



INSIDE WAAPA

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COHEN WINS FREEDMAN

PIANIST TAL COHEN HAS TAKEN OUT ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S TOP JAZZ COMPETITIONS

At the Sydney Opera House in July, jazz pianist Tal Cohen was named the winner of the 2015 Freedman Jazz Fellowship.

Now in its 13th year, the Freedman Jazz Fellowship aims to support the career development of young Australian jazz musicians. It is open to musicians who are under 35 years old on an invitation-only basis.

Cohen topped a four-strong field of finalists comprised of saxophonist Peter Farrar from Sydney, vocalist Gian Slater from Melbourne and saxophonist Mike Rivett from Cairns/Lismore.

In their summing up, the judges – bassist Zoe Hauptmann, saxophonist David Theak and pianist Chris Cody – commented that: “Tal showed a maturity beyond his years, a virtuosity that he does not flaunt, but places at the service of the music. He demonstrated an ability to integrate various influences to produce a well-structured set that maintained audience interest.”

In his award-winning performance Cohen played with his former WAAPA teacher, saxophonist Jamie Oehlers (Senior Lecturer in Jazz at WAAPA), bassist Cameron Undy and drummer Tim Firth.

John Shand in the *Sydney Morning Herald's* review of the Fellowship finals wrote that Cohen “injected a gripping piano solo into a somewhat deconstructed version of Miles Davis’ *Nardis*, shaped a stretch of solo piano out of gorgeous, pearl-like notes in his first original composition, and unleashed a penchant for drama and climax in the second.”

Cohen’s unique piano style and compositional ideas are heavily influenced by the traditional Jewish music he played as a child growing up in Israel.

After moving to Perth at the age of 16, Cohen went on to complete a Masters in Jazz Performance at WAAPA. Since then, he has performed with many outstanding jazz musicians and groups, including the Jamie Oehlers Quartet, saxophonist George Garzone, drummer Ari Hoenig, bassist Bob Hurst and saxophonist Joe Lovano. He released his first album as a leader, *Yellow Sticker*, in 2011. Last year he won the Detroit Jazz Festival Barry Harris National Jazz Piano Competition.

Cohen has just completed a two-year Masters degree at the University of Miami’s Frost School of Music, under the mentorship of Martin Bejerano.

Cohen, who is planning to move to NYC soon will use the \$15,000 Freedman prize money to record an album in New York. “It will be a fantastic collaboration between American and Australian musicians. I’m utilising my contacts in the States and Jamie [Oehlers] is going to be in on it,” the jazz musician says.

When asked to describe the influence his former teacher and now fellow musician Jamie Oehlers has had on his career, Cohen says it is impossible because it is so vast.

“I really don’t think I would be where I am without him, and I don’t mean that in the general clichéd way, I honestly believe that. Besides being an incredible musician, Jamie is a great teacher and a very giving person.”

“I still remember Jamie’s improvisation classes as one of the most demanding classes I’ve ever had – the amazing thing is that he could always demonstrate everything perfectly. We spent many hours practising, playing and listening to music. He is an amazing artist and always stays true to the music.”

“I feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with him all these years and I can’t wait for the new project to work with him again.”



MISS TRUNCHBULL STEALS SHOW

JAMES MILLAR PRODUCES A KNOCK-OUT PERFORMANCE IN MATILDA THE MUSICAL

Matilda The Musical, the Royal Shakespeare Company's multi-award-winning musical adaptation of Roald Dahl's beloved children's book, opened at Sydney's Lyric Theatre to rave reviews in August.

The Australian wrote that the show "makes you want to punch the air with delight", the *Sydney Morning Herald* described it as "astoundingly good" and the *Sunday Telegraph* called it "pure magic".

Matilda the Musical has proven to be an unstoppable critical and box office smash-hit since it premiered in Stratford-upon-Avon in 2010 before its wildly successful transfers to London's West End and New York's Broadway. It has also earned more awards than virtually any other production in living memory, including a record breaking seven Olivier Awards and five Tonys.

While WAAPA graduate Tim Minchin, who wrote the music and lyrics, has been enjoying the soaring success of *Matilda* since it first hit the stage in England, another WAAPA graduate is now making his mark in the show.

James Millar plays the role of Miss Trunchbull in the Australian production and, according to the reviews, he's doing a cracker job of it.

"James Millar deserves all plaudits possible for his show-stopping performance," raved *Time Out Sydney*. Jo Litson in *The Sunday Telegraph* described Millar as "sensational as the dreaded Miss Trunchbull, deploying an alarming bosom and killer comic timing to perfection. He marries an almost psychopathic stillness with sudden, throwaway jauntiness in a way that is both hilarious and frightening."

Maxim Boon in *Limelight* wrote: "James Millar delivers a wicked mix of psychotic barbarity, icy cruelty and deliberately dodgy drag that riles and delights in equal measure."

Millar believes the key to playing Miss Trunchbull is in embracing her world of high drama.

"The more seriously Miss Trunchbull takes her jealousy of children, the theft of a piece of chocolate cake, the loathing of pigtailed and her psychologically unrelenting lust for discipline, the more enjoyable the experience for myself and the audience," he says. "I see her as Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*...furiously determined to not have her rules or contracts or laws broken."

In addition to his acting skills, playing Miss Trunchbull has required Millar to draw on other,

less obvious, strengths. The character's hefty costume is made up of an ice vest, a heavily padded body suit, a particularly heavy coat, hand-knitted woollen socks and a big pair of shorts.

Millar explains how he learnt to cope with his character's weighty wardrobe: "Because the actor inside this mountain of a costume has to do acrobatic tricks and sing and dance on a raked stage, the level of sweat and aerobic energy required to maintain Miss Trunchbull's agility is quite extreme. So I was padded up during rehearsals to get my stamina up to deal with the heat, heaviness and sweat. Now it's a second skin."

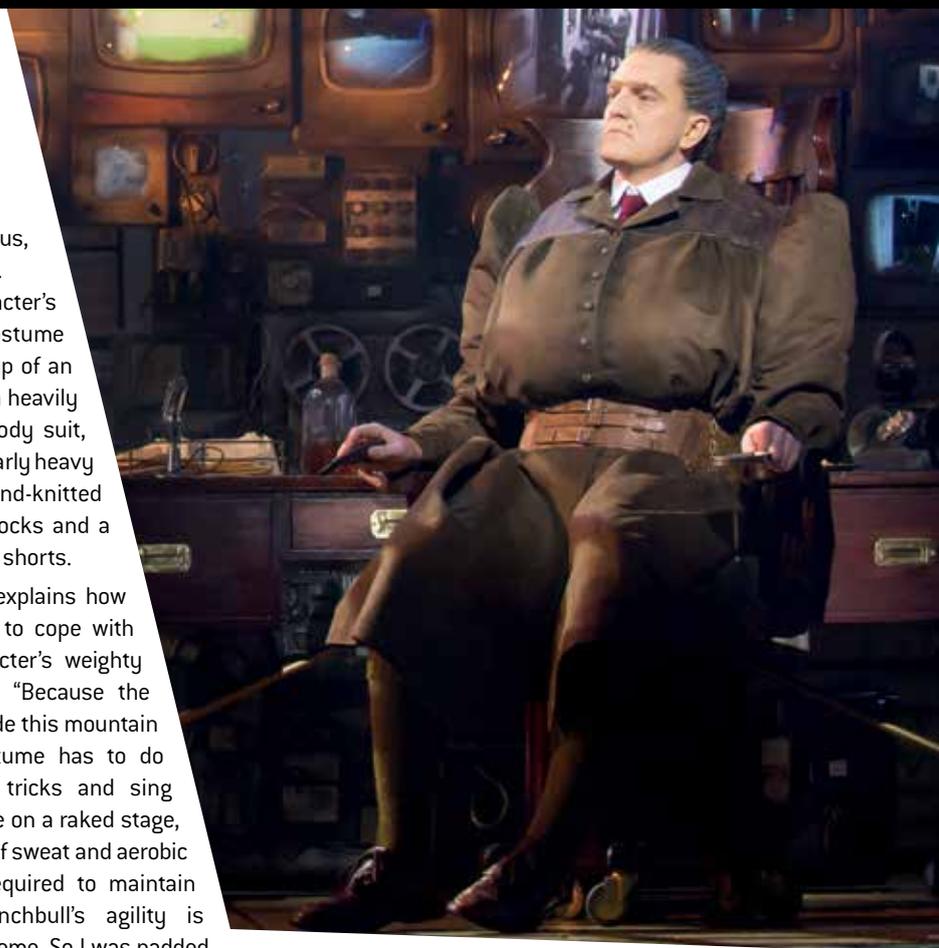
Millar saw *Matilda* three times when he was living in London a few years ago. He believes its success lies in the fact that although it's a show about children, it never patronises or simplifies its dark ideas.

