



**MELBOURNE
THEATRE COMPANY
FOUNDATION**

**IGNITING
THE
SPARK**

My first time

Kate Mulvany on where it all began

Life-defining moments

Sheridan Harbridge, Ngali Shaw
and Merlynn Tong

A visionary gift

Leaving a legacy

Melbourne Theatre Company acknowledges the Boon Wurrung and Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung 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 Nations people, their Elders past and present, and their enduring connections to Country, knowledge and stories. As a Company we remain committed to the invitation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart and its call for voice, truth and treaty.

WELCOME



What ignited the spark for you? There's often a particular moment that inspires an enduring connection to theatre – whether it be your very first play as a child, a special connection to a story that lingers long in your memory or a spectacular theatrical effect that takes your breath away.

My first definite memory of being in a theatre isn't really about the show onstage – the most I can say about that is that I recall a vague sense of warm glowing light from the circle upstairs.

What I do remember is being taken backstage after the final curtain had come down. It felt mysterious and special, like stepping through the doorway of what makes theatricality possible. There were feather boas from the costumes and make-up covering the tiny dressing room tables. It wasn't glamorous at all but I fell in love with those cramped dressing rooms. Seeing behind the magic of the production is what lodged in my memory. It became the foundation for my love of theatre – and especially for everything that goes on backstage to share a story with an audience.

Anywhere 'behind the scenes' is still my favourite place to be. I love standing side of stage during a show in the Sumner or visiting the cast and crew after a performance. It seems almost inevitable that I would end up doing what I do today.

We're proud to have been inspiring, moving and entertaining audiences at Melbourne Theatre Company for 71 years across more

than 850 productions, and we're intent on making that special moment possible for many more people to come. To launch our Igniting the Spark appeal, we've invited some of our incredible artists to share their own special connections to the stage. You'll hear from Kate Mulvany on her life-changing first time in a theatre that kick-started a global career on stage, film and TV. We also talk to award-winning artists from this year's season – Sheridan Harbridge, Ngali Shaw and Merlynn Tong – to find out what set off their passion for theatre. Plus, we sat down with longtime supporters of the Company, Richard Simmie and Andrew McAlice, to talk about their cherished theatre memories and why they've chosen to leave a bequest.

The stories we stage and the opportunities we provide through the many programs we have in place are only possible with the generosity of Donors. To everyone who supports the future of our Company and our artists with a donation – you are our custodians, and I thank you for recognising the important role Melbourne Theatre Company plays in our cultural landscape. Whether you're a loyal Donor or donating for the first time, please consider supporting us before the end of the financial year. Your contribution not only enables world-class storytelling, but it gives us the opportunity to ignite the spark of a lifelong love of theatre for future generations. ■

Anne-Louise Sarks, Artistic Director & Co-CEO

At 14, a door was opened for Kate Mulvany that would change her life forever.

IGNITING THE SPARK

Do you remember your first time? Please excuse the provocative question, but we are all adults here.

Just take a moment. Think back. Lose yourself in memory. When was your first time?

I'm talking about theatre of course. Do you remember your first time experiencing theatre? When was it? Where was it? Can you picture it? Smell it? What were you wearing? Who was it with? Did you enjoy it or was it dreadful? Were you forced to go or did you plan it with excitement? Did you save up to buy your ticket or was it a free event? Did it leap out at you unexpectedly on a street corner or was it held in your own living room, a moment of fun or ritual shared between family and friends?

Now, the reason I ask this question is that for over a decade now, I have had the joy of working with the incredible Anne-Louise Sarks, Artistic Director of Melbourne Theatre Company. She has a



ritual that has become my favourite part of working with her. On every opening night, no matter how hectic the rehearsal process has been to get to that point, Anne-Louise, without fail, gathers the team together, be they performers, designers or crew. We stand in a circle onstage and Anne-Louise always says the following words: 'No matter what happens tonight, there will be someone

out there who is watching theatre for the very first time... and you might just change their life.' That's not the end of her speech, but it always gets me right in the heart. Because I can't help but feel a rush of relief and gratitude and awe that someone thought to give me a first time.

