

# Tbreak

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**If we can awake (the audience's) spiritual consciousness or even just an essence of that, then we've done our job**  
Bangarra's Stephen Page on his motivation as an indigenous storyteller

## CABARET

### The Gold Violin Show

Slide 41, Oxford St, Darlinghurst; Friday 9pm, dinner and show \$80 (pre-purchase essential), show only \$30, 8915 1899, [sophieserafino.com](http://sophieserafino.com)

WHEN the Australian embassy wanted a true blue musician to play for Prince Frederik and Princess Mary in Denmark, they called Sophie Serafino.

The woman with the gold violin appeared opposite another Australian import — Sculpture By The Sea.

But unlike her, the inanimate objects didn't have to grapple with the finer details of royal protocol.

The prince, however, turned out to be very casual. "He said 'Your show was a trip'. Mary was the very proper one. If I didn't know better I would say she was the one who had been in the royal family for years," Serafino says.

Now back in Australia, Serafino is touring with her *Gold Violin Show*, which features music from the EP of the same name. "It is my foray into the fantasy violin world. It's pop meets world music, meets classical violin," she says.

The show tells the story of Serafino's travels with her violin.

"The gold violin will steal me and the audience away on a fantastic trip to different countries," she says.

The violinist, actor, singer and composer tells the story mostly through a series of her own compositions along with singing, acting and dancing.

In the show she plays both a 200-year-old conventional violin and an exclusive Yamaha, gold-coloured electric violin.

"The inspiration for the show is that my violin has taken me right around the world — to America, Morocco, Italy, Germany, France, Turkey, everywhere." **Troy Lennon**



Gold fingers: Multi-talented Sophie Serafino

### Director leads nose first

MAVERICK filmmaker Robert Rodriguez was one of the first directors to revisit 3D — with *The Adventures Of Sharkboy And Lavagirl*, starring the then-unknown Taylor Lautner.

Now he's leading the way into the next sensory dimension with the announcement that *Spy Kids: All The Time In The World* will feature Aromascope.

Moviegoers will rub a number on a scented card, given out at the cinema, when the corresponding numbers flash up on the movie screen to enhance the fun of the immersive action adventure.

According to the film's promo line, there will be: "Four times the gadgets, four times the adventure and four times the dimension."

*Spy Kids: All The Time In The World* — the fourth film in the hugely successful franchise and the first in eight years — opens in Sydney on September 22.

Bangarra has a vision of connecting with the mainstream, writes **Vanessa Keys**



Evolving: Jasmin Sheppard in Stephen Page's *ID*, a work exploring indigenous identity  
Picture: Liam Kidston

## Dancing with change

IN THIS age of theatremakers striving to create bigger and better "multi-faceted stage experiences", Bangarra artistic director Stephen Page comes across as a bit of a purist.

He's not interested in creating a specifically "educational" experience, nor is he fussed about sending his audience home with a message or a moral lesson tucked in their pockets.

Page, who is celebrating his 20th anniversary at Bangarra's helm, is simply interested in entertainment.

"I think in our country audiences really just want to be entertained," he says matter-of-factly. "You know what? They don't want to use their brain. They just want to come along and be entertained. For me, watching theatre is a lot like watching sport. You don't go to the footy to think, do you?"

Interestingly, it's not the first time Page has talked passionately about football and Bangarra in the same breath. In 2009, The Sydney Swans and Bangarra Dance Theatre became "cousins" in a partnership arrangement aimed at encouraging the organisations, both with strong ties to the indigenous community, to share knowledge and resources and to establish player/performer development programs.

Page's desire to see Bangarra connect more intimately with mainstream audiences is again evident in the company's 2011 program, *Belong*, which opens at the Opera House's Playhouse theatre on July 20.

The double bill encompasses Page's own piece, *ID*, an exploration of what it means to be indigenous in the 21st century; and *About*, a piece exploring the

different traditions and customs passed down through indigenous tribes. *About* is also Thursday Islander and Bangarra dancer Elma Kris's second choreographic work for the company.

Both dances ask important questions about identity, a topic that inevitably came to Page's attention as he started to reflect upon his 20 years at the company.

"I wanted to explore the different perceptions on the Aboriginal identity that I've witnessed over the last five, 10 years," he says. "Western perceptions, personal perceptions, even indigenous perceptions... all of them provoked within me how we celebrate our identity in the 21st century, through stereotypes and our own personal experiences."

Has he noticed a difference in the last 20 years in the way people perceive and respond to Bangarra?

"Sure, it's changed. But we've also changed. Our focus and our delivery and our process is truly honest to our indigenous perspective and hopefully will always naturally provoke a varied perception from an outside viewer," he says.

In Bangarra's early days, Page says, he tended to create works he thought the public wanted, rather than what drove him creatively.

"We were being judged and we were totally aware of that. Now, it's only about the creative process and what comes out of that. It's about what we feel is right in terms of the evolution of indigenous storytelling through dance."

**Belong, Bangarra Dance Theatre, Playhouse, Sydney Opera House; July 20-August 20, \$65-\$75, 9250 7777, [sydneyoperahouse.com.au](http://sydneyoperahouse.com.au)**

## Edge of desperation to Puccini's classic

### OPERA

#### Review: *La Boheme*

Opera Theatre, Sydney Opera House; until October 24, 9250 7111, [sydneyoperahouse.com.au](http://sydneyoperahouse.com.au)

WHEN Mimi first enters the artists' garret, Rodolfo thinks she's drop-dead gorgeous. But as we all watching know, by the end of Act IV in Puccini's *La Boheme* she'll just be dead.

It's what happens in between that counts and this Opera Australia production, directed by Gale Edwards, romps between the disused rotunda of struggling artists, poet Rodolfo (Ji-Min Park), painter Marcello (Andrew Jones), philosopher Colline

(David Parkin), and musician Schaunard (Shane Lawrence) and the indulgence of Germany's Weimar Republic.

Park's first solo won warm applause but unfortunately not so Takesha Meshe Kizart's opening aria as Mimi.

Lawrence shines as the garrulous Schaunard who shares the spoils of his gains with freezing friends. The bohemians' philosophy means when they have money, they spend it — usually on wine, women and song — until there is none left, including the rent, as landlord Benoit (John Bolton Wood) finds. Decked out in green checked duds and bright orange hair, Bolton Wood captured his cameo well. And birthday boy Jones kept a lid on his exuberance as Marcello, but at times seemed to want to jump out of his skin.

Taryn Fiebig is bawdy and bold as Marcello's ex-lover Musetta, with her platinum



blonde hair and sequined outfit showing an alluring leg. The lush Cafe Momus, all red velvet and chandeliers, had an array of prostitutes and a spectre of ascending fascism in a gilded box.

The final act, reuniting the lovers, brings us back to the

garret. Kizart does desperately ill quite well, wringing out the last of her performance while Park packs in the emotion as Rodolfo realises the love of his life is no more.

It's a marquee production with some shining stars. **Grant Jones**

**Stars shine: The cast of Opera Australia's remake of Puccini's *La Boheme* Picture: Bob Barker**