



NTOP
OF

NATIONAL THEATRE
OF
PARRAMATTA

PUTTING THE NATION ON STAGE

Riverside Theatres' Resident Company

STOLEN

by Jane Harrison

RIVERSIDE



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

National Theatre of Parramatta would like to acknowledge that we are here today on the land of the Darug people. The Darug people are the Traditional Owners of this land. National Theatre of Parramatta also acknowledges the current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, who now reside within this area.

PLEASE NOTE

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander patrons are advised *Stolen* contains images of deceased people.

STOLEN

BY JANE HARRISON

DIRECTED BY VICKI VAN HOUT

Opening Night Friday 3 June 2016
Season Thursday 2 to Friday 17 June 2016
Lennox Theatre, Riverside Theatres

CREATIVES

DIRECTED BY
VICKI VAN HOUT

DESIGNED BY
**IMOGEN ROSS
AND VICKI VAN HOUT**

LIGHTING AND VIDEO DESIGNER
TOBY K

COMPOSER AND SOUND DESIGNER
PHIL DOWNING

PRODUCTION MANAGER
ANNETTE ROWLISON

STAGE MANAGER
CARL SCIBERRAS

ASSISTANT TO THE DIRECTOR
BIANCA 'BEE' CRUSE

CAST

SHIRLEY
HENRIETTA BAIRD

ANN
MATILDA BROWN

JIMMY
MATHEW COOPER

RUBY
BERTHALIA SELINA REUBEN

SANDY
KERRI SIMPSON

FROM THE DIRECTORATE

Paula Abood, Wayne Harrison AM,
S. Shakthidharan, Annette Shun



A new theatre is cause for celebration. A new national theatre is an opportunity to capture the creative diversity of the nation. *Stolen* encapsulates the diverse experiences of the First Peoples of this land, telling the stories of the Stolen Generations. It puts a magnifying glass on a shameful practice in our history that began in Parramatta, compelling us as a society to find a better way to move forward together.

Stolen is a classic and important work that is brought to life in a bold, inspired and contemporary fashion in this season of National Theatre of Parramatta. As a directorate, we aspire to present works that resonate with audiences in Western Sydney and beyond. Our vision is to “*put the nation on stage*” in ways that are performatively compelling, insightful and vital. It promises to be an adventure, and we hope you’ll come along for the ride.

A NOTE FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

What can I tell you about Stolen, the first play I ever wrote? Firstly, that I was honoured to be given the opportunity to write this play by Ilbjerri Theatre Company. It was an honour, and a deep responsibility, to be tasked with creating a story that, in its simple way, tries to encapsulate the experiences of the Stolen Generations.

I can tell you that it took six years to write and workshop and finally get to the stage. And that it has taken on a life of its own since, touring many parts of the world along with cities and regional towns across Australia and that even in a place as culturally different as Japan it still resonated.

I can tell you that half the Aboriginal actors I know, it seems, have performed in it at one time or another in the 18 years since it premiered! And that everyone who performs in it or directs it brings their own poignant stories and experiences to the story, enriching it with their commitment and talent.

For audiences, I hope it brings understanding that we are all part of this story, it is part of our history and our present. For the Aboriginal community members in the audience, it is my profound hope that we do your stories justice.

Jane Harrison

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Stolen - At its core is a provocation to the importance of acting with humanity. Stolen follows the lives of five characters who have been affected by careless governance, from

its leaders down to the smallest common denominator, the individuals who enforced this predicament upon them.

Why is Stolen relevant? It serves as a reminder how not to act and as a reminder that young lives are the adults of our future. When children are nurtured and loved they have accumulated a set of tools to contribute to a better future community, hence when they are denied nurturing guidance from the people who act as primary role models, their parents and their communities, it is almost inevitable that they will in turn perform the instability they have been subjected to.

If the audience leave with their curiosities piqued I will consider this to be a success of sorts. I mean it’s kind of weird to talk in terms of success isn’t it? Considering the topic. When we think of world atrocities we automatically think of the holocaust of Nazi Germany, of Apartheid in South Africa, of the current unrest in Syria. Our history in Australia is equally insidious with hundreds, maybe thousands, of Stolen and Forgotten children, brought up to work as (for want of a better word) slaves.

I am always surprised by the power and presence of humour, especially when times appear at their bleakest and this play readily

utilises humour to this effect. This play is ultimately not about lives in the home care system, but of the resilience to overcome an appalling start in life. This work operates as a sort of modern day urban song cycle, the storytelling occurs in a kind of dreaming time, where chronology and geography is fluid and secondary to the essence of who these characters are.

