



BWW REVIEW: DJUKI MALA Brings Their Energetic Blend Of Traditional And Contemporary Dance To SYDNEY FESTIVAL

by

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Tuesday 19th January 2016, 7:30pm, Magic Mirrors Spiegel tent, Hyde Park

DJUKI MALA, the little dance troupe from the remote Elcho Island, East Arnhem Land, that was catapulted to fame with a YouTube video of their unique blend of traditional Aboriginal dancing and contemporary "western" dance shares their story with SYDNEY FESTIVAL. Presented as a part documentary and part concert, video interviews with Elders and the dancers express the dedication, drive and commitment to their culture by continuing to tell stories through dance. There is also a heartwarming message that all involved also see the encouragement of dance as something that can show the community's youth that they can be "healthy, strong and smart".

The troupe of 5 male dances marked with white paint present traditional dances armed with spears and spear throwers, clad in loincloths and feathered headpieces. The screen behind them bears projections of Elcho Island and the soundtrack includes the rhythmic sounds of

billions claps ticks, didgeridoo and vocals.

The dance to "Zorba The Greek", presented to honour a Greek friend and also the work that made them an Internet sensation is naturally included. There are wonderfully comic routines where they draw on other cultural dances from around the world along with contemporary styles like hip hop and freestyle and blend them with their traditional styles. They honour contemporary influences and also draw on a movie musical classic.

The blend of athleticism, fluidity, agility, precision and intensity is made even better by the passion, playfulness and comedy they inject into their work. Their joy in sharing their work is clear and infectious, earning them standing ovations. Their respect for their elders and their desire to carry on the vision 'Big Frank' had for the group is clear.

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