



MEDIA RELEASE

GARRY STEWART'S HIGHLY-ANTICIPATED AUSTRALIAN PREMIERE OF THE BEGINNING OF NATURE

May 16, 2017

The first-look performance had more than 5000 people on their feet at WOMAD in 2016, and it wowed audiences at its global premiere in Colombia in November. Now Australian audiences finally get the chance to see Garry Stewart's phenomenal work, *The Beginning of Nature*.

An accessible and highly-relatable piece of dance, *The Beginning of Nature* is a visual and auditory feast which draws on the rhythms in nature - day and night, the seasons, tidal patterns, migration, hibernation, sleep and waking, weather patterns, the binary of growth and decay and the various systems of the body.

It is not only a visually stunning and thought-provoking work, but also includes live operatic style singing in the Kurna language, the indigenous language of the Adelaide plains.

Kurna and Narrunga man, **Jack Buckskin**, has collaborated with ADT to develop the score for *The Beginning of Nature*, which includes a libretto in the Kurna language.

The language was all but extinct 20 years ago, but through unrelenting work by the Kurna people using a "dictionary" written by local missionaries in the mid-1800s, the language has been revived as is now taught in schools and at university.

"When I first decided to make this work, I always wanted to include the human voice in the score, but in a work about rhythms in nature it made very little sense to use English, which has only been spoken on this continent for the past 230 years – barely a blip - compared to the tens of thousands of years that indigenous languages have been spoken here. So it made much more sense to work with the Kurna language," ADT artistic director, **Garry Stewart**, said.

Composed by **Brendan Woithe**, *The Beginning of Nature's* score will be sung live by two indigenous classical singers at all venues and performed live by the Zephyr Quartet at the Adelaide and Canberra seasons, and a quartet of South Australian musicians at the Renmark and Darwin seasons.

The Beginning of Nature had its world premiere in Bogota, Colombia in November, to critical acclaim. It was also the company's inaugural performance in South America. ADT then performed in Amsterdam in February, with audiences blown away by the company's first ever piece featuring live music on stage.

Through *The Beginning of Nature*, ADT is bringing this once-lost language to Australia, and indeed the world.

The first stage of the development of *The Beginning of Nature* was showcased at WOMAD in 2016, to rave reviews, but 2018 will see its full-length Australian premiere.

Stewart said the entire company could not wait to unveil the production, which has been nearly four years in the making, to audiences all around Australia.

“It is a hugely significant piece for ADT and one we are immensely proud of,” he said. “While we love touring internationally, there’s something very special about premiering a work to our home audiences in Australia.”

“Our dancers are astonishing and beautiful and they never fail to amaze me. I find myself in awe of them in this work. They manifest something that is far beyond just the choreography itself. They embody ideas, feelings, processes and transformations in such profound ways. They really are incredible.”

In support of *The Beginning of Nature*, ADT held a Kurna language workshop, where members of the community learnt basic Kurna phrases and were given an understanding of the history of the language. A virtual reality presentation, featuring the ADT dancers performing in South Australian landscapes, also accompanied the WOMAD performance.

2018 Australian Dance Theatre National Tour – The Beginning of Nature

<u>Town/City</u>	<u>Venue</u>	<u>Dates</u>
Canberra, ACT	Canberra Theatre	14/6/18 - 15/6/18
Wyong, NSW	The Art House	18/6/18
Dubbo, NSW	Dubbo Regional Theatre	21/06/18
Wollongong, NSW	Illawarra Performing Arts Centre	28/6/18 - 30/6/18
Adelaide, SA	Dunstan Playhouse	11/7/18 - 14/7/18
Renmark, SA	Chaffey Theatre	21/7/18
Hobart, TAS	Theatre Royal	27/7/18- 28/7/18
Alice Springs, NT	Araluen Arts Centre	3/8/18
Darwin, NT	Darwin Entertainment Centre	9/8/18 – 10/8/18
Katherine, NT	Godinymayin Yijard Rivers Arts and Cultural Centre	11/8/18
Mandurah, WA	Mandurah Performing Arts Centre	18/8/18

Garry Stewart and Jack Buckskin are available for interview. Images of *The Beginning of Nature* can be emailed upon request.

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