9 MAY - 4 JUN 2022



# LETTER FOR MOLLY

BY BRITTANIE SHIPWAY | DIRECTED BY URSULA YOVICH



# WELCOME

When I read Brittanie Shipway's beautiful play I knew we had a unique voice and a talented new writer. This play is not just about searching and belonging, it is also, for me, about choosing your own identity within your given culture. It is about generational change but also respect, love and forgiveness. With the very talented Ursula Yovich directing and this extraordinary cast and creatives, I know you will have a wonderful journey with A LETTER FOR MOLLY and, like me, will think about it long after the play is done. I hope too you will reflect on those connections that make family and culture an important part of who we become. Enjoy.

### MARK KILMURRY

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

# WRITER'S NOTE

It is often not until adulthood that our perspective of our parents matures into one of understanding. As children, we perceive them as providers, before they reveal to us their fallibility during our teenage years. Adulthood, however, brings with it a more balanced awareness.

For me, this transition occurred on Mother's Day 2020, when mum and I got lost out bush in the Blue Mountains. With the absence of any phone signal (or any general sense of direction) we talked and, for the first time, I felt like I had heard her story. The next day, I sat down and wrote A LETTER FOR MOLLY. The story poured out in three days: rooted in my Gumbaynggirr ancestry and the stories of four (and a half) generations of Aboriginal women, it mapped the loss of culture against a horrific backdrop of effective assimilation policies. It was here that the protagonist Renee would reconnect with her mother and the culture that was stolen so many generations ago.

May this story signify a hopeful reclamation of culture; may we Dream into the future with both wonder and understanding.

### **BRITTANIE SHIPWAY**

Ensemble Theatre proudly acknowledges the Cammeraigal people of the Eora nation as customary owners of the land on which we work and share our stories. We pay our respects to Elders past and present.

# **DIRECTOR'S NOTE**

I didn't grow up wanting to be in the theatre. In fact, I didn't know what theatre was. It seemed to me a place likened to an old dusty library overflowing with dormant stories. Theatre was where you went to die. However, I would soon discover that this mysterious, enigmatic place is where stories take seed and blossom under the heat of the stage lights. I finally saw and felt the black drapes a-washed in tales living, thriving and growing. I was awoken to the magic of theatre when I got to experience my first play, Louis Nowra's COSI. It dazzled my young mind and I was hooked. I have since been drawn to Australian plays and new Australian works but especially black stories... First Nations voices. The quietness of the past has been shattered and our convictions, our beliefs have risen to challenge you. To bring you into our world.

A LETTER FOR MOLLY confronts the themes of womanhood in Aboriginal families. The way our sometimes shameful history has shaped our black women and how we raise our children and families. How the onslaught of early settlement along with the destructive brutality and cruelty can break the bonds that bind us. How family can diverge from it's values under these conditions. Where kindness and love once lived, the space is now shared with pain, distress and hardness. Can we find stability when we carry our ancestors demons?

Family stories and memories long settled, layer upon layer, fluctuating between what really happened and what becomes family legend. Shipway's ode to her mother, her mother's mother and all who have walked before her is a creation in brush stroked dreaming.

### **URSULA YOVICH**



# **SYNOPSIS**

Free-spirited artist Renee has a sobering revelation at a New Year's Eve party. While reflecting on the tumultuous relationships between her mother, grandmother and great-grandmother, her vivacious friend Nick is on hand to lift her spirits, but Renee is slipping...

Gumbaynggirr writer and actor Brittanie Shipway explores how the experiences of previous generations echo through time and shape the present. A LETTER FOR MOLLY is a vibrant, poignant story of reconnecting with family and looking to the future. This celebration of culture brings to light the importance of identity and the emotional power of a motherdaughter relationship.

RUNNING TIME APPROX. 90 MINS (NO INTERVAL)

REC. AGES 14+ ADULT THEMES AND STRONG LANGUAGE

MUSIC AND LYRICS OF BAARANY BUWARR BY **BRITTANIE SHIPWAY** 

### CAST

MIIMI LISA MAZA DARLENE/NURSE PAULA NAZARSKI LINDA/RECEPTIONIST NAZAREE DICKERSON RENEE BRITTANIE SHIPWAY NICK/DOCTOR/PHOTOGRAPHER JOEL GRANGER UNDERSTUDY TOBY BLOME

\*In respect of Gumbaynggirr culture, characters are listed in order of Elder status.

