

MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY



YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP COURSE Impact Report 2023

SUPPORTED BY

**NEWSBOYS
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	PARTICIPANT RESPONSES	8
PARTICIPANTS	4	PLANS FOR 2024	9
COURSE CONTENT	5	TESTIMONIALS	11
TEACHING ARTISTS	6		

'I am full of gratitude to the enormous amount of people involved in this program. It has provided our students with an opportunity that they would never have gotten otherwise.'

- Teacher of 2023 participant

ABOUT THE COURSE

The annual Youth Scholarship Course is a life-changing week of drama workshops at Melbourne Theatre Company for young Victorians aged 14-16 years with limited access to the arts.

Led by professional teaching artists and theatre makers, the course provides up to 25 young people with an opportunity to develop drama skills, gain confidence, self-awareness and self-expression, while building friendships and a lifelong affinity for theatre.

There is no fee to participate, catering is provided, and accommodation is offered to participants and their families/carers from regional Victoria.

The course is intended for students who would not otherwise have access to an extra-curricular drama program due to economic, geographic or personal barriers, with a dedicated support artist to assist with student wellbeing.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

- Accommodation for eight regional participants and their families at Quest Southbank
- New Associate Teaching Artist role
- Employment opportunities for alumni from the First Peoples Young Artists Program
- Creative artists and production staff as guest facilitators
- Group screening of MTC Digital Theatre's Education Production *SLAP. BANG. KISS.* by Dan Giovannoni
- Master of Arts & Cultural Management intern from the University of Melbourne.

COURSE HISTORY

Melbourne Theatre Company has delivered The Youth Scholarship Course every year – with the exception of 2020 – since it began in 2002. In 2021, the course was delivered online due to COVID.

Over 500 young people have directly experienced the course and its enduring positive impact has been felt by countless family members, friends, school peers and teachers. The participants' performance on the final day has become a yearly highlight for Melbourne Theatre Company staff and donors.

Teaching artists for the course include directors, actors, designers, and other creative artists and technicians from Melbourne Theatre Company productions. Actor-director Jane Bayly directed the Course for many years, and theatre makers Katrina Cornwell and Morgan Rose have been co-directors since 2019.

The course format and content continues to be developed and refined, informed by rigorous evaluation of each year's program and participant feedback. The 2023 cohort will be the first to participate in a 'second act' of the course, planned for May 2024.

**'He has come back to school
full of excitement and
enthusiasm about Drama.'**

- Teacher of 2023 participant



PARTICIPANTS

Teachers in Victorian secondary schools nominated 29 students. Melbourne Theatre Company Education & Families staff together with the Teaching Artists selected 25 students to participate in the course including a student who had been selected but unable to attend in 2022. Ultimately 23 participants completed the week-long course.



25
Students



14

Students from regional Victoria



18

Government schools



6

Non-government schools



1

Home school



8

Disadvantaged* schools



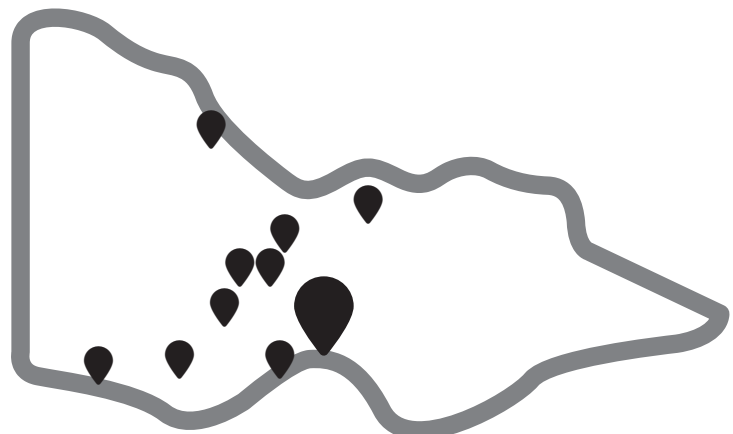
8

Accommodation provided for regional students

* Schools with an ICSEA (index of cultural and socio-economic advantage) below 1,000

Students came from across Victoria to participate in the course.

