



BANGARRA

*dance theatre
australia limited*

'Ochres'



FESTIVAL OF PERTH

1996 Festival of Perth

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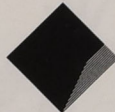
COMMONWEALTH BANK DANCE SERIES

BANGARRA DANCE THEATRE

Stephen Page, Artistic Director

Sunken Garden, The University of Western Australia, 1 - 2, 4 - 9 March

Duration: 1 hour



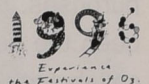
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Photography - Greg Barrett

OCHRES

Introduction

Ochre plays an essential part in traditional life. Working with cultural consultant and dancer, Djakapurra Munyarryun has provided us with valuable insight into the presentation of traditional paint-up and preparation.

As a substance, ochre has intrigued us. Its significance and the myriad of purposes, both spiritual and physical, has been the driving force behind this collaboration.

The portrayal of each colour is by no means a literal interpretation, but the awareness of its spiritual significance has challenged our contemporary expressions.

Stephen Page



BANGARRA

dance theatre

australia limited

Bangarra Dance Theatre Australia Ltd was established in 1989 and is a full-time professional dance company which respectfully embraces the cultures of the indigenous peoples of Australia.

The artistic reputation of the Company is rapidly being recognised for its unique fusion of 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, has contributed a new dimension to Australian dance and choreography.

Bangarra has toured extensively in Australia, and enthralled audiences in Japan, Indonesia, China, Hong Kong, the United States, Germany and the United Kingdom.

In 1994 Bangarra was awarded the prestigious Sidney Myer Performing Arts Award.



Photography - Greg Barrett

PROGRAMME NOTES

Ochres Spirit 'The Light'

Music - David Page

Vocals - Kirk Page

Yellow

'I believe the landscape to be Mother. Its flowing rivers she cleanses in; the yellow ochre she dresses in, the sun and the seasons she nourishes, gathering, nesting and birthing along her travels.'

Music - David Page

Featuring Tjipari Dreaming -

Western Desert Women

Ngarti Language Group

Women's Funeral Dance -

North West Cape

York Etanyanu Language Group

Black

An ash storm has blown over. The call and pain of the initiation can only be viewed from a distance...Men's Business.

Music and Vocals -

David Page and Djakapurra Munyarryun.

Featuring traditional songs *Buffalo Dance*

and *Stick Dance* from Yirrkala. Vocals and

Yirdaki Djakapurra Munyarryun Torres

Strait Island Language from Murray Island -

Pinau Ghee.



Photography - Ashley de Prazer



Red

- Youth
- Obsession
- Poison
- Pain

Custom, Law and Values placed on the relationship between women and men have been on a path of change since time began. In each of these relationships, the youth, the obsession, the poison, the pain, there is struggle.

Music and Vocals - David Page
Featuring Yirrgambah Language Group
Yirdaki and Vocals -
Djakapurra Munyarryun
Torres Strait Island Language and Vocals
from Kala Kawaw Ya Language Group -
Glenda Aragu

White

At dawn Mother Earth yawns, her call engulfs the white ochre spirits to spiritually bathe them in preparation for the day's journey.

Music and Vocals -
David Page and Djakapurra Munyarryun
Vocals and Yirdaki - Djakapurra Munyarryun
Featuring traditional Ochre dance song
from Yirrkala

ARTISTIC TEAM



Stephen Page

Born in Brisbane, Stephen is a descendent of the Munaljali Clan of the Yugambah tribe in south-east Queensland. He graduated from the National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association (NAISDA) in 1983.

Stephen continued his dance career with Sydney Dance Company, performing in *After Venice, Wilderness, Nearly Beloved, Shining, Poppy, Cafe, Soft Bruising, Company of Women* and *King Roger*.

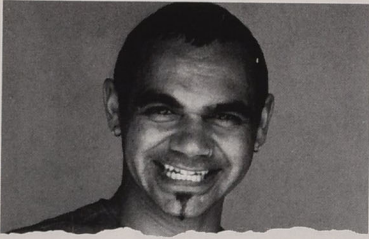
Stephen has choreographed for NAISDA, Sydney Dance Company, Sydney Theatre Company, The Australian Opera, the World Youth Soccer Opening Ceremony, AFL Grand Final, and the Operatic film *Black River*. Stephen joined Bangarra Dance Theatre as Principal Choreographer early in 1991, and by the year's end was appointed Artistic Director of Bangarra Dance Theatre. In 1992 he choreographed and directed Bangarra's first full-length work, *Praying Mantis Dreaming*, heralded by critics as 'a milestone achievement'. This was followed by *Ninni* in 1994. For *Ochres*, Stephen collaborated with Choreographer Bernadette Walong and Composer David Page.



