



THROUGH DIFFERENT EYES.



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ANNUAL REVIEW 2011

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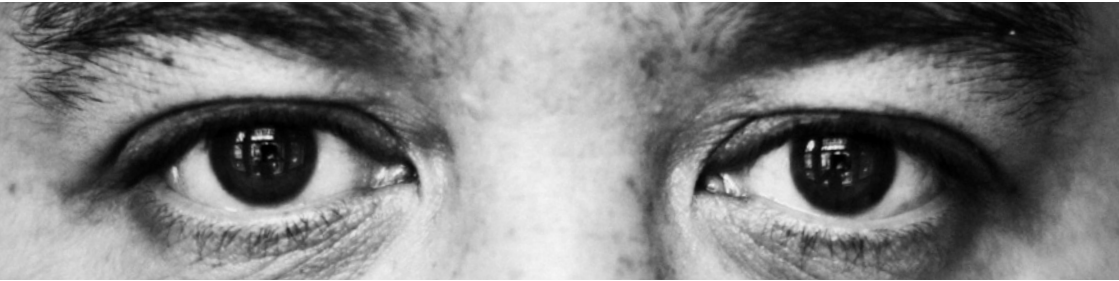


WELCOME TO OUR STAGE



14 THEATRE PRODUCTIONS
152 WORKSHOPS
168 PARTICIPANTS
OVER 1000 AUDIENCE MEMBERS





CHAIR'S REPORT

2011 has been a galvanising year for Milk Crate Theatre with the consolidation of a new Board and reshaping of the management team to guide the organisation to new heights.

NEVER DOUBT THAT A SMALL GROUP
OF THOUGHTFUL COMMITTED
CITIZENS CAN CHANGE THE WORLD;
INDEED IT'S THE ONLY THING
THAT EVER HAS. /

Margaret Mead

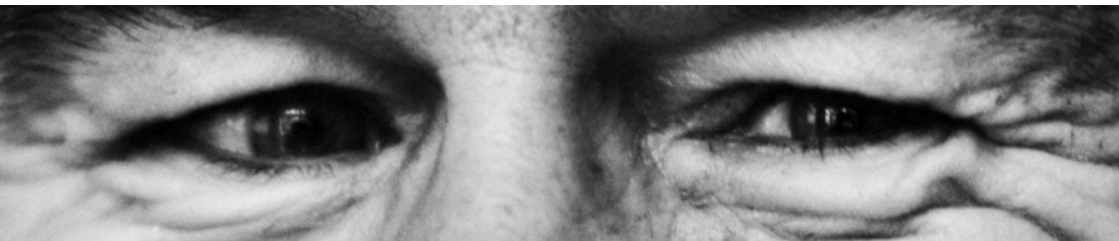
It has been a year of great collaboration and engagement as the Board and artistic team worked to forge a new creative vision underpinned by a commitment to artistic excellence, social inclusion and community engagement. Led by new CEO and Artistic Director, Mirra Todd, Milk Crate Theatre is dedicated to 'creating theatre that creates change' for those who have experienced homelessness and/or social marginalisation.

The relationships and interactions between Milk Crate Theatre's community, the opportunities and interface it creates for both those involved in the workshops and productions, as well as audience members and other supporters, both individual and organisational, is perhaps the greatest reflection of the unique and authentic impact and energy of this company. To experience the positive, animated banter among the Milk Crate Theatre Ensemble, associate artists and the audience after a show is uplifting and insightful.

As Chair of the newly-formed Board, it is a privilege to be involved with an organisation serving the homeless and marginalised community in such a meaningful way. We owe enormous gratitude to our financial supporters whose generosity and sensibility for the work that Milk Crate Theatre does, allows these inroads to be made, and the dedicated staff who give of their time and energy, so willingly and passionately, to facilitate it. During the year, we were sad to farewell long-serving General Manager Katy Coote, who significantly helped lay the foundation for the company's growth. In turn, we warmly welcomed Siena Balakrishnan, who has already embraced the role with great vigour.

