

Melbourne's HOME of **THEATRE**

2021 — ACT 1

WELCOME HOME

MTC MELBOURNE
THEATRE
COMPANY



WELCOME

HOME



Welcome to 2021, a year in two acts.

Act 1 will bring artists, audiences and the theatre-making process together, in a live setting for the first time in nearly a year. The Summer Series will entertain, delight and offer insight into the development of new works, and the two terrific productions that follow will mark our long-awaited mainstage return.

Act 2 will be announced in March, featuring a suite of productions including the world premiere of a contemporary Aboriginal work, other new Australian plays, and international hits.

Our reopening in January will be a truly special moment. 2020 has been a tough and challenging year and we simply could not have made it to this point without the tremendous support of the MTC community.

To everyone who called and wrote with well wishes, to everyone who donated or took a credit note, we thank you. It has kept our spirits up and helped keep the Company going.

To our team of unbelievably dedicated staff, a huge thank you for your incredible resilience, support and hard work. And to the great artists of Melbourne, thank you for continuing to create and make theatre in the most trying of circumstances. Without you, we simply would not exist.

We can't wait to welcome you back to MTC. See you for Act 1.

Brett Sheehy AO
Artistic Director & CEO

Virginia Lovett
Executive Director & Co-CEO

MTC is a
department of
the University of
Melbourne.



MTC is assisted by the Commonwealth Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body, and by the State Government of Victoria through Creative Victoria.



29 JAN —
27 FEB

SUMMER *Series*

Five special events over
five weekends

Supported by





THE WELL

By **Louris van de Geer**

Adapted from the book *The Well*, by Elizabeth Jolley

Directed by Sarah Goodes

An adaptation of a beloved novel, brought to life in a staged reading.

Join **Heidi Arena**, **Paul English**, **Nadine Garner** and **Tamala Shelton** for a special night of theatrical storytelling in this new MTC NEXT STAGE commission by acclaimed Melbourne playwright **Louris van de Geer**. An adaptation of Elizabeth Jolley's award-winning Australian classic, it will be presented as a unique, sonically driven live reading to welcome the first audiences back inside Southbank Theatre after nearly a year offstage.

On a whim, middle-aged Hester brings the orphaned, adolescent Katherine into her home – it's the start of a powerful friendship for both women. But when a sudden tragedy interrupts their seemingly idyllic outback life, it threatens to twist their unshakable bond to breaking point. A haunting thriller in the best traditions of Australian Gothic, *The Well* is a taut work of gnawing suspense as these two women navigate the emotional and psychological terrains of desire, memory and social isolation.

Directed by **Sarah Goodes** (*Home, I'm Darling*), this bespoke staged reading will feature an aural design by sound artist **Camilla Hannan** to explore the acoustic potential of theatre and to prioritise a sonic relationship with the audience. *The Well* is an exclusive opportunity to witness cast and creatives working together to bring a beloved novel to life.

Cast Heidi Arena, Paul English, Nadine Garner, Tamala Shelton

Sound Designer Camilla Hannan

FRIDAY 29 JANUARY, 7.30pm

SATURDAY 30 JANUARY, 2pm & 7.30pm

Southbank Theatre, The Summer

Tickets \$29 + \$4.50 booking fee

Duration approximately 90 minutes

This reading contains adult themes and some coarse language

Piano provided by Yamaha Music Australia,
a proud Season Partner of MTC.

NEXTSTAGE

Commissioned through MTC's NEXT STAGE Writers' Program, supported by the donors, foundations and organisations of MTC's Playwrights Giving Circle



Supported by





BEATING THE BLUES WITH FINN, BURNS AND PHILLIPS

Directed by Simon Phillips

A sneak-peek at a new musical in development by Carolyn Burns, Tim Finn and Simon Phillips.

Over the past few months, the creative team behind the much-loved *Ladies in Black* have been busy working on a new show, and now you're invited to a sneak preview!

