Directors' Notes

In May 2005 Tracks directed the main act of the Arafura Games Opening Ceremony. Within this 35-minute spectacular with over 400 dancers was a section we called the Cultural Explosion. Six local dance groups with origins from Ireland, Greece, Philippines, China, Pacific Islands and Sri Lanka created movement to the same track of music. There was enormous goodwill between groups and interest in how different cultures went about creating new dance. Most of the groups only knew each other while passing in the dressing rooms at a performance. This is where the seed for Without Sea sprouted.

As Darwinites, we were interested in concepts that linked these six groups. We drew on ancient ideas of a great family of land called 'Gondwana' when our geological relatives included India, Sri Lanka, Africa, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and New Zealand. In this time of Gondwana Land there was no sea to divide lands. Darwin is our world Without Sea known for its rich interaction of cultures.

As the work developed, ideas became more and more localised. Tonight you will first be guided through six different Darwin backyards, the only thing dividing each being the cyclone fence. In the second half after a 15 minute interval you will enter a new space. Here the fences are dismantled and a dialogue across the backyards begins.

Creative Personnel

Directors: David McMicken and Tim Newth

Guest Choreographers/Coordinators: Bridgeen Marron, Betchay Mondragon/ Esperanza Estelle Quindara, David Chin, Chandrika Munusinghe, Poppy Kathopoulis and Julia Gray.

Costumes: Elys Spanol, Lousie Reick, Tracey Mepham and Sumana Perera

Production/Stage Manager: Kelly Blumberg

Lighting Designer/Operator: Reuben Hopkins

Stage Hands: Chad Oliver and Ben Southwood

Sound Engineer/Composer: Matt Cunliffe

Promotions: Fiona Carter

Publicity: Tony Collins

Photography/Art Direction: Mark Marcelis

Front of House Manager: Mary Anne Butler

Cast

Irish: Bridgeen Marron, Rosie O'Reilly, Siobhan Evans, Eliousa Edwards, Owen Spencer, Alex Götze and Shawnee Mepham (members of Rince Na Eireann)

Greek: Poppy Kathopoulis, Alex Hatzivalsamis and Chrissa Skandaliaris

Pacific Island: Julia Gray, Yolanda Gray, Indira Jones, Paia Juste-Constant, Erma Muller with Yomei Jones, and Pamela Maclean (members of Sunameke and Kiribati Multicultural Association)

Filipino: Betchay Mondragon, Esperanza Estelle Quindara, Vera Tabuzo, Susana Lu-Dizon and Angie Cope

Chinese: David Chin, Rohan Chin, Zac Chan, Lian Low, Rochelle Chin with Nathan Tam (members of Chung Wah Society Lion & Dragon Troupe)

Sri Lankan: Chandrika Munusinghe, Piyum Perera and Ujith Perera

Music

Dance and music are often inseparable, intimately connected. Without Sea explores these connections, asking questions of where boundaries may lie – is it possible to maintain cultural integrity and share music? Can one dance-form crossover with another's music? Tonight's performance uses music drawn from the cultures involved, some traditional, some contemporary, and some especially created. The engineered layers of these sounds create a rich sound scape that is reminiscent of our contemporary Darwin lives.

Without Sea

our world has no boundaries

Scenario

Act One – Six Darwin Backyards

Act Two – Conversations over the Fence

Artists Statements

"Without Sea highlights how cultural dance connects the Darwin community by strengthening relationships and awareness. In a small city that has many different cultures living side by side the importance of maintaining identity is heightened, as is the importance of educating one another of our differences and similarities. Without Sea is a beautiful example of how Darwin Dance is unique to the rest of Australia and through this performance Tracks has given us an avenue to celebrate our diversity – side by side." **Julia Gray**

"Understanding is locked within our bodies. We move and dance together, celebrating in different ways. We can learn each other's languages to assist communication; we can also learn about each others' dances and come to a deeper physical understanding of connections to each other." **David McMicken**