With a comprehensive three-year program beginning in 2012 expanding the breadth and depth of our delivery across Sydney and a budget of \$630,000, Milk Crate Theatre is poised for a pivotal and exciting year.

ANGUS WHITE
Chair



ARTISTIC DIRECTORS REPORT

2010 was a year of immense organisational change; 2011 has been that change in action, an extraordinary year of engagement, extension, transformation and solidification for Milk Crate Theatre.

LET IT COME FROM YOU, THEN IT WILL
BE NEW. GIVE US MORE TO SEE.

Stephen Sondheim

We offered 152 workshops to 168 participants and demonstrated high levels of return engagement with 328 overall attendances at various initiatives and reached more than 1000 audience members. We created 14 theatre productions, introduced the new initiative, Visible Theatre which through peer to peer mentoring with associate artists saw eleven of the Milk Crate Theatre Ensemble (people who have experienced homelessness and/or social marginalisation) write, develop and perform in three, twenty-minute plays presented at Carriageworks in front of 136 audience members.

We introduced our adult literacy program, Street Salon, conducted 12 sessions with 47 passionate readers and distributed 123 in-kind tickets to contemporary theatre productions for the Milk Crate Theatre Ensemble (expanding our Edge of Your Seat program to include the Sydney Theatre Company; Belvoir Street Theatre and Griffin Theatre).

The issues we work with are complex and Milk Crate Theatre is only successful because we are linked in with services and workers on the ground; with welfare, community and artistic partners. We are effective because of our inclusive arts practice, be it on the rehearsal room floor, at interagency meetings, at a drama workshop or at a meeting with a potential patron or partner. We are united in our quest to create authentic, high quality theatre that is transformative for both those that make it and those that engage with it.

In 2011 we secured exciting new partnerships with Carriageworks, Belvoir Street Theatre, Currency Press, Griffin Theatre, Newtown Neighbourhood Centre, NIDA, PlayWriting Australia, Riverside Theatre, Surry Hills Library, Sydney Theatre Company and The Wayside Chapel. We have re-branded our programs, articulating three various levels of engagement with our community: Stage Door (entry level); Main Stage (extension level) and Back Stage (progression level) and all participants are now the 'Ensemble'. We have researched aspects of education and employment through MCT Ed for six of the Ensemble which has translated into inherent educational components throughout all our workshop programs.

Personally, this year has been a defining career highlight, not only being appointed Artistic Director/CEO of Milk Crate Theatre, but in working creatively with an immensely talented mix of Ensemble and associate artists to write three plays, direct seven theatrical works and present at three conferences. I have had the privilege of working with our dedicated team and Board to shape the strategic and artistic vision of the company for next year and beyond and it is an incredibly inspired vision driven by authenticity and excellence.

MIRRA TODD

Artistic Director/CEO



GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT

As the General Manager for only the latter part of 2011, I have drawn on the insights of the team at Milk Crate Theatre to pull together the General Manager's report.

2011 has been a year of new people and new thinking; a year to celebrate the fantastic work involved in building us into a successful and sustainable theatre company producing our own, authentic work and growing our artistic, social and financial capital. It has meant implementing a rigorous change management process to support the Milk Crate Theatre Ensemble, associate artists, partners, funders and staff.

The Milk Crate Theatre Ensemble continued to provide inspiring theatre and following extensive research, 2011 saw the piloting of their first remunerated program of work. As employees, they were placed on the payroll receiving wages and superannuation, giving value to their contributions and professional achievements.

We welcomed some new faces to the team. The inaugural Board have provided a knowledge base that has strengthened our financial and fundraising capacity and have been actively involved in our rebranding, strategic planning and recruitment. With support from the Thyne Reid Foundation, we recruited Maree Freeman as Education Coordinator. Throughout the year she built networks and opportunities relating to employment, education and training for the Ensemble. The Vincent Fairfax Foundation Cousins Committee provided funding to recruit Kate McBride as Administration Coordinator who provided vital support to our administrative processes, fundraising and a suite of fresh, new marketing ideas.

