



Gene Tree:

Listen. Now. Again

by **ST MARTINS** and **Corrugated Iron Youth Arts**

17 - 21 July 2025

This iteration of *Gene Tree: Listen. Now. Again* was created and performed on sovereign Larrakia Country. The project was first created and performed on the sovereign lands of the Wurundjeri and Boon Wurrung peoples of the Eastern Kulin Nations.

We pay respects to Elders past and present, and stand in solidarity with all First Nations peoples.



CREDITS

PERFORMERS

Ludmilla Primary School

Kylie Adams
Dwight Ahndy Cainghog
Arthur Ah Toy
Hafeez Akbar
Walt Barelow
Zedrina Barma
Lucy Brown
Koby Campbell Stewart
Malcom Cook
Noel Cook
Avaya Dravitski-Munkara
Kade Drouault
Maximilian Ellis Bayliss
Damien Gladwin
Ben Gray
Charlie Gray
Arzarria Hayes
Jakob Holis
Zoey Jeschke
Oliwer Kazimierska
Grace Kerr
Ashton Lewfatt
Michael MacDonald
Liana McDonald
Darcy Mathews

Darren Meng
Ayden Michalowski
Phillamon Minor
Randy Nguyen
Brendon Oxtoby
Jane Patrick
Ellanora Peni Foster
Joel Poulson
Mia Reagan
Kora Riordan
Liam Robertson
Juliet Robinson
Indie See
Hayden Simmons
Alyxandra Sullivan
Wade Taylor
Rocco Uy De Baron
Duni Vasilev
Leja Viljoen
Jett West
Jasmine Wodidj
Anzo Wurramarrba

Corrugated Iron - Company C

Chloe Carter
Alice Cotter
Lucas Cova
Romy Dixon
Zoë Foster
Billie Freeman-Knox
Demelza Gikopoulos
Moon Heaslip
Pheebi Lockley
Thomas McCarthy
Ashlyn McKernan
Asha O'Brien-Hartcher
Matilda Uden
Claudia Wyles

And guest

Keelan Nawudba
(Melbourne Indigenous Transition School)



PERFORMERS

Darwin Symphony Orchestra's Young Artists' Program

- Darius Chung (violin)
Sebastián Gonzalez (violin)
Luca Gordon (violin)
* Christian Kuswadi (violin)
Aya Smith (violin)
Faye Yik (violin)
Dexter Bolwell (cello)
* Nathan Chan (cello)
Miah Smith (cello)
* Marvin Wong (double bass)
* Peter Harvey (trumpet)
* Amy Zhao (percussion)

And guests
Erin De Jager (voice)
Lucas Cova (drums)

- * Section leader

CREATIVE TEAM AND CREW

Script / *Gene Tree* Participants and Creatives from all versions
Concept, Composer, Musician / Elissa Goodrich
Originating Director / Nadja Kostich
Darwin Director / Benhur Helwend
Producer (St Martins) / Lara Week
Producer (Corrugated Iron) / Zoe Scrogings
Set / Nature
Lighting / The Sun
Originating Production Design / Emily Barrie and Rachel Burke, adapted for Darwin
Video Design / Michael Carmody
Corrugated Iron Collaborating Artists / Nikki Jeffries and Swahnnya De Almedia
Darwin Symphony Orchestra Young Artists' Program / Miah Smith and Aya Smith (YAP Staff), Amy Zhao (YAP Student Mentor), Stephanie Arnold (Education and Outreach Coordinator)
Ludmilla Teachers / Ms Korin Lesh, Mr Nathan Batten, Ms Jacinta McDonnell
Production Manager / Lucy Buckley
Stage Manager / Romana Paulson
Sound and Lighting Technician / Finn Williams
Production Consult / Duane Preston
Costume Coordinators / Sally Crawford and Pip O'Shea
Photography / Michael Carmody, David Bradley
Videography / James Gillot, Jason Cheetham

DARWIN DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Growing up in Darwin, the Botanical Gardens was a place of magic for me, family picnics, sliding down hills, and playing on the giant concrete mushroom. It was where my imagination bloomed, and my lifelong love of nature began.

My father worked in the Gardens from the 1950s through to the 1980s. Many of the coconut trees he planted still stand tall today. To return now in a creative role, honouring this space and its living environment, is deeply personal. The Gardens hold memories not just for me, but for many generations of Territorians.

