

Press Release
For Immediate Release



BANGARRA DANCE THEATRE PRESENTS THE STORIES OF EMERGING ARTISTS

Our stories. Our emerging storytellers. Our future.

"As first nations people, storytelling is first and foremost a part of us" – Sani Townson



27th October, 2022: After a ten-year hiatus, Bangarra Dance Theatre announces the return of *Dance Clan* in 2023; presented at Bangarra's own Studio Theatre on Gadigal Country, Walsh Bay, from 3rd to 18th February, 2023.

Since its inception in 1998, *Dance Clan* has fostered the talents of a new generation of storytellers, designers, dancers and choreographers; springboarding choreographic careers of artists including Deborah Brown, Tara Gower, Yolande Brown, and Frances Rings. In 2023, Bangarra Dancers Glory Tuohy-Daniell and Ryan Pearson and Alumni and Youth Programs Coordinator, Sani Townson will each choreograph an original work, performed by the Bangarra ensemble of dancers with a NAISDA Dance Intern.

Dance Clan offers the unique opportunity for Bangarra's artists to share their own stories alongside a brilliant team of Indigenous early career designers, as they express their creative voice, with the support of their elders and mentors.

Current and former David Page Music Fellows Brendon Boney, Amy Flannery and Leon Rodgers will compose the score for each work. Fashion designer Clair Parker will design for the show under the mentorship of industry veteran Jennifer Irwin, NIDA's Maddison Craven will work alongside acclaimed Lighting Designer, Karen Norris, and Shana O'Brien will create the set design under the guidance of Bangarra's multi award-winning Head of Design, Jacob Nash.



Bangarra Associate Artistic Director, and incoming Artistic Director for 2023, Frances Rings said, "Dance Clan is designed to cultivate the ground for our next generation of emerging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Storytellers. This program of new creative works has seen various presentations of cultural and contemporary new expressions thrive, expanding our distinctive dance lexicon and its ongoing impression on the wider artistic ecology."

"I am proud to have seeded my early choreographic skills as a recipient of Dance Clan and honoured to promote the development of First Nations artistic and cultural vibrancy into the future".

Tickets for *Dance Clan 2023* are on sale now via bangarra.com.au.

BANGARRA'S DANCE CLAN 2023

Dates: 3rd to 18th February

Times: Tuesday to Friday 7:30pm, Saturday 1:30pm and 7:30pm

Location: The Studio Theatre at Bangarra, Gadigal Country, Eora Nation, 15 Hickson Rd, Walsh Bay

Prices: All tickets \$54 (Community and Under 30s pricing available)

Tickets: On sale 8 November via bangarra.com.au. Sign up to e-News on the website for presale access.

Dance Clan has been generously supported by the Hooper Shaw Foundation.

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[Images are available for download here](#)

For further information and interview requests:

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CHOREOGRAPHER BIOGRAPHIES

RYAN PEARSON

Ryan is of Biripi and Worimi descent on his mother's side and Minang, Goreng and Balardung on his father's side. He was born and raised in Taree, New South Wales. He joined Bangarra in 2017 as part of the Russell Page Graduate Program.

Ryan began his dance training at NAISDA at age 16, after taking part in the NSW Public Schools' Aboriginal Dance Company, facilitated by Bangarra's Youth Program Team in 2012. During his time at NAISDA, Ryan learnt from a number of renowned teachers and choreographers.

One of Ryan's highlights during his training at NAISDA was attending a six-week Professional Division Summer Intensive at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre in New York City.

Bennelong in 2017 was his debut season with Bangarra, and he has since performed the regional tour of *OUR land people stories* (2018), *Bennelong* at Adelaide Festival (2018) and at the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games opening ceremony.

Ryan was nominated in the 2020 Australian Dance Awards for Most Outstanding Performance by a Male Dancer for his performance in Jiri Kylian's *Stamping Ground* (2019 Production, *30 Years of sixty five thousand*).



