

MERRIGONG TALKING POINT



From Page to Stage: Unveiling the Creative Journey of Personal Storytelling

Sat 11 May, approx. 15 mins after the matinee performance

Writers are often advised to write what they know. So what does that look in reality as creative process of crafting an excellent story that is universal, entertaining and still deeply personal? Facilitated by Annie Clapton, Producer – New Works, Kay Proudlove (writer and performer of *Dear Diary*) is joined by local playwright Rose Maher and dramaturg Phil Spencer in discussion on creating *Dear Diary* and creative practice.

Everyone is invited to join our eclectic and engaging series of foyer talks, designed to complement our Season. Held 15 mins after the Saturday matinee performances of most Mainstage Season shows. Talking Points are free and run for approx. 1 hr.

No bookings are required.



THE MERRIGONG TEAM

Artistic Director / CEO Simon Hinton	Visitor Experience Manager Andrew Bell	Facilities Assistant Don Roth
General Manager Rachel Francis	Front of House Manager Sally Lewis & Flynn Mapplebeck	Marketing Manager Samantha Conridge
Artistic Development Manager Leland Kean	Food and Beverage Services Manager Kellie George	Manager Brand and Audience Strategy Amandine Durrant
Executive Team Coordinator Nicole McLennan	Production and Technical Manager Pip Rigter	Marketing Coordinators Mina Albert, Grace De Liseo, & Eileen Stapleton
Producer – New Works Annie Clapton	Technical Lead Elly Turner	Box Office Manager Linda Hanbury
Artistic Associate - Artist Wellbeing Bonnie Curtis	Senior Lighting Technician Corey Potter	Box Office Supervisor Eliza Swan
Director – The Strangeways Ensemble Anne-Louise Rentell	Technical Coordinator Hayley Metcalf	Finance Assistants Jeannine Mulligan & Rupak Niroula
Program Manager Penny Watts	Trainee Audio Technician Brodee Beattie	Accountant Janki Dave
First Nations Engagement Coordinator Danielle Moylan	Facilities Coordinator James Clarke	
Program Coordinators Dayna Huber & Samson Soulsby		

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LOVED THE SHOW?

Let us know by tagging Merrigong and using the #merrigong2024

To ensure patrons enjoy the performance, management asks you to note:

- Camera and mobile devices should not be used during the performance
- Switch off alarms and mobile phones prior to the performance

The management reserves the right to refuse admission and ask patrons to leave, also to make any alterations to the cast which may be rendered necessary by illness of other unavoidable causes. Patrons are advised that the Illawarra Performing Arts Centre has an EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE, a FIRE ALARM system and EXIT passageways. In case of an alert, patrons should remain calm, look for the closest GREEN EXIT sign, listen to and comply with directions given by the trained in-house attendants and move in an orderly fashion to the open spaces outside the building. The Illawarra Performing Arts Centre is a company limited by guarantee and supported by Wollongong City Council.

ILLAWARRA PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE
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Merrigong Theatre Company manages IPAC & Wollongong Town Hall on behalf of its major funding partner, Wollongong City Council



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Merrigong Theatre Company presents

DEAR DIARY

BY KAY PROUDLOVE

A soundtrack for what we were, what we are and what we will be

“Witty and delightful.”



Fringe World Perth



8 - 11 MAY



Photo by Ashleigh Bateman. ©WVCS06151

Merrigong Theatre Company presents

DEAR DIARY

CAST AND CREATIVES

Writer and Performer Kay Proudlove
Director Leland Kean
Dramaturg Phil Spencer
Costume Consultant Katja Handt
Lighting Designer Tom Doyle
Tour Production Manager/Audio Engineer Ben Davies

8 - 11 MAY

Wed 8 May, 7.30pm

Thu 9 May, 11am (Schools Performance), 6.30pm Q&A

Fri 10 May, 7.30pm

Sat 11 May, 1.30pm TP, AD, C, TT, 7.30pm

Q&A = Post-show Q&A

TP = Merrigong Talking Point

Sat 11 May, 15 mins after the 1.30pm performance

Running time: 1 hr 15 mins (no interval)

Age Recommendation: 14+. Strong language and adult themes.

WRITER'S NOTE

Finding my teenage diaries and reading through them could have gone many ways. Luckily, instead of wallowing in a pit of nostalgia and regret, I decided to make some art. I began to write songs, using the entries for lyrics. I knew early on that these songs weren't going to fit into my regular gigs and sought out a way for them to be heard. Like Oliver with his soup bowl, I came knocking on the door of MERRIGONG X, looking for more. Enter Phil Spencer, a dramaturg who coached me on how to write outside of my comfort zone and Leland Kean, who gave me a stage and helped me work out how to use it to tell this story. Even though this show began with me laughing/crying at myself for a few hours while unpacking boxes, *Dear Diary* has turned into a show of storytelling, music and self-discovery as a woman and an artist. It looks at what we hold on to in our lives (both physically and mentally), why we keep these things and when it's the right time to let them go, if ever. I hope that the audience find familiarity in the naïve, cringe-worthy moments and have the chance to reflect on their own journey through life so far. There is still nostalgia and regret, but instead of it being in a pit, it's out in the open with all of you. And we're not wallowing - we're basking. Thanks for being here. - Kay Proudlove

THANK YOU

Leland Kean, Phil Spencer, Katja Handt, Annie Clapton, Ben Davies, Thomas Doyle, Pip Rigter, Ashleigh Chambers and all of the staff at Merrigong for helping me take this project out of the book and onto the stage.

Arts On Tour for believing in this show enough to send it around the country.

All of my friends and family for their support and inspiration.

