

Joan Sutherland  
Performing Arts Centre

Q theatre company

# DECODED

Annual Youth Theatre Festival 2018



**Information Pack & Application Weblink**

## DECODED | ANNUAL YOUTH FESTIVAL 2018

The Q Theatre Company's Annual Youth Theatre Festival 2018 gives high school drama students the opportunity to explore different theatrical styles, and work with industry professionals including writers, directors, actors and technicians, as together they create an original performance 8-12 minutes in length.

The Festival brings together eight schools from across Western Sydney and pairs them with eight professional theatre artists. Each group will develop their personal response to the provocation for 2018, "DECODED", through workshops, rehearsals and - finally - through performance on the Q Theatre stage, for their peers and audiences from every school involved. The Festival champions and celebrates theatre practice, with a strong focus on two areas:

1. the process of theatre making from idea – development – performance – reflection; and,
2. taking ownership of theatre as a collaborative artform, made possible through a range of people including creators, technicians, coordinators, publicists and audiences.

Please review the entire document carefully before completing your application at the weblink at the end of this document, and contact the Festival Coordinator Ian Zammit if you have any questions:

Ian Zammit | DECODED Festival Coordinator | 02 4723 7606 | [ian.zammit@penrith.city](mailto:ian.zammit@penrith.city)

## YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE FESTIVAL

There are seven distinct stages in the development of engaging in the Festival with The Joan.

### 1. INITIAL PROVOCATION: DECODED

*"A flash of light. A few beeps, a bop and a squeak here and there. The black box appeared without much ceremony. It was discreet, out of the way and wasn't bothering anyone. Until it kept flashing. And it kept beeping and the bops and squeaks got louder and louder. And louder and louder. We looked for instructions, for switches, for any kind of marking at all. Nothing. The smooth metallic surface just hummed quietly and then returned to sending out its code to anyone that would listen. The black box had a message and it wasn't going anywhere till we made sense of it..."*

Eight teams of specialists have been brought in to make sense of the mysterious message from the unknown.

Each school will respond the concept of DECODED through their participation in all 7 stages of this year's Festival process, from Provocation through to Performance. Your provocation could be a response to the act of decoding a message; relating to the challenges of decoding communications across cultures and time or in mythology; or it could relate to how we experience or perceive the concept of decoding and communication. As with the theatrical styles (see step 2), your provocation is intended to help stimulate the early creative process and is not required to be a prominent feature of your finished work

## 2. THEATRICAL STYLES

Each school group chooses a theatrical style to work within, which can be linked specifically to styles being studied within a school's curricula. Some popular styles from past festivals include:

Classic/Greek	Comedy	Contemporary	Dance Theatre
Epic Theatre	Mask	Musical Theatre	Physical Theatre
Shakespeare	Verbatim Theatre	Theatre for Children	Theatre o/t Absurd

Or you can choose another style that suits your class' content focus.

Remember that your theatrical style should provide *inspiration* for your stylistic choices, rather than requiring you and the students to adhere rigidly to all of its conventions. It is recommended you consider 1-2 additional theatrical styles in the event we are unable to accommodate your first choice.

## 3. APPLICATION

To apply to participate in the Festival please complete the **online Application Form** via the weblink at the end of this document, and when finished click the button "Submit Form". You will be emailed confirmation of your application details, and their receipt by the Festival Coordinator, within 24 hours. Contact the Festival Coordinator with any queries regarding DECODED 2018.

**The applications deadline is: Midnight, Thursday 1 March 2018.**

All applications will be assessed for approval, and are processed on a first-in basis. Due to the high level of interest we receive from schools to participate in DECODED, we recommend you submit your school's application at your earliest convenience. We will confirm whether your school's application has been successful by **Friday 09 March, 2018.**

Successful applications will receive:

- \* an email confirming your successful application into DECODED 2018
- \* the **Festival Registration Form** to complete your school details (due **Thursday 29 March**)
- \* an invoice for the \$550.00 entry fee for your school (payment is due **Friday 4 May**)
- \* a receipt confirming your school's reservation of min. 30 student tickets to the 12pm matinee of DECODED on Friday 6 July. (We will be in touch in early May to confirm if you need more than 30 tickets booked, and to invoice for final numbers. Payment of the matinee tickets is due Friday 15 June 2018.)

