

ILBIJERRI Theatre Company

ILBIJERRI is Australia's leading and longest-running Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander theatre company. It creates challenging and inspiring theatre creatively controlled by Indigenous artists. The company's stories are provocative and affecting, giving voice to Australia's unique and diverse cultures.

ILBIJERRI tours its work to urban, regional and remote locations across Australia and the world; and has commissioned 36 new Indigenous works and performed for more than 250,000 people. ILBIJERRI delivers a broad program of artist development for new and emerging Indigenous writers, actors, directors and creatives.

Born from community, ILBIJERRI remains a spearhead for the Australian Indigenous community in telling the stories of what it means to be Indigenous in Australia today. Its work possesses the power to reach out and remind audiences of every person's need for family, history and heritage.

ILBIJERRI's collaborative relationships with communities and artists are at the heart of the company's creative process; all of ILBIJERRI's work empowers and enlightens its audiences.

Artistic Director: Rachael Maza
Executive Producer: Brad Spolding
Associate Director: Isaac Drandic
Associate Producer: Lisa Parris
Company Manager: Lauren Bok
Development & Marketing Manager: Julia Valentini
Finance Manager: Jon Hawkes

Thank You

ILBIJERRI would like to thank Uncle Noel Tovey for sharing his story with such generosity and eloquence; Robina Beard and the creative team of **Little Black Bastard** for making the work so beautiful; Angharad Wynne-Jones and the fabulous Arts House staff for all their support; as well as Janina Harding, Sarah Bond and the Melbourne Indigenous Arts Festival, Asha Holmes publicity, Michaela, Richard and Brock from Megafun and Aidacare for helping us to make such an incredible season.

Arts House

Arts House presents contemporary arts in programs encompassing performance, exhibitions, live art, residencies and other activities that nurture, support and stimulate cultural engagement. We value work in which artists at different stages of their careers, as well as our diverse audiences and communities, are actively involved in creating an imaginative, just and environmentally sustainable global society.

Arts House's programs include two curated public seasons of multidisciplinary work each year. Approximately half of this work is selected through an Expression of Interest process. We seek artists who are responding to the urgent issues of our time in imaginative and surprising ways, taking artistic risks and offering multiple ways for audiences to engage with or co-author their work.

For more information, please contact us on the details below.

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artshouse.com.au

ARTS HOUSE  **CITY OF MELBOURNE**

**Presented by Arts House, City of Melbourne
and ILBIJERRI Theatre Company**

Little Black Bastard

ILBIJERRI Theatre Company

**Arts House,
North Melbourne Town Hall**
Thu 13 – Sat 15 February 2014
1hr 30min, no interval
Post-show Q&A, Sat 15 February

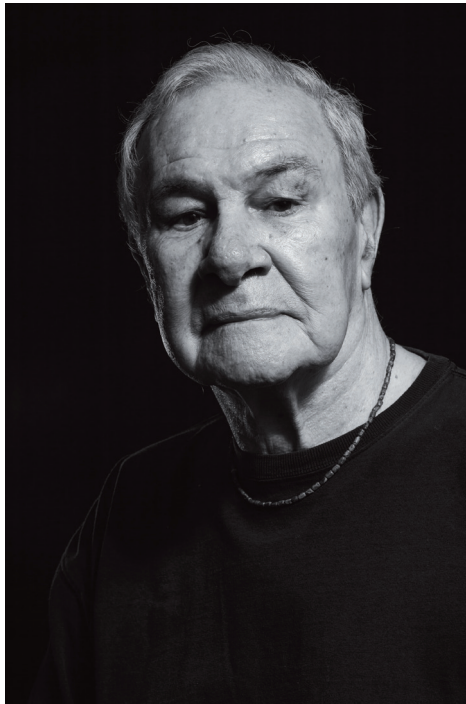
Creative Team

Writer/Performer: **Noel Tovey**
Director/Dramaturge: **Robina Beard**
Rehearsal Director: **Isaac Drandic**
Set Designer: **Richard Roberts**
Lighting Designer: **Rachel Bourke**
Sound Designer: **Sarah de Jong**
Production Manager: **Richard Dinnen** (Megafun)
Stage Manager: **Brock Brocklesby** (Megafun)

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ilbijerri.com.au

Little Black Bastard has been supported by the Aboriginal Benefits Foundation; the Australian Government through the Indigenous Culture Support program and the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body; the Victorian Government through Arts Victoria; and the City of Melbourne through Arts House.