Collaborating again for the first time since the smash-hit musical that brought MTC audiences to their feet in 2015, the award-winning team of **Carolyn Burns, Tim Finn** and **Simon Phillips** are looking forward to sharing their latest work with an audience, in a stripped-back, sneak-peek performance. Directed by Simon Phillips and accompanied by a piano onstage, the cast of three will read and perform tunes from this yet-to-be revealed show, with the possibility of a surprise or two.

Featuring performances from **Alison Bell, Simon Gleeson** and **Chris Ryan**, this strictly limited season will provide a tantalising teaser, as well as a rare insight into the development of a new Australian work.

Cast Alison Bell, Simon Gleeson, Chris Ryan

Musical Director Isaac Hayward

FRIDAY 5 FEBRUARY, 7.30PM

SATURDAY 6 FEBRUARY, 2PM & 7.30PM

Southbank Theatre, The Sumner

Tickets \$29 + \$4.50 booking fee

Duration approximately 90 minutes

Content warning to be advised

Piano provided by Yamaha Music Australia,
a proud Season Partner of MTC.



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WELL, THAT HAPPENED

Created by Dean Bryant for Esther Hannaford, Bert LaBonté, Zahra Newman, Christina O'Neill and Eddie Perfect

Directed by Dean Bryant

A stripped-back performance exploring the year that was.

In the spirit of his hit 2013 show *Gaybies*, director and writer **Dean Bryant** reflects on the past year as seen through the eyes of **Esther Hannaford, Bert LaBonté, Zahra Newman, Christina O'Neill** and **Eddie Perfect**.

If you're trying to make sense of 2020, you're not alone. Stuck inside longer than at any point in history, homeschooling your kids and zooming your workmates while watching racial reckonings and bonkers elections play out on your screens, the year was, at the very least, unique. Bracketed by masking up for bushfires and then viruses, and unmasking as we finally hit the donut days, Victorians spent months deprived of one of the fundamental ways we have of understanding our humanity – the communal experience of theatre.

To celebrate the reopening of the Sumner, Dean Bryant interviewed a group of MTC favourites to share how they got through the year that was, transforming their words into a one-weekend-only theatre event that's both personal and universal. There'll be laughter, tears and the occasional song as we come to terms with one of the more epic years of our lives.

Cast Esther Hannaford, Bert LaBonté, Zahra Newman, Christina O'Neill, Eddie Perfect

Musical Director Mathew Frank

FRIDAY 12 FEBRUARY, 7.30PM

SATURDAY 13 FEBRUARY, 2PM & 7.30PM

Southbank Theatre, The Sumner

Tickets \$29 + \$4.50 booking fee

Duration approximately 60 minutes

Content warning to be advised



Supported by





CYBEC ELECTRIC

Excerpts of electric new writing.

For over a decade, MTC's annual series of Cybec Electric play readings has brought the beating heart of theatre to audiences interested in great stories, electric writing and brilliant acting. With scripts in hand, actors present excerpts from works-in-progress with the assistance of directors and dramaturgs.

In 2021, six playwrights join the ranks. **Grace Feng Fang Juan's** *100 Days* explores the fault lines that arise when Wenwen and her visiting parents end up stuck in a studio apartment together during Melbourne's lockdown. With *Dead in a Liveable City*, **Margot Morales Tanjutco** gives us a comedic nightmare version of your future, when your work friends, work life and work worries overwhelm all other aspects of your life. **Benjamin Nichol's** *Croydon* tells of the life, death and afterlife of a co-dependent mother and daughter. In **Maurial Spearim's** dramatic comedy *Inside Out*, four Blak women talk, sing and dance, stopping at nothing to right wrongs and pave a new path. **Dylan Van Den Berg's** *Whitefella Yella Tree* is a play about the impact of colonisation on queer Aboriginal identities. **Jamaica Zuanetti's** *The World Isn't Made for Them* is the story of four almost forgotten women patients who were central to the development of modern conceptions of psychology.

