

**PRAYING
MANTIS
DREAMING**



BANGARRA DANCE THEATRE AUSTRALIA



BANGARRA

means
TO MAKE FIRE
in the Wiradjuri language
of New South Wales

HISTORY

Bangarra Dance Theatre Australia is a professional dance company that respectfully embraces the cultures of both indigenous peoples of Australia - the mainland Aboriginal and the Torres Strait Islander cultures.

The company was formed in 1989 by graduate dancers and staff of Aboriginal Islander Dance Theatre who saw the need for a professional dance company which reflected the indigenous and contemporary cultures of Australia.

Under the artistic direction of Stephen Page, Bangarra has spearheaded the development of a new style of Australian dance, drawing boldly from the essence and spirituality of Australia's traditional dance styles and combining them with the very best of contemporary dance and music.

Bangarra has toured Australia from Geraldton to La Perouse including most capital cities. Internationally, Bangarra has thrilled audiences in Japan, Indonesia, China, Hong Kong, the USA and the UK. The company is regularly invited to present its unique dance style to large national and international gatherings - the International Olympic Committee at the Sydney Opera House; the huge live and television audience at this year's AFL Grand Final; and the Opening Ceremony of the 1993 World Youth Soccer Championship Cup at the Sydney Football Stadium. Bangarra has also been commissioned to create dance works for television and film.

CULTURAL BASE

Bangarra derives its cultural identity from the peoples of Yirrkala in North East Arnhemland and the Torres Strait Islands.

Traditional Aboriginal dances embrace over 40,000 years of culture, expressing the origins of Aboriginal life and the mystic quality of the Dreaming. They demonstrate the close links between the people and the natural elements - the land, sky, sea and creatures that inhabit their region. Torres Strait Island dances celebrate births, marriage, feast days, the departure and return of loved ones and the environment - the sea, vegetation, marine and land animals.

The modern dances express the beauty, pain and humour of contemporary Aboriginal life. Also invested in these dances is the sophistication of contemporary society, the hopes for the future and pride in the expression of Aboriginal/Islander identity.

BANGARRA'S VISION FOR THE FUTURE

To be Australia's national indigenous dance theatre company, through effectively harnessing the power of traditional and contemporary Australian dance, so that just recognition be given to Australia's indigenous cultures.

To secure permanent premises in Sydney for the presentation of Australia's indigenous cultures, working in conjunction with other indigenous art organisations.

To expand the company's current audience base in Australia: the general public, the people in remote areas, those living in the traditional communities, and the growing number of international visitors.

To continue developing its world audience through international touring.

