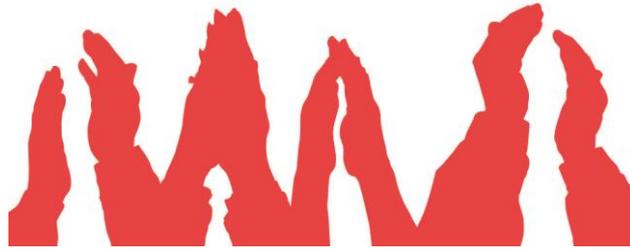


# AMPAG



Australian Major Performing Arts Group

AMPAG Members'

**INDIGENOUS ACTIVITIES**

**ACROSS ARTFORM, ARTISTS, AUDIENCES AND EMPLOYMENT**



WE CONTRIBUTE TO AUSTRALIA'S CULTURAL VIBRANCY, WE HELP BUILD AND INSPIRE COMMUNITIES, REFLECT OUR STORIES AND OUR NATIONAL IDENTITY

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## INTRODUCTION

This publication outlines the activities and the work that Australia's major performing arts companies undertake with Indigenous artists and creators. It also explains the education programs they run targeting Indigenous youth, the community engagement, the co-productions and the cultural exchange. Bangarra Dance Theatre is AMPAG's only company that is solely Indigenous. It continues to create work that extends the boundaries of dance and storytelling, exciting audiences and expanding their understanding of Australian Indigenous culture.

## BANGARRA

Bangarra Dance Theatre is Australia's leading Indigenous performing arts company. Established in 1989, Bangarra weaves traditional and modern cultures seamlessly into its award-winning dance theatre productions, connecting audiences to a sense of place and spirit.

In meeting its cultural responsibilities, Bangarra invests in building and maintaining relationships with traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Their ancient and contemporary stories, songs and dances influence Bangarra's dance theatre by rekindling and honouring language and culture.

With studios at Sydney's Walsh Bay, the 14-member dance ensemble originates from across Australia representing numerous Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations.

### **New works and innovation**

Bangarra Dance Theatre produces a new work each year and actively seeks and nurtures new Indigenous talent in design and choreography. The company's repertoire is renowned for its innovative fusion of traditional and contemporary Indigenous stories, songs and dance in powerful and dynamic theatrical productions.

Under the mentorship of Artistic Director Stephen Page, senior dancer Daniel Riley created a first new work, *Riley* (from *of earth & sky* 2010), and then in 2013, *Scar* (from *Blak*). In 2012 Frances Rings created her first full-length work, *Terrain*, for Bangarra.

In 2013 Stephen Page commissioned four of Bangarra's women artists to create their first work in a production titled *Dance Clan 3*, for the inaugural Corroboree Sydney festival. *Dance Clan 3* was performed in Bangarra's Studio Theatre on Pier 4 at Walsh Bay, Sydney.

In 2014 for the first time, Bangarra's new production *Patyegarang* will tell a Sydney story about an Aboriginal girl, Patyegarang, and her relationship with Lieutenant

William Dawes. Sharing important stories of cultural exchange at the beginning of our modern nationhood, *Patyegarang* symbolises 'what might have been' had the early settlement embraced Aboriginal culture. Choreographed by Stephen Page, *Patyegarang* is a celebration of Bangarra's 25th anniversary and will be presented in Sydney, Canberra, Perth, Brisbane and Melbourne.

### **Cultural exchange**

Bangarra Dance Theatre's Cultural Exchange Program is intrinsic to everything the company does and involves spending time 'on country' with traditional Indigenous communities. Elders teach Bangarra's artists their songs, dances and stories, and Bangarra returns to communities to share its dance theatre works that have been inspired by their culture.

In 2013 Bangarra was in residence for two weeks with the Yolngu communities of Dhalinybuy and Bremer Island in North East Arnhem Land, Northern Territory, to prepare for the new work, *Blak*.

In 2014 Bangarra will conduct cultural residencies in the Kimberley, North East Arnhem Land, Central Desert and in the Torres Strait Islands.

Bangarra's international cultural exchange in the last two years has involved conducting cultural and dance workshops in Mongolia, Vietnam and Thailand for local dance and music school students. It is evident from these exchanges that Bangarra's ability to link ancient culture with contemporary expression is inspiring for local artists in these countries. Bangarra's artists are enriched by these experiences of sharing their Indigenous cultures.

### **Rekindling Youth Program**

In 2013 Bangarra Dance Theatre launched its new youth program, *Rekindling*, designed to inspire and develop the next generation of Indigenous story tellers by helping them to reconnect with their culture. Having conducted extensive research trips into NSW communities in 2012, Bangarra commenced the *Rekindling* program early in 2013, inviting young people of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander heritage to participate.

*Rekindling* is an intensive program for secondary students exploring 'who you are' and 'where you come from'. The participants research and gather stories from within their communities, and develop performance and creative skills to produce dance theatre in collaboration with local elders. In 2013 *Rekindling* brought together 58 young people, selected from workshops in the NSW communities of Moree, Wellington, Kempsey and Blacktown.

*Rekindling* is led by one of Bangarra's most acclaimed artists, Sidney Saltner, who transitioned into a new role of Youth Program Director after 15 years as a performer.

The *Rekindling* program has supported the career transition of four Bangarra artists into areas of leadership, management, digital media and project coordination.

In 2014 *Rekindling* will be delivered in communities in Queensland and NSW.

### **NSW Public Schools Aboriginal Dance Ensemble**

Since 2011 Bangarra has worked with the NSW Arts Unit (NSW Dept of Education) to develop the Aboriginal Dance Ensemble. In 2013 a team of Bangarra artists conducted workshops for school students in Dubbo, Bathurst, Griffith, Grafton, Port Macquarie, Wagga Wagga, Tamworth, Armidale, Broken Hill and Sydney, where over 750 students from 30 regional and city schools, participated in choreographic activities related to Bangarra repertoire and style. The workshops served as a selection process of the Dance Ensemble (28 dancers) who would go on to further develop their dance skills under the guidance of the Bangarra artists, and perform at numerous public events, such as the NSW State Dance Festival, Buunji Indigenous Education Conference (Sydney), the Corroboree Sydney Festival, and the NSW Schools Spectacular.

### **Community engagement**

In partnership with BHP Billiton, Bangarra Dance Theatre's Community Outreach program in 2013 has:

- conducted 18 dance and cultural workshops in 11 locations—with 80 per cent Indigenous participation
- hosted 4 community performance evenings for Indigenous communities, with sponsored discount tickets. For the first time in 2013, this included community evenings at Queensland Performing Arts Centre, Brisbane, and at the Drum Theatre in Dandenong, Victoria
- hosted 2 Koori Kids Days, where Indigenous students were given subsidised tickets to a Bangarra performance and to meet the artists
- conducted 5 site visits from schools and community groups to the Bangarra studios.

