

WILSON



JOHNSTON



TURTUR

THE SCRAMBLE

DANCE THEATRE SHOW

Presented by The Blue Room Theatre & STRUT Dance

OCT
TUE. 28
to
NOV
SAT. 08



The Blue Room Theatre
53 James St, Northbridge
blueroom.org.au

The
Blue Room
Theatre

STRUT
DANCE



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY:

Shaun Johnston, The Blue Room Theatre, STRUT DANCE and the entire creative team behind *The Scramble* would like to acknowledge that this production was choreographed, devised and created in Boorloo, on the traditional lands of the Whadjuk Nyoongar people.

We recognise, honour and thank them for their continuous custodianship of its waters, land and ecosystems that provides each of us spiritual and physical sustenance to create art that deepens our own connection to this beautiful Boodja.

We pay our respects to Aboriginal Elders passed, present and emerging and stand in solidarity with the Community for a just future.

Sovereignty was never ceded.

Always was,
Always will be,
Aboriginal Land.

THE SCRAMBLE

Where wrestling and dance collide...

A rough-and-tumble new dance theatre work by Shaun Johnston and dancers, merging competitive wrestling with contemporary dance to interrogate male intimacy and friendships.

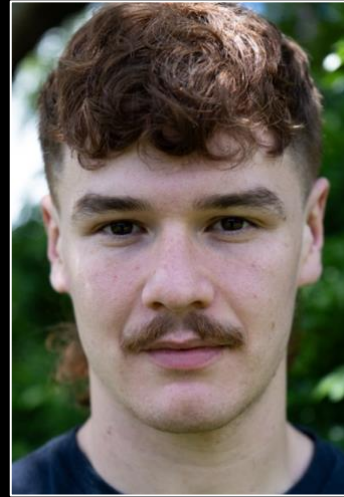
THE SCRAMBLE is a new full length dance theatre work, created by Shaun Johnston in collaboration with dancers Nathan Turtur and Luther Wilson. Presenting at The Blue Room Theatre from 28 Oct – 8 Nov, this extraordinary duet collides competitive wrestling with contemporary dance, in an exhilarating investigation into how men bond and connect.

THE SCRAMBLE wrestles with male intimacy, as two men thud chest to chest in a strained duet. Two guys, donning their training gear, hit the stage with scrappy energy, hugging and shoving, bonding and tussling. Their bodies crash into each other in a whirlwind of limbs that tears across the stage, into the walls and onto the floor. They squeeze and strain in a messy tangle, until they stop, breathe, and let the remaining knot soften. “You good?” “I’m good”. They help each other up, embrace, and start again. This work challenges the invisible barriers we place between men and asks us to reconsider how we think of intimacy.

Throughout arts history, wrestling has been pointed to as the embodiment of struggle. We use it to describe our inner & outer conflicts: we lock horns, grapple with uncomfortable thoughts, or manage to get a hold of them. The form represents both the height of opposition but is also a source of intense intimacy. While widely accepted as masculine, its perception as homoerotic makes it interestingly subversive – placing it in a unique position to explore male closeness. By hybridising wrestling & contemporary dance, we are examining the politics of how men touch, relate, & connect; at the same time, we are broadening the boundaries of contemporary dance partnering practice.

The Scramble is directed by Shaun Johnston, produced by Samantha Hortin, & is performed by Nathan Turtur & Luther Wilson. The creative team includes Adelaide Harney (lighting), Ryan Bugle (sound), Natasha Pearson (Stage Manager) and David Vikman (Dramaturg).

DIRECTORS NOTE:



Our work looks to capture male intimacy on stage, celebrating male friendships while confronting the societal barriers that inhibit closeness. I have been lucky to have very close and intimate male friendships in my life. The relationship I have with my three best friends is built on a lot of love, as well as time being open and vulnerable with each other. Some of my fondest memories are of walking down streets in Northbridge with our arms around each other, or lying on each other at a festival and just breathing. I have always cherished our openness in expressing care towards each other.

However, men in 2025 continue to navigate cultural pressures that discourage genuine connection, particularly with physical intimacy. Homophobia persistently distorts male closeness, imposing a sexualised lens onto platonic relationships and subjecting them to scrutiny or ridicule. Efforts to challenge these biases often focus on affirming sexual identities, rather than disentangling intimacy from the assumptions of sexuality. As a result, many struggle to perceive male closeness without imposing a sexualised reading upon it.

Some of the strongest friendships I have formed have been in wrestling gyms - spaces where physical contact is inherent, normalised, and deeply embedded in trust. Wrestling sits in a contradiction: it aligns with traditional notions of masculinity, yet is frequently sexualised from an external perspective. Within the practice itself, however, there is a profound sense of camaraderie and care. Wrestlers engage in a physically intense and often aggressive practice, yet their interactions are underpinned by mutual respect and an understanding of boundaries. The positive impact of my wrestling community - on my relationships, my sense of self, and my perspective on masculinity - was the impetus for *The Scramble*.

