

The
Blue
bird

TOO
CLOSE
TO
THE
SUN

Mechanicals

The Bluebird Mechanicals

“The sun is approaching the earth, kissing its surface with her scorched lips. We all will die like this. We all can't die like this. Kiss me once Kostya before it all disappears. To know we're real, to know we're here.”

- NINA FROM THE BLUEBIRD MECHANICALS

THE SHOW

The Bluebird Mechanicals is an uncanny and powerful contemporary solo performance piece that delicately brings a series of disparate elements together into a devastating climax. Inspired by the aftermath of Chekov's *The Seagull* and the final fiery flight of the Hindenburg, The piece takes place inside a series of life-sized

natural history museum dioramas enveloped by a careful, immersive visual and sound design.

In the show, Kostya is dead and Nina is a failure. Birds speak. The Hindenburg careens towards oblivion. A Russian woman sits outside it all in a portrait studio, commenting on history and memory and our inability to listen. Fundamentally, the

work is about being on a cusp, a turning point, something explosive and dangerous going on in the contemporary world (i.e. climate change).

There is an aesthetic of taxidermy and wood, flying machines and linen. The work seeks to introduce the historical into the frame of contemporary performance. The show contains projections

and films that flicker inside cabinet boxes and screens that float with imagery. Much of the power of the work will come from an intricate sound, projection and lighting design. The piece will be inventive, handmade, theatrical and imaginative in its qualities, and in the ways it brings these worlds into life.

WRITER/DEVISER/PERFORMER: **TALYA RUBIN**
CO-DEVISER/DIRECTOR: **NICK JAMES**
SOUND DESIGN: **HAYLEY FORWARD**
LIGHTING DESIGN: **RICHARD VABRE**
VIDEO DESIGN: **SAM JAMES**
SET DESIGNER: **CATHIA PAGOTTO**
VISUAL DESIGN AND CONCEPT: **TALYA RUBIN**

This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through the Australia Council, its arts funding and advisory body.



The Bluebird Mechanicals was first developed through Metro Arts.

!Metro Arts

The Bluebird Mechanicals has been developed, in part, through The Collaborations, an initiative of Canada's National Arts Centre English Theatre.



Too Close To The Sun acknowledges the support of the Theatre Arts Residency program at The Banff Centre.



This performance was supported through the Rex Cramphorn Studio's Artists-in-Residence Program, in the Theatre & Performance Studies department at the University of Sydney.



