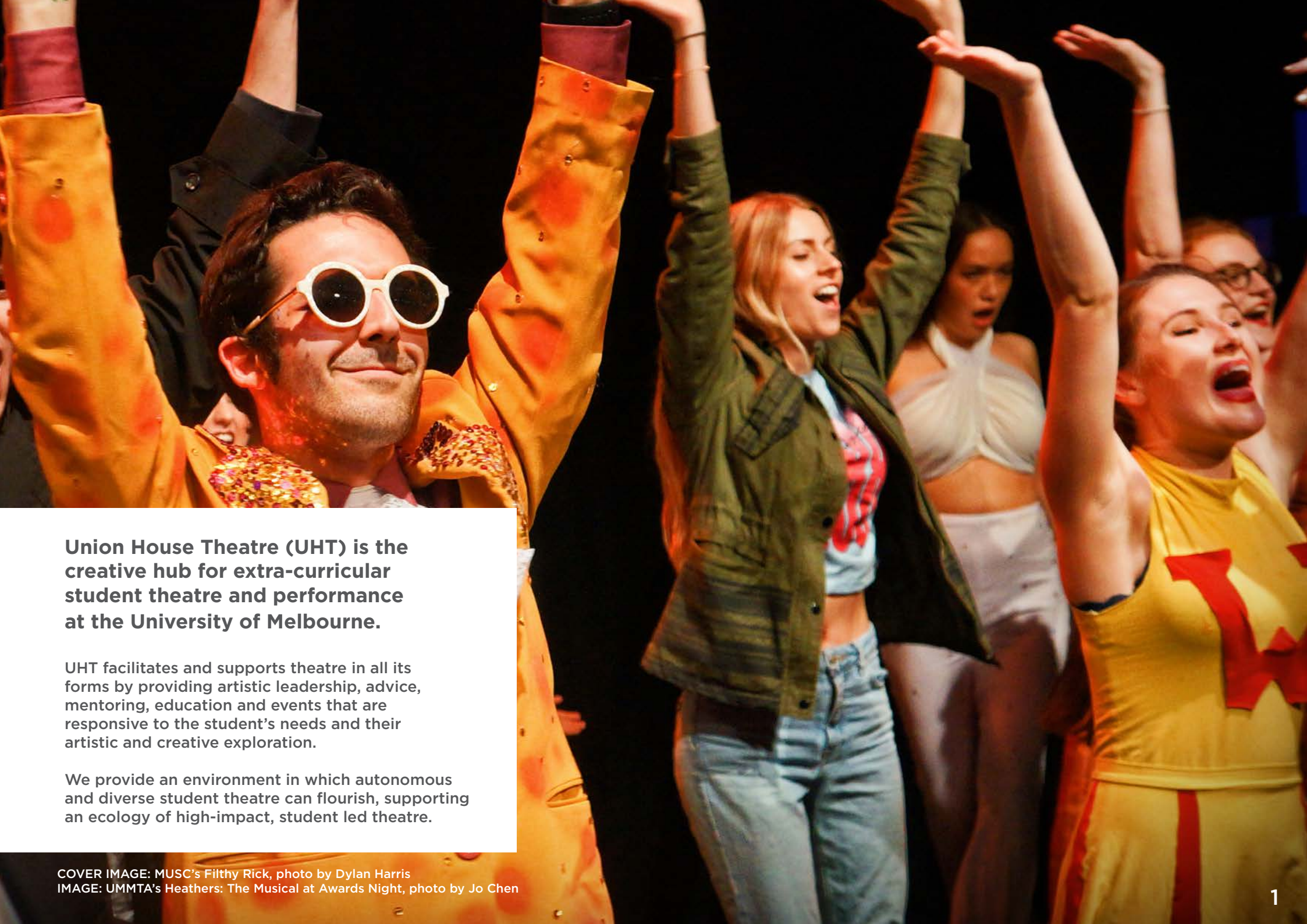


# YEAR IN REVIEW 2017





**Union House Theatre (UHT) is the creative hub for extra-curricular student theatre and performance at the University of Melbourne.**

UHT facilitates and supports theatre in all its forms by providing artistic leadership, advice, mentoring, education and events that are responsive to the student's needs and their artistic and creative exploration.

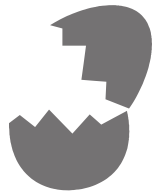
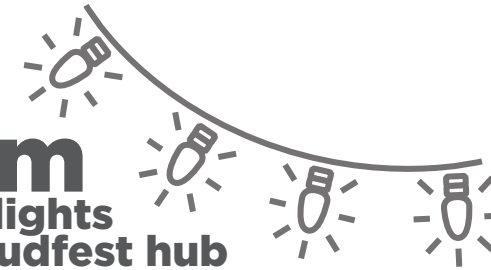
We provide an environment in which autonomous and diverse student theatre can flourish, supporting an ecology of high-impact, student led theatre.

