



THE OLYMPIC ARTS FESTIVALS AND THE SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE TRUST PRESENT BANGARRA DANCE THEATRE

# Fish

A JOURNEY THROUGH THREE WORLDS
PRODUCED IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE OLYMPIC ARTS FESTIVALS



BANGARRA DANCE THEATRE

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### **Creative Team**

Director/Choreographer Stephen Page Composer David Page Cultural Design Djakapurra Munyarryun Set Design Peter England Costume Design Jennifer Irwin Lighting Design Joseph Mercurio Set Construction Diversion Production

### Cast

Albert David Lea Francis Marilyn Miller Djakapurra Munyarryun **Russell Page Frances Rings Gina Rings Sidney Saltner** 

### Company List

Artistic Director Stephen Page General Manager Jo Dyer Rehearsal Director Bill Pengelly Production Manager Joseph Mercurio Stage Manager John Colvin Administration & Publicity Coordinator Carla Theunissen Financial Controller David Lloyd

DRAMA THEATRE, SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE 17 SEPTEMBER TO 27 SEPTEMBER, 1997 MONDAY TO SATURDAY AT 8PM MATINEES 20,24 & 27 SEPTEMBER AT 2PM RUNNING TIME: 65 MINUTES

# the music

### swamp 21.25

(page/page/munyarryun)

gulmura swamp mourning bilthu dry mud dhulu moondance wangkayn mala wirrmu swamp mourning reprise

featuring:

djakapurra munyarryun vocal, bilma, yirrdaki, and guypungura munyarryun vocal yiritja language group yirrkala, david and kirk page vocal yugambeh language group, stephen francis guitar

### traps 20:05

(page/munyarryun)

guttin foil lure catch featuring:

djakapurra munyarryun vocal, david page vocal, michelle doolan vocal, leroy cummins, stephen francis guitar, mark overden piano, karella mitchell cello, milan svab classical quitar

### reef 20:40

(page/aragu/sinak/munyarryun)

dreamfish skool terra'torial the bottom belong featuring:

djakapurra munyarryun vocal, david page vocal; kirk page vocal, glenda aragu, smila sinak, helen anu, agnus ware vocals kalaw lagaw ya western islands language group, stephen francis guitars

It was with our last work Ochres, that Bangarra cemented our position as one of Australia's most innovative contemporary dance companies. Drawing on the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the land, Ochres explored the mystical significance of the substance of ochre, inspired by its spiritual and medicinal power. Fish 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, Fish celebrates the seas, the rivers, the swamps, and the wealth of life and mystery they contain.

### SWAMP

The swamps and the mangroves are still waters, deep, murky and mystical, a site of great sacredness and spirituality. Drawing on stories and traditions from Dhulambouy, Swamp imagines 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.

## **TRAPS**

Traps juxtaposes Western ways with the ancient, challenging the notion of hooking and gutting with the slow lure and catch of the old. Inspired by the craft and the intricate workmanship of the grand fishing traps from Ramingining, this most contemporary of ballets traces the fishing cycle - the drawing of fish from the water, to the restoration of remains to the earth. Stark consequences flow from disruption to such a cycle, to traditions born in the time of the Dreaming. Without the ritual of return the soul is lost in time and place, left grasping at stolen memories, no way of getting home.

## REEF

Inspired by the Torres Strait, the vibrant blues, the rich purples, the deep dramatic greens of *Reef* evoke the clash and contrast of culture and colour found at the water's edge. 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. The exhilaration and energy of life and love are blended in a rich simplicity, as Australia's two Indigenous peoples celebrate the windswept tenderness of the reef.



### STEPHEN PAGE Artistic Director/ Choreographer

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) in 1983.

He continued his dance career with Sydney Dance Company, performing in After Venice, Wilderness, Nearly Beloved, Shining, Poppy, Cafe, soft bruising, Company Of Women, and King Roger, touring with the company to Greece, Italy, Japan, Hong Kong and Korea. Graeme Murphy created the role of the Faun for Stephen in Late Afternoon of a Faun. In 1991, Stephen choreographed an original work, Mooggrah, for Sydney Dance Company's season Shakespeare's Dances.

In 1988, he toured with the Aboriginal Islander Dance Theatre to Germany and Finland and was the Artistic Director for NAISDA's show, Kayn Walu in 1989. In December 1991, Stephen was commissioned to choreograph Sydney Theatre Company's Trackers of Oxyrhyncus. At the same time he choreographed a sextet for the Australian Opera's Nozze Di Figaro.

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 achivement". The works Stephen has created for Bangarra have toured nationally and internationally to Indonesia, China, Hong Kong, USA and England.

Stephen choreographed and directed Bangarra's second major work Ninni, featuring guest actor Rachael Maza. Following this production, Stephen collaborated with then Assistant Artistic Director Bernadette Walong to create Ochres which was presented for the first time in 1995. This piece achieved widespread critical and audience acclaim, and has travelled all throughout Australia, as well as to Berlin, Tokyo, Noumea, Indonesia and India.

In 1996, Stephen directed the Flag Handover Ceremony at the Closing Ceremony of the Atlanta Olympic Games, and made his debut with The Australian Ballet, choreographing Alchemy.

Choreographing/Directing Credits include: Niki Nali for Australia Day at Expo '92 Seville, Barcelona Olympic Cultural Festival and Central Australia; Australia's indigenous peoples' participation 1993 World Youth Soccer Championship Sydney Football Stadium; the operatic film, Black River, winner Grande Prix Opera Screen '93 Paris; Pride (for ABC-TV Choreographer's Series Seven Deadly Sins; choreographer and co-director of the half-time entertainment 1993 AFL Grand Final; directed Black Vine I II & III, Sydney City Council's celebration for the International Year of the World's Indigenous People; numerous Australian rock videos and choreographing The Wedding Song (NIDA) directed by Jim Sharman '94.

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 recepient of a Young Australian Creative Fellowship in 1995.



### David Page Composer

Born in Brisbane, David is a descendant of the Munaldjali Clan of the Yugambeh tribe south east Queensland. At 13 his music career began as a solo singer, recording two singles

under the direction of the W.E.A. Recording Company. He made appearances on shows such as The Mike Walsh Show and Countdown.

David pursued serious music studies in the eighties, enrolling at the Centre for Aboriginal Studies in Music (CASM) at Adelaide University where he studied saxophone, voice, composition and song arrangement. He toured extensively with the performing ensemble of CASM, and went on to become musician and songwriter for Azur an Aboriginal/Islander band. David sang, acted and danced in stage productions Murras , by Aboriginal playwright, Eva Johnson and in Reg Livermore's Big Sister.

As a composer David teamed up with his brother, choreographer Stephen Page and created music works for Kayn Walu and Djunba Women, the annual productions for the NAISDA Student Ensemble, and Mooggrah for Sydney Dance Company's Shakespeare's Dances.

In 1991 David joined Bangarra Dance Theatre as resident composer/performer where he has composed and performed in various productions including Up Until Now, Gapan Sagnal and Black Vine. In 1992 David composed the soundtrack for Bangarra's first full length work, Praying Mantis Dreaming; performed and composed for Niki Nali .

David collaborated with guest composer La-Donna Hollingsworth for Bangarra's second major work Ninni. (1994); David also collaborated with Stephen Page and Bernadette Walong in composing the soundtack for Ochres, (1995 and 1996). Public demand saw the Ochres soundtrack released as a CD through Larrikin records, which then went on to win the 1995 Deadly Sounds Award for Best Soundtrack.

In 1996, David continued his successful artistic partnership with Stephen, co-composing the music for the Flag Handover Ceremony at the Closing Ceremony of the Atlanta Olympic Games. He also wrote the score for The Australian Ballet's Alchemy - the first Australian Ballet piece choreographed by an Indigenous artist, which premiered in Melbourne in September - and which was 1996 Deadly Sounds Award for Best Soundtrack.

Music for television includes Poison for ABC TV's Blackout series, Pride, part of the ABC's Seven Deadly Sins Choreographers Series, Songlines and the theme music for ABC TV series Heartland, for which he received a nomination for an APRA Award.



### DJAKAPURRA MUNYARRYUN Cultural Designer

Born in Yirrkala, north-eastern Arnhem Land, Djakapurra's life has been steeped in traditional dance and

ceremony. In 1989 and 1990, 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 didgeridoo player. A dynamic traditional dancer, Djakapurra shows great interest in the cross over of traditional and contemporary music and dance styles that are being created in the company.

