

# THE EMPIRE

# SUPPORTERS NEWSLETTER

MAY 2023

# BURSARY WINNER EXCELS IN YEAR LONG INTENSIVE COURSE

Current Brian Boak Bursary recipient, Morgan Carter is excelling in the United Kingdom, undertaking an intense one-year Master of Music in Opera Performance at the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM).



*2022 Brian Boak Bursary recipient Morgan Carter*

An award winning British/Australian soprano, Morgan commenced studies in September 2022 after receiving the 2022 Brian Boak Outstanding Performer Bursary.

Undertaking about 12 hours of classes per week as well, Morgan's principal study of voice includes stagecraft, acting, physicality, and vocal mechanics as well as language surgeries in Russian/Czech, French, Italian and German with native speakers, German language classes and performance classes in the English, French, German, Italian.

Taking advantage of the many opportunities for RNCM students, Morgan has thrown themselves headfirst into audition season.

"I have so far auditioned for British Youth Opera, Buxton Opera Festival, Clonter Opera, Opera Up Close, National Opera Studio and the role of Carmen in St Paul Opera's upcoming summer production.

"I am grateful for the wealth of audition practice I have been able to experience. It's an important part of any singers' career, so the more I practice at it, the better I'll get!"

"I am so grateful to the Empire Theatres Foundation and the Brian Boak Bursary for granting me this award. I mean it when I say I would not be here without them, it's just too expensive. The lessons I am learning are invaluable, and all my coaches and tutors truly believe that if I keep working as hard as I am, I will be singing on all the world's stages as a soloist," they said.

The Empire Theatres Foundation Brian Boak Bursary program was made possible through the generosity of the late Mr Brian Boak who was an outstanding supporter of the local performing arts, and is designed to provide support to a person wishing to pursue a program of study or professional development at a centre of excellent in the areas of acting, dancing, singing or instrumental performance.

# EMILY GODDARD RETURNS TO THE EMPIRE



Acclaimed actor, theatre creator and 2009 Brian Boak Bursary winner, Emily Goddard returned to The Empire in 2022 with her award winning one woman drama, *This is Eden* for a one off Queensland performance.

*This is Eden* is a dark and funny provocative bonnet drama inspired by a family trip to Tasmania to research a convict ancestor.

"I decided to make a work that could shed light on the female convict experience, and provoke us into examining the dangers of how we view our past," Emily said.

"Returning to perform the work was special, especially performing it for the Foundation who had supported my bursary, allowing me to do my second year at Ecole Philippe Gaulier, three months of which was spent training in Bouffon - the style that informed the creation of *This is Eden*."

Following the performance Emily held a Q&A session, fielding many questions from the high school drama students in the audience.

Emily is currently in Tasmania, working on adapting the play for television.



Emily Goddard performing 'This is Eden'

# 2022 SEES RECORD YEAR FOR YOUTH BURSARIES



*Recipients of the 2022 Youth Bursaries gather outside the Empire Church Theatre*

The Empire Theatres Youth Bursary program last year saw a record number of recipients and bursary funds awarded, making 2022 the largest year yet.

35 students received a total of \$26,000 in bursaries, the highest number of recipients and funds allocated since the beginning of the program.

Bursary winners hailed from areas including Toowoomba and Highfields as well as the Lockyer Valley, Dalby and Chinchilla.

Empire Theatres Foundation Chairperson, Janelle Fletcher said 2022 saw an unusually outstanding round of students apply for bursaries.

“I think now, it’s very important to reinvest in the arts and continue on with our cause of the development of youth arts so our sector can continue to bounce back after a very difficult couple of years,” Ms Fletcher said.

“It’s these very young people who are the future of arts in this country.”

2022’s recipients attended short courses at National Institute of Dramatic Arts (NIDA), Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA), Queensland Ballet (QB), Sydney Dance Company, Empire Youth Arts and more in a range of disciplines including dance, acting, instrumental music, singing and musical theatre.

