

BY THEATRE WORKS

A POWERFUL CELEBRATION OF CULTURE, RESILIENCE, AND THE UNBREAKABLE TIES BETWEEN MOTHER AND CHILD, COMMUNITY AND COUNTRY.

# LAZARUS

THEATRE WORKS PRESENTS

# LAZARUS

BY JOHN HARDING | DIRECTED BY KAMARRA BELL-WYKES

21 MAY - 6 JUNE | THEATRE WORKS

📍 theatre works, 14 acland street, st kilda



CREATIVE VICTORIA



# ABOUT THEATRE WORKS

**Theatre Works is Australia's home of independent theatre:** a creative precinct where artists take risks, new stories are born, and audiences discover the bold voices shaping contemporary culture. For more than 45 years, Theatre Works has supported artists to develop, make, and share ambitious new Australian work. Today, our precinct is stronger and more interconnected than ever.

Located in the heart of St Kilda, the Theatre Works Precinct brings together four purpose-built venues: the Main Theatre, the Explosives Factory, the TWiSK Rehearsal Space, and the Black Box Café & Outdoor Stage. Each space plays a distinct role in the creative lifecycle, providing artists with everything they need to move from idea, to development, to premiere, to tour; all within a single, supportive ecosystem.

Our model is simple but rare: we share investment and risk with independent artists. Through co-producing, commissioning, and tailored producing support, we ensure artists are backed by real resources: free development space, professional equipment, rehearsal infrastructure, marketing, ticketing, and technical support. This gives artists the freedom to take creative risks while removing the financial and logistical pressures that so often limit independent work.

Every year, more than 600 artists pass through our precinct, developing and presenting work across 50+ productions.

Many go on to regional and national touring, VCE Playlist recognition, and major awards. Our audiences are equally diverse: from loyal locals to school groups, visiting families, and new theatre-goers who discover us through the café, bar, or festival partnerships.

The precinct allows us to operate at a scale unique in Victoria's independent sector. The Main Theatre offers a fully equipped black box for bold, ambitious work; the Explosives Factory provides a home for experimentation, residencies, and intimate performance; the TWiSK Rehearsal Space offers year-round free development space; and the Black Box Café & Outdoor Stage connect the precinct to the daily life of St Kilda, welcoming more than 20,000 visitors each year.

Together, these venues form a pipeline that supports artists at every stage of their practice while building community, diversifying income, and embedding independent theatre deeply into the cultural fabric of St Kilda. This integrated precinct model - development to presentation, bar to black box, artist to audience - is what makes Theatre Works unique.

This is the heart of Theatre Works: a place where artists are held, supported, and challenged; where audiences encounter work that surprises and moves them; and where community grows, one story at a time.

**Theatre Works respectfully acknowledges First People's sovereignty and recognise the continuing connection to lands, waters and storytelling by Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia.**

**We pay our respects to the many clans and language groups in Victoria, to their elders past and present, and acknowledge the strength and resilience of all Aboriginal peoples.**

**Always was, always will be Aboriginal land.**

## TEAM THEATRE WORKS

**DIANNE TOULSON** (she/her) Executive Director / Creative Producer

**ADAM GARDNER** (he/him) Marketing / Graphic Design / Box Office Manager

**JADE HIBBERT** (she/her) Company Producer

**CHRIS PATRICK HANSEN** (he/him) Marketing and Producing Associate

**NATALIE EDGE** (she/her) Front of House Co-Ordinator

**JOSHUA FERNANDEZ** (he/him) Venue Operations Assistant

**ANNE HENDERSON** (she/her) Finance Administrator

# LAZARUS

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**WRITTEN BY**

John Harding

**DIRECTED BY**

Kamarra Bell-Wykes

**VIDEOGRAPHER**

Cobie Orger

**COMPOSER**

Todd Bennett

**SET DESIGN**

Justin Green

**LIGHTING DESIGN**

Tim Bonser

**STAGE MANAGERS**

Clara Camm

Mahi Modouris

**CAST**

Sermsah Bin Saad

Nathan Wright

Riley Warner

Teresa Moore

*Lazarus was originally produced by Yirramboi Festival and  
John Harding Enterprises*

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**LAZARUS IS A BY THEATRE WORKS PRODUCTION**

Shows in the **BY THEATRE WORKS** stream are produced and presented by Theatre Works in-house, lead by artists who are either on staff and/or alumni of our professional development programs.





