

SOUTHBANK  
THEATRE

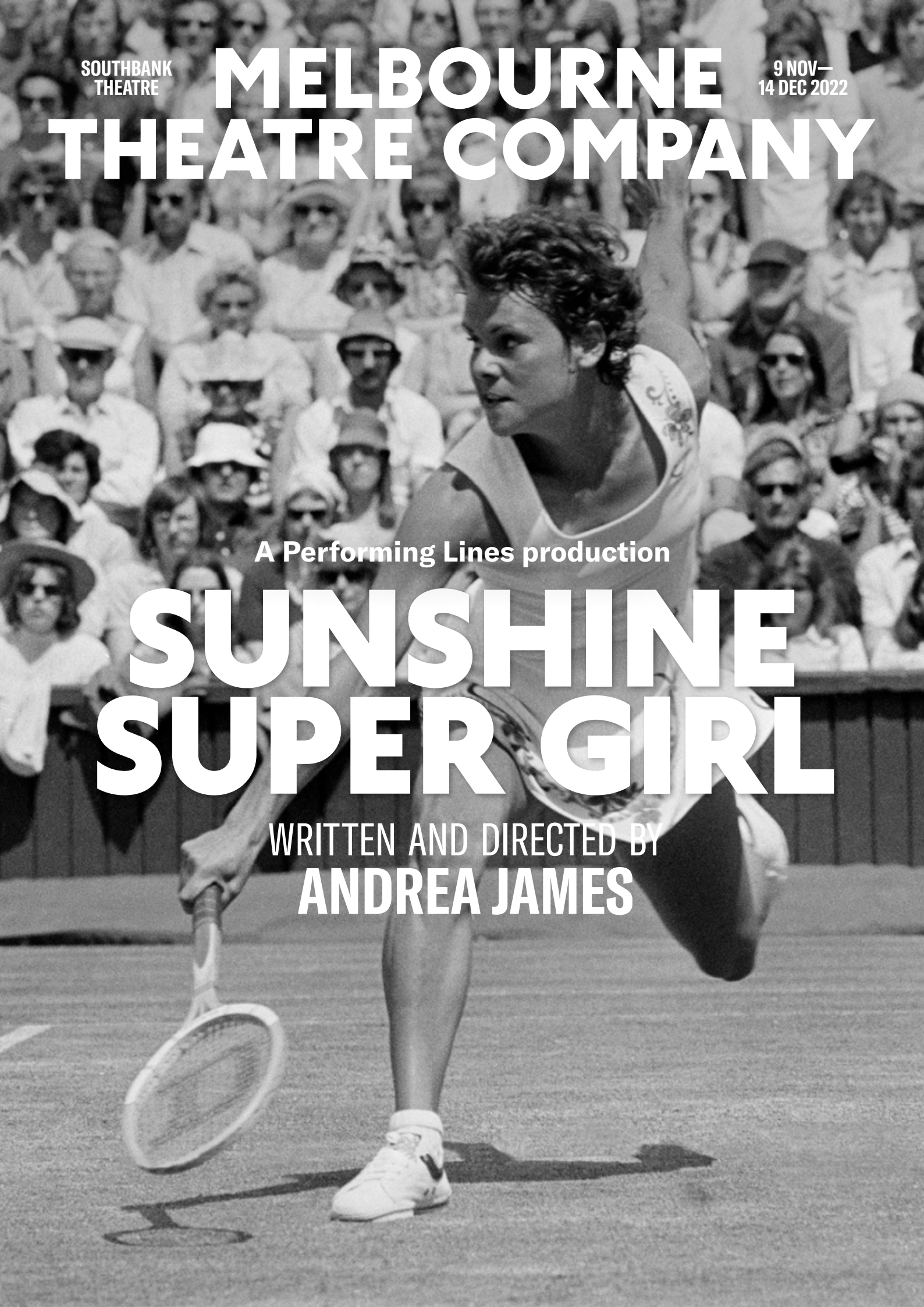
# MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY

9 NOV—  
14 DEC 2022

A Performing Lines production

# SUNSHINE SUPER GIRL

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY  
ANDREA JAMES



**Melbourne Theatre Company acknowledges the Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri peoples of the Kulin Nation, the traditional custodians of the land on which we work, create and gather.**