### CREATIVES

DIRECTOR/UNDERSTUDY URSULA YOVICH ASSISTANT DIRECTOR ERIN TAYLOR **VISUAL ART & CULTURAL CONSULTANT** ALISON WILLIAMS **SET & COSTUME DESIGNER HUGH O'CONNOR** LIGHTING DESIGNER KELSEY LEE **COMPOSER & SOUND DESIGNER BRENDON BONEY** VIDEO DESIGNER MORGAN MORONEY STAGE MANAGER LAUREN TULLOH ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER **BRONTE SCHUFTAN** COSTUME SUPERVISOR SARA KOLIJN WORKSHOP DRAMATURG MIRANDA MIDDLETON TECHNICAL CREATIVE INTERN AROHA PEHI MOVEMENT CONSULTANT SCOTT WITT

### **SPECIAL THANKS**

Thank you Djarla O'Connell for baby Chloe

The Assistant Director position is proudly supported by Jacqui Taffel and Mark Kilmurry.







### BRITTANIE SHIPWAY

A graduate from NIDA, Brittanie is a singer, actor, and storyteller. After studying acting in New York, Brittanie returned home to pursue her

passion for new Australian work. This has seen her workshop many original theatre projects, most notably MURIEL'S WEDDING and EVIE MAY. Some acting credits include the Arbiter in CHESS alongside Natalie Bassingthwaighte and Paulini, Kay in THE SAPPHIRES, Fanny Brice in FUNNY GIRL, and various roles in Sport For Jove's OTHELLO and ROSE RIOT. As a creative. Brittanie has written for ABC Radio National's short stories. articles for SBS and featured on Little Yarns. Brittanie has dramaturgically contributed to ATYP's THE DEB by Hannah Reilly, NOT TODAY by Ally Morgan and PEAR SHAPED by Miranda Middleton. A resident writer for Theatre Works, her play SENSER will debut later in 2022 under the directorial helm of Miranda Middleton, A LETTER FOR MOLLY has received development funding from Create NSW, Belvoir: Shutdown Residency, Australia Council for the Arts, and was also nominated as a semi-finalist in the Rodney Seaborn Playwright Award 2021. Currently, Brittanie is developing her Gumbaynggirr musical YELLOW ROCK which has already received the APRA AMCOS Musical Theatre Award of the year, as well as a Koori Grant from Create NSW.



### URSULA YOVICH DIRECTOR/UNDERSTUDY

Ursula is the writer/performer of works including MAGPIE BLUES, THE MAN WITH THE IRON NECK and BARBARA AND THE CAMP DOGS.

BARBARA AND THE CAMP DOGS (cowritten with Alana Valentine) premiered at Sydney's Belvoir Street Theatre in 2017 with Ursula in the starring role. It was nominated for an AWGIE award and won Helpmann awards for Best Musical, Best Original Score and Best Actress in a Musical Ursula was the recipient of the Balnaves Foundation Indigenous Playwright's Award and directed a development of THE FEVER AND THE FRET and was the Assistant Director of OUTDATED for the Ensemble Theatre Ursula is the voice of 'Levi' in the NITV/SBS children's animated TV series, LITTLE J & BIG CUZ, on which she is also a writer. In addition, she is a multi-award-winning actor. Her stage and film credits include Wayne Blair's TOP END WEDDING, Baz Luhrmann's AUSTRALIA, Ivan Sen's GOLDSTONE and Ray Lawrence's JINDABYNE. Her television credits include - DOCTOR DOCTOR, WAKEFIELD, THE GAMERS, MYSTERY ROAD, WANTED, THE CODE, DEVIL'S DUST, REDFERN NOW, THE GODS OF WHEAT STREET. She is currently co-writing a feature film, stage play and is involved in the creative development of numerous new works across stage and screen.



### ERIN TAYLOR ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Erin is a Dramaturg and Director and was recently appointed as the CEO/ Executive Producer of Australian Plays Transform.