Bernadette Walong

Bernadette is from Oakey, in Queensland. She graduated from the National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association (NAISDA) in 1989. Bernadette then went on to perform with Dance North for the next five years. Whilst there she performed and taught extensively in North Queensland and Asia, doing workshops and choreographic work with a variety of schools and community arts groups.

Bernadette has performed in works by choreographers Sue Healey, Nannette Hassell, Cheryl Stock, Graeme Watson, Leigh Warren, Richard Allen and Karen Pearlman, Csaba Buday and Stephen Page. Her own choreographic credits include: *Raw Deal, Burn this Territory* and *Orchid Sky* for Dance North. Bernadette was a member of Bangarra for eighteen months, having joined in April 1994 when she performed in *Ninni*. She then went on to become Assistant Artistic Director. Bernadette's first choreographic contribution to Bangarra was *Ochres*, collaborating with both Stephen and David Page. Bernadette was chosen as an Australian participant in the second Young Asian Choreographers Workshop held at the National Institute of the Arts in Taiwan in 1995.



David Page

David was born in Brisbane and is a descendant of the Munaldjali Clan of the Yugambah tribe in south-east Queensland. At thirteen his music career began as a solo singer, recording two singles under the direction of the W.E.A. Recording Company. He made appearances on T.V. shows such as *The Mike Walsh Show* and *Countdown*. David pursued serious music studies at the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music, Adelaide University, where he studied saxophone, voice, composition and song arrangement. David sang, acted and danced in stage productions *Murras*, written by Aboriginal playwright Eva Johnson, and Reg Livermore's *Big Sister*. As a composer David teamed up with his brother Stephen and created music works for NAISDA and Sydney Dance Company's *Shakespeare Dances*. He has also created music for television, including ABC TV's *Choreographers Series Seven Deadly Sins*, and the theme music for the television series *Heartland*. In 1991 David joined Bangarra Dance Theatre as resident composer. He composed the soundtrack for *Praying Mantis Dreaming* which has become one of his most applauded achievements. Most recently David collaborated with Stephen Page and Bernadette Walong in composing the soundtrack for *Ochres*.



Jo Mercurio

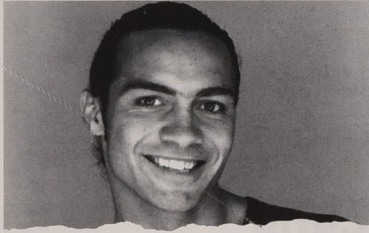
Jo Mercurio was born in Melbourne and raised in Fremantle, Western Australia. Following his sister Connie into ballet at the age of six triggered his fascination with dance. However, he decided to leave the barrel rolls to his brother Paul and moved into lighting. At sixteen one of his first jobs was for Swy Theatre Company where his brother Michael was a founding member.

Jo's career has spanned the entire entertainment spectrum. He has been working predominantly in lighting, involving rock 'n' roll, film, television, drama, dance theatre and corporate shows. Lighting and the manipulation of light has fuelled Jo's passion for his career; it is not only what you see but what is concealed that fascinates him.

Film credits include *Blackfellas*, *Dingo* and *Michelle's Third Novel*. Small screen credits include *Waltz through the Hills*, *Under the Skin* and *Ship to Shore*. Dance credits include *Scenes in a Prison*, *Six Feet Late*, *Traces*, *Window on the Clubbed*, *Praying Mantis Dreaming*, *El Amor Bruco*, *Ninni* and *Ochres*.

Jo is currently Production Manager and Lighting Designer for Bangarra Dance Theatre.

COMPANY MEMBERS

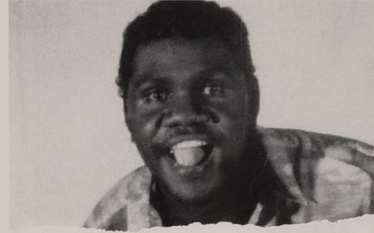


Russell Page

Born in Brisbane, Russell graduated from NAISDA in 1989. During his five years there he was able to learn traditional culture and values, by visiting the communities of Weipa, Bathurst Islands, the Kimberley's, Central Australia and the Torres Strait Islands.

Russell performed with The One Extra Company in *Othello* which toured to Jakarta and Hong Kong in 1990. Teaming up with his brothers Stephen and David, he performed in *Niki Nali* at the 1992 World Expo in Seville and at the cultural festival held during the Barcelona Olympic Games.

In 1991 Russell became a full-time member of Bangarra Dance Theatre, and has toured nationally and internationally with the company. He featured in *Praying Mantis Dreaming* and *Ninni*, and is also one of the original cast members of *Ochres*. In 1995 Russell toured with the company to Melbourne, Adelaide, Canberra, Berlin, Arnhem Land, Tokyo and Noumea.



