

 LA MAMA

MELBOURNE
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BALLKIDS

(OR, SCENES
FROM A FRIENDSHIP)



OCTOBER 9 - 13, 2024

BALLKIDS (OR, SCENES FROM A FRIENDSHIP)

Performed by Izabella Yena and Michelle McCowage

Written by Liv Satchell

Directed by Julian Dibley-Hall with Liv Satchell

Composed by Tom Backhaus

Lighting Design by John Collopy

Production Design by Filipe Filihia

Movement Direction by Xanthe Beesley

Assistant Directed by Freya McGrath

Stage/Production Managed by Ashleigh Walwyn

Produced by VIMH

Image by Jack Dixon-Gunn

Acknowledgements



Our deep thanks to Belinda Locke and Tasnim Hossain for their feedback on the script, CJ for Friendship Map assistance and the La Mama Raffle friendship bracelets, Belinda McClory for the bump-in biscuits and installation assistance, Pat Telfer and Art Twin (for cello), Tommy D, Meredith Filihia, Jacinta Anderson, Hannah Strout, and Polyglot Theatre (for the laminator). And as always – thanks to Caitlin Dullard, Nicki Jam and the entire La Mama team for their unending support.

This project is proudly supported by the City of Darebin's Community Grants Program and the Robert Salzer Foundation.



Director's Note

I love and value friendship more highly than almost anything in this world.

Having a good friend is a balm, an inspiration, a support, and a joy. Having a best friend is...well, the best. Being a good friend is a deeply noble, rewarding and important endeavour - giving selflessly of yourself to someone you adore simply for being themselves, not because you're obliged to, or related to them, but just because you like them.

It was deeply important to me that this show was made with the values it was celebrating, and I thank every one of the creatives who've come on this journey. Some of them were old friends to begin with, some have become good friends across the last few months.

I'm blessed to make theatre with my very best friend in this world and will forever be grateful to her for writing this beautiful, funny, moving play and trusting me to direct it. Thank you, Liv.

Finally, thank you for joining us. I hope this show makes you want to call your best friend, give them a hug, share a story with them, or just hang out.

Julian Dibley-Hall



IZABELLA YENA PERFORMER

Izabella Yena is an actor, theatre-maker and VCA alumni where she received the Patricia Kennedy Award for Excellence. Recent works include 'Bernhard/Hamlet', 'Sexual Misconduct of the Middle Classes', 'Home, I'm Darling' (Melbourne Theatre Company) and 'kerosene' (fortyfive downstairs and theatreworks) which won the 2021 Green Room Award for Best Direction and Best Independent Production and Izabella was nominated for Best Performer. Izabella made her feature film debut in 'Miss Fisher and the Crypt of Tears' (2020), playing the role of Shirin Abbas.

* all 'headshots' feature the cast and crew as 13-year-olds (give or take).



MICHELLE MCCOWAGE

PERFORMER

Michelle McCowage is a queer, non-binary actor and theatre maker. Passionate about championing gender diverse voices and non-conventional forms of storytelling, Michelle seeks to curate spaces for shared vulnerability. Since graduating from the VCA with a BFA (Theatre) in 2020, they have written, produced and performed numerous original works, receiving two Melbourne Fringe nominations for Best Theatre and Best Emerging Artist for their show 'night sweat' (2023).



LIV SATCHELL

WRITER/CO-DIRECTOR

Liv is a theatre-maker, writer, dramaturg, facilitator and community organiser. Her recent body of work 'The Grief Trilogy' was three thematically linked plays exploring transformational encounters between strangers in public space, presented in March 2023 at La Mama Courthouse. She recently made her mainstage debut with original work 'Nayika: A Dancing Girl' at Belvoir Street Theatre, co-created and co-directed with Nithya Nagarajan. Her plays have been variously shortlisted for the Phillip Parsons Fellowship for Emerging Playwrights, the Rodney Seaborn Playwrights Award, the Max Afford Playwrights Award, and the Queensland Premier's Drama Award. She has been nominated for Best Director four times at the Green Room Awards and both 'I sat and waited but you were gone too long' and 'let bleeding girls lie' won Best New Writing for Independent Theatre.



JULIAN DIBLEY-HALL

CO-DIRECTOR

Julian works as a director, dramaturg, performer and producer. He graduated from the Victorian College of the Arts (BFA - Theatre Practice) and the University of Technology, Sydney. His practice focuses on developing spaces for independent artists to create new writing, and presenting new theatrical productions. Most recently, he directed 'The View From Up Here' by Fiona Spitzkowsky and was the producer for VIMH's multi-award winning 'The Grief Trilogy'. He co-founded Sustainable Theatres Australia and is a Lead Artist with Western Edge.



