

YOUR DIGITAL PROGRAM / TEXT ONLY VERSION

# The Tree of Light

## A Concise Compendium of Wonder

SLINGSBY

15 - 16 Mar 2024 / Slingsby's Hall of Possibility

**Duration:** 1hr, no interval

**Note:** Recommended for ages 8+

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### Credits

#### CREATIVE TEAM

**Writer** Ceridwen Dovey

**Director** Andy Packer

**Devisor/Composer** Quincy Grant

**Set and Costume Design** Ailsa Paterson

**Environment Design** Wendy Todd

**Lighting Design** Chris Petridis

**Original Projection Images**

Thom Buchanan

**Animation** Mark Oakley

**Production Manager** David McLean

#### Technical Manager/Operator

Darian Tregenza

**Stage Manager** Jess Wolfendale

#### CAST

Kate Cheel

Felix Jozeps

Ren Williams

#### MUSIC

**Musicians on original recorded music** The Horizon Orchestra

**Piano/Keyboard** Simón Pazos

**Guitar/Keyboard** Quincy Grant

**Drums** Sami Butler

**Violin** Helen Ayres

**Violin** Belinda Gehlert

**Viola** Anna Webb

**Cello/Vocals** Clara Gillam Grant

**Bass/Double Bass** Harley Gray

**Vocals** Miranda Gillam Grant

#### CONSULTANTS

**Cultural Consultant** Karl Telfer

Tropo Architects

XFrame

Dr Angelique Edmonds (UniSA)

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## Synopsis

It is the last day of the year 3099. The leader of the Moonfolk, an elder at the age of 12, is asking you to take the great risk of pausing in your ceaseless survival work to join her in the giant hollow trunk of the last remaining tree on the Moon. She would like you to do something unthinkable, something that your ancestors, the Earthkind, once had the luxury to do: listen to a story that might just save your souls.

Grandmother Tree is the only living link left between the old ways and the new. She has memories of her Treekind back home, and of the Earthkind, too – one young girl in particular, whose

curiosity and courage in the face of hardship Grandmother Tree has never forgotten. She thinks of her often. The little match girl, the girl who climbed high up in her branches seeking honey. It is her story that Grandmother Tree wants you to hear.

Grandmother Tree's seeds have been sent in vain back to Earth, though nothing grows there. But something is happening on the old planet. The leader of the Moonfolk and Grandmother Tree ask you to sit for just a little while longer. Turn your gaze back to Earth - to a sight that the Moonfolk have avoided for too long - and make your peace with it. Breathe in as she breathes out, and listen.

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## Director's Note

**By Andy Packer**

Slingsby takes its audience seriously. We are serious about the concerns of our audience, and we want to make theatre that addresses the issues of the day. The climate emergency is one of the most urgent and complex challenges facing our audiences here in Adelaide, around Australia and across the globe. This threat urgently needs to be addressed, not just to mitigate the human cause of cascading climate change but also to acknowledge and address the existential crisis this represents for our audience, especially young people.

*A Concise Compendium of Wonder* is a poetic, hopeful and practical response to this immense environmental challenge. In 2022 Slingsby established a Green Touring Model, designed to help us measure the carbon footprint of our touring activity, provide us with the data to offset and develop strategies to change our activity and reduce our impact. By telling three epic stories about humanity's connection to nature, performed by one cast on a regeneratively designed set, our future touring of this triptych of theatre shows is set to reduce our carbon impact when compared to the traditional touring of individual works.

We are drawn to the challenge of telling bigger stories and creating increasingly complex immersive worlds.

*A Concise Compendium of Wonder* will be an invitation for audiences to join us across a seven-hour epic journey, travelling through three stories that span 2000 years. All housed in a bespoke wooden meeting house that reconfigures, constantly shifting the audience and performer relationship and leading us to reflect on our beautiful planet and how precious all the life forms that we share this globe with are.

*The Tree of Light* is a new theatre work that responds to our audience, to our planet and to our desire to make unforgettable theatre that inspires hope and positively shapes lives.

It is a bold new version of Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Match Girl* written by Ceridwen Dovey that is a powerful and urgent story – a story that is equal parts lamentation and celebration for all that humans can be. We welcome you to take it in, take it to heart and take something home with you to start the process of turning this big ship around. There's room for hope.

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## About Slingsby

Founded in 2007, Adelaide-based theatre company Slingsby creates emotionally powerful storytelling that invites audiences of all ages into immersive theatrical realms. Each Slingsby show is an invitation into a magical world, transporting audiences to a time and place that is at once breathtaking and familiar. By telling stories of wonder, hardship and hope, Slingsby builds connections and joy within our community.

