

WITH THEATRE WORKS

HOLY FOOL

A man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a brown robe, is smiling broadly with his hands clasped in prayer. A glowing white halo is positioned above his head. The background is a gradient of yellow and blue.

THEATRE WORKS PRESENTS

HOLY FOOL

WRITTEN AND PERFORMED BY **FABIO MOTTA** | DIRECTED BY **GIOVANNI FUSETTI**

ABOUT THEATRE WORKS

Theatre Works respectfully acknowledge 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.

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.

HOLY FOOL

CREATOR / PERFORMER
Fabio Motta

DIRECTOR
Giovanni Fusetti

CREATIVE CONSULTANT
Emma Gough

STORY CONSULTANT
James Vinson

SOUND DESIGNER
Jack Burmeister

LIGHTING DESIGNER
Max Woods

SET DESIGNER
Em Jevons

STAGE MANAGER
Kate Cameron

PRODUCER
Tim Sneddon

HOLY FOOL IS A **WITH THEATRE WORKS** PRODUCTION

Shows in the WITH THEATRE WORKS stream align strongly our values and missions - these works we co-produce and co-present with independent artists and/or companies. Projects within this stream receive significant producing, marketing, PR and production support in addition to free use of the venue and a generous box office split.



TEAM THEATRE WORKS

KRYSTALLA PEARCE (she/her) Artistic Director / CEO

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

JADE HIBBERT (she/her) Producing Coordinator

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

BEK SCHILLING (they/them) Front of House Manager



DIRECTOR'S NOTE

GIOVANNI FUSETTI DIRECTOR



I come from Italy where Saint Francis of Assisi is a very loved and respected figure, a very popular saint, at the point of being the Saint Patron of the country. In Italian he is refereed to as Il Folle di Dio (God's Fool) and Il Poverello di Assisi (The Poor Fellow from Assisi). He is a timeless spiritual giant, whose life is still echoing in the soul of the world and who keeps inspiring people of all paths and believes. I have personally been very inspired by him and in my twenties I was very close to the Franciscan friars and to their spirituality and lifestyle. They left an everlasting imprint in me. So when Fabio invited me to be part of his project The Holy Fool, I immediately jumped in, very excited and grateful for the opportunity to return to Saint Francis with the crafts of my work as a theatre practitioner. How can we encounter such a profound figure with the language of physical theatre and comedy? How can a storyteller bring to the audience the exceptional spiritual depth of this story, as well as the very contemporary power of his message and of his life. Francis shifted his destiny from becoming a rich merchant into being the funder of an order of wild radical friars, dedicating their life to poverty and to the service of the others.

My work as a director has been to support the development of the pieces found by Fabio through Improvisation by grounding them into the rigorous stage vitality of physical theatre. Fabio turns the various phases of Francis's life into the theatrical chapters of a paradoxical hero's journey, led by gestures, voices, rhythm and mime. Held by a highly embodied storytelling style, the show contains elements of clown in the naivety and openness of Francis. The types of Commedia dell'Arte appear in the many archetypal figures inside Francis and around him. There are elements of Satire and Bouffon in the overt provocation of the questions that Francis asked to his fellow Assisi compatriots and to ourselves, contemporary citizens and audience members. And there is an attempt to move a story told by a fool into a ritual that engages the audience as a chorus, in a collective celebration of a question: how can we follow the example set by Saint Francis eight centuries ago and be called to stand for a world more just, more fair, more compassionate and more community-oriented?

With Fabio we both feel that humour and comedy are deeply present in the story and message of Francis. In the Franciscan sources we find many references to Francis as an irresistible preacher and jester, a dancer and a poet, transported by a state of letizia, the spiritual joy or elation of those deeply in touch with the flow of the soul. In Fabio's playfulness acting folly, the story of Francis becomes a metaphor of courage and selflessness, gratitude and engagement, naiveté and activism. With this show we want to offer to the audience an entertaining embodied storytelling show as well as an ethical provocation. How can we follow the footsteps of this giant of the human spirit as theatre artists and citizens? Can a theatre piece contribute to bring us closer to each other and to our neighbours, to our fellow humans and to Mother Earth? And this year, in the 800th anniversary of his death, this is our way to say... thank you Francis... Thank you.

