

INSIDE WAAPA

Western Australian
Academy of Performing Arts

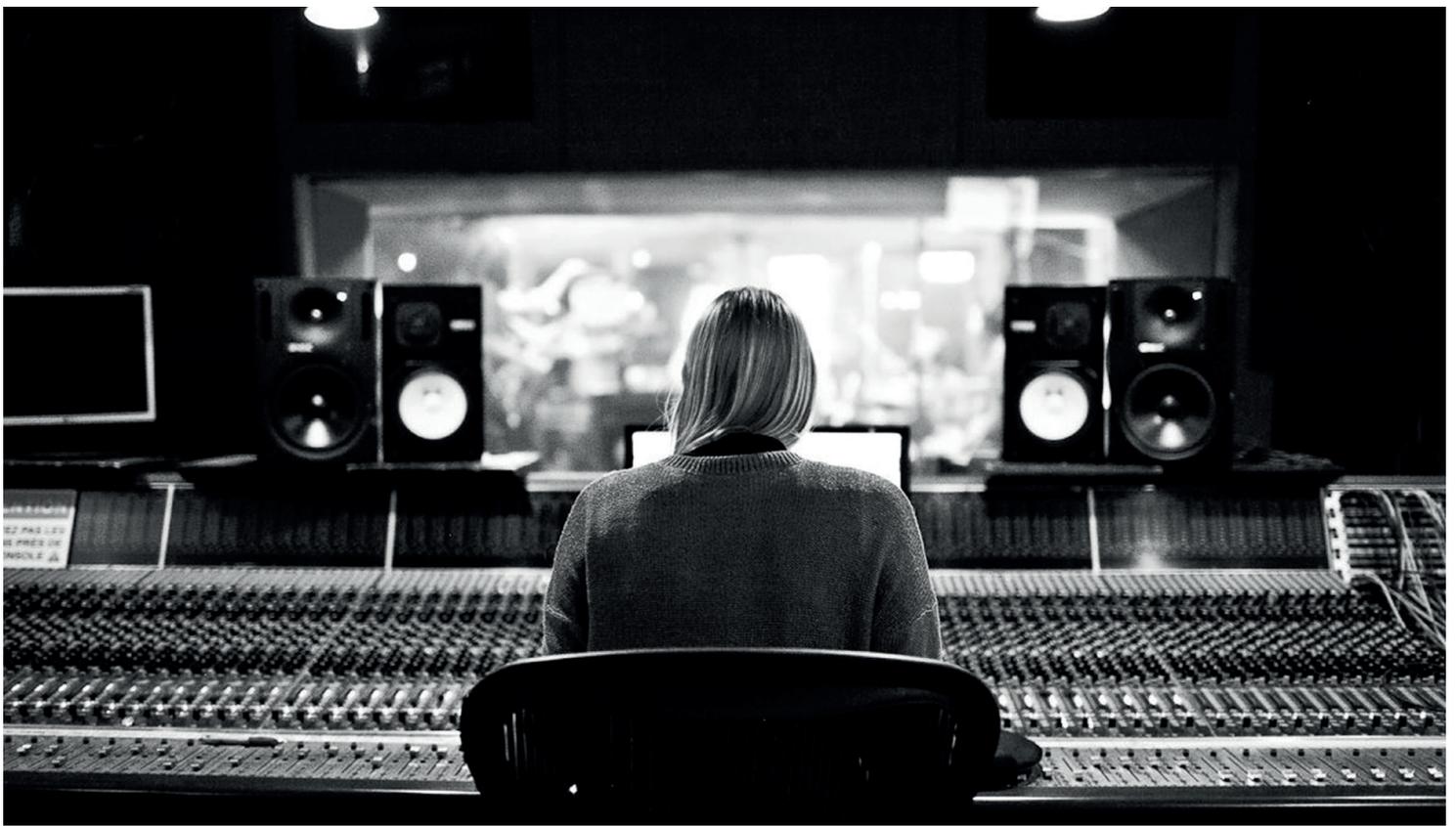
OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN ACADEMY OF PERFORMING ARTS, EDITH COWAN UNIVERSITY (ISSUE 38) December 2014

Anna Laverty: engineering success

Sarah McKenzie
gets sassy
Page 3

Eamon Flack named
Artistic Director of Belvoir
Page 4

Plus
Name Your Seat
this Christmas!