George Serris

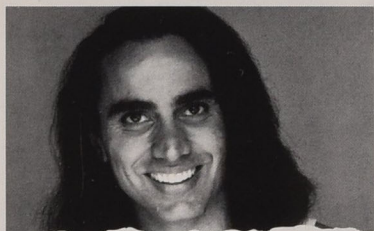
Djakapurra Munyarryun

Born in Yirrkala, north-eastern Arnhem Land, Djakapurra's life has been steeped in traditional dance and ceremony. In 1989 and 1990 he travelled Australia with elders from Yirrkala, teaching and conducting traditional dance and music workshops.

Djakapurra joined Bangarra Dance Theatre in 1991 as a traditional dancer and a virtuoso didgeridoo player. A dynamic traditional dancer, Djakapurra shows great interest in the crossover of traditional and contemporary music and dance styles which are being created in the company.

Djakapurra danced lead roles in *Praying Mantis Dreaming* and *Ninni*. In *Ochres* Djakapurra recreates his own style of dance. He has toured with *Ochres* throughout 1995 to Melbourne, Adelaide, Canberra, Berlin, Arnhem Land, Tokyo and Noumea.

Djakapurra's major film work includes *Black River*, playing the role of the water spirit, and *Breaking Through*, an Imax 3D film produced for Expo '93.



Gary Lang

Born in Darwin, Gary graduated from the National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association (NAISDA) in 1989.

During his time at NAISDA, Gary trained in a wide range of indigenous dance styles from all over the mainland and the Torres Strait Islands, as well as many classical and modern forms of dance.

In 1991 he joined AIDT - the Company, touring with them extensively in Australia and overseas. In 1992 he was featured on billboards and in magazines when he participated in the NSW Land Council's extensive campaign *Racism Sucks*.

Gary joined Bangarra in July 1995. Performing in *Ochres* he has toured with the company to Berlin, Arnhem Land, Tokyo and Noumea.



Kathryn Dunn

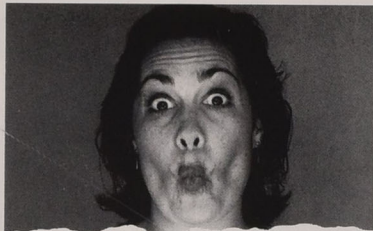
Born in Rockhampton, Queensland, Kathryn began dancing at the age of four. Her training encompassed classical, jazz, tap, contemporary dance, music, speech and drama.

In 1983, at the age of sixteen, Kathryn achieved Honours in her R.A.D. Advanced, attained her Solo Seal and was awarded the R.A.D. Bursary which enabled her to study at the Royal Ballet School in London, where she won the Silver Medal in the Adeleine Genee Competition in London.

In 1985 Kathryn was offered a contract with the Royal Ballet Company with whom she toured extensively for three years, working with many famous choreographers including Jerome Robbins.

Kathryn joined the Sydney Dance Company in 1990. During her five years with the Company Kathryn performed in all its productions.

In 1995 Kathryn performed with Chunky Move under the directorship of Gideon Obarzanek. Kathryn joined Bangarra in January this year.



Marilyn Miller

Marilyn started dancing at the age of five, and has trained in classical ballet, various traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance styles, tap and modern dance techniques, including Martha Graham, Lester Horton and Limone.

Marilyn has performed and taught extensively throughout Australia, and her overseas touring has taken her to New Zealand, Hong Kong, Berlin, Tokyo and Nottingham.

Marilyn has been a guest artist with the Queensland Ballet, Bangarra, and was a founding member and soloist with Aboriginal Islander Dance Theatre - the Company. Whilst with AIDT - the Company she choreographed *Blue and Purple* for its full length work *Colours*. She has also choreographed and acted in works for theatre, such as *Cockroach Opera*, *Dancin in the Snow* and *The Cherry Pickers*.

Marilyn returned to dance with Bangarra after a year's break, pursuing training in acting and choreographing whilst living in Brisbane. Marilyn has toured with *Ochres* to Berlin, Arnhem Land, Tokyo, Noumea and Canberra.



Gina Rings

Born in Port Augusta, South Australia, Gina spent most of her childhood in Murray Bridge and Port Maclay, a small reserve in S.A. Gina began her dance training during her final years of high school. After completing Year 12, she then went on to the Performing Arts School in Adelaide, studying dance and drama for two years.

In 1993 Gina was accepted into NAISDA where she was introduced to traditional dance and culture. As a dance student, travelling to the traditional communities of the Torres Strait Islands was the highlight of her training and growth at NAISDA, where she studied for one year.

