

ARCHIE ROACH AND RUBY HUNTER



WASH MY SOUL IN THE RIVER'S FLOW

★★★★

"This beautiful film is, in every way, a memorable experience."

David Stratton
THE AUSTRALIAN

"On the many occasions this film soars, it's sublime."

Luke Buckmaster
THE GUARDIAN'S TOP TEN AUSTRALIAN FILMS OF 2022

★★★★

"The film is a glorious and intimate experience."

Jane Freebury
CANNBERRA TIMES

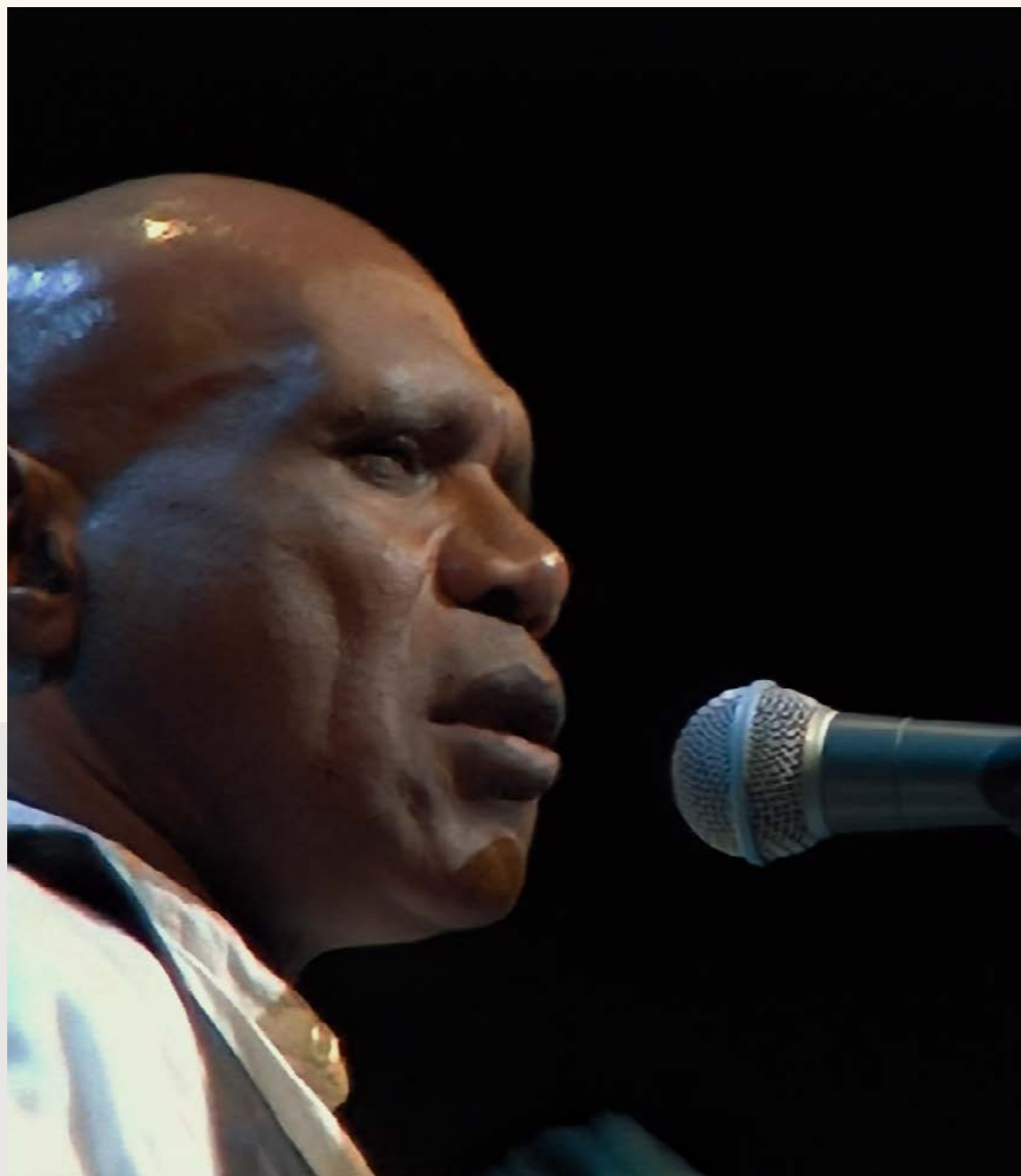


"As essential and powerful as *Amazing Grace* or *Summer of Soul*. Magnificent and masterful, it sweeps you in its wake and carries you for the ride. This film is a miracle."

Andrew F Pierce
THE CURB

ADG 2022
AWARDS
NOMINATED BEST DIRECTION
DEBUT FEATURE FILM





Archie Roach. Courtesy of Wash My Soul Productions

SYNOPSIS

In 2004, Archie Roach and Ruby Hunter, artists at the peak of their power, told their stories through spoken word and song in *Kura Tungar—Songs from the River*, a collaboration with Paul Grabowsky and the Australian Art Orchestra.

Now, Hunter and Roach's profoundly moving experiences—about being stolen as children, finding each other and returning to Country—come to the big screen in a cinematic celebration of love, survival and triumph.

“I love anything connected to Archie and Ruby’s music, because that’s exactly what it does—it connects you. It’s an invitation to their home and their space and their people...I can’t wait for people to see this beautiful film.”

Emma Donovan, Executive Producer

Wash My Soul in the River's Flow is a cinematic reinvention of a legendary concert that premiered in 2004. *Kura Tungar — Songs from the River* was a collaboration between First Nations singer-songwriters Archie Roach and Ruby Hunter working with Paul Grabowsky and the 22-piece Australian Art Orchestra. Using footage combining conversations, rehearsals, and the opening night, with breathtaking images of Hunter's Ngarrindjeri country in South Australia, the film is a portrait of artists at the peak of their powers and a profoundly moving story of loss, love and what it means to truly come 'home'.

