

BANGARRA DANCE THEATRE

YULDEA



YULDEA

CREDITS

Choreographer
Frances Rings
and the dancers of
Bangarra Dance
Theatre

Set Designer
Elizabeth Gadsby

Costume Designer
Jennifer Irwin

Lighting Designer
Karen Norris

Composer
Leon Rodgers

Guest Composers
Electric Fields

*Mirning Cultural
Consultant*
Clem Lawrie

*Yalata Cultural
Consultant*
Ms Smart (dec.)

Rehearsal Director
Daniel Roberts

*Cultural Authority
Representatives
from the Yalata
Anangu Aboriginal
Community
Council*

*Cultural
Astronomy
Consultant*
Karlie Noon

*Aerial and
Acrobatic Creative
Consultant*
Joshua Thomson

BANGARRA DANCERS

Rikki Mason
Lillian Banks
Bradley Smith
Courtney Radford
Kallum Goolagong
Kassidy Waters
Kiarn Doyle
Maddison Paluch
Daniel Mateo
Emily Flannery
Janaya Lamb
Chantelle Lee
Lockhart
James Boyd
Amberlilly Gordon
Lucy May
Donta Whitham

PRODUCTION CREW

*Production
Manager*
Cat Studley

*Company
Manager*
Joseph Cardona

Stage Manager
Rose Jenkins

Head Electrician
Lucy Mitchell

Head of Wardrobe
Jessica
Hodgkinson

*Head Mechanist
& Rigger*
Roni Wilkinson

*Sound & AV
Technician*
Raine Paul

*Assistant Stage
Manager*
Ashleigh King

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this program contains the names of people who have passed away. The use of Ms Smart's and Ms J Cox's names within this publication has been approved for use by both families.

Bangarra Dance Theatre pays respect and acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the Land on which our Company calls home, where much of Yuldea was created – the Gadigal People of the Eora Nation.



WELCOME

This year, Bangarra celebrates 35 years of First Nations storytelling, proudly working with Community to amplify Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander creative and cultural voices.

We are delighted to join as Co-CEOs to lead Bangarra into the next decade. Alongside our Board, dancers, and team, we are united by a deep respect and understanding for Bangarra and the important role it plays in today's society.

To kick off our 2024 program, we begin with a regional tour of *Yuldea*. Created in 2023, *Yuldea* explores the moment traditional life collided with the industrial ambitions of a growing nation. As a part of our Creative and Cultural Life Cycle, we were fortunate to take our dancers, creative team and production crew to visit Yalata Aboriginal Community, and the Far West Region of South Australia for the research and development of this work. We would like to acknowledge and thank our Cultural Consultants, Ms Smart and Clem Lawrie who generously shared their time and knowledge in guiding the creation of this work. We also give special mention to Yalata Aboriginal Community and Board and acknowledge their support in creating this production. *Yuldea* reminds us of the power of connection to place, survival, resilience and the life force of family and community who carry the responsibility of maintaining history and culture. Thank you for entrusting us and allowing us to share this story.

This year we will be returning *Yuldea* to Country as part of our Creative and Cultural Life Cycle. The work will tour regionally to South Australia and return to the communities and Elders who so generously entrusted this story to us. In deep respect, we acknowledge the

recent passing of Cultural Consultant, Ms Smart, whose enduring affection for the Yalata community and dedication to sharing the stories of the Far West Coast of South Australia have left an indelible mark on our company. We honour her memory each time we perform this story on the stage.

In 2023, *Yuldea* saw record breaking successes at the box office and audience attendance. We completed 70 performances in Sydney, Canberra, Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne and Bendigo. The tour included dedicated Community and schools' performances and Audio Description offerings.

Tonight's performance would not be possible without the continued support of the Australian Government, through Creative Australia, its principal arts investment and advisory body, the NSW Government, through Create NSW, and our touring partners, Arts on Tour.

We look forward to continuing to strengthen and grow Bangarra as we map out the next chapter and to sharing with you our commitment to Indigenous stories and advancing and changing society through our storytelling.

Thank you for joining us.



Frances Rings,
Artistic Director
and Co-CEO



Louise Ingram,
Executive Director
and Co-CEO

ABOUT YULDEA

THE PEOPLE

Yuldea tells the story of the Anangu of the Great Victorian Desert and the Nunga of the Far West Region of South Australia, who have experienced every chapter of colonial incursions since British settlement, their traditional life colliding with the ambition of western capitalism and the Age of Imperialism.

