

Presented by Arts House and Hydra Poesis

PROMPTER

HYDRA POESIS

Arts House, Meat Market

Fri 9 – Sun 18 August 2013

90 minutes

Post-show Q&A Thu 15 August

artshouse.com.au

hydrapoesis.net

PROMPTER has been supported by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body, and the Western Australian Theatre Development Initiative; The Myer Foundation; the Government of Western Australia through the Department of Culture and the Arts; and the City of Melbourne through Arts House.

**"PERSONAL POLITICAL PHYSICAL CHALLENGE
LODGES ITSELF DEEP INTO THE SPECTATOR'S MIND
AND CONTINUES TO INTERROGATE US LONG AFTER
THE ACTUAL PERFORMANCE HAS ENDED"**

— *Drama-ergon* (on *Personal Political Physical Challenge*)

Artistic Team

Director/Co-Writer: **Sam Fox**
Co-Writer: **Patrick Pittman**
Assistant Director/Lead Set & Costume
Designer: **Tarryn Gill**
Lead Media Designer & Technoturge:
Matthew Gingold
Lighting Designer: **Ben Shaw**
Production Management: **David Primmer**
Sound Designer: **Dave Miller**
Sound & Media Designer: **Kynan Tan**
Design Team: **Kynan Tan, Ben Forster,
Steve Berrick, Ainsley Canning**
Producers: **Sam Fox, Francesca Hope**
Project Manager: **Laura Boynes**

Cast

Collaborator/Performers – Onstage:
**James Berlyn, Jule Japhet Chiari, Brendan
Ewing, Deborah Robertson, Katya Shevtsov**
Collaborator/Performers – Online: **Dickie
Beau, Marcela A Fuentes, Tariro Mavondo,
Sete Leilua Tele, Allison Wyper**

Research and Development

Onstage Performers: **Michelle Robin Anderson,
Murray Dowsett, Qudus Onikeku**
Design: **Nik Ridikulus, Joshua Webb,
Robert Woods, Pierce Davidson, Marty Jay,
Sophie Durham, Al McEwen**
Consultants: **Stephen Sewell** (Writing),
Richard Fabb (Broadcast and Journalism),
Pacitti Company

Notes on PROMPTER

(that we advise you read post-show)

Welcome to the Anthropocene – the human geological age where we are the force that's changing the planet and the vast conflicts of our species converge in a constant torrent of media. We know this stuff. It's everywhere. What is interesting and unresolved is how we, as individuals/groups/interconnected-bodies-politic are responding to it. **PROMPTER** opens with a scene of pure alienation, where a journalist becomes a disembodied, almost-unconscious talking head; but this is not intended to be alienated theatre – alienation is where we begin, not end. This ensemble of artists, and the many people we are inspired by, are in various ways responding, organising, reporting and resisting the forces of alienation. It's the tactics and double-binds of these responses that are examined in **PROMPTER**.

The TelePrompter likely requires some explanation. Using a mirror and a hidden monitor the TP allows a presenter to read a script that scrolls in front of the camera's lens. It simulates spontaneity and connection, and if any piece of media-tech aligns with theatre and play with artifice, this is it. It is no longer confined to the TV studio but can be found in the field as well as in the politician's toolbox. Never have our onscreen representatives been more performative, and, as audiences, neither have we.

Via our online collaborators we connect the proliferation of performance with a growing sensation of mass empathy evident online. It's not the desensitisation factor we're concerned with, but becoming hypersensitive; and the ethics of our empathy. How do we act on our empathy and what can it be appropriated for? An example that parallels what's explored in **PROMPTER**: people being held in offshore tent prisons to supposedly save them from drowning is a perverse manipulation of our compassion (and our fears). And paid for using the foreign aid budget.

Towards the end of the work you see the online chorus leave their bedrooms and undertake actions in public spheres. Having exhausted their online options and the isolation of their bedrooms, they aren't content to stay confined to the theatre. And in these actions, as an ensemble, we have begun to step out of theatre and the strict domain of art. The actions and ongoing initiatives you see moments of have been undertaken by **PROMPTER** artists; and you can read reports and see full videos of them in an online document called *Prompter-Dispatches*, released in tandem with the show. You'll also find links to in-depth program notes if you want to delve into the onstage-online action you've seen.

We encourage you to visit our *Prompter-Dispatches* site to engage in the spaces between our cultures and our powers:
www.prompterdispatches.net

Sam Fox, Director and Co-Writer

Is it still fashionable these days to quote Marshall McLuhan? Probably not, but I've always liked the way he said 'the medium is the message', even if it was just a typo he thought was funny. All media work us over completely, he said. The modern news cycle is a backstreet rubdown, without time for a happy ending, I said. And then qualified it with a statement about how nostalgia for a lost age is useless, how great stories will always be told, etc, etc.

The island of St Sulpice rose up far from where it started, somewhere near pre-earthquake Haiti, but over our four years of writing the forces of history sailed it closer to our shores. Forgotten and undealt-with legacies in the South Pacific, close-yet-so-far, pulled it into our shadow. It became something about burden, as much as it is something about message. Islands, and us, all worked over, together.

Patrick Pittman, Co-Writer

ARTISTIC TEAM

Sam Fox ①

Director, Co-Writer

Performance-maker Sam Fox draws on his dance, visual theatre and writing practice to create hybrid works that entail finely crafted challenges for audiences. He is founder/director of independent company Hydra Poesis, based at the Centre for Interdisciplinary Arts Studios, Perth. In 2012 he was awarded one of the inaugural Sidney Myer Creative Fellowships. 2013 projects include the *TechnoCulturalBodySuit* series (ISEA/SymbioticA, Sydney) and facilitating arts-activist collaboration *Dance Journalism #1*.

Patrick Pittman ②

Co-Writer

Patrick Pittman is a writer and broadcaster. He is Melbourne correspondent for *Monocle* and a contributor to many other magazines and web sites. He was previously editor of the interview quarterly *Dumbo Feather*, guest-edited *The Lifted Brow*, and was a long-term broadcaster at RTR-FM. **PROMPTER** is his theatre debut.

Tarryn Gill ③

Assistant Director/Lead Set & Costume Designer

Tarryn Gill is a visual artist who works across disciplines: photography, film, live performance, design and choreography. Since graduating with a BA in Fine Arts at Curtin University she has exhibited both nationally and internationally. In the past year she has undertaken artist residencies at the Banff Centre, Canada; the Australia Council's Tokyo studio; and Freud Museum, London.

Matthew Gingold ④

Lead Media Designer & Technoturge

Matthew Gingold's work in audio/visual installation and performance has largely focused on perception, the body and the various meanings 'live' and 'alive' can have within these contexts. Usually this is explored through the multiple – its differences and repetitions – and through these, our connections to identity, the everyday and the sublime.

Ben Shaw ⑤

Lighting Designer

Ben (Bosco) Shaw has worked for companies and festivals in Australia and around the world, on projects that range from independent works to major festival installations. Companies he has worked for include Australian Dance Theatre, State Theatre Company of SA, Adelaide Fringe, Assembly Rooms – Edinburgh Fringe, Adelaide Festival of Arts, Windmill Performing Arts, Arts Projects Australia, Leigh Warren and Dancers, Expressions Dance, Dance North and Bluebottle.

David Primmer ⑥

Production Manager

David Primmer began working in stage arts doing live sound for bands, while at the same time developing his interest in recording technology and radio production. He now runs his own business, *mixed media*: a company dedicated to multimedia production, system integration and event technical production.

