

INSIDE WAAPA

Western Australian
Academy of Performing Arts

Official newsletter of the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, Edith Cowan University (Issue 49) September 2017



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HIGH NOTES

ACCLAIMED SOPRANO EMMA MATTHEWS NEW HEAD OF CLASSICAL VOICE

Australian soprano Emma Matthews has been named as WAAPA's new Head of Classical Voice, taking over the position in January 2018.

Since graduating in 1992 from the West Australian Conservatorium at WAAPA, Matthews has established herself as one of Australia's most successful and accomplished singers.

Her impressive list of accolades includes seven Helpmann Awards, nine Green Room Awards, a Mo Award, the Remy Martin Australian Opera Award and Limelight Awards for Music Personality of the Year 2010, Best Performance in an Opera 2012 and Australian Artist of the Year 2016.

She has performed with all the state opera companies and the major Australian symphony orchestras and is equally in demand on the concert platform and as a recording artist.

Matthews has been Australia's prima soprano, singing with Opera Australia for over 20 years. She has sung at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden and has worked with some of the world's finest conductors and directors. Matthews has an extensive discography, with many of her recordings winning the highest awards.

On returning to her alma mater in this new role, Matthews says, "I'm excited about guiding the voices of the future, at such a prestigious institution."

"I look forward to getting to know the singers at WAAPA, to sharing their artistic journeys, technically, musically and

dramatically, and to guiding them into the professional world that awaits them."

Matthews aims to bring to WAAPA many of the artists, conductors, coaches and directors with whom she has worked and learned from throughout her illustrious career.

"I'm coming home with my husband and two sons, to make Perth our home, and WAAPA our family."

Associate Professor Stewart Smith, WAAPA's Associate Dean of Music says, "Finding the right person to continue Patricia Price's legacy was never going to be easy, but in Emma we have found a truly worthy successor. Emma is an outstanding artist, a gifted teacher and someone with big plans and a clear vision for the future. She is also the warmest of people and I am greatly looking forward to working with her in this important position."

"In addition to welcoming Emma I also wish to acknowledge the outstanding and sustained contribution made by my wonderful colleague, Patricia Price. Not only do Patricia's graduates regularly win scholarships to the major American and British academies, they are also to be found in many of the world's opera houses."

Patricia Price says, "My time at WAAPA has been challenging, exciting and most of all very rewarding and I am delighted to welcome Emma Matthews to take over the reins. I know she will be very happy in the WAAPA family and will continue to gain worldwide recognition for the classical voice courses."



Photo by Jon Green

THE BEST OF BRITISH

The WAAPA Visiting Artists Program, proudly supported by the Minderoo Foundation, brought one of Britain's finest directors and educators to Perth in June to direct the 3rd Year Acting students in Noël Coward's timeless comedy, *Present Laughter*.

Vivian Munn is a highly respected actor, director and educator. Munn has taught and directed at numerous English drama schools including E.15 Acting School and Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts. He is an Academy Associate Teacher at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts, Director of RADA Elders Company and the New York University Course Co-ordinator.

"I was delighted with the cast of *Present Laughter*," says Munn. "From their first reading of the text they were keen to extend their skills and showed tremendous fortitude when tackling the writing which is notoriously difficult. The company faced the task head on, not faltering for a moment and indeed revelling in the challenge that Coward poses. I found this reaction very refreshing and their responses extremely uplifting."

"It was an exciting introduction to the master that is Noël Coward and the 3rd Year students took great delight in his world. The laughter was very much present and it was a joy to facilitate their performance."



Vivian Munn directing the 3rd Year Acting students in rehearsal for "Present Laughter"

Photos by Kathy Wheatley

ART PRIZE SEWN UP!

A WAAPA trained set and costume designer has been awarded the inaugural \$100,000 Ramsay Art Prize. Sydney-based artist Sarah Contos won with her giant quilt called *The Long Kiss Goodbye*.

Contos said the quilt, which measures more than 6 metres by 3 metres, took three months to create by hand and machine and was comprised of screen prints made over a four-year period.

Contos' work was chosen from 21 works of contemporary art, all vying for Australia's newest, and richest, art prize for artists under the age of 40. Her piece was seen by the judges to push traditional quilting and screen-printing techniques forward into a dynamic, modern context.

"Contos' 21st century quilt spills over, and, like a new epic history tableaux, celebrates women in all their glory with fireworks, sequins and PVC," judge Leigh Robb and curator of contemporary art at the Art Gallery of South Australia said.

The finalists, selected from more than 450 entries, came from all over Australia and included paintings, photography, video and interactive works.

The biennial prize, funded by the James and Diana Ramsay Foundation, aims to foster young artists to develop their careers.



Sarah Contos Presents: *The Long Kiss Goodbye*, 2016, Art Gallery of South Australia, 2017, Screen-print on linen, canvas and lamé, digital printed fabrics and various found fabrics, PVC, poly-fil, glass, ceramic and plastic beads, thread, artists' gloves, 610 x 330 x 25 cm.

Photo by Saul Steed

PARIS IN PERTH WAAPA STUDENTS GAIN MOMENTUM WITH NEW YORK DIRECTOR

Thanks to the Minderoo Foundation, WAAPA is able to bring some of the world's leading performing arts practitioners to Edith Cowan University to enrich the education of its students.

One of WAAPA's recent visiting artists was actor/writer/director Andy Paris, a founding member of New York's Tectonic Theatre Project.

Since 1991, Paris's work with Tectonic has created some of the most thrilling and important American theatre of our age, based on a unique methodology for developing, analysing and re-imagining theatre called *Moment Work™*. *Moment Work* has been used to create all of Tectonic's pieces including *The Laramie Project*, a confronting and controversial play that has been translated into dozens of languages around the world as a powerful tool in combating homophobia.

This was Paris' second visit to WAAPA, following a two-week residency with WAAPA's Acting students last year. He returned to Perth in August this year to put the finishing directorial touches on the world premiere of *Momentum*, his new work with the WAAPA students.

"The themes, text and narratives in the show were student-generated, culled from their own lives and their imaginations," says Paris.

"The themes we centred around mostly were those of identity and loss."

"So the piece was a deep dive into what is important to the students: their needs, their history and how it feeds their desires. *Momentum* weaves these narratives together, and the result is a group of young men and women telling their collective story, a story of passion, of familial and racial conflict, of longing, of loss, of love."

Paris describes how *Moment Work's* inherently interdisciplinary process encourages participants to collaborate to combine the different theatrical elements into a compelling piece of theatrical storytelling. "So while the students utilised their talents in acting, they were also lighting, sound and set designers," he explains.

"I hope the audience left the theatre with the sense they had born witness to something truthful and meaningful. And if we did our jobs well, perhaps conversations were sparked and the community more unified."

While Paris was in Perth, Minderoo and WAAPA facilitated a professional development workshop for members of The Blue Room Theatre and The Last Great Hunt, extending



the opportunity to work with one of America's most exciting contemporary theatre makers to WA's professional theatre makers.

Above: Andy Paris directing the 2nd Year Acting students in rehearsal for "Momentum". Background photo by Jon Green

A SOUND CAREER



Photo by Maria Zhytnikova.jpg

In May, more than twenty years after he graduated from WAAPA, sound engineer Gavin Tempny was back in Perth as part of the 2017 Hans Zimmer Live On Tour production crew.

The 1995 graduate has been touring the world as a sound designer and monitor engineer with the multi-award winning film composer. Zimmer is famous for composing music for over 150 films including the Academy Award winning score for *The Lion King*, *The Pirates of the Caribbean* series, *Gladiator*, *The Last Samurai*, *The Dark Knight Trilogy*, *Inception*, *Interstellar* and *Dunkirk*.

Since moving to England a decade ago, the now Oxford-based Tempny has worked with an impressive line-up of musical acts, including Powderfinger, Tame Impala, Ed Sheeran, Mike and the Mechanics and David Gilmour of Pink Floyd fame.

Here Gavin talks to IW about his amazing international career:

Why did you want to be a sound engineer?

Well I played guitar in a band in my final year of school and wanted a four-track cassette based recorder to be able to record some song ideas. So I saved up for that and through part time jobs and a top-up of Christmas money, managed to get enough to buy one. After school I went to university and initially studied science, but found music a bit more interesting, playing with university friends and old school mates. I took a year off and applied for WAAPA and managed to get accepted into the Production (Sound) course. I was mainly interested in it so I had access to better recording equipment, with no intention of doing live sound at all! In the course we

were exposed to all forms of sound, and my eyes (and ears) were opened to a whole new world of fields: television sound, radio, theatre sound design, live concert sound and of course music recording.

What did you enjoy most about being at WAAPA and what did it give you in terms of getting you ready for a career?

I have to say that I wouldn't be where I am now without it. I really enjoyed that there was only a small group of us doing the course and that we had access to the tutors and equipment 24 hours a day. On top of that, the facility at WAAPA is a very rare thing – a music conservatorium (with great classical, jazz and contemporary musicians needing recordings), a working theatre and musical theatre courses that put on shows every six weeks. We crewed those shows. There's also a dance course, fine arts and arts management all on one campus. Really it's a very rare thing.

What a degree like this lets you do is have a sheltered environment of older students designing the productions and the younger students operating them. In a way this provides you with two things: great technical support and a chance to make mistakes and learn before being employed. This worked doubly well for me as I moved to Sydney after I graduated and suddenly I was this young guy who no-one knew, who seemed to know what he was doing, and hadn't made a monumental mistake that everyone knew me by! Contrast that to starting work at a sound company, I wouldn't have had the basic technical grounding and I certainly wouldn't have been as hands-on driving equipment as much as I did.

You've worked with some incredible musicians and bands. What have been the highlights?

Yeah I guess it has been pretty good eh? I had a pretty good career on the way in Australia and not long after I moved to London I was very lucky that another ex-graduate and friend Andrew Burch called me up one day. He was working for a sound company called Britannia Row Productions and they needed someone at short notice to tech some stuff just down the road for a little Australian band called Powderfinger. So down I went and it all seemed to go OK, and I've been getting calls from Britannia Row ever since! In between working for the Australian bands that I was doing when I left for London, I've done some pretty crazy things in the last 10 years or so. I did a month in the desert in Israel working on *Aida*, I mixed the 40th anniversary concert of the United Arab Emirates National Day, have done the Brit Awards, *Orchestral Manoeuvres in the Dark*, mixed a concert where Bon Jovi, Taylor Swift and Prince William sang *Living on a Prayer* together. I mixed Tim Minchin and the orchestra on two tours of Australia, Missy Higgins, Eskimo Joe, Mike and the Mechanics and in the last few years I've been very privileged to be doing monitors for David Gilmour (Pink Floyd) and Hans Zimmer. Having played guitar from a young age, the David Gilmour tour was simply amazing. Incredible band, crew and amazing songs. Not going to say it was an easy day at the office, we were busy, but the result each night was definitely worth the hard work. Hopefully he doesn't leave it another 10 years before he tours again! ►

What is it like touring with Hans Zimmer, a man described as one of the Top 100 Living Geniuses?

It's been good fun, he is certainly a great man. I think one of Hans' great strengths is that he is so grounded and has a fantastic personality. He has a way of gelling people together, a greater sense of project and communication that must be, apart from the obvious creative skills, amazing for directors to work with. During our rehearsals for the tour, he was finishing off the film *Dunkirk*, which is a major musical/sound design piece, yet he kept it together to pop into rehearsals and just fit in playing with a 20-piece band.

Sound engineering for Hans' shows must be especially challenging because of the complexity of mixing live orchestra, choir and electronic elements. How long have you been working with Hans and what has this experience been like for you?

I've been with Hans about six months and yes, it's one of those interesting things, combining an orchestra and a band... It was extremely technically challenging. Each day

we had a new orchestra and choir, different rooms, and the fact that my job was to do the sound on stage for 23 band members makes it exponentially more complicated than a 4 or 5 piece rock band. We dropped the sample rate back to 48kHz and still ran out of DSP on all the consoles. Bearing in mind that these are the highest channel count consoles currently available, this gives you an insight into how complicated it is. And it's not just the audio that is complicated, other departments (lighting, rigging, set and backline) also had long and complicated days. As a result, we often got access to the stage at 2pm for a 4pm sound-check. That's 150 odd inputs mic-ed up and 20 players' mixes line-checked in about two hours. Let's just say that we had to be quite organised.

What is the best part about your job?

I love it all. Honestly, I'm very excitable in the morning with the challenge of managing two semi-trailers of sound equipment, knowing that at some point later that night it's all going to be back in the trucks, having listened to good music and having worked with a great

team of people. Most likely it's the variety and complexity of the projects that I work on that keeps me interested. It keeps me thinking and trying new techniques and methods to solve complex audio related problems.

What advice would you give to someone wanting to be a sound engineer?

There is so much to learn and see that you can never expect to know everything.

You are always as good as the person you can call...

A level-headed personality and being able to get along with others is sometimes more important than skill. This doesn't mean that you can't be good at your job, but it certainly helps in this service-based industry to get along with others.

Watch, listen and take mental notes when given the opportunity.

Never say no to anything, but be honest if you don't know how to do something. A three-minute explanation by someone else and doing it right is far better than barging in and having to undo an hour or two's work. ■

TOP OF THEIR GAME



From left: Lincoln Vickery and Ewen Leslie.

Two WAAPA alumni joined the cast of the keenly-anticipated second season of acclaimed Foxtel drama *Top of the Lake*.

Ewen Leslie and Lincoln Vickery co-starred alongside Elisabeth Moss (*The Handmaid's Tale*, *Mad Men*) as she reprised her Golden Globe winning role as Detective Robin Griffin in *Top of the Lake: China Girl*, which premiered at a special Sydney Opera House screening on August 1 before debuting on BBC First on August 20.

The cast also features Oscar winner Nicole Kidman (*The Hours*, *Big Little Lies*), Gwendoline Christie (*Game of Thrones*), David Dencik (*Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*) and Alice Englert (*Beautiful Creatures*). Like the first series, *China Girl* was directed by Oscar winner Jane Campion.

Filmed in Sydney, *Top of the Lake: China Girl* received rave reviews and a standing ovation at its international premiere at the Cannes Film Festival, the first time the festival had screened a television series.

Leslie, who graduated from WAAPA in 2000, is widely considered to be one of Australia's finest actors, having won awards and critical acclaim for his outstanding theatre performances as Prince Hal in the Sydney Theatre Company's 2009 production of *The War of the Roses*, as *Richard III* (2010) and *Hamlet*

(2011) for the Melbourne Theatre Company, with *Hamlet* being reprised for Belvoir in 2013. He played a lead role in Simon Stone's 2011 production of *The Wild Duck* in Sydney, Melbourne and Oslo for The Ibsen Festival. In 2015 he travelled to Paris to perform in Simon Stone's production of *Thyestes*, and played the title role in Belvoir's award-winning production of *Ivanov*.

Leslie also has a string of film credits to his name, including *The Daughter*, the film version of *The Wild Duck*. Upcoming features include Warwick Thornton's feature *Sweet Country*, selected to make its world premiere in official competition at the Venice International Film Festival in September, Priscilla Cameron's *The Butterfly Tree*; and Jennifer Kent's *The Nightingale*.

Lincoln Vickery auditioned for *Top of the Lake: China Girl* a week after his graduating showcase at the end of 2015. He describes how 'awesome' it was when a month later, just after Christmas, he found out he'd got the part.

In the series, Vickery plays Brett, a young man who falls in love with a sex worker. When she goes missing, Brett gets embroiled in the drama at the heart of the series.

It's not often an acting student gets to step out of drama school and onto the set of a series directed by one of the world's great film directors.

"I've never met anyone quite so inspiring, working with her was an absolute dream," says Vickery. "Every day on set I would learn more not just about my job but about myself."

ART MUSIC AWARD WINNERS



Acclaimed jazz pianist, composer and WAAPA lecturer Tom O'Halloran took out the Jazz Work of the Year award for his album *Now Noise* at the 2017 APRA Art Music Awards, held at Sydney's City Recital Hall on August 22.

The nation's finest composers, performers and educators from the realms of jazz, experimental and art music converged to see 11 national and eight state-based winners named as part of the seventh annual event.

Now Noise, featuring O'Halloran's original compositions, is the second album for Perth outfit Memory of Elements (MoE), comprised of O'Halloran on piano, Jamie Oehlers and Carl Mackey on saxophones, Simon Jeans on guitar, Pete Jeavons on doublebass and Ben Vanderwal on drums.

In addition to his work with MoE, O'Halloran leads his own original jazz piano trio, conducts orchestras, composes experimental music,

and plays analogue synthesizers. In 2016 he won the WAM Best Jazz Artist award and in 2011 was a finalist in the Freedman Foundation Jazz Fellowship, performing at the Sydney Opera House.

As part of the entertainment at the APRA awards night, WAAPA Classical Music graduate and sessional lecturer, cellist Tristen Parr performed finalist Cat Hope's *Shadow of Mill (1st movement)*. The late, great Graham Wood was honoured in a tribute to those members of the Australian music community who have passed in the last year.

The WA Award for Jazz Work of the Year was awarded to WAAPA graduate and sessional lecturer, drummer Daniel Susnjar for *Help You Along Your Way*.

Congratulations also to WAAPA's good friends at Tura New Music for picking up the Award for Excellence in a Regional Area - Tura New Music for their 2016 Regional Program.

PLAYWRITING PASSION PROJECT FOUR NEW SHORT PLAYS ENJOY A SELL-OUT SEASON AT WAAPA

In June, WAAPA presented a season of bite-sized theatrical treats that showcased the breathtakingly original work of four local playwrights: Hellie Turner, Chris Isaacs, Gita Bezard and Finn O'Branagáin.

Petits Fours was commissioned by WAAPA with funds from Playwriting Australia and the Minderoo Foundation.

The plays were performed by WAAPA's 2nd Year Acting students under the direction of Perth directors Susie Conte, Trudy Dunn, Nicole Stinton and Julia Jarel.

Multi-award-winning playwright Hellie Turner presented her provocatively titled work, *Self Portrait Masturbating*, a "peep-hole" into the life of Austrian artist Egon Schiele. This work followed hard on the heels of Turner's adaptation of *The Lighthouse Girl*, which recently completed a sell-out season at Black Swan State Theatre Company.

Director Susie Conte enjoyed the many ways the rehearsal process was informed by having the playwright on hand.

"The process of workshops with the cast was a hugely useful one for me, and especially the young actors, to see how a play is shaped over time and by input from all the key creatives," Conte says.

Chris Isaacs' play *The Emancipation of Alice Paws or Bite The Hand* was selected to represent WAAPA at the 2017 Asia Pacific Bureau Theatre Schools Festival in Shanghai in June, just prior to the Perth season.



Production photo from "Petits Fours", from left: Ellen Robson, Jessie Lancaster and Michael Cameron

Trudy Dunn, who directed Isaacs' play, says the playwright's availability allowed him to be an integral, practical element to the realisation of the text in performance. "These factors resulted in an exciting, shared intent that drove the process through to fruition," she says.

Gita Bezard's short play *Remarkable* is about the art of subtle manipulation and how the language of progress can be used as a weapon.

"To be able to see the script develop from infancy into something more mature, to have input into that process, to help to overcome textual challenges and also have the opportunity to experiment with ideas and

possibilities along the way, was invaluable," says Nicole Stinton, director of *Remarkable*.

The Election by playwright/director/dramatist Finn O'Branagáin is based on the increasing showmanship and 'entertainment value' of the 2016 Australian and US elections, and how the media coverage centres on personality politics over policy.

Julia Jarel, director of *The Election*, believes that *Petits Fours* was an exceptionally innovative and worthwhile experience for all involved. "I would thoroughly recommend a similar project be mounted again in future years for the benefit of upcoming actors, directors and writers."



DANCING THE DREAM



WAAPA GRADUATE JOINS A CUTTING-EDGE BRITISH DANCE COMPANY

Late last year, dancer Tia Hockey was invited to join the London-based Alexander Whitley Dance Company to research and develop a new work. Six months later, *8 Minutes* premiered on June 27-28 at Sadler's Wells Theatre, Britain's leading dance venue.

Made in collaboration with solar scientists from the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory, the title refers to the length of time it takes for the sun's light to reach the Earth.

Tia describes working on *8 Minutes* as a highly interactive process, in which Whitley and his chief creative collaborators — scientist Hugh Mortimer, video artist Tal Rosner, composer Daniel Wohl and the cast of seven dancers — influenced and informed the approach to creating movement.

"Alex guided us through endless choreographic tasks. We were constantly exploring, creating, developing, refining, altering and manipulating material. It was physically demanding, mentally challenging and very enjoyable."

Alexander Whitley, a former choreographic affiliate of the Royal Ballet, started his eponymous dance company

in 2014. Since then, he has developed a reputation for ambitious and intricately-crafted dance works.

"I am drawn to the technicality, physicality and overall aesthetic of his style," says Hockey. "His career is admirable and I am eager to learn, grow and be challenged by this opportunity to work with the company."

The seven dancers in the company are drawn from England, Scotland, Sweden, Spain and Australia.

Hockey says this cultural diversity makes for an exciting group dynamic. "Everybody had something unique to offer. I am very pleased to be working amongst such inspiring and supportive people."

In addition to *8 Minutes*, Hockey has been contracted for two more projects that will keep her with the company for the coming year. In September Hockey began re-rehearsing *8 Minutes* for a tour to four English cities before performing in Karlsruhe, Germany. She will then work with the company on a Royal Opera House commission in response to Frederick Ashton's ballet, *Sylvia*, before developing a new piece entitled *Gandini Juggling*.

Tia Hockey (front) performing "8 Minutes" with the Alexander Whitley Dance Company. Photos by Johan Persson



WILDING OFFERS UNIQUE VOICE

Photo by Daniel Boud

The multi-talented Megan Wilding took to the Belvoir St Theatre stage in July as part of Eamon Flack's production of *The Rover*, starring alongside Toby Schmitz and Nikki Shiels.

Only two months earlier, in the same theatre, Wilding was awarded the Balnaves Foundation Indigenous Playwright's Award for 2017 at an event during National Reconciliation Week. Her \$25,000 prize is comprised of a \$15,000 commission to write a new play and a \$10,000 cash prize.

Wilding completed WAAPA's Aboriginal Theatre course in 2012 before being accepted into the 3-year Acting course. In her graduating year, 2015, Wilding was awarded the Sally Burton Award for her performance of Shakespeare.

"Being chosen as the recipient of the Balnaves Award means the world to me," said Wilding when presented with the award. "I'm so grateful to the Balnaves Foundation and to Belvoir for believing in me and giving me the platform and support to strengthen and explore my voice, just like it has done for all the phenomenal previous winners."

"I entered the Balnaves Award because I had a story that I really wanted to write and the award will give me the tools to fully invest in the process of writing."

For her commissioned play, Wilding is planning to write about an Indigenous woman who takes violent revenge against a man who sexually assaulted her as a child.

Anthea Williams, Belvoir's Associate Director of New Work and a member of the Balnaves judging panel describes Wilding as "a force, a unique voice with excellent writing craft and a passion for telling contemporary stories."

A proud Gamilaroi woman, Wilding also coordinates Belvoir's Writers Group for Women of Colour.

The Balnaves Foundation Indigenous Playwright's Award was established to encourage the telling of Indigenous stories with the aim of fostering understanding and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

ARTISTIC CONNECTIONS

THE MERRY WIDOW SHOWCASES THE DEPTH OF WAAPA TALENT

As part of West Australian Opera's 50th Anniversary celebrations, a new production of Franz Lehár's *The Merry Widow* opened in July at Perth's His Majesty's Theatre. Directed by Graeme Murphy, the production was "bubbling over with opulence and mirth," according to the 5 star review in *Limelight Magazine*.

Starring in the lead role of Danilo Danilovich, Music Theatre graduate Alexander Lewis was praised for his elegant dancing and delightfully light lyric tenor voice – his "Fred Astaire looks and moves."

Lewis is forging an enviable career as a 'cross-over' artist, being equally as comfortable in music theatre and opera. After his time at WAAPA, Lewis completed the Merola Opera Program in San Francisco and the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program in New York.

A global artist, he has performed for New York's Metropolitan Opera, the Komische Oper Berlin, and last year made his Royal Opera House Covent Garden debut.

In 2015 he performed the role of John Wormley in the world premiere of Matthew Aucoin's opera *Crossing* for the American Repertory Theatre. Of his performance as the wounded young soldier, *The New York Times* wrote: "The affecting young tenor Alexander Lewis brings cagey intensity to the role, singing by turns with flashes of defiance and pleading despair."

After his star turn in *The Merry Widow*, Lewis will revisit the role of John Wormley in a remounting of *Crossing* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in New York, and the title role in *The Nose* with Opera Australia and the Komische Oper Berlin.

Lewis was not the only WAAPA graduate in *The Merry Widow*. Singers Emma Pettemerides, Andrew Foote, Sam Roberts-Smith and Jonathan Brain all contributed performances that were review worthy.

"Emma Pettemerides was big-eyed and sweet-voiced as the flirtatious Valencienne," wrote Rosalind Appleby in *Limelight*. "Baritone Andrew Foote's comic excellence was put to good use as the foolish Baron Zeta while Sam Roberts-Smith and Jonathon Brain were quite ridiculous in their rivalry for Hanna's fortune."

In addition, graduates Harriet O'Shannessy, Mark Hurst and Ileana Rinaldi were members of the WA Chorus and WAAPA graduate Breanna Skewes was one of the professional dancers.

While it may not seem the usual career path for a dancer, Skewes believes the multi-disciplinary nature of opera makes it a stimulating platform for dance artists.

"To have all this talent under the same roof, collaborating together, is really electrifying," she says.

This is the fourth Opera Australia production that Skewes has danced in, following *The Magic Flute* in 2015, *Turandot* in 2016 – where the cast performed on a custom-built stage over the water of Sydney Harbour – and a performance last year in the Sydney Opera House for the New Year's Eve Gala.

"It's a really exciting environment to be in," she says. "Every show is different, with a new director and location, a new set is built for every production and they're the most extravagant costumes."

"To have now had the opportunity to be alongside Graeme Murphy and Janet Vernon as they create a new work has been a once in a lifetime opportunity."

Skewes credits her time at WAAPA for providing her not only with the tools and opportunities to dance but also for giving her a wealth of connections out in the industry.

"The connections I made at WAAPA have been invaluable. WAAPA graduates are always willing to help each other out."

"I think a really wonderful thing about WAAPA is that it has so many different faculties that are all interconnected. It's important to know how the machine works so that you know your part and appreciate the people working alongside you."

For now, that appreciation will continue with her cast-mates in *The Merry Widow*, as she tours into 2018 with the show.



From left: Mark Hurst*, Mark Alderson, Jonathan Brain*, Alexander Lewis*(centre back), Sam Roberts-Smith*, Thomas Friberg and Andrew Foote. (*WAAPA graduates)



Front: Emma Pettemerides performing in "The Merry Widow".



Breanna Skewes (second from right) performing in "The Merry Widow".

Photos by James Rogers for West Australian Opera

ART SONG SUCCESS

In July, accompanist and coach par excellence Dr Graham Johnson returned to the WAAPA International Art Song Academy to lead a week of master classes on the songs of Hugo Wolf and Franz Schubert.

He was joined by internationally renowned tenor and Director of the Cardiff International Academy of Voice, Dennis O'Neill CBE, who lent his expertise in the performance of Italian songs: Verdi, Donizetti, Bellini and more.

Now in its fourth year, WIASA offers young singers and pianists an outstanding opportunity to develop their training and performance of art song through the mentorship and guidance of internationally renowned visiting artists. This year's participants came from Australia, New Zealand and Singapore.

At the Gala Concert at Government House Ballroom, Dr Graham Johnson was presented with an Honorary Doctorate from ECU.



WIASA Gala Concert at the Government House Ballroom: in ceremonial robes (centre left to right) ECU Vice-Chancellor Prof. Steve Chapman CBE, Dr Graham Johnson, Head of Classical Voice Patricia Price, WAAPA's Associate Dean of Music, Prof. Stewart Smith and ECU Chancellor Dr Hendy Cowan AO.
Photo by Stephen Heath.

FOUR FINALS FOR KEIGHTLEY

This year bass baritone Paull-Anthony Keightley secured a finals place in four of Australia's biggest competitions for classical singers.

The WAAPA Classical Voice graduate, who is currently a member of the Young Artists Program at West Australian Opera, was named a finalist in the Opera Foundation for Young Australia's Lady Fairfax New York Scholarship; was awarded the ROSL Arts Scholarship, the Canberra Symphony Orchestra Prize and the Christine Leaves Prize at the IFAC Handa Australian Singing Competition; placed second in the Joan Sutherland and Richard Bonyngé Bel Canto Award; and won the Opera Foundation for Young Australia's Deutsche Oper Berlin Award which sees him join the company's ensemble for 2018/19.

After graduating from WAAPA in 2012, Keightley went on to study at the Manhattan School of Music

before landing a Young Artist's position with the WA Opera. He made his professional debut with the company last year in *Gianni Schicchi* before appearing as Sciarone in *Tosca*.

"Being a Young Artist with WA Opera has been brilliant," says Keightley. "The company has offered me support in my artist development as well as numerous off stage experiences that have been equally as helpful."

Upcoming engagements for Keightley include Colline in *La Bohème* with Freeze Frame Opera and Zuniga in *Carmen* with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra.

The 2012 WAAPA graduate values the variety of his time at WAAPA. "Not one day at WAAPA was the same. And the friends I made - passionate individuals that managed to teach me so much!"



DANCE COUP

A WORLD-LEADING DANCE COMPANY AND WAAPA SET BENCHMARK COLLABORATION

WAAPA's dance students were treated to a ten-day workshop in August with two dancers from the acclaimed Tanztheatre Wuppertal Pina Bausch dance company.

Julie Shanahan and Rainer Behr taught the Jooss-Leeder Technique and repertoire from the iconic canon of the late, great choreographer Pina Bausch.

This workshop marks the start of the Pina Bausch Training and Repertory Project, a unique three-year artistic collaboration that puts WAAPA at the forefront of international contemporary dance training. The only other training institution to have been the beneficiary of a similar project has been New York's famous Juilliard School.

The late Kurt Jooss is widely regarded as the founder of tanztheatre (dance theatre). He collaborated for 23 years with the brilliant dancer and educationalist Sigurd Leeder, pioneering modern dance. Pina Bausch trained under Kurt Jooss and is considered one of the most influential choreographers of the modern era.

Next year will see a similar workshop held at WAAPA and in 2019 it is anticipated that the project will culminate in the remount of a Pina Bausch work exclusively on WAAPA Dance students.

Adelaide-born Julie Shanahan has been a dancer with Tanztheatre Wuppertal Pina Bausch for nearly 30 years. Dancer and choreographer Rainer Behr, another long-time Tanztheatre Wuppertal company member, is Shanahan's husband.

Shanahan first saw the German dance company at the 1982 Adelaide Festival when Pina Bausch brought her performers from Wuppertal, an industrial city in western Germany, to Australia for the first time to stage a trilogy of shows, innovatively fusing dance and theatre. Shanahan was just 19 years old but it was clear to her that she wanted to perform with the company. Two years later she moved to Europe and in 1988, Shanahan successfully auditioned for Pina Bausch.



Rainer Behr (top) and Julie Shanahan (below) with WAAPA dance students

Last year, Shanahan returned to the Adelaide Festival to perform a Bausch piece entitled *Nelken (Carnations)*.

WAAPA is delighted to have Shanahan and Behr sharing their expertise and insights into performing in this world-renowned dance company with its students and looks forward to the results of this extraordinary collaboration.

WAAPA has another connection to Pina Bausch: Michael Whaites, Artistic Director of LINK Dance Company, was a member of the company from 1995-2000.



By kind permission and support of Pina Bausch Foundation/Wuppertal.

Photos by Kathy Wheatley



LINK IN FRANCE

WAAPA'S HONOURS DANCE COMPANY PERFORMS OVERSEAS

Fresh off the back of their successful season of *Twin Share* at WAAPA in May, LINK Dance Company toured to France in the mid-year break.

From June 16 to July 19, eleven Honours dance students travelled with Masters student Emma Fishwick and LINK Artistic Director Michael Whaites to Marseille and Montpellier for the creation of a new collaborative work, rehearsals and performances.

In Marseille, the dancers adapted their work *Skinless* by Spanish choreographer Carmelo Segura for an outdoor performance.

"Performing *Skinless* in a square near the port was a very different experience to performing it in a theatre due to the work being heavily based on lighting and floor work," says LINK dancer Sasha Brampton. "We had to strip back the work and adapt some movement around wearing sneakers and being on concrete – we were very dirty afterwards!"

LINK also collaborated with French choreographers Christine Fricker and Léa Meaari, and four of their company dancers, on a site-specific piece entitled *Crossing*

Borders. Crossing Borders was a structured improvisation incorporating interaction between the dancers and the audience through the use of voice and touch.

"We had devised some material in the few weeks prior to leaving for Europe around themes that Michael [Whaites] had discussed with the two other directors, Léa Meaari and Christine Fricker, which we shared with the French dancers and continued to shape and incorporate into their ideas," says Brampton.

"Overall the highlight of our time in Marseille for me was the overwhelmingly enthusiastic response from the French audiences."

LINK then travelled to Montpellier in the south of France where they had been invited by Didier Theron to perform *Twin Share*. Being in the southern French city during the Montpellier Dance Festival gave the students the opportunity to experience contemporary European dance works such as David Wampach's *Endo* and Marlene Monteiro Frietas' *Bacchantes*.

"Being able to see such a range of performances throughout the whole tour was

a beneficial and enlightening experience," says LINK dancer Lauren Catellani. "It was helpful for extending our knowledge of choreographers and artists and broadened our awareness of what is going on in the dance field internationally."

Caitlin Gilchrist agrees, adding that LINK also received positive feedback for their performances. "It was a successful once-in-a-life-time opportunity," she says.

Following their time in France, the LINK dancers embarked on individual secondments: Cassidy Mann participated in the Henny Jurriens Stichting Summer Intensive, working with Eric Beauchesne of Kidd Pivot; Sasha Brampton, Lauren Sherlock and Karen Haruta participated in a six-day Gaga Intensive in Barcelona under artistic director Aya Israeli with guest teachers Bosmat Nossan and Guy Shomroni, both former company members of Ohad Naharin's Batsheva Dance Company; and Kishor Kumar attended the Malta International Arts Festival.

LINK Dance Company in France
Photos by Emma Fishwick



DRANDIC IS QTC'S DRAMATURG

Award-winning actor, dramaturg and director Isaac Drandic is resident Dramaturg at Queensland Theatre under the artistic directorship of Sam Strong.

Drandic, a 1999 Aboriginal Theatre graduate, provides literary management and dramaturgy support to Queensland Theatre's programming department from his base in Cairns.

His role includes dramaturgy on various works this year including *My Name is Jimi*, which had its world premiere in July in Cairns before heading to Brisbane for a sell-out season. This original new work stars WAAPA graduate Jimi Bani (*Mabo, The Straits, Redfern Now*), who co-wrote the show with Dimple Bani and Jason Klarwein. Through music, dance, stand-up and storytelling, Bani tells the story of his family and his place of home on Mabuig Island in the Torres Strait.

Drandic will also join the judging panel for the 2018/19 Queensland Premier's Drama Award.

TIMPANI TALES FROM LONDON

PERCUSSIONIST TEGAN LEBRUN WINS PRESTIGIOUS TIMPANI AWARD



2014 Honours percussion graduate Tegan LeBrun has achieved a childhood dream by completing a Masters degree at London's prestigious Royal Academy of Music.

Tegan starred in the Defying Gravity percussion ensemble throughout her study at WAAPA, showing outstanding skills across all of the percussion instruments – but her special love has always been the timpani. While at WAAPA Tegan won the position of Principal Timpanist of the Australian Youth Orchestra and she toured Europe with the AYO, playing in the world's leading concert halls.

Now she has graduated from the Royal Academy of Music, winning the James Blades Prize for Timpani on her way. Tegan's final concert for RAM was a performance of Gustav Mahler's epic *Second Symphony* in London's Royal Albert Hall. Tegan writes from London:

"Attending the Royal Academy of Music has

been a dream of mine since I started playing percussion. It feels as though it's been a long road to get to this point, but I have been fortunate to have the support of my family and friends (both back home and here in the UK) and have been very lucky thus far to have been taught by some very dedicated teachers.

Living and studying in London has been everything I hoped it would be, but hasn't been without its challenges. Adjusting to a new city and new way of life was a little tricky at first but now I have started to think of London as my home away from home; I have made so many good memories here over the past two years and have met some truly wonderful people.

Studying at the Royal Academy has definitely been a roller-coaster experience – there have been many highs and lows, many challenging moments and equally many joyous ones. I have learnt so much about my playing and about

myself as a person and although things have been hard at times, I wouldn't change any of it for the world.

It seems like only yesterday that I was nervously awaiting my first percussion lesson with Neil Percy (Principal Percussionist of the London Symphony Orchestra), and now I have graduated with a Master of Arts Degree with Distinction and the James Blades Prize for Timpani. Unlike the Zildjian Prizes, which go to the students with the top two exam marks, the Blades Timpani and Percussion Prizes are discretionary. Each year one percussion and one timpani prize are awarded to students who the Head of Department, Principal and the Examination Board feel have demonstrated a highly skilled level of performance and a great deal of dedication to their instrumental studies.

Winning the Blades Prize was a very special moment and a wonderful way to end my studies at the Royal Academy. I have made great strides in all aspects of my playing as a student here, and have worked extremely hard to make the most of the opportunity to study under guidance of some of the best players in the world.

Looking back, I have no doubt that my experiences as a percussion student at WAAPA contributed to me being afforded the opportunity to study at the Royal Academy of Music. WAAPA provided the perfect springboard into the rest of my career, and my time there in Perth was spent much like my time at RAM has been – working hard every day to make the most of every opportunity. I know that, had I not completed studies at WAAPA and worked with some incredibly inspiring and passionate people there, I would not have become the musician I am today."

ACTING SITE GOES GLOBAL

Acting graduates Andrew Hearle and Luke McMahon are taking their WAAPA training global. Since 2010 they have been working on an acting resource website called StageMilk.com

Originally an Australian theatre review site, StageMilk has become one of the world's largest websites for actors, with over 60,000 readers a month. The site offers scenes, monologues and advice on taking an acting career to the next level.

"We've been really lucky," says co-founder McMahon. "We're top of Google for all kinds of search terms, from female monologues to acting games."

Much of the sites' success relies on the practical advice that Luke and Andy learnt during their time at WAAPA.

"Our time at WAAPA was invaluable," says Hearle. "The staff were incredible, they taught us so much."

Now these two entrepreneurs are taking those lessons and passing them on to a wider audience of actors.



From left, Luke McMahon and Andrew Hearle
Photo courtesy of StageMilk



FESTIVAL OF DANCE

WAAPA STUDENTS TAKE OUT PRESTIGIOUS DANCE PRIZES

In June, a record number of students came together at the John Curtin College of the Arts in Fremantle to compete in the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) Australia's Festival of Dance.

