

BIG GIRLS DON'T CRY

5 - 27 APRIL

BELVOIR ST THEATRE

By
Dalara Williams
Directed by
Ian Michael

BIG GIRLS DON'T CRY

RUN TIME: 2 hours 50 minutes
(incl. 20 minute interval)

WARNING

Big Girls Don't Cry contains racism/racist slurs, coarse language and racial violence.

Indigenous Theatre at Belvoir supported by

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Creative Development supported by

ORANGES & SARDINES

BIG GIRLS DON'T CRY

CAST

Stephanie Somerville
Lulu

Megan Wilding
Queenie

Dalara Williams
Cheryl

Bryn Chapman Parish
Officer Robinson

Mathew Cooper
Michael

Nic English
Milo

Guy Simon
Ernie

CREATIVES

Writer
Dalara Williams

Director
Ian Michael

Set Designer
Stephen Curtis

Lighting Designer
Kelsey Lee

Composer and Sound Designer
Brendon Boney

Costume Designer
Emma White

Intimacy Director
Chloë Dallimore

Fight Director
Nigel Poulton

Voice Coach
Laura Farrell

Choreographer
Elle Evangelista

First Nations Community Liaison
Angeline Penrith

Assistant Director
Abbie-Lee Lewis

Stage Manager
Bella Kerdijk

Assistant Stage Manager
Maddison Craven



We acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora nation who are the traditional custodians of the land on which we share our stories.

Cover photography by
Daniel Boud
Rehearsal photography by
Stephen Wilson Barker



Dalara Williams

WRITER'S NOTE

DALARA WILLIAMS

Much of my curiosity for my family history begins within old photo albums. I can't help but start with a very important photograph: from the 1938 Day of Mourning, of a woman holding her child on her hip while her other three children stand up front, the eldest holding a sign that reads, 'Aborigines claim citizenship'. Louisa Ingram (nee) Simpson was her name, my maternal great grandmother.

May her bravery and strength continuously show up within the women of her bloodline.

I spent the majority of my life listening to stories of what my family has done as part of the Aboriginal movement of resistance— from the Day of Mourning to the 1965 Freedom Rides, the Foundation of Aboriginal Affairs, Aboriginal Medical Service, Aboriginal Legal Service, the 1972 Tent Embassy and many more actions to defend our sovereignty.

I started my writing journey back in 2017. I was in my third year of NIDA and, for an assessment for my 'Applied Theatre' elective, I interviewed three very important women: my aunty Millie Ingram, Aunty Margret Campbell and my grandmother Norma Ingram. Over a fresh pot of tea, I pressed play on my recording device and asked the women one question: What was it like to move to Sydney in the sixties? And the yarns began.

Growing up, I would have heard these stories over various occasions—over dinners, birthdays and reminiscing at the wakes of funerals. These women had told me about the multiple dances they attended at the Foundation of Aboriginal Affairs and other small venues around the city that allowed Aboriginal people in. Stories these women loved to share over and over again and the joy it brought them, reminiscing together, that afternoon. Alongside stories of resistance in a world not built for them, they spoke about the joyous moments of friendship, love and the occasional night of dressing up and dancing. These were stories of like-minded blackfullas coming together and making their time in the big city, doing something blackfullas are good at— making it their own.

After graduating NIDA, I revisited the transcript that had been sitting on my laptop for a year and decided to write something inspired by these women. I started working on Big Girls Don't Cry. At first, I wrote it as a screenplay, thinking a film would be a great avenue for this story. That changed in 2023, when I was a part of Ilbijerri's BlackWrights writing program. I made the decision to turn Big Girls into a stage play. While I was the 2022 Balnaves Fellow at Belvoir, Dom Mercer thought it would be a great idea to get a couple of actors together and organise a reading of the script. And I thank him for that push. From that, Big Girls Don't Cry now premieres as part of Belvoir Street Theatre's 2025 season.

This is a story of everlasting sisterhood, black love and black joy. It's about people wanting to have big dreams and the courage to speak their minds. I wrote this play as a love letter to the women in my life— my grandmothers, mothers, aunties, cousins and sisters—and to the special community of Redfern, Sydney. A community that has birthed so many brilliant minds and sparked so many spirits. I can only hope to uphold the tradition of Redfern, of being unapologetically black.

Thank you to everyone who has championed this story over the years, including my friends who offered their time to sit on my living room floor and read the many versions and drafts of the play. A special thank you to Dom Mercer and Abbie-lee Lewis for helping me navigate these theatre spaces as an emerging writer at Belvoir, and to everyone who has encouraged me to keep going. Thank you to my family for continuously sharing their stories with me over my lifetime, always for a good laugh. My beautiful mother, who has taught me to be the proud and stylish black woman I am today. And to my beautiful friend Megan

Wilding—I wrote this play for the two young girls sitting out the back of Eora TAFE, all those years ago, sharing their big dreams and connecting over flowers, rom-coms and The Beatles. Thank you, Megan, for teaching me the meaning of true black sisterhood.



Megan Wilding & Dalara Williams



Dalara Williams



Stephanie Somerville



Megan Wilding



Mathew Cooper



Bryn Chapman Parish



Nic English & Guy Simon



Megan Wilding, Guy Simon, Stephanie Somerville & Dalara Williams



Nic English & Guy Simon



Megan Wilding & Ian Michael



Dalara Williams & Mathew Cooper



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