



Making Tracks

By Sara Fonck
NT | 27.10.2005

An insight into the amazing work of **Tracks Dance Theatre**.

Based in Darwin, **Tracks Dance Theatre Performance** specialises in outdoor events - innovative, humungous, multicultural dance spectacles that everyone can enjoy. Their works can be few and far between, only a handful a year, but that's because creating a **Tracks** performance is an in-depth task. **Tracks** is using Community Cultural Development practices in their work, and the result is thanks to an extensive collaboration between artists, organisations, and communities.

One of the really special things about **Tracks** is the variety of people with which they work. Their performances include people of all ages, and all backgrounds. Jerril Rechter, the Artistic Director with **Stompin' Youth Dance Company** vows "There is no-one else in this country with the ability to work with both Indigenous and wider community issues at the same time and at the highest level". From looking at their history, you know she's right. **Tracks** have spent the best part of twenty years developing relationships with Indigenous people living in remote areas. They have put a great deal of time into developing relationships with these Aboriginal communities, eventually building them into large-scale dance works. As another impressive note, **Tracks** is the only non-Indigenous dance company that uses these relationships as a major foundation of the company's work.

Although there are many communities in the Northern Territory, **Tracks** has spent most of their time working with the community of Lajamanu - an area that lies on the highest point of the Tanami Desert, located 950 km south west of Darwin. Together, they have created performances that integrate Warlpiri culture into a mainstream theatre environment.

The first work to come out of this collaboration was *Desert Boy*, a play written by Warlpiri Aboriginal language students in 1987. Produced by NT company **Corrugated Iron Youth Theatre**, it toured throughout remote communities with the title of *Living in Isolation*. A representative from **Tracks** tells me that "The highlight of the tour was at Lajamanu where the company narrated versions of *A Tour With a Difference* and *Walls Hill*, and performed the bilingual play, *Manangkarawardingki Malju*. The people at Lajamanu appreciated the efforts of the cast to learn some Warlpiri language. Elders invited the cast to stay an extra day so the Lajamanu Yawalyu women could share traditional dances with them".

It's an amazing and inspiring thing to hear about communities working so closely together, to create something that everyone can enjoy. And whilst that was a long time ago, **Tracks** continues to work closely with these communities, constantly inspiring and influencing others around them.

The next scheduled performance is for 12 November 2005. It is entitled *Milpirri*, and it is also a result of the long-lasting collaboration **Tracks** have held with the Lajamanu community. *Milpirri* is set to be a large-scale performance performed by Lajamanu youth and elders utilising traditional Warlpiri and western dance forms. It will be held as the feature performance of a full day of celebrations within the Lajamanu community. The name *Milpirri* means rainstorm cloud, which is something that can only be formed through the coming together of the cool and the warm air. It promises rain, and new growth - of land, and of culture.

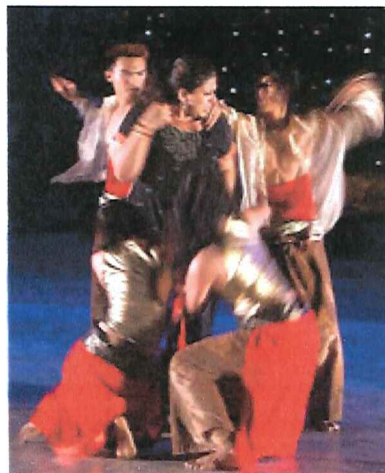
The general public are invited to travel to the community to witness this special event. If you would like to attend, or would like some more information, you can contact the **Tracks** office by emailing info@tracksdance.com.au. If you'd prefer to call, ring (08) 89 244 414.

And if you don't live in the Northern Territory, but would like to see **Tracks** in action, they have a quicktime movie up for viewing, available at www.tracksdance.com.au/Tracks_1.mov.

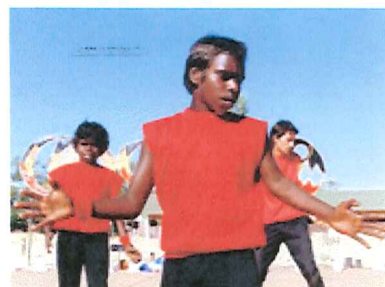
'Milpirri' (Image courtesy www.tracksdance.com.au)



'Angels Of Gravity' 2005
(Photo: Rodney Laredo)



'Snakes Gods & Deities' 2004
(Photo: Rodney Laredo)



1990 Lajamanu community residency. (Photo: Harsh)
All images from www.tracksdance.com.au

ORGANISATION: Tracks



THE PROGRAM is an initiative of the Australia Council's Community Partnerships & Market Development Division
[Home](#) | [About](#) | [Contact](#) | [E-newsletter](#) | [Legals](#)