

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

THE
STREET



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COMPANY PROFILE



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge the Ngunnawal and Ngambri peoples, the Traditional Owners of the unceded lands on which The Street Theatre stands and where we work, create, gather and live. We recognise their continuing connection to land, waters, knowledge and culture, and pay our respects to their Elders past and present.

WHO WE ARE

We are Canberra's award-winning creative powerhouse of inquiry, imagination and innovation. A theatre of new and old work, live ideas and shared stories. A producing company—the essential, artist-led engine where, through creative practice, Canberra's distinct identity is forged.

The Street commissions, creates, develops, produces, curates, and presents live performance that helps us talk to who we are and the world around us. We are Canberra's major investor in artists, creatives, and artsworkers, new theatre, music, and comedy over the last two decades.

The Street is the home for brave artistic voices to create experiences that resonate deeply and expand perspectives. We are a cultural anchor for Canberra and a place for everyone to feel they belong and can participate.





We exist to ignite creativity, conversation,
connection and affirm the beauty of existence.

OUR VISION

A theatre of inquiry and imagination for all, where our stories are forged and shared with the world.

OUR MISSION

We make brave creative work that asks big questions of who we are and the world around us.

OUR GOALS

To make relevant and remarkable theatre and live performance experiences

To invite, extend reach and deepen connection with our audiences

Be a leading creative broker by forging partnerships and maximising exchange in our communities

Be an accountable, resilient and sustainable Street Theatre enterprise

OUR VALUES

Artistry

Excellence in all we do

Adaptability

Innovative and flexible response from all

Belonging

A place for everybody

Hospitality

Working together, shared responsibility

Bravery

Bold and boundless creative imagination

Stewardship

Respecting intergenerational legacies and futures

ARTISTIC PROGRAM

Present

A year-long curated program of remarkable and diverse theatre and live performance.

Develop

The professional development of artists and performing arts workers. New work development. New form investigation. Professional practice in the ACT.

Susan Blain



S

There is a moment before a theatrical performance begins, the silence of anticipation, of possibility suspended in the air. It is a silence I have sat inside many times at The Street Theatre, and it never loses its power and its sense of possibility.

As I write this message, I do so with a full heart. After more than seven years on the Board, as a member, Deputy Chair, and most recently Chair, this is my final report in this role. It is a moment to reflect, honestly and with deep gratitude, on what The Street is and what it has come to mean to me.

Performance in Australia

The arts sector in Australia continues to operate under sustained pressure. Nationally, the disruptions of recent years have reshaped audience habits and tested the resilience of performing arts organisations of every size.

In Canberra, the ongoing transformation of the CBD adds a local dimension to that challenge, with redevelopment, shifting access routes, and disrupted foot traffic presenting conditions we must navigate carefully. We have done so, and we have done so without losing our footing.

What has not diminished is Canberra’s appetite for live, original performance. If anything, audiences are returning with greater purpose and discernment, and an understanding that what The Street offers is not available everywhere.

A Season of Distinctive Work

Our Performance Works this year are The Maids, The Chosen Vessel, and The Story of the Oars, each reflecting the daring, distinctive spirit that defines this organisation. Alongside these, the co-productions of Der Rosenkavalier, National Opera and Newsies Jnr, Music Theatre Projects Ltd, were great collaborations.

On the closing night of one of our productions, I fell into conversation with two patrons who had attended several works across the season. They were not arts industry insiders, simply Canberrans who had quietly made The Street part of their year. When I asked what kept bringing them back, the answer was immediate:

“The Street connects us to possibility. You come here not knowing quite what you’ll find, and you leave feeling like the world is slightly larger than it was before.”

Performance and possibility is, I think, the most honest articulation of The Street’s purpose I have encountered, not from a strategic document, but from two people standing in our foyer, slightly reluctant to leave.

Giving Sustains Us

The ACT Government and ArtsACT have been steadfast partners in our mission, and we are genuinely grateful for their continued belief in the value of independent performance. Their investment is an affirmation that original, community-rooted artistic work belongs at the centre of Canberra’s cultural life.

