

# YEAR IN REVIEW 2018



# UNION HOUSE THEATRE

**CREATIVITY**

**RESPECT**

**RESPONSIVITY & ENGAGEMENT**

**INCLUSION & ACCESSIBILITY**

Union House Theatre (UHT) is the creative-hub for extra-curricular student theatre and performance at the University of Melbourne. We provide an environment in which autonomous and diverse student theatre can flourish, supporting an ecology of high-impact, student led theatre.

UHT facilitates and supports theatre in all its forms by providing artistic leadership, advice, mentoring, education and events that are responsive to the students' needs and their artistic and creative exploration.

28 shows, 26 workshops, 1,412 student artists, 14,042 audience members across 24 teaching weeks, in two venues with 474 seats, 18 casual staff, six core staff including Co-Artistic Directors! What an incredible year 2018 has been at Union House Theatre.



# ARTISTIC DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



2018 has been a massive year for Union House Theatre and all the students who contribute to our thriving theatre community.

We are so proud of each and every theatre group, artist and creative who have graced our stages and knocked on our door. It's not an easy task to study, work and put on a show. So many students work so very hard to make student theatre on campus brilliant. This year has been no exception.

2018 has seen so many companies taking wonderful creative risks as they develop work and try new approaches. UMMTA supported exciting new musicals which were produced at Melbourne Fringe, Mudcrabs explored new forms in comic plays while MUSC's site specific Shakespeare-inspired happenings took over the University. There was some fabulous new writing from Four Letter Word, phenomenal choreography from Flare Dance Ensemble and Chinese Theatre Group have the sorts of audience numbers professional theatre companies dream of. Chinese Music Group branched out to create a new musical and the Colleges keep going from strength to strength. New ideas bubbled up from *Tastings*, and both the Law Revue and Med Revue offered hilarious new sketch comedies.

A Writer-in-Residence, knocking down a wall or two, a full and enriching workshop program, O-week activities, the awards committee, our UHT archive, two full scale productions (a dance work and a musical) mentorships and so much more, rounded out a very full year.

We want to thank all the students for everything that they bring to this vibrant, diverse and energised community at the University of Melbourne. We are constantly inspired by their creativity and dedication to the performing arts, their humour and support of one another. Here's to a great year!

**Petra Kalive and Xanthe Beesley**

UHT Artistic Directors – Petra Kalive & Xanthe Beesley,  
Photo by Rachel Shriver

## UHT STUDENTS OUT AND ABOUT

As well as all the activity that happens on campus - student engagement in the industry is always so exciting to watch with 2018 being no exception.

- Kim Ho won the prestigious Patrick White Playwriting Award this year with the play, *Mirror's Edge*. We are so proud and just a little bit chuffed, as *Mirror's Edge* was originally commissioned by Union House Theatre and presented in August 2018 in the Union Theatre.
- Jean Tong's work *Hungry Ghosts* was presented at Melbourne Theatre Company, and *Romeo is not the Only Fruit* had a return season at the Butterfly Club for the 2018 Melbourne International Comedy Festival. ← DIRECTED BY PETRA!
- In the 2018 Melbourne Fringe Festival, Freya McGrath and Harriet Wallace Mead presented the *24 Hour Dance Project* at Testing Grounds and Antonia Yip worked with Reis Low on *The Good Person Recipe*. UMMTA used their 2017 UHT Awards prize of a Fringe registration to stage two brand new musicals – *Chicks Dig It* and *A Sharp Intake of Breath* – at the Fringe Hub.
- Mudcrabs continued to take advantage of festival platforms by each semester including a new work in the Comedy Festival or Melbourne Fringe. Their show *Mindquest – a Journey into Forever* saw them experimenting outside sketch comedy and winning an award for development time and space, which will be put toward their 2019 show *Kit Goodman! A Good Man* also to be staged in the Comedy Festival.
- Students undertook mentorships, and participated in workshops and performances with industry professionals, including: Michelle Heaven, Holly Durant, Suzie Hardgrave, Susie Dee, Dan Koop, Sahil Saluja, Emma Hall, Leisa Shelton, Mari Lourey, Sapidah Kian, Dan Giovannoni, Ashlee Clapp, Jessica Moody and more!

# UNION HOUSE THEATRE 2018 AT A GLANCE



**28**

student theatre productions



**\$23,029**

theatre prizes, grants and underwriting – thanks Theatre Board!



