

MILPIRRI SENSORIUM

Lajamanu community members and Tracks Dance present the Milpirri Sensorium as part of the 2023 Darwin Festival

Film Scenario

As the build-up arrives, Milpirri storm clouds appear on the horizon

Manyi Manyi (Remembrance).

Brushing the banners with leaves is a sign of respect for family and country.

Wirnpa (The Lightning Man)

This dance comes from the Ngapa Jukurrpa (Rainstorm Dreaming). In this dance the Jangala is throwing lightning at the cloud, "hitting him to make the rain come down, opening up the cloud. Ngapa-Partaluwarna - hitting him, it starts to rain. I'm Ngapa, I have to start falling down".

GREEN GROUP: Japanangka, Napanangka, Japangardi, Napangardi skin groups.

The youth dance a fire dance representing a new day with new beginnings. They also dance Purami (Guidance, follow in your brother's footsteps).

The women dance Mina Mina - Mina Mina is a very important site in the far west of Warlpiri country. It is part of the Karnta Karnta (Women's Dreaming) as the story is about a group of ancestral women who travelled far to the east beyond the boundaries of their Warlpiri Country. The women began their journey at Mina Mina, where the first Digging Sticks (Karlangu) emerged from the ground. They also dance Wardipi (Goanna).

The men dance both the Wardipi (Goanna) and Warlu (Fire). Wardipi was a fighter and a lover boy. It reminds us to follow the right pathways (Purami). In the Fire dance we see the men throwing the fire into the sky - this is the sun rising on a new day - new beginnings. The "T" design on the men's chest, represents the rising of the sun.



RED GROUP: Jakamarra, Nakamarra, Jupurrula, Napurrula skin groups.

The youth dance Jintanka (Unity) from the Wampana (Spectacled Hare Wallaby) story. This is a call to work together as one - to stick together.

The women dance Kulukuku (Diamond Dove). The birds are going around stealing the seeds. They go around and take them from one place and leave them in another.

They also dance Ngurlu (Seed). They gather the seeds and put them in the parraju (coolomon). Then they grind them up and make mangarri (bread/damper/paste) and cook it on the fire. They eat the mangarri and get sick and vomit it all up.

The men dance Wampana (Spectacled Hare Wallaby). The Wampana wallabies were carrying on their heads Yarripiri Snake Dreaming. They were joined at Miya Miya by Wangkinpa, the seed thrower who went 'wrong way' with a Nangala, his mother-in-law!

YELLOW GROUP: Japaljarri, Napaljarri, Jungarrayi, Nungarrayi skin groups.

The youth dance Witi - which in the ceremony are two leafy poles attached to the dancers. A strong tree can withstand any weather.

The women dance Ngatijirri (green grass parrot - budgerigar). Little baby Ngatijirri are sitting in the hollows of the trees, looking around. They are crying for Mummy and Daddy because they are hungry. Mummy brings them a worm to eat. They also dance Kutangka (Long-haired Rat) from the Jardiwarnpa ceremony. Kutangka is a little rat-like creature, bigger than Jungunypa (Mouse) and smaller than Mala (Rufous Hare Wallaby). Kutangka lives in mulga country. This is Walya country near Yinapaka. It digs little holes everywhere looking for food and eats the roots it finds underground. It lives near water, but not in the water.

The men dance Pulawanti (Whistling Kite). The Pulawanti likes to be near water. Pulawanti came from the north from Mayarridiwa. He was travelling, on course, nothing could distract him. He would stop, sit down, and then he sang and danced all the way. He is strong and only looked one way, one direction.

BLUE GROUP: Jangala, Nagala, Jampijinpa, Nampijinpa skin groups

The youth dance Responsibility comes from the Yankirri (Emu) story where the father has a strong responsibility to bring up the baby chicks

The women dance Ngapa (Water). Ngapa did not stay in one place, it went from one place to another, starting from Kurlpurlurnu. The women are dancing as the rain is falling. When they sit down they are playing in the water with their hands.

The men dance Yankirri (Emu). The father emu tends to the chicks showing them the right way to grow up - how to find food, how to learn. The emu is the teacher and represents both the teacher and the taught. The Emu looks around for food and finds Mundurru (yellow berries) on the bush. Humans can't eat them.

Finale Dance

The community comes together. It is based on the Jardiwampa ceremony. This finale dance celebrates the youth and the elders and the layering of old and new, and all things Warlpiri. As the song by the North Tanami Band says - We are the desert people, we are the Warlpiri Tribe, we are the people of the desert.

Fire: Renewal

There are several different fire images

The burning Emu is the dark emu in the night sky, the teacher who tells us to be hungry for knowledge.

Ngurra Kurlu translates as "with home, about home, within home and home within", where home is a synonym for country or community. The circles represent Land, Law, Language, Kinship, and Ceremony - when all these things are strong the body of the community is strong.

The Yarrirdi Yarridi (Burning Poles) - With the lighting of the Yarrirdi Yarridi the entire space is burning. By morning the remaining ash reminds us that it is finished.

The lanterns rising into the night sky represent Wantarri Tarri - (The Milky Way). Reminder to pass on deep learning. You can learn everything on earth by learning from the sky - the gift road.

Many of the dances are also represented in the banners

Green: Mina Mina (a place), Wardipi (Goanna)

Red: Kulukuku (Diamond Dove), Wampana (Spectacled Hare Wallaby)

Yellow: Ngatijirri (Green Grass Parrot)

*Blue: All the blue banners are from Ngapa (Rainstorm), including Kurlpurlurnu
Ngurra Kurlu (At home within) -Fire Banner*

Tracks acknowledge the Gulumerridjin people, also known as the Larrakia people, Traditional Owners of the land on which we live and work.

Milpirri Sensorium contains images, film and voices of people who have passed.

We thank the people of Lajamanu for their generosity in sharing Warlpiri knowledge.

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