PRODUCING THE RIGHT SOUND

IN THE DECADE SINCE LEAVING WAAPA, PRODUCER/MIXER/SOUND ENGINEER ANNA LAVERTY HAS WORKED WITH MANY TOP INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL MUSICIANS AND PRODUCERS

At 16, Anna Laverty's love of music saw her start promoting and booking gigs in her home town of Perth. After high school, she successfully applied for WAAPA's Production & Design course, majoring in Sound.

On graduating from WAAPA in 2003, Anna headed to London where she established the successful Soho indie club night, Hooked Up and created her own label imprint of the same name. In 2008 Anna joined London's Miloco Studios, working alongside industry luminaries Ben Hillier (U2, Blur, Elbow, Patrick Wolf, and the Macabees) and Paul Epworth (Adele, Azealia Banks, Foster the People, and Cee Lo Green). Working with these highly respected producers gave Anna the opportunity to add an impressive roll call of international acts to her credits including Florence and the Machine, Bloc Party, Depeche Mode, Travis and Jarvis Cocker.

Since moving back to Australia, Anna has been involved in the production and/or engineering of many of Australia's premier artists including Nick Cave and The Bad Seeds, Paul Dempsey, Kate Miller-Heidke, Paul Kelly, The Panics, Eagle and the Worm, to name a few.

Now based in Melbourne, Anna has recently finished producing the new EP for Dirt Farmer and is at the production helm for the debut solo album from Jae Laffer, front man of ARIA winning band The Panics.

Here she talks to Inside WAAPA about her journey:

At what age did you decide you wanted to work in music?

I have always been a massive lover of music. But I think I decided I wanted to work in audio when I was about 14 years old, when I actually realised what a sound engineer was. I knew that I wanted to be a sound engineer before they started making such a big deal about us having to get a job!

What led you to the Sound program at WAAPA?

I still remember finding out about the WAAPA course when I was in year 9 or 10 in high school, probably from an advert in Xpress or RTR or something (whatever reached the northern suburbs of Perth) and suddenly thinking there was something to really strive for.

I had studied music in primary and early high school but no one really understood that I didn't want to be a musician, I wanted to make music but not actually play it. I ended up dropping out of music class and really focusing on drama, not acting but doing all of the lighting and sound for the performances. I had a great teacher and she also steered me in WAAPA's direction.

I didn't think I had any chance of getting in because I felt so young and inexperienced but I attended WAAPA's Open Day three years in a row

(aged 15, 16 and 17) and I think Trevor Gaines (the then lecturer in Sound) remembered me. I also spent every school holiday doing work experience at radio stations, small recording studios and SIDE, kind of wandering around the audio world albeit in a pretty unfocused way. I think that initiative and enthusiasm really helped with my application.

What are some of your fondest memories of being a student at WAAPA?

When I got the application decision letter in the post I ran and hid in the corner of my parent's wardrobe so that no one would see me if it was a 'No thank you', but thankfully it was an acceptance letter and I came screaming and crying out of the bedroom. Luckily I was now a WAAPA student so I wasn't going to be the only completely over the top, dramatic person in my classes.

My absolute favourite class was the History of Arts. I learnt so much about the world in that class. Another highlight was in second year doing the sound operator role for the premiere of Nick Enright's *The Good Fight*. It was the last show he wrote and he died very soon after, so that was a bit of an honour.

Also, meeting the guys I studied with was pretty special. We were a pretty tight group and I still consider them good friends to this day.

Originally though I thought I wanted to be a live engineer, then I wasn't sure. And then we started learning about tape and that changed everything.

How did studying at WAAPA help you professionally?

I sometimes do guest lectures at audio colleges and they are great for teaching kids how to use Pro Tools and Ableton etc but WAAPA teaches you about electronics and studios and radio and theatre and dance. Practical stuff that will help you to actually get a job. I learnt everything I needed to know to walk into a studio and not break anything. And that's a really good start!

On graduating from WAAPA you headed straight to London. This seems like a very brave and adventurous move. What motivated you to take such a great leap and how did you establish yourself in your chosen field in another country?

I was 19 when I graduated from WAAPA and I was dying to get out there and take on the world, so two weeks later I moved to London. I was managing bands in Perth at the time and one of the bands moved over with me.