HAMER HALL MELBOURNE
OCTOBER 17, 2004

THE CONCERT

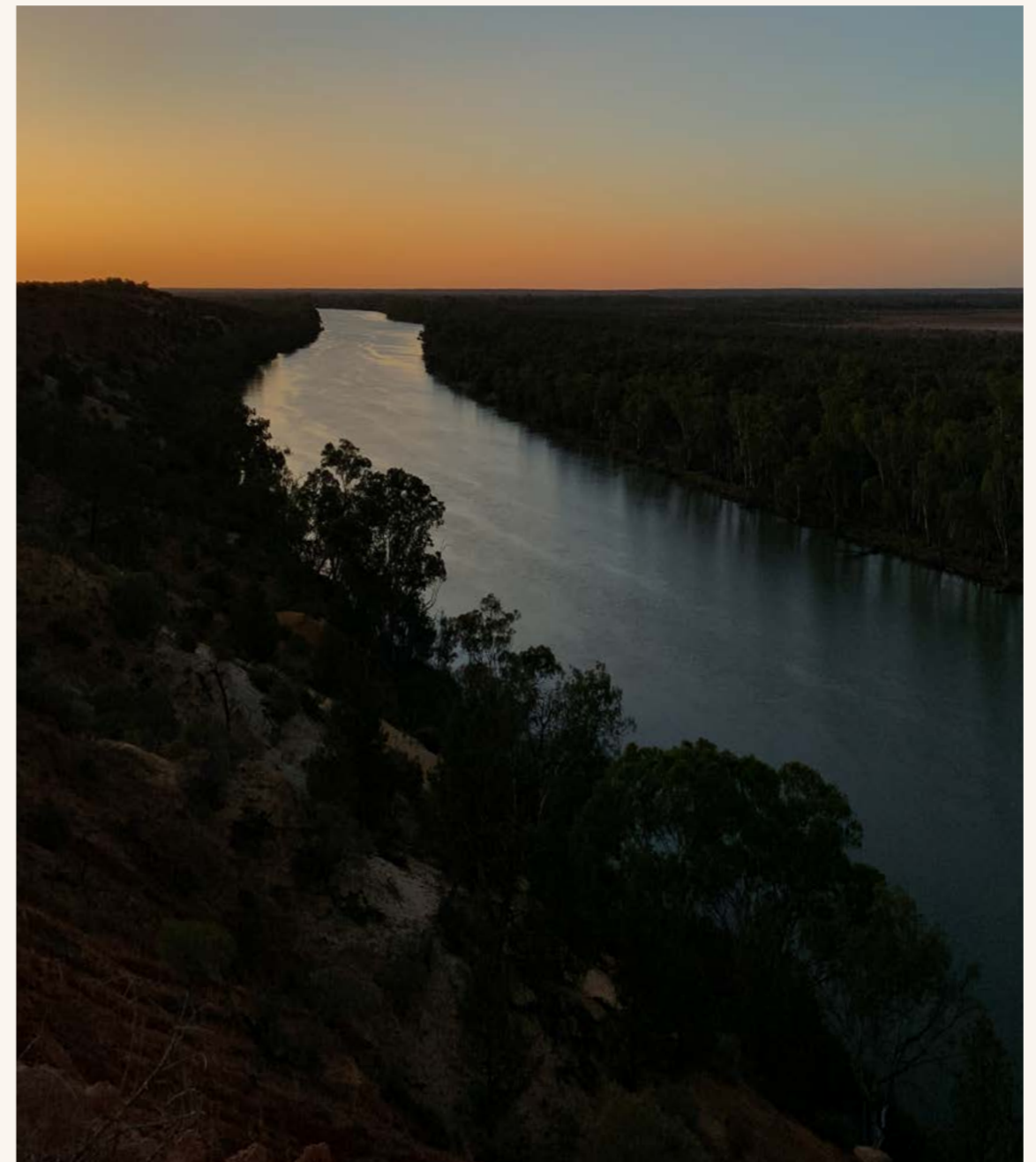
In 2004, First Nations singer-songwriters Archie Roach and Ruby Hunter collaborated with Paul Grabowsky and the 22-piece Australian Art Orchestra (AAO) to create an astonishing work that premiered at the Hamer Hall in Melbourne. Telling on-stage stories about their lives with songs about the Murray River and Ngarrindjeri Country — where Ruby spent her early childhood with her grandparents and siblings before she was stolen—the concert received a rapturous standing ovation in a full house of over 2000 people.

The music—sophisticated, modern, poignant, original and intensely moving—combines Roach and Hunter’s lyrics and chord structure with the contemporary jazz orchestration of Grabowsky and the AAO. Directed by Patrick Nolan and premiering at the Melbourne International Arts Festival, it was also performed at the Sydney Opera House and Adelaide Festival Centre. The following year *Kura Tungar* won the Helpmann Award for the Best Contemporary Australian Concert.

KURA TUNGAR

SONGS FROM THE RIVER

Murray River, South Australia. Photo: Philippa Bateman



ARCHIE ROACH & RUBY HUNTER

Ruby Hunter and Archie Roach. Photo: Sandy Scheltema



AWARD-WINNING ADMIRER & REVERED

Archie Roach and Ruby Hunter are shining icons in our nation's culture. Award-winning, revered and widely admired artists, they occupy a unique place in Australian music and society. As singer-songwriters and musicians, they have played internationally with some of the greatest in the world—Bob Dylan, Patti Smith, Paul Simon, Joan Armatrading, Suzanne Vega, Sting and Billy Bragg, among others—but their journey to self-expression and success was not an easy one.

In the 1960s, Hunter and Roach were taken from their First Nations families and institutionalised in Children's Homes before they were fostered out to white carers. Separated from siblings and raised without being told they had been stolen, Archie and Ruby, like many Stolen Generation children never saw their parents again. Forcibly removing Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander children from their families was a key government policy of 'assimilation' that persisted for 100 years although it was not unique to Australia—the First Nations people of North America suffered the same injustice.

ARCHIE ROACH

is a Gunditjmara/Bundjalung man born in Mooroopna, Victoria in 1956. After being taken from his family at the Framlingham mission, Archie moved from foster family to foster family, before settling with the Cox's who had emigrated from Glasgow, Scotland to Melbourne. Archie's love of music blossomed in their home, with their daughter teaching him the basic rudiments of piano. In his teens, a letter from a sister he didn't know he had, about the death of his mother, sparked an angry search for his real identity and he left the Cox home at fourteen, never to return.

Living on the streets, finding solace for his pain in alcohol while working sporadically in low-income jobs, he continued to search for his parents and siblings. At age 17, with some money in his pocket after a fruit picking stint, he tossed a coin to see if he would stay in Victoria or head to Adelaide.

Archie Roach. Photo: Bill McCauley



“There was a girl waiting for me in Adelaide, one who would change my life forever.”

(Archie Roach, [Tell Me Why](#))

Archie met Ruby when they were teenagers, at the People's Palace, a cheap accommodation hostel run by the Salvation Army in Adelaide—she had also gone in search of the family she had been stolen from.

“I can still see her in my mind today. I can see the look on her face: intense, intelligent and kind. I can see her eyes: wide, deep and dark brown, and I can see the most beautiful round cheeks I reckon I've ever seen, all framed by waves of dark hair. I can see her blue dress cut just below her knees, and a white cardigan, and matching white socks disappearing into black shoes. She looked about my age. Our eyes met and then averted.”

(Archie Roach, [Tell Me Why](#))

Through the love Archie and Ruby discovered in each other, they turned their lives around.

Roach credits Hunter with nurturing his songwriting and singing career, and for getting them both free of alcohol. In the late 1980s, Roach and Hunter formed Altogether, a band of emerging Aboriginal musicians. But it was the first song Roach wrote when he got sober, ‘Took the Children Away’ (1988) that put him on the map. A song that has become an anthem for the Stolen Generations and for which he was awarded an Australian Human Rights Award, the only songwriter to be given that honour.

