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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

# THE MERMAID



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# THE MERMAID

**Director:** Cassandra Fumi

**Artistic Associate:** Tennessee Mynott-Rudland

**Devised with and performed by:** Allegra Di Lallo, An Dang, Theo Boltman, Casper Plum, Flora Feldman, Marshall Morgan, Asha Randall-Sheppard, Ella Simons and Frankie Willcox.

**Developed with:** Emily Goddard, Margaret Mills, Izzy Roberts-Orr (text), Ivy Luo, Mila Jenkins & Harriet Lawson-Acar.

**Set and Costume Designer:** Dann Barber

**Lighting Designer:** Rachel Burke

**Music by:** Christopher Bolton, Bianca Montagner & Ivy Luo

**Sound Design:** Bianca Montagner

**Performance Text:** Izzy Roberts-Orr

**Assistant Director:** Tove Due

**Set and Costume Secondment:** Savanna Wegman

**Director's Secondment/ASM:** Celina Mack

**Dramaturgy:** Vidya Raja

## Creator's Note

The Mermaid is a work a long time in the making, the process of making this work has radicalised my understanding of the power of theatre. At its core is community and creative collaboration. The dedicated, joyous, talented, passionate teenagers who have made the work, have grown up alongside this coming of age story. This work is a celebration of individuality, pop culture, liminal spaces, puberty, loneliness and activism. The beautiful, dedicated design team has created a fantastical world that is malleable and heightens the imagination of these young people. As said in the room they have "become the mermaids of their dreams". We smash icons and symbols as a way of reclaiming and reshaping the myths that saturate us. In a word, this is a project about voice and has been a complete joy to make.

## Thank you...

Margaret Mills, Emily Goddard, Harriet Lawson-Acar, Mila Jenkins, Izzy Roberts-Orr, Dann Barber, Janne Barber, Nicola Stavar, Christie Milton, David Campbell, Fiona Spitzkowsky, Holly Anderson, Chris Cody, Justin Gardam, Lindsay Templeton, Claire Macallister, Eryn Moore and Kathleen Syme Library, Nick Xanthoudakis, Eva and Aldo Fumi, Bruno Raffaele, Susie Dee, Oliver Coleman, Samara Hersch, Lara Thoms, Tariro Mavondo, Bonnie Robinson, Amarachi Okorom, Michael Shaw, Pier Carthew, Sarah Branton, Sue and Kevin Hayes, Sam Ryan, Mark Wilson, Darebin Arts, Celeste Mcleod, Kurt Medenbach, Natalie Smith, Monash University Student Theatre (MUST), Andy Turner, Fortyfivedownstairs, Temperance Hall, Siteworks, and the beautiful, committed, families, partners and friends of the cast and crew.

## ENSEMBLE:

### **Allegra Di Lallo**

Allegra is thrilled to be involved in the development and collaboration of *The Mermaid*. Aged 15, she has been creating and performing in contemporary theatre since she was 10. She was introduced to the wonders of artistic practice by Alex Walker's House of Muchness classes. Allegra is passionate about theatre that recognises and supports the voice of young people. Past performances include *Book of Exodus Part 2* and *The Children's Party*. Allegra co-created and performs in award winning *We All Know What's Happening*, having toured Australia and Europe. When not performing, Allegra will be found mastering a new recipe, running at the park, down at the beach or learning Chinese. She's most excited to be back in the theatre playing the role of the Mermaid.

### **An Dang**

An Dang (she/her) is an actor, dancer and singer with a background in circus where she trained with the National Circus of Vietnam as a contortionist. An has a passion for both theatre and film and is currently undertaking training at institutions across Melbourne such as Melbourne Actor's Lab and MTA, while also studying languages at university.

### **Asha Randall-Sheppard**

Asha Randall-Sheppard is a 13 year old Anangu and Tagalaka person who's upbringing between families in Melbourne, Mutitjulu, Adelaide and Darwin has enriched him with profoundly diverse culturally intersectional experiences and perspectives. Asha is a storyteller, and uses many forms to tell his stories - like performance, video, and drawing. Asha has a passion for drawing,

and draws characters with exaggerated features and using odd colour contrasts. He loves to decorate his room with things he has made, or things that have been made for him, to bring together special memories. Asha loves to go on adventures with his friends and siblings.