Her recent work includes MUSEUM OF MODERN LOVE by Tom Holloway (Sydney Festival, Dramaturg & Assistant Director), JALI by Oliver Twist (Griffin Theatre, Dramaturg & Director) and KASAMA KITA by Jordan Shea (25A Belvoir, Dramaturg & Director). She has read extensively for development programs for Playwriting Australia and playwriting awards, including the Griffin Award and the Bruntwood Prize. Erin received the Sandra Bates Directors Award in 2019 from Ensemble Theatre, and was a mentee of Melbourne Theatre Company's Women in Theatre Leadership Program.



### ALISON WILLIAMS VISUAL ART & CULTURAL CONSULTANT

Alison is a Gumbaynggirr descendant, who from a young age used painting and drawing as a way of expressing

personal impressions, dreams and experiences. Born in Sydney in 1968, Alison grew up around Wollongong, but always harboured a feeling of belonging to her mother's family and country, the northern lowlands of the Gumbaynggirr nation. This feeling brought her to the North Coast of NSW, settling there and establishing a studio to continue developing her art, and strengthening roots within the community to teach, advocate, support family, and promote artistic practice in regional NSW. During her career within the arts, Alison has been a creative practitioner, curator and spokesperson for the cultural heritage of Australian First Nation's people. Her passion is to create areater engagement and understanding, through the arts and cultural practices of the world's oldest living culture. Alison is the Creative Director of Wadjar

Regional Indigenous Gallery, Yarrawarra Aboriginal Cultural Centre and feels blessed to be working and living on the traditional homelands of her ancestors.



### LISA MAZA MIIMI

Lisa Maza (Meriam/Yidinji/ Dutch) works in Theatre and The Arts in a range of roles. Stage performances include: BLACK TIES (ILBIJERRI Theatre/Te Rehia) FROM

DARKNESS (La Boite Theatre), THE SEASON (Tasmania Performs), THE RABBITS (Opera Australia/Barking Gecko), THE SAPPHIRES (Company B), SISTERS OF GELAM, GRONKS (STC/Zeal), STOLEN, YANAGAI YANAGAI!!!, ENUFF (2002), CORRUGATION ROAD (Black Swan), RADIANCE (QTC/Kooemba Jdarra). In 2018 Lisa received Best Supporting Performance (Female) for THE SEASON at Tasmania Theatre Awards.



### PAULA NAZARSKI DARLENE/NURSE

Paula is a Ngugi woman from Minjerribah (North Stradbroke Island) located in Quandamooka Country (Moreton Bay Queensland).

Paula recently appeared in TO KILL A CASSOWARY at Jute Theatre For QTC. Paula has appeared in HEAD FULL OF LOVE (National Tour for QT), MOTHER COURAGE AND HER CHILDREN (co-production with QPAC), CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF (coproduction with Black Swan State Theatre Company), AN OAK TREE, THE CRUCIBLE, THE SCHOOL OF ARTS (co-production with QPAC). Other Credits: Queensland Arts Council/Artslink: MY STORY, YOUR STORY, TALES MY MOTHER TOLD ME, BLOW 'EM; State Library of Queensland: A NIGHT WITH PAULA NAZARSKI, YARNIN TIME, YULETIDE CELEBRATIONS; QUT: BOX THE PONY; NAIDOC Week: THIS WOMAN'S JOURNEY; Kooemba Jdarra: THE MACK, BITIN' BACK, TRUE; Canto Choir: 1975; Aboriginal











Centre for Performing Arts: UP THE ROAD; Brisbane Festival: ARE WE THERE YET? Film: AUSTRALIA DAY, THE BUTTERFLY TREE. Television: UPRIGHT 2, DARBY & JOAN, WAKE IN FRIGHT, HOGES, DEADLINE, THE BUREAU OF MAGICAL THINGS. Positions: Emerging Artist 2011 – Queensland Theatre Company, Australia Council for the Arts – Indigenous Artist Mentorship 2011. Training: Advanced Diploma in Performing Arts, ACPA; Cert IV in Training and Assessment. Play – CARPENTARIA Indidj Youths Arts for Brisbane Winters Festival 2019-2021.



