

EMU RUNNER

A STORY TO OPEN HEARTS AND MINDS

Her mother's death propels a young girl to seek comfort in her ancestral lands, where a bond she forms with a wild emu rebuilds her spirit but also brings her into conflict with a social worker who could break her family apart.

EMU RUNNER

NATURE CAN MEND EVEN THE MOST BROKEN HEART



EMU RUNNER

Emu Runner is about the impact a mother's death has on an Indigenous family living in an isolated community. The story is seen through the eyes of Gem, a spirited nine-year-old girl, who deals with grief by forging a bond with a wild emu, a mythical bird of her ancestors. It is a bond she will do anything to keep but one that puts her at odds with a young and inexperienced social worker.

SYNOPSIS

Emu Runner is a story about a nine-year-old Indigenous girl, Gem Daniels, who lives in a remote Australian town. As she copes with her mother's unexpected death, Gem finds solace in the company of a wild emu, unwittingly connecting with her mother's traditional totem animal.

Gem's obsessive attachment to the emu leads her down a troubled path as she feeds it her school lunches and begins to steal extra food for it. As she spends more and more time with the emu, Gem skips school, attracting the attention of a new social worker in town, Heidi, who is convinced Gem's family is failing to look after her.

In nature the male emu takes on the role of rearing the chicks. With the death of his wife, Gem's father Jay Jay is left to raise Gem, her 15-year-old sister Valerie and her 17-year-old brother Ecka on his own. While Jay Jay's commitment to his family doesn't waver, the pressures to make ends meet and hold the family together are exacerbated by the antics of his older children and Gem's truancy and stealing.

Emu Runner is as much Jay Jay Daniels' story as it is Gem's. Not only does Jay Jay face prejudices from the white community in the town, he also has to prove himself to his Indigenous family and friends, who have little confidence in his ability as a sole parent. Jay Jay is driven by a dogged determination as he strives to nurture and protect his children.

The story reaches its dramatic climax with Heidi making the decision to remove Gem from her father's care, laying bare her limited understanding of the real motivations behind Gem's truancy and stealing.

In the end, it is Heidi who learns from Gem and is confronted by her own lack of preparation for a job which has responsibilities not covered by her tertiary qualifications or her idealism.

Emu Runner is a story about respecting difference. It explores the underlying racial tensions in regional Australia and the importance of traditional customs in modern Indigenous culture.



emu RUNNER

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

Gem is the driving force of *Emu Runner*. It is through her eyes that the story unfolds. She is a child full of wonder and intrigue and anchored by the deep cultural roots of her Ngemba people and country, and thus her sense of belonging is implicit. Her remote country town may struggle to exist, and yet, it is a place that offers great freedoms and a way of life where time slows and simple pleasures are found. At the same time *Emu Runner* presents the fragility of this world and how quickly it can change. The unexpected death of her mother puts Gem and her family's lives into a state of flux as they contend with their sorrow.

Emu Runner is about Gem's search for meaning at time when nothing makes sense. Rather than turning her gaze inward she looks to nature for the answers. The emu is Gem's connection with her mother and its arrival after her death cannot be ignored. The emu is Gem's past, her present and her future. Flightless these birds may be, but ultimately they are a symbol of speed, agility and grace. They are always moving forward, as Gem must. They hold other valuable life lessons for Gem and her family, as it is the male emu that is fully responsible for raising the young, just as Gem's father finds himself fully responsible for his children. Like the male emu, Jay Jay Daniels is fiercely protective and is prepared to step up to meet the challenge he has been dealt.

Eleven-year-old Rhae-Kye Waites, from the remote New South Wales town of Brewarrina, plays Gem in this family drama of loss and redemption, acting alongside the celebrated actor/director Wayne Blair, who plays her father Jay Jay Daniels. Waites and Blair deliver emotionally charged and honest performances at the centre of a dynamic ensemble of Brewarrina locals, augmented by Logie award-winning actor Rob Carlton and emerging talent Georgia Blizzard in small key roles.

Premature death is an issue that repeatedly touches the lives of Indigenous Australians. It is a reality I have become more aware of through my longstanding association with the Indigenous community of Brewarrina. I believe story-telling offers an accessible way to shine the spotlight on this pressing issue, hopefully creating a greater awareness and understanding about the profound impact loss and grief has on others. Stories have the power to engage audiences on so many levels, touching their hearts and minds and by transporting them into the worlds and lives of people that are often far from their experience. It has been a privilege to create a story in partnership with the Brewarrina Indigenous community.

