

Melbourne Festival in association with Multicultural Arts Victoria

Igniting imagination

NO CHILD

For further information contact:

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A performance and drama workshop with NILAJA SUN, renowned writer and performer from North America involving Melbourne's leading actors / writers from diverse communities and cultural backgrounds.



Nilaja Sun

Nilaja Sun is an actor, playwright and teaching artist most known for her Obie award winning solo piece "No Child..." which had its initial off Broadway run at the Barrow Street Theatre from July 2006-June 2007 and was recently revived there in an extended run. For her creation and performance of No Child... and its subsequent national tour, Nilaja garnered 21 awards including: an Obie Award, a Lucille Lortel Award, two Outer Critics Circle Awards including the John Gassner Playwriting Award for Outstanding New American Play, a Theatre World Award, the Helen Hayes Award, two NAACP Theatre Awards, and was named the Best One-Person Show at the U.S. Comedy Arts Festival in Aspen. "No Child..." is published and has been licensed out to over 45 theatres nationally since 2008. In 2010, Nilaja was awarded the solo NOVA Award for Artist of the Year by terra NOVA Collective. She has also been seen on 30 Rock, Law & Order: SVU, Unforgettable, Louie, The International, Rubicon and in 2012, she will be seen in the independent films Nature Calls and Hairbrained. A native of the Lower

East Side, she is a Princess Grace Award winner and has worked proudly as a teaching artist in New York City since 1998.

PARTICIPANT PROFILES



Ruth Sancho Huerga

Ruth Sancho Huerga (Castellon de la Plana, Spain) has written since she was three years old. She holds a Postgraduate in Digital Literature from the University of Barcelona. She is recently doing Master by Research in Media & Communication at R.M.I.T University and is recipient of the Australian Endeavour Awards 2012. She also studied English Philology at the University of Barcelona, Theatre Studies in Laboratorio de Teatro William Layton (Madrid) and Drama in Col.legi del Teatre (Barcelona). She is an actress, poet, playwright and theatre director. She has published and performed theatre and poetry in festivals in countries around the world such as Spain, England, U.S.A, Mexico, Colombia and Australia such as the 'Melbourne Writers Festival' 2005, 'Overload Poetry Festival' in 2006 and 2010, Colombia 2008, University of Barcelona 2010, 'Perth Poetry Festival' 2011, IFLIT Melbourne 2012). She has also worked on Television and Film Industry in series such as 'Central Hospital', 'Classmates', and 'Raluy, one night at the circus'. She has recently performed in "Blood Wedding" (Malthouse Theatre Company) directed by Marion Potts and is now working on Henrik Ibsen's play 'The Ghosts' at the Mixed Reality Performance Lab in Deakin University.



Hung Le

Headlined and encore in his very first stand up gig. Hung, the world's first, best and tallest Vietnamese comic guarantees to spin your mind, dazzle your imagination and awaken your funny zones.

29th April 1975, the last day of the Vietnam war, a nine year old boy jumped onto a leaking prawn trawler on Saigon River with a box of dried biscuits and some seasick pills and managed to survive thirst and hunger to cheat death to become one of the first Vietnamese boat people to land in Australia.

His movies include The Wogboy, Fat Pizza, True Love and Chaos, Broken Hill and Sensitive New Age Killer. Hung is a favourite at Montreal Comedy Festival, Edinburgh Festival and Melbourne International Comedy Festival An author, musician, clown, actor and all round song and dance man...Hung's stand up work and theatre shows are always edgy, satirical, political and his musical send ups go straight for the jocular. His first book 'The Yellow Peril

From Sin City' was released through Penguin. His second, a children's book 'BarryNoodles & DaKillerBs' is with Random House. A constant on the world festival stage and TV since 1988, Hung has made documentaries for the ABC, SBS, Discovery Channel. TV includes CNN, MTV, The Muppet Show, Wow Wow[Japan], London Weekend Television and all throughout Asia.



