



MEDIA RELEASE

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REIMMERSE YOURSELF IN THEATRE WITH MERRIGONG SEASON 2021 – JUST ANNOUNCED

After a quiet year for audiences in Wollongong, Merrigong last night revealed a phenomenal and surprising year of theatre at the Illawarra Performing Arts Centre (IPAC).

From well-loved Australian icons to thrilling American satire, from atmospheric musicals to high-flying adventures, and from car seats to the poolside – there is no shortage of thrills and surprises for theatre lovers in the region.

Kicking off the year is the iconic character from Clayton & Shane Jacobson's much-loved film, **KENNY**. With a heart of gold and a job that is literally down the toilet, this live stage show comes direct from the Sydney Festival. Wollongong is sure to fall in love with **Ben Wood's** portrayal of this poignant underdog.

FANGIRLS, Belvoir theatre's thrilling hit new musical by the multi-talented Yves Blake, takes a fresh and funny look at teenage fascination. Whether your fangirl (or boy) experience was The Beatles, Bay City Rollers, Backstreet Boys or BTS – this life-affirming night will ignite the fan inside us all!

Merrigong Theatre Company has a long tradition of investing in exciting new works of national and international importance, and this year is no different. Joining as a producing partner of **Shaun the Sheep's Circus Show** has ensured Wollongong audiences will be first in NSW to experience what happens when the internationally-acclaimed circus ensemble **Circa** and Academy Award-winning studio **Aardman** join forces. Based on the iconic TV series and movies, *Shaun the Sheep's Circus Show* is brought to life in a spectacle of high-flying adventure and outright hilarity the whole family will enjoy.

There are more big surprises in store, including two performing arts experiences that will be outside of the traditional theatre space.

The Sirens' Return is a powerful new music theatre work that draws on oral histories collected from residents of Port Kembla, with celebrated local director **Anne-Louise Rentell** assembling a high calibre team of creatives and vocalists to bring these stories to life. The evocative show will take



place at **Port Kembla Pool**, utilising the grassed amphitheatre for seating. Inspired by First Nations and western mythology of mermaids - with the local landscape at dusk providing a stunning backdrop to the performance - this is a once-in-a-lifetime theatrical event that's not to be missed.

Taking place at Bulli Showground, be prepared to scream and laugh with **Throttle**. The live action drive-in thriller will unfold around audiences seated in their own cars, in a mysterious and immersive experience that combines dance-theatre and drive-in traditions created by legendary performance collective, The Farm.

"Last year, Merrigong had to cancel more than 500 performances, leaving our stages empty, and taking away the lifeblood of the performing arts – our audience," says **Simon Hinton**, Merrigong's Artistic Director / CEO.

"So now, it is with excitement and confidence that we are calling on Wollongong to 're-emerge & reimmerge' in a year of great theatre at Merrigong. From a theatre seat to your car seat, from IPAC to the poolside, how you experience theatre might be a little different this year – but incredible talent will be taking the stage, and powerful performances will be moving audiences."

Full program and tickets are now available from: <http://www.merrigong.com.au/season2021>.

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For hi res images: http://bit.ly/MTC21_Images

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