In December 2013 Bangarra ran a 2-day cultural residency in NSW's Illawarra region.

### **Education**

Bangarra Dance Theatre continues to develop and deliver programs of cultural education and creative learning for young Indigenous people in urban, regional and remote areas.

Workshops for young Indigenous people during capital city seasons, on-site visits by school groups and dedicated Koori Kids Days enable young people to learn about the power of story-telling and the relevance of cultural expression in their lives. Bangarra also designs and delivers workshops in traditional practices such as weaving and painting by Bangarra's traditional consultants.

In 2013 Bangarra developed a suite of online Education Resources, suitable for Years 3 to 10, aligned with the new Australian Schools' Curriculum in the Arts. These free resources can be accessed and downloaded from Bangarra's website and include filmed excerpts, background information and class activities based on selected Bangarra repertoire—*Moth* (from *Bush*, 2003), *Brolga* (from *Corroboree*, 2001), *Mutton Bird* (from *Mathinna*, 2008) and *Mathinna* (2008).

## **Indigenous employment**

### ***Artists-in-residence***

Bangarra Dance Theatre has five artists-in-residence who make artistic contributions and extend Bangarra's reach into the community. The artists-in-residence share Bangarra's home at Walsh Bay in Sydney and deliver a range of activities such as creative programs, workshops, master classes and presentations. Bangarra's artists-in-residence include Cultural Consultant Kathy Balngayngu Marika, Resident Designer Jacob Nash, Resident Composer David Page, Resident Curator Hetti Perkins and Resident Choreographer Frances Rings.

### ***Indigenous Employment Program***

Bangarra Dance Theatre's focus on bringing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders into the company's creative, production and administration areas was formalised in 2011 with an Indigenous Employment Program. Currently 70 per cent of Bangarra's 40 staff are Indigenous and the six trainees to date have been trained and assisted with successful work outcomes in their chosen fields.

## **Cultural collaborations**

In 2013 Bangarra Dance Theatre facilitated two new collaborative cultural initiatives:

***Birrang—Expanding Aboriginal Dance Horizons*** is a professional development initiative to build capacity in the NSW Indigenous independent dance sector. Birrang is supported by Arts NSW, coordinated by Ausdance NSW, Regional Arts NSW and Bangarra in partnership with NAISDA Dance College, Carriageworks and the Australian Film, Television & Radio School. Birrang began in 2013 and runs until 2015, providing opportunities for independent Aboriginal dance artists to extend their creative, business and marketing capabilities.

***Corroboree Sydney***—Bangarra is responsible for the management of this new festival for all Australians that celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture in the

heart of Sydney. The inaugural event took place in November 2013. It presented a program of activities by Sydney's premier arts and cultural organisations, collaborating for the first time: Sydney Opera House, Australian Museum, Bangarra Dance Theatre, State Library of NSW, Royal Botanic Gardens Sydney, Museum of Contemporary Art, Art Gallery of NSW, Black Fella Films and Koori Radio 93.7FM. Bangarra created a new season of works by women choreographers in 2013 titled *Dance Clan 3* presented in the company's studios at Walsh Bay for Corroboree Sydney.

## AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

### **New works and innovation**

#### ***Timeline***

A kaleidoscopic surge through forty-two thousand years of music, *Timeline* traces the evolution of music, from the ancient Australian Aboriginal musical heritage of c.40,000 BC all the way up to the most recent Western music of today.

The Sydney concerts of *Timeline* are presented in Partnership with Vivid LIVE, part of the Vivid Sydney festival of light, music and ideas.

#### ***The Reef***

In 2012 Richard Tognetti took musicians and surfers to the rugged surf coast and tough desert landscape of northern Western Australia to create a new performance piece at the intersection of music and nature. A remarkable collection of artists travelled with Tognetti to World Heritage-listed Ningaloo Reef, making music and surfing with the locals: photographer Jon Frank, director Mick Sowry, composer Iain Grandage, didgeridoo player Mark Atkins and Indigenous singer and songwriter Stephen Pigram. Together they created a performance using music and film to further delve into the links between surfing, the ocean, landscape and music. With the support of Tura New Music, *The Reef* toured to critical acclaim from Darwin, through regional WA, and to Perth in 2012. *The Reef* was also performed as part of the ACO's 2013 National Season in Sydney and Melbourne in February and received its international premiere at the Hong Kong Arts Festival in March 2013.

### **Education**

#### ***Composition Competition***

In 2014 the ACO is holding a composition competition for HSC music students. Linking with the HSC Music Syllabus, students are invited to submit an original composition for strings (with optional percussion) that integrates ideas from Indigenous Australian culture. Before the competition's deadline, the ACO will facilitate workshops for interested students and teachers led by the ACO's Education Consultant, a music educator, working in partnership with an Indigenous

musician. The ACO will also create educational resources for music teachers to help them work with their students on these compositions.

## **BELL SHAKESPEARE**

### **Education/cultural exchange**

Bell Shakespeare residencies take arts educators into some of Australia's more remote communities, such as Tennant Creek (Northern Territory), Thursday Island (Queensland), Menindee (New South Wales) and St Marys (Tasmania). Bell Shakespeare arts educators spend up to two weeks at a time living in the community and working with young people through schools and community centres.

Bell Shakespeare residencies enable the building of long-term collaborative relationships, engaging arts educators with the community. This approach is educationally beneficial on several fronts, building self-confidence, encouraging group cooperation and stimulating imaginations.

The residencies inspire a curiosity about the world beyond the bounds of the individuals' experience and their environment, for both the Bell Shakespeare arts educators and the community participants.

### **New works and innovation**

#### ***The Shadow King***

A creative development reuniting Malthouse Melbourne and Bell Shakespeare, this work re-envisages Shakespeare's *King Lear*, performed in Indigenous languages, pidgin English and some original Elizabethan text. Accounts of Indigenous experience lived or presented to us daily are the inspiration for this work.

Bell Shakespeare supported the initial creative development workshop of *The Shadow King* in 2011, through its creative development arm, Mind's Eye.

The production was subsequently presented by Malthouse Theatre and Melbourne Festival in October 2013, in association with Sydney Festival, Perth International Arts Festival, Adelaide Festival and Brisbane Festival.

## BELVOIR

### New works and innovation

#### **Co-productions**

Belvoir has a long tradition of seeking out voices of Indigenous theatre makers. It currently has a commitment to producing at least two Indigenous-led works each year. The 2013 season included co-productions with Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company (*The Cake Man*) and ILBIJERRI Theatre Company (*Coranderrk*) as well as Nakkiah Lui's play, *This Heaven*.

#### **The Balnaves Foundation Indigenous Playwright's Award**

The Balnaves Foundation Indigenous Playwright's Award is a \$20,000 award for the creation of a new play by an Indigenous playwright. The award comprises \$7,500 prize money and a \$12,500 commission for a new play each year. Plays are assessed by a panel of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists. This national award was given for the first time in 2012 and went to Nakkiah Lui, whose play *This Heaven* was part of Belvoir's 2013 season. As part of the award, Nakkiah has been commissioned to write a new play, *Koorioke*.

On 13 August 2013 Jada Alberts was awarded the second Balnaves Foundation Indigenous Playwright's Award.

#### **Indigenous employment**

Belvoir has hosted Indigenous producing and technical mentees. The company is currently seeking funding to support an Indigenous artistic staff member.

#### **New works/cultural exchange**

##### **20 Questions—Wesley Enoch**

*20 Questions* is presented by Belvoir and hosted by Wesley Enoch, with guests including Jada Alberts, Lisa Maza, Rachael Maza, David Page, Leah Purcell, Miranda Tapsell and Ursula Yovich.

*20 Questions* is a cabaret and talk show rolled into one. Each night a new mystery guest from the roll-call of Indigenous performers is asked 20 questions. The questions are the same every night, but the answers will be very different. The idea is that out of this simple set-up comes a big, rich, modern dreaming of story and song—and a better understanding of how much more there is still to tell. Wesley Enoch, Artistic Director of Queensland Theatre Company and host of *Sunday Arts Up Late* (ABC1), hosts an extraordinary line-up of guests.

***Brothers Wreck—By Jada Alberts; Directed by Leah Purcell***

This beautiful little play is about life. It begins with a death: on a hot morning under a house in Darwin, Ruben wakes to find his cousin Joe hanging from the rafters. The play that follows tells the story of how Ruben's family, little by little, brings Ruben back from the edge.

**BLACK SWAN STATE THEATRE COMPANY**

Black Swan State Theatre Company has a long history of working with Indigenous communities in Western Australia in developing works and stories for the stage. Current projects include:

**Cultural exchange/employment**

***Partnership with Yirra Yaakin Theatre***

Black Swan is providing mentoring opportunities for emerging artists including writers and stage management staff as part of Yirra Yaakin Theatre's Next Step program. Yirra Yaakin staff regularly provide expert advice to Black Swan on Indigenous matters.

**Cultural exchange/new works and innovation**

Black Swan is working closely with Indigenous communities in Carnarvon, Western Australia to include local stories as part of *WA Stories*, a community engagement project.

**CIRCUS OZ**

A commitment to social justice, a good time for all and encouraging and inspiring individuals has driven Circus Oz's performance and community work in regional and remote Indigenous communities. Since 1985 the company has held workshops and presented its show to a large number of Indigenous communities including Kintore, Papunya, Docker River, Uluru, Yuendumu, Yirrakala, Galiwinku, Ramingining, Fitzroy Crossing, Halls Creek, Turkey Creek and many others. From the very beginning of the company in the 1970s, Circus Oz has also been vocal in issues such as land rights and reconciliation.

However, while Circus Oz's involvement with Indigenous Australians has been long-standing, until recently it has not necessarily been strategic or sustained. With support from the Rio Tinto Aboriginal Fund in 2010, Circus Oz was able to work with Tanya Hosch, an expert in Indigenous social and education policy and philanthropy, taking a more focused look at what the company would like to achieve and how to sustain this over a long period of time.

Arising from this work and following extensive consultation, Circus Oz has taken a more strategic and long-term approach to engaging with Indigenous Australia. Its main drivers were that this strategy must:

- focus on real and measurable outcomes in the quality and diversity of the show, and Indigenous employment, with vocational opportunity and community development impacts for those living in remote communities
- align with the company's values and social justice principles.

As a result, the Indigenous Engagement Strategy was developed, to be delivered in partnership with Indigenous communities, philanthropists and potentially federal and state governments through a three-fold integrated approach:

- promoting Indigenous cultural awareness
- expanding Indigenous vocational and training opportunities
- supporting and developing Indigenous community engagement.

This framework has provided the basis for ongoing collaborations and development of ideas with internal and external partners.

### **Cultural awareness and capacity building**

Circus Oz promotes Indigenous cultural awareness through its people and networks. This has included:

- Recruiting a full-time Indigenous Program Manager: Josh Bond was recruited as Circus Oz's Artistic Associate and Indigenous Program Manager in late 2011. Josh has been involved in the arts for over 15 years as a performer, director, producer and technician, with experience across circus, theatre, dance, film and television. Josh is also the Artistic Director and Executive Producer of Award Winning and renowned Indigenous dance/theatre ensemble DJUKI MALA (The Chooky Dancers).
- Establishing an Indigenous Advisory Committee: This committee, made up of local senior Indigenous artists, elders and respected cultural and community leaders, assists in developing and implementing Circus Oz's Indigenous strategy.
- Building networks across Australia and internal distribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander media.

## **Indigenous employment**

Circus Oz has a proactive and tailored Indigenous vocational program. Alongside policies that support the recruitment of Indigenous staff across the company, this is most strongly represented through its BLAKflip program. The program provides a pathway for talented Indigenous performers to be identified, mentored and supported through internships and as potential members of the Circus Oz ensemble. It is about cultivating and developing a new artistic medium for contemporary Indigenous expression and storytelling.

In January 2012 eleven performing artists, dancers, actors and comedians from around the country came together for high-level circus training in the inaugural Circus Oz masterclasses. Since this original masterclass, almost 30 Indigenous artists have participated in BLAKflip, with four artists receiving internships to perform with the ensemble. Three of these performers were offered 12-month contracts and have performed in Australian capital cities, the USA and regional and remote centres. Participants have also gone on to be offered training and full-time positions at the National Institute of Circus Arts, and have also participated in ongoing training at Circus Oz.

The inclusion of Indigenous members in the Circus Oz ensemble has generated positive community reactions, and has also demonstrated alternative career paths for Indigenous children in the performing arts.

*My class of indigenous kids just saw your 11.00am Perth show—30 August. It was so great as my kids would never have an opportunity to see something like this. The indigenous boys were particularly impressed with the acrobatics and I was wondering where I might 'point' them to pursue a career in something they are just naturals in? Great show thankyou so much you guys have made a world of difference to disadvantaged kids and you don't even know it. Thankyou, Regards —Teacher, Swanview Primary School, August 2013*

## **Community engagement**

Circus Oz first worked with remote Indigenous communities in Arnhem Land in 1985. Since then Circus Oz has visited many regional and remote communities, undertaking workshops and performances. In the last few years, community workshops have been held with Indigenous children in many locations, including Fitzroy Crossing, Darwin, Alice Springs, Dubbo, Wujal Wujal and Palm Island. With external support, Circus Oz has also run longer-term community circus projects such as in Jigalong, WA, in 2007.