Emu Runner invites audiences into Gem's world as she faces the hardest test of her life. My aim is to paint a positive and uplifting story for Gem. I hope audiences come to understand the adversities which arise from living in a remote community as well as marvel in the richness of our First Nation's culture and the beguiling beauty of the Australian landscape.

IMOGEN THOMAS 2018



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PRODUCER'S Statement

The opportunity to produce *Emu Runner* has been as rewarding as it has been challenging. The unconventional processes involved in making the film have seen the complete range of human emotions laid bare and approaches to 'doing things' tested to the limit but... we have got there.

Emu Runner is a film about many things. The most important aspect of the film is the commitment given to it by all the people of the Brewarrina community; without their unshakeable support, it just would not have happened. The film tells the story about one family's strength in recovering from terrible loss. The loss that the character of Gem, the film's protagonist, struggles with throughout the film is taken back at the end through the catharsis of many characters in the film and how their experience strengthens their spirits and enables them to move beyond the pain of losing someone close, of losing someone's respect and taking charge of their lives.

This story is everyone's story. *Emu Runner* belongs to the Brewarrina Community. The film starts and stops with the Brewarrina Community. The only outcome that Imogen and I hope to achieve in making this film is that it can, in some way, provide the people of Brewarrina with a strong foundation to stand fast and be very proud of who they are, where they are from and where they are going. Brewarrina is a positive community where positive things happen. It is time to show the world.

VICTOR EVATT 2018



EMU RUNNER

INSPIRATION

Imogen Thomas wrote *Emu Runner* in consultation with Frayne Barker, an Aboriginal Ngemba woman, from Brewarrina, a small town in northwestern NSW, Australia. Frayne has brought to this project her knowledge of the pressing issues and challenges that come from living in this isolated community.

Positioned near the banks of the Barwon River, Brewarrina is home to a large Indigenous community. It is the traditional land of the Ngemba, Murrawarri, Ualari, Weilwan and Baranbinja people. Brewarrina was where these tribes came together to partake in important ceremonies as well as to enjoy the abundant fish that the river offered, while utilising the stone fish traps that have been there for over 40,000 years. To this day the river continues to hold great significance as well as nourish its community.

In 2003, Imogen Thomas worked on an arts initiative with the Ourgunya women's shelter in Brewarrina. This experience introduced her to a large number of women and children from the community and placed her in a unique position to listen to their stories and gain a very real sense of their lives and personal struggles. She was confronted by the effects of unemployment and poverty on the health of the community and the lives of its members cut short. What was apparent to her was the resilience and strength of the women who had to manage the many social problems arising from these conditions. It was during this engagement that Imogen was introduced to Frayne Barker, director of the Gainmara Birrilee Pre-school. Friendships and subsequent visits to the area inspired Imogen to make a film set in this special place.

Before embarking on a feature-length project with the Brewarrina community, Imogen made *Mixed Bag*, a short film about racial stereotyping and prejudice. From the film's inception Frayne Barker was involved. The production also engaged the support and participation of the broader community who made up the majority of the cast and also worked behind the scenes.

Mixed Bag was completed in 2008 and went on to be screened at both national and international film festivals, receiving many nominations and awards. For Imogen, the real mark of the film's success was the community's response, which was overwhelmingly positive. *Mixed Bag* was a vital stepping-stone in her journey to making a feature film.



VISUAL STYLE

Emu Runner presents a child's perspective of life in an Australian outback town and this is reflected in the cinematic language. The mood and tone is visceral, honest and immediate, instantly engaging the audience in Gem's world.

Following in the cinema vérité tradition, the film was shot on location in Brewarrina, and as much as possible, was cast from within the community.

The camera style in *Emu Runner* has an observational quality, with a readiness to capture and respond to the impulses of the performers. A lightweight camera was used, predominantly hand-held, to allow for mobility and flexibility during the shoot. The camera framing was mindful of the inherent relationship between the characters and the landscape as well as the animals that inhabit that country.