# UNION HOUSE THEATRE 2017



**27**  
student theatre  
productions

**120m**  
of fairy lights  
in the Mudfest hub



**36**  
productions  
in Mudfest



**134**  
Bruce  
cuddles for  
stress relief



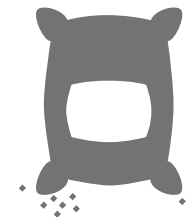
**\$27,000**  
in theatre prizes, grants  
and underwriting—  
Thanks Theatre Board!



**1623**  
cast, crew &  
creatives



**49**  
new works



**2m<sup>3</sup>**  
of sand  
used on stage  
(that's 100 x 20 kg bags!)



**13,545**  
audience  
members



**10,000**  
steps a day between  
the production office  
and the theatres

# STUDENT THEATRE STATISTICS 2015-2017 COMPARISON

2015\*

2016\*

2017\*

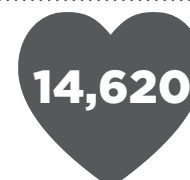
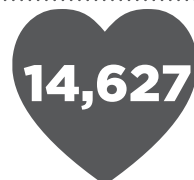
number of  
productions



total number  
of performances



number  
of audience  
members



number of  
cast, crew and  
creatives involved



number of  
original works



\* Mudfest statistics not included

# STAFF

**Artistic Director/Theatre Coordinator** Petra Kalive

**Administration and Development Officer** Erin Adams &  
Christa Jonathan / Bella Vadiveloo

**Production Manager** Gus Macdonald &  
Kellie-Jayne Chambers

**Head Technician** Clynton Jones

**Stage Carpenter/ Mechanist** Jim Stenson & Allen Laverty

**Archivist** Bella Vadiveloo

**Casual Staff** Bonnie Jo Belford

Ruth Blair

Sarah Chamberlain

Chris Choisich

Gina Gascoigne

Adam Grikepelis

Jessica Herne

Christa Jonathan

Dave Kelly

Tristan Lawrence

Cameron McCormick

Nathan Pettenon

Farzam Ramtin

Gin Rosse

Suze Smith

Rita Zambruno

# STUDENT THEATRE

DisColourNation  
The Ex Presidents Student Society  
Flare Dance Ensemble  
Four Letter Word Theatre  
Intercollegiate Activities Council - ICAC  
International House Theatre Group  
Medleys - Med Revue  
Med Moves  
Melbourne University Chinese Theatre Group - CTG  
Melbourne University Comedy Revue Board - MUDCRABS  
Melbourne University Law Revue  
Melbourne University Shakespeare Company - MUSC

Newman College Theatre Group  
Ormond College Drama Club  
Piano and Music Society  
Queen's College Music and Drama Society - QC MADS  
Remedium Collective  
St Hilda's College Drama Society  
St Mary's College Drama Society  
Trinity College Dramatic Society  
Trinity College Music Theatre Society  
University College Theatre Company  
University of Melbourne Music Theatre Association - UMMTA  
Whitley College - W.A.R.T.S

## HONORARY THEATRE GROUPS AFFILIATED WITH CLUBS & SOCIETIES

Melbourne University Chinese Music Group - CMG  
Melbourne University Sri Lankan Students' Association - MUSLSA



IMAGE: Flare Dance Ensemble's Unspoken, photo by Harold Koh

# 2017 UNION HOUSE THEATRE PROGRAM

## EVENTS

- 24 HR Play Project
- Student Theatre Group Summerfest Marquee
- Writer in Residence Program
- Ensemble Assembly - Theatre Welcome Party
- Awards Night

## MASTERCLASSES

- Acting
- Audio Description Training
- Comedy in Discussion
- Comedy Impro
- Comedy for Performance
- Comedy Sketch Writing
- Devising
- Directing
- Improvisation
- Lighting
- Presentation Skills
- Producing
- Production Management
- Shakespeare for Performance
- Stage Management
- Writing for Theatre

## UHT PRODUCTIONS

- 'Comedy on Campus' - a week long festival of workshops and comedy events
- 'Mirror's Edge' - Written by Kim Ho, dramaturgy by Jean Tong directed by Petra Kalive



# ARTISTIC DIRECTOR - PETRA KALIVE

## 64 Shows! (including Mudfest) What a phenomenal year 2017 has been.

I am so proud of each student theatre group, artist and creative attached to all the work in the UHT program and Mudfest (the bi-annual Arts Festival run by the student elected Arts Officers). It's not an easy task to study, work and put on a show. I am constantly inspired by the exceptional work of the students, their dedication to theatre and the fun that they have while doing it.

This year we have seen an explosion in the amount of new writing, devising and development. Students have embraced the incredible opportunity and environment that UHT provides, with some fabulous results.

- Mudcrabs created three short comedy plays in a season of new work, adding this to their repertoire of improvisation and sketch comedy.
- Four Letter Word Theatre presented two new works in UHT's season and three new works as part of Mudfest.
- Melbourne University Shakespeare Society (MUSC) reinterpreted King Lear and Richard III, as well as a season of Shakespearean inspired explorations called SCUM as part of Mudfest.
- The VCA's Ex Presidents Society, Law Revue, Med Revue all presented new sketch comedies
- Student Theatre Groups presented in the Guild and Union Theatres; 12 new works, 9 musicals, 5 dramas and a season of dance work.

There is a buzz in the student theatre community - students are engaged by making sense of the world in which we live and finding ways to reflect and express this through theatre.

This year our students have been particularly active out in the industry. I am very proud that UHT could support these pathways to professional practice.

- Thanks to the support by Theatre Board 'A Dog Called Monkey' by Laura Collins, directed by Freya McGrath had a successful season at Darebin Arts Centre. This work had a development showing in Tastings 2016 Season (a season of short excerpts of new work) presented by the Arts Office, supported by UHT. This season was produced by Tallulah Theatre, run by alumni Sunday Sommerfeld and Matilda Houlihan.
- In 2016, UMMTA received most Outstanding Production at our Awards Night for their production of 'Urinetown'. The prize included free registration for the Fringe Festival in 2017, where UMMTA presented a double-bill of original musical theatre works: Sweet Dreaming and Green Room.
- In Semester 1 2017, student theatre group Discolouration presented 'Romeo Is Not The Only Fruit'; a musical romp which subverted the rom-com form. After a successful season in the Guild, writer and producer Jean Tong was a successful applicant for the Poppy Seed festival. Five projects were selected by a panel of leading industry professionals.
- Jean Tong is also programmed as part of Melbourne Theatre Company's 2018 Education Season, with her full-length work 'Hungry Ghosts' which criss-crosses between storylines of the fate of MH370, corruption in Malaysia and the exploration of identity. I am very excited to be directing.
- Mudcrabs presented 'The Box Set' which first premiered as part of the UHT Semester 1 program at The Melbourne International Comedy Festival. Their second semester UHT show 'Tri-Hard' went on to a season in the Melbourne Fringe Festival. Additionally, some of the comedians in these groups went onto solo shows both in the MICF and Fringe Festival.
- Our mentorship programs also encourages students to connect with industry professionals, including; Leith McPherson, Emma Valente, Mark Wilson, Emilie Collyer & Michele Lee, Melanie Beddie, Justine Campbell, Zoe Scoglio, Juliet Bennie, Sammy J, Jason Geary, Dilruk Jayasinha, Laura Davis, Jason Mailing, Lauren Bok and Andrew McClelland.



## COMEDY ON CAMPUS

Comedy on Campus was a week-long festival in the Guild Theatre which celebrated all that was incredible about the diverse comedy already happening at the University of Melbourne. It provided students with a program of masterclasses, Q&As with alumni comedians and a Comedy Gala. This initiative supported various comedians and comedy groups on campus to take the next step or the first step in performing and writing comedy.

**“Comedy on Campus festival was a great success. The Gala night was a great addition to campus culture and allowing the Mudcrabs to use the Guild ‘in kind’ put us in a financial position which enabled us to take big risks.”**

Student Feedback


# UNION HOUSE THEATRE WRITERS-IN-RESIDENCE PROGRAM

In 2017 Union House Theatre continued its Writers-in-Residence Program with the support of Theatre Board.

The Writer-in-Residence program has had a significant impact on the student theatre scene at the University over the last five years. The opportunity for students to work intensively and over time with eminent writers has driven a thriving interest in new writing for performance, as well as greater confidence.

Emilie Collyer and Michele Lee co-led the program this year, providing skills workshops, mentoring and regular one-on-one sessions to a small group of students from March to August.

The quantity, quality and diversity of new writing on campus this year is testament to the these two Writers-in-Residence.



“The participants in general were of a very high standard... getting to know them and their work was an absolute pleasure.”

Emilie Collyer

## MIRROR'S EDGE

Mirror's Edge, a new play by student Kim Ho was presented by UHT.

