

monkey baa

Illustration by Bruce Whatley



Josephine Wants to Dance

A hilarious musical about self-discovery,
ballet, hip-hop and...a dancing kangaroo.

A Monkey Baa Theatre Company production
Based on the book by Jackie French and Bruce Whatley
Written for the stage by Eva Di Cesare, Sandie Eldridge, Tim McGarry



About the Show

Based on the picture book by Jackie French and Bruce Whatley, this delightful musical is a must see!

Josephine is a kangaroo who loves to dance. Her little brother, Joey, tells her kangaroos don't dance, they hop - but Josephine continues to point her toes and leap through the air. When a ballet troupe comes to the sleepy town of Shaggy Gully, Josephine desperately wants to dance like the ballerinas in pink tutus and silk ballet shoes.

On the day of the first performance the Ballet Company is in trouble. The prima ballerina twists her ankle, and the understudy has a splinter in her toe. Who can dance the lead role? Josephine's talents are called upon to help save the day. Can she do it, and more importantly, does it matter that she's a kangaroo?

Duration: 50 minutes, no interval

Ages: Ages 4-9



Illustration by Bruce Whatley

“Josephine Wants to Dance brings the story of a stage-struck macropod to life with enormous charm and sly wit.”

Audrey Journal

“...it holds many learning opportunities for young people whilst being an engaging and entertaining high-quality production.”

Broadway World





From the Director | Jonathan Biggins

Josephine Wants to Dance is my second visit to the world of Shaggy Gully and I know it's going to be enjoyable as my first, the delightfully idiosyncratic Pete the Sheep. Like Pete, Josephine is an individual who doesn't like it when other people (or kangaroos) tell her she can't do something when she's very determined to try.

All of us have a talent for something, and the key to happiness is being given the chance to discover it and put it to its best possible use. For Josephine, it's ballet; not something kangaroos are expected to pursue but for this marsupial Billy Elliot, it seems as natural as the wind through the trees. As she watches and learns from the world around her, her world of lyre-birds and brolgas, she sees no obstacle to making the leap (literally) into the human world of classical dance. At a time when we're embracing diversity, difference and tolerance, and recognising that talent comes in all shapes and sizes, why not have a gifted kangaroo playing a dying swan? When you think about it, it makes about as much sense as a human being attempting it!

About the Director

Jonathan is an actor, writer and director with a wide and varied stage career. He is one of the creators of the STC's Wharf Revue and his acting credits include Travesties, The White Guard and Ying Tong for STC; The Importance of Being Earnest for MTC; The Mikado and Orpheus in the Underworld for Opera Australia and Essington Lewis: I Am Work. His film and TV credits include A Few Best Men and Three Men and a Baby Grand. Jonathan's contributed to Fairfax's Good Weekend magazine, co-written thirty Wharf Revues, the musicals Living in the 70s and The Republic of Myopia and the plays Australia Day, Talk and The Gospel According to Paul. Jonathan is a winner of two AWGIES and an author of four books.

About the cast



Gracie Rowland | Josephine

Gracie Rowland completed her Bachelor of Music Theatre at the Elder Conservatorium of Music, University of Adelaide. With a strong foundation in acting, singing, and dance, Gracie has appeared in a range of roles including Valerie Clark (A Chorus Line, dir. Matthew Hyde/Luke Alleva) Janet Van De Graff (The Drowsy Chaperone, Newtown High School of the Performing Arts, dir. Daniel Kavanagh), Logainne in (The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee, dir. Joseph Simons), ensemble (Sweeney Todd, dir. James Millar), and Diana Dream/Dance ensemble (On the Town, dir. Erin James). With performance highlights as Dunstanette (AFC 50th Anniversary Concert, Adelaide Festival Centre, dir. Johanna Allen), Can Can Dancer (Carousel of Dreams, Sky City Casino), Solo Vocalist (Death, Divorce, et., Dir. George Torbay).



Nina Carmen | Various Roles

Nina graduated from the Queensland Conservatorium Griffith in 2020. Since graduating, they have performed in A Midsummer Night's Dream with Serpentine Arts Theatre Company as Hermia, Alice in Wonderland with SK Entertainment as Tweedle Dum, and was a featured soloist at the 2021 Queensland Symphony Orchestra's Music Theatre Gala with Lorina Gore and Simon Gleeson. Nina was also a part of the 2021 and 2022 School Touring performance team with Meerkat Productions, touring throughout QLD and NSW schools. Most recently, Nina played the role of Ali in the Australian tour of Mamma Mia!



