

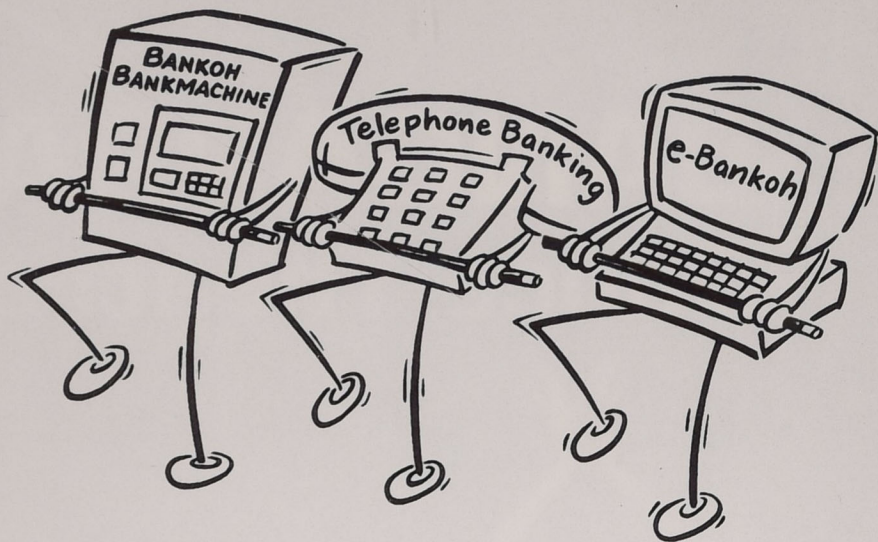
Leeward Community College presents

BANGARRA

Dance Theatre



March 25 & 26, 2000
Leeward Community College Theatre
Pearl City, Hawai'i



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Bangarra Dance Theatre

the Dreaming

Artistic Director Stephen Page

Performers

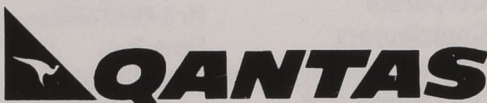
Victor Bramich
Yolande Brown
Elma Kris
Lewis Lampton
Peggy Misi

Djakapurra Munyarryun
Russell Page
Frances Rings
Desley Roberts
Sidney Saltner

Company

Andrew Booth General Manager
Meryl Roger Project Manager
Company Manager Jasmine Gulash
Rehearsal Director Nina Veretennikova
Development Manager Fiona Taylor
Administrator Carla Theunissen
Financial Controller Production Manager
Stage Manager Narelle Lewis
Technician John Matkovic
Administration Coordinator Madeleine Dignam

Bangarra Dance Theatre's Hawai'i tour was arranged through **Tim Bostock Productions** and made possible through the generous support of the following sponsors:



**Tonight's concert is supported by a grant from the
STATE FOUNDATION ON CULTURE AND THE ARTS.**

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the Dreaming; A work in two parts

Before time began when the land was formed and the spirits roamed free was the Dreaming. Where wet meets dry, the future folds back to the past and the Imagined is often Reality.

Steeped in the cultural heritage of the Aboriginal people of Australia, *the Dreaming* combines the ancient myth and ritual of the Munyarryun Clan of Northern Australia with music and movement from the contemporary urban world to present a work of sharp beauty and contrasts. Weaving together the elemental experience of both the land and the waters, *the Dreaming* sets forth on a sublime emotional journey. Drawing on the grandeur and desolation of Australia's sweeping landscapes and waters, *the Dreaming* evokes the dangerous beauty and spiritual resonance of a country and a people.

Humanity merges with nature's pantheon in a lyrical story of resilience, strength and belonging.

Dry

Drawing on the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the land, *Dry* explores the mystical significance of the substance of ochre, inspired by its spiritual and medicinal power. A clay-like paint drawn from the land itself ochre plays a vital role in the cultural life of a community.

From the pain and power of male initiation to the cleansing spirit of Mother Earth at dawn, *Dry* follows the daily cycle of the land and maps the universal cycle of us all.

Wet

Wet continues the story of the earth and the base power of the elements, taking the journey to the vast bodies of water. As disparate, as diverse as Aboriginal identity itself, *Wet* celebrates the seas, the rivers, the swamps, and the wealth of life and mystery they contain.

The still waters are sites of great sacredness and spirituality, imagining the great swathes of life in the silent depths: fish as unborn souls – fearful of pain, ready for birth, awaiting their moment in the sun. The oceans inspire the exhilaration and energy of life and love. The salt in the air and the strength in the waves, the breath of the wind and the beat of the earth merge into one majestic whole.