**We pay our respects to all First Peoples, their Elders past and present, and their enduring connections to Country, knowledge and stories.**

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UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE



MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY IS ASSISTED BY THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT  
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Melbourne Theatre Company presents  
a Performing Lines production

# **SUNSHINE SUPER GIRL**

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY  
**ANDREA JAMES**

**9 NOV—14 DEC 2022**  
**SOUTHBANK THEATRE, THE SUMNER**

## **ABOUT THE PLAY**

A young girl hits a ball against the tin wall of her family's home. This is where it all began for Evonne Goolagong Cawley. Hers is a quintessentially Blak Australian story about a girl from the bush who dared to dream, and with the unlikely support of an outback farming town, rose to become the No. 1 tennis player in the world, and a household name by the age of 19.

# CAST

Mum & Ensemble Jax Compton  
Roger, Dad & Ensemble Lincoln Elliott  
Evonne Ella Ferris  
Barbara & Ensemble Katina Olsen  
Larry, Mr Edwards & Ensemble Kirk Page

# CREATIVE TEAM

Director Andrea James  
Movement Director & Additional Choreography Katina Olsen  
Original Choreographic Concept  
& Initial Movement Direction Vicki Van Hout  
Set & Costume Design Romanie Harper  
Lighting Design Karen Norris  
Tour Lighting Design Ben Anshaw  
Composition & Sound Design Gail Priest  
Video Media Design Mic Gruchy  
Dramaturg Louise Gough  
Mentor Paige Rattray  
Performing Lines Tour Crew  
Production Manager Jason Thelwell  
Stage Manager Jess Keepence  
Assistant Stage Manager Vivienne Poznanski  
Rehearsal Stage Manager Madelaine Osborn  
Head of Lighting Steve Hendy  
Head of Audio Corey Wiles  
Produced by Performing Lines  
Development Photographers Jamie James and Jhuny-Boy Borja  
Rehearsal Photographer Luke Currie Richardson  
Darwin Festival Production Photographer Paz Tassone  
Campaign Image of Evonne Goolagong Cawley  
Evening Standard/Stringer

This production contains mild coarse language, adult themes, flashing lights and haze.  
The running time for this production is approximately 1 hour and 35 minutes with no interval.  
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patrons are advised that this performance contains references, images and depictions of people who have died.

A PERFORMING LINES PRODUCTION

MEDIA PARTNER



Melbourne Theatre Company warmly thanks  
our Production Patrons for this presentation of  
*Sunshine Super Girl*



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*Sunshine Super Girl* is produced by Performing Lines and supported by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body; the NSW Government through Create NSW; the Seaborn Broughton & Walford Foundation; the Blake-Beckett Trust; Moogahlin Performing Arts; Playwriting Australia through its Playwrights' Retreat Program.

*Sunshine Super Girl* has been supported by Production Co-commissioners: Melbourne Theatre Company, QPAC, Griffith Regional Theatre, Queanbeyan Performing Arts Centre, Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre, Bendigo Venues and Events, Geelong Arts Centre, The Art House – Wyong, Wagga Wagga Civic Theatre and Country Arts SA.