Over one weekend, these six playwrights will present excerpts from their work with this year's NEXT STAGE residents, **Emme Hoy** and **Merlynn Tong**, also joining the line-up. Cybec Electric offers a coveted opportunity to be a part of the development process for new Australian stage plays – don't miss your chance to be among their very first audiences.

Directors Katy Maudlin, Stephen Nicolazzo

Cast to be announced

FRIDAY 19 FEBRUARY, 7.30PM – CYBEC SCENES 1
SATURDAY 20 FEBRUARY, 2PM – NEXT (ON) STAGE
SATURDAY 20 FEBRUARY, 7.30PM – CYBEC SCENES 2
Southbank Theatre, The Sumner

Tickets \$12

Duration less than 90 minutes

Content warnings to be advised

Cybec Electric is made possible by the support of the late Dr Roger Riordan AM and The Cybec Foundation

Presented with the support of

THE
Cybec
FOUNDATION

SUMMER
Series

Supported by

Genovese
COFFEE

A development reading of

THE BLACK WOMAN OF GIPPSLAND

By Andrea James

An onstage reading, offering an insight into the first draft of a new Australian work.

From *Sunshine Super Girl* playwright **Andrea James** comes a new MTC NEXT STAGE commission that delves deep into one of the first urban legends of colonial Australia. This special development reading will offer audiences a unique opportunity to hear an exciting new Australian work-in-progress while gaining rare insight into a vital side of the playwriting process.

In 1840, a settler swore he found a bible printed in Edinburgh, a blue silk purse and a broken looking-glass in the remains of a Gunaikurnai camp near Ninety Mile Beach. But did he also really see the face of a 'pale woman' in a possum-skin cloak? Was there really a 'white woman' in Gunaikurnai country or were these unverified stories a cover for other activities – these are the questions Jacinta is trying to answer when she holes herself up in a country motel to put the finishing touches on her thesis. But can she solve a 150-year-old mystery in four days? And get justice for her people?

The Black Woman of Gippsland explores colonial Victorian 'history' through a vital First Nations' lens. This presentation of James' first draft will showcase a work of powerful personal importance for an acclaimed playwright, and offers audiences the opportunity to be part of the continuing development process – Saturday's reading may even differ from the first as Andrea James takes on insights and observations from the initial public presentation to make subsequent textual adjustments.

Cast to be announced

FRIDAY 26 FEBRUARY, 7.30PM

SATURDAY 27 FEBRUARY, 7.30PM

Southbank Theatre, The Sumner

Tickets \$12

Duration less than 90 minutes

This reading contains adult themes, references to historical massacres of First Nations' people and some coarse language

NEXTSTAGE

Commissioned through MTC's NEXT STAGE Writers' Program, supported by the donors, foundations and organisations of MTC's Playwrights Giving Circle



Supported by





**FROM
6 MARCH**

SEXUAL MISCONDUCT OF THE MIDDLE CLASSES

by Hannah Moscovitch

Directed by Petra Kalive



'A familiar story of seduction, until it isn't. A powerful thing to witness.'

– Toronto Star

Award-winning Canadian playwright **Hannah Moscovitch** has set the international theatre scene alight with her fiery wit and incisive ability to tackle complex subjects with humour and intelligence. In this Australian premiere production, **Dan Spielman** and **Izabella Yena** embody Moscovitch's whip-smart #MeToo-era take on the archetypal student-teacher romance.

Jon is a prize-winning novelist who wants more out of life. His third marriage is going about as well as his first two, and he's stuck at university teaching creative writing to lazy undergraduates. He's a good teacher, but there's really only one student worth his time. Annie is clever, imaginative, and a huge fan of his work. One afternoon, Jon catches himself admiring Annie in her red coat, and very soon it feels like their affair was destined from the start. But when the embers have cooled and the affair is over, will he be able to control their narrative?

