



EMPOWERING FIRST NATIONS ARTISTS

Woodside has proudly supported Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company as Development Partner since 2012. Through the Next Step Training Program, Yirra Yaakin inspires the next generation of First Nations artists and continues to create exceptional contemporary Aboriginal Theatre.





DEC birok

Pronounced as Beer - ock

This is the dry season of the year, the first part of summer, with strong easterly winds during the day and southerly breezes in the evening. Noongar people would practice controlled burning to force native animals into the open, making them easier to hunt. Reptiles are very active during Birok, so women would sweep the camps on returning from gathering water and native vegetables, to make it easier to see the snake tracks.

MAR DODNATOD

Pronounced as Boon-a-roo

The second part of summer and the hottest time of the year, with little or no rainfall. Inland Noongar people would source water from rock holes, while most would move towards the coastal areas and estuaries where fish become a major food source. Noongar families would set fish traps and dolphins would help them catch the fish, sharing in the bounty.

- Yirra Yaakin Family Picnic

MAY ajeran

Pronounced as J-air-an

Cooler weather sets in, however the Noongar people usually remained on the coast to continue fishing. Seeds and bulbs were collected – in particular a spicy blood red sand plain bulb, which was ground to flavour meals. Jam gum (bush lolly) was collected during this season, and berries were also plentiful.

- Songbird
- Boodjar Kaatijin





NOV Kambarang

Pronounced as Kam-ba-rang

The days become longer, warmer and drier. The last Red Beak Orchids and native potatoes are gathered and Noongar families start moving towards the coats to catch frogs, tortoises and freshwater crayfish in the swamps and wetlands. Emu eggs are also gathered. This is the season when baby birds are born, reptiles surface form hibernation and wildflowers bloom.

- Operation Boomerang

AUG SEPT OJIDA

Pronounced as Jill-bah

The second part of winter, usually the wettest and coldest time of the year, with clear ice-cold periods. Native potatoes were harvested and kangaroos, possums and emus hunted. Skins were tanned and prepared as clothing and bedding, as well as being made into carry bags for food, medicine and tools. Hunting gear was also prepared. A time of plentiful food.

JUL MAKATOO

Pronounced as Mug-a-roo

The first part of winter. Noongar people returned to inland hunting areas and prepared their camping grounds for Djilba and the heavy rains and cold nights. They would stock up on fire tools and medicines. Swans were easy prey (their moulting season) and widjetty grubs were also in abundance. It is also the season of courtship.

- Sista Girl
- Brothers Wreck



Welcoming Artistic Director Maitland Schnaars' first year of programming, featuring some new works and some returning shows that allow you to experience Aboriginal stories by Yirra Yaakin's talented and diverse artists.

IN 2024, WE HAVE AN INCREDIBLE OPPORTUNITY TO CONNECT WITH THE COMMUNITY AND SHOWCASE AND EMBRACE SOLIDARITY THROUGH THEATRE.

Songbird, written by Shakara Walley, opens our mainstage production season. It's a story about reconciliation, and this show will also be toured. Following that is *Brothers Wreck* by Jada Alberts, a family story. Then, we have a new commission, a result of the Yirra Yaakin Writers' Program, which sees Bruce Denny's play *Operation Boomerang* exploring our elders and aged care.

Our Education & Community Program continues to be strong and in demand, with Boodjar Kaatijin by Ian Wilkes returning to metropolitan primary schools. This production features Koorlbardi (magpie), Weitj (emu) and Nyingarn (echnida) telling stories about The First Sunrise and The Creation of Wave Rock, among others, sharing Noongar language, cultural knowledge and stories.

High schools won't miss out on the humourously and punchy production Sista Girl written collaboratively by Alexis West and Elena Carapetis, which can be booked for 2024.

The Ngalaka Daa (Our Tongue) Ensemble brings us new life stories of young people. All members of the ensemble have the opportunity to connect and learn from industry leaders, covering performance preparation, vocal techniques and Noongar language.

Yirra Yaarnz Writers' Group provides a supportive environment for local storytellers of all levels to develop skills and learn scriptwriting, with selected writings showcased in June 2024.

There are many stories to be shared, and on behalf of the Board and Company, I'd like to thank our continuing relationships with government stakeholders, existing partners, donors and sponsors. I especially welcome new partners, donors and supporters in the coming year to help us continue presenting stories that celebrate Aboriginal performing arts. We look forward to celebrating Yirra Yaakin's exciting and entertaining 2024 program with you.

