

## **Bunyi Bunyi Bumi: Intercultural Movement Workshop**

Join *Bunyi Bunyi Bumi* co-devisors and performers—Waangenga Blanco (Meriam and Pajinka Wik), Alfira O’Sullivan (Acehnese/Australian), and Murtala (Acehnese)—for a dynamic and immersive movement workshop. This artist-led experience introduces participants to Indigenous contemporary dance forms, drawing from Torres Strait Islander and Acehnese traditions.

The work *Bunyi Bunyi Bumi* illustrates First Nations Australian and Acehnese connections across the Indian Ocean, historical trade routes and land masses impacted by environmental factors.

### **Workshop Goals:**

- Introduce Indigenous contemporary dance to the community
- Share and celebrate the intercultural connections between Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, and Acehnese dance traditions, storytelling, language, regions and cultures
- Empower Indigenous and People of Colour (POC) youth through movement, storytelling, and cultural expression

### **What to Expect:**

This interactive workshop is based on the choreographic narrative of *Bunyi Bunyi Bumi*, an intercultural performance work exploring connections between the Torres Strait Islands and Aceh, Indonesia.

Participants will engage in:

- > Artist introductions, region and language, location/geographic
- > Acehnese sitting dance and rhythmic body percussion from Sumatra
- > Torres Strait Islander dance, movement, and body percussion
- > Foundational practices of grounding, breath, and cultural connection
- > Choreographic elements from *Bunyi Bunyi Bumi*

This session is designed for all skill levels, offering a flexible approach that adapts to participants’ abilities and experiences.

### **Workshop Details:**

Duration: 45-60 minutes (adjustable based on needs)

Location: Bunjil Place Studio (2 Patrick NE Dr, Narre Warren VIC 3805)

Attire: Comfortable clothing; participants will be asked to remove shoes and socks for the workshop and will be kneeling for portions of the workshop movements.

Space: Black box studio, set pieces will be moved from the space to avoid distractions, other set pieces will be

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raised out of reach. The dance space is on the floor, (not a raised stage) layed with black tarket  
Observers: Parents, guardians, and teachers are welcome to sit in the audience seating bank

### **Workshop Learning Outcomes:**

Participants will leave with a deeper understanding of Indigenous and Acehnese contemporary dance, the physicality of movement, and the rich cultural storytelling embedded in these practices.

Come move, connect, and celebrate intercultural knowledge through dance.

### **About The Work:**

*Bunyi Bunyi Bumi* brings together First Peoples' resilience, identity, and transformation in re-threading First Nations Australian and Acehnese connections across the Indian Ocean. With powerful choreography and storytelling, this dance work delves into the impacts of colonisation, bringing together extraordinary talent from diverse cultural perspectives.

*Bunyi Bunyi Bumi* entreats us to hear and embody the sounds of the earth - of Country - which hold the stories of shared kinships across the region thrumming with dance, body percussion, syncopated rhythm and stunning visuals. Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, Tamil and Indonesian artists unite in a joyous rebuke of colonial amnesia. Co-Directed by raymond d. blanco (Yadhaigana and Erub) and Priya Srinivasan (Tamil) and co-devised with Waangenga Blanco (Meriam and Pajinka Wik), Alfira O'Sullivan (Acehnese), Murtala (Acehnese) and Tyrel Dulvarie (Yirrganydji).

*Bunyi Bunyi Bumi* is produced by BlakDance, commissioned by Asia TOPA, Arts Centre Melbourne and Bunjil Place. This project is supported through the Australian Government's Indigenous Languages and Arts program, through Creative Australia, its principal arts investment and advisory body and the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland. Supported by Sangam, Suara Dance, City of Greater Dandenong, Drum Theatre, Walker Street Gallery, Metro Arts and Thomas Dixon Centre.

### **Warnings:**

Suitable for all ages.

Performance Audience warning: Loud yelling voices, Haze, Video Projection, Strobe/flashing lighting, loud noises throughout the performance.

Performance Audience lockout: Latecomers will not be admitted until a suitable break in the performance.

