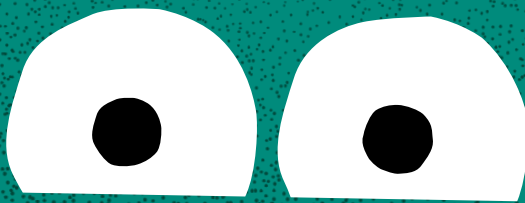
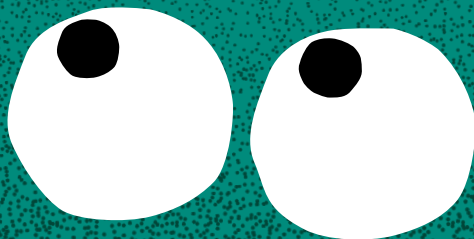
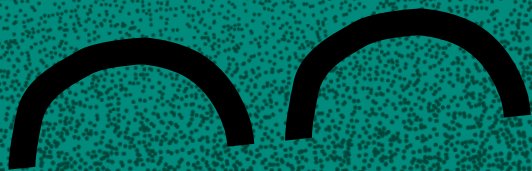


monkey baa



Annual Report
2023

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Hello!

Message from the Chair

Welcome to our annual report. This year, more than ever, our journey together has been a testament to resilience, innovation, and the collective spirit of our Monkey Baa family. We celebrate the 95,000 audiences in over 50 communities around Australia. A heartfelt thank you goes to the ARA Group for their generous five-year sponsorship. This partnership not only ensures our stability but also propels us into an exciting future. Equally, our government partners have been pillars of support, enabling us to navigate the year's challenges and opportunities with confidence.

Reflecting on 2023, it's clear that while we faced our share of obstacles, we also seized opportunities to grow and evolve. The introduction of our new growth plan marks a significant milestone in our history, laying the foundation for a future where our company can continue to inspire and delight young audiences. This year has been about setting the stage for what's to come in 2024 – a year we anticipate with eagerness and optimism.

To our incredible staff, artists, funders, and supporters, your passion, commitment, and creativity have been the driving force behind our achievements. Your belief in

our mission has made all the difference during this transformative period. As we look ahead, I am filled with gratitude and excitement for the opportunities that lie before us. Together, we are poised to embark on a new chapter, one that promises to enrich the lives of young people through the magic of theatre.

Thank you for being part of this remarkable journey. Your support, in all its forms, has been invaluable. Here's to a future that builds on the lessons of the past year, embracing innovation and creativity as we continue to make a profound impact on our audiences. Let's step forward into 2024 with confidence, ready to bring our vision to life in new and exciting ways.



Libbie Doherty
Chair of the Board

From the Executive Director

Greetings to our Monkey Baa community. As we wrap up a year of transition and look forward to new beginnings, I want to express my deepest appreciation for your unwavering support. This year has been about navigating changes, from saying goodbye to our beloved theatre to embracing a future filled with promise and excitement. Through it all, your commitment has been our guiding light.

Financially, we've tackled challenges with a strategic approach, supported by the incredible generosity of the NSW Government. This assistance, coupled with our team's prudent management, has allowed us to maintain our focus on delivering high-quality theatre experiences for young audiences. We're grateful for the support that has helped us turn potential challenges into opportunities for growth and innovation.

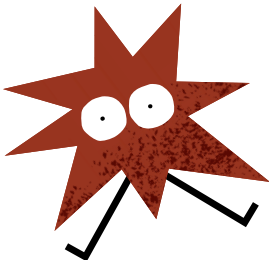
This year, we celebrated the success of our final season in our current venue, thanks to the support of Lendlease and the hard work of our dedicated team. As we prepare to introduce our new business model and presentation strategy, we're filled with anticipation for the stories we'll share and the smiles we'll inspire.

My heartfelt thanks go to everyone who has played a part in our journey this year. Your creativity, resilience and passion have made all the difference. As we move into an exciting future, I am confident that together, we will continue to create memorable experiences for our audiences, fostering a lifelong love of theatre.

Here's to a future where we continue to grow, innovate and bring joy to young people through the power of theatre. Thank you for being such an integral part of our story. Let's embrace the opportunities that lie ahead with open hearts and a shared vision for success.



Kevin du Preez
Executive Director



From the Artistic Director

2023 has been a year filled with creativity, collaboration and artistic achievement at Monkey Baa. It's been a privilege for me to work alongside nearly 100 brilliant creatives, artists and arts workers, each bringing unique visions and passion to our shared projects. Their dedication has been a source of great joy and pride, underscoring the importance of our shared mission in enriching the lives of young audiences.

Soon we will bid farewell to our current venue. But after 12 wonderful years we take with us memories of incredible seasons of work, many showcasing the best of what we can achieve together.

Our partnership with Shopfront for The Lies We Were Told, which earned the 2023 Sydney Theatre Award for Best Production for Young People, is a highlight that deserves special mention. This recognition not only celebrates our creative excellence but also reinforces the significance of our work in the landscape of theatre for young people.

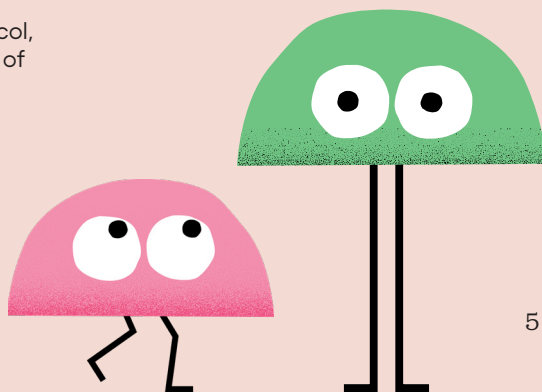
The Artist Program continues to be a beacon of our commitment to nurturing emerging artists with stories to tell. The presentation of Little Bozu and Kon Kon by our Inaugural Penny Cook Creative Associate Mayu Iwasaki marked a significant achievement, showcasing the culmination of two years of dedicated support and development. We're also thrilled about the progress made by our second Creative Associate, Felicity Nicol, whose work has become an integral part of our artistic team.

