

**Hip Hop culture was given  
a good rap in this skills  
development project led by  
well known rhymer, beatboxer  
and breakdancer, Morganics,  
and choreographer Gerard  
Veltre, who fuses hip hop with  
other cultural backgrounds.**

The two shared their vast CCD experience with six local dance artists in the Western Sydney and the Northern Rivers regions, where they ran workshops for two weeks. The project was presented by the Dance Action programs in Western Sydney and Northern Rivers.

by MIA CUYLER



# Urban Street Rural Beat



Left to right: Morganics, Gerard Veltre, Emma Newman, Mia Cuyler, Ryan Dillon.  
Photo: Les Beckett

**WHEN EMMA NEWMAN CALLED TO INVITE ME TO JOIN THE URBAN Street Rural Beat project, little did I know then how much it would shape my role as an artist in this area, and what a truly amazing opportunity I had just been handed.**

Five local dance artists and I met with Emma to discuss the project in February. For us it had just begun, but the idea was developed eighteen months ago by Jeff Meiners, then Outreach Project Manager for Ausdance NSW, and had just got the green light after resubmission to the Community Cultural Development Board of the Australia Council.

## June

14 - 21 June

*Blood Yellow* by Barbara Stellmach. Presented by Cowra Musical and Dramatic Society, **COWRA** Civic Centre. Bookings contact The Giftkeeper Tel 02 6341 4433

14 June - 3 August

*Life in the Emperor's Tomb*, exhibition of Ancient Chinese funerary ceramics from the collection donated by Dr T T Tsui to the National Gallery. Tweed River Regional Art Gallery **MURWILLUMBAH** Tel 02 6670 2790 [tweedart@tweed.nsw.gov.au](mailto:tweedart@tweed.nsw.gov.au) [www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/artgallery](http://www.tweed.nsw.gov.au/artgallery)

The plan was to connect two areas, urban and rural, by inviting leaders in each to work with local artists to develop workshop tools and enhance their Breakdance and Hip Hop skills – so they could then continue working with young people in their area – to inspire and create dance opportunities within our communities.

Gerard Veltre and Morgan Lewis, 'Morganics' – both renowned performers, teachers and CCD workers who have and continue to work with community groups across several states – were approached to lead the project

Among the core artists, we had an abundance of skills to share. Daniella Finkenauer is a prolific local hip hop teacher; Les Beckett, a well known beatboxer and hip hop producer; Ryan Dillon, local break dancer; Zoe Tiernan, local community dance artist and performer; and Cristy Kilkeary and I are both dance students of the Northern Rivers Conservatorium.

Morganics and Gerard mentored us and imparted as much of their knowledge and skills as they possibly could. Smiling along the way, we shared and explored methods to create and facilitate dance, as well as learning our own piece to demonstrate (so we didn't get fat as we sat through miles we travelled!). We ran workshops in Yamba, Casino, Coraki, Grafton, Acmena Juvenile Detention Centre, Drake, Kyogle and Nimbin, where we soaked up Gerard and Morganics in action and put our new skills to the test. With great responses and a lot of enthusiasm we created smiles, many moving feet and real rhymes from every workshop.

Morgan and Gerard have long returned to their homes, but up here we see the continuing effect *Urban Street Rural Beat* has created in our community. Some of the local centres and schools have already funded on-going projects for all the little feet out there inspired to dance.

One of the greatest personal outcomes for me, merely a baby in the world of community arts, was to witness how projects like this can be made possible and be supported. Six months ago I was a dancer wanting to bring back some skills into the area in which I was born and raised, to teach and work with young people; knowing where I would like to go but not quite knowing how to get there. Now I am a dancer and a teacher with an abundance of resources at my fingertips. I've learnt more than just how to facilitate productive workshops. I've learnt how to take an idea and make it happen: the steps to take, where my resources are, what funding bodies are about, and who is there to help. ■

**For information about the Northern Rivers Performing Arts Dance Action contact Emma Newman, Dance Action Manager  
Tel 02 6622 3279 Email [emma@norpa.org.au](mailto:emma@norpa.org.au).**

17 June

Literary Dinner, with special guest speaker Alan Seymour, internationally acclaimed playwright of works including *The One Day of the Year*. 6.30pm. Illawarra Performing Arts Centre, **WOLLONGONG** Tel 02 4226 3366.

17 - 18 June

Glynn Nicholls in *Certified Male*, see one of Australia's most professional and versatile comedians tours his full length musical comedy about a group of men who go off on a 'bonding weekend'. Manning Entertainment Centre **TAREE**. Contact Mike Collins Tel 02 6592 5466