# DIRECTOR'S NOTE

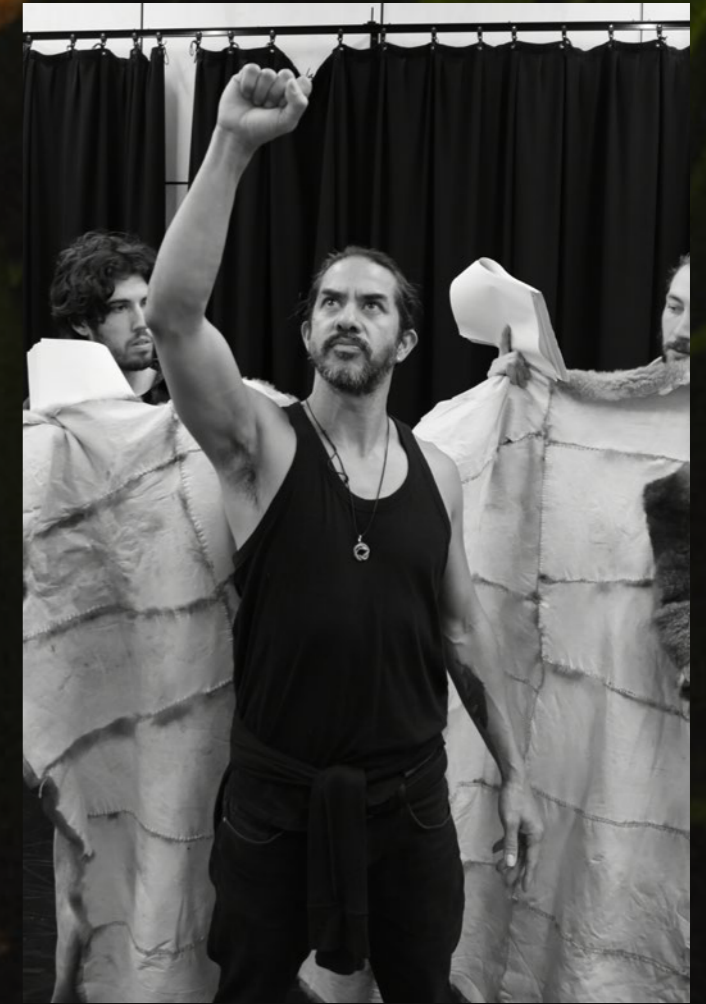
