DIRECTORS' NOTES

Mr Big is about the spirit of Darwin, from its transition as a sleepy little town to one of Australia's fastest growing cities. We have chosen six archetypal characters from old Darwin. For many of us our human spirit has grown from such characters: the military personnel, the hippy traveller, the cowgirl or stockman, the Asian influence, the builder, and the new arrival from down South.

The cast was selected through an audition process held in March 2006. Cast members come from the Darwin region as well as the remote Aboriginal community of Lajamanu. Mr Big has been devised collaboratively between the Directors, choreographers and the cast.

The following excerpts are from **Marilynne Paspaley's 2005 Eric Johnston Lecture, "Finding the Spirit of Darwin"**

"….remember the chalk boards at school, and the white pieces of chalk that were used? Do you remember what happened when the chalk was dipped into a pot of blue ink? Well, growing up in Darwin was like being dipped into a pot of rainbow ink – you absorbed all of these differences that were around you, and they became a part of you as much as you were a part of them.

Proximity broke down prejudices. Working together built respect. I read somewhere the first impressions of a young policeman who had been posted to Darwin a few years earlier and he recorded his surprise at the cultural mix of the town. We all took it for granted and I think it's one of the qualities that sets long term Darwinites apart – the fact that they're more comfortable in a multicultural gathering than they are in a white Anglo-Saxon one.

Darwin in the 1950s had a population of around 8,000. It seemed to me that everyone knew everyone. When you married, you selected one of the main gathering halls in town for the reception. It didn't matter which denomination you belonged to – you chose the venue based on how many guests you were inviting – the Chung Wah Hall for small, the Greek Hall for medium or the Palais for huge. The Palais was a large corrugated iron shed with a concrete floor on the Catholic Church property in Lindsay Street – a more inappropriate name for such a building I cannot imagine.

It was the 1980s. Now that was a time when I think we began to lose the spirit of Darwin. What replaced it was a spirit of development, but it was development at any cost. Please understand, I am not against development – Darwin has always been about development and opportunity, and people who want to have a go. But did we really benefit as a community from the development of Mindil beach? Mindil beach was the town beach. The mist on the dry season mornings would slowly rise as the sun came up to reveal water like glass and palm trees fringing the beach. There was a wonderful sand dune that changed shape every season – growing and shrinking depending on the tides and the storms. A fast-flowing creek carved its way around and behind the sand dune to run all the way to what is currently the Gardens Park Golf Links. On the outgoing tide, it was a great thrill to launch from the sand dune into the creek and be swept rapidly away into the wider waters. Larrakeyah people would camp along the creek behind the sand dune, roasting sea slugs and other shellfish that we were too timid to eat, and teaching us to draw signals in the sand.

What do we value in our town today, I wonder? Are we determining our developments with our community in mind?

I've always believed that one of the strongest attributes of Darwin is that we're a population of people who choose to be here. We are not here because we were born here and don't know any better. This town's ability to attract people from around the world – to have them living harmoniously alongside one another – is, I believe, what defines the spirit of Darwin.

We can be proud of our heritage. We have an opportunity to be the most diverse and interesting city in Australia. If we can value where we have come from, and celebrate what we have become, we will understand what it is that we need to take forward. It is unique. It is what brings me home. It is the spirit of Darwin."

For more information on the story and characters of 'Mr Big' go to 'Now Showing' on our website www.tracksdance.com.au

CREATIVE PERSONNEL

Director/Choreographer: David McMicken

Director/Designer: Tim Newth

Choreographer: Julia Quinn

Guest Choreographer: Nick Power

Youth Choreographers: Erwin Fenis, Kelly Beneforti, Imanuel Dado, Karajayne Handberg, Corina Nichols and Vera Tabuzo

Costumes: Cristina Pantazis

Production Manager: Vanessa Hutchins

Lighting Design: Vanessa Hutchins

Chief Electrician: Neil McKnight

Lighting Operator: Kelly Blumberg

Sound Operator: Maude Love

Stage Manager: Rosemary Westley

Stage Hands and Electrics: Chad Oliver and Ben Southwood

Promotions: Fiona Carter, Tony Collins and Carmel Young

Photography/Art Direction: Mark Marcelis

Animation: Jett Street

Front of House Manager: Nicola Jackson

CAST

A.J. (Military): Erwin Fenis.