This work invites audiences to reconsider their perceptions of masculinity and male intimacy. By exploring a spectrum of physical interactions - soft and sensitive, playful and light, strong and forceful - we advocate for a broader, more nuanced understanding of how men can relate to one another through touch.

The Scramble challenges prevailing narratives of masculinity, offering a space to witness male intimacy without assumption, and to reimagine connection beyond the constraints imposed by societal expectations.

We thank you for coming to our show and hope you enjoy the work we have created.

CREATIVE TEAM



Shaun Johnston – **CHOREOGRAPHER/ DIRECTOR**

Shaun Johnston is a Perth / Boorloo-based actor, dancer, teaching artist and creator with a practice that incorporates acting, physical theatre, contemporary dance and martial arts. Most recently, he starred in the 10 year anniversary production of the multi-award-winning *FAG/STAG* by The Last Great Hunt, presented at the State Theatre Centre of WA. In 2024, Shaun danced in *Coalescing Towards*, choreographed by Italian artist Michele Rizzo & presented in Perth Festival; he performed in *FAKE* by Mark Haslam, as part of the 2024 ISPA Congress; and he choreographed *The Scramble*, which used wrestling and dance to examine touch in male relationships. At the Blue Room Theatre, Shaun has acted in *Conception* (2023), directed by Samuel Gordon Bruce, which was nominated for multiple PAWA awards, including 'Outstanding Independent Production'; he both performed in and devised award-winning show *My Shout* (2021) with Undercurrent Theatre Company. In 2022, Shaun was a member of LINK Dance Company, and performed in *In Your God* (James Welsby & Michael Whaites) and *Something About Love* (Sue Peacock). Since 2020, he has regularly worked with Spare Parts Puppet Theatre, and has performed & taught across regional WA & in Perth while touring *Blueback* (2023) and *Hare Brain* (2020).



Luther Wilson – **DANCER**

Luther Wilson is a dancer and performing artist currently based in Australia, with a practice developed from a background in theatre, contemporary dance, breakdance and circus. Beginning his interest in dance, theatre, and performance in Garamilla/Darwin, and later basing himself in Boorloo/Perth, he has performed in the works of numerous prominent choreographers including Cass Mortimer Eipper, Didier Theron, Graeme Watson, Raewyn Hill, Kimberley Parkin, Crystal Pite, and Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui. Luther has performed as a dancer with Co3 Contemporary Dance in Raewyn Hill's *Archives of Humanity* in 2021 and Kimberley Parkin's *Killjoy* in 2023's IN:HOUSE season. He has also performed with STRUT Dance in *SITU-8: Hotel* in 2021, and with internationally acclaimed choreographers in Crystal Pite's *Ten Duets on a Theme of Rescue* during Perth Moves 2023, and in Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui's *Manifest* in Perth Moves 2025. In Darwin, he has recently worked and performed prominently in theatre, including in Brown's Mart Theatre's 2022 production of *The Messenger*, and in Tania Liemen's *POD* in the 2024 Darwin Festival. Luther's practice continues to develop along lines of interest in tempering impulse, interrogating delineations of practice, and the coalescing of experience, knowledge, and personhood into embodied performance.



Nathan Turtur – **DANCER**

Nathan Turtur is an independent dancer located in Perth (Boorloo) originally from Adelaide (Tarntanya). He completed his Bachelor of Performing Arts at WAAPA in 2019 and completed his Honors in 2020. Within the Perth sector he has performed for a variety of pivotal WA artists which include Kynan Hughes, Brooke Leeder and Maitland Schnaars, Talitha Maslin and Natalie Allen in collaboration with Hot House Company. In 2024 he performed *The Scramble*, a new dance theatre work devised by Shaun Johnston which premiered as part of the Blue Room Theatre's annual Summer Nights program. This work dared to find and examine the cross section that exists between freestyle wrestling, contemporary dance, masculinity and intimacy. To begin 2025, he has been in the second development of *The Scramble* as part of STRUT/The Blue Rooms' Evolve program. He also performed in *IN:VISIBLE* by Enneagon Movement, a work that took place as part of the Joondalup Festival. A joyous occasion, bringing playful and interactive dance to kids and adults alike. He continues to explore and appreciate the rich landscape of tones and textures that are discoverable within the human form.

CREATIVE TEAM



Samantha Hortin – *PRODUCER*

Samantha Hortin is a Performing Artist, Producer and Dancer based in Boorloo, WA. After graduating from the West Australian Academy of Performing Arts in 2019 with her Bachelor of Performing Arts, majoring in Performance Making, she has been working extensively across the Perth industry in the areas of live theatre, dance, film and circus. She was the recipient of the Blue Room Theatres Producing Award in 2022 and received a PAWA Award in 2023 for her work on the independent production "The Complete Show of Waterskiing". Most recently she produced several Blue Room Theatre shows including: "ASK" with Third Place Productions, "Smells Like You" with Lady Great Theatre Company, and collaborated with Fremantle Theatre Company on the sell out independent season of "SPICE". She has also dance professionally for many years including performing with The Weber Bros Circus on their Australian national tour and currently works for PAC Australia as an Administration Coordinator.