Ballarat, Bendigo, Castlemaine, Foster, Geelong, Melbourne, Mortlake, Shepparton, Swan Hill, Traralgon, Warrnambool, Wendouree



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 2023, the course explored the question: How do we make change? Using *The Bacchae* by Euripides, and *little girls alone in the woods* by Morgan Rose as the basis of the course, the students participated in a variety of activities that focussed on how they can make change – and what happens if change isn't made – ultimately devising their own piece of theatre on the subject titled *New World*.

Lead Teaching Artists **Katrina Cornwell** and **Morgan Rose**, and Associate Teaching Artist **Sarah Fitzgerald** directed the week of creating, devising and playmaking in a safe and inclusive environment. While ensuring the participants felt welcome, heard and understood, the team guided the students through the process of creating new work through improvisation and text-based activities that involved music, movement 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 that were integrated into their stimulus texts and their final performance: voice with **Matt Furlani**, movement with **Amelia O'Leary** and costume art finishing with **Claire Mercer**.

MTC DIGITAL THEATRE SCREENING

On the Wednesday evening of the course, the participants watched a digital screening of last year's Education & Families production, *SLAP. BANG. KISS.* by Dan Giovannoni. This production was performed in 2022 on the same stage where students were working during the week of the course. The students were excited to find out that Associate Teaching Artist Sarah Fitzgerald, who had been working with them throughout the week, was in the cast of the play.

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 theme of how to make change, their devised ensemble performance was a testament to the hard work of the participants throughout the week.



TEAM



KATRINA CORNWELL Lead Teaching Artist

Katrina Cornwell is a theatre director, actor and performance maker with a passion for challenging the theatre form. She has a Bachelor of Creative Industries from QUT, a Graduate Diploma

in Arts and Community Practice from the Victorian College of Arts and is a co-Artistic Director for Rawcus. She has trained and performed extensively in visual theatre, collaborating and touring with companies such as Zen Zen Zo Physical Theatre, The Danger Ensemble, Red Moon Rising and Motherboard Productions. In 2022 Katrina co-created *A Resourceful Hero Struggling Against Incredible Odds* for Rawcus/Midsumma Festival and the Malthouse Forecourt. In 2021 she co-created and directed *Us* for St Martins Youth Arts Centre, *Grand Gesture* for La Mama Theatre along with *Everyone Is Famous* for Riot Stage, Darebin Speakeasy and Next Wave. Katrina was the founder and co-Artistic Director of Riot Stage. She has created and directed many new works with young people for the company that have featured in festivals and venues across Queensland and Victoria.



MORGAN ROSE Lead Teaching Artist

Morgan Rose was born in New Orleans, grew up in New Mexico, and currently lives in Melbourne. She is an internationally produced playwright, performance maker and dramaturg, and is

a co-Artistic Director for Rawcus. She was resident writer and co-artistic director of youth company Riot Stage for 10 years where she devised award nominated new work with an ensemble of teenagers for festivals and venues across Australia. Morgan teaches, mentors and creates at a number of universities around Melbourne. As a dramaturg she has worked with Melbourne Theatre Company, Malthouse Theatre, Playwriting Australia, and was co-founder of the dramaturgy initiative Lonely Company. Recent works include: *Virgins and Cowboys* (writer, Theatreworks, Griffin Theatre); *Everyone Is Famous* (writer, Riot Stage/Speakeasy); *Lord Willing and the Creek Don't Rise* (writer, MKA/MTC NEON); *The BachelorS17E05* (co-creator, The People/La Mama); *desert, 6:29pm* (writer, Red Stitch/Wuzhen Festival/Currency Press); *little girls alone in the woods* (Canberra Youth Theatre/Currency Press) and *Fast Food* (writer, Red Stitch).



SARAH FITZGERALD Associate Teaching Artist

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 *Emilia* (Essential Theatre); *SLAP*

BANG. KISS. (Melbourne Theatre Company), *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 HOSFORD Support Artist

Sarah's passion and dedication to social justice, community arts and youth welfare started in Melbourne working with refugee and migrant youth and communities, leading her to work with remote Northern

Territory Indigenous communities and within urban and rural Mongolia. For 15 years Sarah has worked as a youth centre coordinator, program facilitator, school teacher, youth welfare worker and community engagement worker within many diverse communities. Sarah believes very strongly in the rights for every individual to live without discrimination and to have access to education, health and mental health resources. Sarah believes in the power of holistic, creative and integrative healing approaches with an individual and community – that support and provide resources for self-empowerment and personal change.



