CHILDREN OF THE BLACK SKIRT

Written By Ange Betzien

jBah | JAVENBAH THEATRE



AUDITION PACK

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Stoytelling, a traditional method used to teach about culutral beliefs, values, customs, rituals, history, practices, relationships and ways of life is embraced by Javeenbah Theatre.

It is with this that the production team of *Children of the Black Skirt* acknowledge the Traditional Owners, the Kombumerri People, alongside all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ancestors, as we honour the legacy of storytelling through this production.

SYNOPSIS

Children of the Black Skirt is a dark Australian gothic play written by Ange Betzien. It explores themes of childhood, neglect, isolation, fear and the lasting effects of Australia's past, through the painful chapters of Australian history, including convict transportation, the Stolen Generations and World War II.

The play follows a group of children who have been abandoned or forgotten, living in a mysterious and unsettling world where the boundaries between reality, memory and imagination become blurred. Through a series of interconnected stories, the children reveal their experiences of suffering, cruelty and loneliness as they attempt to make sense of their lives and find a place where they belong. Through storytelling, the children begin to release the spirits from their suffering, gradually exposing the truth behind the orphanage and the Black Skirt's mysterious past.

The play highlights the importance of acknowledging past injustices, seeking reconciliation and recognising the power of storytelling to give a voice to those who have been silenced.

THE DIRECTOR

After a overwhlemingly successful Side Piece season with *The Laramie Project* this year, Bryce is excited to return to Javeenbah Theatre in 2027 to direct this play of truth-telling, and the importance of remembering the silenced voices of our history.

Bryce is an experienced performer and director based on the Gold Coast. He graduated from UQ in 2017 with a Bachelor of Education and a Bachelor of Arts (English & Drama), and has since spent the last 9 years teaching across the region. At the Univeristy of Queensland, Bryce engaged with an Intership with AustLit and created educational resources for *Children of the Black Skirt* for teachers around the nation. Euipped with this play text knowledge, Bryce also brings to Javeenbah a love and passion for all things Australian Gothic after being inspired by the works of Dr Stephen Carleton, lead researcher and Senior Lecturer at UQ.

As a performer, Bryce is no stranger to the Javeenbah stage, having worked with the casts of *Letters to Lindy*, *Macbeth* & *Jane & Kel Go To Hell*. Outside of Javeenbah, he is a seasonal performer with Village Roadshow Theme Parks at their Fright Night and White Christmas events. Bryce has also completed an acting course for Stage and Screen with Tim Franklin, award-winning Australian Actor in his program called The Art of Expression.



BRYCE BERRELL

INDIGENOUS CONSULTANT

Given the play's exploration of themes surrounding The Stolen Generations and Indigenous People's, Bryce warmly welcomes to the Production Team, Dr Madeleine Pugin.

Madeleine is a Kombumerri woman from the Gold Coast and Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Indigenous Politics in the School of Government and International Relations at Griffith University, with a deep commitment to advancing Indigenous rights and recognition. Her research focuses on the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the cultural rights, particularly identity recognition, of urban Traditional Owners.

Before her journey in research, Madeleine worked as a High School English and History teacher working across Gold Coast schools. She is thrilled to be a part of the production team, offering cultural support to our cast as they explore the harsh realities of Australian history.

Bryce thanks Madeleine for her time and commitment in supporting this production with her cultural knowledge and authority.



DR MADELEINE PUGIN

INTERESTED IN JOINING THE CREW?

For this production of *Children of the Black Skirt*, Bryce extends an opportunity for artists to join the crew as Assistant Director, Stage Manager & Set Designer. If you are interested in becoming a part of the crew for this prodction, please complete the Cast & Crew Form, supplying relevant details. More details are provided at the end of the audition pack.

PERFORMANCE SEASON

The show is a part of the 2027 Main Stage season and runs from Saturday 10th of April to Saturday 24th of April 2027. Shows are every Friday and Saturday night and Sunday matinee. Bump out for this production is scheduled for Sunday 25th of April 2027, however further consideration will be given with cast based on commitments on ANZAC Day 2027. All cast must be available for the duration of the performance season.

REHEARSALS

A play read will be conducted based on cast and crew availability in December 2026 with official rehearsals commencing in January 2027. Rehearsals will run every Wednesday night from January 6th 2027, and will include weekend rehearsals every Saturday morning from 9am to 12pm. Rehearsals will be located at the theatre or at another location on the Gold Coast.

ROLES

This play includes multi-role playing by all actors. The vision of this production allows for four cast members to join the cast. All cast members are to be 18+. The following cast requirements will be considered by the panel:

- 2x Female-presenting actors, with one being an Indigenous actor
- 2x Male-presenting actors

AUDITION INFORMATION

Please fill out the Cast & Crew Expression of Interest Form on the Javeenbah website. Auditions will be held at Javeenbah Theatre on Sunday 29th of November 2026 from 10am onwards. The panel will consist of the Director, Indigenous Consultant and other people deemed appropriate by the Director, Members of the Javeenbah Management & Production Committee may also be present. If you are not able to attend the auditions in person, please submit a video auditon no later than 9am on Sunday 29th of November to cotbsjbah2027@gmail.com .

AUDITION REQUIREMENTS

The audition for this production will be a two-part process. At 10am, all auditionees will engage in drama activities and cold-reads of the script. Following this at 11am, individual auditions will occur where each auditionee will present a maximum 1-minute monologue to the panel. The monologue must be dramatic in style and reflect themes found within *Children of the Black Skirt*. This monologue is to be chosen by the auditionee that showcases their talent.

FINANCIAL MEMBER

If you are successfully casted in *Children of the Black Skirt*, you must become a financial member of the theatre at $10/year. Payment plans can be arranged. All members must abide by the code of conduct and operating procedures of Javeenbah Theatre Company.

STILL HAVE QUESTIONS?

Please contact Bryce directly by email at cotbsjbah2027@gmail.com