

BANGARRA

Newsletter July '95



WELCOME
TO THE NEW-LOOK
NEWSLETTER!

Bangarra has been undergoing a number of changes this year. This newsletter is a part of the overall change in direction and focus the company has adopted for its future.



Bangarra Dance Theatre Australia Limited is a full-time professional dance company that respectfully embraces the cultures of both indigenous peoples of Australia, the mainland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. The company was formed in 1989 by graduate dancers and staff of the first National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Dance School in Australia.

The artistic reputation of this young company is rapidly being recognised for its unique fusion of Australian indigenous and contemporary dance styles with original music scores. The appointments of Stephen Page as Artistic Director in 1991 and Bernadette Walong as Assistant Artistic Director in 1994 have contributed a new dimension to Australian dance and choreography. Bangarra has toured Australia from Geraldton to La Perouse, covering capital cities and remote communities. Internationally, Bangarra has enthralled audiences in Japan, Indonesia, China, Hong Kong, USA and UK.

LETTER FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER



My first three months has been one of the most challenging, frustrating and rewarding periods I have experienced. Any difficulties have been far outweighed by the extraordinary goodwill that this company attracts from so many quarters.

Following our official studio launch on April 6, (which was a thoroughly enjoyable occasion), we are gradually making our new home more habitable. We now have carpeting in the administration area, and the walls have been painted by a very kind volunteer, John Moulton. In addition we are delighted that ATSIC has recently approved a capital grant that will ensure we have adequate heating and cooling facilities and, the resources to construct a sound studio and upgrade some of the equipment.

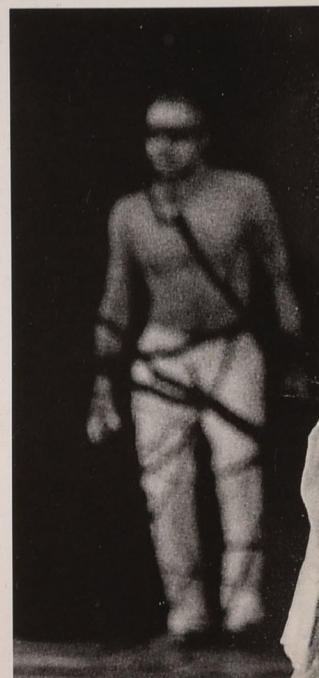
The Melbourne and Adelaide seasons in March and April, respectively, were a great success and, as evidenced by our audience surveys, we attracted significant numbers who had not previously been aware of Bangarra's work. We look forward to return tours to both cities in 1996 and 1997.