Image: Steven Rhall



A Note from Noel Tovey

I was delighted when Rachael Maza asked me if I would perform my autobiographical play **Little Black Bastard** at Arts House, North Melbourne Town Hall, for the Melbourne Indigenous Arts Festival. I grew up not too far from here and some of my earliest memories are in North Melbourne. This season will be a challenge for me as I had my lower left leg amputated in August 2013 and I now have a prosthetic leg and a walker. My life, and my play, is about the many challenges I have faced, so in many ways this new challenge is fitting as I return the story to home ground.

A Note from Robina Beard

I have been in the theatre since age 16, as a dancer. Here in Melbourne you may remember me as Madge the Manicurist in the very long-running advertisements for Palmolive dishwashing liquid. My relationship with Noel Tovey began in 1957, and I have worked with and for him many times since then. I have an intense interest in Aboriginal dance and theatre. Working with Noel on **Little Black Bastard** is the most exciting project of my life, and I consider **Little Black Bastard**, and Noel, to be amongst the most important theatre icons in this country.

About Little Black Bastard

Abandoned by his parents at a young age, Noel Tovey struggled through a rough childhood on the streets of Melbourne. At 17 he ran away to London and reinvented himself as a dancer, actor, singer and choreographer on some of the world's great stages. **Little Black Bastard** is his story: a gripping and tender monologue told in his own words.

Uncle Noel describes his life with candour, warmth and humour – from post-War Melbourne to swinging sixties London and beyond, where his peers included film and theatre's artistic elite. His journey from street kid to show-biz star is one of our country's greatest success stories. Having conquered the ghosts of his early years, Tovey approaches **Little Black Bastard** with a sense of resolution, healing and completion.

After touring internationally for over a decade, **Little Black Bastard** returns to the suburb where it all began – North Melbourne, where Tovey spent some of his harshest childhood years.

Biographies

Noel Tovey **Writer/Performer**

Australia's first Aboriginal male ballet dancer, Noel Tovey, has a career that spans almost six decades. He has been a dancer, actor, singer, choreographer, designer, director, teacher and writer across Europe and Australia. Of his many career highlights, being a Principal Dancer with the Sadlers Wells Opera Ballet, choreographing the 1966 revival of *The Boyfriend* in London's West End, performing in the world premiere of *Oh! Calcutta!*, co-founding the London Children's Theatre and directing the groundbreaking Indigenous production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for the 2000 Olympics at Sydney Theatre Company stand out as but a few.

Robina Beard **Director/Dramaturge**

Robina Beard has had a long and varied career since her dancing debut in 1955. From performing on a number of prime-time variety shows, including *The Benny Hill Show*, to choreographing the original Australian musical, *Hail Gloria Fitzpatrick*, Robina is one of Australia's most accomplished performers for theatre and television. She was awarded an Order of Australia Medal for Services to the Theatre in 2011, for her commitment to raising the standards of dance and theatrical performance.

Isaac Drandic **Rehearsal Director**

Isaac Drandic made his directorial debut in 2011, following a ten-year career as an actor, during which time he performed for Black Swan Theatre Company, Melbourne Theatre Company and ILBIJERRI Theatre Company, amongst others. Some of his directorial credits include *Peter Pan* and *Coranderrk* for Belvoir, and Archie Roach's *Into the Bloodstream* concerts.

Richard Roberts **Set Designer**

Since his first professional engagement in 1977 as a resident designer at the State Theatre Company of South Australia, Richard Roberts has worked for all the major performing arts companies in Australia. As a teacher, he has been Head of Design at WAAPA, Head of Production at the VCA, and Head of Design at The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts.

Rachel Bourke **Lighting Designer**

Rachel Bourke has worked as a freelance lighting designer with leading Australian arts companies including The Australian Ballet, Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne Theatre Company, Sydney Theatre Company and Belvoir, for more than two decades. She is the recipient of six Green Room Awards and was nominated for a Helpmann Award and a Sydney Theatre Award in 2005 for Malthouse Theatre's *Black Medea*.

Sarah de Jong **Sound Designer**

Sarah de Jong has been composing for theatre, dance, radio and film since 1978. Some of her most notable scores include the films *Flirting* (1989) and *Sparks* (1989), both winners of Australian Film Institute Awards; and the radio plays *Summer of the Aliens* (1989) and *The Lights of Jericho* (1993), both of which won the Prix Italia.

Megafun **Technical & Production Management**

Megafun provides creative and technical services to theatre, events, exhibitions, public art and interactive multimedia.