

# WINYANBOGA YURRINGA

4 MAY - 26 MAY 2019

## LEARNING RESOURCES

**BELVOIR**



Belvoir, in association with Moogahlin Performing Arts, presents

**BARBARA AND THE CAMP DOGS**

By **ANDREA JAMES**

Directed by **ANTHEA WILLIAMS**

This production of *Winyanboga Yurringa* opened at Belvoir St Theatre on Wednesday 8 May 2019.

Associate Director **Deborah Brown**

Set and Costume Designer **Isabel Hudson**

Cultural Design Advisor **Danièle Hromek**

Cultural Language Advisor **Dr Lou Bennet AM\***

Lighting Designer **Verity Hampson**

Associate Lighting Designer **Chloe Ogilvie**

Composer and sound Designer **Steve Francis**

Stage Manager **Isabella Kerdijk**

Assistant Stage Manager **Ella Griffin**

Stage Management Secondment **Jennifer Jackson**

Solid Ground Intern **Michona Warria**

\*The song *Ngalnya Woka* was composed for this production by Dr Lou Bennett AM.

Indigenous Theatre at Belvoir is supported by the Balnaves Foundation

*Winyanboga Yurringa* was originally commissioned by Belvoir in 2010. Moogahlin Performing Arts presented the world premiere season at Carriageworks and Geelong Performing Arts Centre in August 2016. This work was developed with the assistance of Playwriting Australia.

*We acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora nation who are the traditional custodians of the land on which Belvoir St Theatre is built. We also pay respect to the Elders past and present, and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.*

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# ABOUT BELVOIR



**One building.**

**Six hundred people.**

**Thousands of stories.**

When the Nimrod Theatre building in Belvoir Street, Surry Hills, was threatened with redevelopment in 1984, more than 600 people – ardent theatre lovers together with arts, entertainment and media professionals – formed a syndicate to buy the building and save this unique performance space in inner city Sydney.

Thirty years later, under Artistic Director Eamon Flack and Executive Director Sue Donnelly, Belvoir engages Australia’s most prominent and promising playwrights, directors, actors and designers to realise an annual season of work that is dynamic, challenging and visionary. As well as performing at home, Belvoir regularly takes to the road, touring both nationally and internationally.

## **Belvoir Education**

Our Education Program provides students and teachers with insights into the work of Belvoir and first hand experiences of the theatre-making process.

Belvoir Education offers student workshops, teacher professional development workshops, work experience, VET placements, archival viewings and a wealth of online resources designed to support work in the drama classroom. Our arts access programs assist schools in Regional NSW and Western Sydney to access the company’s work.

Explore our education pages at [www.belvoir.com.au/education](http://www.belvoir.com.au/education)

# CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM



Andrea James  
Writer



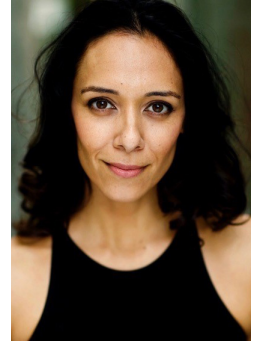
Anthea Williams  
Director



Dr Lou Bennett AM  
Cultural Language  
Advisor



Brendon Boney  
Composer and Sound  
Designer



Deborah Brown  
Associate Director



Steve Francis  
Composer and Sound  
Designer



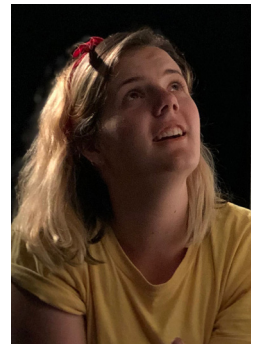
Ella Griffin  
Assistant Stage Manager



Verity Hampson  
Lighting Designer



Danièle Hromek  
Cultural Designer  
Advisor



Isabel Hudson  
Set and Costume  
Designer



Bella Kerdijk  
Stage Manager



Roxanne McDonald  
Necy



Tuuli Narkle  
Jadah



Chloe Ogilvie  
Associate Lighting  
Designer



Angeline Penrith  
Wanda



Tasma Walton  
Carol



Michona Warria  
Solid Ground Intern



Dalara Williams  
Margie



Dubs Yunupingu  
Chantelle

# THE WRITER: ANDREA JAMES

## WRITER'S NOTE

This play had its genesis at Belvoir in 2012 and, in many ways, has come full circle. *Winyanboga Yurringa*, in my Yorta Yorta language, translates as Women of the Sun and is inspired by Hyllus Maris and Sonia Borg's fiercely political and poetically groundbreaking story that burst onto the small screen on SBS and later on ABC television in 1981. As a fledging writer, I vividly recall watching this harrowing and powerful series on television and, realizing that this was the first time, ever, I had seen Aboriginal women portrayed on the small screen with integrity and accuracy. This, in no small part, was due to Auntie Hyllus Maris's vital contribution to the work as a Yorta Yorta woman from the Ulupna clan; that ensured that the stories and women represented rang true.

Originally seeded from an ambitious staged adaptation by a team of writers spearheaded by Auntie Hyllus's nephew, Tony Briggs along with Wesley Enoch; this play began its life as a short play and later became a full length work with support from Playwriting Australia.

In the initial development of this epic production, each writer in the team adapted one of the four episodes of the series; while I was tasked with writing a new episode that would outlay the needs and concerns of Aboriginal women today.

I interviewed many women who I knew in and around Melbourne and on Yorta Yorta Country. Real struggles with identity, lateral violence, repatriation and cultural inheritance began to form the basis of this "everywomen" play.

Whilst Auntie Hyllus and Sonia centred each generational episode around one woman; I knew that the many voices and stories I had heard needed to be represented through numerous characters; in order to celebrate and critique our multi-faceted worldviews, that are invariably influenced by the Aboriginal nations and clans that each woman I spoke to represented with warrior-like grace.

Despite great adversities and a myriad of distractions, all of the women who shared their personal stories with me, demonstrated an all-powerful connection to people and land. The stories were determined, compassionate, sometimes bitchy and often funny. All of the women I interviewed had an enormous sense of responsibility towards their mob and a relentless drive to make positive contributions to their communities and families in large and small ways.

This play invites you to come sit with us and see us in all our beauty and ugliness. To laugh with us, to understand us more fully, and to appreciate the value of our land and culture.

Many strong and skilled winyanboga have inspired and supported this work by telling me their stories, workshoping or performing in the play and encouraging me.

Thankyou to Deidre Bux, Vicki Couzens, Felicia Dean, Caroline Martin, Greta Morgan, Hilda Stewart, Lyn Thorpe, Zeta Thomson, Laurel Robinson, Alana Valentine, Ursula Yovich, Christine Anu, Miranda Tapsell, Elaine Crombie, Angeline Penrith, Nakkiah Lui, Suzie Dee,

Patricia Cornelius, Julie Pittle, Kylie Farmer, Tessa Rose, Leah Purcell, Nicole Foreshow, Lynette Narkle, Irma Woods, Rae Hodgson, Matilda Brown, Kylie Coolwell, Alexis Lane, Pamela Young, Daniele Hromek, Karen Norris, Nadeena Dixon, Alison Murphy-Oates, Liza-Mare Syron, Lily Shearer, Lou Bennett, Louise Gough, Anthea Williams, the beautiful Belvoir cast, my fiesty niece Dayna James-French and, of course, Auntie Hyllus Maris, whose poetry and words continue to inspire.

Winyanboga Yurringa was first produced by Moogahlin Performing Arts at Carriageworks

# THE DIRECTOR: ANTHEA WILLIAMS

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

On Yorta Yorta country, in the wake of thousands of years of history, six women meet to do what women have done for thousands of years: support, protect, and help each other grow. They do this because they are resilient, and because women are brilliant. Each character's life has been touched by colonisation; the cousins who have never met, the teenager in danger, the mothers, grandmothers, academics institutionalised. Regardless these women shine bright.

Andrea James has created a beautiful play about culture, community and women. It has been such a gift to work on this play and I am grateful to the directors, dramaturgs and actors who have worked on readings, developments and Moogahlin Performing Arts' first production. The creative team have brought such heart and care to this work, thank you. This Pakeha woman is very aware that she wouldn't have been able to create this show without the knowledge and generosity of many brilliant Indigenous women: Roxanne McDonald, Tuuli Narkle, Angeline Penrith, Tasma Walton, Dalara Williams, Dubs Yunupingu, Daniele Hromek and Lou Bennett, as well of course as Andrea James. Thank you for sharing your stories.