### NAZAREE DICKERSON LINDA/RECEPTIONIST

Nazaree Dickerson (she/her/ they) is a Wardandi Bibbulman Noongar/Burmese person from Boorloo (Perth), W.A., based on Gunditjmara country in Victoria.

Naz is an Actor, Writer, Director and champion for First Nations and LGBTIQ voices. Since 2018 Naz has worked as a Program Director at Ilbijerri Youth Ensemble. Her production credits include THE WAYARNING (Yirra Yaakin) SEVEN STAGES OF GRIEVING (State Theatre SA) THE CHERRY PICKERS, BELONGING, INTERVENTION and MINNO AND MEDIKA (Karrikarrinya Theatre Collective) CHOPPED LIVER (Ilbijerri Theatre Company) PROPPA SOLID and THE LONGEST MINUTE (JUTE) THE SEASON (Tas Performs) Naz started her writing journey in 2020 with two commissioned works CRUMBS and NGARNGK; GIVER OF LIFE which debuted at Yirramboi Festival 2021. Naz is currently writing two commissions one for Ilbijerri Theatre Company and another for Malthouse Theatre in Melbourne.



### JOEL GRANGER NICK/ DOCTOR/PHOTOGRAPHER

Joel Granger most notably appeared in the Australian/ NZ tour of THE BOOK OF MORMON as Elder McKinley, for which he received

a Helpmann Award nomination. Other theatre credits include Pippin/Charlemagne understudy in PIPPIN for GFO, Arpad in SHE LOVES ME (Sydney Theatre Award nomination) and Baldwin in CRY-BABY for Hayes Theatre Co., Harry Beaton in The Production Company's BRIGADOON, Tobias in SWEENEY TODD for NZ Opera, Warren in ORDINARY DAYS for Pursued by Bear (Green Room Award nomination), Zacky Price in BIG FISH: THE MUSICAL, Tom in THE GATHERING for VTC, and Bride in TITANIC for StageArt. Television credits include TRUE STORY WITH HAMISH AND ANDY and PLEASE LIKE ME for ABC. Joel is a 2015 WAAPA araduate and was a 2018 finalist for the Rob Guest Endowment.

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### **HUGH O'CONNOR** SET & COSTUME DESIGNER

Hugh is a live performance maker, creative director and designer. With an interest in work that is bold and theatrical, Hugh works across

performance, exhibitions and events. Hugh has created work in collaboration with makers including directors: Craig Baldwin, David Berthold, Elizabeth Gadsby, Richard Carroll, Lucas Jervies, Mark Kilmurry, Paige Rattray, lain Sinclair, and Imara Savage. Design for theatre includes: ONCE, SILENT NIGHT, GOODWORKS, RIDE AND FOURPLAY, A LIFE IN THE THEATRE, DAYLIGHT SAVINGS (Darlinghurst Theatre Co.); THE WITCHES (Griffin/Malthouse); THE FLICK, THE ALIENS, 4 MINUTES 12 SECONDS (Outhouse Theatre Co.); HIDDEN SYDNEY: THE GLITTERING MILE (Vivid Festival); UNQUALIFIED 2: STILL UNQUALIFIED, David Williamson's NEARER THE GODS, THE WOMAN IN BLACK, THE ODD COUPLE, FOLK, THE NORMAN CONQUESTS, RELATIVELY SPEAKING, NEVILLE'S ISLAND (Ensemble Theatre); THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS, COSI (La Boite); 4000 MILES (Critical Stages); THE FANTASTICS Composer, WINYANBOGA YURRINGA, (Hayes Theatre); A RIFF ON KEEF (Griffin Independent). Hugh was nominated for Best Set Design at the Sydney Theatre Awards. Hugh holds a Bachelor of Design from NIDA.