My first time was unexpected. I was 14. I grew up in a country town called Geraldton in Western Australia. I had never been to the theatre. I had no concept of what it was. Occasionally a cover band might perform at the local pub but I could never get in. A dilapidated circus might be set up by the wheat silos every couple of years. People would dress up as crayfish at the annual Blessing of the Fleet. But that was it. That was the extent of my cultural knowledge. Strangely enough, we had a theatre in 'Gero': Queens Park Theatre. An enormous square block across the road from my high school. Queens Park Theatre was in the 1986 *Guinness Book of World Records* for having the highest fly tower in the world. For those that don't know, a fly tower is a system of ropes, pulleys and counterweights within a theatre that enables a stage crew to hoist components such as curtains, lights, scenery, stage effects and, sometimes, actors. (Don't I

sound clever? That came from Wikipedia.) But this Geraldton theatre from the *Guinness Book of World Records* often sat empty, forlorn and unlit, with maybe the occasional aerobics exhibition or children's piano recital occupying its enormous, bare stage.

The closest I came to it was wagging school to sit in the circular outdoor grassed area that apparently the Ancient Greeks called an "amphitheatre". To us, it was just a convenient place to hide from maths class.

Then one day, my little town made it into the national arts pages. My aunt from Perth rang to tell us that Geraldton was making big theatre news across the country – and she'd been to see *Cats* over east, so she knew her Australian culture. There was a veritable brouhaha stewing! The world-renowned Johannesburg Theatre Company was bringing their production of Moliere's *Tartuffe* to Australia. This production was set on a trapeze. The trapeze was very large. And the only two theatres Down Under that this company could fit their set into were the Arts Centre in Melbourne... and Queens Park Theatre in Geraldton. →

The Melbourne season of *Tartuffe* had sold out and now desperate theatregoers from around the country had to make their way to Gero, WA – known more for its fishing and farming – if they wanted to see this fabulous French farce. Thanks, *Guinness Book of World Records!* This meant nothing to me, of course. I was busy assembling my crayfish costume for the next *Blessing of the Fleet*.

But then something happened that changed my life forever. Someone opened a door for me. Her name was Mrs Newman.



The Beast in rehearsal, 2013

She was an English teacher at the local boys' school, where my mum also taught. Mrs Newman was a South African woman who had arrived in Geraldton after escaping apartheid in her country. She was a gentle, softly-spoken lady who saw something in me that I didn't even know was there. One fateful day she said, 'Kate, would you like to see a play with me? I think you might like it.' And so we went. Mrs Newman, my mum and I sat there amongst some very weary theatre buffs from around the country, to watch *Tartuffe*. And over the next few hours, the world shifted for me. I was transported to a realm that is the closest I've ever come to a religious experience. I've since learned that the heartbeats of audience members will start to synchronise as they watch a piece of powerful theatre together – and that's what I felt like as I watched *Tartuffe* – my first play. A thrumming communal pulse beating between the stage and the audience, amidst which I sat, an awestruck teen. I can't even say I really understood what was going on up there, but I remember the incredible costumes, the enormous set, the smell of the haze, even the perfume of the lady from over east who was sitting nearby. Gucci Rush. I laughed at *Tartuffe* and his brilliant physical comedy, and I leapt to my feet with the entire audience as the actors took their bows at the end of the play.

It was at this point that Mrs Newman changed my life again. 'Kate,' she said. 'That man who played Tartuffe, I used to teach him in South Africa. Shall we go to Stage Door and say hello?' YOU CAN DO THAT?! Outside, Mrs Newman led me to a door that I had never noticed before.



The Beast, 2013

A simple red door, tucked around the side of the Queens Park Theatre, right next to where I'd wog maths class. Mrs Newman knocked. The door opened. And it was like entering Narnia. There were the actors I'd just been watching. Their costumes were being peeled off like soggy skin. They were hot and sweaty, their makeup dripping down their jubilantly exhausted faces. Some had beers. Some were embracing. Laughing. There were other people too. Backstage workers, bustling through the space, wheeling props out, flying sets up into that now-famous fly tower! And then there he was – Tartuffe himself – emerging from a dressing room! Only he wasn't in character anymore. Instead, he saw Mrs Newman, fell to his knees and wept. 'Mrs Newman!' he said. 'What are you doing here? I thought we'd lost you!' They embraced, this teacher and student. This lead actor and audience member. And in that one evening, I learned the story of *Tartuffe*, the history of Mrs Newman and her country, the future of myself, and the magic and humanity of what opening one door can bring.

