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INSIDE WAAPA

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BEN O'TOOLE stars in 12 Strong

Alumni lead in
JERSEY BOYS

PINA BAUSCH AWARD
for dancer Scott Elstermann

EDDIE PERFECT
Broadway bound

PLUS
Fringe World winners
National playwright award
International visiting artists
and much more



JERSEY BOYS RETURNS

WAAPA alumni star in return season of hit musical

After an extensive tour from 2009 to 2013, the hit musical *Jersey Boys* is returning to Australia this September, with two WAAPA graduates playing lead roles and three other alumni in the ensemble.

Jersey Boys tells the true-life story of the rise to stardom of one of the most successful bands in pop music history, Frankie Valli and The Four Seasons. The band sold more than 175 million records and were inducted into the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame for their worldwide hits, including *Can't Take My Eyes Off You*, *Walk Like a Man*, *Bye Bye Baby*, *Sherry* and *Big Girl's Don't Cry*, which all feature in the musical.

Bernard Angel, a 2007 WAAPA graduate, is taking on the role of charismatic lead singer Frankie Valli while Glaston Toft, a 2005 graduate, is reprising his celebrated portrayal of the band's musical marvel, Nick Massi.

The ensemble includes 2017 Music Theatre graduate Mackenzie Dunn in the role of Francine

and swings Sage Douglas (2010) and Jack O'Riley (2013).

Bernard Angel, who played Joe Pesci in the original Australian tour and understudied the role of Frankie, says the latter's tenacity has stuck with him ever since those performances.

"I still like the fact that the original Four Seasons were working at making music for so long before they finally made it," he says. "Even when I see it now, I still think about how those guys just kept at it. As actors, it's quite similar: we're just constantly auditioning."

Glaston Toft first performed the role of Nick Massi in 2009, touring for four years and amassing over 1300 performances. Most recently Toft was seen in *The Bodyguard* playing FBI agent Ray Court. Prior to this he created and performed the role of Athol Guy in *Georgy Girl - The Seekers Musical*.

The Melbourne-based Toft describes how he is now looking forward to stepping back into

his *Jersey Boys* role. "It's a fantastic show and Nick is a great character to play," he says. "One of the unique parts of the show is that we get to address the audience directly. So I'm really looking forward to that aspect. It does feel like we're able to connect with an audience in a way I haven't seen in many other shows."

Toft studied voice at the Queensland Conservatorium of Music before successfully auditioning for WAAPA's Music Theatre course.

Toft remembers particularly enjoying the production slots at WAAPA, which he says made him realize that he 'learns by doing' – something he tries to take into all areas of his performing. It was also while at WAAPA that Toft met his wife, fellow Music Theatre graduate, Amelia Christo.

Jersey Boys will open at Sydney's Capitol Theatre in September.

From left: The Four Seasons, Cameron MacDonald, Bernard Angel, Thomas McGuane and Glaston Toft



NO WEAK LINKS IN I2 STRONG

'JUMPING IN' IS THE KEY TO ACTOR BEN O'TOOLE'S SUCCESS

2011 WAAPA graduate Ben O'Toole is easy to spot in his latest film, *12 Strong*.

The military-issue glasses that the actor was asked by director Nicolai Fuglsig to don for the shoot are nicknamed BCG – an acronym for Birth Control Glasses – because of their unsexy appearance. Yet O'Toole was happy to embrace his character's distinctive look.

"I had the whole glasses and moustache thing going on," he laughs.

In *12 Strong*, O'Toole stars alongside Chris Hemsworth as Scott Black, a US Army Special Forces soldier on a covert incursion into Taliban-held Afghanistan directly after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

This is the latest in a string of high-profile film and television credits for the Brisbane-born actor, including 2014's *The Water Diviner*; the Mel Gibson-directed *Hacksaw Ridge* in 2016; and last year's *Pirates Of The Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales* and *Detroit*. Back home in Australia, he starred in three seasons of the hit television series *Love Child*.

"From the producers, creatives, cast, to the caterers, everyone on this project was on board from the very start," says O'Toole about working on *12 Strong*. "A film like this is the sum of its parts, and there were no weak links in my opinion. Some of my fellow cast were also people I have admired for some time, so getting to work directly with a hero or two of mine was pretty awesome."

O'Toole credits his training with giving him the ability to throw himself into whatever is demanded of him.

"I'd have to say my on-set attitude and work ethic are the most important things my training gave me," he

says. "WAAPA taught me that from day one it can be refinement, not rehearsal. Taught me to jump in and get out of my own way. Helps a lot on set and keeps you humble!"

"Also, bravery is respected and preferred. No one is interested in a person that will 'do it on the day...' Shut up and jump in! And the work ethic ... the theatrical training forces you to constantly find new things, and think outside of yourself and your character. It's important to understand the role of your character, but it's just as important to understand your character's role in the piece."

This training held O'Toole in good stead when he worked on Kathryn Bigelow's *Detroit*, opposite John Boyega and Will Poulter. He believes the Academy Award-winning director was the perfect person to tell such a difficult and confronting story: "Her compassion inspired everyone on set, and encouraged the best work out of us all."

O'Toole will next be seen in the Australia-filmed sci-fi-horror *Nekromancer* from the directors of *Wormwood*, opposite Monica Bellucci and David Wenham.

Although his burgeoning film work has meant he has spent more time in the US over the past couple of years, O'Toole is still keen to keep his ties with Australia.

"I miss too many people far too much, and would love to maintain a healthy working relationship with the Australian industry."

Ben O'Toole (centre left) as Scott Black and Michael Shannon as Hal Spencer in *12 Strong*
Photo by David James



A PERFECT SCORE

EDDIE PERFECT'S MUSICAL ADAPTATIONS ARE BROADWAY BOUND

Following on from the international success of fellow WAAPA graduate Tim Minchin with *Matilda: The Musical* and *Groundhog Day*, actor/musician/comedian Eddie Perfect is set to open two blockbuster musicals in the US later this year.

