



AUSTRALIAN  
BRANDENBURG  
ORCHESTRA

# Water Music

*Precious, life-giving, pure.*

# Water Music

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With Thanks

MELBOURNE RECITAL CENTRE	CITY RECITAL HALL, SYDNEY
Thu, 09 Oct, 2025 7PM	Tue, 14 Oct, 2025 7PM
Sat, 11 Oct, 2025 7PM	Wed, 15 Oct, 2025 7PM
Sun, 12 Oct, 2025 5PM	Fri, 17 Oct, 2025 7PM
	Sat, 18 Oct, 2025 2PM
	Sat, 18 Oct, 2025 7PM

## ARTISTS

**Rrawun Maymuru** (Yirrkala)  
Yolŋu Songman – Mangalili clan,  
Guest Artist & Composer  
**Paul Dyer** (Sydney) Conductor  
Australian Brandenburg Orchestra

## CREATIVES

**Nick Wales** (Sydney) Composer  
**Sophie Hutchings** (Sydney) Composer  
**Bob Scott** (Sydney) Audio Design  
**Kelsey Lee** (Sydney) Lighting Design

The Australian Brandenburg Orchestra is privileged to work, create and perform on the lands of the longest living culture in the world, and we pay deep respect to traditional custodians and Elders, past and present.

# Repertoire

<b>Maymuru / Wales</b>	<b>Nguy Gapu (Introduction)*</b>
<b>Handel</b>	<b>Water Music, Suite No. 1 in F major, HWV 348</b> <i>Overture — Allegro</i> <i>Adagio e staccato</i> <i>Allegro</i> <i>Air</i>
<b>Hutchings / Maymuru</b> (arr. Nick Wales)	<b>Cloud Beneath The Sea*</b>
<b>Handel</b>	<b>Water Music, Suite No. 1 in F major, HWV 348</b> <i>Minuet</i> <i>Bourrée</i> <i>Hornpipe</i>
<b>Wales</b>	<b>Harbour Light*</b>
<b>Handel</b>	<b>Water Music, Suite No. 2 in D major, HWV 349, and Suite No. 3 in G major, HWV 350</b> <i>[Allegro]</i> <i>Alla Hornpipe</i> <i>[Sarabande]</i> <i>Rigaudon [1 &amp; 2]</i> <i>Menuet [1]</i> <i>Menuet [2]</i> <i>[Gigue 1 &amp; 2]</i> <i>[Gigue 2]</i> <i>Minuet</i>
<b>Maymuru / Wales</b>	<b>Nguy Gapu [Ocean Water]*</b>

\* Denotes world premiere





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## About the Brandenburg



The Australian Brandenburg Orchestra is the national Baroque music flagship. It is a world leader in historically informed performance and hugely influential in the broader musical landscape.

The rise and triumph of the Brandenburg through the unflagging passion and vision of its co-founders Paul Dyer and Bruce Applebaum is one of the most extraordinary success stories in the nation's performing arts history.

Since its stunning debut at the Sydney Opera House in 1990, the orchestra has introduced Baroque (and earlier) music at a serious level, playing on instruments authentic to the period. The Brandenburg is renowned for its energetic spirit, stylistic diversity, ambition and innovation. In the words of the Honorable Dame Quentin Bryce, the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra 'has brought untold rewards in its brilliant musicianship, imaginative programming, outstanding soloists and partnerships. It has created adventures steeped in tradition yet luminously alive and liberating.'

A unique company, the Brandenburg vibrantly reawakens Baroque and Classical masterpieces for a contemporary audience. The Brandenburg's 20 recordings with ABC Classics include five ARIA Award winners for Best Classical Album.

Discover more at [brandenburg.com.au](http://brandenburg.com.au)

'...what stands out at concert after concert is the impression that this bunch of musicians is having a really good time. They look at each other and smile and laugh... there's a warmth and sense of fun not often associated with classical performance.'

THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD

# Rrawun Maymuru

Guest Artist & Composer



Rrawun Maymuru comes from a long line of Yolŋu songmen from Yirrkala a remote community in North East Arnhem Land [NT]. He is the direct grandson of Dr Yunupingu and sings in both English and Yolŋu Mata. His songs reflect a love for country and culture as well as his distinct perspective on the modern world.

