

Presented by Arts House as  
part of Dance Massive

# Tiny Slopes

## Nat Cursio Co.

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Image: Gregory Lorenzutti

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Tue 21 – Sat 25 Mar, 7pm  
60 mins

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## Creative Team

**Nat Cursio**  
Director / Choreographer  
**Alice Dixon, Melissa Jones, Caroline Meaden, Francesca Meale, Rae Franco, Amelie Mansfield, Pyper Prosen, Pixel Willison-Allen**  
Collaborating Performers  
**Byron Scullin**  
Sound Designer  
**Travis Hodgson**  
Lighting Designer  
**Sarah Hall**  
Costume & Set Designer  
**Tamara Saulwick**  
Text/Voice Consultant  
**Jacqueline Aylward**  
Understudy & Project Assistant  
**Harriet Gregory**  
Stage Manager



## Artist Statement

The genesis for *Tiny Slopes* was back in 2014 when I was thinking about how we learn and change as we age and what aspirations we actually pursue. How often do we actually follow up on those things we say we'd really like to be able to do?

Perhaps representing the poor-artists version of the mid-life-crisis-Ferrari-purchase, I decided (at 41) that it was time to learn to skateboard. After a hard fall that resulted in a severe wrist sprain I understood that this was going to be a slow process. I invested in some protective gear and engaged a group of dancers willing to take up the challenge.

Over the last couple of years we have intermittently come together, both in public space and the cocoon of the studio, to skate, dance and reflect on the experience of new learning. The incremental making of *Tiny Slopes* has incorporated a balance between the conventional application of the skateboard (standing/riding) and its abstracted sister - a more overtly choreographic exploration- our own version of skateboarding if you like.

The virtuosity of the dancers is evident not so much in their capacity to perform tricks but more so in their willingness to perform in a piece that continues to change in order to sit

outside of their comfort zones. Our small gang of infiltrating tweens, with their combined innocence and wisdom, provide us with mentorship and inspiration.

*Tiny Slopes* is as much about what we don't know as what we do. In bringing this work to an audience I'd like to open up conversations about the limitations we place upon ourselves, the value of risk and persistence, the importance of humility and a little celebration of what is both ordinary and extraordinary.

I wish to deeply thank the performers for their trust and guts.

— *Nat Cursio*

**Nat Cursio**

Director / Choreographer

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Nat Cursio’s recent works include: *at least for a while anyway*, a video portrait of dance veteran Don Asker created in collaboration with Daniel Crooks (commissioned by Carriageworks), recently screened at Light Moves, Ireland and ACFI Melbourne; *Recovery* with Shannon Bott and Simon Ellis; a candid duet about grief (The Substation, choreographer-in-residence); *Blizzard*, a poetic, uncompromising response to the climate crisis using dance and acoustic sound as integrated modes (The Substation, choreographer-in-residence); *PrivateDances*, a program of intimate mini-dances in tents, remounted 2013 with Darebin Arts (after award-winning original, 2010 Next Wave Festival) and followed by a Hong Kong Edition at Freespace Fest 2014; and *The Middle Room*, a ceremonial one-on-one playdate in Nat’s home, commissioned by Theatre Works for the inaugural FOLA.

Nat’s new work *LOOP*, a participatory dance work for children, will be presented by Arts Centre Melbourne in 2017.

**Alice Dixon**

Collaborating Performer

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Alice Dixon has performed in works by artists including Nat Cursio (*Blizzard*, *Live Clips*, *With a Bullet: Remastered*), One Step at a Time Like This (*Since I Suppose*, Melbourne Festival), Reckless Sleepers (*A String Section*), Balletlab (*Above*, Mona Foma), Rob McCredie (*Who Knows What*, *Next Wave*), and Nebahat Erpolat (*Urban Rupture*).

