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Winiwini Gurruwiwi

Date of Birth: 31/12/1979
Clan: Gälpu
Homeland: Ŋaypinya
Moiety: Dhuwa

Biography

Commonly known as Larry, Winiwini is the son of famed Gälpu clan elder and yiḏaki master Djalu' Gurruwiwi. He has worked under the guidance of his father for many years and subsequently has become a very skilled yiḏaki maker and player.

His virtuoso yiḏaki playing is also well known worldwide, initially due to the fact that he is Djalu's son, then because of his playing being recorded alongside his father's on instructional CD's. In more recent years, Larry has become very well known through his yiḏaki playing on youtube. One of his videos has had over 3.2 million views at time of updating this profile.

Larry's yiḏaki playing is his own unique style that he has developed within the generic Yolŋu techniques, composition structures and clan styles. From a technical perspective, what makes his playing unique is his skill with syncopation and his precision within the articulatory phonetics of both his own style and Yolŋu compositions in general. In many people's opinion, Larry is one of the most skilled yiḏaki players on the planet.

He is also an active sportsman, playing AFL in his local team and taking pride in keeping fit and healthy. This fitness also has a positive impact on his yiḏaki playing ability, in particular within cyclic breathing patterns. Larry's cardiovascular strength and fitness are clearly evident when he plays yiḏaki. He maintains a strong playing pressure whilst drawing in air through exertion from the diaphragm. This means his cheeks do not bellow out when playing. In the world-wide didjeridu playing communities, there are a wide variety of contemporary techniques and it is most common to see the player using their cheeks to bellow out and draw air in to maintain a continual sound. In direct contrast to this, Yolŋu use the diaphragm, resulting in very minimal movement in the cheeks, which keeps the sound clear and defined. Larry is a master of this technique. Those who witness his playing are often stunned and amazed, struggling to comprehend how this is possible.

Larry is also a talented musician, composing his own keyboard based songs that have the distinctive Yolŋu 'gospel' quality to them, echoing the tonality of the music from world famous Gurrumul Yunupiŋu. Larry is the founder and lead singer of the Barra band and is currently collaborating with Australian artist Gotye, having performed together at Womad in 2015.

He has featured on a Japanese television commercial and several documentaries. He now travels regularly with his father to share his culture through performances and educational events.