

Presenter Pack

Magnificus Magnificus By Liz Lea Dance



Tammi Gissell in Magnificus Magnificus. Photo; Lorna Sim

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COMPANY PROFILE

Liz Lea Dance;

A performer and choreographer Liz Lea trained at London Contemporary Dance School and Akademi in London and Darpana Academy in India. Based between London and Sydney for many years she is now based in Canberra as Artistic Director of Liz Lea & Co and Canberra Dance Theatre and Associate Director at QL2 Dance.

In 2013 she was Choreographer in Residence at CSIRO Discovery and directed DANscienCE, a dance and science symposium held in Canberra for National Science Week, August 2013. For Liz Lea Dance presented InFlight at the National Library of Australia and Seeking Biloela at The Street Theatre – two new solo works; Magnificus Magnificus inspired by the red tailed black cockatoo for Indigenous dance artist Tammi Gissell and Kapture, inspired by Ahmed Kathrada, imprisoned alongside Nelson Mandela for 26 years.

Her work has been performed and presented all through Europe, the UK, India, Africa and the USA.

Since 2009 Liz has been developing her company profile and produced and directed 120 Birds, InFlight and Seeking Biloela. She has a fascination with history and undertakes intensive research into her work as a form of inspiration as well as insuring the works are correctly informed. Liz has a commitment to working with Australia's national institutions and has worked closely with the National Film and Sound Archive, National Library of Australia, CSIRO and the National Gallery of Australia.

“the solo Magnificus Magnificus created with and for Indigenous dance artist Tammi Gissell is a meeting of Indigenous knowledge and western science – all inspired by the stunning Red Tailed Black Cockatoo; we are keen to tour the work throughout Australia to share the research we have undertaken as a company in regional areas, to touch people, move them make them laugh and bring some sparkle along the way”

ABOUT THE SHOW

SHOW SYNOPSIS

Where science and dance meet Indigenous and cross cultural heritage... 'Magnificus Magnificus', performed by Tammi Gissell and directed by Liz Lea, dives into the world of the red tailed Black Cockatoo. 'Magnificus Magnificus' draws upon Indigenous knowledge and stories, aligned with science. The work celebrates a stunning bird, her history, character and style in a cabaret-esque explosion of feathers.

Highly theatrical with a simple but effective set 'Magnificus Magnificus' explores the nature of being a performer, where they come from and how they go forward, making the most of Tammi's strong performance quality, speaking voice, strength and vulnerability. The red tailed Black Cockatoo is the bringer of truth, tears and rain. Let the stories begin...

Tammi and I knew of each other as showgirls 20 years ago – we reconnected through her work with NAISDA and I approached her to work with me, securing initial funding from CSIRO, Inspiring Australia and artsACT. We subsequently secured Australia Council funding and developed the work for premiere in Canberra in October 2013. the work very much aligns with Tammi's history as an Indigenous woman and dancer alongside the stories

<http://magnificusmagnificus.com/>

and research about the Red Tailed Black Cockatoo.

We have deeply researched aspects of Indigenous culture such as the different totem systems, kinship, heritage, protocols, music and dance. The work has been made in consultation with elders every step of the way.

<http://www.canberratimes.com.au/act-news/seeking-biloela-a-flight-of-discovery-to-inspire-20131023-2w1h8.html>

<http://inspiringtheact.org.au/event/dance/>

<http://blog.ql2.org.au/?p=1241>

<http://michellepotter.org/reviews/seeking-biloela-liz-lea>

<http://www.canberratimes.com.au/entertainment/theatre/come-fly-with-me-20130527-2n70m.html>

<http://michellepotter.org/news/liz-lea-more-canberra-dance-in-2013>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Directed by; Liz Lea

Movement created by Liz Lea Tammi Gissell

Performed by Tammi Gissell, Eric Avery and Graham Davis King

Costume Design; Liz Lea and Bruce Scott

Lighting Design; Karen Norris

Installation Artist; Naomi Ota

Music; Eric Avery, Graham Davis King and Adam Ventoura

Funded by; artsACT, Australia Council and Liz Lea Dance

Sponsors; CSIRO, Inspiring Australia and Dance Encore Productions

BIOGRAPHIES

Tammi Gissell BA, PTP (Hons) Born literally 'out the Back of Bourke', Tammi proudly descends from the Murruwarri nation of North-Western NSW.

