

BANGARRA DANCE THEATRE

**THE
LIGHT
INSIDE**



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THE LIGHT INSIDE

DHARAWAL COUNTRY
ILLAWARRA PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE
13 Jun – 15 Feb 2025

AWABAKAL AND WORIMI COUNTRY
CIVIC THEATRE, NEWCASTLE
20 – 21 Feb 2025

CREDITS

Choreographers
Deborah Brown
Moss Te Ururangi
Patterson

Composers
Steve Francis
Brendon Boney

Set Designer
Elizabeth Gadsby

Costume Designer
Jennifer Irwin

Lighting Designer
Karen Norris

Associate Set Designer
Shana O'Brien

Featured Music Performer
James Webster

Rehearsal Director
Rikki Mason

BANGARRA DANCERS

Lillian Banks
Courtney Radford
Kallum Goolagong

Kassidy Waters
Jye Uren
Maddison Paluch

Daniel Mateo
Emily Flannery
Janaya Lamb

Chantelle Lee Lockhart
James Boyd
Amberlilly Gordon
Donta Whitham

Edan Porter
Zeak Tass
Roxie Syron
Eli Clarke

PRODUCTION CREW

Production Manager
Cat Studley

Company Manager
Joseph Cardona

Head of Wardrobe
Jessica Hodgkinson

Stage Manager
Ashleigh King

Head Electrician
Lucy Mitchell

*Sound and Video
Technician*
Emjay Mathews

Assistant Stage Manager
Peta Rixom

Bangarra Dance Theatre pays respect and acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the Land on which our Company calls home, where much of Horizon was created – the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation.

Welcome

This year, Bangarra celebrates 36 years of First Nations storytelling, proudly working with Community to amplify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander creative and cultural voices.

We are delighted to join as Co-CEOs to lead Bangarra into the next decade. Alongside our Board, dancers, and team, we are united by a deep respect and understanding for Bangarra and the important role it plays in today's society.

To kick off our 2025 program, we begin with a regional tour of *The Light Inside*. Created in 2024, *The Light Inside* brings together leading Māori choreographer and Arts Laureate Moss Te Ururangi Patterson. Moss hails from Lake Taupō in the Central North Island of Aotearoa, and within the tribal territory of Ngāti Tūwharetoa. Moss is a passionate advocate for the empowerment of Māori culture and is Artistic director of NZ Dance Company.

Moss has collaborated with the inimitable Deborah Brown. Deborah is from the Wakaid Clan and Meriam Island, in the eastern Torres Strait Island region, and has Scottish ancestry. Deb has a deep connection with Bangarra, as senior artist and choreographer (2003 – 2017), and has had a prolific career working across our industry. Moss and Deborah have come together to create *The Light Inside* – in Bangarra's first-ever cross-cultural collaboration. Together they guide our award-winning ensemble in stories that honour their mother countries and the spirit that calls them home.

The theme of home is explored by our choreographers in their own unique way. For Deborah, it's the seeds of a plant grown by her mother in a suburban Brisbane backyard that evoke memories of a rich life growing up on the Torres Strait Islands. And Moss, takes us on a journey across the Tasman Sea to Aotearoa and the ancestral lands of Ngāti Tūwharetoa where the matriarchal lineage holds strong the lifeblood of Māori culture.

This work represents a fresh and dynamic new chapter in our artistic and cultural songline. Through opportunities like this,

we invite a broader global First Nations conversation on issues that impact our people and country. We carry a responsibility to provide a platform for these unique stories and to shine a light on issues that other Indigenous people may be navigating. Through story we build a global First Nations creative network that supports each other both on and off stage.

Thank you to our dancers who have boldly realised the vision of our two choreographers. We thank them for the commitment and respect they have given to these stories. We thank the creatives for their contribution which brings these powerful stories to life on stage, our incredible production crew for their unwavering support and the efforts of our Bangarra family who drive our purpose.

We acknowledge and thank Elders, family and community advisors for supporting the choreographers and the creation of these stories.

Tonight's performance is made possible by the continued support of our government partners, the Australian Government, through Creative Australia, its principal arts investment and advisory body, the NSW Government, through Create NSW, and our touring partners, Arts on Tour.

