

MERRIGONGX ARTISTS' PROGRAM

Innovative • Independent • In-development



MERRIGONGX

ARTISTS' PROGRAM

Innovative • Independent • In-development

MERRIGONGX is our annual artists' program. It focuses on supporting artists to take creative risks.

MERRIGONGX places artists and their practice at the centre of our community. From in-house creative developments to full-blown public presentations of new work, and everything in between, MERRIGONGX provides independent artists with financial, technical, marketing, and artistic resources.

This year we're inviting you to engage with some of our artists, and witness the birth of four extraordinary new works and five development showings. Artists will also be working in our venues 'under wraps' on exciting projects throughout the year, see inside for a glimpse into their developments.



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Lily Hayman

Lily Hayman is a theatre maker and performer from Sydney, she grew up on Dharawal land which was never ceded. Her work focuses on challenging notions of passive spectatorship, while staging the extraordinary magic of Australian stories.

Artist Statement

The process of creating **Fledgling**, an adaptation of local novelist Joshua Lobb's *The Flight of Birds*, has been exceptionally collaborative. From the first readings of the original novel, the cast has had a fundamental role in shaping the direction of the text. We began by reading aloud from Josh's book, finding character voices within the narratorial style of the novel and highlighting passages we could bring to life on stage. From there the process became about digging beneath the text and finding ways to bring the incredibly detailed text to life without words, finding a balancing point between the literary and the theatrical upon which **Fledgling** constantly teeters.

This show grew from a fascination with the ways that we as human beings can drastically influence one another. In the early stages of this project we grappled with questions of politics and collective thought, before slowly honing these interests down into a pointed investigation of the impact of familial values upon the future of this planet, both ecologically and socially. We wanted to create a work that explored the full consequences of our actions upon the world we live in. After the year that has been, returning now to **Fledgling** feels like coming home. The show at its core is the story of a man who cannot understand his daughter and cannot stop his world from crumbling around him. It is a story of grief and climate change, but also a story of hope and connection. I am excited to bring this show to the MERRIGONGX stage now, and I am excited for you to see it!

- Lily Hayman



Fledgling

Written and Directed by **Lily Hayman**

Adapted from the novel *The Flight of Birds* by Joshua Lobb

Fledgling explores the generational divide between a parent and their child, and questions what kinds of worlds we leave behind for our children when our time comes to an end. This adaptation stages the deterioration of a father and daughter's relationship alongside the deterioration of the natural environment.

Writer, Director and Sound Designer Lily Hayman

Lighting Designer Sam Read

Production Manager Tyler Fitzpatrick

Cast Claire Gilmour, Jessica Melchert, Benjamin Stonnill
and Nick Vagne

25 – 27 MAR

Thu - Sat, 8pm

Bruce Gordon Theatre,
Illawarra Performing Arts Centre

Reserve Your Spot

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Applespiel



Applespiel evolved out of a shared interest in contemporary performance and a desire to develop a collaborative creative process. The collective makes work that places cultural phenomena and forms outside of those traditionally shown in theatres on to the stage, in order to deconstruct their more unsettling aspects. **Applespiel** met at University of Wollongong, and have always found Merrigong to be a rich environment for experimentation and play. **Applespiel** are Simon Vaughan, Nicole Kennedy, Emma McManus, Mark Rogers, Troy Reid, Joseph Parro, Nathan Harrison, Rachel Roberts and Solomon Thomas.

Artist Statement

Over the past few years, internet apologies have become their own cultural phenomenon: YouTube influencers and social media personalities seeking to outdo each other in sincerity, emotion, and self-flagellation. In ***Sorry, Sorry, Sorry***, we sought to explore this peculiar world of internet apologies, and found ourselves exploring a much larger conceptual arena - one which stretched from intimate, personal apologies, to corporate attempts at saving face, to landmark political and social moments. We've talked to historians, speechwriters and restorative justice workers. And watched a lot of YouTube.

This project requires us to experiment with form and find the choreography and exhaustion of performed apologies. We're using apologies that are written, performed, broadcast, filmed and edited - we want to bring those processes into a live theatre space in a way that is tangible and reflective. With a range of skills in performance, writing, directing, movement, music and tech, we've worked hard at developing a very open process where these elements will lead us to unexpected places. And if we fall short, at least we'll know how to sound sincere.