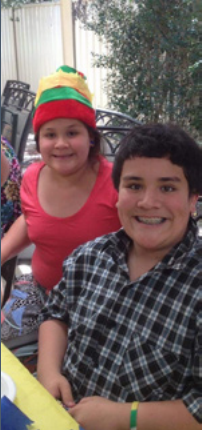
TOM BACKHAUS COMPOSER

Tom is a Naarm-based composer, sound designer, producer and stage manager. As a sound designer he is best known for his densely layered and evocative scores for theatre. Recent credits include, 'The Grief Trilogy' (VIMH), 'End Of.' (Griffin Theatre), 'The Temple' (Malthouse Theatre), 'Feather in the Web' (Red Stitch) and 'Become The One' (Lab Kelpie). Tom is also the creative producer of the award-winning drag comedy duo Dazza and Keif. He is also the producer of 'Get Bent Fest', a queer arts festival presented by Midsumma Festival.



JOHN COLLOPY LIGHTING DESIGNER

John is a Green Room Award-winning lighting designer who works across theatre, circus, and dance. His recent lighting design credits include: 'A Dodgeball Named Desire', 'Animal Farm', and 'Paradise Lost' (Bloomshed, Green Room Award for Best Lighting Design – Independent Theatre), 'In Common', 'Sensory Decadence', and 'Kilter' (One Fell Swoop Circus), 'The Grief Trilogy' (VIMH), 'object-shun/SERMON' (Dancehouse, Erin O'Rourke/Rhys Ryan); 'Just a Boy, Standing in Front of a Girl' (15 Minutes From Anywhere).



FILIFE FILIHIA PRODUCTION DESIGNER

Filipe Filihia is a set and costume designer working in Melbourne, who explores their intersectional heritage through experimental design and storytelling. A recent graduate from the Victorian College of the Arts, they are hoping to create work that makes space for everyone. Their design credits include 'LELE' (Dir. Chanella Macri), with Western Edge Youth Arts, 'Footprints' working with first nations choreographer and VCA alum, Ngioka Bunda-Heath, 'Home Economics' (Dir. Steph Lee), 'Transwoman Kills Influencer' (Dir. Emmanuelle Mattana) and 'All I'm Saying' (Dir. Charlotte Rodgers).



XANTHE BEESLEY MOVEMENT DIRECTOR

Xanthe is a performance maker, movement director and facilitator with a background in theatre and dance. Her practice spans mainstage, independent and student contexts with recent credits including movement direction and consulting for 'Happy Days', 'Laurinda', 'Touching the Void', 'Sexual Misconduct of the Middle Classes' (Melbourne Theatre Company); 'Emilia: The Play' (Essential Theatre/Arts Centre Melbourne); 'The Grief Trilogy' (VIMH/La Mama) and 'Summer of the Seventeenth Doll' (UHT). Xanthe is currently the Artistic Director of Union House Theatre where she supports a vast network of emerging artists and students and directs and devises new dance and theatre projects.



FREYA MCGRATH

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR/
ASSOCIATE PRODUCER

Freya is a contemporary Producer and performance maker. Freya is passionate about supporting new work and innovative artistic endeavours. Freya has acted as a Producer with Bureau of Works (2019-23), Contemporary Music Victoria, (2023), Polyglot Theatre Company (2021-22) and Kath Papas Productions (2019-20). Freya was the Creative Producer for GARAGE BAND by Joseph O'Farrell & ALWAYS LIVE (2022 & 2023). Directing credits include 'The 24 Hour Dance Party' (2018) and 'A Dog Called Monkey' (2017).



ASHLEIGH WALWYN

STAGE/PRODUCTION MANAGER

Ash is a Stage, Production, and Company Manager, originally from the UK. She grew up and found her love for theatre in Malaysia before graduating from VCA. Credits include ASM for 'Mr Burns, a post-electric play' (Lighting Jar Theatre), Special Events Stage Manager for MICF, Senior Stage Manager/Back of House Caller for Victorian State Schools Spectacular (Dir. Neill Gladwin), and Stage Manager for 'Punk Rock' (Patalog Theatre), 'Bright Star' (Pursued By Bear), 'LAND', 'ANALOG' (Three Fates Theatre Company), 'Ghost Quartet', 'Guys and Dolls' (Antipodes Theatre Company), 'The View From Up Here', 'The Grief Trilogy' (VIMH), 'The Mentor' (Bravo Arts) and 'The Inheritance' (fortyfivedownstairs).



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Box Office opens 4pm on performance nights, 12pm
for Playreadings and 2pm Sundays

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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.

La Mama is financially assisted by Creative Victoria (Creative Enterprises Program), and the City of Melbourne (Arts and Creative Partnership Program).

We are grateful to all our philanthropic partners and donors, advocates, volunteers, audiences, artists and our entire community. Thank you!

