Introductory Notes

1. Introductory information

Event name: **Possum Magic**

Event presenter: Monkey Baa Theatre Company and Dream Big Festival 2023

Event synopsis: Adapted from the story by Mem Fox and Julie Vivas, **Possum Magic** tells the story of Grandma Poss and her grand-possum Hush who live in the Australian bush. Grandma Poss is very clever – she makes magic; she can make wombats blue and emus shrink. When a dangerous snake chases Hush, Grandma uses a powerful spell to quickly make Hush invisible and keep her safe. But the spell to make Hush visible again requires ‘people food’ and Grandma Poss and Hush must set off around Australia to find the right ingredients.

Audio Describers: Jules Fielke and Jo Ankor

1. Set description

At the centre back of the stage, five tall curly yellow, white and grey tree trunks frame a big, white, round full-moon. During the play, this moon is also a screen where we see silhouettes, a map of Australia, projections of Grandma Poss and Hush’s travels and pictures of their destinations. Behind the moon-screen is the backdrop which shows the star-filled night sky, rolling storm clouds, rain, a city skyline, and the coloured sparks of Grandma Poss’ magic! On each side of the stage are clumps of smaller, curly, yellow, white and grey trees and on the right is a short wooden ladder with some books stacked on top.

The bicycle Grandma Poss and Hush ride starts as two wheels and a handlebar and becomes a silhouette on the moon-screen as they visit different cities across Australia.

Each city has special objects to make the scene. The **Adelaide** scene has two panels painted like full supermarket shelves; for **Melbourne**, it is three cinema seats; for **Brisbane**, two cloth-draped trolleys carrying plates of scones; in **Darwin**, a giant vegemite sandwich on a long stick; for **Perth**, a stripey beach umbrella, a puppet seagull and an around-the-deck tray of icecreams and lollies indicate the beachside while a 2-metre wide circular cloth is painted to look like a pavlova. The umbrella then inverts to become a boat on a sea of bright blue fabric waves; and in **Hobart**, two steel kitchen trolleys hold shiny pots and pans.

1. Characters and Costumes

**Grandma Poss** and **Hush** each wear brown overalls with leaf-like shapes stitched to the legs, back and arms, long fluffy tails that curl at the end, white sneakers and possum-shaped ears on a fluffy headband.

**Grandma P**oss has grey hair, long red and green striped socks, wire-rimmed glasses and has a large lavender apron with a big pocket across the front.

When **Hush** becomes invisible, her costume turns silvery grey.

Hush is played by **Ebony Tucker**, and Grandma Poss by **Sarah Woods**.

**Gabriel Fancourt** and **Teale Howie** play a range of characters in the story, shown by adding or removing pieces of costume. They begin by wearing long sleeved black shirts, jeans and sneakers, with silver stars scattered in different sizes over their sleeves and pants.

**Wombat** has a rust-coloured vest and brown hat with a pair of orange wombat ears attached. The left one flops over at the edges, the other stands up straight.

**Snake** wears a crinkly yellow long-tailed coat with painted orange, green and brown bands and a dark brown collar, over a white shirt. **Gabriel** becomes long like a snake by extending his arm in front, using his hand as the head, and stretching one leg out behind him.

**Emu** is a large shadow-puppet seen on the moon-screen.

In **Adelaide**, **two shop assistants** wear white coats and coloured shirts and hold large panels with pictures of the supermarket shelves; these also become doors.

In **Melbourne there are two Cinema Patron**s. One wears a blue shirt under an open denim shirt and the other wears a yellow shirt under an open denim jacket and carries two REALLY BIG boxes of popcorn. They both wear 3D movie glasses – these have a square, white, cardboard frame where one eye opening is covered in a red plastic and the other a blue plastic lens.

**In Brisbane, Joyce and Noreen** organise a Scone Baking Competition. Joyce wears a front-buttoned pink knee-length shift and Noreen wears a matching blue one. They each have matching flat-topped round hats, with curly grey hair escaping at the back. The ladies push curtained trolleys with their scone entries on display.

**In Darwin, two schoolboys** wear their school uniforms of yellow polo shirts and blue caps turned backwards.

**In Perth, the beach-side Ice Cream vendor** wears a tall brown magician’s top hat and a bright red patterned jacket. He carries a large tray filled with ice-creams and goodies. **Seagull** is a puppet that fits over the actor’s hand – and creates a lot of havoc!

Finally, in **Hobart, a chef** wears a tall white chef’s hat and coat.

1. Production Credits

Based on the book by Mem Fox and Julie Vivas

Adapted by Eva Di Cesare and Sandie Eldridge

Directed by Sandie Eldridge

Production Designer Emma Vine

Composer & Sound Designer Nate Edmondson

Lighting Designer Matt Cox

Magic & Illusion Adam Mada

Puppetry Director Alice Osborne

1. Event details

Event date and time: Schools’ show is **Tuesday 23 May** at 1pm, with a 15-minute Sensory Tour at 12.30pm. General Public show is **Saturday 27 May** at 10.30am.

Event location: Dunstan Playhouse, Adelaide Festival Centre

1. Access information

Ticket information: Tickets through Tickatek

Getting to the event: The production takes place in the **Dunstan Playhouse** at the Adelaide Festival Centre.

Please contact the Adelaide Festival Centre on 131 246 for details on current Covid requirements and the best access route to the theatre complex.

At the theatre, access is via the Riverbank Concourse. The Dunstan Playhouse is wheelchair accessible and guide dog friendly and there are two accessible toilets in the venue. One is opposite the bar by the Space Foyer. The other is opposite the main reception desk, near Door One of the Dunstan Playhouse. Assistance is offered by venue staff

For all other disability access enquiries please contact Patron Services on email access@adelaidefestivalcentre.com.au or call 08 8216 8600.

For more information on audio described performances please contact Access2Arts using the email address audio.describer@access2arts.org.au or Voice/Text 0415 090 547. Or alternatively speak to one of the audio describers at the theatre.

This completes the audio description pre-show notes for **Possum Magic**, produced by Jo Ankor and Jules Fielke.