A strong and prolific songwriter, Rrawun penned the song Bayini that gave Gurumul Yunupingu his first No.1 ARIA chart single. In October 2016 Rrawun Maymuru debuted his live solo set at the request of Rhoda Roberts AO for Homeground Festival at the Sydney Opera House - it was here that we witnessed the power of Rrawun's extraordinary vocal resonance and the way he can affect a great space within and without. In 2012 Rrawun Maymuru was awarded the GR Burarrwanga Memorial Award for best new talent at the National Indigenous Music Awards. Rrawun also fronts the Aboriginal rock band East Journey who have been awarded the 2015 MusicNT Song of the Year [Rock category] and 2014 'Film Clip of the Year' at the National Indigenous Music Awards [NIMAs] for Bright Lights Big City. Rrawun's ability to transcend language and cultural barriers with his distinct resonance is an experience to be seen, heard and felt.

## Cultural Context: Rrawun Maymuru & Manikay

We are honoured to collaborate with Rrawun Maymuru, a Yolŋu songman from Yirrkala in North East Arnhem Land, as part of this Water Music program. Rrawun performs traditional Manikay (songlines) with cultural authority, passed down through generations of his family. These songs are sacred and carry deep cultural meaning. Their inclusion in this program has been guided by Rrawun's permission and direction, and should be treated with the utmost respect. All artistic decisions involving cultural material, including Manikay and newly composed work arising from Yolŋu themes, are made in consultation with Rrawun and in accordance with Yolŋu cultural protocols.

# Nick Wales

Composer



Nick Wales' electronic classical music is immersive, visceral and progressive. From empowering beauty to magnetic dark passages, Wales' textural compositions inspire listeners across multi art-forms including popular and classical music, contemporary dance, film, theatre and the visual arts.

Recent commissions include collaborations with choreographer Marina Mascarelle for Ballet de l'Opéra de Lyon and Sydney Dance Company; The feature film score for *True Spirit* for Netflix feature directed by Sarah Spillane, *ab intra* for Rafael Bonachela and Sydney Dance Company, *Zampatti*, *Maton* and *Step Into Paradise* for MAAS Powerhouse Museum Sydney, *The Greatest Menace* podcast soundtrack for AMAZON/Audible, the Helpmann Award nominated *Am I* for Shaun Parker and Company and a new immersive work *Cathedral for a Deep Valley* for the Bundanon Trust.

Nick's ongoing collaboration with Aboriginal song man Rrawun Maymuru has seen their work *Nyapillilngu* (Spirit Lady) feature in Sydney Dance Company's 2017 production *Ocho* and win the Indigenous Language Award at the 2020 National Indigenous Music Awards (NIMAS).

A master of building tension, drama and spectacle, Nick has soundtracked Sarah Spillane's feature films *True Spirit* (Netflix) and *Around the Block*. Television credits include *Step into Paradise with Amanda Brown* (Blakfella films / ABC), *The Lost Diggers of Fromelles* (channel 4 UK), *Bird Nerd: The Art of Leila Jeffreys* (ABC), *Hannah Gadsby's Nakedy Nudes* (ABC), *Nothing to Lose* (SBS).

Nick's musical collaborators include Sarah Blasko, Bree van Reyk, Veronique Serret, Ngaiire, Tarik O'Regan, Sophie Hutchings, Deepchild, Stereogamous, Paul Mac, Jonny Seymour, Jess Green, Alyx Dennison, Jessica O'Donoghue, Jason Noble. Visual Art collaborators include Mel O'Callaghan, Lauren Brincat, Justin Shoulder and Hayden Fowler. His collaborative works have featured at the Biennale of Sydney, MMCA Seoul, The Adelaide Biennale of Contemporary Art, Museum of Contemporary Art Sydney and in public collections including The Art Gallery of NSW, National Gallery of Australia and Artbank Australia.



## Paul Dyer AO Artistic Director



Paul Dyer is one of Australia's leading specialists in period performance.

Paul co-founded the Brandenburg in 1989 after completing postgraduate studies at the Royal Conservatorium in The Hague, and has been Artistic Director and conductor since that time. He is a performing artist comfortable in his unique music arena — whether working in ancient music, contemporary music, opera, with artists such as circus performers, contemporary dancers, or visual artists.

