

## Entertainment

# Performers show teaching of traditional dance is in good hands

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Reviewed by Jill Sykes



Sisters Taree and Caleena Sansbury in *Two Players Games*. Photo: Branco Gacia

### **Our Home – Ngalpun Mudth Carriageworks, December 12**

The annual presentation by NAISDA Dance College has always been a joyful celebration of indigenous identity, youthful endeavour and achievement. It still is.

But these days it is also a smooth production in which contrasting ideas and styles are held together with surprising cohesion by skilled direction and the commitment of the performers.

Raymond Blanco is this year's creative director and he has had a wealth of talented choreographers to work with, most of them drawn from the college's teachers and assessors, including Kristina Chan, Pam Williams, Aku Kadogo and Paulina Quinteros.

Some are also NAISDA graduates: Vicki Van Hout, Sani Townson, Frances Rings and Gary Lang.

Graeme Murphy is neither but it was a pleasure to see a brief excerpt from *The Protecting Veil*.

Although Jasmyne Mehrton-Johnson failed to equal the speed and elasticity of the original casting, she captured the spirit of the solo and set a promising benchmark as a performer.

Moa Island and a delightful swimming dugong were the thematic glue that bookended Our Home with traditional dances which were vividly presented and led by their cultural tutors, which always adds a rich dimension.

In between, Townson made the most of the strong male talent in *Garkazui*, a sextet for Czack Bero, Hans Ahwang, Casey Natty, Kyle Schilling, Phil Walford and Tyrone Simpkins. Van Hout put her own spin on historical moments, Barangaroo to Captain Arthur Philip, in words as well as movement.

*Quinteros* had three couples dancing sensuously to Latin American music. Williams' Charleston-activated speakeasy was hilarious. *Kadogo's Shouse* was both seriously and skilfully silly.

The taiko drumming, performed by eight dancers, was terrific.

Altogether, there were 22 items. The more challenging pieces, particularly Rings' *Dismorph*, showed these dancers still had a way to go; at the same time, it was good to see them taking up this challenge, and getting as far as they did.

It was a program full of assurances that the teaching of indigenous dance at this level is in good hands.

Read more: <http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/dance/performers-show-teaching-of-traditional-dance-is-in-good-hands-20131215-2zezw.html#ixzz2uBt4cKvM>