GLORY TUOHY-DANIELL

Glory is a descendant of Indjalandji Dhidhanu and Alyewarre Aboriginal tribes, in the North West Queensland, and of Scottish, English, Irish, Welsh, Chinese and Spanish heritage.

Glory joined Bangarra in 2016, one of two Russell Page Graduate Program recipients. She studied dance at NAISDA.

The experience that has made the biggest impact on Glory was attending a cultural residency, learning and performing cultural dance in community on Saibai and Moa Islands, in the Torres Strait and Elcho Island, North-East Arnhem Land.

Glory first saw Bangarra in 2011's *Belong*, and it has been a long-held goal of hers to join the company. *OUR land people stories* in 2016 was her debut season with Bangarra, and she has since toured nationally with *Bennelong*, regionally with *Terrain* and *OUR land people stories*, and internationally to Copenhagen, Berlin, Bonn, Paris and USA.

SANI TOWNSON

Sani is a descendant of the Saibai Koedal and Samu Clans of Saibai Island. While studying with NAISDA from 1996 to 2000, Sani was a Featured Artist with Torres Strait Islander group Bibir in Bangarra's production *Munikhay*, part of *Dance Clan 2*.

Sani joined Bangarra Dance Theatre as a Dancer in 2001 and has travelled with the company on Regional Tours across Australia. He also toured internationally to Noumea, Japan, China, United Kingdom, United States of America, Monaco and New Zealand. During his time at Bangarra, he was nominated for Best Male Dancer at the 2003 Deadly Awards and performed in awarding-winning productions such as *Skin*, *Walkabout*, *Bush*, *Corroboree*, *Unaipon*, *Clan*, *Boomerang*, and *Amalgamate* in collaboration with The Australian Ballet. Sani left Bangarra Dance Theatre at the end of 2006.

In 2008, Sani performed as a Guest Artist with Leigh Warren & Dancers in the acclaimed production of *Petroglyphs - Signs of Life*. Soon after, he danced in the musical film *Bran Nue Dae* directed by Rachel Perkins, and was a featured Dancer for **Christine Anu** in the 2009 Blues Roots Festival. Sani has also been featured on NITV's popular lifestyle shows *Move it Mobstyle* and *Express Yourself*, and his choreographic work has been featured on *Ready for This* on ABC.

In 2009, Sani collaborated with Qantas on their 'I Still Call Australia Home' campaign, translating the second verse of the song into his native tongue of Kalaw Lagaw Ya; the campaign launched at the Bledisloe Cup that year. 2010 saw Sani in the Helpmann-nominated production of *Saltbush* by Insite Arts, and in 2012 he was part of Wesley Enoch's Sydney Festival show *I Am Eora*.

Ongoing collaborations with Gondwana Choirs have led to the creation of *Ngailu – Boy of the Stars*: the first ever Indigenous children's opera, and choreographic collaborations with *Marliya* and Felix Riebl of Cat Empire. As an independent Artist and in partnership with organisations like the New South Wales Arts Unit (Department of Education), Sani has facilitated workshops with children across the



country. He was instrumental in forming the Sydney-based Aboriginal youth group Gili Dancers, which has been selected for the New South Wales State Dance Festival on numerous occasions.

He has had opportunities to choreograph for the Arafura Games in Darwin, as well as the launch for the National Congress for Australia's First Indigenous Peoples, Gondwana National Indigenous Children's Choir, NAISDA Dance College, and internationally at the Shanghai World Expo. Sani has been an Artist in Residence at both NAISDA Dance College and the Solid Ground Program at Carriageworks, and has choreographed works including *Malu Ngadh Paru Kedha* (NAISDA Dance College) and *Lagaw Mabaygal – Ailan Ppl* (Insite Arts). In 2019, Sani was the Artistic Director for NAISDA Dance College's End of Year Production *Ngoenakap*, inspired by the community of St Paul's Village on Moa Island.

In 2020, Sani joined Bangarra's Youth Program Team in the role of Youth Program Coordinator.



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