Over the last 10 years Alice has also performed extensively with Opera Australia. Choreographic works include *And Then* (Pieces for Small Spaces), *Alices* and *Untitled* for her postgraduate diploma in Choreography (VCA). With her collaborators Caroline Meaden and William McBride Alice has created *This is What’s Happening* (winner Melbourne Fringe Dance Award 2015) *Fallen O’er* (Alchemy program at Abbotsford Convent) and *Blowin’ Up* (Arts House award Melbourne Fringe 2016). Residencies awarded to Alice include Mosaico Danza (Italy) and Tasdance TRIP. In 2017 Alice will perform in Nat Cursio’s *LOOP* and will undertake the City of Melbourne supported Boyd Residency.

**Melissa Jones**

Collaborating Performer

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Melissa Jones graduated from the Victorian College of The Arts with a Bachelor of Dance Honours and was awarded The Phillip Law Travel Scholarship to dance with Rosalind Crisp and The Forsythe Company. Melissa has performed in works by Shian Law (*Body Obscure Object*, *Proximate Edifice. Psycho*), Opera Australia (*The Ring Cycle*), Zoe Scoglio (*Shadow in Blue*), Nat Cursio (*Blizzard*, *With a Bullet: Remastered*), Sandra Parker (*Automaton*, *Small Details*, *Three Angles*), Pomare Productions, ADT anniversary (*Dancers with Dirty Feet*), Robert McCredie (*Who Knows What*) and The Forsythe Company (*Human Writes*).

Melissa received an Ian Potter Cultural Trust Grant and an Australia Council Artstart grant, to develop her improvisational and somatic practice, performing internationally.

Melissa was named as a ‘dancer/choreographer to watch’ in Dance Australia (2013) after premiering *Disquiet*, then choreographing *Gather Way*, for Lucy Guerin Inc’s Pieces for Small Spaces, supported by the Fling Flying High Residency.

**Caroline Meaden**

Collaborating Performer

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Caroline Meaden is a choreographer and dancer. She has performed in works for Michelle Heaven (*In Plan*), Nat Cursio (*Blizzard*, nominated for 3 Green Room awards and an Australian Dance Award), Reckless Sleepers (*A String Section*), Lucy Guerin Inc’s Pieces for Small Spaces, the Next Wave, Asia TOPA and Big West Festivals, and Opera Australia.

Caroline’s collaborative work (with Alice Dixon and William McBride) includes: *This is What’s Happening* (Melbourne Fringe Dance Award winner, Green Room & Australian Dance Awards nominations); *Fallen O’er* (Abbotsford Convent’s Alchemy season), Vitalstatistix’ Adhocracy Program residency; and *Blowin’ Up* (Fringe Arts House Award winner).

Caroline has two works in development at The Substation and Arts House, and will undertake a 6 month residency at Boyd Studio through City of Melbourne. She has been supported by The Australia Council, Creative Victoria, City of Melbourne and The Besen Foundation.

**Francesca Meale**

Collaborating Performer

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Francesca Meale studied at the VCA during which she was also a member of Yellow Wheel Youth Dance Company performing in *WeTube live* (Dance Massive 2013) and *FX* at Meat Market. During her VCA studies she worked with numerous choreographers including Stephanie Lake, Rebecca Hilton, Lina Limosani and Nat Cursio, performing in Nat’s work, *Long Time At Sea*.

Since graduating Francesca has been working on the development of Nat Cursio Co’s *Tiny Slopes*. She has trained in Gaga technique at Strut in Perth in 2016 and has been working with her peers on various independent dance projects. In 2017 Francesca will travel to the U.S to teach intensively at a children’s dance camp and follow this with a research and development trip to New York. She will also perform in Nat Cursio Co’s new work for children, *LOOP*.

**Rae Franco**

Collaborating Performer

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Rae Franco is in Year 9 at Northcote High School. She started skating at 10 and now she rides all the time, including to school. After learning how to ‘drop in’ Rae was the second-placed girl in the national U12 bowl riding competition at St Kilda. Rae plays soccer for the Brunswick Zebra’s, loves playing football, running and competing in athletics events. Rae loves drawing, playing piano and joins Yellow Wheel as a dancer in 2017.