MATT FURLANI Guest Artist

Matt Furlani is a Voice & Dialect Coach and actor, holding a Postgraduate Diploma in Voice Studies and Bachelor of Dramatic Art from VCA. Matt has worked as voice and dialect coach on

productions including *My Sister Jill*, *Bloom*, *Jacky*, *Come Rain or Come Shine*, *Admissions*, *The Truth*, *Home*, *I'm Darling* and *Golden Shield* (Melbourne Theatre Company); *& Juliet* (Michael Cassel Group); *Looking for Alibrandi* (Malthouse); *Wolf Play*, *Heroes of the Fourth Turning*, *Iphigenia in Splott*, *The Cane*, *Pomona* and *Ulster American* (Red Stitch Actors' Theatre); *Burn This* (16th St Actors Studio); *Death of a Salesman* (Hearth Theatre). In 2016 he was a recipient of the Mike Walsh Fellowship, enabling him to travel to Scotland and work with renowned voice teacher – and author of *Freeing the Natural Voice* – Kristin Linklater. He has taught voice and dialect at 16th St Actors Studio and TAFTA since 2017.



AMELIA O'LEARY Guest Artist

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. Amelia's dance practice is grounded in the

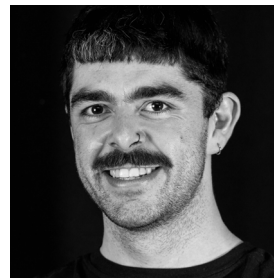
duality of power and softness. It breathes freedom and honesty of exploration and human experience, becoming a product of both the digital and physical realms. As an independent artist, O'Leary is interested in creating her own soundscapes and projections as part of an integrated practice. Amelia has created multiple dance works and films including *Yinarr* the film that was presented at Yirramboi festival 2020 and Dance (Lens) Festival 2021. After graduating with a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Dance) from the Victorian College of the Arts in 2021, Amelia performed her first full-length work *Yinarr* in Adelaide Fringe and Dancehouse in 2022. She was also a part of *Collision* by Jo Lloyd presented at Junction Arts Festival and *Garabari* by Joel Bray at Arts House in 2022. In 2023 Amelia shared her second full-length work *A Certain Mumble* in Frame Festival at the Northcote Town Hall and developed her new work *STAUNCH ASF* for Deadly Fringe.



CLAIRE MERCER Guest Artist

Claire is a multi-disciplinary artist and costume art finisher working in live theatre, film, television and fashion. As a VCA Fine Art graduate, Claire has a variety of skills in the areas of painting,

drawing, fabric dyeing, textile artistry and garment design & construction. These areas of interest led her to study Costume for Performance (Live Production) and then onto many kinds of creative work in the world of theatre, from costume and set design to scenic painting and fashion design. Adjacent to her ongoing theatre work, Claire also runs her own sustainable fashion label, which she operates from her Melbourne studio.



JYDEN BRAILEY Workshop Assistant

Jyden is a Tharawal, Yorta Yorta artist living in Naarm and an experienced performer in award winning shows (*Soul of Possum*). Jyden is a passionate leader and sees benefits in sharing stories and

supporting others to share theirs through performance. He has supported the creative team behind Melbourne Theatre Company's Cybec Electric writers' program and also featured in Ilbijerri Theatre Company's Ensemble in productions such as *Conversations with the Dead* by Richard Frankland. Jyden continues to take leadership roles in mentoring and supporting participants in First Peoples Young Artists Program. He made his Assistant Producing debut at MPavilion early this year (*Intertwined*) and performed professionally in two YIRRAMBOI productions.

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?

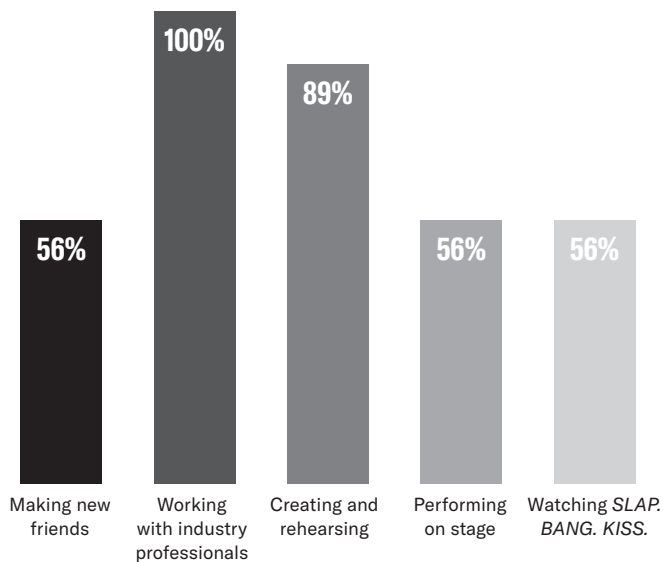
Did you feel supported by the staff and guest artists?