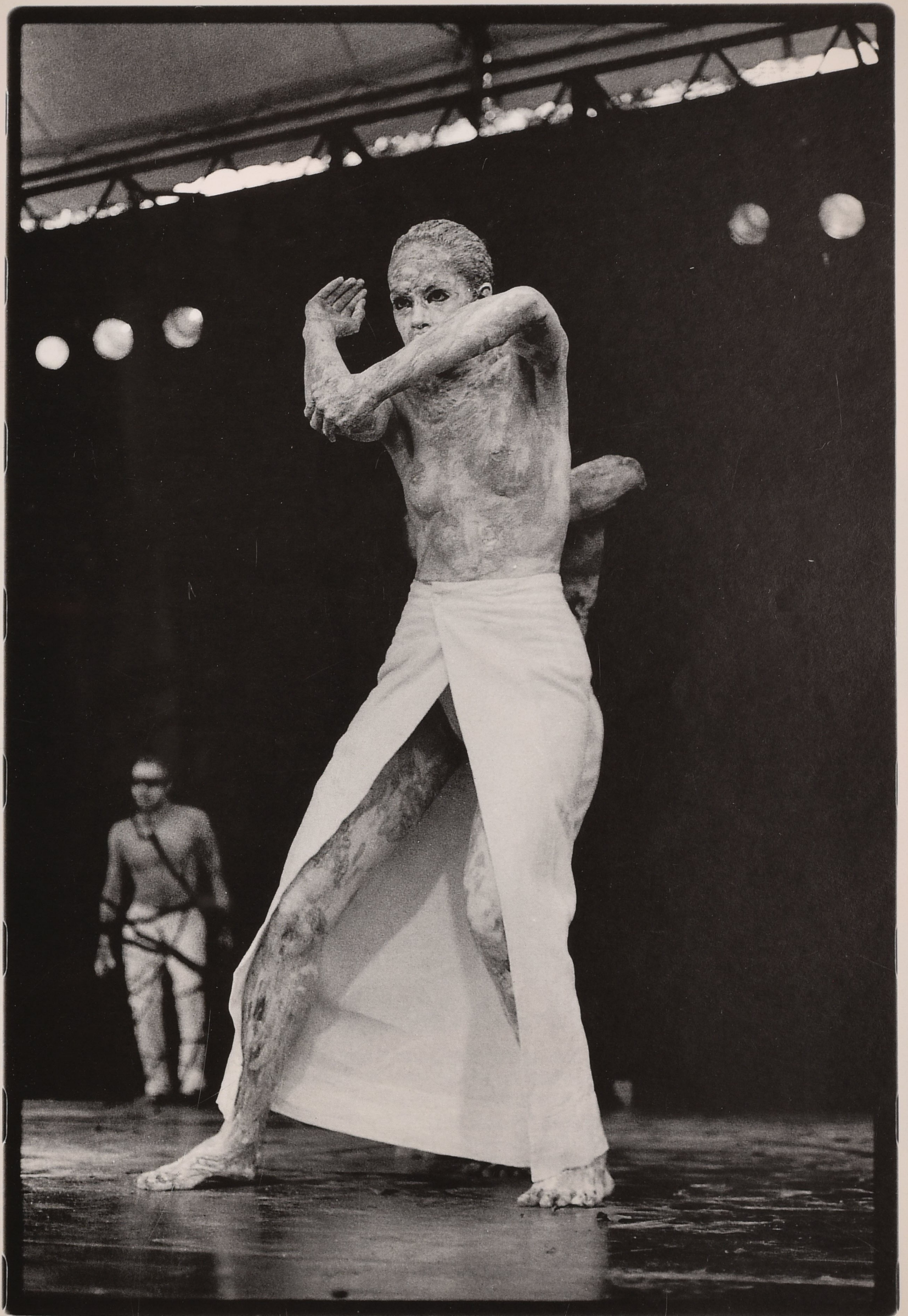
The second part of the year will be hectic - from August the company will tour Berlin, Arnhem Land, Tokyo, Canberra and concluding with a Sydney season of "Ochres" at the Enmore Theatre (November 8-25).