I am always seeking to embed my own works with the knowledge I have and am continuing to accumulating as a long time alumni of NAISDA. At NAISDA we learned dances, were told stories, lore and law, we made our own props from simple materials, often including, developing and substituting the traditional artefacts with urban equivalents at hand.

I have enhanced the idea of Stolen occurring as a song cycle, sung or conceived by the character Ruby. Because she is deemed disturbed, I see her character as accessing the Dreaming more readily. This is a subtle device, which imbues the work with a more ambiguous or surrealist quality or logic. The set also reflects this as I have done away with the original confines of the home; with its rows of beds and replaced it with a beautiful yarn bombed tree, which dominates the stage, designed by Imogen Ross, to reflect a culture surviving and thriving in urban modernity. The rest of the set is continuously constructed and deconstructed with pieces of cardboard used like we would dancing feathers which when finished with are tucked back into the folds of our skirts, to be replaced by leaves or small branches acting as spears or the beaks of cranes, perhaps the motion of the west wind or of the fog rolling off the mountains. Each scene retold in a separate short songlike manner with its own rhythm mimicking the landmarks of this dreaming cycle.

Vicki Van Hout

BIOGRAPHIES



**JANE
HARRISON**
Playwright

Jane Harrison is a descendant of the Muruwari people of NSW. She is a researcher, writer and playwright. She believes strongly in the power of cultural connection, and the value of stories in strengthening that connection. Her first play *Stolen* has been performed around Australia, United Kingdom, Hong Kong and Japan and was the co-winner of the Kate Challis RAKA Award 2002.

Jane's play *Rainbow's End* which was a Riverside production toured Australia (with a second production in Japan), winning the 2012 Drover Award and is currently on the NSW English syllabus. It played to sold out audiences at Riverside Theatres in 2011. Her most recent play *The Visitors* was part of the Melbourne Theatre Company 2014 Cybec Electric series. Jane's novel *Becoming Kirrali Lewis* won the Black and Write! Award and was published in 2015. She was the Festival Director for Blak & Bright, the inaugural Victorian Indigenous Literary Festival in 2016.



**VICKI
VAN HOUT**
Director and Designer

Vicki is an Indigenous independent artist with over 20 years' experience. A graduate of NAISDA Dance College and the Martha Graham School of Contemporary Dance (New York), she went on to perform with both major indigenous dance companies, Bangarra Dance Theatre and the Aboriginal Islander Dance Theatre before joining forces with Marilyn Miller as founding member of Fresh Dancers.

With Marilyn, Vicki performed *Dear Carrie* for Oneextra Dance and *Quinkin* for the Adelaide Fringe Festival. She enjoyed a residency in Austria as a part of a greater contemporary indigenous contingent and was also awarded a World Dance Alliance choreographic residency in Singapore in 2007.

Vicki is predominately inspired by indigenous social custom. From this initial premise Vicki seeks to find contemporary meaning through relevant mainstream social practices.

More recently Vicki has been interested in the integration of new media technologies. This has resulted in one Critical Path residency and a performative residency at Performance Space (Carriageworks), with funding from the Australia Council inter-arts board to test the application of 'traditional' painting techniques in a project with the ongoing working title of *Briwyant*.



**IMOGEN
ROSS**
Designer

Imogen has worked professionally as a performance and event designer for the last 23 years in Sydney, Melbourne, London and Perth.

She trained as a production designer at Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts after majoring in Theatre Studies and Psychology at University of New England before launching ONE SMART CookIE DESIGNS. She has designed and/or coordinated over 50 plays, operas, musicals, dance pieces, corporate events, short films and commercial television pieces for a variety of projects and clients.

Imogen designed five national touring productions for Monkey Baa, three of which were nominated for Green Room and Glug Awards. Recently she has designed both set and costumes for Merrigong Theatre Company, and is currently working on development with Monkey Baa.



TOBY K
Lighting and
Video Designer

Toby is an award-winning light, interaction and video artist. Toby is a regular artist for Sydney Opera House's Creative Play program and in January 2016 developed *The Unbroken Line* - a 7.5m wide 'bodyscreen' which reacts to hands, arms and whole bodies without touch. He also developed *Echo Tables* which allows participants to collaboratively draw with their shadows.

Independently he has created *Beatdice*, a tactile artwork allowing people to create a unique collaborative music and light sculpture, featured at Vivid Light 2015. He recently designed video and lighting for *I Might Blow Up Someday* by queer performance trio Hissy Fit.

Toby won Best Independent Lighting Design at the 2014 Sydney Theatre Awards for the Sport for Jove production of *All's Well That Ends Well*.





**PHIL
DOWNING**
Composer and
Sound Designer

Phil has been performing and recording music for over 20 years. With extensive experience in the live music environment in Australia, Phil was first engaged to produce soundtracks for theatre due to his experimentation with original musical inventions.

