

**MELBOURNE
THEATRE COMPANY**

**BETTY AMSDEN
YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP COURSE
Impact Report 2022**



SUPPORTED BY

**BETTY
AMSDEN
FOUNDATION**

ACCOMMODATION PARTNER


QUEST
SOUTHBANK

**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.**



CONTENTS

ABOUT THE COURSE	2
PARTICIPANTS	4
COURSE CONTENT	5
TEACHING ARTISTS	6
PARTICIPANT RESPONSES	8
PLANS FOR 2023	9
TESTIMONIALS	10

'I'd just like to thank you for the opportunity to take part in such an amazing course. I feel that I have gained a lot from this course which will help me in the future. I've made so many awesome connections and learnt so much. Thank you for such a good time and so many wonderful memories.'

- Participant

ABOUT THE COURSE

The annual Betty Amsden Youth Scholarship Course is a life-changing week of drama workshops at Melbourne Theatre Company. The course provides an opportunity for young people with limited access to the arts to learn and develop drama skills, gain confidence, self-awareness and self-expression while building friendships and a lifelong affinity for theatre.

All meals are provided, and accommodation is available for a limited number of students from regional Victoria. This course is intended for students who would not otherwise have access to an extra-curricular drama program due to economic, geographic or personal barriers, and is offered free of charge thanks to generous support from the Betty Amsden Foundation and Quest Southbank.

COURSE HISTORY

Over the last 20 years, Melbourne Theatre Company has had the privilege of working with 434 students from across the state of Victoria, to participate in a week of workshops and learning experiences.

Thanks to the generous support of donors, we have been able to provide an invaluable experience to disadvantaged students from across Victoria to pursue their interest in the arts industry.

Through investing in the young people, we look forward to the bright future of emerging actors, producers, writers, directors and designers who will continue to create inspiring work for future audiences to enjoy.

2022 HIGHLIGHTS

Every iteration of the Betty Amsden Youth Scholarship Course is unique. 2022 was an exciting return to an in-person course at Southbank Theatre after the 2021 course was held online during lockdown. These are some other notable highlights:

- This year we supported participants with a more complex mix of social and physical barriers than previous years
- Supported a young person living independently to participate in the course
- Supported a young person from a community youth theatre group to participate
- Provided accommodation for 8 regional participants and their families
- We were able to facilitate two new support artists, including one from the First Peoples Young Artists Program
- The roster of guest artists reflected the diversity of both the Victorian community and the cohort of students
- Education staff, department, teaching artists and support artists adapted throughout the week to make adjustments for participants with autism and ADHD as required
- COVID-safe protocols were designed and implemented with success
- Premiere group screening of the Melbourne Theatre Company Education Production *SLAP. BANG. KISS.* by Dan Giovannoni on MTC Digital Theatre

'We love Melbourne Theatre Company and the opportunities it provides to our students. This was the first time we have nominated a student and I will definitely be nominating again.'

- Teacher



PARTICIPANTS

Teachers in Victorian secondary schools and one community drama group nominated 32 students (maximum one nomination per school). Melbourne Theatre Company education staff together with the lead teaching artists selected 24 students to participate in the course.

Ultimately, 22 young people participated in the course, including a student who had been unable to attend the 2021 Course. Two of the selected participants were unable to attend due to medical/social circumstances, so we will endeavour to enable future participation for these students.



22

Students



8

Students from regional Victoria



13

Students from government schools



9

Students from non-government schools



7

Students from disadvantaged schools

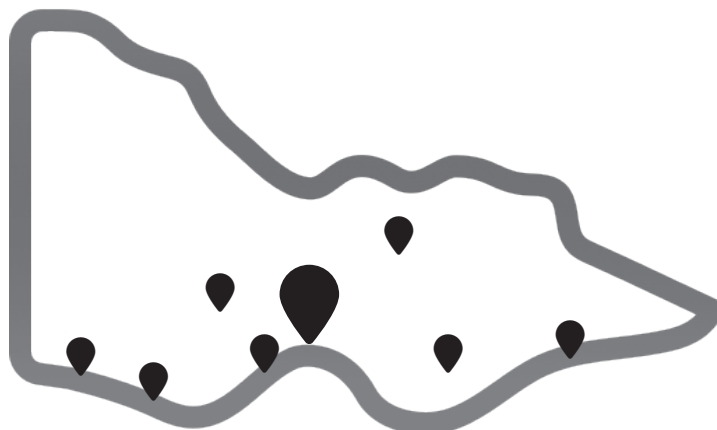


8

Students provided with accommodation

Students came from across Victoria to participate in the course.