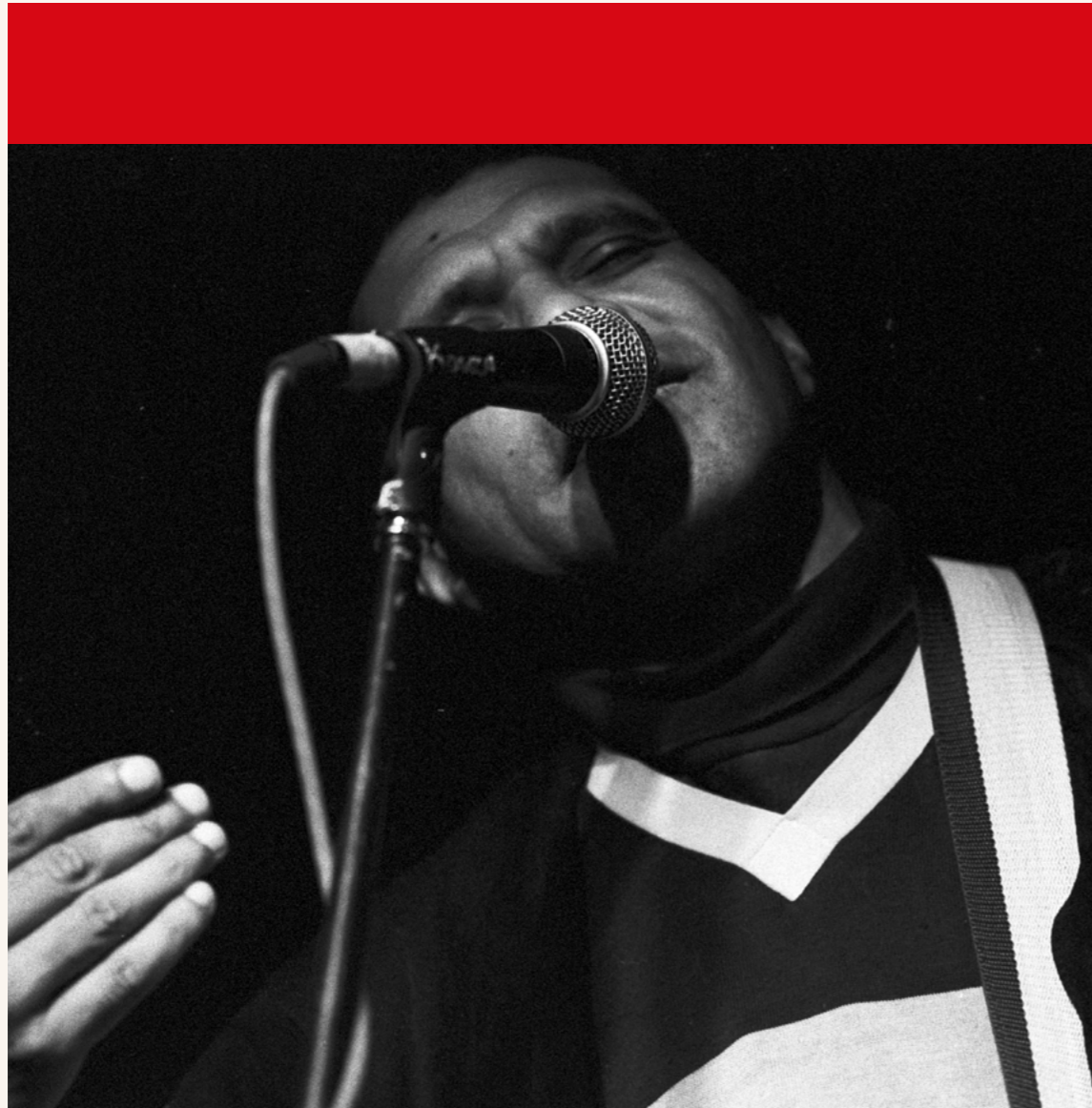
In 1991, when offered the opportunity to make his first album, Roach originally resisted. It was Hunter, hands on hips, who said: “It's not all about you, you know. How many blackfellas you reckon get to record an album?”

Her influence didn't stop there. A song short for his first album *Charcoal Lane* (1990), Roach and producers Paul Kelley and Steve Connolly settled on 'Down City Streets'—a song written by Ruby about living on the streets as a homeless teenager. She had been secretly writing songs and hiding them in drawers. Archie discovered the song and Ruby persuaded him to include it on the album.

At the ARIA Music Awards 1991, *Charcoal Lane* won the ARIA Award for Best New Talent and Best Indigenous Release. It was included in the US *Rolling Stone's* list of Top 50 Albums for that year.

Archie had arrived.

Archie Roach. Photo: Brian Rapsey



ARIA HALL OF FAME

In 2020, Roach was inducted into the ARIA Hall of Fame, and appeared on the cover of *Rolling Stone* as one of the Top 50 Australian singer songwriters of all time with AC/DC, Sia, Michael Hutchence and Kylie Minogue.

Beyond his fame as a significant world class artist, Roach has been credited with playing an important role in the conversation around Reconciliation in Australia. He has devoted decades of his life working with communities and incarcerated Indigenous people, and through the Archie Roach Foundation, he has supported the storytelling careers of emerging First Nations artists and musicians.

Archie's memoir *Tell Me Why: The Story of My Life and My Music* won the Indie Book of the Year non-Fiction, the Victorian Premier's Literary Awards for Indigenous Writing and NSW Premier's Award for the Young People's History Prize (2021).

www.archieroach.com

TOOK THE CHILDREN AWAY

“In the film, Uncle Archie talks about a song that he wrote called ‘Took The Children Away’, which is a part of Australian music history. It was actually the first time I’d ever heard, in a film, or in any interviews where Uncle Archie yarns about the impact that it had on him...It’s kind of nice to hear from Uncle Archie what music has done for him, too, and that’s what’s kept him going. It’s been a massive healing thing for him...It’s the reason why he writes.”

Emma Donovan, Executive Producer

Ruby Hunter. Photo: Jacqueline Mitelman



RUBY HUNTER

A Ngarrindjeri, Kokatha and Pitjantjara woman, Ruby Hunter was born in 1955 by a billabong on the Murray River. She started her life in the semi-traditional way, learning Ngarrindjeri language and customs, but in 1964 she was stolen from her grandparent's home in the Coorong. Split up from her siblings, and sent to a children's home, she was later fostered.

Ruby speaks of being a foster child and taken to a performance of the Jackson 5 with a group of other Aboriginal children to create a 'black presence in the audience', and of Archie's appearance on the Happy Hammond television show as one of the Tarax Juniors. Ruby says she remembers seeing Archie in the audience on the show and telling her foster mother:

"I'm going to marry that boy when I grow up."

In 1993, Ruby signed with a major record label, Mushroom Records, and recorded her first album *Thoughts Within*. She was the first Indigenous Australian woman to do so. Outside of her family, it remained the achievement of which she was most proud. In 2000, she recorded a Blues and Roots album *Feeling Good*.

Ruby was an eloquent advocate for the rights of First Nations people, a great storyteller, a trailblazer and musical star to generations of young Indigenous women who are successful singer-songwriters, a beloved Elder in her community and 'Mum' to many.

