

MEDIA RELEASE: Thursday, 31 October 2019

TWO FAMILIES, TWO CULTURES ... TOO MUCH!

Black Ties (February 13 - 16)



Image: Garth Oriander

BLACK TIES is the biggest, blackest wedding ever and **Perth Festival** audiences are invited to join the party.

A highlight of the Festival's first week of entirely First Nations performances on Noongar Boodjar, this hilarious and heart-warming immersive theatre experience reminds us of the power of love to unite.

Created by **ILBIJERRI Theatre Company** (Australia) and **Te Rēhia Theatre** (Aotearoa/New Zealand), **BLACK TIES** is a groundbreaking collaboration and cultural exchange between two leading First Nations theatre companies.

Written by **John Harvey** and **Tainui Tukiwaho**, who co-directs with **Rachael Maza**, **BLACK TIES** reimagines the popular wedding rom-com from a distinctively First Nations perspective.

With a peerless cast led by **Uncle Jack Charles**, **Mark Coles Smith**, **Lisa Maza**, **Tuakoi Ohia** and **Brady Peeti**, and a live band playing Black anthems and wedding classics, **BLACK TIES** will be a party to remember.

When Māori corporate hotshot Hera (Tuakoi Ohia) and Aboriginal consultancy entrepreneur Kane (Mark Coles Smith) locked eyes at a Cultural Awareness session, it was love at first sight. Ambitious and career focused, Kane and Hera now have their perfect future all mapped out. But there is one thing they can't control...their families!

As the biggest mob of Aunties, Uncles and cousins from both sides of the ditch get worked up for the blackest wedding ever, reality is sinking in. Fast! Will this international love story bring two strong cultures together? Or will it blow Hera and Kane's world apart?

"The big highlight for me is that I finally get to work with an all First Nations creative team," ILBIJERRI Artistic Director Rachael Maza says. "On and off stage this work is a celebration of who we are as Blackfulla's and Māori's: the resilience, the humour, the passion, strong family, culture, thriving despite our shared experiences of colonisation.

"I think about the trajectory of black theatre in this country to where we are today and this cocktail of hard hitting/political and the humour has always been there - how else could we have survived?"

ILBIJERRI THEATRE COMPANY

ILBIJERRI is Australia's longest established First Nations theatre company. We create, present and tour powerful and engaging theatre creatively controlled by First Nations artists that gives voice to our cultures. Born from community, ILBIJERRI continues to make work with a potent political punch, and brings distinctive deadly humour to stages around the world.

TE RĒHIA THEATRE

Established in 2012, Te Rēhia Theatre is a proudly Māori theatre company, championing Māori playwrights, tikanga Māori arts practice and the presentation of our diverse stories. Te Rēhia Theatre, named in honour of the atua of leisure is led by Amber Curreen and Tainui Tukiwaho based at Te Pou – The Auckland home of Māori Theatre. We're passionate about te reo Māori (the Māori language) in theatre and the exploration of innovative ways of telling Māori stories.

CREATIVE TEAM

WRITTEN BY JOHN HARVEY AND TAINUI TUKIWAHO

DIRECTED BY RACHAEL MAZA AND TAINUI TUKIWAHO

SET DESIGNER: JACOB NASH

COMPOSER AND MUSICAL DIRECTOR: BRENDON BONEY

LIGHTING DESIGNER: JANE HAKARAIA

AV DESIGNER: JAMES HENRY

SOUND DESIGNER: LAUGHTON KORA

COSTUME DESIGNER: TE URA HOSKINS

PERFORMERS

JACK CHARLES
MARK COLES SMITH
LANA GARLAND
TAWHIRANGI MACPHERSON
LISA MAZA
TUAKOI OHIA
BRADY PEETI
TAINUI TUKIWAHO
DALARA WILLIAMS
DION WILLIAMS

AND A THREE-PIECE BAND LED BY BRENDON BONEY AN FEATURING LAUGHTON KORA

WHAT: Black Ties

WHEN: 13-16 February

WHERE: Studio Underground. State Theatre Centre, Northbridge (Yandilup)

HOW MUCH: \$49

BOOKINGS AND FESTIVAL INFO: perthfestival.com.au

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BLACK TIES was commissioned by AsiaTOPA, a joint initiative of the Sidney Myer Fund and Arts Centre Melbourne; and has been assisted by the Australian Government's Major Festivals Initiative, managed by the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body, in association with the

Confederation of Australian International Arts Festivals Inc., Sydney Festival, Perth Festival, New Zealand Festival, Auckland Festival, AsiaTOPA Festival and Brisbane Festival.

For further information, interviews or images please contact:

Stephen Bevis

+61 8 6488 8618 / 0448 927 281

sbevis@perthfestival.com.au

Emma Britton

+61 8 6488 8582 / 0411 726 605

ebritton@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 the ir 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 66 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.

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