Private philanthropy is also central to what The Street can be. Donor support allows us to take the kinds of risks that make this organisation worth caring about, commissioning new work, backing emerging artists, and keeping our programme accessible to audiences for whom price can be a barrier.

The Board’s Year

I am proud of what this Board has achieved. We finalised a communications strategy that gives The Street a clear, confident public voice. We undertook a thorough review of our Constitution, examining our objects, our name, and our purpose through the lens of both founding intent and future obligations. The result is a governing document that is modern in principle, clear in purpose, and true to the spirit of this place.

I joined the Board in 20

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND CEO

Caroline Stacey OAM



The Street sits at the intersection of live ideas and shared stories and notwithstanding the challenging structural conditions facing theatre today, 2025 was alive with excitement, vibrancy, innovation and artistry. As I sat with audiences absorbed in the experiences unfolding on stage I was reminded many times over of our role as a home for brave artistic voices, a creative engine for bold new work, and a cultural anchor for Canberra.

In 2025 The Street staged five productions revisiting break-through classics, big conceptual works where completely new theatrical forms emerged, and welcoming overseas award-winning comedies. We worked in partnership with smaller independent companies to uplift their work. Street productions were published in partnership with Currency Press. Theatre works reflected The Street's leadership role in the ACT in producing new work and new formats of work and advancing innovation in the performing arts sector. It is rewarding to see these works recognised through audience attendance, sharing of responses in the foyer and online, and in the critical acclaim they attract.

Our productions profiled professional actors and creatives in the sector with our investment in artists and form given a Canberra Critics Circle Award for *The Chosen Vessel*. In all our work, we look to advance careers and connections for creatives during their professional journey, from emerging to well established and internationally acclaimed.

Like many arts organisations, we faced financial challenges reflecting economic pressures and shifting audience behaviours. Our net position shows us continuing to achieve small incremental gains as we work strategically to reshape how we work knowing we have to be resilient for what the future holds. Considered strategies around programming, particularly in relation to new Australian work and the mix of artists are critical. Central to our success is collaboration and strategic alliances to extend connection, impact, and the resonance of artistic work.

What I loved in 2025 was the meeting of artistic ambition and audience appetite. A year filled with curiosity, exploration, the ridiculous and societal issues requiring deep exploration.

We presented Jean Genet's iconic psychological thriller *The Maids*, showcasing our outstanding female artists in one of the most significant plays of the 20th century. Fierce and exquisite with an claustrophobic eye-popping red space, exceptional performances and sold-out season it was a rollercoaster ride.

A new genre of Aboriginal Gothic emerged with Dylan Van Den Berg's *The Chosen Vessel*, a powerful re-imagining of the Barbara Baynton dramatic short story. Hailed as a milestone work this poetic drama was rightly recognized as theatre of the highest standard and of utmost importance to the Australian cannon.

Another standout production was the original play with music *The Story of The Oars* by Nigel Featherstone. Gripping, lyrical, and atmospheric

this compelling theatre work featured striking visuals, an unforgettable haunting sound world from deconstructed piano centre stage, and a marvellous ensemble of actors.

Hilarious, intelligent, and artfully entertaining <



YEAR IN

THE STORY OF THE OARS



It's an eerie, atmospheric tragedy that will keep you thinking long after you leave the theatre.
[Stage Whispers](#)

DIANA: THE UNTOLD AND UNTRUE STORY



Funny and affectionate and, of course, a little bit saucy
[Stun Magazine](#)



THE CHOSEN

CONTEMPORARY MUSIC PROGRAM



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NEW WORK IN DEVELOPMENT

The Street has a two-decade history as Canberra's major investor in theatre-makers and the creation of new work and is Canberra's go to space for creative investigation with rigour and care. The Street's work is shaped by a desire to create and produce work that talks to who we are and the world around us, to offer diverse and alternative perspectives with imaginative reach and theatricality.