With an international reputation as a distinctive and cherished company with seasons at some of the world's most prestigious festivals and venues including repeat invitations to New Victory Theater (New York), Dublin Theatre Festival, Edinburgh International Children's Festival and Sydney Opera House alongside tours across USA, Canada, Singapore, China, India, Norway, UK, Ireland and New Zealand, 10 of Slingsby's original productions have now toured regionally, nationally and/or internationally. A brace of local, national, and international industry awards is testament to the company's renown for excellence in theatre making and lifelong impact on the lives of audiences of all ages.

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## Biographies

### CAST

#### Kate Cheel

Kate is an actor, theatre-maker and multimodal arts facilitator.

In 2018 she played the lead role in the AACTA-nominated feature film *Strange Colours*, which premiered at the Venice Film Festival and earned her a nomination for Best Lead Actress by the Film Critics Circle of Australia. Additional on-screen credits include the award-winning telemovie *Riot*, ABC comedy series *The Letdown*, Stan series *The Commons*, *Sexy Nails* for Photoplay Films, *Ladies in Black* for ABC and feature films *The Royal Hotel* and *One Eyed Girl*.

Kate's recent theatre credits include leading roles in Griffin Theatre's *Dead Cat Bounce* and *Babydoll* for Ensemble Theatre. Previous theatre credits include *Kill Climate Deniers* (Kinetik Collective), *Emil and the Detectives* (Slingsby), *That Eye*, *The Sky*, *Three Sisters*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Hedda Gabler*, *Jesikah*, *Masquerade* (State Theatre Company South Australia), *The Overcoat* (Belvoir), *Big Bad Wolf*, *Fugitive* (Windmill Theatre Company), *Brief Encounter* (Kneehigh Theatre UK), *Minus One Sister* (Griffin Theatre), *Spring Awakening* (ATYP – nominated for Best Supporting Actress in a Musical, Sydney Theatre Awards), *4 Minutes 12 Seconds* (Outhouse Theatre Company) and *Home Invasion* (An Assorted Few - nominated Best Performance in a Leading Role, Sydney Theatre Awards).

Kate is a member of The Bait Fridge, a multi-

disciplinary artist collective working in experimental and socially engaged performance.

Kate was awarded the Emerging Artist of the Year by the Adelaide Critics Circle and was the recipient of the Neil Curnow Performing Arts Award and the Adele Koh Scholarship for Acting.

Kate is a graduate of Adelaide College of the Arts (Acting).

#### Felix Jozeps

Originally from Adelaide, Felix graduated from WAAPA in 2009 (Acting). His professional theatre credits include; *Comedy of Errors*, *Macbeth*, *Henry V*, *The Winter's Tale* and *Henry 4* (Bell Shakespeare), *The Libertine* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Sport for Jove), *Billionaire Boy* (CDP), *The Song Was Wrong* (Perth Theatre Company) and *Debris* (Old Fitz Theatre). He has also appeared in numerous educational shows; *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth Undone* and *Midsummer Madness* (Bell Shakespeare).

Felix's TV credits include *Desert King*, *Mr Inbetween*, *Top of The Lake 2: China Girl* directed by Jane Campion, *Underbelly: Razor*, and *The Moodys*. He starred in the short film, *The Beehive*, which premiered at Tribeca Film Festival and has also produced and directed his own short films including *Undedicated* which premiered at Austin Film Festival. Felix also performs in children's hospitals for the Starlight Children's Foundation.

In 2022, Felix made his directorial debut, directing the Bell Shakespeare Players for *The Wonderful World of Will*.

## Ren Williams

Ren is an Australian film & theatre actor, having trained with Honours at the Flinders University Drama Centre. Also specialising in directing and writing, Ren is a co-founder of independent theatre company CRAM Collective.

After graduating in 2020, Ren made her directing debut in 2021 with Deadset Theatre Company's show *Truck Stop* along with winning State Theatre Company SA's Young Playwright Award for her play *Modified*. In June 2022 Ren performed and produced The CRAM Collective's world premiere *Something Big* (Dir. Connor Reidy), following their sold-out show of *New World Coming* - a show created in 5 days. In 2022 Ren performed as five different characters in Kinetik Collective's Stateside show *Kill Climate Deniers* (Dir. Clara Solly-Slade). Most recently, as well as acting in a number of short films, Ren performed in the 2023 DreamBIG Festival in the one-woman show *Guthrak* (Dir. Matthew Briggs). Before joining the USA tour of *Bluey's Big Play* (Dir. Rosemary Myers) at the end of 2023, Ren had the pleasure of puppeteering on the set of Windmill Pictures' *Beep and Mort* Season 2.

