



actor/writer Peter Cook's *Breaking the Castle* sees him play multiple roles in a work exploring the complexity of men's mental health and related themes. Photo: Kerrie Brewer.

## Cook breaking the mould

Writing and starring in your own work is a creative opportunity most actors only dream of.

Canberra's Street Theatre has provided a bevy of local creatives the opportunity to take their ideas from the page to the stage since they founded their First Seen program in 2012.

Accomplished stage and screen actor turned writer, Peter Cook, developed his new one-man work, *Breaking the Castle*, from a 10-page manifesto into a fully-fledged script via the First Seen program in 2019.

"As a first time writer, if I'd sent this in to other places it might not have gone anywhere ... Caroline (Stacey) saw enough in that to go 'this in an idea worth developing'," Cook tells *Canberra Weekly*.

*Breaking the Castle* was subsequently slated as The

Street's first in-house production for 2020.

With experience studying journalism and creating plays for young people, Cook knew writing was something that came to him.

"As an actor, a lot of the time you're sitting around the phone waiting for your manager to call.

"I wanted to work and I also felt I had something to say, so I thought I'd give writing a crack," he says.

The work continues to evolve throughout the four-week rehearsal process prior to taking the stage from 29 February to 14 March.

A graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts, Cook has lived and worked in Canberra over the past decade.

With *Breaking the Castle*, he plays multiple roles in a work

exploring the complexity of men's mental health concerns.

"The play is, to me, a slice of life of one human being, and I think a lot of people will see themselves reflected back.

"I made it as funny as I possibly can as well, because a lot of it is quite heavy. Getting people to laugh with you recognises truth."

Cook says the concept and themes covered in the work - addiction, love, family, grief, loss, trauma and reality - tie into the old adage of 'writing what you know'.

"I did go through a rough patch in my life; I've definitely been through some darker periods with depression and anxiety. I've definitely dealt with periods where I was using substances to cope.

"There's a lot of things in here that I wanted to say. Number one

is about addiction, which is very misunderstood and very easy for us to label people as addicts or junkies, and not see them as human beings who are struggling with life.

"I think we need to approach that topic with much more compassion.

"Number two is touching on what it's actually like to be an actor and to want to create art, and have that drive, and not be able to do it.

"Everyone has a dream or an ambition or a hope, and wants to feel fulfilled in their work. And the character in this play especially, who is different from me ... all he wants to do is be on stage," he says.

*Breaking the Castle* will be staged at *The Street, City West, 29 February-14 March;* [thestreet.org.au](http://thestreet.org.au)

- Denholm Samaras

## Big screen debut

The Honourable Miss Phryne Fisher (Essie Davis) is here to make her debut on the big screen in *Miss Fisher and the Crypt of Tears*. To celebrate the release of the film, we're giving you the chance to win one of 10 double passes to see it in cinemas.

Romantic wayside stops in the Far East, glamorous sojourns in the mansions of London, and a battle to survive the rolling sands of the Arabian Desert long enough to find the missing treasures. Solve numerous murders and break all aviation records as the lady detective wings her way home again! In cinemas 27 February. Please check online for a screening cinema near you.



### Enter to WIN

To enter, email [competitions@canberraweekly.com.au](mailto:competitions@canberraweekly.com.au) with 'Miss Fisher' subject field. Tell us your name, full contact details and who stars as Miss Fisher. Entries close 9am 27 February 2020 and winners drawn same day. One person. Entrants must be aged 18+.

## Learn to pipe, drum & dance

Pipe Band isn't just another hobby. It's a lifestyle you build and a family that grows with you.

Lessons available for pipers, drummer and dancers.

**First term membership fees FREE!**

The band meets every Wednesday from 5.30pm in Weston. Please contact us on the phone numbers below for more info.

**CONTACT:**  
Pipe Major: Fran Emerson 0412 567 768  
Drum Sergeant: Alex Crawford 0401 966 026  
[canberraceltic.org](http://canberraceltic.org)

## Do you suffer from hearing loss?

Join us for the ACT Deafness Resource Centre Hearing and Health Expo

**WHEN: 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020, between 10am-3pm**  
**WHERE: Hellenic Club Woden ACT**

**Hearing Awareness Week**, once again, gives us the opportunity to bring together the Hearing Industry under one roof. Hearing Australia (formerly Australian Hearing) will be in attendance on the day, to provide **FREE** hearing screening tests, but you must book first on 6232 3200.

*If you can't make it to the Expo, drop in to the DRC anytime and talk to us about how to best manage your hearing loss.*

**We are located in the Grant Cameron Community Centre, Level 1B, 27 Mulley St, Holder ACT 2611.**  
**Visit our website [www.actdrc.org.au](http://www.actdrc.org.au) or phone us on 02 6287 4393**

The ACT Deafness Resource Centre is a registered provider of NDIS supports from 11 June 2014  
Provider Registration #: 60297041

# DYARA

now open

## INDIGENOUS ARTS HUB

The Dyara Indigenous Arts Hub at the National Museum of Australia features a wide range of handmade products sourced from around Australia. Dyara is the Ngunnawal word for bowerbird - a name chosen due to the hub's eclectic collection of items from artists and art centres in remote and regional areas. Products include paintings, jewellery, weavings, carvings, ghost net objects and much more. Featured art centres include Tjanpi Desert Weavers, Warlukurlangu Artists, Erub Arts, Maruku Arts, Giringun Aboriginal Art Centre, and Numbulwar Numburindi Arts. **Come and explore the range today.**

**Open daily, until October**

Gandel Atrium, National Museum of Australia  
Acton Peninsula, Canberra  
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IMAGE: Janganpa Jukurpa (Brush-tail Possum Dreaming) (detail), 2019 by Janelle Napurrula Wilson, Warlukurlangu Artists