Now, the speech Anne-Louise gives every opening night – there's another part to it. After she says, 'No matter what happens tonight, there will be someone out there who is watching theatre for the very first time and you might just change their life,' she follows with, 'And there might also be someone out there who is watching theatre for the last time tonight, and we do this for them too.'

After Mrs Newman opened that door for me all those years ago, I went on to become an actor and a playwright. I even performed in a production of *Tartuffe* for Bell Shakespeare. My career as an artist has taken me around the world, through countless stage doors, performing for all walks of life. But no-one has had a more profound effect on me than the young woman I'd like to tell you about.

Three years ago, as the pandemic eased a little and audiences cautiously started to make their way back to theatres, I was writing an adaptation for Sydney Theatre Company of Ruth Park's *Playing Beatie Bow* – a story about a teenage girl who magically travels through

'The heartbeats of audience members will start to synchronise as they watch a piece of powerful theatre together.'



Bernhardt/Hamlet, 2023

a portal of time between modern day Australia and 1873. This play was to open the newly renovated Wharf Theatres in Sydney. Not long before this, I'd been contacted by an incredible young woman named Tara. At that stage, Tara was one of the leading high school drama students in NSW. She lived near Penrith and had just gotten into university to study drama teaching. And wow, did she love Australian plays! Australian playwrights! Australian theatre companies! Tara's dad is an air conditioning repairman. Her mum sews incredible jackets for dogs. And they fully supported Tara as she attended all the youth theatre courses that she could. Tara and I, through our shared love of theatre, especially Australian theatre, connected immediately, and so I arranged for Tara to visit the *Playing Beatie Bow* rehearsal room. She came straight from her latest round of chemotherapy, which she'd been having for over a year. Tara watched our rehearsal with wide-eyed wonder and gave some fantastic – and vital – dramaturgical notes. Afterwards, as we stood outside the theatre, I asked Tara what her dream was. She said, 'I want to be one of those people that sips a glass of champagne in a foyer after a show and talks about what they've just experienced.'

When Opening Night came five weeks later, Tara was my date. She came in a wheelchair and a bright yellow dress, with an IV bag on her lap that ran up to a port on her chest, just near her heart. Despite her being desperately ill, her doctors had allowed Tara to attend the show. Recommended it, in fact. She sat next to her beautiful mum. She whispered excitedly over her shoulder to me before the show: 'Are the actors nervous? Did the backstage crew sort out that moment with the ship's sails? Is Guy Simon still

doing that funny laugh? Has Heather Mitchell learnt her lines yet?' And then the lights went down and the show began. I didn't watch my play that night. I watched Tara watch my play. I've never been more nervous in my life. She sat, entranced, throughout. The same way I'd watched *Tartuffe* all those years ago. And I hoped the rest of the audience would synchronise to the thrum that was clearly coming from her heartbeat.

After the show, that 17-year-old girl sipped half a glass of champagne and talked jubilantly about the play until 2am, before heading out of the stage door and back to her hospital bed. Tara died a week later.



'We must open the doors because if we don't, we lose stories. We lose knowledge. We lose each other.'

I had the heartbreaking honour that night of accompanying Tara to her last time. That precious evening is the sort that Anne-Louise always reminds us of on our Opening Nights.

We live and work on ancient land, where storytelling, songlines and culture-sharing have been happening for 60,000 years. So many entrances and exits, so many stage doors. So many stories to share with one another. Stories that can change lives, change laws, change the way we think about one another, about the world around us. Stories that entertain us and encourage empathy and empowerment. Stories that can synchronise our heartbeats. Such is the magic of an open theatre door. The Melbourne Theatre Company seasons being programmed by Anne-Louise and her magnificent teams – with your valued support – are testament that we can and must open the doors wide to all.

To the Mrs Newmans and the Taras and the country kids, and the wheelchairs, to those who can't afford a ticket and those who you suspect just might like it. To the first timers and the last timers.

We must open the doors because if we don't, we lose stories. We lose knowledge. We lose each other. The heartbeat fades. The communal thrum is silenced.

We must continue to say, 'All are welcome', and if it ever feels like that isn't the case, then we must change the architecture. Make the door bigger. Brighter.

