

QPAC presents

THE OTHER SIDE OF ME

BY Gary Lang NT Dance Company

PRODUCED BY BlakDance



27 - 28 FEBRUARY 2026
CREMORNE THEATRE, QPAC



BLAKDANCE



Queensland Performing Arts Centre, Gary Lang NT Dance Company and BlakDance acknowledge the Traditional Custodians, the Yuggera and Turrbal peoples, upon whose lands these performances are held, and the Larrakia peoples upon whose lands these performances were created.

We pay our respects to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander ancestors of this land, their spirits and their legacy. We consider it a privilege to continue the traditions of those who have danced, made music, and told stories on this land before us.

The foundations laid by these ancestors – our First Nations peoples – gives strength, inspiration and courage to current and future generations.



IMAGE: PAZ TASSONE

A NOTE FROM BLAKDANCE / GARY LANG

Choreographed by industry leader, Larrakia man Gary Lang, *The Other Side of Me* is an international, cross-cultural collaboration between Gary Lang NT Dance Company and Northumbria University (UK) academics Dr Laura Fish (dec.) (Co-Creator, Dramaturg, Writer) and Liz Pavey (Co-Creator, Dramaturg). Developed across the Northern Territory and the United Kingdom, the work reflects a true transnational story of the Stolen Generations, raising critical questions about Country of origin, identity, adoption, displacement, the criminal justice system, and psychological wellbeing.

The work offers a platform for thoughtful discussion about the trauma inflicted upon Aboriginal cultures since colonisation, and how these impacts remain ongoing and deeply felt in the present day.

Performed as a virtuosic duet with two male dancers, the production was inspired by the true life of an Aboriginal man born in the 1960s in the Northern Territory, adopted by a white English family, and raised in the remote English countryside. The speed and ease of this adoption process - completed in less than one week - reflects the historical reality of Aboriginal child removals during this period. Central to the work is a collection of personal letters and poems, which offer intimate insight into the inner life of a young man attempting to reconnect with his First Nations Australian origins.

The sound design and score are a collaboration between award-winning Yolŋu artists Banula Marika and Arian Pearson (Yirrkala, North East Arnhem Land) and renowned composer Sam Pankhurst. Banula Marika, a long-term collaborator of Gary Lang and a senior loreman of the Rirratjingu clan, contributes Manikay that form part of the evocative soundscape.

Cultural guidance for the work was provided by Josephine Crawshaw (Gurindji) and in addition, Gary Lang's nephew, who has lived experience of incarceration, contributed cultural dramaturgy, strengthening the authenticity, integrity, and emotional truth of the work's representation of a Blak man navigating the justice system.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the lands on which teaching takes place, honouring Elders past and present. *The Other Side of Me* is deeply connected to Larrakia Country and the lived experiences of First Nations peoples across the Northern Territory.

Our BlakDance Board, Cultural Council and staff uphold First Nations sovereignty. We recognise the lands of Turrbal, Ugarapul/Yugarapul and Jagera/Yuggera Peoples on whose Country the BlakDance office is located in Magandjin, is unceded land and still without a Treaty. We honour and pay respects to Country on which we travel and share stories. We pay respects to our Elders, past and present. We acknowledge all First Peoples of this continent and celebrate the beauty and strength of our communities. Always was, always will be.

We pay respect and homage to all the BlakDance Elders across Australia.

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THE OTHER SIDE OF ME

The Other Side of Me is an international, cross-cultural collaboration with Northumbria University (UK).
Created by Gary Lang NT Dance Company. Produced by BlakDance.

Creatives / Artists

Gary Lang (Co-Creator, Choreographer, Director) *Larrakia*

Banula Marika (Cultural Consultant, Songman) *Yolŋu*

Laura Fish (dec.) (Co-Creator, Dramaturg, Writer)

Liz Pavey (Co-Creator, Dramaturg)

Josephine Crawshaw (Cultural Consultant) *Gurindji*

Jesse Norris (Cultural Consultant) *Torres Strait Island descendent*

Janet Munyarryun (Voice Artist) *Yolŋu*

Arian Pearson (Sound Designer) *Yolŋu*

Noelle Shader (Rehearsal Director)

Alexander Abbot (Performer)

Blake Escott (Performer) *Dhunghutti, Worimi*

Chandler Connell (Original Cast) *Wiradjuri and Ngunnawal*

Samuel Pankhurst (Composer/Sound Designer)

Samuel James (Projection Designer)

Joseph Mercurio (Lighting Designer)

Jennifer Irwin (Costume Designer)

The work honours the real young man whose life inspired it, as well as the communities affected by similar histories.