*As soon as they left people were asking, 'Can you bring them back?' If anything, visits by Circus Oz and groups like it serve to inspire those who may not be reached*

*by mainstream institutions like schools.*

—*The Sydney Morning Herald* report on Circus Oz's 08 Palm Island Tour

In mid-2013 Circus Oz returned to Arnhem Land on its *Circus Oz Goes Bush* tour. Across two weeks, and encompassing five communities—Gunbalanya, Maningrida, Ramingining, Gapuwiyak, Yirrkala—before finishing at the Garna Festival, this tour took a circus show of scale to many of these communities for the first time.

*They brought something universal—a show that talked languages everyone can speak—the languages of fun and wonder.*

—*Arafura Times*

### **Cultural collaboration**

Circus Oz has been fortunate to forge a long-term partnership with Annamila, a philanthropic organisation that supports the vocational and internal cultural awareness aspects of our Indigenous Engagement Strategy. This partnership, recognised in 2013 by Creative Partnerships Australia for best practice in philanthropy, has been central to the development and expansion of Circus Oz's strategy. Support has also been provided by the Australia Council for the Arts and private donors.

Many private and public organisations, including Playing Australia, Recognise, Toll Marine Logistics, Pacific Aluminium, West Arnhem Land Shire, East Arnhem Land Shire, Adventure Tours and the Sidney Myer Foundation, supported our *Circus Oz Goes Bush* program. Our next challenge is to develop a long-term partnership with a number of communities, which supports the strategy's objectives as well as ensuring the overall sustainability of Indigenous engagement in Circus Oz.

### **MALTHOUSE THEATRE**

Malthouse Theatre aims to stimulate dialogue and thinking about how we as a society respond to cultural diversity and Victoria's Indigenous heritage, by fostering greater Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community involvement in Malthouse Theatre activities. Malthouse does not seek to co-opt an Indigenous theatre, but rather to facilitate diverse artistic ambition and have a long standing commitment to producing Indigenous work. Across the years, we have brought our audiences celebrated works such as *Black Medea*, *Ngurrumilmarmiriyu [Wrong Skin]*, *Namatjira*, *Briwyant*, and most recently *The Shadow King*.

### **Indigenous employment**

Jason Tamiru, a Yorta Yorta man, is Malthouse Theatre's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Liaison Producer. He is specifically responsible for convening the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Council (see below), Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander audience development and all-organisational awareness. Jason is also the producer of *Blak Cabaret* and the Associate Producer of *The Shadow King* (see below).

### **Community engagement and capacity building**

In 2012 Malthouse Theatre established a council of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists to work with us to improve links to the community both of artists and audience members and guide us through protocols as needed. The council also gives specific feedback on performances, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists' needs, allowing Malthouse Theatre to use its influence to enact change throughout the organisation and not just on stage. The council includes artists Uncle Jack Charles, Isaac Drandic, Lisa Maza, Melodie Reynolds as well as Malthouse Theatre's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community Liaison Producer, Jason Tamiru.

### **Education**

Malthouse Theatre has established a relationship with Worowa Aboriginal College to provide bespoke opportunities (such as workshops, performances and post-performance discussions) for their students and teachers.

### **New works and innovation**

#### ***The Shadow King***

Beginning its life as a creative development with Bell Shakespeare, *The Shadow King* premiered in October 2013 as part of Melbourne Festival. Epic and provocative, *The Shadow King* reworks Shakespeare's timeless tragedy *King Lear* as a sprawling, blood-soaked tale of two Indigenous families in Australia's north. Probing our understanding of kinship and country, it weaves a parable that echoes our nation's history. Told through modern English, Kriol languages and a live rock score, this ambitious new production brings together some of Australia's foremost Indigenous performers, including Tom E Lewis (*The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*) and Jimi Bani (*Mabo*), along with the musical talents of Bart Willoughby (Yothu Yindi). It will tour across Australia in 2014.

#### ***Blak Cabaret***

In conjunction with Vic Health and the Helen Macpherson Smith Trust, Malthouse Theatre has a three-year touring plan for *Blak Cabaret*—a cocktail of comedy, music, poetry and dance featuring the deadliest mob of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander performers. The program addresses racism as an underlying cause of increased health risks in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, both regional and urban. Showcasing the best of Victorian Indigenous artists in a fun and positive light, *Blak Cabaret* toured to Shepparton Festival and Castlemaine Festival in the first quarter of 2013, with further performances in Mildura, Swan Hill in

November/December 2013. Performances are also taking place in south-west Victoria and Gippsland in early 2014, before revisiting Shepparton and Castlemaine. Malthouse Theatre will also showcase the performance at The Coopers Malthouse as part of the Melbourne Indigenous Arts Festival in February 2014.

So far, the tour has featured 16 artists from all over Victoria (with at least four others included in the next leg). The unique approach of working with community groups (such as the Shepparton football community) as well as arts groups means the audience reach is both broad and inclusive, in turn helping to dispel false beliefs and stereotypes associated with racism.

### ***Walking into the Bigness***

*Walking into the Bigness*, co-created by Richard Frankland and Wayne Blair, was commissioned by Malthouse Theatre. The production, also directed by Wayne Blair (*The Sapphires*), will be staged by Malthouse Theatre in August 2014. *Walking into the Bigness* tallies the experiences that made the man, Richard Frankland. His yarns are offered unvarnished and with his distinctive blackfella humour as first person narration, yet Richard himself never speaks the words. Instead actors old and young, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, male and female, take on his tales, presenting them as both personal and universal stories.

Richard's on stage presence as a musician—underscoring the work with stunning harmonies that intensify at emotional milestones—shows him as custodian of these tales, ensuring the cultural and individual experience is palpable. Through the performance style, *Walking into the Bigness* also plays with ideas of fractured identities, childhood, loss of innocence, separation and culture according to the chosen voice.

## **MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY**

### **New works and innovation**

MTC remains proud of the multiple achievements of *The Sapphires*, which started life here in 2004, toured and then of course was turned into a film. The company has more recently produced *The Man from Mukinupin*, and worked with Indigenous casts and dancers in such recent shows as *The Birthday Party*, *The Tempest*, *Inheritance* and *The Ghost Writer*.

The MTC's artistic vision and purpose include a commitment to fostering stories of understanding and empathy, passion and excellence that challenge and enrich. To realise this vision, MTC has created a series of programs that provide genuine opportunities and produce work—not just reflecting Australia and Australians, but leading the way in accessibility and artistic vitality. These include:

### **Neon Festival of Independent Theatre**

In 2014 MTC will continue to celebrate Melbourne's vibrant independent scene with five companies producing their own work with complete creative freedom.

### **Cybec Electric**

A season of semi-staged play readings—five plays that are diverse in form and content; and which may well be part of our mainstage season in 2015. The first play in the season is *The Visitors*: written, directed and acted by an all Indigenous ensemble—Jane Harrison (playwright) Leah Purcell (director), Sermsah Bin Saad, Kamahi Djordan-King, Greg Fryer, James Henry, Glenn Maynard, Leroy Parsons, Glenn Shea (actors). MTC is committed to developing new works from Indigenous artists and bringing them to the main stages. MTC has for the first time partnered with the City of Melbourne's Indigenous Arts' Festival to present *The Visitors*.

