# Rise Up! The Ballad of James Arden



15 February 2024 Union Theatre









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.

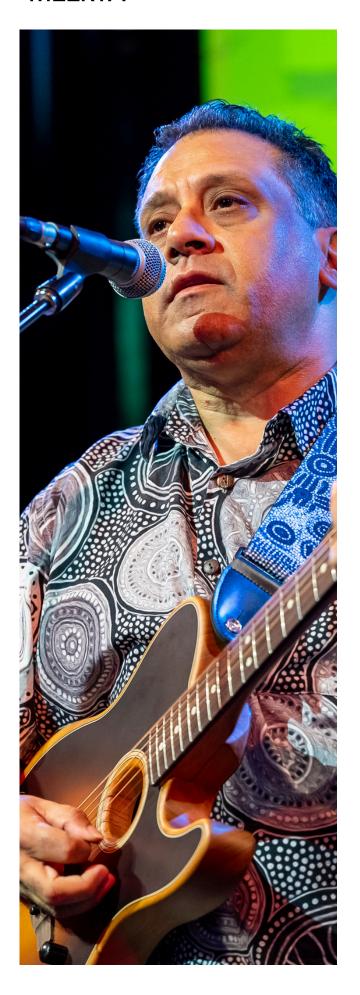
David is a highly experienced and accomplished First Nations musician who has collaborated and performed with some of Australia's most highly regarded musicians.

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: Virgina 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 Suturday Welcome to Country: Daniel Ross, Wurundjeri Woi-Wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal

Corporation

Meerta Artwork and Design: EARTHwise Culture

and Dixon Patten



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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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