Helmed by MTC Associate Director **Petra Kalive** (*Hungry Ghosts*), this timely tale about the dangers of desire inverts everything you thought you knew about this burning issue. As Jon, **Dan Spielman** (*The Code*) brings the audience into his confidence, freely sharing his internal turmoil; and as Annie, **Izabella Yena** (*Home, I'm Darling*) shows us an all-too-real young woman coming into her power.

FROM 6 MARCH

Southbank Theatre, The Sumner

Tickets on sale from 4 February

Duration approximately 90 minutes

Contains coarse language, sexual references and mature themes

Commissioned by Tarragon Theatre, Toronto, Canada

Cast Dan Spielman, Izabella Yena

Set & Costume Designer Marg Horwell

Lighting Designer Rachel Burke

Composer & Sound Designer Darius Kedros

Assistant Director Isabella Vadiveloo

**FROM
17 APRIL**



AN MTC NEXTSTAGE ORIGINAL

BERLIN

by Joanna Murray-Smith

Directed by Iain Sinclair



‘Her works challenge, amuse, inspire and deliver unforgettable theatre.’

– Mona Brand Award judges on Murray-Smith

Joanna Murray-Smith is one of Australia’s most celebrated playwrights, captivating audiences from Melbourne to Broadway and the West End. Her riveting NEXT STAGE commission for MTC is a romantic thriller that pits the devastating shadow of history against the dazzling promise of true love.

Tom is an Australian abroad. Charlotte, a Berliner through and through. After meeting in a bar, sparks fly between them and she invites him to spend the night at her place. As they navigate the ritual of seduction, their desire gives way to secrets that cannot be ignored and questions neither of them can answer. Does young love stand a chance against the suffocating reach of the past?

Directed by **Iain Sinclair** (*A View From the Bridge*), and starring **Grace Cummings** (*Prehistoric*) and **Michael Wahr** (*Shakespeare in Love*), *Berlin* weaves a universal story of youthful passion into a nail-biting game of philosophical cat and mouse that will keep you guessing to the very end.

Cast Grace Cummings, Michael Wahr
Set & Costume Designer Christina Smith
Lighting Designer Niklas Pajanti
Composer & Sound Designer Kelly Ryall
Voice & Dialect Coach Anna McCrossin-Owen
Assistant Director Alastair Clark

FROM 17 APRIL

Southbank Theatre, The Sumner

Tickets on sale from 25 February

Duration approximately 90 minutes

Contains coarse language, sexual references and mature themes

NEXTSTAGE

Commissioned through MTC’s NEXT STAGE Writers’ Program, supported by the donors, foundations and organisations of MTC’s Playwrights Giving Circle



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

8 DEC

Summer Series
tickets on sale

4 FEB

*Sexual
Misconduct of the
Middle Classes*
tickets on sale

25 FEB

Berlin
tickets on sale

MARCH

2021 — Act 2
announced



There will be captioned and audio described performances of *Sexual Misconduct of the Middle Classes* and *Berlin*. The dates for these performances will be confirmed prior to tickets going on sale for each production. Please check MTC's website or contact the Box Office closer to the time for further information.

Find all the latest information about Act 1 including how to redeem account credit at mtc.com.au

Please note, tickets for Act 1 performances are limited due to reduced venue capacities. There are no subscription packages available for Act 1 and limits on tickets per booking may apply.