Set in the heart of the Mallee in regional Victoria, 'Mirror's Edge' is a haunting magical-real work about Sea Lake. A dying, tiny drought-stricken town inundated with busloads of Chinese tourists who arrive to take photos of the nearby Salt Lake.

When the sun goes down, the light is just right and the lake turns to mirrorwater – like walking on sky. Mirror's Edge explored the complexities of cross-cultural encounters.

This work provided students with the opportunity to work with award winning interdisciplinary, site-specific artist Zoe Scoglio who created the visual projection / landscape of the work.

“Kim Ho’s writing is funny, poignant and educative. I feel privileged to have seen a play by someone who is undoubtedly one of the future greats in Australian theatre... the sections in Cantonese and Mandarin that I did not understand were just as mesmerizing as those which I did.

I also found myself learning about Boorong culture and science and realising how little I knew about Indigenous Australia.

It is rare to be made aware of your ignorance without feeling attacked... Each of his characters is nuanced; each has some kindness and some ignorance – and it is clear that it is ignorance, not malice, which drives them. This allows the audience to empathise with the characters more easily and willingly.”

THE DIALOGUE, Emily Kruse

## ACCESS

In 2017, Union House Theatre received SSAF Funding to support a trial program of Audio Description training and an Auslan Interpreting Grant System to support Student Theatre on campus.

This continued and implemented the hard work undertaken to date in response to the UHT Disability Action Plan created in consultation with the Creative Arts Officers in 2015/16. In addition, regular conversations with student theatre groups has brought to UHT's attention the affordability issues that students creating theatre are facing.

### DESCRIPTION VICTORIA

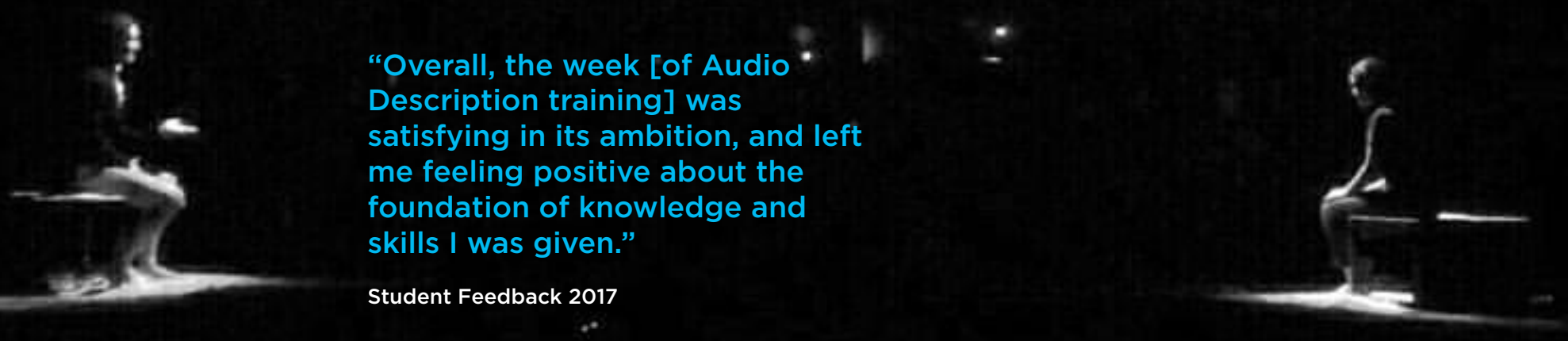
In July Union House Theatre and Description Victoria partnered to deliver a five-day training course in the fundamentals of audio description, including an opportunity to practice live describing on a rehearsal of *Mirror's Edge*. The course was delivered by Will McRostie, Director of Description Victoria, and Ross de Vent, Blind musician and audience advocate.

Since the training, three of the trainees have been offered placements working with Description Victoria on shows with Malthouse Theatre, MTC, and Melbourne Fringe.

### AUSLAN STAGE LEFT

UHT began a trial partnership with Auslan Stage Left. This partnership created pathways for the deaf community to engage with the work of student theatre and for students to increase accessibility of performances.

Susan Emerson, Co-Founder and Director of Auslan Stage Left put a call out to the deaf community asking them what shows they would be interested in seeing within UHT's Semester 2 program. In consultation with Union House Theatre, the production team for shows of interest were approached. UHT covered a percentage of the interpretation making the Auslan accessible for student theatre groups to utilise.



“Overall, the week [of Audio Description training] was satisfying in its ambition, and left me feeling positive about the foundation of knowledge and skills I was given.”