Gene Tree first emerged during the COVID lockdowns, developed by young people from St Martins over Zoom and later performed in Melbourne's Royal Botanic Gardens. The idea to bring the work to Darwin grew from a partnership initiated by our Executive Producer / CEO, Zoe Scrogings, through a vision to strengthen creative partnerships nationally with kindred youth arts organisations. Zoe also drew on Corrugated Iron's deep community relationships, including with Ludmilla Primary School and Darwin Symphony Orchestra to ground this reimagining in local voices, stories, and place. Over the past five months, I've had the privilege of working with original director Nadja Kostich (St Martins Youth Arts Centre), Elissa Goodrich who conceived the idea and composed the score, Company C (Corrugated Iron Youth Arts), and students from Ludmilla to reimagine the work here.

Together, we explored questions like: *If you were a piece of nature, what would you be?* and *What is your relationship with the natural world?* We dove into the themes of DNA, evolution, and the remarkable story of the Peppered Moth, asking bold questions like: *Do we have hope to evolve? How insignificant are we? Would we better understand animals and nature if we were more aware?*

It feels especially fitting to ask these questions in a city named after Charles Darwin. This Darwin adaptation has been a rich, rewarding journey, blending science, rhythm, and deep reverence for nature. I am so proud of the young people who helped shape this version. Their creativity and honesty have brought something truly special into being, something grounded in the spirit of the Top End and performed in the living museum of the George Brown Botanical Gardens.

Gene Tree: Listen. Now. Again is a reimagining of St Martins' award-winning production, now making its Darwin debut as part of the 2025 Darwin Fringe Festival. We warmly invite you to join us.

Benhur Helwend

Darwin Director, Corrugated Iron





**WHAT IS
THE SOUND
OF YOUR
HEARTBEAT
RIGHT
NOW?**

ORIGINATING CREATORS' NOTE

Gene Tree: Listen. Now. Again has been a thriving hive of evolution and collaboration for almost a decade. It began in conversation, enthusing over how the roles of scientist and artist are not so dissimilar: to be curious, to ask questions, to test hunches, to ask again. Years on, *Gene Tree* has adapted, mutated and transformed hundreds of times over, like the very first cells and species, with every child and artist who continues to contribute to it.

We have, from the ground up, built this unique concept tour that hails from Melbourne and now engages Darwin children, young people, artists, crew and organisations. We have created a map, a blueprint and a methodology that we hope can continue to be refined and travel the world far and wide as a living, growing performance experience tracing pathways of care and connection across our planet.

Originally almost 100 children from 40 cultures in Melbourne contributed words, stories, melodies, rhythms and ideas to shape the premiere of *Gene Tree*, which has now been handed over to the incredible young people and artists of Darwin who, in turn, have reshaped it with their own bodies, voices, stories and experiences. It has been such a joy to meet the 65 young participants from Ludmilla Primary School, Corrugated Iron Theatre Company C and the Darwin Symphony Orchestra Young Artists Program. And to see and hear *Gene Tree: Listen. Now. Again* be shaped by them and by Darwin itself, the birds, sunlight, trees, bugs and animals, ocean and mangroves.

In various moments, *Gene Tree* becomes a collective dream for our planet, an ode to nature, a call to attention, or a simple listening. Our score has arisen from a musician's study of science, in collaboration with and response to the young people. It evokes the incessant, relentless rhythms of our biology—cells duplicating, dying, birthing—and is embodied by the young people who lead a humming celebration of adaptation and change in a celebratory procession through the George Brown Darwin Botanic Gardens. The distillation of their stories, reflections and impossible questions about the planet and nature takes the audience into a state of hyper-focus, into our senses and bodies, to 'Listen. Now. Again.'

All our young people are sharing with you their own breakthroughs and personal bests in their performance today. They have made us laugh and cry and delight in their discoveries and offers. We could not have asked for more of the remarkable teams that have held this work here: Corrugated Iron, who have championed this project from our first reach out, they are amazing, and their director Benhur Helwend has so beautifully created this version; Ludmilla Primary School, whose incredible culture, led by dedicated Principal, Carol Putica and teachers, evokes such curiosity and enthusiasm in the children; DSO's Young Artists Program, with their dedicated staff embracing this new musical adventure with us; the crew and team here and afar, at St Martins... you have all made a herculean effort—each one doing their part, assisting others to do theirs, filling the gaps, inventing the solutions, making the work better together, so the young people and children can shine! To you all, what an extraordinary effort of collaboration. Massive, colossal thank yous to each one!