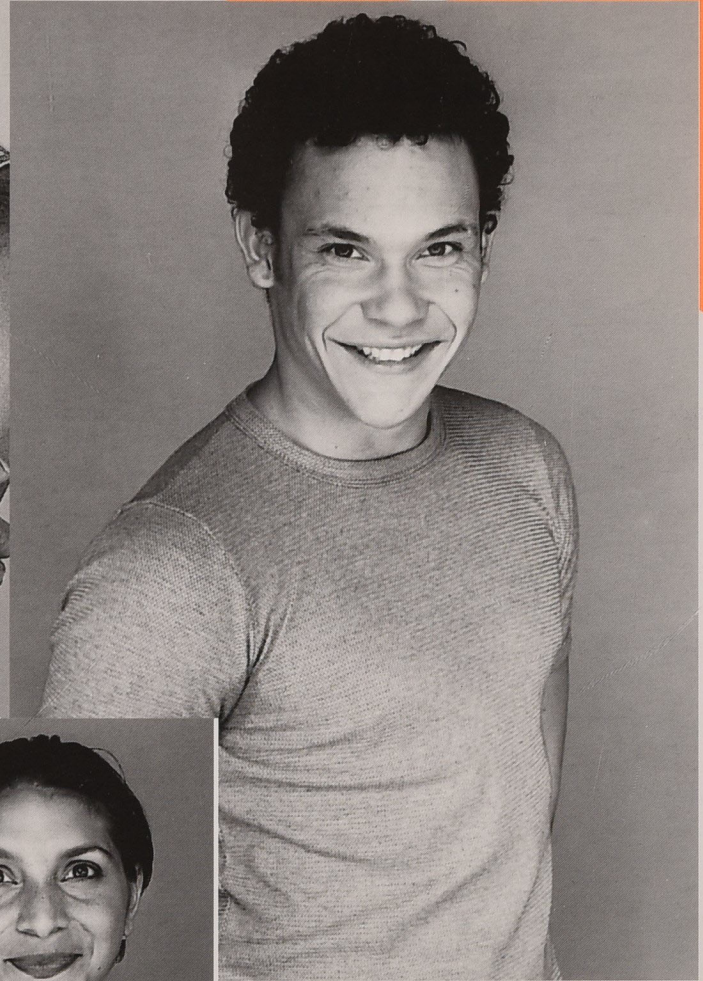
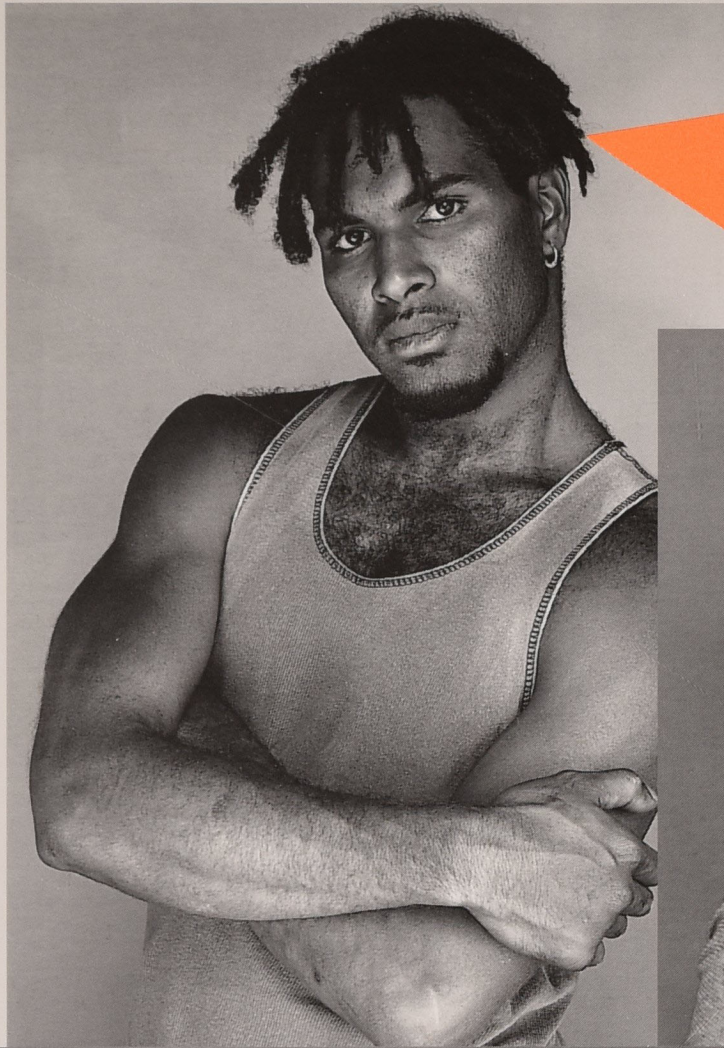
I know there are a large number of long-time Friends and supporters of Bangarra I have not yet had the pleasure to meet and hope that I will be able to catch up with you all during the year.

In the meantime. I trust you will enjoy our new newsletter

Jan Irvine
General Manager







Comp

*Clockwise from top left:
Albert David, Kirk Page, Gary Lang, Marilyn Miller,
Jan Pinkerton, Gina Rings*

This year Bangarra has been joined by some new talent.

Terri Janke has been appointed to the Board of Bangarra. Her experience gained at the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Arts Unit, of the Australia Arts Council as Performing Arts Program Officer and that of her current position as an Information Officer at the National Indigenous Arts Advocacy Association will prove very valuable to Bangarra.

Currently in her final year of an Arts Law degree Terri was the proud recipient of the John Koowarta Reconciliation Law scholarship which will allow her to

attend the College of Law fulltime from September to December this year. Using the knowledge acquired through her degree Terri wishes to empower artists and protect the cultural integrity of indigenous arts and culture.