Dr. Rand Hazou

Rand is theatre academic and facilitator with experience working across a variety of creative projects. In 2004 Rand was commissioned by the UNDP to travel to the Occupied Territories in Palestine to work as a theatre consultant running workshops for Palestinian youths. In 2009 Rand was awarded a PhD in Theatre and Drama at La Trobe University. His thesis examined the latest wave of political theatre in Australia dealing with Asylum Seekers and Refugees. In 2011 Rand was awarded a Cultural Leadership Skills Development Grant from the Australia Council for the Arts to develop The 7arakat|Harakat Project, involving a series of theatre-related initiatives between Australia and Palestine. As part of this grant, Rand travelled to

Palestine in October 2011 to participate in an internship with Al-Kasaba Theatre in Ramallah. For more information about the 7arakat Project please visit: www.7arakat.com.au



Majid Shokor

Majid Shokor is an actor for stage and screen.

Originally from Baghdad, he lives and works in Melbourne. Since his arrival in Australia in 2001, he has appeared in many plays, short films, TV series and the feature film Lucky Miles, for which he was also the cultural consultant. His performances have received critical acclaim and been honoured with two prestigious Green Room Award nominations for Best Actor in Independent Theatre, in 2005 and 2009. Majid holds a Post-Graduate Diploma in Community Cultural Development (Honours) from the Victorian College of the Arts - Melbourne University and a Masters Degree in the same subject and university department. Majid is passionate about role of the art in creating a cultural dialogue. He believes that theatre is a place where justice and redemption could be found. Currently he is designing a cultural exchange project that includes

young filmmakers from Baghdad and Melbourne to produce short films together.



Tariro Mavondo

Prior to commencing the Bachelor of Dramatic Arts at the VCA, Tariro Mavondo began a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Politics and Anthropology. During this time she was also working as an artist with international and nationally established bands at festivals such as the World Music Festival in Adelaide, Big Day out and the World Music Expo (Arts centre). Tariro got a taste of the theatre when she performed as an actor and dancer in Claudia Escobar's final VCA Animating piece **Play: Ground** (2008). At the VCA Tariro's major acting roles have been Nina in **The Seagull** 2009, Blair in **Perfume, Underwear and Crash Helmet** (2010) and Ariel in **Shakespeare's the Tempest** (2011). Tariro has written monologues for Company 2011's group devised production **The Good People** and played Marcia in **A Mouthful of Birds** in her final third year production (2011).

Tariro is the 2011 recipient of the **Irene Mitchell Award** (Outstanding Actor in their Third Year in Training). Tariro is currently working on a performance therapy production called **Batagine/Baulkam Hill African Ladies Troupe** with Sydney Director Ros Horin (2011-current). Tariro was a state finalist at the 2009 Australian Poetry Slam. Tariro was a state finalist at the 2010 Australian Poetry Slam. Tariro was a national finalist at the 2010 Australian Poetry Slam. Tariro co-organises Slamalamadingdong an open poetry slam competition at Bella Union; Trades Hall every third Thursday of the month. Tariro has completed three, weekend intensive expressive arts therapy workshops with internationally renowned facilitator **Soto** (Tamalpa Institute California).



Alice Garner

Alice Garner is a Melburnian musician, actor and historian, who has been performing since she was a child in film, theatre, television and radio. Acting credits include recent ABC documentary *Utopia Girls*, features *Jindabyne* and *Love and Other Catastrophes*, TV series *SeaChange* (ABC-TV), and *Secret Life of Us*. She plays cello in two groups: Xylouris Ensemble and euphonia. She co-founded actor-advocacy group Actors for Refugees, and performed for many schools and community groups. In recent years, she has turned her energies toward supporting public education, as a member of her children's primary school council, and by organising music and art events with the local high school to support its efforts in re-engaging with the local community. She is currently a postdoctoral fellow in the History Program at La Trobe University.