### **BIOGRAPHIES**

**Waangenga Blanco (Pajinka Wik and Meriam Mer)**

**Co-Devisor, Co-Choreographer, Percussion Composer, Performer**

Waangenga Blanco is a proud Indigenous man who descends from the Pajinka Wik in Cape York and Meriam Mer the furthest eastern island in the Torres Strait. He is an award winning, globally touring performing artist, specialising in contemporary dance, choreography and acting. Waangenga began his professional career in 2005 with Bangarra Dance Theatre and became a senior foundational influencer to a new generation of traditionally informed contemporary dance. He choreographed the award nominated 'I.B.I.S' for Bangarra in 2015, Waangenga is a creative visionary with scope across multiple platforms of expression, including dance, live performance and acting for the stage and screen. Finishing up his time with Bangarra in late 2018, Waangenga is now a freelance artist.

**Alfira O'Sullivan (Acehnese Australian)**

**Co-Devisor, Co-Choreographer, Percussion Composer, Performer**

Alfira is Artistic Director and founder of Suara Dance (since 2001). Born in Perth of Acehnese-Irish descent, Alfira studied at the Institute of the Arts Yogyakarta and Surakarta, and conducted research and trained under master dance instructors in Aceh. Her Bachelor of International Studies from the University of NSW informs her cross-cultural engagements in Australia and abroad and she has completed an Honours thesis in Indonesian Studies at Sydney University, on the history and significance of Acehnese body percussion. Alfira specialises in traditional and contemporary Indonesian dance styles regularly performing at festivals, conducting workshops and creating new work informed by her traditional practice.

**Murtala (Acehnese)**

**Co-Devisor, Co-Choreographer, Percussion Composer, Performer**

Murtala, is a dancer, choreographer and actor from Aceh. Trained in traditional dance from a young age, he furthered his tertiary studies in dance, music and theatre in West Sumatra, and completed a Masters in Dance Choreography from the Institute of the Arts, Surakarta. Murtala is frequently interviewed as a scholarly reference on Acehnese body percussion and currently works as an Indonesian Creative Arts Teacher at Scotts Head Public School. Murtala has been a dance practitioner in Australia since 2008, performing and directing with Australia's leading Indonesian Dance company, Suara Dance. With Suara, he has toured nationally and internationally, at numerous festivals and international conferences.

**raymond d. blanco (Yadhaigana & Erub, Zenadth Kes)**

**Co-Director, Co-Devisor, Co-Choreographer**

raymond d. blanco's heritage blends Yadhaigana from the Northern Peninsula Area, Cape York and Erub Island of Eastern Zenadth Kes. He is a director, choreographer, movement director, and consultant in the artistic, creative and management portfolios. In 2024, raymond has worked on a choreographic residency with Australasian Dance Collective as part of their First Collective Residency; with the Cassowary Coast Regional Council in Innisfail on the RAP Indigenous Art Fair; with JUTE Theatre on the remount of Back on Track; and the creative development collaboration with Suara Dance for Asia TOPA 2025. Since 1984, his illustrious professional career, which started as a commercial dancer and performer with various companies such as the Tony Bartuccio dancers, Dancing Daze (ABC Television), special soloist in the Opera Australia Ballet in the World Premiere of Voss and Death in Venice. raymond was gifted the position of Artistic Director of Australia's first First Nations dance company, and with the dancers, revised the Aboriginal Islander Dance Theatre into

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AIDT – ‘the company’. A professional touring company founded in 1989, AIDT-‘the company’ was an elite ensemble of young Indigenous dancers and choreographers. raymond has been instrumental in the development of both form and cannon of contemporary First Nations dance in Australia with a contribution spanning four decades.