From composition using various computer based music creation tools, to creating sounds from found objects or manipulation of surroundings and the natural environment, Phil has consistently forged a unique path in musical expression.

Highlights include: *Feast* (Milk Crate Theatre), *Prehistoric Aquarium*, *The Dream of the Thylacine*, *Murder* (Erth), *Posts in the Paddock*, *The Piper* (My Darling Patricia), *This Fella My Memory* (Moogahlin Performing Arts), *Artwork* (Branch Nebula), *Long Grass* (Vicki Van Hout/ Performing Space), *Falling* (Alice Osbourne/ Performance Space), *The Fox and the Freedom Fighters* (Performance Space).



**BIANCA 'BEE'
CRUSE**
Assistant to
the Director

Bee is a proud Cabrogal woman of the Darug Nation. A born storyteller she has a strong background in Australian Film and Television, assisting on productions such as *Redfern Now*, *Clever Man* and *Servant or Slave*. She is now writing her first documentary *Black Nan* with CuriousWorks.

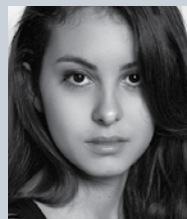
Bee Cruse is the second participant of the Creative Futures Program, National Theatre of Parramatta's mentorship scheme.



**HENRIETTA
BAIRD**
Shirley

Henrietta is from the Kukuyalanji people in Far North Queensland, and now resides in Sydney. She is a Diploma graduate of NAISDA Dance College graduating in 2005. She has performed in many notable productions in Sydney including *My Right Foot Your Right Foot*, for Vicki Van Hout. Researching native bush plants from her country, Henrietta explores movement based on the methods of collecting, preparing and applying techniques, whilst telling stories through dance. Recently she performed *Through the Windows* at Village Bizarre Festival, The Rocks.

Henrietta is part of Koori Kinnections, which caters to school vacation care groups and holiday programs, teaching children about Aboriginal culture. She also conducts learning based tours at the Royal Botanic Garden. Henrietta has worked with The Song Room since 2015, as part of the Western Sydney Deadly Arts programs.



**MATILDA
BROWN**
Ann

Matilda is a 2015 graduate of Queensland University of Technology where she performed in *Survival*, played the role of Varya in *The Cherry Orchard*, Lady Montague in *Romeo and Juliet* and Mrs

Stanley in *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, directed by Jennifer Flowers. She played the role of Natalie Beyer in *The Coast of Utopia: Voyage*, which was directed by David Bell, and the role of Mrs Oxenham in *The Hot I Baltimore* directed by Robert Benedetti.

Matilda will make her professional debut in Riverside Theatres production of *Stolen*, performing the role of Ann.



**MATHEW
COOPER**
Jimmy

Mathew is a Wongatha man from the Goldfields of Western Australia. He graduated from Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts in 2012 with both an Advanced Diploma in Performing Arts for Acting and a Certificate IV in Aboriginal Theatre. Mathew has been working with school-aged children to devise and develop performance. Recent stage performances include *Lucky* for Melbourne Theatre Company/ Neon and the Belvoir/ Ilbjerri Theatre Company co-production *Coranderrk*.

At the end of last year Mathew finished shooting his first feature, *The Marshes*, directed by Roger Scott and scheduled for release in 2016. He has also appeared in three short films for WA Screen Academy and in the critically-acclaimed television series *Redfern Now*.

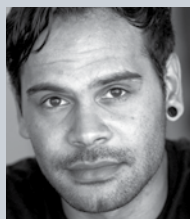


**BERTHALIA
SELINA
REUBEN**
Ruby

Berthalia Selina Reuben is a proud Torres Strait Island woman from the Peidu and Samsep tribes of Erub, Darnley Island. Growing up in a family with a strong Torres Strait Island cultural heritage, Berthalia has practiced her cultural dances from a young age which today shows through her passion for cultural dance and knowledge.

Berthalia began her technical dance training at NAISDA Dance College where she successfully completed her Diploma in Professional Dance Performance and her AusDance Victoria Safe Dance Practice Certificate.

Whilst being a developing artist at NAISDA she worked with many artists and choreographers. Through dance and cultural knowledge, Berthalia plans to work with indigenous youth across Australia inspiring confidence and pride in their respective cultural heritage.



**KERRI
SIMPSON**
Sandy

Kerri graduated from the Aboriginal Centre for the Performing Arts in 2012 with an Advanced Diploma in Performing Arts. The following year Kerri made his television debut as Ned in the Canadian drama series *Hard Rock Medical* that screened on TVOntario. Kerri recently appeared in series two of *Black Comedy*, ABC TV's irreverent sketch comedy series.