- **Applespiel**

Sorry, Sorry, Sorry

By Applespiel

Sorry, Sorry, Sorry is a deep dive into the modern apology. Where is the meaning and sincerity in a landscape filled with apologies born from football scandals, YouTube personality confessions and uncountable moments of personal shame?

In 2021 the world is a different place and our ideas of accountability have shifted – we hope. So has the value we place on being in a shared physical space, exploring ideas. In a social and political climate where interrogating the past, being held to account, and seeking a productive way forward are key issues, the act of apologising is more important than ever.

Using apologies that are written, performed, broadcast, filmed and edited, they are transformed when brought into a live theatre space and explore the intersection between performance, accountability and apology. With a lot of material to inhabit, you can't help but ask: if you rehearse an apology and put it in front of an audience, can you still mean it?

22 – 24 Jul

Thu – Sat, 7.30pm
Bruce Gordon Theatre,
Illawarra Performing Arts Centre

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Ten Tonne Sparrow

Ten Tonne Sparrow is a performance company creating work that uses storytelling, pop-sociology, pop-science and history to talk about the stories we tell about ourselves. Their new work is a tragic comedy rock opera by writers and musicians, Tom Hogan and Elana Stone.

Artist Statement

A musical about Burke & Wills seems a little... on the nose, and is an ambitious undertaking for two, middle class, white musicians. Most of us know some part of their story, and saying it's a musical certainly conjures up a particular type of show. But it's a story that needs to be told.

It's a musical that's not just about some financially well-endowed white men walking into the desert with a bathtub dreaming of everlasting historical relevance; **Mount Hopeless** is about colonisation, the effects of ignoring the wisdom of the traditional owners of this country, and the repercussions of enforcing your will upon the environment. These themes are front page issues on our newspapers today as our country burns. It's important that we examine our own lives and look at what not to do; Burke & Wills provide us with a list of hilarious examples of exactly how to royally f**k up when navigating this country - with profoundly serious consequences.

The real trick is that it's also a comedy.

...And it's not that kind of musical.

- **Tom Hogan and Elana Stone**



A TEN TONNE SPARROW PRODUCTION

Mount Hopeless

By **Tom Hogan** and **Elana Stone**

A musical tragic comedy based on the story of Burke & Wills. The two idiots are often heralded as tragic heroes, and as symbols of the Australian spirit, rather than a warning tale of exactly not what to do. The songs are joyous, the story has you slapping your forehead, saying "NO, YOU FOOLS!", and underneath it all are some real questions about mateship, biting off more than you can chew, and rewriting history to suit your own narrative.

26 – 28 AUG

Thu – Sat, 8pm
Bruce Gordon Theatre,
Illawarra Performing Arts Centre

Reserve Your Spot

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Kirby Medway & Solomon Thomas

Kirby Medway is a writer and theatre maker who has presented work at a range of contemporary and experimental art festivals. **Solomon Thomas** is a theatre maker, performer, puppeteer and video designer who explores the intersection between the physical and digital in theatre.

Artist Statement

UFO started from a desire to make a theatre show that involved an actual 'life-sized' UFO landing. Solomon pitched this idea to Kirby, who produced a work of speculative fiction, or more accurately, an anti-blockbuster – in opposition to the expanded genre of science fiction it might normally occupy. As a way of capturing the scale of the landing, Solomon created small-scaled miniatures, repurposing 3D modelling techniques to create theatrical puppets. Scans of the actor's bodies are replicated via a 3D printer, complete with moving parts.

**- KIRBY MEDWAY
AND SOLOMON THOMAS**



UFO

By **Kirby Medway & Solomon Thomas**

A reluctant group of very ordinary people deal with each other at the precipice of the unknown when a spacecraft lands on a golf course. Hierarchies and arbitrary rules unfold, all the while the UFO sits silent. Until...

UFO is a new live-cinema, sci-fi theatre work performed on a 1:8 miniature golf course, using exquisitely detailed scale miniatures. Combining a mesmerising mix of video, stop-motion animation and live theatre, this work offers a contemplative alternative to narratives that deal with human-alien interaction.