Perfect, best known for his role as musician Mick Holland in Network Ten's drama *Offspring*, has written the score for the much-anticipated Broadway adaptation of Tim Burton's *Beetlejuice*.

The 2001 WAAPA Music Theatre graduate has also reworked songs for the musical *King Kong*. *Kong* will mark Perfect's Broadway debut, while *Beetlejuice* will open in Washington DC.

The 40-year-old actor and musician, who wrote the award-winning *Shane Warne: The Musical* as well as standalone shows including *Misanthropy*, has divided his time between his home town of Melbourne and New York for the past year.





BRASS BRILLIANCE

Brent Grapes, WAAPA's Head of Brass and principal trumpet with the West Australian Symphony Orchestra, has won a spot in the acclaimed Australian Brass Quintet.

"I'm so excited to perform with the ABQ for their 2018 season," says Grapes. "The members of this ensemble are some of the very finest brass musicians in the country and I'm thrilled to share the stage with them."

The ABQ opening became available when founding member and former Head of Brass at WAAPA David Elton left to take up the position of principal trumpet with the prestigious London Symphony Orchestra.

Fellow ABQ musician Scott Kinmont will be a visiting artist at WAAPA this year for students in the Brass program. Kinmont was for many decades the lecturer in trombone studies at the Sydney Conservatorium and is currently Associate Principal Trombone in the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

This year WAAPA's Brass students will also gain the expertise of visiting artist Darryl Poulsen, former principal horn of the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra.

"The opportunity to have these guest artists share their knowledge is one that the students and I will learn so much from," says Grapes. "It's always a thrill to work with the students at WAAPA; the dedication and talent on display here is inspiring."

Above: WAAPA's Head of Brass Brent Grapes
Photo by Nik Babic Photography



Photo by Kathy Wheatley

A PIANOMAKER OF FORTE

Acclaimed historical piano maker visits WAAPA

In March, WAAPA was delighted to welcome the internationally renowned builder of historical pianos, Paul McNulty as a visiting artist.

McNulty has lived and worked in the Czech Republic for over 25 years. His workshop is in the small village of Divisov, some 60 kilometres southeast of Prague.

Today McNulty and his wife, the acclaimed fortepianist Viviana Sofronitsky, run McNulty Fortepianos, building replicas of historic pianos with the utmost precision.

The fortepiano, the modern piano's predecessor, was the instrument that many of the great composers composed on, from Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, Mozart and Beethoven to Chopin, Liszt and Brahms.

McNulty produced his first fortepiano in 1985. Since then he has built in the style of the great fortepiano makers of the past, including Stein, Walter, Hofmann, Graf and Pleyel, Chopin's favorite brand. In 2011 on request McNulty reproduced one of Liszt's personal pianos, the Boisselot op. 2800. This instrument was originally made in 1846 for Liszt's 1847 Russian tour. In 2015 McNulty extended his list of first modern copies with a Streicher piano, Brahms' favourite piano model.

McNulty's instruments are owned by prominent players and leading music institutions throughout the world, including the Melbourne Recital Centre, London's Royal Academy of Music, Chopin's Institute Warsaw, and many others. His instruments also feature on significant recordings made by the great fortepianists of modern times.

Building a single fortepiano requires around 1,000 man-hours to make: the treatment of wood alone has to be planned out, with boards being left outside for five years before the drying process begins – and that's years before they even make it into a workshop for shaping.

A year ago, WAAPA took possession of a McNulty fortepiano built in the style of the famous Viennese instrument maker, Anton Walter. As McNulty explains, it was chosen because Mozart, Hayden and Beethoven all composed and played on Walter fortepianos.

"In 1796 Walter was regarded as the foremost piano maker in Vienna," says McNulty. "He built instruments for those who wanted to play loud and fast, and he did that in the way of making a robust mechanism – more so than the [contemporary] Stein fortepiano which has a brighter, more incisive, reedy tone." McNulty describes the Walter fortepiano as "being robust with a warm, full sound."

So when Mozart bought a Walter piano in 1782, his concertos took on a fuller texture in the orchestral arrangements. This was one of the most important phases of Mozart's career, with the composition and highly successful premieres of his mature piano concertos.

"Mozart used his Walter piano exclusively when he performed in Vienna. It was always being carried from one concert to another so it was special in this regard."

Towards the end of the 1790s, Beethoven was composing on a Walter piano in his studio. "So you have from 1801 the *Moonlight Sonata*, which explores a dramatic range of coloration and the last movement is fiercely dramatic and you need a piano of such power but it also has this warmth," explains McNulty.

By having a McNulty-crafted Walter replica fortepiano, WAAPA's music students are able to play the instrument the pieces were composed for and audiences are able to hear these composers' works as they would have sounded when they were first performed.

STUDENTS WOWED BY KELLY

Award-winning British arts leader inspires next generation

Jude Kelly CBE, Artistic Director of London's Southbank Centre, delivered a stirring address to WAAPA students and staff in a packed Geoff Gibbs Theatre on 27 February.

Kelly was in WA for the Perth Festival, thanks to the ongoing generosity of WAAPA sponsor, the Minderero Foundation.

Considered the most powerful woman in British arts, Kelly is an award-winning director and producer of theatre and opera in the UK and internationally. She is the recipient of a CBE and OBE for services to the Arts, two Laurence Olivier awards and 17 honorary doctorates for her work in the field of cultural access.

After 12 years, Kelly is stepping down from her role at the helm of the UK's largest arts centre later this year to pour her energies into the global movement she founded in 2010, Women of the World festivals.

WOW celebrates the history and potential of girls and women in all fields of life and highlights the obstacles that prevent gender equality from being achieved. Since its inception, WOW has staged 49 festivals in 23 countries over five continents, featuring talks, debates, performances and activism involving more than two million people.

Kelly's talk at WAAPA covered themes of leadership and self-determination in the arts and the positive impact of performance making and arts on society.

