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ARTS



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## Aboriginal artist's Dreamtime work

"CLIFFORD Possum is one of Australia's most important Aboriginal artists," Rebecca Hossack, cultural development officer at London's Australian High Commission told *Australian News*.

"And he has recently published a fabulous book of his work," she added.

Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri is considered one of the finest painters of contemporary art in the Aboriginal movement and is a member of the renowned Papunya Tula Artists.

His paintings depict various aspects of Aboriginal life, such as women searching for wild Bush berries, men keeping snakes away from the nest, hunters and indigenous animals such as kangaroos.

But to most undiscerning European eyes, they appear merely as dot and circle paintings

with squiggles and lines.

The coded form tells of Dreamtime stories and has become increasingly popular throughout Europe.

Hossack has noted an increased demand for these pictures and often displays Aboriginal work — including Clifford's masterpieces — at her two galleries in London at 35 Windmill Street and at St James).

Clifford Possum is presently passing on his knowledge and skills to his daughter, Gabriella Possum Nungarrayi, who lives and works in Melbourne.

Already she has had exhibitions of her work displayed in the Australian National Gallery (Canberra).

● For more information contact the Australian High Commission on 071-887-5297.



Rebecca Hossack and Aboriginal artist Clifford Possum Tjapaltjarri.

## Aussie musician with a home from home date

FEW musicians can claim they supported bands such as the Beach Boys and the Kinks at the age of 16.

Australian musician and composer, Marc Ongley, is one person who can — and he did so with the Australian band Maya after just three years of learning the guitar.

Born in Maitland, New South Wales, in 1952, Ongley started playing rock guitar at the age of 13.

"At 13 I couldn't play at all, but I joined the school band and went on from there," Ongley told *Australian News*.

"The mid-60s was a great time for music," he adds.

"And by the time I was 16 I was playing in a good professional band."

Ongley claims it was "extremely exciting" playing with the Beach Boys, but says he also enjoyed working with a number of Australians, including Max Merrot and the Meteors and Brian Cadd.

When he turned 18 he switched to classical guitar.

"My decision was based purely on wanting to become a



Marc Ongley, Australian musician and composer, plays in London this month.

better musician," he says.

"So I studied and started to teach classical guitar and have done so now for about 20 years," explains Ongley.

As a classical guitarist he was regarded as one of Australia's finest musicians, performing on national radio and television and giving numerous

concerts in Australia.

"Now I play jazz, primarily," he says.

His first debut jazz CD, *The Marc Ongley Jazz Quartet Song for Ros*, distributed in the UK, features five original compositions along with well known standards.

Ongley made London his permanent home in 1991.

"I came because both my brothers

lived here and from a musical point of view it is great to work in London," he says.

"It's nothing to do with a difference in the quality of musicians — there's some fantastic musicians in Sydney and Melbourne, the two great musical centres of Australia.

"There's just a heck of a lot more happening in London."

Apart from his son, Ongley says he doesn't miss anything about Australia.

"It may seem quite strange to many people here because most people want to live in a warmer climate," Ongley says.

"But I don't like it too hot".

Ongley is presently working on an album with Steve Waterman, a British trumpet player.

"We just need to find someone to distribute it," says Ongley.

"It's difficult to find the funds for jazz because there is such a small audience."

● Marc Ongley will be playing at the Bull's Head, Barnes, London, at 8.30pm on February 20.