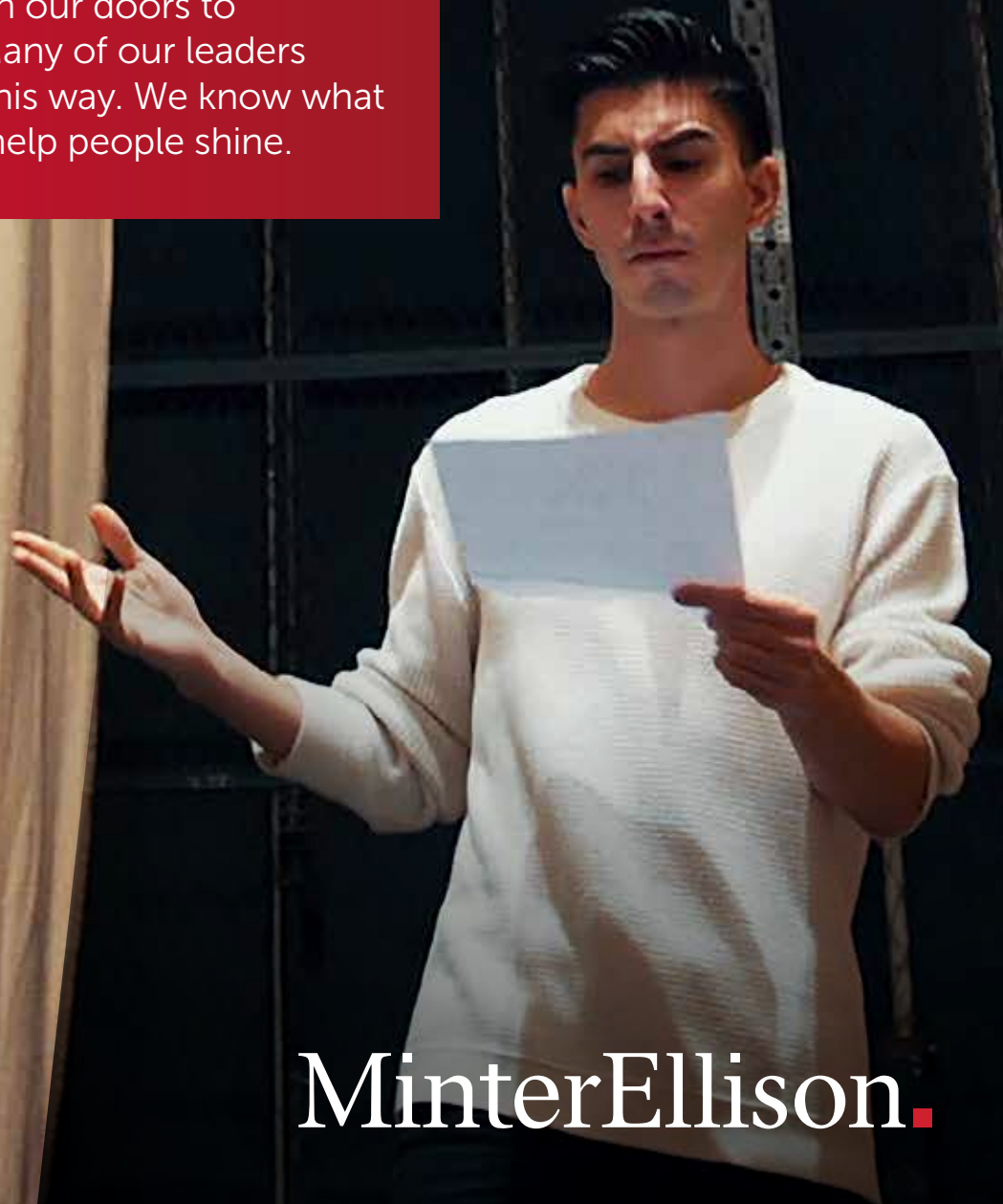


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EVOLVE

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Tomorrow's stars need development. That's why MinterEllison is supporting Melbourne Theatre Company's Future Directors Initiative. Every year we open our doors to graduates. Many of our leaders started out this way. We know what it means to help people shine.



MinterEllison.

**WRITER AND  
DIRECTOR'S NOTES**

**A LEGEND.  
A NATIONAL  
ICON.**



Ella Ferris



## **Writer and Director Andrea James on why she was inspired to relive and celebrate the iconic moments from the life of the Wiradjuri tennis superstar Evonne Goolagong Cawley on stage.**

There's something about a number one sports person that is utterly transfixing. The sheer wonderment of watching the best in the world is a sight to behold.

To tell the story of Evonne Goolagong – Wiradjuri tennis superstar – we've really had to lift our game. She has creatively challenged us as artists in the best ways possible. There's something about a crisp white sports outfit that really makes our Blakness shine.



Writer and Director Andrea James



Katina Olsen with Writer and Director Andrea James

Growing up on my father's Yorta Yorta country, I have two endearing television memories. The first is of my dad's cousin Glenn James running onto the MCG as the one and only Aboriginal football umpire of the day (there were very few First Nations footy players in the league at that time too); and the second memory is of Evonne Goolagong Cawley bursting onto our screens and back pages when she made a Wimbledon comeback in 1980.

