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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!

La Mama is financially assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council – its arts funding and advisory body, Restart Investment to Sustain and Expand (RISE) Fund - an Australian Government initiative, the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria, and the City of Melbourne through the *Arts and Creative Partnerships Program*.



L A M A M A P R E S E N T S C A C T U S



J u n e 2 3 - J u l y 4 , 2 0 2 1



C A C T U S

Written by Madelaine Nunn

Directed by Katie Cawthorne

Performed by Ayesha Harris-Westman and Lucy Rossen

Lighting design by Aedan Gale

Sound design by Daniella Esposito

Assistant sound design by Rachel Stone

Stage manager Claudia Howarth

Producer Madelaine Nunn

Operator August Shearman

Photography credit Darren Gill

Set Construction Thomas Pidd/A Friendly Beast

Thank you...

David & Bunnings Collingwood, Jodie & Officeworks Russel Street, Barbara Pettigrew, Alex Donnelly, Thomas Pidd,

Anthony McGirr, Maureen Nunn, Brooke Simmonds, Australian Theatre for Young People, Fraser Corfield, Jane FitzGerald, Amy Maiden, Nick Hardcastle, Rebel Wilson, Caitlin Dullard, Liz

Jones, Tom Lai

Director's Note:

Cactus is a play that makes my heart smile. It takes great pride in telling an honest story about women, using an unashamedly Australian voice. It invites us into the lives of two charismatic, smart, aware, and funny young women – Abbie and PB, to watch gently from the sidelines, as they inhabit a time in their lives of great discovery and change. Cactus stirs us to remember what it is to laugh at the smallest of things, and to experience something for the first time. It reminds us of the importance of facing what scares us, even though it might be painful to do so, and it asks us to recognise who in our lives make us feel truly like ourselves and to hold them close.

This work has been created by an incredible team of artists, which has reminded me of the beauty of the process of making theatre and the stamina of this industry in these especially trying times. Cactus has survived multiple lockdowns, reschedules, rewrites, recasts and changes within the creative team. We've been offered support from people far and wide to make this production happen, which says so much about the strength of Maddie's writing and of the affection that is felt for the story of Cactus. To everyone who's chipped in to bring this life, we can't thank you enough

This story is important to us, and we feel incredibly proud to present it to you.

Madelaine Nunn

Madelaine Nunn is an award-winning writer/theatre-maker/actor and a recipient of the highly coveted ATYP Rebel Wilson Theatremaker Scholarship. Since graduating from the VCA as an actor Madelaine has co-founded Three Birds Theatre, been shortlisted for the Rodney Seaborn Playwrights Award, nominated for two Green Room Awards and has toured her work throughout Victoria, NSW and the US. This year, three of Madelaine's plays are having premiere seasons in Melbourne, Sydney and the Central Coast. Last year, she worked with the Melbourne Theatre as part of Cybec Electric and her play, Kinder Surprise was recorded as part of ABC's National Radio Drama Program.

Katie Cawthorne

Katie trained at the National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA) receiving a Masters of Fine Arts in Directing and has been making work since 2002. She was the Artistic Director of Canberra Youth Theatre from 2015 to 2018 and was awarded a Canberra Critics' Circle Theatre Award for Revitalising and Advancing Canberra Youth Theatre. Katie has directed for Warehouse Circus, Design Canberra Festival, Aspen Island Theatre Company and playwrights Emily Sheehan, Madelaine Nunn and Tracy Bourne. Katie is co-founder of The Anchor theatre company and a teaching artist at the National Theatre Drama School, the National Institute of Circus Arts and the National Institute of Dramatic Arts Open learning.

Ayesha Harris-Westman

As part of the Hothouse Theatre Studio Ensemble in 2014/2015, Ayesha helped develop two new works; Letters to the Border and Between the Clouds (dir. Travis Dowling), the latter touring to ATYP. Graduating from VCA in 2019 with a BFA in Acting, her roles included Scribe in Fucking A (dir. Candy Bowers), Karen in August: Osage County (dir. Leith McPherson), Adriana in The Comedy of Errors (dir. Tony Smith), Dog/Rodica in Mad Forest (dir. Sean Mee), and Artemidorus/Cato in It was Greek to Me (dir. Budi Miller). Ayesha also played Lou in DNA at Chapel off Chapel in 2020.

Lucy Rossen

Lucy is a performer based in Naarm and a recent grad from the VCA with a BFA in Acting. She has a love of projects that involve music, landscapes and the Australian voice. Her credits from VCA include Earthquakes in London (Dir: Sarah Goodes), King John (Dir: Helen Trenos), Mirror Mirror (Dir: Georgina Naidu), Myopia and Do I look Like I Care (Dir: Samuel Boyd). Lucy has also appeared in various short films including Drain Rats and Fright Night (Dir: Grace Dephoff) and Mellow Geometrics to Soothe the Soul (Dir: Samuel Eidelson). Lucy performed, directed and wrote for Melbourne University Law Revue.

Aedan Gale

Aedan Gale (he/him) is a lighting designer based in Melbourne, Australia. He is a graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts, graduating with a Bachelor of Fine Arts: Design & Production. Aedan's design credits include Guerilla Sabbath (La Mama/Midsumma Festival), VCA Acting Company 2020 productions of Earthquakes in London and pool (no water), as well as several short contemporary dance works with renowned choreographers such as Anouk van Dijk, Stephanie Lake, and Larissa McGowan.

Daniella Esposito

Daniella is a sound designer and composer studying a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Production) at the Victorian College of the Arts. Specialising in sound design and composition for theatre, immersive works, and film. Daniella's credits include Sound Design and Composition for Malthouse Theatre's 2020 Season Launch, Hydra (Double Water Sign Theatre), Guerilla Sabbath (Midsumma Festival), Cactus (La Mama), Punk Rock (Patalog Theatre), Slut (The Burrow), Treats (Fever103 Theatre), Land (Three Fates Theatre Company), Never Said Motel (Writers Festival, OK Motels), and Western Edge Youth Arts. Daniella is incredibly honoured to join Melbourne Theatre Company as their Assistant Sound Designer for Sunday.

Rachel Stone

Rachel, affectionately known as 'Stoz', is an arts practitioner currently studying at Victorian College of the Arts, BFA Production. Originally from a small farm on the surf coast of South Australia, now she works on contemporary pieces that reflect the light, dark and beauty in the human experience. Her 2020 play "the Boy My Father Raised", which she produced, and Directed was a sellout and received international touring offers. She's done multi-disciplinary sound design and compositional work and was also awarded the Adelaide Festival Center 'Arts Award' for excellence and continual dedication within the arts.

Claudia Howarth

Claudia is a graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA). She has stage management experience in theatre, musical theatre, opera, devised works, and contemporary dance. She completed internships on the 2019 Melbourne season of Calamity Jane at the Comedy Theatre, and MTC's Shakespeare In Love. Most recently, Claudia has worked as assistant stage manager on The Feather in the Web (dir. Declan Greene) for Red Stitch Actors Theatre, We're Probably Really Really Happy Right Now (dir. Sarah Vickery) at Theatre Works (February, 2021), and for Victorian Opera on their world premiere of Deborah Cheetham's family opera Parrwang Lifts The Sky, performed at the Playhouse (dir. Elizabeth Hill-Cooper) in June 2021.