## CREATIVE TEAM

### Ceridwen Dovey

Writer

Ceridwen is a Sydney-based writer of fiction and creative non-fiction, and a filmmaker. Born in South Africa, she grew up between South Africa and Australia, went to Harvard University on scholarship as an undergraduate, and did her postgraduate studies in social anthropology at New York University. Her debut novel, *Blood Kin*, was shortlisted for the Dylan Thomas Award and selected for the U.S. National Book Foundation's prestigious "5 Under 35" honours list. Her second book, *Only the Animals*, won the inaugural 2014 Readings New Australian Writing Award, the Steele Rudd Award for a short story collection in the Queensland Literary Awards, and was co-winner of the People's Choice Award for Fiction at the 2015 NSW Premier's Literary Awards. The book is on the VCE Literature Text selection (for high school students in Victoria).

Her 2018 novel, *In the Garden of the Fugitives*, described by *The New York Times* as an «impressive, thought-provoking novel,» was published around the world. Her memoir-biography, *On J.M. Coetzee: Writers on Writers*, was published in 2018 as part of Black Inc.'s acclaimed Writers

on Writers series. In 2019, Penguin Random House published a collected edition of Ceridwen's profiles of people in unusual careers, *Inner Worlds Outer Spaces: The Working Lives of Others*, and in 2020 they published her novel *Life After Truth* (which started out life as an Audible Original as an experiment in audio-first novels). She's also the author of the bestselling Audible Original novel *Once More With Feeling*.

Her recent collaborative work of bio/auto-fiction, *MOTHERTONGUES* (co-written with Eliza Bell, and with original songs by Keppie Coutts), was published by Penguin Random House in April 2022. Ceridwen regularly contributes essays and articles to many publications, including *newyorker.com*, the Monthly, WIRED, Smithsonian Magazine, and Alexander. Her essays have been selected for The Best Australian Science Writing 2021, The Best Australian Science Writing 2020, The Best Australian Science Writing 2019, and The Best American Science and Nature Writing 2018. Her science writing has been awarded an Australian Museum Eureka Award and two UNSW Press Bragg Prizes for Science Writing (2020 & 2021).

With her creative collaborator Rowena Potts, she is the co-founder of the Archival Futures Collective, which is dedicated to making experimental archival films about emotions and ethics in outer space. As Research Fellows at the Powerhouse Museum, they have been completing the Archival Futures of Outer Space film quartet (*Moonrise; Musca; Memorabilia; Requiem*).

### Andy Packer

Director

Andy is an award-winning director of theatre, music theatre and opera. He has also worked as creative producer of multidisciplinary arts programs, creative director of large-scale events and festival director. In 2007 Andy co-founded Adelaide-based theatre company Slingsby. The company's productions have received 16 industry awards and have toured to more than 100 theatres in over 80 cities and towns across 13 countries.

Andy is renowned for creating original live performance moments that are emotionally powerful and visually bold. His work across theatre for young audiences, opera, cabaret, music theatre and symphonic concerts has pushed him to develop a distinctive theatrical aesthetic that is at once personal and epic.

Andy has directed productions and events for Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, State Opera of



South Australia, State Theatre Company of South Australia, Adelaide Festival of Arts, Adelaide Fringe, Adelaide Festival Centre, Adelaide Chamber Singers, Australian String Quartet, Windmill Theatre, Restless Dance, Tutti Ensemble, Rundle Mall Management Authority and the International Astronautical Federation. In 2019 Andy was Show Director for the World of WearableArt Awards Show in Wellington, New Zealand.

### **Quincy Grant**

Devisor/Composer

Quincy has spent his life being a freelance composer and musician. He has played and written for many bands over the decades, in many different styles - the most recent being the despicable gypsy band Golonka and the folk outfit Miranda Bede.

He has written over seventy works for soloists, chamber ensembles and orchestras that have been performed in hundreds of concerts. And written the music for over forty theatre works, for companies all over Australia, with his second opera being scheduled for performance in 2025. He has toured many countries in Europe, Asia and the Americas.

He is co-director of The Firm, a company that presents concerts each year featuring Australian classical musicians in programmes of new Australian music along-side carefully chosen repertoire.

Quincy lives in Adelaide with his dear Anna, and has three children: Arland, Clara and Miranda.

### **Ailsa Paterson**

Set and Costume Design

Ailsa holds a Bachelor of Dramatic Art in Design (NIDA). Recent design credits include *The Marriage of Figaro* (SOSA), *The Dictionary of Lost Words* (STCSA/STC – costume design), *Lady Day* (STCSA/MTC/Belvoir), *The Goat, or Who is Sylvia?* (STCSA/STC – costume design), *Tracker* (ADT – costume design), *Girls and Boys* (Sydney Festival/Adelaide Festival), *A Christmas Carol* and *Boxing Day BBQ* (Ensemble Theatre), *Single Asian Female* (STCSA), *Chalkface* (STCSA/STC), *Watershed* (Adelaide Festival) and *Myth or the Go Between* (Gravity and other Myths/Blue Soup Films).