Evonne was a joy to watch and was renowned for her grace both on and off the court. She was a breath of fresh air on a sometimes stuffy tennis circuit; as she superseded race and class barriers to become a number one tennis player.

*Sunshine Super Girl* is not a documentary, but rather a dramatisation for stage that relives the moments that we remember and know about. Ours is a legendary tale about a Legend and National Icon.

After a period of independent research and writing, the wonderful team at Performing Lines picked up the project and nurtured a series of creative developments in 2017 to 2019.

Choreographer Vicki Van Hout was instrumental to this development journey; and applied her rigorous practice to develop a dance language that could emulate the flow and brilliance of a world-class tennis player and bring physical dexterity to the storytelling.

In perfect synergy, *Sunshine Super Girl* made its world premiere at the Yarruwala Arts & Cultural

Festival on Wiradjuri Country in Griffith in October 2020 – on Evonne's traditional homelands.

Research references include *Home: the Evonne Goolagong Story* by Evonne Goolagong Cawley and Phil Jarratt, *The Inner Game of Tennis* by W. Timothy Gallwey as well as archival materials from the Australian Film & Television Archive, The Wimbledon Tennis Library and Evonne and Roger's own personal anecdotes.

Kirk Page



Katina Olsen and  
Jax Compton



Ella Ferris



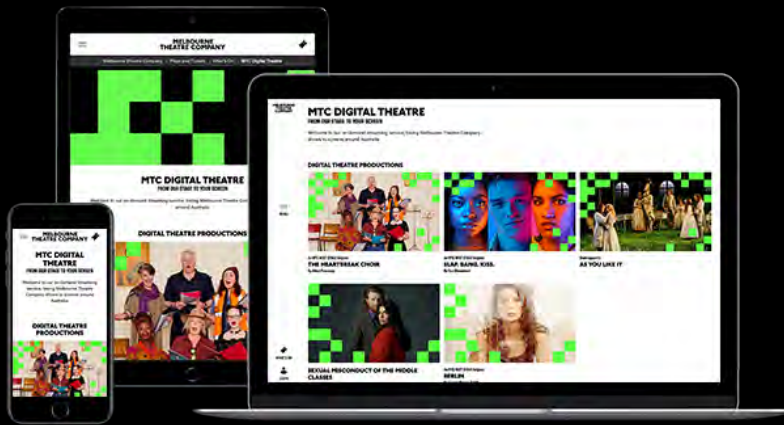
Many creatives have contributed to the development of the play, bringing their skill and intellect to the studio. Thank you to Katie Beckett, Luke Carroll, Bee Cruse, Chenoa Deemal, Phoebe Grainger, Rarriwuy Hick, Colin Kinchela, Lee Lewis, Tuuli Narkle, Kirk Page, Taree Sansbury, Kyle Shilling, Guy Simon and Bjorn Stewart.

Francesca Smith gave me dramaturgical support as the play was forming and I have been ably mentored by Paige Rattray. Thanks also to Narelle Lewis and Alice Hatton who were my initial Producers at Performing Lines and champions for the work. Many thanks to my partner Arnum Endean who gifted me Evonne's autobiography for my birthday (to impress me when we were 'courting') and gave this project its initial spark.

And finally, a special thank you to Evonne Goolagong Cawley and her husband Roger who have given this play their critical eye and remain an inspiration. Through Evonne and Roger's tireless work at the helm of the Goolagong Foundation, we eagerly await the arrival of the next Evonne Goolagong and Ash Barty waiting in the wings. ■

Katina Olsen, Ella Ferris and Lincoln Elliott





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Kirk Page, Lincoln Elliott and Katina Olsen



# CAST & CREATIVE TEAM



## **JAX COMPTON MUM & ENSEMBLE**

Jax Compton is a proud Wuthathi and Zenadth Kes woman, mother, wife and creative practitioner. Jax began her practice at the QL2 Centre for Youth Dance in Canberra, which led to pursuing further study at NAISDA Dance College and QUT where she

completed a Bachelor of Fine Arts. She has also completed a Master of Fine Arts – Cultural Leadership from NIDA. Jax has experienced an array of amazing opportunities artistically as a performer, choreographer and creative producer. Professionally, she has worked in the arts and culture, education, sport and events sectors. Jax is also the co-founder of Muggera Cultural Enterprise, a cultural performance company. Jax continues to form a practice that highlights the value and importance of creating culturally safe creative spaces for First Peoples in the arts and culture sectors, both now and into the future. She is unequivocally dedicated to her family, culture, identity and the creative practices of First Peoples.



