



The Orb → Living Cultures → Dance → Creating Tradition → Layers of Meaning

Video Transcript

Sinsa Mansell

00:00:04

I've been fortunate enough to work at St Helens, in and out, for a number of years running a number of workshops, but just recently we've had three days now we've been running workshops.

00:00:14

It's been beautiful to see them come together.

00:00:17

So this opportunity was opened up for those that want to participate, rather than putting them in a position where "This is what's happening".

00:00:27

It's beautiful to see them go through the process of understanding what they've put their hand up to do, and then really contributing.

00:00:38

Compared to any other performing arts or style of dance, traditional dance is not just about the routine and the choreography.

00:00:47

It's about the significance of what it is that they're doing, what they're learning, what they're passing on.

00:00:53

It's not just about the movements.

00:00:55

And one thing I share with them about is we all have birthdays, we all get together, we celebrate, we have a wedding, we all get together and celebrate.

00:01:03

Traditionally any of those celebrations to us is a ceremony, and it would be dancing, sometimes for days, sometimes not stop for weeks, just continuously dance and dance and sing and dance.



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Video Transcript

Sinsa Mansell

00:00:01

I'm very fortunate to be who I am and have my connections to my community, and grow up with such a strong community base.

00:00:09

And from a young age I was working in the language department, and so a small group of us cousins got together and we decided that we really wanted to educate ourselves and speak fluently as much as we could.

00:00:20

And so it started off with creating songs out of palawa kani and this was in the early 2000s.

00:00:27

And then from that around the fireplace we decided to create movement to go with those songs, and it just evolved from there.

00:00:35

So one of our main focusses was creating stories of the native animals that belong to our country here in Tasmania.

00:00:44

When we formed, we started off just dancing, and that was just for ourselves.

00:00:48

And then we identified what we're actually doing.

00:00:51

So number one, we are actually keepers of ceremony, and we're keeping those ceremonies alive, passing them on to our children.

00:00:58

But also we're creating a safe space and environment for children, adults, the broader community, absolutely anyone to come and learn and be a part of it.

00:01:10

Creating awareness.

00:01:11

That's our job, creating awareness.

00:01:13

Letting people know that we're still here, you know, the history of Tasmania is a beautiful history.

I mean, we all have a history, every continent, every land mass has a history, but it's beautiful to be able to open that space to educate the rest of the world.



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The Orb → Living Cultures → Dance → Creating Tradition → Workshop

Video Transcript

Sinsa Mansell

00:00:05

So this afternoon the students are going to come in for their final rehearsal session from the workshops that they've done for the previous two days.

00:00:11

They'll be then getting prepared in traditional ochre, which will be the first time for some of the students.

00:00:17

And then we'll be heading outside to perform the dances that they've learnt to showcase to the rest of the classes.

00:00:22

To begin with it's about building a relationship with each other, that comfortable space, so there is communication, there's games, and then it works into questionnaires and answering, so getting some more sound knowledge, sharing elements of Tasmanian Aboriginal culture, - and identifying the differences between other tribes and other nations.

00:00:49

And then talking about the stories and the traditional practices and opening that up, and allowing them to create dances around the stories that we've been talking about.

00:01:04

So one of the elements a lot of the children are really interested about are the muttonbirds, so they've chosen to create a small dance for the muttonbird.

00:01:13

You know, they've got to enjoy it, and I hope to bring that opportunity and come and be the fun with dancing.



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The Orb → Living Cultures → Dance → Creating Tradition → Performing Pride

Video Transcript

Sinsa Mansell

00:00:02

So it's one thing to workshop and learn a lot of different information and to be able to take that in and process it.

00:00:10

It's another thing to rehearse and learn a dance, but then to be able to perform that and showcase that in front of the rest of the school or your peers your students or family and friends, it's something that really ignites within them, like they're proud, they have an understanding that not everybody has this opportunity, and it's really significant.

00:00:39

Also as a facilitator you have to identify every student has different learning capabilities.

00:00:49

And every structured dance or creation of dance doesn't always suit the entire group.

00:00:57

So as a facilitator you have to identify what will work best, and not exclude, try and give them the opportunity to be able to participate in what works best for them.

00:01:08

It's not about a perfect performance.

00:01:11

It's about having fun, it really is.

00:01:15

And one thing I share with the students is that it's not about who's in front of you and who's watching, it's actually about you, this is for you.

