

ARTIST BIOS: Children's Cheering Carpet - Saltbush

Davide Venturini, Artistic Director

Davide studied sociology at Cesare Alfieri University of Florence. Has been with TPO company since 1983. Within it, he has directed productions with an eye to the pedagogical aspects of art, and in particular the processes of visual communication, emphasising the value of images and the use in theatre of hi-tech devices. He currently holds the post of TPO author and Artistic Director.

Jason Cross, Artistic Director

Jason has worked as an Artistic Director, theatre director, physical performer and creative producer. From 2001-2005 Jason was the Artistic Director of *Big West Festival* (Melbourne, Victoria) one of Australia's leading multi art form festivals combining professional and community participation arts projects and creating a range of projects specifically for young people. In 1995 Jason was a founding member of the celebrated physical performance company *5 Angry Men* who he worked and toured with extensively until 2002. From the early 1990's Jason worked as an independent freelance theatre maker and director working independently and with companies such as *Anthill*, *Playbox*, *Five Dollar Theatre* and *La Mama*. Jason has realised commissions for major national arts festivals including Melbourne International Festival of the Arts - *Concrete Mountains* (1995) and *Rice Paddies* (2001) - and he has written and directed independent theatre works including *The Congress* and *Ereshkigal*. Jason was the Artistic Director of the 16th ASSITEJ World Congress and Performing Arts Festival in 2008 and is currently the Artistic Director of the 2009 Australian Festival for Young People - *Come Out*.

Sasha Zahra, Dramaturg

Sasha Zahra is a theatre maker and director graduating from the University of Adelaide in 1997, BA (Drama Studies). From 1999 – 2001 Sasha was the Artistic Director of D Faces Of Youth Arts (Whyalla) where she directed 5 major works and from May 02 – April 08 was the Artistic Director of Kurruru Youth Performing Arts where she directed and produced many successful projects including: *Wicked Sista*, *Soaring* (a new commission for the '05 Come Out Festival), *Crossing Paths* (winner 'best dance show' '06 Adelaide Fringe) and *Second to None* – a co production between Kurruru and Vitalstatistix nominated for a 2008 Ruby award). Other directing highlights include Stephen Berkoff's *Lunch*, Aristophanes', *Lysistrata*, Buchner's *Woyzeck*, Fiona Sprott's *Eager to Breathe* and '*in my life i died once or twice*', Astrid Pill's *H2O Babies*, Finegan Kruckemeyer's *Dinner*, and a reading of Johnny Gavlovski's *The last Session*. In 2004 Sasha undertook a residency with Won Smol Bag Theatre in Vanuatu (as part of the Australia Council's 'out there and everywhere initiative') directing 7 short touring works and in 2005 was the assistant director of Byron Lavery's *Frozen* for State Theatre Company SA. Currently Sasha is the Associate Artistic Director for the Australian Festival for Young People (Come Out), directs Kurruru's Stilt performance Troupe, is a tutor for Restless Dance Theatre. Later in 2009 Sasha will head back to Vanuatu to present a number of works at the Wan Smolbag International Theatre Festival and will direct Tracey Rigney's 'Slow Awakening' for Vitalstatistix Theatre Company.

Lou Bennett, Composer/Performer/Musician

Lou is a Yorta Yorta/Dja Dja Wurrung singer /songwriter /composer, best known as a member of singing group Tiddas. Lou has composed scores and sound scapes for many films and theatrical events, as well as performing as a solo artist alongside many of the best musicians in the world. She has recently begun acting, and creating her own theatre & comedy material and has been touring nationally and internationally with her band – Lou Bennett and the Sweet Cheeks.

Deon Hastie, Choreographer/Performer

Deon is a descendant of the Tjapukai people of Far North Queensland.