At first I started a club night in Soho called Hooked Up and I met so many people through that. I booked the bands, did the sound, DJ'd, took the door money and still managed to have an amazing time. There were some bands that stood out so I decided to set up a record label to showcase their music. I released a bunch of 7"

singles over the next few years under the banner of Hooked Up Records.

Eventually though my calling back to audio came and I decided to go and do work experience at a studio group called Miloco. I had no idea that they looked after so many studios, I just applied for their work experience program and unbelievably they said yes!

I spent two weeks running around London on buses dropping off hard drives, boxes of tea bags, clean tea towels and generally doing nothing to do with audio, but all around me were real live working sound engineers, actually doing it for real. On my second last day the manager of the studio asked me to go and help one of the producers who was packing up the studio to go to the US to start work on the new Depeche Mode album. It was Ben Hillier.

Ben and I get on so well and he asked me if I would look after the studio while he was away. Other engineers would be coming in and using it, he could see I knew how to handle mics and had a respect for the gear so he wanted me to ensure nothing got broken. From then on I was an assistant engineer at Miloco and I had the pleasure of working with many different producers and engineers and learning everything I needed to know to become a producer/engineer in my own right.

You have worked with some amazing artists (Bloc Party, Florence and The Machine, Paul Dempsey, Nick Cave and The Bad Seeds) as well as producers like Paul Epworth. Can you

take us through some of the big names you have worked with and any cool moments you want to share with us?

Well, yes, over the years I have been lucky enough to be in the room and contribute when some of my favourite records were made. I have also worked with some of my musical heroes and I don't have a lot of bad stories to tell. The recording world is such a good place to work. Unfortunately the hours are long and the pay is bad for a long time, but if you can get over that and stick it out the rewards are massive.

I'm a massive Nick Cave & the Bad Seeds fan so working on their last record 'Push the Sky Away' was a bit of a dream. I'm also a huge The Panics fan and I had the privilege of producing a beautiful solo record for the singer Jae Laffer a couple of years back. My most recent favourite though is The Peep Tempel's new album 'Tales'.

The best thing about being an assistant engineer for six years in both London and Australia was getting to work with so many amazing producers – Nick Launay, Paul Epworth, Ben Hillier, Steven Schram, Fernando Garibay, Wayne Connolly to name a few – and coming to realise that there are no rules.

Any words of advice for WAAPA students?

This is just the beginning. Life, and the hard work, starts when you graduate. Never stop learning, never think that you know everything and ALWAYS be the last one standing.

JAZZ VOCAL STAR GETS SASSY

SARAH MCKENZIE NOMINATED FOR TOP INTERNATIONAL JAZZ VOCAL COMPETITION

In 2008, in her final year at WAAPA, Sarah McKenzie set the tone for her future career by winning the Hawaiian Award for Most Outstanding Jazz Graduate and the Jack Bendat Scholarship. The following year, she was named the 2009 winner of the Generations in Jazz Vocal Scholarship.

Since then, McKenzie's superb jazz vocals and brilliant piano playing have seen her perform as a featured artist at events like the Stonnington, Wangaratta and Melbourne jazz festivals in Australia and jazz festivals in Europe and the USA, including prestigious events like Umbria Jazz and the Monterey Jazz Festival.

She has recorded three albums for ABC Jazz, picking up a 2012 ARIA Award for Best Jazz Album for *Close Your Eyes*. Her latest album was recorded in New York with guests Warren Wolf and Ingrid Jensen.

In February this year, McKenzie was runner-up in the Jazz Voice Competition at the Mid-Atlantic Jazz Festival in Maryland. In June, she performed an original song with the Boston Pops at Symphony Hall.

After recently graduating from Boston's prestigious Berklee College of Music on a full-tuition scholarship, McKenzie came third in the Sarah Vaughan International Jazz Vocal Competition, announced on November 16. Also known as the SASSY Awards, the competition is the only international jazz vocal competition of its kind, providing a lot of press for all finalists and a platform for one outstanding jazz singer to launch a career within the music business.

Now based in Boston, McKenzie was recently in Australia to promote her new album, *We Could Be Lovers*. She also performed at the Sydney International Women's Jazz Festival and at Melbourne's Bennetts Lane Jazz Club.





Photos by Brett Boardman

EAMON FLACK APPOINTED ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF BELVOIR



Belvoir's Associate Director – New Projects, Eamon Flack, has been appointed to lead the company from 2016. He will be the company's third Artistic Director and lead it into its fourth decade.