Dave Miller ⑦

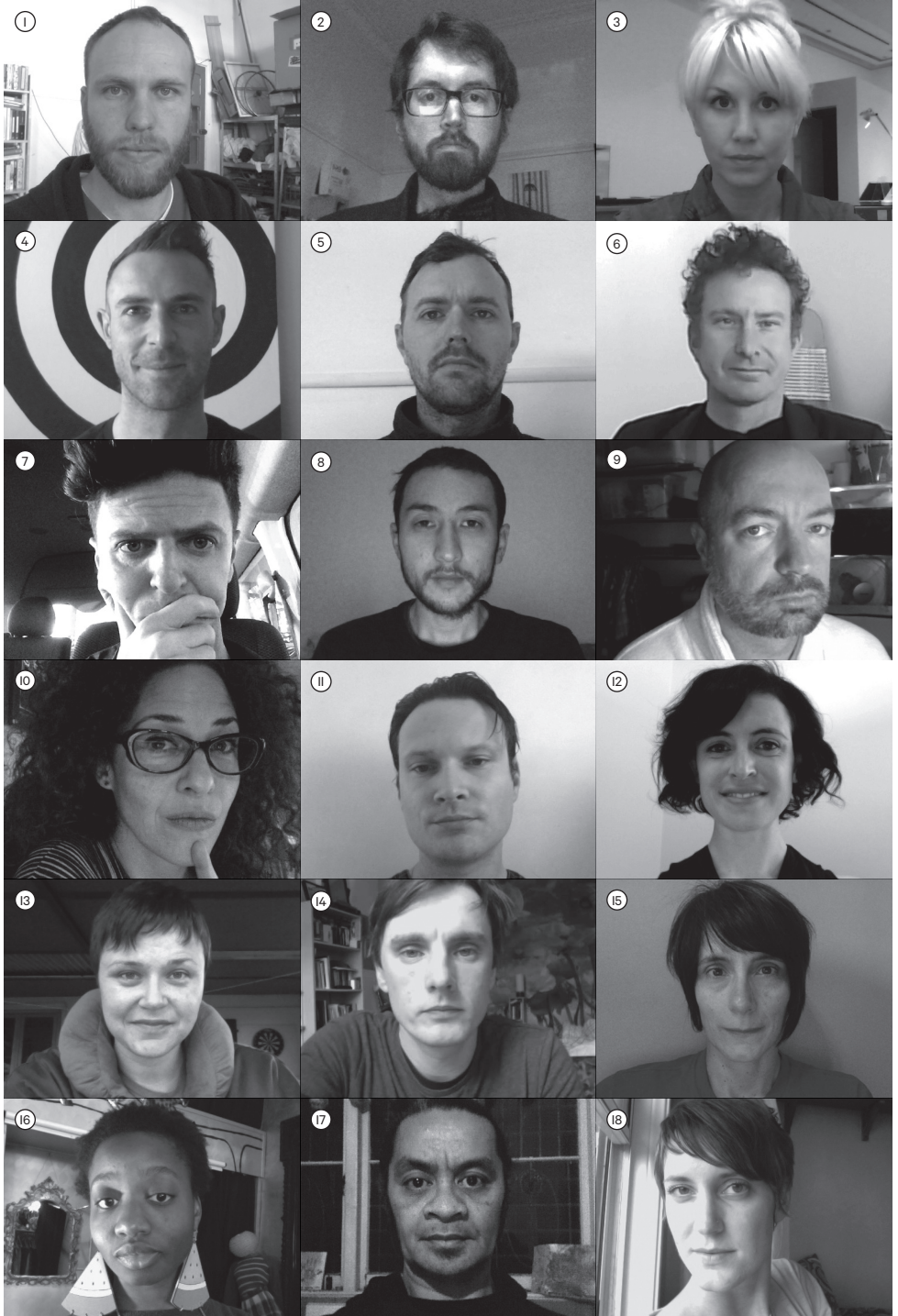
Sound Designer

Hailing from Perth, WA, the physical seclusion of living in the most isolated city in the world has inspired Dave Miller to create truly modern forms of electronic music. He plays as a core member of three-piece, PVT, with releases on Create/Control and WARP. His collaborations include Roam the Hello Clouds and Triosk. As a solo artist he has released a number of records on Scape and meupe.

Kynan Tan ⑧

Sound & Media Designer

Kynan Tan works through digital means to create audio-visual works, electroacoustic compositions, installations and improvised live performances. These works investigate the use of computer technologies and the manipulation of data through the output of digital sound and image. The majority of works question the role of the computer in the creation of art – as an instrument, mediator, processor and creative tool.



CAST – ONSTAGE

James Berlyn ⑨

Collaborator/Performer

James Berlyn is an award-winning performing artist and teacher of more than 25 years experience. Trained in dance at the VCA, he has worked in dance, dance theatre, theatre, and community art across the country; as a performer, director and curator. He has presented his own work for Sydney Festival, Ten Days on the Island, PIAF, Awesome, PICA, Artplay and Theatreworks (Melbourne).

Jule Japhet Chiari ⑩

Collaborator/Performer

Originally from France, actor, filmmaker and journalist Jule Japhet Chiari worked in film, television and theatre before moving to Australia. She has recently completed production on her film, *Partisane Arise*, starring Nicola Bartlett. She is a core collaborator on Hydra Poesis's **PROMPTER** project.

Brendan Ewing ⑪

Collaborator/Performer

Born and raised in Hong Kong, Brendan Ewing moved to Perth at 17, where he began working as a musician, singer and songwriter. He began his career in theatre as an actor and performer/devisor while training in contemporary performance at Edith Cowan University; a career which has seen him perform with independent and major theatre companies throughout Australia.