Djakapurra danced lead roles in Praying Mantis Dreaming and Ninni. In Ochres Djakapurra recreates his own style of dance with great articulation. He has toured with Ochres throughout 1995-6 to Europe, Asia and all over Australia.

His major film work includes Black River, playing the role of the water spirit and Breaking Through - Imax 3D film produced for Expo '93.



### Peter England Set Designer

Peter England graduated from the University of New South Wales with a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture (Honours 1986) and

from the National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA) with a Bachelor of Performing Arts in Design (1994). He has worked for architectural firms in Sydney and Queensland and has been a finalist and award winner in numerous national and international urban design competitions.

Since graduating from NIDA Peter has designed theatre and a variety of special event projects. His recent design credits include Third World Blues (Sydney Theatre Company), Shirley Valentine at Wharf II (Blue Sky Productions), the 1996 City of Sydney New Year's Eve celebrations; Trocadero (Sydney Theatre Company fundraiser); member of the design team for the Atlanta Olympics Flag Handover ceremony; Richard III (NIDA); The Jungle (Sydney Theatre Company); Brazilian Blue (Twelfth Night Theatre); Mary Mackillop Place, North Sydney.

In 1997, in addition to his work on Fish, Peter co-designed sets and costumes for Opera Australia's production of Madama Butterfly, and is working on sets for The Australian Ballet's collaboration with Bangarra Dance Theatre, Rites (The Rite of Spring).



### JENNIFER IRWIN Costume Designer

Jennifer Irwin works regularly with Australia's leading choreographers to design and produce dance costumes. Since 1982, she has

worked with Sydney Dance Company as resident costume designer and wardrobe supervisor. In 1984 she received a Theatre Board grant to study at La Scala, Milan. Her first design commission was for SDC's Sirens in 1986, followed by a further 14 commissions for Graeme Murphy and SDC including Synergy with Synergy, Shining, Protecting the Veil, soft bruising, and Berlin. She has designed Praying Mantis Dreaming, Ochres, and Mooggrah for Stephen Page, Arbos for Ohad Naharin, and Saccharin Suite for Gideon Obarzanek. She designed and constructed over 200 costumes for 70 dancers in Murphy's event Vast for the Australian Bicentennial celebrations.

Jennifer Irwin has worked with Australia's top stage designers including Kristian Fredrikson, Brian Thomson, Andrew Carter, Michael Pearce and Kenneth Rowell. Her dance film credits include the ABC's Sensing for the SDC, and Gluttony, part of Seven Deadly Sins.

In 1995, Jennifer made costumes for the Australian Opera's Les Troyens I and II. Most recent credits include SDC's production of Graeme Murphy's Free Radicals, dance costumes for the Paralympic handover ceremony in Atlanta, and Stephen Page's Alchemy, with the Australian Ballet. Continuing her successful partnership with Stephen Page, she is designing costumes for The Awakening, Ceremony of the Festival of the Dreaming, and Rites, Bangarra's collaboration with The Australian Ballet for the 1997 Melbourne International Festival.



### Joseph Mercurio Lighting Designer

Joseph Mercurio was born in Melbourne and raised in Fremantle, Western Australia. His fascination with

dance was fuelled by his decision to follow his sister Connie into ballet at age six. He soon decided to leave the barrel rolls to his siblings, including brother Paul, and became involved with the the technical aspects of theatre, with a strategic move into Lighting. At age sixteen one of his first jobs was for Swy Theatre Company, co-founded by his brother Michael.

Jo's career has spanned the entire entertainment field, working in rock and roll, film, television, drama, dance theatre and corporate shows. Lighting and the manipulation of light have been Joseph's main career passion; it is not only what is seen but what is concealed that continues to fascinate. Film credits include: Blackfellas, Dingo and Michelle's Third Novel. Small screen credits include: Waltz through the Hlls, Under the Skin and Ship to Shore. Dance credits include: Scenes in a Prison, Six Feet Late, Traces, Window on the Clubbed, Praying Mantis Dreaming, El Amor Bruco, Ninni and Ochres. In 1996, Joseph designed the lighting for Stephen Page's debut with The Australian Ballet, Alchemy. Jo is also Production Manager with Bangarra Dance Theatre.