**Amelie Mansfield**

Collaborating Performer

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Amelie Mansfield is 11 years old and in her final year at Caulfield Junior College, a French/English bilingual school. Amelie has been hanging out at skateparks since she was born as her older brother Julian is a ‘flow’ rider for Element Skateboards. She is passionate about sport, and loves running fast, riding her horse, playing lacrosse and skateboarding.

Amelie has a Jack Russell dog called Sofia and enjoys teaching her new tricks. Amelie speaks fluent French and in April 2017 she will be flying to France to attend school there for three months.

**Pyper Prosen**

Collaborating Performer

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Pyper Prosen is in year 7 at University High School and started learning to skate in Barcelona in 2011 when she was 6 years old - she has been hooked ever since. She stopped for a while, after consecutively breaking her arms and wrists but has recently taken it up again to join the *Tiny Slopes* project.

Pyper plays futsal at Brunswick FutsalOz and came second in the state championships. In 2015, Pyper’s short film *Alone This Time* won the Screen Test Student Fest (Chicago) and came 3rd in Little Big Shots (Melbourne) and screened in other festivals around the world. Pyper’s enjoys reading, arts and crafts, writing short stories and playing the saxophone.

**Pixel Willison-Allen**

Collaborating Performer

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Pixel Wilson Allen is in Year 9 and goes to Maribyrnong Sports College. She started skateboarding at the age of 12 and loves to ride flat. Before learning how to skateboard Pixel was already a skilled rollerblader and she has played inline hockey for Australia in the Junior Women’s Team. Pixel loves photography, soccer, rollerblading and athletics.

**Byron Scullin**

Sound Designer

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Byron Scullin explores the technological representation and amplification of sound and its properties as a physical presence. Operating in an ambiguous space where music and sound transitions into noise, Byron’s sonic environments offer an experience of mass and multiplicity. His work *Bass Bath* featured at Dark MOFO (2015) and explores low frequency high volume waveforms and their interaction with the body.

After an interest in synthesis at a young age, Byron was mentored by producer/composer Francois Tetaz. He has since been involved in almost all aspects of audio in his twenty year career, contributing sound to feature films such as *Wolf Creek* and dance productions by Gideon Obarzanek, Jo Lloyd and Lee Serle. A prolific collaborator, Scullin has worked closely with video artist Daniel Crooks, as well as Australian composers Anthony Pateras, Marco Fusinato, and Oren Ambarchi. Byron’s will premier as part of Dark MOFO 2017.



**Travis Hodgson**

Lighting Designer

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Travis Hodgson has designed lighting for Speak Percussion (*Transducer; Circuit; The Black of the Star; Driftwood*), Ashley Dyer (*Tremor; Life Support; And Then Something Fell On My Head; Somewhere Between Sleeping and Waking, Daydreaming and Living*), Matthew Day (*MASS; Intermission; Thousands; Cannibal*), Sonia Leber and David Chesworth (*We are printers too; We, The Masters; Richter/Meinhof-Opera*).

Travis has also designed lighting for Matthias Shack-Arnott, Nat Cursio, Martin Del Amo, De Quincey Co, Team Mess, Quiver New Music Ensemble, Linda Luke and Peter Fraser. Travis was nominated for a Green Room Award for De Quincey Co's Embrace: Guilt Frame (Sydney Theatre Company) and Matthias Shack-Arnott's Fluvial (Arts House). His has designed for theatre, dance spaces, installations, public spaces, music venues and galleries across Australia.

**Sarah Hall**

Costume & Set Designer

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Sarah Hall is a designer and maker based in Melbourne. With a background in music, fine art and furniture design, she recently completed the Bachelor of Fine Arts (Production) in Design Realisation at the Victorian College of the Arts (VCA). She has previously worked in London with You Me Bum Bum Train, East End Backpassages and RIFT.

In her last year at the VCA, Sarah designed costumes for Nat Cursio's *Quiet Death, Quiet Musical* - as part of the dance ON season - and designed the set and costumes for Luke Kerridge's *The Wonderful World of Dissocia*. In 2017 Sarah will design costumes for Nat Cursio's new work for children *LOOP*.

