

# REPORT

# **The Pryce Centre** For Culture & Arts.

## CLEOPATRA PRYCE | International Professional Development Jan, April 2019

In January and April 2019, I undertook an extensive international dance training and professional development program. This took me to New York, Philadelphia and Los Angeles.

It was a program that was built around me and my needs as an emerging dancer and arts manager and sought to provide practical skills and experiences that will support not only my work in Australia, but my goals to train and perform overseas.

Without the support of the Young, Black and Deadly Scholarship, this would not have been possible as I would have struggled financially to make my dreams a reality. This report recognises the outcomes made possible by your investment. I hope to use what I have learnt to continue to inspire our young people as well as have them see that their dreams are as achievable as mine.







## New York.



### **DANCE TRAINING:**

I took two dance classes at Alvin Ailey Dance Company. It has been a massive dream of mine to visit Alvin Ailey, but even more mind-blowing to participate in Horton technique and contemporary dance classes as part of their extension program. The classes here are interesting in that they run through without stopping and have a live percussionist. This forces you to feel the music and keep up in the class. I actually enjoyed this as a model because it

means that they are pushing you to be excellent instead of making it too easy for you. I think that was a challenge I was nervous to accept but once I got into it, I really did love the lessons.



## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:**

In New York I attended a day at the International Society of Performing Arts conference and met a lot of international delegates who are CEOs and company directors. I also got to listen to panels and presentations from artists all round the world. This helped me to understand what these types of gatherings are about and how important they are to network and be prepared.

I also attended meetings at the Quebec Consulate, the American-Australian Association and KIN: First Nations Dialogues. I attended an honouring for Elders and a protocol from the Lenape Custodians of New York. I also participated in a workshop by New York based Spiderwoman theater and Aboriginal dancer Mariaa Randall.





# Philadelphia.



## DANCE TRAINING:

Met with Mrs Joan Myers-Brown founder of PHILADANCO - the Philadelphia Black Dance Company. She is 87years old and still running her company. She is so famous, Barak Obama gave her the highest honour for the arts. Aunt Joan as she likes to be called gave me a tshirt and invited me to a class later that day. I was thinking it was a general class like what I'd experienced at Alvin Ailey. To my surprise, it was the Company class with the professional dancers who tour and perform on stages all over the world. This was a big deal as I was confronted with my own confidence in my ability to dance alongside a professional ensemble. I got nervous and nearly backed out but was guided into the room and met with such support and positivity. Before I knew it, the class had begun. It was some of the most challenging choreography I had undertaken but I found myself keeping up. It saw this as a chance for me to set goals on my own areas of improvement but my big goal is to come back and dance as part of the professional ensemble of PHILADANCO. When I do this, I will be the first Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander dancer to be a part of the company.



## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

Sat in a rehearsal of DANSE4NIA REPERTORY ENSEMBLE. This is a multicultural, contemporary modern dance company/organisation committed to using dance to foster personal, cultural, and social change. They devise work using Ballet, Horton Technique and contemporary movement vocabularies. After the rehearsal we introduced ourselves and discussed the possibility of opening up a youth dance exchange between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander up and coming dancers and their dancers.

I also met with Iquail Shaheed, the company director of DANCE IQUAIL! He had travelled to Australia to teach at

NAISDA and is also interested in developing exchange and ideas with us.

Iquail is a great role model in what he has achieved coming from extreme poverty to earning degrees at University, dancing for Alvin Ailey, forming his own company and performing all over the world.





# Los Angeles.



## **DANCE TRAINING:**

DEBBIE ALLEN is world famous and her dance academy is based in Los Angeles. I came to do a Hip Hop class. Being in the studio with other people around my age was incredible and the choreography was amazing. What I didn't realise during the performance was that THE Debbie Allen had been watching me do the choreography. Below is a video of some of my dance class with the surprise of Ms Allen responding to my performance at the end. As an outcome of this, I was invited to come to Debbie Allen Dance School summer program.



THE MILLENNIUM DANCE COMPLEX is known worldwide as the best studio for commercial dance. This is where all the big celebrities go to work on their choreography. Artists such as Beyonce, Janet Jackson, Pink, Brittany Spears, Usher and Justin Timberlake etc. have all been there. Their celebrity hall of fame covers most of their walls. It was incredible to take a class with a world class choreographer who is behind this league of performer. I liked her choreographic style which was complex yet delicate in many ways. I am planning to return to Millennium to take up their 40 dance classes offer for \$299 which is such a great deal and nothing like what we can access back in Australia for the commercial dance experience.





THE PLAYGROUND is an interesting company model as it is a one room street front class where you are watched by people walking by on Melrose Avenue. As you can see in the video below, I took a different Hip Hop class here to the style and choreography of Debbie Allen Dance Academy. This is important to me as a dancer and also a choreographer, so I can expand my technique and then use my skills back in Cairns to lead the young dancers there.



### **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:**

During my time in Los Angeles, I visited LACSHA. This is a performing arts high school as part of CAL State University. We sat in on a class with a guest choreographer who was teaching the Limon technique which was a contemporary ballet style. We then met with the Head of Dance and discussed ideas around faculty exchange so that we may have some of the Choreographers come to Australia and teach our young people these styles.

We also got to take some photographs for use in social media and I did some training on running the Pryce Centre as a virtual office, basic bookkeeping, tour management and using technology to keep our communities connected to the world.





