

arts & entertainment



Left: Aspiring local actor Jess Duivenvoorden (left) is returning to a residential theatre project at Allambee Camp this week. She is captured at the 2017 camp alongside Joe Capurso of Stratford during a workshop activity led by local director Sharryn Marshall.

Aspiring actors debut youth-focused works

Aspiring young actors from across Victoria will premiere contemporary theatre works at Trafalgar Public Hall this weekend. A group of 30 young performers are currently undertaking residential theatre intensive

project "Theatre Craft Youth Unlimited" at Allambee Camp. This year's project by The Victorian Drama League seeks to "up the ante" and challenge. After 10 days of immersive training and rehearsal with local directors Sharryn Marshall, Todd Miller, Andrew Davies as well as other regional directors from Badaginnie and Townsville, the youth will present premiere performances of a suite of specially written new works by emerging playwrights Stephanie Clark of Warragul and Didem Caia of Melbourne.

Raina displays power of dance

Former Warragul resident Raina Peterson will take centre stage at the Midsumma Festival in Melbourne next week with her unique cabaret inspired take on Indian dance.

Raina has developed into a leader in the Indian dance art field and is co-artistic director of "Karma Dance". Her second full-length original show "Bent Bollywood", choreographed with co-artistic director and dance partner Govind Pillai, will blend the technical rigour of classical Indian dance with contemporary and Bollywood theatrics.

Asked to describe the piece, Raina said it "looks at what it is to be queer and Indian through dance".

It is a moving and complex piece whilst also offering a sexy and naughty twist. Raina was born in Warragul, attending kinder through to year seven in the district. She is a past student of Warragul Primary School and Warragul Regional College.

Her parents were founding members of Gippsland Indian Association.

Raina was introduced to dance at age five. She briefly attended KC's School of Dance in Warragul but it was a Gippsland-based intensive performing arts program which ignited her passion.

"I always really enjoyed doing creative things," said Raina. "Music as well."

Whilst still living in Warragul, Raina travelled to Melbourne to study classical Indian dance.

Later at university, Raina was tasked an assignment to hold a public discussion on racism. Instead of writing or speaking, Raina and two friends performed a cabaret show to complete the task.

The show was performed around Melbourne and at the Adelaide Fringe

Festival, propelling her into activism through dance around the queer scene in Melbourne.

Now aged 32, Raina is one of very few professional teachers of classical Indian dance style "Mohiniyattam" and performs around Australia and internationally.

Her first full-length work, "In Plain Sanskrit", debuted two years ago at the Footscray Community Arts Centre to rave reviews. Its success also resulted in a tour to New Zealand.

"I was a bit surprised. We didn't know how well it would go."

Raina's next aim is to develop a full-length classical Indian dance show.

She hasn't yet returned to Gippsland as a professional performer.

"It would be great to tour there," she said. "I remember seeing shows at the theatre there. It would be a trip down memory lane."

Midsumma Festival is an annual arts and culture celebration of the LGBTQIA+ communities.

There will be six performances of "Bent Bollywood" at Brunswick Mechanics Institute between Thursday, January 25 and Saturday, February 3.

It is an adults-only show with nudity and sexual content.

Tickets are \$30 for adults, \$22 for concession and \$20 for groups.

For further information, visit bent.karmadance.org.



Left: Raina Peterson, who grew up in Warragul, is preparing for present dance show "Bent Bollywood" at the Midsumma Festival in Melbourne. The piece explores "what it is to be queer and Indian through dance".

"The Places You'll Go" will be on stage at Trafalgar Public Hall on Saturday at 2pm and 8pm as well as Sunday at 2pm.

Amongst the 30 youth are a Tasmanian and eight local performers. They are Rachel Willig, Abel Ferguson, Vanessa Hornby, Alannah Hunt, Gabby Rota, Jess Duivenvoorden, Eliza Greenall and Lewis Neale.

Six of the eight have been assisted by a Baw Baw Shire Council community development grant after showing committed interest in performance arts through their schools and with Warragul Youth Theatre.

Project coordinator Joanne Watt was thrilled to also receive funding support from Trafalgar and District Community Bank's Youth Foundation and Regional Arts Victoria's Regional Arts Fund.

"This project pulls together so many elements of modern theatre making practice," said Ms Watt.

"From the gem of an idea to making the base script material, to working maturely in an ensemble setting with a time constraint, as happens professionally. (We) put it all together in an intensive residential immersion setting at Allambee Camp."

"This is a great opportunity for young actors to stretch their skills intensively and to meet young actors from diverse locations and with differing experiences and lifestyles," she added. "Opportunities for young people to work on contemporary Australian theatre with consideration of their life joys and stressors, makes young writers and young actors a great mix."

The second part of the project will see totaly new productions springing from the same scripts in Bendigo during July.

The shire's community development grant will assist six different young actors attend.

Tickets to "The Places You'll Go" performance at Trafalgar are \$12.80 per person.

For bookings, visit eventbrite.com.au. Tickets will also be available at the door.

THE VICTORIAN DRAMA LEAGUE INC. THEATRE CRAFT YOUTH UNLIMITED

PERFORMING AT TRAFALGAR PUBLIC HALL

SAT 20 JANUARY AT 2PM AND 8PM **WRITTEN BY DIDEM CAIA AND STEPH CLARK**

SUN 21 AT 2PM

TICKETS \$12 AT THE DOOR OR AT EVENTBRITE.COM.AU

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For more information contact Joanne Watt on 0408 366 481, email summerschool@theatre Craft.org.au or visit www.theatre Craft.org.au

LOCAL EVENT LISTING

Warragul Regional Newspapers P/L, publisher of The Gazette and The Trader, and the Drouin & District Community Bank, support district community organisations by promoting upcoming public events free in a

COMMUNITY EVENT CALENDAR

The calendar is published monthly in The Gazette and The Trader, in the first week or editions of the month.

Post this form to Community Event Calendar, Warragul Regional Newspapers, P.O. Box 305, Warragul 3820, or deliver to 97 Queen Street, Warragul 3820.

Event Name:

Event address:Event date:

Contact person:Contact Phone: