

BANGARRA DANCE THEATRE

THE BOGONG'S SONG

A
CALL
TO
COUNTRY



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MEANJIN
QUEENSLAND PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE
25 SEP - 4 OCT 2025

GADIGAL COUNTRY
THE STUDIO THEATRE AT BANGARRA
8 - 19 OCT 2025

CREDITS

*Director, Co-Writer
& Choreographer*
Yolande Brown

*Co-Writer &
Provocateur*
Chenoa Deemal

Music
Brendon Boney

*Songwriting &
Composition*
Yolande Brown

*Set & Costume
Designer*
Richard Roberts

Set Design Associate
Annaliese McCarthy

Lighting Designer
Ben Hughes

*Lighting Design
Associate*
Eben Love

Video Designer
Justin Harrison

Puppet Master & Maker
Vanessa Ellis

Cultural Consultants
Aunty Doris Paton
Arthur Little

Illustrator
Cheryl Davison

Performers
Benjin Maza
Tijlala Brown-Roberts

Traditional Dance by
Brent Watkins

*Accompanying Music
by Uncle Sean Ryan*

*Audio Description
Written by*
Shane Carroll

Spoken by
Chenoa Deemal
(Meanjin)

Deaf Consultant
James Kerwin

Auslan Interpreter
Sofia Andersen

Auslan Interpreter
Natalie Waldmeier

PRODUCTION CREDITS

*Director, Technical
& Production*
John Colvin

Production Manager
Toni Glynn

Stage Manager
Abby Dinger

*Assistant Stage
Manager*
Mikayla Hosking

Costume Maker
Millie Adams

Props Maker
Savanna Mojidi

*Assistant Puppet
Construction*
Justine Warner

This production was proudly made in Meanjin. Bangarra Dance Theatre acknowledges the Jagera and Turrbal people who are the Traditional custodians of the land.

WELCOME

As Co-CEOs of Bangarra, we are honoured to welcome you to *The Bogong's Song: a call to Country*.

What guides you through the darkness when you've lost your way? A whisper on the wind. A shimmer in the stars. A moth in flight.

This brand-new work, created by Yolande Brown and Chenoa Deemal, follows the internationally acclaimed *Waru - journey of the small turtle*, which captivated more than 25,000 children. We are thrilled to welcome *The Bogong's Song* as the next chapter in Bangarra's storytelling for young audiences, featuring the talents of Benjin Maza and Tjilala Brown-Roberts, whose gifts in dance, music, and spoken word illuminate this heartfelt story. They take us on Country in search of the elusive Bogong Moth, along the way we enter an extraordinary world where Country speaks through stars, trees, grasses, animals and of course, insects. Blending storytelling, shadow puppetry, video design, dance, and song, *The Bogong's Song* has been created especially for primary-aged children to share insight into First Nations knowledges, ecological relationships, and the value of small creatures through creative storytelling and performance.

We extend our deepest thanks to the extraordinary cast and creative team, whose imagination, artistry, and commitment bring the Bogong's world to life on stage. We are also grateful to the QPAC team and to Bradley Chatfield for their generous support. Your dedication makes it possible for Bangarra to continue sharing stories that sustain spirit, kinship, and Country.

We acknowledge and thank Cultural Consultants, Aunty Doris Paton, Arthur Little and the Ngarigo cultural authorities for their knowledge and generosity in guiding the creation of this work. To our audiences and supporters, thank you for walking alongside us.

This production has been commissioned by QPAC and Bangarra Dance Theatre and is made possible by the generous support of the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland, the Australian Government through the Indigenous Languages and Arts program, the Girgensohn Foundation and the Knights Family Jabula Foundation.

With this performance we invite you and your young ones to reflect and be guided by the spirit of the Bogong Moths' journey, to witness connection to Country to discover that even the smallest creatures have a vital role to play in the health of Country, and our shared obligation in caring for it.



Frances Rings,
Artistic Director
& Co-CEO



Louise Ingram,
Executive Director
& Co-CEO

DIRECTOR'S NOTE



For years, I've been fascinated by the Bogong Moth. I'm not sure why I was drawn to its magnetic pull, but I've come to feel this little creature — with its cultural, ecological, and spiritual significance — was calling for its story to be told.