Since 2010, more than 480 Bursaries have been awarded.

Applications for 2023 Youth Bursaries open July!



## RETURNING HOME WITH SOLD OUT CABARET

A former Toowoomba creative brought his cabaret home this year, when *Confessions from the Bell Jar* performed in the Lounge Bar in February to a sold out audience.

Once a 2012 Youth Bursary winner, now a talented theatre creator, Jack Lynch wrote and performed this original cabaret inspired by the life and works of Sylvia Plath, taking *Confessions* to the Melbourne Fringe (2019), Adelaide Fringe (2020) and *The Butterfly Club* (2022) before bringing it home to the Empire Theatre.

Through original songs and confessional comedy, Jack explored his relationship to Sylvia Plath's notorious novel *The Bell Jar* and her other personal writings, revealing their enduring relevance to his own struggles with mental and emotional health, challenging the audience to talk about the things we're not supposed to talk about.

## FOUNDATION SPONSOR IMPACT ENSEMBLE

After consistently supporting Empire Youth Arts since its inception, Empire Theatres Foundation are this year coming on board as the primary sponsor of advanced audition based performance-making program, IMPACT.

Sponsoring the IMPACT program is a continuation to the commitment of the Empire Theatres Foundation to supporting the development of young artists in our region. The IMPACT Program offers young artists the chance to tell their stories with the same level of quality and care as a professional theatre production.

Kicking off the program with the Junior IMPACT Ensemble's performance of comedy thriller *Shack* by George Kemp from July 14–15, followed by the Senior IMPACT performance later in 2023. Rehearsals for *Shack* are currently underway.



*Junior IMPACT discovering their show's advertisement at The Empire*



(L-R) Jess Field, Samantha Dashwood & Lilly Kirkbride

## YOUTH BURSARY DANCERS CATCH UP AT SDC

Two Youth Bursary recipients were lucky enough to receive the VIP treatment during their holiday workshop at Sydney Dance Company (SDC), receiving a behind the scenes tour of the facility as well as their intensive program.

Jess Field and Lilly Kirkbride's experience was amplified by meeting a former Empire Youth Bursary winner, Samantha Dashwood, who is now working as SDC's Head of Open Programs and Learning.

Samantha took the time out to speak to Jess and Lilly about everything she had accomplished with her career and show them around.

## LILLY TAKES HER DREAMS OVERSEAS

Three time Youth Bursary recipient and dancer Lilly McCarthy-Cole will be fulfilling a lifelong dream, attending a prestigious six month exchange program at Purchase College, the Conservatory of Dance at State University of New York in July.

As one of only four students selected from Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA), where she is a second year dance student, Lilly will undertake academic and dance classes, having the chance to perform both on campus and in New York City.

As the dance syllabus at Purchase emphasises different contemporary techniques and a range of other dance styles, Lilly is excited to extend her training further and immerse herself in the culture of New York while building industry contacts.

Lilly extended her thanks to the Foundation for the opportunities her bursaries had lead her to.

"Over the years, I was awarded the maximum bursaries I was able to, attending workshops at Sydney Dance



Lilly McCarthy-Cole

Company in 2017, Australian Dance Collective in 2019 and Australian Ballet in 2021," she said.

"From these opportunities I was able to realise my passion for contemporary dance in Australia. For me, these bursaries were the stepping stones in building my career,"

"I owe so much to the Empire Theatres Foundation and give them my thanks as I begin my preparation for departure for my time in New York."

## YOUNG FILMMAKER COMES HOME FOR FLICKERFEST

Toowoomba filmmaker, Charlotte Chimes, returned home in April when her film was screened as part of nationally touring film festival, Flickerfest.

Writer and producer of *Six Months*, Charlotte Chimes, is a former Toowoomba resident and recipient of two Empire Youth Bursaries to Queensland Theatre Residency Week in 2008 and 2009. She worked hard to establish her career as an actress (*Catching Milat*, *Schappelle*, *Neighbours*) and has now put her talents to use both in front of and behind the camera to great success.