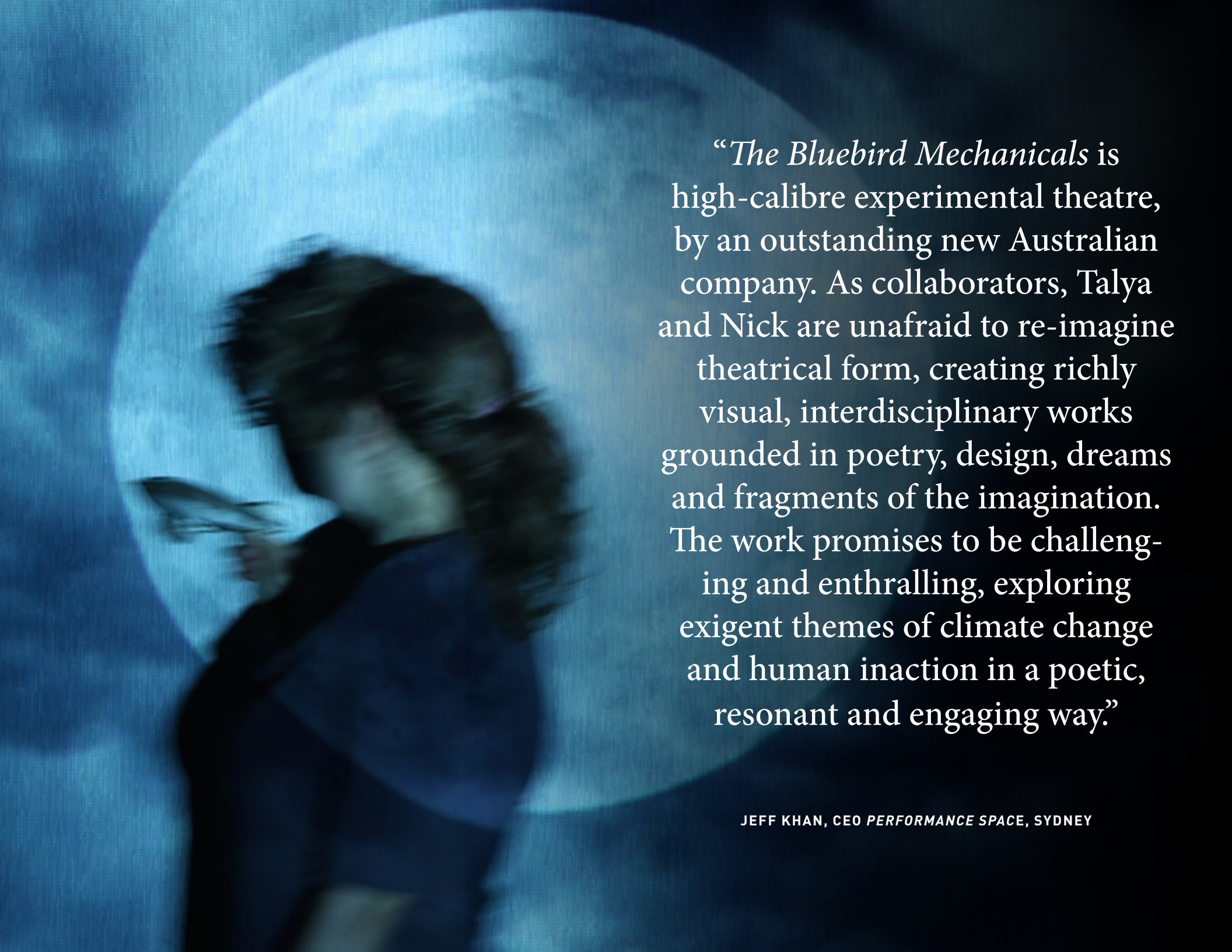
This project is supported by the NSW Government through Arts NSW.



The Bluebird Mechanicals was assisted through HotHouse Theatre's A Month in the Country residential program, a project delivered in partnership with Albury City. Assistance has also been provided by: Playwrights' Workshop Montreal.

CONTACT

TOOCLOSETOTHESUN.THEATRE@GMAIL.COM

A blurred, blue-toned photograph of a person in motion, possibly a dancer or performer, against a large, bright circular light source. The person is in the foreground, slightly out of focus, with their arms and torso visible. The background is a dark, textured blue with a large, bright, circular light source that creates a strong glow and lens flare effect. The overall mood is artistic and dynamic.

“The Bluebird Mechanicals is high-calibre experimental theatre, by an outstanding new Australian company. As collaborators, Talya and Nick are unafraid to re-imagine theatrical form, creating richly visual, interdisciplinary works grounded in poetry, design, dreams and fragments of the imagination. The work promises to be challenging and enthralling, exploring exigent themes of climate change and human inaction in a poetic, resonant and engaging way.”

JEFF KHAN, CEO PERFORMANCE SPACE, SYDNEY

TOO CLOSE TO THE SUN is an innovative interdisciplinary solo performance-making company creating and touring work in Canada and Australia. The key founding artists, Talya Rubin (performer/devisor) and Nick James (director/co-devisor) are a husband and wife team. We work with Canadian and Australian collaborators at the forefront of their fields in sound, set, video and object design. Our materials come from threads of research as well as internal imagery. We make installation theatre works, both small and large scale, that bring together vivid and intensely original visuals and aesthetics with new writing. We are driven by transformation, immersion and intensity in the work we do.