### **KELSEY LEE** LIGHTING DESIGNER

Kelsey is a lighting, set and costume designer for theatre and film. Recently for Belvoir she was Associate Lighting designer for AT WHAT COST?

and previously the lighting designer for A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN. For Belvoir's 25A she was the Co-Production and Lighting designer on DESTROY, SHE SAID; and lighting designer for EXTINCTION OF THE LEARNED RESPONSE; SKYDUCK and KASAMA KITA. Last year she designed the lighting, set and

costumes for WILFRED GORDON MCDONALD PARTRIDGE (ACO). Other credits include OUTDATED, KILLING KATIE: CONFESSIONS OF A BOOKCLUB, UNQUALIFIED 2: STILL UNQUALIFIED (Ensemble Theatre), QUEEN FATIMA (NToP and Sydney Festival), THERE'S A SEA IN MY BEDROOM (ACO); JALI (Aya theatre, dance, musicals, cabaret, experimental Productions, Griffin Theatre Company), I'M WITH HER (Darlinghurst Theatre Company); APRIL AARDVARK (ATYP); GOOD DOG, IF WE GOT SOME MORE COCAINE I COULD SHOW YOU HOW I LOVE YOU (Greendoor Theatre Company) and LULU: A MODERN SEX TRAGEDY (NIDA).



### **BRENDON BONEY COMPOSER & SOUND** DESIGNER

Brendon is a Wiradjuri/ Gamilaroi man who grew up in Wagga Wagga, New South Wales and is now based in

Ettalong Beach. Brendon's work includes WUDJANG: NOT THE PAST, Bangarra Dance Theatre, AT WHAT COST?, Belvior Theatre, THE 7 STAGES OF GRIEVING, The Sydney Theatre Company- (Design Associate), BLACK TIES, Illbijerri Theatre- Musical Director & DUBBOO, Bangarra Dance Theatre, GODS OF WHEAT STREET (ABC1), REDFERN NOW (SBS), OFFSPRING (Network 10), WINNERS & LOSERS (Seven Network), UNDERBELLY CHOPPER (The Nine Network) & plus providing lead character Willie's singing voice in the film BRAN NEW DAE.



## **MORGAN MORONEY**

Morgan Moroney (he/him) is a multidisciplinary designer, originally from the land of the Kaurna people and currently working on Bidjigal and

Gadigal land. With a particular passion for integrated-media live performance, Morgan combines his passions for storytelling and technology to collaborate on distinctive and innovative works. Training: NIDA. Awards: APDG Emerging Designer for Live Performance (GHOSTS, NIDA 2020). Recent: Lighting Designer, JALI (National Tour), SIGNIFICANT OTHER (New Theatre), THE CONSTRUCT (Circus Monoxide); Assistant Lighting Designer, THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA ON SYDNEY HARBOUR (Opera Australia); Video Designer, UNQUALIFIED 2: STILL UNQUALIFIED, Assistant Video Designer, JAGGED LITTLE PILL AU. UPCOMING: co-Lighting Designer, CLEANSED (Redline), Lighting Designer, THE BARBER OF SEVILLE (Opera Australia).



### **LAUREN TULLOH** STAGE MANAGER

Lauren Tulloh is a NIDA graduate, completing a Bachelor of Dramatic Art (Production). For Ensemble Theatre: LOVE LETTERS,

KILLING KATIE, THE WOMAN IN BLACK, THE APPLETON LADIES' POTATO RACE (2021 regional tour), OUTDATED, THE LAST WIFE, THE LAST FIVE YEARS, MARJORIE PRIME, THE PLANT and BETRAYAL. For National Theatre of Parramatta: QUEEN FATIMA, THE THINGS I COULD NEVER TELL STEVEN and JESUS WANTS ME FOR A SUNBEAM (Belvoir return season). For the Hayes Theatre Company: REWIRED: MUSICALS REIMAGINED, AMERICAN PSYCHO, HIGH FIDELITY, ASSASSINS, THE FANTASTICKS, VIOLET and CALAMITY JANE which also toured to the Comedy Theatre Melbourne, Belvoir & regional areas. For Christine Dunstan Productions: THE GRUFFALO and THE GRUFFALO'S CHILD which toured extensively in Australia & New Zealand, For Tall Stories UK: THE GRUFFALO: SONGS FROM THE SHOW which toured to Singapore.

mainstage and independent productions, musicals, professional touring shows, festivals, immersive theatre and regional touring. Bronte's production credits include GRAND HORIZONS (Sydney Theatre Company), LIZZIE, YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN (Hayes Theatre Co.), CRY BABY (LPD Productions & Sydney Opera House), LIFE OF GALILEO (Belvoir), THE BIG TIME (Ensemble Theatre), and SENIOR MOMENTS (National Tour – Return Fire Productions). She has worked with Sydney Festival, Sport for Jove, and is also a published playwright.