## **LINCOLN ELLIOTT ROGER, DAD & ENSEMBLE**

Lincoln Elliott is a NIDA Musical Theatre graduate, writer, composer and instrumentalist. Lincoln is proudly of Wiradjuri heritage. Theatre credits include *On a Clear Day...* (Squabbalagic; postponed); *Chimerica* (Sydney Theatre Company); *Il Viaggio a*

*Remis*, *La Traviata* (Opera Australia); *3 Weeks in Spring* (Endymion Productions); *Ugly Love* (Acoustic Theatre); *Ordinary Days* (Alter Ego); *Meet Me in St. Louis* (Starkeeper Productions); *Miracle City* (NIDA); *Ned* (Plush Duck Productions); *Company* (Limelight); *Funny Girl* (Theatre & Company); *Carrie: The Musical* (Rock Bottom Productions); *Inner West Side: The Musical* (UltraCult); *Alice* (Andrew Freeborn); and workshops for *Milk* (The Street Theatre); *The Cleaners* (BurgMan Productions); and *The Water Code* (Hope. New Works). As a writer and composer, Lincoln's work includes the original experimental musical song-cycle *Share-House*; musical consulting on *Wørk of Art* (Little Triangle); and head writer and series regular on upcoming web-series *Flat-packed* (MELCS). Screen credits also include feature film *The Choice* (Tiny Productions).



## **ELLA FERRIS EVONNE**

Ella Ferris is a Taribelang artist from Cairns, QLD. She has trained for several years in ballet (the Australian Ballet School), commercial dance and musical theatre (Patrick Studios Australia), and theatre (Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School and the Victorian College of the Arts). From her training at VCA, her acting credits include *Twelfth Night*, *Machinal*, *Gaban* and *The Spook*. In 2022, she was an understudy and dancer in *The Wiggles Big Show Arena Tour*. She has acted in several student films, music videos and commercials. In 2020, Ella was the recipient of the Lionel Gell Foundation Scholarship in Theatre for excellence.



## **KATINA OLSEN BARBARA & ENSEMBLE, MOVEMENT DIRECTOR & ADDITIONAL CHOREOGRAPHY**

Katina Olsen is a Wakka Wakka Kombumerri dancer/choreographer, and has worked throughout Australia, Canada, UK, USA and Europe with Atamira, Sydney Dance Company, Stalker Theatre, Australasian Dance Collective, Bangarra Dance Theatre, Force Majeure, Erth, GUTS, Meryl Tankard, Martin del Amo, Victoria Hunt, Narelle Benjamin, Vicki Van Hout, Liesel Zink and Wesley Enoch. Recent highlights include *Mother's Cry* (Sydney Dance Company's New Breed 2018); *Walking into the Bigness* (Malthouse Theatre); and *Cleverman 2* (ABC). Katina presented her independent solo work *namu nunar* at Supercell Festival of Contemporary Dance, Yonder Festival, Horizon Festival and Happy Hour as part of March Dance 2019. Katina is also a founding member of Dance Makers Collective and collaborated and performed with them on their Australian Dance Award nominated *DADS*, their 2020 sold out Sydney Festival show *The Rivoli* and choreographed solo work *beneath* performed by Emily Flannery as part of *In Situ* with DMC's Future Makers at Sydney Festival 2021.