SIGNIFICANCE OF PLACE

Yooldil Kapi is the traditional name for a permanent clay pan waterhole surrounded by sand dunes situated on the traditional lands of the Kokatha people. Widely regarded as the epicentre of cultural life, it was a dynamic cultural centre of trade, ceremony, lore and kinship as well as being an important refuge for sustenance and survival.

Numerous tribes gathered here, following the trade, water and spiritual routes, that intersected and webbed their way across the western desert extending south into the Nullarbor Plain.

THE STORY

Like many other places across Australia, this was the site of unprecedented decisions and actions that resulted in a forever changed landscape. The building of the Trans-Australian Railway in the early 1900s brought the great metal serpent to the Nullarbor, draining the desert soak water source that had sustained life for thousands of years. Soon after, atomic testing began at Maralinga, just north of Yuldea, further restricting people from their traditional lands, creating distress and having lasting impacts on people's health and well-being.

A note to readers: Ooldea is the name and the spelling most used to refer to the site of the famous soak. Aboriginal people referred to it as Youldul, Yuldeh, or Yultulyngya. Ernest Giles, a British born explorer who was guided to the soak in 1875 by two Aboriginal men, wrote the name as Youldel, but the following year the Surveyor-General in Adelaide decided to change it to Ooldea, and the name has remained the most common in use. We extend our thanks to Maggie Brady, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Australian National University, for contributions to this information.

MUSIC CREDITS

Supernova

Written and performed by Electric Fields.

Kapi Spirit, Birds, Dingoes, Red Mallee, and Yooldil Kapi

Written and performed by Leon Rodgers.

Letters Patent

Written and performed by Leon Rodgers.

Featured voice by Justin Smith.

Steel Snake

Written and performed by Leon Rodgers.

Mission

Written and performed by Leon Rodgers.

Featured vocals in hymn by Ms Smart (dec.), Elaine Cox and Ms J Cox (dec.).

Black Mist

Written and performed by Leon Rodgers.

Featured voice samples from *Bitter Springs* (1950) courtesy of STUDIOCANAL Films.

Ooldea Spirit

Recorded and produced by Electric Fields and Leon Rodgers.

Original *Ooldea* song written by Derek Bryant and performed by Derek Bryant and Verna Gibson.

Hymn performed by Ms Smart (dec.)

Ooldea Skye written and performed by Electric Fields.

Music mixed by Leon Rodgers and Julian Schweitzer.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people should be aware that this production contains voices of recently deceased persons. Bangarra Dance Theatre has been given permission for the use of this recording.

YULDEA

60 minutes (no interval)

ACT 1 – SUPERNOVA

Supernova

Anangu clans observe the night sky, a ritual passed on from ancestors before. Through the cycle of creation and destruction, sky lore has provided the knowledge necessary to sustain life in the harsh desert environment. The death of a star, a supernova, foretells the arrival of change...

Cast: Kiarn Doyle, Cassidy Waters, Emily Flannery, Maddison Paluch, Janaya Lamb, Donta Whitham, Rikki Mason, Lillian Banks, Courtney Radford, Bradley Smith, Daniel Mateo, Chantelle Lee Lockhart, James Boyd, Amberlilly Gordon, Lucy May

ACT 2 – KAPI (WATER)

Water, the source of all life, is also home to supernatural beings whose dynamic journeys created all the features of the landscape and provided the foundation for Anangu lore. Severe drought forces people to travel long distances through living landscapes until they reach Yuldea Kapi piti, the only source of permanent water. Along the way, they rely on water-finders and different water supplies. From birds and dingoes to the water-holding roots of the mallee tree.

Kapi Spirit

Cast: Lillian Banks, Kallum Goolagong

Water Diviners: Birds

Cast: Courtney Radford, Emily Flannery, Maddison Paluch, Janaya Lamb, Chantelle Lee Lockhart

Water Diviners: Dingoes

Cast: Rikki Mason, Bradley Smith, Kallum Goolagong, Kiarn Doyle, James Boyd

GLOSSARY – PITJANTJATJARA LANGUAGE TRANSLATIONS

Anangu people; name used by people of the Western Desert when referring to themselves.

Ilkari heaven/sky
Inma ceremony
Kapi water
Kapi Piti soak
Mamu bad spirit
Manta land

Nunga people; name used by people of the Far West Region when referring to themselves.