**120**

production meetings chaired by UHT staff



**4,358\***

cups of tea consumed in the UHT office

*\*NOT BASED ON FACT*



**AWARDS NIGHT  
PHOTO ALBUM**

(VIEWED 1,036 TIMES)

most popular UHT Facebook post



**1,412**

cast, crew & creatives



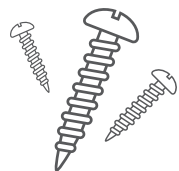
**ONE**

time Nigel our resident possum appeared on stage during a production



**12**

new works



**6,000**

screws used in the workshop



**14,042**

audience members



**2.4KM**

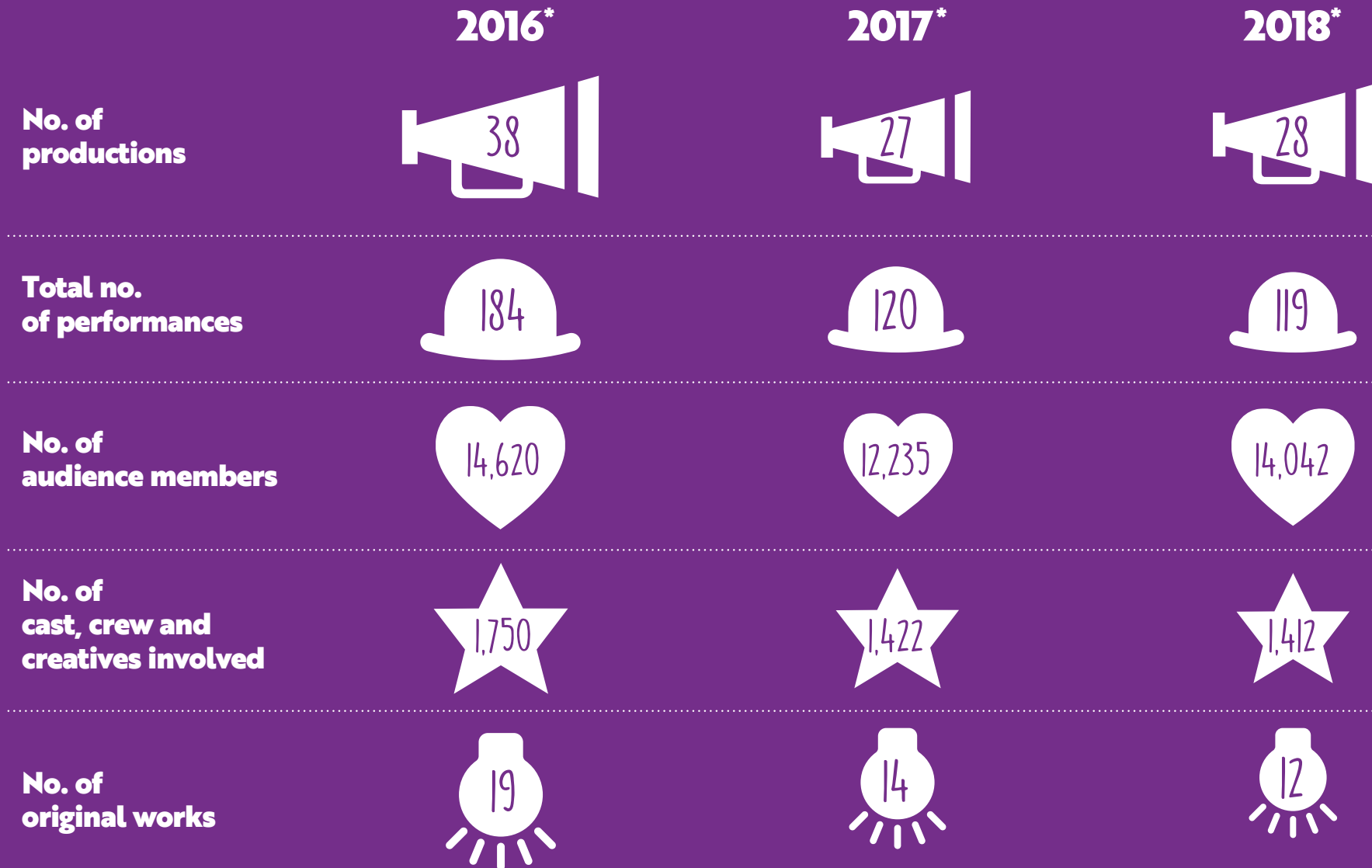
metres of gaffa tape



**152**

combined number of nights the Awards Committee were out seeing shows

# STUDENT THEATRE STATISTICS 2016-2018 COMPARISON



*\*Bi-annual Mudfest statistics not included*



Arty Party, Photo by Caleb Trisceri



# STAFF

Co-Artistic Director / Theatre Coordinator – **Petra Kalive & Xanthe Beesley**

Production and Venue Manager – **Khat Kerr**

Head Technician – **Clynton Jones**

Administration and Development Officer – **Erin Adams**

Stage Carpenter – **Allen Laverty**

Theatre Worker – **Alexandre Malta**

Archivist – **Bella Vadiveloo**

## CASUAL STAFF

Tom Backhaus

Ashleigh Barnett

David Barrell

Jeremie Berube

Ruth Blair

Kate Cameron

Sarah Chamberlain

Ben Cronin

Gina Gascoigne

Adam Grikepelis

Jessica Herne

Tristan Lawrence

Thalia Livingstone

Cameron McCormick

Farzam Ramtin

Jacob Shears

Jean Tong

Rita Zambruno

Photo by Khat Kerr

# STUDENT THEATRE GROUPS

- Flare Dance Ensemble
- Four Letter Word Theatre
- Intercollegiate Activities Council – ICAC
- International House Theatre Group
- Medleys – Med Revue
- Med Moves
- Melbourne University Chinese Theatre Group – CTG
- Melbourne University Comedy Revue Board – MUDCRABS
- Melbourne University Law Revue
- Melbourne University Shakespeare Company – MUSC
- Newman College Theatre Group
- Ormond College Drama Club
- Piano and Music Society
- Queen’s College Music and Drama Society – QC MADS
- Spreading Fire Creative Company
- St Hilda’s College Drama Society
- St Mary’s College Drama Society
- Trinity College Dramatic Society
- Trinity College Music Theatre Society
- University College Theatre Company
- University of Melbourne Music Theatre Association – UMMTA

## Honorary Theatre Groups - Affiliated with Clubs & Societies

- Melbourne University Chinese Music Group – CMG
- Melbourne University Sri Lankan Students’ Association – MUSLSA