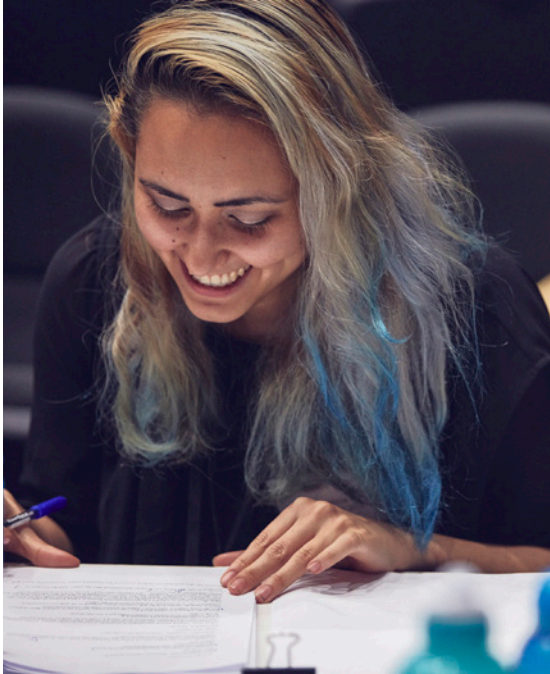


MTC **DIGITAL THEATRE**

From our stage
to your screen. ■

LAUNCHING IN 2021

MTC SIGNATURE PROGRAMS



NEXT STAGE

MTC's NEXT STAGE Writers' Program is one of the most rigorous playwright commissioning and development projects ever seen in Australia. Launched in 2017, the program has so far resulted in 29 commissioned works and welcomed 11 writers-in-residence, as well as the mainstage premieres of two plays – Benjamin Law's *Torch the Place* and Anchuli Felicia King's *Golden Shield*, with more to come in 2021. NEXT STAGE is made possible by the donors, foundations and organisations of MTC's Playwrights Giving Circle.

First Peoples Young Artists Program



Now in its sixth year, the First Peoples Young Artists Program provides opportunities for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to develop their knowledge and experience of the creative industries. Participants are guided by facilitators and guest artists to develop their own stories and voices through workshops on scriptwriting, design and performance. Meaningful pathways continue for past participants through employment opportunities and dedicated professional development. The First Peoples Young Artists Program is supported by The John and Myriam Wylie Foundation, and is presented with the assistance of program partners the Wilin Centre for Indigenous Arts and Cultural Development at VCA and YIRRAMBOI.

Education

MTC's award-winning Education program connects young people and teachers across Victoria to Melbourne's home of theatre through enrichment programs, classroom resources, professional development and partnerships. Innovative learning activities enhance the theatre experience, and our ever-expanding suite of digital content and virtual workshops make MTC Education a world-leading program. MTC Education is supported by the Education Giving Circle with additional programs made possible by individual donors and foundations.



Women in Theatre

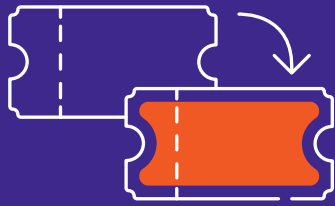
Since 2013, MTC's Women in Theatre Program has provided invaluable career development for women in our industry through a yearlong program comprising masterclasses and workshops, leadership training, networking opportunities and one-on-one mentoring. Designed to evolve with the needs of the industry, the second half of 2021 will see the program transition to focus on paid pathway opportunities within creative technical design, as well as an investment in ongoing support and engagement for past participants as they navigate their careers in the industry. MTC's Women in Theatre Program is supported by the Women in Theatre Giving Circle.

WE'RE READY FOR YOU



For your wellbeing and peace of mind, we've
made some changes.

MTC.COM.AU/YOURVISIT



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We are continually updating our health and safety measures in line with Victorian Government advice. Please check our latest guidelines prior to your visit at mtc.com.au/yourvisit

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Acknowledging a lifetime of extraordinary support for MTC.

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Supporting the long term sustainability and creative future of MTC.

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Supporting the NEXT STAGE Writers' Program.