In 2025 we continued to put story quality at the centre of our creative process with our focus on writers, composers and new writing that contributes to a strong Canberra theatre identity. Nurturing artists across the career spectrum, supporting with space, time, resources, and expertise. And across all stages of a project's life. Performance works have a two to three year development period from initial idea to stage production. Keeping audiences at the centre of the experience we seek feedback from our peers, artists, and community formally and informally with each work in development. Programs include: Early Phase, First Seen, Master It and Resident Street.

In 2025 we incubated new ideas and work, progressed existing work with pre-production developments of The Story of the Oars as it headed towards production in October, and supported partner companies Luminescence Chamber Singers and Music Theatre Projects.



Working at The Street Theatre on the piece "They Come to Watch Me Die" provided significant development for myself as a dramaturg. The opportunity to develop ideas in the workshop environment, with actors who could instantly bring the script to life enabled me to see the work as it would appear on the stage. I found I developed from looking at the script scene by scene to being able to visualise the whole piece and more easily identify areas and scenes for improvement.

Justene Tayler-Cannon

It's just so invigorating to be a part of a development and the resultant discussion. The Street is the only place I know in the region where there's intellectual rigour and risk and ambition.

Nigel Featherstone

Hornig and the Gadget

By Stephen Lindsay

A musical imagining of the evening spent by Los Alamos scientist Donald Hornig atop a rickety 103-ft tall surplus Forest Services tower next to the world’s first, fully armed atomic weapon on the desert plains of Alamogordo, New Mexico.

Assembly complete, a paranoid J, Robert Oppenheimer orders the 23-year Hornig to climb the tower, install the final ‘X-Unit’ detonation device, and then stay to babysit “The Gadget” against any possible sabotage. It is mere hours until the scheduled “Trinity” test detonation at 05.30 am July 16, 1945.

The Street provided us with the space to intensively work, tools to enable us to connect our locally based work with international input, and sound equipment and technical and front of house support to allow us to deliver a high-quality experience during our explorations, as well as for the audiences who attended our showings. When in residence at The Street, it is not merely a transactional matter, but is becomes a place where the whole company attached to the project can feel at home, and are able to open up to the experience, immerse themselves and go deeply into the work.

Dianna Nixon Music Theatre Projects

Production

Producer Music
Theatre Projects

Dramaturg
Dianna Nixon

Movement
Oakelani Edmonds
Helen Linkenbagh

Sound
Kimmo

EARLY PHASE



2020 Early Phase artist Ylaria Rogers maintained momentum on her verbatim inspired work *We Are Not Alone*. This theatre piece aims to empower the real voices of survivors of child sexual abuse, telling their stories, using their words.

2023/24 Early Phase artist Tracy Bourne continued work on *Photon's Arrow*, a conceptual work that explores ideas of time and memory, light and dark, grief and the beginning of the universe. Tracy worked through the text and scoring all music in preparation for a development together with various grant applications.

2022 Early Phase artist Katrina Waters secured significant co-investment from multiple prestigious institutions including ANU School of Music, Mornington

Peninsula Shire, ANU Gender Institute to commission five leading Australian female composers. Using interviews with women with large, loud and unladylike voices (professional dramatic sopranos), retranslated into '*Songs for Loud Women*' – challenging who gets to tell the stories and which narratives should be sung in opera. In 2025 she completed her five-song cycle grounded in qualitative life-history interviews and presented the work and findings at a symposium in October.

Working at The Street over the past 8 or so years has been a creative highlight for me. I want to thank you for bringing me in on projects as a director and performer and supporting Photon's Arrow. I have learnt so much about my creative practice and the practice of making theatre through these experiences. I sincerely believe that my work has become much richer and more rigorous as a consequence of these opportunities.

Tracy Bourne

This program of masterclasses for ACT based theatre and performance makers, involving artist development initiatives with leading practices is deigned to extend artistic practice, facilitate exposure to new processes and ideas, and build performance-making knowledge and connections.

GERMAN AUSTRALIAN OPERA GRANT

Free masterclass for young professional singers and advanced students, open to the public, led by international conductor Dr David Kram AM, Artistic Director of German-Australian Opera Grant.

