

KIT CUNNEEN is an eager lighting technician and designer based in Melbourne. She is currently undertaking her Bachelor of Fine Arts (Production – Lighting Technology) at Melbourne University's Faculty of Fine Arts and Music. Her production practice is geared towards theatre as a form of emotional catharsis and as a way of commenting on our social current state. Recent credits include Head Electrician for Company 19's production of 'Swim Between the Flags' (2019) and Lighting Designer for 'Fefu and Her Friends' (2018).

JESS KEEFE Sound designer, performer and composer, Jess Keeffe enjoys a variety of musical and theatrical pursuits. Recent work includes *What Every Girl Should Know* (Between the Buildings), *The Untouchables* (Black Apple), *Catch Jazida* (Jazida Productions), *Disparate Scenes for Millennial Dreams* (Periscope Productions), *Nomnomnom* (Roshelle Fong), *All the Locks are Solid and Tight* (The Impending Room). In 2016 she was selected for the MTC's inaugural Women in Theatre Program. She is a regular musical collaborator with some of Australia's top burlesque performers and performs around Australia as a cellist and electronic artist under the name Tarsier.

CHRISTA JONATHAN is a list-making Third Culture Kid with her fingers in many arts pies. She is a qualified graphic designer with a Master of Creative Writing, Publishing and Editing who freelances as a stage and production manager for socio-culturally challenging works of theatre. She was a recipient of Melbourne Theatre Company's Robert McDonald Professional Development Award (Stage Management Secondment, MTC's Jumpy, 2014) and The Wheeler Centre Hot Desk Fellowship in which she developed and published a graphic novel, *The Long Way Home*. Christa is studying Diploma of Interpreting (Auslan-English) and is skipping the first week of classes to fully commit to assisting the birth of *Unuckle*. Hope you enjoy the show!

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We want to extend our thanks to Lara Stevens for her mentorship throughout the development of this show: thank you for your keen dramaturgical eye. Thank you to Michael Bird for your beautiful guitar sounds, to Mungo Trumble for your invaluable assistance during bump in, and to Freya McGrath for being the ultimate "friend of the show". To Chris Kohn and the VCA for their ongoing support. To David Harris and Georgia Symons for putting up with the lack of work life balance. To our mothers – Jane Wallace, Helen Symon, and Amanda Place – for everything.



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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!

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 presents

UNSUCKLE

11 - 16 FEB 2020



Image by Darren Gill

UNSUCKLE

Creators - **Harriet Wallace-Mead, Isabella Vadiveloo, Josiah Lulham**

Director - **Isabella Vadiveloo**

Performers - **Harriet Wallace-Mead, Josiah Lulham**

Set and Costume Design - **Freya Allen**

Lighting Design - **Kit Cunneen**

Sound Design - **Jess Keeffe**

AV Design - **Isabella Vadiveloo**

Guitar - **Michael Bird**

Stage Manager, Co-Production Manager - **Christa Jonathan**

Co-Production Manager - **Harriet Wallace-Mead**

Assistant Stage Manager - **Freya Allen**

Mentor - **Lara Stevens**

CREATOR AND DIRECTOR'S NOTES | HARRIET, JOSIAH & ISABELLA

"Mother was The Woman the whole world had imagined to death."

Deborah Levy, Things I Don't Want to Know (2013)

H: Trying to fit all of our ideas and thoughts and feelings about motherhood into one teeny tiny show has been an immense task. We started with a question about what motherhood has meant in the past and what we find when we look backwards, but then found ourselves unable to look away from how it is changing. It seems like every conversation we have about the possibility of having kids ourselves is so quickly drenched in fear about the climate crisis, and questions about our individual responsibilities in the face of that.

J: After our initial development showing of this work in June last year, which we presented as part of La Mama Explorations, we saw and felt the world change: the School Strikes for Climate, XR's October Rebellion, the violent police response to the IMARC Blockade, and an unprecedented and devastating bushfire season. Thinking and making for *Unsuckle*, questions of motherhood began to tend away from this question of whether or not to have children, to what felt like the more urgent question of how we could expend maternal energy caring for the planet. And it is difficult not to think about this distressed Earth and its future when thinking through questions of motherhood.