Dominic Golding

Dominic Hong Duc Golding came to Australia as a tiny baby in a cardboard box, evacuated from Saigon in April 1975, just before the city fell to communist North Vietnamese forces at the end of the Vietnam War. Operation 'Babylift' was a last minute effort to save some 2000 plus children and babies from orphanages in South Vietnam by flying them to adoptive families in the United States, Australia, and other countries. In 2000 he was involved with a site installation performance Memory Museum about Australia's involvement in war for the Adelaide Festival Centre. In numerous roles Dominic has worked with Australian Vietnamese Youth Media on Aussie Bia Om, Viet Boys Downunder, Banana Strip (2001-2004) and directed Walking Without Feet (2004) with the Vietnamese Community in Australia (VIC chapter) a art showcase by Vietnamese young adults with special needs. Dominic has returned to Vietnam three times, each time a new show was developed, Shrimp (2005, 2007) which won the Drama Victoria Award, and Mr.Saigon, Ms. Hanoi

(2007). He completed his MA theatre 2010 that examined the art practice of adoptees from Korea and Vietnam. Today he is working with RISE, a refugee drop in centre.



Wahibe Moussa

As an actor, Wahibe has worked collaboratively on projects that encourage discovery throughout the rehearsal process and continues into performance. She looks for challenging characters in theatre and television.

With fifteen years experience in writing for performance, Wahibe continues to develop her skills in short fiction and play-writing through the Master of Creative Writing, Publishing and Editing at the University of Melbourne.

Wahibe's Community Arts Work experience encompasses Theatre, Visual Art and Writing Projects in Melbourne and Sydney. In these roles she worked collaboratively as a writer, Cultural/Language Consultant and performer within Artistic teams, liaising with diverse refugee communities in the creation of new works.

Her work has been strongly influenced by notions of identity in diaspora, and self-determination on both individual and national levels. She is involved in research to understand the relationship between the two. Wahibe's practice is informed by her experiences working and travelling with diverse Refugee and Indigenous communities. In 2008 Wahibe received the Green Room Award for Female Actor in an Independent Production, for her role as Mahala in the Theatre @ Risk's 2007 production of Tony Kushner's Homebody/Kabul. In 2010 she founded a new writing group, "Writer's Nest" based at the Victorian Writer's Centre, where writers meet weekly to challenge and investigate new writing territories.



Arnold Zable

Arnold Zable is a writer, storyteller, educator and human rights advocate. His books include *Jewels and Ashes*, *The Fig Tree*, and three novels, *Café Scheherazade*, *Scraps of Heaven* and *Sea of Many Returns*. His new book, *Violin Lesson*, 2011, continues his exploration of refugee journeys and themes of exile and displacement. Zable is the author of numerous stories, columns, features and essays, a co-author of *Kan Yama Kan*, a play in which asylum seekers tell their stories, and two storytelling shows: *Wanderers and Dreamers* and *Anytime the Wind Can Change*. His novel *Cafe Scheherazade* has been adapted for stage and performed at Forty-five Downstairs in 2011.

Zable has conducted writing workshops throughout Australia, and has worked with refugees, asylum seekers, immigrants, the homeless, the profoundly deaf, Black Saturday bushfire survivors, problem gamblers, at risk youth, and other groups using story as a means of self-understanding and healing. He has been a visiting lecturer in creative writing and human

rights issues at Deakin, Melbourne, Monash, RMIT, La Trobe and Victoria universities. Zable is president of the Melbourne Centre of International PEN, a patron of the Victorian Storytellers guild, an ambassador for the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre, a former member of the Victorian Immigration Museum advisory board, and has a doctorate from the School of Creative Arts, Melbourne University, where he is currently a Vice-Chancellor's fellow.