The student theatre community at UHT is exciting, varied and energetic. Groups presented over 28 performances in two theatres as well as site specific work. We look forward to new companies emerging in 2019 who plan to present adaptations, physical performance, dance works and diverse cultural performance.

WATCH THIS SPACE!

Melbourne University Shakespeare Company's *An Other Space*,  
Photo by Luke Macaronas

# 2018 UNION HOUSE THEATRE PROGRAM

## EVENTS

- 24 HR Play Project
- Summerfest
- Student Theatre Group Marquee
- Writer in Residence Program
- Arty Party – Semester 1 & 2
- Winterfest
- Playwrighting MiniFest
- Ida Alumni Evening
- UHT Awards Night

## WORKSHOPS

- 80s Dance
- Access & Inclusion
- Acro-balance
- Acting
- Choreography
- Design on a Budget
- Directing for Theatre
- Drawing Breath
- Improvisation
- Let's Dance – weekly drop-in
- Lighting
- Marketing
- Morning Dance – Winterfest
- Orchestration for Music Theatre
- Power Tools
- Presenting with Confidence
- Producing Skills
- Scheduling & Budgeting
- Sound & Video on Stage
- Stage Management
- Theatre-Making and Devising

## UHT PRODUCTIONS

- *things we should talk about* directed by Xanthe Beesley, choreography Michelle Heaven
- *Ida* directed by Petra Kalive, composition by Ashlee Clap and ensemble, based on the work by Anita Punton

// I think the lessons that you taught really applied to many aspects of my life... these classes were helping me become unstifled and more open to offer, accept and expand. I have spent most of my life being apologetic, overly critical and fearful of judgement, so every little progress means a lot to me. //

**Improvisation workshop participant**





## UHT PRODUCTIONS

# things we should talk about

A new dance theatre work was presented at UHT in Semester 1 in the Guild Theatre. Directed by UHT Co-Artistic Director Xanthe Beesley the process also provided students the chance to work with renowned choreographer Michelle Heaven.

Tackling the hard issues one gesture at a time – *things we should talk about* provided a platform to reintroduce dance to the UHT program and to explore an inventive, intensive devising process. A diverse group of 15 students made up the ensemble of this movement-based work which catalogued all the things that are unsaid in our society and asked what happens when people stay silent? This original piece explored the things we 'should' be talking about but aren't, the conversations we might be having if we weren't plugged in and tuned out and the physical act of turning away from difficult ideas.