THANK YOU

David Bridel

Zack Fine

Melbourne Actors Guild

La Mama Theatre

Jaime Dorner

Elizabeth Davie

Paul Bourke

Zya Kane

Anna Thomson

Will Smith

Josiah Lullham

Karla Erenbots

Brigida Cornetta



FABIO MOTTA

WRITER / PERFORMER



Fabio Motta is an multi award-winning performer, theatre maker, director and teaching artist who has performed and devised theatre in Australia, Italy, and the United States. Working extensively as an actor in Australia and abroad with companies like the Australian Shakespeare Company, Polka theatre, Born in a Taxi, Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival and Theatre86. He also has multiple TV and film credits to his name including Ronny Chang International student, Utopia season 4, Carla Cametti PD, Warnie, Slant and Little Tornados. His critically acclaimed solo-show SPOT had a sold-out season in 2021 at Theatre Works and raving reviews in his return season in 2022. He received a Green Room Award for 'Best Performer' for his solo show SPOT in 2022. Most recently he directed 'CVNT' (a Bouffon solo show performed by Sophie Power) which won 'best comedy' at Melbourne Fringe Festival 2024, and 'Sunday Roast' by Thomas Sainsbury which also won 'Best show at Adelaide Fringe' in 2023.

EMMA GOUGH

CREATIVE CONSULTANT



Emma is a theatre director and educator in her final year of the Master of Theatre (Directing) at the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA). Her professional development includes training at the University of Exeter, the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA), and directing internships with Anne-Louise Sarks at Malthouse Theatre and Katie Mitchell at the Schaubühne in Berlin. Her directing work has received four-star reviews at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and has been recognised with Green Room Award and Best in Theatre nominations at Melbourne Fringe. She is the recipient of the Joan McCloud Award for Best Production Design for her reimagined production of The Macbeths, presented at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival. Emma is the founder of the Melbourne Actors Guild, supporting the training and collaboration of actors across Melbourne's independent theatre sector. Her current work explores her interest in stories that garner cultural narratives and how these impact behaviour. She has loved revisiting Holy Fool after directing the first development for La Mama explorations and can't wait for audiences to see the brilliant Fabio in action!

GIOVANNI FUSETTI

DIRECTOR



Based in Italy, Giovanni Fusetti is a theatre pedagogue, director and teacher, specialising in movement-based theatre. He trained at the École Internationale de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq in Paris, completing both the school's professional and pedagogical programs as well as the L.E.M. (Laboratoire d'Étude du Mouvement), before being invited by Jacques Lecoq to teach Improvisation at the school. For over 35 years, Giovanni has taught, directed and developed theatre artists internationally. He co-founded Kiklos Teatro and its International School of Theatre Creation in Padua, and later founded HELIKOS International School of Theatre Creation. His work has taken him to leading theatre schools, universities and companies across Europe, the Americas, Australia and New Zealand, including Pig Iron School for Advanced Performance Training, Dell'Arte International, Princeton University, Stockholm University of the Arts, Toi Whakaari and the Victorian College of the Arts. Giovanni's practice brings together movement analysis, improvisation, theatre creation and a lifelong exploration of Masks, Red Nose Clown and bouffon. He has trained and coached hundreds of clowns around the world, as well as theatre educators and hospital clowns, and continues to teach and direct internationally.

JAMES VINSON

STORY CONSULTANT



James is an ADG-nominated writer director across film, television, and theatre. They currently work between Naarm/Melbourne on Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung Country, as well as Edinburgh on the traditional lands of the Dùn Èideann region, once stewarded by the Votadini, Gododdin, and Gaels. James' films have screened at Palm Springs International Film Festival, the Cannes Short Film Corner, and FOXTEL's Comedy Channel as the winner of Australia's Funniest Shorts (I Am Fairy). Their short, Passage of Flick, received Best Film at the Lionshead Film Festival, Best Foreign Short at Joy House Film Festival, and Official Selection at the Burbank International Film Festival. Their television credits include Wentworth (Fremantle/Foxtel) and Glitch (Matchbox/ABC/Netflix). In 2019, James directed the critically-acclaimed stage production of Kenneth Lonergan's Lobby Hero, and in 2020, they wrote for the Audible thriller series, Wentworth: The Fall Girl. Their debut feature film, Slant, is now available to stream after winning Best Australian Feature Film at MonsterFest '22 and was nominated for Best Direction at the Australian Director's Guild Awards '23. In 2024, James wrote and directed Daughter of the Inner Stars, a unique orchestral experience blending live performance, original animation, and a powerful cinematic score played by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, which premiered at the Sydney Opera House. In 2026, James wrote and directed the queer commedia dell'arte physical comedy, Little Devil and the War Machine for the Melbourne International Comedy Festival.

