

**NORPA PRESENTS**

# Flow



**Created and performed by Mitch King with Blake Rhodes  
Directed by Jade Dewi Tyas Tunggal**

**16 - 17 Nov**

**Maclean Showground  
YAEGL COUNTRY**

**23 - 25 Nov**

**The Quad, Lismore  
WIDJABUL WIA-BUL COUNTRY**

**norpa**

# From the Artistic Director

**Bringing Flow back to Lismore, and introducing it to new audiences in Maclean, is a chance for all of us to connect to the river and waterways through First Nations stories and perspectives.**

At the heart of Flow is Mitch's own journey in making the show — it's a brave undertaking to write and perform in a theatre show, even for the most experienced or well trained actor. Yet, Mitch has been steadily developing Flow, and NORPA has surrounded him with support and theatre making expertise to help stage this story sensitively.

The way Mitch has involved the community and elders has been inspiring to be a part of and all that support from the community can be felt and seen in Flow. This is a rare and brave piece — both personal and universal. As we listen to the Dirrangan story we get to reflect on the rivers and water of our region, the importance of water and the stark warning of the nature of greed, intertwined with the deeply personal journey of a hip hop artist trying to navigate his role in learning and sharing his culture.

Seeing Flow transformed from an in-theatre performance, into an epic outdoor experience is an absolute thrill. NORPA is proud to be remounting this work. It's apt to be sharing an ancient, yet contemporary local story in these times.

**Julian Louis**  
NORPA Artistic Director



# About the show

**Mitch King is a Yaegl Bundjalung man with a story to tell. Joined on stage by long term collaborator and sound artist Blake Rhodes, Mitch tells his story inspired by community, Country and the first native title claim on a body of water in Yamba.**

Told through contemporary dance, poetry, visual imagery and rap, Flow is a new dreaming, strengthening respect for Eldership and engaging young people in the living traditions held in local ancestral stories.

Flow is a yarn about Yaegl country and neighbouring nations within NSW. It's a tale of searching and finding identity in music, urban culture and nature, an ancient story acknowledging how and why water flows through this region and its cultural significance.



# Director's note

**We are Country and Country is us. What happens to Country happens to you and me.**


Flow, a journey of a Yaegl Bundjalung artist rediscovering identity and culture, is a dream creative project entangling my art with home, family and community. Meeting in Lismore at a gathering with 2017 NORPA Associate Artists, Mitch and I connected yarning about creativity and childhood memories of Angourie, Maclean and Woody Head.

Going back to Yaegl country and culture, the wellspring of Flow was initiated with Uncle Ron Heron, Ken Laurie and William Walker watching our rehearsal in the dance studio at Raymond Laurie Sports Centre in Yamba. Elders are our caretakers and teach us, then we realise the great regret that we have lost so much! Now is a time of catching up. We wish we had learnt this crucial information years ago and now we have lost people who had the connection and knowledge.

Flow has the permission from immediate family to tell this story. The spirit is communicating through the performers and all theatrical elements. Cultural work is addressing ongoing survival and we are mindful of host guest relationships on contested land. Audiences experience cultural revival and reconnecting with ancient wisdom through contemporary multimedia forms. Everything has a place. Knowledge keeping – storytelling. There is a lot we don't understand and don't know about.

Mitch stands and tells his story with fire and truth, continually making changes and becoming a fuller person. There are many emotional themes reinforced by the seismic sonic-world realised by Blake. Matriarchal water energy resonates in the sky-view paintings of Yaegl artist Frances Belle Parker and the all-embracing vocals of Githabul artist Jennifer Williams, balances the embodied belonging on stage.

Presently in our world the suffering and grief caused by rapidly emerging climate threat amplifies pre-existing vulnerabilities rising from displacement, marginalisation, corruption and conflict. Climate change is much more than an environmental crisis that is transforming the geopolitical landscape.



How can we prevent the collapse of biodiversity? What are the real ramifications for people affected by ongoing devastating fires and floods?

Flow is a powerful yet gentle offering that illuminates the generosity of Yaegl mob to share their insights of place despite so many years of oppression and in a difficult time of truth telling for culture, the Arts, society and ecology, especially as we appreciate the security of keeping things local.

Hearing and speaking Yaygirr language as we learn a very ancient and sacred story of care and healing, deepens our understanding and protection of this magnificent big wide river region. What have we done and continue to do? Is the Dirrangan reminding us to listen to land, community and law with an urgency to change our ways?