CREATING PRAYING MANTIS DREAMING

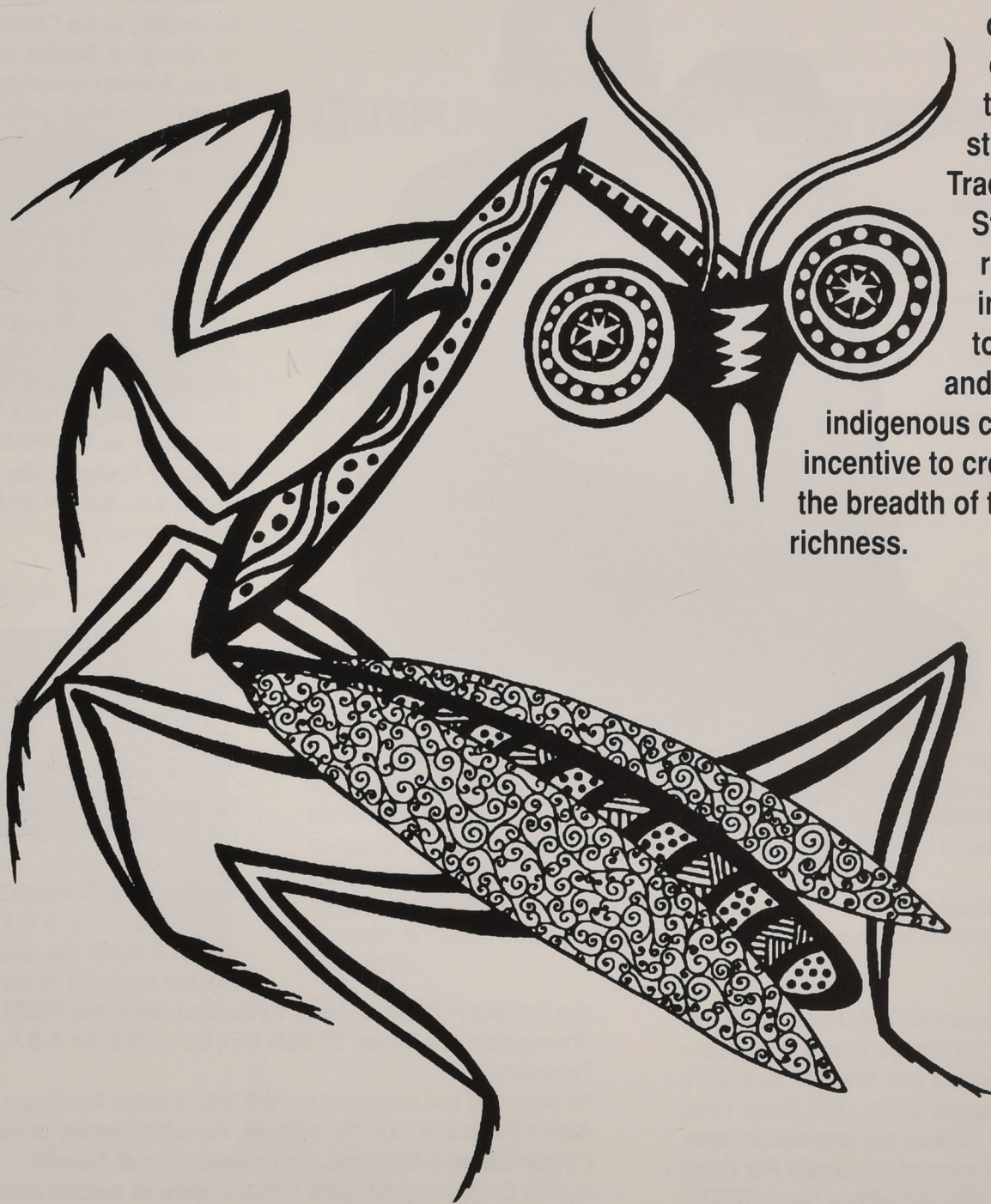
The inspiration and knowledge to do this work comes predominantly from the Yirrkala people of North East Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory. PRAYING MANTIS DREAMING is based around the dreaming of a woman born to an Aboriginal mother and European father. She inherits the Praying Mantis totem from her mother, the Spirit of the Praying Mantis watches over her and guides her through her journey. She experiences lust, anger and death in the city and then learns of her traditional roots through the Praying Mantis Spirit.

This production is significant in that it gave me the opportunity to merge three distinct and different styles of dance —

Traditional Aboriginal, Torres Strait Island and contemporary dance. Having an original musical score written to compliment the dance and musical styles of these

indigenous cultures has given me incentive to create a work that shows the breadth of the company's artistic richness.

STEPHEN PAGE
Artistic Director



Artwork: Libby Blainey



STEPHEN PAGE

Artistic Director, Bangarra Dance Theatre

Stephen graduated from the National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association (N.A.I.S.D.A.) in 1983.

He danced with Sydney Dance Company in AFTER VENICE, WILDERNESS, NEARLY BELOVED, SHINING, POPPY, CAFE, SOFT BRUISING, COMPANY OF WOMEN, and KING ROGER and toured with them to Greece, Italy, Japan, Hong Kong and Korea. Graeme Murphy created the role of the Faun for Stephen in LATE AFTERNOON OF A FAUN, where he danced alongside premier dancers, Garth Welch and Graeme Murphy. In 1991, Stephen choreographed an original work, MOOGGRAH, for Sydney Dance Company's season SHAKESPEARE'S DANCES.

In 1988, he toured with the Aboriginal Islander Dance Theatre, the performing arm of N.A.I.S.D.A., to Germany and Finland and was the Artistic Director for N.A.I.S.D.A.'s show, KAYN WALU in 1989.

In December 1991 Stephen was commissioned to choreograph Sydney Theatre Company's TRACKERS OF OXYRHYN-CUS. At the same time he choreographed a sextet for The Australian Opera's season NOZZE DI FIGARO. Stephen joined Bangarra Dance Theatre Australia as Principal Choreographer in September 1991, choreographing UP UNTIL NOW which was presented to audiences in Sydney, NSW North Coast and Brisbane. At the end of 1991, Stephen was appointed Artistic Director of Bangarra Dance Theatre Australia. In 1992 he choreographed and directed Bangarra's first full-length production, PRAYING MANTIS DREAMING.