Bangarra Dance Theatre

One of the most exciting performing arts companies in Australia at the moment is Bangarra Dance Theatre. Formed in 1989, the meteoric rise of this company has seen them lauded by audiences and critics alike. Bangarra is something special, and totally unique. They have developed a new language through which contemporary urban Aboriginal people can express themselves, their ideas and their spirits, a language of dance, music and song. Drawing on the traditional dances and culture of the Yirrkala community in the remote area of Arnhemland in the north of Australia, under the artistic direction of Stephen Page, Bangarra has fused the traditional aspects of Aboriginal and Islander life with contemporary movement, and from this fusion has emerged an electrifying new style, completely innovative, truly Australian.

The company is both nationally and internationally recognized for this unique fusion and has brought a new dimension to Australian dance and choreography. Bangarra performed its first full-length work, *Praying Mantis Dreaming* in 1992, followed by *Ninni* in 1994, and *Ochres* in 1995. All of these shows were immensely successful, but *Ochres* was the breakthrough piece for Bangarra, a work which resulted in more invitations for national and international touring than Bangarra is currently able to accept. Inspired by the land, by ochre itself, essential parts of Aboriginal and Islander life, *Ochres* drew plaudits from Australia, Asia and Europe. The portrayal of each ochre color – red, yellow, black and white – brought with it an awareness of the spiritual which challenged our own contemporary expression. Bangarra gives us the opportunity to see Aboriginal culture as an evolving and important part of Australian life and not as an artifact from times gone by.

Bangarra undertook the next step of their journey in July 1997 moving to a new home at the Wharf, Walsh Bay on Sydney's famous Harbour. Stephen Page's long anticipated new piece, *Fish*, had its world premiere at Edinburgh Festival in August, 1997. As *Ochres* explored the land and our relationship to it, *Fish* continued the story of the encompassing power of the natural elements. Inspired by the stories of the coastal peoples of the lands on which Sydney now stands, *Fish* was a visually ravishing journey through nature's great waters, its inhabitants and cycles, and its depths and rituals. It celebrated the waters, the sea, the rivers, and the wealth of life and mystery they contain.

Fish had its Australian premiere in Sydney as part of the first of the Olympic cultural festivals, *The Festival of Dreaming* where it was acclaimed by both critics and audiences alike. Bangarra also performed *Fish* as part of *Made to Move*, Australia's contemporary dance touring circuit and toured the work nationally to most capital cities, regional NSW and Victoria, and internationally to Noumea, Korea and Taiwan.

In October 1997 the company journeyed the Melbourne to perform at the Melbourne International Festival of the Arts in an historic collaboration with The Australian Ballet on *Rites*, a striking new adaptation of *The Rite of Spring*, choreographed by Stephen Page, which has been acclaimed by critics and public alike. *Rites* will tour to Sydney and internationally in 1999, and will also have a repeat season in Melbourne.

In November 1998 Bangarra presented *DanceClan*, a dramatic new double bill in association, with the City of Sydney. It was the first season presented in Bangarra's new home on the Wharf and featured a new work choreographed by longtime Bangarra dancer, Albert David and a traditional programme presented by the Munyarryun clan, on whose deep artistry and spirituality Bangarra draws. *DanceClan* proved to be such a critical and box office success that a new *DanceClan* double bill will be presented in November of 1999.

In 1999 the company has had a momentous year, touring to Britain, the Untied States and regional Australia, in venues ranging from a big top in Barnet in Britain and a football field on Thursday Island in the Torres Strait, to the City Centre in New York and Queen Elizabeth Hall in London.

From all over Australia Bangarra's artists have come together to form a unique contemporary clan - a tribe that embraces both of Australia's Indigenous peoples and speaks in an astonishing new language of dance and of song. The uniqueness of the language lies in its hybridity - its ability to fuse stories and songs as timeless as the land from which they are drawn with the contemporary experiences and realities of the Aboriginal and Islander people who have made the cities their home. This hybridity results in a style which seamlessly blends contemporary fluidity with dynamic traditionalism.

Special thanks to **Hawaiian Air**
for their support of the statewide tour.

Bangarra: Building the New through the Old

For many audiences, the impact of a Bangarra performance is both intense and indescribable. They are touched by the work in ways they cannot completely fathom, in ways they find moving and mysterious.

To Bangarra, the energy is not so much mysterious as magical, and can be attributed to the strength of the artistic process they employ, the artistic kinship of the creative team. Drawing on the most ancient of cultures, Bangarra brings alive the essence of the old in starkly contemporary forms, using the methods laid down in the Dreaming, the tried and true and traditional ways. Myths appear in the dreams of the Story-teller, feeding on, filtering through his land and his life. These stories he tells to his people, who paint them in ochre on the bodies of dancers, who bring them alive with their movement, inspiring the Song-Man to sing.