**Jade Dewi Tyas Tunggal**  
Director



# Writer's note

**In 2018, history was made when the Yaegl people of the Lower Clarence won a native title claim over the ocean.**

This was the first native title claim on a body of water and came after 20 years of proceedings. The native title claim meant that Yaegl people would finally be free to fish, go worming or gather pippies without someone looking over their shoulder.

My daughter also wanted to do a school project on Yaegl country and the day of the Yaegl determination. When she asked me about it, I realised I didn't know much about native title. This was such a momentous occasion for Yaegl people, so we did some research and what we found became part of the inspiration for Flow.

My vision for Flow is for the continuation of our ancestor stories through an urban, contemporary setting, while still valuing the practice and protocols of culture. The process for me of creating this show was very profound as it helped me to understand who I am as a Yaegl man and how I need to keep the stories of my people alive.

The journey of talking to elders and leaders of the Yaegl community resonated that Biirrinba, the beautiful Clarence River, is a very special part of our family that connects from our ancestors to the present day.

I would like to acknowledge and thank NORPA, all the elders, emerging leaders, family, friends and my Flow team that have been a part of this journey. This show is my gift of gratitude to you all.

**Mitch King**  
**Writer and Performer**

# The team

## CREATIVE TEAM

WRITER / PERFORMER  
Mitch King

COMPOSER / PERFORMER  
Blake Rhodes

DIRECTOR  
Jade Dewi Tyas Tunggal

VIDEO DESIGNER  
Mic Gruchy

LIGHTING DESIGNER  
Padi Bolliger

VISUAL ART  
Frances Belle Parker

CONTRIBUTING ARTIST  
Jennifer Williams

CULTURAL & DRAMATURGY  
CONSULTANT  
Rhoda Roberts AO

WRITING SUPPORT  
Kirk Page  
Damion Hunter

PERFORMANCE SUPPORT  
Fred Copperwaite

ORIGINAL LIGHTING DESIGN  
Karl Johnson

ORIGINAL VIDEOGRAPHY  
Maiara Skarheim

## PRODUCTION TEAM

CREATIVE PRODUCER FIRST NATIONS  
Paris Mordecai

PRODUCER  
Sasha Bradbury

PRODUCTION MANAGER  
Rich Morrod

STAGE MANAGER  
Benji Roberts

SITE MANAGER  
Sierra Bell

SITE PRODUCER  
Linden Tierney

## YAEGL ELDERS AND EMERGING LEADERS

Uncle Gilbert Laurie  
Uncle Ron Heron  
Aunty Lenore Parker  
William Walker  
Ken Laurie  
Shondell Laurie  
Frances Belle Parker  
Elsdon Charlton

# Cast & creative team



## **Mitch King**

WRITER / PERFORMER

Mitch King is a Yaegl Bundjalung man from the Far North Coast region of NSW. He is a creative producer specialising in hip hop music and dance and has been working at NORPA as an associate producer and associate artist since 2014. Flow is Mitch's debut as a writer and performer for theatre. Mitch is one third of award winning hip hop group Teddy Lewis King, and teaches dance with young people around the region. He has a background in youth work and collaborates with young people on community events and programs.



## **Blake Rhodes**

COMPOSER / PERFORMER

Blake Rhodes is a hip hop artist known for his innovative brand of electronic flavoured hip hop. He is a founding member of the celebrated hip-hop trio Teddy Lewis King and opener for powerhouse band Winston Surfshirt. A prolific lyricist and producer, Blake's releases include the 2019 single Wonderous, Fear and Loathing (2022), and his newest offering Can't You Tell (2023) which has been featured on Spotify's popular The Drip and Fresh Finds Au and NZ, Apple Music's BLAKLIST and FIRST playlists, as well as spins on Triple J, CADA and 2SER.



## **Jade Dewi Tyas Tunggal**

DIRECTOR

Angourie local Jade Dewi Tyas Tunggal is a director, choreographer and dancer, focusing on extending dance language through intercultural arts practice and interdisciplinary performance. With Australian convict/settler and Javanese royal/Buddhist ancestry, her imaginative and highly theatrical award-winning work has been created and performed nationally and internationally. Forged in Westernised contemporary performing arts, Javanese court arts, Bali temple ritual, BMC eco-somatic improvisation and creative collaborations with First Nations Australian dance artists, most recently Bangarra, Blakdance and Marrugeku, this year alongside NORPA Jade is also collaborating with organisations Angourie Dance Youth Project, Regional Arts Australia, Arts Northern Rivers, Critical Path, Art Gallery of NSW, Creative Recovery Network and Outback Theatre for Young People.