Overall, the visual design of the film sculpts from the textures and colours that exist in Brewarrina. The colour palette is informed by the outback landscape, with its black and burnt-red soil, the sandy yellows of the grassy plains and the muted ashen greens of the scrubby bush. Washed-out, sun-bleached colours of the weatherboard houses and shop signs are reflected in the townscape. The character of the social worker, Heidi, sits outside this colour spectrum. She stands out in stark whites and steely tones, reflecting the textures and contrast of the city she has come from.

Films that have been seminal in the development of *Emu Runner* include Rene Clément's *Forbidden Games*, Carol Reed's *Fallen Idol*, Peter Bogdanovich's *Paper Moon*, Tony Gatlif's *Swing* as well as the Dardenne Brothers' film *The Kid with a Bike*. In each of these films the director invites the audience to experience the raw truthfulness of child's point of view and their imaginative spirit when faced with the dramas of their lives.

While *Emu Runner* is grounded in a distinct social realist style it strives to capture the inherent lyricism of its characters and their world.

DREAM TEAM



IMOGEN THOMAS

Writer/Director/Producer

Emu Runner is Imogen's first narrative feature-length film. Imogen has a Master of Fine Arts degree from the Tisch School of Arts graduate film program at New York University. She also holds a First-Class Bachelor of Arts Honours degree in Drama, from Flinders University in South Australia. It was here that Imogen began making short films, many of which have been screened at festivals and have received awards, including Best Narrative Drama at the 11th Adelaide Film Festival for *Departure*. At this time, she also pursued a career in set and costume design for the theatre, designing celebrated productions for Sydney's Belvoir St Theatre, the Adelaide Theatre Festival and Magpie2. In 1998 Imogen was awarded the prestigious South Australian Premier's Award for Emerging Artist of Year. This award afforded her the opportunity to undertake her Masters degree at NYU.

Imogen's graduating film, *Mixed Bag*, premiered at the Montreal Film Festival in 2008 and went on to be screened at both national and international festivals. It received the Gold Award at the Australian Cinematographer's Society Awards 2008 as well as being a finalist for the Wasserman and King Award, First Run Film Festival 2009, NYC. Imogen lives in Sydney, Australia, with her partner Victor Evatt and their two daughters.

VICTOR EVATT

Producer

Victor has had the privilege to work in collaboration with the First Nations People of Australia over many years. He holds degrees in Early Childhood Education, Infant Mental Health and Music. He has worked directly as a teacher to advocate for equality in Indigenous Early Childhood Education. Victor has also coordinated community-driven arts-based initiatives with BIGhART and Beyond Empathy. He was the Executive Producer of Imogen Thomas' short film *Mixed Bag*. *Emu Runner* is Victor's first feature credit as a producer. Additionally, Victor brings a wealth of knowledge from his background in music and as an opera singer and has overseen the musical components of *Emu Runner*.

FRAYNE BARKER

Indigenous Script Consultant

Frayne is a Ngemba Aboriginal woman from the northwestern New South Wales community of Brewarrina. She comes from a large family and has lived and worked in her community for the majority of her life. In her early teenage years Frayne recognised the importance education played in shaping the lives and future of her people and this set her on a course to pursue an Early Childhood Teaching degree at Macquarie University. After completing her studies in 1997, Frayne returned to Brewarrina, where she took up the director position at Gainmara Birrilee Pre-school, which is a learning environment dedicated to Aboriginal children.

To this day she continues to run the pre-school as well as being actively involved in local community groups that foster support for the Aboriginal community. Frayne is a member of the Aboriginal Early Childhood Support and Learning Organisation.

Frayne has a strong interest in film and has acted as a consultant to Imogen Thomas on her film scripts *Mixed Bag* and *Emu Runner*.

ANTONIA BARNARD

Producer

Antonia has been producing and line producing feature films and television since the mid-1980's. Her award-winning career spans children's television, film financing and feature film production. Her feature films include *Welcome to Woop Woop* directed by Stephan Elliott; *Bootmen* directed by Dean Perry and *The Quiet American* directed by Phillip Noyce. Antonia also produced the award-winning short film *Two Bob Mermaid* with the Indigenous director Darlene Johnson.