### **Priya Srinivasan (Tamil)**

#### **Co-Director, Co-Devisor, Co-Choreographer**

Priya Srinivasan is an award winning performer, choreographer, and writer, who co-founded and leads Sangam, a groundbreaking and transformative cultural platform addressing inequity in the arts in Naarm. Since 2019, Sangam has thrived under her guidance, showcasing hundreds of South Asian creatives towards self representation and artistic excellence on Australia’s funded stages. Priya is the inaugural recipient of the Asia Pacific Impact Award from Creative Australia (2024), awarded to an Australian artist for significant impact on communities and/or audiences in Asia or the Pacific. Rooted in Indian classical dance, Priya's work emphasises feminist decolonization, spotlighting minority women's stories and First Nations exchanges. She has a PhD in Performance Studies and has published an award winning book: Sweating Saris: Indian Dance as Transnational Labor which is taught worldwide. Her deep rooted work bringing research into practice has shifted notions of what counts as contemporary art in Australia. Her two most recent acclaimed interdisciplinary, intergenerational performances include: The Durga Chronicles (Green Room Award winner for Breaking Ground 2023) and Agam (part of Mosaics) with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl. The Bowl performance of Agam on Australia’s largest stage to create decolonial, social justice, intercultural, multidisciplinary collaborations of artistic excellence that redefines music as dance, theatre and text was lauded as a cutting edge new work that has offered new models for large scale non western performance. More recently, Priya directed an exciting international project: Sangam Labs Leadership Exchange in Bengaluru bringing together intersectional artistic leaders and organisations between India and Australia (2024) with the support of Global Victoria.

### **Tyrel Dulvarie (Yirrganydji)**

#### **Co-Devisor, Co-Choreographer**

Tyrel Dulvarie is a Yirrganydji, Dugulbara, Kalkadoon, Umpila man from Kimuy, with Malaysian and Indonesian heritage, from Johor Bahru & Java. From 2016 – 2021, Tyrel performed nationally and abroad as a company dancer with Bangarra Dance Theatre. After an exciting and fulfilling experience with Bangarra, Tyrel relocated to Meanjin in 2021 and joined the Australasian Dance Collective from 2021 - 2022. To pursue other ambitions, Tyrel became a freelance artist in 2022 and has had the privilege to work and perform creations by various contemporary dance choreographers/artists such as Melanie Lane, Daniel Riley, Stephanie Lake, Cass Mortimer-Eipper, Stephen Page, Frances Rings. In 2019, he received the Australian Dance Award for Outstanding Performance by a Male Dancer for his standout performance in Bangarra Dance Theatre’s “30 Years of Sixty Five Thousand”. Tyrel trained at the Aboriginal Centre for the Performing Arts (ACPA) in Meanjin from 2011-2013 and furthered his training in Sydney Dance Company’s Pre-Professional Program in 2015. Tyrel has a strong love and value for culture, First Nation voices and stories, representation, physical movement, and connecting with one another. He currently resides in Naarm.

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## **Vernon Ah Kee (Kuku Yalanji, Waanji, Yidinji, Gugu Yimithirr)**

### **Visual Designer**

Vernon Ah Kee was born in Innisfail, Queensland and lives and works Brisbane. His multi-faceted practice includes works that range from large-scale drawings of his ancestors to hard-hitting text-based works and installations. Through clever puns and plays on words and objects, Ah Kee fuses the history and language of colonisation with contemporary black/white political issues to expose degrees of underlying racism in Australian society.

### **Text Acknowledgement**

Commissioned by Bunjil Place and Asia TOPA, Arts Centre Melbourne.

Produced by BlakDance.

This project is supported through the Australian Government's Indigenous Languages and Arts program, through Creative Australia, its principal arts investment and advisory body and the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland.

Supported by Sangam, Suara Dance, City of Greater Dandenong, Drum Theatre, Walker Street Gallery, Metro Arts and Thomas Dixon Centre.

### **Creative Team**

Co-Directors and Co-Devisors:

raymond blanco (Yadhaigana and Erub) & Priya Srinivasan (Tamil)

Co-Devisors:

Alfira O'Sullivan (Acehnese)

Murtala (Acehnese)

Waangenga Blanco (Meriam and Pajinka Wik)

Tyrel Dulvarie (Yirrganydji)

Visual Design: Vernon Ah Kee (Kuku Yalanji, Waanji, Yidinji, Gugu Yimithirr)

Rehearsal Director: Joshua Bond

Design Dramaturg: Govin Ruben (Malaysian Tamil)

Sound Designer: Samuel Pankhurst

Projection Designer: Sam James

Set & Costume Designer: Harry Gill

Lighting Designer: Kris Chainey

Dramaturg: Katrina Irawati Graham (Indonesian)

Well-Being & First Aid Support: Nix Gross (Quandamooka)