

17 May 2021

Cast Announcement and Season Extended for *Boy Swallows Universe*

Queensland Performing Arts Centre (QPAC), Queensland Theatre and Brisbane Festival have announced the cast for the world premiere of Trent Dalton's *Boy Swallows Universe*, adapted for the stage by Tim McGarry.

Tickets for *Boy Swallows Universe* have disappeared faster than Slim Halliday, and the show's run in QPAC's Playhouse – a world premiere highlight of Brisbane Festival and the blockbuster of Queensland Theatre's 2021 Season – has been extended. The highly anticipated adaptation will now play from 30 August to 25 September 2021.

Described by Trent Dalton himself as “Eli, heart and soul”, Brisbane-born actor Joe Klocek will play the role of Eli Bell in his hometown. Making his start in Queensland Theatre's Young Artists' Ensembles, Klocek most recently appeared in Australian feature film *The Dry*.

Vietnamese-Australian actor and playwright Ngoc Phan will fill the shoulder pads of formidable matriarch ‘Back Off’ Bich Dang. A graduate from Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts, Phan has stage and screen credits to her name and has a long association with Queensland Theatre as a Teaching Artist.

Originally from Queensland, Helpmann Award-winning actor Anthony Phelan will tackle the roles of bone-chilling prosthetic limb and drug merchant Tytus Broz and convicted murderer-turned-babysitter Slim Halliday. With a vast career spanning film, television and theatre, Phelan's recent screen projects include *Top of the Lake* and *Wanted*, and he has appeared on stage for the likes of Bell Shakespeare, Belvoir St Theatre and Sydney Theatre Company.

Eli's sidekicks comprise Tom Yaxley (August Bell), Ashlee Lollback (Caitlyn Spies/Shelley) and Hoa Xuande (Darren Dang).

Michala Banas is Eli's beloved mother Frankie Bell, while the other men in her life will be played by Mathew Cooper (Robert Bell), Anthony Gooley (Lyle Orlik) and Andrew Buchanan (Teddy Kallas).

Joss McWilliam will take on underworld figures Iwan Krol and Alex Bermudez, and Hsin-Ju Ely and Charles Ball join the cast as ensemble members.

Queensland Theatre Artistic Director Lee Lewis said it was a thrill to see Queensland Theatre's pathways for young artists lead to Joe Klocek taking his place as the beloved Eli Bell amongst some of the country's finest acting talents.

“*Boy Swallows Universe* is the play the whole of Queensland, indeed, the whole of Australia has been waiting for. This is how we truly come back from COVID-19 — with the best story, told by the best artists,” Ms Lewis said.

“Hold on to your sunhats, this play is going to be the story that brings us all back together.”

Propelling audiences to Australian suburbia in the 80s, when Paul Hogan was putting a shrimp on the barbie and Ataris were bought from the classifieds, *Boy Swallows Universe* is inspired by Brisbane author Trent Dalton's childhood and will come to life under the directorship of Sam Strong and design by Renée Mulder.

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Tickets to *Boy Swallows Universe* are on sale via qpac.com.au or 136 246.

ENDS

Season Details

Queensland Theatre, Brisbane Festival and QPAC present Trent Dalton's *Boy Swallows Universe* adapted for the stage by Tim McGarry

When: Monday 30 August to Saturday 25 September

Where: Playhouse, QPAC, Queensland Cultural Centre, South Bank, Brisbane

Tickets: Refer to qpac.com.au for current pricing

Bookings: qpac.com.au or 136 246

Director Sam Strong

Designer Renée Mulder

Lighting Designer Ben Hughes

Composer/Sound Designer Steve Francis

Video Designer Craig Wilkinson

Movement Director Nerida Matthaei

Download high resolution images via atgp.ac/BoySwallowsUniversePublicity

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Boy Swallows Universe is presented by Queensland Theatre, Brisbane Festival and QPAC. Queensland Theatre is generously supported by the Landmark Productions Fund, Production Partner, Ergon Network and Energex, part of Energy Queensland, and Principal Partner RACQ.

Brisbane Festival is an initiative of the Queensland Government and Brisbane City Council and is generously supported by Strategic Tourism Partner, Tourism and Events Queensland and the Brisbane Festival Giving Program. Brisbane Festival features on the *It's Live! in Queensland* events calendar.

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