



**BANGARRA DANCE THEATRE AUSTRALIA LIMITED**

**PO BOX 218 PYRMONT NSW 2009**

**BOOKINGS: (02) 660 4402**

**A.C.N. 003 814 006**

# NEWSLETTER

**No 1  
1991**

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Welcome To All Our Readers For 1991

It is great to be back in touch with you!!! Due to lack of staff and funding it was regrettable that we lost touch with you last year. Bangarra is eager to renew contacts with old friends and supporters, and to make lots of new ones.

This newsletter, our first for the year, will bring you up to date with 1990 and let you know what Bangarra will be doing in 1991. *So read on and catch up with the latest news on what one of Australia's leading indigenous dance groups has been up to...*

## **This Year's Company**



The lineup for 1991 is —

ILLONA TIM  
DAVID PAGE  
JIMMY GAGAI  
RUSSELL PAGE  
MONICA STEVENS  
GUYPUNJURA JANET MUNYARRYUN  
and  
DJAKABURRA DOUGLAS MUNYARRYUN

They are all dynamic and dedicated dancers. It is an extremely talented ensemble and it's been exciting to see this fusion of talent come together after the struggle of the past two years.



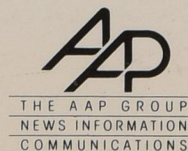
*Clockwise — Jimmy, Djakaburra, Illona,  
Janet, Monica, Russell  
Photo: Paul Sweeney*

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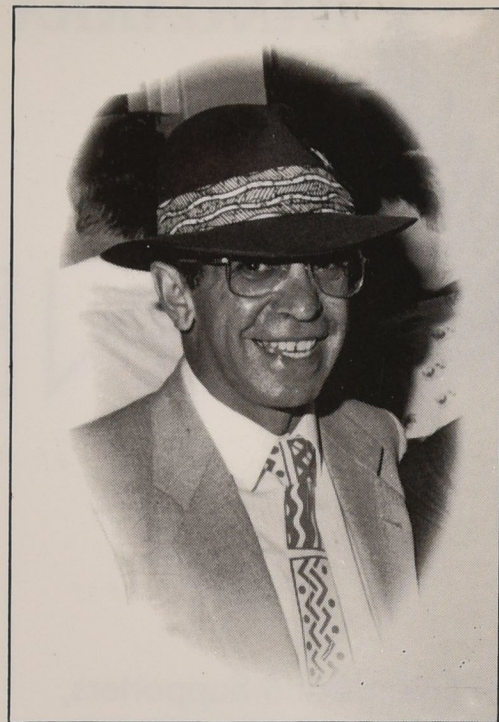
## → NEW STAFF

We kicked off 1991 with two new staff appointees:

Rob Bryant as General Manager – with a Business Degree from the University of Technology in Sydney, and Jennifer Beale comes to the Publicity and Marketing Officer position from the field of Journalism via Channel 7.

You will be hearing more about these two Koories – in future newsletters.

Thanks to the D.E.E.T. Aboriginal Employment Development Program for funding these two positions.



*Rob Bryant*

## → NEW CHAIRPERSON

After his appointment as General Manager, Rob resigned from his position as Chairperson of the Board, and Lola Forester was duly elected. Lola is a reporter on the SBS program "Hotline". Prior to this appointment Lola was a reporter for "First in Line" the Aboriginal program on SBS 1989-90.

## → AUSTRALIA COUNCIL GRANT

Bangarra has been offered their FIRST GRANT from the AUSTRALIA COUNCIL via the PERFORMING ARTS BOARD for Creative Development. This is fantastic news as it will be used to employ two extremely talented and experienced Aboriginal choreographers – Stephen Page and Roslyn Watson – to work with the dancers and create a full length work.

More about this in future newsletters.



*Jennifer Beale*

## **ATSIC PUBLICITY ← GRANT**

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission are funding part of the publicity budget - and it's thanks to them that we're able to bring you this newsletter, as well as others throughout the year.

## **1991 APPEARANCES←**

### **APRIL • Canberra**

#### **Dance Week**

Guest company with the Australian Association for Dance Education. Performing at schools and the National Gallery Theatre.

### **MAY 19TH • Sydney**

#### **Public Performance Fundraiser**

NSW Teachers Federation  
Auditorium  
300 Sussex Street, Sydney 6.00PM

### **MAY — JULY**

#### **Rehearsal Of New Works**

Rehearsal period with guest choreographers Roslyn Watson and Stephen Page.

### **MAY — JUNE**

#### **Indonesia**

Performing at the Jakarta International Festival and Bali Art Festival.



*Jimmy, Douglas, Russel, David  
Seated — Janet, Monica, Illona  
Photo: Paul Sweeney*

**AUGUST**

**Townsville**

To be confirmed

**SEPTEMBER**

**Melbourne**

To be confirmed

**NOVEMBER**

**NSW North Coast  
Schools Tour into  
Brisbane**

**DECEMBER**

**La Reunion**

Cultural exchange. La Reunion is off the East Coast of Africa, in the Indian Ocean.

To be confirmed.

**→ THE NATIONAL DANCE  
SUMMIT — "MOVING  
FORWARD"**

Over Easter, 135 people from the dance world descended on Canberra to create the most important work of their career, and not one of them danced a step!