Can they create order where there is none? Or will protocols break down in the face of the unknown?

Writer Kirby Medway

Director / Designer Solomon Thomas

Sound Designer Tom Hogan

Creative Producer Malcolm Whittaker

Cast Matt Abotomey, James Harding, Angela Johnston
and Tahlee Leeson

23 – 25 SEP

Thu – Sat, 7.30pm

Bruce Gordon Theatre,

Illawarra Performing Arts Centre

Reserve Your Spot

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aXis by Circus Monoxide

aXis is the new professional performance troupe from Circus Monoxide. Since 1996, Circus Monoxide has been producing professional touring productions and a wide variety of community, training, and education projects for people of all ages from their base in Wollongong.

aXis launches with a performance created for public spaces as a direct response to COVID-19. It is designed to encourage engagement, reminding people of the benefits of art and culture in their everyday lives, and creating work that considers the safety requirements of our new normal. Circus Monoxide's Artistic Director, Zebastian Hunter is a critically acclaimed director with a rigorous process and twenty years' experience in circus.



The Construct Development Showing

Circus and contemporary dance through a bespoke cube sculpture.

Development showing of an exciting new work by Circus Monoxide Artistic Director Zebastian Hunter in collaboration with Producer Linda Catalano (*Quiet RIOT*). Circus and contemporary dance combine to create this thrilling, brand new acrobatic performance set to a stunning original composition of neo-classical music. As the amazing artists tumble, dance and contort their way through a bespoke cube sculpture they create moments that are poignant, intense, playful and comic in a celebration of the freedom and hope we have found in our new normal.

SAT 20 FEB, 7.30pm

Bruce Gordon Theatre,
Illawarra Performing Arts Centre

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MERRIGONG^X
Development

Catherine McKinnon

Catherine McKinnon is an award-winning writer of novels and plays. Her most recent novel, *Storyland*, was shortlisted for the Miles Franklin Award.

Artist Statement

The stories I write are mostly connected to the places where I live and work and the people that surround me. For *Storyland*, I chatted with locals and elders of the community and also took long hikes to the different locations where I set the story.



Some of *Storyland* closely follows historical events (although they are fictional), others are imaginative adventures about the future. *Storyland*, in part, broods on fear and what it does to us. But it is also an exploration of wonder and the exciting environment around us. The main characters are ordinary people who have extraordinary experiences. People who have shaped our past, live in our present, and will create our future.

- CATHERINE MCKINNON

Storyland

Development Showing

By **Catherine McKinnon**

In *Storyland* five rebellious 'sidekicks' tell tales of survival and destruction. These tales are adventurous, shocking, surprising, and like any good yarn, entertaining, but they are not necessarily reliable. They are connected by the water that flows from Mount Kembla (Djenbella) into Dapto Creek (Dabroo) and on into Mullet Creek (Bawn) before arriving at Lake Illawarra (Jubborsay) and finally trickling out to the wide-open sea. The stories all recount urgent cravings and bungled communications, and are about the deep and abiding need humans have to find connection with each other and the land we live on.

SAT 24 APR, 11am

Bruce Gordon Theatre,
Illawarra Performing Arts Centre

Reserve Your Spot

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Storyland was commissioned by Merrigong Theatre Company.

MERRIGONGX
Development

Drew Fairley

Drew Fairley is an actor, singer, writer and director who has rattled around the globe for thirty years making people laugh and cry – in a good way.

Artist Statement

I was marooned on a cruise ship in the early months of the pandemic. It was absurd. It was also a complex journey of keeping it together and battling with my demons. Whilst languishing in Manila Bay I started a tiny TV talk show, *Actual Cabin Actual Fever*, that dragged me out of my sadness. It was an incredible silver lining to a potentially very dark story of getting stuck. Isolated, shutting down and inappropriately dressed, I lost my way whilst set adrift at sea.

In essence, I'm keen to tell a deeply personal, hopefully universal, story of grief and loss through a Vegas Supper Club aesthetic. Think Cher performing Macbeth directed by David Lynch. Without the middriffs - I promise. This show is for anyone who was dazzled by what coping really looks like when the safety nets are gone and lightning rumbles in the horizon.

- DREW FAIRLEY



As Luck Would Have It

Development Showing

By **Drew Fairley**

As Luck Would Have It begins like a piece of stand-up, telling the hilarious clash between land and cruise ship logic. Then as we are banished from Australian waters, the play slides into a surreal parallel story of life and death. The machinations of desperation through the inner workings of the theatre itself are explored. It's going to be a hilarious, adventurous, mysterious and bumpy ride. Exactly like your 2020 but on a ship and with wigs. A swirling, drum-rolling, horn-tooting theatrical odyssey.

Sat 1 May, 11am

Bruce Gordon Theatre,
Illawarra Performing Arts Centre

Reserve Your Spot

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As Luck Would Have It was commissioned by Merrigong Theatre Company.

MERRIGONGX
Development

Kirli Saunders

Kirli Saunders is a proud Gunai Woman, award-winning international writer, teacher, consultant and artist, and was named the 2020 NSW Aboriginal Woman of the Year.

Artist Statement

Let me start by acknowledging, that I write this on Gundungurra Country. My family came to be here after they were removed from Yuin lands. Like many First Nations families, we have a strong history of dispossession, relocation, oppression and control as a result of Government policy and colonisation.

This history of disconnection is something I've been healing from for the last decade, through writing, making art, teaching and researching. I have spent hours yarning with family, tracing our ties, hiking sacred mountains, and sipping cuppas with Elders who hold the stories of my Grandparents.

Going Home centres around my journey of homecoming and reconnection, back on Gunai Land. It's my hope that this work will celebrate the strength, resilience and warmth of First Nations communities and offer solace for those similarly disconnected or displaced. This work would not be possible without the support of Elders, Custodians and Family on Gundungurra, Yuin, Dharawal and Gunai Countries.



Going Home

Development Showing

By **Kirli Saunders**

Inspired by Kirli Saunders' own reconnection to Country and Community, **Going Home** explores the intersection of the removal of four siblings taken from their families in 1970's and the homecoming of those siblings to Country in present day.

Weaving fiction with truth, poetry with prose, and language with land, this work offers solace to those similarly disconnected, and celebrates the strength, survival and warmth of First Nations communities. It explores the intergenerational impacts of our shared history, confronts what we leave behind when we are forced to go, and prompts us to think about what lies ahead.

Sat 22 May, 11am

Bruce Gordon Theatre,
Illawarra Performing Arts Centre

Reserve Your Spot

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Going Home was co-commissioned by Play Writing Australia and Merrigong Theatre Company.

MERRIGONGX
Development

- **KIRLI SAUNDERS**

Austinmer Dance Theatre

Austinmer Dance Theatre (ADT) is a developmental contemporary dance company, the only one of its kind in the Illawarra. Founded by Artistic Director Michelle Maxwell, ADT bridges the gap between full-time dance training, tertiary education and a professional career for young dancers trained in contemporary dance, ballet, dance theatre and improvisation.

Artist Statement

uNCOILED is an annual project established in 2012 as a tribute to former student, Nicole Fitzsimons. She was an avid supporter and friend of the company, who passed away at the age of 24.

This platform to create original works has developed into ***uNCOILED eXposed***: the Illawarra's first-ever curated, outcome-based, contemporary dance residency. This revitalised platform offers emerging artists the chance to make their choreographic debut and to premiere thought-provoking art that is bold, experimental and, in parts, raw and emotional.

Lifting the lid off this formerly 'in house' season, artists will have the opportunity to collaborate with a group of committed and driven dancers, in a supportive, uplifting environment. This innovative project will be made up of original works from ADT company members and NSW-based emerging choreographers.

We hope to increase access and exposure to the artform, through different, abstract and raw perspectives.

- MICHELLE MAXWELL



uNCOILED eXposed

Development Showing

The premiere showing of *uNCOILED eXposed* is an experimental dance residency that represents an unravelling of fresh choreographic talent. Emerging artists from diverse styles and backgrounds will work collaboratively with ADT company dancers to create new experimental dance works.

This outcome-based residency will give successful applicants from diverse styles and background the time and space to develop their artistic practice - from development through to a fully staged 4-performance season.

Artistic Director Michelle Maxwell

Senior Company Dancers Natalie Cuzolo, Mihkayla Bartlett

Junior Company Dancer Rikia Bell

Company Apprentices Carlie Shaw, Ilana Maryasin, Claire Hubbard

21 – 23 OCT

Thu 7.30pm, Fri 11am & 7.30pm, Sat 7.30pm
Bruce Gordon Theatre,
Illawarra Performing Arts Centre

Reserve Your Spot

merrigong.com.au/merrigongx

MERRIGONGX
Development

PROJECTS 'UNDER WRAPS'

Throughout 2021, a whole range of artists will be working in our venues 'under wraps'. Take a glimpse into the exciting projects these artists are working on, from circus to music, from multi-media to absurdist theatre.

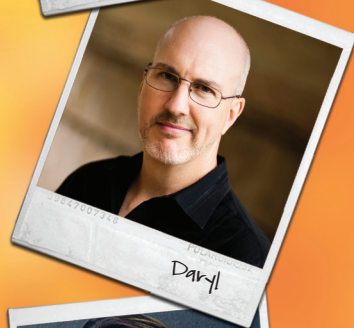
ALICIA BATESTINI

Alicia Battestini is a performer, director and creator of physical theatre from Wollongong. *Elsie for Vestri* is an outlandish and tender exploration of grief and loss. It's also a celebration of play as a coping mechanism. Created with video artist Mic Gruchy, physical character work combines with video-based performance to explore the chaotic, poetic, and hilarious world of 'Elsie': a gender-fluid twenty something who struggled with anxiety and depression. It does this from the perspective of several different characters, all of whom loved 'Elsie' before 'Elsie' disappeared.



DARYL WALLIS

Daryl Wallis is an accomplished composer, sound designer, keyboard musician, vocal coach and musical director. *The Hour of Land* is a personal meditation and dialogue between two of the oldest National Parks in the world, Yosemite National Park and the Royal National Park Sydney. Using an original piano score, projected imagery and narration, the work will explore the intersection of wilderness, creative practice and poetic contemplation. What is wilderness? What is the relationship of wilderness to art? What is the indigenous history and practice within 'protected' wilderness areas?



EMMA SAUNDERS

Emma Saunders is an Australian dance artist who works as a director, choreographer, performer, educator and curator. She will undertake a creative development solo project with a focus on reflecting and deepening her processes on making outdoor, local, en-masse site-specific dance works involving the professional dancing and broader community. Inspired by how outdoor works mediate the distance between audience and performer, the residency will explore the physical environment as a force to be acknowledged, celebrated, incorporated, reckoned with or reacted to as one might a silent but wieldy partner.





INTRANSIT.CO

InTransit.co is an independent theatre company led by designer Katja Handt and director Michael Pigott, developing dramaturgical frameworks to articulate the contemporary experience. **Fault Lines** is a hybrid performance work currently in development that asks people to respond to the idea of environmental, health and economic crisis. Performers try to reconstruct a town's disappearance from the fragments of evidence that remain, as the audience watches the model of the town sink. This work extends their interest in audience participation for creating performance.



FRUMPUS

Frumpus developed from the rich and anarchic Sydney performance scene of the early 1990s. The collaborative practice of performance artists and comedians Cheryle Moore, Lenny Ann Low and Stephanie Hart, Frumpus explore provocative, grotesque and punctured ideals of female perfection. Their new work, **Landed**, navigates the world of luxury travel and obscene excess via physical humour and skewed imagery and soundbites from TV, film and advertising. Upending choreographed themes from Benny Hill to Alan Watts, **The Goodies** to **Picnic at Hanging Rock**, **Landed** travels into turbulent, anarchic and joyful self-satisfaction.



JANE FULLERTON-SMITH

Jane has an extensive creative history as a writer, performer, choreographer, director and producer, who thrives in comedy, movement and song. **Fiona Hiscock-Browne - A Memoir (The Unmedicated Version)** is the complicated journey of one woman unconsciously falling into a state of mania... possibly bipolar, possibly not. Currently in long form, Jane will develop for the stage, and bring Fiona's wonderfully misunderstood and slightly unhinged yet colourful character to life.



