

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.

White T-Shirt Group

White is divided into three sections

- Parts 1 and 2 focuses on coming into the space voice instruction by Amy Flannery and Emily Flannery with Chandler (Cheeky) Connell seated.
- Part 3 is the same as Part 3 Red, 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. Step on the right foot, reach both arms forward and circle your hands to the right (1,2), bring them into the left hip as you step onto the left (3,4). Step forward on the right, hold R elbow with L hand, bring the lift leg behind and bend both knees (5-8)
2. Step forward on the right (1-2), bring the left in and stand up (3-4); put your R hand on your shoulder and left and on elbow, step forward L (5-6), rock back (7-8)
3. Four walks forward performing the following arms for 2 counts each: keep your R hand on your shoulder and left and on elbow rock (1-2), tangle the arms (elbow straight) (3-4); untangle (parallel arms) (5-6); Big circle (7-8)
4. Turn to face the front (1-2); Open the hands (3-4); Twist and brush something off your shoulder (5-6); Repeat this again (7-8)
5. Step wide to the side and reach up with right hand, down with left (1-2); Come together and reach up with left hand, down with right (3-4), repeat to the other side (5-8)
6. Take you hand to your heart as you step forward (1-2), step again and push it out to your friends (3-4); Take 2 more steps forward, leaving your hands in front
Begin from the start again with the variation below
7. Step on the right foot, reach both arms forward and circle your hands to the right (1,2), bring them into the left hip as you step onto the left (3,4). Step forward on the right, hold R elbow with L hand, bring the lift leg behind and bend both knees (5-8)
8. Slight change here, swivel to face the back (1-2), swivel to face the front (3-4) step forward L (5-6), rock back (7-8)



9. Step forward keep your R hand on your shoulder and left and on elbow rock (1-2), tangle the arms (elbow straight) (3-4); untangle (parallel arms) (5-6); Big circle (7-8)
10. Swivel to the back (1-2); Return and open hands (3-4); Twist and brush something off your shoulder (5-6); Repeat this again (7-8)

Part 2 –step by step movement:



1. Heartbeat: eight chest expansions/pulses (counts 1- 8)
2. Step back on the right leg and crouch (1-2); Stand up (3-4); Chest to sky (5); Return (6); Step forward and crouch (7-8)
3. Turn to the back (1-2); Reach and step wide to the right (3-4); Bring the foot back in and take the right arm to the sky (5-6); Break in the elbow (7), Drop everything (8)
4. Both arms up to the sky (1-2); Arms down (3); Arms up (4)
5. Bend elbows twice (5-6); circle forward with one elbow, then the other and turn to face the front, drop down (7-8)
6. Chest to the sky (1-2); Return to drop forward (3-4); Circle with the elbows and torso (5-7); Stand up straight (8)

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)