Looking ahead, I am very excited about the expansion of our Creative Learning Program and the innovative ways we're engaging with schools and communities. Our plans for the coming year promise to further our mission and deepen our impact, thanks to your continued creativity and support.

Thank you to each, and every one of you for making this year one of unforgettable artistic collaboration and growth. Your ingenious creative practice, dedication, and passion are the heart of Monkey Baa. I am grateful for the opportunity to lead such an inspiring community.

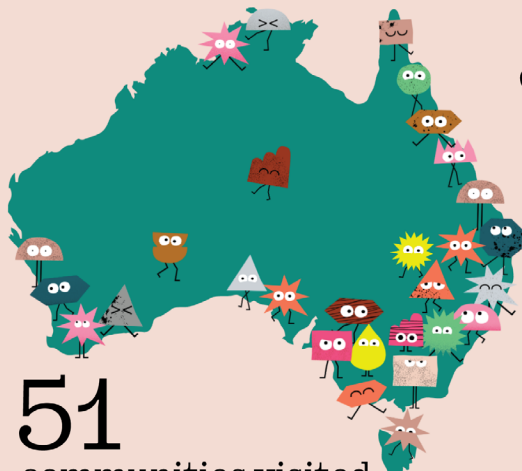


Eva Di Cesare
Artistic Director



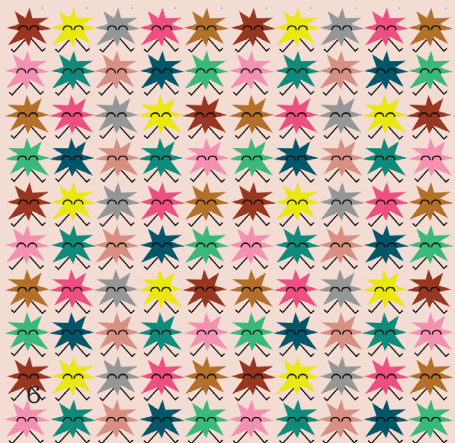
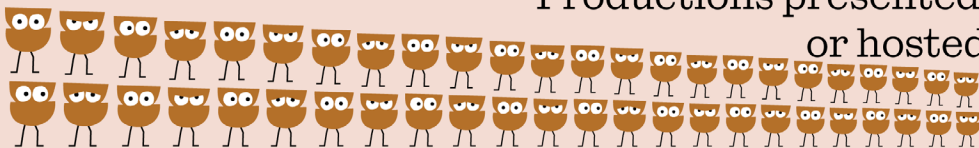
A snapshot of 2023

A journey in
exploration,
renewal and
creativity



44

Productions presented
or hosted



100 Artists and
workers employed



The background of the entire image is a repeating pattern of small, colorful cartoon mushrooms. Each mushroom has a different colored cap (pink, yellow, blue, green, grey) and a simple face with two dots for eyes and a small line for a mouth. They are arranged in a dense, grid-like pattern across the entire page.

94,957
audience members

6,332
student participants

A Monkey Baa Theatre Company Production
Based on the book by Mem Fox and Julie Vivas
Adapted for the stage by Eva Di Cesare and Sandie Eldridge



Possum Magic

National Tour

3 April - 10 November 2023

*"Always high
quality productions
perfectly aimed at the
correct age appropriate
target audience."*

- Joan Sutherland
Performing Arts Centre

Cast

Gabriel Fancourt
Teale Howie
Ebony Tucker
Eva Di Cesare
Sarah Greenwood
Sarah Woods
8

Crew

Cally Bartley
Kirsty Mangelsdorf
Dana Ioppolo



Touring Locations

NSW

Sydney
Belrose
Parramatta
Penrith
Goulburn
Nowra
Canberra
Wollongong
Parramatta
Coffs Harbour
Tamworth
Taree
Wyang
Casula
Dubbo
Orange
Griffith
Wagga Wagga
Port Macquarie
Bathurst

QLD

Logan
Cleveland
Brisbane
Toowoomba
Rockhampton
Bundaberg
Mackay
Ayr

NT

Darwin
Alice Springs

VIC

Shepparton
Swan Hill
Mildura
Portland
Warrnambool
Colac
Warragul
Bairnsdale
Hamilton
Werribee
Narre Warren
Frankston

WA

Esperance
Perth
Karratha
Margaret River
Albany

SA

Adelaide

TAS

Hobart
Devonport

Mem Fox and Julie Vivas' beloved picture book 'Possum Magic' has enchanted children for over 40 years. Seen by over 160,000 young people across Australia, Monkey Baa's delightful adaptation returns to the stage.

Grandma Poss loves making magic. She makes wombats blue and kookaburras pink. She makes dingoes smile and emus shrink. But one day, when danger arrives, Grandma Poss uses her most magical spell to make Hush invisible. Possum Magic takes us on a fantastical journey to cities around Australia to find the food that makes Hush visible again.

Featuring spellbinding magic, puppetry and original music, Monkey Baa's award-winning team has turned the whimsical world of the book into an exciting live experience for audiences aged 3-8 and their families.



100% of
presenters rated
the show quality very
good or excellent

51

communities

182

performances

76,668

audience members



A Monkey Baa Theatre Company Production

Written for the stage by Jenevieve Chang

Based on the book *Yong: The Journey of an Unworthy Son* by Janeen Brian,

Published by Walker Books Australia Pty Ltd

Created in collaboration with Her Majesty's Theatre, Ballarat and Bendigo Venues & Events.



Yong

Sydney Opera House

19 - 24 June 2023

Cast

George Zhao

Crew

Hannah Crane

Blake Condon

10



Australian Government

RISE Fund



CITY OF
BALLARAT



CITY OF GREATER
BENDIGO



Locations

NSW Sydney

The production of Yong is based on 'Yong: the journey of an unworthy son' by Janeen Brian, published by Walker Books Australia Pty Ltd, Sydney.

Set against the backdrop of the Australian gold rush of 1857, Yong is a new Australian play by Jenevieve Chang. Mixing historical fact and narrative fiction, Yong takes us on a journey across land and sea, from China to the goldfields of Australia.