CLICK HERE  
TO WATCH!



“ It’s just so amazing to be part of this ensemble... the cast is very inclusive. It’s like an environment where I can truly embrace myself ”

Charlie Qi Zhang



*things we should talk about*, Photo by Theresa Harrison

## DANCE ON CAMPUS

A culture of dance and movement has started to brew in 2018 with a broad range of activities, one-off events and programs for students of all interests and abilities. Activities included:

- *things we should talk about* – a new dance theatre production
- Students working with professional choreographers including Michelle Heaven and Holly Durant
- Theatre Board grants to support a dance video project and student participation in professional dance classes
- Dance performances in *Tastings*
- Choreography workshops
- Weekly drop in dance classes in the Des Connor Room
- O-week / Winterfest pop up 80s dance class attended by over 50 students
- Student Theatre Groups like Flare Dance Ensemble, with a focus on dance



## UHT PRODUCTIONS

# IDA

*Ida*, was presented in second semester in the Guild Theatre directed by Co-Artistic Director Petra Kalive and composed by alumnus Ashlee Clapp and the cast. This musical celebrated the achievements of young women who challenged the institution and became the first women to study at the University of Melbourne.

This production was a reimagining of the 1994 UHT production *The Princess Ida Parlour* written by Anita Punton and directed by then Artistic-Director Rosemary Myers. There were some eerie similarities between the 1994 and 2018 productions; the creative team comprised mostly women, there was a transformation in the cast across rehearsal and production – they grew as an ensemble but also as individuals, there was lots of laughter, lots of learning about the first women at UniMelb, the piece was created and performed by students from across the University studying a range of degrees from Science to Psychology and both Rosemary Meyers and Petra Kalive had 6 month old babies that they fed in the rehearsal room – which they couldn't have done, had those first women not stood up and said "we want in!".

## IDA ALUMNI EVENT

A hugely popular Alumni event was held during the season. It is a special thing when UHT gets to meaningfully re-engage with its past students (especially after 24 years). We know what we do has a significant impact on individual students, the University community and extra-curricular creative-output across campus – it's great to be reminded of how long-lasting that impact is. The alumni spoke of how their time at UHT had been formative in their friendship circles, world-view and long-term engagement with the arts.

*// It was fantastic to see the show we made all those years ago reinterpreted and, if anything, made even more relevant today than it was then... thanks for the nostalgia trip you've sent me on these last few days. It's been much more moving and impactful than I expected it to be. //*

Justin Murray (1994 Ensemble member)

*// ...the indispensable Union House Theatre has triumphed once again in creating an engaging, informed and most of all, inspiring theatre experience... treat [yourself] to a night at the Princess Ida Parlour, where both knowledge and laughter abound. //*

Oriel Forsythe – The Dialog

CLICK HERE  
TO WATCH!



# WRITER-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM

In 2018 UHT continued its Writer-in-Residence Program with the support of Theatre Board.