In 2006 she co-produced *The Painted Veil*, starring Naomi Watts and Edward Norton directed by John Curran for the Yari Film Group. In 2007, Antonia was Executive Producer for the ABC Television series *Rain Shadow*, starring Rachel Ward. The same year she took up the role as the Producer Offset Manager for the Film Finance Corporation. Other producing achievements of Antonia's are *Last Ride* with Nicholas Cole, the debut feature of director Glendyn Ivin, starring Hugo Weaving; *Burning Man* directed by Jonathan Teplitzky, starring Matthew Goode; and, again working with Stephan Elliot, *A Few Best Men*. In 2012 Antonia, produced the ABC Television series *Devil's Dust*. She continues to produce films of distinction, including *Tracks*, *Truth* and *Backtrack*.



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JOHN FINK

Producer

John Fink is a restaurateur, a writer and a filmmaker. As Creative Director of the Fink Group, John runs the family restaurant business with his father, long-time restaurateur, theatre-owner and hotelier Leon Fink. The Fink Group owns and operates Quay Restaurant, Otto Ristorante and Bennelong at Sydney Opera House, and is a joint partner in three other restaurants. John also works in his “spare time” on his personal slate of scripts and films, a passion/talent he undoubtedly inherited from his mother, the prominent Australian film producer Margaret Fink. His films have appeared in international film festivals including Melbourne International Film Festival, American Film Institute, Flickerfest, and Sundance.

MARY WAITES

Indigenous Community Liaison & Performer

Mary Waites is a proud Ngemba First Nations woman. Mary grew up, and has lived in the north-west NSW community of Brewarrina all her life. Mary has had a working relationship with Imogen Thomas since 2007 when Mary played a small role in the short film *Mixed Bag*. In *Emu Runner*, Mary plays the role of Daphne, Gem’s grandmother. (She is Rhae-Kye Waites’ grandmother in real life too.) Mary has also had a pivotal role as *Emu Runner’s* community liaison during the pre-production, production and post-production periods. Mary’s commitment to *Emu Runner* has been intrinsic to the culture of the project in its relationship to and with the community of Brewarrina. Between 2016 and 2017 Mary was the coordinator of the Brewarrina Literacy Campaign and the star of a major documentary, *In My Own Words*. The film follows Mary’s journey helping a group of adult First Nations people who are learning to read and write for the first time.

GABRIEL BARBER SHIPTON

Producer

Gabriel has had a fascination for the cinema since childhood. Over the past 10 years he has carved out a career in the film industry in the area of film accountancy. His experience is diverse, from low-budget film productions to larger studio pictures that have been produced in Australia, including *Happy Feet*, *Happy Feet Two*, *Oyster Farmer* and *Redhill*. In 2012 Gabriel worked on *I Frankenstein* and *Fury Road* in Namibia. In the past few years he has worked on productions such as *Prey*, *Lion* and more recently *Peter Rabbit*. These productions have given him a unique insight into all facets of the film production process and have provided him with a solid foundation to transition into producing. *Emu Runner* is Gabriel’s first foray into producing.

MICHAEL GIBBS

Cinematographer (DOP)

Emu Runner is Michael’s first feature film in the role as cinematographer. Starting out in film at a very young age, under the tutelage of his film-making family, Michael has worked in a diverse array of roles within the camera department on a multitude of films, TV and commercial productions. Training under luminary Australian cinematographers, his extensive work as a professional camera assistant over the past 18 years has enabled him to hone his cinematic skills on distinguished films productions such as *Happy Feet*, *The Killer Elite*, *I Frankenstein* and *Candy*. In this capacity, he has also worked in the Australian television industry on series such as *Offspring*, *Rush* and *Neighbours*, as well as on numerous commercials. He has shot television, commercials, music videos and documentaries, including most recently the pilot for *Full Pull*, an episodic documentary on the sport of tractor pulling. He is a true Swiss Army knife of a film-maker. Michael currently resides in Melbourne, Australia, with his wife and two young boys.



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LISSA COOTE

Art director

Lissa Coote's work as a production designer has been prodigious. Her work has received much acclaim. In 1978 she won an Australian Film Institute award for best production design for *Newsfront*, directed by Phillip Noyce. She also received AFI nominations for her design work in *F.J. Holden*, directed by Michael Thornhill, and *Fatty Finn*, directed by Maurice Murphy. Lissa enjoyed a strong creative collaboration with director Stephen MacLean on *Around the World in 80 Ways* as the production designer and on *Starstuck* as the decorator. In conjunction with her extensive body of film work, Lissa has also worked as a decorator in television; some of her credits include the Kennedy-Miller mini-series *Bodyline* and *Dirtwater Dynasty*, as well as the mini-series *The Last Bastion*, written by David Williamson, and *The Last Frontier*, starring Linda Evans and Jack Thompson.

