

#DARWINFESTIVAL

# BIGHOUSE DREAMING

A Declan Furber Gillick Yarn

**THEATRE** Australia

📍 Brown's Mart Theatre



Fri 16 Aug

6pm

Sat 17 & Sun 18 Aug

1pm & 6pm



Photo: Philippa Clarke



# LEGS ON THE WALL MAN WITH THE IRON NECK

**PHYSICAL THEATRE** Australia

📍 The Playhouse,  
Darwin Entertainment Centre



Tue 13 & Wed 14 Aug

7.30pm

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Photo: David Charles Collins

# GHENOA GELA MY URRWAI

📍 Brown's Mart Theatre  
Fri 9 – Sun 11 Aug

**DARWIN  
FESTIVAL**

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## GHENOA GELA MY URRWAI

**Produced by Performing Lines in association with ILBIJERRI Theatre.**

Originally co-produced by Belvoir and Performing Lines in association with ILBIJERRI Theatre and Sydney Festival.

**We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of this land, and all those that we travel through and perform on. We pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.**

**Always was. Always will be.**

### CREATOR'S NOTE

My island name is Genua, that's the name I was given when I was born. But when I got to school, one of my teachers changed my name to Ghenoa. Now I prefer to be called G. I was born and bred in Rockhampton, in central Queensland. My parents were born in the Torres Strait. I'm a first generation, mainland-born Torres Strait Islander. The stereotype of blackfellas in sport was strong in Rocky – if you make it in sport, you've made it. When I was younger, I was pretty good at everything. I wanted to be a big sports star. The nearest I got to considering being an artist was fantasising about joining Janet Jackson's backup dancers. Both my

parents wanted us to learn traditional island dancing – it was one of the few traditions my parents grew up with that we could do on the mainland. For us kids it was the first thing they taught us, pretty much as soon as I could sit up. I call myself a 'Torres Strait Island artist', and I do that on purpose. Many people aren't very familiar with Indigenous politics, and they tend to blur the two – Aboriginal and Torres Strait. I am a choreographer, performer, actor, whatever, but it's important to state that I'm a Torres Strait Island artist. *My Urrwai* is absolutely personal. It's hilarious, it's really funny – we yarn these stories in our family all the time. All my creative tricks come from my family and my childhood. But there's some heavy stuff in there too. I have a responsibility to family, to my stories. It's a part of cultural practice to consult with your family. My mum is mentioned a lot in the show, and I had to have her come down and see it, where she sits in it, and hear her perception of it not only as my mum, but as a Torres Strait woman. When you're in an industry that doesn't understand you or your people, or where you come from, you need that support to be able to articulate appropriately how to move forward. I want to make a black space. I want to make sure that everything I'm doing is the best representation of my people and culture.

But I'm not the representative for my people; I'm representing myself and my story. How can we say what we wanna say without it being tokenised? I don't know the answer, I'm still navigating that. But I know we need more blackfellas across the arts. We need more stories. You're gonna see mine tonight.

**Ghenoa**

### DIRECTOR'S NOTE

It has been an extraordinary honour to work with such an incredibly talented artist like G. We began this journey several years ago. *My Urrwai* began as a humorous, light and entertaining piece, but after a little exploration we soon discovered that there was a lot more to tell. Ghenoa's story speaks to the heart of all blackfellas' stories of having to navigate a diverse career as an artist in the predominantly white arts industry, while honouring one's culture and the responsibilities that come with that. Ghenoa has not come from a theatre background and I believe this has allowed the work to be what it needs to be. It is a beautiful blend of storytelling, acting, movement/dance, and comedy. But then I am reminded that this has always been our way – it's only western societies that silo art forms, so we are only doing what we have always done! It has also been an incredible honour to work alongside Kate

Champion whom is ever rigorous in ensuring that nothing is in there that doesn't have meaning or purpose. I am very proud of this work, and am thrilled you are having a chance to see it tonight. I hope to see it tour for years to come.

**Rachael Maza**

### CREDITS

**Creator/Performer** Ghenoa Gela  
**Director** Rachael Maza  
**Dramaturg** Kate Champion  
**Composer** Ania Reynolds  
**Lighting Designer** Niklas Pajanti  
**Set & Costume Designer** Michael Hankin  
**Production & Stage Manager** Nicole Eyles

View full creative team bios at  
<http://bit.ly/my-urrwai>

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[performinglines.org.au](http://performinglines.org.au)  
[@performinglines](https://twitter.com/performinglines)

### BIG ESSO (BIG THANK YOU)

To my Pumle (family) especially Mum and Dad, my girls, Mel, Ama Rachael, Kate, Ania, Toby, Claire, Michael, Nik, Narelle, Liz, Danielle, Colm, Karilyn, Dalisa, Rachael, Pippa and Andrea.