### **Flora Feldman**

Flora is thrilled to be involved in *The Mermaid*. Previously Flora performed in *Solaris* (Dir. Mathew Lutton) at the Malthouse, 2019; *A Rain Walk* (Dir. Andy Field & Beckie Darlington), Melbourne Fringe, 2020; and *Singing Swallows* (Dir. Romi Kupfer) at Theatre Works, 2021. She has previously starred in *Exquisite Corpse*, a virtual reality film directed by Amiel Courtin-Wilson for MIFF in 2018 as well as *Traces* in 2020 also directed by Amiel Courtin-Wilson. Flora has recently been cast in an upcoming feature film. Flora is a member of the House of Muchness, training under founder and artistic director Alex Walker. Flora also studies ballet at the National Theatre and singing with Georgia Brooks. Flora loves to sing and climb trees and is concerned about climate change.

### **Casper Plum**

Emerging artist Casper Plum centres his art practice around contemporary performance and photography. As a director, Casper made his debut earlier this year when *See It With Me* was presented as a part of *Let's Take Over* at Northcote Town Hall. As a performer, Casper has worked on numerous professional productions including *Body of Knowledge* (Virtual national and international tours) and *We All Know What's Happening* (national and international tours). Through his photography, Casper explores and documents his transition and captures unique observations of everyday life.

## **Ella Simons**

Ella is a 14 year old actor and youth activist based on wurundjeri land. She currently volunteers for school strike 4 climate helping fight for climate justice. She is passionate about making the world a better place and enjoys doing this through arts and theatre. Ella has been in several other shows and is currently In ' Body of Knowledge' doing online shows across the world. In her spare time Ella enjoys doing Circus, spending time with her family and cooking.

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## **Frankie Willcox**

Frankie is a 13 year old artist. They've been doing theatre since they were 7. They've worked with companies including St Martins Youth Theatre, The Rabble (Loan, 2018) and now, The Mermaid which they've been devising with the team for two years. In their spare time they like to play acoustic and bass guitar and read. Their favourite book is Red White, Royal Blue by Casey McQuiston.

## **Marshall Morgan**

Marshall is a 14 year old actor and student with an interest in visual art, post-hardcore music and Liza Minnelli. Their past performing credits include: For the Ones Who Walk Away (St Martins, 2017), Banjos, Boots and Beyonce (St Martins, 2017), Lone (The Rabble, 2018), The Walker (ABC, 2019) and most recently, the virtual international tours of Body of Knowledge (Dir. Samara Hersch 2021). They are currently reading Trotskyist theory and Keywords by Raymond Williams.

## **Theo Boltman**

Theo Boltman is a 15 year old performer, activist and ballet dancer. They are in year 10 at the King David School and enjoy Literature, Religion and Society, and History. They started performing in 2017 in the Book of Exodus Part 2 directed by Adena Jacobs. They have since performed in productions around Australia and in Europe about refugees, bodies, and mermaids. They started their activism in 2018 and have volunteered with the Australian Youth Climate Coalition, School Strike 4 Climate and Melbourne Youth for Refugees. They have also produced a podcast since 2019 called Beyond the Echo Chamber where they interview people across the political spectrum to move beyond the echo chamber of their own thoughts and learn about new ideas.

## CREW:

### **Cassandra Fumi - DIRECTOR**

is a theatre maker who is interested in prioritising process and collaboration and has a socially engaged theatre practice that is informed by her stage management work. Directing credits include; +++WEAREAIR+++, Associate Artist Body of Knowledge @ Home (Theater Spektakel, Zürich, Kampnagel, Hamburg & Imagetanz, Vienna), DOG SHOW (Melbourne Fringe Hub - Winner Best Emerging Theatre Ensemble & Falls Festival), The Places You'll Go (Adelaide Fringe - Winner Best Theatre - Week 3), Nadja After André Breton (The Cockpit Theatre & Hornsey Town Hall Arts Centre, London), An Act Of Self-Destruction (VAULT Festival & Ply Gallery), Poker Face (Kings Head, London, Trieste & Milan International Arts Festival), Assistant Director to Leticia Caceres on The House of Bernarda Alba (Melbourne Theatre Company). Cassandra is currently running a Performance Program at the Melbourne Youth Justice Centre with sentenced and remanded girls aged 10- 21. [www.cassandrafumi.com](http://www.cassandrafumi.com)