Thank you for all you do, my fellow theatre lovers. Let's work together to keep our theatre doors open and painted bright so that no-one ever feels like they can't enter a space that might just change their life... by giving them their first time. ■



LIFE-DEFINING MOMENTS

Three of the talented artists involved in Season 2024 reveal what made them fall in love with theatre.

Sheridan Harbridge

Helen in *Meet Me at Dawn*, Co-Writer of *My Brilliant Career*

The piece that really got me excited about the potential of theatre was when I saw the Stephen Sondheim musical, *Company*, directed by Simon Phillips in 2000 at Melbourne Theatre Company when I was 18. I'd seen musicals before, but not ones that were so actor-driven. I'm attracted to musical theatre because it bypasses the brain and goes straight to the guts. Seeing a big intelligent musical on a small scale blew my mind at the potential of theatre and storytelling, and the thrill of a story hitting me in the stomach before it hit me in the brain inspired me.

I was able to experience the power of theatre with *Prima Facie* [Season 2023] in being involved in a story where the audience members who needed to feel seen and heard, *were* seen and heard. People would come up and tell me how much it changed them, and while it was a difficult role, any time someone would tell me what the show meant to them, it reminded me that's what theatre is for – changing lives.

It's beautiful to be connected to what feels like a family at Melbourne Theatre Company. Developing *My Brilliant Career* [with Dean Bryant, music by Mathew Frank] for Season 2024 makes me feel part of it because you get to tap into what the audience needs to hear. It's one of those stories that reminds us how far we've come and how far we haven't. Setting that work to music really makes it a joyful explosion of Australian sound. We rarely get to hear Australian music with an Australian dialect in musical theatre and I'm excited to bring it to audiences.

Theatre is an act of communion. Coming into a space and breathing with each other, laughing with each other and applauding with others – it's one of the only mediums that serves a community act in unison. Theatre is a beautiful space to experience stories. It's an ancient art form. People have been telling stories for hundreds of thousands of years. It's important to support theatre to bring in new audiences to see stories that reflect their lives. ■



Tibian Wyles and Ngali Shaw in *37*, 2024



Sheridan Harbridge in *Prima Facie*, 2023

Ngali Shaw

Jayma in *37*

Acting came out of nowhere. I was making music in my room one day when my mum came in with an ad from a casting agency looking for Aboriginal actors for a TV role. No experience was needed. I didn't get it but the agency contacted me after seeing my tape and helped me get another TV role. From there I fell in love with acting.

Being involved in Season 2023's *Jacky*, written by Declan Furber Gillick, made me love theatre. I was 22 at the time and the impact was immense. I felt like I'd found what I'd been searching for my entire life: to find out what I want to do and fall in love with it. And I did. The story was full of so much truth – happy truths, sad truths and funny ones too. I related to the character of Keith quite a bit, so it made it easier when trying to get to the heart of him.

Having the opportunity to spread theatre to new audiences is so fun. I enjoy every moment. Connecting to the crowd is what reminds me why I do what I do. I try to do that through looking at the audience and speaking directly to them because that's the difference between seeing a movie and seeing a play. As a stage actor you get to see the live reactions, and there's a unique connection between the audience and the performers.

Being involved with Melbourne Theatre Company again for Season 2024 is a blessing. I love seeing familiar faces but also making new friends along the way. I'm grateful to be a part of some of the best stories on one of the best stages in Australia. *37* is true storytelling. It generates conversation and laughs and is an experience audiences won't forget. ■

'It unlocked a part of me that I didn't even realise was locked away.

It was a scary sensation – but one that my young heart knew I needed.'



Merlynn Tong, 2023

Merlynn Tong

Writer and Girl in *Golden Blood*

I was 14 years old and growing up in Singapore in a chaotic home environment: my mother was very depressed and I was often secretly hungover from drinking with her. One day, my best friend stole a bottle of perfume from a shopping centre. This event would change my life. As part of her punishment/rehabilitation, she was sent to counselling sessions and, inexplicably, to an acting class. She did not want to attend it alone, so she pulled me along.

I remember entering the class that was filled with tough teens (many of whom would later become great friends) and at the front of class was our teacher, Faith. She was very tall, had thick long dark hair that reached her waist and she possessed a voice that seemed to rock the whole room – when she spoke, I felt the need to steady myself.