KAY PROUDLOVE

Kay Proudlove is a South Coast performer, writer and composer who has toured worldwide with her live shows, and worked on various projects in the worlds of folk music, musical theatre and the dramatic arts. **Dear Diary** is a musical work that brings the stumbling, unsure and cringe-worthy naivety of her teenage diaries to the foreground in hopes that the audience will experience second hand embarrassment, a solid belly laugh, a few tears and a sense of familiarity and camaraderie. *“I have certainly felt more love for teenage Kay while writing these songs and I hope that the show will give the audience a chance to reflect on how they feel towards their past selves, and ultimately about who they’ve grown to become.”* says Kay.



LHALESKA URDANIVIA

Lhaleska is an experimental artist who creates film, sound, analogue & digital photography, directs performances and creates poetry and fine arts. **In Her Hands** will combine confessional poetry, live performance and video projection to explore different aspects of the human experience: pain, love, chance, resilience, strength and hope. The work will draw on her own story of growing up away from her birth country, covering significant transitions of her life (from becoming a teenager to an adult), and feeling a sense of loss, isolation and uncertainty, but also about overcoming hardship and bringing hope.



NEISHA MURPHY

Neisha is vibrant director and variety entertainer who has spent the last 20 years of her life dedicated to performance. Blending a unique mix of physical bravado and character vulnerability, **ChaChi** is a vaudevillian style show about the journey of a girl growing up, surrounded by circus misfits. Combining storytelling, gender play, contemporary circus feats, daredevil stunts and a host of eccentric characters, this physical performance utilizes experimental set structures and props.





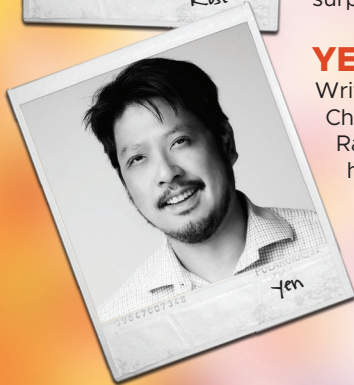
ROCKING HOIST

Rocking Hoist is Alex Tutton & Lauren Scott-Young. Alex is a playwright and theatre maker, whose creative practice involves exploring the digital world and how it intersects with myth building, accountability and queerness. Lauren is an emerging Sydney artist who has created and performed in works both internationally and locally. ***There is a fireplace at the end of the world*** started with the idea of a TED Talk set at the end of world. Amongst a corporate setting (where big business say they are a family, not a business) the wheels eventually fall off revealing something much more unhinged!



ROSE MAHER

Rose is an actor and performance maker who values collaboration, community and communication. Seeded in a Bouffon workshop, ***Monsignor Hell & the Catholic School Girl*** combines two parts of her practice: the storyteller and the clown. Bringing stories from a Catholic upbringing together with the clown, elements of mockery and play in this work cultivate the performers' complicité with the audience: let there be laughter, surprise and the truth!



YEN YANG

Writer **Hung-Yen Yang** is your 'typical' Australian-Indonesian-Chinese mash-up and a graduate of the Australian Film Television Radio School (AFTRS). ***A Practical Guide to Self-Defence*** is his account of growing up Asian in Australia. Part play, part instructional guide it follows his unlikely transformation from pacifist, asthmatic geek into a brutal, fighting machine. It is sprinkled with practical demonstrations like how to fall and how to punch as we hurtle towards our central existential contradiction – 'How to defeat the beast within?'

THE STRANGWAYS ENSEMBLE

Comprising seven members, **The Strangeways Ensemble** is Merrigong's permanent company of professional actors who are perceived to have intellectual disabilities, and Wollongong's only professional theatre ensemble.

Formalised in 2018 after Merrigong's second professional work with the group, *The Outside Man*, **The Strangeways Ensemble** meet every Friday to rehearse and develop skills, as well as engaging in a number of week-long workshops with some of the country's leading theatre artists and companies.

In 2021, the Ensemble will curate and perform in *The Strangeways Cabaret*. Held

over three nights in The Music Lounge, expect a cabaret show filled with spirited hijinks and joyful celebration, with performers from the Illawarra and beyond.

The Strangeways Ensemble is Malcolm Allison, Ethan Arnold, Rachel Head, Christian Tagliaferro, Ethan Green, Jordan Bowater, Phillip Prentice, with Director Anne-Louise Rentell.