Flack, a 2003 WAAPA Acting graduate, is widely regarded as one of Australia's leading theatre directors. He is best known for his recent sold-out production of *The Glass Menagerie*, starring fellow graduate Rose Riley, and for his Helpmann Award-winning production of *Angels in America* in 2013. He has also worked as a writer, actor and dramaturg for Belvoir, Melbourne Theatre Company, Malthouse Theatre and many other companies.

Flack was born in Singapore and travelled widely as a child, but spent most of his youth in Darwin before attending high school in Brisbane.

"I've served a kind of apprenticeship for this job for the last nine years – half under Neil Armfield and half under Ralph Myers – and again and again I've seen astonishing things achieved

in ridiculous circumstances," said Flack. "Running a theatre is a quixotic undertaking. Everything you ever do is doomed to disappear forever on closing night. And yet I can think of nothing better. To my mind, the cardboard crown of the artistic directorship of Belvoir is the absolute height of honour and responsibility. A theatre is one of society's test cases. If a rich, liberal country can't find a way to include the full variety of life in the model of itself on stage, then how can we hope to include the full variety of life in the real society off stage? The ideal theatre company is a combination of a nineteenth-century playbill and SBS world movies: our greatest actors in the finest plays, delivering the world on stage. I'd like the Upstairs Theatre to be Sri Lanka one moment, Lakemba the next and Elizabethan London after that. Belvoir is a little building on a hill where people gather to say what they really mean and to let it all out then and there – all the outrage and bafflement and astonishment at what we're living through – in order to go home again with some faith in

humanity and a sense of purpose. I cannot imagine a more wonderful job than leading such a company."

"Eamon is a very good theatre director indeed," said Belvoir's current Artistic Director Ralph Myers. "His work is sophisticated, delicate and finely wrought. In addition to his skills as a director, he is a generous and sensitive mentor and supporter of artists. He has a keen eye for emerging talent, and is often the first person to spot the worth of exciting new projects at their genesis. During my tenure here as Artistic Director he has been an invaluable Associate Director, and I am delighted at the Board's decision to appoint him as my replacement. I look forward to many years of thrilling, bold, and engaging theatre under his leadership."

Flack will continue in his position as Associate Director – New Projects and as Artistic Director designate throughout 2015 while programming the 2016 Season. He will assume the role of Artistic Director as of January 2016.

CAPTURING DANCE MOTION

MOTION CAPTURE RAISES THE BARRE FOR WAAPA DANCERS

The latest motion capture technology is now being used on WAAPA's elite dance students to help them improve their technique and avoid injuries.

The program is the first of its kind, bringing together motion capture technology and the expertise of a specialised biomechanist into an elite dance program.

ECU Biomechanicist Dr Luke Hopper hopes the facility will be able to assist dancers in refining their technique to prevent injuries.

The program uses up to 50 tiny markers placed on a dancer's body to map their movements in 3-D. The data can then be used to create a video that can be used to review individual dancer's technique or even utilised in performance.

"It is firmly believed in the dance industry that performing with 'incorrect technique' will cause injury, but there is a lack of scientific

evidence that supports these beliefs," Hopper said.

"We hope to provide a new form of visual feedback to the dancers of their movements using motion capture and see if this improves learning in dance training."

For WAAPA Dance Lecturer Andries Weidemann there is huge potential in motion capture as a tool for both teaching and performance.

"Dancers learn by watching, copying and experimenting with movement on their own until they have integrated that movement into patterns that they can replicate easily," he said.

"Seeing their motion captured and placed on an avatar gives the students a perspective that they have not had before and that this can lead to new insights about their performance."



Dr Luke Hopper and WAAPA dance student Valentina Maricovicinovic demonstrate the new motion capture facility.

Contemporary dance student Alex Perrozz, who is in his final year of training, said the videos provided 3-D evidence of what teachers had always told him. "It's helpful to see from an outside perspective what our faults are in our technique so we can improve on that," he said.

The motion capture facility will also be utilised by other research disciplines across Edith Cowan University, including animation.

FROM STAGE MANAGER TO EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF AUSTRALIA'S NEWEST DANCE COMPANY

1999 WAAPA Stage Management graduate Aaron Beach has worked solidly since finishing his studies for many of Australia's leading youth arts and contemporary arts organisations, accumulating a wealth of experience and knowledge along the way, which has led to his appointment as Executive Director of Australia's newest dance company, the Contemporary Dance Company of Western Australia (CDCWA). It also marks a return to his home town after over a decade of living in the Eastern States.

