

MEDIA KIT

 WINDMILL
THEATRE CO



SYNOPSIS



A brand new show from the makers of *Grug*.

A slightly sideways tale about unexpected friendship, finding where you fit and learning to mix it up a little.

In Mort's Village everything has its place, every day is the same and everyone likes it that way. Until one morning, crash, boom, bang... down comes Beep.

What is this annoying interruption to Mort's breakfast molly melon, who is this noisy robot girl, and how will she find her home?

With Windmill's trademark design, gentle storytelling, music and puppetry, *Beep* tells the story of what happens when someone new comes to town.

For ages 2 - 7

DIRECTOR'S NOTE SAM HAREN

In creating *Beep*, we wanted to build upon the stylistic approaches of the two works based on the *Grug* books we had previously made. These works combine puppetry with a unique form of performance and storytelling. The character of Grug is the only one of his kind. He lives by himself, has no family, and inventively solves the problems in his world. For *Beep*, we were interested in creating a village of creatures who all live together. We wanted to explore what happens when an outsider enters their world. Thematically, the work explores what it means to accept someone from a different place.

We've discovered that an episodic structure is very effective for this age group, as younger children engage with smaller narrative units rather than long, complex dramatic arcs. As a result, we've chosen to explore the large dramaturgical problems that occur in the show through in little story units, structured around experiences in the world of *Beep* that the children can relate to.









WRITER'S NOTE KATHERINE FYFFE



For me, *Beep* is a show about finding yourself out of your comfort zone, learning to adapt to new things, and the importance of friendship in smoothing life's transitions. Themes of change, friendship and home are investigated through the characters and their environment.

Beep's journey mirrors that of many people around the world today: her home is no longer safe, landing her in a strange new place which she must find a way to make her new home. This allows us to think about the broader idea of what "home" is for children and adults. Mort and the villagers also embark on a journey of learning to accept and embrace someone new in their tight knit community.

Change is a big part of children's lives, whether that be starting school, moving house, or a shift in the family unit such as parental separation or a new family member. *Beep* demonstrates how these transitions can be made easier with the support of friends and the wider community.

ABOUT THE CREATIVE TEAM

**Sam Haren**

Co-creator/Director

Sam is a Creative Director of Sandpit, a company that creates immersive personal experiences that change the way people view the world around them. From 2002-2012 Sam was the Artistic Director of The Border Project, and directed/co-directed all of the company's work in this time. For Windmill he has directed *Beep*, *Plop!*, *Grug and Grug and the Rainbow*, as well as the interactive experiences *My Room* and *Escape from Peligro Island*. Sam also co-directed *Skeleton* with Larissa McGowan (Adelaide Festival 2013 & Dance Massive/Malthouse) and directed and choreographed the theatrical trailer for *Alien 5* (ADT Ignition 2007 & 2008) and *The Game is Not Over* (ADT Ignition 2006).

**Jonathon Oxlade**

Co-creator/Designer

Jonathon studied Illustration and sculpture at the Queensland College of Art. He has worked extensively in set and costume design for Windmill, Queensland Theatre, LaBoite Theatre, *isthisyours?*, Aphids, Circa, Arena Theatre Company, Polyglot, The Real TV Project, Polytoxic, Men of Steel, Lemony S Puppet Theatre, Terrapin Puppet Theatre, Vitalstatistix, Barking Gecko, Bell Shakespeare, The Border Project, State Theatre Company South Australia, Sydney Theatre Company, The Escapists, Sandpit and Belvoir St Theatre. Jonathan has worked as a designer for many venues and festivals including the Sydney Opera House, Melbourne Festival, Asia TOPA, The Adelaide Festival of the Arts, The Adelaide Fringe Festival and the Queensland Art Gallery. Jonathan was the Festival designer for the 2010 Out of the Box Festival and the 2015 Brisbane Festival hub Arcadia. Jonathon has illustrated picture books including *The Empty City* for Hachette Livre/Lothian and the *Edie Amelia* series by Sophie Lee. Jonathan is currently the Resident Designer at Windmill.