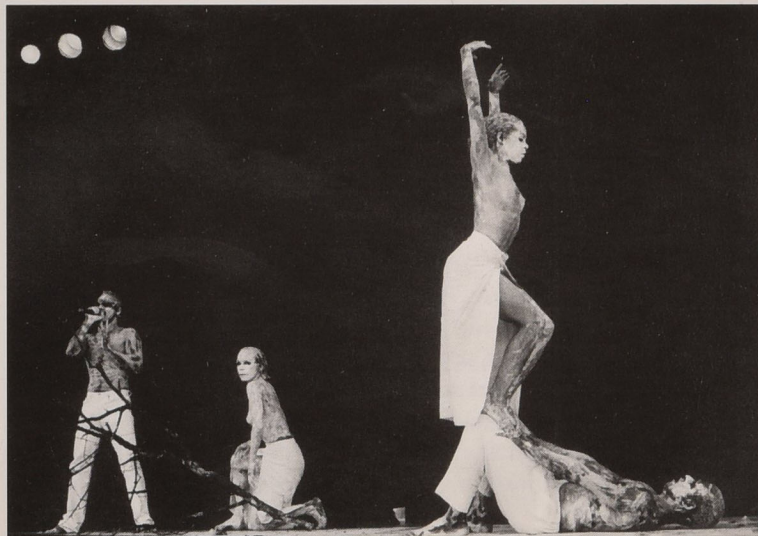
Joining the dancers of Bangarra is Albert David who graduated after 5 years at NAISDA in 1994 with a diploma in dance. His rich cultural heritage of the Kurriri Island (part of the Torres Strait Islands) adds to Bangarra's indigenous repertoire. In June Albert toured Thursday Island conducting research for professional choreographic development.

any News

Kirk Page following in the footsteps of many of the Page clan has been successful in gaining a one year apprenticeship with Bangarra. Studying at NAISDA, Kirk completed a one year certificate course, bringing his powerful voice and dance talent to Bangarra.

Christine Anu performed with the company up until June when she left the company to pursue her burgeoning music career. She will be joining us again soon for Black Vine II at Town Hall on 13 July.

Bangarra is also joined by Marilyn Miller, Gina Rings, Jan Pinkerton and Gary Lang. Meanwhile Russell Page and Djakapurra Munyarrayan have been conducting workshops in Yirrkala with young people.



The touring calendar for Bangarra is once again jam-packed. After a successful performance at Survival '95, Womadelaide, performances of Ochres in Melbourne and Adelaide, the launch of Christine Anu's debut album and the Museum of Sydney, Bangarra is getting ready to perform overseas.

JULY 13

BLACK VINE II, SYDNEY TOWN HALL

JULY 24-28

SPECIAL SCHOOL SEASON
ENMORE THEATRE, SYDNEY

AUGUST 7TH -14TH

GERMAN TOUR,
"EXPERIENCE AUSTRALIA '95" TOURING
BERLIN
HAUS DER KULTUREN DER WELT

SEPTEMBER 23RD AUGUST -9TH "OUTBACK

TOUR", ARNHEM LAND
GALIWINKU, NHULUMBUY, MILINGIMBI

SEPTEMBER 19-21

TOKYO
TOKYO INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL
"OCHRES"
TOKYO METROPOLITAN ART SPACE

OCTOBER 14-21

"OCHRES",
NATIONAL AUSTRALIAN
THEATRE FESTIVAL '
CANBERRA

NOVEMBER 8-25

"OCHRES"
ENMORE THEATRE,
SYDNEY

JULY

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

Calendar

FRANCES RINGS

Born in Adelaide, Frances's bloodline on her mother's side is Kookatha, a desert tribe, that extends across Western Australia and, on her father's side, German. As a little girl Frances spent a lot of time going bush with aunts and uncles looking for bush tucker and medicine.

As she grew older Frances spent time with her father in Adelaide, Kalgoorlie and Albany. In year 11 they moved to Queensland, a time when dance was being introduced into the school curriculum. Frances completed year 12 at boarding school where she learnt from an ex-scholar, Sidney Saltner, about the National Aboriginal and Islander Dance School in Sydney.

Attending a two week audition in Sydney, Frances was convinced that Sydney was the place to be. Graduating in 1992 from a 5 year diploma course in dance at the National Aboriginal and Islander Skills Development Association (NAISDA) she joined Bangarra. Having spent two and a half years with the company she is taking a short leave of absence to pursue further training in dance in the USA.

Q. What motivated you to join Bangarra?

A. I always liked their work and, after having worked with Stephen Page when I was at NAISDA I experienced his way of bringing things out in you that you never thought you had. There was a special bonding in the group that really appealed to me, there were no barriers between indigenous and contemporary dance. It was one of their first performances, "Up Until Now" that made me think, yeah, I want to be around that.

Q. What / who has been a major influence in your career?

A. Firstly, Janet Munjarryun, Sylvia Blanco, Stephen Page, Bernadette Walong and Marilyn Miller. Also, people who are out there just doing it, like Ningali (Josephine Lawford) and Christine Anu, both of whom I went to NAISDA with.

