

MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY



YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP COURSE Impact Report 2024

SUPPORTED BY

**NEWSBOYS
FOUNDATION**

ACCOMMODATION PARTNER


QUEST
SOUTHBANK

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.



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‘Thank you for providing this opportunity. As a family from regional Victoria it was fabulous to have the chance to participate in a course of such a high calibre.’

– Family member of 2024 participant

‘We would like to thank Melbourne Theatre Company and their sponsors for providing this scholarship for our children. It was an incredible experience from which my child has gained a lot of knowledge and created some lifelong friendships.’

– Family member of 2024 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 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 free of charge.

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.

In 2024 we welcomed 23 young creatives to learn about different areas of the arts industry such as design, scriptwriting, movement and voice. The course culminates with an ensemble performance they have devised together for an invited audience including their families/carers and teachers.

2024 HIGHLIGHTS

- Accommodation for eight regional participants and their families at Quest Southbank
- Group screening of the 2024 Education & Families Production, *World Problems* by Emma Mary Hall
- Creative artists as guest facilitators in the workshops, including two artists who worked on *World Problems*
- Creating an ensemble piece entitled *XOXO Earth*, created and performed by the students, directed by teaching artists Katrina Cornwell, Morgan Rose and Sarah Fitzgerald

COURSE HISTORY

Thanks to funding received, 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 continue to be developed and refined, informed by rigorous evaluation of each year's program and participant feedback. The 2024 cohort will return to participate in a 'second act' of the course, planned for March 2025.

**‘Thanks so much for the week.
It has been amazing and I learnt
heaps about acting, theatre and
about myself.’**

– 2024 participant

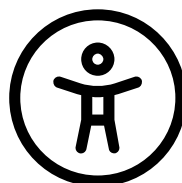
**‘The experience was great, the
people were all so kind, talented
and supportive.’**

– 2024 participant



PARTICIPANTS

Teachers in Victorian secondary schools nominated 29 students. 25 students were selected to participate in the course, however two withdrew prior to the Youth Scholarship Course week due to personal circumstances. Fortunately, one will be returning to participate in the 2025 cohort. Ultimately 23 participants completed the week-long course.



23

Students



8

Students from regional Victoria



17

Government schools



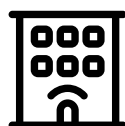
6

Non-government schools



10

Disadvantaged* schools



8

Accommodation provided for regional students

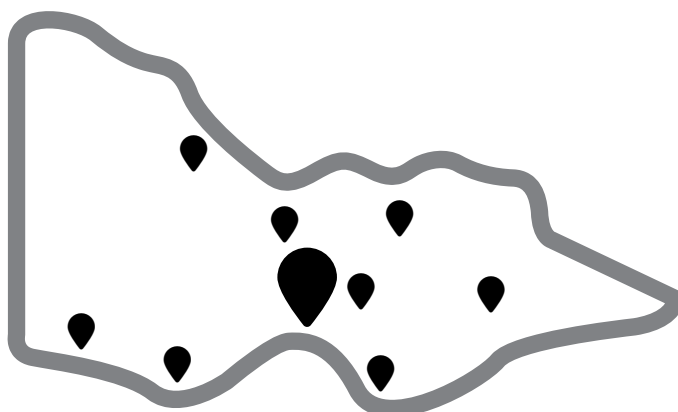


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Repeat schools from 2023

Students came from across Victoria to participate in the course.

Diamond Creek, Wallan, East Gippsland, Geelong, Mornington Peninsula, Shepparton, Swan Hill, Warrnambool, Wodonga



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

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 2024, the course explored the theme of change. Using script excerpts from source material *World Problems* by Emma Mary Hall as the basis of the course, the students participated in a variety of activities that focused on past, present and future memories that explore change – what happens when change occurs, and what will the future look like? The students ultimately create their own piece of theatre on the subject, titled *XOXO Earth*.

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.

Professional guest artists who work with Melbourne Theatre Company conducted workshops with the participants that integrated the stimulus text and helped build toward the final performance. In 2024, three guest artists shared their knowledge and skills with the group. Voice and Dialect Coach **Matt Furlani** ran a vocal skills workshop that helped students harness their breath and vocal capacity in performance. Movement Consultant **Amelia Jean O’Leary** introduced students to ways of working with motion and

gesture in an interactive workshop, and also returned later in the week to choreograph a movement sequence for the final performance. Set and Costume Designer **Dann Barber** shared his design process in a Q&A session and facilitated an activity where students created spherical props to use in their performance. Both Amelia and Dann worked on the Melbourne Theatre Company production of *World Problems* and shared insights into the theatre-making process.