The work Stephen has created for Bangarra, has toured to Indonesia, China, Hong Kong, USA and England.

Stephen's other choreographing/directing credits include: the dance theatre work NIKI NALI for Australia Day at EXPO 92 in Seville, the cultural festival for the Olympic Games in Barcelona and a tour of Darwin, Yirrkala, Central Australia and Adelaide; Australia's indigenous people's participation at the opening of the 1993 World Youth Soccer Championship at the Sydney Football Stadium; the contemporary operatic film, BLACK RIVER, which has just been awarded the Grande Prix Opera Screen 93 Prize in Paris; PRIDE (for ABC Choreographer's Series SEVEN DEADLY SINS) which was selected as a finalist for the Banff Performing Arts Award, Canada; and numerous rock videos.

Most recently Stephen co-choreographed the half-time entertainment at the 1993 AFL Grand Final, and directed BLACK VINE, Sydney City Council's celebration for the International Year of the World's Indigenous People performed by 80 Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander artists at the Sydney Town Hall.

DAVID PAGE

Composer of PRAYING MANTIS DREAMING and Musical Director of Bangarra Dance Theatre

Born in Brisbane, David is a descendant of the Munaldjali Clan of the Yugambeh Tribe south east Queensland.

At 13 his music career began as a solo singer recording two singles under the direction of W.E.A. Recording Company. He made appearances on shows such as The Mike Walsh Show and Countdown.

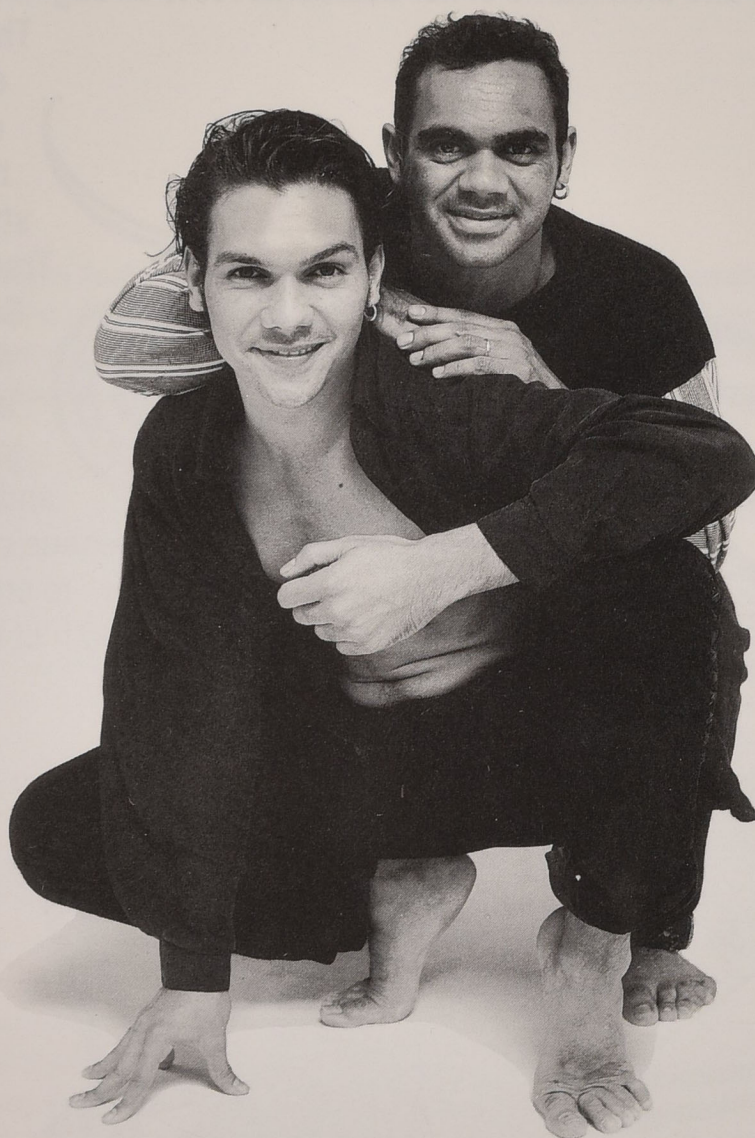
David pursued serious music studies in the eighties enrolling at the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music, Adelaide University where he studied saxophone, voice, composing and song arrangement. He toured extensively with the performing ensemble of CASM and went on to become a musician and songwriter of AZUR an all Aboriginal/ Islander band. David sang, acted and danced in stage productions such as MURRAS written by Aboriginal playwright, Eva Johnson and Reg Livermore's BIG SISTER.