Student Feedback 2017

## MENTORSHIP


In 2017, we continued support, advice and advocacy to students and formalised our mentorship opportunities. As well as UHT continuing mentoring by our professional staff, we also tapped into a pool of industry professionals from various disciplines. Our focus was to improve engagement, connection and empowerment of our students.

### MENTORSHIPS AVAILABLE WITHIN UHT:

- Artistic Director / Theatre Direction
- Arts Administration / Marketing
- Production Management
- Technical (Sound & Light)
- Stage Carpentry / Set Building
- Acting / Performance

### INDUSTRY MENTORSHIP POOL:

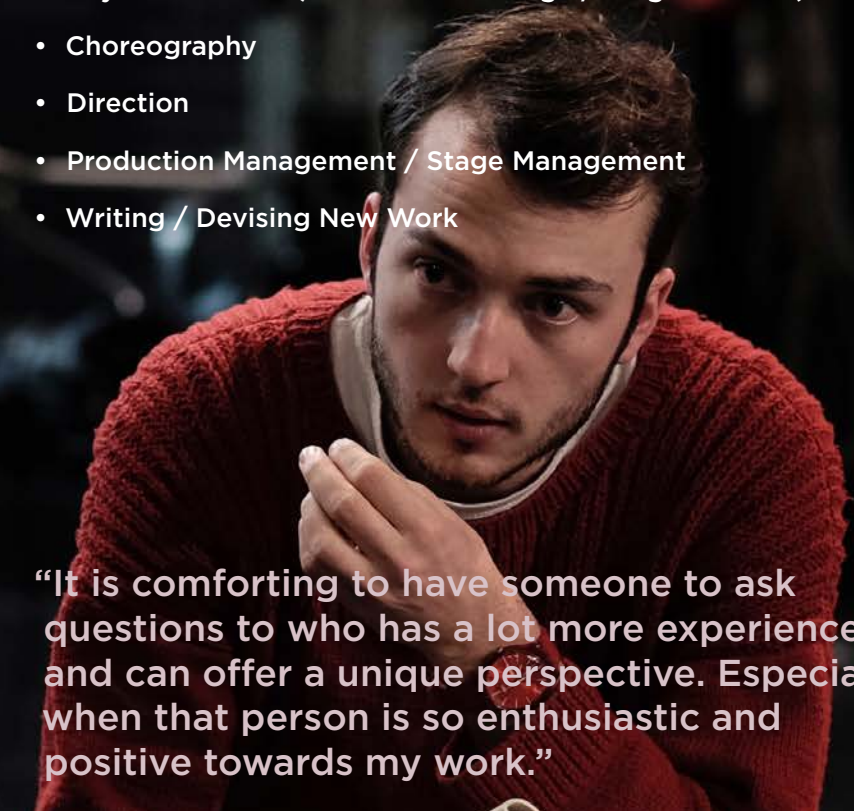
- Comedy (Performance/ Writing)
- Music Theatre (Performance / Writing new musicals)
- Devising Techniques
- Shakespeare (Performance / Devising from the text)
- Physical Theatre (Movement for stage / Stage Combat)
- Choreography
- Direction
- Production Management / Stage Management
- Writing / Devising New Work



“It was a really valuable experience for me in terms of having a safe-space with a trusted mentor to soundboard ideas, discuss issues, and brainstorm solutions.”

Student Feedback 2017

IMAGE: UHT's Mirror's Edge, photo by Bede McKenna



“It is comforting to have someone to ask questions to who has a lot more experience and can offer a unique perspective. Especially when that person is so enthusiastic and positive towards my work.”

Student Feedback 2017

## ARCHIVE & ALUMNI

- In 2017 the Melbourne University Student Theatre (MUST) Archive Database moved from being hosted by MUSUL to the UoM platform. With ongoing support from Theatre Board, we have continued to archive material from all 2017 productions.
- ‘Alumni out and about’ is now a regular section in our e-news Followspot. This encourages community building and better activates the Alumni Facebook group and Instagram accounts through “Throw Back Thursday” posts.
- In 2018 we plan to improve the search functionality of the MUST database, digitising analogue technology and adding a multimedia element.
- Every week our e-news Followspot goes out to almost 3000 students and alumni. Over 50% of those emails are viewed, which according to a recent report from Mailchimp regarding Email Marketing Benchmarks, is 20% above the industry standard.



IMAGE: Awards Night, photo by Jo Chen



IMAGE: St Hilda's 9 to 5 - The Musical, photo by Matthew Irwin



[umsu.unimelb.edu.au/theatre](http://umsu.unimelb.edu.au/theatre)