00:01:27

It's not for anyone else that's out there, you're getting to do something that is ancient.



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The Orb → Living Cultures → Dance → Holistic Practice → Country and Dance

Video Transcript

Danny Gardner

00:00:05

Well, here we are at Risdon Cove, I happened to come upon this little spot years ago, and then I come up here with my son not long back and we just went for a walk and we found it.

00:00:15

It just seemed like a nice quiet place to be.

00:00:19

I just sort of came here to get away from the big city across the river, and just to relax and be on Country.

00:00:25

You don't have to drive so far away to be able to connect with my country or my spirits.

00:00:33

I remember the community was still protesting and fighting for a land return at Eddystone Point, also known as *larapuna*.

00:00:41

One of the memories that I have of dancing was on country there.

00:00:44

But on stage, the first time on stage was at a high school, and I was so nervous, really, really scared, and nothing went the way it should have.

00:00:51

Yeah, but over the years I think it has helped me to develop my own confidence.

00:01:01

It's like given me a purpose where I can go to the schools and educate children and teach culture.

00:01:07

That can be through dance, other cultural activities, teach them how to make and throw spears, so it has sort of progressed me in my own cultural learning a fair bit, because it's given me more of an interest in it.

00:01:21

So dancing is a main interest of my part with the culture, but like I said, I don't favour it over anything else, I quite enjoy all my culture aspects.



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Video Transcript

Danny Gardner

00:00:00

So Manala, we do this dance because the two animals in it mate are our special animals, they're a part of our creation.

00:00:08

It's the emu, and the kangaroo, okay?

00:00:12

The first Aboriginal man, he climbed on, was created as a kangaroo, so we was kangaroos like this.

00:00:21

And we would hop around everywhere like this.

00:00:24

And we would eat like this.

00:00:27

And we might do big jumps.

00:00:35

And then they might scratch.

00:00:39

And sniff.

00:00:43

And shake.

00:00:47

They do that to keep the flies off their back, okay?

00:00:50

And he climbed on the emu's back, the big emu.

00:00:55

And we do different ways, hold your hand like this or this way.

00:00:59

Dad likes this one.

00:01:02

And the emu can come down the Milky Way, big long steps down the mountains, left these big footprints.

00:01:17

And as he came to rest, the kangaroo jumped off his back, and he found all the land, and he hopped around learning what to eat, where to drink, what to look out for, especially the hunters.

Manala

00:01:36

What kind of hunters?

Danny Gardner

00:01:38

00:01:40

00:01:43

00:01:45

00:01:47

00:01:59

The Aboriginal hunters.

Because they come with their spears like this.

I'll pretend this is my spear.

And they'd hunt like this.

And they would search the land for tracks, for animal tracks, and they would look, and they'd tell all the other people hunting with them, "This way, this way".

And they'd sneak more, sneak, hide behind the tree, and get real close to the kangaroo, and [shouts], and they'd kill him.

Manala

00:02:13

Why?

Danny Gardner

00:02:14

For food.



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The Orb → Living Cultures → Dance → Holistic Practice → Connection

Video Transcript

Danny Gardner

00:00:02

When I've worked with kids that they're first time performers, the first question I ask them when they're finished is "Would you do that again, like right now? Do you feel like you want to go out and do that again?".

00:00:17

I'm just going to use a little bit today because we haven't got lots.

00:00:22

Look how lovely that colour is.

00:00:23

It's really hard to not go "Okay, let's do a couple more dances".

00:00:26

Because the feeling is amazing.

00:00:30

It's no different from someone going to the gym and releasing endorphins, but in our case it's more around having that connection, and you feel it back.

00:00:40

Some people I think may over-think it.

00:00:43

It's really just keep it basic, the fact that you can sit in a place in the bush and have no thoughts, but generally feel really good about yourself, that's my belief, that's the old people watching over us, in any culture, the old people always watch over us.

00:00:58

And so I think when we're happy, we're doing the right things, our old people are happy.



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The Orb → Living Cultures → Dance → Holistic Practice → The Feeling of Dance

Video Transcript

Manala

00:00:05

The fire isn't going to go out.

Danny Gardner

00:00:06

It will in a minute.

00:00:07

You follow dad like this.

00:00:08

You seem to notice people when they're really connected and they're dancing.