TALYA RUBIN

(Devisor/Writer/Performer) is a Montreal born, Australian made writer, performer and creator of new work for live performance. She has toured with her original solo works to festivals in Adelaide, Brisbane, Sydney, Montreal, Prague and Toronto. Her most recent work was seen at Brisbane Festival, Performance Space, Arts House, Brisbane Powerhouse, Uno Festival and Théâtre La Chapelle. As a poet, Talya won the National Canadian Bronwen Wallace award for poetry for the most promising writer under the age of 35. She recently published her first book, *Leaving the Island*, with Véhicule Press.

NICK JAMES

(Co-devisor/Director) is a writer and film director born in Chile from Australian parents. Nick directed and co-devised *Of The Causes of Wonderful Things*. His short films have been screened at festivals in Italy, the Netherlands, Germany, Poland, Romania, Chile, Argentina, Ukraine, the United States, Canada and Australia. He was awarded two grants one from the Australian Film Commission and one from Film Victoria to travel to represent his film at the Stuttgart Film Winter Festival for Expanded Media and the Castro Theatre as part of the San Francisco International Gay and Lesbian Film Festival. His most recent Short *Complexe* was filmed in Quebec and is in post-production. He is currently co-writing a feature film with Talya.

HAYLEY FORWARD

creates compositions, sound designs, performances, and sound installations for the visual and performing arts. As an artist Hayley collaborates with Jess Olivieri and the Parachutes for Ladies whose exhibits include Framed Movements ACCA, Melbourne Festival 2014; Contemporary Australia: Women GOMA, 2012, Primavera 2011, MCA. As a sound designer, Hayley creates atmospheric soundscapes and incorporates ideas into the weave of her own creative work. Recent credits include Tacita Dean's, *Event for a Stage* at Carriageworks, Sydney Biennale 2014 and *Too Close to the Sun's Of the Causes of Wonderful Things*. Her sound design in theatre earned a Green Room award nomination.