Students came from schools in Portland, Warrnambool, Ballarat, Mansfield, Geelong, Traralgon, Bairnsdale and Greater Melbourne.



COURSE CONTENT

Melbourne Theatre Company offers a unique opportunity for young people to explore and express their creativity in a week of workshops and hands-on learning experiences.

In 2022 the course explored the theme of 'advice'. Using Aesop's Fables as the basis for the course, the students participated in a variety of activities that focussed on what constitutes good advice vs bad advice, ultimately devising their own piece of theatre on the subject.

Teaching artists Katrina Cornwell and Morgan Rose directed the week of creating, devising and playmaking in a safe and inclusive environment, ensuring the participants felt welcome, heard and understood. Katrina and Morgan guided the students through the process of creating new work through improvisation activities that involved music, movement, text and play. This process resulted in a collaboration of all the students' lived experiences in a presentation of a new work on the final afternoon of the course.

Professional guest artists who work with Melbourne Theatre Company conducted workshops with the participants: costume designer Karine Larché (*Laurinda*), director Mark Wilson (*Jacky*), and actors Sarah Fitzgerald and Tsungirai Wachenuka (*SLAP. BANG. KISS.*).

MTC DIGITAL THEATRE SCREENING

On the Wednesday afternoon of the course, the participants watched a digital recording of this year's Education production, *SLAP. BANG. KISS.* by Dan Giovannoni. This production was performed earlier in 2022 on the same stage where students were working during the week of the course. Students were excited to meet two of the cast the day after seeing the production.

PRESENTATION

After a week of learning and creating together, the participants presented their work to an audience of family, teachers and industry professionals. Focussing on the themes of life advice and taking inspirations from Aesop's Fables, these creations were honest, funny, emotional, and a testament to the hard work of the participants throughout the week.



TEACHING ARTISTS



KATRINA CORNWELL

My name is Katrina (Kat) Cornwell and I am an actor, theatre-maker and director. I grew up in the regional, coastal town Mackay, in central Queensland. When I was 10 years old I performed at a local competition called 'Rock Pop

Mime' in front of 1,000 people. That's when I decided that I was going to be an actor. I moved to Brisbane when I finished high school and studied theatre at University. I discovered physical theatre and fell in love with finding non-naturalistic ways of expressing ideas, relationships and emotions. I performed a lot when I was younger, but was always interested in how performances were made. Now I mostly direct, devise and facilitate and occasionally perform. When I'm not in a rehearsal room I like walking, reading page-turning novels and watching law based TV-shows like *The Good Wife*.



MORGAN ROSE

I am originally from the United States, and went to high school in a little town called Gallup, New Mexico. There wasn't much theatre to see there, although we did have the option of a drama class in high school. I loved it-- loved

performing and creating my own short plays, but thought there was no way that was a career option. I decided to major in Computer Science at university. In my first year at university I took an acting class for fun as an elective. I was very shy and very scared in class, but I had the best time. I never missed a session. All my computer science classes though were a different story. I never went, and had to drop the classes mid semester so I didn't fail them! At that point, I admitted to myself that I wanted to work with performance not computers, so I switched my major to Theatre Arts. Today, I work in Melbourne as a playwright and theatremaker. I love working with a group of people and collaborating to make something completely new, something that is completely ours. I also love watching terrible reality television and taking naps with my dog.