Paul is an inspiring teacher and has been a staff member at various conservatories throughout the world. In 1995, he received a Churchill Fellowship and he has won numerous international and national awards for his CD recordings with the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra and Choir, including the 1998, 2001, 2005, 2009 and 2010 ARIA Awards for Best Classical Album.

Paul has performed with many international soloists including Andreas Scholl, Cyndia Sieden, Marc Destrubé, Hidemi Suzuki,

Stefano Montanari, and countertenor Derek Lee Ragin. Leading an ensemble of Brandenburg soloists, in August 2001, Paul toured the orchestra to Europe with guest soloist Andreas Scholl. In 2015, he was featured on the soundtrack of the James Bond 007 movie, *Spectre*.

A passionate cook, entertainer, foodie, teacher, swimmer and traveller, he is friends with people and artists from Istanbul to India, Japan and Italy, and creates a unique platform for overseas performing artists to work with him and the Brandenburg in Australia.

Among his list of achievements, Paul was awarded the Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) in 2013 for his 'distinguished service to the performing arts in Australia'. In 2003, Paul was awarded the Australian Centenary Medal for his services to Australian society and the advancement of music, and in 2010, Paul was awarded the Sydney University Alumni Medal for Professional Achievement.

## Bob Scott Audio Designer

Bob is an internationally awarded audio engineer, music producer and sound designer with over 20 years experience in music production, immersive mixing, theatre sound design, location recording, broadcast, film and audio consultation in Australia, Europe and Asia.

Specialising in immersive sound, Bob offers Dolby Atmos and Apple Spatial Audio mixing in 7.1.4 surround sound. Atmos goes beyond the ordinary listening experience and puts you inside the music in a new spatial way, revealing every detail of the music with unparalleled clarity and depth.

In 2020, Bob produced the original motion picture soundtrack for the film *River* with the Australian Chamber Orchestra and Richard Tognetti, premiered *The Nightline* which was an immersive sound work at Melbourne's Rising Festival and recorded Bryce Dessner's *Impermanence/Disintegration* with the Australian String Quartet.

In 2019, Bob was the recipient of Tokyo's World Festival Sound Design award for *The Howling Girls* and an ARIA Award for production on Paul Kelly's *13 Ways To Look At Birds*. He received an additional three nominations for his work on Chaika's *Arrow*, Ellen Kirkwood *[A]part* and ACO's *Haydn / Mozart*.

With a credit list that includes the likes of Sarah Blasko, Paul Kelly, Kate Miller-Heidke and Josh Pyke, Bob is sought out by creatives who want to push the boundaries of sound, cross-pollinating ideas and techniques from different audio traditions and fusing new ideas with established forms.

## Kelsey Lee Lighting Designer

Kelsey is a lighting, set and costume designer for theatre, dance, opera and events.

Credits include Lighting Designer: Sydney Theatre Company: *4000 Miles*. Griffin Theatre Company: *Whitefella Yella Tree*; *Sex Magick*; *The Lewis Trilogy*. Belvoir: *Big Girls Don't Cry*, *Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*; *Well-Behaved Women*; *A Room of One's Own*. Melbourne Theatre Company: *Destiny*. reGroup: *Autotune*. Marrugeku: *Mutiara*. Force Majeure: *Gurr Era Op*. Ensemble: *Masterclass*; *The Memory of Water*; *A Letter For Molly*. Bell Shakespeare: *The Comedy of Errors*. NTofP: *Queen Fatima*. Fervour: *Life Is A Dream*. ATYP: *April Aardvark*. Greendoor Theatre Company: *Sistren*, *Good Dog*; *If We Got Some More Cocaine I Could Show You How I Love You*.

Set and Costume Designer: Sydney Dance Company: *Somos*; *Silence & Rapture*.

Set and Lighting Designer: Belvoir 25A: *An Ox Stand On My Tongue*. Griffin Lookout: *Jali*.

Lighting, Set & Costume Designer: Australian Chamber Orchestra: *Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge*; *There's a Sea In My Bedroom*.

Co-production Designer & Lighting Designer: Belvoir 25A: *Destroy, She Said*.





Nick Wales and Rrawun Maymuru.  
Photo by Camila Tassinio.