Tell us about your career trajectory from graduating WAAPA? It is very interesting to see you go from more on-the-ground stage/event/production management roles into your new position as Executive Director of Australia's newest contemporary dance company.

I have a background in Production Management having worked with Bangarra Dance Theatre, Barking Gecko Theatre Company, AWESOME Arts Australia Ltd, ANPC National Playwrights' Conference, ATYP, Deckchair Theatre, Rock Surfers Theatre Company, City of Perth New Year's Eve Concert and the Perth International Tattoo.

My professional experience has been entirely in the performing arts, as well as in community and cultural development; in particular, I have spent years working with children and young people, emerging practitioners and Indigenous artists. I have always had a keen interest in



developing strategic partnerships, online engagement, lobbying and advocacy.

I have had wide-ranging regional, national and international touring experience in both dance and theatre, including managing tours to Germany, Italy, China, the USA, Canada, Austria and Hungary. As an independent theatre producer, I have also produced work in Sydney and Perth.

How did your time at WAAPA help prepare you for industry?

WAAPA was great for me. I developed the best network of friends and colleagues

many of whom I still work with regularly. The discipline, rigour and level of detail taught to the stage management students have benefited me enormously.

I have had a number of WAAPA secondment students from Stage Management and recently Arts Management and I am always impressed by their high level of technical skill matched with a hunger and passion for the industry.

It's important to match a love of theatre with a strong work ethic. You have to love it to work in the performing arts industry.

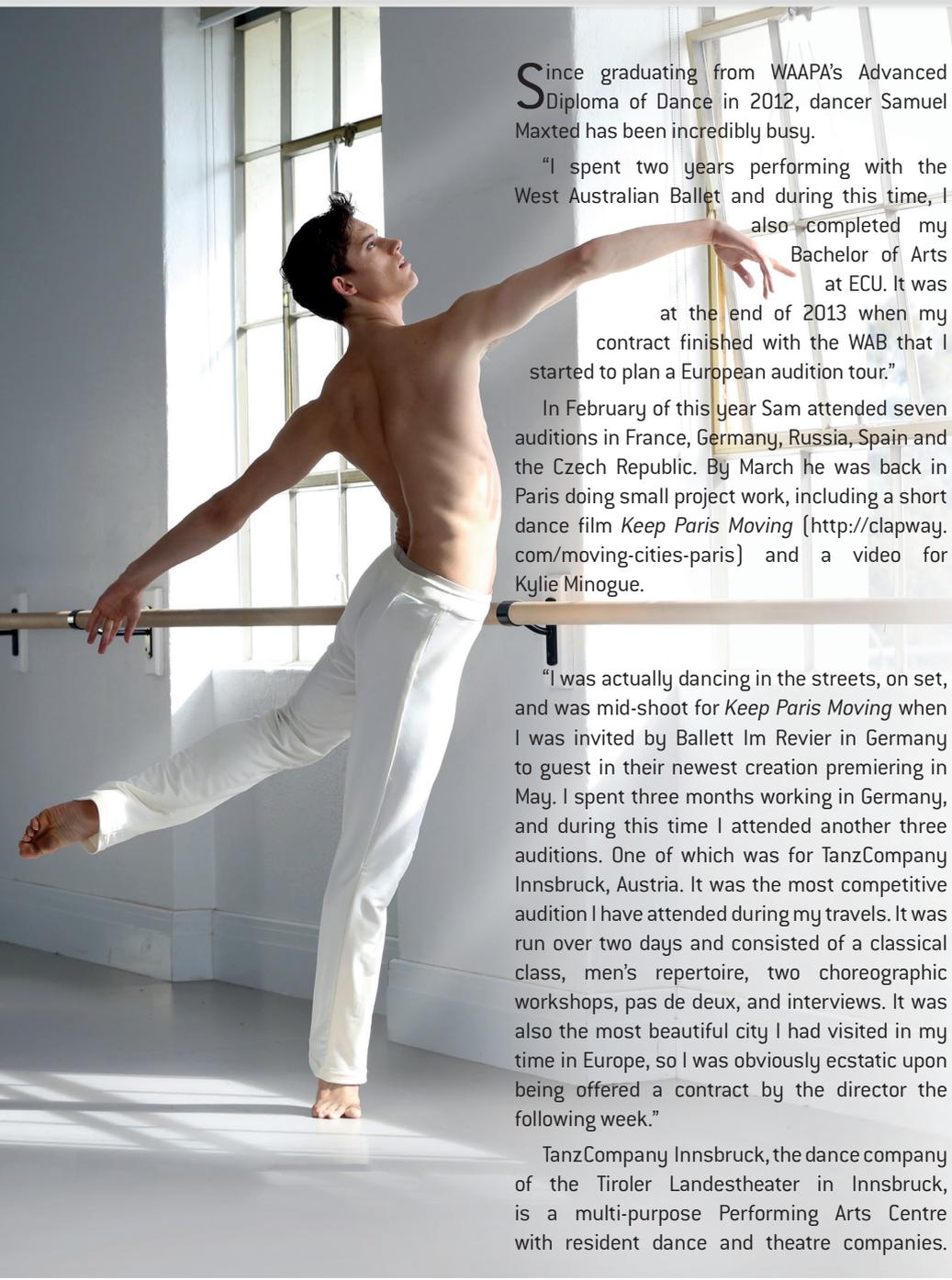
What skills have you picked up along the way that has led you to this exciting new role?