We look forward to continuing to strengthen and grow Bangarra as we map out the next chapter and to sharing with you our commitment to Indigenous stories and advancing and changing society through our storytelling.

Thank you for joining us.



Frances Rings, *Artistic Director & Co-CEO*



Louise Ingram, *Executive Director & Co-CEO*

About The Light Inside

Choreographer Deborah Brown shares the motivation behind *Salt Water* in *The Light Inside*.

THE PEOPLE

The people of *Zenadth Kes* embody a vibrant culture that has welcomed a cross-sector of people and journeys. They embrace a duality of beliefs and ideas, demonstrating industriousness, intelligence, and empowerment. When united, they shine. As natural navigators, custodians of their land, and soulful diplomats, they wonderfully maintain and nurture their culture. Their deep respect and connection to the sea and saltwater is profoundly evident in their way of life.

“A soon as you hear a warup (hourglass drum) struck, your heart beats stronger”.

SIGNIFICANCE OF PLACE

Zenadth Kes is an amazing archipelago united by its water currents. Two places that inspire me deeply are Badu, the western island, and Mer, the farthest eastern island, marking the beginning of the Great Barrier Reef. Despite the many visitors over the years, the identity of *Zenadth Kes* remains strong. It is a place where the three tiers of sea, land, and sky converge, each communicating with the other. This interconnectedness has taught me to read and respect wherever we go. The significance of *Zenadth Kes* stays with us, no matter how far we travel. Place is not only where you are rooted; it's who you carry with you. Music and dance have a way of transporting you back to the islands. Although place serves as our anchor, we can always look across the horizon to where we come from. Our ancestry and elders originate from there, bound by an invisible rope that forever connects us.

THE STORY

The Light Inside, Salt Water, is an homage to my mother and the connection to the sea, sky and land of her people of the *Zenadth Kes*. Song and dance was the first language shared, developing a strong sense of identity despite living on the mainland.

In his own words Choreographer Moss Patterson tells us about the inspiration for his work *The Light Inside*.

HE TANGATA | THE PEOPLE

I was raised by my grandmother Rowena Irihau Atirau Southon (nee Asher) and my mother (Jane Te Aowhaitini Patterson). Within the cloak of their embrace, they gifted me the stories, dances, prayers, and rituals of my whānau (family). I continue to honour the matriarchal line within Ngāti Tūwharetoa by expressing some of them here with the support of the Bangarra whānau. They loved me deeply, and they helped me to understand what it means to be in this world as an Indigenous man. I am always searching for space in which their values, or their way of being in the world, can be shared. They are proud Indigenous women, holding the community together, being bold and brave and strong in what they do and who they are.

TURANGAWAEWAE | THE PLACE

‘Toitū te whenua, whātungarongaro te tangata’. ‘The land remains, but people come and go’, is a saying which describes my feelings about the place in which I was raised.

Tongariro is my maunga (mountain), Taupō is my moana (large body of water) and Tongariro is my awa (river). The river flows past my humble home and marae (village) named Tokaanu. Ngāti Kurauia is my subtribe and Pūhaorangi is my whare tipuna (meeting house). These landmarks and special places together form the rich cultural environment that have inspired me to create this dance, *The Light Inside*, because it is from here, from my village, Tokaanu (windy rock) that I draw my strength. This wild and peaceful environment I can feel inside me always.

PURAKAU | THE STORY

The work is about remembering to never let the light go out, the light being the stories, the memories, the experiences, the hopes, the dreams of our elders, our grandmothers, our mothers and our Indigenous children. It's about upholding their light, to keep it shining amongst the violence of the world. This work calls on us to hold on however we can, to the grace, the wisdom, the beauty, the stillness, the power, the strength, the mana (prestige) of the matriarchy as it informs our own identities.