**Shaun Lee-Chen\*** (Perth)  
Concertmaster, Baroque Violin



**Matthew Bruce\*** (Sydney)  
Assoc. Concertmaster



**Ben Dollman\*** (Adelaide)  
Principal Second Baroque Violin



**Jared Adams\*** (Sydney)  
Baroque Violin



**James Armstrong** (Melbourne)  
Baroque Violin



**Ella Bennetts** (Sydney)  
Baroque Violin



**Aaron Brown** (Brisbane)  
Baroque Violin



**Rafael Font** (Sydney)  
Baroque Violin



**Matthew Greco** (Sydney)  
Baroque Violin



**Sarah Papadopoulos** (Sydney)  
Baroque Violin



**Tim Willis** (Melbourne)  
Baroque Violin



**Monique O'Dea\*** (Sydney)  
Principal Baroque Viola



**John Ma** (Canberra)  
Baroque Viola



**Tadhg Sudlow** (Netherlands)  
Baroque Viola



**Marianne Yeomans** (Sydney)  
Baroque Viola



**Jamie Hey\*** (Melbourne)  
Principal Baroque Cello



**Anton Baba** (Sydney)  
Baroque Cello



**Daniel Curro** (Brisbane)  
Baroque Cello



**Rosemary Quinn** (Sydney)  
Baroque Cello



**Robert Nairn\*** (Adelaide)  
Principal Violone



**Melissa Farrow\*** (Sydney)  
Principal Baroque Flute



**Adam Masters\*** (Melbourne)  
Principal Baroque Oboe



**Kailen Cresp** (Melbourne)  
Baroque Oboe



**Jane Gower** (Denmark)  
Principal Baroque Bassoon



**Michael Dixon** (Sydney)  
Principal Baroque Horn



**Dorée Dixon** (Perth)  
Baroque Horn



**Leanne Sullivan** (Sydney)  
Principal Baroque Trumpet



**Richard Fomison** (Brisbane)  
Baroque Trumpet



**Brian Nixon** (Sydney)  
Principal Baroque Timpani

\* Denotes Brandenburg Core Musician  
# Member of the Mentorship Program



## DIRECTOR'S NOTES

### Water is Life

David Attenborough recently said:

*'After living nearly 100 years on this planet, I now understand the most important place on Earth is not on land, but at sea.'*

The ocean has changed during his lifetime. Sea life is being destroyed on an epic scale because of industrial fishing and the polluting of rivers and waterways among other things. But it's not too late! Countries have promised to protect a third of the oceans at a recent UN Conference. This could be transformational.



Sea Turtle in coral reef. Photo by Jason Bishop.

My starting point for our Brandenburg concert was **water**.

I wanted to present Handel's *Water Music* but quickly realised that there was a greater theme here, the connection to water in everyday life on Earth:

**Freshwater** — rivers, lakes and streams

**Rainwater**

**Seawater**

**Subglacial lakes**

**Solid water** — the ice sheets of Greenland and Antarctica, glaciers, icebergs, snow, frost, hail and sleet

**Water vapour** — invisible moisture in the air, clouds and fog, steam from heated water, humidity

**Other special forms** — like dew and mist

All these forms make our planet beautiful, complex and extraordinary.

King George I commissioned Handel to write a piece in 1717 to be performed on the Water. Boarding at 8pm, the rising tide propelled the barge upstream without rowing. 50 musicians performed and the whole river was covered with people enjoying the *Water Music*. It was so popular the king ordered it to be repeated at least three times, with the performance continuing until well after midnight.

I have been a regular dedicated swimmer since I was about six years old. My clearest thoughts flow when I am immersed in water. Over time, I started to worry about its future and wanted to find a way of linking my work in classical music to the environment. But I realised that First Nations People have a greater connection to Country — water and land. Access to clean, sustainable water is critical for the health and autonomy of us all.

My project is called *Water is life* — a symbol of purity and wisdom.

### Water on Earth

Water makes up 71% of the Earth's surface. Most of it is in the oceans and seas (96.5%). Smaller amounts exist as groundwater (1.7%), in glaciers and ice caps (1.7%), and as water vapour, clouds, and precipitation (0.001%) in the air.

### Water and People

Around 70% of the freshwater humans use goes to agriculture, making it essential for global food production. Fishing in salt and fresh waters supplies a significant source of food, providing 6.5% of the world's protein.