TIFFANY DARO

Costume

Tiffany spends much of her time in her small shop where she gets to play with beautiful things and dress up her windows making little installations to satisfy her creative urges. She has always held an interest in craft and making beautiful things and jumps at any opportunity to work on other projects to ultimately bring more joy and art into the world. Tiffany has worked in costume on two of Imogen Thomas's films. Tiffany lives in Bellingen NSW with her two daughters.

NICOLE NORELLI

Editor

Nicole Norelli is a screen editor based in Sydney, Australia. Able to conceptualise from pre to post, from a photographic and production background, Nicole began her career as a storyteller studying Film and TV and Photomedia, in Perth, Western Australia, spending her lunch breaks and waking hours creating magic in the studio, darkroom and editing suite. In 2014 she drove across the vast Australian outback with her partner and 'Puss' the cat and has never looked back. In 2017 Nicole undertook postgraduate studies in Screen Editing at the Australian Film Television and Radio School in Sydney, fulfilling a lifelong dream. As an Australian screen editor she facilitates the cinematic brush strokes of narrative storytelling.

JENNY HICKS

Editor

Jenny Hicks is a Sydney-based writer and film editor. She has been working in the international film and television industry, predominantly in the cutting room, for more than 30 years. Jenny worked as an assistant editor on TV series and films such as *Twin Peaks* and *Wild at Heart* for director David Lynch, all three *Matrix* films for the Wachowskis, *The Last Samurai* and *Blood Diamond* for Ed Zwick and *The Thin Red Line* for Terrence Malick. Moving to Cape Town, South Africa in 2007 she started editing long-form documentaries, television drama and feature films, including *One Last Look* for director Philip Roberts, and Darrel Roodt's *Winnie Mandela*. Returning to Sydney in 2013 she continued editing, including the feature film *Out of The Shadows* for director Dee McLachlan and two TV documentary series, *Ice Wars* and *The House*, for the ABC. Jenny is also an accomplished writer, publishing her first non-fiction book on the history of Australian rodeo in 2000. Her first feature film script, *Butterflies*, was nominated for the AWG Monte Miller Award 2015.



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TOM HEUZENROEDER

Sound Designer

Tom has worked as a sound designer and mixer for film and television, both in Australia and abroad, since 1995. In 2006, he received an AFI award for his sound design work on *Ten Canoes*, directed by Rolf de Heer. He has also been nominated for a Primetime Emmy Award for *Glass: A Portrait of Philip In Twelve Parts*, directed by Scott Hicks, and has recently worked with a facility in Wales, editing sound for *Doctor Who*. He has also worked on many critically acclaimed films, such as *Girl Asleep* and *Ali's Wedding*.

BEN FINK

Composer

An integral member of the Australian music scene for over 25 years, Ben has toured, recorded and composed with acts such as The Whitlams, Lior, Christa Hughes, iOTA, Lily Dior, Miriam Lieberman, Waiting for Guinness, The Stiff Gins, Voices from the Vacant Lot and King Clam, co-writing The Whitlams single "Best Work", Lior's indie hit "I'll Forget You" and Lily Dior's "Love is like a River". Ben has worked as composer, musical director, guitarist, singer and performer with the likes of the Sydney Theatre Company, National Theatre of Parramatta, Stalker Theatre, Belvoir St Theatre, Hayes Theatre, ABC Radio, Live Ideas (Hidden Sydney) and The Performance Space. Ben has composed and performed music for film, television, radio and theatre, including for Khyentse Norbu's feature film *Travellers and Magicians*, and the multi-national collaborative outdoor art installation *Nomanslanding* with Turpin + Crawford Studio. Ben runs a successful private practice as a vocal coach and vocal technique instructor.