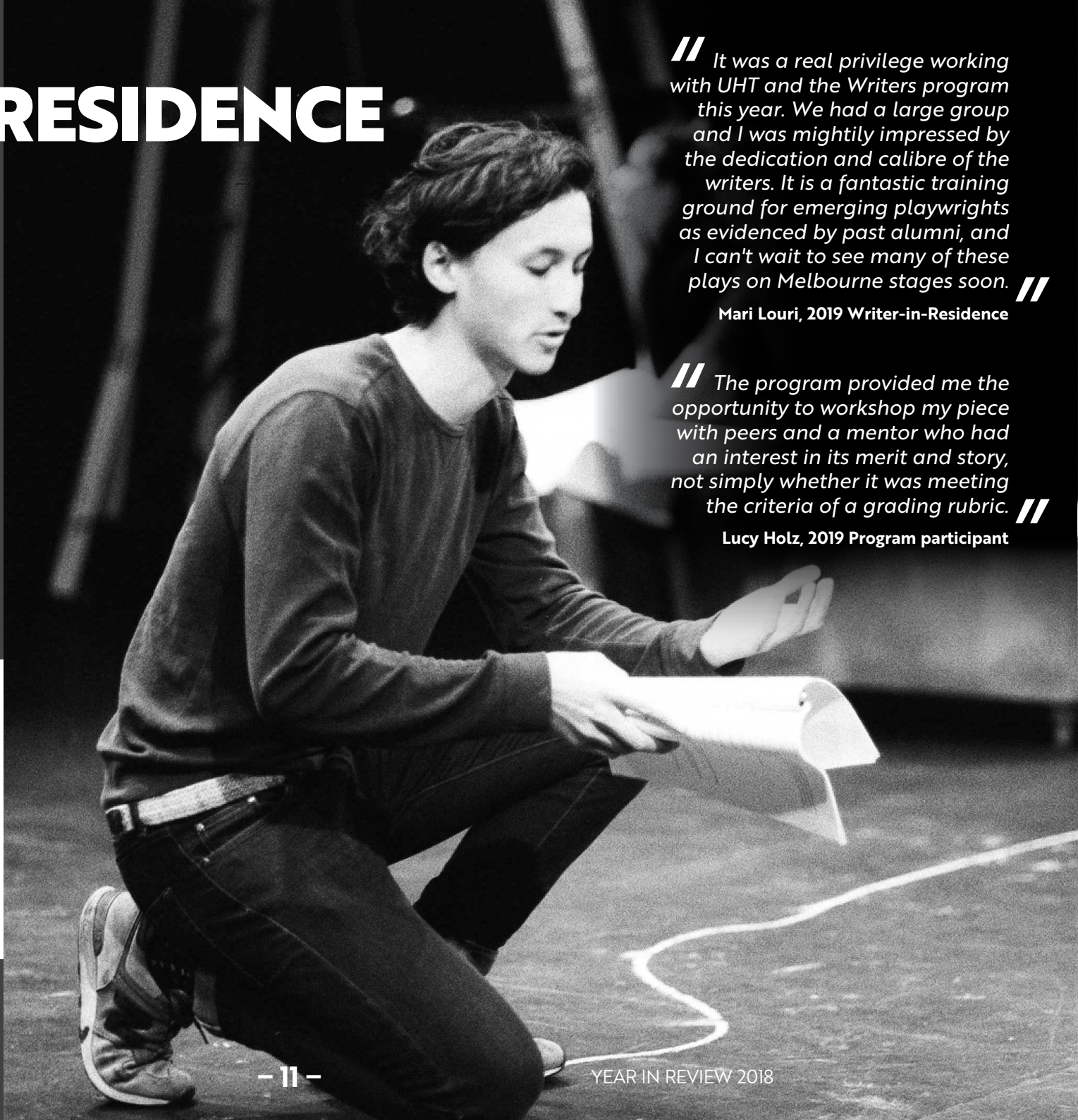
The Writer-in-Residence program was an opportunity for 12 emerging writers to work with a professional playwright over 6 months, developing their unique style and voice as writers of new works for stage. Students participated in workshops, one-on-one sessions, and brought their ideas to the stage in the Playwrighting MiniFest, in the Guild Theatre in Semester 2.

The 2018 Writer-in-Residence was playwright, dramaturg and theatre-maker Mari Lourey. Mari's collaborative practice, and political work and industry expertise made her a dynamic choice for the 2018 UHT Writer-in-Residence.

## PLAYWRIGHTING MINIFEST

In Semester 2, participants put their work and themselves out there in the Playwrighting MiniFest. Over two nights, snippets of work were heard and seen by full houses spilling over with supportive peers. Many of the works gestated in this program have gone on to have future development opportunities with UHT, Student Theatre Groups, at Fringe Festivals and more.

UHT's *Mirror's Edge*, Photo by Bede McKenna



*“ It was a real privilege working with UHT and the Writers program this year. We had a large group and I was mightily impressed by the dedication and calibre of the writers. It is a fantastic training ground for emerging playwrights as evidenced by past alumni, and I can't wait to see many of these plays on Melbourne stages soon. ”*

**Mari Louri, 2019 Writer-in-Residence**

*“ The program provided me the opportunity to workshop my piece with peers and a mentor who had an interest in its merit and story, not simply whether it was meeting the criteria of a grading rubric. ”*

**Lucy Holz, 2019 Program participant**



# PRODUCTION

The backbone of all venue and performance activities at UHT is our Production Team. Our Production & Venue Manager, Head Technician and Stage Carpenter lead a team of 18 casual theatre workers and while you may not always spot them, they are at the forefront of foyers, backstage and bio boxes of each student theatre production. They provide workshops, mentorships, production budget and scheduling guidance, production meetings, technical and design advice, bump ins, venue hire, maintenance, and offer a box of tissues and a loud cheer on opening nights.