KAY PROUDLOVE | WRITER AND PERFORMER



Emotional and witty, Kay is a Wollongong raised indie-folk singer-songwriter with a remarkably agile, engaging, honest, soul-bearing voice and a wry, dry-ice sense of humour. With a live performance style that is much like being invited into her lounge room, her songs

are truly stories set to melody, by turns relatable, humorous and heartbreaking. Creating an intimacy between audience and performer through vulnerability, Kay's live show is likely to leave you wondering whether all her songs are about you.

The co-ordination that never showed up for Kay on any sort of sporting field has made itself known in a marriage of acoustic guitar, voice and lyrics that are practiced in the art of observation. From the self-love anthem *Bikini Body* to the heartfelt story of missed connections in *All In The Timing* and the pop cultured parody of *May The Fourth*, Kay's songs highlight the commonalities between human beings, pulling at them like heartstrings. This skill has been refined over the last 20 years while performing her work around Australia, including appearances at **Woodford Folk Festival, The National Folk Festival, Illawarra Folk Festival, Nannup Music Festival** as well as every bar in Greater Sydney that local emerging artists cut their teeth on. Never shying away from an audience of strangers, Kay befriends quickly and has opened shows for the likes of **Tim Fredman, Katie Noonan, William Crighton, 19-Twenty, Caiti Baker, Shaun Kirk, Hollie Col, The Northern Folk and Boat Keeper.**

Kay used 2020 to compose the musical works for *See You Later, Mum*, a black comedy stage show written

by Christine Firkin, which Kay performed in at Adelaide Fringe Festival in March 2021 and Edinburgh Festival in 2022. The show received a four-star review from Stage Whispers who commented that "Proudlove's beautiful songs are carried on a guitar and a voice - sometimes the two voices, harmonising heartfelt lyrics with clever rhymes."

Kay composed and performed original music for Merrigong Theatre Company's production *Shakespeare in the Garden: A Midsummer Night's Dream*

LELAND KEAN | DIRECTOR



Leland is the Artistic Development Manager for Merrigong Theatre Company. He has over twenty-five years professional experience as a Director, Producer, Designer, Dramaturg, Curator and Arts Manager. Prior to joining Merrigong in 2015, Leland was

the Artistic Director of the Tamarama Rock Surfers Theatre Company. During his decade long tenure with the Rock Surfers he programmed and produced over 100 new Australian works and established both the Old Fitzroy and Bondi Pavilion Theatres. Since graduating from the NIDA director's course in 1997, his career has been committed to the development and production of new Australian work and artists. He has directed and produced premieres and

productions of the work of many of Australia's most prominent writers including Suzie Miller, Sue Smith, Alana Valentine, Kay Proudlove, Brendan Cowell, Toby Schmitz, Aiden Fennessey, Tim Minchin, Travis Cotton, Stephen Carlton, John AD Fraser, David Williamson, Tim Baker, Lachlan Philpott and Drew Fairley. For Merrigong he has directed productions of *Lost Boys* (2018), *The Surfer and the Mermaid* (2019), *Dear Diary* and *As Luck Would Have It* (2022), and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2023). He produced the national tour of *Letters to Lindy* in 2018 and has driven the development of Merrigong's The Strangeways Ensemble and Merrigong's artist development program MERRIGONG X.

PHIL SPENCER | DRAMATURG



Phil Spencer is a writer, theatre-maker and educator. He is the Peggy Ramsey Foundation Award for Writers and has been shortlisted for the Philip Parsons Playwright Award. Show credits include *The Smallest Hour* (Griffin Theatre Company),

No Standing. No Dancing. (ABC Radio Fictions), *Hooting & Howling* (Melbourne Fringe, 2016 New South Wales Tour, Lorne Arts Festival, Sydney Theatre Company Rough Draft) *Glorious Pomegranate* (Sydney Fringe), *All Lost in the Supermarket* (Sydney Writers Festival, Radiotonic), *Destroyer of Worlds* by Caleb Lewis (Adelaide Fringe), *You And Whose Army?* (Giant Dwarf, Art & About, UK tour), *One Man Show* by *The Chaser's* Chris Taylor & Andrew Hansen (Australian Tour), *Boxing Day* (Rock Surfers + NSW tour), *The Great Apeth* (Rock Surfers) and *Bluey* (Battersea Arts Centre, London, Melbourne Fringe, The Arches Glasgow).

Phil recently finished up as the Associate Artist at Griffin Theatre, where he developed dozens of new works and founded BATCH festival, Griffin Scratch and the Griffin Up Late program. He is a regular contributor to the popular *Story Club* podcast, ABC Radio Fictions and has delivered storytelling workshops for Brand X, Critical Stages, ATYP and the NSW Writers Centre.

Phil was the recipient of Peggy Ramsey Foundation Award for Writers and has been shortlisted for the Philip Parsons Playwright Award not once, not twice, but thrice (*but still hasn't won it, so he's pretty sure it's rigged*). He has performed in lounge rooms across Sydney, arts festivals across Australia and in sh*tty rooms above pubs the world over.

TOM DOYLE | LIGHTING DESIGNER



Tom Doyle is a lighting designer and theatre maker from Wollongong, working on Gadigal and Dharawal land. Tom holds a Bachelor of Creative Arts (Theatre) and a First-Class Honours (Theatre) from the University of Wollongong. Recently, Tom has

designed lighting for *Optimal Stopping* (MerrigongX, FIDCDMX), *The Lobster* (MerrigongX), *Dumb Kids* (KXT), *Artslab: Body Of Work* (Shopfront), and *The Infinity Mirror* (The Flying Nun). Tom is a proud MEAA member.