"It's joyful without being twee," he explains. "Its lead character is a headstrong, intelligent female who uses compassion and intellect to overthrow an unjust regime. And all the while it commands a smile on your face and visually and musically takes you somewhere that is reminiscent of your own childhood and reminds you that you're still that kid inside."

"Plus the music is fantastic, the script is sharp as a tack and the joy of seeing something executed with such painstaking care for the collective delight of an audience is awe-inspiring."

Like Tim Minchin, Millar is a man of many talents. In addition to his acting and singing skills, the 2003 Music Theatre graduate is an accomplished writer, dramaturg and director.

Millar wrote the book and lyrics for *The Hatpin*, which premiered at the Seymour Centre, starring Caroline O'Connor, Peter Cousens, Melle Stewart and Barry Crocker, before it was picked up for a season in New York. *The Hatpin* was nominated for a Sydney Theatre Award in 2009 and received a workshop in London in 2012.



James Millar as Miss Trunchbull in *Matilda*
Photo by James Morgan

Millar also wrote the lyrics for and performed in *LoveBites* in its premiere season at the Seymour Centre. *LoveBites* was nominated for a Sydney Theatre Award in 2009 and enjoyed a return season at the Seymour Centre, again receiving rave reviews, before touring to Perth in 2010.

He has worked as a dramaturg on the Nick Enright musical, *The Good Fight* for New Musicals Australia, and the touring musical, *Breast Wishes*. Earlier this year he directed the musical *Urinetown* at WAAPA with the 3rd Year Music Theatre students.

Millar, who has degrees in both writing and performance, sees himself primarily as a storyteller.

"I've always loved the crossover of both [writing and performance] because they are both just ways of telling stories, which is what I think I love to do. So whether that be telling my own stories or performing someone else's or directing a group of storytellers to tell mine or someone else's...I think that's my actual job."

For the moment, Millar is working his magic on stage as an actor, telling the story of *Matilda*.

HELPMANN HAUL

THREE WAAPA GRADUATES WIN AUSTRALIA'S TOP LIVE ENTERTAINMENT AWARDS

The talents of graduates Simon Gleeson, Kerri Anne Greenland and Alex Rathgeber were recognised at the prestigious 2015 Helpmann Awards, held on July 27 at the Capitol Theatre in Sydney.

The annual awards acknowledge distinguished artistic achievement and excellence in the many disciplines of Australia's vibrant live performance sectors.

Simon Gleeson won Best Male Actor in a Musical for his starring role as Jean Valjean in Cameron Mackintosh's production of *Les Misérables*. For the same production, Kerri Anne Greenland picked up the award for Best Female Actor in a Supporting Role in a Musical for her portrayal of Éponine Thénardier.

Les Misérables received the most nominations in the 2015 Helpmann Awards

and took home an impressive five Helpmann Awards, including the hotly contested award for Best Musical.

In his review, Giles Hardy drew attention to the number of WAAPA graduates in the show: "the singing across the board is top notch, a fine tribute to WAAPA who seem to have trained almost the entire cast."

Another WAAPA graduate, Alex Rathgeber took out Best Male Actor in a Supporting Role in a Musical for his portrayal of Billy Crocker in the Opera Australia/John Frost production of *Anything Goes*.

"Alex Rathgeber is the kind of leading man they don't mint anymore..." wrote *The Age*. "Handsome and fleet-footed, easily the most impressive vocalist, with a strong upper register that vaults towards high notes."



Photos from top: Simon Gleeson, Kerri Anne Greenland and Alex Rathgeber with their Helpmann Awards
Photo by Jim Lee courtesy of the Helpmann Awards

BACKSTAGE TAKES CENTRE STAGE

In June, 18 WAAPA 3rd Year design and costume students travelled to the Czech Republic with two WAAPA staff to participate in the 2015 Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space (PQ15).

The Prague Quadrennial, which this year ran from June 18-28, is the world's largest international festival of theatre and performance design. It presents contemporary work in a variety of performance design disciplines and genres including costume, stage, lighting, sound design and theatre architecture for dance, opera, drama, site-specific, multi-media performances and performance art.

The exhibition draws thousands of performance and theatre professionals, students, and spectators from all over the world. This year's 11 day festival saw a total attendance of 180,000 visitors enjoy installations, photos, videos and more than 600 live performances, as well as events, workshops, performances, presentations, lectures and discussions.

The WAAPA contingent was at the Festival to participate in the 'Tribes Program'. From 10am to 7pm every day during the Festival, dozens of masked 'Tribes' from around the world walked through the centre of Prague as part of huge, live design installation.

The WAAPA students began working on their Tribe designs last year, with four designs

eventually being accepted and exhibited in Prague this year: *Australian Hybrids* designed by Molly Werner, Holly Albracht and Jessica Hodgkinson; *Incandescent Flight* designed by Giorgia Santacaterina, Bryanna Price and Helen Wojtas; *Anhydrous* designed by Isabel O'Neill, Madeleine Watt and Charlotte Gee; and *Efflorescence* designed by Amy Francis Rae-Bennett, Robyn Constable and Kat Mackay.

In addition, Design students Frances Danckert, Sarah Jenkins, Ashleigh Hodges, Robyn Buss, Rhiannon Irving, Nora Stelter and Dolly-Mere Nettleton also travelled to Prague, helping to perform the WAAPA pieces.

"Designing for an international stage has been a truly incredible opportunity for all us WAAPA students involved," says 3rd Year Design student, Charlotte Gee.

"We are all very thankful for the kindness and support of the WAAPA staff that encouraged our creativity and provided guidance. I would like to thank Edith Cowan University, WAAPA, Friends of the Academy, the Jackman Furness Foundation for the Performing Arts and Minderoo Foundation for the generous contributions that made this journey possible. To be involved in PQ 2015 was such an invigorating and inspiring experience, I am very excited about my future in design."

Photos at left: WAAPA student costumes on parade in Prague



SUPPORTING EXCELLENCE

TOP ARTS PRACTITIONERS VISIT WAAPA TO SHARE THEIR EXPERTISE

Thanks to support from the Jackman Furness Foundation for the Performing Arts (JFFPA) and the Minderoo Foundation, a number of international and national guest artists have recently visited WAAPA to teach, mentor and inspire the students.