(Top) Katina Olsen and Evonne Goolagong Cawley  
(Bottom) Katina Olsen, Ella Ferris and Lincoln Elliott





## **KIRK PAGE LARRY, MR EDWARDS & ENSEMBLE**

Kirk Page is a proud Munanjali man of the Yugembeh nation QLD with ancestral lineage connecting to Badu Island in the Torres Strait Islands and a Polish German mix of migrant settler heritage. He trained at the National Aboriginal and Islander Skills

Development Association (NAISDA). His practice as an artist centres Indigenous voices always. Credits include *The Demon* (Stalker Theatre Company); *Wudjang Not the Past* (Bangarra Dance Theatre); *Dreamland* (NORPA); *Harp in the South, A Midsummer Night's Dream, Stolen and Black Diggers* (Sydney Theatre Company); *Snugglepot & Cuddlepie* (CDP); *Silent Disco* (Griffin Theatre Company); *The Dreamers* and *Conversations with the Dead* (Belvoir Street Theatre); *My Girragundji* (Bell Shakespeare); *Australia the Show* (Hothouse Theatre); *Death in Bowengabbie* (Merrigong Theatre Company); *My Lovers Bones* (Brown Cab Productions). TV credits include Season 2 of *Redfern*, for which Kirk received a Logie nomination for most outstanding actor, and Series 2 of *Mystery Road*.



## **ANDREA JAMES DIRECTOR & WRITER**

Andrea James is a Yorta Yorta/Gunnaikurnai theatre maker and VCA graduate. She is a NEXT STAGE playwright at Melbourne Theatre Company and is writing *The Black Woman of Gippsland* set on her Grandmother's country. Andrea wrote and directed

*Winyanboga Yurringa* (Carriageworks 2016, Geelong Performing Arts Centre 2016, Belvoir 2019). For Griffin Theatre Company, her play *Dogged* written with Catherine Ryan premiered in 2021 where she also directed *Ghosting the Party* by Melissa Bubnic in 2022. Ahead of its national tour, *Sunshine Super Girl* played at Griffith Regional Theatre in 2020 and Sydney Festival in 2021. Andrea was Artistic Director of Melbourne Workers Theatre 2001–2008, Aboriginal Arts Development Officer at Blacktown Arts Centre 2010–2012, Aboriginal Producer at Carriageworks from 2012–2016, and is currently an Artistic Associate at Griffin Theatre Company. She was a participant of the British Council's Accelerate Program for Aboriginal Art Leaders 2013 and was recently awarded the Mona Brand Award for Women Writers.



## **VICKI VAN HOUT ORIGINAL CHOREOGRAPHIC CONCEPT & INITIAL MOVEMENT DIRECTION**

Vicki Van Hout is a Wiradjuri woman born on the south coast of NSW. An independent choreographer, performance-maker and teacher, Vicki has toured nationally and internationally, most recently with her critically acclaimed solo show *plenty serious TALK TALK*. A graduate of NAISDA and the Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance in New York, Vicki was awarded the 2014 NSW Dance Fellowship – the first Indigenous winner of the Fellowship – and the 2019 Australia Council Award for Dance.



## **ROMANIE HARPER SET & COSTUME DESIGN**

Romanie Harper is a designer based in Naarm/ Melbourne. Romanie has previously worked for Melbourne Theatre Company on *Girls & Boys* and *The Violent Outburst That Drew Me To You*. Recent design credits include *K-BOX*, *Australian Realness*, *Trustees*, *Good Muslim Boy*, *Little Emperors* and *Turbine* (Malthouse); *8/8/8:WORK* (Rising Festival); *Hercules* (Arts House); *The Cherry Orchard* and *Packer and Sons* (Belvoir St Theatre); *What Am I Supposed to Do?* and *Equinox* (Deep Soulful Sweats); *Hercules, Die! Die! Die! Old People Die!*, *We All Know What's Happening* and *Never Trust a Creative City* (Arts House); *Contest* and *Moral Panic* (Darebin Arts' Speakeasy, 2018); *Runt*, *This Is Eden*, *Resident Alien* and *Triumph* (fortyfivedownstairs) and *M+M* (Daniel Schlusser Ensemble).