In 1994 Gina was offered an apprenticeship with Bangarra Dance Theatre. During that year she toured with the company to the Adelaide Arts Festival, and performed with the company in its major Sydney season *Ninni* at the Enmore Theatre. Gina was part of the original cast of *Ochres* when presented as a work in progress during the 1994 Nambundah Festival at Belvoir Street Theatre. Recently she toured with the company to Berlin, Tokyo, Noumea and Canberra.

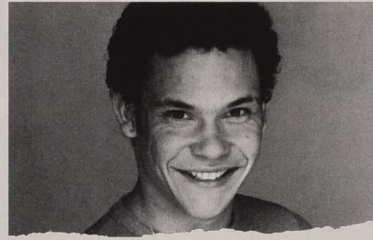


Frances Rings

Frances was born in Adelaide, South Australia and completed a five-year Associate Diploma in Dance with the National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association (NAISDA) in 1992. During her time at NAISDA Frances toured with its professional company A.I.D.T. to New Zealand, Queensland and Northern New South Wales. During her final year she was chosen to perform and tour with Kim Walker's production *Harold*.

Frances was offered an apprenticeship with Bangarra in 1993. She has toured nationally and internationally with the company to festivals and major events. Performing in *Praying Mantis Dreaming*, *Ninni* and *Ochres*, Frances has developed a real sense and passion for Stephen Page's style of choreography. By 1994 she was dancing the lead role in *Ninni*, a role that was created specially for her. She is an original cast member of *Ochres*.

In 1995 Frances was the recipient of an Australia Council grant which enabled her to travel to New York to attend the Summer School programme at the Alvin Ailey American Dance School.



Kirk Page

Kirk Page was born in Queensland. Before stepping into the world of the performing arts Kirk worked as a labourer until deciding to take the challenge of becoming a full-time dancer and singer.

Kirk came to Sydney in 1994 to study dance at the National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association (NAISDA). He is part of the Page clan, so naturally was inspired and encouraged by his family to make the move into the performing arts.

After having successfully completed a one-year certificate course at NAISDA, he gained an apprenticeship with Bangarra in 1995. Kirk is not only an aspiring dancer, but carries inside him a deep and passionate voice that can be heard in the opening song of *Ochres*.

Kirk has toured with *Ochres* throughout 1995 to Melbourne, Adelaide, Berlin and Arnhem Land.

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BANGARRA

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Gary Lang
Marilyn Miller
Djakapurra Munyarryun
Russell Page
Kirk Page
Kathryn Dunn
Frances Rings
Gina Rings

PERSONNEL

Artistic Director: Stephen Page
Cultural Consultant:
Djakapurra Munyarryun
General Manager: Jan Irvine
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Administration Assistant: Roma Dainius
Production Manager: Jo Mercurio
Rehearsal Director: Bill Pengelly

PRODUCTION TEAM

Choreographers: Stephen Page and
Bernadette Walong
Composer: David Page
Production Manager/Lighting Design:
Jo Mercurio
Stage Manager: Gwen Steele
Costume Design: Jennifer Irwin
Set Construction: Spinning-Eye, Luke Keon

COMPANY CREDITS

The Australia Council - This project has been assisted by the Commonwealth Government through The Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.

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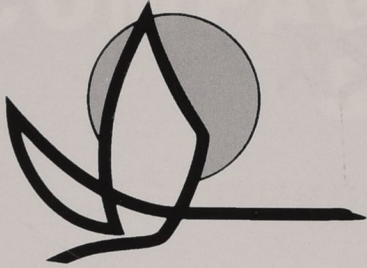
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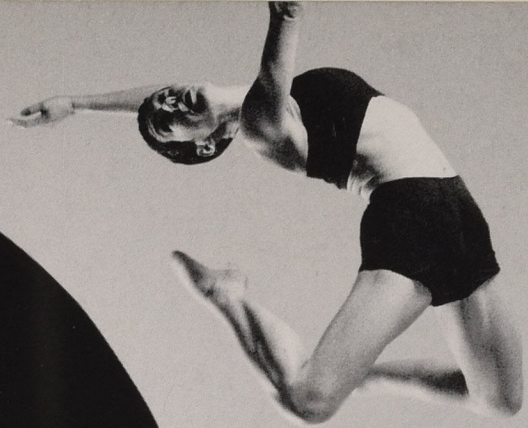
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2 Fruit 'n' 5 Veg everyday.



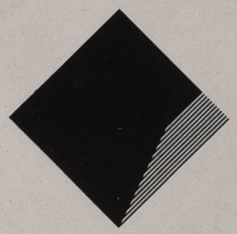
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