## 4. TEACHING ARTISTS & AUDIO/VISUAL PROVOCATION

Schools accepted into DECODED will be paired with an artist who has expertise in the theatrical style that has been assigned. You may nominate an area of performance craft which you would like your artist to focus on, such as physical or vocal skills, acting, writing or directing, and we will consider your preferences when selecting your artist. You will also receive an audio and/or visual element intended as an additional provocation for your group. More information will be provided closer to this time.

Your artist will spend a total of 20 face-to-face hours working with your group, the timing of which is decided between yourself and the artist. This time includes your stagecraft workshop and technical rehearsals which together total around five hours.

Over the rehearsal process your artist will introduce your chosen style, facilitate the generation of ideas and performance material and help guide the creative and artistic development of your performance.

## 5. STAGECRAFT WORKSHOPS & TEACHING ARTIST WORKSHOPS

During Term Two in the week of Monday 14 - Thursday 17 May 2018, you and your students will undertake a two-hour Stagecraft and Technical Production Workshop in the Q Theatre led by your artist and members of The Joan's technical and production teams. For 2018 you will also be partnered with another school as a "buddy" group, to share the learning experience, discover insights into each other's processes and support your buddy group's developments.

The Stagecraft Workshop session will give your students an insight into the dimensions, layout and architecture of the Q Theatre stage as well as the sound, lighting and other media options available to you which will help inform the development of your performance. It is also an excellent opportunity to identify potential performative or technical production challenges and processes which you may want to address early in the rehearsal process.

Session times are available as follows – please indicate your preferences in your application:

Mon 14 May: 9:00AM - 11:00AM, or 11:30AM-1:30PM, or 2:00PM-4:00PM  
Tue 15 May: 9:00AM - 11:00AM, or 11:30AM-1:30PM, or 2:00PM-4:00PM  
Wed 16 May: 9:00AM - 11:00AM, or 11:30AM-1:30PM, or 2:00PM-4:00PM  
Thu 16 May: 9:00AM - 11:00AM, or 11:30AM-1:30PM, or 2:00PM-4:00PM

NOTE: If the space is available in The Joan after your Stagecraft Workshop, we can provide a venue for your group's first session with your Teaching Artist: contact us at your earliest convenience check availability and confirm if you wish to book this.

Following the Stagecraft Workshop will be your time to arrange performance development workshops with your Teaching Artist. Each Teaching Artist is allocated just 15 hours in the weeks leading up to Production week (see below), so we recommend you plan ahead with your teaching artist at the Stagecraft Workshops (or in earlier consultation if you are able) for the best use of your time together.

## 6. PRODUCTION WEEK & TECHNICAL REHEARSALS

Production Week is the week leading-up to the performance date, with Technical Rehearsals taking place between Monday 2 – Thursday 5 July. During this week your group will attend The Joan for a full day of rehearsals. Your "buddy" school will be booked for the same day, and the day is split into two sessions of 3 hours:

- 3 hours in a Technical Rehearsal session on the Q Theatre stage (if time will also include one or more dress rehearsals); and,
- 3 hours spent rehearsing / fine-tuning your performance with your artist in a rehearsal venue.

The sessions are morning (9:00AM start) and afternoon (1:00PM start), with a break for lunch in between. One school group will be booked in for the Technical Rehearsal in the morning session, with the buddy school rehearsing at the same time, and then the schools will swap sessions for the afternoon. Schools in Technical Rehearsal have the opportunity of welcoming their buddy school groups to watch their Dress Rehearsal, and provide a supportive audience in their dress rehearsal towards the end of the session. Depending on schools' availability these rehearsals may extend into the preceding week (Monday 25 to Friday 29 June).