Anthea Williams

# COUNTRY, SUSTAINING AND MAINTAINING, SENTIENT AND ALIVE

Danièle Hromek, Budawang/Yuin

The following excerpt is drawn from Danièle Hromek's PhD titled:

***The (Re)Indigenisation of Space: Weaving narratives of resistance to embed Nura [Country] in design***

*So, Country is known – people sing for it, there are dances known, taught and danced for it, it has its stories that are taught, learned and told. It has its mysteries. It has its rituals. It can be painted, it can be harvested, and one can care for and love it.*

Country holds everything and the potential for everything. Indigenous space is part of Country and simultaneously has Country in it. It is therefore always full of the everything and the potentiality of Country. It could never have been empty or terra nullius. According to Mick Dodson, 'We are talking about the whole of the landscape, not just the places on it. [...] All of it is important – we have no wilderness. [...] None of it is vacant or empty, it is all interconnected'.<sup>1</sup>

Notably, Country is a lived experience and a heritage, and includes all people who have belonged and will belong to it. For Oliver Costello, Country is holistic. It is the spaces, the places, the relationships, the connections. Country is everything that exists and everything that does not, everything we know and do not know.

Extending this idea, Kevin O'Brien describes connection to Country as being experienced and understood through the senses and seared into memory. He states:

*Country is an Aboriginal idea. It is an idea that binds groupings of Aboriginal people to the place of their ancestors, past, current and future. It understands that every moment of the land, sea and sky, its particles, its prospects and its prompts, enables life. It is revealed over time by camping in it and guides my way into architecture. There is no disenfranchisement, no censorship and no ownership. Country is a belief. It is my belief.<sup>3</sup>*

Brian Martin adds to the discussion by stating that Aboriginal culture is created by the reality of Country, where all things are extracted through memory and continual practice. His philosophical approach sees Country as a grounding of the metaphysical (or theoretical) into the material (or physical). 'Country is the basis of Indigenous ideology and it specifically constitutes and is constituted by the relationship between memory, life and culture, which are embedded in land'.

Country includes everything in the landscape: land, water and sky; it soars high into the atmosphere, deep into the planet crust and far into the oceans. Country – which incorporates ground, space, site, environment – is aesthetic, environmental, social, spiritual and political. It is geology and geography, landscape and terrain. It writes the ground and imparts the knowledges that afford its care. Cultural connection to Country encompasses narratives and knowledges, incorporating traditions, practices and art, linked to identity, language and community.

Country is inherent rather than owned or earned; we become connected at birth and rights to Country are immediately obtained along with the responsibilities to care for it as we learn through life. This does not change with colonisation; likewise, our kin networks never

change.

Country is more than just a place marked on a map in a geographical sense. Nor is it passive scenery for humans to play out their lives. Anthony McKnight discusses Country as 'decentr[ing] the human authorship privilege of overseer, creator, controller, implementer, and owner'. He indicates that Country provides opportunities to reimagine and co-create how we think about and practice knowledge, because Country holds our knowledges in place, as a source for us to connect and reconnect to the land and to ourselves.

While the processes of colonisation do affect Indigenous spaces, Uncle Greg Simms says that Country is unaffected, only our relationships with Country can be affected. Likewise, affected relationships are also reclaimable and reparable. Uncle Greg speaks of Country as a place to return to for healing, a place of comfort, strength and nourishment. He discusses changes to the land, saying,

*It is still our spirit Country; our spirit still lies there. No matter that they build city on it, it is still a place we can always go back and heal [...], it is all changed but it is still Country. You still get healing from that place. Just go back, take off your shoes, walk around on the land to regenerate the soul. Call out the spirits of your ancestors. That is what the Old People taught us. We have got to go home to talk to the Old People, talk to the spirits of our ancestors.*

Since Country cannot be divided, while the land may be damaged or traumatised by colonial processes, like a broken arm, it can heal through Country. Thus if one part is removed physically, the songs and stories keep it in place, in memory, and its knowledges remain intact.

Country is sustaining and maintaining, it is sentient and alive.

1 Dodson, M 2007, 'Indigenous Protected Areas in Australia', Yawuru, paper presented to the International Expert Group Meeting on Indigenous Peoples and Protection of the Environment, Khabarovsk Russian Federation, August 27-29.

2 Costello, O 2015, 'Yarn with Oliver Costello', Bundjalung, on Gadigal Lands, Sydney, interviewed by D Hromek, 28 August.