**Katherine Fyffe**

Co-creator/Writer

Katherine graduated with Honours from Flinders Drama Centre in 2001. She has co-created and performed in shows *I Am Not An Animal*, *Trouble on Planet Earth*, *Highway Rock N Roll Disaster*, *Please Go Hop!*, and *Disappearance* for The Border Project.

She was also a founding member of The Border Project. She has toured internationally in *Afternoon of the Elves* and *The Green Sheep* for Windmill, and performed in productions at STC, MTC and STCSA. In 2006 she worked with the experimental company Goat Island Performance Group in Chicago. Recent writing credit *Ghosts, Toast and the Things Unsaid* for Sandpit and Google's Creative Lab won the 2016 Best Interactive Adelaide Fringe Award.

**Chris Petridis**
Lighting Designer

Chris is a lighting and video designer from Adelaide. Since completing his studies in technical production at the Adelaide Centre of the Arts, Chris has developed an impressive body of work spanning multiple art forms including theatre, dance, and other live events both within Australia and internationally. Chris has worked on Windmill's *Big Bad Wolf* and *The Story Thieves*, State Theatre Company of South Australia on *The Kreutzer Sonata*, *Maggie Stone* and *Little Bird*. Chris has completed designs for Slingsby Theatre Company's *The Mouse, The Bird and the Sausage*, Torque Show's *MALMÖ*, The Border Project's *Half Real*, Ludwig's *Fleck and Flecker*, five.point.one's *Muff* and a multimedia performance project for Country Arts SA called *If There Was A Colour Darker Than Black I'd Wear It*. Chris has also worked in association with Geoff Cobham on a number of projects including creating the visual aesthetic for Force Majeure's *Never Did Me Any Harm* using light and video.

**Luke Smiles**
Sound Designer

Luke creates highly detailed soundtracks for theatre, dance and film, working across all areas of music composition, sound design, foley and sound effects editing. His work is enjoyed by audiences both nationally and around the world.

Working under his business name motion laboratories, Luke has composed and produced soundtracks for many Australian and international artists and companies. Various credits include: *G* (Australian Dance Theatre), *Double Think* (Byron Perry), *Glow* (Chunky Move), *I left my shoes on warm concrete and stood in the rain* (Gabrielle Nankivell), *The Maids* (Sydney Theatre Company), *Wildebeest* (Sydney Dance Company), *Fugitive, School Dance and Girl Asleep* (Windmill Theatre Co).

MEDIA REVIEWS

• THE ADVERTISER •

Tom Bowden
August 26 2017

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"A tender tale of friendship for the whole family"

A tender tale of friendship for the whole family

Sometimes in life we don't find new friends, they find us.

Following the critical acclaim of *Grug*, Windmill Theatre Co return to the Adelaide Festival Centre with *Beep*, a delightful tale about fitting in, making new friends and adapting to new situations.

Welcome to Mort's Village, where every day is the same, everyone has their place and nothing ever changes.

It's not bad, it's just the way it works.

Until one day, that is, when a noisy robot girl Beep crashes from space, throwing a spanner in the works and upsetting the locals' routine.

The villagers are initially scared of her, but over the course of the next 40 minutes, friendships are formed and they band together to solve a series of problems that threaten their very existences.

It's a delightfully sweet production, with Windmill's performers bringing their adorable puppet characters to life with their trademark gentle style.

The staging is minimalist but effective, with puppets popping up left, right and centre, and the storytelling enhanced by some impressive audio/visual effects.

"Thank you so much for bringing me to this!" my five-year-old says halfway during the performance, and she was literally wriggling on the edge of her seat for the rest of it.

It's a great show – the performers really connect with their audience and get them to relate to the characters with empathy and compassion, all the while softly addressing some very real issues kids face everyday.

"That was brilliant!" my little girl loudly exclaimed with a beautiful, beaming smile at the end of the show.

And she was right.

INDAILY**Review: Windmill Theatre's Beep**

A colourful setting, comic puppets and plenty of surprises hold young audience members in thrall in Windmill Theatre's new interactive children's show *Beep*.

In a tiny village, a rotund, striped, mono-syllabic playful character called Mort lives in a tree that produces molly melons when it rains. Mort loves to eat the molly melons and to play with fluffy yellow balls called fuzzles.

