

# UMEERTA

Rise Up! The Ballad of James Arden

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C  
15 February 2024  
Union Theatre



UMAC is part of the  
University of  
Melbourne Global,  
Culture and  
Engagement



**University of Melbourne Arts and Culture  
acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung peoples  
of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Owners of the  
unceded land on which we work. We pay respect to  
their Elders past and present, and their enduring  
traditions of knowledge sharing, performing and  
storytelling on this land.**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and all peoples should be aware that *MEERTA - Rise Up! The Ballad of James Arden* and the associated songs, artworks, videos and website may contain the images, voices and/or names of people who have passed away.

David Arden and family has respectfully consulted widely with family and community for appropriate use of images and in some circumstances where this may not have been possible, we acknowledge it can cause deep distress and sadness for family members, extended family members, communities and peoples associated with the deceased. Upon request we will respectfully remove any image that may cause any individual family or community member distress or discomfort.



**MEERTA- Rise Up! The Ballad of James Arden brings together an exceptional team of artists, led by accomplished Gunditjmara/Kokatha singer-songwriter, David Arden. MEERTA is a creative piece of powerful truth-telling and warm heartfelt theatre.**

It tells the story of David's family and his great grandfather James Arden, and the Gunditjmara People – a story of identity, urban and tribal life, friendship, racism, freedom and fighting for your rights. Through songs and extraordinary animations MEERTA provides an opportunity for the wider community to learn firsthand the story of the Gunditjmara People and their fighting spirit – and gain a greater understanding of our First Nations people and their history.

David is a highly experienced and accomplished First Nations musician who has collaborated and performed with some of Australia's most highly regarded musicians.

His rich career has had many highlights including being the front man for the Koori Youth Band working with many of the great First Nation acts

from Hard Time Band, Altogether Band, Bart Willoughby and Mixed Relation Band. He was a key guitarist and vocalist with Uncle Archie Roach, and toured with the late Archie and Ruby, both nationally and internationally, performing his own song 'So Young' on Archie's second album Jamu Dreaming.

'David has the sweetest rhythms and he has a perfect ear on the guitar. His use of dynamics is simply brilliant. He is one of the finest guitarists in Australia, he treats not only his own music with incredible respect, but other peoples' music too and it shows.' - The late Uncle Archie Roach AM

MEERTA is a message of strength, hope and understanding. David will be collaborating with professional Aboriginal & non-Aboriginal musicians alongside music students from Faculty of Fine Arts and Music.

The show incorporates stunning visual designs by VCA animation students that amplifies the poignancy of David's original compositions.



## MUSICIANS

### BAND

David Arden

*Lead Artist and Director / Vocals / Guitar*

Daniel Jauregui

*Musical Director / Vocals / Guitar*

Chris Cameron

*Drums*

Jordan Murray

*Orchestral Lead and Music Notation / Horns*

Jake Amy

*Keys*

Rodrigo Zarate Gallardo

*Bass*

Emma Volard

*Vocals*

### WOODWIND

Sam Bartholemeuz

*Baritone and Tenor*

Tom English

*Alto*

### HORNS

Ashling O'Farrell

*Trombone*

Yael Marks

*Trumpet*

### STRINGS

Bailey Clennett, Kieron Fenner, Sophia Hans,  
Sunni Rae, Healey Morris, Sophia Shaw

*Violin*

Sonia Freiburg

*Cello*



## ANIMATION

### STUDENTS

Bethany Davey  
Sophie Deka  
Elizabeth Eather  
Hunter Kelly  
Chloe Jia Ying Lau  
Suniva Miller  
Korbin Munn  
Oliver Wilson  
Lucas Wylie  
Jiayun Zhang

### LECTURERS

Darren Bell  
Christie Widiarto

## THANK YOU

Cultural liaison: Violet Arden  
Producer: Jill Morgan AM  
UMAC Team: Virginia Lovett, Sue Thornton,  
Daniel Coghlan  
UMAC Technical: Darren Golding  
UMAC Lighting: Guy Carrison  
City of Melbourne: Will Box, Michelle Ely  
Wilin Centre: Tiriki Onus, Michael Julian  
Filming: Andrew O'Keefe, Adam Saturday  
Welcome to Country: Daniel Ross, Wurundjeri  
Woi-Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal  
Corporation  
Meerta Artwork and Design: EARTHwise Culture  
and Dixon Patten



# UMAC

MEERTA is supported by City of Melbourne, Creative Victoria, The University of Melbourne's Wilin Centre for Indigenous Arts & Cultural Development, Faculty of Fine Arts & Music and UMAC. Originally commissioned by YIRRAMBOI.



# YIRRAMBOI

UMAC is part of the University of Melbourne's Global, Culture and Engagement portfolio.



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