

Tutti Arts presents  
a Company AT production

# Impersonal Space

by Emily Steel



23 May – 25 May 2019

The Odeon, Norwood

as part of the DreamBIG Children's Festival



# Director's Notes

The Company AT ensemble played a huge part in the development of *Impersonal Space*. Working with workshop creators Edwin Kemp Attrill and Yasmin Gurreboo, they were able to express through discussion and exercises how they would like to see an Autistic person portrayed in this show. This led to the development of scenes which provided Writer Emily Steel with great material to inform the script. In 2017, *Impersonal Space* premiered at the Queen's Theatre to great acclaim from critics and audiences alike.

Earlier this year, with support from Country Arts SA, Company AT used a week-long residency in Port Pirie to workshop *Impersonal Space* into a tour-ready version with a smaller cast. We are excited to premiere this version at the DreamBIG Children's Festival and we hope to take this highly enlightening production around the country!

*Impersonal Space* looks to break through the barriers of the external understanding of the symptoms of Autism and bring the audience into the inner being of an Autistic person; to show the multi-layered process of a mind that others may find confusing but which can arrive at truly unique perspectives that may change the world for the better. We want the audience to see who Autistic people are as people!

We hope it is a penetrating piece of theatre that revolutionises your beliefs about the all-encompassing world of being Autistic. Great thanks to everybody who has supported the development of this project, and my very special thanks to the whole amazing Tutti team.

**Julian Jaensch**  
Director

# Writer's Notes

When I started work with Company AT, I thought I was investigating a very different sort of mind to my own. The idea for *Impersonal Space*, about a little girl with Einstein and Newton as her imaginary friends, came from Julian Jaensch. The methods we found for representing an Autistic mind, showing a largely neurotypical audience how the world can look through Autistic eyes, came from workshops with the company. But, to my surprise, I ended up putting quite a lot of myself in this play.

My niece is Autistic. When she was first diagnosed, my response to my sister was, "No, but... she's just like me." The more I heard from the members of Company AT about what childhood had been like for them, the more it reminded me of my own. That little girl who doesn't want to work with the other children, who reads and remembers everything, who only wants to eat chips - she's a lot like me. I'm not sure, now, if the common ground we kept finding is because the neurotypical mind and the Autistic mind have more in common than we tend to think, or if I am further along the Autistic spectrum than I imagined.

Either way, it has been a great privilege to have worked with Company AT. Their generosity, empathy and absolute bluntness have been brilliant. I once went straight from a party to a Company AT rehearsal, and I can't tell you how relieved I was to leave behind the polite socialising and walk into a room where everyone tells you exactly what they think. Thank you, to Julian and everyone at Company AT, for bringing me into your world.

**Emily Steel**

Writer

# Creative Team

Director .....	Julian Jaensch
Writer .....	Emily Steel
Lighting Designer .....	Nic Molison
Set & Costume Designer .....	Meg Wilson
Sound Designer .....	Sascha Budimski

# Cast

Nicole Allen, Julian Jaensch, Monday McGill, Kaila Pole, Satsy, Jacob Thomas, Kate Watts.

# Production Team

Cast Support:..... Susan Bradley, Claire Hodgson

Producer / Arts Manager .....	Jane Gronow
Production Manager .....	Matt Iversen
Stage Manager .....	Françoise Piron
Assistant Stage Manager.....	Susan Bradley
Lighting Operator / Technician.....	Tobias Peart
Crew .....	Tessa Gauvin
Audio Description.....	Access2Arts – Kari Seeley
Auslan Interpreter .....	Cherie Sakovits
Photograph credit .....	Sam Oster
Volunteer .....	Alice Knight

# Cast Biographies

**Nicole Allen** - Nicole (Nikki) Allen is an accomplished actor who has appeared in films, TV and commercials over 25 years. Along with her many theatre credits Nikki is a sought-after theatre maker who specialises in directing movement for actors. Nikki is also Assistant Director and lead Actor in a world first online theatre project with Michael Allen Productions. She is the Artistic Director of Fearless Theatre and is a drama facilitator for Company AT, Carclew and the Adelaide Festival Centre.

**Julian Jaensch** - Julian has been in the arts industry for 20 years. Completing his training at the Centre for Performing Arts in 1999, Julian has worked extensively with Adelaide theatre companies and is also a trained dancer. While working at Autism SA in 2009 Julian launched Company AT (autistic theatre). Julian's directorial style is dynamic in its physicality and, as an Autistic person himself, has a unique way of immersing the audience in the content.

**Monday McGill** - Miss Monday has worked the spectrum of performing arts for over 35 years. Her formal training was in Dance at CPA and Performance Studies (Dance) at VUT with a focus on Sensory and Somatic Studies and the application of Neuroscience in movement. Miss Monday joined Company AT with their first season of *Impersonal Space* as Assistant Director and is happy to be back working with such a dynamic, talented team. She likes the taste, feel and look of the colour black, but not the smell.