I first began sharing stories of the Bogong Moth with my colleagues at AIME, intrigued by its ancient migration and its role in the natural world. When invited to create Bangarra's second children's work, the Bogong Moth quickly emerged as a central figure — quiet, persistent, and powerful. A tiny insect, yes, but one with deep meaning for First Nations peoples, especially in the high country where its presence has long been honoured through story, ceremony, kinship and connection to Country.

Once seen as a seasonal gift, the moth has more recently been labelled a pest. That shift — from sacred to unwanted — holds uncomfortable parallels with how society can misinterpret what it doesn't understand — and this extends to Aboriginal youth, often seen as 'running amok' rather than individuals with stories and potential.

This work has been a deeply collaborative creation, shaped not only by a remarkable creative team but also by the important conversations and guidance shared with cultural knowledge holders and Elders. Their wisdom has been invaluable in helping the story take shape. I want to also thank the scientists who have generously shared their knowledge and are dedicated to protecting the Bogong Moth, along with the many plants and animals now threatened or vulnerable in the Snowy Mountains.

I was privileged to spend time on Monero Country in the Snowy Mountains during this process — and to bring my then 9-year-old son along. Seeing this landscape through a child's eyes helped shape this story and reminded me of the profound importance of children connecting story to Country.

The Bogong's Song holds space for wonder, truth, and deep listening. I hope it stirs empathy, curiosity, and a desire to become better custodians of Country — because when Country is healthy, we are too.

Yolande Brown

ABOUT

PEOPLE

The Bogong Moth holds immense cultural significance for First Nations clans in south-eastern Australia. The arrival of the moths in the high country signals the time for gathering — to feast, and conduct Ceremony and the business of Lore. Ancient songlines carry the Bogong's story — essential to preserving cultural, social, and environmental sustainability now and into the future.



Photo: Woo,
via Moth Tracker

PLACE

Bogong Moths breed in the hot dry climate of the lowlands of southern Queensland, NSW, northern Victoria, SA and in favourable conditions in parts of WA. It takes seven weeks for larvae to pupate into newly hatched moths. They then travel over 1000 kilometres to the cool caves and crevices of the Australian Alps. They find their way with the help of their inbuilt navigation system, using star constellations, landforms and the Earth's magnetic field. Upon reaching the caves they aestivate (hibernate) over the summer months, then when the weather starts to cool, they travel back to the breeding grounds. Their life cycle is over, and a new generation begins.

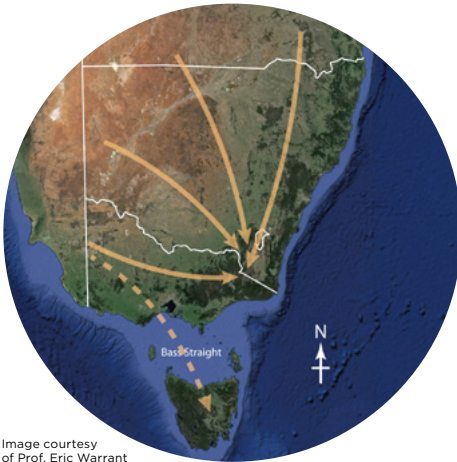


Image courtesy
of Prof. Eric Warrant

STORY

Today, the Bogong Moth is an Endangered species. Populations declined gradually since colonisation due to land clearing and urban development. More recently, the impact of climate change has caused significant decline. Also, light pollution from cities interferes with the moth's internal navigation, many losing their way and perishing before reaching their destination. Conservation scientists are working hard to learn everything they can about these amazing creatures so they can help us save the moths, their environment and their story.



Photo: Zara,
via moth tracker

CREATIVE TEAM



YOLANDE BROWN

Director, Co-Writer, Choreographer, Songwriting & Composition

Yolande is a proud Bidjara woman and award-winning artist whose career spans dance, music, and theatre. A senior artist with Bangarra Dance Theatre (1999–2015), she co-choreographed *Dark Emu* and created *Imprint*. She received the Deadly Award for Best Dancer (2010) and led the creation of Bangarra's *Knowledge Ground*. Recent choreographic works include *The Sunshine Club* (Queensland Theatre/HIT Productions) and *Nhangam Ngali Nyin* (Queensland Ballet's 2025 *Bespoke*). Yolande is Co-CEO of AIME and a Legs on the Wall board member.