SUPPORT ARTISTS



JOSHUA LYNZAAT

Hi, my name's Josh :) I grew up in Geelong and Bendigo, and then moved to Melbourne to study music at uni. I got really involved in student theatre and have been involved in theatre ever since. Mostly, I make plays with a theatre company

called Rawcus. The things that bring me joy in my life are gardening, cooking, reading, walking my dog Ed, and spending time with my friends. I'm pretty basic. My two favourite movies are *Interstellar* and the original *Lion King* movie.



AMELIA O'LEARY

Amelia O'Leary is a First Nations Gamilaroi Yinarr from Northern New South Wales and has lived in Naarm (Melbourne) for the past eleven years. O'Leary's dance practice is grounded in the duality of power and softness. It

breathes freedom and honesty of exploration and human experience, becoming a product of both the digital and physical realms. As an independent artist, O'Leary is interested in creating her own soundscapes and projections as part of an integrated practice. After graduating from the Victorian College of the Arts with a Bachelor of Fine Arts Dance in 2021, O'Leary performed her first full-length work *Yinarr* in Adelaide Fringe 2022.

GUEST ARTISTS



SARAH FITZGERALD

Sarah Fitzgerald is an Anglo-Indian actor born and raised in Naarm (Melbourne). After graduating from the Victorian College of the Arts in 2018, they have performed in *The Great Australian Play* (Montague's Basement);

Analog (Three Fates Theatre) and *Oh No! Satan Stole My Pineal Gland!* (Melbourne Fringe Festival). They recently worked on *The Quest* (Productions on Rye) as an Orc. In 2019, the cast of *Oh No! Satan Stole My Pineal Gland!* won Best Emerging Ensemble Award at the Melbourne Fringe Festival and *The Great Australian Play* was nominated for Best Production at the 2021 Green Room Awards. Sarah performed in the Melbourne Theatre Company production of *SLAP. BANG. KISS.* in 2022.



KARINE LARCHÉ

Karine Larché is a set and costume designer. Originally trained in France (ENSATT), Karine worked in couture and theatre in Paris before moving to Melbourne, where she studied the Master of Design for Performance at the

Victorian College of the Arts. Her set and costume design credits include *Laurinda* (Melbourne Theatre Company), *Nothing* (Forty Five Downstairs) and *And She Would Stand Like This* (Antipodes Theatre at Meat Market). Her costume design credits include *Pool (No Water)* (VCA); *Project F* choreographed by Prue Lang and the short film *Gugu naGogo* (ABC/ Screen Australia). Currently, Karine is participating in the Besen Family Artist Program in Set and Costume at Malthouse Theatre.



MARK WILSON

Mark Wilson is a Melbourne-based theatre maker, director, actor, writer, and dramaturg. He trained at the VCA, Monash and Philippe Gaulier in Paris, and is an International Fellow of Shakespeare's Globe in London. Most recently he

directed the twenty-fifth anniversary production of Michael Gow's *Sweet Phoebe*, the Dutch premiere of Emma Hall's *World Problems*, and the premiere season of Declan Furber Gillick's *Bighouse Dreaming* (Best Performance at Melbourne Fringe; nominated for 6 Green Room Awards; Brisbane Festival; Darwin Festival). He regularly directs, performs and teaches Shakespeare, and in 2016 he completed his trilogy of radical Shakespeare adaptations: *Unsex Me, Richard II* (with Olivia Monticciolo, Melbourne Fringe/Brisbane Festival) and *Anti-Hamlet* (nominated for 4 Green Room awards including Production, Writing and Direction).



TSUNGIRAI WACHENUKA

Tsungirai Wachenuka is a Zimbabwean performer who grew up in England before relocating to Australia in 2010. Her professional debut was in Stage Art's *The Colour Purple* in 2016, playing the role of

Olivia/Ensemble. Early in 2017 she played the lead role of Sosina in the creative development of the theatre production *The Abyssinian Contortionist*, produced by Performing Lines and directed by Kate Champion. The last few years Tsungirai toured internationally with LifeLikeTouring In Nickelodeon's *Paw Patrol Live* and recently starred in Podcast of the Year *Private Affairs* written and produced by Christine Mwaturura. Tsungirai performed in the Melbourne Theatre Company production of *SLAP. BANG. KISS.* in 2022.