The festival, which takes place over five days, is a springboard for many aspiring and pre-professional dancers who compete for prestigious scholarships and awards across various categories.

The competition was adjudicated by guest professionals Lana Jones (principal with The Australian Ballet), Daniel Gaudiello (former principal with The Australian Ballet), Steven Etienne (former Dutch National Ballet dancer), Cédric Ygnace (ballet master at West Australian Ballet) and Daryl Brandwood (former dancer with The Australian Ballet, West Australian Ballet, Australian Dance Theatre and Expressions Dance Company.)

A number of WAAPA students excelled in the competition, reinforcing WAAPA's reputation as a centre for excellence in dance training. Evelyn Roberts, currently completing her Bachelor of Arts in Dance, followed up her success as a finalist in

last year's Genee International Ballet Competition by taking out both the prestigious Linley Wilson Scholarship and the prize for Best Senior Female.

Best Senior Classical went to Angel Wright Warner (Diploma - Elite Performance) who also won the Adjudicator's Prize for Best Female Dancer. The Linley Wilson Artistic Scholarship was awarded to Keely Geier (Diploma - Elite Performance) and Best Senior Contemporary went to Portia Secker (Diploma - Elite Performance).

WAAPA sessional Dance Lecturer Diana de Vos OAM was awarded a RAD Fellowship for her many years of outstanding and exceptional service to the Academy and to the art of ballet.

A gala performance on the final evening of the festival, which reprised the award-winning performances, also featured a guest performance of *Black Attitude* by WAAPA's 3rd Year Bachelor of Arts Conversion students, choreographed by Jayne Smeulders. and Evelyn Roberts performed *La Foulle* choreographed by Kim McCarthy.

From top: Evelyn Roberts, Keely Geier and Diana de Vos OAM
Photos courtesy of David Mueller Dance Photography

MUSIC THEATRE'S NEW TRAILBLAZER

Jarrold Draper, WAAPA's first Aboriginal Music Theatre student, is the recipient of the 2017 Edith Cowan University Vice-Chancellor's Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Scholarship.

This scholarship is worth \$2,500 per semester until the completion of an undergraduate degree.

Draper, a Wiradjuri man from central New South Wales, is currently in the second year of WAAPA's Music Theatre course.

At 15 years of age Jarrod moved away from home to attend boarding school where his talents shone on and off the stage. He attracted lead roles in the school productions, won several theatre awards, sung solo at the Empire State Building and scored 100 per cent in Music in his HSC.

He also represented his school and town at state level in swimming, rugby, touch football, basketball and soccer.

However, despite this impressive list of personal triumphs, Jarrod says he's most proud of his most recent achievement.

"Being the first Indigenous man to be accepted into the Music Theatre course at WAAPA is my biggest personal achievement," he says.

Jarrold said studying at WAAPA was not only a dream come true for him but could also have a positive impact for others who want to make a career in their own chosen field.

"I have always been encouraged by my parents to follow my dreams and be proud of my Indigenous heritage.

"Encouraging and promoting education within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is important because education creates empowerment. Education makes us all equal and opens up unbelievable and achievable opportunities, such as attending WAAPA," Jarrod says.

"The scholarship will assist me financially and relieve some of the pressure associated with the demands of the course," he said.

"I have goals of performing on Broadway and with the skills and training I'll acquire at WAAPA, plus my own hard work, determination and dedication I have no doubt I can achieve them.



Above: Jarrod Draper performing in WAAPA's 2017 production of '42nd Street'.
Photo by Jon Green

"When you're doing something you love it just seems to make sense and come with ease."

Selection for the ECU Vice-Chancellor's Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Scholarship is based on academic merit and demonstrated leadership and contribution to the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander community.

Jarrold received his scholarship on July 3 at a flag raising ceremony that marked the beginning of ECU's NAIDOC Week celebrations.



Joshua Nicholls with Janis Siegel (Manhattan Transfer)

NYU JAZZ TOUR

In July, WAAPA's 2nd and 3rd Year Jazz students attended a two-week intensive summer school in the jazz capital of the world – New York City.

The course, held on the jazz campus of New York University in Greenwich Village, consisted of workshops, music theory classes and ensemble rehearsals, and culminated in two public performances and two recording sessions for each ensemble. In addition, the students enjoyed the wealth of amazing jazz on offer in the New York jazz clubs and a spot of sightseeing.

Here 2nd Year Bachelor of Jazz Performance student Joshua Nicholls describes the trip:

"The NYU facilities provided us with some excellent resources: soundproof practice rooms, well-situated accommodation that was just walking distance from New York's iconic jazz clubs such as the Blue Note and the Village Vanguard, and a large pool of experienced, knowledgeable and helpful staff.

By hearing jazz music in its intended context and developing our own music with experienced lecturers, the NYU course allowed us to fully explore our artistic ambitions in a supportive and dynamic environment.

In order to fully absorb the intricacies, the ethos and the spirit of jazz, you have to immerse yourself in the culture and in the music; as a thriving hub at the epicentre of the global jazz scene, there is no better place than New York to expand your understanding. On any given night we were spoilt for choice in terms of gigs to see, with endless venues featuring some of the biggest names in jazz – Ron Carter, Bill Frisell, Chris Potter and Greg Osby, among countless others.

Those of us who decided to sightsee sought out iconic landmarks including the Empire State Building, the Statue of Liberty, Grand Central Station and the 9/11 Memorial. The amount of rich culture and history that is so densely packed into the city was not only eye-opening, but was invaluable to our growth as artists and as human beings.

I'd like to give my sincerest thanks to Jamie Oehlers, Chris Tarr, Dave Schroder and all the staff at NYU, WAAPA and ECU who went above and beyond to make this life-changing trip possible."

SALLY BURTON WINNERS



From right: Mitchell Bourke, Sally Burton and Stephanie Somerville

3rd Year Acting students Stephanie Somerville and Mitchell Bourke have won the 2017 Sally Burton Awards.

Nurturing young artistic talent has long been a passion for Sally Burton, the widow of the great Welsh actor Richard Burton. All students in 3rd Year Acting at WAAPA are invited to perform for the annual prizes – one for a male, one for a female – worth \$2,000 each.

The students are required to perform a Shakespearean text monologue or duologue. The judging is based on the ability to speak the verse, connect to the text, interpret the content and present the finished work.

Stephanie Somerville played Queen Margaret in a powerful scene from *Henry VI* and Mitchell Bourke gave a poignant and touching portrayal of *Richard II*. This year's judges were Artistic Director of Black Swan State

Theatre Company, Clare Watson, director/designer Lawrie Cullen-Tait and writer/director Will O'Mahoney who were unanimous in their decision.

