Michael Manolis, Stephen Pigram, *"Everybody looking for Kuckle"*, 1983,1990 Bran Neu Dae Productions.
- <sup>i</sup> S. D. G.P. S. Pigram, *Dry River Bed*, Jiir,
- <sup>ii</sup> Album notes *Saltwater Country*, 1997
- <sup>iii</sup> See <https://www.savethekimberley.com/watch-movies/>
- <sup>iiii</sup> Alan Pigram, *Barefoot Kid*, Pigram Brothers *Saltwater Country*, Pearl Shell Studios, 1997
- <sup>liv</sup> The Sydney Morning Herald review of the 30th anniversary performance of Bran Nue Dae at Parramatta's Riverside Theatre (Jan 20,2020) was embarrassing in its lack of understanding. It focused on theatre technicalities, praised the best known member of the cast, Ernie Dingo, and offered luke warm praise. We are all so bloody ignorant. When I attended Bran Nue Dae at the Riverside Theatre Parramatta on Jan 18 2020 I asked myself why the Gadiigal welcome to country had not paid respect to the remarkable 30th anniversary milestone of the play for all Aboriginal Australia and particularly not acknowledged the late actors and performers including Jimmy Chi, Ningili Lawford-Wolfe, Stephen Bamba Albert, Jo Jo Angus, Duncan Campbell, Sylvia Clark, Lindsey Cox, Syvanna Dolan, Bob Fagetter, Bob Juniper, Djunnawong Stanley Mirindo, John Sahanna who had made the play great. This was one of Australia's most successful pieces of musical theatre surely this would be recognised and respected in every Aboriginal nation. But no. At the end of the play the Mayor of Parramatta mis-pronounced Jimmy Chi's name and had no idea who or what was "Kuckles" and could never have conceived that the staging of the play 30 years ago in Parramatta was because it was and is the appropriate traditional ceremonial area for visiting Aboriginal communities to share their knowledge and culture. More than these slights, our lack of insight that Bran Neu Dae is a work of artistic and musical genius and a profound critique of the hypocrisy of white Australia, indicates that we are still ignorant about our own history and our own continuing myopic, racist trajectory as a nation. Why is Bran Nue Dae so under-appreciated? Why is it not more well-known? Why is Australia's most successful Aboriginal musical known only in the same vein as an entertaining film like Mamma Mia or Shampoo? Why is the role of Kimberley and Broome Aboriginal artists still so hidden and unacknowledged? Why does the respect seem to flow only one way?