We have grown into our new home on Oxford Street in Darlinghurst, which has provided a bright space for us and our visitors to enjoy. Our funding has grown through a diverse range of financial contributors with a noticeable increase in private donations, which as of May became tax deductible.

2012 will be a year of strategic development. Beyond our artistic program, our projects vary to incorporate a new staff structure, a new brand, the implementation of the Milk Crate Theatre evaluation plan and the development of a marketing strategy. We commence our research project with the support of the Westpac Foundation to trial a three tier social enterprise project; with it comes the potential of generating new partnerships, income and providing services and advocacy for and with the Milk Crate Theatre Ensemble.

All this is only possible with the ongoing support of our partners from the community and welfare sector and the many friends of Milk Crate Theatre that have contributed to the year that was 2011, thank you.

SIENA BALAKRISHNAN

General Manager

WHAT IS THAT UNFORGETTABLE LINE?
Samuel Beckett



2011 PROGRAM: WORKSHOPS

The power of Milk Crate Theatre comes back to the power of our workshops and this is driven by one factor: that we are artists with expertise in working with communities.

In 2011 we ran 152 workshops and initiatives across 14 locations across Sydney.



PROGRAM PARTNERS

Our Stage Door workshop partners in 2011 included the following welfare services: Anglicare (Bondi); Cardinal Freemans (Granville); Edward Eagar Lodge (Surry Hills); Kirketon Road Clinic (Kings Cross); Ozanam Learning Centre (Woolloomooloo); Rough Edges (Darlinghurst); Parramatta Mission (Parramatta); Samaritan House (Surry Hills); Lou's Place (Kings Cross) and The Wayside Chapel (Potts Point). Our Main Stage partners included all the previously mentioned partners and in addition, Belvoir Street Theatre; Carriageworks; CEO Sleep-out (Custom House); Connect Studios (Parramatta); Homeless Symposium (Financial Counsellors' Association of NSW), PlayWriting Australia; Surry Hills Library; 2nd International Urban Mental Health Conference (St Vincent's Hospital).

STREET SALON & STREET LIBRARY

The Street Salon and Street Library initiatives saw Milk Crate Theatre expand its programs to focus on literacy skills and theatre appreciation through an engagement with dramatic texts. Thanks to our partners Currency Press, Milk Crate Theatre is now home to a library of over 400 plays that are used regularly for Street Salons (in Surry Hills and Parramatta) and borrowed by the Ensemble who are engaging with other extension activities such as auditions or reading for pleasure. Through the Street Salons, the Ensemble have read from a wide variety of dramatic texts. They have engaged with absurd theatre, Australian naturalism, surrealism and British comedy and learnt about the historical context in which different theatre genres have been born.

Milk Crate Theatre has moved the city Street Salons to the Surry Hills Library and through a wonderful partnership with the Adult Programs arm of the library we have access to an even wider group of participants.

EDGE OF YOUR SEAT

The Edge of Your Seat program was another way for the Ensemble to have a theatrically critical voice through an appreciation of live performance in the Sydney and Parramatta regions. Milk Crate Theatre is extremely grateful to those theatre companies who partnered with us in 2011; Griffin Theatre, Sydney Theatre Company, Little Ones Theatre, Parramatta Riverside Theatre, Belvoir Street Theatre and the Darlinghurst Theatre Company.

COMMUNITY SHOWS

Our interactive community shows prove to be a potent reminder of the difficulties many of us grapple with, generating often challenging yet always inspiring debate. Chemical Handcuffs (written by Mirra Todd) explored parental neglect that feeds soul-destroying addiction and drug dealing; Being Alive (written by Mirra Todd) delved into the difficulties of a young homosexual, shunned by his parents, trying to find his place in the world; Running Blind (written by Maree Freeman) exposed the heart breaking despair of inter-generational debilitating mental health illness; and finally Shushed (written by Mirra Todd) confronted the harsh reality and fallout of childhood sexual abuse which is often the precursor to adult rape.

