

QUEENSLAND THEATRE

Finalists announced for Queensland Premier's Drama Award 2022-23

Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk has today announced the finalists for the Queensland Premier's Drama Award 2022-23. Artists Ryan Enniss, Phoebe Grainer and Anthony Mullins, have been selected from a field of over 200 entries Australia-wide.

New South Wales writer, Ryan Enniss is being acknowledged for his work on *Drizzle Boy*; a play that shares the story of a young autistic man making his way through a life filled with miscommunications, misnomers, and misunderstandings.

Far North Queensland creative, Phoebe Grainer earned the honour of finalist with her play *Burning House*; a drama which gives a glimpse into the realities of small towns and exposes the darkness and unpredictability of the people in them.

Finally, Queensland writer Anthony Mullins has reached the finals with his first play *The Norman Mailer Anecdote* which is centered on one night, one room and one family as they wrestle with accusations from the distant past.

The three finalists are now in the running for the title, guaranteeing the professional production of the winning play in Queensland Theatre's 2023 Season, a \$16,000 commission fee to develop their play ahead of the premiere production, and a \$30,000 cash prize from QPDA Prize Sponsor Griffith University.

The previous winner, Steve Pirie and his play *Return to the Dirt* premiered in Brisbane in October 2021.

Premier Anastacia Palaszczuk congratulated playwrights Ryan Enniss, Phoebe Grainer and Anthony Mullins on their exceptional entries, which stood out from the 216 submissions received.

"This year marks 20 years of the Queensland Premier's Drama Award – a successful partnership with Queensland Theatre which has supported storytellers and encouraged the growth and evolution of our unique arts sector," the Premier said.

"Over the last two decades, this initiative has provided professional opportunities for more than 260 local actors, writers and directors, has developed 34 plays, and has helped 10 captivating original works make the leap from the page to the stage.

"There was an overwhelming response to the call for submissions for the QPDA 2022-23 and once again the judging panel were faced with a difficult task in selecting just three finalists for the Award.

"Finalists Ryan Enniss, Phoebe Grainer and Anthony Mullins come from diverse backgrounds and different lived experiences, informing how they explore major themes like justice, memory and human connection.

"It's clear that all our finalists have a promising future writing for the Australian stage, and we look forward to seeing the winning work fully-realised as part of Queensland Theatre's 2023 season."

The Queensland Premier's Drama Award covers a two-year cycle.

In the first year, three finalists are selected and their works undergo creative development with industry professionals prior to judging and the announcement of the winner. The second year involves further development of the winning play followed by the professional world premiere production and publication of the script.

Enniss, Grainer and Mullins will develop their works throughout the coming year, with the winner announced in May 2022.

Queensland Theatre will produce the world premiere of the winning work in Season 2023, curated by Artistic Director, Lee Lewis.

"Our stories are our national treasures. The Queensland Premier's Drama Award is the most significant playwriting award in the country in offering playwrights a production of their play and the prize money provides financial support to live while they write. In a year when so many entries reflected the difficulties of the times we are all struggling with, these three finalists' plays speak urgently about resilience, resistance, truth and power. It is inspiring to see so many

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brave playwrights challenging us all to see, to understand and to work to make a better world for everyone. Our playwrights are our leaders and this award signals the commitment of the Queensland Government, Griffith University and Queensland Theatre to support the growth of our national imagination.”

The Queensland Premier’s Drama Award is an initiative of the Queensland Government, delivered in partnership with Queensland Theatre.

For more information, visit queenslandtheatre.com.au/queensland-premiers-drama-award

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THE 2022-23 FINALISTS:

Ryan Enniss: Ryan grew up in a rural town in the south of Tasmania, and very early on found creative outlets to occupy his time. He published his first novel at the age of fourteen and has had his eyes set on producing more work ever since. Diagnosed as autistic at the age of 19, Ryan has been on a journey of self-discovery ever since.

He graduated with a Bachelor of Contemporary Arts from the University of Tasmania in 2018 and is set to complete a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Acting) at NIDA in 2021.

His work, ***Drizzle Boy***, is about a young autistic man who is just trying to make his way in a world filled with miscommunications, misnomers and misunderstanding. It seems like everyone in his life and beyond has an opinion on how to cure him and make him like everyone else. But he’s not. In his mind, no one is really all that much like anyone else.