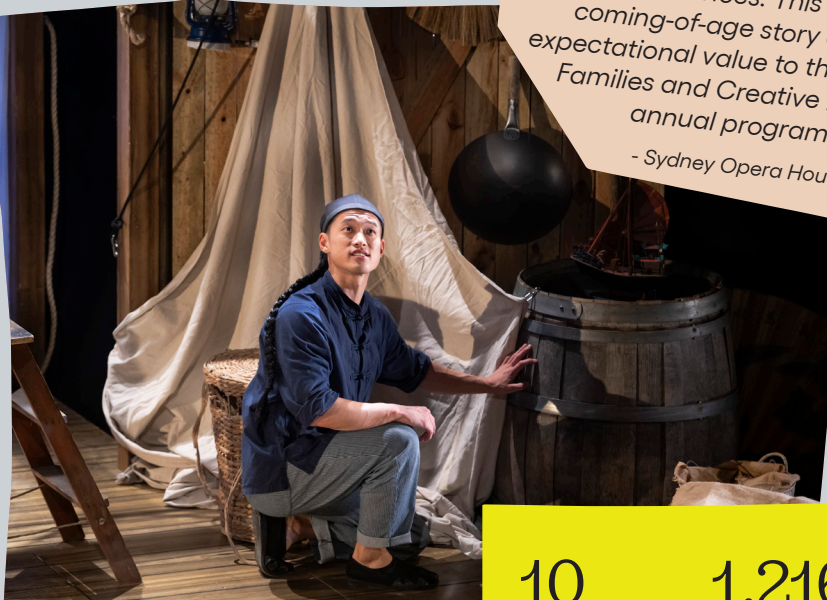
The work was created with deep collaboration with the Ballarat community and generously funded by the Federal Government through RISE and the Australia Council Playing Australia.

"Glen Street Theatre has a long and productive partnership with Monkey Baa Theatre Company. They consistently produce work of high standards and are trusted by our community. The inclusion of quality work from a company such as Monkey Baa allows us scope to grow into our changing local demographic."

- Glen St Theatre

"Monkey Baa Theatre Company's production of Yong was beautiful Asian Australian storytelling, which was thoroughly enjoyed and praised by Sydney Opera House's schools and general public audiences. This time less coming-of-age story added expectational value to the Children, Families and Creative Learning annual program."

- Sydney Opera House



10

performances

1,216

audience members

Creative Development

In 2023, we worked with over 19 artists to progress the development of the following new works.

19

Artists engaged



7

Creative development weeks

3

New works



Detention

Based on the novel by Tristan Bancks
Adapted by Kobra Sayyadi and Callan Purcell
Original concept by Callan Purcell

A powerful story, the production will connect young people to the experiences of unsettled refugees from Afghanistan. This production will explore stories and themes not often seen on the main stage, especially for younger audiences.

The creative development ran for approximately ten days over a three week period. A selection of artists with varying specialties built relationships with the Hazara community, learned of the culture and current events affecting them in Afghanistan and when seeking asylum in Australia, and investigated the world of the book through play-based analysis. They produced character studies, devised movement and sound-based response pieces to further understand the perspective of the characters of the play.

The development included mostly performers from culturally diverse backgrounds, particularly members of the Hazara community.

Artists

Callan Purcell
 Kobra Sayyadi
 Randa Sayed
 Zeynab Noori
 Wern Mak
 Lucia May
 Nicole Pington

Mansoor Noor
 Jordan Shea
 Brittanie Shipway
 Felicity Nicol
 Eva Di Cesare



The Duck and the Darklings

Based on the book by Glenda Millard and Stephen Michael King

Adapted by Lachlan Philpott

Directed by Eva Di Cesare

Based on the children's book by Glenda Millard and Stephen Michael King, *The Duck and the Darklings*, is a new immersive experience for children adapted by writer Lachlan Philpott directed by Eva Di Cesare, is a story about finding hope in a world that has forgotten how to live in the light.

In 2023, we moved into Phase 3 of the immersive production. This phase included the creation of two major set elements of the immersive world; the inflatable finding fields and Grandpapa's home, and the testing and refining of three major focal points together; the physical world, the script, and scene.

This phase in the project has been instrumental in moving this exciting project forward to the creation of the huge physical inflatable world, testing lighting and ensuring it is atmospheric and able to depict the Land of the Dark, pushing the development of the script further, bringing to life the characters and puppetry, and testing the parameters of what is possible when creating immersive theatre with characters interacting closely with audience participants.

Cast

Annie Byron
Deborah Galanos
David Lynch
Riley McLean
Mansoor Noor
Randa Sayed

Creatives

Matt Aberline
Matt Cox
Kailah Cabanas
Claudia Chidiac
Mary Rapp
Laura Watson

We want to say a special thank you to the following donors for their generous support and taking part in our matched funding campaign for the Duck and the Darklings. With their support we managed to raise \$71,000 towards the development of this wonderful new production. A big thank you to the following people:

Edward Federman, Lenore Robertson, Wendy Were, Eva Di Cesare, Kevin du Preez & Stephen Gray, Genevieve Clay-Smith & Henry Smith, Wendy Brooks and Partners, Kylie Blundell and Libbie Doherty.

We also want to thank Creative Partnerships Australia for the matched funding for this campaign.

Where is the Green Sheep?

**Based on the book by Mem Fox
Illustrated by Judy Horacek**



The vision for *Where is the Green Sheep?* is a bold reimagining of Mem Fox's beloved children's book, using a blend of animation and puppetry to bring the story to life on stage.

As the book celebrates its 21st birthday, this production aims to renew love for this iconic story, introducing it to a new generation of children, from birth to five years old, and extending *Monkey Baa's* reach beyond its traditional audience.

We thank Sydney Opera House and Arts Centre Melbourne for their support to kick-start this project. Watch this space throughout 2024 and 2025 for more to come!

Creatives

Eva Di Cesare
Judy Horacek
Kailah Cabanas
Me-Lee Hay



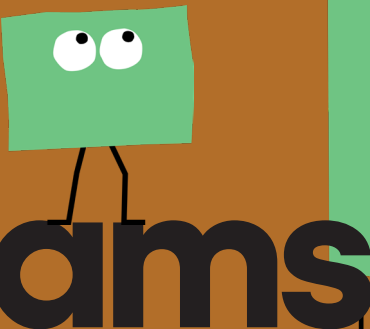
Join the Artistic Director's Circle

We thank our Artistic Director's Circle members for their generous support to make the above possible.

