



## No sorry to Aborigines: Russian dancers

There were Germans acting like Hawaiians, Chinese who thought they were Greek and Canadians getting passed off as Spaniards but nothing caused quite the stir of two Russians trying to dress up like Aborigines. Looking like a bizarre cross between cowboys and cheerleaders wearing fake ferns, ice dancers Oksana Domnina and Maxim Shabalin completed their indigenous-themed original routine at the Pacific Coliseum on Sunday night.

The Russian pair received polite if not exactly overwhelming applause after they skated and the judges seemed equally non-plussed, the world champions dropping from first to third overall when the original component was scored.

The routine had caused an uproar amongst Aboriginal groups in Australia, particularly with the NSW Land Council who described the routine as offensive.

Chair of the council Bev Manton took particular umbrage to the uniforms made of a hotch-potch of plastic leaves and seemingly randomly painted white markings while there were question marks raised about the choreography and music score which had a didgeridoo backbeat.

While other performers happily interpreted other cultures without anyone batting an eyelid the Russians were clearly in the crosshairs on Sunday.

Shabalin had offered a "maybe" about whether the pair had changed their outfits and music after the controversial European Championship routine last month.

There were some minor modifications on Sunday. Shabalin's clothing was lighter in 'skin' tone to match Domnina's caramel-coloured wares and there were less markings on their legs.

He again shrugged off the controversy afterwards. "It can't be 100 per cent authentic because it's the ice," he said.

"We did a bit of research in the beginning and then we did some more."

Asked about why he changed to a lighter colour uniform he said: "We got some opinions that it was offensive. I don't know why it was offensive but we changed."

But his partner was quite happy to cut to the chase.

"Actually, we were happy about it," Domnina said.

"It showed that we touched something. No other couple got so much press."

Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir put host Canada in position for its first Olympic ice dance gold medal by winning the original dance.

Their spicy flamenco earned 68.41 points, with US champions Meryl Davis and Charlie Scott in second place.

The deciding free dance is on Monday.

*article from ninemsn*

# BRITISH pop star George Michael has kicked off his first Australian tour

Despite the venue change from ME Bank Stadium to the oft-complained-about acoustics of the Burswood Dome - 15,000 punters eagerly awaited the pop stylings of the legendary gay icon.

There were some production problems during the test run on Friday night - it was the first time the stage was set up in over a year-and-a-half.

The elaborate platform was revealed as three large screens and two smaller ones decorated the stage to allow even the furthest of seats to see the British singer perform.

Bi-level scaffolding housed the instruments, which included bongo drums and keyboards.

For reasons unknown - the start time was delayed to about 8.30pm, but Michael was worth the wait.

He greeted the crowd looking debonair in a black shirt and his signature shades. It was a far cry from his "Choose Life" T-shirt he wore in his heyday as part of '80s pop group Wham!

It was wall-to-wall hits from the man of the hour as he asked the crowd "Are we ready to make up after 22 years?" in reference to the last time he visited Perth.

Fast love was a hot favourite, but everything he sang throughout the evening was lapped up by the adoring audience.

The lighting and display screens were that of a true flamboyant showman, with music clips from Michael's music collection dating back to when he first became a solo artist. He had a talented team behind him with six backup soul singers and an enthusiastic keyboardist.

Vocally, he was slightly breathless at times and the microphone levels appeared to fluctuate but his voice was uniquely Michael and no-one seemed to be complaining. Much of his show was power ballads including



George Michael wows Perth fans

Father Figure and Praying for Time.

He stepped up the tempo with the Wham song Everything She Wants. Many people hadn't forgotten those days as many were sporting the "Choose Life" T-shirt in the music video of Wake Me Up Before You Go Go which, unfortunately, Michael did not perform.

His dance moves haven't evolved much, and, in the least condescending way possible, it was adorable to watch. He made great use of the stage and the runway, which was set up so he could get as close to the audience as possible. He was engaging throughout the show and it really seemed like he actually wanted to be in Perth, unlike some artists who treat their tours like it's a chore.

He sang two covers quite beautifully - they were Roxanne by The Police and Nina Simone's Feeling Good, which was performed while burlesque dancer Dita Von Teese graced the screens. It was his song One More Try that really shone, as well as his 1990 hit Too Funky.

Barely anyone was sitting down throughout the entire concert, which was an unusual occurrence for a show in Perth. People wanted to boogie down to Faith after the 20-minute intermission, and boogie they did. The main quailm of the night was the breaks between songs were s-

lightly too long, but that may have been more from eagerness to hear his next hit.

After singing Spinning the Wheel he remarked "I must say I can't remember the last time I played in this sort of heat, and I'm not just talking about the people in the room," What a charmer. It was exactly as one would imagine a George Michael concert to be, full of energy, bright lights and a party vibe.

He sang Amazing for "anyone who has found the one" and Flawless (Go to the City), but sadly didn't try to hit any high notes. There was an amusing moment when he came out in a police shirt to sing Outside, which was released just after he was arrested for "pleasuring himself" in a public toilet.

He only had one song for his encore and of course it was Careless Whisper. He got the crowd to sing along with him - it was a joyous moment. Many were waiting for him to sing Freedom, but it never came.

Those who chose not to buy tickets for the show missed out on some great entertainment. As he bid everyone adieu he said "I'm sorry it took so long Perth, I hope I made up for it tonight."

George, you sure did.

*article from Perth Now*

## Twenty four percent of those on Australian Student visas looking for immigration

A recent online survey of 1600 international students in more than 10 Australian Universities shows that 24 percent are interested in studying overseas to gain permanent residence. This is up five percent compared to a similar survey in 2005. The recent changes to the Australian immigration system which will make it more difficult for many students to gain a permanent residence visa may therefore put off many prospective students interested in Australia.

The new Australian immigration system gives priority to skilled migrants with a job offer. Also, the new Skilled Occupations List will in future, most likely, only include more highly skilled occupations. It is felt that the latest Australian immigration changes will cause serious problems for private colleges; This has been the faster growing sector of Australia's \$17 billion-a-year international education industry.

There has been a great deal of bad publicity following a number of attacks on Indian, especially in Melbourne. However, it was still felt that Australia is the safest place to study; Safer in fact than the US, Britain, Canada and New Zealand.

The main issue that students consider when choosing a Country is the quality of education. However, two thirds of those surveyed also took into account safety when making their decision. Indians put "good career prospects" ahead of safety when making a decision.

Overall students felt that Australia was "a safe country" and also felt that it was a multicultural and tolerant society. Students are happy with their Australian study experience with only 6 per cent saying that they were not satisfied; Nine percent of Indians who responded to the survey expressed dissatisfaction with their experience in Australia.