There's a routine to village life, where every day the children go to school and other residents go to work – in a tree elevator.

But Adelaide writer Katherine Fyffe's story sees the tranquility and routine of Mort's home disrupted by the arrival of a robot called Beep, with bright round lights for eyes and an endearing mechanical voice.

Jonathon Oxlade's imaginative set is softly lit in gentle greens, while the sound of crickets establishes a natural setting and a serenity that calms the young audience members as they enter, preparing them for an interesting and enjoyable experience.

Antoine Jelk, Ezra Juanta and Kialea-Nadine Williams, dressed in purple, delightfully narrate the story as they also cleverly operate the various puppets.

Youngsters are introduced to the idea of renewable energy, as wind power is required to power the village and later to replenish Beep's batteries.

Beep also explores the idea of a stranger in the midst: Beep is an electronic being and the creatures in the village need to adapt to her presence. Gradually they warm to her and she participates in the games the villagers play; when she breaks down, they all come to her rescue. Without being overly moralistic, the show plants the seed that we should be welcoming to strangers and assist others in need.

Director Sam Haren delivers plenty of surprises and gags throughout the show, and Tamara Rewse's puppets are comic and colourful.

Windmill's *Beep* will entertain young children because of its colourful setting, engaging characters and thoughtful storyline. I was accompanied by a five-year-old and a seven-year-old who enjoyed it all. Alongside us was a 15-month-old boy on his father's lap who gurgled and clapped and loved it on a different level.

It is a joy to hear young children who are so involved with the story that they spontaneously speak their inner thoughts. After the performance there is the opportunity for children to make robots and windmills, adding to the overall quality of the experience for the entire family.

Greg Elliott
August 28 2017

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"A colourful setting, comic puppets and plenty of surprises hold young audience members in thrall"

THE ADELAIDE REVIEW

David Knight
August 28 2017

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"Forget Star Wars' BB-8 or Pixar's WALL-E, Beep is the most endearing robot of them all"

Review: Beep

Forget Star Wars' BB-8 or Pixar's WALL-E, Beep is the most endearing robot of them all. Her adventure in Windmill Theatre Co's new young children's production Beep is a joyous celebration of friendship and acceptance.

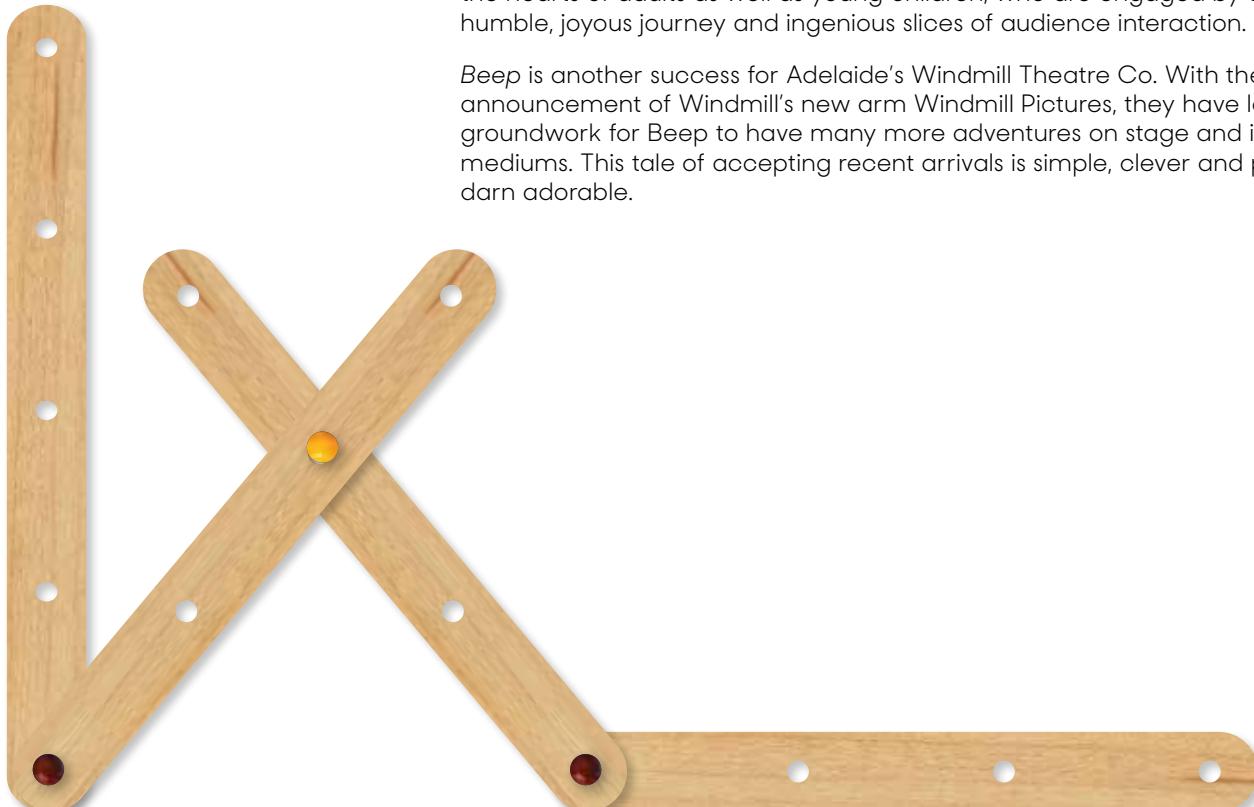
All is well in Mort's tree-top village. Every morning the cute creatures wake to start their day in their beautiful home world. Some go to school, some to work while others, including Mort and his sister Pop, frolic the day away chasing furry little critters while enjoying delicious Molly Melons. Life is good until an unexpected visitor disrupts Mort and the curious creatures of his world.

