

PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

IMMERSIVE OUTDOOR WORK *THE SIRENS' RETURN*: SHOWCASING POWERFUL FEMALE STORIES TAKES THEATRE- MAKING TO A WHOLE NEW LEVEL

Merrigong Theatre Company's first production of 2022 will see them leave their home at Illawarra Performing Arts Centre and take to a different kind of stage: outdoors against the stunning vista of the Port Kembla Pool at dusk.

A co-production with The Society of Histrionic Happenings, *The Sirens' Return* is a new music theatre work that marks a new level of theatre-making for the company, where audiences will be fitted with headphones and welcomed into an immersive and deeply emotive experience, from 14th – 19th February.

Drawing on oral histories collected from women living across different eras of the steel town, as well as First Nations and western mermaid mythology, *The Sirens' Return* honours the diversity of women's experiences through the emotional power of song. With an eclectic score from acclaimed composer Daryl Wallis (*Dead Man Brake*, *The Outside Man*, *Landscape with Monsters*) that traverses jazz, blues and pop, *The Sirens' Return* presents a metaphor for the way country survives and keeps going despite its hardships.

Celebrated local director, Anne-Louise Rentell (*Trash Talk*, *Dead Man Brake*, *The Outside Man*) said, "This is a big, epic project and it is the first time the company is producing something outdoors on this scale. I am excited for the audiences to be on site, it is such a beautiful place; it will be incredibly magical."

Presented by a high-calibre team of creatives and vocalists, *The Sirens' Return* reflects the spirit of place from the perspective of the women who embody it, in a once-in-a-lifetime theatrical event that's not to be missed.

The Sirens' Return

By Anne-Louise Rentell, Barbara Nicholson, Ali Jane Smith and Daryl Wallis

Cast and Creative Team

Director **Anne-Louise Rentell** Musical Director **Daryl Wallis** Video Designer **Laura Turner** Costume Designer **Katja Handt** Lighting Designer **Travis Kecek** Cast **Alice Ansara, Matilda Brown, Marlene Cummins, Jeannie Lewis, Billie Rose Prichard, Kerrie Sweeney** Photo by **Jeremy Park**

DATES 14 – 19 February 2022

TIMES 7:30pm

LOCATION Port Kembla Pool Amphitheatre

TICKETS Adult: \$49, Under 30s \$39, Family of 4 \$156 (Max 2 Adults), Pensioners/Groups 8+ \$44, School Groups 8+ \$23

BOOKINGS <https://merrigong.com.au/shows/the-sirens-return/>

AGES 16 +. Contains strong language and strong adult content.

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

Merrigong Theatre Company is a not-for-profit company that operates Wollongong's premier performing arts venue, Illawarra Performing Arts Centre (IPAC) and the city's key civic and community venue, Wollongong Town Hall.

The 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 they 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.