B I O S



SAM JAMES

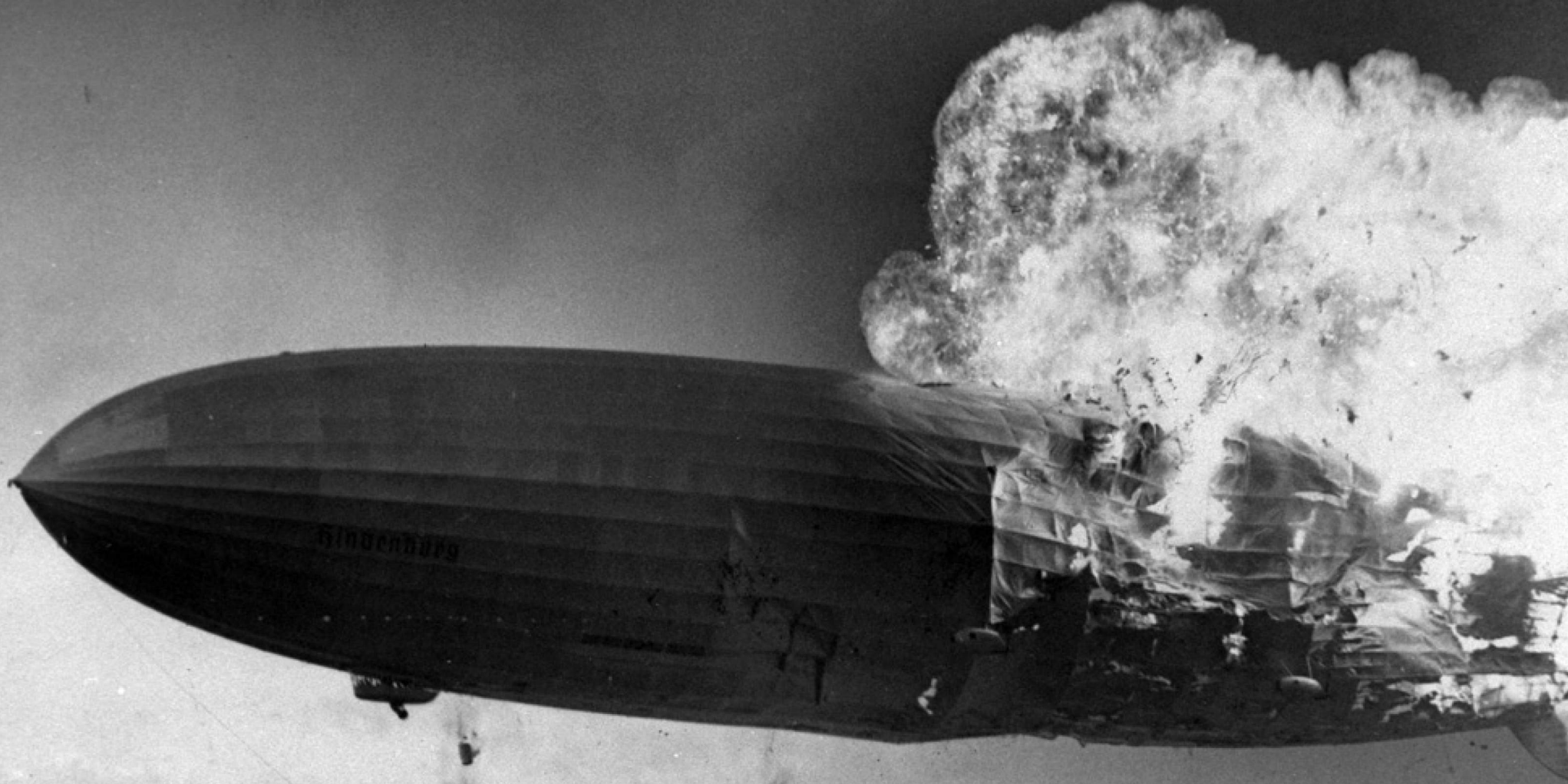
has been a projection designer for contemporary performance companies and independent dancers since 1995. As a video artist he has been involved in over 200 performance works including *Nun's Night Out* (winner Best Dance Film, Australian Dance Awards 2006), *The Piper* (My Darling Patricia, Sydney Festival 2014 - winner Best Children's Theatre Sydney Theatre Awards 2014), *GUDIRR GUDIRR* (Marrugeku 2014), and *My Radio Heart* (NORPA and Urban Theatre Project 2014). Other projection design works are *In Glass* (Narelle Benjamin, Sydney Opera House and Malthouse 2011) *Nightgarden* (My Darling Patricia, Arts House 2009).

CATHIA PAGOTTO

is a designer/director working in theater, dance, film and visual arts. She has designed lights, sets, and costumes for numerous productions worldwide, including Ame Henderson's Toronto-based Public Recordings. Pagotto has designed for NY-based visual artist/director Jonathan Berger on his epic visual theater projects *Noble Fir* (L.A.) and *Souvenir* (NY), as well as Portland-based director Scott Palmer (founder and artistic director of the Glasgow Repertory Theatre) on *Just One More Dance*. She graduated from the California Institute of the Arts with a Specialization in Design for the Theatre. During this time, she worked for renowned theatre director and filmmaker Janie Geiser, creating set elements and costumes for puppets used in the projects, and she was design assistant to Broadway set designer, Christopher Barreca.

