

An indescribable feeling

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Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu plays Becks Music Box again tonight.

Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu could not see the standing ovation he received last night after playing in Perth for the first time.

But he must have been able to feel it.

The ARIA award-winning singer songwriter from north east Arnhemland showed off a magical and mesmerising voice, a beautiful warm tenor that swept the audience away.

The performer, recently back from cold New York, has been sharing his culture and immense talent with people around the world, and prefers to communicate with the crowd only through song, saying very little in between.

He sings in his native Yolngu language, but it is the emotion that comes through his voice rather than lyrics that touches those who listen. This diminishes any language barrier.

His vocal performance seems effortless, and is accompanied by a guitar, a double-bass and viola. No backing vocals are necessary, and would in fact detract from the impact of the simplistic yet striking performance.

His songs are largely about the creatures found on his lands and his homelands themselves. They are emotive and seem mystical.

Gurrumul plays his guitar flipped around the wrong way as he sings in a quirk that works for the performer.

During the concert, his band decides to try their hand playing each of their instruments flipped around the wrong way too, a challenge they almost rise to.

They entice Gurrumul to turn his instrument the right way, and together play a tune they tell the crowd is a favourite in Aboriginal communities. Wipeout.

The moment makes the audience giggle.

Gurrumul, a former member of Yothu Yindi and now an integral part of Saltwater Band, plays many pieces from his self-titled album, released in February last year to much critical acclaim.

He plays Beck's Music Box courtesy of the Perth International Arts Festival again tonight.