00:00:12

There are no outside thoughts, no influences at that moment when I'm dancing, and it's just like someone surfing, when they're surfing a wave, they'd have that same feeling of there's no thoughts on the outside world, you're just stuck in that moment.

00:00:24

But I still get nervous.

00:00:27

If I'm not as nervous I don't seem to feel as good about it.

00:00:31

It keeps me on my toes, it makes me aware that okay, if something's not going to go right, I can see it happening before it does.

00:00:40

When you dance with young people it helps teach them that nerves are normal, and it helps, over time they build confidence.

00:00:47

I think the nervousness comes from, is mainly in my own head thinking "Am I doing this the right way, is this culturally appropriate?"

00:00:57

You're giving your audience something that they can take away, not just so much a performance, but a bit of knowledge.



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Video Transcript

Danny Gardner

00:00:02

Okay, there's your spear.

00:00:03

Right, so I'm going to be a wallaby.

Manala

00:00:04

Yep.

Danny Gardner

00:00:05

Guess what, I'm going to be a fast wallaby.

00:00:10

Most different dancers, they have their own ability of how they will learn.

00:00:15

I like to watch and learn.

00:00:16

So if I was to do an animal that I've never done some sort of dance around, it's just observing.

00:00:23

The other side is just coming to a place like here, I can just sit down and connect, and sort of pass my thoughts on to my old people or ancestors, and maybe ideas will come to me.

00:00:36

We always try to stick to keep it as culturally appropriate and traditional as we can.

00:00:41

At the same time throwing a bit of contemporary style stuff in, it never hurts, but it's really important that we try to stick to being traditional.

00:00:49

Where did he go?

00:00:49

He went this way - scratch - can you eat?

00:00:49

- oh he's listening



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The Orb → Living Cultures → Dance → Holistic Practice → Cultural Therapy

Video Transcript

Danny Gardner

00:00:03

It's no secret that mental health is an issue.

00:00:05

It's not widely talked about.

00:00:07

I think from experience I've found myself quite reluctant to talk to people, but when I have, I've never felt judged or worried by it.

00:00:17

And I find through dance and connecting - dance isn't just non-stop dancing around, and non-stop, you can have a little dance and sit down around a fire and just yarn.

00:00:28

I find a lot of our cultural activities can be very therapeutic, quite relaxing.

00:00:35

And when you come to places like this, the first thing you notice is you don't hear the outside world or cars and traffic, you actually start to tune into the natural sounds of things.

00:00:45

And it takes you away from that world, where it's not so much running away from it, but it's being able to sit down and think clearly.

00:00:54

I know just a general stressful day for anyone can be bad enough, and so for me I'm happy to come out here on country, and just lose myself and get lost away from all the issues of the normal world.



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Video Transcript

Sinsa Mansell

00:00:03

To be honest to express how I feel, there's different feelings, but I don't have words in my vocabulary for what happens to oneself when you're going to perform.

00:00:19

We open up most festivals in the state.

00:00:22

We perform on a number of platforms, and that's a performance, that's theatrical.

00:00:26

But at the same time as soon as we put our skins on and our ochre, it takes you to another place.

00:00:34

And that's very emotional.

00:00:35

Very, very emotional.

00:00:38

The traditional practices such as dance is so significant to not only your health and wellbeing, your spiritual being, but most aspects of your life.

00:00:51

One of the first dances that we created was a welcome dance.

00:00:55

And it's beautiful to know that all these years later, that same welcome dance is performed at most events by our dancers.

00:01:04

So that's a tradition that we've now started.

00:01:07

In another 10 years' time it's going to be 20 years old.

00:01:11

So that in itself is another reason why we do it, and it's beautiful to see, all these years later, that it's still going, creating that tradition.



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The Orb → Living Cultures → Dance → Motion Transfer → Connection to animals

Video Transcript

Craig Everett

00:00:05

The main reason of dance and that is to storytell, and the most important reason in my belief is connection, not just to country, but to the animals that you're dancing as well.

CJ and Mitchem Everett

00:00:21

pama, paya, luwa

Craig Everett

00:00:33

It's not just about going out there and pretending to be a kangaroo or pretending to be an emu or an eagle, it's actually being the eagle.

00:00:44

So it's not just trying to copy the movements, it's understanding why they move like that.

