

BANGARRA DANCE THEATRE

SANDSONG

Stories from the Great Sandy Desert



NATIONAL TOUR
June – September 2021

CREDITS

Choreographers
Stephen Page
Frances Rings
and the Dancers of
Bangarra Dance Theatre

Cultural Consultants
Putuparri Tom Lawford
Eva Nargoodah

Cultural Consultancy
Wangkatjungka &
Walmajarri Elders

Composer
Steve Francis

Set Designer
Jacob Nash

Costume Designer
Jennifer Irwin

Lighting Designer
Nick Schlieper

AV Designer
David Bergman

Rehearsal Director
Daniel Roberts

*Aerial Movement
Consultant*
Joshua Thomson

Rigging Consultant
David Jackson

Lighting Realiser
Chris Twyman

Sound Recordist
Brendon Boney

PRODUCTION

Production Manager
Cat Studley

Company Manager
Claudia Elder

Stage Manager
Stephanie Storr

Head Electrician
Marshall Bull

Head of Costume
Monica Smith

Rigger & Head Mechanist
Katie McDonagh

Sound & AV Technician
Khyam Cox

Assistant Stage Manager
Rose Jenkins

SPECIAL THANKS TO
Mayarn Julia Lawford
Gerard Lawford
Erica Lawford
Clinton Wolf
Jaden Mellick
Rosie Lawford
Alexander Wolf
William Wolf
Florence Wolf
The Nargoodah family
The Lawford family
The Tighe Family
The Cox Family
The James Family
Ngarralja Tommy May

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BANGARRA DANCE THEATRE AUSTRALIA

ABN 96 003 814 006
Bangarra Dance Theatre Australia
Gadigal Country, Eora Nation
Wharf 4/5, 15 Hickson Road
Walsh Bay NSW 2000
Phone +61 2 9251 5333
Email bangarra@bangarra.com.au

@bangarradancetheatre #bangarra

/bangarra

@bangarradance

/bangarradancetheatre

bangarra
DANCE THEATRE
AUSTRALIA

ACT 1 **MAKURRA I COLD DRY SEASON**

Poison

Time and space collide in a cloud of black collective consciousness, foreshadowing dark times ahead. But the Land is always present, the breathing womb of resilience.

No cast

Dry

The vibrant energy of the seasons unfolds to reveal the enduring cycle that sustains life in the Great Sandy Desert.

Cast: Full ensemble

Skin

A young woman is guided through Kinship and affirms her place amongst her skin group. She is given her name and told of her responsibilities to family, and to the women's business knowledge that she will inherit one day.

Cast: Rika Hamaguchi, Glory Tuohy-Daniell, Lillian Banks, Courtney Radford, Cassidy Waters, Maddison Paluch, Emily Flannery

Junta: Women's Traditional Bush Onion Dance

This Traditional Dance is about collecting the Junta Bush onions, cooking them, rubbing them together and finally winnowing them in the coolamon till they are clean and ready to eat and share with the family.

Cast: Rika Hamaguchi, Glory Tuohy-Daniell, Lillian Banks, Courtney Radford, Cassidy Waters, Maddison Paluch, Emily Flannery

Totem

The men are preparing a young man for Ceremony. Through the lens of male energy, ritual transformation connects the men to their totems. The totemic shapeshifters move through the space, evolving as they reaffirm story to place, and their responsibility to the maintenance of men's sites.

Cast: Beau Dean Riley Smith, Rikki Mason, Baden Hitchcock, Ryan Pearson, Bradley Smith, Kallum Goolagong, Gusta Mara, Kiarn Doyle, Daniel Mateo

Marjarrka: Men's Traditional Dance Story

This tells the true story of how Wurtuwaya (Yanpiyarti Ned Cox's grandfather) and Wirrali (Ningali Lawford-Wolf's great-grandfather) recovered their stolen Marjarrka totemic object from a group of men who had taken it and were using it to perform their own ceremony. Wurtuwaya and Wirrali managed to retrieve the sacred totemic object, and created this important ceremonial dance, which is performed by both senior and younger men.

This dance belongs to the Lawford Family, Tighe Family, Cox Family and James Family.