MTC DIGITAL THEATRE SCREENING

On the Wednesday evening of the course, the participants watched a digital screening of this year’s Education & Families production, *World Problems* by Emma Mary Hall. This production was performed on the same stage where students were working during the last few days of the course. The students were eager to see the production having worked with excerpts from the script during the week.

PRESENTATION

After a week of learning and creating together, the participants presented their work to an audience of family, teachers and industry professionals from Melbourne Theatre Company. Drawing on the theme of memories and 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 actor, maker and activist of Anglo-Indian descent, based in Naarm/Melbourne. After graduating from the Victorian College of the Arts in 2018, Sarah has worked in theatre

and screen. Their credits include *SLAP. BANG. KISS.* (Melbourne Theatre Company); *The Great Australian Play* (Montague's Basement) and *Oh No! Satan Stole My Pineal Gland!* (Melbourne Fringe) – the latter two were nominated for a Green Room Award and a Melbourne Fringe Award, respectively. They also feature in the short films *House of Whoreship* (dir. Holly Bates); *Alma* (dir. Marina Slomp Albertini) and in the upcoming feature film *Ice Road 2: Road To The Sky* (dir. Jonathan Hensleigh). Sarah is a member of the MEAA and is also involved in animal and human rights activism.



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

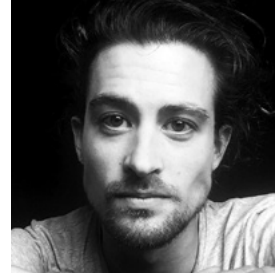
productions including *My Sister Jill*, *Bloom*, *Jacky*, *Come Rain or Come Shine*, *Admissions*, *The Truth*, *Home*, *I'm Darling* and *Golden Shield* (Melbourne Theatre Company); *& Juliet* (Michael Cassel Group); *Looking for Alibrandi* (Malthouse); *Wolf Play*, *Heroes of the Fourth Turning*, *Iphigenia 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 Jean O'Leary (she/they/ yinarr) is a proud First Nations Gamilaroi Yinarr from Northern New South Wales currently living in Naarm/Melbourne. Her dance practice is about human and spiritual experiencing.

Through complexity and adversity, she finds ways to tell coded and poetically rich stories. Her dances are personal and personified from her multidisciplinary skills in theatre, film and sound design. After graduating with a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Dance) from the Victorian College of the Arts in 2021, O'Leary performed and created multiple works including *Yinarr* (Adelaide Fringe and Dancehouse); *A Certain Mumble* (Darebin Arts Speakeasy) and *STAUNCH ASF* (Melbourne Fringe), for which she was awarded Best Emerging Indigenous Artist at Melbourne Fringe 2023, and nominated for a Green Room Award for Pioneering Artistry: Breaking Ground. Amelia also choreographed *One Day* as part of Melbourne Theatre Company's First Peoples Young Artists Program (now Deadly Creatives) at Yirramboi Festival. She is currently developing multiple new works.



DANN BARBER Guest Artist

Dann Barber is an award-winning set and costume designer whose work is influenced by his study of drawing and fine art at RMIT. He is also a graduate of theatre design from NIDA.

Recent work includes *World Problems*, *Bloom*, *A Very Jewish Christmas Carol* (Melbourne Theatre Company); *Melbourne*, *Cheryomushki* (Victorian Opera); *The Crocodile* (Spinning Plates); *Wittenoom*, *The Amateurs* (Red Stitch Actors' Theatre); *Rent* (LPD Productions); *Barnum the Musical* and *Chess* (Storeyboard Entertainment). He has been the associate costume designer for Gabriela Tylesova for the Australian Ballet's *Sleeping Beauty* and again for Melbourne Theatre Company's *Shakespeare in Love*. Dann has received and been nominated for numerous awards including Green Room Awards for Best Design in Cabaret for *The Ghetto Cabaret* (Kadimah Yiddish Theatre), Best Independent Set and Costume Design for *The Mermaid* (La Mama Theatre) and Best Set Design for *Yentl* (Kadimah Yiddish Theatre). Dann is a guest lecturer and tutor at VCA and Melbourne University.