I: The opportunity to actually develop a "development showing" into a fully fledged show is an unfortunately rare phenomenon. We have been extremely lucky to be afforded this opportunity by La Mama. Joined by a team of absolutely legendary designers, mentors and tech wizzes, this full development has allowed us to further complicate the work we make. The theatre is one of the last remaining places where undivided attention is expected, and we wanted to capitalise on

that - to really engage with complex ideas that wouldn't make sense if you were simultaneously scrolling on your phone. We wanted to explore these highly topical and complex issues across physical, intellectual and emotional landscapes, and what we found was over and over, we were being asked to hold multiple, contradictory truths within ourselves. To feel that we absolutely will be mothers and won't be mothers at the same time. To feel despair and hope at the same time. To hold these contradictions together in your body, your heart and your brain can feel overwhelming. We found solace in remembering the MOST daggy mum values of all time: hope, care and love.

J: The performance could be considered a map of how we have been thinking about motherhood. Our making is a dynamic process, fitting with the ways we change and the world changes. In turn, no two performances will ever be the same. As makers, *Unsuckle* opens us up to examine questions, but we have no answers, only new space for the labour of inspiration.

H: *Unsuckle* is as much a question as it is a proposition. It is how three people (and an extraordinary design team) have imagined into motherhood. We invite you to imagine with us.

BIOS...

ISABELLA VADIVELOO is a Melbourne based theatre maker who works across disciplines as a theatre director, dramaturg, performer, deviser and creative director. Recent directing credits include: *If Needed, Repeat* (La Mama Explorations) and *Crash Pad* (Melbourne Fringe and The Butterfly Club), as well as numerous works presented at Art Centre Melbourne's Small and Loud (For which she is also the co-creative director), Union House Theatre, Immerse Festival, Village Festival and Crack Theatre Festival. She has worked as a member of the The Dig Collective and as associate artist with Teatro De Los Sentidos. She is currently completing her Masters of Directing for Performance at the Victorian College of the Arts.

HARRIET WALLACE-MEAD is a performer, deviser, producer and stage manager with a keen interest in political work that pushes boundaries in both form and content. Harriet has worked across a broad range of projects, working under Xanthe Beesley on recent Union House Theatre productions, *The Lonely Crowd* (2019, assistant directing and stage managing) and *Things We Should Talk About* (2018, assistant directing), both devised dance-theatre works. In 2018 she had her first experience with the Melbourne Fringe Festival, producing Freya McGrath's *The 24 Hour Dance Project*, followed by her role as Club Coordinator for Club Fringe in 2019. She has participated as a performer and collaborator in works such as Jean Tong's *TERRORISM* (The Guild, 2016), La Mama's Youth Ensemble's inaugural show, *Kiss Sigh Shout, Laugh Cry Dream* (La Mama Theatre, 2017) and *if needed, repeat* (La Mama Explorations, 2019).

JOSIAH LULHAM is a performer, improviser, deviser, and theatre maker interested of late in physical theatre. Josiah is a member of Melbourne Playback Theatre Company, and an anthropology PhD candidate at the University of Melbourne. The process of making and improvising theatre is the primary curiosity in his art practice currently, the area in which Josiah most enjoys playing. Most recently Josiah has appeared in In The Park Production's 2019 season of *As You Like it*, the devised work *Paradisiac* as part of the 2018 Next Wave Critical Mass program for The Melbourne Fringe, and Rohan Byrne's RUR2020 for the 2018 National Science Week directed by Georgia Symons.

FREYA ALLEN Originally from Tasmania, Freya moved to Melbourne to pursue further education in design and production. Freya is a versatile designer and maker, who enjoys both set and costume work, as well as prop design and construction, and scenic art. Freya's work at the Victorian College of the Arts has included various workshop and costume assistant roles, designs for Dance, and the set design for Music Theatres production of 'On the Town'. She also completed internships with Lightning Jar Theatre Inc., and designer Dann Barber. Her first freelance show was 'Punk Rock', presented by Patalog Theatre.