

MALTHOUSE
THEATRE



NATIVE DIGNITY

INFO PACK



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What's your story?

Native Dignity

INTRODUCTION

Native Dignity is a unique performance, developed as programming to complement the exhibition, *Colonial Life & the art of S.T.Gill* at State Library Victoria, provoking audiences to rethink what Colonial life was like for Koori Victorians during the 19th Century. Using the illustrations of Samuel Thomas Gill (or S.T. Gill), Native Dignity is an act of self-determination reimagining race relations, offering up radical visions through hidden histories and possible futures. Featuring the poetry of Robbie Batzke, opera singer Shauntai Batzke, contemporary dancers Carly Sheppard and Baden Hitchcock.

Duration: 1 hour



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*This performance/Native Dignity was developed
in partnership with State Library Victoria*

*COVER IMAGE / Native dignity by Samuel Thomas Gill, 1818-1880.
Image is from the collections of the State Library of NSW*



PRODUCER / JASON TAMIRU

Jason Tamiru is a proud Yorta Yorta man. He is the producer of Blak Cabaret, producer of Smith Street Dreaming, associate producer of The shadow king, and founder and producer of the Melbourne Comedy Festival's Deadly Funny program. He is also associate producer of the inaugural Melbourne Indigenous Arts Festival, and recipient of the VIPA 2012 Uncle Jack Charles Award and the British Council's National Indigenous Leadership Award.



POET / ROBBIE BATZKE

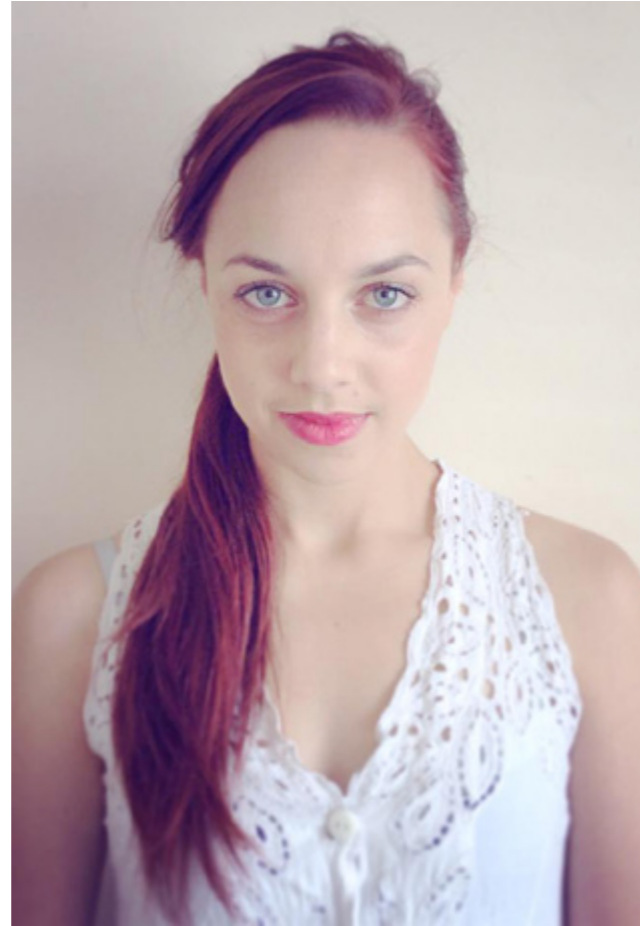
Robbie Batzke is a proud Miriam Torres Strait Islander man. Originally from Cairns but now based in Melbourne, he is the founding director of Soul4GIVE, a not-for-profit Indigenous advocacy for the advancement of Indigenous wellbeing. Robbie has previously acted as artistic director for musical events in Queensland and provided music management for various performing artists. He now shares his story and social views through the medium of spoken word and poetry.





SOPRANO / SHAUNTAI BATZKE

Wiradjuri singer/songwriter Shauntai Batzke will make her Sydney Opera House debut later this year with the Short Black Opera Company in Deborah Cheetham AO's opera Pecan summer. After a short stint in New York working with singers, maestros and directors from the Metropolitan Opera House and completing two consecutive years with the Melba Opera Trust, Shauntai is now working on Puccini roles for the stage and music programs with Soul4GIVE.



DANCER / CARLY SHEPPARD

Based in Melbourne, Carly Sheppard is an emerging performance artist specialising in dance and choreography, and descending from the Kurtjar, Wallangamma, Takaluk and Kunjin language groups of North Queensland. After studying Careers in Dance at NAISDA Dance College and a Bachelor of Dance at the Victorian College of the Arts and Music, Carly has been developing her multidisciplinary practice across forms of dance and choreography, visual art, music and theatre.



DANCER / BADEN HITCHCOCK

Baden Hitchcock is a Melbourne-based indigenous contemporary artist. A recent graduate from VCA, he has worked with choreographers Antony Hamilton, Lee Serle, Becky Hilton, Lina Limosani, Maria Randall and Prue Lang. He has most recently performed in Antony Hamilton's production Nyx as part of the Melbourne Festival. Baden also has a strong background in music, receiving his Performance Certificate in violin and also being a member of the Short Black Opera Company, performing in Pecan summer. He received and participated in the Australian Dance Theatre internship as well as a choreographic residency at Art House – North Melbourne Town Hall.