Right: Jude Kelly CBE addresses WAAPA students and staff
Photo by Kathy Wheatley



On 20 February, WAAPA hosted an exclusive masterclass by internationally renowned French pianist, Jean-Efflam Bavouzet, thanks to the generosity of the Perth Festival.

WAAPA Bachelor of Music students Izaak Masters, Chantal Xiaosong Liu and Mitchell Price-Norgaard were chosen to participate. "It was an absolute honour to play for Jean-Efflam Bavouzet," said Masters. "He was a true inspiration to me and took the masterclass with an engaging flare. Overall, it benefitted me by giving me performance practice, and feeling motivated for the future."

Bavouzet was in Perth to perform a concert at Government House Ballroom on 24 February.

Above: WAAPA Bachelor of Music students Izaak Masters, Chantal Xiaosong Liu and Mitchell Price-Norgaard with internationally renowned French pianist, Jean-Efflam Bavouzet
Photo by Stephen Heath

5 MINUTES WITH EMMA MATTHEWS

WAAPA's new Head of Classical Voice and Opera, soprano Emma Matthews has returned to the place where her career began to teach performance.

IW: You've performed with all state opera companies and have been prima soprano, singing with Opera Australia for more than 20 years. Have you a favourite performance?

EM: I have many favourites. I think in my top three would be singing at Covent Garden as the Vixen in *The Cunning Little Vixen*. It was an incredible experience and the most beautiful place to sing, with wonderful colleagues. It was also incredibly challenging physically. It required lots of crawling and leaping; I've never worked so hard in my life!

Another favourite would be the 2001 New Years' Eve performance at the Sydney Opera House. I was seven and a half months pregnant with my first son, Jack, and singing for the first time Ophelia's mad scene, from *Hamlet*, with Simone Young conducting.

IW: What were you looking forward to most about returning to Perth and your alma mater?

EM: I left WAAPA with the plan of coming back one day. My job interview for my new position was daunting though, as I had to sing for the panel in the Music Auditorium. I hadn't sung in there since my graduating recital and I felt like a student again! To come back now and share my passion for technique, stage craft and the opera repertoire is a huge honour.

IW: How different is it to go from performer to teacher?

EM: It's a big change, but one I've been doing gradually. I'm not stopping singing, just doing less, so I can focus on my students. I love hearing a voice grow and getting to know the young singers. Singing isn't just about singing — you need to be able to communicate through your voice and through your physical expression. I'll be focussing very much on technique with my students, which needs to be mastered before they can become real artists.

IW: What is the one piece of advice you have for WAAPA's aspiring Classical Voice singers?

EM: Properly focus on all the steps needed to produce beautiful line and tone, and a constant flow of breath. When you're given a vocalise to learn, learn it. Study languages, be prepared for lessons and be patient — it takes longer for some voice types to get it right. Listen to recordings, and go to as many live performances as possible.

IW: What do you love most about opera?

EM: Opera is the ultimate of art forms. It is profoundly moving, and the voices combined with the orchestra and the visual elements, when done right, are incredibly powerful. People who say they're not into opera generally haven't been to a performance or have seen an uninspiring production. Do yourself a favour and open your mind and ears, get off your phones, and go and see one of the fabulous West Australian Opera performances. You'll be surprised!

A FIRST FOR AUSTRALIAN DANCER

DANCER SCOTT ELSTERMANN WINS INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP



Scott Elstermann has been selected as one of four recipients of the 2018 Pina Bausch Fellowship for Dance and Choreography.

This makes the 23-year-old dancer the first Australian and youngest ever artist to receive this prestigious Fellowship.

The Pina Bausch Fellowship offers young dance artists opportunities such as residencies at dance institutions, short-term placements with companies or choreographers, and opportunities to study with renowned artists.

From February until May, Elstermann is being mentored by Spanish director and choreographer Marina Mascarell.

"This is an extremely exciting, once in a lifetime opportunity," says Elstermann.

"I will get the rare opportunity to experience all the phases of Marina Mascarell's artistic process from a two-week creative development, a premiere of a new work, a remount of a previous work, touring and workshops.

"The Fellowship will take me to companies such as Skånes Dansteater (Malmo, Sweden), Nederlands Dans Theater (The Hague, Netherlands) and Gärtnerplatztheater (Munich, Germany) as well as artistic organisations such as Mercat

de les Flors (Barcelona, Spain). I will get to participate in daily class, explore task work, observe rehearsals and attend world class performances."

Elstermann graduated from WAAPA in 2014, taking out the Palisade Award as most outstanding graduate of the Bachelor of Arts (Dance) degree.

Since then he has worked for some of Australia's leading dance artists including Lucy Guerin Inc., Natalie Allen, and Shona Erskine. He was invited to perform at the World Dance Alliance Global Summit Choreolab in Angers, France and the iconic Vondelpark Openluchttheater in Amsterdam. Elstermann has also choreographed a range of short works, with his show *Awkward Con-nections* winning the Overall Dance & Physical Theatre Award at the 2016 Perth Fringe World Festival.

On awarding Elstermann the Pina Bausch Fellowship, the Jury statement noted the young dancer's high technical level, compelling stage presence, and sensitive and expressive body language: "His skills and talent as a dancer are extremely promising and we feel that an immersion in a stimulating and challenging dance environment is crucial for the next phase of his artistic development."

WAAPA graduate Scott Elstermann (far right) with fellow 2018 Pina Bausch Fellowship winners Marie-Lena Kaiser, Alexandre Achour and Kareth Schaffer
Photo by Sala Seddiki

RENNIE RISES TO ROCKY HORROR HEIGHTS

From understudy to star, Adam Rennie steps up to lead role

Adam Rennie has earned rave reviews for his performance in the lead role of Frank N Furter in *The Rocky Horror Show*.

As Craig McLachlan's understudy, Rennie was catapulted into the role on January 8 during the Adelaide season. Rennie had only one three-hour rehearsal before taking to the stage as Frank N Furter for that evening's performance.

Yet that night the 2008 WAAPA graduate "didn't miss a beat" according to the *Adelaide Advertiser*.

"Rennie has the looks, the legs, the luscious lips and most importantly of all, the lungs to make a meal of this iconic role," wrote *Advertiser* critic Peter Burdon. "The night was Rennie's, and it was a triumph."

The adulation followed Rennie as the show toured to Brisbane and Perth, with *The Courier Mail* labelling Rennie "a star in the making" while *The West Australian* praised Rennie as "spectacular and intriguing as the corset-encased Frank".

"...from the moment Rennie first emerged for Sweet Transvestite, he stole the show with an interpretation of Frank that was saucy, hilarious and mesmerizing," wrote reviewer Jessie Papain. "His vocals were sublime, particularly during I'm Going Home, which added a vulnerable, human side to this murderous extraterrestrial being."

Rennie recently returned to Australia after moving to New York in 2012 where he performed in *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *Priscilla Queen of the Desert*, the Australian musical *Once We Lived Here* and the national tour of *Flashdance - The Musical*. His Australasian credits include *Crazy for You*, *Jekyll & Hyde*, *The Producers*, *Prodigal* and *Love Never Dies*. He has also worked alongside the legendary Debbie Reynolds in *Irene*.

Joining Rennie onstage in *Rocky Horror* were fellow WAAPA graduates Rob Mallett (2012) in the role of Brad Majors, James Bryers (2010) as Eddie/Dr Scott, Ross Chisari (2013) as Phantom, and Holly James (2011) as the Swing/Dance Captain.

Adam Rennie as Frank N Furter in *The Rocky Horror Show*
Photo by Rob Maccoll



ECU HONOURS SHOWBIZ GREATS



From left: Dr Kevan Johnston, Dr Jill Perryman and ECU Chancellor, The Hon Dr Hendy Cowan AO

Australian show business veterans Jill Perryman and Kevan Johnston were the worthy recipients of honorary doctorates at Edith Cowan University's graduation ceremony on 4 February at the Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre.

Dr Perryman AM MBE has enjoyed an extraordinary performing arts career in musical theatre, starring in numerous hit stage shows, including *Hello Dolly!* and *The Boy from Oz*. She is also a highly accomplished dramatic actress, with her credits including *'night Mother*, *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, *Gulls* and *Noises Off*.

Dr Perryman was presented with her honorary doctorate for her outstanding contribution to the Australian arts and for the care, wisdom and grace with which she has inspired and mentored countless new performers in the entertainment community.

Dr Johnston, a highly accomplished dancer, actor and choreographer, was awarded his honorary doctorate for his tireless encouragement and support of young talent in the performing arts. Beyond his stage work, Dr Johnston took enormous pride in his teaching and choreographic roles at WAAPA, where he tutored for many years.

The couple's granddaughter Mackenzie Dunn graduated from WAAPA's Music Theatre course last year. Dunn will make her professional debut in the Black Swan Theatre Company production of Ray Lawler's *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll* in May.

Dr Perryman and Dr Johnston are great fans of WAAPA and are enthusiastic attendees of all its music theatre shows.

"We are so surprised with all the talent at WAAPA, it is mind-blowing," Dr Perryman said.

SOUND DECISIONS

Just two years after finishing his WAAPA training, Production and Design graduate Christian Peterson is now touring the world as a sound engineer with Cirque du Soleil. Here he tells Inside WAAPA how his career is shaping up:

IW: When did you decide you wanted to be a sound engineer and why?

CP: I played music during my high school years and performed in music theatre, which got me interested in sound. It wasn't until I recorded my band's EP when I was 15 that I really got into sound. I bought some microphones, a little mixer and software to record it and it was all done in my bedroom! A bit cringeworthy to listen back to now, though you have to start somewhere. It's interesting that a lot of legendary music producers recorded their first albums on only four-track cassette machines and now any kid who has an iPad or a laptop can produce, mix and export an entire album to the world. Technology advances have really made this profession accessible.

IW: What did you enjoy most about your studies at WAAPA?

CP: The real highlight of my experience at WAAPA was working

on the shows; they're all student run, and I think that enables students a level of 'take it and make it yours'. That's crucial for transitioning into work outside of WAAPA, where project management and collaborating with other people and departments is a skill everyone on a show really needs. The lecturers we had were awesome and many of them have become colleagues and great friends; a lot of them work in the industry so their knowledge is current and relative to the work that's around.

IW: How did the gig with Cirque du Soleil come about?

CP: I left WAAPA in 2015 and was working full time as a sound technician on festivals, concerts and theatre shows in Perth and around Australia. I met some of the crew on the Cirque du Soleil show *Kooza* in Melbourne last year and I took that as an opportunity to see if they were hiring. They weren't, but I took a resume, wrote a cover letter, treated it like an interview and after pestering them enough that day (and the day I came back!), they asked if I would join them for the next leg of the tour in Perth. I lived in Perth so they wouldn't have to pay for extra lodging or transport and they happened to need an extra hand in the sound department. Right place at the right time, but had I not asked, it may never have happened! ▷

IW: What does your job at Cirque du Soleil entail?

CP: I work as a PA Tech [Public Address Technician, known in Australia as a Systems Technician] in the Sound Department; my role involves designing, rigging and tuning the sound system for each new venue we arrive in. On arena tours, we move every week and each venue has its challenges in acoustics, audience seating, height/weight restrictions, etc. I also mix the show as backup to the Head of Sound and a lot of my week is spent on projects, whether new or maintenance. On this show I have over 150 speaker cabinets to maintain, rig and tune, and the stage has audience on either side, so it's quite unique in its design. We have an eight-piece band as well as artists and props mic'd on stage. There's a lot of wireless systems, whether it's microphones, in-ear monitoring for the band or comms for the technicians. The show takes a day to load in and have ready for performance, and it's all packed up in under five hours, but we'll have that down to even less, soon!

IW: What are you working on now?

CP: I am currently on *Corteo*, which has just begun its North American arena tour, since it's a remount of a big top show. We spent a few months in Montreal (where Cirque is based) and Quebec City designing and building the show, and since then we've

opened in New Orleans and at the time of writing, are about to load-in to Houston. Previously I was touring in Australia, New Zealand and Dubai with *Toruk*, another arena show and before that was *Kooza* in Perth.

IW: What do you love most about being a sound engineer?

CP: I really enjoy the mix of creative and technical work that is involved in sound engineering. Some days I'm behind the console mixing a show based on the emotive and acrobatic content on stage and other days I'm rigging the speakers, making cables and loading trucks (and there's no shortage of trucks...). Sound is very subjective and we all respond to it differently, so if an audience walks away applauding and happy, then that makes it worth the work. Ultimately what we do is a service, and I'm very thankful that I get to do what I love! You have to enjoy working in a team environment as, like any career, the biggest challenges are often to do with people. Luckily I am surrounded by a great team at Cirque, with people from all around the world!

IW: What does 2018 hold for you?

CP: *Corteo* is on its North American tour now until August next year, so my time will be mostly spent in the US and Canada. Generally every 10 weeks we get two weeks off; in a week I'm headed to China for a holiday which should be interesting!



WAAPA Professor Geoffrey Lancaster's CD of Mozart piano sonatas, *Mozart Keyboard Sonatas KV330–332*, was awarded a 5 star rating in *The Australian* in January.

Reviewer Vincent Plush announced that "If there is one album to blow fresh breeze into a new year, this is it."

This follows Andrew Ford's assertion last December in *Inside Story* that "this CD demands to be heard and will force you to think about Mozart and his music".

Lancaster is renowned as one of the foremost exponents of the fortepiano, the forerunner of the modern piano. His new CD was recorded in Perth in June 2016 on a fortepiano constructed by Paul McNulty, based on an 1805 Viennese model and tuned to A-330 pitch.

"There is barely a bar played in the conventional four-square manner. The musical architecture is taken apart and reassembled in bizarre yet illuminating ways," wrote Plush.

"Purists have condemned these performances, but I salute a shibboleth-shattering performer and a brave recording company for sweeping away 250 years of straitlaced stylistic purity and pomposity. I will never be able to listen to these familiar pieces in quite the same way again."

Professor Lancaster has also recently released Joseph Haydn's *The Seven Last Words of Christ* on the Tall Poppies label.





Photo by Tom Supple

Above: Tara Tiba

SIREN SONG

TWO WAAPA GRADUATES SING FOR PERTH FESTIVAL OPENING

For ten days in February at dawn and dusk, Perth's St Georges Terrace echoed with the ethereal sound of women's voices as part of a spectacular outdoor aural work that opened this year's Perth Festival.

Siren Song, a seven-minute serenade signalling the arrival and departure of the light each day, was created by sound artist Byron Scullin and curatorial duo Supple Fox, a creative partnership between artists Tom Supple and Hannah Fox. An earlier version of *Siren Song* garnered international acclaim when it premiered at Dark Mofo in Hobart in 2017.

The Perth musical soundtrack, which emerged from 400 speakers on rooftop locations along the CBD's central axis, included the voices of artists Carolyn Connors, Yorta Yorta

opera singer Deborah Cheetham, Tanya Tagaq, Kristal Kickett and WAAPA graduate Karla Hart.

Their voices were joined, via a recording emitted from a hovering helicopter, by the remarkable solo chants of WAAPA graduate Tara Tiba.

Tiba was born in Tehran in 1984, shortly after female singers were prohibited from performing in public. She trained in Iran in Western classical piano studies before studying jazz at WAAPA – however it is her reputation as a singer of classical Persian vocal music that saw her invited to participate in *Siren Song*.

Tiba described how hearing these uniquely Iranian ornamental vocal techniques projected through the Perth streetscape felt like a fitting tribute to the city that supported her after leaving Iran.

FILM GAINS NATIONAL ATTENTION

PHD CANDIDATE'S AWARD-WINNING DOCUMENTARY SCREENS ON SBS

It's Not Just Me, a documentary film about transgender men written and directed by WAAPA PhD candidate Jonathan Messer, was screened nationally on SBS in February and on SBS Viceland in March, and is available for viewing on its online platforms.

The film, which premiered last year at Perth's Revelation Film Festival and picked up the award for Best LGBT Documentary Feature at the Atlanta International Documentary Film Festival, was also screened at the Queer Screen's Mardi Gras Film Festival in Sydney in February and in the Brisbane Queer Film Festival in March.

It's Not Just Me explores the lives of four Australian transgender men as they navigate the various aspects of gender transition, including the challenges they face in their relationships, with family and employment, and the 'transitions' that those around them have to make as well.

The 60-minute documentary was filmed as four short films over a three-year period,



Director Jonathan Messer (inset photo and second from left above) and composer Johannes Luebbers (centre) with members of the LGBTIQ community at the Queer Screen Mardi Gras Film Festival in Sydney.

following each of the men throughout their journeys.

Fellow WAAPA PhD candidate Johannes Luebbers and Bachelor of Music Honours graduate Alice Humphries co-wrote and performed the original score for the film, PhD candidate Rusty Geller was one of the cinematographers and WAAPA alumnus Dr Stuart James was the sound designer/audio post production.

Messer said the inspiration for *It's Not Just Me* came from wanting to look at the rising acceptance and understanding of transgender women.

"When I was doing my literature review I looked a little bit deeper and I realised actually there are no men in popular culture – transgender men – and so I thought I'd explore that," he said.

"I am very proud to be a part of the WAAPA research community and am very grateful to have my work recognised for its social and cultural value nationally."

To watch the film, go to the SBS-On Demand link: <https://www.sbs.com.au/ondemand/video/1153653315991/its-not-just-me>



Photo by Rachael Barrett and Perth Festival 2018

Far left: Maddie Hughes with Rebecca Erin Smith conducting.

FESTIVAL FANFARE

As part of a collaboration between the Perth Festival and WAAPA, three Music Composition students were given the opportunity to create original fanfares to herald the start of many of this year's Perth Festival performances.

The fanfares, composed by Bachelor of Music in Composition and Music Technology students Maddie Hughes, Olivia Guelfi and Holly Powley, replaced the traditional foyer bells ushering audiences to their seats.

The aspiring composers were mentored by WAAPA lecturer Rebecca Erin Smith. The fanfares, written for brass ensemble and

percussion, were then performed and recorded by professional musicians and students from WAAPA.

Rebecca Erin Smith is an award-winning Australian composer who specialises in collaborative media and concert works. A graduate of WAAPA, the Manhattan School of Music and a Fulbright Scholar, Smith's most recent commissions include works for Edith Cowan University, WA Youth Orchestra, Phoenix Ensemble, and GreyWing Ensemble.

The fanfares replaced the theatre bells at venues around Perth including the State Theatre Centre, His Majesty's Theatre, the Octagon Theatre, Regal Theatre and the Perth Concert Hall.

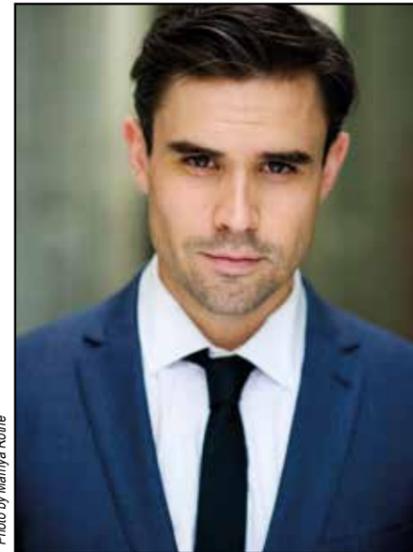


Photo by Marnya Rothe

Actor Scott Sheridan has won one of only four 2018 Glorias Fellowships.

Set up by the Gloria Dawn and Gloria Payten Foundations and administered by the National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA), the Glorias Fellowships provide financial assistance for professional actors and directors to broaden their knowledge through international travel and study.

A GLORIOUS FELLOW

PRESTIGIOUS FELLOWSHIP TAKES ACTING GRADUATE TO CHICAGO'S COMEDY HUB

The \$9,000 funding provided by the Fellowship will enable Sheridan to spend four weeks from July 9 at a Summer Intensive of Improvisation and Sketch Comedy at Chicago's Second City Training Centre.

The 2009 WAAPA Acting graduate has previously worked with companies such as Melbourne Theatre Company, Bell Shakespeare, Griffin Theatre Company, Black Swan State Theatre Company, Barking Gecko Theatre Company and Sport for Jove. He appeared in John Duigan's 2012 film *Careless Love*, and played Brian Henderson in the 2015 Seven Network biopic, *Peter Allen: Not the Boy Next Door*.

However it is comedy that Sheridan considers is his strength as a performer and writer. His recent film *Undedicated*, which he wrote and performed in with several other WAAPA graduates, was accepted into the 2017 Austin Film Festival.

Winning the Fellowship will allow Sheridan

to study the techniques and styles of comedy performance at the world's most influential comedy school.

"The Second City has produced the likes of Amy Poehler, Tina Fey, Stephen Colbert, Bill Murray, Key and Peele and so many other great comedians that I am inspired by, and wish to emulate in my own performance, but in a uniquely Australian way," says Sheridan.

"There is a growing need for new stories in our country, with comedy being one of the great mediums in reaching our audience and making a change.

"The course specialises in comedy performance, improvisation and creating your own works. Undertaking classes at Second City will provide me with invaluable tools for performance, teaching and writing."

For more information on the Glorias Fellowships, please go to: <https://www.nida.edu.au/alumni-and-industry/fellowships/glorias>

FRINGE WORLD WINNERS

FRINGE WORLD AWARDS SHOWCASE WAAPA TALENT

WAAPA students and graduates featured heavily among the winners of the Perth Fringe Festival 2018 Fringe World Awards. The third largest Fringe in the world, Fringe World is a broad community celebration of more than 750 events from international and local artists performing at almost 130 venues across the city.

Fringe World Awards are given to the best shows in each genre category, with winners receiving cash, development support and direct touring opportunities.

The most coveted prize of the Festival, the Martin Sims Award – which recognises the best new Western Australian work destined

to succeed on the world stage – was presented to cabaret act, *What Doesn't Kill You (Blah Blah) Stronger*.

The producers of the show, Holland Street Productions, received \$10,000 and touring opportunities to other Fringe Festivals through the World Fringe Alliance. This is the second time Holland Street Productions have picked up the top Fringe gong, having previously taken out the Martin Sims Award in 2014 for *Point & Shoot*. Two of the three partners in Holland Street Productions are WAAPA graduates: Tyler Jacob undertook the Certificate II Music Theatre program and Erin Hutchinson studied Classical Voice.

LINK Dance Company graduate Bernadette Lewis was the recipient of the Dance and Physical Theatre Award for her live dance, light and photography installation, *The Honeymoon Suite*.

Michelle Aitken, a 2016 WAAPA Dance graduate, took out the Melbourne Fringe Tour Ready Award for her self-devised physical theatre piece, *Future's Eve*.

The Independent Program Award winner was won for the seventh year in a row by Summer Nights, a curated program of performances. One of these was Anna Barnes' *Minus One Sister*, the debut production for SALT, a new collective that champions original Australian writing.

Minus One Sister brought together a team of WAAPA students and graduates under director Riley Spadaro, with producer/production manager Emily Stokoe, set/costume designers Kaitlin Brindley and Kelly Fregon, lighting designer Phoebe Pilcher, composer/sound designer Alex Turley, movement director Jessica Russell, stage manager Jessie Atkins, publicity and marketing by Zachary Sheridan and Samantha Maclean, and actors Skye Beker, Mitchell Bourke, Phoebe Sullivan and Stephanie Somerville.

