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RIVER SITE REVEALS HIDDEN HISTORIES

BESIDE

WA Youth Theatre Company

WORLD PREMIERE

Presented in collaboration with the National Trust of Western Australia



Beside. Cr. David Cox

WA Youth Theatre Company invites audiences to join an evocative promenade performance exploring the social and cultural histories of **Peninsula Farm** along the banks of the Derbarl Yerrigan in Maylands.

BESIDE, presented in collaboration with the **National Trust of Western Australia** combines theatre, stories, song and find your-own-adventure to share the ongoing changes that have taken place at the site of one of the first farms in the Swan River Colony.

Beginning at twilight, a talented young cast will guide audience members through a series of encounters over the course of 80 minutes and three acts in and around the colonial-era farmhouse.

In a Festival with the 2021 theme of **Bilya** (river), **BESIDE** considers the transformation of this vital life source for our city. It explores Noongar oral histories of the Swan River alongside the cultural, environmental and social impacts along its banks.

BESIDE is commissioned by Perth Festival and is the much-anticipated follow-up to WA Youth Theatre Company's sold-out Fringe World shows *Body Rights* at the Old Girls School in 2020 and *REST*, its Martin Sims Award-winning work in the grounds of East Perth Cemeteries in 2019.

This diverse and exceptional group of young performers is guided by acclaimed artist and WA Youth Theatre Company Artistic Director **James Berlyn**, who directed *Tenebrae et Lux* at the 2013 Perth Festival and created and performed *I Know You're There* at the 2016 Perth Festival.

BESIDE's powerhouse creative team features Assistant Director **Maitland Schnaars**, with music from **Rachael Dease** in collaboration with **Della Rae Morrison** and visual dramaturgy by **Zoë Atkinson**. This stellar team includes associate artists **Ian Wilkes** (the co-creator of 2021 Perth Festival presentation *Galup*), **Phoebe Sullivan** and **Georgia Ivers** leading a cast of young Western Australians working with senior Noongar artists, cultural consultants and advisors from the Swan River Trust and National Trust to bring an intimate and provocative new work to WA.

James Berlyn says; 'BESIDE is about notions of perspective. When you stand beside someone or something are you a witness, a bystander, a participant or something other? We invite audiences to come to this special place and see it from a new perspective.'

Perth Festival Artistic Director Iain Grandage says, 'WA Youth Theatre Company is, under the guidance of James Berlyn, creating unique and profound works of theatre that connect story and place and people.'

'These productions are so arresting because of the unadorned honesty and poignancy of the performances from the young actors in the company. This exciting new Festival commission applies this careful and rich approach while speaking very specifically to the river themes of the 2021 Festival program.'

WHAT: BESIDE

WHERE: Peninsula Farm / Baigup / Maylands

WHEN: 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 24, 25, 26 & 27 Feb 8pm

HOW MUCH: \$39

BOOKINGS AND FESTIVAL INFO: perthfestival.com.au

Click here for a [media kit](#) and [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.