### **Community engagement**

#### **MTC Connect**

This is a partnership with Multicultural Arts Victoria (MAV), by which MAV has identified a number of theatre artists of diverse backgrounds to join the MTC family as ambassadors, advocates and facilitators between MTC and their communities. MTC Connect aims to grow MTC's connections with Melbourne's diverse theatre and community landscape, beyond our usual artists and audiences.

#### **Artist Access**

MTC is committed to creating and developing opportunities for artists from all backgrounds and at all stages of their careers.

### **Education**

MTC Education provides access for thousands of young people to world-class productions, workshops and learning programs in theatre and drama. In 2014 the Education Program has expanded to include primary school aged audiences.

## **MELBOURNE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

### **New works and innovation**

#### ***ngangwurra means heart***

*ngangwurra means heart* is a major new collaboration from Black Arm Band and the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra. The partner piece to Black Arm Band's acclaimed *dirtsong*, *ngangwurra means heart* spins a magical musical yarn about what it really means to be Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander in Australia today. After initial workshops with Black Arm Band members, MSO players and the Indigenous community in Maningrida, the work was presented in November 2013.

## MUSICA VIVA AUSTRALIA

### Education

#### **Datiwuy Dreaming 2013**

This newest addition to Musica Viva In Schools is the culmination of three years of artistic and educational collaboration between NAISDA, elders from Elcho Island (Yolngu people) and Musica Viva. The performance was the live outcome of a complete educational program that included:

- professional development for all participating teachers
- digital teaching resource with interactive student activities, mp3s, video, curriculum links (including literacy in both English and Yolngu language, social studies, history, dance and, of course, music)
- Instructional videos supporting teachers with the cultural protocols in exploring an Aboriginal culture.

Funding for the program has been provided by Rio Tinto, the Australia Council and Office of the Arts.

#### **Tour 1: NSW Central Coast April 2013**

- 12 schools in the Central Coast area—4 of these schools are regional schools
- 1 teacher professional development session
- online professional development re cultural protocols

#### **Tour 2: WA metro and Mid-West October 2013**

- 12 schools in the Perth metropolitan area
- 9 remote schools in the mid-west region including some of the most remote schools in the country
- 1 community concert in Meekatharra—attended by about 180 people.

Quotes received by the WA Musica Viva office include:

*The staff and students here are still buzzing about this amazing experience!*  
—Anna-Maria Agnello, Music Specialist, Our Lady of Mercy Primary School

*I was certainly surprised to hear the students singing in Yolngu language by the time the performance had ended. As an Aboriginal person it was great to see all students and staff engaging with Aboriginal history and culture and this I believe was due to the fun and interactive way it was delivered by the dancers.*  
—Coleen Sherratt, Project Officer Aboriginal Languages, Department of Education

*The performers interacted with the audience in such a way that all, young and old were contributing. Our whole school participated from our little 3 year olds to our*

*year 12 students. For the full hour all our students were engaged and mesmerised.*  
—Liz Tuckey, Principal, Mt Magnet District High School

*Great community turn out! Staff and Students enjoyed, think some wished they could see your whole show—another time!*

—Jody Eckert, Principal, Karalundi Remote Aboriginal School

### **Datiwuy Dreaming 2014**

#### **Tour 3: NSW Met North**

This 3-week tour (17 schools, 36 performances in Metropolitan North) sold out within weeks of being offered to schools from October 2013. The schools that are participating in the tour in 2014 range from a Montessori school for infants and early school-aged children to public and independent primary schools.

#### **Tour 4: Darwin and Alice Springs**

Datiwuy Dreaming also tours to Darwin and Alice Springs in Term 2, 2014. This tour is receiving positive responses from local schools and teachers (about 50 per cent of the tour was booked as of November 2013), with an exceptional booking taking place with Alice Springs School of the Air. This performance will take place in their Alice Springs REACT studio and will be broadcast to about 60 students in remote locations around the Northern Territory. Students will interact with the digital resources via remote access classes with their teachers and will have the opportunity to ask questions of the Dativuy Dreaming performers at the streamed event.

#### **Further Initiatives in 2014**

1. Due to the exceptional response from schools and teachers to the performance and educational content of this new ensemble, we are piloting a Musica Viva Teachers' Forum (MVTF) in New South Wales and Queensland. These forums will be open and free to any of the 900<sup>1</sup> teachers in NSW and Queensland who subscribe to our Musica Viva In Schools Programs.

The MVTF '*Is it OK?*' (working title) will explore, from a Musica Viva educator's perspective, the issues and steps taken to navigate the cultural heritage of an Aboriginal culture (in this case that of the Yolngu people). The forum will give teachers practical support for navigating cultural protocols as well as learning activities that integrate the Indigenous components of the Australian Arts Curriculum into everyday classroom contexts.

2. Musica Viva also aims to explore the possibility of sharing our learning around creating digital resources to both teach a Creative Arts curriculum and also as a means of capturing/sharing the cultural heritage of the diverse language groups of the many Aboriginal nations. This is in consideration of the ACARA's

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<sup>1</sup> Approx combined figures taken from 2012 annual state reports.

draft Framework for Aboriginal Languages and Torres Strait Islander Languages.

### **Indigenous employment**

Musica Viva is working with NAISDA to offer enhanced professional development opportunities for staff and students at NAISDA. Planning is underway for mentoring, exchanges, and internships in 2014/15 as each company seeks to share skills and enhance understanding of their staff and students.

## **OPERA AUSTRALIA**

Opera Australia's community partnerships program is built upon strong, community-based partnerships and genuine dialogue with communities. It supports cultural revitalisation and intercultural connection in communities around Australia.

### **New works and innovation**

#### ***Yarrabah the Musical***

A new music theatre piece created in 2012 by Opera Australia and the Yarrabah Indigenous community in Far North Queensland. Directed by Rhoda Roberts and featuring 80 community performers. SBS's NITV screened a documentary about the making of the musical in November 2013. *Yarrabah The Musical* won Best Community Event in the Australian Event Awards 2013.

#### ***The Bungalow Project, Alice Springs***

A new music theatre piece created in partnership with the Arrulka Business Aboriginal Corporation as part of the inaugural Mbantua Indigenous Festival being hosted by the Arrernte Aboriginal communities peoples of Central Australia, with Rachel Perkins and Nigel Jamieson as Artistic Directors. This piece tells the story of 'The Bungalow', one of the first institutions created to house mixed-race Aboriginal children taken from their parents. It was performed in October 2013 at the Telegraph Station in Alice Springs.