The Artistic Director's Circle helps us invest in the commissioning of new work by emerging and established artists. With the circle's investment, we guide leading national and international artists to create and develop ambitious new works for young people.



Our Programs



Not only do we deliver innovative, empowering theatre for young people, we also offer a variety of programs for artists, leaders and young people, to even further be inspired through the arts.

Artist Program

Penny Cook Creative Associate Program

"My time with Monkey Baa has allowed me to grow and stretch as an artist. I continue to squeal with joy and gratitude for the opportunity to work with this dynamic, beautiful company!"

Felicity Nicol
(Monkey Baa, Creative Associate)

Each year we bring on a new Creative Associate for a two-year tenure with the company. Building on their passion for creating theatre for young people, they will learn how Monkey Baa operates and be supported towards a public presentation of their own work in their second year.

2023 culminated in Mayu Iwasaki, our inaugural Creative Associate, presenting her new work, *Little Bozu and Kon Kon*. Mayu is a bilingual Japanese actress, puppeteer, and theatre-maker. The showing of her work was a tremendous success and we look forward to supporting Mayu beyond her placement with our company.

In 2023, we welcomed our second Creative Associate, Felicity Nicol.

Felicity is an award-winning Performance Director and Artistic Director from Sydney, Australia. A graduate of the NIDA Director's Course, she has gone on to work with prominent artists from around the world, including Ontroerend Goed (BEL), Punchdrunk & Gecko Physical Theatre (UK), Illutron (DEN) and Mammalian Diving Reflex (CAN). Felicity's work young people has led her to working with Australian Theatre for



Young People, Matriark Theatre, PACT, Milk Crate Theatre & Spark Youth Theatre (AUS), Mit Ohne Alles (GER), The Torontonians (CAN) and Company3 (UK).

Felicity's mission as an artist is to shift assumptions, we have towards other people by changing power dynamics and social contracts. This has led her to creating work for 10 Nodi Festival (IT), Ruhrtriennale (GER), HAVEN Festival (DEN) and Wiener Festwochen (AUS). Felicity is a recipient of Australia Council for the Arts Grants, a Create NSW development grant, a Mike Walsh Fellowship and a 2018 Sandra Bates Directors Award.

Learning Program

Teaching Artist

Tours



For every Monkey Baa production, we run pre-show drama-based workshops around the country to prepare students to see the performance at their local theatre. In 2023, teaching artists engaged with over 2,156 students before they attended the performance of Possum Magic.

We employ artists from the region in which we tour. These artists are connected with the community and extend the experience from a local perspective.

The teaching artist tour is a way for Monkey Baa to embody our ethos of reaching young people wherever they may live.

Tours

Possum Magic

Teaching Artists

Alexander Andrews (NSW)

Eva Di Cesare (NSW)

Jono Chan (NSW/NT/QLD)

Julia Low (VIC/TAS)

Mathew Lee (NSW/ACT)

Michelle Hall (WA)

Rachel Jackett (NSW)

Tina Jackson (VIC/SA)

Vincent Hooper (VIC/NSW)

Violette Ayad (NSW)



4,800
student participants

240
workshops

50
communities

Learning Program

Workshop

Incursion Program

In 2023, Monkey Baa trialled our first Workshop Incursion Program, offering young people a diverse range of skills including improvisation, playbuilding, scriptwriting, and puppetry. Our Teaching Artists conducted face-to-face workshops in classrooms all over Sydney and Greater Sydney. These workshops provided an immersive and behind-the-scenes look into the world of theatre.

Our workshops not only impart technical knowledge but also nurture life skills such as communication, teamwork, and confidence. The commitment to affordability and accessibility ensured that all young people, regardless of economic background, can experience the transformative power of theatremaking.

As we reflect on a highly successful program, our focus remains on expanding the reach of our workshops, providing a platform for creativity and personal growth.

Schools

Queenwood School
for Girls
9 workshops

Anzac Park Public
School
5 workshops

Eagle Vale High
School
1 workshop

Carroll College
Boulee
1 workshop

Leighland Christian
School
1 workshop

Wollemi College
1 workshop

Kinma Primary
School
1 workshop

Cedars Christian
College
4 workshops

Holy Spirit Catholic
Primary School
2 workshops

Waitara Public
School
2 workshops

St Vincent's College
Ashfield
2 workshops

Lindfield Learning
Village
1 workshop



30
workshops

750
students



Learning Program

School Holiday Workshops

For the first time, we ran workshops for young people at ARA Darling Quarter Theatre, led by experienced Teaching Artists. Designed for all skill levels, these in-person sessions accommodated both week-long and individual workshop attendance, encouraging creative exploration.

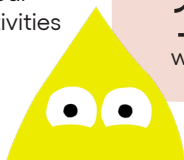
With over 100 participants taking part in the workshops, we ensured an engaging and interactive experience. Safety was paramount, with Teaching Artists undergoing specialised training and our Learning team closely monitoring activities for inclusivity and respect.

This successful initiative underscores our commitment to accessible, engaging, and safe artistic opportunities for young people.

We collaborated with the Sydney Opera House to present five Possum Magic workshops during the school holidays, providing young participants with an enchanting theatrical experience that complemented their visit to the theatre.

15
workshops

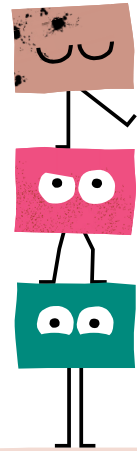
200
participants



Learning Program Learning Resources

Monkey Baa created several new learning resources for teachers and students in 2023. These are linked to our productions and take students behind the scenes in exploring the vision, script, design, rehearsal and performance.

Our resources bring the magic of theatre into the classroom with activities and experiences that help students build courage through creativity and gain skills across all areas of theatre-making.