Deborah Robertson ⑫

Collaborator/Performer

Deborah Robertson performs, choreographs and teaches dance and film. She has performed nationally and internationally and has created works in Perth, Melbourne and Canberra. She was Assistant Director on Tracie Mitchell's dance film *Under The Weather* and Michael Hatch's feature drama *Bitter Art*. A member of Hydra Poesis since 2006, she is also currently Education Coordinator at West Australian Ballet.

Katya Shevtsov ⑬

Collaborator/Performer

Katya Shevtsov is a performer and theatre-maker with training and experience across the disciplines of acting, dance, puppetry and physical theatre. She has worked in professional and independent theatre and film in Western Australia and Victoria and toured regionally, nationally and internationally.

CAST – ONLINE

Dickie Beau ⁽¹⁴⁾

Collaborator/Performer

London-based performer and intrepid drag fabulist, Dickie Beau, is a postmodern cultural pickpocket, maverick theatre-maker, actor and twisted video star, looting a range of performance traditions from 'low culture' to 'high art', to create distinctive performance experiences. Dickie draws on clowning, theatre, drag and mime, without being exclusive to one school's rules; merging the sensibility of contemporary culture with queer twists and informed echoes of the past.

Marcela A Fuentes ⁽¹⁵⁾

Collaborator/Performer

Marcela A Fuentes (Marsha Gall) is Assistant Professor in the Department of Performance Studies at Northwestern University, USA.

Her work investigates contemporary performances in the Americas that challenge previous definitions of efficacy and make the case for a reformulation of the relationship between symbolic production and politics. She is currently working on a digital book investigating performance practices through the lens and methodologies of the digital humanities. She also works in theatre, radio and performance as a director, performer, dramaturge and producer.

Tariro Mavondo ⁽¹⁶⁾

Collaborator/Performer

Tariro Mavondo was awarded the Irene Mitchell Award upon graduating from the VCA in 2011. She played Mukami Obanda in *Winners & Losers* (Channel Seven, 2013) and is a performer and deviser in The Baulkham Hills African Ladies Troupe (Riverside Parramatta/Bevoir, 2013). She has toured *Black Face White Mask Interactive* and *Excerpts from Zamunda* and has been a guest Shakespeare facilitator with Western Edge Youth Arts. She is a founding member of community arts organisations including the Centre for Poetics and Justice; and has been a finalist in the Australian Poetry Slam. She produced *Africa's Got Talent* in May 2013.

Sete Leilua Tele ⁽¹⁷⁾

Collaborator/Performer

Sete Leilua Tele's primary method of artistic articulation is dance. This has evolved to include digital storytelling, especially utilising photography. As a performance maker his creations have addressed diaspora, identity displacement, loss, spirituality, mathematics, astro-dreaming, and just grooving for the sake of it! His fluidity in movement in transitioning between performance frames, and the wearing of different hats, conveys an adaptability that is becoming more expansive. His ebullience is derived from engagement with the work, developing the work, and the sharing of the work in whatever iteration it may be.

Allison Wyper ⁽¹⁸⁾

Collaborator/ Performer

Allison Wyper is a performance artist based in Los Angeles, USA. Bridging contemporary practices including performance, theatre, dance and radical media arts she generates a dynamic hybrid genre that vitalises the performance space as a site of critical investigation; with a focus on collaboration, intimacy, endurance and sustainability within extreme body-based practices. She has been an Associate Artist with international performance company La Pocha Nostra since 2004, and has performed, taught and collaborated with artists from around the world.

Thank You

A special thank you to the artists who were invaluable to our research and development phase: Michelle Robin Anderson, Murray Dowsett, Steve Berrick, Al McEwen, Nik Patterson and Josh Webb. Extra special thanks to object designers/builders Ainsley Canning and Pierce Davison, who always go the extra mile. To Steve Berrick, whose generosity is unrivalled. And enormous thanks to Francesca Hope, Kate Neylon and Sharon Flindell for producing roles and support in the long journey of this project. To Qudus Onikeku for critical conversations. Robert Pacitti and Pacitti Company, Perth Festival, and to CIA STUDIOS and pvi collective for constant support. To the Myer Foundation. To our consultants Stephen and Richard. And most especial thanks to our incredible practice mentor Dicky Eton.

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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.

521 Queensberry Street
North Melbourne VIC 3051
(03) 9322 3720
artshouse@melbourne.vic.gov.au
artshouse.com.au

ARTS HOUSE

