



Tuesday, September 22 – 2015

Queensland Theatre Company announces Artistic Director

A week after unveiling a much anticipated Season 2016 anchored by an important world premiere and a mainstage program featuring tales of change, Queensland Theatre Company (QTC) has announced their new Artistic Director will be one of Australia's leading theatre directors and arts leaders, **Sam Strong**.

Sam has been the Associate Artistic Director of Melbourne Theatre Company (MTC) since 2013 and is also currently Chair of Brisbane-based Circa. At MTC, Sam has directed multiple sold-out productions, reached a paid audience of over 145,000 people and directed the mainstage theatrical debuts of visual artist Callum Morton and screen comedy legends Working Dog. To say the team at QTC is excited is an understatement.

"After a national search we are absolutely delighted to be welcoming Sam Strong to lead this company artistically," said QTC Executive Director, **Sue Donnelly**. "Sam has carved out a stellar career in Sydney and Melbourne, making critically and commercially successful theatre as a director, and growing the audiences at Griffin Theatre company as artistic director," Ms Donnelly said.

QTC Chair **Richard Fotheringham** said audiences were set for a rich adventure ahead. "On the back of launching our Season 2016 program last week which stars 10 powerful productions as well as another incredibly strong touring program nationally, we can now celebrate the appointment of Sam Strong; what a wonderful future QTC audiences can look forward to," Mr Fotheringham said.

Ms Donnelly paid tribute to outgoing Artistic Director Wesley Enoch who departs to take up the baton at Sydney Festival. "Wesley Enoch introduced a new era of passion to QTC; a champion of local and Indigenous productions. He has launched world and Australian premieres and shone the light on important actors, directors and causes. His work with *Black Diggers* was inspirational, and he was pivotal in bringing Michael Attenborough to Australia to direct *Macbeth* 18 months ago. The importance of his legacy at QTC cannot be quantified and we look forward to many collaborations with him in the future," Ms Donnelly said.

On his appointment, Sam Strong said: "I'm delighted to be taking on the challenge of Artistic Director of the Queensland Theatre Company. Wesley Enoch is an artist and a cultural leader I admire and it's a rare gift to inherit a company in as great a shape - artistically and operationally - as QTC."

"I'm excited about working with Sue Donnelly and the team to take the company to even greater heights. QTC is already a national leader in touring, Indigenous programming and working with young people. I want to grow this reputation and make QTC a national leader in everything it does," Mr Strong said.

On moving to Queensland, Strong said Queensland represented a wealth of creative talent, one which he was thrilled to be working with. "My time with Circa has whetted my appetite to work in Queensland and with Queensland artists and I can't wait to plunge myself into the Brisbane scene. I'm looking forward to teaming up with Queensland artists to take our theatre around the state, around the nation and around the world," Mr Strong said.

Prior to MTC, Sam was Artistic Director of Australia's new writing theatre, Griffin Theatre Company. At Griffin, Sam tripled subscribers, expanded the program to include the revival of Australian classics, and directed the highest selling show in the company's 35-year history. Prior to Griffin, he was the Literary Associate at Company B Belvoir, and the dramaturg in residence at Red Stitch Actors Theatre, where he co-founded Red Stitch Writers.



Sam won Best Direction of a Mainstage Production for *The Floating World* at the 2013 Sydney Theatre Awards, and has received multiple nominations for Best Direction at the Sydney Theatre Awards, the Greenroom Awards, and the Helpmann Awards.

He has directed many of Australia's leading actors including Justine Clarke, Lucy Durack, Colin Friels, Noni Hazlehurst, Asher Keddie, Lachy Hulme, Robyn Nevin, Josh McConville, Luke Mullins, Pamela Rabe, Kat Stewart, Erik Thomson, Hugo Weaving, and David Wenham.

Sam's directing credits include: *Masquerade* (Sydney Festival/Griffin/STSA/Melbourne Festival); *The Weir*, *Endgame*, *The Sublime*, *The Speechmaker*, *Private Lives*, *The Crucible*, *Other Desert Cities* and *Madagascar* (Melbourne Theatre Company); *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* (Sydney Theatre Company); *The Boys* (Sydney Festival/Griffin); *The Floating World*, *Between Two Waves*, *And No More Shall We Part* and *Speaking in Tongues* (Griffin); *The Power of Yes* (Company B Belvoir); *Red Sky Morning*, *Faces in the Crowd* (Red Stitch) and *Thom Pain* (based on nothing) (B Sharp).

Sam joins QTC from November this year.