

## LISA GERRARD SINGS IN TONGUES WITH PAUL GRABOWSKY BUT DOESN'T SPEAK



Pat Wilson, The Advertiser  
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THE dome of golden wood which forms Ukaria's concert hall ceiling seems a fitting context for Lisa Gerrard's recital. It's modern, stripped-back and spacey.

Singing predominantly her own compositions, she performs two continuous 45-minute halves, largely bereft of any identifiable language.

Gerrard sings in an idioglossa — her own language, if you will — with two exceptions, *House of the Rising Sun*, and her own composition, *Sleep*.

Associate artist is national treasure Paul Grabowsky, whose piano accompaniment and solos are exemplary for their clarity, sensitivity to genre, and beauty of phrasing.

Hunched over the keyboard, his compact figure is full of more music than most mortals can comprehend.

Gerrard enters the stage regally, helmeted by sleek blonde hair piled atop her head, and clad in glittery midnight-blue floor-length frock and cloak. She stands in front of her microphone.

And that's it. Occasionally she shapes a phrase with her left hand. Her face is static, offering few clues to the context of her glorious range of sounds. She frequently performs with her eyes shut.



We must make what emotional and intellectual sense we can from her voice alone. It is a fine and flexible mezzo, with over two octaves being employed. She shapes sounds pharyngeally to darken or lighten tonal quality, and has excellent pitch discrimination, sometimes working microtonally.

However, her voice comes to us through a microphone and sound system which has a reverb setting of 11. Aficionados recognise her sound; others will simply wonder why she wants to sound as if she is trapped in a drainage pipe all night.

Fans of Gerrard's band Dead Can Dance are well-rewarded in her program. Her encore is, of course, the Gladiator theme, its Schubertian accompaniment effortlessly provided by Grabowsky. In addition, he speaks the very few words spoken. Lisa Gerrard never speaks.

**Singing in Tongues — Lisa Gerrard with Paul Grabowsky**

**Ukaria Cultural Centre**

**July 7**