The visitor is a robot, Beep, a mechanical outsider who lands in this natural wonderland to escape her now uninhabitable home. While the other creatures of the village are afraid of this strange-looking visitor, Mort's curiosity gets the better of him as he engages with the recent arrival.

Made by the creators of Windmill's internationally successful shows Grug and Grug and the Rainbow (based on the books by Ted Prior), Beep is an original show written by The Border Project's Katherine Fyffe who collaborated with director Sam Haren (Sandpit, The Border Project) and Windmill's in-house designer Jonathon Oxlade. It is a beautifully designed world, as the bright teal of the tree village and the surrounds are the perfect base for the Jim Henson-like puppet critters that pop out of the tree and the ground. The three actors and puppeteers – Antoine Jelk, Ezra Juanta and Kialea-Nadine Williams – engage the young audience with verve and wit.

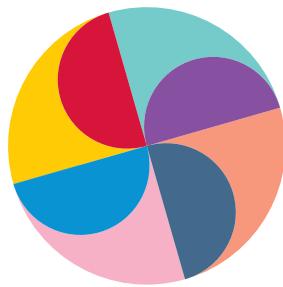
Mort, who looks like a cross between Grug and *Guardians of the Galaxy*'s Baby Groot, might not say much aside from 'Mort' but he is a loveable happy-go-lucky fellow. His friendship with Beep, a fantastically designed 1950s box-like robot that beeps, buzzes and lights up, is one that will warm the hearts of adults as well as young children, who are engaged by the humble, joyous journey and ingenious slices of audience interaction.

Beep is another success for Adelaide's Windmill Theatre Co. With the announcement of Windmill's new arm Windmill Pictures, they have laid the groundwork for Beep to have many more adventures on stage and in other mediums. This tale of accepting recent arrivals is simple, clever and pretty darn adorable.









ABOUT WINDMILL THEATRE CO

Based in Adelaide, South Australia, Windmill Theatre Co is a leading producer of unique and contemporary theatrical work for children, teens and families. Windmill's artists are inspired by the vibrancy, sophistication and inventiveness of young people, and the company has performed 56 productions, including 27 new commissioned works across 193 cities in 27 countries since its inception in 2002.

With a philosophy that creative expression is fundamental to humanity and vital for navigating the modern world, Windmill's aim is to make theatre a dynamic meeting space between the imaginations of artists and audiences. The company has won a swag of awards for its live theatre repertoire, and in 2016 made its first feature film that led to the opening of a new screen arm to the company, Windmill Pictures.

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