For this gathering of dancers, choreographers, academics, administrators, independent artists, company directors, arts bureaucrats, representatives from dance companies, ethnic dancers as well as a large number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders dancers, including traditional elders, were taking part in the National Dance Summit.

Instead their task was to produce a report that will be used to form dance policy for the next ten years.

Organised and funded by the Australia Council, this was the first time a forum of this kind was held in Australia.

Intensive workshops dealt with a wide range of issues from the critical





## → 1990 UPDATE !

topic of funding and the development of alternative funding structures, to issues such as education, networking, professional development and a vision for the next decade. The tangible result – a 32 page draft document of objectives and strategies to achieve them, to take dance forward to the year 2001.

Indigenous dance and culture emerged as an important issue across all topics. This was due to the successful lobbying and networking of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander delegates to have the special needs of indigenous dance on the agenda of each workshop.

We lobbied for OUR vision to have the two indigenous cultures (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island) become a vital force throughout Australia and the world. To achieve this, a funding increase of 100% within the next year to indigenous dance groups was recommended.

The Summit expressed strong support for indigenous dance. One key recommendation from the Summit was for the establishment of a national indigenous dance company.

The Summit also called for the establishment of its own representative dance organisation. The Australian Association for Dance Education, which has offices in each State, has been asked to see if it has the framework to do this.

1990 was a demanding and challenging for all involved.

With very little government funding, income was generated mainly by school performances throughout New South Wales and residencies in communities with large Aboriginal populations; teaching and performing.

The only paid full-time administration staff member all year was Cheryl Stone. Working from the balcony of her home, she was forced INTO her bedroom in winter by the cold and rain.

Lack of funding forced the dancers OUT of the Lee Street Studio near Central Railway, into the South Sydney Police Citizens Youth Club in Redfern; a space they share with numerous other community groups.

We cannot thank the SSPCYC and Constable Jenny Bedwell enough for providing us with vital rehearsal and storage space at a nominal fee.

The professionalism and commitments of everyone who worked with Bangarra or supported them through the highs and lows of 1990 is a credit to all.

*Thanks To Our Sponsors And Friends For Their Invaluable Support Throughout 1990.*

## → STATISTICS

58,426 people saw Bangarra perform in 1990.

Whilst the majority of these performances were in schools, the dancers entertained and excited international audiences at the World Congresses of Gastroenterology in Sydney, the World Archery Championships at Valla Park in Northern New South Wales and the World Rowing Championships in Tasmania.



→ **OTHER 1990  
ACTIVITIES**

The dancers featured in a 12 minute video with QANTAS and the Australian Tourism Commission called "unCONVENTIONAL AUSTRALIA" promoting Australia as an international destination for conventions.

YAPUMA LARRY GURRUWIWI was a guest performer with the *One Extra Company* in *Othello* at the 13TH Festival of Asian Arts in Hong Kong.

ILLONA TIM performed in "Harold", a work-in-progress directed and choreographed by Kim Walker in collaboration with the cast, based on the life of Harold Blair, the first Aboriginal opera singer.

Charity performance at *South Sydney Police Citizens Youth Club Christmas Party* on 14TH December. Then a quick dash from Redfern to the *Belvior Street Theatre* for the Koorie Cabaret "Tjulpu" organised by Suzanne Butt.

→ **DID YOU KNOW...**

SYLVIA BLANCO-GREEN is on leave in the U.S.A. performing with her husband, Roger. They are both doing very well in New York.

PERCY JACKONIA is on leave and has returned home to Cairns for a well earned break with his family.

YAPUMA LARRY GURRUWIWI is also on leave with his family in Yirrkala.

JASMINE GULASH is expecting a baby very soon. We wish them both all the best.



Sylvia Blanco-Green

## TRADITIONAL DANCERS ←

We acknowledge the valuable contribution throughout 1990 of traditional dancers Yapuma Larry Gurruwiwi, Banula Marika and Guypunjura Janet Munyarryun from Yirrkala in the Northern Territory, as well as Percy Jackonia and Jimmy Gagai from the Torres Strait Islands.



*Bangarra teaching Samantha Campbell (6), from Orange, a Torres Strait Island play dance  
Photo — Courtesy Central Western Daily.*

→ **TE AO HURIHURI —  
1990 AUSTRALIA  
NEW ZEALAND DANCE  
COURSE**

The focus for the 1990 course was the cultural richness of indigenous dance traditions, particularly that of the Aborigines, Torres Strait Islands, Maori and South Pacific Peoples.

All 73 participants were invited guests of the Raukawa people at the Matua Marae (meeting house) at Otaki on the North Island.

The Wananga (course) program offered workshops, discussions and cross-cultural collaboration, lead by elders from New Zealand, the South Pacific Islands and Australia. The course was organised and funded by the Australia Council and New Zealand Queen Elizabeth II Council.

Bangarra assisted elders from Mornington Island and the Torres Straits, as well as conducting their own workshops which incorporated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island dances.

These workshops gave many Australians a chance to experience the indigenous dances of their country for the FIRST time. This was an emotional experience for many.

Bangarra's workshops were very popular with everyone, including the local townspeople, eager to participate in cultural exchange.

"Everybody in the town turned up to see our workshop, even the school children," said Percy Jacksonia.

All five Bangarra dancers attended this course, and returned invigorated from their experiences. It was a great way to end a gruelling year!!!



*Left to right — Jimmy, Monica, Larry, Illona, Percy*