

[Press Release](#)[Media Contact](#)

Lara Paterson
E lara@commonstate.co
M (+61) 421 621 633

Chunky Move Media Centre

JOIN THE CIRCLE AND DANCE: JOEL BRAY AND CHUNKY MOVE PRESENT THE WORLD PREMIERE OF *GARABARI* THIS DECEMBER



Garabari, a new large-scale immersive performance work choreographed by **Joel Bray**, one of Australia's fast rising stars, will have its world premiere at Arts House in North Melbourne from Thursday 1 until Saturday 10 December.

Across the globe, First Nations cultures have harnessed the enduring power of ritual to transmit knowledge. Countless generations have undergone rites of passage that have left them changed – closer to others, and more attuned to themselves.

In a contemporary celebration inspired by *corroboree* – an Aboriginal dance ceremony often performed as a festive and sacred ritual, Bray (a proud Wiradjuri man), presents an amalgamation of bodies, sound, and light, revealing hidden meanings inspired by the ancient ceremonial practices of his ancestors.

Five Indigenous and non-Indigenous dancers will perform in a contemporary *bora* carved out of sound and light, driven with melodic beats by **Byron Scullin**, otherworldly lighting by **Katie Sfetkidis**, and lavish costumes, designed by First Nations fashion designer and entrepreneur **Denni Francisco**.

This work has been crafted in close collaboration with Wiradjuri elders, including Joel's father **Uncle Christopher Kirkbright**. Bray has visited the Wiradjuri region around Wagga Wagga regularly over the last year, exploring ancient corroboree sites, and working with the community to create artworks that will be incorporated via projection and costume into the performance.

Garabari choreographer Joel Bray said, “For First Nations artists, inviting community into the creative process, consulting with elders and securing cultural permissions are vital first steps in making work. However, never have I had the resources to undertake that labour in the patient and considered fashion it truly deserves.”

He continues: “This contemporary performance work is made hand in glove with community, celebrating the fact that we, as Wiradjuri People, have gathered together for thousands of generations to do ceremony, to trade, to reconnect with family and, yes, to party!”

Presented in partnership with **Chunky Move** and supported by the **Tanja Liedtke Foundation**, *Garabari* is the creation of Bray’s time spent as Chunky Move’s inaugural Choreographer in Residence, which commenced in 2021 with a \$80,000 fee over two years.

“Chunky Move’s Choreographer in Residence program is a unique opportunity for established Australian choreographers. It grants the appointed artist unparalleled financial and organisational support, offering them the rare situation of being fully immersed in their artistic work in a paid capacity. We’ve been thrilled to support Joel Bray, as our inaugural Choreographer in Residence, to develop and present *Garabari*.” said **Chunky Move artistic director Antony Hamilton**.

--- ENDS ---

NOTES TO EDITORS

- *Garabari* runs from Thursday 1 December to Saturday 10 December 2022 at Arts House, North Melbourne.
- Tickets (Pay if you can: \$35, Standard: \$20, Blaktix: \$10) are now on sale via: www.artshouse.com.au/events/garabari/
- Further information can be found at artshouse.com.au, chunkymove.com and joelbraydance.com.
- Images can be found in the [Chunky Move Media Centre](#).

World Premiere

Commissioned by Chunky Move

Presented by Arts House, Chunky Move and Joel Bray Dance

About Joel Bray

Joel Bray is a proud Wiradjuri man who trained at NAISDA and WAAPA before pursuing a career in Europe and Israel with Jean-Claude Gallotta, Company CeDeCe, Kolben Dance, Machol Shalem Dance House, Yoram Karmi’s FRESCO Dance Company, Niv Sheinfeld & Oren Laor and Roy Assaf. He returned to Australia to work with Chunky Move under Anouk van Dijk.

Joel’s choreographic practice springs from his Wiradjuri cultural heritage. His works are intimate encounters in unorthodox spaces, in which audience-members are invited in as co-storytellers to explore the experiences of fair-skinned Aboriginal people, and the experiences of contemporary gay men in an increasingly digital and isolated world. His body becomes the intersection site of those songlines – Indigenous heritage, skin-colour and queer sexuality.

Since returning to Melbourne, Joel has created numerous critically acclaimed solo works, including *Biladurang* (winner of three Melbourne Fringe Awards); *Dharawungara*, (commissioned by Chunky Move) and *Daddy* (commissioned by the Yirramboi Festival, Arts House and Liveworks). Joel’s works have toured extensively across Australia. Joel was the 2019 National Library of Australia Creative Arts Fellow, and is continuing this Burbang research into Wiradjuri ceremony through a series of Australia Council Signature Works grants. In 2020, he was commissioned to create a new work as part of Sydney Dance Company’s *New Breed*

About Chunky Move

Chunky Move was established in 1995 and as Victoria’s flagship contemporary dance company, is one of the most influential arts organisations in Australia. Under the creative leadership of Artistic Director Antony Hamilton, Chunky Move creates bold, visually striking, and genre-defying dance works that merge the body with other artistic

mediums. Chunky Move's works interact with varied spaces and presentation contexts and are underpinned by an ethos of collaboration and experimentation. Artists and audiences are at the heart of the company, and their partnerships and projects, expressed through a program of major works, commissions, residencies, workshops and public classes, aim to increase the visibility of contemporary dance as an everyday artform.