In August, WAAPA was honoured to host three outstanding arts practitioners: saxophonist Rob Buckland, acting teacher Lorna Marshall and lighting designer Mark Howett.

Internationally renowned saxophonist Rob Buckland spent two weeks at WAAPA, with 40 music students receiving intensive tuition and a further 60 participating in his workshops.

Described as one of the most distinctive and versatile saxophonists of his generation, Buckland is Deputy Head of Wind, Brass and Percussion and Director of Saxophone Studies at the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM), in Manchester. He is also the number one choice for most of the orchestras in the UK and has garnered a multitude of prizes and accolades.

WAAPA Lecturer Dr Matt Styles describes Buckland as, "a musician whose artistry is so great that his instrument appears to be part of him, rather than a separate entity. He's a richly dramatic and brilliant performer."

The highlight of Buckland's visit was a performance on September 7 in WAAPA's Music Auditorium which featured over 80 saxophonists.

Buckland was impressed with the learning environment at WAAPA.

"WAAPA has an incredible vibe, a real sense that this is somewhere where things happen, and happen all the time," Buckland says. "The open-minded and fresh thinking attitude of the staff and students is so refreshing, and I think the general creative environment makes for a highly energised and exciting feel to everything that happens here."

"With leaders like Dr. Matt Styles driving highly artistic, inventive and forward looking projects such as the one I have been privileged to be part of these last two weeks, the students are in such dynamic and supportive environment, and the skills and life lessons that they'll learn here will clearly help them all realise their goals and ambitions in their careers after WAAPA."

"I sincerely hope that WAAPA can continue to have the bravery and self-belief to develop these highly creative initiatives even further in the future, and if I can help

by being part of this, I'd be absolutely honoured and delighted."

Students in WAAPA's Bachelor of Performing Arts (BPA) degree course, along with a cohort of Classical Voice students, have benefitted from a two-month visit from acclaimed acting teacher, Lorna Marshall.

Marshall runs workshops in creative process across the globe for performers, singers, directors, opera singers and teachers. She has also been published in the area of neuroscience for performer training. Her unique teaching style sees her work at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London, along with having significant relationships with the Royal Shakespeare Company, Shared Experience and the Royal National Theatre.

Marshall's classes focus on connecting voice and text to the body and movement, giving the young performers access to and ownership of their own creativity. The highlight of Marshall's visit is a series of promenade-style performances, devised by the BPA students under Marshall's direction, which is being performed at the WA Museum in October.

Thanks also to the generosity of JFFPA and the Minderoo Foundation, award-winning Australian lighting designer Mark Howett is currently at WAAPA from August through November.

WA-born Howett has forged an international reputation for his lighting design. On the national stage, his ongoing collaborations with director Neil Armfield have produced such acclaimed productions as the recent theatrical version of *The Secret River*.

Howett has been engaged to design the lighting for two WAAPA shows: the Classical Voice production of Benjamin Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, with Richard Gill as Music Director, which opened in October; and the Dance Department's production, *Flourish*, due to open in November.

Howett is mentoring the 3rd Year Lighting Design students, allowing them to take on the role of Associate Lighting Designer, with responsibility for the management of the technical production of the lighting design. Through this process, the students develop a deep appreciation of lighting design theory and are able to see first-hand an internationally-renowned lighting designer at work.



Rob Buckland. Photo by Stephen Heath Photography



Lorna Marshall. Photo by Kathy Wheatley



Mark Howett. Photo by Jan Green



CONDUCTING KUDOS

JESSICA GETHIN'S CONDUCTING CAREER IS ON SONG

West Australian conductor Jessica Gethin has been named the recipient of the Brian Stacey Emerging Conductor Award for 2015.

The annual award, which is affiliated with the Helpmann Awards and carries a \$10,000 cash prize, recognises an Australian conductor who shows significant promise and skill early in their professional career. Gethin, as this year's winner, was invited to appear as a presenter at the 2015 Helpmann Awards ceremony in July.

A graduate of WAAPA and the Symphony Australia Conductor Development Program, Gethin is currently the Chief Conductor of the Perth Symphony Orchestra and Co-Artistic Director of the Perth Chamber Orchestra. She has an extremely diverse background having worked in genres ranging from Baroque and period performance, classical, jazz, opera, ballet, musical theatre, and commercial projects including film scores and pop recordings.

Gethin has performed on stages throughout Europe, USA, UK, Canada, Asia and Australia as conductor, concert presenter, program writer, orchestrator, guest lecturer, music educator and adjudicator.

This latest accolade follows hot on the heels of Gethin's successful selection for the inaugural residency of the Institute for Women Conductors (IWC) at the

Dallas Opera in Texas. She is one of only two Australians selected from 103 applicants worldwide for just six places.

The week-long residential program, starting on November 28, will include mentoring by Dallas Opera's Music Director Emmanuel Villaume and Principal Guest Conductor Nicole Paiement, master classes, seminars, discussions and networking opportunities. All six participants of the program will conduct the Dallas Opera Orchestra in a public concert at the conclusion of the residency.

"I was so thrilled to see The Dallas Opera offer such an innovative initiative for female conductors to further develop their opera skills on the podium," Gethin said in a recent interview. "This is the first time this has been done anywhere – trying to support women conductors in getting right up there."

"Perth is one of the most isolated cities in the world, and while that's no reflection of its cultural landscape, opportunities to further your career are limited. So I really need to go away to broaden my studies, and this is a perfect opportunity."

Gethin recently secured her first international representation with leading agent Mindy Coppin and was listed by the *Australian Financial Review* in the top 100 Women of Influence in Australia for 2015.

ENERGISING THE ALPHABET

A new partnership between WAAPA and Alphabeticus is providing opportunities for WAAPA students to be part of an exciting and innovative children's literacy initiative, *The Alphabeticus Project*.

The aim of the partnership is to ignite and implement Alphabeticus and WAAPA joint projects that will assist in improving children's literacy outcomes through educational material, music, puppetry, drama and film.

While staff in ECU's School of Education are involved from an educational research perspective, the collaboration with WAAPA has already resulted in the recording of an original alphabet song performed by WAAPA students and alumni.

Fellow students from the School of Communication and Arts assisted in making a documentary of the recording session at Crank Recording Studio.

Martin Meader, a Ph.D candidate at ECU, says it was fantastic for Alphabeticus to work with WAAPA talent. "The students and graduates brought enthusiasm and terrific energy to the recording session. We were

blown away when our song came alive," says Meader.

A video of the song features Sir Ruffy de Hound, Princess Polly and the rest of the Alphabeticus puppet cast.

Students in WAAPA's newly formed Puppetry Unit, coordinated by Dr Frances Barbe, operated the puppets. Mick Higham from Alphabeticus commended the students on how well they took direction, made suggestions and for their "creativity and stamina in getting through a long day of filming. We worked with a great bunch of students and in return, they had some industry experience so it was definitely a win-win situation".

A major aim of Alphabeticus is to produce a feature film in collaboration with ECU and WAAPA, enabling students to work with industry professionals such as director Kevin Clash (puppeteer of Elmo from *Sesame Street*) and composer Mario Grigorov (composer of Academy Award-winning movie, *Precious* and the Academy Award-winning documentary, *Taxi to the Darkside*).

Photos: Music student Priscilla Gardner at Crank Studio Alphabeticus





MAKING OVERTURES

WAAPA HOSTS THE FIRST MUSIC THEATRE EDUCATORS' CONFERENCE 'DOWN UNDER'

In June WAAPA hosted the Musical Theatre Educators' Alliance (MTEA) Conference, the first to be held in the southern hemisphere.

Australasian Overtures brought over 175 delegates from ten countries to WAAPA for a four-day program of masterclasses, workshops, panel discussions and entertainment.

The conference was a fitting highlight in a year-long celebration of the 30th anniversary of WAAPA's renowned Music Theatre course.

The MTEA is an international organisation of teachers who train pre-professional students of Music Theatre in either degree or certificate programs. Now over 15 years old, the Alliance was formed to allow the opportunity for discourse on all aspects of Music Theatre training, including curriculum, recruitment, production, and professional placement.

Originating in the U.S., over time the group has broadened to include members from the U.K. and Europe, and more recently Asia and Australia.

"*Australasian Overtures* was about synergies: between disciplines, between cultures, between professionals, teachers and students," says Crispin Taylor, WAAPA Lecturer and *Australasian Overtures* Artistic Director. "The conference focused on building bridges and broadening horizons for musical theatre across all languages and cultures, with a special focus on Asia."

Keynote speaker was the conference's Patron, comedian, playwright, librettist and novelist, Ben Elton. Other guest presenters included Lisa O'Dea (Dance), Matt Lee (Dance), Charles Gilbert (Performance), Mary King (Singing), and Tony Knight (Acting).

A gala concert, held on June 22 as a finale for the conference, showcased the talents of a number of WAAPA's outstanding graduates and current students who performed a range of showtunes from famous musicals. Hosts for the evening were graduates Lisa McCune and John O'Hara, who were joined by fellow alumni Lisa Adam, Edward Grey, Tom Handley, Brendan Hanson, Glen Hogstrom, Alexander Lewis, Suzie Mathers, Katie McKee, Jennifer Peers, Matthew Lee Robinson and Sophie Wright.

The concert was directed by Edward Grey, with music direction by Kohan van Sambeeck, lighting design by Benjamin Fry and sound design by Alex Toland.

Feedback from the conference has been glowing in its praise. "I just wanted to take a moment to congratulate you on the conference in Perth," wrote David Grapes, Professor and Director of the School of Theatre Arts and Dance at the University of Northern Colorado. "It was an exhilarating five days...kudos to you and your amazing team!"

Dr Irene Bartlett, Head of Jazz Vocal Studies at the Queensland Conservatorium at Griffith University, commented that "Ben Elton's keynote was a real kick start to the conference, the plenary sessions were inspiring and the breakout papers were diverse and interesting. A big thank you to the WAAPA administrative staff and students who made the whole experience warm and welcoming."

Charles Gilbert, Professor of Theatre Arts at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia was equally enthusiastic: "After a splendid week in Perth and WA, I've made it safely home to Philadelphia. Thanks again for your tireless efforts to make this week such a smashing success!"



WAAPA graduates and students performing at the MTEA Gala Concert

Photos by Stephen Heath Photography

OPERA STAR ON THE RISE

BARITONE DUNCAN ROCK CAME TO SINGING LATE BUT HAS MADE UP FOR IT NOW

Duncan Rock was studying law at the University of Western Australia when he decided to do a crash course in classical music on the side. His only previous musical experience had been playing electric guitar in high school bands. He took a punt, enrolled at WAAPA in a diploma course, and had his first singing lesson.

Not long after, in 2004, Rock was awarded the Michelle Robinson Scholarship for most outstanding first year voice student at WAAPA. Two years later, Rock took out the major prize at the Australian Singing Competition, the \$30,000 Marianne Mathy Scholarship.

After performing in the finals with the Sydney Symphony under the baton of renowned opera conductor Richard Bonyngé AO CBE, Rock was presented with the Mathy award by the late Dame Joan Sutherland. Rock was 22 years old and it was the first time he had performed with an orchestra.

The Mathy Scholarship would catapult Rock from Australia to the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London, where he undertook a Masters degree. Since then, he has also studied at the National Opera Studio, picked up a swag of awards and embarked on an international singing career.

The young baritone has been described as “a singer to watch as not only is he a striking stage presence, but he possesses a wonderfully rich baritone voice that is plainly destined for greatness.”

Rock has been a Samling Scholar, a Royal Philharmonic Society Young Artist and the recipient of the Overseas Award from the Royal Overseas League Singing Competition. He won the 2012 Chilcott Award in its inaugural year, awarded from the Susan Chilcott Scholarship to support a ‘major young artist with the potential to make an international impact’. Rock has been a Harewood Artist for the English National Opera and a Jerwood Young Artist at the Glyndebourne Festival, where he was recipient of the 2010 John Christie Award.

His opera roles have taken him all over the world. He has sung Tarquinius in *The Rape of Lucretia* for the Deutsche Oper, Berlin and at the Glyndebourne Festival; the title role in *Don Giovanni* for the Boston Lyric Opera and the Welsh National Opera; Papageno in *The Magic Flute* for the English National Opera; Billy Bigelow for the Théâtre du Châtelet; Marullo in *Rigoletto* at Covent Garden; and English Clerk & Guide in *Death in Venice* for the Teatro Réal in Madrid.

Future seasons see Rock return to Covent Garden and the Teatro Réal, and he is slated to make his début at the Metropolitan Opera.

In April next year, Rock will perform the lead role of Billy Bigelow in Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Carousel* in his début for the Houston Grand Opera in Texas. Also in the cast will be fellow WAAPA graduate, tenor Alexander Lewis, playing the role of Enoch Snow.

Here Rock talks to Inside WAAPA about his rising international career:

Since your time at WAAPA you've completed your Masters, won numerous awards and scholarships, and have studied and sung with brilliant teachers and singers around the world. Has there been one moment or event that stands out as an absolute highlight for you?

There have been a few moments that stand out as significant along the way. My first job out of college was covering Don Giovanni for Welsh National Opera, I ended up doing four performances when the singer broke his ankle

“ WAAPA [was] the place where I developed my love of music and performing... free from the stresses of the professional world ”

(not my fault!) which gave me a huge amount of exposure early on. My first role at Covent Garden was also pretty special as I've always dreamed of singing at that house. And just this year I got to sing on the stage of the Metropolitan Opera New York for the first time, I will be making my debut there next season. My favourite role so far has been Tarquinius in *The Rape of Lucretia* by Britten, it was my first big role at Glyndebourne and also my German debut for the Deutsch Oper Berlin. But the absolutely most significant event was winning the Australian Singing Competition Mathy Award back in 2006. It was that which gave me the confidence (and finances) to be able to take the plunge and try my hand at singing professionally – it quite literally changed my life.

Where are you based?

I've been in London now for eight years. As an opera singer it is an ideal base. The job involves so much travel (which I do love) but I like to be at home as much as I can. London is ideal for both needs as there is plenty of work here (so I can be at home) but it is easy to travel around when necessary – or at least easier than travelling from Australia!

What do you enjoy most about being an opera singer?

It's quite simple really – I love being paid to do something I'd do for free. Being flown around to exciting cities and beautiful opera houses is nice too.

Most of all I love working with people who love their job. When you work at the highest level in classical music you are fortunate to be collaborating with and learning from a whole slew of passionate, interesting and talented people from all over the world. It really is a wonderful lifestyle. It takes a huge amount of hard work and discipline – but it is worth it in the end.

Opera seems to be such an international career, it doesn't matter where you come from. But do you feel you possess certain traits as an Australian that have helped you in your journey so far?

I think Australian singers face challenges early on that prepare them for the career challenges ahead. There is some great quality

opera in Australia but obviously the amount of work is very limited. Those that make the choice to move overseas (as I did to London) learn to deal with the difficulties of being away from friends, family and general independence – knowledge that is invaluable later on in a career. I also notice a fierce determination to succeed in Australian singers who are away from home. I think it has something to do with the fact that often they have uprooted their lives and sacrificed so much in order to chase their dream. This brings a feeling of far higher stakes which I believe causes people to work harder and eventually succeed over their colleagues who perhaps had an easier ride. I think this would account for the disproportionately high number of successful Australian singers working around the world.

What was the best thing you took from your time at WAAPA?

My time at WAAPA was very embryonic in terms of my life as a singer. I was still studying Law at UWA at the time and was only singing as a hobby. This situation allowed WAAPA to be the place where I developed my love of music and performing. Free from the stresses of the



Photo by Paul Mitchell

professional world, I was able to explore the world of opera and classical music and realise it had a massive place in my heart. I only have the fondest memories of my time there.

At the Houston Grand Opera next year you will be singing with another WAAPA graduate, Alexander Lewis. Small world! Have you worked with Alexander before and are you looking forward to working with another Australian?

I don't know Alexander that well, although we have met a few times. He was always a couple of years ahead of me. At WAAPA we were both baritones and I remember hearing him sing and being so jealous of how easily he negotiated his passagio and high notes! Now he sings tenor so I don't feel so bad about it! It's an interesting contract as we are both essentially opera singers who cross into musical theatre when possible, this is not something all singers are able to do. I'm sure we'll have a blast in Houston – I hear he enjoys a good BBQ.

Is there one role you haven't sung yet that you'd love to perform?

I'm very fortunate to have already performed so many of my dream roles and operas: Don Giovanni, Marcello in *La Boheme*, Billy Bigelow in *Carousel*. But the one that has always evaded me is the title role in *Billy Budd* by Britten. I have done the opera four times but always as other characters. Fortunately I'll finally get my chance next year when I perform the role at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow – can't wait!

GILL CASTS SPELL OVER DREAMSHOW

Richard Gill OAM, renowned throughout the world for his expertise in music education, was the guest music director of Benjamin Britten's operatic version of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which opened at WAAPA in October.

Gill joined director Rachel McDonald and award-winning lighting designer Mark Howett in bringing Britten's musical interpretation of Shakespeare's sensual and intoxicating play to life.

Richard Gill OAM is one of Australia's pre-eminent conductors and is internationally respected as a music educator, specialising in opera, musical theatre and vocal and choral training. His work in developing young musicians and creating opportunities for them is recognised worldwide.

In addition to his role as Artistic Director of the Sydney Symphony's Education Program, he has been Music Director of Victorian Opera since its inception in 2006. He has also been Artistic Director of OzOpera, Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the Canberra Symphony Orchestra, is a conductor for the *Ears Wide Open* program with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and Advisor for the *Musica Viva in Schools* program. He regularly conducts main stage performances for Opera Australia and major Australian orchestras.

Gill was Founding Director of the WA Conservatorium of Music from 1985 to 1990, which then merged with SODA (School of Dramatic Art) to become WAAPA. He has been awarded an Honorary Doctorate from Edith Cowan University.

"Richard Gill has an absolute wealth of knowledge and the way he imparts it to the students, with such humour and fun, is a joy to behold," says Patricia Price, Coordinator Classical Vocal Studies and Opera. "It has been a great privilege to welcome one of Australia's great educators back to WAAPA to conduct the opera."

"It's a big ask for the students to sing Britten's opera, it's a very difficult piece but they have done incredibly well," says Gill.

"There's an incredible breadth and depth of talent here at WAAPA; there are students who are very accomplished and there are those who are just starting out. The joy of putting a group together like this is that they learn from each other, they watch each other grow and develop. It's a place of learning and they all get to have a go."

Richard Gill's visit was supported by WAAPA's inaugural Bravo Donor Circle. For more information about this initiative, please visit the WAAPA website waapa.ecu.edu.au.



Photo by Brendan Read

VIRTUOSO FOR VIENNA SHOW



Photo by Jon Green

WAAPA'S HEAD OF STRINGS PERFORMS WITH THE VIENNA SYMPHONY



In early September, Associate Professor Alexandre Da Costa and the WAAPA String Camerata performed an evening concert in WAAPA's Music Auditorium, *A Stradivarius at the Opera*.

This selection of opera highlights arranged for solo violin and string quartet or string camerata featured arrangements of celebrated excerpts from Wagner's *Valkyrie* and *Meistersingers*, Puccini's *Turandot*, Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* and Richard Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier* – along with Jules Massenet's beloved *Meditation from Thaïs* and Georges Bizet's sparkling *Carmen Fantasy*.

Later this year, Da Costa will take the program to Vienna where he will record it with the Vienna Symphony for Universal Music Group.

The Canadian-born Da Costa, who joined WAAPA this year as Head of Strings, is a world-

renowned violin virtuoso and educator. A musical prodigy, he has garnered countless accolades and awards throughout his exceptional career. Among his many plaudits, he has been described as "a musician of the highest international quality" who displays "a virtuoso technique and a huge sound, plus passion, commitment and musicality in equal measure".

"It is a great honour for me to return to Vienna, a magical city where I lived for a few years while learning some of the most important musical and artistic lessons of my life," says Da Costa. "This time I return to play and conduct one of the most famous orchestras in the world, and work with musicians that have deeply inspired me."

A Stradivarius at the Opera marks the beginning of a very busy 2015-16 season for the energetic virtuoso. Da Costa has guest soloist appearances planned with the Vienna, Leipzig, Frankfurt, Montreal and Seville Symphony Orchestras, and concerts at the Berlin

Philharmonie, Toronto's Koerner Hall, Vienna's Konzerthaus and Guadalajara's Degollado Theater before returning to WAAPA for the commencement of the 2016 academic year.

Yet Da Costa's work as an educator at WAAPA is never far from his thoughts.

"Working at WAAPA gives me the opportunity to share my vision and philosophy of sound, which comes directly from the German and Austrian traditions, while my technique is strongly influenced by a long line of Russian players with whom I had the chance to get my training, such as Zakhar Bron, himself a pupil of David Oistrakh," says Da Costa.

"At WAAPA, it is with a lot of pride that I envision a department that passes on to a new generation those important European ways of string playing."

Main photo: Alexandre Da Costa performing with the Faith Court Orchestra

DANCERS SHINE AS SWANILDA



Sarah Hepburn as Swanilda
Photo by Emma Fishwick

The three dancers chosen to alternate the principal female role of Swanilda in the West Australian Ballet/Queensland Ballet's recent co-production of *Coppélia*, which ran from 11-26 September at His Majesty's Theatre in Perth, were all graduates of WAAPA's Dance course.

Choreographed by Greg Horsman, the production's three lead female dancers were Sarah Hepburn, Meg Parry and Carina Roberts. Roberts, who is in her final year at WAAPA, is part of the WAB Young Artists' Program.

Sarah Hepburn, who danced the role of Swanilda on opening night, received enthusiastic reviews for her performance.

The Australian stated that "Hepburn was exquisite as both Swanilda and Coppelia," while Nina Levy in her review in *The West Australian* wrote that: "As Swanilda, Hepburn showed stamina – once on, she barely left the stage. A feisty Swanilda, she impressed with her trademark crisp allegro and batterie." Margaret Mercer in *Dance Australia* praised Hepburn's "sparkling footwork" and the "mischievous streak" in her Swanilda.

Hartley Trusler at *Dancetrain Magazine* was equally impressed: "Sarah Hepburn's performance of the playful Swanilda was another standout of the show, Act 2 in particular. She really did seem to bring the doll to life!"



NYX NIXES COMPETITION

WAAPA 3rd Year Costume student Georgia Santacaterina took out the coveted Best Costume Design award in the Future Runway section of the Telstra Perth Fashion Festival in September.

Her winning costume was a dramatic handmade midnight-blue gown made for a mythological Greek creature called Nyx.

The 29-year-old fantasy fan took a gamble on her passion nearly three years ago, giving up a job in retail to study at WAAPA.

“Sewing is something I took up on my own as a hobby, and I just made costumes for fun, then after a few years I thought, you know what, I really want to pursue this as a passion and as a career,” Santacaterina said in a recent interview.

The hand-draped couture gown for Nyx, who is the “personification of the night sky”, was made from dyed silk-satin Santacaterina ordered from interstate. The fabric was studded with 7500 rhinestones.

Santacaterina also soldered wire to make a neckpiece embellished with hand-dyed lace, pearls and sequins and fashioned a luxurious cape from brushed Japanese satin, which was foiled with gold.

“The illustration for [Georgia’s] Costume Design was phenomenal so that was great to start with and we were so excited to see the final piece and when it came out, it was perfect,” commented Student Runway judge Pippa McManus.



Georgia Santacaterina with her winning design at the 2015 Perth Fashion Festival
Photo by Ryan Ammon

RADIO ACTIVE A HIT

In what has become an annual event, WAAPA’s Contemporary Music team of Mike Eastman, Ric Eastman and Matt Allen visited schools in Albany in May of this year.

They were there to work with the students of Great Southern Grammar and Albany Senior High School in preparation for a performance at the Albany Entertainment Centre in August.

In August, the lecturers and 11 selected students from the Contemporary Music course ventured south again to work with the Albany students for a week of workshops and rehearsals. They were accompanied by students

from WAAPA’s Production & Design course as the creative technical team.

The week culminated in a one-night performance at the Albany Entertainment Centre, which featured 40 high school students along with WAAPA staff and students. Additionally, students from Albany with an interest in backstage areas such as lighting, sound and stage management also had the opportunity to work with the WAAPA production students on the show.

“This was easily the best combined performance we have undertaken,” said Mike

Eastman. “The standard of musicianship was excellent and we performed to our biggest house yet, confirming that the residency is fulfilling its aims and growing with every year.”

WAAPA’s Contemporary Music students also performed their annual *Radio Active* concerts at WAAPA’s Geoff Gibbs Theatre in September. The program featured a diverse repertoire covering all musical bases from pop to rock, R ‘n’ B to soul and funk classics in three spectacularly produced concerts with a huge cast of talented young musicians and singers.



Photos by Jon Green



ABORIGINAL THEATRE IN THE SPOTLIGHT

EVA MULLALEY WINS FELLOWSHIP PLUS OTHER GRADUATE SUCCESSSES

"It can be really hard when you're out of community and a long way from home," Mullaley says. "So I try to support the new students by introducing them around, making them feel part of the place."

In her first year as a mentor, Eva set up a Facebook page for the students so they could feel connected to each other. Since then she has added a new cohort each year – there are now 12 years' worth of Aboriginal Theatre graduates on it.

In addition, Mullaley has tour managed throughout Europe and Malaysia and directed community performances around Australia. In 2013 she was Artistic Associate at Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company, where she produced and directed *Yirra Yaarnz*, among other projects.

Mullaley describes being awarded the Fellowship as a humbling experience.

"It's a shock to realise that people have faith in you," the director says. "I had a week to get the application together yet people were so generous in sending me letters of recommendation and expressions of interest in having me work with them. Then to be awarded the Fellowship...well, that was humbling."

For the past five years Mullaley has assisted Aboriginal Theatre Course Co-ordinator, Rick Brayford on the Aboriginal Theatre end-of-year production. This year is no different, with Mullaley co-directing with Brayford the premiere performance of David Milroy's new play, *Rodeo Moon*, due to open on November 14.

Commissioned by WAAPA with funds from the Jackman Furness Foundation for Performing Arts and Minderoo Foundation for its Aboriginal

Theatre program, *Rodeo Moon* was the highlight of the recent Yellamundie National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Playwriting Festival, held in August at Carriageworks in Sydney.

Following an intensive two-week creative development process at the festival, six new plays were presented from new and established writers. *Rodeo Moon* was selected to open the Yellamundie readings.

2005 Aboriginal Theatre graduate Karla Hart had her new play *Tooly* chosen out of 35 submissions. Rick Brayford attended the Festival and Eva Mullaley was selected for an internship as dramaturge working on two new plays by Glen Shea and Nathan Maynard.

A play that was developed two years ago at the 2013 Yellamundi Festival was *Battle of Waterloo* by Kylie Coolwell, which earlier this year received its premiere season at the Sydney Theatre Company. In the cast were WAAPA Aboriginal Theatre graduates Shereena Clanton and Shari Sebbens, both of whom are gaining national reputations for their acting work.

Another graduate finding national exposure is Mark Coles Smith. Smith was seen on television earlier this year in the ABC series *Old School*, opposite Bryan Brown and Sam Neill, and also appeared in the critically acclaimed *The Gods of Wheat Street*, also for the ABC. Most recently, Smith starred alongside Michael Caton and Jackie Weaver in the feature film *Last Cab to Darwin*. Mark's other feature credits include the forthcoming *Around the Block* from director Sarah Spillane, opposite Christina Ricci.

Mark Coles Smith photo by Paul Wesley 2013

Director/producer Eva Mullaley was recently awarded the 2015/16 Indigenous Arts Forward Fellowship from the WA Department of Culture and the Arts.

The Fellowship is open to Aboriginal artists and arts workers who seek to build their career to the next level through a year-long period of development.

The Fellowship, which is worth \$25,000, will allow Mullaley to build her skills as a theatre creator by working on a range of projects and with a variety of theatre companies across Australia.

Mullaley aims to work with Moogahlin Theatre Company in Sydney and Ilbijerri Theatre Company in Melbourne; collaborate with theatre makers in Sydney and Adelaide; work independently on theatre creation skills; as well as continuing established relationships with Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company and WAAPA.

Mullaley, a Yamatji/Widi woman from the mid-west region of WA, graduated from WAAPA's Aboriginal Theatre course in 2003. Every year since then, she has found time to return to WAAPA to act as a mentor to the Aboriginal Theatre students.

SPANNING TIME

This August, 1991 Acting graduate Sandie Eldridge returned to her alma mater to direct the 2nd Year Acting students in Helen Edmundson's stage adaptation of George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss*.

Sydney-based Eldridge is Co-Creative Director of Monkey Baa Theatre Company, which she formed in 1997 with Eva Di Cesare and fellow WAAPA graduate Tim McGarry.

Monkey Baa Theatre Company is one of Australia's premier touring theatre companies producing quality work for young people.

Earlier this year Eldridge's new play *The Unknown Soldier*, written to commemorate the centenary of World War I, was performed as part of Monkey Baa Theatre Company's 2015 season

at the Lend Lease Darling Quarter Theatre before touring NSW regional centres.