Sections

72 minutes, no interval

GLOSSARY

Atua and Atuatanga Māori Gods

Tawhirimatea God of the winds

Tangaroa God of the oceans

Ngāti Tūwharetoa Moss's tribe

Ngāti Kurauia Moss's subtribe

Taupō Lake Taupo where Moss was born

Tama-nui-te-ra the sun

Whānau family

Kia ora be well

Waiata song

Makawe hair

Tapu sacred

Maunga mountain

Awa river

Moana lake or ocean

Mana prestige, authority, status, spiritual power

Te Ao Māori The Māori world view

Kau tau te mauri let us all be at peace

‘Toitū te whenua, whātungarongaro te tangata’ ‘The land remains, but people come and go’

Whakapapa genealogy

The Atua the spiritual guardians

Gur/Adabad/Salt Water

CYLINDER

Beneath the blanket of scratches and clicks, a haunting voice from the past reverberates through to our core. In 1898, anthropologist Alfred C Haddon, recorded songs on wax cylinders from various islands across the Torres Strait. Approximately 141 cylinders were recorded, delicately encasing ancient and sacred stories passed through generations. Voices so powerful, they reach beyond the horizon. Cast: Daniel Mateo

SAILS

Across the horizon, the striking sails glide across the sea. We come from seafaring people. The islands have had many visitors and in turn, we have become navigators ourselves. From The Coming of the Light, Christianity landing on Darnley Island, to the majestic pearling luggers that mastered the waters and reefs. These sails represent a carrier from land to the depths of the sea and the chance for a safe return home.

Cast: Courtney Radford, Maddison Paluch, Emily Flannery

DIVERS

Aboard the impressive luggers are the brave men who plunged to great depths for the illustrious pearl shell. An industry that provided for much of the world, these men proved to be industrious and resolute despite the dangers of the sea.

Cast: James Boyd, Jye Uren, Donta Whitham

REEF

As children we learn of our connection to the reef through song. The reef evokes a sense of beauty and wonderment. A natural barrier to shelter and protect many of the islands, providing a home to an abundant marine life, a primary food source for islanders. An underwater constellation. Arguably, the world's most renowned reef, The Great Barrier Reef, begins at the farthest eastern island of the Torres Strait, Mer.

Part 1 Coral

Cast: Chantelle Lee Lockhart, Roxie Syron, Janaya Lamb, Amberlilly Gordon

Part 2 Reef

Cast: Courtney Radford, Emily Flannery, Maddison Paluch, Janaya Lamb, Chantelle Lee Lockhart, Amberlilly Gordon, Roxie Syron

BOUNDARIES

We are taught to respect our neighbour's boundaries. Over the centuries, islanders have had their boundaries challenged. In more recent years we have seen the Torres Strait Treaty come to fruition, protecting the islands from downstream effects of mining and exploitations of resources, to the Mabo native title case and more recently the Torres Strait 8.

Part 1 Politics

Cast: Kassidy Waters, Kallum Goolagong, Jye Uren, Donta Whitham

Part 2 The People

Cast: Full ensemble

BLUE STAR

The scintillating star tells islanders of a change in season. A storm is coming, the moisture in the air makes the star blue and twinkle faster. Stars are our guides, our compass. As seafarers, as caretakers of land and now as people who travel the world, seeing the constellations of Tagai, of Baizam, seeing the stars twinkle, we are the past, present and future all at once. We share these stars across cultures.

Cast: Lillian Banks

REJUVENATION

Culture is never completely lost. We always carry a seed of knowledge. As a contemporary community we share and instill that knowledge as best we can. We acknowledge our ancestors and know that we keep their light shining through our accomplishments, through song, dance, cooking, caretaking for land, caring for our Elders or raising our children. There is guidance from our past.

Part 1 Seed

Cast: Daniel Mateo, Janaya Lamb

Part 2 Leaves

Cast: Full ensemble

Sections

Wai Māori/ Fresh Water

ATUATANGA | THE DIVINE SPIRIT WITHIN

The opening scene acknowledges the Atuatanga, or Godly state, within Māori consciousness. Our whakapapa (genealogy) stretches back to the beginning of time and to the Atua (the spiritual guardians) and reminds us to seek higher consciousness in all things.

Cast: Full ensemble

TE KOROKORO O TE PARATA | THE GREAT WHIRLPOOL OF PARATA

In the story of our journey from Hawaiki (the ancient homeland), to Aotearoa, New Zealand, The Te Arawa waka (the boat on which my tribal ancestors traversed the high seas) was pulled into a great whirlpool. My ancestor Ngatoroirangi used his incantations to invoke the hammerhead shark to guide and pull us out. In the vortex, the resilience of the people is ignited to navigate Tangaroa (God of the ocean) protecting them on their epic journey.

