

**JACOB SHEARS** (LIGHTING DESIGNER)  
 Graduating from VCA in 2017 Jacob's interest in light stems from the unique culmination of both art and science that he employs in his designs. Jacob's work ranges from production management, to theatrical lighting design to lighting installations, actively seeking challenging and unique works.

**ELIZABETH SLY** (KRYSTAL/RENEE) moved to Melbourne from Tasmania to attend La Trobe University, graduating with a Bachelor of Creative Arts (English/Theatre). She has recently completed her Bachelor of Acting for Stage and Screen at the Federation University Arts Academy, where she performed in *The Chapel Perilous* (Mother), *Our Country's Good* (Elizabeth Morden), *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (Governor's Wife), and *The Northern Lass* (Oliver Pate). *Running with Emus* is Elizabeth's post-graduate debut on the Melbourne theatre scene.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We would like to thank the many people and organisations that have assisted us along the way to this production, particularly: Andrew Straker, Anthony Crowley, Shan McPhee, Kate Culbertson, Nick Glen, Rick Chew, Kim Bennett, Lorraine Learmouth, Sue & Mike Hofman, Margot & Stephen Henty, Ken & Glenda Adams, Judy & John Worrall, Jacqueline Hibbet, Elaine & Nick Keely, Rhonda Ballard, Marion Smith, Ros Dwyer, Denise Morrison, Des & Marie Hudson, Tucker Peace & his team, the Cohuna Leos, the Gannawarra Refugee Support Group, Cathy & Pete Donehue, Kirsty Orr, Diane Upton, Jane Ogden, Jodie Hay, Jennifer Fraser, Libby Jacobs, the Cohuna Water's Edge Walking Group, Annette Blonski, Meg Mappin, Helen Edwards, Tanya Black, the Australia Council, Federation University, Regional Arts Victoria, Cohuna Neighbourhood House and of course La Mama Theatre and those who wished to remain anonymous.



Office Phone: (03) 9347 6948  
 Office Hours: Mon – Fri | 10:30am – 5:30pm  
 349 Drummond, Carlton VIC 3053  
[www.lamama.com.au](http://www.lamama.com.au) | [info@lamama.com.au](mailto:info@lamama.com.au)

La Mama Theatre is on traditional land of the people of the Kulin Nation. We give our respect to the Elders of these traditional lands and to all First Nations people past, present and future. We acknowledge all events take place on stolen lands and that sovereignty was never ceded.

We are grateful to all our philanthropic partners and donors, advocates, volunteers, audiences, artists and our entire community as we work towards the La Mama rebuild. Thank you!

La Mama is financially assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council – its arts funding and advisory body, the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria, and the City of Melbourne through the Arts and Culture triennial funding program.



2020 VCE  
 THEATRE STUDIES

**RUNNING WITH EMUS**  
 11 - 22 MAR 2020

# RUNNING WITH EMUS

Written by **Merrilee (Moss) Moss**

Directed by **Kim Durban**

Performed by **Julie Nihill, Sam Baxter, Kevin Dee,**

**Gregory J Fryer, Elizabeth Sly**

Set & Costume Designer by **Adam (Gus) Powers**

Lighting Design by **Jacob Shears**

Stage Manager **Adam (Gus) Powers**

Photographer **Darren Gill**

Day bed constructed by **Glenn Powers**

Crew **Reuben Duffy**

## WRITER'S NOTES | MERRILEE MOSS

The inspiration for *Running With Emus* came when I moved from Melbourne to the small town of Cohuna in 2014. Despite many welcoming gestures from the community, I felt an unexpected and uncomfortable level of culture shock. As a "newcomer" or "blow-in", I was cast into the role of outsider. But this provided a unique point of view and I began to enjoy collecting snippets of dialogue, jotting down descriptions, observing opinions and habits. It seemed strange to me, for example, that people drove everywhere when the town was not much bigger than a shopping mall. I began a column in the town's newsletter called 'Notes from a Newcomer' where I pondered these things. About the same time, I accompanied the Gannawarra Refugee Support group to a Shire meeting where we put a motion to make the Shire a "Refugee Friendly Zone". These two things combined to kick-start my creative journey.

## DIRECTOR'S NOTES | KIM DURBAN

It is an exciting proposition to premiere a new play because, not only has nobody ever *seen* it, nobody has ever *heard* it, and nobody has ever *said* it aloud (except perhaps the writer muttering in her study). Consequently, the look, the sound and the taste of a new play are always, for me, delicious. There is a litany of Aussie ideas in the chorus of dissent running through the plot that I recognise, and I am attracted to the centrality of a mature woman at the heart of this play. Pat is a marvellous creature and her stubbornness grounds the story. Counterpointed by bird song and surrounded by the bush, the voices of the actors in *Emus* are from different places, ages and backgrounds. In writing this note, it is hard to avoid the production's link to place and space. We are mounting the production at a time when our country has been burning and people are looking for hope. *Running With Emus*, with its dry humour and cross-generational embrace gives those flashes of hope some room, celebrating the wisdom of the old, the reflections of the country and the feisty energy of the young as they work to create a refuge that can change their world.