Debra Miller

A Message from the Chair





A Message
from the Artistic
Director MAITLAND SCHNAARS

Kaya everyone and welcome to Yirra Yaakin's 2024 season. It's a mixture of old and new, local and interstate. It's a season that shows the depth and complexity of Aboriginal theatre from across Australia. After celebrating our 30th anniversary, it is also a season that highlights the continuing growth of Yirra Yaakin as a theatre company and the importance of Yirra Yaakin as a culturally significant organisation that is integral to the arts not just in Western Australia but Australia in general.

"ONLY THE ARTS CAN MAKE SOCIETY LOOK AT ITSELF AND THINK, REFLECT AND HOPEFULLY CHANGE FOR THE BETTER".

We have three mainstage productions programmed for 2024 Songbird, Brothers Wreck and Operation Boomerang. Songbird is a beautiful play about love, loss and the possibility of reconnecting after a loss. It is written by local singer, songwriter and playwright Shakara Walley. It first premiered in 2015 at the Blue Room Theatre. In 2024 it is being reimagined with a talented team of young emerging artists led by emerging Aboriginal writer, performer and Director, Cezera Critti-Schnaars. We are also in the process of securing a regional tour of Songbird.

Our second mainstage production is *Brothers Wreck* by Jada Alberts. First performed at Belvoir Theatre in Sydney by Company B, it is a beautifully written play about a young man's journey dealing with and coming to terms with his cousin taking their own life. The play explores a tragic topic which, sadly, has touched so many people. It will premiere here in WA, at the Subiaco Arts Centre, at the opening of NAIDOC Week.

To finish off the year, our third mainstage production *Operation Boomerang* is a commission of a brand-new play by Yamatji actor and playwright, Bruce Denny. Inspired by a real-life experience, the play explores the contentious issue of a senior person's right to die on their own terms. Told with copious amounts of humour and tenderness, this is a significant play for our times.

Of course, our much-loved regulars will be returning. Ngalaka Daa Ensemble continues Yirra Yaakin's commitment to the continued growth, understanding and respect of Noongar language. We will continue to develop and support first nations writers through our Yirra Yaarnz Writers' Group. Our educational program is bigger than ever. Alongside our primary school show Boodjar Kaatijin by Ian Wilkes, we will be introducing a secondary school show Sista Girl by South Australian playwrights Alexis West, a Birra Gubba Wakawaka South Sea Islander woman, and Elena Carapetis, a strong Greek/ Australian woman.

I am extremely excited about our 2024 season and look forward to seeing you all at the Theatre. There is nothing like it.

I dedicate this season to you, my brother Butch, RIP.

Maitland Schnaars



SONGBIRD

WRITTEN BY SHAKARA WALLEY

SHOWING FROM 19 APRIL - 4 MAY 2024 SUBIACO ARTS CENTRE

An intimate tale of heartbreak. forgiveness, shared memories and sweet melodies.

REGIONAL TOUR 7 - 31 MAY 2024

Presented by Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company

Playwright Shakara Walley **Director** Cezera Critti-Schnaars **Director Mentor** Emily McLean Producer Jen Edwards Set & Costume Designer Charli Strickland Sound Designer Levi Widnall Sound Designer Mentor Rachael Dease Lighting Designer Jolene Whibley Stage Manager Jasmyn Day Cast Kira Feeney, Owen Hasluck and Tyren (Tre) Maclou

Songbird is a story about a young couple. Leon & Brooke, who parted ways following the death of Brooke's brother, Michael, Michael, Brooke and Leon grew up together and have been best friends their entire lives. They were inseparable until Michael's untimely death drove Brooke and Leon apart.

After five years, Leon wants to reconnect with Brooke and find out why Michael died. Does he really want to know the truth behind the death? Will he understand why reconciliation with Brooke may be too difficult, or will their shared memories & love of music allow forgiveness to triumph over the ever-aching sadness they both share?

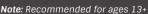
Featuring live music and original songs.

















BROTHERS WRECK

WRITTEN BY JADA ALBERTS

SHOWING FROM 9 - 21 JULY 2024 SUBIACO ARTS CENTRE This play is about life.

Presented by Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company

Playwright Jada Alberts **Director** Maitland Schnaars Assistant Director Bruce Denny Producer Jen Edwards Set & Costume Designer Sound Designer Rachael Dease Assistant Sound Designer Levi Widnall **Lighting Designer** Cast Tyren Tre Maclou, Della Rae Morrison Sometimes death has the most to teach us about life. Ruben wakes to find that his cousin has died by suicide on a hot Darwin morning.

What follows is the story of a family, buffeted by constant tragedy, holding itself together - as their people have done generation after generation. This play asks us: how do we deal with death? And how many other people does it take for each of us to live? Little by little, Ruben's family brings him back from the edge.