Deng Makuei

Deng is an actor from South Sudanese background. He left South Sudan in 1986 and speaks English, Dinka, Swahili and Arabic. He has recently been involved with the Western edge youth centre, playback theatre, Screen Actors Australia and VCAM Centre for Cultural Partnerships. He has appeared in theatre performances, TV series such as Rush, Neighbors, and Slap Extra. He has also appeared in films such as THE TRAVELLER (2008), CHINJONI Lead Harlem (2007). <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X3EMRiFS2CU>



Tania Canas

Tania has completed a Bachelor of Contemporary Arts (Drama and Psychology) and a Masters Degree in Communications at RMIT University. She has performed as part of the Melbourne Fringe Festival, Next Wave and Amnesty International's ARTillery Festival. Earlier this year Tania was selected to be on a panel as part of the 18th Annual Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed Conference at the University of California, Berkeley. She was also recently selected to be part of ATYP's National Studio in NSW for emerging playwrights. Tania currently volunteers at RISE refugee.



Olena Fedorova

Olena was born in the Ukraine. After graduating from music college (piano), she made a decision to become an actress, and while studying at a theatrical university (1999-2003) took an active part in the production of classic and contemporary Ukrainian and Russian works on the university's stage. In Australia she worked as an organizer and presenter of a Maslenitsa celebration in Federation Square, Melbourne (Feb, 2006) and since 2007 she has created two drama and music studios for kids. In 2007 Olena appeared in the film *The Stars Down to Earth* by Jim Curlis, as *Villain*. In 2009 she graduated from the VCA with a Postgraduate Diploma in Performance Creation (Animateuring) and in 2010 she completed her Master of Theatre Practice. Olena was last seen at La Mama in *Sarajevo Suite* in 2011 and 2012.



Donna Dimovski Kantarovski

Donna is Australian born actress, her family moving back to Macedonia when she was a child. She studied and received a B.F.A in Acting, Skopje, Macedonia. Donna's acting career started as a student at Theatre of Drama in Skopje, where she played various roles such as leading female role in Shakespeare's **Miranda** "The Tempest." After completing her degree she returned to her home town in Bitola, where she was employed by Bitola National Theatre, becoming the leading lady in many performances; "Macbeth," (**Lady Macbeth**), "The house of Bernarda Alba," (**Adela**), "Maestro and Marquerita," (**Marquerita**), "Fugitive," (**Lence**), "Kill for money," (**Kata**), "Don't make a fool of love," (**Rozeta**) and many more plays for adults and children. **Awards: for BEST YOUNG ACTOR "Trajko Corevski"** for the part

LENCE in the play Begalka by Vasil Iljoski-Bitola National Theatre, Theatre Festival-Vojdan Cernodrinski, Prilep, 1995. **For BEST ACTING REALIZATION** in the play **“Majstorot i Margarita,”** for the role **MARGARITA**, Bitola National Theatre, Theatre Festival -Vojdan Cernodrinski, Prilep, 1996.



Claudia Escobar

Claudia Escobar is a Colombian artist currently based in Melbourne, Australia. Escobar’s artwork has been internationally catalogued as effective and deeply provocative. She has devised and directed a series of performances, theatre works and visual arts projects with children raising spectres of childhood and imagination. She is artistic director of ‘EL TARRO’ the smallest performing space in the world Official Selection of South Project 2010 and showcased in Melbourne, Sydney, Bogota, San Francisco, Buenos Aires, Berlin, Cesena and Venice. She was visiting artist at Societas Rafello Sanzio (Italy 2011). She is the recipient of the Keith and Elisabeth Murdoch Travelling Fellowship (2011), Art and Youth for Peace Award (Colombia 2010), IPCA Award (2008), Carolina Oramas Award ICETEX (Colombia 2007) and Orloff Family Charitable Trust Scholarship (2007). She was recently Assistant Director at the Malthouse production Blood Wedding (2012) directed by Marion Potts. Performances include: SWEAT (Branch Nebula, 2010/2011) at the IN TRANSIT Festival in Haus Der Kulturen Der Welt (Berlin) manola (solo work 2010) as part of Performance Space season, Carriageworks (Sydney) and Dance Massive 2011 (Melbourne). Escobar has over eight years of experience in arts management and has worked as a consultant for cultural management. Escobar is currently responsible for Contemporary Cultures, Marketing & Development at Multicultural Arts Victoria. <http://www.claudiaescobar.com/>