"We explore universal themes from our unique perspectives and aim to find the fantastical in the mundane. We make work which is evocative and challenging, but also poetic and funny. We like to make people think and laugh."

- The Strangeways Ensemble



MADE FROM SCRATCH

The night where all creative endeavours take the stage!

Made From Scratch is a multi-artform performance night offering artists space and support to test new ideas in front of a live audience.

Here, **experimentation is key.**

The beauty is you get to experience a little bit of everything. These events will showcase new works from local artists across performance, film, stand-up comedy, poetry, music, cabaret, circus and anything in between.

Got an idea for an act?

Contact artistic@merrigong.com.au

Sat 5 Jun, 7.30pm

Sat 3 Jul, 7.30pm

Sat 14 Aug, 7.30pm

Sat 11 Sep, 7.30pm

The Music Lounge,
Wollongong Town Hall

Reserve Your Spot

merrigong.com.au/merrigongx



MERRIGONG PLAYWRIGHTS' PROGRAM

Merrigong has a long history of developing and producing new work by some of Australia's most celebrated playwrights. The Merrigong Playwrights' Program invests in the next generation of storytellers. As a part of our increased support for independent and emerging artists, this new initiative provides long-term mentoring for those with an interest in writing for the stage.

Through regular meetings over the course of the year, the Merrigong Playwrights' Program aims to create a space where writers are encouraged to rigorously articulate their ideas in a safe and supportive group of peers. We want to give writers the confidence to dream big and dazzle us with trailblazing new work.

This program is open to anyone aged 18 and above with an interest in writing for theatre. We are committed to providing an inclusive culture and program where all our artists are valued and recognised for their unique qualities, ideas and perspectives. We encourage applications from Indigenous Australians, people with disability, people from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, mature age workers and LGBTQTI people.

For more information, contact:
artistic@merrigong.com.au



HOW TO ENGAGE

Merrigong is committed to supporting the development and presentation of the work of independent artists through new and established performance platforms and development opportunities. Opportunities with MERRIGONGX for independent artists/groups include:

- **Presentation:** funded and in-kind support for the production of new works with a presentation season.
- **Creative Development:** funded and/or in-kind support for the development of new works with no immediate public outcome.
- **Development Showings:** funded and in-kind support for the development of new works with a 'work-in-progress' public outcome.
- **Made From Scratch:** our experimental scratch night of new work and new artists.

Artists and Companies with a connection to the Illawarra are encouraged to make an Expression of Interest through the MERRIGONGX application process. After consultation with the artists/groups, works are selected and curated by Merrigong's artistic team, with the assistance of an external industry professional. Applications take place on an annual basis from July of the previous year, with successful applicants informed in December. A callout for interested artists for our 2021 Made from Scratch series will be made in April 2021.

For more information, contact: artistic@merrigong.com.au



Show up and support artists

We want to make it easier to experience new works. So for MERRIGONGX events there is no set ticket price. Instead, you simply reserve a spot, show up, then pay what you feel the performance is worth afterwards.

1

RESERVE YOUR SPOT FOR FREE

Register and reserve your spot online.

If this is your first time, you will need to sign up. All you need is an email address and a credit or debit card (note – no money is charged to your card.)

2

SEE THE SHOW

You know this bit...

3

PAY WHAT YOU FEEL

After the show, we'll send you an email asking how much you want to pay. You choose the amount based on your experience and your circumstances. There is no minimum or maximum amount.

Important: If you reserve a seat and don't show up on the night, you will be charged a \$20 no-show fee per seat. This ensures that the artists don't miss out for their work.

Our company's name, 'Merrigong', reflects the Dharawal word for the Illawarra region's distinctive escarpment, a landmark of supreme cultural importance. This 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.

Venues

Illawarra Performing Arts Centre, 32 Burelli Street, Wollongong

Wollongong Town Hall, Corner of Crown and Kembla Streets, Wollongong

Thank you

Merrigong Theatre Company's major funding partners



Merrigong Theatre Company manages IPAC & Wollongong Town Hall on behalf of its major funding partner, Wollongong City Council.



Other supporters of works and artists



The Strangeways Ensemble



Going Home



The Construct

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