Cast: Beau Dean Riley Smith, Rikki Mason, Baden Hitchcock, Ryan Pearson, Bradley Smith, Kallum Goolagong, Gusta Mara, Kiarn Doyle, Daniel Mateo

ACT 2 **PARRANGA, HOT DRY SEASON**

Coolamon

The women hunt during cold weather time. This year is different though, its dry and cold. The land is quiet and there is a drought, water and food are scarce. A meditation on fragility, survival, balance, knowledge, life and death.

Cast: Rika Hamaguchi, Glory Tuohy-Daniell, Lillian Banks, Courtney Radford, Cassidy Waters, Maddison Paluch, Emily Flannery

Spinifex

The men are carrying smoking spinifex to make a shelter. They are burning off, vaccinating, maintaining the health of Country. The old people are talking to Country, they can sense the change coming. The colonisers and their cattle have brought a dust storm with them which breaks the Land apart, displacing families.

Cast: Full ensemble

ACT 3 **KARTIYA**

Auction

The Land has been interrupted. Mobs have left the desert, forced to leave the memories of bush life behind them. People begin

their new life as laborers and domestics, in servitude to the pastoral industry, victim to the lawlessness of a new frontier and the whims of the station owners.

Cast: Full ensemble

Station Labour

The men toil from dawn to dusk in the stockyards, labouring in a relentless cycle, paid only in rations of food and clothing.

Cast: Beau Dean Riley Smith, Rikki Mason, Ryan Pearson, Bradley Smith, Kallum Goolagong, Kiarn Doyle, Daniel Mateo

Build Up / Walk Off

Wet season lies in the distance, reflecting the growing tensions of the people. A cyclone is brewing as the people stand up for their rights.

Vincent Lingiari's voice fills the space, stabilising the energy, awakening the memory of the proud desert men that they once were, and giving them the strength and solidarity to walk-off the stations.

Cast: Full ensemble / Aerialists: Rikki Mason, Lillian Banks

ACT 4 **YITILAL, WET SEASON**

Fringe

A young boy is lost, an internal storm brewing, ready to explode from social trauma and intergenerational grief. Wet season reminds him of his Grandfather and the resilience of the Lore Men who came before him. His sister steps out from the shadows of his fear, carrying the spirit to cleanse him.

Cast: Rika Hamaguchi, Baden Hitchcock, Kallum Goolagong, Daniel Mateo

Lore Time

Mobs come together for Ceremony and to begin the healing.

Cast: Beau Dean Riley Smith, Rikki Mason, Rika Hamaguchi, Glory Tuohy-Daniell, Baden Hitchcock, Ryan Pearson, Lillian Banks, Courtney Radford, Cassidy Waters, Gusta Mara, Emily Flannery, Kiarn Doyle, Maddison Paluch

Karnti: Women's Traditional Bush Potato Dance

This Traditional Dance is about looking for the Karnti bush potato. You look everywhere with your digging stick for the roots. You see a crack in the ground and that is where the Kartni is and you can dig it up.

Cast: Rika Hamaguchi, Glory Tuohy-Daniell, Lillian Banks, Courtney Radford, Cassidy Waters, Maddison Paluch, Emily Flannery

Painting Mob

Painting Country brings the people closer to their desert homeland, which they have not seen for forty years.

Art transports them back to their Traditional Lands, reconnecting and reaffirming ties to Country. This cultural awakening empowers and strengthens them to rebuild family, Community and their future.

Cast: Full ensemble

Homeland

Through oppression, multiple displacements and decades of upheaval, the spirit of People and place endures to stand strong in their Kinship and belonging. They come together in wet season for Lore time when everyone gathers for Ceremony. Unbroken, the cycle continues.

Cast: Full ensemble

Descriptions of Traditional Dances provided by Eva Nargoodah, Mayarn Julia Lawford and Putuparri Tom Lawford and the National Museum of Australia.

GLOSSARY

Walmajarri Language translations:

Kartiya *White Person*

Makurra *Cold Season*

Parranga *Hot, Dry Season*

Yitilal *Wet Season*

Marjarrka *Men's Traditional Cone Dance*

Karnti *Women's Traditional Bush Potato Dance*

Junta *Women's Traditional Bush Onion Dance*