A LOVE STORY

"Aunty Ruby's always been a very honest songwriter. I think she met her match with someone like Uncle Archie."

In the film, you can see the connection and the strength that Uncle Archie had for his woman. How he did that, through the music on stage, it's actually breath-taking...It's emotional to see this beautiful love story of two amazing artists."

Emma Donovan, Executive Producer

ON RUBY HUNTER

“There were no other Aboriginal women in the scene, on the scene, when Aunty Rube was around. To me she was the only Aboriginal woman and there was such a big gap after her. Tiddas emerged and Christine Anu but there are years apart of Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander women in Australian music...I love Aunty Rube’s songs and messages and what she was about. I was probably too young to understand what she was about when I first saw her... I saw her on *Rage* singing ‘Let My Children Be’ but it was the image of her, a black Aunty there on the TV; while everyone else was taping Mariah Carey songs, I saw an Aboriginal woman... Her lyrics and the way she sang makes you feel good and proud, that’s what I love about her songwriting.”

Emma Donovan,
Executive Producer & Singer/Songwriter

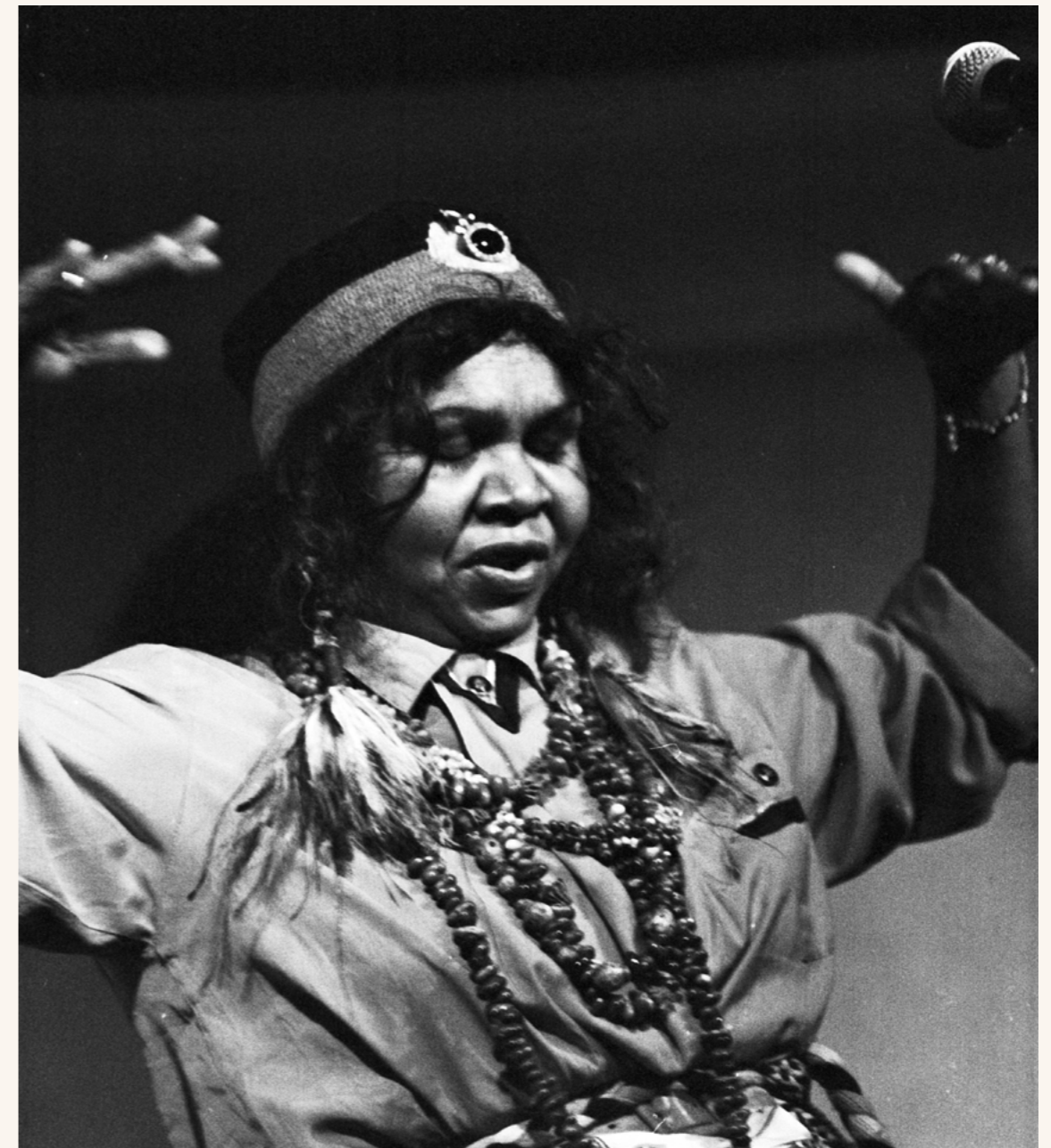
Ruby Hunter. Photo: Brian Rapsey



Ruby Hunter’s voice is a revelation: deep with clarity of tone and emotional range. She had a razor wit, a phenomenal strength of character, a capacity to find humour in the darkest of places and didn’t have much sympathy, nor time for self-pity. She had no difficulty telling it as it is and her brothers say, she was the youngest but she was always “the boss”. All this is evident in the film whether she is in conversation, on stage or in rehearsal. What is also clear in the film is Ruby and Archie’s bond. They spent 38 years together—inseparable partners in love, life and music until Ruby’s sudden death in 2010 at the age of 54.

The film is dedicated to Ruby Hunter.

Ruby Hunter. Photo: Brian Rapsey



DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

PHILIPPA BATEMAN

WASH MY SOUL IN THE RIVER'S FLOW HAS BEEN SEVENTEEN YEARS IN THE MAKING.

In 2004, my friend Patrick Nolan who was the concert director of *Kura Tungar—Songs from the River* asked me if I'd like to film this unique production and its preparations. I leapt at the chance—I'm a die-hard music fan and thought the scope, ambition and storytelling of Archie and Ruby made it an event both artistically distinctive and important culturally to document.

Conceived, in part, as an act of reconciliation through the artistic collaboration of Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists, *Kura Tungar* was performed prior to the Australian government making a formal apology to the Stolen Generations. (The apology didn't happen until 2008). Non-Indigenous Australia's failure to confront and deal with our complicity in our destructive treatment of Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander people, on so many fronts, was something I felt strongly about. What I learned from watching Archie and Ruby in this film, was how bad we are at listening. I am no different.

The Coorong, South Australia. Photo: Philippa Bateman



I SAW THE POTENTIAL OF THIS FILM THROUGH ARCHIE AND RUBY'S TRUTH, HUMOUR, GENEROSITY AND TALENT, TO OPEN PEOPLE'S HEARTS AND MINDS TO THE POWER OF LISTENING.

2004

With a small crew, headed by cinematographer Allan Collins (*Beneath Clouds*), we filmed conversations between Hunter, Roach, the concert director Patrick Nolan, Paul Grabowsky and the AAO, the rehearsals and the opening night at Hamer Hall, Melbourne. The intention at that time was to go on tour with the production but that did not eventuate and is often the way with films, the footage was stored and put away for another time.