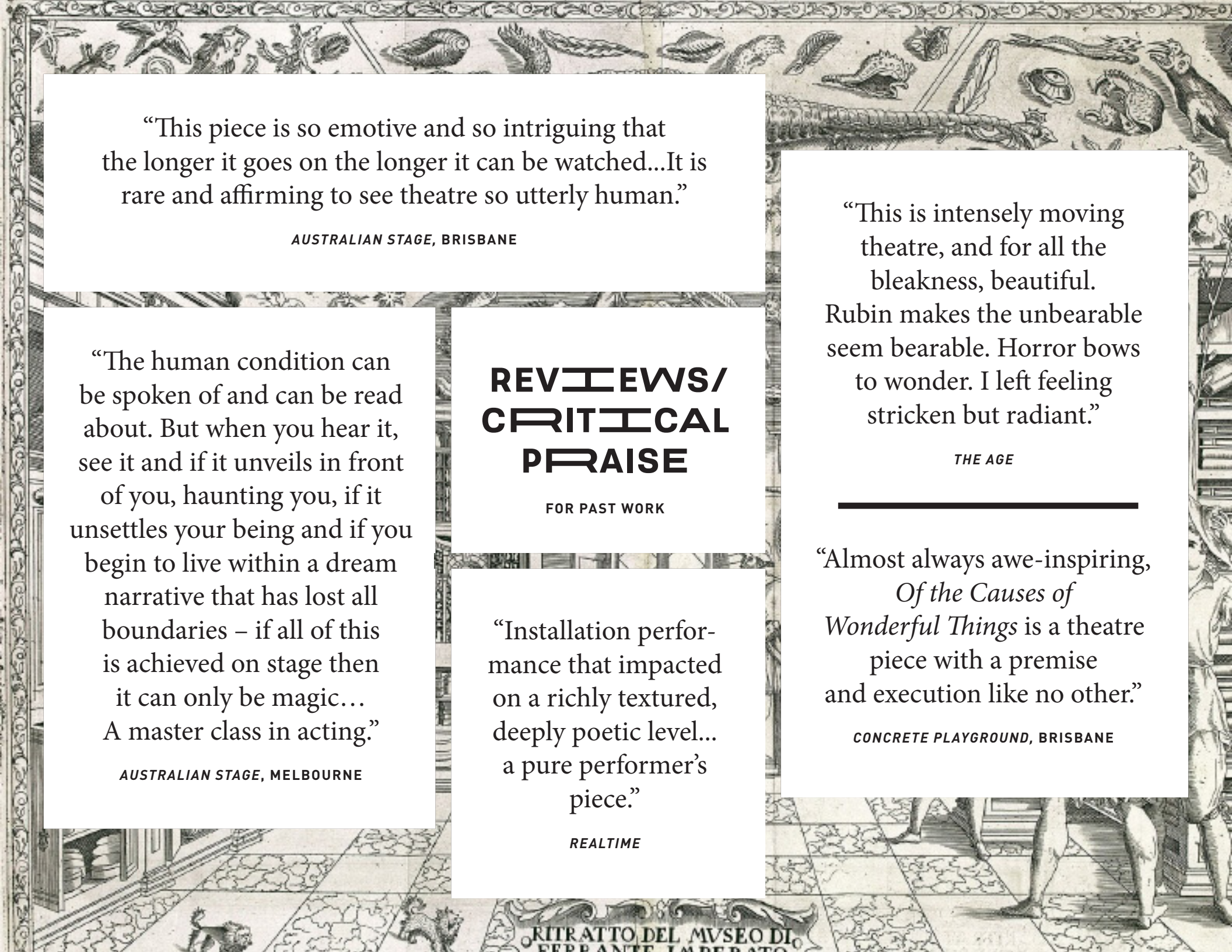
RICHARD VABRE

is a highly skilled lighting designer with an amazing facility for creative lighting of contained spaces. He has lit productions for MTC, Malthouse Theatre, Arena Theatre Company, NICA, Stuck Pig's Squealing, Chambermade, Rawcus, Red Stitch, Polyglot, Melbourne Worker's Theatre, Union House Theatre, Platform Youth Theatre, Aphids, Theatre Tarquin, and Dancehouse. Richard has won several Green Room Awards for his designs.