3 O'Brien, K 2011, 'In Pursuit of an Architecture of Realism', Kaurareg and Meriam, Monument, vol. 101, no. March, pp. 35-36.

4 Martin, B 2013, 'Immaterial Land', Bundjalung and Muruwari, in E Barrett & B Bolt (eds), *Carnal Knowledge: Towards a 'new materialism' through the arts*, I B Tauris, London, pp. 185-204.

5 McKnight, A 2015, 'Preservice teachers' learning with Yuin Country: becoming respectful teachers in Aboriginal education', Awabakal, Gumaroi, and Yuin, *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, vol. 12 July 2015, pp. 1-15.

6 Simms, G 2015, 'Yarn with Uncle Greg Simms', Gadigal/Darug/Gundungurra/Yuin, on Darug Country, Sydney, interviewed by D Hromek, 28 October.

7 Burarrwanga, L, Ganambarr, B, Maymuru, D, Lloyd, K, Ganambarr-Stubbs, M, Ganambarr, R, Suchet-Pearson, S & Wright, S 2014, *Welcome to my Country: seeing the true beauty of life in Bawaka, Yolnu* (Burarrwanga, Ganambarr, Maymuru, Ganambarr-Stubbs, Ganambarr), *The Conversation, Australia*, viewed 11 May 2017, <https://theconversation.com/welcome-to-my-country-seeing-the-true-beauty-of-life-in-bawaka-31378>.

# PRODUCTION ELEMENTS

The elements of production are the technical and visual elements used to manipulate the elements of drama in order to effectively tell a play's story.

In these notes we are going to look at *Winyanboga Yurringa*

Set model box

Costume renderings

## SET DESIGN

Before a set is made for a production, a set designer creates a design for a model box built to the scale of the theatre. Usually this model box is exactly 25 times smaller than the real size of the theatre (1:25 scale). The purpose of this step in the design process is to give the creative and production team a chance to review the design before it is constructed. The model box provides specific information about texture, materials, look and detail of a set.