### **Tennessee Mynott-Rudland - ASSOCIATE ARTIST / STAGE & PRODUCTION MANAGER**

Tennessee is a theatre maker who graduated from their Bachelor of Performing Arts at Monash in 2015. While there they were heavily involved in student theatre, managing a number of their productions. They have since worked in arts management and facilitation roles with companies including Western Edge Youth Arts, Melbourne Fringe, The Village Festival, Footscray Community Arts Centre, St. Martins Youth Arts, and These Are The Projects We Do Together. Recent stage management credits include The Retreat (Sub30 Collective), Faux Mo (Mona Foma), The Watching (Western Edge Youth Arts), Facing Medea (La Mama Theatre),

A Room of One's Own By Virginia Woolf (fortyfivedownstairs) and We All Know What's Happening (Vitalstatistix, Adelaide). When they're not facilitating theatre projects you can often find Tennessee making pasta or baking bread.

### **Tove Due - ASSISTANT DIRECTOR**

Tove Due is a theatre maker and performer. She graduated from Monash University with a Bachelor of Arts (Theatre) in 2019. Tove has previously undertaken directing secondments on Wake in Fright (Malthouse Theatre), and Book of Exodus – Part I (Fraught Outfit) through the Theatre Works Associate Artists Program. As a performer, Tove has toured both nationally and internationally with shows including: We All Know What's Happening (recent seasons include Noorderzon Performing Arts Festival, Zurich Theatre Spektakel), Forgiveness (Barking Spider Visual Theatre, Wuzhen Theatre Festival), and The Bacchae (Fraught Outfit/Melbourne Festival, Dark Mofo).

### **Celina Mack - DIRECTION SECONDMENT / ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER**

Celina is a Melbourne theatre-maker, performer and co-artistic director of STRANGEkit Performance Collective. Passionate about exploring experimental artistic practices and partnerships, Celina has spent the last year trialling new ideas through directing and devising absurdist theatrical events with STRANGEkit. Celina's education includes VCA's Music Theatre Studio, Meisner Melbourne's Professional Performers Program and is currently completing a Bachelor of Arts in Theatre Studies at Monash University. Recent credits include Concertos of Collective Destruction (MUST, 2021), HOLESP@CE (Melbourne Fringe Festival, 2020), Take Me To Your Leader (Born In A Taxi/CTP, 2020), TimeHop 2: The Clock Strikes Back (Magical Mystery Co, 2020)

and *The Bacchae* (La Mama Theatre, 2019). Celina is thrilled to be working with Cassandra Fumi on *The Mermaid* and can't wait to have you here, swimming with us.

### **Dann Barber - SET AND COSTUME DESIGNER**

Dann's work spans costumes and set design across plays, musicals and operas. A graduate of the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA), his work is influenced by his study of drawing and fine art at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT). This year Dann has designed the set for 'Rent the Musical' (Sugary Rum Productions / LPD Productions) in the drama theatre at the Sydney opera house and the Set and costumes for 'Chess the musical' (Storyboard Entertainment) starring Natalie Bassingthwaite and Paulini at the Regent Theatre. Other recent work includes the award winning design for 'the Ghetto Cabaret' (Fortyfivedownstairs), his acclaimed re-imagining of 'Barnum: The Circus Musical' starring Todd McKenny (Storyboard Entertainment), '33 Variations' starring Ellen Burstyn and Lisa McCune (Mariners Group and Cameron Lukey), 'Escaped Alone' (Red Stitch Actors Theatre), and the sold out season of 'Angels in America' (Cameron Lukey, Dirty Pretty Theatre). Based in Melbourne Dann's work has also been featured further north at the Hayes Theatre, Griffin Theatre, Queensland Theatre Company, The Brisbane Festival, and La Boite Theatre Company. Dann has been the associate costume designer for Gabriela Tylesova for 'Sleeping Beauty' (Australian Ballet) and most recently 'Shakespeare in Love' (Melbourne Theatre Company). He is a regular lecturer at the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA) and the Melbourne University.