2nd Year Bachelor of Performing Arts student Zachary Sheridan was also the writer and director of *The Cockburn Incident*, which won the Adelaide Fringe Tour Ready Award. This show, another product of WAAPA students and graduates, featured performers Tamara Creasey, Courtney Henri, Christopher Moro, Marshall Stay, James

Thomasson and Elise Wilson, and assistant director Bec Fingher, designer Dani Chilton, with lighting by Phoebe Pilcher, sound by Marshall Stay and dramaturgy by Cam Pollock.

Two current Bachelor of Performing Arts students, Grace Chow and David Stewart, and Diploma of Acting student Lily Baitup were performers in WA Youth Theatre Company's *yourseven*, which took out both the WA Emerging Artist Award and ECU Performing Arts Award.

WAAPA congratulates all these students and graduates on their success at the Fringe Festival Awards.

Clockwise from main photo: What Doesn't Kill You (Blah Blah) Stronger, The Honeymoon Suite and Future's Eve.



A MARVEL OF AN IDEA

FREE FILM SCREENING INSPIRES INDIGENOUS AND AFRICAN YOUTH

When actor Shareena Clanton set up a GoFundMe page to raise community support for a free screening of superhero blockbuster *Black Panther*, she never dreamed that the producers behind the film would come on board.

Clanton, who is best known for her role as Doreen in the Foxtel drama *Wentworth*, was inspired by the film's celebration of black people, both on and behind the camera: the director, Ryan Coogler, and the majority of the cast are black and the story focuses on black characters in powerful roles.

Clanton is a graduate of WAAPA's Aboriginal Theatre course and the Advanced Diploma of Performing Arts (Acting).

Propelled by the firm belief that it is important for young black kids to see themselves represented in the stories they see on screen, Clanton reached out for community support to provide a free screening for Melbourne's Indigenous and African youth.

The film's production company Marvel contacted Clanton and offered to provide funds to cover the cost of the first screening. That initial support, coupled with the funds raised online, enabled Clanton to provide several free movie screenings.

"What I'm trying to endorse here is something incredibly positive," said Clanton in a recent interview. "Who knows, we might be able to inspire the next superhero film writer, the next director or another actor who sees themselves up there and goes, yeah, that is possible. Now you've shown me that it's possible."

Above: Shareena Clanton (second from left) at the free screening of *Black Panther* with some of Melbourne's Indigenous and African youth.



NEW CULTURAL AMBASSADOR

and collaborate across all WAAPA departments.

A Gooniyandi/Kija man from the Kimberley region of North-Western Australia, Stewart will serve as WAAPA's Aboriginal Cultural Ambassador by implementing cultural awareness lectures and workshops.

Stewart studied dance at the National Aboriginal Islander Skills Development Association (NAISDA) in Sydney. As a dancer and choreographer he has worked with numerous local and international companies including Company Lian in Paris, the Intercultural Institute Singapore, Buzz Dance Theatre, Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company, Ochre Contemporary Dance Company, and many others. He has also worked on community youth dance projects throughout regional WA and the Northern Territory, and has participated in

conferences, seminars and performance symposiums across Australia, Indonesia and the Pacific Islands.

In 2016 and 2017, Stewart worked as the Aboriginal Liaison Officer at Lumen Christi Catholic College.

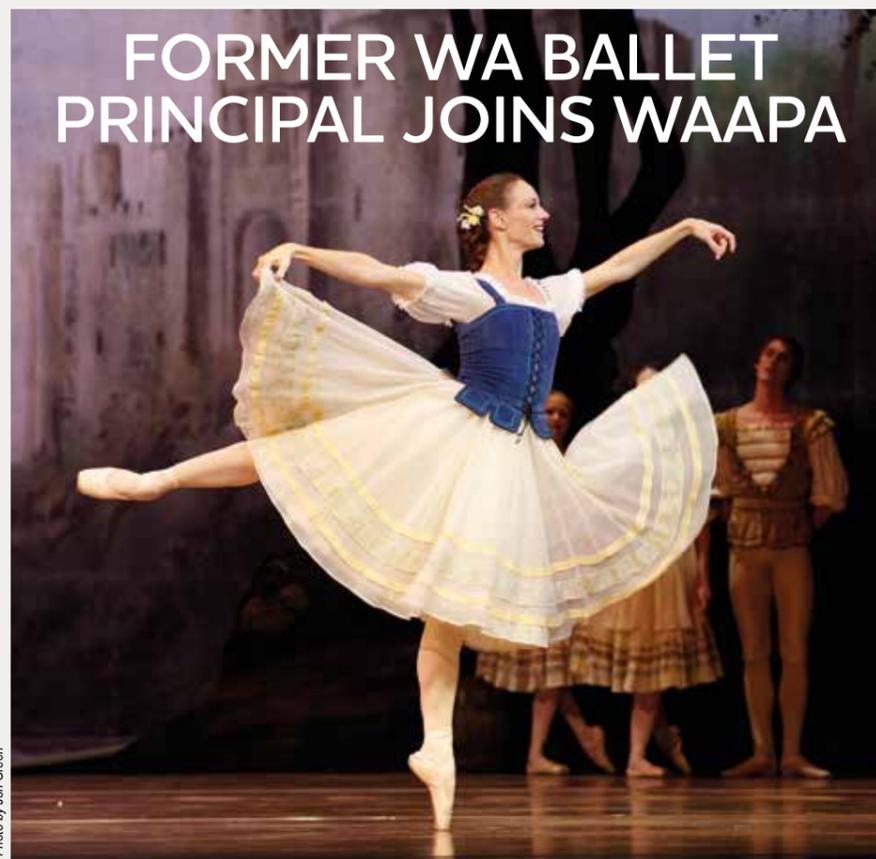
"The influence of Simon's addition to WAAPA's staff is highly significant given his experience, connection and communication with Aboriginal family groups and organisations," says Rick Brayford, Coordinator of the Aboriginal Performance program.