### **Community engagement**

#### ***Oz Opera collaboration with Barkly Regional Arts***

Oz Opera coordinated a large scale community engagement project in Tennant Creek, Northern Territory, in conjunction with Barkly Regional Arts. Tennant Creek has a population of about 3000 people, of which 52 per cent identify as Indigenous Australians. The musical collaboration between the Winanjikari Music Centre All Stars and the Oz Opera Orchestra, and the Regional Tour performance of *Don Giovanni* in Tennant Creek were broadcast to the four remote Indigenous communities of Epenera (pop. 250), Elliott (pop. 500), Ali-Curung (pop. 150) and Canteen Creek (pop. 250) on 13 August 2013, reaching Indigenous audiences who would otherwise not have the opportunity to experience the opera. The collaborative performance

between the Media Mob, the WMC All Stars and the Oz Opera Orchestra can be viewed at: <http://vimeo.com/m/76120094>

This event also received media coverage from *The Australian* <http://video.theaustralian.com.au/2402965223/Embracing-opera-in-the-outback>, NITV News (video clip attached) and the *Tennant and District Times*.

## **Indigenous employment**

Opera Australia has also successfully supported the placement of four Indigenous interns. These candidates were recruited and appointed in partnership with CareerTrackers, a national non-profit organisation that works with Indigenous university students and private sector companies to create career pathways through structured internship programs. Interns work across departments and projects that refine their existing skills and interests, and develop new ones. Equipped with this experience, candidates have the opportunity to develop their interpersonal skills, build self-confidence, and garner a greater awareness of what career pathways are available in the arts. As a result, they may identify avenues to continue working in the performing arts or broader arts industry, as artists, arts workers, or future leaders of cultural organisations. The placements provide a unique opportunity to forge strong industry contacts and networks and encourage them to continue building their careers in the creative industries.

## **OPERA QUEENSLAND**

### **Education**

#### **Open Stage**

The Open Stage program is the heart and soul of Opera Queensland and a fundamental part of the company's future direction.

Through Open Stage, OperaQ is succeeding in its new mission 'To reflect, celebrate and enrich life in our communities' and achieving our goal 'to build and maintain strong, meaningful relationships with diverse communities across Queensland and Australia'.

Since 2011, as part of Open Stage, OperaQ has been working with the Aboriginal Centre for the Performing Arts (ACPA) and schools in remote regions of Queensland and New South Wales (NSW).

#### **ACPA training courses**

OperaQ has delivered week-long residency programs and workshops as a part of ACPA's training courses. A number of students, who have completed the workshops and shown interest in sharing their skills through teaching, have also become interns within our Open Stage School Residency programs.

### **Open Stage School Residency**

Every year OperaQ has visited Western Cape College (Weipa Campus) in Far North Queensland, Wilcannia in far-western NSW and Walgett in north-western NSW to deliver this popular program to predominantly Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

In Weipa, the week-long residency involves a group of up to 35 students working with a director, music director, three singers and either a local Aboriginal artist or a recent ACPA Alumnus. It culminates in a musical presentation for elders, community members, school staff, students and peers. In this remote location, the Open Stage Program allows students to challenge themselves while pursuing music, drama, visual arts and dance, with the support of professional artists, student mentors and local artists. An added bonus is that the program has a major impact on students and engages them beyond school hours.

In Walgett and Wilcannia, the relationship between OperaQ and the local communities has developed over three years as a result of the tailored week-long residences. More than 45 students performed to the Wilcannia community in October 2013 and anecdotal feedback has shown the impact of the programs. OperaQ is also proud of the important professional development opportunities offered to teachers, including Ness Schepp, the new music teacher in Walgett who wrote, 'I have been so personally encouraged, inspired and enriched by the ideas and enthusiasm that the team brought ... I believe in what you are doing and I know that it can, does and is making a difference!'

## **QUEENSLAND THEATRE COMPANY**

### **Strategic approach/ best practice**

Queensland Theatre Company (QTC) is an ATSIAB-accredited Indigenous organisation led by Noonucal/Nugi Artistic Director Wesley Enoch, the first Indigenous Artistic Director of a state theatre company. The company's Indigenous Program, introduced in 2011, is aimed at producing, promoting and building audiences for Indigenous work.

In 2012, 16,324 people attended a production of an Indigenous work presented by QTC. These productions have been presented in Brisbane and also toured regionally, reaching audiences from primary school aged children through to adults. The work has been both entertaining and thought provoking, raising awareness of a range of issues and challenges facing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. QTC is now known as a theatre company that presents high quality, professionally produced Indigenous work in large scale public venues such as the Queensland Performing Arts Centre (QPAC).

Queensland has the second largest Indigenous population in Australia. According to 2011 Census data, more than half (61.0%) of Australia's Torres Strait Islander population and a quarter (25.7%) of the Aboriginal population live in Queensland. Indigenous Queenslanders are dispersed across the state with an estimated 78 per cent living in regional and remote areas. As there is no major Indigenous performing arts organisation in Queensland, QTC strives to take on the role of providing opportunities to Indigenous artists and arts workers and developing high-quality Indigenous productions.

The Indigenous Program aims to be an example of national and international best practice in reconciliation, supported by Australian Indigenous communities. Other Indigenous organisations in the performing arts community have become actively involved with QTC in partnership arrangements, including the Aboriginal Centre for Performing Arts (ACPA), BlakDance and *kuril dhagan* at the State Library of Queensland.

In 2013 QTC was awarded the Queensland Premier's Reconciliation Award in recognition of the Indigenous Program.

### **New work and innovation**

In the two years since the Indigenous Program began, QTC has gone from presenting no Indigenous work to two or more large-scale Indigenous works a year. This has included QTC's 2013 main stage season performance of *Mother Courage and Her Children*, a major new translation of the Brecht play that draws parallels between the themes of the play and the plight of Indigenous people in Australia in the past 200 years. In 2012 QTC, in partnership with QPAC, presented the Sydney Theatre Company/Adelaide Festival production *Bloodland*, as well as presenting new Indigenous works *Head Full of Love* and *Stradbroke Dreamtime*.

In 2014 QTC will present *Black Diggers*, a performance based on the little-known stories of Indigenous soldiers in World War I. It will be co-produced with Sydney Festival and performed in Brisbane as the centrepiece of QTC's main stage season for 2014.

One of QTC's Strategic Goals for 2014 is to build a repertoire of Indigenous work which can be toured nationally and internationally. This will create broader audiences for Indigenous work, as well as provide career opportunities and professional development for Indigenous artists.

### **Youth and education**

Woodridge State High School is situated in Logan City, whose 270,000 residents come from all over Australia and more than 161 cultural groupings from around the world. This rich multiculturalism is reflected in school attendance. Over 60 per cent of students are Indigenous.

In a partnership with Queensland Child Protection Week, workshop artist and performer Louise Brehmer worked with Year 9 Woodridge State High School students to create a performance based on the Child Protection Week themes of protection, safety, self-responsibility and community. The work, called *Who Are You*, was performed at the Bille Brown Studio at QTC, as well as at Woodridge State High School for the students and broader community.

