

# MINYMAKU INMA

(Women's Dance & Song)

## Kungkarangkalpa (Seven Sisters)

The travels of Kungkarangkalpa unite many language groups. A song line that travels widely throughout Central Australia, through to the north west of Western Australia and right down to the Great Southern Bight in South Australia, but of course it is only possible to present a small glimpse of an episode of the Seven Sister's mammoth journey. In this performance the sisters are travelling close to Cave Hill located near Amata on the Anangu Pitjantjatjara (AP) lands in the north west of South Australia. They are anxious as they travel, fearing the pursuit of a male called Wati Nyiru - a man who takes many forms. He can cleverly disguise himself as he relentlessly chases the sisters and in this case is living underground. The sisters must be particularly vigilant as he may quickly thrust himself up from underground or appear from a tree when they least expect it. An important aspect of the Tjukurpa (Creation story) is that a code for living an exemplary life is demonstrated through the actions of these participants. Women can thus teach young girls about appropriate behaviour.

## Minyma Kutjara (Two Sisters)

The journey of the Two Sisters is widely known through Central Australia by many language groups. This inma depicts the classic rivalry between the two sisters. The younger sister has stolen a treasured item from the bigger sister who tries in vain to retrieve it. However she is enjoying the opportunity of teasing her older sister and revels in being able to taunt her with the item, withdrawing it at the last moment just as she reaches out for it. In recent times Aboriginal women have had to fight to protect a major Minyma Kutjara site threatened with destruction when the Northern Territory government proposed to build a dam in Alice Springs which would have flooded the site. Ngaanyatjarra, Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara (NPY) women fought alongside Arrernte traditional

owners and custodians in a long and bitter struggle to stop the dam. Finally in 1992 a 20 year moratorium was placed on building the dam under the Commonwealth Heritage legislation. For Aboriginal women right throughout Central Australia this has been a major victory in protecting Aboriginal women's Law and culture.

## Wati Wurtu (Wombat)

In this performance the wombat is searching vigorously for maku - witchetty grubs. The location is near Mintabie on the AP lands, a place renowned for opal mining. The wombat is affectionately referred to by Anangu (how Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara people refer to themselves) as kapali - grandmother in reference to their waddle like gait.

## Nyinu (Bandicoot)

This dance comes from Wataru on the AP lands. The mother bandicoot is carefully travelling with her child on her back looking for a suitable place to make a home. She is frightened as she furtively travels through land that has been decimated by bushfires. Her aim is to find bountiful country that will support her baby and a suitable burrow in which to live.

### Tjitji halfacasta ngayuku katingu (Brown skin baby)

A well known song written by Bob Randall about the stolen generation. Sung in Pitjantjatjara this version recounts the sadness of a mother who did not know where her child was removed to.

### The Pitjantjatjara Lands Right Song

This song was written by Bill Davies from Alice Springs in the 1980's. The song implores people to listen to what the land means to Anangu - it is sacred and comes from the ancestors. The song is a celebration of the struggle of Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara and Ngaanyatjara people to gain their land back in South Australia.

### Karnka munu kakalalya (Crow and white cockatoo)

The journey of the crow and cockatoo crosses the AP lands through to the Ngaanyatjarra lands in Western Australia. This episode takes place near Ernabella on the AP lands and recounts the actions of the jealous crow. Karnka and kakalalya are both females vying for the attention of a male eagle. Kakalalya is considered a better choice as she takes good care of herself, eating good food and behaving in a befitting manner for a woman. Karnka who is regarded by all to be contemptible, eating anything she comes across and displaying offensive behaviour, becomes insanely jealous and plots the cockatoo's downfall. This happens when she breaks the leg of kakalalya with her digging stick to prevent her from reaching a waterhole. She dances around joyously on one foot "crowing" about her actions.

### Ngintaka (Perentie)

This performance comes from Wallatina, right on the eastern edge of the AP lands. The journey of Wati Ngintaka once again travels right across to the Ngaanyatjarra lands from South Australia. Here he has stolen the tiwa the top part of a grinding stone, a highly prized possession so that he might make the best flour. All the Minyma Nyii Nyii - women zebra finches are enlisted to get it back from him. They do this by touching him all over and still cannot find the tiwa as he has cleverly hidden it in the tip of his tail.

### Waru (Bushfire)

Once again this performance comes from Wataru and depicts the story of how fire was taken away and then brought back to people. The firestick was taken away by Kipara - bush turkey a long way to Western Australia. For a long time people sat in darkness with no fire until it was eventually brought back by two Wati Kirkinpa - hawk men. Here the Karnka Minyma - Crow women are now joyously putting out fire that has at last been lit throughout the country and they are celebrating with their dancing.

### Wati Warty (Wombat)

The wombat is depicted travelling around his burrows near Mintabie. In a joyful celebration of his journey we see that he is able to move forwards and backwards in much the same way.