And so we welcome you, our audience, to *Gene Tree* at Darwin Fringe, to experience this bee-hive-like convergence of music, evolutionary biology and storytelling. We hope you will imagine and listen for the music within the science. We invite you to join the children as they bring out the rhythms and the stories that alert us to patterns and change, and hope. In doing so, perhaps we may all pay attention in new ways, and hear a 'music' that we may have never known to listen for.

Elissa Goodrich and Nadja Kostich
Originating Creators, St Martins

DREAM OF THE THIRD STRAND (FINAL SONG)

Lyrics by *Gene Tree* 2022 participants and creatives, music by Grace Annan and Elissa Goodrich

I am the earth singing her own song
I am a descendant of the firstborn cell
The atom before the atom of you
I have adapted to the changes you have sung

Uncrushable
Unstoppable

I can change
I changed
I can change again

I am the earth singing her own song
I am a descendant of the firstborn cell
I share a common present with you
And I dream an unwritten future

Uncrushable
Unstoppable

Spoken

History is written in my genes
I am the mutations and the variations
The replications and the proliferations
I share a common present with you
And I dream an unwritten future

I am the earth singing her own song
I am a descendant of the firstborn cell
The atom before the atom of you
I have adapted to the changes you have sung

Uncrushable
Unstoppable



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

St Martins Youth Arts Centre and Corrugated Iron Youth Arts wholeheartedly thank:

Carol Putica	Danielle Ford
Hannah Illingworth	Tully Gelfling
Nadine Lee	Craig Viellaris
Kelly Blumberg	Engeldis Bano
Cj Fraser Bell	Darwin Languages Centre Library
Merlene Hutt	Tracks Dance Company
Sophie, Helen, and all of the George Brown	
Darwin Botanical Gardens staff	
Dr Anna Syme	
Gideon Brazil	
Elliott Folvig	
Leah Scholes	
Rodrigo Salgado	
Adam Simmons	
Dreamedia	

References:

“Listen. Now. Again” - inspired by “The Rain Stick” by Seamus Heany
“This is the story of light and dark...” - inspired by “Moth” by Isabel Thomas

ST MARTINS STAFF

Artistic Director and CEO / Nadja Kostich
Executive Director / Thomas Caldwell
General Manager - Development / Hayley Haynes
Venue and Operations Manager / Julie Blyth
Artistic Associate / Alice Qin
Workshops and Marketing Coordinator / Agnieszka Majer
Presenter Services Coordinator / Shayne Cummin
Bookkeeper / Aida Innocente

ST MARTINS BOARD

Chair / Elise Margow
Deputy Chair / Steve Bradby
Director / Arjun Ravi
Director / Kudzai Mhishi
Director / Fiona Symonds

CORRUGATED IRON STAFF

Executive Producer / CEO / Zoe Scrogings
Administrator and Workshop Coordinator / Jodie Reichstein
Head Circus Trainer / Nikki Jeffries
Marketing & Engagement Coordinator / Courtney Green
Creative Producer (Programs) / Benhur Helwend
Creative Producer (Creative Schools and Communities) / Rachal Van Wyk

CORRUGATED IRON BOARD

Chair / Megan Lawton
Treasurer / Steve Bartlett
Director / Amy Hetherington
Director / Simon Niblock
Director / Carol Putica
Director / Wade Jenkins
Director / Jemima Fernandes
Director / Benjamin Mooney
Director / Felicity Pearson
Director / Anita Carver



St Martins Youth Arts Centre is a Melbourne-based youth arts company with a national reputation for making original and bold contemporary performances, inviting audiences into the real, potent, and poignant worlds that concern young people. Its methodology of working with children aged 5-18 and exceptional artists in deep and collaborative processes is key to achieving astonishing performance outcomes. Over the past decade, St Martins' public performances have garnered multiple industry awards and accolades, including two Green Room Awards for Gene Tree in 2022.

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Corrugated Iron Youth Arts is the Northern Territory's leading youth arts company. It engages, trains, mentors and employs emerging artists and creative professionals who inspire children and young people to develop their skills and forge pathways in the arts. Corrugated Iron inspires the NOW generation of creative leaders, movers and shakers to take the lead in shaping its artistic program to ensure that it is driven by the voices of young people.

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**ST
MARTINS
YOUTH
ARTS
CENTRE**



**DARWIN
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA**



**DARWIN
FRINGE
FESTIVAL**