Palya good
Waru fire
Wiltja shelter
Wiya no/bad

Red Mallee

Cast: Daniel Mateo, Cassidy Waters

Yooldil Kapi

Cast: Full ensemble

ACT 3 – EMPIRE

Letters Patent

In 1836 King William IV issues the new colony a Letters Patent to proclaim a guarantee of the rights of 'any Aboriginal natives' or their descendants to lands they 'now actually occupied or enjoyed'.

Cast: Rikki Mason, Kiarn Doyle, Janaya Lamb, Amberlilly Gordon, Lucy May, Donta Whitham

Steel Snake

In 1912, construction begins on the Trans-Australian Railway. Starting simultaneously at Port Augusta (SA) and Kalgoorlie (WA), the railway is finally completed in 1917 at the sacred site of Ooldea Soak on the edge of the Nullarbor. Within 20 years of the arrival of the great metal serpents, all the water from Yooldil Kapi had been exploited, and the soak is dry.

Cast: Daniel Mateo, Bradley Smith, Lillian Banks, Chantelle Lee Lockhart, Emily Flannery, Kallum Goolagong, Maddison Paluch, Cassidy Waters

Mission

The Anangu sustain a life on the fringes of the railway line, trading artefacts to train passengers and receiving rations. The railway brings alcohol, disease and dependency. In 1933, The United Aborigines Mission establishes a reserve to accommodate to the needs and care of Anangu children. As bush life starts to ebb away, Christianity impacts on the traditional life of the Anangu.

Cast: Daniel Mateo, Kiarn Doyle, James Boyd, Amberlilly Gordon, Janaya Lamb, Courtney Radford

Black Mist

In 1956, the Australian Government begins atomic testing at the site known as Maralinga. The devastating consequences to traditional lands and people leave a trail of destruction that echoes through the generations. Then comes the black mist of the atomic testing, forcing the Anangu to leave their desert homelands where they had lived for millennia. Broken, the families and clans are separated and sent to missions north, south, east and west.

Cast: Rikki Mason, Kiarn Doyle, Bradley Smith, Emily Flannery, Lucy May

ACT 4 – OOLDEA SPIRIT

Ooldea Spirit

Despite the impacts of Colonisation, kinship ties endure from people to family, family to country and land to sky. Overhead, reflected in the Kapi is the constellation, a divine Songline linking earth and sky and an eternal remembrance of customs, lore and celestial story systems. Elders who carry the memories of Yuldea pass them down through the lineage, ensuring the spirit of Yuldea is remembered.

Cast: Full ensemble

ON COUNTRY

Wirangu and Mirning Country, South Australia.
Images by Kassidy Waters and Rikki Mason.



Lauren Peel and Frances Rings



Yalata Board Member Roslyn Peters

ABOUT US



WE ARE BANGARRA DANCE THEATRE

We are a company of professional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander performers.

We are storytellers. We are fire makers.

As one of Australia's leading performing arts companies, we share our culture with Communities and audiences across Australia and the world.

We are contemporary dancers, drawing on 65,000 years of culture.

We create powerful works of theatre with dance, music, poetry and design.

We tell the stories of our Elders, create works on Country and return the works we create to the place they were made.

Each of our dancers is a professionally trained, dynamic artist with a proud Aboriginal and/ or Torres Strait Islander background. Together, they represent the best of Australian talent.

We have been making our indelible marks on the Australian theatre landscape for 35 years. We were born in 1989 from the energy of NAISDA (National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association) founder Carole Y. Johnson, along with NAISDA graduates, and Rob Bryant and Cheryl Stone.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Main images by Daniel Boud and production image by Kate Longley.

Today, Artistic Director and Co-CEO Frances Rings leads the company in our mission to promote awareness and understanding of our cultures.

Every year, we tour a world premiere work across the nation and embark on a regional tour. We are at home performing on Country, in regional centres and on Australia's most iconic stages. We run education workshops, programs and special projects to nurture the next generation of storytellers.

We are for the hundreds of First Nations Communities across Australia – and for anyone who wants to be a part of our story.

REGIONAL TOURING

Regional touring is a crucial part of the company's annual calendar, connecting Bangarra with the Communities that inspire our stories, as well as exposing new audiences to a positive representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. Community tickets throughout the regional tour are made possible through the support of The Balnaves Foundation.



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ON AND OFF THE STAGE.



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**BANGARRA DANCE
THEATRE AUSTRALIA**

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