Was the content presented in an easy to understand way?

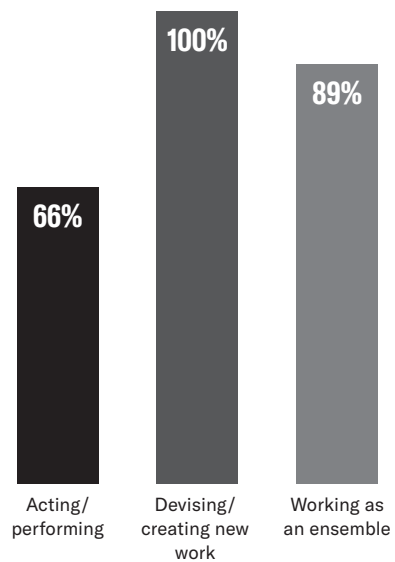
Do you feel you have gained new skills from this course?



What was the best part of the week?



What skills will you take away from this week?



PLANS FOR 2024

Melbourne Theatre Company intends to offer the Youth Scholarship Course in 2024.

The following points reflect learnings from the 2023 course:

- Already scheduled dates for Monday 30 September—Friday 4 October 2024
- Continue to involve artists who are working with Melbourne Theatre Company to demystify and highlight career pathways in the performing arts
- Offer workshops and adjust the course to be more in line with the feedback we have received from the 2023 participants

SECOND ACT

This year's cohort will be the first to participate in a 'second act' of the course, thanks to generous funding received from the Newsboys Foundation.

Planned for Saturday 11 May 2024, and facilitated by the same core team, the participants will be invited back to Melbourne Theatre Company for a tour of our production headquarters and a drama workshop with a guest artist.

The students will also see the 2024 Education & Families production, *World Problems* by Emma Mary Hall, presented in the Lawler at Southbank Theatre – the same venue where they participated in the Youth Scholarship Course.

Dinner will be provided and the students from regional Victoria who stayed at Quest Southbank in 2023 will once again be offered a room, free of charge, to support their participation.



**'I really loved the teaching
artists and the activities they
gave us. I think they really
helped me grow as a performer.'**

-2023 participant



TESTIMONIALS

'Keep it up. Please don't ever stop encouraging young performers – especially regional children.'

– Audience member

'He was beaming after the show and while exhausted, was so incredibly proud of himself.'

– Teacher of 2023 participant

'We were blown away with being put up in accommodation for the week, for the clear communication we had and the great job that the team did making everyone comfortable.'

– Audience member

'I'd like to express gratitude for the opportunity for my child and the support given.'

– Audience member

'Thank you for making it possible for students who may not otherwise get this rich exposure and experience of theatre.'

– Teacher of 2023 participant

'I am full of gratitude to the enormous amount of people involved in this program. It has provided our students with an opportunity that they would never have gotten otherwise.'

– Teacher of 2023 participant



MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY
EDUCATION & FAMILIES

252 Sturt St
Southbank VIC 3006
03 8688 0974

SOUTHBANK THEATRE

140 Southbank Blvd
Southbank VIC 3006
03 8688 0800

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

Photography by Jacinta Keefe



SUPPORTED BY

**NEWSBOYS
FOUNDATION**

ACCOMMODATION PARTNER

QUEST
SOUTHBANK

MTC IS A DEPARTMENT
OF THE UNIVERSITY
OF MELBOURNE



MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY IS ASSISTED BY THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT
THROUGH CREATIVE AUSTRALIA, ITS PRINCIPAL ARTS INVESTMENT AND ADVISORY
BODY, AND BY THE STATE GOVERNMENT OF VICTORIA THROUGH CREATIVE VICTORIA.



**MELBOURNE
THEATRE
COMPANY**