### Water and Trade

Waterways move more than just water. Oil, natural gas, and manufactured goods are shipped long distances by boats on seas, rivers, lakes, and canals, linking economies and communities.



### Water and Industry

In homes and industries, water is indispensable. It is used in cooling, heating, dissolving substances, cooking, and washing. Its properties as an excellent solvent make it a key part of countless processes.

### Connection to Identity and Place

Waterways define borders between Country, determine seasonal movement, and form part of songlines — ancient navigational and spiritual maps. Water is inseparable from land as Country, which includes not just land and water, but sky and everything living and non-living. Water connects people to their ancestors and to each other.

### Water

In the Yolŋu language of North East Arnhem Land, the word for 'water' is *gapu*. Yolŋu people also have specific terms for different types of water, such as *monuk gapu* (salt water) and *raypiny* (fresh water). The word *gapu* is a powerful symbol in Yolŋu culture, reflecting the importance of water in the region's climate and culture.

### Why is water important to Indigenous Australians?

Water helped in defining language boundaries and ceremonial places and also underpins many land management practices. Dreaming stories across Australia show the connection of ancestral beings to cultural stories related to water sources.

### What does water symbolise?

Water is the lifeblood of Mother Earth. Water is sacred, and it's a symbol of sovereignty. Indigenous advocates have been at the forefront of efforts to address these issues, advocating for the protection and conservation of water sources and the recognition of Indigenous water rights.

### What is the cultural significance of water?

For some, water is seen as a gift for humans to care for, whilst others embrace a view that accentuates water's importance for the environment and wildlife. The connection between water and place is strong in many Indigenous cultures. Protecting and managing water is a custodial and intergenerational responsibility.

### What is the spiritual meaning of water?

People travel great distances to drink or bath in water from mountains, wells and springs that are imbued with special energy. Water, a symbol of purity and wisdom, allows the human body to function, embody its true essence and heal.

### Water in 1717 for Handel, Water in 2025 for us all.

Rrawun Maymuru, Nick Wales and myself were all excited to start the creative development process for this concert. We met up at the historic *Music Farm Studios*, located in the Byron Bay hinterland near Coorabell.

Many famous musicians have recorded their music in the studio, including Olivia Newton-John, Jimmy Barnes (in *Cold Chisel*), Richard Clapton, Yothu Yindi, Midnight Oil and Kylie Minogue.

It was a special time for us all but connecting with Rrawun and hearing stories of Country made me realise how little I know. It was lifechanging.

The three of us have spent the last months preparing tonight's music.

### My Water Music program involves five elements:

*Nguy Gapu* (Introduction)

Handel's *Water Music*, Suites 1, 2 and 3

Nick Wales' piece *Harbour Light*

Sophie Hutchings / Rrawun Maymuru / Nick Wales' piece *Cloud Beneath the Sea*

The Brandenburg's commission  
*Nguy Gapu* [Ocean Water], co-composed by Rrawun Maymuru and Nick Wales

I was thinking about the emotional meaning of tonight's music interpreted through its musical character, and symbolism:

Joy and Festivity of Water

Grandeur and Majesty of Water

Natural Elegance and Serenity of Water

Unity and Continuity of Water

Thank you everyone and enjoy *Water Music*.

*Djutjuna* (Goodbye, in Yolŋu Matha)



Paul Dyer AO  
Artistic Director



Nick Wales and Paul Dyer at ACO Studio, 2025.  
Photo by Ashley Giles.



Rrawun Maymuru and Paul Dyer in Byron Bay, 2025.  
Photo by Ashley Giles.



Paul Dyer and Rrawun Maymuru at the Music Farm Studios, 2025. Photo by Ashley Giles.





Paul Dyer, Rrawun Maymuru and Nick Wales at the Music Farm Studios, 2025. Photo by Ashley Giles.



# Water Music

**Rawun Maymuru (1980-) &  
Nick Wales (1975-)  
Nguy Gapu (Introduction)**

The Australian Brandenburg Orchestra is honoured to collaborate with Rawun Maymuru, a Yolŋu songman from Yirrkala in North East Arnhem Land, as part of this *Water Music* program. Rawun performs traditional *Manikay* (songlines) with cultural authority, passed down through generations of his family. These songs are sacred and carry deep cultural meaning. All artistic decisions involving cultural material, including *Manikay* and newly composed work arising from Yolŋu themes, have been made in consultation with Rawun and in accordance with Yolŋu cultural protocols.