2020

In early 2020, just prior to the emergence of Covid, I approached Roach about making the film (he is a producer on the project), and sought the permission, guidance and involvement of Ruby's remaining siblings—her brothers Eric Richards and Jeff Hunter. With Roach and Hunter's family on board and my producing partner Kate Hodges, documentary filmmaker Ian Darling at the Shark Island Institute funded the first stages of development. He also joined the team as Executive Producer and contributed production funds so we could begin making the film.



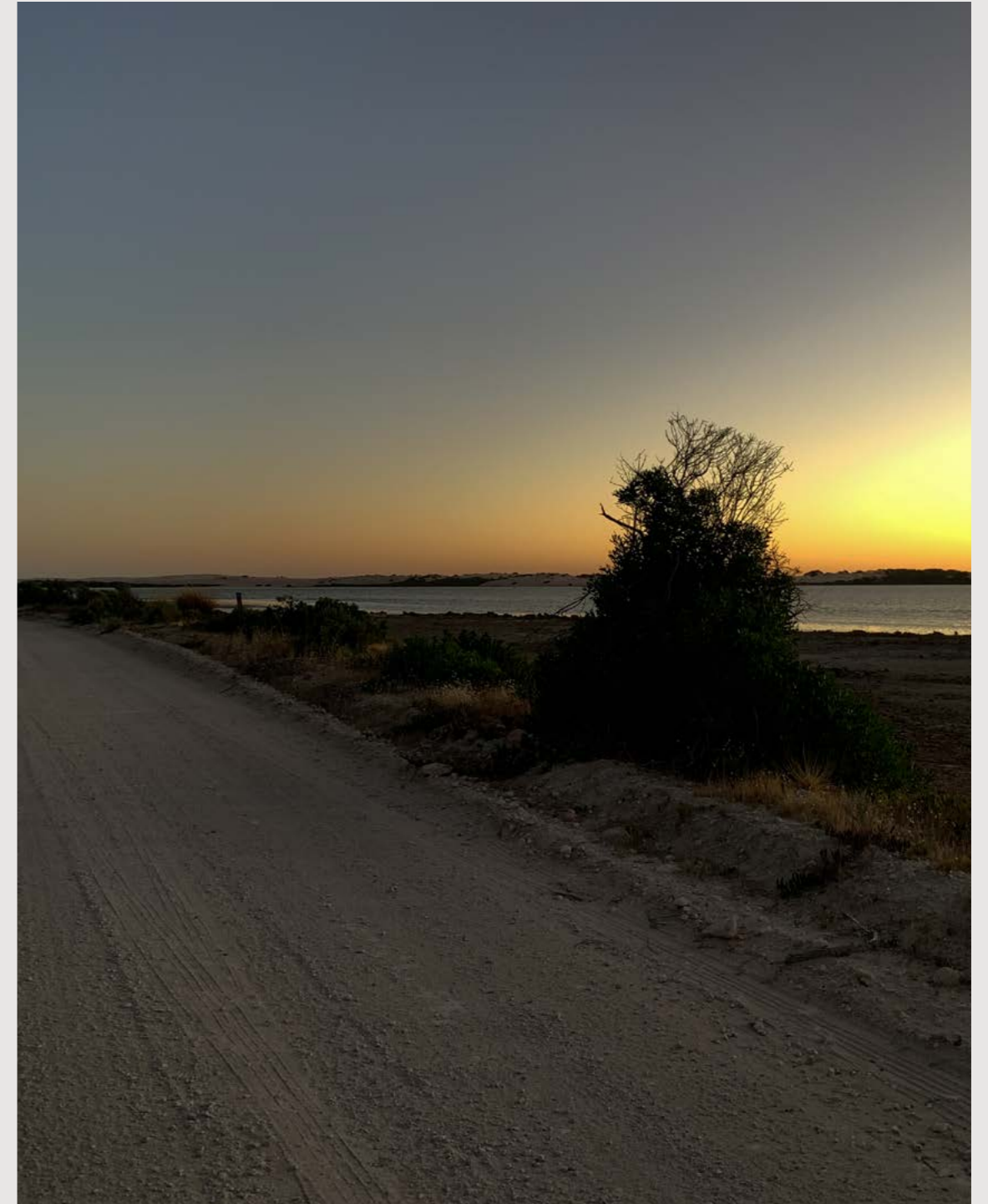
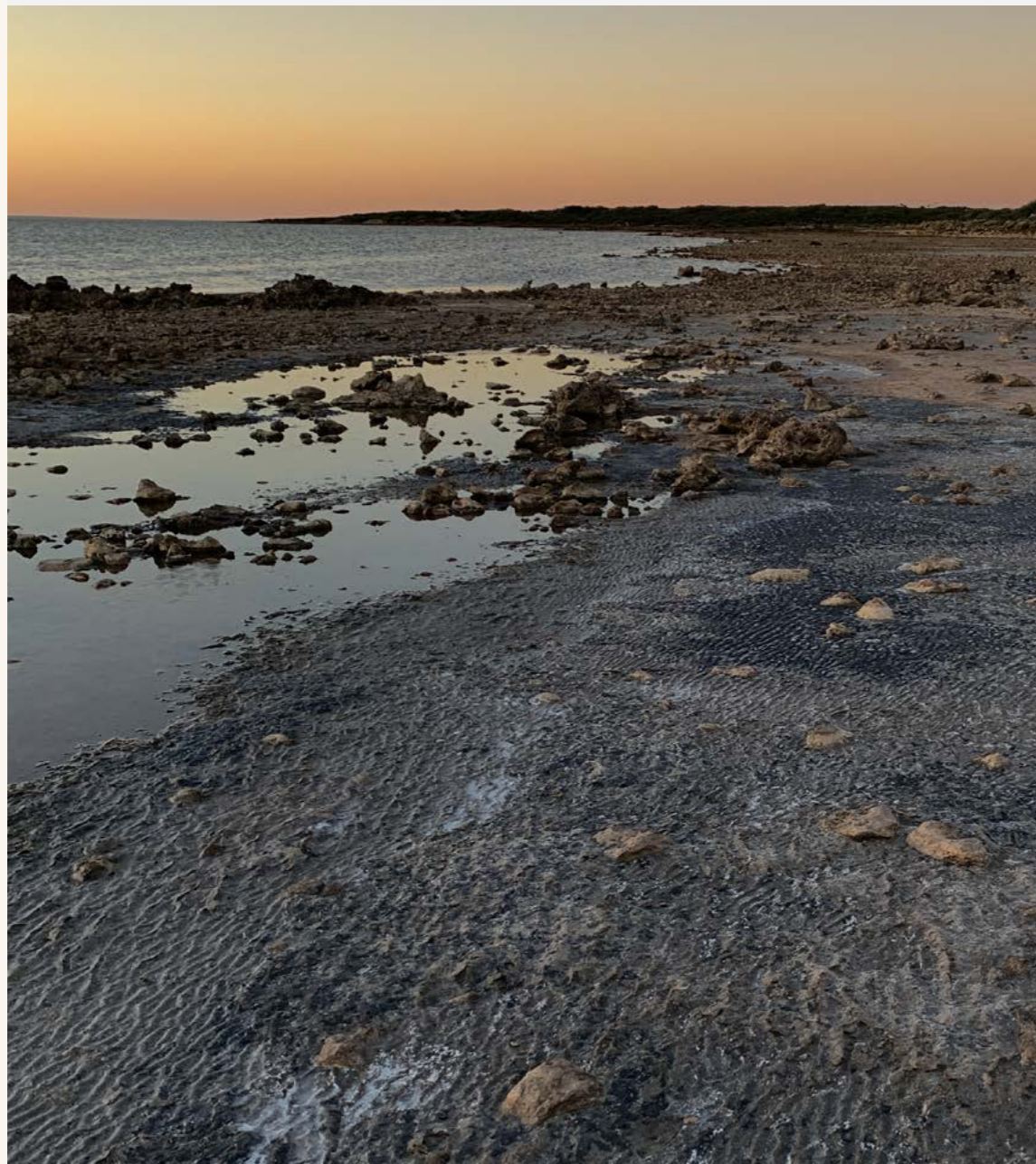
Jeff Hunter and Eric Richards, Ruby's brothers on Country.