3
new
resources

1,570
participants

ANTI-DOTE: 2023 Drama Australia National Conference

Monkey Baa's Learning & Engagement Specialist, Alexander Andrews, and Producer, Emma Khamis, participated in the ANTI-DOTE: 2023 Drama Australia National Conference held at the University of Newcastle. Over two days, education experts, arts organisations, and teachers gathered to exchange innovative drama practices addressing the challenging circumstances of our times. Together, we delved into how drama education remains a source of hope, countering the challenges posed by unprecedented crises, inequity, and change.

The conference was a platform to explore ways in which drama education can create space for each other, our students, and our

communities to narrate and stage stories that hold significance. During the event, Alex and Emma established connections with teachers, engaged in discussions about the state of the arts with other organisations, and acted as a bridge between arts and education. As a result of the conference, Alex was invited to host a professional development for teachers' day-long course at ARA Darling Quarter Theatre and also speak at Drama NSW's Bridging the Divide conference in 2024.

DRAMA
DRAMA NEW SOUTH WALES

Engaging Young People

Youth Advisory Council

Our Youth Advisory Council (YAC) empowers young people through theatre and creative experiences, providing advice, representation, connection, and amplifying their voice within the organisation. In return, opportunities are offered to learn about theatre, make a difference, network, attend productions, and advance careers in the arts industry.

The 2023 Youth Advisory Council

Max Fernandez

Aaki Hiwatashi

Yuki Hiwatashi

Zara Perry

Isaia Ta'ale

"The thing that I find really important about [the Youth Advisory Council] at Monkey Baa is that we get the opportunity to be the voices for young people, for theatre design for young people and be at the frontline of those stories."

*-Isaia Ta'ale,
Youth Advisory Council Member*

Engaging Young People

Student Collaborators

Monkey Baa has a longstanding relationship with Bankstown West Public School and Wattawah Heights Public School. Students work with the company as we develop our works. We seek their input, feedback and response as we create our productions. In 2022, we collaborated with 150 students across the development of The Duck and the Darkling and Little Bozu and Kon Kon.

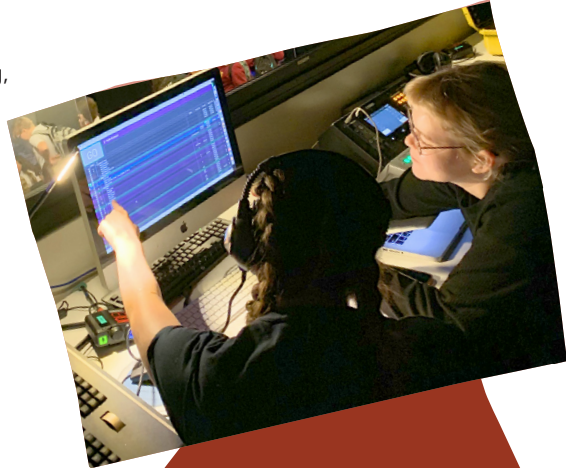
"I feel very special for being able to see all the work [Monkey Baa] is working hard on and I feel really cool that I am able to think of ideas that [Monkey Baa] will put inside the act."

*- Bankstown West Public School
Student*

Engaging Young People Work Experience

Each year we welcome students to join the Monkey Baa team and learn how an arts organisation runs, from programming to direction, venue management to marketing, and producing to play development. Our work experience program develops skills and knowledge in making and presenting theatre and prepares young people for a career in the arts.

In 2023, we welcomed 3 students to the company
Sam, 18
Alex G, 16
Alex A, 16



Young people are at the centre of everything we do.

20

staff
under 30

5

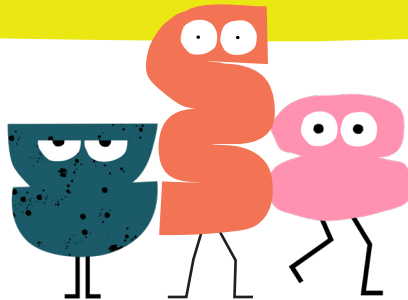
Youth Advisory
Council
Members

3

Board
Members
under 30

150

student
collaborators



The background of the image is a dark, moody scene. On the right side, a large, vertical wooden wheel, possibly part of a traditional mill or a decorative element, is visible. In the foreground, a traditional Japanese umbrella (wagasa) is partially open, resting on a wooden surface. The lighting is dramatic, with a strong light source from the left creating a bright, horizontal beam of light that cuts across the scene. The overall tone is artistic and evocative.

inspiring
imaginative
empowering

monkey baa



Presented Season



We curate an annual season of theatre for young people of all ages at our theatre, the ARA Darling Quarter Theatre. We were proud to present the following season in 2023.

A Monkey Baa Theatre Production
Based on the books by Sheena Knowles & Rod Clement
Written for the stage & directed by Eva Di Cesare

Edward the Emu

10 - 21 January 2023

20

performances

1706

audiences



Creative Team

Eva Di Cesare
Director & Writer

Isabel Hudson
Set & Costume Designer

Alice Osborne
Puppetry Director

Nate Edmondson
Composer & Sound Designer

Matt Cox
Lighting Designer

Kailah Cabanas
Resident Puppetry Director

Zac Saric
Associate Sound Designer

Warwick Doddrell
Assistant Director

Sandra Eldridge
Dramaturg

Edward is bored with his lot. Being the only emu at the zoo leaves him feeling glum and under the impression that the grass is greener in another animal's enclosure. Convinced that the other creatures are more popular, Edward breaks ranks in search of fun and finds Edwina along the way! Meanwhile, the zookeepers are in hot pursuit to restore order to the zoo. Come on an adventure with the emus as they hilariously navigate their feathered existential crises, seeking to find their place in the world.

Featuring exceptional, world-class puppetry, an original score and inventive storytelling, the emus' journey of hijinks and tenderness leads them to discover that the best thing you can be is...you!

Supported by Monkey Baa Theatre Company
as part of the Penny Cook Creative Associate Program

Little Bozu and Kon Kon

18 January 2023



3

performances

177

audiences

Creative Team

Mayu Iwasaki
Story and Design

Me-Lee Hay
Composer

Matt Cox
Lighting Designer

Katerina Gaskell
Puppet Maker

Zac Saric
Sound Designer

Thomas Creative
Set Construction

Eva Di Cesare
Artistic Director and Mentor

A bilingual Japanese actress, puppeteer, and theatre-maker, Mayu spent two years developing the work with guidance from Monkey Baa's Artistic Director, Eva Di Cesare.

