

BLACK ARM BAND ~ 2017 Tour Seminars and Workshops

Revised August 2016 ~ www.blackarmband.com.au

Aboriginal Dance & Culture with Fred Leon

Presenting workshops and talks about Aboriginal dance, language preservation & cultural identity.

Fred Leone is the artistic director of Black Arm Band's internationally acclaimed show, "dirtsong", a leading Australian indigenous hip-hop artist, dancer, and cultural educator. Performing traditional dance with his family since the age of 5, Leone's heritage is Garrawa, Waanyi & Butchella mobs (tribes) and he is one of the only speaker's left of his indigenous language. In 2008 he founded Impossible Odds Records, NSW's only indigenously owned and operated label, and in 2013 programmed the first Coroboree held in Brisbane since the 1920's – a gathering of 9 Clans and 160 dancers as the closing ceremony for the Clancestry festival.

Leone volunteers teaching language and dance to young Aboriginal people in the community of Zillmere on Brisbane's north side and heads up Yawar Nuba a dance group of all Badjatala descendants based in Brisbane. He's passionate about, and committed to, social change and social justice, particularly applying his skills and knowledge to support the strength, status and development of Indigenous Culture.

Yidaki/Didgeridoo (presenter TBD)

Presenting workshops and demonstrations on the yidaki/didgeridoo

Languages & Voices of "dirtsong"

Workshops explore the significant compositions of dirtsong.

In its earliest formation, *dirtsong* was sung in over 13 indigenous languages from around Australia. It is a unique collaboration with Aboriginal Australia, mixing traditional words, music and dance with their contemporary counterparts.

dirtsong, still includes many indigenous languages, many of which have been awoken from a long hiatus, as well as those that have been kept alive and passed down the generations. The fragility of an oral tradition coupled with the Australia's white colonization meant that many indigenous languages were entirely lost over the years. For some Black Arm Band artists, this has led to a personal journey to research and find the language of their ancestors to put into contemporary songs. *dirtsong* therefore, is a very special collection of songs, that covers connections to different areas of Australia and the people who once lived there.

The Black Arm Band singers will offer a workshop that will focus on 2-3 significant songs from the production, their language, musical journey and connection to country. The workshop will look at the map of indigenous languages and talk about the significance of each song to the company and Australia. The performers will teach a vocal workshop looking at the songs and the language.

dirtsong

by Aexis Wright (poem that inspired the production)

*This is dirtsong – It comes from where we bin start off. Comes from country line. Long time singing song for country.
dirtsong coming up from where everything start off.*

*Coming up from ancient song for making country good – looking good all of the time. Singing it up, singing it up, looking after it well.
Should be like that, very important for spinifex, gidgee, mulga, Plenty good food, plant, water hole, animal each country place,
Sky place,*

*Sea place – looking after em. Keeping story alive for country, make it alive – singing the songs, Living the stories, Holding the
knowledge, Following the story, That is the Aboriginal law belonging to us.
dirtsong – happening now!*