

THE STORY OF BANGARRA DANCE THEATRE



# FIRESTARTER



## **ENERGETIC, RISK-TAKING, URBAN, HIP — AUSTRALIA'S UNIQUE MODERN DANCE COMPANY CELEBRATES ITS 30<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY**

From its early beginnings in the late 1980s, through the politically tumultuous 90s and into the new millennium, Bangarra Dance Theatre has grown to be one of the nation's most revered cultural institutions.

Globally recognised as a leading performing arts company with a distinctive theatrical voice and utterly inimitable soundscapes, music and design – Bangarra's unique signature style also encompasses authentic storytelling, outstanding technique and deeply moving performances.

Marking Bangarra Dance Theatre's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, *Firestarter* takes us through its birth and spectacular growth, recognising the Company's founders and telling the story of how three young Aboriginal brothers — Stephen, David and Russell Page — turned the newly born dance group into a First Nations cultural powerhouse.

Featuring remarkable archival footage and interviews with those integral to Bangarra's establishment, including co-founders Carole Johnson, Cheryl Stone along with a number of former dancers and creatives, *Firestarter* is a tale of pride, heartbreak, adversity and empowerment – with the transformative strength of Indigenous dance at its centre.

**Through the eyes of the brothers and company alumni, *Firestarter* explores the loss and reclaiming of culture, the burden of intergenerational trauma, and – crucially – the power of art as a messenger for social change and healing.**

Directed by Wayne Blair (*The Sapphires*, *Redfern Now*) and Nel Minchin (*Matilda & Me*, *Making Muriel*), *Firestarter* features powerfully cinematic dance sequences – capturing the stunning visual language and heightened drama that Bangarra is famous for.

**After a successful theatrical season and a comprehensive tour of the festival circuit where it was ecstatically embraced, *Firestarter* is now set to captivate international audiences – already an official selection for Sheffield Doc | Fest in the UK, the Hot Docs and DOXA Festivals in Canada, and the Pan African Film + Arts Festival in the US.**

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# MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

'An engrossing celebration of artistic creation.  
What an experience! What a joy!'

[The Guardian](#)

'Fascinating, poignant, and replete with  
the playful spirit and soaring imagination  
that has characterised Bangarra'

[Sydney Morning Herald](#)

'Exhilarating. An astounding documentary'

[Time Out Sydney](#)

'Spectacular...compulsory viewing'

[The Sydney Arts Guide](#)

'Stunningly photographed'

[Dance Informa](#)

'A barnstorming celebration!'

[NME.com](#)

'Fascinating...a real eye opener'

