

MICHAEL BOLTON FINE ART

PADDY FORDHAM

Cat. No: 194 03 pl
Title: Marrddayjin - First Rain to the Rembrannga People
Size: 125 * 204 cm
Medium: Paint on linen
Providence: Commissioned by Michael Bolton Fine Art, 2002.

Artists Notes: This is from the Beginning. It's rain to the first people. Us mob. Rembrannga. From generations ago. *Ngnalk njugala* – rainwater from God. Bore water is Borlungs water, Dragon water.

REMBRANNGA PEOPLE

I record it for the Mirritja People of Middle Arnhem Land and their children. This recording is for Aboriginal People and the Rembrannga Tribe, Mirritja People. Mirritja People from the other side. Mirritja People from grandpa side.

White man way, you call me Paddy Fordham, but I'm a Wainburranga, I'm a Gela, Mirritja Group. My children, my nephew, my niece, they the Gojok and Gotjan. My sister mob they Galijan. Belljain is my granddaughter.

Mirritja People that means like I'm Gela. Then Wamut People is my father, or Duwa People. Some mosquito are Duwa and some he is Yirritja. That's the way the song goes.

We the Rembrannga Tribe. The Ngalkon side with us. Walgala Jimba group, Flying Fox Mob, Galwalla People. This thing happened from early days. We got the song, I can record this song now if I want to right now. We call him *Marrddayjin*. It's a public ceremony, children can listen, woman, young boy and young girl. It's not a secret one. He different, but this one is for us mob from history. From our culture, we call it skin group.

All the things in Middle Arnhem Land are for the Mirraitja Group. Wirebelt group of the Middle Arnhem Land.

Gokkjar Mirraitjgok. He rained. That song is there forever and ever. Its not like when people play guitar and then he changes the song. If we want to change the song we have to have another corroboree. Not this one, we cant change him. Its one song that we renew. Sing it forever and ever. People died but the song is still renewed. That's how our history is. No matter who is alive, it's still the same. Aboriginal culture was made like this, for the children, to make them remember their great, great grandpa on his fathers side or his mothers side, like that.

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From Dreamtime, even the Brogal was a human being, Ibis was human being, no matter what bird. They were Aboriginal before. They were us mob. Rembrannga, before everybody else. This is for the Central Arnhem Land no matter what you are.

TOP & BOTTOM BANDS

The heaven and its shadow on Earth. The top is the heavens. Milky Way. The river in the sky. He the Black Head Python.

White and black and everybody else here today, but still the sun and moon looks after us, and the stars. Morning Star is the way we got the law. The history for you and me. If the Morning Star is finished it will be dark night all the time. He holds up the daylight. That's the law.

Moon, sun, star, they all share the same company. One comes in low and high and one stay in the same place. Moon can't move, star can't move, Sun he different. And all the rest, that river on top. Milky Way – *Gulalanga*, that's the place now, that's the Black Head Python.

The river in the sky is all the birds and animals from the Beginning. The Black Head Python, he came down from the heavens and brought the rain from God. Lightening, he brings the clouds up. If the lightening stops then there will be no rain in the world.

Today we can't see him (*Gulalanga*), he might be close or long way. We all got different eye, different brain. God put him there on top

TOP PANEL

It came, white and black. If it were all white, we might be all white people. (if all black) we might be all Aboriginal. Aboriginal is a black man. That's how he (God) separated them. Like the clouds. That's how he sent them. Black cloud is a human being. I'm a black. White cloud is a whiteman. Red cloud, he a yellow fellow.

That's the way. Two ways. You white, half white. Or really black and half black. That's the way we were all made. Ha ha ha ha ha. (Paddy laughing) Everything is clear, it doesn't matter, we all made the same way.

The two kinds of cloud, white and black, they come in low. Full of rain. All the other clouds got names too. Black cloud we call *nguleengee*. White one we call *bulngee*. *Walngnal*, that's the rain. When white and black come together, that's when it will rain. That's how he came from in the Beginning.

Bukkarrookum. That mean Rain! Like a body, no eyes, no anything. That's from the beginning of life for the Wirebelt People.

That place name now *Gullarjult*. That's the one that rained. *Gukgarlmin darl darl*. This white cloud came *Darl Darl*, black one from *Gukgarlmin*. They got all our mothers there. Some have died, some they alive. They are a big mob of groups too. The witnesses.

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They sing him from there over to us mob. They call him *Muddayrin*.

From the dead people to the public ceremony, *Muddayrin*, to the children for learning. *Gukgarlmin Darldarlmun*. White one and black one, they came to us.

MIDDLE PANEL

Two different groups but they the same group. One rubs the white on, or the red colour. All are my mob from generations ago. Rembrannga People from the Beginning.