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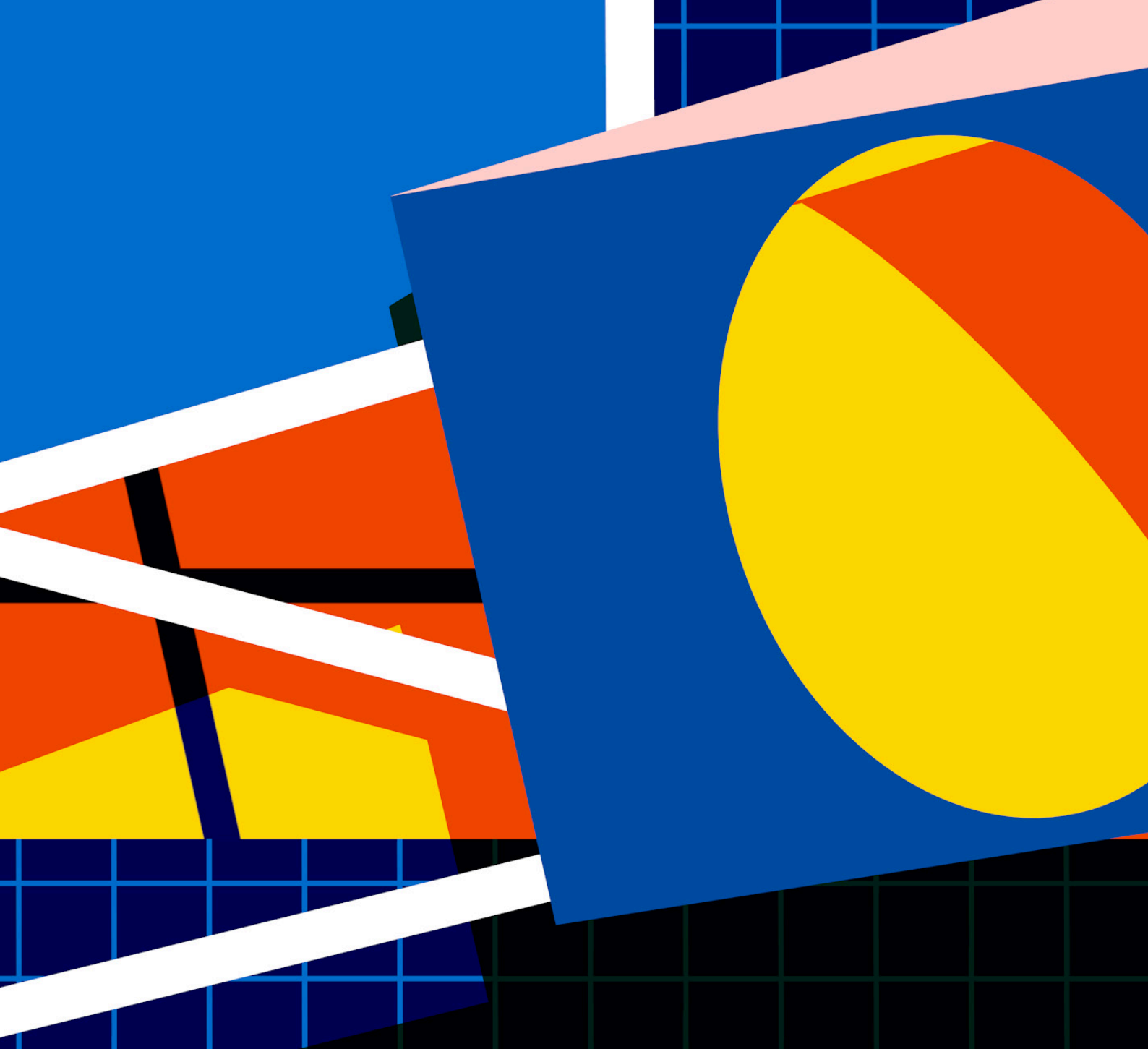


Southbank Theatre Partners



If you would like to join our corporate family or host a private event, please contact partnerships@mtc.com.au

Partners current as of December 2020.



In this document, the terms First Peoples, First Nations, Indigenous and Aboriginal are used to refer with respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and their art, cultures and stories. When used in reference to a particular work or artist, the choice of term has been determined by the artists involved.

Image credits

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Details in this guide are correct at the time of publication. MTC reserves the right to add, withdraw, and substitute artists and vary the program should the need arise.

Melbourne's HOME of **THEATRE**