I think my production background has been really useful. It has been so valuable to have spent years gaining a deep understanding over how each department within an arts organisation connects.

Production highlights include:

- **Bangarra** - *Fire* – *A retrospective, True Stories, Clan, Mathinna, Awakenings*
- **Barking Gecko** - *Hot Dogs, The Stones, The Buzz, Ghost Train, Hidden Dragons, His Majesty's New Clothes, Crabbing at High Tide, Primates, Feather Surfers, The Troll from The Bowl*
- **Broken Limb** - *The Boys, Macbeth, Rosencrantz & Guildenstern are Dead*
- **ATYP** - *Birds, Spurboard, Hamlet, Kinderspiel, Sparkleshark, Lucky, Bendy*

SAMUEL MAXTED'S EUROPEAN ADVENTURE



Since graduating from WAAPA's Advanced Diploma of Dance in 2012, dancer Samuel Maxted has been incredibly busy.

"I spent two years performing with the West Australian Ballet and during this time, I also completed my Bachelor of Arts at ECU. It was at the end of 2013 when my contract finished with the WAB that I started to plan a European audition tour."

In February of this year Sam attended seven auditions in France, Germany, Russia, Spain and the Czech Republic. By March he was back in Paris doing small project work, including a short dance film *Keep Paris Moving* (<http://clapway.com/moving-cities-paris>) and a video for Kylie Minogue.

"I was actually dancing in the streets, on set, and was mid-shoot for *Keep Paris Moving* when I was invited by Ballett Im Revier in Germany to guest in their newest creation premiering in May. I spent three months working in Germany, and during this time I attended another three auditions. One of which was for TanzCompany Innsbruck, Austria. It was the most competitive audition I have attended during my travels. It was run over two days and consisted of a classical class, men's repertoire, two choreographic workshops, pas de deux, and interviews. It was also the most beautiful city I had visited in my time in Europe, so I was obviously ecstatic upon being offered a contract by the director the following week."

TanzCompany Innsbruck, the dance company of the Tiroler Landestheater in Innsbruck, is a multi-purpose Performing Arts Centre with resident dance and theatre companies.

TanzCompany Innsbruck's Artistic Director is Spanish dancer and choreographer, Enrique Gasa Valga. Sam joins a very multi-cultural company with fellow dancers coming from Spain, Venezuela, Italy, Germany, Japan, Czech Republic, Poland, USA, France and Switzerland.

"The work is extremely physical, with a 'neo-classical' style, and being a company of 16 dancers, we are consistently working and onstage. I'm in my second month working with the company, and I've performed in the theatre's opening gala, a remount of the company's repertoire *Salt and Pepper*, our director's first premiere for the season *Dante.Inferno*, and currently we are preparing for another premiere of *Charlie Chaplin*. It's a lot of work, but so far I'm taking the challenge on with a lot of enthusiasm."

Sam is grateful to his WAAPA Dance Lecturers for inspiring him to pursue a dance career overseas.