PERFORMANCE

‘CONGRATULATIONS, IT WAS A GREAT SHOW AND FANTASTIC TO SEE THE EVENT IN ANOTHER CONTEXT (OUTSIDE OF THE WELFARE AGENCIES). ALL IN ALL A VERY ENJOYABLE EXPERIENCE, AND A REAL EXTENSION IN TERMS OF THE WRITTEN AND THEATRICAL OUTPUT FROM THE PARTICIPANTS. ,

Astra Howard (Welfare Worker)

MAINSTAGE OUR CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT: PREPARATION FOR THE 2012 COMPANY PRODUCTION FEARLESS

At the start of 2011 we posed three questions to the Ensemble:

1. What is something you don't understand about yourself;
2. What is something you don't understand about the world you live in;
3. What is an issue, theme or idea you'd like to profoundly explore?

The distillation resulted in the theme of loneliness. Quickly we understood that there is a visceral divide between the common sense of loneliness when measured against the experiences of The Ensemble, whose loneliness is a bona fide living entity; it has a profound impact on their lives. We spent two weeks working with eight of the Ensemble (Fabiola, John M, John T, Nathan, Michael, Murray, Rob, Robin) and associate artists (Lucy Bell, Sean Barker, Tony Cugin) singer (Christa Hughes), composer (Daryl Wallis), workshop director (Naomi Edwards) and playwright (Mirra Todd).

Fearless will be showing from 13-22 September 2012 at Carriageworks.



‘The use of stage with TV and father on different sides; and riding the bike around whole space was really effective. An impressive initiative and I hope to see more in future, with some great acting and staging. ,

Sandra (Audience Member)



‘It (Chemical Handcuffs) was a really magical theatre experience. There's not often that you get the chance to sit in such a diverse audience and participate so strongly in a performance. Congratulations to all involved on a great night. ,

Fraser Corfield (Artistic Director, Australia Theatre for Young People)

This year has seen a real explosion of creative output from the Ensemble (we have over 25 highly engaged Ensemble members) in various initiatives.

The Visible Theatre initiative introduced peer to peer mentoring and produced three short plays written and performed by the Ensemble at Carriageworks. They tackled significant themes of man's inhumanity to man; Box (written by Murray Robertson) revealed both the majesty and the heart break of a man living on the streets, and his encounter with a litany of people, some fringe dwellers and others do-gooders; Brigitte (written by John McDonnell) investigated the tension between self doubt and self belief, asking how do you embrace your own inner truth if it doesn't fit into others' idea of who you should be; Bracken (written by Murray Robertson) dealt with the impact of suicide on those left behind, including a baby girl now turned 18, who is demanding answers to unanswerable questions.

FINANCIAL REPORT

The past six years have seen significant growth from an annual turnover of \$14,300 in 2006 to \$611,500 in 2011. Our growth has been possible through a significant increase in philanthropic donations, government grants and private donors. In 2011 we received a majority of funding for program delivery in 2012 placing us in a secure financial position for the year ahead.

Milk Crate Theatre would like to thank our 2011 funding partners: Arts NSW; Australia Council for the Arts; City of Sydney; Hunt Family Foundation; Marrickville Council; Nelson Meers Foundation; Parramatta City Council; Perpetual Trustees (funded by the Myee Codrington Foundation and the Palmdale Trust); Private Donors; Sydney University Medicine Revue; Thyne Reid Foundation; Vincent Fairfax Family Foundation and Cousins Committee; W & A Johnson Family Foundation; and Westpac Foundation.

TABLE 1. 2010-2011 INCOME

INCOME	2010	2011
Philanthropic Organisations	\$136,500	\$342,045
Government Grants	\$95,560	\$165,500
Private Donors	\$51,490	\$92,259
Other Income	\$5,500	\$11,696
TOTAL INCOME	\$289,050	\$611,500

NB: All figures stated are correct as of January 2012 account reconciliation.

CHART 1. 2011 INCOME SOURCES AND PERCENTAGES

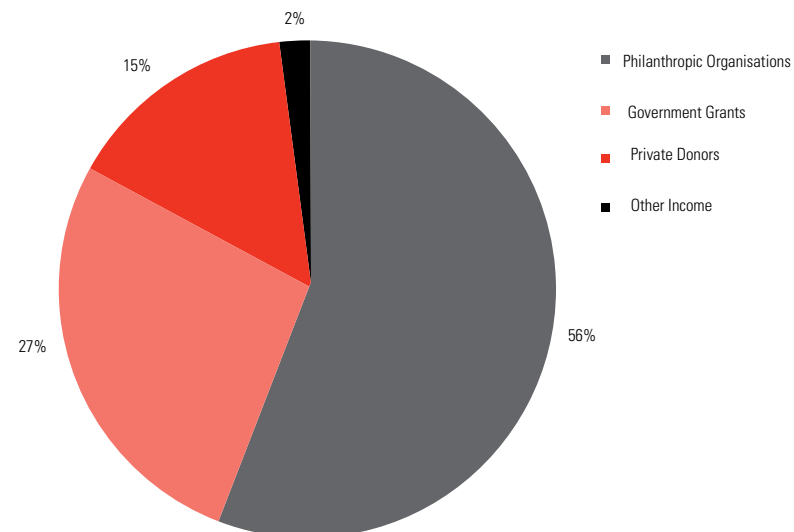
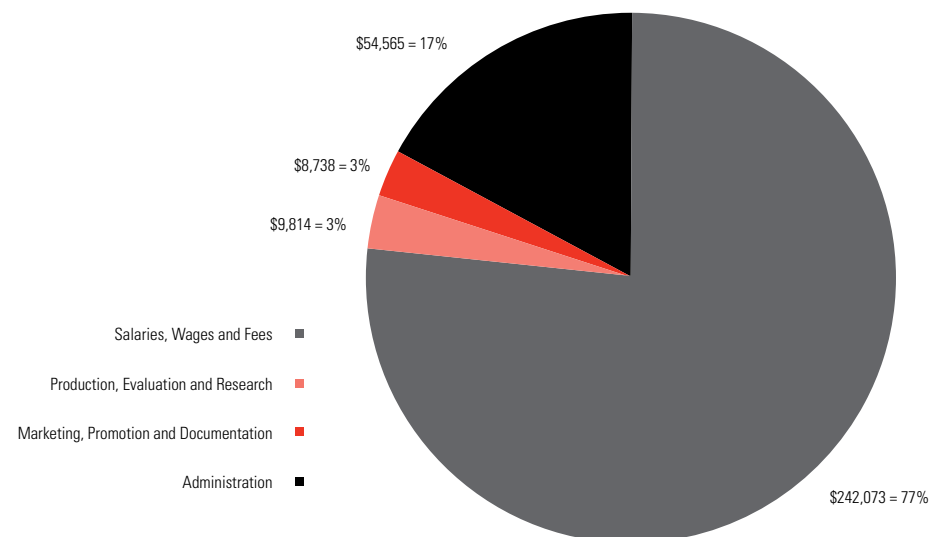


CHART 2. 2011 EXPENSES AND PERCENTAGES



In 2011 Milk Crate Theatre had a total income of \$611,500 and total expenses of \$315,191. This provides the company with an operating profit of \$296,309. A significant amount of the 2011 income has been generated for operations in 2012 and has been allocated accordingly in the 2012 budget.

THE MILK CRATE THEATRE TEAM

STAFF

MIRRA TODD

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR/CEO

Mirra is an award-winning playwright, actor and director. In 2011 Mirra wrote and directed *Chemical Handcuffs*, *Being Alive* and wrote *Shushed*, directed *Box*, *Brigette* and *Bracken* for Milk Crate Theatre. As a playwright, he has written *The Outsiding*, short-listed for the Patrick White Award (STC); *Gangland*; *The Duplicates*; *Hard Swallow*; *Strong as blood* and *The Whyte Principle*. As an actor, he has worked for Australia's leading theatre companies and in various film and television productions.

KATY COOTE

CEO/GENERAL MANAGER

Katy has previously worked for Critical Path as their Business Administrator, as well as Darlinghurst Theatre Company, *Sculpture by the Sea* and YHA Australia as International Marketing Coordinator. Katy has worked for Milk Crate Theatre since 2005 and held the position of General Manager since 2008. Katy took on a new position at Artsupport in September 2011.

SIENA BALAKRISHNAN

GENERAL MANAGER

Siena has worked in the Australian and UK arts sector in the areas of cultural diversity and social inclusion with Momentum Arts (UK) and the Department of Culture and the Arts (WA). In 2007 she managed Australia's first government grants programs for artists with disabilities and for Indigenous artists with disabilities. More recently, Siena has worked with not-for-profit organisations in remote Australia building their financial and organisational capacity.

MAREE FREEMAN

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Maree was Co-founder and Co-artistic Director of Synergy Cubed Productions, a theatre in education enterprise with whom she won the CONDA (City of Newcastle Drama Award) for Best Professional Direction. Maree has had her plays performed through Little Ones Theatre, the Tamarama Rock



Surfers Theatre Company and the Griffin Theatre GRIFfringe initiative. In 2011, Maree wrote and directed *Running Blind* and directed *Shushed* for Milk Crate Theatre.

KATE MCBRIDE

ADMINISTRATION COORDINATOR

Kate has worked for the Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney as a Business Administration Trainee, Fundraising Events Assistant and Coordinator of Public Programs. Kate has also worked on the inaugural Woollahra Festival as a Project Manager.

MILK CRATE THEATRE ENSEMBLE

Chris, John T, Margaret, Murray, Rob, David H, Falah, Fabiola, John M, Peter W, Graeme B, Michael G, Gordon B, Gavin, Steven, Robert, Abdul, Julian, Anthony, Geoff, Kerwin, Bradley, Di, Mark, Adrian, Charles, Mark, Leon, Becca, Alice, Julie, Andrea, Michael M, Dylan, Kelly, Lindsay, Robin, Gaylene, Peter D, Andy, Jack, Sunny, Georgina, Susan, Holly, Alan, Julz, Peewee, Peter, Nathan, Patrick, Sandra, Ronnie, Chris, Phillip, Gary, Tai, Rosemary, Scott, David J, Horst, Adam, Anthony, Peter B, Michael S, Patty, Kenny, Barbara, Zoe, Lisa, Tessa, Jo, Brahmashakti, Cath, Shane, Gretta, Lenah, Stewart R, Jongpil, Heath, David, Miriam, Alan J, Rupert, Allan S, Jenny, Georgina, Kieran, Tomasz, Tessa, Sally, Chanene, Stephanie, Owen, Tony, Brigitte, Lawrence, Roanail, Koudiata, Dhananaut, Trina, Leah C, Nagina, Krystal, Maryanne, Louise, Pelin, Nicole and Ramon.

ASSOCIATE ARTISTS

Sean Barker, Maurie Barlin, Lucy Bell, Lauren Clair,

Tony Cogin, Michael Cullen, Catherine Davies, Naomi Edwards, Sophie Gregg, Sarah Hone, Christa Hughes, Rashelle McHugh, Craig Menaud, Graeme Rhodes and Daryl Wallis.

BOARD

Angus White (Chair)
Natalie Devlin
Julie Rosenburg
Michael Sharp
Beck Ronkson (2011)

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