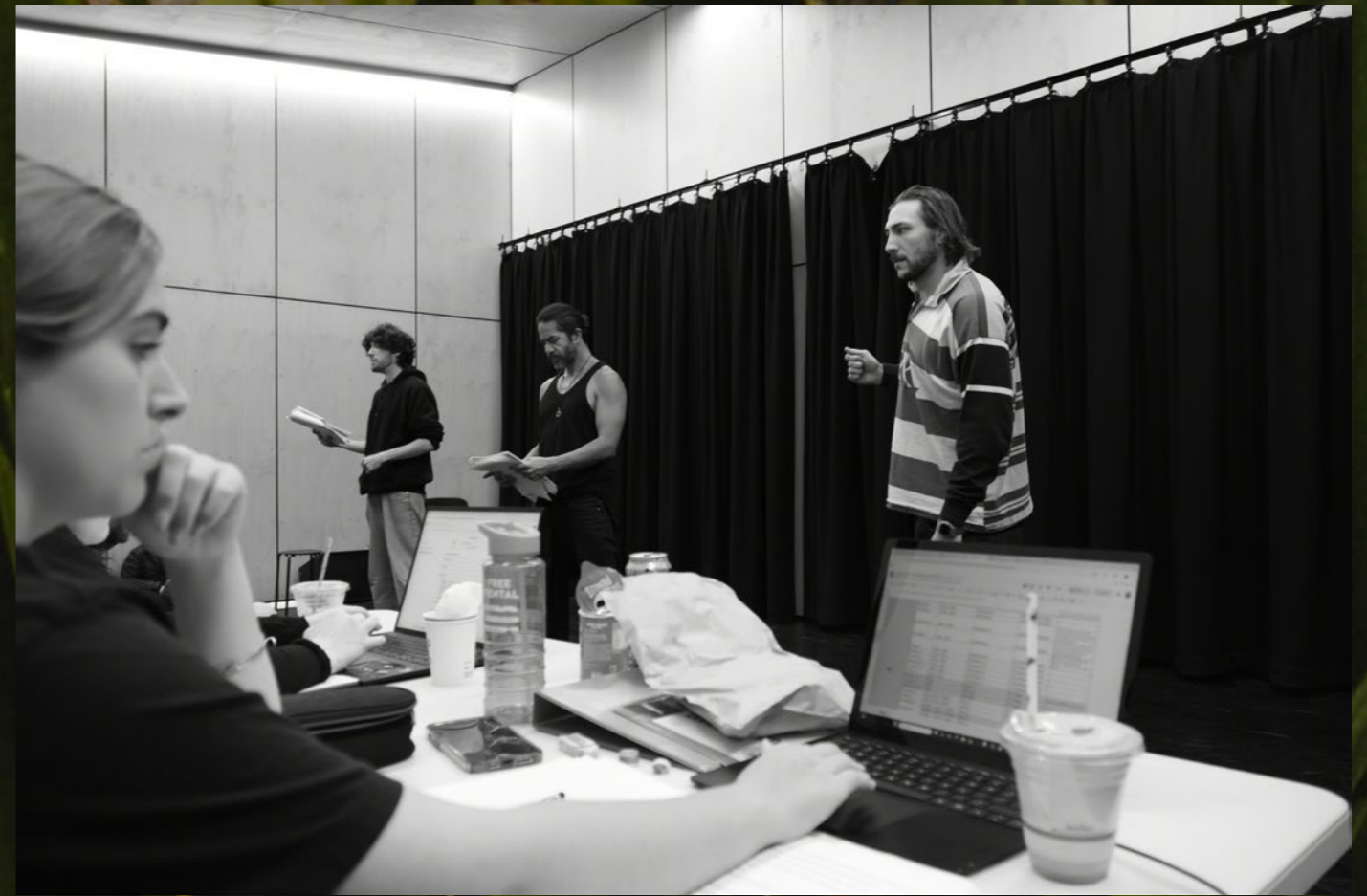
## KAMARRA BELL-WYKES