Set Model Box by Isabel Hudson



The set of *Winyanboga Yurringa*

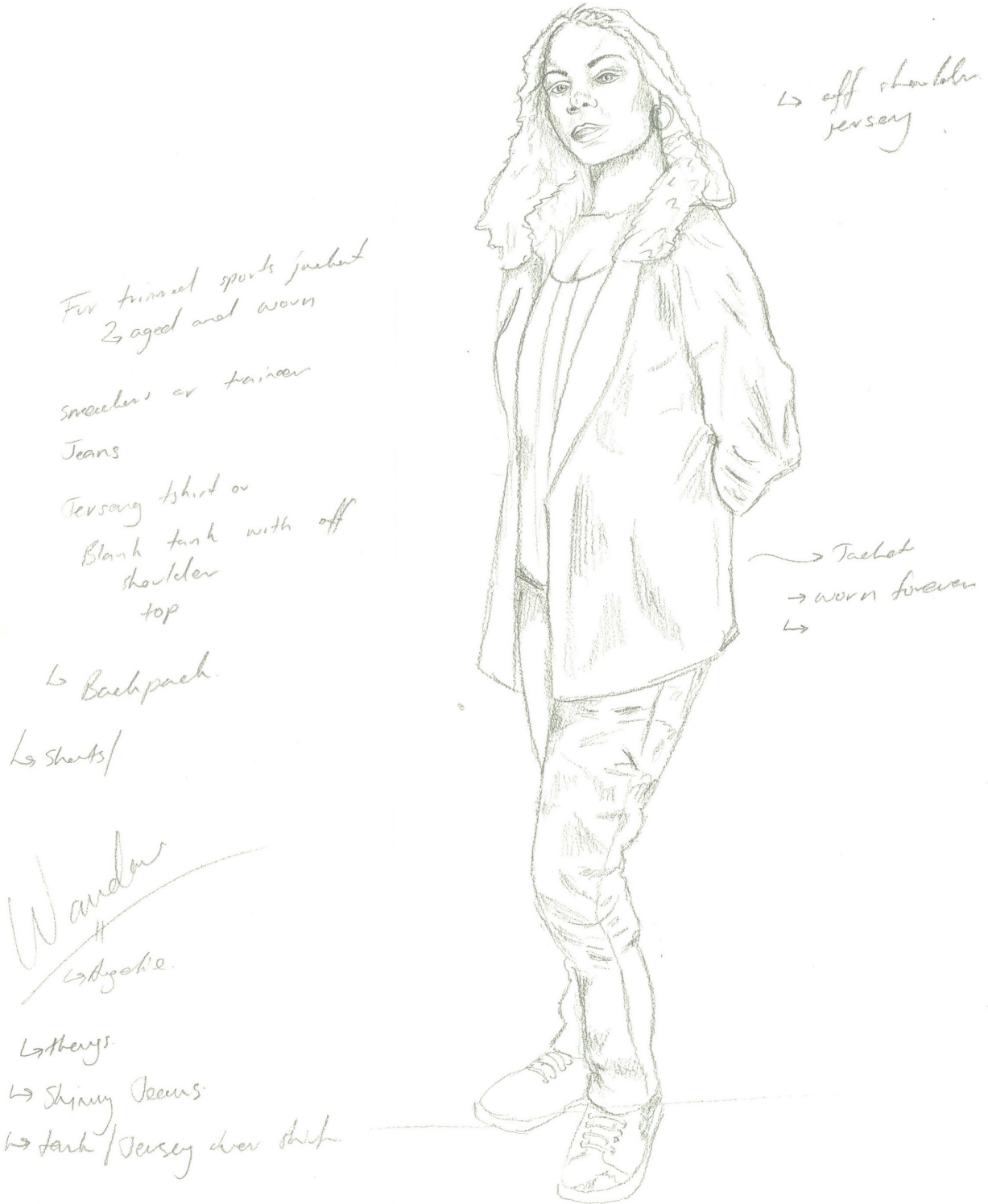
Set Design Isabel Hudson

#### Questions to consider after seeing this production

1. What is the key difference between the early model box design & the final set design?
2. Why might this change have taken place?
3. How many different locations were represented in the production?
4. How were the set pieces used to represent different locations?
5. How has the designer used stage space, texture, colour and composition to enhance dramatic meaning?

# COSTUME DESIGN: RENDERINGS

## Character: WANDA



Costume rendering by Isabel Hudson

# Character: CAROL



head scarf head band?

frankie's scarves  
wrist

hair loosely curled  
at nape of neck  
maybe real lip  
→ more neutral

fine cashmere  
jumper

Hand bag  
leather bag / fratchel

watch

keep cup

Additional jacket  
required.

tight refs  
from life? maybe  
mixed with another  
pair

Carol

↳ T+SMA

Costume rendering by Isabel Hudson

# Character: CHANTELLE



Costume rendering by Isabel Hudson

# REHEARSING WINYANBOGA YURRINGA



Roxanne McDonald, Tasma Walton, Angeline Penrith, Dalara Williams

Describe what you see in the picture above.

What do you think is happening in this moment?

How do the actors' body language and facial expressions convey this?

Do you think the actor in the background is part of the scene? Why or why not?



Tasma Walton

Describe what you see in the picture above.

What do you think might be happening in this moment?



Dubs Yunupingu

Describe the expression of this actor.

What might be happening in this moment?

Where do you think this scene is taking place? Give reasons for your answer.



Anthea Williams, Dubs Yunupingu, Dalara Williams , Angeline Penrith, Tuuli Narkle

Describe what you see in the picture above.

What do you think the most important elements in the relationship between a director and their cast might be?

# POST SHOW DISCUSSION

How is the set and other production elements used to tell the story of the play?



The set of *Winyanboga Yurringa*

Which character did you identify with the most? Why?



Dubs Yunupingu, Tuuli Narkle, Angeline Penrith, Dalara Williams, Tasma Walton, Roxanne McDonald,

Describe the relationship between the characters. How were these relationships realised on stage?



Angeline Penrith, Tasma Walton

What moment in the production had the most impact on you? Why?



Roxanne McDonald

How does the production explore the identity?



Dalara Williams

How did you feel at the end of the production?



Tuuli Narkle, Roxanne McDonald

# PODCAST



Writer Andrea James, along with Director Anthea Williams, performer Angeline Penrith, and Cultural Design Consultant Danièle Hromek discuss the play, the importance of Country for Indigenous peoples and the value of the stage in telling one's stories

Produced by Zoe Ferguson for Belvoir

Listen to the *Winyanboga Yurringa* podcast online here:

<https://omny.fm/shows/belvoir/winyanboga-yurringa-back-stage-podcast>

# CONTACT EDUCATION

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