# Cast & creative team



**Mic Grunchy**  
VIDEO DESIGNER

Mic works across stage, screen and video art. He is a pioneer of Video Design for Theatre, designing shows for all the major companies and festivals around Australia over more than 30 years. He has produced projections on the Sydney Opera House for VIVID and created video designs for theatre, opera and dance around Australia, in London's West End, across Europe and in Asia. His shows have won Helpmann Awards and he was awarded an Australia Council Creative Australia Fellowship for Interdisciplinary Practice in 2012. Mic has edited feature films, TV, documentaries and his video artworks are in collections and museums around the world. Commissioned works include installations for the Sydney Opera House, Sydney Olympic Park and the Biennale of Sydney.



**Padi Bolliger**  
LIGHTING DESIGNER

Padi Bolliger is a Northern Rivers based performer, designer and technician and has been working in theatre and galleries for the past 25 years both on and off stage. He designed lighting for outdoor installations for Tropical Fruits, dance and theatre for visiting companies at NORPA and art installations at the Lismore Regional Gallery.

# Support acts



## **Blakboi**

Thu 16 & Fri 17 Nov, Maclean

Blakboi (Tom Avery) is a singer/songwriter and multi-instrumentalist who loops decks, drums, keys, guitars, voice and di. Visual artist and activist, surfer and poet, he will change the way you see the world. Blakboi is from the Gomeroi peoples of Central NSW, now living on Bundjalung Country around the Byron Bay/Lismore area.



## **The Boy of Many Colours**

Thu 23 Nov, Lismore

Indigenous rapper, producer, dancer, visual designer and editor Coedie Ochre Warrah McCarthy is The Boy Of Many Colors That Came In The Falling Rain, which is the traditional meaning and translation of his name. His tribes are the Yidinji Bar Burrum & Mamu of North QLD, and he was born on Bundjalung country where he grew up with elders teaching him culture, dance and art.



## **Madison King**

Fri 24 Nov, Lismore

Madison is a proud Widjabul, Arakwal and Nyanbul girl and emerging musician living on Bundjalung country. She is drawn to soul and R&B, and her performances draw from these genres. Madison has performed at various events across the Northern Rivers, including Bounce Back Day.



## **Benji Roberts**

Sat 25 Nov, Lismore

Benji is a Bundjalung man living on Bundjalung jugun. He is a singer, song writer and producer with over 15 years experience in the music and arts industry. He is particularly drawn to soul, R&B and blues genres. Benji uses music as a form to process and deal with personal struggles, as well as share his culture.

# Acknowledgements

## Thank you

NORPA thanks and acknowledges the support from everyone who contributed to make FLOW happen from our partners, the FLOW artists, creatives, crew, volunteers and community to the Yaegl Traditional Aboriginal Corporation and neighbouring First Nations communities from whom we continue to draw inspiration from your stories and knowledge.

## With respect

Mitch and the Flow team would like to acknowledge the recent passing of Uncle Ron Heron, a proud Yaegl Elder who played an integral role in the development of Flow. Uncle Ron worked tirelessly throughout his life to support his community and his impact on Yaegl country and beyond is felt deeply and widely. We would like to recognise and celebrate the generous contributions of Uncle Ron to the Flow project, in his sharing of knowledge, story and wisdom.

## Flow is supported by



This project has been assisted by the Australian Government through Creative Australia, its principal arts investment and advisory body, and the NSW Government through Create NSW.

© Production photos in this program are by Kate Holmes from NORPA's 2021 season of Flow

# About NORPA

NORPA is a company that makes theatre from the ground up. We take inspiration from the country and culture around us. Based in the Northern Rivers of NSW, we program and co-produce shows by leading national companies too, but creating original Australian work is at the heart of what we do and why we exist.

## NORPA BOARD

David Wolff (Chair)  
Jill Eddington (Secretary)  
Damian Kassagbi  
Julian Louis  
Naomi Moran  
Stephen Van Mil  
Meredith Wray

## NORPA TEAM

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR  
Julian Louis

CREATIVE DIRECTOR FIRST NATIONS  
Rhoda Roberts AO

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
Libby Lincoln

CREATIVE PRODUCER  
Sasha Bradbury

CREATIVE PRODUCER FIRST NATIONS  
Paris Mordecai

FUNDRAISING, OPERATIONS AND  
SPECIAL PROJECTS MANAGER  
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YOUTH & ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR  
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