"Alberts' script grabs you by the heartstrings in the first few minutes and doesn't let you go."

- Polly Simons / Stage Noise









Note: Contains strong coarse language and adult themes including references to suicide and alcohol abuse. Recommended for a mature audience, ages 15+







OPERATION BOOMERANG

WRITTEN BY BRUCE DENNY

SHOWING FROM 8 - 19 OCTOBER 2024 SUBIACO ARTS CENTRE Boomerangs always return.

Presented by Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company

Playwright Bruce Denny Assistant Director Bobbi Henry **Dramaturg** Humphrey Bower Producer Jen Edwards

Operation Boomerang was developed from a personal experience with the playwright's mother and other elderly relatives being placed in aged care as well as the importance of returning to Country for many of Aboriginal people when they know their time is near.

Cultural and spiritual needs versus societal expectations drive this work as a kookie Indigenous family try to support their sassy matriarch's sunset wishes.











Note: Recommended for ages 15+







BOODJAR KAATIJIN

WRITTEN BY IAN WILKES

METRO TOUR APRIL - JUNE 2024

REGIONAL TOUR JULY - AUGUST 2024

Presented by Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company

Playwright Ian Wilkes
Director Bobbi Henry
Assistant Director Jessie Ward
Producer Jess Gatt
Set & Costume Designer Matt McVeigh
Sound Designer Tao Issaro
Stage Manager Emma Stirling

Suitable for audiences ages 5+

Please visit **yirrayaakin.com.au** for ticketing information

Following a successful tour in 2017, Yirra Yaakin is excited for our highly acclaimed children's show, Boodjar Kaatijin to be returning to primary schools in 2024!

Audiences will join Koorlbardi (Magpie), Weitj (Emu), Nyingarn (Echidna) and their koordah (friends) as they journey through Noongar Boodjar sharing stories of how the land was created. Through a collection of four stories based on Noongar knowledge and understanding of country, audiences will learn about The First Sunrise; The Creation of Kings Park, How the Kangaroo Got Its Colour: How the Echidna Got its Spikes; and The Creation of Wave Rock and the Stars.

Boodjar Kaatijin kicks off the series of Kaatijin plays, written for our younger audiences, that focus on the sharing of Noongar language and connecting young people with important cultural knowledge and stories.

"Boodjar Kaatijin is a fun, interactive and educational play, that gives students a glimpse into the cultural significance of the places in which we live. It is a suitable and entertaining program that is extremely engaging for students; curriculum relevant; has great incorporation of Noongar language and gives an entertaining and educational insight into Noongar culture and history."

- Review from teacher, Belmay Primary







SISTA GIRL

WRITTEN BY ALEXIS WEST AND ELENA CARAPETIS

METRO TOUR JUNE - JULY 2024

Presented by Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company

Playwright Alexis West and Elena Carapetis **Director** Bobbi Henry Producer Jessica Gatt

Sista Girl is a brilliantly humorous, powerful, and heart-warming production that tackles issues as alive and important as they've ever been. Told via the story of two young women, strangers to each other but bonded by blood and grief. Sisters. They break the cold silence of the hospital room to start a difficult conversation. About the past and secrets. About the women who were their mothers. And about why this man, their father, abandoned one family to make another. When the past is dying and can't say sorry, how do you move on?

Co-written by Alexis West and Elena Carapetis the play speaks directly to its young audiences about matters of identity, grief, and the complex nature of family, whilst prompting them to question their own perceptions of other races, genders, and cultures.











Note: Contains adult themes and heavily racial language. Suitable for audiences 15+





"Rich in wry comedy and yearning for lost connections."

The Australian



Written by Alexis West & Elena Carapetis

NGALAKA DAA ENSEMBLE

Driven by the sharing of Noongar language and culture, the program will provide participants with the opportunity to receive intensive development in theatre making, performance and language skills at a professional level.

Successful participants will partake in an intense series of workshops and rehearsals leading to a number of curated public performance opportunities. As a member of the Ngalaka Daa Ensemble participants will gain access to training with industry leaders including performance preparation, vocal techniques, movement techniques / physicality, Noongar language (comprehension and articulation), acting techniques (various forms and styles), monologues, dialogues and ensemble work, embodiment of text and Noongar physical theatre processes.

In addition to providing people with opportunities to participate in the arts, the Ngalaka Daa Ensemble program is also an avenue in promoting the sustainability of one of the oldest languages in the world, while promoting cultural awareness and reconciliation, along with a greater sense of connection and understanding of the communities they live in.

Back for another year!

