



# 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)

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## 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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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.





Ian Michael

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

IAN MICHAEL

*This story is about dreamers and lovers who find beauty in an uncertain world.*

When Dalara approached me to direct *Big Girls Don't Cry*, I couldn't say no. *Big Girls Don't Cry* is a love letter to Dalara's grandmothers and to the generations of Black women who stood strong in the face of adversity. Collectively, we felt deeply

the significance of what it means to be telling this story and the moment in Black theatre history we were stepping into.

It is more than just a play, it speaks directly to the heart of her community, Redfern - celebrating sisterhood, identity, and the courage to dream, while honouring the women who paved the way and embraced resilience and joy unapologetically.

Dalara's writing shines a light on the strength and resilience of these women and their communities, intertwining personal stories with political realities. The play serves as both a tribute to those who have come before us and a powerful affirmation of the unbreakable spirit of Black love, laughter, and again sisterhood. It captures moments in our political history, but continually reminds us that the fight for change is always held by the love, joy and resilience of mob.

Black joy and love as resistance.

To Bryn Chapman Parish, Mathew Cooper, Nic English, Guy Simon, Stephanie Somerville, Megan Wilding, and Dalara Williams — who filled our rehearsal room with laughter, pulled all the heartstrings and brought these characters to life with absolute authenticity, words cannot truly capture the generosity, trust, and dedication you have shown in bringing this work to life. Your craft and commitment have made this production what it is, and I am deeply thankful to each and every one of you.

I am deeply grateful to the creative team: Stephen Curtis, Kelsey Lee, Brendon Boney, Emma White, Chloë Dallimore, Nigel Poulton, Elle Evangelista, Laura Farrell, Abbie-Lee Lewis, Isabella Kerdijk, Maddison Craven, for creating a world that allowed us to explore strength, resilience, and love boldly and unapologetically.

*Big Girls Don't Cry* is a significant addition to the theatre canon and is sure to leave a lasting impact on our theatre landscape for generations to come. To everyone at Belvoir, thank you for your tireless work and endless support, you've made so many of our dreams come true.





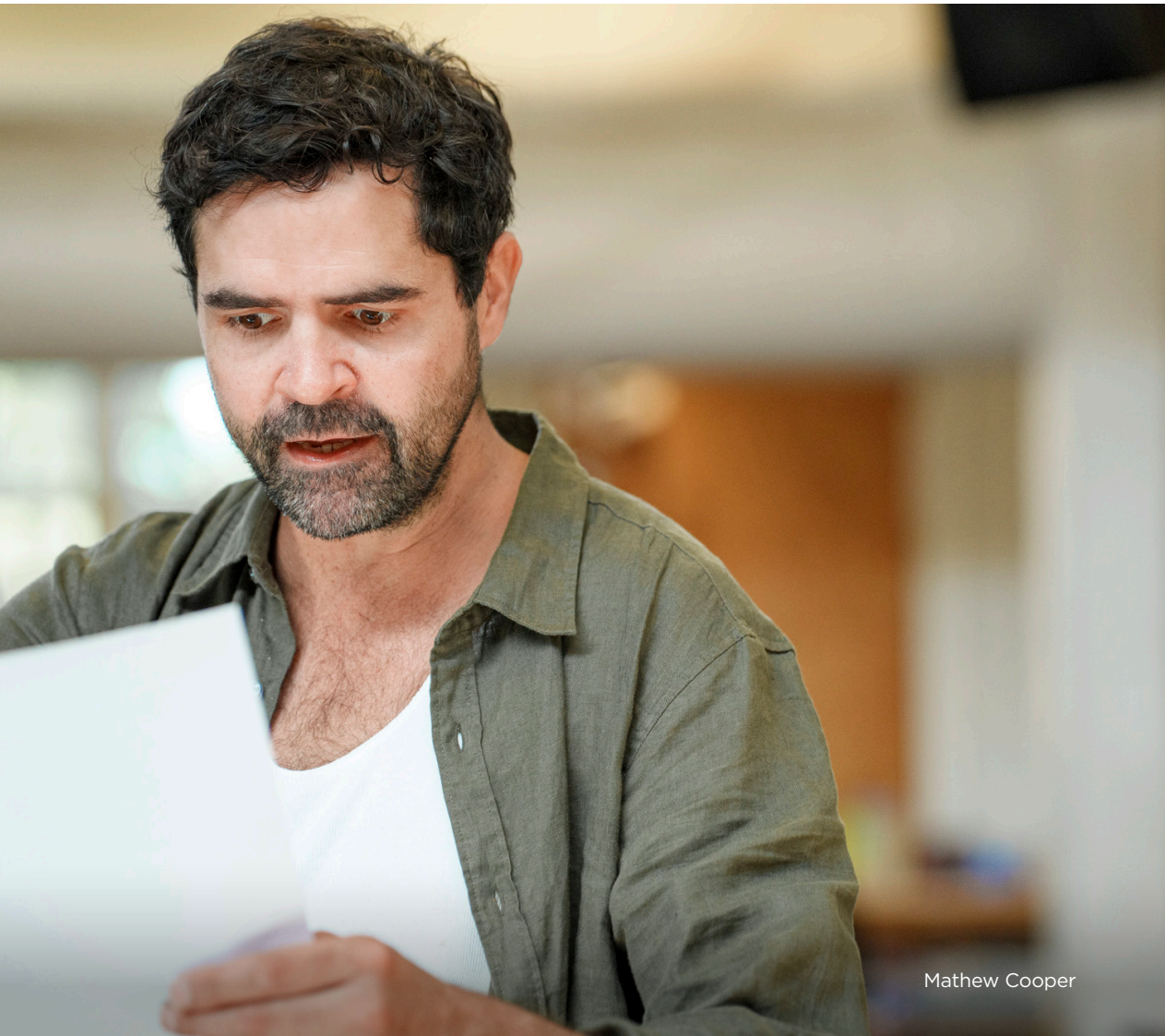
Dalara Williams



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



**BELVOIR ST  
THEATRE**

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## JACKY

Award-winning Australian drama of sex, secrets and a city of lies.

16 Jan – 02 Feb

## SONG OF FIRST DESIRE

History, politics, Spain – a new play from the great Andrew Bovell.

13 Feb – 23 Mar

## BIG GIRLS DON'T CRY

Love and revolution in the streets of Redfern.

05 – 27 Apr

## THE WRONG GODS

Local justice, global power – from the prize-winning writer of Counting & Cracking.

03 May – 01 Jun

## THE SPARE ROOM

Helen Garner. Judy Davis. Elizabeth Alexander..

07 Jun – 13 Jul

## GRIEF IS THE THING WITH FEATHERS

The literary sensation – now a profound new play.

26 Jul – 24 Aug

## ORLANDO

Virginia Woolf's classic through a fresh, bold, theatrical lens.

30 Aug – 21 Sep

## MEOW MEOW'S THE RED SHOES

Hilarious fractured fairytale by the peerless cabaret legend.

04 Oct – 09 Nov

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