From all over Australia, Bangarra's artists have come together to form a unique contemporary clan - a tribe that embraces both of Australia's Indigenous peoples and speaks in an astonishing new language of dance and of song. The uniqueness of the language lies in its hybridity: its ability to fuse stories and songs as timeless as the land from which they are drawn with the contemporary experiences and realities of the Aboriginal and Islander people who have made the cities their home. This hybridity results in a style which seamlessly blends contemporary fluidity with dynamic traditionalism, and for which Bangarra is renowned.

The traditional songs and dance featured and adapted in Bangarra's work come from the cultural library of the Munyarryun clan. Based in the Yirrkala community in Arnhemland - a creative wellspring that has spawned many of Australia's leading Indigenous musicians and visual artists, including the Yunupingu and the Marika families - the Munyarryun clan have been a source of great inspiration for choreographer Stephen and composer David Page. Brother and sister Djakapurra and Guypunura have brought to Bangarra the traditional dances and songs of men and women living within remote Aboriginal communities in Australia's top end, building a bridge between north and south, between rural and urban in the same way the company seeks to connect Aboriginal and Islander, black and white.

Djakapurra Munyarryun is the family's representative at the heart of Bangarra, who both dances with the company, and has a major creative and cultural influence on Bangarra's work. Eight months of the year he treads the boards in theatres around the world; the remaining four months the sand is his stage, as he fulfils his duties as an important Song-man within his community. His creative energy is regenerated annually by his time back home, and upon his return to city life, he is able to communicate this energy to the rest of the Bangarra clan. The sounds and feel of the land are evident in his work, quite literally in the music we hear and the steps we see, and more intangibly, from the fire in his eyes.

The creative partnership between Stephen and David Page is inexpressibly important to the overall success of Bangarra Dance Theatre. Together they combine dance and music to tell the stories of their people and their generation. The injection of energy from the very core of the land provided by the Munyarryun family acts to preserve Bangarra's artistic and cultural integrity even as it extends its value, and enhances its effect. Bangarra thus demonstrates the beauty, the sophistication and the ongoing evolution of Aboriginal and Islander cultures, embodying an energy that enlivens and inspires.

Stephen Page, Artistic Director

Born in Brisbane, Stephen is a descendant of the Munaldjali Clan of the Yugambeh tribe from south east Queensland. Stephen graduated from the National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association (NAISDA) and performed with Sydney Dance Company until 1991. In December 1991, Stephen was commissioned to choreograph Sydney Theatre Company's *Trackers of Oxyrhyncus*.

Stephen joined Bangarra Dance Theatre as Principal Choreographer in September 1991, choreographing *Up Until Now*. At the end of 1991 Stephen 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".

Choreographing/Directing Credits include: the dance theatre work *Niki Nali* for Australia Day at Expo '92 Seville, the cultural festival for the Olympic Games in Barcelona; the contemporary operatic film, *Black River*, winner Grande Prix Opera Screen '93 Prize in Paris; *Pride* (for ABC TV Choreographer's Series *Seven Deadly Sins*), directed *Black Vine*, a celebration for the International Year of the World's Indigenous People performed by 80 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists at the Sydney Town Hall; and numerous Australian rock videos. The success of *Black Vine* in 1993 spawned *Black Vine II* in 1995, featuring Bangarra in conjunction with Christine Anu, and *Black Vine III* in 1997.

Stephen choreographed and directed Bangarra's second major work *Ninni*, featuring guest actor Rachael Maza. He then collaborated with then Assistant Artistic Director Bernadette Walong to create *Ochres*. In 1996, Stephen choreographed the Flag Handover Ceremony at the Closing Ceremony of the Atlanta Olympic Games, and made his debut with The Australian Ballet, choreographing *Alchemy*.

In 1997 Stephen directed the *Awakening Ceremony*, the opening of the landmark indigenous arts festival *The Festival of the Dreaming*. He created two major new works during 1997, *Fish* for Bangarra, which had its premiere by invitation at the Edinburgh International Festival, and a sell out season at the Sydney Opera House as part of the Festival of the Dreaming, the first of the four Olympic cultural festivals in the lead-up to the Sydney 2000 Games. He also created *Rites* for The Australian Ballet which premiered at the Melbourne International Festival of the Arts and was filmed for television by the ABC. *Rites* has since been performed at the Opera House in Sydney and The City Centre in New York, both in 1999.

In 1993, Stephen received a Mo Award for Dance Performer of the Year, and under his artistic directorship Bangarra was voted joint winner of the prestigious Sidney Myer Performing Arts Award 1993. He was also a recipient of a Young Australian Creative Fellowship in 1995 and of the Green Room Award for Best Direction in Dance for *Rites* in 1997. In 1998, along with his brothers David and Russell, and Bangarra Dance Theatre, he was the subject of a documentary *Urban Clan*, screened on the ABC and BBC. (continued on next page)

Stephen directed a film version of his work *Fish*, which was screened on SBS in early 1999. Also in 1999 Stephen has directed a new work *The Dreaming*, showcasing Bangarra's repertoire which toured Britain culminating in a performance at Queen Elizabeth Hall, at the Southbank Centre.