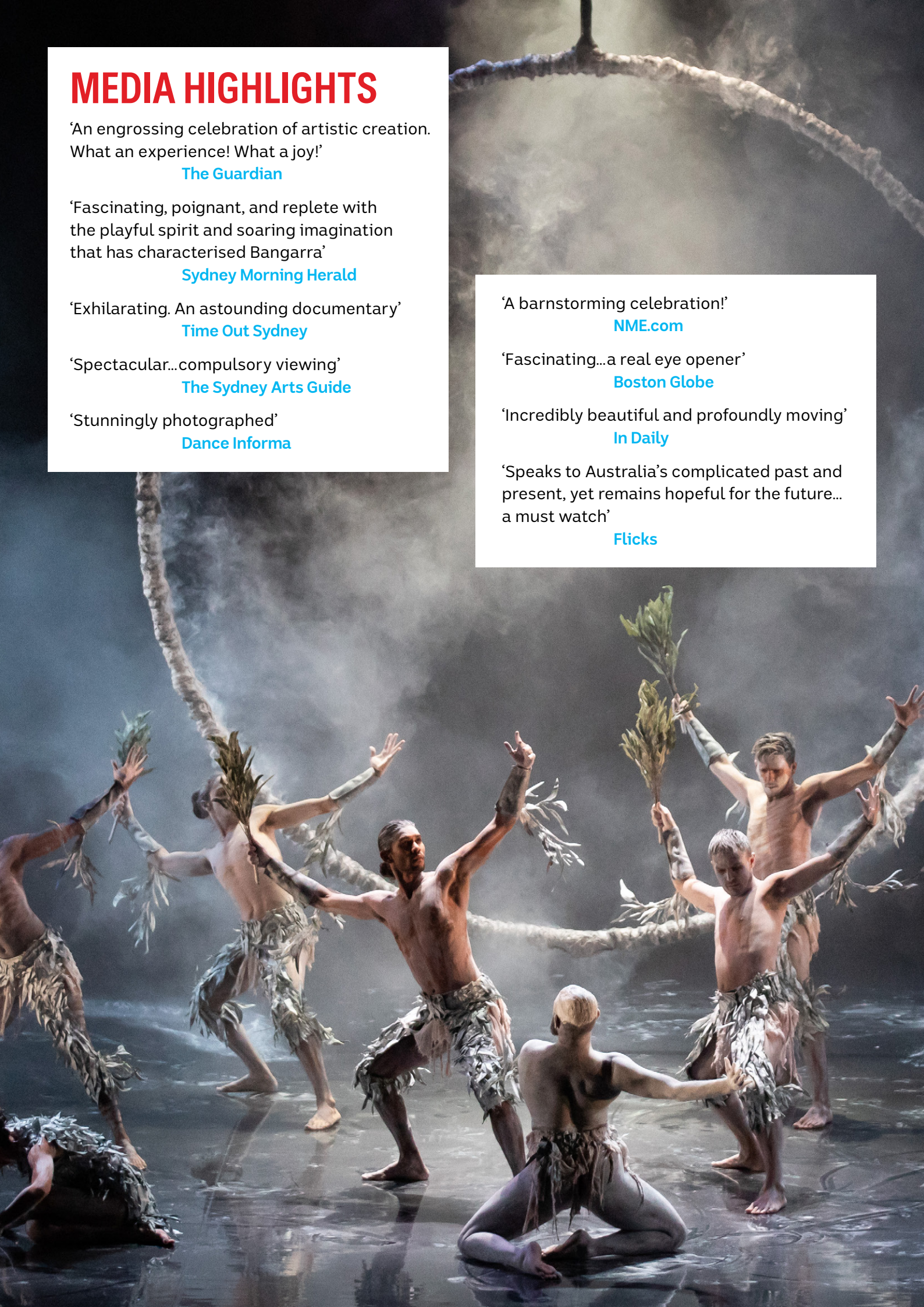
[Boston Globe](#)

'Incredibly beautiful and profoundly moving'

[In Daily](#)

'Speaks to Australia's complicated past and  
present, yet remains hopeful for the future...  
a must watch'

[Flicks](#)





## AWARDS

**Australian International Documentary Conference Awards 2021:**  
Nomination Best Feature

**AACTA Awards 2020:**  
Winner Best Documentary  
Nomination Best Editing in a Documentary  
Nomination Best Sound in a Documentary

**Adelaide Film Festival 2020:**  
Winner Inaugural Change Award  
Winner Documentary Award Prize

## FESTIVALS

### AUSTRALIAN

**Brisbane International Film Festival 2020:**  
Closing Night Film

**Byron Bay International Film Festival 2020:**  
Opening Night Film

**Revelation Perth International Film Festival 2020:**  
Opening Night Film

**Sydney Film Festival Summer Series 2020:**  
Opening Night Film

**Screenwave International Film Festival 2021:**  
Official Selection

**Human Rights + Art Film Festival 2021:**  
Official Selection

### INTERNATIONAL

**Sheffield Doc | Fest 2021:**  
Official Selection

**Hotdocs Documentary Festival 2021:**  
Official Selection

**Pan African Film + Arts Festival 2021:**  
Official Selection

**DOXA Documentary Festival 2021:**  
Official Selection



## ABOUT BANGARRA DANCE THEATRE

**Bangarra's mission is to create inspiring experiences that change society.**

Led by Artistic Director Stephen Page and Associate Artistic Director Frances Rings, it's currently in its 31<sup>st</sup> year but its dance technique is forged from over 65,000 years of culture, embodied with contemporary movement.

'Arts and culture are the biggest medicine, the biggest identity for this country. This is what's good for our country. Good for our soul.'

– **Stephen Page**

'A modern dance company unlike any other... remarkable, imaginative and richly varied'

– **The New York Times**

'Bangarra's work resonates far beyond the normal reach of dance'

– **Dance Europe**