She is a dancer, teacher, choreographer, poetess and performance theory scholar holding a Bachelor of Performance: Theory and Practice(Honours) from the University of Western Sydney (UWS); inducted into the Golden Key International Honour Society in 2004; graduating Deans' Medallist and Reconciliation Scholar in 2005. Her Honours Degree research into sacred gesture and posture upon the formation of body identity made the UWS Deans' Honour Roll again in 2006.

From 2007 – 2011 she was Course Coordinator at NAISDA Dance College.

In 2011, she held residency at the Aboriginal Centre for the Performing Arts (ACPA) and was commissioned to write for the Queensland Performing Arts Centre. Since then completing choreographic commissions for OCHRE Dance Company (W.A), Canberra Dance Theatre for the National Gallery and Idja Dance Theatre. Tammi has lectured widely including the University of Newcastle, Queensland University of Technology, the Victorian College of the Arts and has presented research to the World Dance Alliance; and was panellist at the 2012 BlakDance forum and the 2013 National Dance Forum. In November 2013 she appeared at the 8th annual Tsai Jui-Yueh International Dance Festival, Taiwan and the Kowhiti Symposium of Indigenous Dance, New Zealand.

<http://magnificusmagnificus.com/>

Eric Avery is an independent emerging contemporary dancer and musician/violinist currently based in Sydney, NSW. As a child he learned Indigenous dance then moved onto physical theatre when he was 13 (Butoh, Sizuki, Viewpoints) and then classical ballet and contemporary dance when he was 16. Eric is Indigenous Australian and belongs to the Yuin, Ngiyampaa and Gumbangirri tribes of NSW of which he is also a custodian of Ngiyampaa Wangaypuwaan traditional songs and dances from his Father's line. Recently at the end of 2012 Eric completed a mentorship program with the Australian Ballet Company. His focuses were Dance Education, Ballet Technique, Body-Mind conditioning and Choreographic Studies.

Musically Eric has been learning violin since he was 12 and then went to further his studies in music at Newtown Performing Arts High School. Whilst at NAISDA Eric undertook private compositions with Alexander Sussman in Sydney. Now Eric is currently playing violin in a variety of venues and composing for *Magnificus Magnificus*, directed by Liz Lea. Choreographically Eric has been developing a solo exploring Ngiyampaa language patterns. He is also currently developing a teaching method to be able to teach Ngiyampaa Language through dance.

Graham Davis King is a Wiradjuri and Ngiyampaa artist and activist who won the inaugural College of Fine Arts Professional Development Award in 2006. Performance Artist, Printmaker, Sculptor, Painter, an Indigenous Aboriginal person from the Ngiyampaa and Wiradjuri people.

I believe as an Aboriginal person that Aboriginal culture is alive and well in N.S.W. in particular and across Australia, despite being faced with challenges from colonialism and a modern world.

Black Cockatoo is an opportunity to explore deeper realms of Aboriginal culture in Western N.S.W. Ngiyampaa /Ngemba culture connecting through with many other Aboriginal Nations and peoples whose story resides and journey's through Bourke and the surrounding Ngurramba (country). This is about the embodiment of our Belonging and connection to Western N.S.W.