Deon graduated from the National Aboriginal and Islander Skills Development Association in 1998 with a Diploma in Dance. He undertook the Emerging Artist program with Leigh Warren and Dancers (LWD) in 1999 and was invited to become a full member in 2000. His first major role for the company was as Pierrot in Glen Tetley's *Pierrot Lunaire*. As a longstanding member of the company Deon has worked with a number of different choreographers including William Forsythe, John Utans, Michael Whaites, Peter Sheedy, Tony Rizzi and Gina Rings. Deon also performed in the Opera Trilogy series, *Ahknaten*, *Einstein on the Beach 1,2,3&4* and *Satyagraha*, and works by composer Phillip Glass presented by LWD and the South Australian Opera. As a member of LWD Deon has collaborated with Junction Theatre, Ballet Frankfurt, Australian String Quartet, Tankstream String Quartet and Zephyr String Quartet.

In 2006 he co-choreographed a work for Kurruru Youth Performing Arts Group, which was performed at the Adelaide Fringe Festival and won best Youth work at the Fringe Awards. Deon was nominated for the Rolex Mentor and Protégé Arts Initiative 2006. In 2007 Deon was invited to work with Gina Rings and Soo Yuen You in Company Miji's performance of *Reliquary*, fusing aboriginal and Korean styles of dance. He was one of 2 dancers of LWD chosen to work on a collaboration between Leigh Warren and Japanese choreographer Uno Man – *Wanderlust* – which was premiered in Japan 2006.

In 2008, Deon performed in *Seven* an award winning LWD performance which premiered at the Adelaide Fringe Festival and in collaboration with the Zephyr String Quartet LWD premiered *Impulse* and the award winning production *Shimmer* at the Adelaide Space theatre.

Anna Balducci, Dancer/Performer

Anna graduated from the Schweizerische Ballettberufsschule in Zurich in 1993. She went on to specialise at the Rudra Bèjart academy of Lausanne, broadening her skills as a dancer to encompass acting, singing, music and choreographic composition. She dances with "Ensemble" and "Company Blu". She has been involved in children's theatre since 2004 and presently works with TPO

Delwyn Mannix, Visual Artist/Designer

Del is a proud Wangkangurru woman of the Northern Flinders rangers/Simpson desert region of South Australia. She has worked extensively in schools, with community organisations, the Parks Community Centre, Kurruru Youth Performing Arts, Kalaya Children's Centre and has been commissioned to paint large scale public murals, community calendars and individual canvases. Del has been painting for 14 years and takes her inspiration from country – it's rich colours, textures, autumn tones of the desert and her mother. Her mother who died suddenly in 2007 was a part of the stolen generation and taken away from her family as a child. Del says: "Mum never finished her journey. But mum always said to me, the ancestors left their knowledge with me for painting. Mum

went through a lot in her life and I've always seen my paintings as a healing process for her. I feel, for me to paint the way I do, represents her connection to her people and desert home."

Elsa Mersi, Digital Designer

Elsa works in the fields of performing arts, computer graphics and video using a multidisciplinary approach. Her work focuses prevalently on research and experimentation in new ways of interpreting the relationship and interaction that link performer, image and space. She also conducts research into new languages and systems of computer-based projection.

Rossano Monti, Technical Designer

Rossano is a self-taught computer specialist having attended courses in computer engineering in Pisa until 2001. Since 1995 he has been a sound engineer and graphic artist for the Bonton group both live and in studio, he has contributed to the sTRANO nETWORW group and has taught computer studies. He has been with TPO since 2001 dealing with programming and software, computer systems management and staging the performances.

Spartaco Cortese, Sound Designer/Musician

Spartaco works on audio productions in multimedia projects using mainly electrical instruments and audio software. He has 5 albums to his credit 2 of which were solo under the pseudonym of Yellowcake, published in the second half of the 90s by KK Records, the seminal Belgian electronic music label. He has worked with TPO since 2000.

Touring

Children's Cheering Carpet – Saltbush is available for touring from 2010. If you need further information please contact Insite Arts



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More information on other works by TPO is available at www.tpo.it