Faith performed for us. Her words silenced a room full of hardened and cynical young people. Watching her filled me with awe, fear and wonder. At the time, my inner life was often simmering but muted, perhaps a survival mechanism of sorts. Faith's performance permitted me to feel again, and to feel deeply, without reservation. It unlocked a part of me that I didn't even realise was locked away. It was a scary sensation – but one that my young heart knew I needed. At the same time, there was a deep recognition and reckoning that was growing in me. In her, I caught a glimpse of what I was supposed to do in life: to perform, to tell stories, to continually transform. Transformation allowed me a way out, a way to become someone else, not just as

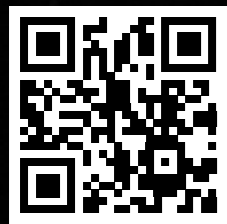
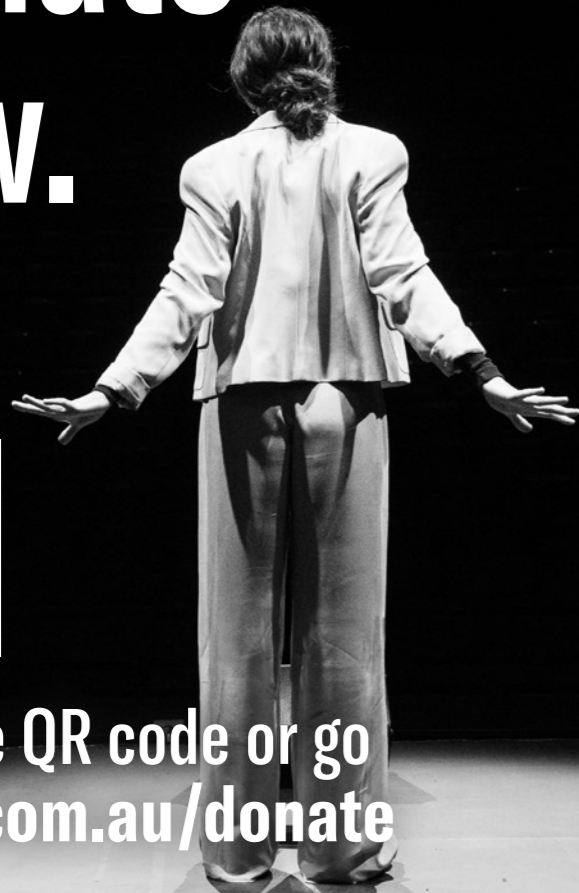
an escape while I was on stage, but also, as a possibility for growth in my life. I have been privileged in this life to be given the circumstances to allow me to continually transform.

Melbourne Theatre Company's wonderful Head of New Work, Jenni Medway, informed me about the Company's *Cybec Electric* program in 2020 and encouraged me to join it. I was then commissioned as a NEXT STAGE writer [Melbourne Theatre Company's commissioning and residency initiative for new work].

Both programs nurtured the beginnings of *Golden Blood*, a two-hander set in Singapore starring the mesmerising Charles Wu and I. We play siblings; my character is taken under the wing of her gangster older brother in the wake of our mother's death. Directed by the impeccable Tessa Leong for Season 2024, the play examines what we inherit from those before us, and questions whether we can pick the parts we want to inherit. I'm excited to show audiences a Singapore that I am sure they have never experienced before. Getting to perform at Melbourne Theatre Company where it was birthed feels like a homecoming. ■

To hear more from our artists, watch the video at mtc.com.au/definingmoments

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The Drowsy Chaperone, 2010



Andrew McAlicee and Richard Simmie



Jacky, 2023

For Andrew McAlicee and Richard Simmie, the magic of theatre isn't a fleeting experience, it's a lifelong love affair that began with childhood encounters and blossomed into a commitment to ensure its enduring presence for future generations.

The decision to support Melbourne Theatre Company in their Wills was a natural progression of their enduring passion for the arts.

When asked about his first experience of theatre, Andrew McAlicee recalls being blown away on a school excursion to see *Fiddler on the Roof*: 'I was about seven and I remember having a sense of awe.' Richard Simmie had a similarly eye-opening experience watching *The Mikado*: 'I remember the costumes, the singing – I'd never seen anything like it having grown up on a sheep farm. It sowed the seed of wanting to explore and try new things, leading to my love of

classical music, opera and other forms of theatre.' These early experiences laid the groundwork for their shared appreciation of live performances and the profound impact theatre can have on individuals and communities.