"Dance is a medium of communication and expression, represented by different styles and immensely influenced by different cultures. Being engaged in 'Without Sea' has reinforced how unique multi-cultural Australia is, in particular the Northern Territory. The performers were able to converse and understand one another through animated dance and were acceptingly open to learning each other's cultural styles of dance. The result is a web of dancers distinctly different yet symbolic of one whole – a world Without Sea." **Chandrika, Piyum, & Ujith**

"There is a vibrancy that emanates from a people who take pride in the practice of their native culture. This practice is not for oggling at, nor is it for academic examination. It is a celebration that calls for participation, inclusion and a shared sense of community pride." **Betchay Mondragon**

"Give dancers a theme or a rhythm and steps will flow, cutting across cultural divides and dance styles. The smorgasbord of culture and styles in our community provides a delightful spectacle of music, costumes and steps when performed. Without Sea brings together some of these cultures to perform a show, while providing a platform for meeting new people and learning a little of different cultures." **Bridgeen Marron**

"For the last few years I have been interested in making a piece called 'not my country'. I am interested in what it means to be a non indigenous Australian. Working on Without Sea has reminded me that most Australians' ancestry comes from elsewhere. It's made me rethink the meaning of multicultural and where I place myself within this." **Tim Newth**

"It is amazing to see how easily the performing arts can draw cultural groups together portraying respect and understanding of each other. Each dance has its story to tell, formed & arisen through years of world history, giving an insight into the meaning of life in their own cultural interpretation of dance. Understanding each culture makes it easier to combine the traditional dancers. Some of our stories are similar and have the obvious feelings in mind; such as love, prosperity, war and the joy of celebration." **Poppy Kathopoulis**

"Our form of dance has been founded for use in religious occasions and as such is rarely performed with any other dance forms. Without Sea has allowed me to open up boundaries, sharing and learning along with like minded people to form something quite unique. This celebration of our cultural heritage symbolises our ability to co-exist and truly characterises a world without sea." **David Chin**

Thank You

Front of House Volunteers, Ausdance NT, Andi Baker, Rosia Muller, Ana Ragata, Airileke Ingram, Lina Tyrell, Salevasa Day, Nannette Theil, Filipino Australian Association of the Northern Territory, Tanuli Chan, Bubu, Koro, Bada, Kedu, Aniheta Crombie, Chung Wah Society, Richard Hodowaniec, Radio Larrakia 94.5FM, Dixi Joy Bankier, Darwin Festival, Darwin High School, Darwin Theatre Company, Darwin City Council, Boral Scaffolding, Temporary Fencing Hire, Associated Panel Products, Heather Molomolo, Friends and Family

Sponsors

Southern Cross Television, Cee Ceas, and Darwin Entertainment Centre

Funding Bodies

Tracks is assisted by the Commonwealth Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body and the Northern Territory Government through the Department of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts

About Tracks

Tracks is one of the major performing arts companies of the Northern Territory. It is known for its innovative, large-scale outdoor performances that bring together participants from diverse cultures and artistic disciplines. Tracks works at the frontier of dance, and is a key player in shaping the future of dance in Australia.

Tracks works with professional artists and community members to produce high quality, inclusive and innovative dance performances. The process of creating a Tracks performance is unique. Since 1988 Tracks has been using Community Cultural Development practices in their work. Tracks' artistic product follows extensive collaboration with artists, organisations and communities, usually over many years.

Tracks is based in Darwin with the deserts of Central Australia to the south and the tropics of South East Asia to the north. Our unique geographical location has led us to prioritising work with diverse cultural, Indigenous, youth and senior dancers.

Tracks is driven by its human relationships. Led by founding Artistic Directors, Tim Newth and David McMicken, their company is their community.

For more information see our website www.tracksdance.com.au

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
Administration Assistant: Skye Raabe
Bookkeeper: Julie Stark

Committee of Management

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

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

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