### **Savanna Wegmann - DESIGN SECONDMENT**

Savanna Wegman is an Asian-Australian director, designer and writer based in Naarm (Melbourne), making devised theatre and

multi-disciplinary performance. Her work currently researches structures of alternative/speculative reality and digital/non-digital scenography and how they find new forms through theatrical storytelling and performance spaces. She is co-director of the STRANGEkit performance collective (alongside Celina Mack) and is currently completing a Bachelor of Arts at Monash University studying digital humanities, theatre and performance. Recent projects include production design WE ARE AIR (Melbourne Fringe 2020) and HOLESP@CE (STRANGEkit, Melbourne Fringe 2020).

### **Rachel Burke - LIGHTING DESIGNER**

Rachel has an extensive and highly awarded body of work across three decades for main stage companies, independent theatre, and architectural lighting design nationally and internationally. Industry acknowledgment includes nine Green Room Awards for Theatre Lighting Design, IES Victorian and National Awards of Excellence for Lighting Design in 2005, 2010 and 2019 and Helpmann Award nominations in 2005 and 2015. Rachel held a part time academic position at Melbourne University/VCA Production and Design from 2017-2019. She is a graduate from Rusden Victoria College with a Bachelor of Education Secondary in Drama and Dance. Selected theatre designs from 2021 include Sexual Misconduct of the Middle Classes - Melbourne Theatre Company, Charlie and the War Against the Grannies - Arts Centre Melbourne/Sydney Opera House and Iphigenia in Splott - Red Stitch Actor's Theatre. She has just designed a remount of the highly acclaimed Picasso and His Dog -Lemony S Puppet Theatre for Melbourne Festival of Puppetry 2021 at La Mama Courthouse.

## **Christopher Bolton - COMPOSER**

Christopher is a Melbourne composer, songwriter, and musician. Bolton has composed for productions such as Three Sisters, Uncle Vanya (Metanoia Productions), Last Words, What a Joy to be Alive (Sticky Fingers Theatre) and The Tempest (Theatre Works with John Bolton and Brian Lipson). Bolton is also the chief songwriter of Melbourne band Seagull, releasing five albums to local and international acclaim, and building a dedicated fanbase over the past decade.

## **Ivy Luo - COMPOSITION- ELECTRIC GUITAR**

Ivy Luo is a teenage musician and writer. Ivy is inspired every week by piano lessons with Bob Sedergreen. Ivy has been published in Cordite Poetry Review and Archer Magazine. Apart from music and writing, Ivy also loves cooking, popping, and napping.

## **Bianca Montagner - SOUND DESIGNER**

Bianca Montagner is excited to be joining the team as the sound designer for Mermaid. A Narrm/Melbourne-based sound designer and musician, they are currently completing their final year of a Bachelor of Arts/Music at Monash University. Bianca was the sound designer and operator for The Love of the Nightingale (Theatre Works 2021) and +++WE ARE AIR+++ (Melbourne Fringe 2020). They have also provided sound for The Commonwealth of Kekistan (Butterfly Club 2020), Systems People (Monash University 2020) and Macbeth (Monash MPavillion 2019). Outside of sound design, Bianca has also performed as a pianist in Concertos of Collective Destruction (MUST 2021), MUST Cabaret Festival (2019, 2020) and FIND Festival (MUST 2021).

## **Vidya Rajan - DRAMATURGE**

Vidya Rajan is a cross-disciplinary artist working across writing, contemporary performance making, comedy, digital and screenwork. She has been a recipient of the Wheeler Centre's Hot Desk Fellowship, Melbourne Festival's Director's Lab Program and Screen Australia's Developing the Developer Initiative. She has recently worked as a writer and performer with ABC Comedy, SBS, Theatreworks, Artshouse, Audible, Griffin Theatre and The Blue Room. Her work has also appeared in APJ, McSweeney's, Liminal, Cordite and Running Dog amongst others. She is a former writer-in-residence at the Malthouse Theatre, and is currently under commission on a number of screen, stage, and digital/multi-artform projects.

## **Izzy Roberts-Orr - PERFORMANCE TEXT**

Izzy Roberts-Orr is a poet, writer, broadcaster and arts worker based on Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Boon Wurrung land, currently completing a book of elegiac poetry, Raw Salt. As an arts worker, Izzy is driven by community cultural development principles, focused on creating space for meaningful self-determined art making. As an artist, Izzy is interested in making work that is political, personal and accessible. Exploring lineages both ancestral and intellectual, Izzy's work engages with local ecologies, death, digital futures, labour and inheritance. Izzy is a 2020-2021 recipient of the Australia Council Marten Bequest Scholarship for Poetry.