Uncle Larry Walsh and John Harding are both living legends, renowned for their dedication to advocacy, justice and self-determination for the Victorian First Nations community. They are respected and revered role models, grass root heroes and reluctant leaders. They are fathers, uncles, brothers, sons, agitators, story tellers and rebel adventurers that possess larger than life presences and epic yarns. Both of these incredible men have been my own personal and professional mentors for many years, supporting my journey as a Blak woman and theatre maker. Their advice, encouragement and example have been invaluable inspirations and constant reminders to live in truth, power and purpose. Just being in the room with both of these icons at the same time is a life lesson in history, politics and comedy that will split your sides and blow your mind.

To witness the formal collaboration of LAZARUS with John skilfully curating Uncle Larry's life journey on the page is nothing short of phenomenal. John has captured the essence of Uncle Larry's extraordinary and miraculous life journey across the generations from a child, to a man, to a revered Elder. To be invited to direct such a significant work is a massive honour and responsibility and I will endeavour to bring the magic, beauty and triumph that is Uncle Larry's life and John's craft on the stage. Ultimately LAZARUS is a story of family, love, community, country, heartache and pain, a story of healing, forgiveness and transforming trauma into

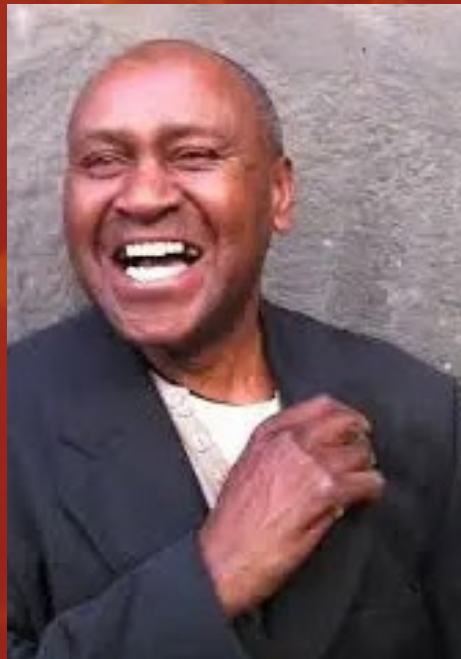
weapons of change, a story of Aboriginal men that White Australia again and again attempts to destroy and that again and again Aboriginal men resist, survive and rise above.

Staging LAZARUS was an opportunity to bring this incredible biographical yarn to life, elevating the original Yirramboi staging to its most elevated form. Working with elements of the original design we reimagined the sound track and the form, utilising physical comedy and stylised naturalism to weave the eclectic tapestry of memories, worlds and characters of LAZARUS. life. Through the audition process I was struck with the vision of casting 3 actors to play Lazarus across the generations, boy, man and Elder to embody his full life span, exploring how the past and the present merge to become the full version of LAZARUS. This also provided an opportunity to cast an all First Nations ensemble with the cast playing across multiple roles both Blak and Non-Indigenous to deliver a dynamic and playful performance. The slapstick form honours the Blak humour at the heart of our community's survival and resistance and a trademark that myself, Johnny and Uncle Larry all share is the overriding compulsion to to have a wicked laugh in the face of injustice, heart break and trauma.



# JOHN HARDING

PLAYWRIGHT



John Harding (Kuku Yulangi/Erub; TSI) is the founder of ILBIJERRI Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Theatre Company, dedicated to Indigenous artistic expression. He received the Australia Council for the Arts Indigenous Fellowship in 1997 and the Australian Human Rights Medal for Arts for Up the Road (1991).

After more than thirty-five years working across theatre, television, documentary, drama, film, and poetry, John Harding has produced thirteen staged theatrical productions and received multiple state and national awards, including the Australian Human Rights Award. Twice published as a playwright by Currency Press, he specialises in creative writing and has served on Indigenous advisory committees for the Melbourne Arts Festival, the Australian Arts Law Centre, and the First Nations of Australia Writers Network. John continues to write and now advises artists, both mob and allies, as a cultural and artistic consultant, sharing his expertise to support the next generation of Indigenous and collaborative creative work.

A playwright, director, and actor, John has contributed to groundbreaking works, including *Blackout* (ABC TV, 1989) and *The Masters* (SBS, 1996). His plays have toured internationally, including *Enuff* at the UN Forum (2005). Recent works include *Sisterly Love* (2014, 2016) and *Tick the Box* (2023). John's *The Dirty Mile* won a 2009 Deadly Award.