"Throughout my time training at WAAPA I was tutored and mentored by lecturers that had very successful international careers so my mind was always open to the possibility of taking my dancing overseas. Europe is a part of the world that has always interested me and being so rich in culture, it is abundant with a variety of dance companies and theatres to inspire and challenge you. This is exactly the experience I've had. Moving to Europe and being exposed to its exciting and competitive dance scene has extended my skills and progress as a dancer. I'm now at a point with my dancing that I doubt I would have been able to accomplish if I had stayed within the comfort and familiarity of the Australian scene. My passion for dance and the stage is as strong as ever, and I can only encourage other young dancers to venture out over the waters in pursuit of finding similar challenges and inspiration as I have."

AN EXPATRIATE DANCE LIFE

Lee Johnston, who graduated from WAAPA's Bachelor of Dance in 2003, recently returned to Australia after a decade overseas and is now working as a freelance dancer/choreographer in Sydney. She fills Inside WAAPA in on her exploits:

"After a three-month apprenticeship in 2004 with National Dance Company Wales (NDCWales) I became a full-time company dancer leading to a nine-year performance career with them.

Throughout this time I had the privilege to work with choreographers including Ohad Naharin, Christopher Bruce, Angelin Preljocaj, Stephen Petronio, Andonis Foniadakis, Itzik Galili, Stephen Shropshire, Stijn Celis, Gustavo Sansano and Nigel Charnock, as well as performing extensively throughout the UK, Europe

(including Holland Dance Festival, STEPS Dance Festival, Internationale Tanzmesse, Bilbao, Milan, Athens and Poland) and internationally (including Cuba, India and China).

While at NDCWales, I pursued my choreographic interest making five works. *Purlieus* (2012) and *They Seek to Find the Happiness they Seem* (2013) have since entered NDCWales' repertoire and are currently touring the UK and Europe.

In August 2013 I became Rehearsal Director for NDCWales and from December 2013 the House Choreographer and Interim Artistic Director.

In this position I programmed *Tuplet* by Alexander Ekman and *Walking Mad* by Johan Inger into NDCWales' 2014/15 repertoire, implemented Stage One and Gaga Workshops

(both artist support initiatives for the dance sector of Wales), as well as leading the company in a visioning and strategy development process for its future direction - resulting in my writing NDCWales' Vision Document 2014 for the Arts Council of Wales.

Things are going well in Sydney so far but it's very strange to go from a crazy heavy workload to freelancer – exciting times however."



PERTH FILM MUSIC A CULT HIT

PERTH COMPOSER CHRISTOPHER DE GROOT DISCOVERS AN INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCE FOR HIS 'GIALLO' SOUNDTRACK

Off international interest in his soundtrack for the thriller *Sororal*, composer Christopher de Groot has signed to the prestigious Swedish soundtrack label *Screamworks*.

De Groot's soundtrack for *Sororal* was also nominated for Best Original Music at the 2014 WA Screen Awards and more recently, was nominated for an APRA Award for Film Score of the Year.

Shot on location in WA, *Sororal* is currently making appearances at genre film festivals around the world, most recently at Fantaspao in Brazil. Inspired by Italian horror films, *Sororal* lays claim to being Australia's first 'giallo' film, a style of murder-mystery film that includes elements of horror fiction and eroticism.

De Groot, who graduated from WAAPA in 2010 with a Masters degree in composition, describes how he achieved the distinctive sound for the *Sororal* soundtrack: "It is comprised of a 10-piece brass section, 16-piece choir, two drum kits, electric guitar, electric cello, and a barrage of analogue synthesizers. The score takes inspiration from prog-rock, kraut-rock, as well as

Bulgarian choir music, 20th Century avant-garde classical works and classic giallo scores from the likes of soundtrack band *Goblin* and legendary Italian film composer *Ennio Morricone*. The score was all performed and recorded in Perth." Eneksis, a vocal ensemble made up of WAAPA students and directed by WAAPA lecturer Micheál McCarthy, recorded 15 choral tracks for the movie.

Written over the period of a year, de Groot recorded the various instrumental sections in Perth at different times as funds came to hand. He recorded all of the analogue synthesizer and guitar parts in his bedroom while the brass section was recorded at WAAPA during the 2012 summer break. The choir was recorded at a local church while the rhythm section was recorded in a Perth recording studio.



MUSIC BY CHRISTOPHER DE GROOT

Christopher de Groot (left) and his *Sororal* album cover

"The response has been amazing," says de Groot. "People who haven't even seen the film have been tracking me down on social media, asking how they can get their hands on the soundtrack. I've had enquires from Italy, France, Brazil and the United States."