In 2014 we will be working on The Logan Project, addressing issues of cultural and racial intolerance in the Logan City area, especially as it affects young people, through the creation of a Youth Ensemble specifically for young performers/actors/musicians from the Logan area (ages 16–20).

Through projects such as these, QTC is committed to giving Indigenous young people the opportunity to explore issues through creative expression. This process enables them to feel empowered and confident and gives them the opportunity to contribute to their communities.

( In addition see special schools tour of QTC's new Indigenous work *Stadbroke Dreamtime* below)

### **Regional partnerships/Community engagement**

Increasing access to theatre in regional and remote areas is a core focus of the Indigenous Program. It aims to increase participation across all age groups as well as educating children and young people about career pathways in the arts. Recent achievements include:

- 51 regions visited including Ayr, Charleville, Emerald, Freestone, Moffatdale, Quilpie, Wandoan, Yarraman and Yeppoon
- 35 students from Cunnamulla State School came to Brisbane to see QTC's 2013 performance of *Mother Courage and Her Children*. QTC provided travel assistance and hosted workshops for students before and after the show. The students also met with the cast to ask questions and take photos.

There was a special schools tour of QTC's new Indigenous work, *Stadbroke Dreamtime*, a production based on the stories of Aunty Kath Walker, Oodgeroo of the tribe Noonucul. This five-week tour through regional Queensland encompassed 31 schools with 4400 children attending—many seeing live theatre for the first time. With sponsorship secured by QTC, the show was presented in schools for free.

### **Mentorships and employment**

Employment and career development for Indigenous artists and arts workers is a major focus of the Indigenous Program. In particular, QTC is interested in promoting the work and careers of Indigenous women. Ursula Yovich had a lead role in QTC's main stage performance, *Bloodland*, in 2012 and then appeared as the title character in *Mother Courage and Her Children* in 2013. This was a breakout role for

Yovich, who received excellent reviews. In 2014 QTC is presenting Yovich's solo show, *The Magic Hour*, a retelling of the Brothers Grimm fairy tales.

In 2012 five Indigenous people were employed on permanent staff and a further 13 artists were employed on contracts related to specific projects. Paid mentorship positions were offered to two Indigenous artists: Paula Nazarski and Lara Croydon. Janine Matthews was mentored in 2013, working in the programming area to both produce and create new works as well as training as a workshop facilitator. QTC also has an ongoing arrangement with Indigenous administration apprentice, Kalisha Soe.

QTC has a Memorandum of Understanding with the Aboriginal Centre for the Performing Arts (ACPA). Wesley Enoch regularly mentors students from ACPA and directed the ACPA 2012 final year show, *Up the Ladder*. All students from ACPA are auditioned by QTC and some have been offered employment contracts for productions in 2014. Three ACPA students were seconded to QTC's 2012 Theatre Residency Week, observing and supporting the work of the tutors throughout this week-long theatre intensive program.

The extent to which QTC is seen as an attractive and culturally appropriate workplace for Indigenous people is the subject of a formal debrief session held at QTC Managers' meetings, which broadly checks how the company has met the Indigenous Program's strategic goals. It is also considered by the Indigenous Reference Group which is chaired by Board member Nathan Jarro.

### **Capacity building**

A fundraising strategy as part of QTC's 2012 season of *Head Full of Love* raised nearly \$50,000 for The Purple House in Alice Springs for mobile renal dialysis units. At the end of each performance of *Head Full of Love*, the cast talked about the need for the mobile units so that Indigenous people could stay in their communities and receive treatment. The play, which was about reconciliation, was loosely based on stories collected from the Purple House.

In 2012 QTC delivered Australia's official delegation to the Festival of Pacific Arts (FOPA) in the Solomon Islands. Fifty Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists from around the country attended the Festival and displayed the unique talent of our Indigenous people. QTC was the first state theatre company to produce such a delegation.

Also in 2012, the company co-presented a week of workshops, masterclasses and performances for Indigenous performers with BlakDance.

QTC is currently working on its Reconciliation Action Plan and all staff have received cultural awareness training.

## SYDNEY SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

### Cultural collaboration

#### **Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu**

Sydney Symphony Orchestra, as part of the Vivid Live Festival, collaborated with Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu in two concerts at the Sydney Opera House in May 2013. Blind from birth, Gurrumul is a member of the Gumatj clan of Elcho Island, off the coast of tropical North East Arnhem Land. He quickly became known for singing about identity, spirit and connection with the land, its elements and his ancestors. He first came to attention when he released his eponymous debut album in 2008, to international acclaim. It sold half a million copies worldwide, reaching triple platinum in Australia earning him fans as diverse and well-known as Elton John, will.i.am and Sting.

### New works and innovation

#### **Jandamarra**

The SSO has commissioned a major new choral work, *Jandamarra: Sing for the Country (Ngalanybarra Muwayi)*, to be performed in July 2014 at the Sydney Opera House. Jandamarra was an Indigenous Australian of the Bunuba people in the West Australian Kimberley region who, in the 1980s, led one of the few organised armed insurrections documented against European settlement in Australia.

Composed by Australian Paul Stanhope with a libretto by Steve Hawke, the performances will feature the Yilimbirri Ensemble from Fitzroy Crossing plus 500 singers from five choirs: the National Indigenous Choir, the Gondwana Voices, the Gondwana Chorale, the Sydney Schools Choir and Sydney Children's Choir.

The commission is supported by the Kimberley Diamond Company and two other SSO donors, Vicki Olsson and Geoff Ainsworth.

The work is based on the stage play *Jandamarra* which was originally produced in Perth in 2008 by the Black Swan Theatre Company in collaboration with Bunuba Cultural Enterprises, which is a community-owned company from Fitzroy Crossing.

## SYDNEY THEATRE COMPANY

### New works and innovation

Over the years, STC has supported the development and realisation of works by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists and creatives through Education program initiatives, the Wharf 2 Blueprints and Rough Drafts new works development programs, as well as through main stage seasons. These include the following:

- In 1992 directors John Howard and Patrick Guerrero established STC's Australian Peoples' Theatre project, in response to a perceived lack of cultural diversity in mainstream theatre. This included community outreach and education projects and involvement by Bradfield College. As a result of this collaboration a TAFE course was established.
- *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1997), by William Shakespeare, directed by Noel Tovey with an all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples cast, in association with Olympic Arts Festivals, as part of the SOCOG Festival of the Dreaming.
- *Black Medea* (2000), written by Euripides; devised, adapted and directed by Wesley Enoch.
- *The Cherry Pickers* (2001) directed by Wesley Enoch. Written in 1968 by Kevin Gilbert, *The Cherry Pickers* is regarded as the first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander written play.
- *Bloodland* (2011), written and directed by Wayne Blair, from a concept by Stephen Page, directed by Stephen Page, story by Kathy Balngayngu Marika, Stephen Page and Wayne Blair. This was a world premiere co-production with Adelaide Festival and Allens Arthur Robinson, in association with Bangarra Dance Theatre. The production toured to Adelaide and Brisbane.
- *The Secret River* (2013) by Kate Grenville, an adaptation for the stage by Andrew Bovell. World premiere as part of Sydney Festival, followed by seasons in Canberra and Perth. *The Secret River* explored the conflict between transported thief William Thornhill and the Dharug people on whose land by the Hawkesbury River he attempts to settle. Grenville's story confronts the brutality which ensued with this collision of cultures, and the stage adaptation expanded the emphasis to the experiences of both the Dharug people and the European settlers. *The Secret River* depicts a turning point in the development of Australia—a fork in the road with the chosen path resulting in consequences we all live with today. *The Secret River* was produced by Sydney Theatre Company in association with Sydney Festival, the Centenary of Canberra and the Perth International Arts Festival.