Photo: Philippa Bateman

All those years later, soaking in the rushes, I was blown away by the sublime artistry of Archie Roach and Ruby Hunter. It was thrilling. My first intention in making the film was a strong desire to share and celebrate their talent with the world.

The longer I sat with the footage and listened, also striking was the truth of what Archie and Ruby spoke about as survivors of the Stolen Generation, their mythic love story in the face of such hardship, and their plea that we care for Murray River threatened by environmental destruction. All this was as germane in 2020 as it had been in 2004.

Coorong National Park, South Australia. Photo: Philippa Bateman



Coorong National Park, South Australia. Photo: Philippa Bateman

I had been in the audience on the concert's opening night. The room was electric, the emotion was high and it was no surprise when thousands of people jumped to their feet for a standing ovation. The transcendent feeling of joy in the room after Archie sang the final song 'Wash My Soul in the River's Flow' was profound.

NGARRINDJERI COUNTRY



Lake Bonney, Barmera Riverland, South Australia. Photo: Philippa Bateman

THERE'S LOSS, PAIN AND A DEEP SENSE OF LONGING IN ARCHIE AND RUBY'S SONGS BUT THERE IS ALSO LOVE, REDEMPTION, HEALING AND GRACE.

I wanted all that tangled beauty to be alive in the film, as it is alive in Archie and Ruby and their performance, and that of the AAO musicians.

When they had children of their own, Archie and Ruby returned to the Coorong to live. It was there and then, Ruby said that her true healing began—we needed to have a glimpse of what her Country was and is. The Ngarrindjeri people of South Australia have lived by the Murray River for over 18,000 years. It is astoundingly beautiful.

From the start, I aimed to open a door cinematically into the songs, to offer the audience a chance to immerse themselves viscerally, not only in the music but the grandeur and singularity of the land Hunter and Roach sing about. The challenge was to find a way to cinematically express the emotional pull of Country, as experienced by Archie and Ruby in memory, song and performance—without breaking the flow of the music.



Lake Bonney. Photo: Philippa Bateman

Seventeen years later after the filming of the concert in 2004, I travelled with cinematographers Bonnie Elliott and Maxx Corkindale, and guided by the Hunter-Richards' family, we shot on Ngarrindjeri Country. The generosity of the family meant we were also able to access and shoot at key locations, such as the home of Ruby's grandparents and from where she and her siblings were stolen in the 1960s. Being on Country with the Hunter-Richards family, and in that ancient and stunning landscape was a privilege felt by all of us.



Photo: Philippa Bateman

Camera assistant Bonnie Paku and DP Bonnie Elliott at Lake Bonney, Barmera Riverland, South Australia.

The intertitles in the film are mostly direct quotes from Ruby Hunter and from Archie Roach's memoir Tell Me Why. Their insights and wisdom speak for themselves. For the film, a choice we made, with Archie, was to use both English and Ngarrindjeri language on screen. Archie and Ruby wrote their songs in English but for Archie and Ruby's family, the presence of the Ngarrindjeri language on screen is an important acknowledgment of culture.

Like many First Nations people, Archie and Ruby were forbidden to speak their language after they were stolen and assimilation policies had in many cases, wiped out Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander languages in Australia. The last fluent Ngarrindjeri language speaker died in 1969. The first Aboriginal language and words Archie heard was Ngarrindjeri—and he heard them from Ruby. Ruby's sister-in-law Rosslyn Richards worked closely with Ngarrindjeri Elders and language teachers Rita and Audrey Lindsay to produce the translations.

Ruby Hunter died in 2010. She was a trailblazer for young First Nations female artists and a much loved Elder. Emma Donovan, our Executive Producer and for whom Ruby was an inspiration in her own singer-songwriter career, continues to sing her songs, and speaks passionately about the gap in her legacy that the film addresses.