PARTICIPANT RESPONSES

At the end of course, we asked the participants to complete a short survey regarding their experience over the week. Their responses are indicated in the graphs below:

Did the program meet your expectations?

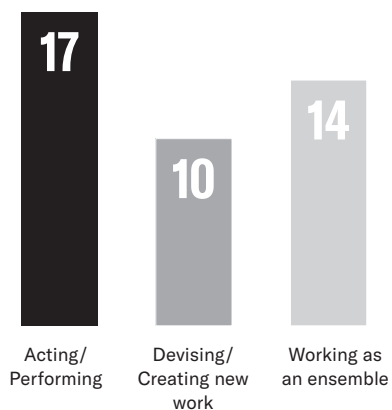
Did you feel supported by the staff and guest artists?

Was the content presented in an easy to understand way?

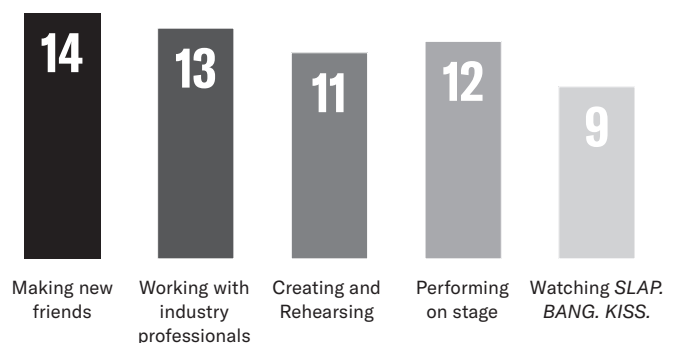
Do you feel you have gained new skills from this course?



What skills will you take away from this course?



What was the best part of the course?



PLANS FOR 2023

Melbourne Theatre Company is working towards offering the Youth Scholarship Course in 2023. The following points reflect learnings from this year's course:

- Have secured dates: first week of September 2023 school holidays (to avoid the Friday-before-Grand Final public holiday) Mon 18 – Fri 22 Sep 2023
- Include the cast of the Melbourne Theatre Company Education Production as guest artists in the program, as this was a highlight for the participants
- Screen the 2023 Education Production as the evening activity
- Offer places to the two selected participants unable to participate this year
- Continue to involve artists who are working with Melbourne Theatre Company to demystify and highlight career pathways in the performing arts
- Offer workshops more in line with the feedback we have received from the 2022 participants



TESTIMONIALS

'My student wrote in the school newsletter that for them it was life-changing, elating, connecting and defining. For a student at risk that was a powerful intervention.'

– Teacher

'This program gave my child motivation and a direction over the school holidays. It was tiring but she never gave up, enjoying every day.'

– Parent

'Thank you for a great opportunity for my child what an experience she will never forget.'

– Parent



'I thought the enforcement of asking for pronouns was important and the amount of respectful and constructive leadership is better than I've ever seen. It created an incredibly inclusive environment.'

– Participant

'Meeting new people and performing the play and learning about acting has inspired me to continue to pursue my passion of the arts.'

– Participant

'People like me don't usually get to have experiences like this.'

– Participant

'I learned so many new things but the most important thing I learnt was to just be yourself and don't worry about other people judging you for what you want to do in life.'

– Participant

'Nothing but praise and gratitude for the Betty Amsden Youth Scholarship Course! Thankyou!'