PETER DAVISON

Composer

As a composer, arranger, orchestrator and conductor, Peter is a hugely versatile composer, using a wide range of techniques, from traditional orchestra to modern sound design creating a unique sonic space. As a performer, he conducts professionally across Europe, and as a composer he writes for all forms of media: including TV, film, games and commercials. Peter is the composer for stop-motion animation feature *Strike*. He is the composer attached to Pebble Beach Screen Partners' feature musical *Champagne Chandra*. In 2017 and 2018 Peter worked as orchestrator and conductor on the multi-award-winning score, *Horizon Zero Dawn*. In 2017 Peter conducted the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic's new ensemble 10/10, also arranging/orchestrating the 1960's seminal album by Roger McGough and Andy Roberts, *Summer with Monika*. Peter also conducted the City of Prague Philharmonic, orchestrating Animortal's stop-motion animation *Chuck Steel, Night of the Trampires*. In 2016 Peter composed the additional score for the award-winning feature documentary *Something Quite Peculiar*, about The Church's front man Steve Kilbey.

GLENN SKUTHORPE

Singer/Songwriter

With five highly-regarded albums and music featured in documentaries such as John Pilger's *Utopia*, Nhunggabarra, Kooma, Muruwari man and international touring singer-songwriter Glenn Skuthorpe is a masterful lyricist and composer who gives voice to those whose stories must be heard. Following best album nominations and a string of highly successful tours (Byron Bay Blues Fest, Woodford, Cygnet and Calgary Folk Festivals), Glenn released his sixth album, *Out On My Own*, in June 2018 before touring Canada in August 2018.

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JAMES BONEY

Singer/Songwriter

James Boney is a Muruwari man. He was born in Brewarrina and raised in Goodooga, a neighbouring country town in north western NSW. His first introduction to music was through his father, who played the guitar. From listening and watching his father, James' passion for music was ignited and this was further developed and encouraged at his local school. James co-wrote the song "Justice Will Be Done" with Leslie Shillingsworth, which was part of the *Building Bridges* album. The song also featured on the feature film *Deadly*. James continues to follow his passion to tell stories through writing songs and singing, drawing from his life experience and his culture.

EUGENIE PUSKARZ THOMAS

Cellist

Eugenie Puskarz Thomas is a young emerging cellist from Brisbane, Australia. She made her solo orchestral debut at 17 with the Second Queensland Youth Symphony and is currently studying a Bachelor of Music at the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith University under the tutelage of Meta Weiss. She counts among her mentors Kejia Wang, Patrick Murphy, Teije Hylkema and Shannon Tobin. Eugenie has been a member of the Queensland Youth Orchestra's Organisation for over seven years and during that time has held four principle positions. Highlights of Eugenie's career include performances in locations such as Parliament House, touring with Tina Arena and James Morrison as well as performing with Opera Australia in their 2017 production of *Aida* on the Gold Coast under the baton of Tahu Matheson.

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PRINCIPAL cast

RHAE-KYE WAITES

Gem

For eleven-year-old Rhae-Kye, a student of the Brewarrina Central School, the lead role of Gem was her first opportunity to act in a fiction narrative. On the second week of the shoot Rhae-Kye made the insightful comment about the role she was undertaking, stating it was 'hard work' as well as rewarding. On many occasions while shooting the film she reminded the director that she could not pretend 'to be' a certain way for a scene rather that was how she was. Rhae-Kye is an intuitive, honest and playful performer with an eagerness to learn. In *Emu Runner* she acts alongside her grandmother Mary Waites and her grandfather Lindsay Waites, as well as her cousin Letisha Boney.