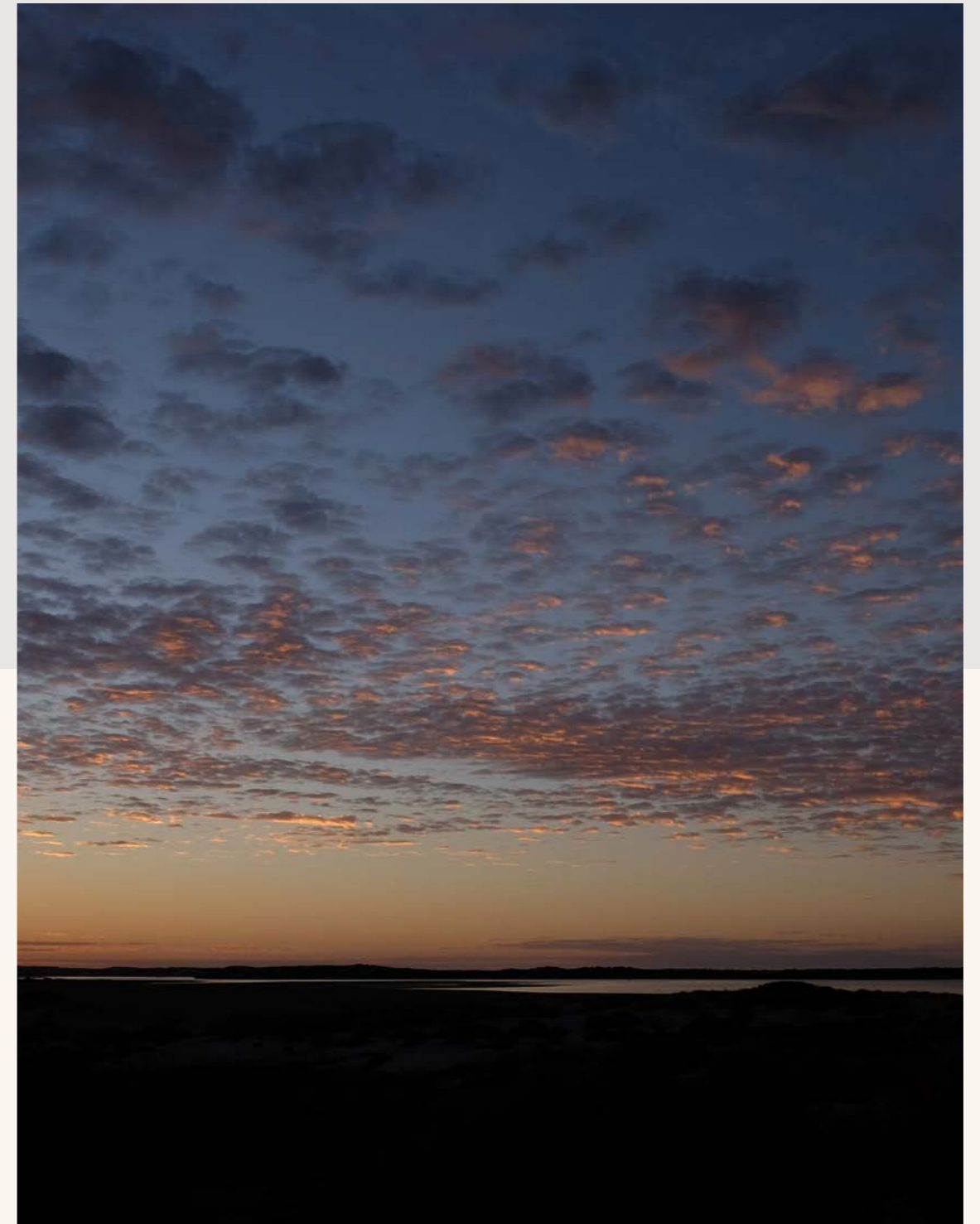


Photo: Philippa Bateman

Our hope is that the film takes Ruby and Archie's spine-tingling talent and their generosity of spirit to the world.

WRITER DIRECTOR

Philippa Bateman

PRODUCERS

**Archie Roach AM
Kate Hodges
Philippa Bateman**

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS

**Ian Darling AO
Emma Donovan**

EDITORS

**Matias Bolla
Lily Davis**

CINEMATOGRAPHERS

**Allan Collins ACS
Bonnie Elliott ACS**

SOUND DESIGN & MIX

Sam Petty

TITLES DESIGN & ARTWORK

Jakub Zaremba

MUSIC & LYRICS

**Archie Roach
Ruby Hunter**

ARRANGEMENTS BY

**Paul Grabowsky AO
& the Australian Art Orchestra**

PRODUCTION COMPANY

Enigma Machine



**An Enigma Machine Production
in association with
Screen Australia, Create NSW & Shark Island Institute**

TRAILER

[Wash My Soul Trailer - Coming Soon](#)

SONGS

[Ruby Hunter - Down City Streets - Excerpt From Wash My Soul In The River's Flow](#)

[Archie Roach - Into The Bloodstream - Excerpt From Wash My Soul In The River's Flow](#)

EXCERPTS

[Executive Producer and singer/songwriter Emma Donovan talks about Wash My Soul in the River's Flow](#)

[Executive Producer Emma Donovan Talks About Why Ruby Hunter Is So Important To Her And First Nations Women](#)

[Executive Producer Emma Donovan On Archie Roach's "Took The Children Away" And What The Film Reveals About His Feelings On Writing The Song](#)

[Executive Producer Emma Donovan On The Love Story That Is Wash My Soul In The River's Flow](#)

[Executive Producer Emma Donovan On Connection To Country In Wash My Soul In The River's Flow](#)



**TRAILER
SONGS EXCERPTS**

WRITER / DIRECTOR / PRODUCER

PHILIPPA BATEMAN

works across documentary, feature film, television drama and screen-based media arts.
Wash My Soul in the River's Flow is her directorial debut.

Philippa worked as a senior Creative Executive in the development, production and acquisition of feature films for 25 years in Australia, the US and UK. She began her cinema career in script and story development in Los Angeles and London, having worked as a published feature writer in magazine journalism (*Harper's Bazaar*, *Elle*, among others) and an academic researcher in Art History and Film at the University of Sydney, after graduating with a degree in Philosophy and English Literature.

As a creative producer, Philippa has had First Look producer deals with two US studios—Universal and United Artists (during the tenure of UA President Bingham Ray) for whom she also consulted on acquisitions.

At her former company April Films, which started life with a Universal deal, notable acquisitions included: Geraldine Brooks' *March* prior to the novel winning the Pulitzer Prize for Literature 2006, and *Jindabyne* written by Bea Christian and based on the Raymond Carver story 'So Much Water So Close to Home'.

April financed, produced and marketed *Jindabyne*. Directed by Ray Lawrence (*Lantana*) and starring Laura Linney and Gabriel Byrne, the film was selected for Director's Fortnight, Cannes 2006 and screened at Toronto International Film Festival and Berlin Film Festival. A critical hit in Australia and internationally, Peter Bradshaw, film critic for *The Guardian* UK gave the film five stars. *Jindabyne* sold to Sony Classics and was released in 2007 in the US. In Australia, it was distributed by Roadshow Films and was nominated for 11 AFI Awards, including Best Film. April Films won SPAA Independent Producer's Award (2006).

After shutting April films in 2010, Philippa had a stint in Paris writing and taking photographs for the online publication *The Global Mail*. On her return to Sydney, she founded Enigma Machine, to develop her own projects and work with like-minded creatives across a range of mediums. She produced the large scale interactive artwork *Starry Night* by Brad Miller for Vivid (2014) and *The Beehive* (2018) about murdered activist and publisher Juanita Nielsen (starring Pamela Rabe). A non-linear documentary and art installation directed by Zanny Begg, it was commissioned by *ACMI* and Artbank. Held in both collections, the work was recently acquired by the City of Sydney for its permanent art collection.

Since 2014, Philippa has worked with documentary filmmaker Ian Darling at the *Shark Island Institute* including: consulting as a writer/producer on *Good Pitch Australia*, *Voxdocs* and as a mentor with the Shark Island Story and Impact Labs. She was Executive Producer on Darling's second feature *Alone Across Australia* (2004) and he is an Executive Producer of *Wash My Soul*. The film is a production in association with the Institute.

A recipient of the 2019 Documentary Australia Foundation/Create NSW She-Doc Fellowship, Philippa was embedded at *Alex Gibney's Jigsaw Productions* in New York. While in the US, she further developed the US based feature documentary *AMERICAN HUNTER* (dir. Alex Kershaw) and wrote a feature documentary, *CRASH*. She is currently working on her next documentary and other Enigma Machine projects that include TV drama and feature film.

enigmamachine.com.au

PRODUCER

ARCHIE ROACH

is a Guditjmara/Bundjalung man born in Mooroopna, Victoria in 1956. Singer-songwriter, author and icon, Archie Roach is one of Australia's most loved and admired artists. In 2020, Roach was inducted into the ARIA Hall of Fame and appeared on the cover of *Rolling Stone* as one of the Top 50 Australian singer songwriters of all time with AC/DC, Sia, Michael Hutchence and Kylie Minogue. He was also named Double J's Australian Artist of the Year.

