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BELOVED PLAY WITH A FIRST NATIONS FLAIR

The Sum of Us

Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company



Image cr: Poeth Rivas

Yirra Yaakin Theatre Company returns to **Perth Festival** after its 2020 Festival world-premiere hit *Hecate* with an exciting new production of the much-loved Australian comedy drama *The Sum of Us*.

How's a bloke supposed to find Mr Right when his father's always up in his business? That's the premise of this uplifting play that revolves around the comfortable relationship between widower Harry and his son Jeff as they each search for the right partner.

The Sum of Us, the acclaimed 1990 play adapted into the award-winning film starring **Russell Crowe** and **Jack Thompson** in 1994, is a beautiful tale of a strong family bond, ageing, queerness and the dance we all do when searching for love.

Written by **David Stevens** (*Breaker Morant*), *The Sum of Us* will be performed by an Australian First Nations cast in a 90-minute production spiced with Latin dancing and great music from the 1990s.

A decade after the play was last seen in WA, Yirra Yaakin **Artistic Director Eva Grace Mullaley** said she was inspired to produce *The Sum of Us* because it showed that being queer would not turn the world against you.

'It is a story that encompasses all cultures,' Mullaley says. In an industry where Indigenous people are constantly asked to relieve their trauma instead of normalising good relationships, this play is about a beautiful father-son relationship and their search for love.

'Balancing humour and pathos, this touching play is as relevant today as it was 30 years ago when it helped break down barriers at the height of the AIDS crisis.'

This is the first time Yirra Yaakin has produced a play with a focus on queer identity. It will be presented as part of the need to display functional and dysfunctional families and represent First Nations people as contemporary, dynamic and evolutionary members of society.

After his success as co-writer of *Breaker Morant* with Bruce Beresford, David Stevens wrote *The Sum of Us* in the late 1980s but could not find a theatre company in Australia willing to produce the play. He took it to producers in New York and it opened on October 16, 1990 at the Off-Broadway Cherry Lane Theatre, where it ran for 335 performances and won The Outer Critics Circle Award for Outstanding Off-Broadway Play 1990-1991. He adapted his script for the 1994 Crowe-Thompson film, which also was directed by the play's American director Kevin Dowling.

Despite being set in Melbourne, the first production in Australia was in 1992 by the Sydney Theatre Company at the Wharf Studio Theatre and the last time it was produced in Australia was in 2011 on a national tour by HIT Productions.

WHAT: The Sum of Us

WHERE: Subiaco Arts Centre / Wandaraguttgurup / Subiaco

WHEN: 18 Feb – 28 Feb (Except Monday and Tuesday). Wed – Fri 7.30pm, Sat 20 Feb 7.30pm, Sat 27 Feb 3pm & 7.30pm Sun 6pm

HOW MUCH: \$59

BOOKINGS AND FESTIVAL INFO: perthfestival.com.au

Click here for [images](#). For further information, interviews or images please contact:

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Perth Festival acknowledges the Noongar people who continue to practise their values, language, beliefs and knowledge on their kwobidak boodjar. They remain the spiritual and cultural birdiyangara of this place and we honour and respect their caretakers and custodians and the vital role Noongar people play for our community and our Festival to flourish.

Perth Festival

Founded in 1953 by The University of Western Australia, Perth Festival is the longest running international arts festival in Australia and Western Australia's premier cultural event. The Festival has developed a worldwide reputation for excellence in its international program, the presentation of new works and the highest quality artistic experiences for its audience. For 67 years, the Festival has welcomed to Perth some of the world's greatest living artists and now connects with hundreds of thousands of people each year.

Iain Grandage is the Artistic Director 2020–23.