In association with WAYTCO

WORKSHOPS

Open Term 2 and Term 3 School Holidays **Venue** King Street Arts Centre

Price Free

PERFORM A NC E S 8 - 9 AUGUST 2024 WA MUSEUM BOOLA BARDIP

Please contact us for bookings Email producer@yirrayaakin.com.au or call 08 9380 3049

Photo by Dana Weeks















YIRRA YAARNZ WRITERS' GROUP

Presented by Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company

We will continue to grow and develop our Writers' Group workshops by providing a supportive environment in which local, emerging Aboriginal playwrights are provided with dramaturgy and training to learn and develop their script-writing skills.

The aim of this program is for Yirra Yaakin to produce high quality short works through a vigorous selection process and create pathways for our writers' to ultimately have their works presented on stage.

We will present another play reading program developed from selected members of the Yirra Yaarnz Writers' Group, showcasing the importance of storytelling & playwriting as it relates to Aboriginal culture.

Please visit **yirrayaakin.com.au** for ticketing information
Photo by Dana Weeks



LIVE READINGS 21 - 22 JUNE 2024 WA MUSEUM BOOLA BARDIP















FAMILY PICNIC

YIRRA YAAKIN COMMUNITY EVENT

THURSDAY 21 MARCH 2024 SUBIACO ARTS CENTRE THEATRE GARDENS

We're excited to be opening our home again in 2024.

Yirra Yaakin will be holding our annual Family Picnic again in 2024, as part of our partnership with the City of Subiaco. This is an opportunity to hear a bit more of what we have coming up in 2024, experience the world behind contemporary Aboriginal theatre and meet and yarn with the whole Yirra Yaakin family within the Theatre Gardens surrounding the Subiaco Arts Centre, where we are the Company-in-Residence.

Attendees will enjoy live music, samples of kangaroo stew, damper and face painting for the kids (and adults too).







SUPPORTING YIRRA YAAKIN

WAYS YOU CAN SUPPORT US

SUPPORT A CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE BENANG (TOMORROW) FUND

Yirra Yaakin exists to create platforms and opportunities for Aboriginal stories and storytellers. We have been very successfully doing this for 30 years. Creating great theatre takes development, time, and opportunities to try new things and see if they will work.

As a professional theatre company, we must allow and support new work to develop over a minimum of 2 years. Each work that Yirra Yaakin puts on stage has had extensive script and creative development to both nurture the playwright and allow the story to take shape ready for production.

Within current funding structures there is a huge financial gap in supporting the development of new works. To fill this gap Yirra Yaakin has created the Benang Fund, so you can help in the development of scripts, plays and playwrights. Benang means 'Tomorrow' or 'Future' and this fund will assist the future of our playwrights, our teams, and our new works. The shows we put on tomorrow need to be developed today.

SUPPORT OUR ARTISTS. CREATIVES AND THEATRE ARTS PROFESSIONALS IN ALL STEPS, FROM SCRIPT TO STAGE

A general donation to our Company will support:

- a production or program;
- an emerging perfromer, writer or dramaturg;
- an emerging producer, designer or director.

You can contribute to supporting our company through either;

- · A Donation one-off or single gift contribution
- · An Ongoing Donation a regular gift contribution each week, month or annual season
- · Leave a Bequest by leaving a gift in your will to Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company.

Visit yirrayaakin.com.au to find out more, or to add your support for sharing more Aboriginal stories and Storytelling and be part of the Yirra Yaakin legacy!



TOGETHER WE STAND TALL

Yirra Yaakin creates, shares and celebrates contemporary Aboriginal theatre, performance and stories."

We intend to keep standing tall for our communities and invite you to support us to continue making the magic of Aboriginal theatre for years to come.

Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company produces up to four new plays a year. This doesn't happen overnight. Every play needs at least two years development, starting with script development and then adding actors and/or readers in a creative development.

The process of making and creating works is often more beneficial to the development of the Playwright, Dramaturg, community and all artists involved throughout, than the production itself.

Yirra Yaakin wishes to continue to facilitate the training of more Western Australian Aboriginal artists, creatives and theatre arts professionals.

But we need your support.

YOUR DONATION WILL ENABLE US TO CONTINUE MAKING THE MAGIC OF ABORIGINAL THEATRE FOR YEARS TO COME! To donate, please complete and return the Donation Form provided.

DONATION FORM



Yirra Yaakin from its inception has consistently risen to the challenges of creating new Aboriginal works to raise and highlight important artistic, cultural and historical topics and issues. To continue this creative process, support from donors is vital, appreciated and highly valued.

