

MEDIA RELEASE



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WINDMILL LAUNCHES NEW SCREEN ARM, SCHOOL DANCE FILM & 2018 THEATRE SEASON

After the international success of its first feature film *Girl Asleep*, award-winning South Australian theatre company **Windmill Theatre Co** has today announced the launch of **Windmill Pictures**, a new arm of the company wholly dedicated to developing screen projects from its live theatre repertoire.

The company has also announced it has successfully secured Screen Australia story development funding for script development of its proposed next feature film, **School Dance**, based on its multi Helpmann Award winning stage production.

Minister for the Arts, the Hon Jack Snelling said: "Windmill has proven its ability to deliver a highly successful feature film with *Girl Asleep* having screened in 25 countries around the world, winning several international awards. This success has highlighted Windmill's value as a producer with a repertoire of new Australian stories that have been developed and refined over a long period of time, and tested on live audiences. I'm pleased to announce the establishment of Windmill Pictures and the early development of another Australian film project here in South Australia."

Windmill Theatre Co Artistic Director Rosemary Myers said: "Making our first film, *Girl Asleep*, was an incredible creative ride for our artists and we're thrilled to have reached so many young people across the world through the screen medium. The creative process of taking *Girl Asleep* from stage to screen has forged a new and exciting convergence model of live theatre and film for the company and we're excited to take on more screen projects alongside our theatre work."

A joyful and funny look at the awkwardness of adolescence seen through the friendship of three teenage boys, *School Dance* premiered at the 2012 Adelaide Festival and went on to win two Helpmann Awards including Best Presentation for Children, as well as a Sydney Theatre Award for Best Production for Young People and the Ruby Award for Best Show.

School Dance playwright **Matthew Whittet** will adapt the screenplay for the new film, with pre-production beginning in late 2018, and shooting penciled for 2019.

Augmenting these exciting announcements is Windmill's new interactive online platform that gives young people a behind-the-scenes look at the making of film *Girl Asleep*. Set to go live in October, it will be available via the Windmill website at windmill.org.au.

Windmill's Executive Producer, Kaye Weeks said: "*Girl Asleep* the film has given us a fantastic asset to reach young people who find it hard to get to the theatre, and this online platform enhances their experience by providing a fun and interactive tour of the making of it. We're lucky to be able to provide this incredible resource free of charge thanks to the generosity of the Lang Foundation."

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Windmill Theatre Co has today also announced its 2018 live theatre season, including two brand new shows and one international collaboration.

First up in May 2018, Windmill will premiere **Baba Yaga** at the prestigious Edinburgh International Children's Festival in Scotland, under a co-commission from Scottish company Imagineate. A fun look at the traditional Russian folklore character with a modern surrealist twist, *Baba Yaga* will be directed by **Rosemary Myers** and star award-winning performer **Shona Reppe** and **Christine Johnston** of beloved Australian comedy group The Kransky Sisters. Following the festival premiere and a tour of Scotland in 2018, Adelaide audiences will see the show in 2019.

In September 2018 Windmill will premiere **Amphibian**, written by Adelaide playwright **Duncan Graham** and directed by **Sasha Zahra**. Responding to the world's refugee crisis, *Amphibian* tells the story of a teenage boy who makes his way alone from Afghanistan to Australia.

Also in 2018 Windmill will bring back family favourite **Grug and the Rainbow** for a season at the Space Theatre in April, while **Big Bad Wolf** will tour New Zealand, as well as regional South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, Sydney and regional New South Wales.

The announcements come ahead of today's world premiere of Windmill's new play for children, **Beep**, at the Space Theatre in Adelaide's Festival Centre. **Head of the Australia Council Tony Grybowski** will attend the event to officially present Rosemary Myers with the prestigious Australia Council Theatre Award for 2017, announced in March.

Chair of Windmill Theatre Co Bruce Speirs said: "Today's announcements herald exciting times for the company. Collectively they represent the company's ambition to continue providing audiences with a unique theatrical experience, while evolving the way in which it engages with them through stage, screen and digital mediums. We thank Minister Snelling and Arts South Australia for backing our company's vision to innovate and embrace new opportunities for our work."

Tickets for the 2018 Windmill season will be available online at windmill.org.au from 1 September.

ABOUT WINDMILL THEATRE CO

Founded in Adelaide in 2002, Windmill Theatre Co is a leading producer of quality theatrical and screen work for children, teens and families.

Over the last 15 years it has entertained more than 650,000 young people, performing more than 56 works, including 27 new commissioned works, and 55 regional, national and international tours taking in 193 cities across 27 countries in this time. The company has won scores of awards including six national Helpmann Awards, a Sydney Theatre Award, five SA Ruby Awards, three Business SA Export Awards and the 2012 Sidney Myer Performing Arts Award for Excellence – the first such awarded to a youth theatre company in Australia.

In 2016 Windmill released its first feature film, *Girl Asleep*, which immediately became a runaway success, winning Best Film at the Australian Film Critics Association Awards, The Age Critics Prize for Best Australian Feature Film at the Melbourne International Film Festival, Best Work at the SA Screen Awards, and the Foxtel Movies Audience Award for Most Popular Feature at the Adelaide Film Festival. The film also stormed festivals internationally, winning both the Grand Jury Prize and Futurewave Award at the Seattle Film Festival and was nominated for six AACTA Awards, taking home the award for Best Costume Design.

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Alongside the creation of new work, Windmill also delivers a groundbreaking Arts Education program, which encompasses free education workshops for students, structured interactive programs that provide opportunities for schools and communities to co-create professional work with artists, digital educational resources for teachers, and an acclaimed access program where up to 15% of tickets are made available at no cost annually to disadvantaged community groups and schools in SA.

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