**Tamara Saulwick**

Text/Voice Consultant

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Tamara Saulwick is a performance-maker working across and between art forms. She creates contemporary works for theatres, public spaces, installations and radio. With over twenty years experience, Tamara has presented her work nationally and internationally.

Recent works include; audio walk *Newport Archives* (The Substation), audio-visual installation, *Alter* (Arts House, Festival of Live Art), live performance work *Endings* (Performance Space & Arts House), which tours to Canada and the UK in 2017, and *Permission to Speak* for Chamber Made Opera (Arts House). Tamara was a recipient of an Australia Council Theatre Fellowship (2015/2016). She has a PhD in Performance Studies from Victoria University. Tamara was recently appointed Artistic Director for Chamber Made Opera.

**Jacqueline Aylward**

Understudy and Project Assistant

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Jacqueline Aylward is a Melbourne-based dancer and choreographer with a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Contemporary Dance) from the Victorian College of the Arts (2016), a Bachelor of Arts (History and English) from the University of Melbourne (2013) and an Advanced Diploma of Classical Ballet from the Australian Conservatoire of Ballet (2013). During her time at V.C.A. she worked with Sandra Parker, Lee Serle, Mariaa Randall, Stephanie Lake and Prue Lang.

Jacqueline has recently performed in Victoria Hunt's, *Tangi Wai*, Leah Landau's, *Romancer* and *The Sequel 2*; Lee Serle's, *Multimodal*; and Yellow Wheel's, *I Came Here to Dance Once*. Jacqueline has choreographed her own works *Becoming Barbara* (2016) and *Elbow to Pubic Symphysis* (2015) and is involved in *Size Doesn't Matter*, an unofficial fringe festival to Dance Massive.

**Harriet Gregory**

Stage Manager

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Harriet Gregory is a stage manager based in Melbourne. Her recent credits include *The Book of Loco, Antigone, Suitcase Series, Meow Meow's Little Mermaid, Come Away with Me to the End of the World, The Fiery Maze* and *Little Emperors* all at Malthouse Theatre. She also works regularly with Circus Oz, Melbourne International Comedy Festival and Melbourne Recital Centre.



Nat Cursio



Alice Dixon



Melissa Jones



Caroline Meaden



Francesca Meale



Rae Franco



Amelie Mansfield



Pyper Prosen



Pixel Willison-Allen



Byron Scullin



Travis Hodgson



Sarah Hall



Tamara Saulwick



Jacqueline Aylward



Harriet Gregory





Josh Wright and all at Arts House,  
Sarah Neal and all at Malthouse  
Theatre, Jy Hildred and all at Meat  
Market, Taran Ablitt, Jeremy Gaden,  
The Substation, Megan Williams and  
all at Auspicious Arts, Gabriela Green,  
Pia Lauritz, Chimene Steele-Prior,  
William McBride, Eugyeene Teh, Pete  
Brundle, Coen Cursio-Brundle, Jason  
Ireland, James Sandri, Juno  
Petherbridge, Sherwyn Spencer, Chris  
Ritchie, Tim Meaden, Quinn Knight,  
Pascal Scullin, Erin Milne, Cobie Orger,  
Gregory Lorenzutti, Fiona Herman,  
Arena Theatre Co, Emilie Collyer,  
Prue Clark, Nick & Travis at Riverslide  
Skatepark, Matt at Fast Times  
Skateboarding, Pippa Willison, Richard  
Allen, Nick Franco, Naomi Brouwer,  
Rohan Mansfield, Cloe Blanchet,  
Brian Cohen, Tara Prowse.

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and the City of Melbourne through Arts House. *Tiny Slopes* was  
developed through Arts House's CultureLAB with the assistance of  
Creative Victoria.

The young people in *Tiny Slopes* are very comfortable with  
skateboarding and have negotiated the conditions of their own safety in  
discussion with their parents, guardians and the *Tiny Slopes* creative  
team. They are employed in accordance with the Mandatory Code of  
Practice for the Employment of Children in Entertainment.