Q. What are the best and funniest performances you have ever done?

A. Cable Beach - Broome, the lunchtime performance at the Valley in Harlem (USA) and Praying Mantis Dreaming in Cairns are my best memories. The funniest would have to be "Harold" at Mornington Island, as we were performing

outside, the costume changes were also made outside, so, during one change we managed to get bindii through our tracksuit pants. There was nothing we could do but keep on dancing with the bindii all over our legs and bum.

Q. Why have you chosen America to further your studies and what did you have to do to accomplish your goal?

A. I had the strongest recurring dreams about America. Sabine (Cynthia Lochard) who has been a constant guide in my career told me some wonderful stories about her experience as a dancer growing up in New York. She advised me to go to Alvin Ailey. I sent away for information, filled out lots of forms and was accepted into their International Summer Students course. I then successfully applied for assistance to the Australia Council for the Arts under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board.

Q. Frances, what is it you hope to gain and in turn bring back to your community and Australia?

A. I would like to gain a strong technique and open up my vision of dance, I want to open it up on a world wide

perspective. I would like to be a strong contemporary Australian Indigenous dancer to show our technique and our dance to the world. I want to teach at NAISDA and would like to be involved in directing one of their End of Year shows. I believe it is important for the graduates to go back and teach at the school.

Q. What would you like to say to the next generation of young Aboriginal dancers?

A. Don't be afraid of getting out there and having a go. Don't feel shame, just listen to yourself and your heart, you will know what to do! It's total dedication, hard work and lots of patience, it can take years to make the connections, but keep at it, have faith in yourself. To be honest I don't believe I was naturally technically talented like so many of the people around me, but, I had a dedication and consistency to it and, most of all I had faith in me.



Ochres

Spirituality is an integral part of our lives. For indigenous Australia this spirituality centres around the land. The nurturing and life-giving capacity of even our harshest terrains has been the mainstay of indigenous religious beliefs. Incorporating the earth into spiritual ceremonies is done by many tribes using various ochres.

Having the different colours such as white, yellow, red and black, ochre is applied to the body in a paint up ceremony. Ochres are usually applied in designs according to your totem so that your totem spirituality is awakened during the paint up. There are no time constraints, no boundaries, there's an apparent timelessness around the ritual.

Stephen Page and Bernadette Walong have taken these essences of the paint up ritual to create a strong yet subtle dance performance that awakens the spirituality in all of us. Choreographed to create an awareness of the centrality of spirituality to landscape, the performance also addresses the issue of reconciliation in an indirect manner through illustrating the connection that exists between the audience and the dancers, men and women and the past and present.

The various colours of ochre have a spiritual significance. Yellow represents women's business and, black, men's business. Red is the relationship between men and women and white represents sacred territory.

After leaving Ochres you feel like you have just witnessed and been involved in a special and intense spiritual ceremony. Don't miss it.







Jan Irvine.

L-R Lydia Miller, Minister Michael Lee, Bernadette Walong.



L-R Colin James, Mahier Stone and Carole Johnson.

BANGARRA FINDS A NEW HOME.....

For the first time in our 6 year history Bangarra now has a permanent home with studio, office and production space under one roof.

On April 6th an official opening of the premises was attended by 60 guests. Our guest of honour was The Honourable Mr. Michael Lee, Federal Minister for Communications and the Arts. Other special guests included The Honourable Mr. Robert Tickner, Federal Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Ms Pat Turner, Chief Executive Officer for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission.

They were joined by Mr. Michael Lynch, General Manager of the Australia Council, Ms Lydia Miller, Executive Officer of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board of the Australia Council and, Gary Simpson Chairperson of the NSW Arts Advisory Council (NSW Ministry for the Arts), along with representatives from the local Federal member Jeanette McHugh's office. Members of other arts organisations, representatives of the

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts community and, the Bangarra Friends Committee (representing the Bangarra Friends) were all present.

The efforts of our staff and dancers in transforming our space into an attractive arts venue for the evening was a great success. Our guests who have either never seen the building or have only seen it in its "warehouse" state were both impressed by the transformation and enthusiastic about the new opportunities this would provide for Bangarra to move forward.