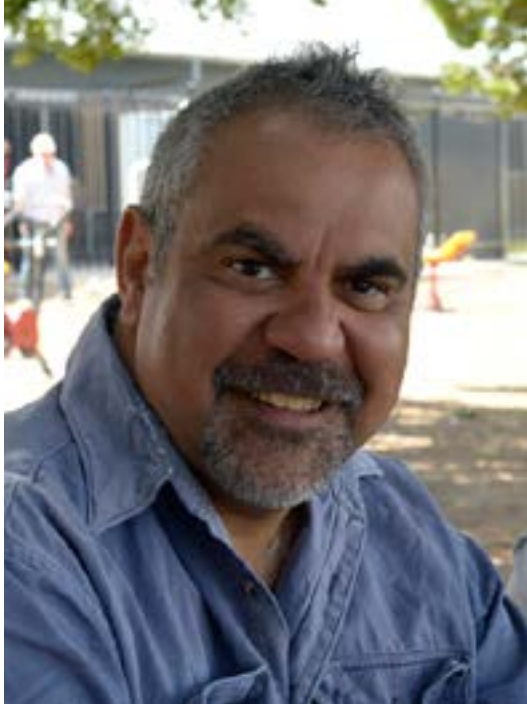
WAYNE BLAIR

Jay Jay

On television Wayne is best known for his AACTA-nominated work in two seasons and a tele-movie of *Redfern Now* for the ABC. Selected TV credits include Rowan Woods' telemovie *The Broken Shore*, *Small Claims*, *Fireflies*, *Water Rats*, *All Saints* and *Wild Side*. More recently he starred in episodes of *The Let Down*, *Squinters* and *Black Comedy* as well as *Mystery Road*. Wayne's film credits include *The Turning – Family*, the AACTA Award-winning *Wish You Were Here*, *X*, *The Last Time I saw Michael Gregg*, *Blessed* and *Mullet*. On stage Wayne has performed in *True West* directed by Phillip Seymour Hoffman and *Tot Mom* directed by Steven Soderbergh. Other theatre credits include *The Sunshine Club*, *Inheritance* and *The Cherry Pickers* for the Sydney Theatre Company; *Jesus Hopped The A-Train*, *Stuff Happens*, *Run Rabbit Run*, *Conversations With The Dead*, *The Sapphires*, *The Dreamers* and *Cloud Street* (International Tour) for Belvoir; *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet* for the Bell Shakespeare Company, and *Skin* with Bangarra Dance Theatre. Wayne Blair is an acclaimed film and television director. He has directed for an array of television series including episodes of *Redfern Now* (some of which he wrote), *Cleverman*, *Love Child*, *Offspring* and *The Gods of Wheat Street*. His film directing credits include the award-winning film *The Sapphires*, *September Of Shiraz* and more recently *Top End Wedding*.



RHAE-KYE WAITES



WAYNE BLAIR



GEORGIA BLIZZARD



ROB CARLTON



MAURIAL SPEARIM



MARY WAITES



LETISHA BONEY



RODNEY MCHUGHES

MAURIAL SPEARIM

Darlene

Maurial Spearim is an Indigenous woman from the Gamilaraay, Kooma, Muruwari nation. A VCA graduate with a Bachelor of Dramatic Arts Degree, Maurial continues to collaborate with a wide range of artists who, much like herself, have a passion to co-create, develop and perform. Maurial is interested in exploring theatre, song, and dance through the expressions of the body and the utterance of the voice, where artforms are combined to create a story evocative of past and present.

Credits include We Get It, Elbow Room/Neon for Festival Melbourne Theatre Company in 2015; Wentworth Foxtel 2013/2015; The Secret River 2015, Redfern Now tele-movie 2015; Who Stole The Sole state tour, Phunktional Arts Limited 2013-2015; BalaaBalaa Yuli-Gi dancer 2015; Skin Choir Songlines, Aboriginal Music Corporation 2012-2014; Body Armor state and national tour, Ilbijerri Theatre Company 2010-2013; Seven Sisters dancer 2010-2013; Move It Mob Style, dancer 2012.

GEORGIA BLIZZARD

Heidi

Born and raised in Hobart, Georgia made the move to Sydney upon completing Year 12 to commence her studies at NIDA. She graduated with a Bachelor of Dramatic Arts in 2015 and has worked across the mediums of theatre including the world premiere of Australian play *The Surgeon's Hands*, television, with credits including *Home and Away*, and film, including award-winning short film *Strange Beauty*, *The First Fagin* and *Thor: Ragnarok*. She also spends her days teaching drama for children aged 2–12 in NIDA's Open Program and dabbling in music and art.

ROB CARLTON

Stan

Rob Carlton has been a professional actor since he was 15 years old. He won the Silver Logie for most outstanding actor for his portrayal of Kerry Packer in the ABC mini-series *Paper Giants*. He's a multiple AACTA nominee in both drama and comedy categories. As a director Rob was the 2006 winner of Tropfest, as well as winning best actor at Tropfest that year. As a writer Rob won an Australian Writers Guild award for the show he created, *Chandon Pictures*. *Chandon Pictures* was also nominated for multiple AACTA awards, a Logie for most outstanding comedy and two Australian Directors Guild awards. Rob's acting credits in a career over 30 years span television, theatre and film.

INTRODUCING

Mary Waites
 Letisha Boney
 Rodney Mchughes
 Lindsay Waites
 Stella Carter
 Anne Wright
 Sandra Murphy
 Coco Daro
 Bram Eastman
 Anthony Fisher
 Drew Johnston



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