



MEDIA RELEASE: For Immediate Release

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Disability Theatre Company is ready to have a ‘whale’ of a time with kids in Sydney

indelabilityarts is set to delight young audiences with its award-winning oceanic adventure that celebrates difference

indelabilityarts will be having its Sydney debut with multiple award-winning children’s show “*Wilbur the Optical Whale*” by Karen Lee Roberts at Sydney Fringe Festival in September. For the Brisbane-based company that produces works by disabled and neurodivergent artists, performing in Sydney has been long awaited.

Writer and performer Karen Lee Roberts is excited to entertain Sydney children with her colourful characters, stating, “*Sharing the story of Wilbur’s adventures is an absolute joy for me and taking the deep-sea dive into his world is a sensory treat for young and older audiences alike.*”

‘*Wilbur the Optical Whale*’ tells the story of a glasses-wearing whale named Wilbur who, along with his best friend Cecil the Shark, encourages children to accept everyone just as they are. The story takes place under the sea, where the audience is taken on an immersive journey to engage with the environment around them. Collaborating with Flipside Circus, the show employs art forms including circus, stunning projections, vivid music, and interactive games to take the audience on a deep-sea sensory dive to meet Wilbur and his cheeky friends.

‘*Wilbur the Optical Whale*’ is created to be accessible to all audiences. Performances feature integrated Auslan and headphones are available so attendees can engage

on their own terms. The set also includes a quiet space as part of relaxed performance mode for those who require it.

Rebecca Alexander, co-artistic director of **indelabilityarts** and performer in *'Wilbur the Optical Whale'*, believes that accessibility is at the heart of the show, stating, *"One of **indelabilityarts**' core goals is to create great theatre that has accessibility built in. For 'Wilbur the Optical Whale', we looked for ways to integrate Auslan into the underwater world so it is equally important to the storytelling as the narrator."*

To achieve this integrated accessibility, the company utilises technology through a projection of an Auslan interpreter in a bubble floating around the stage. This unique method of incorporating accessibility led to **indelabilityarts** winning an Adelaide Fringe Weekly Innovation Award and Overall Access Award.

Audiences can expect a show with heart, as Rebecca states, *"The audience are on the stage with the actors and there's a beautiful message in the show about acceptance and celebrating difference."*

indelabilityarts has previously performed *'Wilbur the Optical Whale'* at Adelaide Fringe in 2020 and 2022, where the company took home the Weekly John Chataway Innovation Award and the 2020 Access Award. They have also performed the show to sold-out audiences at the 2021 Brisbane Festival, and won a Weekly Children's Event Award at Perth Fringe earlier this year. *'Wilbur the Optical Whale'* won the Best Independent Production award at the 2022 Matilda Awards.

"This just might be the most heartwarming show you'll see all year!"

- Kids in Adelaide

"There is so much to love about this beautiful tale and performance"

- Brisbane Kids

"Every kid with a disability will have something to relate to, every kid who knows a kid with a disability in their class, every kid that's been bullied or is a bully should see it, and every kid who laughs at fart jokes...so, every kid!"

- Fringeworld Perth

'Wilbur the Optical Whale' is playing at the ARA Darling Quarter Theatre on September 29, 2023 at 3.30pm and September 30, 2023 at 10.00am and 1.00pm. Tickets are available through sydneyfringe.com

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