Handpicked for the festival from around 3200 entries, *Six Months* was just one of nine Australian short films selected to tour and has made its way around the country since it's debut at Flickerfest in Bondi Beach in January.

Charlotte attended Flickerfest at the Armitage Centre and Q&A session following the screening.

## WORKING BEHIND THE SCENES

Former Empire Youth Bursary winner Hamish Williams has kicked off his work in the film industry with a win, scoring roles on the crew for Netflix blockbuster *Spiderhead* (2022) and Amazon Prime feature film *Thirteen Lives* (2021).

After his bursary to Empire Youth Arts classes and studying at Griffith Film School, Hamish scored a role as a Digital Imaging Technician Assistant on *Spiderhead*, filming at the Gold Coast from late 2020 to early 2021 and worked in the Grip Department on feature film *Thirteen Lives* in 2021.

Hamish is continuing to work in the film industry with a few active projects, while also looking into shooting his own material on the side as his experience grows.

## YOUNG DOCUMENTARY MAKER TELLS IMPORTANT STORY

Toowoomba Grammar School student, Ben Rosenberg is hard at work on his self-devised project creating a short film about a schoolmate who has been diagnosed with a condition that will see him lose his sight by his early 20s.

In an unique move, Ben received his 2022 Youth Bursary for his project, and has created some experimental visuals that will be developed into a documentary Ben hopes to complete by the end of July.

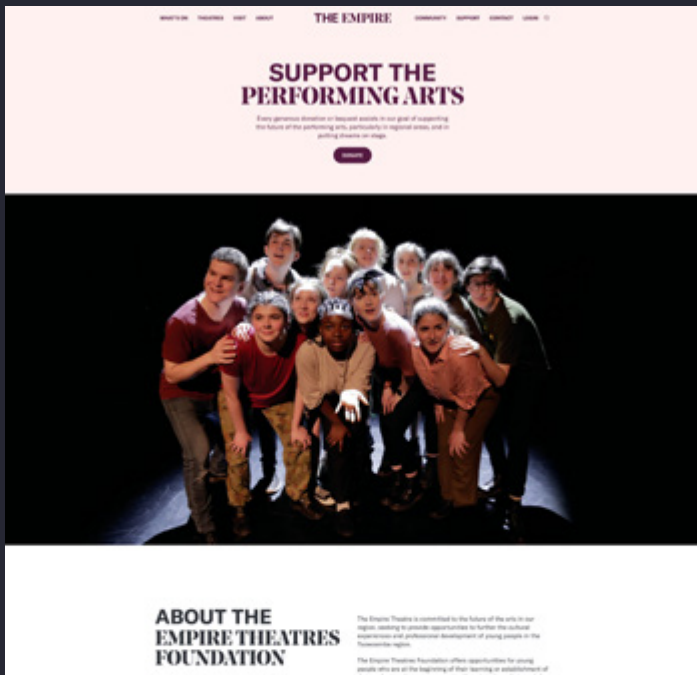
Ben's progress in filmmaking continues, recently being named Best Director at the Nextwave Youth Film Awards for his horror abstract- inspired piece, *Green Room*. This is Ben's third Nextwave's Youth Film Award, having won Best Script and Best Director in 2020 and 2021.



Hamish Williams

# THE EMPIRE

# HELP PUT DREAMS ON STAGE



For those who love the arts and want to see it grow and thrive, donating to Empire Theatres Foundation has never been easier!

The newly refurbished Empire Theatre website highlights the work of the Foundation in a new way, with a colourful, user friendly, functional modern platform, allowing us to proudly share our stories of success with our supporters.

Contributions can be made easily via the website Support page, with each generous donation supporting young performing artists and assisting to build and enrich the cultural life of Toowoomba.

An investment in the Empire Theatres Foundation is an investment in the young creatives in our region and in the development of the arts into the future.

All donations over \$2 are tax deductible

## THE FOUNDATION GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES OUR CORPORATE SPONSORS



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