Both Minister Michael Lee and Michael Lynch re-affirmed their support for Bangarra. The total commitment of the Australia Council in assisting Bangarra to consolidate and develop its new positioning is vital to the growth of the company and its new space.

The entertainment for the evening was provided by the company, who performed extracts from its newest work, Ochres, and





Members of the Aboriginal Arts Community.



L-R Marguerite Pepper, Stephen Page, Jan Irvine.



L-R Michael Lynch, Ms Pat Turner, Stephen Page, Lydia Miller, Minister Michael Lee.



Cheryl Stone, Minister Robert Tickner, Jan Irvine

traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dances.

Special thanks for the success of the official opening goes to our principal sponsor AAP who provided the delicious supper and to the Friends Committee for the special part they played in the organisation of the night.

Bangarra also wishes to thank Colin James for his time and efforts in helping to secure and acquire building approvals with Leichhardt Council. Colin's help and guidance in designing a space to suit our needs has been invaluable.

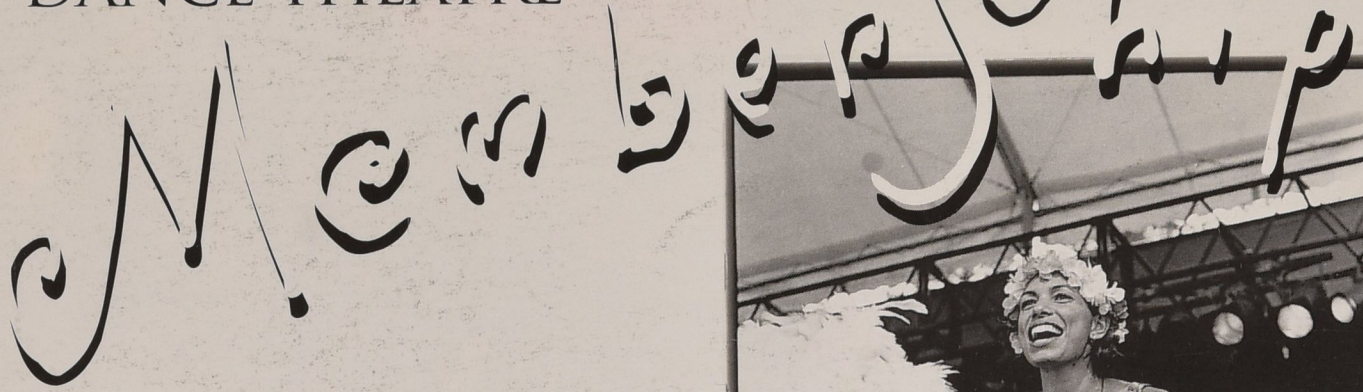
With the official launch of the premises now over, we will set a date when all Bangarra friends can enjoy the new studios.



Bangarra Friends Committee.

BANGARRA

DANCE THEATRE



LET'S BE FRIENDS

Bangarra Dance Theatre Australia wishes to extend to you an invitation to become a Friend. Like any fledging enterprise, the dance company needs the support of its friends. Every bit of support we get means we'll grow that much faster and that means more public performances. If you have any good fundraising ideas please let the Friends know, especially if you're willing to work to make them happen.

BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

- Discount tickets for all performances.
- Discount on items purchased.
- Invitation to meet the dancers.
- Your contribution to the growth and success of one of Australia's leading professional contemporary, indigenous dance theatres.



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SUBSCRIBE NOW

BANGARRA FRIENDS APPLICATION FORM

To join, simply fill out this form and return with your payment to:
Bangarra Friends P.O. Box 224 Leichhardt 2040

Membership is valid for one year from date of joining. Please select your membership choice below and indicate all names in Dual and Family Memberships. One membership will be issued in each name.

Single Adult Membership	\$25	Concession (Students/Pensioners)*	\$15
Dual Membership	\$40	Life Membership	\$1,000
Family/House (4 persons)	\$60	*Student/Pension No:	

Name 1: _____

Name 2: _____

Name 3: _____

Name 4: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____ Phone: (W) _____

(H) _____

Enclosed is my cheque or money order for \$ _____

Please credit my:

- Bankcard Mastercard Visa Amex

Card Number: _____

Expiry Date: ____ / ____

Name of cardholder: _____

Signature: _____

Please make your cheque or money order payable to Bangarra Friends. Any other support you can donate to help build this young, dynamic company would be appreciated.

Please indicate below any skills or interests you are able to contribute.