An unlikely duo unite in a story of self-acceptance and empathy.

Little Bozu and Kon Kon follows a shapeshifting raccoon and a misunderstood fox from different worlds. They find each other in a shared need for friendship, and from it come to accept their own differences. After a series of mistaken identities, Bozu and Kon Kon find solace in each other's shared uniqueness.

creative
partnerships
australia

A Shopfront Arts Co-op and
Monkey Baa Theatre Company Production
as part of Sydney World Pride Amplified 2023

The Lies We Were Told

21 - 23 February 2023

4

performances

513

audiences



Creative Team

Natalie Rose
Director

Isabel Hudson
Assistant Director

Sharleen Ndlovu
Assistant Director

Daniel Potter
Set & Lighting Design

Prema Yin
Composer

Tyler Fitzpatrick
Production Manager

Valentina Corona
Producer

Lily Hayman
Associate Producer

Conceived and created by a fiery group of teenagers, *The Lies We Were Told* is an insight into what it's like to grow up in society obsessed with fiction and what it takes to figure out the facts.

From little white lies about the tooth fairy to the big, trickier ones about gender norms, heteronormativity and queerness, this fresh Australian play unpacks how society places us in a box from day dot. With stories about the hopes and dreams of young people, this is a bold exploration of what it's like to be a teenager living in Australia today.



Australian Government
RISE Fund



A Monkey Baa Theatre Company Production
Based on the book by Mem Fox and Julie Vivas
Adapted for the stage by
Eva Di Cesare and Sandie Eldridge

Possum Magic

31 March - 6 April 2023

Creative Team

Sandie Eldridge
Director and Co-writer

Eva Di Cesare
Co-writer

Emma Vine
Production Designer

Adam Mada
Magic and Illusion Designer

Nate Edmondson
Composer & Sound Designer

David Bergman
Vision Animator

Sam Chester
Movement Director

Alice Osborne
Puppetry Director

Kate Sherman
Remount Movement Director

Drew Wilson
Remount Puppetry Director

Julie Vivas
Illustrator

Mem Fox and Julie Vivas' beloved picture book 'Possum Magic' has enchanted children for over 40 years. Seen by over 150,000 young people across Australia, Monkey Baa's delightful adaptation returns to the stage.

Featuring spellbinding magic, puppetry and original music, Monkey Baa's award-winning team has turned the whimsical world of the book into an exciting live experience for audiences aged 3-8 and their families.

10
performances

2,065
audiences

A Slingsby production
Emil and the Detectives
By Erich Kästner
Adapted for the stage by
Nicki Bloom



Emil and The Detectives

12 - 13 April 2023

Creative Team

Andy Packer
Director

Nicki Bloom
Playwright

Quincy Grant
Composer and Sound Design

Wendy Todd
Designer

Ailsa Paterson
Costume Designer

Geoff Cobham
Lighting Designer

Chris Petridis
Technical Design

Luku Trembath
Animation Director

Young Emil catches a train to visit family in the big city. Something valuable is stolen. But the thief soon discovers Emil was not such an easy target. A group of quick-thinking and resourceful children rallies around. Can a bunch of kids work together to uncover and outsmart the true criminal?

Kästner's 1929 novella is more than a 'good romp', it broke ground for the independent-children-versus-devious-adults story genre. Streetwise city kids, a hard-working single mother and Emil's past brush with the law add grit and nuance to this satisfying tale.

8

performances

1,066

audiences

SLINGSBY
- Journey In Wonder -



Government of
South Australia



Co-produced by Audioplay & Windmill Theatre Company

Audioplay: Sunrunners

1 - 6 July 2023



169
participants

Drawing on the simplicity and strength of real-world imaginative play combined with sophisticated production values. Audioplay encourages highly active imaginative play whilst building kids' sense of empathy and teamwork skills. Created by an award-winning team with over 20 years' experience writing, directing and producing film, theatre and events.

Creative Team

Zoe Pepper
Creator, Co-Writer, Director

Gemma Pepper
Producer

Clare Testoni
Co-Writer

James Brown
Composer

Xoe Baird
Sound Designer



Department of
Local Government, Sport
and Cultural Industries



Government of
South Australia



Thank you to the Lang Foundation and
Thyne Reid Foundation for their support

An Ali Gordon and Alicia Gonzalez production

Holiday Island

05 - 07 October 2023



6

performances

763

audiences

Creative Team

Ali Gordon
Co-creator, Performer

Alicia Gonzalez
Co-creator, Associate Director

Corey Potter
Technician and Stage Manager

A clown yearns for a summer getaway, so she decides to create it herself at the ARA Darling Quarter Theatre. With nine colourful suitcases in tow, she builds an imaginary world of play, relaxation and togetherness: Holiday Island.

Like a silent film, driven by a nostalgic soundtrack, audiences are treated to an uplifting and perfectly silly beach adventure, completely indoors.

Monkey Baa Studio

Monkey Baa Studio supports independent theatremakers in presenting innovative work for young audiences.

We offered our venue and production support, including marketing, publicity, ticketing and a stipend to two productions in our 2023 season. After receiving numerous exceptional applications from theatremakers, we selected two outstanding projects for our 2023 season. A big thank you to the City of Sydney who supported this program.

A George Kemp and Hayden Tonazzi production

Shack

27-28 October 2023

Antarctica. A blizzard. Nine school kids are stranded in a shack, on the bottom of the world, with a sinister force circling outside...

Our young explorers, in the ghostly footsteps of Ernest Shackleton, question their place in the natural and social order of the world as the limits of their courage are pushed into uncharted waters. A hypothermic flurry of comedy and thriller, Shack explores the territory between teen anxiety and teen invincibility. Young people are being called on to lead like never before, but how do they learn to step up, when sometimes just existing is hard enough?!

