

MEDIA RELEASE: 15 November 2021

SWEET FEAST WITH A DEADLY AFTERTASTE

Daddy

By Joel Bray



Image: James Henry

***'(A) soul-baring erotic odyssey . . . matched by a deeply personal, and intensely political, exploration of gay and Aboriginal identities.'* – Sydney Morning Herald**

One of the most electric new figures in Australian dance, **Joel Bray** brings his sugar-coated thrill-pill ***Daddy*** to **Perth Festival** audiences for the first time.

The Wiradjuri dancer, writer and performance-maker heads to Perth with this intensely flavoured show that combines dance, theatre and audience participation into an irresistible sweet feast with a deadly aftertaste.

At the heart of *Daddy* is Joel's insatiable cravings for father figures, which always leave him wanting more. From the sugar-coated idyll of childhood reminiscence to the glazed excesses of queer adulthood, Joel's story proves that a sweet tooth is a dangerous thing.

A graduate of WAAPA, Joel is acclaimed for creating performance works that are intimate encounters in unorthodox spaces. He invites audiences as co-storytellers to explore the experiences of fair-skinned Aboriginal people and gay men in an increasingly digital and isolated world. His body becomes the intersection for songlines of Indigenous heritage, skin-colour and queer sexuality.

Hilarious, provocative and heartfelt, *Daddy* tickles the nerve endings of desire while prodding the cavities left by colonisation. Move around the **Studio Underground** with Joel as his trademark confection of conversation, dance and all-you-can-eat audience participation probes one of the paradoxes of our age: when so much is on offer, why are we left so hungry?

Short-lived highs give way to the inevitable comedowns before the cycle begins all over again. And like a kid in a candy store, an imperial hunger for Aboriginal Australia consumes all it encounters – land, women and children – like fistfuls of sugar.

‘Joel is an immensely charismatic artist and it is a privilege to fulfil a long-held ambition to celebrate him and his art in this program,’ **Perth Festival Artistic Director Iain Grandage** says. ‘*Daddy* will be a joyous night in the theatre as Joel hides some tough, dark questions in jars of cookies and piles of glitter.’

On returning to West Australian shores to perform again, Bray says the feeling is akin to a homecoming.

‘I trained at WAAPA, so Perth has always felt like a second home to me. I am thrilled to be coming back to share both these works with local audiences,’ he says. ‘It’s been a pleasure to return to rehearsing and performing *Daddy*. After the insanity of the last two years, a work about the search for connection and a sense of belonging feels more urgent and relevant than ever.’

Daddy was commissioned by the City of Melbourne through Arts House, YIRRAMBOI Festival and the Arts Grants Program; and by Performance Space, Sydney. It was developed for YIRRAMBOI’s KIN Commissions and the Liveworks Festival 2019.

WHAT: Daddy

WHERE: Studio Underground / Yandilup / Northbridge

WHEN: Wed 2 – Sat 5 Feb 8pm. Sun 6 Feb 6pm.

HOW MUCH: \$39

BOOKINGS AND FESTIVAL INFO: perthfestival.com.au

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

Stephen Bevis

+61 8 6488 8618 / 0448 927 281

sbevis@perthfestival.com.au

Lauren Papendorf

+61 8 6488 2000 / 0414 050 846

lpapendorf@perthfestival.com.au

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.

ABOUT 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 nearly 70 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 2020–24.

CREDITS

Creator, Choreographer, Performer Joel Bray

Composition & Sound Design Naretha Williams

Lighting Design Katie Sfetkidis

Set & Costume Design James Lew

Collaborating Director Stephen Nicolazzo

Collaborating Choreographer Niharika Senapati

Dramaturgy SJ Norman

Audio Technical Support Daniel Nixon

Piano Niv Marinberg

Voices Josh Price, Jason Tamiru

Technical & Stage Manager Lucie Sutherland

Executive Producer Distribution & Tour Management Alison Halit

Creative Producer Josh Wright

JOEL BRAY

An artist living on Kulin country (Melbourne), Joel Bray is a proud Wiradjuri man who trained at NAISDA and WAAPA before pursuing a career in Europe and Israel with Jean-Claude Gallotta, Company CeDeCe, Kolben Dance, Machol Shalem Dance House, Yoram Karmi's FRESCO Dance Company, Niv Sheinfeld & Oren Laor and Roy Assaf. He returned to Australia to work with CHUNKY MOVE. Joel's choreographic practice includes making dance, dance-theatre and works for young audiences.

Joel's solo performance *Biladurang* won three Melbourne Fringe Awards. His second work *Dharawungara* was commissioned by CHUNKY MOVE and was a choreographic lament for the ceremony stolen from him by the Coloniser. *Daddy* was commissioned by the Yirramboi Festival, Arts House and Liveworks (Sydney). *Considerable Sexual License* for Darebin Speakeasy reimagined a sex ritual as a place to explore trauma and fine healing. Joel's works have toured to the Brisbane, Sydney, Darwin, Midsumma, Auckland, LiveWorks and Dance Massive Festivals and to Arts Centre Melbourne.

Joel was the 2019 National Library of Australia Creative Arts Fellow. In 2020, he adapted Biladurang to a live-streamed performance and undertook a CHUNKY MOVE “Solitude_1” residency re-imagining Instagram as a choreographic form.

Joel is the 2021 CHUNKY MOVE Choreographer-in-Residence including a commission for a large scale work called *Garabari*, and a further commission from the National Gallery of Australia for a multi-channel screen work called *Giraru Galing Ganhagirri (The Wind Bring the Rain)*

Joel’s practice springs from his Wiradjuri cultural heritage. His works are intimate encounters in unorthodox spaces, in which audience-members are invited in as co-storytellers to explore the experiences of fair-skinned Aboriginal people, and the experiences of contemporary gay men in an increasingly digital and isolated world. His body becomes the intersection site of those songlines- Indigenous heritage, skin-colour and queer sexuality.