Hannah Gwatkin | Various Roles

Hannah is a vivacious cabaret performer, singer, actor, dancer, and saxophonist. She holds a Bachelor of Musical Theatre from the Queensland Conservatorium of Music, Griffith University and a Diploma of Music (Contemporary Performance). Credits include Eco-Worrier: A Climate Cabaret (Sydney Fringe), Not Today (Rogue Projects), Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines—Singer, A Chorus Line (Mad About Theatre), Big Blue Sky: A Peter Garrett Story (NIDA), and The Boy from Oz: The Arena Musical (Overtur). She currently also runs her own eco-friendly party entertainment business, Little Footprint Parties.



Callum Slater | Various Roles

Callum is a versatile performer who graduated from the Queensland Conservatorium of Music, Griffith University Bachelor of Musical Theatre Course in 2018. Most recently Callum' screen credits have included From All Sides (Gemme De La Femme) as Thomas and It' Our Time (Joyhouse Productions) as Sam. On the theatrical side Callum toured extensively with theatre companies Brainstorm Productions from 2020-2021, Echelon Productions Book Week Shows in 2019, 2022 and 2024, and Gibber Theatre Company' Smashed in 2023. Callum also starred in the original Australian production of Yank! A WWII Love Story (Woodward Productions) and was a featured soloist in Broadway on Screen for Queensland Pops Orchestra, in 2018.

About Monkey Baa

Monkey Baa creates great theatre for young people and for over 28 years we have presented award-winning theatrical experiences that inspire and empower audiences across Australia. We are one of Australia's widest touring companies, with over 29 national tours to 135 regional and remote communities, 5 international tours and 4,000 performances reaching more than 1.5 million young people.

We empower young people to shape their lives through inspiring theatre and creative experiences. We create, present and tour performances powered by imagination, with eye-opening ideas and boundless fun. Our vision is a world where all young people are emboldened by creativity and our mission is to empower young people to shape and navigate their lives through inspirational theatre and creative experiences.

Creative Team

Adaptors

Eva Di Cesare, Sandra Eldridge
and Tim McGarry

Director

Jonathan Biggins

Composer and Lyricist

Phillip Scott

Choreographer

Tim Harbour

Set and Costume Designer

James Browne

Lighting Designer

Emma Lockhart Wilson

Sound Designer

David Bergman

Musical Director

Michael Tyack

Remount Lighting Designer

Veronique Benett

Costume Cutter

Marianne Close

Company Stage Manager

Kirsty Mangelsdorf

Technical Coordinator

Joel Montgomery

Performer

Bronte Tonks

Performer

Nina Carmen

Performer

Hannah Gwatkin

Performer

Callum Slater

Understudy

Teo Persechino

Understudy

Georgia Unsworth

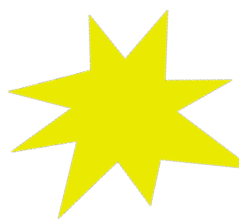


Photos by Alex Vaughan, featuring performers: Lily Boulderstone, Nina Carmen, Hannah Gwatkin and Brodie Masini.

Monkey Baa Staff

Eva Di Cesare
Kevin du Preez
Sonia Dodd
Emma Khamis
Alexander Andrews
Chloe Bradbury
Shaotong Li
Felicity Nicol
Jem Page
Laura Pike
Laura Watson
Sophie Wickes

Artistic Director
Executive Director
Producer
Producer (On maternity leave)
Social Impact and Engagement Producer
International Exchange Artist
Marketing Specialist
Creative Associate
Head of Technical Operations
Social Impact Manager
Head of Production
Associate Producer and Teaching Artist



Josephine Wants to Dance is proudly supported by



Play your part with Theatre Unlimited

Theatre Unlimited encompasses a range of programs aimed at breaking down barriers so more young people can experience live performing arts and their transformative benefits.

Our focus is on young people in regional and remote communities, those attending under-resourced schools, children managing medical challenges, or those in Out-of-Home care. With your support, we aim to reach 30,000 young people experiencing disadvantage every year.

Please consider making a donation in the foyer after the performance, donations of \$2 or more are fully tax-deductible.

For more information visit www.monkeybaa.com.au/support-us



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Monkey Baa respectfully acknowledges the custodians of this nation and honours their enduring cultural and spiritual connection to the lands, waters and seas. We pay our respects to Elders past and present, on whose lands we work, live and share stories. Monkey Baa tours across many nations. Our offices are in Sydney and Brisbane. We respectfully acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation and the Turrbal and Jagera people in Brisbane and its surrounds.

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