# COBIE ORGER

VIDEOGRAPHER



Cobie has been engaged with the moving image for over 20 years. She creates meditative works for screen centred around the body in motion, the natural world and everyday happenings. These works manifest as independent projects as well as collaborations with choreographers, composers, theatre makers and musicians. Her work has screened in galleries, theatres, cinemas, foyers, personal computers and on building façades. Commissions have come from programs within diverse Australian art organisations including Ensemble Offspring, Speak Percussion, Chamber Made, Next Wave festival and Dancehouse. Her video work can exist in performance and installation contexts that explore the interplay between forms in large-scale participatory events, intimate solo experiences or more traditional theatre contexts. She is particularly interested in creating methodologies for an artistic practice that utilise and mash up the creative languages at hand, i.e. choreography, music composition, or filmic techniques. Her work has been shown locally and abroad and has often stemmed from residencies at places such as Bundanon (AUS), Bogong Centre for Sound Culture (AUS), Dancehouse (AUS), Critical Path (AUS), Les Baines Connective (CHE) and Culuurcentrum Berchem (BEL).

# KAMARRA BELL-WYKES

DIRECTOR



Kamarra Bell-Wykes (Yagera/Butchulla) is a theatre maker and arts specialist working across mainstage, academic, education and community arts sectors. In 2022 Kamarra formed theatre collective A DAYLIGHT CONNECTION whose credits include *The BLOK!* (Darebin Speakeasy/Fringe), *A NIGHTTIME TRAVESTY* (Yirramboi/AsiaTOPA/Malthouse/Kia Mau), *CHASE* (Malthouse/Hot House) and *ECLIPSE* (Rising) a collaboration with First Nation Queens *Cerulean* and *Stone Motherless Cold*. Kamarra's other significant theatre credits include *House Arrest* (Yirramboi/Malthouse), *A Wake -A Woke Mob* (MTC/ILBIJERRI), *37* (MTC), *Romeo and Julie* (Red Stitch) *Because the Night* (MALTHOUSE), *The Score*, *Scar Trees*, *Viral*, *North West of Nowhere*, *Body Armour*, *Chopped Liver*, *Shrunken Iris* (ILBIJERRI) In 2021 Kamarra won the Patrick White Award for *Whose Gonna Love 'Em? I am that i AM* (FCAC/ ILBIJERRI). In 2026 Kamarra will direct her own mainstage work *BEFORE I FORGET* at Melbourne Theatre Company as well as *LAZARUS* at Theatreworks.

# TODD BENNETT

SOUND DESIGNER



Todd J. Bennett is a Wiradjuri and Filipino composer and sound designer for theatre, film and games. He is part of Melbourne Theatre Company's inaugural Future Creatives cohort, where he worked on *Cost of Living* as Assistant Sound Designer. Todd is also a BlackStage participant through ILBIJERRI Theatre Company. As well as a sound design secondment on *Blak in the Room*, he contributed original compositions for *Blak in the Lounge*, a popup workshop and gallery space at Southbank Theatre. He sound designed for *Αριάδνη/Ariadne* for La Mama's Mother Tongue Festival 2024. Todd composed for a number of sound installations, including at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music and at ABC's Melbourne offices as part of their commemoration of Reconciliation Week 2023. He is currently finishing his Masters of Interactive Composition at the Victorian College of the Arts.

# JUSTIN GREEN

SET DESIGNER



Justin Green is a designer, maker, producer, and creative leader with more than 30 years of experience across theatre, film, television, and live events. A graduate of the National Institute of Dramatic Art, his practice spans production design, design realisation, large-scale event delivery, and creative fabrication, with a career defined by work that moves fluidly between major public events and intimate performance experiences.

Following early roles with the Malthouse Theatre and Sydney Theatre Company, Justin joined Belvoir Street Theatre Company as Construction Manager before becoming Head of Design for the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras. In 2007, he founded Justimagine Productions, leading projects for clients including Queensland Ballet, Victorian Opera, Arena Theatre Company, Polyglot Theatre, the Birdcage at VRC, Cartier, Chanel, Jaguar, and Arts Centre Melbourne. His work is recognised for combining technical precision with strong visual storytelling and a deeply collaborative approach.

Alongside his industry practice, Justin has worked extensively in arts education and research through the Faculty of Fine Arts and Music at the University of Melbourne and now as Program Lead at the Australian College of the Arts. His current research explores collaboration, scenographic realisation, and the relationship between designers and makers in contemporary performance practice.