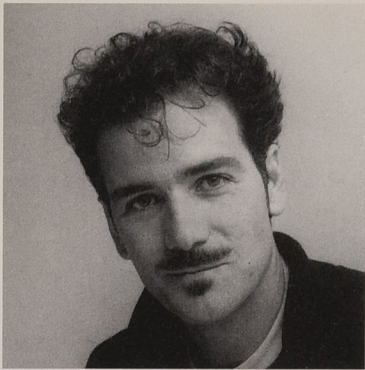
As a composer David teamed up with his brother/choreographer Stephen Page and created music works for KAYN WALU and DJUNBA WOMEN, the annual productions for the NAIS-DA Student Ensemble, and MOOGGRAH for Sydney Dance Company's SHAKESPEARE DANCES David has also created music for televi-

sion including POISON for ABC TV's Blackout series, and PRIDE, Choreographers Series SEVEN DEADLY SINS for A.B.C. Television.

He performed and composed for NIKI NALI a dance theatre production that toured EXPO 92 in Seville, the cultural festival at the Olympic Games in Barcelona, and the central strip of Australia.

In 1991 David joined Bangarra Dance Theatre as resident composer/performer where he has composed and performed in various productions including UP UNTIL NOW, GAPAN SAGNAL, and most recently, BLACK VINE. David's composition and musical direction of PRAYING MANTIS DREAMING is one of his most applauded achievements.





ROSS PHILIP

Ross Philip danced with Ballet Victoria before joining the Bat Dor Dance Company in Israel in 1976.

He returned to Australia in 1977 and joined the Sydney Dance Company, where his partnership with Janet Vernon was launched in Graeme Murphy's ballet TIP. This partnership continued in the memorable SDC productions of GLIMPSES, RUMOURS, POPPY, DAPHNIS AND CHLOE, SOME ROOMS, AFTERWORLDS NEARLY BELOVED, VAST, and KING ROGER.

In 1981, Ross studied Fine Arts at the University of Tasmania. He returned to Sydney Dance Company in 1983 but took time out in 1987 to pursue his own art-work. He was invited back to do SDCs five city tour of VAST in 1988, and has continued dancing with them since 1989 dancing in productions including SOFT BRUISING, BOXES, CAFE (for which he designed sets), IN THE COMPANY OF WOMEN, NEARLY BELOVED, VIRIDIAN and STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE, and Kim Walker's MONKEY SEE. Ross is a painter and sculptor and maintains an active interest in choreography and design, creating designs for THE SHAKE-SPEARE DANCES season at the Seymour Centre.

Bangarra's Artistic Director, Stephen Page, invited Ross to be the guest artist in PRAYING MANTIS DREAMING. He is the first European dancer to perform with the company.



GUYPUNURA JANET MUNYARRYUN

Born in Yirrkala, north east Arnhem Land. Janet worked as traditional Aboriginal dancer, teacher and advisor with the National Aboriginal/Islander Skills Development Association from 1985-1989. She performed in NAISDA's End of Year Show Productions, STOMPIN GROUND, INNOVATIONS and KAYN WALU, touring Finland and Germany with the Aboriginal/Islander Dance Theatre in 1988 and also performing in the Melbourne Spoleto Festival. In 1989 Janet attended the Asian Dance Academy Festival in Hong Kong as Guest Teacher with AIDT.

Janet joined Bangarra Dance Theatre in 1990 as both dancer and traditional advisor, travelling with the company to Indonesia in 1991.

It has been with Janet's guidance that has made it possible for Stephen Page to create PRAYING MANTIS DREAMING.



MEDIKA WILLIAMS

Born in Melbourne in 1983, Medika lives in Sydney where she attends Darlington Public School and is part of the school's dance group. In 1990, she participated with thousands of school children in the Annual Schools Spectacular at the Sydney Opera House. Medika played the daughter (of Maroochy Barambah) in the internationally acclaimed operatic film BLACK RIVER. She has won numerous Koori Education Awards in the arts.