"We are now able to increase the cultural input and movement components of the Aboriginal Performance program, raising the cultural capital and cross-cultural arts collaborations across WAAPA."

Simon Stewart's position at WAAPA is generously supported by the Bass Family Foundation.

WAAPA welcomes a new Contemporary-Indigenous Dance Lecturer to its Aboriginal Performance program.

Contemporary Aboriginal choreographer Simon Stewart will teach dance and movement to WAAPA's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, as well as Indigenous movement to the Bachelor of Performing Arts cohort. Stewart will also contribute to productions, run workshops



The much-loved former West Australian Ballet principal dancer Jayne Smeulders has joined the staff at WAAPA, teaching across the Dance and Music Theatre programs.

"Being at WAAPA will give me the opportunity to give back all the wonderful knowledge and guidance I was given as a dancer," says Smeulders. "I hope to be able to inspire the students to be the very best they can possibly be."

Smeulders' dance career, which spans 20 years, started with Nederlands Dans Theatre II, where she worked with acclaimed international choreographers such as Jiří Kylián, Hans van Manen, Paul Lightfoot, Nacho Duato, Ohad Naharin, Lionel Hoche, Johan Inge and Gideon Obarzanek.

On her return to Perth in 1999 she joined the West Australian Ballet where she remained until her retirement last year. As principal dancer, she performed numerous lead roles with the company, including Kate in John Cranko's *The Taming of the Shrew*, Clara in Ivan Cavallari's *The Nutcracker*, the title role in *Giselle* and Kitri in Lucette Aldous's *Don Quixote*. In 2008 she was the recipient of the West Australian Dance Award for Outstanding Performance by a Female Dancer.

Her work as a choreographer for WAB includes *Cinderella* in 2011 and *The Nutcracker* in 2016. WAAPA audiences will get to see her choreographic talents in *Rise*, the first dance season for the year.

When asked to choose a highlight of her career, Smeulders describes dancing

on the Metropolitan Opera House stage in New York's famed Lincoln Center with Baryshnikov in the audience as a "surreal" experience. She also cites the honour of being awarded the 2009 West Australian of the Year in the category of Arts, Culture and Entertainment.

This is in marked contrast to what she describes as her low-point: "My calf exploding on stage in my opening solo in *Taming of the Shrew* (my all-time favourite ballet!)." Remarkably, this torn calf muscle, which sidelined her for more than five months, was the only serious injury Smeulders suffered in her long career.

"In my case I was very lucky to be born with a strong body type and I always looked after myself and stayed physically and mentally healthy," she says. "In times when I may have thought of doing something else, I was always reminded of why I loved to dance so much by a new choreographer or inspiring director."

Smeulders believes that it is important for young dancers starting out on a career to "find somewhere to work where someone believes in you" – even if that means having to keep searching for the right company.

"Be a positive person but also know your strengths and weaknesses. The Serenity Prayer is something I always came back to: 'Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can and the wisdom to know the difference'."



PLAYWRIGHT GETS IT RIGHT

Actor-turned-playwright Travis Cotton wins national award

In March, playwright Travis Cotton was announced as the winner of the 2018 Lysicrates Prize for his play, *Starfish*. Co-presented by Griffin Theatre Company and The Lysicrates Foundation, the prize celebrates the best new Australian writing.

Cotton was one of three shortlisted playwrights who were able to see a staged reading of the first act of their new play performed in front of an audience at the Sydney Opera House. As voted by the audience, Cotton will now receive a full commission of \$15,000 to finish the play.

Now in its fourth year, the Lysicrates Prize supports experienced writers who have had two or more mainstage plays produced.

In his acceptance speech, the 1999 WAAPA graduate thanked Griffin for its support for what he described as "a very lonely job".

"To listen to actors speak the words I have written, and to have people discuss my work, makes my heart soar, and strengthens my resolve as I work towards being a great Aussie contemporary playwright," he said.

Cotton's plays, including *Rites of Evil*, *Robots Vs. Art*, and *80 Minutes No Interval*, have been performed around Australia at venues such as The Blue Room, The Old Fitz, Red Stitch, La Mama and The Store Room.

Above: Travis Cotton with Griffin Theatre Company's Artistic Director Lee Lewis
Photo by Jessica Lindsay

DANCER WINS KEIR AWARD

On Saturday 17 March, 1999 Dance graduate Melanie Lane was announced as the recipient of the prestigious 2018 Keir Choreographic Award for her work, *Personal Effigies*.

The \$30,000 biennial Australian choreographic award is presented by the Keir Foundation with Sydney's Carriageworks and Melbourne's Dancehouse, with support from the Australia Council for the Arts.

Launched in 2014, the award is dedicated to commissioning new short works and promoting innovation, experimentation and cross-artform practices in contemporary dance while providing significant support to the contemporary dance sector in Australia.

The results were announced at a performance at Carriageworks in Sydney by four finalists chosen from an extensive process in which eight Australian artists are supported to develop new work. A jury of Australian and overseas artists chooses the finalists and the winner. *Personal Effigies* was performed by Lane and composer Chris Clark, with costume design by Paula Levis.

The audience award went to Amrita Hepi's *A Caltex Spectrum* for three performers.

Keir Choreographic Award founder Phillip Keir said: "I am delighted to see how the award has developed over the last six years. The range and depth of the applicants has truly made the deliberations of the jury more difficult than ever this time around. Congratulations to the final eight commissioned artists and to Melanie Lane and Amrita Hepi, this year's recipients, chosen by a highly esteemed jury of international choreographers."



Production image of Melanie Lane's 2018 Keir Choreographic Award-winning work, *Personal Effigies*. Photo by Zan Wimberley

In the Heights



WAAPA in the Park



WAAPA in the Park



The Crucible



ON STAGE AT WAAPA

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