Mikael Carlsson of *MovieScore Media* is one of the many fans of de Groot's work, writing in his review that: "Christopher de Groot's music is some of the most refreshing and eclectic horror music to be heard in a contemporary film – while it's paying tribute to the genre masters (*Goblin*, *Morricone* et al) it is also totally unique, challenging and highly original. A nasty score filled with surprises!"

NAME YOUR SEAT THIS CHRISTMAS

"Every year since 1990, I have been privileged to witness an incredible array of performances and outstanding talent produced by this truly world class training institution, WAAPA. Naming a seat was one way of contributing to this unique and irreplaceable Academy in the hope that it will continue to train and nurture future generations of our best creative talent."

– Mal Gammon

"I decided to surprise my niece by buying a name on a seat at WAAPA for her. My niece is now 13 and I can't wait until she visits Perth in 2015, so I can take her to a performance and she can discover not only her named seat, but also the delights of live performance. Perhaps she will be inspired to study at WAAPA one day?"

– Tania Chambers

"My husband and I were both members of ECU staff. My husband was in the Practice Dept. in the seventies and I was employed as a lecturer in the Faculty of Education from 1975 until my retirement in 1996. My husband passed away in 2008. I wanted us both be remembered in some small way for our dedication to Education, especially in Western Australia, which is why we participated in the Name Your Seat Campaign. We both loved the Performing Arts and ECU has distinguished itself in this field as producing some of the most outstanding graduates in Australia."

– Patricia English

Name Your Seat is an ongoing fund-raising campaign that helps ensure WAAPA's invaluable contribution to the Arts can continue.

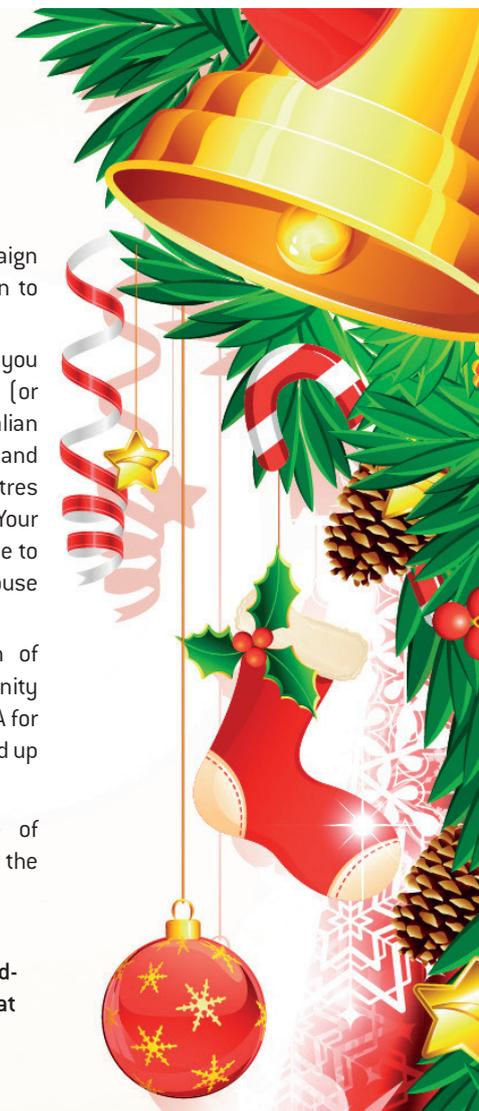
With the festive season fast approaching you may be considering what to get your loved ones (or yourself!) for Christmas. The Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts can offer a unique and thoughtful gift: Name Your Seat in one of our theatres to create a lasting connection with WAAPA. Your inscription will appear on a plaque on a seat, visible to everyone in the Geoff Gibbs Theatre, the Roundhouse Theatre or the Music Auditorium.

Celebrate your loved ones with a donation of \$300 Name Your Seat proves a unique opportunity for friends and supporters to give the gift of WAAPA for Christmas. You will receive a gift certificate wrapped up in a bow to put under the Christmas tree.

For further information contact the Office of Advancement on the email address below or use the link to access the online Name Your Seat form.

Email: supportingwaapa@ecu.edu.au

Web: <http://www.waapa.ecu.edu.au/friends-and-sponsors/how-you-can-support-us/name-your-seat>



IN THE SPOTLIGHT

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



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