



Press release

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SYDNEY: The Assyrian* pianist and Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA) candidate, Lolita Emmanuel, is excited to announce the premiere of *Performing Assyrian-ness*, her lecture-recital film, airing online on the 20th of November, 2022.

Assyrians around the globe are invited to join an open conversation about the future of Assyrian Art music in this world-first lecture recital film.

Performing Assyrian-ness intertwines storytelling, music research and classical music performance to explore the small but growing genre of Assyrian Art music.

This cinematic debut from Lolita responds to the historical erasure and misrepresentation of Assyrians through music. It is inspired by a new burst of creativity amongst young Assyrian artists in stateless diaspora, collaborating internationally to produce a rich, engaging and insightful dialogue across geographic divides.

Accompanied by commissioned visual art from Bahto, Lolita will perform three Assyrian works for piano, including composer Rasson Bet-Yonan's "Goodi", based on an Assyrian butter-churning song of the same name.

"Assyrians worldwide and through time have demonstrated their resilience and creativity through the greatest hardship," says Lolita. "My vision, as an Assyrian and a performer-researcher, is to open a conversation about what the future of Assyrian music could be."

Performing Assyrian-ness an open conversation in every sense - viewers are invited to reflect and share their thoughts during the online screening.

Audience responses will be incorporated into Lolita's future performances and current Doctorate research in Assyrian Art Music at the Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney. Through this, Lolita aims to develop a new approach to Assyrian Art music performance that is exciting and engaging for transnational Assyrians.

Lolita is proud to be working with an all-Assyrian production team, with director, camera operator and editor Carlos Hydo, the Assyrian-run production company Umbrella Films, US-based visual artist Dicky Bahto and designer Nusardel Oshana.

Lolita invites all audiences to join her for the online premiere, and especially encourages Assyrians around the world to view the film.

Subtitles will be available in English and select languages.

*The Assyrians are a stateless and transnational people, indigenous to Northern Mesopotamia, or the regions that span current day Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey. Due to ongoing oppression in their ancestral homelands, most Assyrians live in the diaspora, across Southwest Asia and the globe.

Above image: Lolita Emmanuel, pianist, performs in "Performing Assyrian-ness".



Performing Assyrian-ness is supported by the NSW Government through Create NSW.



Above image: Lolita Emmanuel, pianist, performs at the Sydney Opera House.

Biography

Lolita is an Assyrian musician born on Cabrogal land (Sydney, Australia) and navigating many worlds: she is a pianist, vocalist, academic tutor and researcher. Her performance experience spans Art, Folk, R&B and Hip Hop genres, in venues such as the Sydney Opera House, The Art Gallery of New South Wales, The Metro Theatre and North Byron Parklands for Splendour in the Grass festival. In 2019, Lolita joined the Assyrian Women ensemble as a principal accompanist. As a performer-researcher and Assyrian woman living in stateless diaspora, Lolita is passionate about sustaining Assyrian cultural heritage through music and regularly performs for Assyrian audiences. She is currently undertaking a Doctor of Musical Arts (DMA) at the Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney (USYD). Her research, "Performing Assyrian-ness", explores new and decolonial approaches to performing Assyrian Art music that sustains Assyrian heritage and can unite the diverse and transnational Assyrian community. Lolita is currently an academic tutor in musicology at the Conservatorium of Music (USYD) and the keyboardist for hip-hop artist Rhyann Clapham aka DOBBY's WARRANGU: River Story project.