

[13 Dec 2014](#)

Review: Your Skin My Skin (NAISDA Dance College)

Posted in [Dance](#) by [Suzy Wrong](#)



Venue: Carriageworks (Eveleigh NSW), Dec 10 – 13, 2014

Director: Frances Rings

Image from Twitter [@theNCIE](#)

Theatre review

Identity is a subject that features in any art education, but for students at NAISDA Dance College, Aboriginality is a central tenet that guides their learning experience in dance and performance. Also known as the National Aboriginal and Islander Skills Association (40 years old this year), NAISDA's end of year showcase for 2014 is entitled *Your Skin My Skin*. The program represents a gamut of dance styles, but the topic of race is never far behind. A series of sensitively curated items are linked by cultural dance and music under the leadership of tutors Heather Mitijangba and Tony Mudalyun, and musicians Shane Dhawa and Timothy Djirmurmur. Regardless of how individual dance pieces come about, we are reminded that heritage is part of their creation, and the land that our feet rest upon is crucial to the expressions on stage.

The event commences with *Rika's Story*, choreographed by the nine performers of the piece with Shaun Parker at the helm. The piece provides the perfect introduction to the college and the evening, with graduating student Rika Hamaguchi's confident verbal narration giving insight into the group's thoughts about study experiences and her feelings at this significant time as she embarks on a new chapter in life. Through Hamaguchi's words, we gain an understanding of the meaning and origins of the movements being displayed, as well as the psychology behind them. Also graduating are Hans Ahwang, Czack Ses Bero, Casey Natty,

Kyle Shilling and Philip Walford, who have all completed NAISDA's four-year Diploma of Professional Dance Performance.

Shilling presents the only solo piece of the schedule. *Justice?* is a meditation on Aboriginal deaths in custody, with impressive choreography and music created by the student. His work is intensely emotional and energetic, and he demonstrates surprising maturity and gravity. Also memorable is Natty, who shows excellent focus and a solid presence in his various appearances. The athletic dancer executes choreography with precision and flair, and like all of the graduating class, rich with potential and promise. The young men's performance in *Grinding Stone* by Frances Rings (an excerpt from Bangarra Dance Theatre's *artefact*) is a highlight, bringing poignancy and depth to their mysterious dance.

Aside from the passionate achievements of NAISDA's students, *Your Skin My Skin* is successful also for its excellent aesthetic values and accomplished technical capacities. The show runs smoothly with beautiful transitions, and atmosphere is always gauged just right. Music and sound might be second fiddle, but they are as delightful as the dance imagery occupying centre stage. NAISDA's night of nights is a celebration of the year's work by its fabulous staff and students, and an annual performance with heart and soul that dance enthusiasts will certainly enjoy.

www.naisda.com.au