The big mimi is the Songman, he is the one that leads the song. When the rain comes you can see it hit their bodies. That's the decoration and the rain hitting them. When the rain came, then all the people, Rembrannga Tribe and all the witnesses travelling. After the rain and storm, people travelled to all the different places. All the tribes, everybody.

They were the witnesses for when God gave the first rain to the Rembrannga People. One side he Wulgular, Walgala People, Jimbak People, Kalarbinj People, Jumbukbul People, Jarbutpurl People, Kolumpul People, Djauan People, Ritharrngu People. They were all the witnesses from long time ago.

First rain from God for the first time came to my People. All the animals after, everything came after. Rain made everything.

When the rain meets any ground, dead body, cattle, dog, kangaroo, bird, anything, he cleans him up. If no rain you can't do nothing. Everything stink, everything dirty. Storm and wind clean him up everything. Even dead bullock. It makes everything smell good, animals, trees, you can make good homes. The rain makes you and me happy. Everything.

BOTTOM PANEL

They were the new people (first man). That's how the really true people lived. They used to go hunt and eat. They never used to worry about anything. Sometimes, one or two days with no feed, just only a little bit of food to have. They used to chase kangaroo, one to round him (encircle), then kill him. They used to do things like that. Not like now.

Before this, it was empty area. They had nothing then, it was dry and empty. They used to move from place to place. Sit down where the big caves are. They didn't sit down in one place.

When they might be perishing they might drink water from animal gut. My father and me used to do that. Look at all the kangaroo eating the green grass on the burnt ground. Just wait. Another mob go round (encircle) him. Kill him. Alright wait now, don't cook him right away. Put them all down one place. Cut open his gut (stomach). Leave his gut like a billy can, like a water bag. Just squeeze all the grass and throw it away. Wait for him to settle, Alright you can drink him.

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Buffalo too, you might see him in the dust nothing. Come up quiet behind him and drop him. Cut open his gut. He full of grass, take him out. He full of water. Drink him now. You right now.

We can do this for any animal, kangaroo, bull, cat, bullock, cattle.

Dragon water too he is in the trees. Bore water. Pandanus Tree we can cut him half half (pieces). Put him in a bucket, you can get water. Any tree. Some tree got round one (burl) that stick out, like a gut, he got water. Paper bark too got water, he salty but you can still drink it.

That's how we used be, I can still do that today.

There were the other People, they did eat one another. Everywhere, Rock People, all the Desert People, all the different tribes, they were cannibals. And there were all different tribes that were good people too. Half make himself into skin group. The other half walk around no skin, walk around with nobody knowing each other. He would know his family but other people he didn't know them. Just kill them, take them back and eat them. God punished them.

The old people were the first to sing him. To lead the corrobborre. They are the mob singing. They come out from their humpy, sit down in the middle of their fire, use the clap sticks to make the coorobberee.

That's where it was learnt from. Mirritja People, all the Mosquito People.

One side were good people, one side were no good people. But us mob from the Beginning, we never ate one another. They just stay in one place – their Country. Yes, that's where we stay. Where we got our own ideas, we got our own problems, our own history.

And that's why the first rain came to them. God gave it to them. The good people. In every place it might have happened the same way, but this is the custom for Rembrangga People. Everybody got it like this, in all the different places. We all talk about this one.

That was a long time ago now. All these people have died, but we breed more and more. Take on the old culture. Then they die. The son carry on, have another son, die again the father. Son, again take over from them. Like that. We all the same body of our grand grandpa from long time ago. We same, but another woman (maternal side) might have different idea (customs). Right up to today.

THE SONG

Song insert

That's the end, the story for everybody, that's the way it went. We still got this song. The old people sing him. Everybody got it. All the relations, all the different languages, but it came from us. Middle mob.

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Other mob can sing him other way round and we can accompany them. They sing, we still join them to sing. If they want to come with us mob, follow our song, they can come.

Jalmbak, Walgela, Jimbarr, Kalapinglu, Yangyule, Gorraaku, Ritthannga, Darlwanul and more than that. Too many languages. That recording got their names, they know from that.

We the honest people.

Humpy we call him *gok*. They put him up to cover up from that rain. Fork-stick we stand him up in the ground. Call him *mungala*, for putting the crossway stick to put the skin on. Bark from the Stringy Bark Tree. We call him *gurlngcark*.

The tree grows by himself from seed or sometimes on the Dragon under the ground.

Ant-pit, it grows by itself, by the ants. Ants build him up.

Too many stories. No matter that it is about the plain, about the hill, about the desert. All the different stories are too much for me to tell you. All the different names. Even the dry leaf, when he fall down it will come out new one.

True stories, but we don't carry around a book. Carry him around in our hearts and brains.

Thank you.