BETHANIE MUE-YEH-HSER TARDIF Workshop Assistant

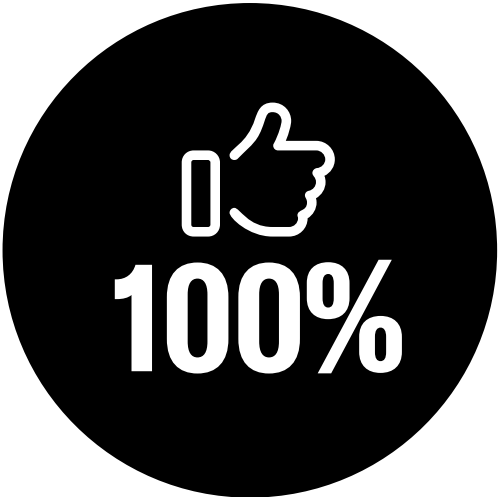
Bethanie is a Melbourne University Student who is interning at Melbourne Theatre Company as part of her Master's degree. She is interested in theatre design

and set production, being part of multiple student theatre productions. Bethanie focuses on engaging refugee youths and adults in arts and storytelling, at her local community centre.

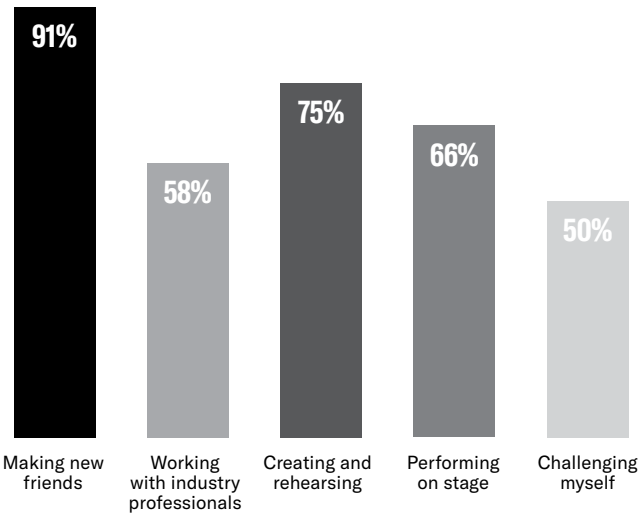
PARTICIPANT RESPONSES

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:

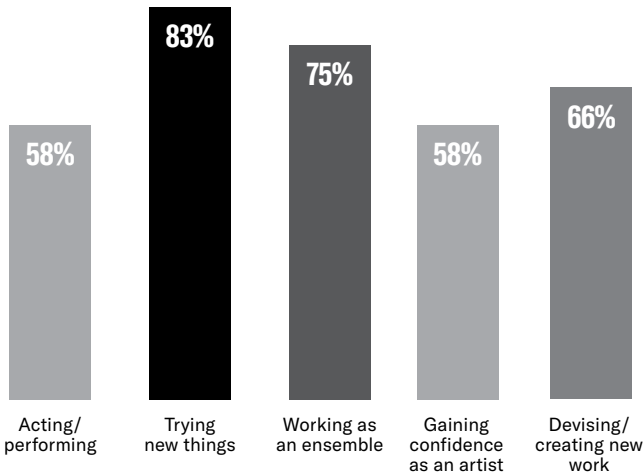
- Did the program meet your expectations?
- Did you feel supported by the staff and guest artists?
- Was the content presented in an easy to understand way?
- Do you feel you have gained new skills from this course?



What was the best part of the week?



What skills, if any, will you take away from this week?



PLANS FOR 2025

Melbourne Theatre Company intends to offer the Youth Scholarship Course in 2025.

The following points reflect learnings from the 2024 course:

- Already scheduled dates for 2025: Monday 29 September – Friday 3 October in the Lawler at Southbank Theatre
- 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 2024 participants

SECOND ACT

This year's cohort will participate in a 'second act' of the course, thanks to generous funding received from the Newsboys Foundation. Planned for Saturday 8 March 2025, 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 2025 Education & Families production, *The Robot Dog* by **Roshelle Yee Pui Fong** and **Matthew Ngamurarri Heffernan**, directed by **Amy Sole**. This will be 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 2024 will once again be offered a room, free of charge, to support their participation.



TESTIMONIALS

‘Exciting. Inclusive. Fun.’

– 2024 Participant

‘I learned so much, including but not limited to: teamwork skills and being aware of my physicality as a performer.’

– 2024 Participant

‘Friendly. Informative, Wholesome.’

– 2024 Participant

‘The vocal workshop taught me a lot of very helpful things and inspired me to pursue even more knowledge on how the voice works and how it can be manipulated.’

– 2024 Participant

‘An amazing experience.’

– 2024 Participant



‘Life changing.’

– 2024 Audience member

**‘It was an amazing experience, she’s
so lucky and we’re so grateful.’**

– 2024 Audience member

‘Empowerment, confidence, strength.’

– 2024 Audience member

‘Insight into life beyond school.’

– 2024 Audience member

**‘The course has assisted greatly in
my daughter’s future decisions with
performing arts.’**

– 2024 Audience member



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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.



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