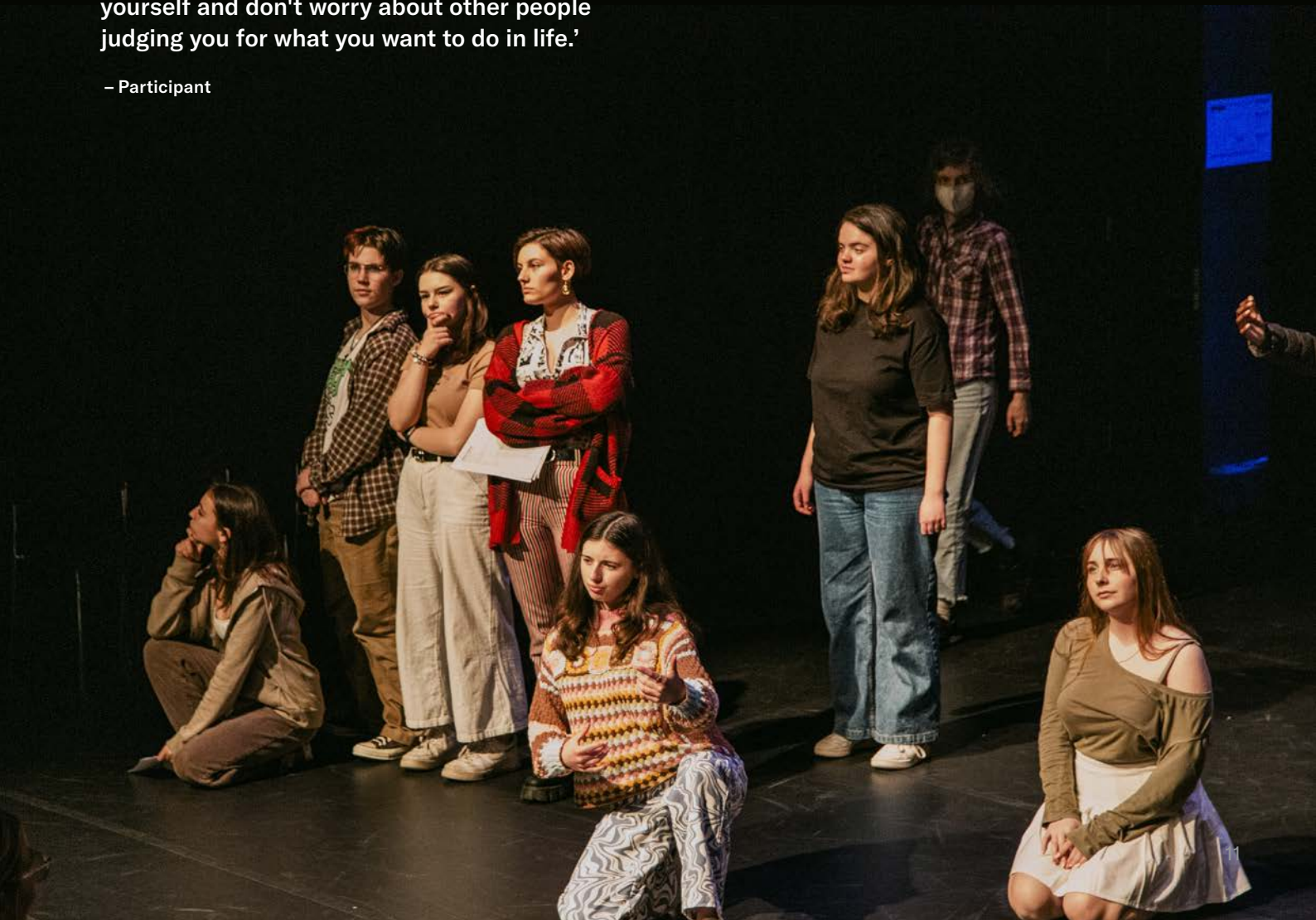
– Audience member

'Exceptionally well-organised, incredibly supportive, caring environment. Fantastic! Can we have more opportunities like this for regional students?'

– Audience member

'This program is amazing for the development of self-awareness and confidence.'

– Audience member



MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY HQ

252 Sturt St
Southbank VIC 3006
03 8688 0900

SOUTHBANK THEATRE

140 Southbank Blvd
Southbank VIC 3006
03 8688 0800

education@mtc.com.au
mtc.com.au/education

Photography by Joshua Vickery-Stewart

SUPPORTED BY

BETTY
AMSDEN
FOUNDATION

ACCOMMODATION PARTNER


QUEST
SOUTHBANK



MTC IS A
DEPARTMENT
OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF MELBOURNE



Australia
Council
for the Arts

CREATIVE VICTORIA