Their connection with Melbourne Theatre Company started in the early 1980s and continues today, with the couple being dedicated members of our Donor community. Andrew reflects: 'Over the years, there's been so many plays that have touched me, including *The Drowsy Chaperone* for its excellent storyline, staging and hilarious performances.' Richard echoes this sentiment, sharing his profound experiences with plays like *The Heartbreak Choir* and *Jacky*, which explored themes of tragedy and cultural divide. 'The plays that have resonated most with me over the years are the ones that have heart and emotion.'

Andrew loves the immediacy of the theatre, 'I'm drawn to humour, pathos, and the wonder of seeing a play – because it's real and live right in front of you.

I never get sick of it.' Richard recognises the critical role of the arts in our lives: 'Without the arts, life would be very boring. It's such a critical part of who we are and it deserves our support.'

Like so many of our audience members, the two find enjoyment in the conversations that are sparked by our productions. Richard remarks, 'It's always great when you go home and talk about the performance, and even when you wake up the next morning and the feeling is still present. That's when I realise it's made an impact. Even if it's a polarising play or one I didn't like, being able to discuss it with someone who may feel differently opens your mind.'

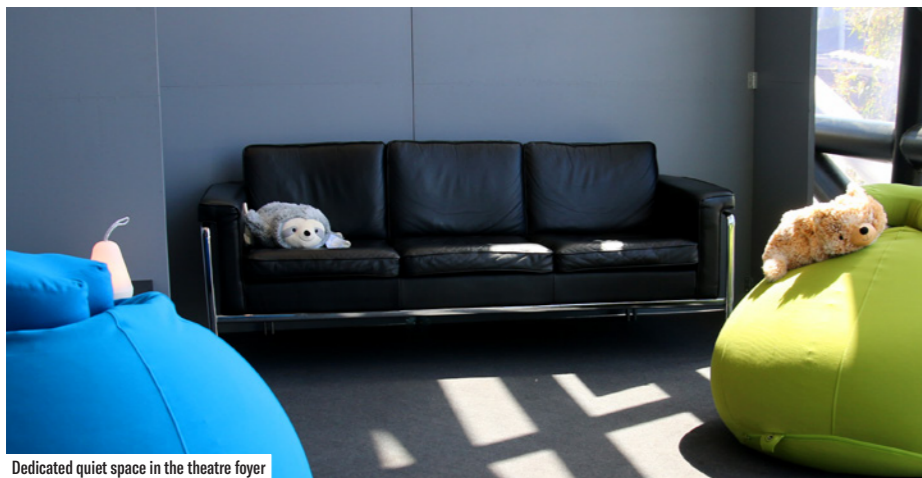
Their commitment goes beyond being audience members, it extends to active involvement with Melbourne Theatre Company, particularly as supporters of the NEXT STAGE Writers' Program. As Richard explains, 'In 2015 I wanted to get more involved with the Company, so I met with [then Head of New Work] Chris Mead to discuss NEXT STAGE.

I was blown away by the idea and was keen to become a part of it. We've had some amazing success stories from it so far.'

Encouraging others to follow suit, Andrew and Richard champion the idea that including Melbourne Theatre Company in their Will is not just a financial contribution but a timeless investment in the preservation of culture, creativity and the enduring magic of live theatre. Their decision becomes an invitation for others to contribute to the future of Melbourne Theatre Company and ensure that the transformative power of theatre continues to inspire generations to come. ■

If Melbourne Theatre Company has played an important role in your life, we invite you to play a role in its future.

To learn more about leaving a gift to Melbourne Theatre Company in your Will, visit mtc.com.au/leave-a-legacy or call Meaghan Donaldson, Annual Giving Manager, on 03 8688 0938 for a confidential chat.



Dedicated quiet space in the theatre foyer



A Very Jewish Christmas Carol, 2023



Bloom, 2023



INSPIRING THE ARTISTS & AUDIENCES OF TOMORROW

Our award-winning digital Education Hub provides a trove of resources that educators and students can access for free. Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School Assistant Principal, Joel Batalha, details how these important advancements create new possibilities for access to theatre.

Adapting the theatre environment is a crucial step in enhancing accessibility for our audiences.

