

QUEENSLAND THEATRE

13 October 2021

Original cast of *Yandy* reunite for Play Club

Queensland Theatre and playwright Jolly Read are reuniting the original cast members of *Yandy* from across Australia for a very special Play Club event on Tuesday 26 October.

Marking 75 years since the landmark Pilbara Aboriginal Pastoral Strike, this live play reading over Zoom will bring together Heath Bergersen, Isaac Drandic, Trevor Jamieson, Geoff Kelso, Melodie Reynolds-Diarra, Dennis Simmons and Phil Thomson, along with new cast member Maitland Schnaars. Original Community Cultural Advisor, Nyamal and Pitjikalá Elder Doris Eaton is again supporting the artists.

When 800 Aboriginal workers and their families began walking off dozens of pastoral stations across the vast Pilbara region of Western Australia, their fight for wages and better living conditions sparked what is still recognised today as Australia's longest-ever strike.

Artistic Director Lee Lewis is thrilled that Queensland Theatre's Play Club series has provided this chance for Jolly Read and original director Rachael Maza (Ilbjerri Theatre Company) to revive such an exceptional play and shine a new light on its significant history.

"Play Club has become such a treat for theatre fans across Australia and around the world over the past 18 months. To close out the 2021 program with original cast members of *Yandy* breathing life back into this ground-breaking play is just the type of opportunity we created this platform to provide."

The experiences and life story of one of the strike's leaders, the late Nyamal Elder and loreman Peter Coppin, inspired Jolly Read's award-winning play *Yandy* which premiered with Black Swan State Theatre Company in 2004.

This extraordinary production celebrates the courage of the strikers who endured great hardship, physical danger, violence and threats to end their effective slavery. They stood firm, with their bravery and determination finally forcing changes that led to the recognition and restoration of their basic human rights.

Playwright Jolly Read said that the Play Club reading means a lot to the original cast and creatives, as well as the community.

"The strikers and their families are very proud to be celebrating the strike's 75th anniversary. This reading will give people a better understanding of their remarkable fight for justice and equality," Read said.

"As one striker, Ngarla Elder, Stephen Stewart, says, 'If it was not for the strike, we wouldn't be here today.'"

Yandy can be viewed live anywhere in the world over Zoom webinar on Tuesday 26 October at 7.30pm AEST. Tickets are \$15 from queenslandtheatre.com.au

CREATIVES AND CAST

Playwright Jolly Read
Director Rachael Maza
Community Cultural Advisor Nyamal and Pitjikalá Elder, Doris Eaton

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Daisy Bindi/Dorothy Hewitt Rachael Maza
Don McLeod Phil Thomson
Mary/Police Officer Melodie Reynolds-Diarra
Peter Coppin Isaac Drandic
Storyteller/Striker Jack Trevor Jamieson
Clancy McKenna Dennis Simmons
Jim Grazier/Bill Hardy/Ken Duncan/Police Officer Geoff Kelso
Ernie Mitchell/Police Officer Heath Bergersen
Dooley Bin Bin Maitland Schnaars

For further information, imagery or interviews, please contact Amanda Lawson, Queensland Theatre via publicity@queenslandtheatre.com.au or phone 07 3010 7669

Queensland Theatre acknowledges the Jagera and Turrbal people who are the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we work, and their unique relationship with the lands, seas and waterways. We pay our respects to their Elders both past and present, and to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.