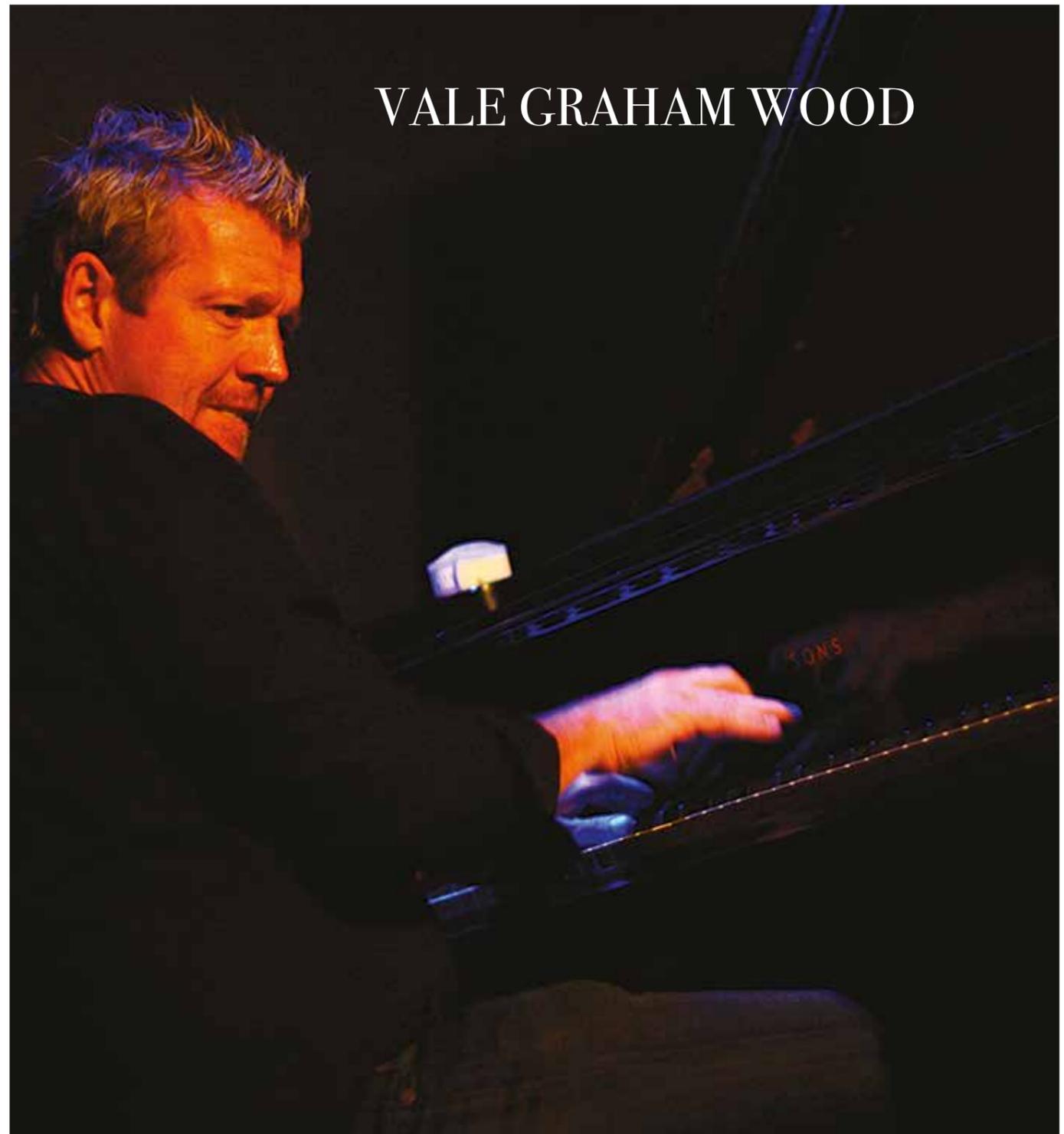
Many of the past recipients of the Sally Burton Award have gone on to greater success in film, television and theatre. Past winners include James Mackay and Matthew Levett who both went on to win the prestigious Heath Ledger Scholarship; Abby Earl is enjoying a long-running role in the hit TV series *A Place To Call Home*; 2015's winners Ben Kindon, who stepped out of drama school into a lead role in *Barracuda*, and Megan Wilding, who is the 2017 winner of the Balnaves Foundation Indigenous Playwright's Award; and Claire Lovering, who scored a lead role in the Nine Network's 2016 television drama series, *Hyde & Seek*.



On Saturday 12 August at the conclusion of *The Bach Connection* concert performed in the Music Auditorium, Dr Stewart Symonds, donor of the Stewart Symonds Piano Collection, received his Honorary Doctorate from ECU Chancellor Dr Hendy Cowan AO.

ECU Vice-Chancellor Prof. Steve Chapman CBE congratulates Dr Stewart Symonds with Executive Dean Prof. Julie Warn AM and Prof. Geoffrey Lancaster.

VALE GRAHAM WOOD



On Wednesday 19 July, WAAPA lost a most admired and respected colleague, friend, teacher and mentor when Associate Dean Associate Professor Graham Wood PhD passed peacefully surrounded by his family and loved ones.

Dr Graham Wood was a musician, educator and entrepreneur. His history with WAAPA stretches back 27 years from his time as an undergraduate student through to his appointment as Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning in 2016.

As a professional pianist, arranger and composer he toured extensively nationally and internationally and worked with many

renowned international artists including Frank Foster, Sam Rivers, Ernie Watts, Sheila Jordan, Dave O'Higgins, Cindy Blackman, Dave Weckl, Claire Martin, Reggie Workman, Ingrid Jensen, Mark Murphy, Greg Osby, Bob Sheppard, Carmen Lundy, Chris McNulty, Paul Bollenback, George Garzone, Mike Moreno, Gretchen Parlato, Howard Levy, Jon Gordon and Fred Wesley. As an entrepreneur he started the Perth International Jazz Festival and the successful Ellington Jazz Club.

Graham was a great advocate for music education and was very proud of his PhD research which covered *Prevalence, factors*

and effects of Performance Related Medical Disorders (PRMD) among tertiary-trained jazz pianists in Australia and the United States. His work is published internationally in the Performing Arts Medical Association (PAMA) journal and he made regular presentations at the Performing Arts Medical Association annual symposium in Aspen, Colorado.

Graham's impact on this institution, its students, staff, patrons and the entire Western Australian music community cannot be understated.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

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

42nd Street



Chicago



Love and Information



Unleash



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Unleash



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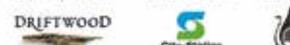
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