JACK BURMEISTER

SOUND DESIGNER



Jack Burmeister is a Melbourne-based Sound Designer and Composer whose work sits at the intersection of theatre, film, and audio storytelling. His practice utilises cinematic, synthesised, and choral textures, alongside environmental sound design, to create rich and detailed sonic worlds that integrate seamlessly into each production. Jack's work has been recognised nationally and internationally. He received a Green Room Award nomination for Outstanding Sound Design for *The Roof is Caving In*, and won Best Score at the Geelong Independent Film Festival for *With Everything I Am*, which also received Best Student Film at the New York International Film Awards. Selected recent theatre credits include *Red Sky Morning* (dir. Lyall Brooks), *The Effect* (dir. Alonso Pineda), *Othello* (Melbourne Shakespeare Company), *The Wolves* (dir. Belle Hansen), *TARZAN* (dir. Alister Smith), and *Thirty-Six* (dir. Kitan Petkovski). Jack was the Sound Designer for *NIUSIA* (dir. Kat Yates), which received a Scotsman Fringe First Award at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, and *Kinder* (dir. Tiah Bollock), which is currently undertaking a 2026 European tour. His work has also featured on global stages, including COP27 and COP28, where he served as Lead Designer and Performer on internationally presented audio works.

EM JEVONS

SET DESIGNER



Em (they/them) is a performer, scenic artist, prop and puppet maker and emerging designer. They've created work for Hannah Gadsby: *The Evening Muse* (Token/MICF) Lano and Woodley In Space (Token) Hello Mr Radio (Handful of Bugs) *Pride and Prejudice* (Bloomshed), *Katya Kabanova* (Vic Opera), *Macbeth*, *Fat Pig* (BK Opera) *Bladderwrack* (Theatreworks), and *Elephant Rope* (Scary Goats). They were lead Set Designer for *The Irreducible* (Blank Space Productions) and puppeteered on the 2025 sell-out season of *Die Die Die Old People Die* (Puppet Rats/Lemony S Puppet Theatre) - currently in further development for a return season at the Melbourne Festival of Puppetry (October 2026).

MAX WOODS

LIGHTING DESIGNER



Max is a Melbourne based freelance lighting designer and technician who studied at the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA). Max was previously the Technical Manager at the National Theatre Melbourne, where he discovered his passion for lighting. Highlights of his career as a designer so far include: *Lehenda* Ukrainian Dance Company's *Kazka* (directed by Melanie Moravski Dechniz); Theatrical Inc.'s *A Chorus Line* (directed by Tahra Cannon); and Karma Dance's *Temple of Desire* (directed by Govind Pillai), which was the recipient of the Director's Choice Award at the 2024 Melbourne Fringe Festival, and has subsequently toured to the Toronto Fringe Festival and the Sydney Opera House. Max has also recently worked as a technician across various projects for BAAC Light, including *Rockwiz* at the Hotel Esplanade.

KATE CAMERON

STAGE MANAGER



Kate has been working backstage since starting in London's West End as a teenager and yes that has been a highly lucrative career choice, thank you for asking. They now work across Melbourne's arts and music scene, as well as touring when the opportunity arises, in warmer Australian territories and abroad. In their spare time they sometimes paint things, shout into mics, and get overexcited about adding to their Merlin bird ID app.

TIMOTHY SNEDDON

PRODUCER



Tim Sneddon (he/him) is an independent creative producer working across theatre, puppetry, clown, immersive experiences and participatory arts. He maintains a particular interest in experimentation with form and audience experience. He has worked with companies including Come Close and Listen, The Ribbons Collective and Puppet Rats, and provides marketing support to organisations including Born In A Taxi, Otto and Astrid, Circus Oz and Clubhouse Productions.

Alongside his independent practice, Tim co-founded the Merri-bek Family Festival and worked as the Creative Producer of the Village Festival (2019–2022), delivering multiple annual arts festivals in partnership with state and federal government, not-for-profit arts organisations, local councils and community initiatives, bringing contemporary and alternative art to unconventional civic spaces.



BY THEATRE WORKS

FRESH WORKS

LORD OF THE FLIES



THEATRE WORKS PRESENTS
WILLIAM GOLDING'S

LORD OF THE FLIES

ADAPTED BY NIGEL WILLIAMS | DIRECTED BY STEVEN MITCHELL WRIGHT



PHOTO CREDIT: SIM WIMAGE

18 SEPTEMBER - 2 OCTOBER | THEATRE WORKS

theatre works, 14 acland street, st kilda



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THE ETERNALLY HOPEFUL



THEATRE WORKS PRESENT

THE ETERNALLY HOPEFUL

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY ISABELLE DAVIS



PHOTO CREDIT: DAN RABIN

22 - 26 SEPTEMBER | EXPLOSIVES FACTORY

explosives factory, rear laneway, 67 inkerman street, st kilda



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ST KILDA

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