**SAM BAXTER** (RAFFAELE/GOOSE) Hailing from the country town of Cohuna, Sam completed his formal training in theatre at Federation University Arts Academy in 2019. Whilst there, he performed in plays such as *The Chapel Perilous* (Canon), *Our Country's Good* (Major Ross), *A Woman of No Importance* (Gerald Arbuthnot) and the Australian premiere of *The Northern Lass* (Captain Anvil). *Running With Emus* marks Sam's first professional outing as an actor.

**KEVIN DEE** (SPARRA/JIM) Since his first film role in the hit comedy *Strange Bedfellows* Kevin has worked on numerous successful short and feature films and won Best Actor awards in London and the U.S. His theatre work has been well received not only in Australia but also in Canada and at The Edinburgh Fringe. His television work includes *Underbelly*, *Jack Irish*, *Winners & Losers*, *Lowdown* and *Neighbours*.

**KIM DURBAN** (DIRECTOR) trained as a teacher in South Australia, then as a director at the Victorian College of the Arts. She has built a strong reputation as director of new plays and classic texts for theatres across Australia, including MTC, QTC, Playbox, La Mama and Red Stitch Theatre. In 2001, Kim was appointed Senior Lecturer in Performing Arts at Federation University in Ballarat, where productions include *The Northern Lass*, *Margaret of Anjou*, *As You Like It*, *Machinal*, *The Tempest*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Murder on the Ballarat Train* and *Kiss Me, Kate*. She is joint coordinator of the Bachelor of Performing Arts degree. Kim is the winner of the 2015 *Vice-Chancellor's Award for Teaching Excellence*, the 2012 *EJ Barker Fellowship*, a 2010 *ALTC Citation*, the *Yvonne Taylor Award for Directors* in 2002 and a joint winner of the 1990 *Ewa Czajor Memorial Award*. Kim is a founding member of the Australian Women Directors Alliance. She has a current entry in the *Who's Who of Australian Women*, and her PhD thesis explores her direction of plays by Caroline playwright Richard Brome. Her production of *Oriel* by Merrilee Moss was seen at the Carlton Courthouse in 2016.

**GREGORY J FRYER** (PIE) has been involved in the arts from 1984 (last year of school) onwards, initially as a musician then branching out to theatre in 1996. Greg has had a very fulfilling career both in stage & screen. Some of his credits include the *Dr Blake Murder Mysteries*, *The Sapphires* and *Mad as Hell*. However, he considers La Mama Theatre to be his second home and has been an active member of the

Lloyd Jones Ensemble for the last 24 years.

**MERRILEE (MOSS) MOSS** (WRITER) is an award-winning Victorian playwright. Her nine plays include *If Looks Could Kill* (1988), *Over the Hill* (1989), *Empty Suitcases* (1993) and *Tango Femme* (2011). In 2010, her play *Night Breakfast* won the Community & Youth Australian Writers Guild Industry Excellence (AWGIE) award. In 2014 the play *Oriel* was awarded a High Commendation in the R E Ross Playwrights Development Awards. *Oriel* had a season at La Mama Courthouse Theatre in 2016. Moss has a PhD in Theatre Performance from Monash University. She has also published novels, including *Fedora Walks*, the adventure series for young adults *Hot Pursuit* and a novel for 7-11 year olds, *Thriller & Me*.

**JULIE NIHILL** (PATRICIA REILLY) is an Australian theatre, film and television actress with some 35 award winning years experience. She gained classical training with Trinity College, London leading to many roles, including Jessie Bradman in the iconic *Bodyline* which firmly established her in the Australian Film Industry. Julie is widely known as the publican Chris Riley in the multi-award winning *Blue Heelers*.

**ADAM (GUS) POWERS** (DESIGNER/STAGE MANAGER) is a freelance theatre maker with a Master of Theatre from Monash University who works across both Production/Stage Management and Set/Costume Design roles. Recently as the Artistic Director of Tasmanian Theatre Company, Gus produced the World Premiere of Kate Mulvany's *The Mares* followed by a season of *Gruesome Playground Injuries*, *Constellations* and *Oleanna*. At Federation University's Arts Academy in Ballarat, Gus worked on over seventy productions between 2008 and 2017 in various roles. Design highlights include; *The Hatpin*, *Urinetown*, *Oklahoma!*, *The Tempest* and *The Kitchen*. Other productions there include *Oh What A Lovely War*, *Machinal*, *Love and Information*, *As You Like It* and *Garden City Weeded*. Other freelance work includes; directing/designing Southside Players 2015 production of *Wheeler's Luck* and the 2016 return season at the Theatre Royal in Hobart, designing *The Invisible People* at Sovereign Hill, *Calvin Berger* at the Lawler Studio MTC, Manilla Street's Production of *Blood Brothers* at Chapel Off Chapel, Cheeky Theatre's *Ordinary Days* and *Come Blow Your Horn* and set and props for Left Bauer/Humdrum Comedy's production of *Gilligan's Island - The Musical* at Chapel Off Chapel.