“Too Close to the Sun’s theatre practice is characterized by an intuitive but rigorous process, both artists’ strongly developed visual aesthetics, and a commitment to developing fully realised worlds with highly skilled collaborators.”

KIERAN SWANN, PROGRAMMING MANAGER,
METRO ARTS, BRISBANE



“This piece is so emotive and so intriguing that the longer it goes on the longer it can be watched...It is rare and affirming to see theatre so utterly human.”

AUSTRALIAN STAGE, BRISBANE

“The human condition can be spoken of and can be read about. But when you hear it, see it and if it unveils in front of you, haunting you, if it unsettles your being and if you begin to live within a dream narrative that has lost all boundaries – if all of this is achieved on stage then it can only be magic... A master class in acting.”

AUSTRALIAN STAGE, MELBOURNE

REVIEWS/ CRITICAL PRAISE

FOR PAST WORK

“Installation performance that impacted on a richly textured, deeply poetic level... a pure performer’s piece.”

REALTIME

“This is intensely moving theatre, and for all the bleakness, beautiful. Rubin makes the unbearable seem bearable. Horror bows to wonder. I left feeling stricken but radiant.”

THE AGE

“Almost always awe-inspiring, *Of the Causes of Wonderful Things* is a theatre piece with a premise and execution like no other.”

CONCRETE PLAYGROUND, BRISBANE



“The Bluebird Mechanicals
promises to delicately and
precisely unpack the cultural
psyche hidden in huge moments
of horror and change.”

SARAH GARTON STANLEY, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR,
ENGLISH THEATRE, NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE (CANADA)

Involving end of the world narratives, a dead artist, prophetic birds and a burning Zeppelin, *The Bluebird Mechanicals* looks at the performance space as a place of revelation. This new solo work examines climate change, human greed and inflation and comes to life inside a natural history museum diorama structure.

SUMMARY

ARTIST/COMPANY:

TALYA RUBIN
/TOO CLOSE TO THE SUN

PRODUCTION TITLE:

THE BLUEBIRD MECHANICALS

GENRE/Form:

INTERDISCIPLINARY
PERFORMANCE/THEATRE

CO-DEVISOR/DIRECTOR:

NICK JAMES

SOUND DESIGN:

HAYLEY FORWARD

LIGHTING DESIGN:

RICHARD VABRE

VIDEO DESIGN:

SAM JAMES

SET CONSULTANT:

CATHIA PAGOTTO

PUPPET MAKER:

BRYONY ANDERSON

DRAMATURGY:

CAMPION DECENT

ORIGINAL CONCEPT:

TALYA RUBIN

DEVELOPMENTS

2016: THE BANFF CENTRE, BANFF, CANADA – THEATRE PRODUCTION RESIDENCY

2014: METRO ARTS, BRISBANE – SHORTFUZE RESIDENCY

2014: HOTHOUSE THEATRE, ALBURY, NSW – A MONTH IN THE COUNTRY

RESIDENCIES

2014: PLAYWRIGHTS' WORKSHOP, MONTREAL, CANADA

– CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

2014: REX CRAMPHORN STUDIO, SYDNEY UNIVERSITY

– CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

TECHNICAL SUMMARY

DURATION: 75-80 MINUTES

VENUE: BLACK BOX SPACE WITH CAPACITY FOR RIGGING AND PROJECTION

SPACE: 10M X 10M

CAPACITY: UP TO 250

PERSONNEL: 3 (PERFORMER,

DIRECTOR, PRODUCTION MANAGER)

BUMP-IN: 2 DAYS

“Talya’s work is compelling and intelligent, intimate and atmospheric – both in writing, performance, staging and direction. She has made astute choices with her collaborators to create this stunning work.”

JUDE GUN, EXECUTIVE PRODUCER,
ADELAIDE FESTIVAL (ABOUT OF THE
CAUSES OF WONDERFUL THINGS)

TOO CLOSE TO THE SUN

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