Karen Norris; Lighting Designer; has worked extensively as a lighting designer in Australia, the United Kingdom and Europe. Recent work in the UK includes *Timecode* and *Wind in the Willows* with Will Tuckett and *Eros Eris* with Liz Lea Dance, all at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and The John Metcalfe Band at the Royal Festival Hall. In Australia she has worked for Bangarra Dance Theatre, Belvoir Street Theatre, Red Shed Theatre Company, State Theatre of South Australia, Griffin Theatre Company and One Extra. In 2008 Karen returned to Australia from living in France and her work has since included designs for the Opera Ingkarta Project (Adelaide Festival 2008), Noel Jordon's *In the Shape of a Girl* (Sydney Opera House), *Love Me Tender* (Director Matt Lutton for Company B, PICA and Griffin Theatre Company), *In Glass* (Spring Dance & Dance Massive), *Narrelle Benjamin, Forseen* (Riverside Theatre), *Narrelle Benjamin & Francis Rings. Terrain* (Bangarra Dance Theatre) *Francis Rings, Something In The Way She moves* (Performance Space) *Julie-Anne Long*. In Europe Karen has designed for Liz Lea: *Inland, Reflect, Blue Bird, Livid, Refract, Partita & Eros Eris*.

Naomi Ota is a fibre installation artist based in Melbourne, Australia. Her work is a complex cross-over between textile and contemporary art. Ota's field also extends into theatrical installations. Her understanding of culture as a native of Japan and her international experience as a professional artist have both contributed a unique cultural context to the discipline. Ota's works have been exhibited in various national and international exhibitions, such as a solo installation of *Scent of whiteness* at the Esplanade main concourse (Singapore), the 5th Triennial International Textile Exhibition (Tounai,

Belgium), Flax & Linen Biennial (Normandy, France), Diaphanous II (Nokia Singapore Arts Festival, Singapore), pins & needles (National Gallery of Victoria), Tamworth Fibre Textile Biennial (touring Australia). the 4th International Textile Competition (Kyoto, Japan) which she received the award grand prix. Her works are included in public collections of NGV, Museum of Victoria, Art Bank, The Royal Blind Association in NSW and Kyoto Nishijin Textile Industrial Association.

Ota has been working with Tony Yap Company as a core collaborator since 2004. She was involved in successful projects such as Melaka Art and Performance Festival (Malaysia), The Buddha My Body - A Palimpsest (fortyfive downstairs, Melbourne / Studio Banjar Mili, Yogyakarta, Indonesia / Arko Art Gallery, Seoul, Korea), Development of Tony Yap's solo performance of Melangkori (Northcote Town Hall), E1-Aether (Biwako Biennale, Japan), E1-evocation of a lost boy (Asian Arts Mart, Esplanade, Singapore), Ether Ota was also involved in EnTrance, Yumi Umiumare's solo performance at Malthouse and her installation was nominated for a Green Room Award 2009. She also collaborated with You Soo Yeun for her dance performance Stanza Ota has an MA by research (sculpture) from RMIT University, Melbourne, and an MA (Textile) from Kyoto City University of Arts, Japan. She is currently a PhD candidate at RMIT (Textile).

Bruce Scott Costume Concept/Design & Production. Commenced his Professional Theatrical Career in 1966 with JCW's "Funny Girl", 1967 "Fiddler on the Roof", 1969 "Humpty Dumpty on Ice" UK, 1970 "Birds of a Feather" UK & "Let's Have a Party" Jersey CI, 1971 Le Lido – France, 1973 "Charlie Girl" & NSW Dance Co. 1974 "Pippin", 1975 formed an adagio act, with Lesley Summers, namely "Dance Encore" & toured Japan, S. E. Asia & Europe, 1976 Married Lesley! "Irene" London West End UK, 1977 "Royal Silver Jubilee Command Performance" UK, 1978 "Starry Nights" HK, "Soir De Gala" Tas., 1979 formed "Dance Encore Productions" touring Australia, S.E. Asia, HK, South Korea, Taiwan & Japan, 1990 Our son Adrian is born, 2004 "Dance Encore Performing Arts Studio" opens @Bexley NSW with Lesley as Principal and we now have over 250 students. Very happy to be working with Liz again and also, special thanks to Diane Beattie for her sewing contribution. I always enjoy design and the satisfaction of seeing a finished product onstage.... Especially "Seeking Biloela".

PERFORMANCE SPECIFICS

DURATION

Act 1 – 55 minutes

SUITABLE VENUES

This work can presented with a complex and beautifully detailed lighting design in a wel equipped theatre and can also work in a less equipped space – school hall or lecture theatre – or out doors.

MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PERFORMANCES PER WEEK

8 performances

MINIMUM BREAK BETWEEN PERFORMANCES

120 minutes

LICENCING AGREEMENTS

The company holds copyright to all the material

APRA OBLIGATIONS

One song – from the musical Cabaret – 1 min, 15 seconds.

TOURING PERSONNEL

The touring party consists of 5 people.

Name	Role
Tammi Gissell	Dancer/performer
Eric Avery	Musician/performer
Graham Davis King	Musician
Liz Lea technician etc	Director technician

PERFORMANCE HISTORY

Year	Venue	Number of performances
2014	Spirit Festival, Adelaide	1
2013	The Street Theatre, Canberra	2
2013	CSIRO Discovery, Canberra	3
2013	Dance Massive, Melbourne	1
2013	Centenary Indigenous Program Launch, Canberra	1

AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

OVERVIEW

We can offer dance workshops in Indigenous and contemporary dance, Burlesque and yoga. We can target the classes for a range in ages and abilities, from pre school to over 55's. It would be particularly exciting to work with young people or elders to develop a show opener – a 5-7 minute work developed over 2-5 days that opens the shows, delights, bringing in local audiences.

We can also offer workshops in Indigenous story telling, painting and music.

As the work is so closely bound with Indigenous culture and stories we are particularly keen to ensure we can engage with a range of participants and people. We have found that the work successfully reaches to all audiences we have presented the work for. We aimed to second guess and answer every question that might arise.

DESCRIPTION / DETAILS

Dance/movement workshops would simply require people to come comfortably dressed, with bare feet and or cotton socks. Length would vary from 1hr – 2 hrs or day/2 day long intensives.

COST

Can be negotiated.

TARGET AUDIENCE FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The classes/activities and talks can be pitched at a range of ages and experiences and we would be guided by advice from the touring team and local research.

MARKETING

MARKETING COPY

One line - 10 words

Where science and dance meet Indigenous and cross cultural heritage...

Short - 100 words

Where science and dance meet Indigenous and cross cultural heritage... 'Magnificus Magnificus' dives into the world of the red tailed Black Cockatoo. 'Magnificus Magnificus' draws upon Indigenous knowledge and stories, aligned with science. The work celebrates a stunning bird, her history, character and style in a cabaretesque explosion of feathers. Highly theatrical with a simple but effective set 'Magnificus Magnificus' explores the nature of being a performer, where they come from and how they go forward. The red tailed Black Cockatoo is the bringer of truth, tears and rain. Let the stories begin...

Extended - 300 words

Where science and dance meet Indigenous and cross cultural heritage... 'Magnificus Magnificus', performed by Tammi Gissell and directed by Liz Lea, dives into the world of the red tailed Black Cockatoo. 'Magnificus Magnificus' draws upon Indigenous knowledge and stories, aligned with science. The work celebrates a stunning bird, her history, character and style in a cabaretesque explosion of feathers.

The work arises from intensive research at CSIRO Discovery and is supported by Inspiring Australia. We see how the story of the decimation of the Red Tail mirrors the experiences of Australia's Indigenous people and how science and people are finding a way forward. The birds numbered in the 10' of 1000's 200 years ago and now there are so few. We also learn about Indigenous totem and kinships systems and how Indigenous people have cared for the land and her animals for centuries. Music, song and spoken word define the work and detail the facts while stunningly lit and costumes dance bring the stories to life.

Highly theatrical with a simple but effective set 'Magnificus Magnificus' explores the nature of being a performer, where they come from and how they go forward, making the most of Tammi's strong performance quality, speaking voice, strength and vulnerability. The red tailed Black Cockatoo is the bringer of truth, tears and rain. Let the stories begin.

MARKETING SUMMARY

The work has only just premiered by has been seen in a number of places – we have had an overwhelming positive response from both Indigenous and non indigenous audiences. We have found audiences coming from young people interested in Indigenous culture and specifically from audiences over 55.

MEDIA QUOTES

"Magnificus Magnificus" is the most successful and accessible of the two. Strikingly performed by indigenous dancer, Tammi Gissell, this work concerns the plight of the red-tailed black cockatoo, but it also echoes the life of the dancer. During the course of the work we learn a great deal about the red-tailed black cockatoo, its habitat and habits. We also learn a lot about Tammi Gissell, a stunning dancer, who addresses the audience directly and disarmingly about the habits and nature of the cockatoo, and the bush turkey,

and how both relate to her own life and experiences as a cabaret showgirl.

Along the way Gissell transforms into both birds, performs an impressive routine on roller-skates, then executes her finale resplendent in high heels, a towering red and black feathered headdress and showgirl feathers. This spell-binding tour-de-force is accompanied by an evocative soundscape composed by Adam Ventura, Eric Avery, and Graham Davis King, and performed live by the latter two composers.

City News, Canberra, October 2013

AUDIENCE REVIEWS

"I laughed out loud! Who knew Tammi was so funny?! And she dances with such depth and grace. You really see the bird in her movement".

"I wept with laughter and with sorrow. Such a beautiful dancer and bird and such a sad story – but she looks great in heels!"

"The costumes are amazing and it is great to see the musicians playing live"

"Amazed to see the way she moves on stage - Cant wait to do the next workshop now"

"I saw my grandmother in your performance and was silenced by the silence of all the kids. That was stunning"

"You #\$\$%^& nailed that culture wise girl, nailed it" Indigenous elder to Tammi.*

COLLEAGUE RECOMMENDATIONS

Cris Kennedy

Director - CSIRO Discovery Centre

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Artistic Director - SCINEMA Festival of Science Film

www.scinema.com.au

VIDEO LINKS

<https://vimeo.com/80708949>



Photo: Lorna Sim

<http://magnificusmagnificus.com/>



Photo: Lorna Sim



Photo: Lorna Sim

MARKETING MATERIALS

We have strong designs for posters and postcards along with an eflyer. Blogs of the initial creation process are available and good quality film footage.

CONTENT WARNINGS / AUDIENCES TO AVOID

No

SPONSOR OR OTHER ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The CSIRO, Inspiring Australia, Australia Council and artsACT logos all need to be acknowledged. We have them at request.

TEACHER'S RESOURCES

We are in the process of creating these, particularly with information about the Red Tail and how to assist protecting them.

PRODUCTION DETAILS

TECHNICAL SUMMARY

We can either run the show with no lighting – or very simple in a lecture hall/school hall or outdoors or we can bring in our full lighting design which is complex.

EXAMPLE SCHEDULE

1-2 hours; we can either run the show with no lighting – or very simple in a lecture hall/school hall or outdoors; no lighting set up needed but sound tech and spacing rehearsal needed.

4-5 hours; we can bring in our full lighting design which is complex

CREW REQUIRED FROM VENUE

Simple; one crew member

Full show; 2-3 crew members

STAGE

Simple; no hanging or lighting requirements; min stage; Minimum width 8 meters, minimum depth 5 meters.

Full show; hanging set requirements; 10 meters/10 meters.

Company to supply

head mics

Venue to supply

PA

LIGHTING

Simple; open wash if possible.

Full show; 10 specials and a range of colours, 35 cues.

Company to supply

n/a

Venue to supply

Simple; PA

Full show; PA, lighting, smoke machine

SOUND

60% played live on Violin and Didgeridoo with spoken word from two performers. 40% recorded on CD

Company to supply
Head mics and CD

Venue to supply
PA

AV
N/a

WARDROBE

6 costumes for dancer; long black/red skirt, black trousers, PVC tutu, feather headdress and backpack.
Black trousers and shirts for musicians

Company to supply
Company supplies all costumes, iron and sewing kits needed for the show.

Venue to supply
an ironing board, dressing rooms would be great but toilets can suffice and the use of a washing machine would also be great but not completely necessary.

FREIGHT NOTES

We do not have a truck but would need a small one to transport set elements and costumes. A loading dock would be very helpful.

CRITICAL ISSUES

N/a

CONTACTS

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