3

performances

285

audiences

Creative Team

George Kemp
Writer

Hayden Tonazzi
Director

Jessica Fallico
Assistant Director

Jane FitzGerald
Dramaturg

Angela Doherty
Set & Costume Designer

Morgan Moroney
Lighting Designer

Saint Clair
Lighting Realiser

Chrysoulla Markoulli
Sound Designer



A Rogue Projects production
Directed by Miranda Middleton

Pear-Shaped

03 - 04 November 2023

Young designer Frankie is working on their latest project - a brand new adaptation of one their favourite childhood stories, Alice in Wonderland. The pressure is on to deliver something entirely new, but a surprise visit from their sister will send Frankie tumbling down a rabbit hole of memories they'd rather forget.

Adapting elements of Lewis Carroll's classic tale in an entirely original and imaginative way, this deliciously dark new comedy explores what happens when food, a symbol of love, family and culture, becomes the enemy.

1

performance

79

audiences

Creative Team

Ziggy Resnick
Writer

Miranda Middleton
Writer, Director

Robbi James
Producer

Erica Lovell
Producer

Talia Meyerowitz-Katz
Producer

Grace Deacon
Production Designer

Oliver Beard
Composer & Sound Designer

Brittanie Shipway
Dramaturg



Partnerships

Collaborating to extend our impact.



Sunderella

Trikone, Bali Padda &
Sydney World Pride

1 - 6 July 2023

Set in 18th-century British India, *Sunderella* featured a cast of 17 performers in splendid costumes and jewellery. Produced by Sydney-based Trikone Australia and Bali Padda in association with Sydney WorldPride, *Sunderella* follows Sundar, a pious and sweet-natured young man living with his evil stepmother and two self-centred step sisters. But as the timeless fairytale goes, Sundar's fortunes change when a celestial force "stirs the pot", transforms him into a gorgeous woman called *Sunderella* and sends her prancing to the prince's palace.



Monkey Baa, via the ARA Darling Quarter Theatre, supported the production.

4

performances

922

audiences



Class Clowns

Melbourne International Comedy Festival

10 March 2023

Class Clowns is the Melbourne International Comedy Festival's national development program for young people.

Class Clowns introduces teens aged 14-18 to comedy through creative workshops with professional comedians, using artistic activities to hone comedic talent and build self-esteem, confidence and resilience.

2023 was the 6th year that Monkey Baa was a partner of the program to host the Sydney heat of the competition.



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monkey
baa

Fringe Kids

Sydney Fringe Festival

23 - 30 September 2023

Monkey Baa and Sydney Fringe joined forces to host 2023 Sydney Fringe Kids. Over 2070 young people visited our theatre during the September school holidays. 30 independent artists and groups presents 14 performances during the week.

Productions in the 2023 festival included:

Wonderfully Wacky
Wizard

Flabbergasters

Aiden Schofield
Magician

101 Ways to Annoy Your
Parents And Other
Really Old People

Wilbur the Optical
Whale



SYDNEY
FRINGE
FESTIVAL

ARA
DARLING QUARTER
THEATRE

monkey
baa
37



Community Programs

Monkey Baa partners with like-minded charities to extend our impact on our community. From sustainable suppliers to schools from Low Social Economic areas to provide access to theatre to those who are regularly excluded.

Two Good

Two Good is a charity focused on supporting women and families affected by domestic violence, offering them opportunities to rebuild and improve their lives. Through its social enterprises, including a catering company in Sydney, Two Good not only provides vital services but also employment opportunities for those it helps. Monkey Baa has chosen Two Good as its exclusive catering partner at the ARA Darling Quarter Theatre, further supporting the charity's mission. Monkey Baa also provided free tickets to our theatre shows to their participants.

**TWO
GOOD
CO.**

Girls and Boys Brigade

The Girls & Boys Brigade, located in Surry Hills, Sydney, plays a crucial role in supporting children, youth, and their families who face a range of challenges, including financial, social and housing difficulties. Their mission is to provide education and recreation that build life skills as a foundation for a brighter future. Monkey Baa proudly supports the Girls & Boys Brigade as a preferred charity partner, offering discounted theatre tickets and partnering to deliver school holiday workshops.



Theatre Access Program

Monkey Baa, with the support from Matana Foundation for Young People, has launched a new pilot program aimed at ensuring equitable access to theatre for young people across Australia. The heart of this initiative is a dedicated fund that accompanies Monkey Baa on its national tours, providing not only free access to theatre performances but also covering the often prohibitive costs of transportation. By removing this significant barrier, we hope to make it possible for young audiences to engage with and be inspired by the magic of live performance. This initiative reflects Monkey Baa's deep commitment to empowering young people through theatre, ensuring that every child, regardless of their circumstances, can experience the transformative power of the arts.



Venue Hire



We manage both corporate and community hires of our theatre ARA Darling Quarter Theatre. We promote our theatre as an intimate space for a wide variety of uses including corporate events. Across the year, we hosted a total of 66 performances and events through venue hire activities which were attended by approximately 9,300 patrons. Monkey Baa employed over 30 front of house and technical staff to manage these activities.

Theatre

The Australian Institute For Performing Arts
AIPA Drama Night

Whimsical Productions
Next to Normal

Milk Crate Theatre
Solace

Empyrean Theatre of Living
Flight of Wolves

Trikone Australia and Bali Padda, Sydney
World Pride
Sunderella

North Sydney Kids Musical Theatre
Frozen Jr.

Rising Arts Productions
PUFFS

University Clubs

UTS Comedy, Revue and Performance Society
Off Off Off Broadway

The Sydney University Musical Theatre Ensemble (MUSE)
Little Women

UTS Backstage
High School Musical

Sydney University Chinese Students Association (SUCSA)
Goodbye Mr Loser (夏洛特烦恼)

Music & Dance

Pepa Molina Flamenco Dance Academy
Báilame Flamenco Recital

Triptico
Domus

Paca Lara
Duende Flamenco Show

Soulfood
At The Movies

Percussion Australia
Digital Dojo

Showcases & Awards

The Australian Institute For Performing Arts
AIPA Concert Night

Cammeray Dance Academy
End of Year Concert

Entertainment Works
End of Year Concert

JW Dance Academy
End of Year Concert

Talks & Festivals

Rami Elhanan and Bassam Aramin
We Need To Talk

Currency Press
Festival of Playwrights



Events

Mission Australia's Executive Roadshow

The Greens' State Election Campaign Launch

Clean Health Live

Casual Hands: Vivid 2023 Volunteering Induction

Netflix ANZ Post Summit

Wear It Purple Launch

Laracon 2023

Evolution Before and Beyond

Screenwise

In 2023, we continued to grow our venue hire business and it was the busiest year on record. We want to thank all our venue hires in celebrating a year of wonderful performing arts at the ARA Darling Quarter Theatre.