26 —
MAY

NATIONAL OPERA – MONTH OF MASTERCLASSES

A variety of free sessions with experienced professionals sharing their knowledge on key skills relevant to performers at all levels.

24 May – Auditions Masterclass with Sarah Mann

31 May – Musical Theatre to Opera Masterclass with Dianna Nixon

7 June – Male Voices Masterclass with Don Christopher

14 June – Open Voices Masterclass with Sonia Anfiloff

24 MAY –
14 JUN

A rip-roaring session with so much useful talk about the voice including 'messe di vice'. Really wonderful to feel connected to singers in other parts of Australia and what is happening in Australia and Germany through this masterclass.

Participant

The Street offers more than rehearsal and venue support. It presents an opportunity to embed opera within a vibrant interdisciplinary ecosystem – where creative processes sit alongside finished work and where independent and professional artists are invested In an environment of inquiry, diversity and collaboration.

National Opera





Ignite is our specialist program featuring a series of annual and one-off themed events facilitating the examination of a theme or art form in depth through a combination of genres or disciplines such as music, dance, theatre, talk.

The Canberra Comedy Festival

The Street reveled in producing a stacked line-up of whip-smart stand ups, sketch maestros, and world class comedy geniuses over 10 nights keeping the City West side of Canberra buzzing. 2025 marked our eleventh instalment of partnering with the Canberra Comedy Festival and we delivered another huge year as one of the major hubs. We hosted some of the most exciting names in comedy as well as supporting emerging local artists Anneli Cole, Foster and Cohan, Laura Johnston, and Jeremy Smith with additional rehearsal time, technical support and creative feedback. Festival signature events such as ACT Raw Comedy Finals, Comedy Debate, and the all-ages Clean Comedy Spectacular continued to remain firm favourites. Wil Anderson had a cracker of a season with Watchu Talkin' Bout Wil, Australian legend Nazeem Hussain made us pay, and we were introduced to Lizzy Hoo, Jenny Tian, unpredictable improvisers The Bear Pack and comedy samurai Takashi Wakasugi while Canberra-grown funster Bronwyn Lewis ate up the stage.

Production

Canberra Comedy Festival

Tim Duck
David Graham
James Stevenson
Benjamin Stevenson

The Street

Dean Ellis

PARTICIPATE

To amplify the conversation and connection we deliver a series of discussion forums and pre and post-show exchanges to engage audiences to probe themes, questions and ideas presented in our season.



THE MAIDS POST-SHOW FORUM

Discussion and Q&A led by Artistic Director–CEO Caroline Stacey ^{OAM} with *The Maids* cast and creative team about their artistic process.

28 —
MAY

TO THE BITTER END: JEAN GENET'S POWER AND PLAY

Loosely inspired by a true-crime headline from the 1930s and first performed at Paris's Théâtre de l'Athénée in 1947, Jean Genet's *The Maids* is an electrifying exploration of freedom and constraint, illusion and reality. Two women, locked in an absurd game they're determined to see through "to the bitter end", confront the helplessness not only of their social position, but of the human condition.

Associate Professor Leslie Barnes, Dr Gemma King and Dr Russell Smith from Australian National University's School of Literature, Languages and Linguistics in a conversation and Q&A on power, poetry, perseverance and the centrality of the outcast in Genet's work.

01 —
JUN

DAVID T. LITTLE IN CONVERSATION WITH CAROLINE STACEY ^{OAM}

New York composer David T. Little, visiting for the Australian premiere of his work *Ghostlight* as part of Divine Darkness, discusses new music now. Learn about his process creating *Ghostlight* and his unique perspectives on the world of opera and chamber music as a composer who has "a knack for overturning musical conventions" (The New York Times)!

04 —
JUL

THE CHOSEN VESSEL POST-SHOW FORUM

Discussion and Q & A led by Director Abbie-lee Lewis with *The Chosen Vessel* cast and creative team about their artistic process.

