

GRUG

BY WINDMILL THEATRE CO



PHOTO: Shane Reid / Carnival Studios



LA BOITE
THEATRE COMPANY



WINDMILL
THEATRE CO

V1.0

ABOUT THE SHOW

SYNOPSIS

“Based on the picture book character by Ted Prior.”

The much-loved picture book character created by Ted Prior returns to the stage to captivate and charm audiences across all generations. Grug began his life as the top of a Burrawang tree that fell to the ground. Resembling a small, striped haystack with feet and a nose, Grug is fascinated by the world around him and solves everyday problems creatively and without fuss.

When dancing instructions are too difficult to understand, he invents his own dance and calls it “The Grug”. When snails eat his cabbages, Grug plants more cabbages so there will be enough for both him and the snails. Ted Prior’s hugely popular character is brought to life in a magical stage production that will enchant our very young theatre lovers and delight their young-at-heart parents and grandparents.

CAST & CREATIVES

DIRECTOR Sam Haren

DESIGNER Jonathon Oxlade

COMPOSITION & SOUND DESIGN DJ TR!P

CAST INCLUDES Elizabeth Hay, Matt Crook & Zoë Dunwoodie

RECOMMENDED FOR

Suitable for all ages and grades.

WARNINGS

None - *Grug* is suitable for everyone.

CURRICULUM LINKS

FORM, STYLE & CONVENTIONS

- Visual Theatre
- Puppetry
- Children's Theatre
- Literary Transformation/Adaptation

SENIOR SYLLABUS UNITS

Grade 12 Unit FOUR: Transform

SUBJECT MATTER

- Self sufficiency
- Independence
- Community/Friendship

PURPOSE

- Empathise
- Educate or inform
- Empower
- Celebrate
- Entertain

CONTEXT

- Dramatic
- Real
- Philosophical
- Sociological
- Historical: relating to moods, attitudes, influences and conditions that existed
- Personal
- Environmental

MEET GRUG

Grug was created by Ted Prior in rural New South Wales in the 1970s. Ted developed the character of *Grug* for his two young children based on an imaginary bush animal that grew out of a Burrawang tree. The iconic and uniquely Australian colour palette, flora and fauna, and characters within the many *Grug* stories helped to establish the series of books as classics within the genre of Australian childrens picture books.

First printed in 1979, *Grug* has remained in production for more than 40 years. Countless Australian children have grown up with *Grug* as a staple of family life. *Grug* is loved by nostalgic adults and children alike.

Windmill's production of *Grug* was created in 2010 by collaborators Sam Haren (Director) and Jonathon Oxlade (Designer). They were both intrigued by the unique place the *Grug* books held in the imagination of young Australian children as well as in the nostalgia their parents have for the books from their own childhood. Sam Haren explains:

"I was a huge fan of *Grug* growing up in Australia. The original *Grug* book was one of my favourites. I vividly remember the images of *Grug* evolving from the bristly top of a tree, and imagined all the corners of his intriguing, underground home. There was something unique about *Grug* that captured my imagination as a five-year-old."

Drawing on stories from multiple *Grug* books, Sam and Jonathan have created a world of imagination within the *Grug* set that conjures the classic aesthetic of the *Grug* books whilst simultaneously re-imagining the landscape of the world of *Grug* and bringing to life the many characters and adventures that *Grug* has within it.

The episodic nature of the *Grug* stories, including the cycle of day and night, repetition of dramatic elements and short duration of each story cycle were developed by the creative team to suit the needs of early childhood audiences. The language of this work has since been successfully applied to other Windmill productions for this age group.

Since its premiere in 2010, *Grug* has toured extensively around Australia and the world performing to more than 50,000 children. The show has featured at major Australian arts centres including Arts Centre Melbourne, Adelaide Festival Centre and Sydney Opera House and has also toured extensively across regional Australia. *Grug* has also toured the USA, Canada, China and the UK. 2020 is the 10th anniversary of Windmill's *Grug*.

MEET GRUG

SAM HAREN

Sam is a Creative Director of Sandpit, a company that create immersive, and interactive theatre and personal experiences. Sam was the Artistic Director of The Border Project from 2002-2012, directing or co-directing all of their work during that time.