## 7. PERFORMANCES

Two Performances of DECODED will be held on Friday 6 July in the Q Theatre, at 12pm and at 7pm. The earlier matinee performance is for a school audience and the evening performance is for general public, although anyone may elect to attend either performance.

The minimum 30 tickets allocated to you as a participating school will automatically be assigned to the matinee performance.

## REHEARSAL LOGISTICS

Tutors are contracted to work with you and your students for a total of 20 hours. The breakdown is:

- 1 x 2 hour Stagecraft/Technical Workshop in the Q Theatre
- 12 hours of Performance Preparation Workshops, at your school or at The Joan\*
- Technical Rehearsal Day:
  - 1 x 3 hour technical rehearsal in the Q Theatre
  - 1 x 3 hour Performance Preparation Workshop in one of The Joan's venues
- Teaching Artists are also invited to attend the Performances on Friday 6 July

A suggested model for the Performance Preparation Workshops process: 4 x 3 hour sessions, led by your artist either at your school or The Joan. These workshops could be held during or after the school day, in the evenings or at weekends depending on your school's situation. Three hours is a recommended amount of time, as it allows your artist and students time to reconnect, generate and refine performance material with some depth, and plan activities to be conducted before the next workshop.

*\* Where available The Joan can offer rehearsal spaces as an alternative to your school facilities. Our centre is open Monday-Friday 9am-9pm and Saturdays 9am-4:30pm during term times. Conducting some or all of your workshops at The Joan can help your students develop a more intimate understanding of the environment they will be performing in and can help promote focus and creativity during workshops. Venue availability is limited, so contact the Festival Coordinator early to look at space at The Joan for any or all of your workshops.*

## SOME TIPS FOR YOUR PERFORMANCE

It is our belief that, with support, young local artists can create theatre that is as powerful, relevant and engaging as that made by professionals. We also acknowledge that those participating are likely at a very early stage in their personal artistic development.

With this in mind, we have compiled a short list of guidelines to help you and your students avoid some common pitfalls. These guidelines are based on best industry practice. Consider them ahead of your stagecraft workshop, when you will have a chance to experiment and identify potential challenges early-on.

**Duration** Your work should be strictly within 8-12 minutes once performance-ready.

**Audience** Have in mind that your audience will range in age from year 7 students to adults, so consider content accordingly.

**Use of Space** For maximum impact keep the dimensions of the Q Theatre in mind when developing your work. To aid you in this we have included a stage plan with this pack. Consider the stage dimensions, entrances and exits, aisles and other features and how you could exploit them. Consider, for example, how your piece could spread across the auditorium, or the effect of contracting it onto a restricted area. If you are ever unsure about an aspect of the space please contact us for clarification.

**Volume** There is a dramatic difference between rehearsing speech in a classroom and performing in a professional theatre. Performers should be constantly aware of their volume to ensure they can always be heard when they intend to be. At school it will sound like your students are shouting, but once they enter the theatre they will be amazed at how much harder they have to work to be heard! If you identify vocal skills as a major challenge for your students please let us know so that we can work to support them through the rehearsal process.

**Character** It can be easy in the context of a short performance to paint characters in 'broad strokes'. Remember your characters are the engine for the drama of your piece so it pays to flesh them out. As you discover new things about them you'll also discover new avenues for developing your story, and therefore new material.

**Design** Beyond the script and the staging there are plenty of opportunities for you to embellish and enhance your performance by imaginatively employing elements of set, costume and props design. We encourage you to use this opportunity to develop a fully-realized aesthetic, however we recommend that you not rely on 'placeholder' items such as rostra. In some cases less may be more, but a distinctive and refreshing 'look' can help make for a more powerful and memorable performance.

## TECHNICAL PRODUCTION

DECODED is a great way for students to learn about the technical aspects of mounting a production, and teachers and tutors are encouraged to involve students in the technical design of their works throughout the rehearsal period.

If any of your students are especially interested in technical production we may be able to offer them an opportunity to spend some time working with our technical crew in the lead-up to the performance date. This experience will count toward VET Entertainment hours where applicable. Please contact us for more information.