CHENOA DEEMAL

Co-Writer & Provocateur

Chenoa Deemal is a proud Thiithaarr Warra (Guugu Yimithirr), Kaanju and Ayapathu woman. She is an award-winning actress, receiving a Matilda Award for *Is That You, Ruthie?* Her stage credits span leading companies including Queensland Theatre, La Boite, Ensemble, Riverside Theatres and Melbourne Theatre Company. Screen Credits: *Safe Home*, *Troppo*, and *Summer Love*. *The Bogong's Song* marks her first writing credit, alongside co-writing her own feature film with Rough Sea Films. Training: QUT (BFA ACTING), ACPA.



BRENDON BONEY

Music, Sounds & Arrangements

Brendon Boney is a Wiradjuri/Gamilaroi man from Wagga Wagga, now based on Darkinjung Country. As a composer and sound designer, his credits include Bangarra Dance Theatre's *Illume*, *Kulka*, *Horizon*, and *Dance Clan*; STC's *Fences and Sweat*; and Belvoir's *At What Cost?* and *Winyanboga Yurringa*. His screen work spans *Underbelly*, *Offspring*, and *Gods of Wheat Street*. A performer in *Wudjang: Not the Past* and *Black Ties*, he also voiced Willie in *Bran Nue Dae*. Brendon is an APRA PDA winner and co-writer of the 2024 QMA Song of the Year.



RICHARD ROBERTS

Set & Costume Designer

Richard is an award-winning designer and educator whose work spans theatre, ballet, opera, musical theatre, and film across Australia and internationally. He is Head of Design and Production at the Victorian College of the Arts, with previous leadership roles at WAAPA and the Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts. His extensive opera, dance, and theatre designs include collaborations with Opera Australia, Australian Ballet, Queensland Theatre, MTC, STC, Belvoir, and Black Swan. His screen work includes *The Battlers*, *Five Times Dizzy*, and *I Own the Racecourse*.



ANNALIESE MCCARTHY

Set Design Associate

Annaliese McCarthy is a proud Gadigal woman and designer working across architecture, furniture, and set design. Her practice is grounded in community and guided by culture, shaping spaces, objects, and performances. In 2024 she designed sets for Bangarra's *Dance Clan* and was named in Australian Design Review's 30 Under 30. A New Colombo Plan Scholar, she has worked in Tokyo with leading furniture and architecture firms. Annaliese's design language is deeply influenced by place, story, and the people who hold them.

CREATIVE TEAM



BEN HUGHES
Lighting Designer

Ben Hughes is an award-winning lighting designer for theatre, dance and opera, and is the associate artistic director of The Danger Ensemble. His work has featured with companies including Queensland Theatre, Sydney Theatre Company, Melbourne Theatre Company, Opera Queensland, Belvoir, La Boite, Queensland Ballet and Australasian Dance Collective, with seasons across Australia, the UK, US, China, India and New Zealand. Ben won the 2023 Matilda Award for best light design for *SALAMANDER*, and lectures in lighting design at Queensland University of Technology.



EBEN LOVE
Lighting Design Associate

Eben is a Ngarrindjeri man born into the entertainment industry with both his parents working as professional practitioners in production across theatre, festivals, film and music. As a teenager, Eben became involved with Cairns community theatre, Tropical Arts, as a backstage production hand. After high school, Eben undertook a traineeship at the Cairns Centre of Contemporary Arts (now Bulmba-ja Arts Centre) focusing on Lighting Design as a main craft.



JUSTIN HARRISON
Video Designer

Justin is a sound and video creative working across theatre, film and television, and videogames. He has previously created video and sound design for Queensland Theatre, Melbourne Theatre Company, Belvoir St Theatre, La Boite Theatre Company, and has been the resident designer at The Grin and Tonic Theatre Troupe for 14 years. In 2016, his work on *The Wider Earth* was awarded the inaugural Matilda Award for Projection Design, and he has since been nominated for Helpmann, Olivier, APDG and BADC awards.



AUNTY DORIS PATON
Cultural Consultant

Doris Paton is a proud Gunai and Monero Ngarigo woman, educator, and community leader dedicated to the reclamation and revival of Aboriginal languages. With a PhD in Philosophy (Education), Doris has taught language for over 25 years and chaired key curriculum and advisory groups, including the Victorian Aboriginal Languages Implementation Committee. A recipient of the Wurreeker Award and Parks Victoria Regional Achiever Award, she is a Senior Lecturer at Monash University, a Parks Victoria Board Member, and a Federation University Council Member.