Ella Ferris, Katina Olsen and Lincoln Elliott



Kirk Page





## **KAREN NORRIS LIGHTING DESIGN**

Karen Norris has lit productions throughout Australia and Europe and was based in London and Nice from 1998 to 2008. Recent designs include *Terrain & Lore* (Bangarra Dance Theatre); *NAISDA* (Francis Rings & Sani Ray); *Champions* (Martin del Amo); *On View* (Sue Healey); *CELLA* (Germany); *Hiding in Plain Sight* (Narelle Benjamin); *KOTAHI* (Atamira Dance Company NZ); *Barbara and the Camp Dogs* (Belvoir Street Theatre); *The Appleton Ladies' Potato Race* and *The Last Five Years* (Ensemble Theatre); *Blak Box* (Urban Theatre Projects); *Winyanboga Yurringa*, *Broken Glass*, *The Weekend*, *Rainbows End*, *The Last Shot*, *Cutter* and *Coota* (Moogahlin Performing Arts); *RED*, *The point* (Liz Lea Dance); *plenty serious* *TALK TALK* (Vicky van Hout); *Blak*, *Drop Effect* (Bankstown Arts); *Silence* (Karul Projects BlakDance); *Complications of a Lyrebird* (Jasmine Shepherd); *Explicit Content* (Rhiannon Newton); *TWO* (Raghav Handa); *Set Piece* (Anna Breckon and Nat Randal); *宿* (Stay) (S Shakhidharan); *Sleeplessness* (Carriageworks), *Action Star* (Kaz Therese) and *Dance X* (Australian Ballet).



## **BEN ANSHAW TOUR LIGHTING DESIGN**

Ben Anshaw was lighting designer for *Monkey Tales*, *Jay Laga'aia: Family Time*, *Peter Combe Live it Up!* and *Bellyflop in a Pizza!* (Monkey Baa Theatre Company). Other selected theatrical lighting design credits include *The Screwtape Letters*, *The Bald Soprano*, *Medea*, *The Lark*, *Love of the Nightingale* and *Below*. Ben was lighting design assistant on *The Boy From Oz* Arena Spectacular, associate lighting designer for *Titanic*, *A New Musical* and *Snugglepot & Cuddlepie* (CDP). Ben lit Lorna Luft in her only Australian concert. He has also lit classical concerts for Australian Chamber Orchestra, Australian Brandenburg Orchestra and Sydney Symphony Orchestra. For television, Ben was a lighting director on multiple Australia Day Live concerts (Network 10/ABC), lighting designer for *Mother of all Galas* (Foxtel/Comedy Channel), *Intelligence Squared* debates (BBC/ABC) and lighting assistant for *Australian Idol* and *Aria Awards*. Ben has also lit multiple award shows including APRA Screen Music Awards and Australian International Design Awards.





## **GAIL PRIEST COMPOSITION & SOUND DESIGN**

Gail Priest is a sound artist, curator and writer living on the land of the Darug and Gundungurra people (Katoomba, NSW). Originally trained in theatre, she has worked as a sound designer/composer for performance for over 25 years primarily collaborating with independent directors and choreographers. Recent shows include *Sunshine Super Girl* (Andrea James, Performing Lines); *Grace Under Pressure* (Alternative Facts); *Playlist* (Powerhouse Youth Theatre); and *Obscene Madame D* (Kantanka). She also creates her own performances including *A continuous self-vibrating region of intensities* (Performance Space and The Substation) and installations such as *SonoLexic* (Experimenta) and *Sounding the Future* (UTS Gallery). She has performed live experimental music and exhibited immersive sound installations nationally and internationally and has several CD releases on her own label, Metal Bitch, as well as other labels including Flaming Pines. She is also a curator of concerts and exhibitions and writes factually and fictively about sound and media arts.



## **MIC GRUCHY VIDEO MEDIA DESIGN**

Mic Gruchy works across stage, screen and video art. He is a pioneer of video design for theatre, designing shows for all the major companies and festivals around Australia for more than 30 years. He has produced projections on the Sydney Opera House and video designs for theatre, opera and dance around Australia, in London's West End, across Europe and Asia. His shows have won Helpmann Awards and he was awarded an Australia Council Established Artist's Fellowship for Interdisciplinary Practice in 2012. He has edited feature films, TV shows, documentaries and his video artworks are in collections and museums around the world. Commissioned works include installations for the Sydney Opera House, Sydney Olympic Park and the Biennale of Sydney. Recent video designs include *The Crowd And I* (Australian Chamber Orchestra); *Bunngul* the Gurrumul Orchestral concert (Perth and Darwin Festivals) and *Love for One Night* (Northern Rivers Performing Arts).

Ella Ferris and Jax Compton





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# MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY

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