Nick Wales is a Sydney based composer whose electronic music has featured in multi art-forms including popular and classical music, contemporary dance, film, theatre and the visual arts. His ongoing collaboration with Aboriginal song man Rawun Maymuru has seen their work *Nyapilliingu* (Spirit Lady) feature in Sydney Dance Company's 2017 production *Ocho* and win the Indigenous Language Award at the 2020 National Indigenous Music Awards.

**George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)  
Water Music, Suite No. I in F major, HWV 348  
Overture — Allegro  
Adagio e staccato  
[Allegro]  
Air**

*On Wednesday Evening, at about 8, the King [George I] took Water at Whitehall in an open Barge ... Many other Barges with Persons of Quality attended, and so great a Number of Boats, that the whole River in a manner was cover'd; a City Company's Barge was employ'd for the Musick, wherein were 50 Instruments of all sorts, who play'd ... the finest Symphonies, compos'd express for this Occasion, by Mr. Hendel; which His Majesty liked so well, that he caus'd it to be plaid over three times in going and returning. At Eleven his Majesty went a-shore at Chelsea, where a Supper was prepar'd, and then there was another very fine Consort of Musick, which lasted till 2; after which, his Majesty came again into his Barge, and return'd the same Way, the Musick continuing to play until he landed.*

- London, The Daily Courant, 19 July 1717



19<sup>th</sup> century artist's rendering of the first performance of Handel's *Water Music* in 1717, with George Frideric Handel (left) alongside King George I of Great Britain (right), traveling on the Thames River as musicians play in the background.

**German King of England Orders Water Party**  
George I became king of Great Britain on the death of Queen Anne in 1714. Although Anne had given birth to 17 children, all had died in childhood and so her natural successor was her half-brother James Stuart, son of deposed King James II, but he was Roman Catholic.

The thought of a Catholic on the throne of England was anathema to the ruling English political party, so to forestall this possibility in 1701 the English parliament passed the Act of Settlement which expressly forbade anyone who was Catholic or married to a Catholic from ever becoming monarch. As a result, 56 people with higher claims were removed from the line of succession leaving George, Prince-Elector (ruler) of the German principality of Hanover, as heir to the throne. He was Anne's second cousin due to being a great-grandson of James I through the female line. The Act of Settlement is still in force today, although an amendment in 2013 means that a person is not now excluded from the succession if their spouse is Catholic.

George was 54 years old. He had never been to England, and although he understood the politics, he barely spoke the language. He was an experienced soldier with an impressive military record, but he was personally reserved and did not enjoy the ceremonial role of the sovereign. This was clear from the moment of his arrival in London, when he travelled in a carriage in the dark, 'as if deliberately to outrage the crowds of Londoners who had waited long hours to see him' according to one commentator.

From Germany George brought his entire court with him including his mistress, and his treatment of his wife, who he had accused of adultery and imprisoned for life, was considered scandalous. He returned often to Hanover, where he was still the ruler, and indeed opted to be buried there. George was resented for not making any effort to connect with his subjects and became the butt of mockery spread by the political opponents of the men who had put him on the throne. To make matters worse he was on bad terms with his adult son, the Prince of Wales (later George II), who set up his own rival court and held the type of lavish parties that his father shunned.

To restore his public image, George held a number of sumptuous receptions at Hampton Court in the summer of 1717 and ordered a 'river party' to be held on the Thames. As a piece of public theatre it was very successful. The Prussian ambassador reported that, 'the evening was all that could be desired for the festivity, the number of barges and above all of boats filled with people desirous of hearing was beyond counting.' The music that Handel composed for the occasion was immediately popular with the king and with the general public, and has remained so ever since.

## Handel and the *Water Music*

By 1717, Handel had lived in London for six years and was well-established as the city's pre-eminent composer of Italian opera. He was also German and coincidentally had previously been music director to the Elector of Hanover. According to his first biographer John Mainwaring, he was embarrassed to be found in London and not at home in Hanover when the Elector arrived in the form of King George I of Great Britain.



It was true that Handel had been formally dismissed by the Elector in 1713, but any difficulty had been smoothed over by 1714, and he continued to provide music to George's court, as he had to Queen Anne's.

