Introductory Notes

1. Introductory information

**Event name:**

The River That Ran Uphill

**Event presenter:**

Slingsby/ (As told by Edgell Junior) & Adelaide Festival 2023

**Event synopsis:**

In 2015, Cyclone Pam ravaged the South Pacific. Edgell Junior, a Ni-Vanuatu man from Pentecost Island and member of Slingsby’s Flying Squad ensemble, experienced and survived cyclone Pam and its aftermath. Based on his lived experience, this moving production emphasises the real importance of community cooperation and resilience.

**Audio Describers:** Carol Wellman Kelly and Jules Fielke

1. Set description

The Space Theatre is arranged as a traditional proscenium theatre, with one bank of seats in 8 tiered rows, in front of the stage. The playing space is open so the 4 lighting trees, 2 on either side, a props table on our left, and a computer on a road case, to our right, are clearly visible.

The backdrop is a large blue plastic tarpaulin stretched across the rear of the space. In front stands another darker blue tarp 3m high x6m wide attached to a free-standing frame. A straw broom hangs on the side of the frame on our right side. A smaller blue tarp approx. 2.5m square lies spread out on the floor in front. This is the main playing space 6mx6m at floor level. On top there are 2 more tarps scrunched up with green and yellow blobs of fabric scattered on top like a symbolic sea of islands. This tarp later becomes the rolling ocean waves, the rising river and a projection screen. A brown traditional string bag called a Billum, also rests amongst the items.

Across the front of the space is a series of 3 lights on revolving stands called “Movers” with strips of LED lights between, pointed at the stage.

On the Props table which is covered in a floral cloth, sit cylindrical watertight tubs which have fluorescent lights inside so they glow at times. A number of similar tubs are scattered around the space in different sizes. These also become seats later in the play. Other props include; two plastic milk crates, a white sheet/ projection screen, a framed piece of clear plastic with island blobs painted on and three sheets of corrugated iron (1m long by ½ m wide) which transform into the wall of Edgell’s mum’s house, Edgell’s ghetto, the roof and then the doors of the village theatre.

Throughout the play shadow puppetry is used to show objects, the village or people and family. In one scene, a glass rectangular box, like a fish tank, appears with miniature house hold furniture inside. The performers create sound effects of the storm into a freestanding microphone, become the characters of the story, as well as creating the scenes by physicalising aspects of the story; for example, connecting to become a boat. The performers also trigger the lights from the computer on our right and trigger the change of sound/music via a small console on a stand at the front of the space, near us.

1. Characters and Costumes

The actors wear white t-shirts under overalls or dungarees that have a round cloth badge stitched on with “Slingsby Flying Squad” written on it. The central image on the badge depicts a pair of spinning seed pods, open like wings.

Edgell has black very tight curly hair which surrounds his head and blends into his black sideburns, beard, and moustache. He has dark eyes, a wide nose, and brilliantly white teeth. His bib and brace overalls are also brown over a white t-shirt. He wears high-side white sneakers with chunky white soles. This is Edgell’s story, and in the opening scenes he wears an additional black hoody, that has EVER on one shoulder and LAST on the other in large white block letters.

Alexis is a Birri Gubba, Wakka Wakka, South Sea Islander woman. Her long voluminous dark hair is streaked with grey and twisted up into a clip. She wears a black scarf around her neck and the trademark ‘Flying squad’ overalls buttoned to the waist and turned up slightly at the ankle with khaki-coloured boots. Around her waist hangs a small brown saddle bag on a belt.

Delia has long curly brunette hair that she wears up in a bun. She has large eyes and an open smiling face. Her overalls are brown, a long-sleeved version rolled up to the elbows and at the ankles to reveal tan work boots.

Jennifer has long straight brunette hair pulled back in a ponytail; her dark eyes are framed by sculpted eyebrows on her youthful smooth face, and she wears small gold earrings. Jen wears the ‘bib and brace’ “Flying squad” overalls with white ankle socks and sandshoes.

Josh, a Larrakia, Wadaman, Karrajarri, Gulidgan man, has short glossy black hair parted on one side. He has a hint of a beard on his broad expressive face. His sleeveless ‘King-Gee’ style work overalls are a tan/faun colour, and he wears black canvas shoes.

1. Creatives

**Cast (playing themselves)**

Edgell Junior

Alexis West

Delia Olam

Joshua Campton

Jennifer Stefanidis

**Production Credits**

CEO and Artistic Director Andy Packer

Associate Director Clara Solly-Slade

Writers and devisers Alexis West, Delia Olam, Edgell Junior, Elleni Karagiannidis, Jennifer Stefanidis and Joshua Campton

Choreographer Kenneth Johnson

Composer Quincy Grant

Designer Slingsby’s flying Squad and Wendy Todd

Lighting Designer Darian Tregenza

Lighting and AV Realiser Mark Oakley

Costume Designer Meg Wilson

Poster Designer Andy Ellis

Education Resources Deanne Bullen

1. Event details

Event date and time:

The audio-described performance is on **Monday 25th March** at 10am.

A receiver and earpiece will be provided for you to use, to hear the Audio description during the Performance. A Preshow Introduction to the Set, Characters and Costumes will be read live 15 minutes prior to the commencement of the performance. **Please arrive 30 minutes before the start of the show to collect your headsets from the describers at the venue and listen to the Audio Introduction.**

Event location:

The production takes place in the **Space Theatre** at the Festival Centre.

Run time: 50 minutes

Recommended for Ages 8+ up: Theatrical Haze, Loud Noises and Strobe Effects.

1. Access information

Please contact the **Venue** on for further details on the best access route to the complex.

Assistance: assistance is offered by venue staff