We would also like to thank our venue sponsors for their ongoing support and guidance.

69
events

9,281
audiences



Our Supporters



Thank you to our supporters
and partners



Principal Partner



**CITY OF
SYDNEY**

creative
partnerships
australia

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Publicity and Production



Marketing and Communication Partners

We are deeply grateful to all those who have contributed to Monkey Baa.



\$50,000+

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Jibb Foundation, Libby Fairfax
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Eva Di Cesare
Peter Owens

\$1,000 – \$2,500

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\$100 – \$1,000

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Thomas, Andrew Threlfall, Jacinta
Tynan, Wendy Were, Luke Woolley

Our Principal Sponsor

ARA Group

Monkey Baa is delighted to announce the continuing partnership with the ARA Group as their Principal Sponsor. The ARA Group have helped make so many things possible for us over the last 5 years, and many more possibilities in the years to come.

The support provided by the ARA Group will help Monkey Baa provide empowering, inspiring theatre experiences to thousands of young people across Australia. In 2023 alone, Monkey Baa reached 94,957 audience members in 51 different communities – a feat that would not have been possible without the ongoing support from ARA.

ARA is an employee-owned company established in 2001 and has gained recognition as an industry leader that is committed to giving back. ARA believe it is their responsibility to assist the communities in which they operate. They do this through the ARA Endowment Fund and by building meaningful partnerships with various charitable organisations.

This partnership between Monkey Baa and ARA is strongly linked by both companies' belief in providing equitable access and support to communities far and wide, and will undoubtedly change the lives of young people in communities across the country. To honour this, Monkey Baa is delighted to share that our teaching artists program, which operates in regional and metropolitan areas in all states and territories, will be proudly named the ARA Teaching Artists Tour. The support from ARA in this program enables our talented teaching artists to deliver educational and theatre experiences based around our works into classrooms for young people to experience and engage in.

We would like to thank ARA Group for their ongoing support and assistance. As a small not-for-profit arts organisation, Monkey Baa relies on the generosity and support of such organisations to be able to achieve our incredible reach and provide transformative experience for as many young people as possible. A special thankyou to Edward Federman, Chief Executive Officer of ARA Group for the ongoing support in this partnership. We are so excited as to what this partnership will bring into 2024 and beyond.



Thanks to ARA, we are able to...



Provide experiences for young people that are empowering and inspiring.



Facilitate workshops to communities who otherwise miss out.



Tour to communities in Metro, Regional, Rural and Remote Australia.



Bring innovative new Australian work to the stage.



Create access to young people from all background and abilities.



Support the talent within Australia's creative industries.

Our People

We are a collective of super dedicated people bringing the joy of theatre to all young people across Australia.

Patrons

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Susanne Gervay OAM
Morris Gleitzman

Board

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Eamon Waterford
until Nov 2023

Genevieve Clay-Smith
until Nov 2023

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Kevin du Preez
Executive Director

Mayu Iwasaki
Creative Associate (until Jan 2023)

Felicity Nicol
Creative Associate

Emma Khamis
Producer

Alexander Andrews
Learning & Engagement Specialist

Laura Watson
Head of Production

Jem Page
Head of Technical Operations

Melissa Hynd
Finance Manager (until March 2023)

Candice Foster
Communications Manager (until Feb 2023)

Annabelle Radford
Communication & Design Specialist

Shaotong Li
Digital Marketing Specialist

Laura Pike
Project Manager

Kirstin Bokor
Development Manager (until Mar 2023)

Mai Le
Development Coordinator

Romy Watson
Customer Experience Lead (until Apr 2023)

Amelie Downie
Customer Experience Lead

Front of House Staff

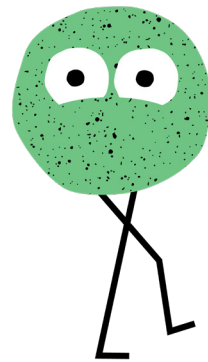
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Ella Watson-Heath
Gaby Whalland
Kieran Clancy Lowe
Lara O'Connor
Laura McKay
Marshall Peach
Paul Nolan
Seymour Nixen

Teacher Advisory Panel

Kimberley Colquhoun
Melanie Griffith
Susan Huang
Shannen Mack
Mark McKendrick
Henrietta Stathopoulos
Simon Ward

Technical Crew

Amber Spooner
Amelie Downie
Blake Condon
Cally Bartley
Dana Ioppolo
Daniel Baykitch
Emma Van Veen
Emma Paterson
James Handsaker
Jasmine Rizk
Jessica Law
Kirsty Mangelsdorf
Paris Bell
Pip Skinner
Renee McClenahan
Ryan Devlin





Support us in empowering young people to navigate and shape their lives through inspirational theatre. By supporting Monkey Baa, you assist us to make a lasting impact on the lives of thousands of young people throughout Australia. Join our diverse range of donors who are all passionate about creativity, our young audiences and making a difference.

Please visit our website, or scan the QR code to learn more about how you can support our work.

www.monkeybaa.com.au/support-us

Monkey Baa is endorsed as a deductible gift recipient (DGR) under Subdivision 30-BA of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997. The company is also a charitable institution endorsed for charity tax concessions by the Australian Taxation Office. Donations of \$2 or more are fully tax-deductible. A receipt will be issued for all contributions.

Acknowledgement of Country

Monkey Baa Theatre Company acknowledges the Gadigal people of the Eora nation who are the custodians of the land on which the company gathers.

We also pay our respects to all First Nations people and honour their continued connections to the lands, water and seas. We pay our respects to Elders past and present on whose land we work, live and share stories.