Aimed at young people aged 10 and over, *The Unknown Soldier* follows the dual journeys of a 16-year-old soldier fighting for King and Country on the battlefields of World War 1 and a 13-year-old boy in present day Australia.

Five generations of WAAPA graduates worked together on Eldridge's play.

1987 Acting graduate and Monkey Baa Co-Creative Director and Producer, Tim McGarry, was the dramaturg on the play, with direction by 1999 Acting graduate Matt Edgerton and design by 2008 Design graduate Anna Gardiner. Eldridge and 2013 Acting graduate Felix Johnson were the cast members.



From left: Tim McGarry, Anna Gardiner, Sandie Eldridge, Matt Edgerton and Felix Johnson

Jo Litson in her review in *Scene and Heard* wrote that "Matt Edgerton directs with great clarity on an impressive set by Anna Gardiner... Johnson moves convincingly between 13-year old Charlie and Albert [and] Eldridge is a warm, reassuring presence as both Angela and Grace."

EXPERIENCES IN ART

THIRD YEAR SOUND STUDENT CHRISTIAN PETERSON SHARES HIS "OPPORTUNITY OF A LIFE TIME" TO VISIT THE AMERICAN REPERTORY THEATRE:

"About a year ago, WAAPA was visited by director Diane Paulus and a number of other creatives from the American Repertory Theatre (ART) in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Among the visitors was sound designer Jonathan Deans, best known for his work with *Cirque Du Soleil* and countless West End and Broadway sound designs.

I was completely shocked and thrilled that Jonathan had come to WAAPA...here was one of the top sound designers in the world, lecturing our class. Two hours later, when Jonathan had left, our jaws were still on the floor; I'm confident everyone in that class learnt something invaluable that day.

A year later, an opportunity arose for a WAAPA Sound student to travel to Massachusetts to intern on a musical at the ART – how could I not apply! This was simply the opportunity of a lifetime, and it turned out to be that and more.

The moment I arrived in Boston, I loved it; the New England architecture, immense greenery and the Harvard University campus, which the ART is situated on, was beautiful. I arrived at the Loeb Drama Centre, the theatre complex that houses the ART offices, their main theatre and a number of other studios. The ART is a leading force in American theatre, producing groundbreaking work which has been honoured with many distinguished awards over the years.

The show I would be working on was called *Waitress*, directed by Diane Paulus and with Jonathan as sound designer. Written by Jessie Nelson and scored by Sara Bareilles, the story was adapted from the 2007 film of the same

name. *Waitress* follows the life of Jenna, a waitress who has a knack for making cleverly named pies that help her deal with her abusive husband, become a mother and find her place in the world. Jessie Mueller, who had recently starred in *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*, played the role of Jenna. What an amazing voice!

The first couple of weeks on the show was continuing the bump in of the design; while a majority of the larger speaker cabinets had already been rigged and installed, there was certainly lots to do before we were ready for tech. I won't lie, picking up a measuring tape and trying to read 'eleven feet and thirteen, sixty-fourth inches' was a challenge. It seemed the quickest way was to measure distances in metric and use an app on my iPhone to find the imperial value.

While I was learning the various processes and technology American theatre had to offer, the crew soon learnt the wonders of Vegemite, Fairy Bread, Kangaroo and Burgundy pies and my favourite, Drop Bears. That and a plethora of new language we both learnt – I've come away using the terms 'project' and 'right?' fairly often.

Throughout the technical dress rehearsals, I would shadow either Jonathan or Brian, the show's mixer. I now have pages upon pages of notes with workflow and design ideas for my future work from what I saw.

We had the owner of Sound Associates, one of the biggest and best Local One (New York's



Photo by Samuel Lerner

IATZE union district) sound rental houses, visit us, as well as two representatives from d&b audiotechnik North America, who tuned the system and discussed new features of what were brand new speakers and amplifiers. If I had to sum up the greatest experience on this trip, it would be meeting all the different people along the way.

My last day was the first preview on the 2nd August. It was so rewarding finally seeing the show in its entirety with an audience – not only were the seats filled, so was the rear of the house and the stairs. And for good reason: the show was brilliant, the music incredible, and was sure to leave many laughing and crying. That was the day they announced the show would have its debut on Broadway in 2016.

I cannot express sufficient thanks to those who afforded me this opportunity – the Jackman Furness Foundation for the Performing Arts, Mindaroo Foundation and Nomad Two Worlds – for providing me the sponsorship and creating the link between WAAPA and the ART.

I'm really driven now, to connect WAAPA and the ART together more, in sound, other technical production courses, and more. I hope that what I experienced is possible for future students."

NEW ACTING GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP

On 15 October, JFFPA in collaboration with MasterCard awarded 3rd Year graduating student Shalom Brune-Franklin with the inaugural Chris Edmund Scholarship. Brune-Franklin was chosen from a short list of three finalists including Claudia Ware and Megan Wilding.

The scholarship, aimed to support the recipient in 'kick-starting' their acting career, honours director, teacher, writer and painter, Chris Edmund. Edmund taught at WAAPA for 30 years and was Coordinator of Acting for 10 of those years, training Hugh Jackman, Frances O'Connor and Jai Courtney, among many others.

Early in 2015, MasterCard filmed Hugh

Jackman surprising his former teacher in New York with the announcement of this \$17,100 scholarship in his honour.

Australian actor and JFFPA Founding Patron, Jack Thompson, said: "This scholarship will provide an exciting opportunity to a WAAPA graduate who has shown exceptional aptitude for further mentoring and guidance in their chosen career path, at a time crucial to their further development. It is apt that the scholarship should celebrate Chris Edmund, who has been inspirational and instrumental to the success of so many of WAAPA's finest graduates of the Acting Department."



Chris Edmund with Scholarship winner (from left) Shalom Brune-Franklin, finalists Claudia Ware and Megan Wilding.

Photo by Kathy Wheatley



Anna-Katarina Hicks describes WAAPA's **BIG APPLE JAZZ JAUNT**

From 23 June to 4 July, the 2nd and 3rd Year Jazz students attended a two-week intensive course at the jazz campus at New York University (NYU) in Greenwich Village, New York.

The course involved morning and afternoon ensemble sessions with NYU faculty, theory classes, recording sessions, performances at the historic Provincetown theatre in Greenwich Village and masterclasses with an impressive list of jazz greats including Chris Potter, Lenny White, Jeff Coffin, Tyshawn Sorey, Don Freidman, Mark Turner, Scott Colley and Adam Rogers.

In addition, the students had the opportunity to book private lessons with some outstanding local musicians and enjoyed the wealth of amazing jazz on offer in the New York jazz clubs.

3rd Year Bachelor of Jazz Performance student Anna-Katarina Hicks describes the trip:

“Two weeks studying at NYU this July was a life-defining moment. Up until that point I had been uncertain of what I would do after finishing my degree. Tossing up doing honours, save up and go travelling...it was a big cloudy question mark. How that has changed. Three things I could not have fathomed before experiencing them in the flesh:

1 The vibe of New York City. It is a heaving animal of expression with a brazen hunger for creative pursuits.

2 The music scene. The quantity, the diversity and the quality of what it had to offer. In Perth,

particularly within the jazz niche, we are blessed with a formidable calibre of musicians. Many of whom have coloured and mentored me through my studies at WAAPA. What blew my mind in New York was that every night of the week, whether it was six in the evening or three in the morning, there was exquisite music being made. Music literally pours, night and day out of the city's pores...in parks, on street corners and seeping out of dingy basements. It was the greatest live-music-listening binge of my life.