# MAHI MODOURIS

STAGE MANAGER



Mahi is a Naarm/Melbourne-based stage manager, designer and performer and recent graduate of Collarts: Bachelor of Performing Arts (Stage Management). Credits include Find Me (Verity, dir. Andrew Tomazos) ILAURUN: The Cutting Comb (Assistant Stage Manager, dir. Effie Nkrumah), Love and Information (Assistant Stage Manager, dir. Belle Hanson), Punk Rock (Stage Manager, dir. Jay Wood), Brothers Bare (Stage Manager/Operator, dir. Jessica Fallico) and Mara (Assistant Stage Manager/Performer, dir. Megan Jones). Mahi enjoys all aspects of theatre, onstage and offstage and aims to take in as much information as she can. As a theatre maker, she hopes to work in a whole range of different genres and to learn and experience what it's like to work in all aspects of theatre.

# TIM BONSER

LIGHTING DESIGNER



Tim Bonser is a Naarm/Melbourne based lighting designer for live performance, whose work has been seen across Australia and internationally. Recent lighting design credits include CYRANO DE BERGERAC (Artefact), THE PLACEHOLDER (Midsumma Festival), DJUNA (Bullet Heart Club), GUYS & DOLLS (Antipodes Theatre Co, Green Room nominated Lighting Design), ONE DAY IN SEPTEMBER (Perryman Theatre Company), COMMON DISSONANCE (Na Djinang Circus), HALF TIME (Hayes Theatre Co) and GENESIS (West Australian Ballet). Tim got his training at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Performing Arts Majoring in Live Production and Design - Lighting (2018). Currently working as the head of lighting at the Melbourne Recital Centre, Tim lights shows for hundreds of artists a year, local and international, across all genres of music.

# CLARA CAMM

STAGE MANAGER



Clara is a Melbourne based stage manager and production designer currently completing her bachelor in Stage management at the Australian College of the Arts. She specialises in prop realization, set design and costume with stage management being a recent endeavor. Her recent credits include stage management in Australian Open (By Theatre works), The Breath of Kings (Burning house with Theatreworks) and Stage management and Set realisation for Mara (Machination ensemble by Theatre Works)

# SERMSAH BIN SAAD

PERFORMER



Sermsah's Bin Saad's name in the Indigenous community is synonymous with theatre, television, film, radio, festival circuits, opera, dance & choreography. He was top 7 males on "So You Think You Can Dance Australia" in 2008 and made history as the first ever Indigenous dancer introducing Traditional/Contemporary dance on commercial television. He also teaches through the Nikki Visaj Enterprises in schools and corporate events teaching Aboriginal Culture and protocol of country.

Sermsah credits include touring & performing with Mitch Tambo on the tour Burn the Floor, also Bran Nue Dae (movie) where he helped lead the dancers in the sequences, The Glitch - ABC, The Preacher - ABC, The Circuit -SBS, The Activist- Nadia Green, Half - Nexus Production Group, Reading Writing Hotline (voice over) Corrugation Road - Black Swan Theatre, Ngalyak & the Flood (International Tour to Europe) - Big Mama Productions, Pecan Summer - Short Black Opera, Let Love Rule - Archie Roach, Big Heart - TheatreWorks Love Drunk - Phunktional Theatre, The Visitors - MTC, Muttacar Sorry Business - Yirra Yaakin and wrote and performed his very own play developments of The Lighthouse - Yellamundie Festival, Liyan - Melbourne Fringe & Seventh Season - Yellamundie Festival and now choreography for Electric Fields (Gaslight) Above all his artistic achievements, Sermsah values his heritage. A proud Nyikina man from the Kimberley's. He believes in 'Liyan' a saying springing from his hometown of Broome/ Derby WA meaning connection to country, spirit and instinctual knowledge.