### **Cultural awareness-raising**

- In 2013 STC began working with Reconciliation Australia to develop a Reconciliation Action Plan. This is specifically focused to develop a pipeline of Indigenous candidates for performing arts management and production roles.
- Initial Cultural Awareness Training has been given to key staff members of the Artistic Operations Team. This will be rolled out further in 2014.

## **Indigenous employment**

STC is currently investigating developing an Indigenous internship program with CareerTrackers. This is a national not-for-profit, independent organisation that works with Indigenous university students and private sector companies to create career pathways through a structured internship program.

## **TASMANIAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

### **Cultural engagement**

#### ***Tyalgum Mantras***

The Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra opened its 2013 Master Concerts season with a performance of Ross Edwards' *Tyalgum Mantras* which teams didgeridoo virtuoso William Barton with the orchestra in a trance like meditation. William Barton is one of Australia's leading didgeridoo players and a powerful advocate for his cultural traditions and the virtuosic potential of his instrument. William is a Kalkadunga man from western Queensland.

### **New works and innovation**

#### ***Shadow Dreams***

The TSO and Terrapin Puppet Theatre jointly commissioned *Shadow Dreams*, by playwright Finegan Kruckemeyer and composer Graeme Koehne for the 2013 Ten Days on the Island festival. Suitable for children aged 5 plus and their families, *Shadow Dreams* featured filmed images, puppetry, live actors, and live music performed simultaneously in Hobart and Launceston for four performances, and in Hobart and Burnie for two performances linked simultaneously by high-speed broadband.

*Shadow Dreams* is the story of two Tasmanian boys, one who grows up living on a hill in the city while the other is an Aboriginal boy growing up on a hill in the country. The cast included three Tasmanian Aboriginal actors, while the story included traditional Aboriginal stories which were integrated into the play with the agreement of the local Tasmanian Aboriginal community.

The TSO received Indigenous funding from the Australia Council for Fiona Hamilton to provide an Indigenous mentoring program to develop the show and assist in the training of the actors. Local Aboriginal artists Tasman Langford, Sheldon Thomas, and Janice Ross designed and created props and parts of scenery.

There were considerable complexities in presenting simultaneous performances where the audience at either end could see the performances at both ends particularly dealing with the latency issues flowing from the use of the high-speed internet. There were also considerable complexities in the Indigenous consultation

process. The Aboriginal actors involved have had heritage back to the island communities coming from well-known Tasmanian Aboriginal families and all spoke some of the Palawa Kani, the reconstructed language resembling the extinct languages once spoken by the Aboriginal people. Palawa words were incorporated into the text as were correct Indigenous place names used as part of the *Shadow Dreams* play.

## THE AUSTRALIAN BALLET

### Education

#### ***Young Aboriginal Women's Program***

The Young Aboriginal Women's Program was developed in 2012 by The Australian Ballet and the Wannik Dance Academy at Mooroopna Secondary College in regional Victoria. Young Aboriginal women aged 12 to 16 years—students of the Wannik Dance Academy—engage in a specialist dance program, which is combined with academic studies. The program provides young women with a positive environment that highlights self-worth, the necessity to attend school each day, and motivates students to engage in a positive education experience to lead to further studies and future employment. By collaborating with The Australian Ballet, the program further engages students in in-depth cultural and professional learning and performance.

The Young Aboriginal Women's Program consists of a three-day incursion program delivered by The Australian Ballet at the Wannik Dance Academy, followed by a three-day excursion program of dance and arts activities at The Australian Ballet's Melbourne headquarters.

If funding is secured, the next phase of the Young Aboriginal Women's Program is to implement a work experience placement at The Australian Ballet following the incursion and excursion segments.

#### ***In-schools program***

The Australian Ballet's in-schools program *Out There—The Australian Ballet in schools* targets young Indigenous Australians and culturally diverse communities. It addresses the current lack of dance education in Australian schools with a touring program that complements the core values of the overall school curriculum.

### Mentoring

The Australian Ballet also runs an annual mentoring program for a young, emerging Indigenous artist in partnership with the Australia Council to develop teaching, producing and choreographic skills.

## **Employment**

In 2012 Bangarra dancer Ella Havelka became the first Aboriginal to join the Australian Ballet. Havelka, a descendant of the Waradjuri people from Dubbo in NSW's central west, hopes to inspire a younger generation of Indigenous dancers.

## **Cultural collaboration**

For The Australian Ballet's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2013, Stephen Page, artistic director of Bangarra Dance Theatre, led a new collaboration between Bangarra and The Australian Ballet—*Infinity*. Set to a score by award-winning composer David Page, the piece featured dancers from both companies and toured to Melbourne, Sydney and New York City to critical acclaim.

The fruitful collaboration between Bangarra and The Australian Ballet began in 1996 with *Alchemy* and continued in 1997 with *Rites* which premiered at the Melbourne Festival and then toured with The Australian Ballet to Paris in 2008.

## **WEST AUSTRALIAN OPERA**

### **Cultural engagement**

WAO has developed protocols, especially when touring in regional areas, which include a 'welcome to country' at regional shows and at Opera in the Park, held in the Supreme Court Gardens, Perth.

## **WEST AUSTRALIAN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

### **Education**

#### ***WASO On The Road***

The West Australian Symphony Orchestra reaches Indigenous students and communities in regional and remote locations through the WASO On The Road program. Small ensembles visit schools and present community concerts across the state, and in 2013, ensembles travelled through the Pilbara region as far north as Dampier, South to Albany and to Geraldton.

WASO musicians present workshops, concerts and master classes in schools, as well as free community concerts and where possible, join local community ensembles in rehearsal to share their knowledge and experience. Selected program repertoire includes opportunities for audience members to be involved in the performance. Groups travel with child-sized instruments to give students in these centres the chance to have a go on musical instrument.

These interactive programs encourage participation and storytelling.