Roach has been credited with playing an important role in the conversation around reconciliation. ARIA CEO Dan Rosen: "He told stories no-one else was telling, and brought these issues to the forefront of the Australian psyche. His thirty-year career on stage is enough for him to be a legend, but it is matched with off-stage activism and his tireless work to give back to the communities around him. He's a man who has made the world a better place, and he rightly takes his place as a giant of Australian music". *Sydney Morning Herald/The Age* 10 November 2020.

His fame is well established and the awards pile high but outside of his career as a singer-songwriter, Roach is committed to his work in prisons inspiring young Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander people to tell their own stories and pursue a career in the arts through the [*Archie Roach Foundation*](#).

With the release of *Wash My Soul in the River's Flow* in 2022, Roach hopes that the gap in Ruby Hunter's legacy will be addressed and people will appreciate the enormity of her talent, humanity and contribution.

"This is a film Ruby Hunter would be very proud of".

Kate Hodges, Producer has worked in the Australian film and television industry for over 25 years for some of Australia's most prestigious current affairs programs, ABC television's documentary department and as an independent producer. Some highlights include the Walkley Award finalist and Logie nominated documentary *After the Deluge*, *The Valley* with journalist Paul Lockyer and a recent stint producing environmental films - *I Can Change Your Mind About Climate* and *Ten Bucks A Litre*.

She was one of the producers of the theatrical documentary *Frackman* and spearheaded the innovative grassroots distribution and impact strategy that drove the box office and outreach success of the film.

On the back of the success of *Frackman* and motivated by the potential of creating real conversation and community around documentaries, Kate oversaw the release and outreach strategies for a range of social issue films through the Screen Australia backed enterprise Screen Impact.

She continued her work in the impact sector as Director of Impact and Strategy at Shark Island Institute, managing the Good Pitch Australia slate of 19 feature docs. She has recently completed work on a Shark Island feature documentary *The Department* and produced *Wash My Soul in The River's Flow* with Director/Producer Philippa Bateman.

PRODUCER

KATE HODGES



Emma Donovan. Photo: Ian Laidlow

www.emmadonovan.com

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

EMMA DONOVAN

is an acclaimed Indigenous Australian singer and songwriter best known for her work with soul bands, The Putbacks and The Black Arm Band project. She has also toured and recorded with Archie Roach and Ruby Hunter, Spinifex Gum, Christine Anu, Yothu Yindi, Jimmy Little and Paul Kelly among others.

Emma started her singing career at age seven, appearing in family band The Donovans. On her mother's side, Emma is part of the famed Donovan family of singers of the Gumbaynggirr people, of what is now known as Northern New South Wales. On her Father's side, Emma is of the Yamatji people, of what is now known as Western Australia.

Emma founded the acapella group The Stiff Gins in 2000. After The Stiff Gins, she released a solo album *Changes* in 2004 and an EP *Ngaaranga* in 2009. In 2004, she was the subject of SBS documentary *Gumbaynggirr Lady*. In 2007 Emma joined The Black Arm Band and was part of their *Murundak* show, which reproduced iconic songs of the Aboriginal resistance movement in a theatrical setting. From its inception, till it wrapped up in 2018, The Black Arm band was born after Ruby Hunter commented to her partner Archie Roach, "We need an Aboriginal orchestra" and in response to former Prime Minister John Howard's speech in which he dismissed the "black armed view of history". The band, consisting of Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists was an enormously important group, producing a number of shows which toured internationally and helped establish the careers of a new generation of Indigenous singers of whom Emma was one.

In 2015 Emma began her ongoing collaboration with Melbourne combo The Putbacks, meeting drummer Rory McDougall and bassist Mick Meagher when they were playing together in The Black Arm band. Emma and The Putbacks went on to release the album *Dawn* to great acclaim. *Dawn* was born of Emma and the band's shared love for classic American soul and the protest music of Indigenous Australia. Equal parts Aretha Franklin, Coloured Stone, Ruby Hunter and Al Green, *Dawn* was a revelation for soul audiences worldwide. In 2020, Emma Donovan and The Putbacks released *Crossover* as a tribute to Emma's mother. Her latest album is *Under These Streets* centred on home, family and community.

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

IAN DARLING

www.sharkisland.com.au

Ian Darling, Executive Producer is an award-winning documentary filmmaker. He is Executive Director of Shark Island Institute in Sydney.

His Director and Producer credits include *The Final Quarter*, *Paul Kelly – Stories of Me*, *The Oasis*, *Suzy & the Simple Man*, *In the Company of Actors*, *Alone Across Australia*, *Woodstock for Capitalists*, and *Polly & Me*. He is an Executive Producer of *Allen V. Farrow*, *Paper and Glue*, *On The Record*, *2040*, *The Fourth Estate*, *The Bleeding Edge*, *Unrest*, *Inventing Tomorrow* and *How to Change the World*. He is currently producing *The Department*.

Ian Darling received the Byron Kennedy Award for innovation and the relentless pursuit of excellence at the 2018 AACTA Awards. He received the AFI/AACTA Award for Best Direction in a Documentary, has been a Walkley Awards Finalist (twice), twice a winner of the Film Critics Award, and nominated for numerous Australian Directors Guild, AFI/AACTA, and IF awards.

He was former Chair and Founder of Documentary Australia Foundation and Good Pitch Australia. He recently created voxdocs (Short films. Different voices. Big ideas) in partnership with *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*. He is a Member of the Impact Partners Advisory Board in New York and has been Chair of The Caledonia Foundation since 2001.

His photographs have been finalists in the National Photographic Portrait Prize, the Moran Contemporary Photographic Prize, the Sydney Life Photography Prize, and the Head On Photo Festival.

He has an MBA from IMD Switzerland, and a BA (Acc.) from the Australian National University.



Maxx Corkindale and Bonnie Elliott, Coorong National Park. Photo: Philippa Bateman

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

RUN TIME	88 minutes
COLOUR	Colour Black & White
ASPECT RATIO	1.78:1
FORMAT	HD
SHOOTING FORMATS	Mini DV Digital Betacam Super 8 4K
EXHIBITION FORMAT & FRAME RATE	DCP (25fps)
SOUND	Stereo & 5.1
LANGUAGE	English Ngarrindjeri (text only)

Production Company

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This film was made on unceded Aboriginal Lands.

We acknowledge and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging, and to the Traditional Owners of Country on which this concert was performed.

We acknowledge Gadigal Country, one of the twenty-nine clans that make up the Eora Nation. We pay our respects to the Traditional Owners and Custodians of that land and to their Elders past, present and emerging.

We acknowledge Ngarrindjeri Country and pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging. Without the support of the Ngarrindjeri Nation, this film and Ruby's story would not have been told.