### BILL PENGELLY Rehearsal Director

Bill Pengelly joined Bangarra as Rehearsal Director in 1996 and has been an invaluable member of the creative team ever since. His experience in dance

encompasses all aspects of performance, teaching, choreography, dance administration and tour coordination.

Bill's early years in dance saw him with the North Queensland Ballet Company and the Queensland Ballet.

Bill joined the Sydney Dance Company as a dancer in January 1980 and performed roles in the premiere stagings of many works by Graeme Murphy, as well as many works by guest choreographers including Mooggrah by Stephen Page. He was appointed Dance Master to the Sydney Dance Company in 1986. In 1994, Bill choreographed his first work, Birds of Passage, for Sydney Dance Company's choreographic workshop, Raw. Bill remained with Sydney Dance for fifteen years.

Throughout his professional career Bill has toured extensively, performing in countless productions as well as film and video clips. He has been guest teacher with numerous dance institutions including the Scottish Ballet, Nureyev and Friends Australian Tour, Western Australian Ballet and the Australian Dance Theatre



### John Colvin Stage Manager

This is John's second show with Bangarra, having joined the company in 1996 to work on Ochres. He has spent the last ten years being a theatrical bum working for anyone who would

have him. Reckless employers included the Sydney Festival, Sydney Dance Company, all of Melbourne's myriad festivals and any number of failed commercial producers of both fine theatrical classics and bottom of the barrel vaudeville.

He's still enjoying himself.



### ALBERT DAVID

Albert was born in Thursday Island, Torres Strait in 1971. In 1989 he was accepted into NAISDA (National Aboriginal and Islander Skills Development Association) and continued his studies until graduating in 1994.

During his time as a

student he was offered work in videos and commercials including Coca-Cola. He has worked as a model for Balarinji designer outfits.

In 1991 Albert toured nationally with Harold, choreographed and directed by Kim Walker.

In 1995 Albert joined Bangarra and has toured extensively with Ochres throughout Europe, Asia and Australia.

He was also Christine Anu's choreographer and lead dancer. Albert has gathered valuable knowledge in teaching cultural awareness.



### LEA FRANCIS

New Zealand born Lea Francis studied dance with Bryan Lawrence and Janet Karin at the Bryan Lawrence School of Ballet in Canberra and joined Sydney Dance Company at the age of sixteen in January 1985.

In her first year at Sydney Dance Company, Lea danced in New York and on the company's historic tour to the People's Republic of China. Lea went on to dance with the company on twelve international tours and in seasons throughout Australia. Lea's career produced a long list of roles in the works of Graeme Murphy including those in Poppy, Some Rooms, soft bruising, Piano Sonata and Berlin.

During her time at Sydney Dance Company she worked with many guest choreographers from both Australia and abroad including Ohad Naharin, Ralph Lemon, Louis Falco, Stephen Page, Kim Walker, Paul Mercurio and Gideon Obarzanek.

After nearly twelve years with Sydney Dance Company, Lea recently embarked on a career as a freelance artist performing works by Garry Stewart and Kim Walker. Most recently she joined Gideon Obarzanek's "Chunky Move" for their season at the National Theatre Festival in Canberra.



### MARILYN MILLER

Marilyn started dancing at the age of five, and has trained in Classical Ballet, various traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dance styles, tap and modern dance techniques, including Martha Graham, Lester Horton and Limone.

Marilyn has performed and taught extensively throughout Australia, and her overseas touring has taken her to New Zealand, Hong Kong, Berlin, Tokyo and Nottingham.

She has been a guest artist with The Queensland Ballet, Bangarra, and was a founding member and soloist with Aboriginal Islander Dance Theatre - the Company. Whilst with AIDT - the Company she choreographed Blue and Purple for their full length work Colours. She has also choreographed and acted in works for Theatre, such as Cockroach Opera, Dancing in the Snow and The Cherry Pickers.

Marilyn has returned to dance after taking a break in Brisbane to pursue training in acting and choreographing. Marilyn has toured with Ochres to Berlin, Arnhem Land, Tokyo, Noumea and Canberra.



### RUSSELL PAGE

Born in Brisbane Queensland, Russell graduated from NAISDA in 1989. During his 5 years there he was able to learn traditional culture and values, by visiting the communities of Weipa, Bathhurst Islands, the Kimberly's, Central

Australia and the Torres Strait Islands.

Russell performed with The One Extra Company in Othello which toured to Jakarta and Hong Kong in 1990. Teaming up with his brothers Stephen and David he performed in Niki Nali at the 1992 World Expo in Seville and at the cultural festival held during the Barcelona Olympic Games.

In 1991 he became a full-time member of Bangarra Dance Theatre, and has toured nationally and internationally with the company. He featured in Praying Mantis Dreaming and Ninni, and is also one of the original cast members of Bangarra's most successful piece, Ochres. Russell toured with Ochres to great acclaim throughout Australia, Europe and Asia. He has also worked extensively as a solo artist, most recently at the Australian pavilion at the 1997 Venice Bienale.



### FRANCES RINGS

Frances was born in Adelaide, South Australia, and completed a five year Associate Diploma in Dance with NAISDA in 1992. In her final year there, she received the Ken Brindle Memorial Scholarship.

During her time at NAISDA Frances toured with their professional company AIDT to New Zealand, Queensland and Northern New South Wales, During her final year she was chosen to perform and tour with Kim Walker's production, Harold.

Frances was offered an apprenticeship with Bangarra in 1993. She has toured nationally and internationally with the company to festivals and major events. Performing in Praying Mantis Dreaming, Ninni and Ochres, Frances has developed a real sense and passion for Stephen Page's style of choreography. By 1994 she was dancing the lead role in Ninni, a role that was created especially for her. She is an original cast member of Ochres, and has travelled with the production to Melbourne, Adelaide, Noumea, Canberra, Arnhem Land, Sydney, Perth, NSW regional and QLD regional.

In 1995 Frances was the recipient of an Australia Council grant which enabled her to travel to New York to do three months independent study with the Alvin Ailey American Dance School.

Frances has appeared in numerous film and video clips. Most recently, she danced in the film Billy's Holiday, and appeared in the ABC documentary about Christine Anu, Saltwater Soul.



### GINA RINGS

Born in Port Augusta, South Australia, Gina spent most of her childhood in Murray Bridge and Port Maclay, a small reserve in S.A. Gina began her dance training during her final years of high school. After completing Year 12, She

then went on to The Perfoming Arts School in Adelaide, studying dance and drama for two years.

In 1993 Gina was accepted into NAISDA where she was introduced to traditional dance and culture. As a dance student, travelling to the traditional communities of the Torres Strait Islands was the highlight of her training and growth at NAISDA, where she studied for one year.

In 1994 Gina was offered an apprenticeship with Bangarra Dance Theatre. During that year she toured with the company to the Adelaide Festival, and performed with the company in its major Sydney season Ninni at the Enmore Theatre.

Gina was part of the original cast of Ochres when presented as a work in progress during the 1994 Nambundah Festival at Belvoir Street Theatre. Recently she toured with the company to Berlin, Tokyo, Noumea, and Canberra.



### SIDNEY SALTNER

Sidney graduated from NAISDA College in 1991 with an Associate Diploma in Dance. Whilst studying, Sidney performed and taught extensively throughout Australia. During his final year of studies, he undertook his

apprenticeship programme with the Australian Dance Theatre. He there toured to Hong Kong, and performed in Kim Walker's Harold.

Sidney joined the Aboriginal and Islander Dance Theatre (AIDT) as a full time member in April, 1992. He has danced major roles with AIDT in such productions as Maralji, Colours, Gelam, Asik and Drums of Mer.

With AIDT Sidney has toured extensively throughout Australia, as well as internationally to Germany, the United Kingdom, Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Seoul, Taiwan, New Zealand, South America, the Pacific Islands, Papua New Guinea, Northern Ireland, France and The Netherlands. He has also choreographed for the company, contributing to their Asik season in Indonesia, and AIDT's 1994 Schools' season.

Sidney has done extensive film and television work, appearing in various commercials, and most recently in Billie's Holiday. During the 1996 Contemporary Performance Week, he worked with Bernadette Walong on the piece River Woman, and on its opening at the Newtown Performance Space.

Sidney makes his debut with Bangarra for its 1997 season.

# Thank Yous

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