Theatre is for everyone.

A core component of our pledge is being able to welcome new audiences to productions, and also to limit the barriers that exist. Relaxed Performances are just one of the ways Melbourne Theatre Company aims to make this a reality.

By making small but significant changes to the way we stage some performances, we aim to create a space for those who might otherwise be prevented from engaging with theatre. This may include audience members with diverse sensory and cognitive abilities, including neurodivergences such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism and anxiety. Modifications include adjusting sound and lighting to limit sudden loud noises and bright lights which can be overwhelming for some.

Introduced during Season 2023, the first Relaxed Performances were held for *Bloom* and *A Very Jewish Christmas Carol*. For both productions, audiences were also able to access a visual story, an insightful guide for those in attendance to familiarise themselves with what to expect when they see a show. Visual stories outline the plot of the production, describe elements of the set, go in-depth with sensory warnings and provide helpful information on accessing the theatre.

Seating in Relaxed Performances is also much more flexible, with audience members encouraged to move around and sit wherever they wish. A dedicated quiet space is also offered in the theatre foyer for those who need a break from the show. This freedom to adjust their surroundings gives audiences the opportunity to

experience a live production in a way that is most comfortable for them.

Relaxed Performances are an important component of the many initiatives at Melbourne Theatre Company designed to break down barriers to accessing the joys of theatre. It is thanks to our generous Donors that these initiatives can continue at the scale, frequency and impact all audiences deserve.

In 2024, this includes significant subsidised ticket schemes, new recordings for MTC Digital Theatre, and Relaxed Performances of *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *My Brilliant Career*. ■

To support access to theatre for all, visit mtc.com.au/donate

When did you first become engaged with Melbourne Theatre Company's Education Hub?

As a theatre educator who has been a supporter of Melbourne Theatre Company for 20 years, I was honoured to take part in an interactive teachers' workshop in November 2022 to see how inclusive and accessible the Education Hub would be. COVID really stretched the way in which we access resources and shows, and the Hub has allowed students statewide to access high quality resources and educational support.

In what ways do you feel the Education Hub helps support students' learning?

The Hub is a great companion resource for students engaged with a particular learning area. For remote or underprivileged schools who cannot offer a rich extracurricular program, the virtual tours are an excellent way for young people to engage with a professional theatre company. Students can not only take virtual tours of facilities but also tour the set designs to get a sense of how these shows come together.

From traps, lifts, and revolves to simple things like a mixing desk it's helpful for young people to get a sense of theatre technology and how it assists staging a production.

The Hub excels at educational resources for shows listed within the school curriculum, but also with mini packs for shows that are not listed for study. For Year 12 students, the ability to revisit these resources – and even rewatch productions – has been a valuable addition to revision when they might see a show in March but the exam is not until November. I love that Melbourne Theatre Company makes fundraising for education a priority because they see the value in engaging and inspiring the next generations of theatregoers to keep our wonderful industry flourishing.

What kind of feedback have you received from students and/or teachers using the resource?

I've heard from staff at regional and remote schools that this resource allows them to be on an even playing field in

what they can offer students. A couple of my students have since been inspired to begin a career beyond the stage and acting. I have students who are now looking at a stage management career and others who are considering a design career. They were able to discover there's more to theatre than learning lines and performing. Some have volunteered for local theatre companies and wanted to assist with set building and costumes. They're also getting more involved behind the scenes for our productions.

I know a resource like this doesn't happen without the support of both Melbourne Theatre Company staff and the generous Donors who value education as a way of sustaining theatre by inspiring our young people. The Education & Families team is one of a kind and their dedication to making this priority a reality should be commended. ■

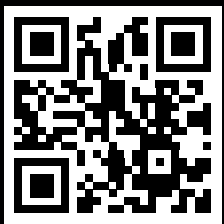
To learn more about how you can support the extraordinary work of our Education & Families team, visit mtc.com.au/education

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**Your support is vital to
creating transformative
moments in the theatre.**

Witnessing a captivating performance that leaves a lasting impact. Sitting in the audience as a chorus erupts into song. Seeing your story reflected on stage.

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CONTACT US

Philanthropy team
Melbourne Theatre Company
252 Sturt St
Southbank VIC 3006
03 8688 0954
foundation@mtc.com.au

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