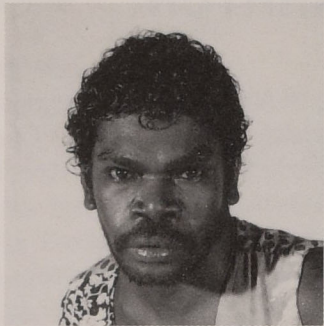
Medika has been performing with Bangarra for the past year and has toured from Geraldton to London dancing the role of the young daughter in PRAYING MANTIS DREAMING.





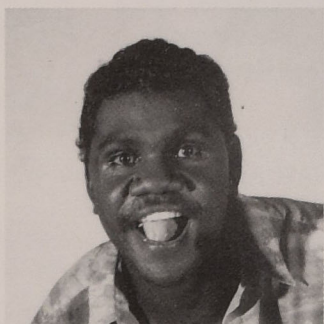
RUSSELL PAGE

Born in Queensland, Russell studied with NAISDA. In his graduation year of 1989, Russell travelled with NAISDA to Hong Kong, representing Australia at the 2nd Dance Academy Festival. In 1990, Russell toured to Jakarta and Hong Kong performing in One Extra Dance Theatre's production of OTHELLO and featured in their BRAVE NEW WORKS 2. In 1991, he joined Bangarra and has toured with the company to Indonesia, China, Hong Kong, USA & England. Russell played the lead acting role in BLACK RIVER, a contemporary operatic film directed by Kevin Lucas which won the Grande Prix Opera Screen 93 Prize in Paris. He has also performed in POISON, an Aboriginal documentary for ABC TV, directed by Michael Riley. In 1992 Russell performed with NIKI NALI at Australia Day at EXPO 92 in Seville, and at the cultural festival held during the Olympic Games in Barcelona, and toured Darwin, Yirrkala, Central Australia, and Adelaide. Russell is performing the lead role in PRAYING MANTIS DREAMING.



YAPUMA GURRUWIWI

Yapuma is from Elcho Island in the Northern Territory where he began learning dance as a child. In 1988 he came to AIDT Professional Performing Group via a special course for traditional dancers. In the same year he toured Germany and Finland as well as performing in the Melbourne Spoleto Festival. In 1990 he was in One Extra Dance Company's Production of OTHELLO which toured Indonesia. Yapuma joined Bangarra in 1989, and toured Japan, New Zealand, China, Hong Kong, London, Los Angeles and New York with the company. Yapuma has performed in the highly acclaimed operatic film BLACK RIVER.



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 workshops. He joined Bangarra Dance Theatre in 1991 as a traditional dancer and a virtuoso didjiridoo player. A dynamic traditional dancer, Djakapurra shows great interest in modern dance. He has travelled to Indonesia, China, Hong Kong, London, Los Angeles and New York with the company. Also featuring in BLACK RIVER.

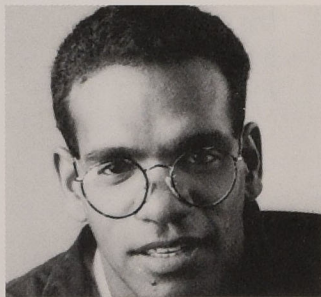
PINAU GHEE

Pinau was born and raised on Murray Island in the Torres Strait Islands where dance played an important part in his life. Before graduating from the National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association (NAISDA) in 1988 Pinau was fortunate to do a brief traineeship with the Queensland Ballet Company as part of his course. During his apprenticeship with the Aboriginal Islander Dance Theatre he travelled to Germany & Finland. In 1991, he joined Bangarra and toured with them to Indonesia, Hong Kong, China, London, New York and Los Angeles as well as appearing in the production UP UNTIL NOW. Pinau featured in films BEDEVIL directed by Tracey Moffat and PRIDE, ABC choreographers' series Seven Deadly Sins.



LEWIS LAMPTON

Lewis hails from Townsville, Queensland, and successfully completed a 5 year course with NAISDA in 1990. Before graduating he spent a three month professional traineeship working with Tasdance and attending a cultural festival in Papua New Guinea. In 1991 Lewis performed with Aboriginal Islander Dance Theatre, the Company where Lewis danced the lead role of Harold Blair, in HAROLD. Lewis toured with Bangarra to China, Hong Kong, London and New York. Lewis is currently doing a 4 year Bachelor degree of Human Movement at the Australian Catholic University.