Phoebe Grainer: Phoebe Grainer is a Kuku Djungan, Muluridji, Wakaman, Tagalaka, Kunien, Warrgamay and Yindinji woman from Far North Queensland raised between Far North Queensland, the Northern Territory and Western Australia. Her ancestral lands span from Warrgamay country to Kunjen country.

In 2013, she studied at the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts completing a Certificate IV in Aboriginal Theatre. The following year she studied at NIDA, completing a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Acting).

Phoebe is currently a playwright in the 2020-21 Darlinghurst Theatre’s Next Line program where she delivered her play ***Jalbu Meri***. As the Creative Producer at the Sweatshop Literacy Movement, Phoebe edited an anthology called **Racism**, which launched at the Sydney Writers Festival. Phoebe’s essays, poems and short stories have appeared in **The Lifted Brow**, **SBS Life**, **Red Room Poetry** and **Sweatshop Women**.

Her entry, ***Burning House***, tells the stories of a young man as he returns home, a black family, a small town and a young woman looking for answers. It’s a drama that exposes the darkness and unpredictability of human beings. It gives an intimate glimpse into the realities of small towns, their humid, sticky air and the dangerous, old secrets they hold tight.

Anthony Mullins: Anthony is a BAFTA and Australian Writers’ Guild award winning screenwriter. One of his first short films was selected for Official Competition at the Cannes Film Festival and one of his first television gigs was writing webisodes for the ground-breaking US series **LOST**. Anthony won a BAFTA for his work on the BBC series **Spooks** and has been a script producer and editor on award-winning shows including **Safe Harbour**, winner of the 2019 International Emmy for Best Mini-Series.

Anthony is the author of ***Beyond the Hero’s Journey***, an innovative screenwriting guide released by New South Publishing. He has a Doctorate of Visual Arts from Queensland College of Art where he teaches regularly.

His entry, ***The Norman Mailer Anecdote*** is centered on one night in one room as a family wrestles with an accusation from the distant past. It’s a tense drama that explores the limits of memory and recollection, and asks the question; are we really who we remember? How do we know?

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PREVIOUS WINNERS

2020–21

Steve Pirie, *Return to the Dirt* (winner)

Anna Loren, *Comfort* (finalist)

Maddie Nixon, *Binnavale* (finalist)

2018–19

David Megarrity, *The Holidays* (winner)

Hannah Belanzsky, *don't ask what the bird look like* (finalist)

Anna Yen, *Slow Boat* (finalist)

2016–17

Michele Lee, *Rice* (winner)

Kathryn Marquet, *Furious Creatures* (finalist)

Suzie Miller, *I Looked Up and There You Were* (finalist)

2014–15

Daniel Evans, *Oedipus Doesn't Live Here Anymore* (winner)

Tim Benzie, *The Overflow* (finalist)

Megan Shorey, *One in Seven* (finalist)

2012–13

Maxine Mellor, *Trollop* (winner)

Stephen Carleton, *Bastard Territory* (finalist)

David Megarrity (for The Human Company), *The Empty City* (finalist)

2010–11

Marcel Dorney, *Fractions* (winner)

Rebecca Clarke, *Belongings* (finalist)

Philip Dean, *Unreliable Bodies* (finalist)

2008–09

Richard Jordan, *25 Down* (winner)

Katherine Lyall-Watson, *Tinder* (finalist)

Sven Swenson, *Dangerfield Park* (finalist)

2006–07

David Brown, *The Estimator* (winner)

Anthony Funnell, *The Tram* (finalist)

Michael Riordan, *String* (finalist)

2004–05

Adam Grossetti, *Mano Nera* (winner)

Stephen Carleton, *Constance Drinkwater and the Last Days of Somerset* (finalist)

Philip Chappell, *Welcome to Dreamland* (finalist)

2002–03

Sven Swenson, *Road to the She-Devil's Salon* (winner)

Kathryn Ash, *Flutter* (finalist)

Bruce Clark, *The Kaufman Letter* (finalist)

Simon Ratcliffe, *Conurb* (finalist)

Hugh Watson, *The Valley* (finalist)

Gayle Wilkinson, *Goat Head Burs* (finalist)