Our supporters and audience members consistently welcome the Yirra Yaakin theatre experience because they walk away feeling uplifted and entertained. We invite you to support us.

If you would like to be involved, we invite you to complete this Donation Form and choose the level that suits you best.

By completing this form you are supporting Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company to continue to create, and increase access to our theatre works and projects by sending your gift. All donations of \$2 or over are tax deductible.

YOUR DETAILS

First Name:	A STATE OF THE STA	Middle Initial:
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YOUR PRIVACY

Yirra Yaakin appreciates your generous support, as well as respecting your privacy. Please specify your preference.
Donation Privacy
I give permission for Yirra Yaakin to publish my name (or company name) and gift amount in various publications for public acknowledgement.
I wish to remain anonymous.
Privacy information can be viewed from https://yirrayaakin.com.au/our-company/privacy-policy/
FURTHER INFORMATION
Please send me further information on leaving a bequest.
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OUR DONORS

THANK YOU

YIRRA YAAKIN THEATRE COMPANY WOULD LIKE TO THANK OUR GENEROUS DONORS FOR THEIR SUPPORT.

Amy Welsh Caroline de Mori AM **Craig Wallace** Fiona Clarke Fiona Stanley Frania Sharp Helen Carroll Hilary Cadman Irene Jarzabek Jon Greenaway Joy Crocker Judith Hugo Laura Henderson Margrete Helgeby Chaney Marita Walker Mark Pearson

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Michael



"Only the arts can make society look at itself and think, reflect and hopefully change for the better."

MAITLAND SCHNAARS
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

ABOUT YIRRA YAAKIN

Whadjuk Boodjar Subiaco Arts Centre 180 Hamersley Road Subiaco (Wandarguttagurrup) WA 6008

Phone (08) 9380 3040 Email yy@yirrayaakin.com.au Website www.yirrayaakin.com.au

Tickets Visit our website or call (08) 9380 3040

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Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company was established in 1993. Since then, the company has evolved into a respected cultural leader and artistic hub for Aboriginal people from all over WA, Australia, and around the world. Yirra Yaakin produces award winning. world-class theatre, sharing Aboriginal stories through exciting, entertaining. educational and authentic new works. The company has commissioned and premiered more than 70 new major plays. We have worked with and nurtured prestigious Aboriginal writers including David Milroy, Sally Morgan, Derek Nannup, Mitch Torres and Dallas Winmar. among many others.

FOUNDING PATRON

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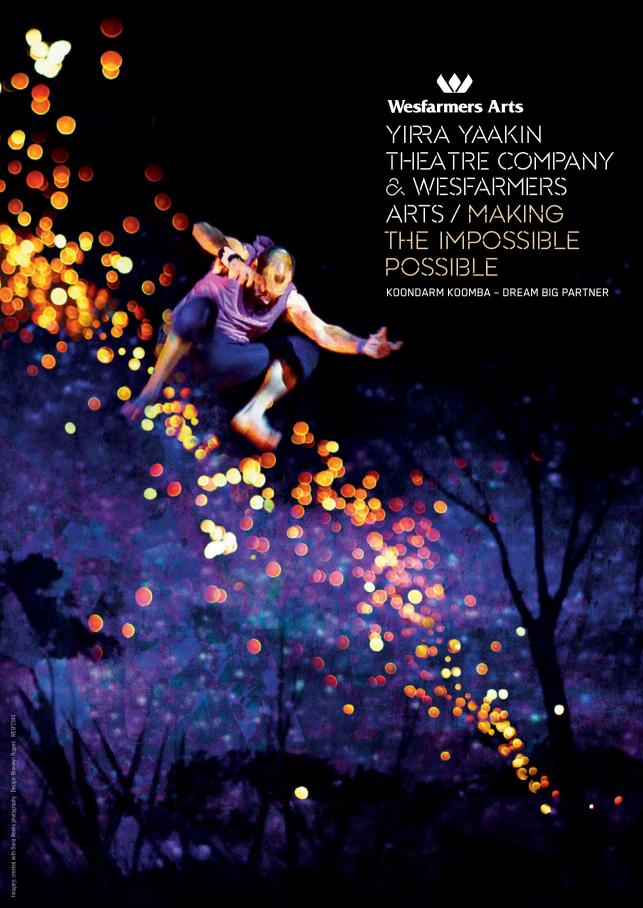
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Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company would like to thank all of our partners and donors for their support in helping us to share Aboriginal stories through the art of theatre.

GOVERNMENT









DEVELOPMENT

KOONDARM KOOMBA (DREAM BIG)





COMMUNITY CULTURAL

EDUCATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT







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