The *Water Music* title comes about because of the circumstances of its performance on the Thames, not because Handel set out to evoke sounds associated with water. Publications since the 1730s have organised the movements by key into three separate suites, hence the three HWV numbers attached to it in the catalogue of Handel's works. Handel's autograph (original manuscript) does not survive, and perhaps there never existed a master score of the work anyway. There is no record elsewhere of what was played that summer night on the Thames in 1717, and nothing to indicate how Handel originally organised the individual movements. The closest we have is a manuscript copy made by one of Handel's copyists dated 1718, and in that version the work consists of one large suite, not three separate ones.

In modern performances, the suites are commonly played one after another beginning with the suite in F major, followed by movements drawn from the D major and G major suites, as in this concert series. A *suite* in this period consisted of a mix of French court dances such as the *minuet* and *bourrée*, with other movements in the Italian style such as *Adagio*, *Andante* and *Allegro*. Handel added an English flavour with two movements based on the *hornpipe*, an English country dance, and hunting horns.

We know what instruments were used at the first performance, from a report sent by the Prussian ambassador to the court in Berlin immediately after the event:

*Next to the King's barge was that of the musicians, about 50 in number, who played on all kinds of instruments, to wit trumpets, horns, hautboys [oboes], bassoons, German [transverse] flutes, French flutes [recorders], violins and basses; but there were no singers.*

### What to Listen For

The suite in F major opens with a grand *Overture* ('opening' or 'entrance') in two parts, with a majestic first section contrasted with a faster fugal second one. This form was developed by in the 1650s, as a suitably ceremonial piece to announce the arrival of King Louis XIV of France at the beginning of an opera or ballet performance. This *Overture* could well have accompanied the arrival of George I at the Whitehall jetty.

It segues into an *Adagio* where the oboes predominate, followed by a cheerful *Allegro* in which a hunting motif is played first by horns, oboes and bassoon and echoed by the strings. The final movement in this set is the *Air*, a beautiful, serene melody played first by violins, who are joined on the repeat by the horns.



Portrait of George Frideric Handel by Balthasar Denner c.1726

Sophie Hutchings (1978-),  
Rrawun Maymuru (1980-)  
(arr. Nick Wales)  
**Cloud Beneath The Sea**

This work was co-composed by Sydney-based pianist and composer Sophie Hutchings and Rrawun Maymuru and co-produced by Nick Wales. Originally for piano, voice, and strings, it was recorded for the ARIA award winning album *A World Outside*. In this concert series, the orchestra will be performing a new arrangement of the work for voice and string orchestra by Nick Wales.

### What to Listen For

The piece opens with a gentle solo cello, introducing a motif which is later picked up by the other strings. It is minimalist in style, with slow sustained chords set against active shifting triplets in the upper strings. A dense, layered texture of sound is created with parts divided into sub-parts, and at times one instrument playing more than one note. It is tonally very stable. Texture, not melody, dominates.

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)  
**Water Music, Suite No. I in F major, HWV 348**  
*Minuet*  
*Bourée*  
*Hornpipe*

The Suite in F major features oboes and horns, instruments selected for their carrying power outdoors. This was the first composition heard in England in which horns were used as orchestral instruments. Until that time it was used exclusively as a hunting instrument, and it would have struck those listening in 1717 as very novel. Handel gives the horns the opening melody in the *Minuet* which begins this set of movements.

The *minuet* was a fashionable graceful court dance in this period, but the heavy-footed horns give it a rustic, comic effect. Following the *Minuet*, a sprightly *Bourrée* (a French court dance characterised by rapid movement of the feet), is heard first in the violins, then from the oboes, and finally from the full orchestra, followed by an English *Hornpipe* that receives a similar treatment.

The *hornpipe* was an English country dance, and its rhythmic pattern was used from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries in suites and theatre music. One of the many hornpipe country dance tunes was entitled 'Sailor's Hornpipe', which led to a widely held but incorrect belief the hornpipe was a nautical dance.

Nick Wales (1975-)  
**Harbour Light**

The play of light on the water on Sydney Harbour was Nick Wales' inspiration for *Harbour Light*, which is in the tradition of musical depictions of seascapes such as the *Sea Interludes* by Benjamin Britten. 'I was interested in creating uplifting melodies to echo the beauty and magnificence of the harbour while also creating layered textural and minimalistic phrases to mimic the mirror-like shimmering ripples of light reflecting off the water', Wales commented.