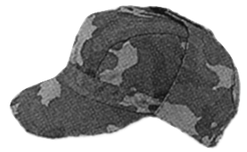
Sunshine (Hippy): Corina Nichols

Dusty (Cowgirl): Vera Tabuzo

Princess (Asian): Karajayne Handberg

Bob (Builder): Imanuel Dado

Destiny (Southerner): Kelly Beneforti



Military/Cowboys: John Ferrer, Grant Nery, Jeremiah Rasing and Gerard Japanangka Scobie

Military/Asians: Holly Au and Carmen Jap

Military/Hippies: Loni Garnons-Williams and Katrina Firth

Builder/Cowboys: Jason Chav, Caleb Japanangka Patrick, Ricky Borg and Paul Viojan

Builder/Asians: Poppy Kathopoulis and Jensine Ricket

Builder/Hippies: Tegan Barrett-McGuin and Lorraine Meehan

Southerner/Cowgirls: Chloe Lauverjon and Kathryn Lawrence

Southerner/Asians: Shaan Myall, Jenelle Saunders, Kylie Wilson and Flori Latif

Southerner/Hippies: Elle Richards, Jess Sadler-Keary and Cara Thomas

SCENARIO

Act 1: Old Darwin Town – Dusty, Princess, Bob, Sunshine and AJ arrive for a big night out.

Act 2: You're Not From Here – Destiny arrives from down South.

Act 3: The Big Build – a city under construction.

Act 4: Inhabiting the City – taking the city by storm.

Act 5: New fuelled by Old.

MUSIC

Chris Isaak, Tomoyasu Hotei, Keichi Suzuki, Curtis Schwart, Barry McGuire, Troy Cassar-Daly, Da Phazz, Massive Attack, Gotan Project, The Chemical Brothers, Blunted Stylus, Beastie Boys, The Pussycat Dolls, Noreaga, Bitbull, Flii Stylz and Black Eyed Peas

THANK YOU

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SPONSORS

Southern Cross Television, Top End Hire – Generator, Waco Kwikform – seating bank, Audio Technology – Sound System, Cee Ceas, Darwin Entertainment Centre, Copytime, Coleman's Printing and ITV

FUNDING BODIES

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ABOUT TRACKS

Tracks' vision is to **Give Voice to Territory Culture** through a dance and performing arts company based in the Northern Territory. Tracks has a local and national reputation for its performances that unite professional, community and cultural elements that powerfully connect place, people and spirit using sites that are linked in important ways to the narrative of the performance.

STAFF

Artistic Directors: Tim Newth and David McMicken
Company Manager: Fiona Carter
Dance Animateur: Julia Quinn
Youth Dance Animateur: Erwin Fenis
Development Consultant: Suzanne Fermanis
Bookkeeper: Julie Stark

COMMITTEE OF MANAGEMENT

Jill Macandrew, Jackie Wurm, David Taylor, Traci Keys, Glenn Bernardin, Donna Quong, Ken Conway and Nick Papandonakis

PUBLIC FUND TRUSTEES

Dr Tarun Weeramanthri, Rev. Steve Orme and Dr Anita Toth

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Donations to Tracks are gratefully received. All donations help **Tracks give voice to Territory culture by developing dynamic contemporary dance performances**. Please make cheques to *Tracks Inc Public Fund.* Donations over $2 are tax deductible.

Are you a **Friend of Tracks?** Receive discounts to performances and invitations to special events. Forms are available from the Tracks office.