JENSEN WARUSAM

Jensen comes from Saibai Island in the Torres Strait Islands where he is a leading dancer in his community. For many years he has taught Traditional Torres Strait Island Dancing at NAISDA. In 1988 he toured Germany and Finland with the AIDT Professional Performing Group. With his passion for dance he returned to join Bangarra in 1991, for the Indonesian Tour as well as performing in UP UNTIL NOW. Jensen toured with the company to China, Hong Kong, Los Angeles, New York and London.





MONICA STEVENS

Monica is a founding member of Bangarra Dance Theatre Australia. Born in Gordonvale, North Queensland, she is a graduate of NAISDA. Monica has made many television and theatre appearances including the Sydney Opera House production, THE FIRST AUSTRALIANS, the Royal Bicentennial Gala Performance, the opening of the new Parliament House in Canberra and the Assembly of the General Association of International Sports Federations for Sydney's Olympic Bid. Her tours have taken her to the USA, England, Germany, Finland, Japan, New Guinea, Indonesia, New Zealand, China and Hong Kong.

GLEND A ARAGU

Originally from Dauan Island, in the western group of the Torres Strait Islands, Glenda spent six years in the traditional community of Dauan Island before coming to the mainland to complete her secondary education. In 1989 Glenda was accepted into NAISDA and completed 3 years of study before returning home to the Torres Straits. Glenda began her apprenticeship with Bangarra this year, touring with the company to Los Angeles, New York and London.



FRANCES RINGS

Born in Adelaide, Frances has completed an Associate Diploma in Dance with NAISDA. Frances toured New Zealand with AIDT 'The Company' in November 1990 and toured Queensland and northern New South Wales with the production HAROLD choreographed by KIm Walker. Frances was offered an apprenticeship with Bangarra early this year, and has toured with the company to Los Angeles, New York and London.

ILLONA TIM

Born in Cairns, Queensland, Illona started her dance training at NAISDA, graduating in 1988. During her apprenticeship with the Aboriginal Islander Dance Theatre she toured Germany and Finland and also performed at the Spoleto Festival in Melbourne. While at NAISDA her choreographic experience included such works as METAMORPHOSIS and FLEDGLINGS in collaboration with Marilyn Miller. Illona has toured both nationally and internationally with Bangarra since 1991, and has performed in the film BLACK RIVER and ABC TV's PRIDE — SEVEN DEADLY SINS, The Choreographers Series. Illona toured with Bangarra to China, Hong Kong, Los Angeles, New York and London.



CHRISTINE ANU

Christine completed her Associate Diploma in Dance with NAISDA in 1992 and during this time also toured with the production HAROLD. Christine has recently returned from the "Bush Tour" of the Northern Territory where she was a back up singer for Yothu Yindi. She has signed up to White Records and finalised the recording of "Last Train", a project written by and involving Paul Kelly. Early in 1994 Christine will embark on the recording of her debut album. Christine has toured with Bangarra to Los Angeles, New York and London.

SUE ANN WILLIAMS

Born in Longreach Queensland and raised in Rockhampton she started classical ballet at the Rockhampton Academy of Dancing under Debra Parker, where she obtained outstanding results in her RAD examinations. She joined the Queensland Young Dancers Company and later successfully auditioned for the Australian Ballet School. In 1987 she attended the Victorian College Dance Programme. In 1992 Sue Ann was offered an apprenticeship with Bangarra Dance Theatre Australia. Sue Ann toured with the company to China, Hong Kong, London, Los Angeles and New York.



PRODUCTION TEAM

TREVOR CONNELL

Trevor is operations manager for Extravaganza! Event Technical Services a company which provides technical production for theatre and Special Events.

Trevor began his professional theatre career at the Q Theatre in Penrith in 1977, since then he has worked in the capacity of Stage Manager, Production Manager, Technical Manager, Set Builder, Technician, Lighting Designer, Set Designer and Photographer for many of the major and minor Theatre, Opera and Dance companies in Sydney.

With Extravaganza! Trevor has been responsible for design and technical production for many Special Events throughout Australia including the launch of "Lou Lou" perfume at the State Theatre, fashion parades for Grace Bros., the annual Bradmil Denim Awards, Spring in the Gardens and numerous shopping centre parades. Working with Bangarra has given Trevor the opportunity to put a little back into the industry through training very keen people in production skills.

