

Indigenous Australian dance looks beyond the big Bangarra

Date

November 24, 2014



Elissa Blake

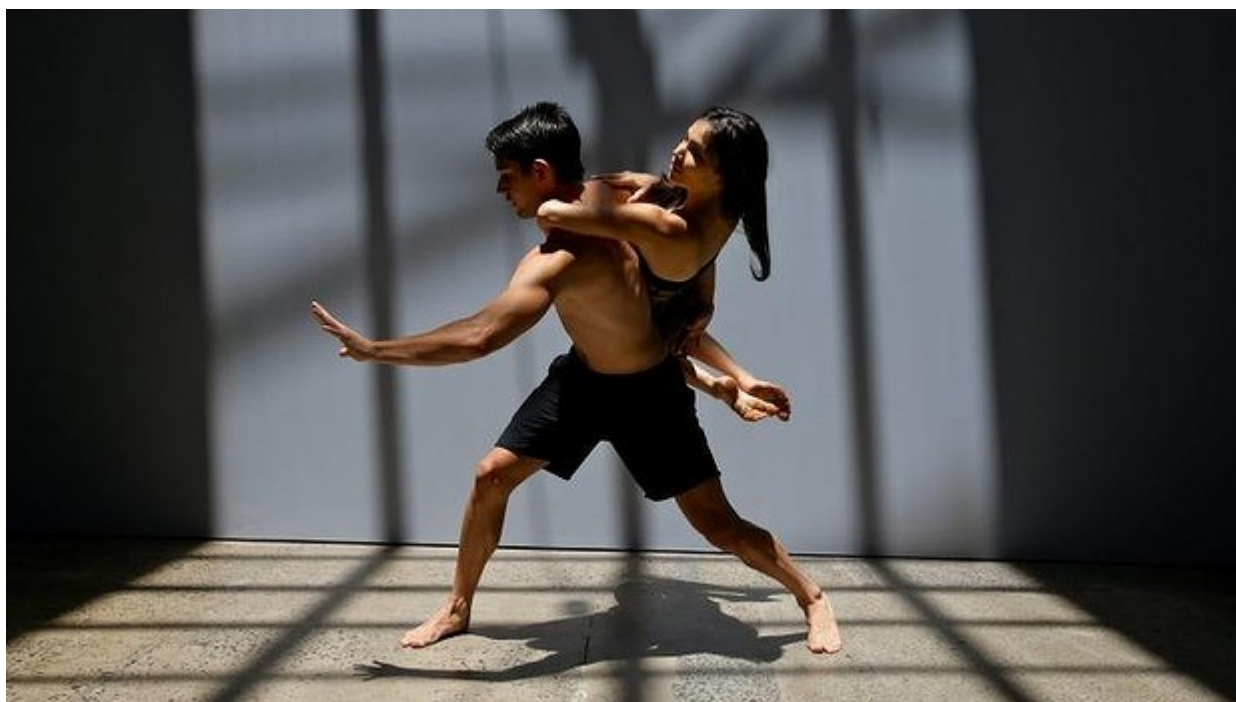


Frances Rings, with Casey Natty and Rika Hamaguchi, says we need another national indigenous dance company. *Photo: Dallas Kilponen*

Leading choreographer Frances Rings is calling for a second national indigenous dance company to cater for the talent emerging from the indigenous dance college NAISDA.

"We only have one mainstream indigenous contemporary dance company in Australia - that's Bangarra Dance Theatre - but there is room for another one," Rings says. "I'm hoping that in the next few years there will be a place for that. The students coming out are amazing and you want to know there is somewhere for them to go. That is a concern for me."

Rings, who graduated from NAISDA 22 years ago, is an acclaimed indigenous dancer and choreographer who travelled the world with Bangarra. She is currently an artist-in-residence with the company.



Dancers Casey Natty and Rika Hamaguchi will perform in *Your Skin My Skin*. Photo: Dallas Kilponen

This month, Rings is directing young indigenous dancers at NAISDA in *your Skin my Skin*, an evening of works by local and international choreographers including Craig Bary, Shaun Parker, Vicki Van Hout, Raymond D. Blanco, Pam Williams and Iquail Shaheed, a teacher at New York's Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater.

Advertisement

A lot has changed since Rings studied at NAISDA, she says. The students are "leaps and bounds" ahead of her generation in their access to and understanding of media technology and this will have a big impact on the art they create. "When I was a student I read international dance magazines and cut out pictures of Alvin Ailey and pinned them on my wall," Rings says. "Now these dancers can access every dance company in the world online. They can make their own music and create their own show reels. They're on a whole different platform. They are confident and it's exciting to see."

Rings says the NAISDA students are starting to look beyond Bangarra to other local and international dance companies, as well as creating their own independent dance practice. "Bangarra is there but there's also a whole other world beyond it," Rings says. "But in a lot of those companies, you can't rely on your identity or background. It's about having good technique, having vision and being an incredible interpreter of choreography. These students see that as achievable and that's really exciting. We want that to happen for them."

Your Skin my Skin plays at Carriageworks from December 10-13.

Read more: <http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/dance/indigenous-australian-dance-looks-beyond-the-big-bangarra-20141207-11sop4.html#ixzz3LF5TtGpt>