3 There were two women who I never would have met had it not been for this opportunity. Both of whom I am immensely grateful to for their insight, honesty and encouragement: Janis Siegel (from Manhattan Transfer) and Sheila Jordan. It was only through a very kind, inspiring, two-time Grammy Award winner ensemble tutor at NYU, Alan Broadbent that I lucked upon teeing up a lesson with Sheila, a jazz giant and personal inspiration.

These women have both reached a level of technical mastery that is only achievable through a life-long dedication to their instrument. In addition, they are inspiring because of their colourful kick-ass attitudes and killer personalities.

The little gem they gave me was the advice to pursue what I wanted to do. Pursue my song writing. Give it hell of a crack. I'll never forget Sheila Jordan warning me, with her heavy New York accent: “Now you listenna me, 'n' listen good. Don't you ever get deterred, if you meet someone who wants to pull you away from music



give him the flick. You've got what it takes...and move to New York.”

I now have a plan for what I want to do. If anyone has ever looked you square in the eyes when you've doubted yourself and said they believe in you, then you would understand why my New York experience was life defining. It is the most welcomed and powerful kick up the butt of encouragement, especially when it has come from those whom you admire profusely.

To Graham Wood, Jamie Oehlers, WAAPA, NYU and my family...saying 'I am so grateful for this opportunity' doesn't even touch the sides of my sentiments, but I hope they get the picture.”

2015 CLASSICAL MUSIC AWARDS

On September 20, WAAPA celebrated the achievements of its most outstanding Classical Music students at a presentation ceremony for the 2015 Classical Music Awards.

Percussionist Thomas Robertson was awarded both the prestigious Helen Court Award for the most outstanding final year student in the Classical Music program and the Luigi Paolino Award for Excellence in Classical Percussion. The latter award was established in memory of WAAPA percussion graduate Luigi Paolino and is awarded to the most outstanding undergraduate percussionist.

Soprano Eimear Foley was announced the winner of the coveted Barbara MacLeod Scholarship for the most outstanding female Classical Music student. This prestigious \$10,000 scholarship, established in memory of Captain Barbara Denise MacLeod, will enable the talented singer to further develop her musical skills by undertaking a short intensive program of study at a leading music institution. Foley is currently

completing her Post-Graduate Diploma in Classical Voice, under the tutelage of Patricia Price. At the end of this year, Foley will be auditioning for Masters programs in London and New York.

The winner of the 2015 Warana Music Award for best concerto performance in the Classical Music program was pianist Noelle Zhao. Zhao is completing a Bachelor of Music degree at WAAPA, where she studies under Anna Sleptsova. Zhao won with an outstanding performance of Rachmaninov's 2nd Piano Concerto.

The Dame Mary Gilmore Award, provided by Perth's Karrakatta Club for the most promising overall final year female student in the Classical Vocal course, was presented to mezzo-soprano Katherine Goyder.

The Michelle Robinson Award for the most outstanding mid-year recital given by a first-year Classical Vocal student was presented to Shania Eliassen. The prize was established by John and Helen Court in honour of former WAAPA staff member, Michelle Robinson.



Left to right: 2015 Classical Music Award winners Noelle Zhao, Mercedes Slack-Smith, Shania Eliassen, Katherine Goyder, Thomas Robertson and Eimear Foley

This year a new percussion scholarship was founded by Norman Archibald to provide financial support to WAAPA students who demonstrate excellence in classical percussion. The inaugural Norman Archibald Percussion Scholarship was awarded to third-year percussionist Mercedes Slack-Smith.

WAAPA congratulates these outstanding musicians, and is indebted to the donors who generously support the student scholarship program.

LINK'S EUROPEAN ADVENTURE

WAAPA'S HONOURS DANCE COMPANY PERFORMS IN EUROPE

On June 18, LINK Dance Company toured Europe, performing works from their show, *Tipping Point*, which had a season earlier in the year at WAAPA.

On tour were LINK dancers Lisa Barry, Rita Bush, Samatha Cramer-Miller, Natalie Kolobaric, Dean Ryan Lincoln, Alexander Perrozzi, Ben Seaton, Tarsha Smolenski and Robert Tinning, with 3rd Year dancer Dominik Mall and Production & Design students Desnee Smallberger and Erin Martin, and LINK Artistic Director Michael Whaites.

The first three weeks of the tour were spent in Istres and Montpellier in France, and Amsterdam in the Netherlands.

In Istres, a town in the south of France, the students were able to perform in several venues, one of which was the famed Théâtre de l'Olivier which has a long tradition of exceptional dance companies performing in it.

One of the dance works performed by LINK had speaking roles, so the LINK dancers learned their parts in French – an effort that was greatly appreciated by the local audience.

The company spent five days in Montpellier, where they rehearsed and again performed to welcoming audiences. The Montpellier Dance Festival was in full swing and the LINK dancers were fortunate to see a wide variety of dance including Batsheva Dance Company's latest creation *Last Work*, and performances by Rachid Ouramdane, VA Wölfl, Christian Rizzo and Farruquito.

In Amsterdam, the LINK company performed at Vondelpark, a beautiful, massive park in the middle of Amsterdam with an open-air amphitheatre used for concerts and performances. Having the opportunity to perform in an outdoor theatre was new for many of the dancers, giving them yet another new experience.

This concluded the official LINK part of the tour. The students then went their separate ways, travelling to workshops in various cities in Europe.

Five of the LINK dancers remained in Amsterdam to attend the Henny Jurriens Summer Intensive, a three-week workshop in Amsterdam with teachers, choreographers and professional artists commissioned from around the world to teach a variety of classes, repertoire and workshops. The repertoire classes were taught by current or ex-artists or rehearsal directors of the respective companies and offered repertoires by Jiri Kylian, Akram Khan, Sidi Larbi and Martha Graham.

While some students travelled to the P.A.R.T.S Summer Intensive in Brussels, Belgium, other students went to Vienna, Austria, for one of the world's largest festivals of contemporary dance and performance, ImPulsTanz.

LINK dancer Alexander Perrozzi took part in a *Rosas Danst Rosas* Repertory Workshop held by ex-Rosas dancer, Samantha Van Wissen.

"With clarity and precise detail, Wissen carried out a week-long workshop teaching phrases from all four sections of *Rosas Danst Rosas*, a famous work by Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker," reflects Perrozzi. "It was an insight not only into the repertoire, but also a look at Keersmaeker's choreographic process."

LINK dancer Natalie Kolobaric sums up the benefits of the trip: "The experience provided the LINK dancers with an extremely insightful and beneficial once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, giving us an understanding of the European dance scene and opening up some tremendous networking options for the future."

LINK Dance Company's European tour was generously supported by the Friends of the Academy.

Photo 1: Istres - France

Photo 2: Technique Rehearsals Istres for *Unkempt* work

Photo 3: Istres site specific performance with LINK Dancers, Choreographed by Michael Whaites

Photo 4: Istres site specific performance with Natalie Kolobaric, Choreographed by Michael Whaites

Photos by Dean Lincoln



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

A GLIMPSE OF WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING ON STAGE AT WAAPA



13



Radio Active



Carrie The Musical



The World Goes 'Round



Tilt



Macbeth

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Carrie The Musical



A Midsummer Night's Dream



Macbeth



Radio Active

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