We understand that the final weeks of rehearsal are a period of rapid development and change, however we request that you submit your technical **requirements at least two weeks prior to the performance date** to allow adequate time to source and prepare the necessary equipment: for 2018 please provide these specifications by **Friday 22 June**.

### **Important information about using recorded music and/or sounds in your performance:**

Music or sounds recorded by other artists is protected by copyright, but can be used through application to the appropriate agencies. We require at least six weeks' notice if you intend to use music or sounds recorded by other artists in your work as such content is subject to a 3-8 week clearance process and approval is not guaranteed: for 2018, we ask that you provide any desired recorded music / sound requests by **Friday 25 May**.

Please use the APRA/AMCOS Works Search ([www.apraamcos.com.au](http://www.apraamcos.com.au)) to ensure availability of your chosen track(s) before requesting clearance. When submitting your work requests, prioritise a first and second preference of tracks you desire to use, to minimise the chances of disappointment. You must include the full track name, the names of the performing artist and composer, the name of the album from which the track is taken, the year of production and the exact duration of the excerpt you wish to use. FYI A good rule of thumb to consider is: the more well-known the track, the less likely it is to be approved.

Please also note that you may not parody or change the lyrics of an existing work.

- Sound** We can accommodate the use of recorded and/or live sound in your performance. Recorded sound must be presented on a CD or USB drive. All tracks must be in order and already edited to be the desired length.
- Lighting** Most things are possible, and more likely with notice! Contact us if you have any questions or special requests and we will do our best to accommodate your vision. We encourage you to carefully plan your lighting states for maximum dramatic effect. Consider the mood of your scene, the motivations and interactions of your characters and the general atmosphere you're working to evoke.
- Graphics** The Q is equipped with a data projector and computer for projecting visuals onto the cyclorama, a large white curtain at the rear of the stage. Videos should be recorded and edited in the highest possible resolution to ensure the quality of the blown-up image and where possible presented in a full screen format without black bars.

## INDUSTRY FEEDBACK

One of the chief aims of DECODED is to ensure that participants leave the festival having gained an insight into the practicalities and processes involved in mounting a professional-scale production. To this end each year we assemble a panel of industry experts who provide individualized feedback to each group about their performance. This feedback will focus on three key areas: technical production, stagecraft and performance skills. The feedback is intended to provide valuable reflection material for analysis within the group and insights that will inform student's future performance practice. Each school group will also receive a Certificate for their participation in the Festival and creating a performance for DECODED.

## MARKETING THE FESTIVAL

DECODED is a non-profit event and we rely on ticket sales to keep the Festival going year after year. It is expected that students and teachers will actively publicise the event, and this is greatly appreciated. We encourage you to advertise the Festival within your school networks and to direct interested parties to our Box Office for further information. We will supply you with posters and flyers closer to the performance date. We also strongly encourage you to utilize your 30 tickets by inviting other year groups, your staff and executive faculty members to help fill the house and give the performers the best experience possible.

## KEEP IN TOUCH

There are two main contacts within The Joan whom you can contact to discuss your involvement in the festival as it progresses:

### **Ian Zammit – Festival & Schools Coordinator**

4723 7606 / [ian.zammit@penrith.city](mailto:ian.zammit@penrith.city)

Contact Ian for all queries relating to the running and logistics of this year's DECODED festival, as well as any urgent after-hours enquiries. For creative, technical, and venue-related queries please also contact Ian in the first instance.

### **Geoff Turner – Technical Manager**

4723 7608 / 0414 983 316 / [technical@jspac.com.au](mailto:technical@jspac.com.au)

Geoff Turner is a veteran of the Festival and will be leading the technical preparations, rehearsals and operations for DECODED. Contact Geoff with any urgent technical issues.

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# DECODED 2018: APPLICATION FORM

[Click here to view & complete the "DECODED" APPLICATION FORM](#)

**Applications will be accepted until midnight on Thursday, 1 March, 2018.**

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