UMMTA in the Workshop, Photo by Frances Cao

## SET BUILDING WORKSHOP

In 2018 the Production team led an exciting project to upgrade the Set Building Workshop. By removing a wall in the basement of the Union Theatre, a large workshop area was revealed – offering twice as much room to support the growing requirements of student theatre. This has seen an increase in the number of activities and workshops that UHT has been able to offer to students and the broader University community.

a bounty of almost US\$1.1 billion for anyone who believe in the director, and the lead actor playing the Queen Deepika Padukone.



# ACCESS AND INCLUSION

UHT upholds the highest principles of access and inclusion which are built on the hard work undertaken to date on UHT's Disability Action Plan. Regular consultation with student theatre groups reveals a passionate community keen to deliver best practice models of access and inclusion across student theatre.

In 2018 the student theatre community offered captioned performances, Auslan interpreted shows and nights that were audio described. Provision of relaxed performances are on the increase, with many groups creating break-out spaces and information kits for audience. 'Pay as you feel' performances were also popular.

UHT continued to work with Description Victoria for audio description and trialled captioning through Go Theatrical. Several student works were Auslan interpreted via a range of providers. Wayfinding videos, storyboards, large print and digital programs (all offered to patrons prior to attending performances) provided ways to ensure the whole theatre-going experience was accessible as possible for the community.

UHT auspices Theatre Board Access grants for student theatre groups, to help cover costs. UHT also offers an award for a student or group who has demonstrated best practice access and inclusion in the presentation of their event.

*UHT's things we should talk about, Photo by Theresa Harrison*

# MENTORSHIP

Supporting, advising and advocating for students continues to be a significant focus of UHT's annual activities and programs. Formal and informal mentoring opportunities exist at every level of the organisation. Whether students are just starting out, trying something new or looking to take their first steps into the industry – our experienced staff were able to guide, challenge and celebrate each step of the way. As well as a full program of mentoring activities within UHT, we also drew on a wealth of connections to industry professionals from various disciplines to continue to empower students as they progress on their creative journey.

Lighting Workshop with UHT Head Technician  
Clynton Jones, Photo by Shang-Lien Yang

## Mentorships available within UHT:

- Artistic / Theatre Direction
- Producing
- Performance Making / Devising
- Arts Administration / Marketing
- Production / Stage Management
- Technical (Sound / Light)
- Stage Carpentry / Set Building
- Acting / Performance

## Industry Mentorship Pool:

- Comedy (Performance / Writing)
- Music Theatre Composition
- Writing for Theatre
- Devising New Work
- Site Specific Performance
- Contemporary Performance
- Dance / Choreography
- Acting and Directing

*“The mentorship I undertook allowed me to solidify my artistic and career goals. Not only was it educational (providing a whole range of industry knowledge and professional learning) but has also challenged and inspired me. I have a new found confidence and determination to pursue my interests and to further develop my artistic practice thanks to the support I received this year.*

*The accessibility of UHT, particularly to students with limited experience, is so valuable; it allows us the chance to explore and learn collaboratively in a nourishing and supportive environment.*”

**Luke Macaronas – 2018 UHT mentee and President Melbourne University Shakespeare Company**

# ARCHIVE & ALUMNI

- It has been a great year for archiving and curating at UHT. This year has seen archival material such as photos, VHS recordings and old programs and flyers come out from dark and dusty boxes to assist in UHT's production of *Ida*, providing in depth research material and assisting in the engagement of alumni.
- We have been very lucky to have had several programs loaned to us by the Victorian Historical Society which date back to the 1940s. These programs are making a great addition to our digital archive and are so helpful in establishing a timeline of shows that have been performed here at UHT.
- A strong collaboration with the Rowden White Library's archival department is also allowing us to take huge strides regarding how we can best activate our collection of archival materials. This includes identifying who our target audience is, how the archive can best be accessed and what format is most efficient in doing so. We are excited to continue this collaboration in 2019.
- Every week our e-news Followspot goes out to over 3000 students and alumni keeping them engaged with UHT's activities!

**Melbourne University Student Theatre Archive**  
[must.unimelb.edu.au](http://must.unimelb.edu.au)

# PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

UHT continues to grow and strengthen connections via a wide range of formal and informal partnerships with UMSU and the broader University community.