This is Kerri's second appearance in a production of *Stolen*, having previously appeared in a Queensland Performing Arts Centre production directed by Leah Purcell in 2011. Kerri is excited to be part of National Theatre of Parramatta's inaugural season.



NATIONAL THEATRE OF PARRAMATTA

National Theatre of Parramatta is Australia's newest theatre company based in Sydney's geographical heart. Launched in November 2015, National Theatre of Parramatta reflects the diversity of Australia today through contemporary and bold performance, education programs and its audiences.

As the resident theatre company at Riverside Theatres, National Theatre of Parramatta is raising the profile of performance and engaging the imagination and creative ideas of Western Sydney and beyond, across the nation and ultimately internationally.

As a principal arts organisation we aim to contribute to Western Sydney's vibrant artistic community by fostering the creation of new works, building capacity in the arts, facilitating education and development through performance, and engaging audiences, as we join in the vital task of enriching the cultural life of Australia's fastest growing region.



OUR PROGRAMS

Integral to our company is the development of Western Sydney's professional and emerging artists. We are committed to capacity building in the cultural sector and aim to nurture and support generations of exciting theatre-makers producing work of the highest quality, for a diverse range of audiences.

Alongside this our education program opens up possibilities for audiences to engage with the theatre.

EDUCATION PROGRAM

We are committed to presenting at least one work each year that is specifically designed for school audiences.

TELL IT

Our storytelling competition for students from Years 5 to 12. Learn more about the craft of storytelling, with an opportunity to tell your tale to an audience.

CREATIVE FUTURES PROGRAM

National Theatre of Parramatta is committed to capacity building in Western Sydney and has launched a Creative Futures Program for artistic, production and back stage opportunities. The scheme provides on the job learning and networking possibilities, enabling each participant to advance their careers within their nominated field.

As Assistant to the Director for *Stolen*, Bianca 'Bee' Cruse is the second participant of this program.

OPEN DAYS

Our Open Auditions, Open Portfolio for Creatives and ParraPitch Days are an opportunity for National Theatre of Parramatta to meet and learn more about the pool of talent that is in Western Sydney, with a view to consideration for future productions.

These days are held annually.

FROM PAGE TO STAGE

National Theatre of Parramatta's advanced playwriting salon for emerging playwrights to take the next step with a chance to develop their craft. The program features an opportunity for writers to take their work from page to stage.

The program is run with Playwriting Australia. Expressions of interest open soon.

BACKSTAGE PASS

An opportunity for students to engage with theatre-making at National Theatre of Parramatta.

As a package of activities, Backstage Pass enables students to gain a deeper understanding of the theatre-making process from rehearsal through to post-production.

A partnership with University of Technology Sydney.

National Theatre of Parramatta aims to present our work to a wider audience. National Theatre of Parramatta aims to tour *Stolen* in future years.

For more information on National Theatre of Parramatta visit nationaltheatreofparramatta.com.au



SUPPORT US

"Theatre is about creating magical spaces...Storytelling, stirring the imagination and at times making the impossible possible...the way we truly communicate with each other is through art...Stimulates people beyond the opportunities that exist and allows people to think beyond."

Commander Chris Hadfield, Astronaut

Help us create exciting new productions. More importantly, help us invest in the future where we can create new opportunities for Western Sydney artists and audiences.

DONATIONS

Every donation is valuable. Donations are made to National Theatre of Parramatta through the Parramatta Cultural Trust, which is a not for profit arts organisation. We are raising funds for our future programs and to build our capacity building programs for the performing arts in Western Sydney.

All donations of \$2.00 or more are tax-deductible.

If you would like more information on any of our programs please contact Joanne on 8839 3395 or jkee@nationaltheatreofparramatta.com.au to discuss further.

CONTACT US

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TELLING TALES

A celebration of storytelling, with new works premiering in October 2016.

Telling Tales embraces the glorious complexity and diversity of Western Sydney, sharing the stories of its people; the yarns, anecdotes, personal memoirs and imaginary tales set in a performance context

Be immersed in epic multi-generational storytelling work; from the nuances of language and power in *Who Speaks for Me*, to stories about maps and borders, tales that have languished in the shadows now bursting to be told in the *Cartographer's Curse*.



THANK YOU

AMANDA JAMES

CHARLOTTE GALLEGUILLOS,
CARRIAGEWORKS

EL PHOENICIAN

PASCALE BERRY,
BLACKTOWN ARTS CENTRE

LILLIANE MOFFAT

This production has been licensed
through the Australian Script Centre.

RIVERSIDE THEATRES

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