### What to Listen For

Again, texture is the outstanding feature in this work. Here the strings are not divided into the usual four parts but into nine, with further divisions occurring, for example in the opening section where two of the violin parts are playing more than one note. Multiple parts woven together create a dense glittering texture, evoking the shifting brilliance of sunlight on waves through a constant shifting of the rhythmic pulse.



**George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)**  
**Water Music, Suite No. 2 in D major,**  
**HWV 349, and Suite No. 3 in G major,**  
**HWV 350**

[Allegro]  
 Alla Hornpipe  
 [Sarabande]  
 Rigaudon [1 & 2]  
 Minuet [1]  
 [Minuet 2]  
 [Gigue 1 & 2]  
 Minuet

The D major movements are celebratory and triumphant, with the addition of trumpets and drums to horns and oboes, all instruments which Handel must have chosen because their sound would carry well across the water. The addition of drums gives the suite a military feel, to flatter a king and underline his military successes. The hornpipe in D major is opulent, much grander than the F major one, and features fast passage work by the violins in the middle section.

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This set of movements from the *Water Music* concludes with a ceremonious *Minuet* in D major, played by the full orchestra.

**Rrawun Maymuru (1980-) &**  
**Nick Wales (1975-)**  
**Nguy Gapu [Ocean Water]**

*'When the ocean lies still  
 and clear beneath the sun,  
 we sing Nguy Gapu —  
 a Songline of deep knowing.  
 This is the time of Gunbilk,  
 the crystal calm of the Yirrija moiety,  
 when the voices of the Gumatj,  
 Warramiri, and Lamamirri clans  
 rise like spirits weaving memory into melody.*

*When the ocean stirs  
 and the waves speak in thunder,  
 we call it Garngirr —  
 the rough breath of the sea.  
 From distant shores,  
 the water signals to us;  
 a lone tree that we catch for use —  
 Bakali, the floating wood,*

*Beneath the surface, life dances:  
 the octopus unfurls its silent limbs,  
 the whale sings in the deep,  
 and fish shimmer like scattered stars.  
 Above, birds wheel and dive,  
 hunting for food.*

*When the sun sets,  
 the wind sends a message  
 Smoke from the opposite shore  
 rises to become a cloud —  
 a signal of neighbours across the water,  
 their fires glowing*

*Nguy Gapu is not just a song.  
 It is a map of spirit,  
 a tide of connection,  
 a breath shared between land, sea, and sky.'*  
 - Rrawun Maymuru, 2025

This work is another collaboration between Rrawun Maymuru and Nick Wales. Wales explained that he was interested in how different types of water — still, rushing, flowing, glistening — could be explored musically:

*'Knowing I was writing for a period orchestra was really beneficial as it gave me some parameters to work within, both practically and stylistically. I wanted to write to the orchestra's strengths, stylistic nuances and typical performance practices but with the addition of a contemporary minimalistic edge. I love the double violin concertos of Vivaldi, and this really informed the climax of the piece featuring the first violins playing runs to mimic running water.*

*We are amplifying the orchestra and augmenting the sound of the ensemble with keyboard sub bass and reverb and delay type effects. The use of modern technologies fused with the sound of the baroque period instruments is exciting; to reimagine how the rich and organic tones of the baroque orchestra can be reimaged in a modern context.'*  
 -Nick Wales, 2025

**What to Listen For**

Here, voice and strings are joined by harpsichord and winds, as well as synthesiser. The work is again characterised by a dense, rich string texture, with violins now divided in six. The opening section features slow sonorous shifting chords heard first in the strings alone, who are then joined by the winds, with clear rhythms shared across the parts. Insistent complex rhythms in the long middle section build gradually to a climax. The solo violins and flute have spectacularly florid lines sometimes in parallel, sometimes interweaving against powerful rhythms from the other instruments, before a return to the calm of the opening section.

Composed & Arranged by: Rrawun Maymuru & Nick Wales\*

\*Published by Wise Music 3 Pty Ltd

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Paul Dyer, Rrawun Maymuru and Nick Wales in Byron Bay, 2025. Photo by Ashley Giles.





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