DARREN JARDEN

Following seven years in the building industry in Brisbane, Darren joined Bangarra to work as Stage Manager and to be trained as Production Manager.

Since May 1993 Darren has toured with the company to Western Australia and Yirrkala where he had the privilege to experience traditional ways for the first time.

He has stage managed the company's school shows, performances and Black Vine at the Sydney Town Hall.

During the company tour to the USA, Darren enjoyed exchanging cultural and theatre experiences with Afro-Americans and American Native Indians. Then in London Darren stage managed Praying Mantis Dreaming at the South Bank Centre.

Darren is pursuing his interests in sound recording, lighting and set design and production management by undergoing courses and working with other companies whenever the opportunity arises.

JOE HURST

In 1982 Joe received his Painter and Decorator Trades Person and he then went on to further his studies at the Northern River College of Advanced Education - Lismore, in Visual Arts. At Qld College of Arts he completed two semesters of a BA in Animation. Joe's first major design was "Kakadu Man" for the Marionette Theatre of Australia and "Keepers" written & directed by Bob Maza at Belvoir Street Theatre. Recent work includes ABC TV Blackout, Poison directed by Michael Riley, Reflections, Myths and Legends - NAISDA Student Ensemble, Up the Road directed by Kylie Belling, Close to the Bone directed by Richard Wally- Q Theatre Penrith, The Sining Land - Toe Truck Theatre, Through Murri Eyes - Street Arts Community Theatre Brisbane and Black Vine directed by Stephen Page - Sydney Town Hall. Joe has recently returned from Budapest where he has been doing installation for the Dreamtime Exhibition at the Hungarian Arts Festival.

JO MERCURIO

Jo Mercurio's work is devised evenly between film and Dance Theatre. Working with light in both mediums brings a fusion of lighting styles. Recent credits as Lighting Designer for "Field Works Performance Group" "Scenes in a Prison", "Traces" and "Poets Lunatics and Dreamers" Collaborations on all of Club Terpsichord shows including "Get a Life" and "window on the Clubbed" Perth and Melbourne season. Various other works; "Daughters of Draska" Rakini Indian Dancers "Six Feet Late" Jenny Preston-Newman. Film credits include "Dingo" and the recently released "Blackfellas".

Set construction by **BROWNS MILL**

BANGARRA DANCE THEATRE PERSONNEL

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DAVID PAGE
ROULA KANTARZOGLOU - Modern/Jazz
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Assistant Stage Manager *

DARREN JARDEN
JEWEL SCOTT

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Production
Marketing and Publicity
Marketing and Publicity

RICHARD ALLEN
TREVOR CONNELL
ANN HINCHLIFFE
BAUXHAU STONE

* Trainee positions funded by Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC)

** On secondment from State Rail Authority



BANGARRA

THANKS

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the traditional communities of Yirrkala and the Torres Strait Islands for allowing Bangarra Dance Theatre Australia to utilise selected dances for parts of the performance repertoire. Your traditional dances has been shared nationally and internationally, contributing to the positive image of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

A special thanks go to the traditional dancers, whose contribution to the company has been invaluable.

We also acknowledge the assistance of: South Sydney Police Citizens Youth Club, Damien Gerard Sound Studio, Libby Blainey, Jenny Irwin, Gerry Bostock, Eugene Casey, Roland Chadwick, Lil Harris, Aunty Dee, Leila Wedd, SBS Radio 2EA - Aboriginal Program, Sonia Stevens, Sam Basa, Marcia Walker, Kelly Khalu, Sydney Dance Company, State Rail Authority, Ernabella Choir, Michael Page International, DASFLEET, The Earth Exchange.

BANGARRA'S SPONSORS

KEEP THE FLAME BURNING
BY SUPPORTING THE ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE
OF AUSTRALIA'S CULTURAL HERITAGE



This project was assisted by the Performing Arts Board and the Aboriginal Arts Unit of the Australia Council, the Federal Government's arts funding and advisory body.

ABORIGINAL AND
TORRES
STRAIT
ISLANDER
COMMISSION



ARTHUR
ANDERSEN



ATSIC



Ansett Australia.

PETER D. WALKER & CO.
Chartered Accountants



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