

## Composer David Page has died at the age of 55

Reporter: Rachel Pupazzoni  
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**PETER LLOYD:** The music director of Indigenous Bangarra Dance Theatre Company has died unexpectedly.

David Page was 55.  
He's remembered for being a vital influence in delivering Indigenous culture with audiences throughout Australia.

Rachel Pupazzoni reports.

(Music plays)

**RACHEL PUPAZZONI:** David Page is a descendant of the Nunkul people and the Munaldjali clan of the Yugambah tribe from south-east Queensland.

For decades he shared his passion for his people's music and culture with audiences throughout Australia and the world.

**DANIEL BROWNING:** This is an artist who did things and who really grew what you might call contemporary Aboriginal culture. He was very much a part of that kind of growth and he will be, he'll be very sorely missed.

**RACHEL PUPAZZONI:** Daniel Browning, the presenter of Radio National's Indigenous Art and Culture Program 'Awaye', says his contribution to indigenous culture was treasured by many.

**DANIEL BROWNING:** I think he created some beautiful instrumental music. I mean yes it was a soundtrack for the performances of Bangarra. But it was also, you know, it was innovative.

It was interesting and exciting and new, and I think David Page will be remembered as someone who contributed an awful lot to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community as an artist and as a person who touched many lives. I can just say that I know for a fact he leaves many heartbroken people behind.

(Music plays)

**RACHEL PUPAZZONI:** David Page began with Bangarra Dance Theatre in 1991 at the same time his brother Stephen became Artistic Director.

Their youngest brother Russell was a principal dancer with Bangarra.

Bangarra Dance Theatre issued a statement today saying:

"The Bangarra clan is unbelievably saddened that our brother David Page is no longer with us."

(Music plays)

**RACHEL PUPAZZONI:** New South Wales MP and long time friend of the Page brothers, Linda Burney, first met David Page about 30 years ago.

**LINDA BURNEY:** He was always such a warm person that made everyone feel comfortable, that was the light of any event, and I'm just so shocked and so saddened to hear of his untimely passing, it's inconceivable really.

**RACHEL PUPAZZONI:** He composed more than 25 pieces for the company's repertoire.

**LINDA BURNEY:** Tens of thousands of people, not only here in Australia but across the world, have been touched by his talent, by his music and particularly his composing.

**RACHEL PUPAZZONI:** He acting chief executive officer of Ausdance, Neil Roach, says his music brought a special element to each performance.

**NEIL ROACH:** The great groundedness of his work and his music, the way he went to country to land to hear and feel what was going on. We in the audience all heard and felt that.

(Music plays)

**RACHEL PUPAZZONI:** The eighth of 12 children, David Page got his start in pop music.

**NEIL ROACH:** He was a child pop star. His biography you know would indicate that he was being groomed for Australia's Michael Jackson.

**RACHEL PUPAZZONI:** After a short stint at pop music, Page went on to become a composer. He helped create the music for the opening ceremony at the Sydney Olympic Games with Steve Francis.

The pair worked together again, winning a Helpmann Award for best Original Score for this piece, 'Belong' composed for Bangarra in 2011.

('Belong' plays)

**RACHEL PUPAZZONI:** Page also won a Helpmann Award for 'Mathinna' in 2009.

He was given the Green Room Award for Best New Play in 2006 for his autobiographical show 'Page 8'.

**LINDA BURNEY:** It is another example of a wonderful, talented Aboriginal person leaving this earth before their time.

**PETER LLOYD:** That's Linda Burney ending that report by Rachel Pupazzoni.