Cast: Cassidy Waters, Daniel Mateo, Kallum Goolagong, Lillian Banks, Courtney Radford, Emily Flannery, James Boyd, Maddison Paluch, Janaya Lamb, Jye Uren, Amberlilly Gordon, Donta Whitham, Edan Porter, Roxie Syron

TAUPŌ HAU RAU | THE LAKE OF ONE HUNDRED WINDS

We arrive to the hundred winds of Taupō standing on the shoreline looking out across the horizon feeling the call of the ancestors rising through the earth. We also hear a powerful haka (challenge), written and performed by senior cultural leader and elder Ngāpō Wehi. The haka calls on the government to uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi (an agreement signed in 1840 between the Crown and Māori) and respect Tino rangatiratanga (Indigenous sovereignty). The elements of rocks, wind and water place us within the sacred landscape of the central north island.

Cast: Cassidy Waters, Daniel Mateo, Kallum Goolagong, Lillian Banks, Courtney Radford, Emily Flannery, James Boyd, Maddison Paluch, Janaya Lamb, Chantelle Lee Lockhart, Jye Uren, Amberlilly Gordon, Donta Whitham, Zeak Tass, Roxie Syron

TE ŪRANGA | THE ARRIVAL

The resilience of my people, the people of Tokaanu and of Ngāti Tūwharetoa is evoked. The light emanating from the body follows the journey of the spirit from a baby, to an adult, to death and the transformation into a spiritual being. We are journeying, cutting through, using our resilient spirits and totems. The Hokioi (spiritual hawk) is a feminine spiritual warrior, traversing time, traversing space, symbolic of the way forward as Indigenous women lead us into the future.

Cast: Full Ensemble

WAIKUA | SPIRITS RISING

The connection that we have to the earth and our journey in life continues into the spirit realm. The knowledge that we hold in this lifetime rises and rises and rises, to support our communities and to be captured if we can be silent enough to hear the whispers around us.

Cast: Full ensemble

MAKAWE TAPU | SACRED HAIR

This section references two traditional stories. The attainment of the three baskets of sacred knowledge and the story of Maui attempting to tame the sun Tama-nui-te-rā. Maui was not able to achieve this task until his sister Hinauri gifted him sacred strands of her hair giving him the knowledge, strength and courage to complete the task. The power, strength, resilience and wisdom of the divine feminine is present in the three baskets of knowledge that were passed down to humankind. This act is reminding us and calling for the amplification of Indigenous knowledge and the sacred feminine.

Cast: Emily Flannery, Chantelle Lee Lockhart, Jye Uren, Daniel Mateo

PURE | THE CLEARING AND PURIFICATION OF THE SOUL

Cleansed by the winds of Tawhirimatea.

A beautiful waiata (song) sung by Jacqueline Carter speaks about the love that surrounds us, the vibrational energy that we can capture when we are still enough to listen. It asks us to remember our Atuatanga (higher self), our core sense of being and to shed our tears and to let go of our inhibitions and to be all that we can be, to stay close and be at peace.

The final moment in the show returns to the Hokioi, the spiritual warrior, a feminine deity, leading us into a future of love, connection and resilience.

'Kau tau te mauri' let us all be at peace.

Cast: Full ensemble



We are Bangarra Dance Theatre

We are a company of professional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander performers.

We are storytellers. We are fire makers. As one of Australia's leading performing arts companies, we share our culture with Communities and audiences across Australia and the world.

We are contemporary dancers, drawing on 65,000 years of culture. We create powerful works of theatre with dance, music, poetry and design.

We tell the stories of our Elders, create works on Country and return the works we create to the place they were made.

Each of our dancers is a professionally trained, dynamic artist with a proud Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander background. Together, they represent the best of Australian talent.

We have been making our indelible marks on the Australian theatre landscape for 35 years.

REGIONAL TOURING

Regional touring is a crucial part of the company's annual calendar, connecting Bangarra with the Communities that inspire our stories, as well as exposing new audiences to a positive representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. Community tickets throughout the regional tour are made possible through the support of The Balnaves Foundation.

Photography by Daniel Boud.

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on and off the stage.



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has an impact.

**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



@BangarraDanceTheatre



/bangarradancetheatre