

BANGARRA ANNOUNCES 2021 RECIPIENTS OF THE RUSSELL PAGE GRADUATE PROGRAM



Image: Mitchell J Nalingu Harrison-Currie, Maddison Paluch and Daniel Mateo, photo by Dan Boud

Bangarra Dance Theatre is pleased to announce that the Russell Page Graduate Program has been enhanced for 2021, welcoming two young Dancers into the Company and introducing a Youth Programs Trainee role to support the important work of the Company's Youth Programs Team.

The 2021 Russell Page Graduates are **Daniel Mateo**, **Maddison Paluch**, and **Mitchell J Nalingu Harrison-Currie**.

The Russell Page Graduate Program provides the opportunity for First Nations early career artists to develop as professional Dancers and facilitators through training, mentoring, performance and touring seasons – one of many ways that Bangarra continues its commitment to supporting and fostering the talent of the next generation of Dancers.

Daniel and Maddison will make their debut as Dancers performing with the company in *Spirit: a retrospective 2021* at Sydney Festival this month. As part of the Russell Page Graduate Program, they will complete a one-year intensive immersion experiencing the rigour and training of what is expected in the role as a professional dance artist, guided in a nurturing environment.

Daniel Mateo is a descendant of the Gamilaroi people of North East New South Wales as well as the Tongan people of the Pacifika region, who shared that the program is *"an opportunity to make a valuable contribution as an artist and a storyteller"*.

Wiradjuri woman and 2020 Russell Page Professional Development Scholar **Maddison Paluch** said the opportunity is *"a chance to grow as an artist and contribute to the Company's important work"*.

For the first time in 2021, the Russell Page Graduate Program also includes a newly introduced Youth Programs Trainee role. Mitchell J Nalingu Harrison-Currie is a Mununjali, Bundjalung and Gunggari man from west of the Gold Coast, Beaudesert and Fingal Head, and joins the Company to support Bangarra's Youth Program Team in delivering activities online and across the country.

Mitchell said, *"In 2015 Bangarra's Rekindling program came to me at a pivotal moment in my life. Being a part of Bangarra Youth Programs team would mean I would be able to reach others in the way that Bangarra reached out to me six years ago".*

Associate Artistic Director Frances Rings said, *"Named after the younger brother of Artistic Director Stephen and his Songman brother David, Russell represented what it was to be an Indigenous performing artist; to be humble, vibrant, artistically gifted and generous. He was also passionate about passing on knowledge to the next generation of young artists."*

"These qualities we see reflected in a generation of Dancers coming through the Russell Page Graduate Program today. Maddie, Daniel and Mitchell bring exciting new blood to the Company, and alongside our current Dancers, represent just a few of the 300 language groups from across Indigenous Australia."

Initiated in 2014, The Russell Page Graduate Program is supported by a group of philanthropists and the Sherry-Hogan Foundation. The program is part of Bangarra's commitment to building a strong platform for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and artists and is named for the late Russell Page, a senior Bangarra artist who passed away in 2002.

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