The Other Side of Me is produced and toured by BlakDance. The tour received financial assistance from the Australian Government through Creative Australia, its principal arts investment and advisory body.

The work premiered in 2023 in Darwin Festival at the Darwin Entertainment Centre, then toured Western and Central Australia 2024, premiered in Melbourne at The Australian Ballet's DanceX Festival in 2025 and continues on its East Coast Australian tour in 2026.

It received financial support through the Northern Territory Government, Arts NT, Darwin Entertainment Centre, Regional Arts Australia, the British Council, Creative Australia, Brisbane Festival and Queensland Performing Arts Centre.

ABOUT THE WORK

One mother's love, another's loss. Between them the child grows to a man who can never return home. *The Other Side of Me* by Gary Lang shares the tragedy of Stolen Generations through the heartbreaking story of one man stranded between two families, continents and cultures. This achingly intimate duet confronts the destruction wrought by Motherland and colony still felt by First Nations people, but offers the redemptive beauty of singing his spirit home.

The story is based on actual events. However, names, incidents and timelines have been changed for dramatic purposes. All characters depicted in the production are composites or fictitious. Any similarity to the original story, or of fictitious characters to an actual person, living or dead, is coincidental and unintentional.



IMAGE: PAZ TASSONE

SYNOPSIS

The production opens with two prisoners, shuffling through the audience towards their cell, discussing a story they recently heard – that of a young Indigenous man. He was adopted from the Northern Territory, and taken all the way to England, and his young life ended while in custody over there. He never got to return to his home, except in his dreams.

As the dance unfolds the audience are transported into the mind of this man. The two dancers represent different sides of the same person. The English side, and the Indigenous Australian side. The side he knew and the side he didn't. He is trapped, not just in prison, but also in his mind.

The choreography moves through anger, despair, compassion, and understanding. The First Nations side gains more strength as the man remembers his early life in the Northern Territory, his connection to culture and Country.

The production ends in the death of the dancers, choreographed against a wall, slow and incredible. As they sink to the ground, images of Stolen Generations headlines from the not-so-distant past steal across the stage. The sound of Country and a heartbeat fills the stage as a final image of the Northern Territory sunset is projected onto the stage and dancers. The young man's spirit has returned home.



THE COMPANY

GARY LANG NT DANCE COMPANY

Gary Lang Northern Territory Dance Company is led by industry leader and Larrakia man Gary Lang. His signature choreography blends the gestural physicality of First Nations dance with the ethereal movements of classical ballet, to create a new art form that is entirely unique within the Australian dance landscape. Lang's unique style of dance, 'long grass ballet', subverts and transforms traditional Larrakia and Rirratjingu Yolŋu songlines and stories at the intersection of cultures, and explores the themes of spirit worlds, loss, hope, healing and journeys.

THE PRODUCER

BLAKDANCE

BlakDance is a self-determined, First Nations-led industry organisation and producer for Australian First Nations contemporary dance – a vital advocate for Indigenous voices in the arts industry, supporting the growth and development of Indigenous dance through professional pathways, productions, national and international tours that keep culture strong and careers sustainable.

Dance in Australia sits within the context of 100,000 years of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural continuum. BlakDance is a Queensland organisation and industry development and producing services organisation for First Nations contemporary dancers and choreographers. We develop the capacity and professional pathways of contemporary First Nations dance artists, incubate emerging small to medium dance companies and support artists and communities to connect, collaborate, make and share performance works nationally and globally.

Across two decades, BlakDance has grown to become an irreplaceable organisation in the Australian dance ecology. Through our programs and activities, we are building the capacity of First Nations artists, choreographers, practitioners and makers while simultaneously building the competency and resources of presenters and the broader performing arts sector to program First Nations work and producers to deliver it. This means future audiences of First Nations dance will engage in deeper cultural frameworks relevant to their lives. We call this re-futuring: a Blak future for arts, culture and the nation.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Queensland Performing Arts Trust is a statutory body of the State of Queensland and is partially funded by the Queensland Government through Arts Queensland.

The Honourable John-Paul Langbroek MP
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THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

QPAC warmly thanks our key donors who help us engage broadly across the state and continue enriching lives through performing arts.

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Gary Lang NT Dance Company



Artistic Director, choreographer and Senior Larrakia man, Gary Lang, is a much loved and revered figure in the Northern Territory community. His strong cultural identity drives his work as an ambassador for Indigenous peoples and artists of the NT.

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