### SARA KOLIJN COSTUME SUPERVISOR

Sara Kolijn graduated from Auckland University of Technology in 2007. She previously co-ordinated the 2022 and 2019 productions of

BLACK COCKATOO, and UNQUALIFIED 2: STILL UNQUALIFIED with Ensemble Theatre. She recently worked as Head of Wardrobe at Bell Shakespeare on A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM and HAMLET, as a buyer for HEARTBREAK HIGH, and a costume assistant for BOOMKAK PANTO at Belvoir and I'M A CELEBRITY... GET ME OUT OF HERE! She worked at Opera Australia for 9 years supervising WHITELEY, EL VIAGGIO A REIMS, DIE MEISTERSINGER, and THE LOVE OF THREE ORANGES (amongst many, many others) and organised the 2017 OA GARAGE SALE. Other Supervising credits include THE POHUTAKAWA TREE for Auckland Theatre Company. Wardrobe Assistant credits include; KAREN O STOP THE VIRGINS for Vivid Festival, OLIVER! for Auckland Theatre Company. Design Credits include; BE YOUR OWN BOSS for Giant Dwarf Productions and The LEGEND OF AGNI for Bus Stop Films. Sara was Head Of Wardrobe on HAIR and THE UNBELIEVABLES at Sydney Opera House and AIDA ON THE BEACH for Opera Australia.



### BRONTE SCHUFTAN ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

Bronte works as a Sydneybased stage manager, and has had a range of experience working on







MIRANDA MIDDLETON WORKSHOP DRAMATURG

Miranda is a director, writer, and dramaturg, with a Master of Fine Arts (Directing) from the National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA). In 2022, Miranda

is the Resident Writer at Theatre Works, and will assistant direct Simon Phillips on COME RAIN OR COME SHINE at Melbourne Theatre Company. Miranda's recent directing credits include SOWING SEEDS (Gasworks Arts Park), NOT TODAY (Kings Cross Theatre), VOLDEMORT AND THE TEENAGE HOGWARTS MUSICAL PARODY (Theatre Works) and THE GREAT AND POWERFUL OZZIE (Old 505 Theatre). Miranda is currently developing her new musical PAPER STARS with Salty Theatre, and her play PEAR-SHAPED with Rogue Projects.



### **AROHA PEHI** TECHNICAL CREATIVE INTERN

Aroha Pehi is a proud Darrriebullum, Kuku-Yalnji, Ngāphui and Ngātiporou woman from South-East Queensland. She is an

independent artist based in Sydney. She co-founded 'Lost All Sorts Collective', with fellow graduates of NAISDA and is in the developmental stages of their work FRAID; which covers how people, Indigenous and non-, place value and connection to land and tradition. Aroha continues to explore her own movement and interests in the arts, with a strong passion to bring her knowledge into communities.



### TOBY BLOME UNDERSTUDY

Toby Blome is a graduate of NIDA with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting. Since graduating he has appeared in EXIT THE KING and THERE WILL BE A CLIMAX (at the

Old Fitz Theatre), ERNANI (Australian Opera), INTERSECTION 2019 - ARRIVAL for ATYP, Eddie in Jackrabbit's A LITTLE PIECE OF ASH, and the touring production of HILTER'S DAUGHTER for Monkey Baa. He is also one half of the clowning duo RUDY & CUTHBERT, who have performed extensively in Sydney and at Melbourne's Southbank Theatre. Screen work includes Private 'Yank' Akell in Kriv Stenders feature film DANGER CLOSE, and more recently the ten part crime drama THE TWELVE (for Foxtel). In late 2022 Toby will be appearing in PHOTOGRAPH 51 for the Ensemble Theatre.





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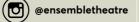
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