This year Stephen is directing and choreographing *Skin*, a new work for Bangarra, which will premier at Harbour of Life, the Olympic Arts Festival in September. Stephen has also been commissioned to direct both the Opening Ceremony of *Tubowgule*, the Sydney 2000 Olympic Arts Festival, and *Awakenings*, the Indigenous segment of the Opening Ceremony for the Sydney 2000 Olympic Games.

Djakapurra Munyarryun, Cultural Consultant

Born in Yirrkala, north-eastern Arnhem Land, Djakapurra's life has been steeped in traditional dance and ceremony. As a teenager he'd become so adept that 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 didjeridu player. He has a major creative and cultural influence on Bangarra in his role as cultural consultant and is instrumental in the company's ability to fuse traditional myths and music with the experience of urban Aboriginal and Islander people.

Djakapurra danced lead roles in *Praying Mantis Dreaming* and *Ninni*. In *Ochres* Djakapurra recreated his own style of dance with great articulation. He toured extensively with *Ochres* and also performs in the company's new work, *Fish*, which premiered at the Edinburgh International Festival. He performs on the soundtrack for *Fish*, singing and playing bilma and yirrdaki (clap sticks and didjeridu).

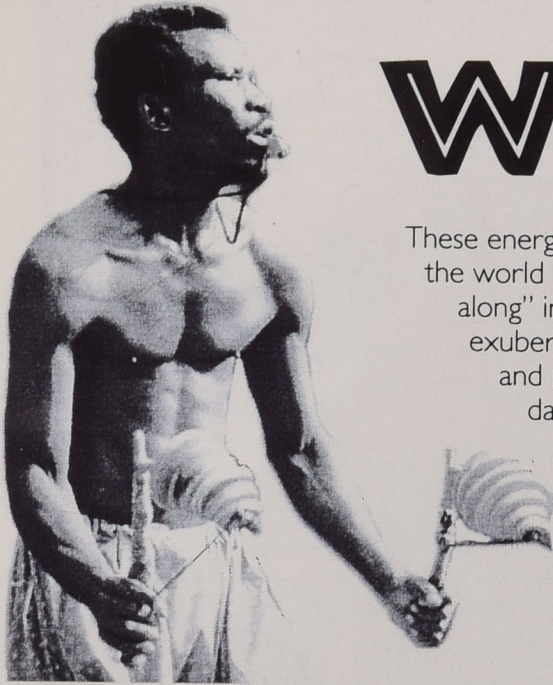
Djakapurra performed in *Rites*, a collaboration between Bangarra and The Australian Ballet, which premiered at the Melbourne International Festival in 1997. He has since toured with this production to both Sydney and New York in 1999.

Djakapurra, along with his sister Guypunura, lead the Munyarryun clan in *Laka Bunkul* (Evening Star) during *DanceClan*, a double bill presented by Bangarra in November 1998, as part of the City of Sydney Streets Alive programme.

Djakapurra performed last year at Womad, appearing in Johannesburg, Adelaide, the United Kingdom and Seattle, USA. During 1999 he also performed in the UK tour of *The Dreaming*, and the Backyard Tour of *Fish*, which travelled through Queensland, the Northern Territory and Western Australia.

His major film work includes *Black River* which won the Grand Prix award in Paris for best feature film in 1993, playing the role of the water spirit, and *Breaking Through*, - an Imax 3D film produced for Expo '93. He has also performed with Yothu Yindi, Christine Anu and with David Page for the ABC special *Songlines*. Most recently Djakapurra played a starring role in the ABC's *2000 Today - The Millennium Broadcast* performing at the sunrise ceremony at Uluru.

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A magnifying glass with a wooden handle is positioned over an open dictionary. The lens is focused on the word "knowledge", which is printed in a bold, serif font. The surrounding text in the dictionary is blurred, but some words like "per-", "intelligible", "hence, to recog-", "distinguish; specif.", "acknowledge.", "fruits.", "Matt. vi.", "Luce xxiv.", "as val-", "of an-", "knowl-", and "fact" are visible. The background of the entire advertisement is a dark blue, textured surface.

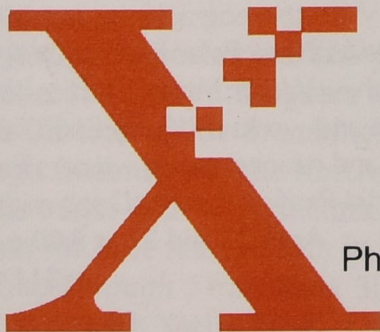
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