Slingsby credits include *Songs for Those Who've Come Across the Seas*, costume designs for *The Boy Who Talked to Dogs*, *Emil and the Detectives*, *The Mouse, the Bird and the Sausage* and *Ode to Nonsense*.

Credits for State Theatre Company South Australia

include *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*, *Ripcord*, *Gaslight*, *The 39 Steps*, *Jasper Jones*, *End of the Rainbow*, *Creditors*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Switzerland*, *The 39 Steps*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Mendelssohn's Dream*, *Beckett Triptych*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Hedda Gabler*, *In the Next Room or The Vibrator Play*, *War Mother*, *The Ham Funeral*, *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)*, *The Price*, *The Cripple of Inishmaan*, *Betrayal*, *A Doll's House*, *Things I Know To Be True* and *Little Bird*.

### **Wendy Todd**

Environment Design

Wendy is an Adelaide-based designer of theatre, events and spaces. Recent production designs (Set & Costume Design for all productions) include: *Nursery* 2014, (Sally Chance Dance), *Babyteeth* 2013, *Blasted* 2012, *Pornography* 2012 (State Theatre Company of South Australia), *Land & Sea* 2012, *Skip Miller's Hit Songs* 2011, *Harbinger* 2010 (Brink Productions), *Man Covets Bird* 2010, *The Tragical Life of Cheeseboy* 2007 (Slingsby), *Worldhood* 2011 (Australian Dance Theatre), *A Lion In The Night* 2012, *The Little Green Tractor* 2011 (Patch Theatre Company), *Cutaway III*, 2013 & II, 2012 (Vitalstatistix), *Ruby Bruise* 2010 (The Misery Children & Vitalstatistix). Recent event designs: Designer Blink Bar 2015 Adelaide Festival of Arts Precinct, Design Assistant/Coordinator Lola's Pergola 2014, Design Coordinator of Barrio 2013 & 2012, Assistant Designer Persian Garden 2008 & 2006 (Late Night Clubs of the Adelaide Festival of Arts), Event and Gala Designer Adelaide Cabaret Festival 2015, Design Coordinator Adelaide Cabaret Festival 2014 (Adelaide Festival Centre), Bowerbird Design Markets 2014, 2013, 2012.

### **Chris Petridis**

Lighting Design

Chris is a Lighting and Video Designer. Following his completion of the Technical Production course at the Adelaide Centre of the Arts, Chris has continued to develop his experience across theatre, dance, and other live events in Australia including:

2021: *Creation Creation* by Windmill Theatre Company; *Hiccup!* by Windmill Theatre Company; *The Boy Who Talked to Dogs* by Slingsby.

2020: *The Bleeding Tree* by Theatre Republic; *Of All Things* by Alison Currie for ADT; *Anatomy of a Suicide* by Flinders University Drama Centre; *The Lighthouse* by Patch Theatre Company; *Incognito* by Flinders University Drama Centre.

2019: *World of Wearable Art 2019*; *Madama Butterfly* by State Opera South Australia; *A View from the Bridge* by State Theatre Company SA; *Cher* by Vitalstatistix; *ZOOOM* by Patch Theatre Company; *13 Ways to Look at Birds* feat. Paul Kelly by GWB; *FEMME* by Erin Fowler Projects; *Zizanie* by Restless Dance Theatre.

2018: *Lines* by Theatre Republic; *World of Wearable Art 2018* with Bluebottle; *SOLO (Sea Wall & Bitch Boxer)* by Flying Penguin Productions; *Julius Caesar* by Flinders University Drama Centre; *Songs for Those Who've Come Across the Seas* by Slingsby; *Brothers Wreck* by Malthouse Theatre & State Theatre; *Baba Yaga* by Windmill Theatre Company; *Terrestrial* by State Theatre Company South Australia; *In The Club* by State Theatre; *The Walk of Fame Gala* by the Adelaide Festival Centre.

2017: *Angelique* by isthisyours?; *Beep* by Windmill Theatre Company; *Emil and the Detectives* by Slingsby; *Vigil* by the Adelaide Cabaret Festival; *Mr Burns* by State Theatre Company South Australia & Belvoir St Theatre; *Long Tan* by Brink Productions.

2016: *Ignition 2016* by ADT; *Love & Information* by Flinders University Drama Centre; *Juliet Letters* by Flying Penguin Productions; *Gorgon* by State Theatre Company; *Beginning of Nature (WOMAD)* by ADT.