Ryan Burge – *SOUND DESIGNER*

Ryan Burge is a composer, sound artist and studio producer. He has composed for multichannel soundscape installations, chamber ensemble, contemporary dance, and film. He holds a First Class Honours degree in Composition and Music Technology from the West Australian Academy of Performing Arts. His thesis explored the concept of hyperrealism in electroacoustic music through field recordings and synthesis. Parallel to this, he steadily releases contemporary electronic music under different monikers that explore sonic aesthetics and emerging sub genres



Adelaide Harney – *LIGHTING DESIGNER*

Adelaide Harney is a lighting designer and theatre practitioner in Boorloo, Perth. A two-time PAWA nominee, she has garnered recognition for her innovative work in the field. Her recent accomplishments feature prominently, including her role as Lighting Designer for "Wet Hard Long," a daring feminist dance production by acclaimed choreographer Jenni Large. Additionally, Adelaide has contributed her expertise to the Audible Edge festival. She was also the highly acclaimed lighting designer for Sampa the Great's one-night performance at the Art Gallery of NSW in 2023. Adelaide's design ethos is characterized by its versatility, spanning from dynamic and daring to subtle and nuanced expressions. Her upcoming project includes collaborating on "Scramble" with producer Shaun Johnston, promising another venture into boundary-pushing creative spaces. With a commitment to excellence and a passion for pushing artistic boundaries, Adelaide Harney continues to make significant strides in the theatre community, both locally and beyond. Her work not only illuminates the stage but also enhances the narrative and emotional depth of each production she engages.

CREATIVE TEAM



Natasha Pearson – STAGE MANAGER

Natasha Pearson is a passionate theatre-maker, director, and performer. A recent graduate of WAAPA's Bachelor of Performing Arts (Performance Making) and Diploma of Musical Theatre (2021), she made her professional debut in 2025 as Jesse in *HOODS* with Barking Gecko Theatre. That same year, she was commissioned to write *Hearts and Robot Parts* a play for young people through Barking Gecko's Blank Page Programme. Natasha has worked with major companies including Black Swan State Theatre Company (*Speaking in Tongues*, Production Intern), WAYTCO (*Made in Boorloo*, Assistant Director), and The Blue Room Theatre (*FEMOID*, Co-deviser/Performer) and State of Play at the State Theatre Centre (*FootyBoy*, Assistant Director). On screen, she played Michaela in *Mustangs FC* (ABC ME/BBC/Universal Kids, 2019). In 2025, she also travelled to Japan to study the Suzuki Method of Actor Training.



David Vikman – DRAMATURG

David Vikman (he/him) is a multi-faceted performer and artist with a foundation in classical dance, trained at the National Swedish Ballet School and Lund Performing Arts School. He later expanded his practice at WAAPA, where he pursued an independent study unit in movement dramaturgy under LINK Dance Company's Michael Whaites, exploring how written language can convert into and transform physical expression. *The Scramble* challenges traditional ideas of masculinity and intimacy. David is drawn to projects that explore identity, and the work resonated with him on both a thematic and personal level. His contribution centred on interrogating the quality of touch between men, while defining meaning in the spaces between the steps: the pauses, the shifts in intention, the emotional weight of stillness. While no stranger to The Blue Room Theatre, *The Scramble* marks David's first appearance in a dramaturgical role.



THANKYOU'S AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Shaun Johnston and the entire creative team behind *The Scramble* would like to extend their gratitude toward the following people and companies for their immeasurable contribution and support toward this work:

The Blue Room Theatre

STRUT Dance

Performing Lines WA

PICA

UWA Wrestling

Gladiator Wrestling

Bernadette Lewis

Tyrone Robinson

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Will Dickie

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Andrea Mae

Yousef Mishmish

Featherstone Pilates and Physio

Brooke Leeder

ACF

Zakayyah MacLean

Marisa Quinn

Ella Peeters

Laura Money

Charles Johnston

Thank you for joining us for *The Scramble!*

Please check out our socials below to keep up with the creative team on all future projects:

Instagram: @thescramble_show

We are currently running a funding campaign to support the artists, cast and crew behind *The Scramble*. Independent Arts is an integral part of the cultural sector here in Western Australia. Your support allows independent artists to continue making and presenting incredible local works here on our home soil. Every donation over \$2 is tax deductible, and any donation no matter how small will help us to reach our fundraising goals.

Please scan the QR code for more information or visit the website listed below:

<https://artistsculturalfund/thescramble.com>