Sermsah is an educator who teaches dance and storytelling through movement and theatre into schools and organisations to openly discuss the terrible atrocities of colonialism and the displacement of Aboriginal people in their own country. He says, 'We have been subjected to this for too long and it still continues systemically today.

'Enough is Enough. Sovereignty has never ceded.'

# NATHAN WRIGHT

PERFORMER



Nathan Wright (he/him) is a First Nations, Naarm/Melbourne based actor and comedian. Nathan hails from Garramilla/ Darwin. Completing his BFA (Acting) at the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA), Nathan is a connected storyteller with a versatile range. Recent credits include 'The Prince' in La Dispute (dir. Keith Brockett, w. Marivaux), two stand- up comedy specials on SBS, NITV's Deadly Funny at the Forum Theatre for the Melbourne International Comedy Festival (MICF), a comedy spot on MICF's Caboriginal and the Adelaide Fringe Festival tour with the comedy group Deadly Darwin. Nathan also played various roles in Attempts on Her Life (dir. Leticia Cáceres, w. Crimp) and the role of 'Compeyson' in Great Expectations (dir. Georgina Naidu, w. Gupta/Dickens). Shortly after graduating Nathan landed ILBIJERRI Theatre Company's Scar Trees (dir. Rachael Maza, w. Furber-Gillick) at Malthouse Theatre. Nathan is a present and passionate actor looking to leave a mark and thrive in both the comedic and dramatic spaces.

# TERESA MOORE

PERFORMER



Teresa Moore is a proud Noongar and Yamitji woman who graduated from Western Australia Academy Performing Art's Bachelor of Arts (Acting) in 2018, during which she has had the pleasure of performing roles such as 'Tituba' in THE CRUCIBLE, 'Eunice' in A STREETCAR NAMED DESIRE and 'Condoleezza Rice' in STUFF HAPPENS. Additionally Teresa was invited to perform at Ryerson University in Toronto in HOME, written and directed by Peggy Shannon; 'Rosie' in BRAN NUE DAE (Opera Australia), and 'Ada' in musical PANAWATHI GIRL, written by David Milroy.

While at WAAPA, Teresa was cast as 'Jaz' in Season 1 the TV series MYSTERY ROAD, working alongside Judy Davis and Aaron Pedersen. Other featured TV credits also include BLACK COMEDY S5, DOCTOR DOCTOR and PLAY SCHOOL.

Teresa was previously an Associate Artist at Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company, for which she had the pleasure to be the Creative Producer & Writer of the Ngalaka Daa Ensemble 2023 program. Teresa also produced the WOOLAH! Exhibition for Yirra Yaakin's 30th Anniversary and was a part of Yirra Yaakin Writing Festival as a Narrator this year. Furthermore Teresa also judged the 2023 Shakespeare Awards Night for WAAPA.

In 2024 Teresa starred in Western Australian Opera's production of WUNDIG WER WILURA, composed by Gina Williams and Guy Ghouse, which is exclusively performed in Noongar Language. Recent credits include HAIR THE MUSICAL at the Athenaeum Theatre, EMU IN THE SUN at MTC, and ABC mini-series GOOLAGONG.

# RILEY WARNER

PERFORMER



When the pink power ranger tells you to do something you listen. This is how Riley got his start in acting. Riley is a Pitjantjatjara actor born and raised in central NSW. After working under Angie Diaz ( The pink power ranger ) at Naisda Dance college she advised Riley to move to Perth and study acting. Riley has since graduated from WAAPA and has been a part of several plays, including The Harp in the south, Nora: A Dolls House, Beautiful Burnout, Macbeth and Looking for Alibrandi both directed by Stephen Nicolazzo. Riley also has an interest in both film and physical theatre work.

BY THEATRE WORKS

# THE WOLVES



THEATRE WORKS PRESENTS

## THE WOLVES

BY SARAH DELAPPE

10 - 20 JUNE | THEATRE WORKS

14 acland street, st kilda



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