



AUSTRALIA // THEATRE

MY NAME IS JIMI

Queensland Theatre

This is the story everyone needs to hear and to see. Charismatic actor and storyteller Jimi Bani (*Mabo, The Straits, Redfern Now*) finally tells his story in ***My Name is Jimi***, and that of his family and his place of home – Mabuig Island, a remote speck in the sparkling blue of the Torres Strait and the keeper of thousands of years of rich history and culture. Now, with just a few hundred people fanning its flame, the story, colour, characters, challenges and history of the Wagadagam culture come to the stage in what is a truly memorable live theatre experience.

It unfolds through music, dance, stand-up and fireside storytelling, with four remarkable generations of one family on the stage - Jimi's grandmother, mother, son and brothers come together to share incredible yarns of totems, traditions and childhood memories. On stage it is a true celebration - Jimi performs alongside his son Dmitri, mother Agnes, and grandmother Petharie with his brothers Conwell and Richard Bani.

Drawing directly on the lived experiences of the Bani family and their role as leaders of the Wagadagam tribe of Mabuig Island, the stories span the generations – Jimi jokes in three languages with his grandmother, and then tortures his son with spontaneous break-dancing. It's an Australian story, and a world story of family and preserving the culture and language of Mabuig Island in the Torres Strait.

Co-creator Jason Klarwein said: 'I cannot really recall a play like *My Name is Jimi*. Sure, there are works it can be related to, but what audiences will see, experience, feel and celebrate on stage is only a sliver of what is happening

culturally within this extraordinary family. It is truly a unique theatrical experience.'

Always humble yet with a presence that takes one's breath away, Jimi Bani said sharing the stage with his family and sharing his story with audiences was a tribute to his father's passion for keeping traditions alive.

'With my father's guidance, this is the story of a small community of people clinging tightly to each other, and fighting to protect what really matters, in the whirling chaos of a rapidly changing world. It's funny and challenging, it's inclusive and it's honest, most of all, it's hopeful,' said Jimi.

My Name is Jimi is dedicated to the memory of Adhi Dimple Bani and those that came before.
*Koeyma Ezzo (many thanks).

*This is the Kala Lagaw Ya language of Mabuig Island

Melbourne Festival Artistic Director Jonathan Holloway said: 'This show is fun, it's witty, it's engaging. Jimi Barney is an Australian treasure who has lived an astonishing life. This is his story - he brings his family on stage throughout the performance, delivering his tale in a unique way.'

★★★★★ 'A rare gift of a show.' – The Guardian

★★★★★ 'Enchanting for all ages, it's impossible to leave the theatre unaffected by this story.' – Limelight Magazine

Presented with Arts Centre Melbourne.

Arts Centre Melbourne, Fairfax Studio

Thu 4 – Sun 7 Oct

Thu – Sun 7.30pm

Sat also 3pm

From \$39

festival.melbourne

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