



MEDIA RELEASE

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MERRI
GONG
THEATRE
SEASON 2022

Merrigong promises ‘first wave of great new theatre’ in ambitious 2022 season

Wollongong’s Merrigong Theatre Company launched its 2022 season at Illawarra Performing Arts Centre on Wednesday, unveiling an ambitious year of theatre that promises to spark the imagination and wonder of audiences across the region.

The Season includes 10 all-new local, national and international mainstage theatre shows, including the first of what Merrigong hopes will become an annual tradition – a 3-week open air season of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* as part of a brand new **Shakespeare in the Garden** program from the Company. In the magical setting of the **Wollongong Botanic Garden**, this new take on Shakespeare’s most enigmatic work will bring together some of the country’s finest actors and designers, along with musicians and artists from across the Illawarra, for a breathtaking outdoor experience for theatre devotees and newbies alike.

Continuing its tradition of highlighting local artists and stories, Merrigong is producing more work than ever before, with three locally produced mainstage works featured in the 2022 Season.

As Luck Would Have It by writer, performer and composer **Drew Fairley** is a devastatingly funny and personal musical comedy inspired by Drew's experiences stuck on a cruise ship during the early days of the pandemic. Coming to international attention through his online series #actualcabinactualfever, this new work is a darkly comic odyssey of a man drumming up mirth while staring into the abyss. *A Practical Guide to Self Defence* by Wollongong-born Australian Chinese playwright **Hung-Yen Yang** (co-produced with Riverside’s National Theatre of Parramatta), is a poignant and witty account of growing up Asian in ‘80s Australia, complete with martial arts, multimedia and handy step-by-step survival tips, and starring *SBS PopAsia*’s **Andy Trieu**.



Thanks to Federal Government RISE funding, March 2022 will see the return of the much-loved pop-up festival in the Arts Precinct, **Spiegelent Wollongong**, an event that is expected to attract more than 10,000 visitors over 3 weeks. The season will open with the exhilarating and critically acclaimed show from the international masters of contemporary circus, ***Circa's Peepshow***.

Programmed to be part of the cultural festivities surrounding the **UCI 2022 Road World Championships** in September, Merrigong will host the world premiere of ***Symphonie de la Bicyclette*** by **Hew Parham**, a new theatre work that celebrates life on two wheels (produced by SA's Brink Productions in association with Merrigong).

And, in a major coup for the regional company, local audiences will have the opportunity to experience the thrilling sound and light installation ***Blindness***, from London's legendary Donmar Warehouse.

"We've worked hard to curate this Season around all the uncertainty of these times, and some things are a little different as a result," says Simon Hinton, Artistic Director / CEO of Merrigong Theatre Company. *"But for all the difficulties of the period, there have been some emerging triumphs. Artists are a resilient bunch, and many have used this time to create and develop extraordinary new work. Our 2022 Season features the first wave of some of this great new theatre."*

Full program is now available from: <http://www.merrigong.com.au/season2022>.

ENDS.

For further information and interviews - **Edie Watt** 0422 050 691 or ewatt@merrigong.com.au

Hi res images available:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/16rnaa0t08fxlqv/AAB9gVanv3hUC_FbCnu8_HMTa?dl=0

Our company's name, 'Merrigong', reflects the Dharawal word for the Illawarra region's distinctive escarpment, a landmark of supreme cultural importance. The name serves as a constant reminder that our venues rest on unceded First Nations land. In all that we do, Merrigong Theatre Company seeks to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, and to show respect to all First Nations people who call our region home.