NATIVE DIGNITY

**PRE-PERFORMANCE COMMENTS ABOUT ST GILL'S
ARTWORK NATIVE DIGNITY C.1860**

'The rightful custodians mocking the foreigners. A colonial parody. History and today.'

'An exception that proves the rule.'

'Either an image of an aboriginal couple mocking the style of whites OR due to the caption is a white artist lampooning social aspirations of aborigines? A puzzle.'

'I see an Aboriginal man and woman parading proudly and happily around in European style clothing. In a state of half dress. Maybe they have adapted it to suit what they want to do with it. Do they have to wear European clothes to have dignity in the eyes of the white settlers?'

'A cheeky send up of the white settlers and their inappropriate dress for the climate accomplished in act of mimicry.'

'2 people who have adapted another culture's clothing, but don't know the right way of wearing them.'

'Southern darkies caricature of Native Australians.'

'A parody of white upper class folk. We are moving with exuberance and style of our own. In the background are raised eyebrows – of envy. What will happen next? Congratulations Black & Bright Festival.'

'Aboriginals dressed up in weirdly tattered western dress. I hope they're poking fun at the white people in the background – but I'm not sure about that! Is there something more sinister going on?'

'Very interesting. I think they (Gill) [intend] to out humour the colonels [sic].'



NATIVE DIGNITY

**POST -PERFORMANCE COMMENTS ABOUT ST GILL'S
ARTWORK NATIVE DIGNITY C.1860**

'Wonderful performance – profound, lucid & with bite. Sarah'

'After. I think it shows the class & character of the Aboriginal people.'

'The juxtaposition of cultures clearly shown. Loved it.'

'After. Strength.'

'There's no dignity in meeting expectations of appearances.'

'Our clothes may be in tatters, but our spirit is not.'

'After. Survivors.'

'The play shows how time has evolved opera singers dancers in modern contemporary style – The narrator Indigenous people have a voice that is getting louder & louder. I loved the whole experience – wish I was in Melbourne this weekend to experience more. Thank you. Impressive.'

'Resilience. Dignity – where possible Non subservience'

'CLEAR VIEW OF THE CLIMATE.'

'Two people dressed in their best and out on the town'

'There is a sly humour from the artist, subverting the status quo, with dignity held by our Native Australians no matter their new clothes – which are superfluous anyway'

'We all have much to learn + live by.'

'Lordy, Lordy. Pushing against the attitude Clever, brave, human dignity Thanks to Jason & amazing artists for giving us the strength to keep on keeping on our voices. Mixture of beauty, angst, humour and courage.'



TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

GENERAL

Native Dignity features 4 artists interpreting 27 projected S T Gill images in a provocative and entertaining performance. The Poet and Soprano are solo performers with the Dancers are a duo. The Poet performs in 4 scenes. The Soprano and Dancers perform in 2 scenes each. In total there are 8 performance scenes interpreting 27 projected images.

NATIVE DIGNITY PERFORMERS

Robbie Batzke: Poet
Shauntai Batzke: Soprano
Cary Sheppard: Dancer
Baden Hitchcock: Dancer

STAGING (TO BE SUPPLIED BY VENUE)

Native Dignity is very simply staged. The Venue should provide a clean stage surrounded with black legs and boarders and preferably a black or red curtain at the rear of the stage.

Also enquired on stage, 2 microphones on stands, 1 lectern, 2 tall adjustable lamps.

PROJECTOR AND SCREEN (TO BE SUPPLIED BY VENUE)

Venue to provide projector and screen large enough for audience viewing during Native Dignity performance.

Venue should discuss Projector and Screen with Native Dignity Producer in advance

LIGHTING (TO BE SUPPLIED BY VENUE)

A good cover is required for the dance performance.

Spot lights or tall lamps to be used for Poet and Soprano.

Lighting should not be in contrast with projected images.

AUDIO (TO BE SUPPLIED BY VENUE)

VENUE SOUND OPERATOR MUST BE LOCATED AT A GOOD MIXING POSITION, PREFERABLY REAR OF STALLS.

Good quality FOH system for a general cover
2 mics on stands for performers
2 fold back speakers
MP3 play back facilities at desk

CREW

The show travels with a Producer and 4 Performers

VENUE CREW

One Sound Board Operator.
One Lighting Board Operator.

DRESSING ROOMS

Minimum of 2 dressing rooms (M, F)
Bottled Water available for performers
Platter of fruit for performers

SCHEDULE

Stage, Lighting and Sound should be set up 2 hours prior to performance.

Sound checks will need to be done for all performers. Should commence 90 minutes prior to curtain.

Projected items set and ready to go for performance.

WARDROBE

An iron and ironing board should be available in the dressing rooms.

Mirror should be available in the dressing rooms.

PRODUCTION COSTS

Please contact the producer Jason Tamiru:
03 9685 5100
0423-050-391
Jtamiru@malthousetheatre.com.au

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

Jason Tamiru Producer
03 9685 5100
0423-050-391
Jtamiru@malthousetheatre.com.au