ARTHUR LITTLE
Cultural Consultant

Arthur Little is a Wiradjuri Gamilaroi, Ngunnawal Yuin man, leader, mentor, and changemaker with nearly 20 years at AIME, where he is now Co-CEO and Global Partnerships. He works to uphold cultural integrity, empower communities, and drive systems change. Arthur's career includes roles with Crown Casino, the Aboriginal Health & Medical Research Council, and the NSW Ombudsman. A former professional Rugby Union athlete, he represented Australia in the European Heineken Cup and Super 10 Italy.

CREATIVE TEAM



CHERYL DAVISON

Illustrator

Cheryl Davison (Overton) is a leading contemporary Aboriginal artist, storyteller, and cultural teacher from the far South Coast of New South Wales. A Walbunja and Ngarigo woman, Cheryl shares creation and family stories passed down by Elders, often painting Gulaga and its connected creation stories of land, ocean, and sky. Her works are held by the National Gallery of Australia, Art Gallery of New South Wales, National Museum of Australia, Wollongong Art Gallery, and in numerous private collections nationally and internationally.



VANESSA ELLIS

Puppet Master & Maker

Vanessa Ellis is Head of Puppetry at AIME Mentoring, where she designs, fabricates, and mentors through storytelling. Trained as a dancer, she transitioned to puppetry in 1998 and has since devised, built, and performed across theatre, film, television, and festivals worldwide. Her work spans rod, shadow, marionette, animatronic, and large-scale puppetry, often using sustainable and upcycled materials. Career highlights include *Walking with Dinosaurs*, Victorian Opera, Opera Australia, Creature Technology Company, and Polyglot, alongside creating over 50 puppets for AIME globally.



BENJIN MAZZA

Performer

Benjin Mazza is a multidisciplinary performer, writer, and musician whose career spans theatre, dance, music, and festivals nationally. Stage credits include *Othello* and *Stradbroke Dreamtime* (Queensland Theatre), *SILENCE* and *Weredingo* (Karul Projects/BlakDance), *From Darkness* (La Boite), and *Crossing the Divide* (Shock Therapy Arts). A regular festival performer and musician, they have appeared at Brisbane Festival, Woodford Folk Festival, Sydney Opera House's Homeground, and the Commonwealth Games. Award recognition includes Matilda Award nominations for Best Supporting Actor for *Weredingo* (2021) and *Othello* (2022).



TJILALA BROWN ROBERTS

Performer

Tjilala is a proud Warlpiri woman from Central Australia, currently completing her Advanced Diploma in Performing Arts at ACPA. A dancer, singer, and songwriter, she blends contemporary, fusion, and street dance with spoken word, often accompanying herself on guitar. Trained across contemporary, hip hop, jazz, tap, and ballet, her performance highlights include Bangarra's Indigenous Round at Suncorp Stadium and Brisbane Festival 2024. Tjilala shares stories through movement, music, and culture, honouring her elders' legacy.

Cover, page 8 and
below image by:
Daniel Boud



MUSIC CREDITS

*All Songs Written
& Composed by*
Yolande Brown

*Music, Sounds
& Arrangements*
Brendon Boney

Voice Overs

Yolande Brown

Tessa Nuku

Xavier Titus

Molly Boney

Lincoln Richard

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Ngarigo Cultural Authorities

Aunty Iris White

Shane Herrington

Dean Freeman

Paul Brown McLeod

Chris Close

Aunty Roxanne McDonald

Penny Conroy

Lincoln Richard

Bairnsdale West Public
School

David Dixon

Ellen Mundy

National Capital Exhibition

Dr Linda Broome

Prof. Eric Warrant
(BSc (Hons), PhD.

Auslan Stage Left

Estelle van Hoeydonck
& Peter Lancaster
– Zoos Victoria

Queensland Theatre

Set built by a NoBLE event

Yeronga State School

Felicia Chapman

bangarra
DANCE THEATRE

QAPAC
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PERFORMING
ARTS COUNCIL

Queensland
Government

Australian Government
Indigenous Languages and Arts

GIRGENSOHN
FOUNDATION

The Bogong's Song has been commissioned by QPAC and Bangarra Dance Theatre and generously supported by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland, the Australian Government's Indigenous Languages and Arts program, the Girgensohn Foundation and the Knights Family Jabula Foundation.

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