**Kaila Pole** - Kaila has been involved in performing arts for most of her life. She started attending Helen O'Grady's Drama Academy at age five and was heavily involved in drama at school, starring in her Year 12 production. She joined Company AT in 2015 and, as part of the ensemble, performed *History of Autism* at the Come Out Children's Festival. In the future, Kaila hopes to have more opportunities to perform, and would love to be able to tour with Company AT performing *Impersonal Space* across the country.

# Cast Biographies

**"Satsy"** – SATSY has been in Company AT since its inception in 2009. He has performed in *Aspie Live* at the Horsham Awakenings Festival and played the lead role of Jeremy in *Framed Out* at APAC in Sydney 2009. He played Dr Hans Asperger in *History Of Autism*. In *Impersonal Space*'s debut at the Queen's Theatre in 2017 he played Dad to good reviews. He also participated in the work-in-progress performances for Company AT's Port Pirie residency. He is an unknown quantity, an enigma. Nobody gets him. Nobody. He is an absurdist, trouble-making contrarian.

**Jacob Thomas** - Jacob has been learning performing arts since he was eleven years old. He was enrolled in Helen O'Grady's Drama Academy where he learned improvisation and basic theatre techniques. He studied drama at both Hamilton Senior College and Thebarton Senior College. He has been a member of Company AT for three years and acted in *History of Autism*. *Impersonal Space* is his second play with the company. He hopes there will be many more to come.

**Kate Watts** – The 2019 season of *Impersonal Space* is Kate's debut in professional theatre. Kate has been a principal actor in her high school drama ensemble and her performance credits include the Australian premiere of *The Trench* and musicals such as *Beauty and the Beast*, *Into the Woods* and *The Addams Family*. Kate has won several awards for her amateur theatre performances: Year 12 Drama Captain and Prize and Year 12 David Bradley Memorial Prize in 2018. Kate also has an extensive background in dance, performing with the Australian Classical Youth Ballet and is very excited to be joining Company AT this year and to be invited to perform *Impersonal Space*.

# Producer's Notes

Tutti Arts is delighted to present Company AT's production *Impersonal Space* by Emily Steel for the 2019 DreamBig Children's Festival. After the success of 2017, we were determined to take this important work to the world. With support from Country Arts SA and DreamBig, *Impersonal Space* has been reworked into a 6-cast show.

At its grassroots, Company AT, is a CACD program, empowering an ensemble of actors on the autism spectrum to develop and perform new work. Thanks to support from Tutti and Community Bridging Services, the ensemble meets weekly for a two-hour workshop led by Artistic Director Julian Jaensch. Younger emerging actors can access a pathway to becoming professional through the Where It's AT and AT This Place youth programs.

To discuss future touring please contact Jane Gronow at Tutti.

## About Company AT

Established in Adelaide in 2009 by Julian Jaensch and Katharine Annear, Company AT (Autistic Theatre) is Australia's first wholly Autistic theatre company. Company AT has worked in partnership with Tutti Arts since 2012. Company AT inspires and connects people with an Autism Spectrum Disorder through the process of creating and presenting powerful theatre. Company AT has produced three works to date: *Framed Out* in 2010, *History of Autism* for the 2014 Adelaide Fringe and 2015 Come Out Festivals, and *Impersonal Space* in 2017.

In addition to the adult ensemble, Tutti has supported Company AT to offer theatre workshop programs for children aged 8 – 12 years and young people aged 13 – 17 years, providing a complete pathway for young Autistic performers. A pioneer in Australian theatre for adults with an Autism Spectrum Disorder, Company AT provides an authentic and distinctive voice within the disability arts sector, presenting quality events, workshops and performances.

# About Tutti Arts

Tutti Arts works across many art forms to promote the professional development of artists with a learning or intellectual disability. Taking its name from the musical term 'tutti', meaning everyone, Tutti is a model of artistic excellence and social inclusion with a truly unique voice in Australian arts. To further the organisation's vision of taking the work of disabled artists to the world, Tutti supports disability-led collectives like Company AT, The Sisters of Invention and Sit Down Shutup and Watch Film & New Media Festival by providing an artistic and administrative environment. This encourages artistic growth, audience reach, and industry recognition.

[www.tutti.org.au](http://www.tutti.org.au)

Contact Tutti Arts on 8422 6511 or [info@tutti.org.au](mailto:info@tutti.org.au)

## Supporters

Thank you to the entire Company AT ensemble who were instrumental in creating this show; Susannah Sweeney, Ruth Weldon, Victoria Hannaford and Rynelisha Bollard at Adelaide Festival Centre; Louisa Norman, Pippa Stroud and Jenny Stephenson at Country Arts SA; all staff at The Odeon; The Mill; Davie and Todd Fogarty, and the following organisations:

