

Written Guide to the Choreography



Big Dance Australia 2018 is a large-scale, participatory dance festival for all ages, levels of ability and experience, led by Ausdance Victoria and Ausdance NSW.

Big Dance Australia 2018 is created by acclaimed Indigenous choreographer Frances Rings and New Zealand born Craig Bary. The dance has all the hallmarks of the richness and beauty of Ring's work and Bary's contemporary dance experience, offering participants access to a unique insight into Contemporary Aboriginal dance and culture.

The five-minute dance routine can be learnt by anyone in the world and include versions to suit different capabilities, including standard and seated. The online tutorials of the dance sequences are easy to follow and supplemented by the cues provided in this booklet. The dancers you see presenting the dance are developing artists from National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association (NAISDA) Dance College.

In presenting this Written Guide to the Choreography we acknowledge the importance of the traditional custodians of this land and pay our respects to elders, past, present and future.

A note on the choreography

The choreography has 3 clear groups: black T-shirt group, a white T-shirt group, and a red T-shirt group. Rings explains their significance and symbolism: 'the black is the indigenous and the white is the non-Indigenous; the red is really the heart of our country. It's the red soil, it's our bloodline, it's our lineage and it's our spiritual heart of Australia, which is Uluru. And that is something that indigenous and non-Indigenous people connect with.'

Each group (black, white, red) is assigned a different choreographic sequence/variation. Please note that these colour choices are symbolic and in no way literal. You may freely choose the group you follow; with a movement story, you connect with and want to tell. Once you've selected a group you must stay with that group throughout the dance. Dance leaders, think about the size, formation and needs of your own participants and from this decide if you'd like everyone to dance the same variation, or learn all three group variations.

Themes

In the choreography, Rings and Bary explored a number of themes and ideas including:

- Indigenous and non-Indigenous people coming together in a shared dialogue
- Country; its spiritual heart, its red earth
- Bloodlines and culture making up our shared identity
- Breathing into our shared cultural life and sustaining that connection.

These are embedded within the movement, and in some of the group structures. The more you practice the dance, the more you will sense these connections. This is an important factor in the work. Learning the movements until they almost feel second nature will help you understand the ideas and stories behind the dance.

Getting ready to learn the dance: hints and tips

- Find a quiet space that is clear of objects and is relatively even and smooth, with enough space for your dancers to move without hitting the walls or each other. You will need a sound system to play the music.
- Encourage your dancers to wear comfortable clothing and ideally bare feet, so that they can feel the floor.
- Each group has their own instructional video, divided into three sections. Have the video and your notes handy, so that you can refer to them as you go.
- Practice each section until it starts to feel comfortable and your dancers don't hesitate in between movements.
- Bring plenty of water and keep hydrated.
- Movement and spacing that can be adapted for those with limited dance experience, disability and movement barriers, including those who may be seated.
- Neutral stance
 - This is a stance with feet in parallel with each other, head erect, spine long and hands out to the side. The dancer should feel comfortable, relaxed and ready to move.

Black T-Shirt Group

Black is divided into three sections

- Part 1 focuses on coming into the space voice instruction by Gusta Mura and Edan Porter with Hosken McFarlane seated.
- Part 2 is the same as Part 2 Red, voice instruction by Frances Rings
- Part 3 is the same for all, voice instruction by Craig Bary

Part 1 - standing - step by step movement:

Starting position – neutral position, at the side of the room, facing inward

1. Lean forwards, right hand on left shoulder, left hand on right elbow, slide your right foot out into the sand (1-2), swap hands and repeat on left (3,4). Repeat right side and left side once more (5-8)
2. Repeat this again, just changing the arms and hands to a wiping action (1-8)
3. Repeat this again (8 counts with hand on shoulder and elbow, 8 counts with wiping action)
4. Repeat this again, facing the front (8 counts with hand on shoulder and elbow, 8 counts with wiping action)
5. Stand in parallel, swoop your left arm back and bring the hand to your left shoulder; roll the shoulder forward and reach forward (1-2), Repeat on the other side (3-4)
6. Bird: wrists crossed, right leg forward (5-6). Push back to parallel, bring right hand to right shoulder, left hand on right elbow (7-8)
7. Twist to left and thread the right arm through to the floor (1-2); Take right hand, pull it in and thread it to the floor, bring the other hand to join it (3); Break and lift both hands slightly (4); Reach down again (6); Stand, facing the front, right hand up, left hand on right elbow (6); Thread right hand under chin, lift your right heel and lean to the left, (7); Return to parallel, hand under chin (8)
8. Close your fist (1-2); Place your hand on the side of your face and push, bending knees (3-4)
9. Turn and walk in this position to face the back wall, stand up straight (5-8)
10. With left hand, slide along right hand to the elbow 'break' (1); Twist (2); Twist and step to face the front, roll down in parallel position (3 – 4); Roll up and lift right arm, lift left arm, bring both together into a small shape, return to arms up (7-8)
11. Slowly take your arms down and wait for the heartbeat.



RED Part 2 – Red and Black - step by step movement:

Starting position – standing in parallel position of feet, with arms to the side

1. Heartbeat: eight chest expansions/pulses (counts 1- 8)

2. Touch R foot forward, R hand goes above your head, with your left arm wrapped around your body (1); Bring foot back and take the other foot forward, with arm up and other arm wrapped around the body (2); Repeat again both sides (3-4)
3. Dip in the middle, with hands crossed (5); Come back to standing (6); Dip again (7); Come to heart beat hands (8)
4. Drop down (1); Open chest (2); Drop down (3); Open chest (4)
5. Cut right arm across to left (5); Pull up, hands on shoulders (6); Cut left arm across to right (7), pulling up (8)
6. Travel towards the back wall, cut with opposite arm x 4 (counts 1-4); Circle one arm around and to the shoulder (5-6); Circle the other arm around (7-8)
7. Travel backward to the audience, twisting, with hands on sides of head (1-4); Rock forward and reach your arms forward, rock back and pull back your elbows (5-6); Repeat (7-8).
8. Turn around to face the front: Rock forward and reach your arms forward, rock back and pull back your elbows (1-2); Repeat (3-4).

At this point the white group arrives



RED Part 3 – coming together - step by step movement:

Starting position – standing in parallel position of feet, with arms to the side

1. Rock forward and reach your arms forward, rock back and pull back your elbows (1-2) Repeat (3-4)
2. Right hand to sky, other hand on shoulder (5); Change (6); Change (7); Change (8)
3. Two hands up (1); Two hands down (2) ; Two hands up (3); Open on (4)

4. Slight direction change follows: Red and white groups step to the left, black group steps to the right
5. Lunge to the side and scoop same arm, bring feet together, hands on shoulders, repeat to the other side. Continue this action facing each of the walls (facing front, side, back, side, front again)
6. Heartbeat (right hand to heart, left hand holds your elbow): Rock forward on left (1); Rock back (2); Rock forward (3); Bring feet together and straighten your arm by pushing your elbow towards the centre of your body (4); Forearms parallel (5); Circle the arms around, finish with opposite arm on top in parallel arms (6-7); Open fingers (8)
7. Four steps back, starting on the left foot and cutting with the right hand (1-4); Circle the left hand back and to the left shoulder, big bend (5-6); Repeat with the right arm (7-8)
8. Four steps forwards, starting with the right leg, twisting with hands on sides of head (counts 1-4); Rock forward and reach your arms forward (5); Rock back and pull back your elbows (6); Repeat (7-8).
9. Repeat the rocking with elbows action, twice, facing the back wall (1-4); turn to face the front, arms straight out to the side (5)
10. Drop your body all the way forward (6); Lift your right arm (7); Lift your left arm and drop your body all the way forward, reach your arms out and down (8)