He has co-directed *Ghosts Toast and the Things Unsaid* (Sandpit/ Google's Creative Lab), *Eyes* (Sandpit) and *Skeleton* with Larissa McGowan (Adelaide Festival 2013 & Dance Massive/Malthouse). Sam has worked with Australian Dance Theatre as a dramaturg and researcher. He was one of three international finalists for Rolex's Mentor and Protégé Initiative for a mentorship with Julie Taymor in 2006.

For Windmill Theatre Co, Sam has directed *Plop!*, *Escape from Peligro Island*, *Grug* and *Grug and the Rainbow*, as well as interactive experience *My Room*.

JONATHON OXLADE

Jonathon has designed set and costumes for Queensland Theatre, LaBoite Theatre, isthisyours?, Aphids, Arena Theatre Company, Polyglot, The Real TV Project, Polytoxic, Men of Steel, Lemony S Puppet Theatre, Terrapin Puppet Theatre, Vitalstatistix and Barking Gecko.

He has also worked with Bell Shakespeare, The Border Project, State Theatre of South Australia, Dead Puppet Society, The Last Great Hunt, Sydney Theatre Company, The Escapists, Melbourne Theatre Company, Sandpit, Belvoir St Theatre and Windmill Theatre Co, where he is resident designer.

Jonathon has received numerous awards. Most recently in 2016, Jonathon was awarded the Sidney Myer Creative Fellowship and received APDG awards for both Best Production Design and Best Costume Design for *Girl Asleep*, and received an AACTA award for best Costume for *Girl Asleep*.

In 2017, he received the Sydney Theatre Award for Best Costume Design for *Mr Burns*.

MEET WINDMILL

Windmill's vision is to engage excellent artists to create new Australian theatrical work for children, teenagers and families, and to share these stories with an ever-increasing national and international audience.

Over the past ten years, under the artistic directorship of Rosemary Myers, Windmill has created a distinctive house style of award-winning theatre that has positioned the company as Australia's largest maker of work for family audiences.

Our work is inspired by the vibrancy, modern sophistication and inventiveness of young people. We are driven to create stories that reflect and explore the contemporary human experience in ways that are ingenious, surprising and with an edge of subversion. And our young audience is up for the ride. Naturally playful and unbound by the traditional conventions of the theatre, they fluidly embrace the landscape of imagination.

Our work is diverse in scale and responds to the potential of live theatre in our modern time. There are no hard and fast rules on the shape our work takes, however, it loosely falls into three main audience segments:

1. THEATRE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD - Windmill was the first company in Australia to create work for early childhood audiences and has continued to innovate with productions including *Grug* and *Beep* that are designed to be gentle, first experiences of theatre. Featuring puppetry, lush design and intricate soundscapes these productions tour extensively.
2. THEATRE FOR CHILDREN - these diverse productions explore challenging and relevant subjects for this age group and include *Amphibian*, the story of an unaccompanied minor travelling from Afghanistan to Australia, as well as large-scale family musicals such as *Rumpelstiltskin*, produced with animation and high-end production values integral to the storytelling.
3. THEATRE FOR TEENAGERS - Windmill is also one of Australia's major creators of work for teenage audiences. This audience is regularly considered hard-to-reach and often neglected across Australian programming. Windmill's productions explore the teenage experience in both form and content and have significant traction with the teenage, young adult and family audiences.

In recent years, we have begun adapting our theatre repertoire into film and television projects through our new initiative, Windmill Pictures. We aspire to become a leading convergence model of live theatre and film, taking more of our tried and tested Australian stories into the screen medium. These projects extend our artists' practice, further leverage our investment and greatly increase our audiences.

Windmill is an artist-led company, and a rich combination of ideas and aesthetics fuels our particular brand of work. We nurture deep creative dialogues prioritising substantial development times and ongoing creative collaborations that are regularly invigorated with the addition of new artistic voices.

Grug is a Windmill Theatre Company production. Originally produced in association with Queensland Performing Arts Centre's Out of the Box Festival.

TICKET PRICES

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Each school booking includes one complimentary teacher ticket with every 10 students.

STUDENT TICKETS \$27.50
ADDITIONAL TEACHER TICKET..... \$35.00

CURRICULUM & WORKSHOP ENQUIRIES

Visit laboite.com.au/education or contact Maddie Nixon our Youth & Education Producer at maddienixon@laboite.com.au or 3007 8600

SCHOOL BOOKING ENQUIRIES

Visit laboite.com.au/education or contact schoolbookings@laboite.com.au or our Box Office at 3007 8600



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