00:00:48

So whether it be eating grass or whether it be looking out for hunters, or scratching, that whole process of it is done to be able to connect with that animal, and to show respect for the animal as well, and like I say, it's connection with country, because that ochre connects with country, and you're dancing for animals that are on country, which are either our spirits or they're our food, they're our life source, so it's just so much more to it than just the dance, it's about paying respects and that homage sort of thing to that animal for what they do for us throughout all our thousand years of being able to be alive on this country.



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The Orb → Living Cultures → Dance → Motion Transfer → Teaching

Video Transcript

Craig Everett

00:00:00

As soon as he comes across on your territory, you've got to get up and you go in and you attack him, so you come down like that on him.

Mitchem Everett

00:00:07

We're going to teach my little brother CJ how to do the Cape Barren Goose dance today.

Craig Everett

00:00:10

But that bird, he's got to come in, and he's pushing with the wing too, okay?

Mitchem Everett

00:00:15

He's done a lot of birds and like eagles and stuff, he's been doing it ever since he was probably like two as well.

00:00:22

Yeah, so he's pretty good at it, he picks things up really quickly, CJ does, yeah.

Craig Everett

00:00:28

Properly, and you'll stand over him.

00:00:32

Honk, honk, honk.

Mitchem Everett

00:00:34

Me and my Dad started this dance.

00:00:37

We flew over to Flinders Island to study the Cape Barren Geese, and we created a dance out of that, and we're going to try to perform that and teach my brother, because it's his first time as well to learn it.



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The Orb → Living Cultures → Dance → Motion Transfer → Cleanse and Welcome

Video Transcript

Craig Everett

00:00:02

Old fella sitting up there watching us.

00:00:06

First of all it's getting into the actual process of just getting ready to paint up, even before, even if we know what dances we're doing, it's that whole process of getting undressed and walking on country with bare feet, and actually having that connection, and then putting that ochre on you.

Mitchem Everett

00:00:25

We usually go the cleansing first, to cleanse the area and the spirit out of the area.

00:00:30

And then we'll go do the welcome, and that's to welcome everyone in and like the good spirits.

unamed

00:00:56

pama, paya, luwa



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The Orb → Living Cultures → Dance → Motion Transfer → Achievement

Video Transcript

Mitchem Everett

00:00:04

NAISDA's a dance college, and they bring kids in [from]all around Australia, but I'm like the second person from Tasmania in 30 years to go up there.

00:00:16

I was really surprised when I went up there.

00:00:18

It does all different aspects of dance.

00:00:20

I got taught the Aboriginal aspect of dance, the Torres Strait Islander dance, jazz, a bit of ballet, it was a lot different, because I'm usually just cultural, it was a big difference, yeah, I really enjoyed it.

00:00:34

I just really want all the knowledge I can get really, I just want to just get it all out there as much as I can.

00:00:41

I mean, it's hard to explain.

00:00:43

Like you feel the dance, like so I get really embarrassed speaking and stuff, and I used to get bullied about being Aboriginal in school, in primary school.

00:00:51

And when I'm dancing, none of that, I just don't think about anything, it just all goes naturally, yeah, it just really overcomes me.

00:00:59

I just took the opportunity and it was really, it turned out really great for me, yeah.



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The Orb → Living Cultures → Dance → Motion Transfer → Achievement

Video Transcript

Mitchem Everett

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The Orb → Living Cultures → Dance → Motion Transfer → Father and Son

Video Transcript

Mitchem Everett

00:00:04

We was brought up in such a beautiful environment.

00:00:07

We had it so much around us, being at Eddystone Point, *Irapuna*, that's where my sixth great grandfather was, *manalargena*.

00:00:15

It's like with Dad, he's just done so well with us kids, and without him we wouldn't really know our culture.

00:00:21

And it's a big part of this, like knowing who you are, I think.

Craig Everett

00:00:26

He still consistently thanks me for the opportunities that he gets, and he doesn't realise that he doesn't get them because of me, like he gets them because people see his passion, see him dance, and see his movement when he dances.

00:00:41

But like I said to him, people don't give you opportunities if they don't see that passion or that drive, or that truth in you as well.

00:00:49

I couldn't be a prouder father, like it's just amazing.

Mitchem Everett

00:00:53

Normal kids go and play the Playstation and stuff, but when we were younger we were out cutting trees down and building waddies and spears.

00:00:59

He's just a role model I think, I look up to him so much.

00:01:04

He's created my life pretty much.

Craig Everett

00:01:08

I'm really proud of you boys.



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