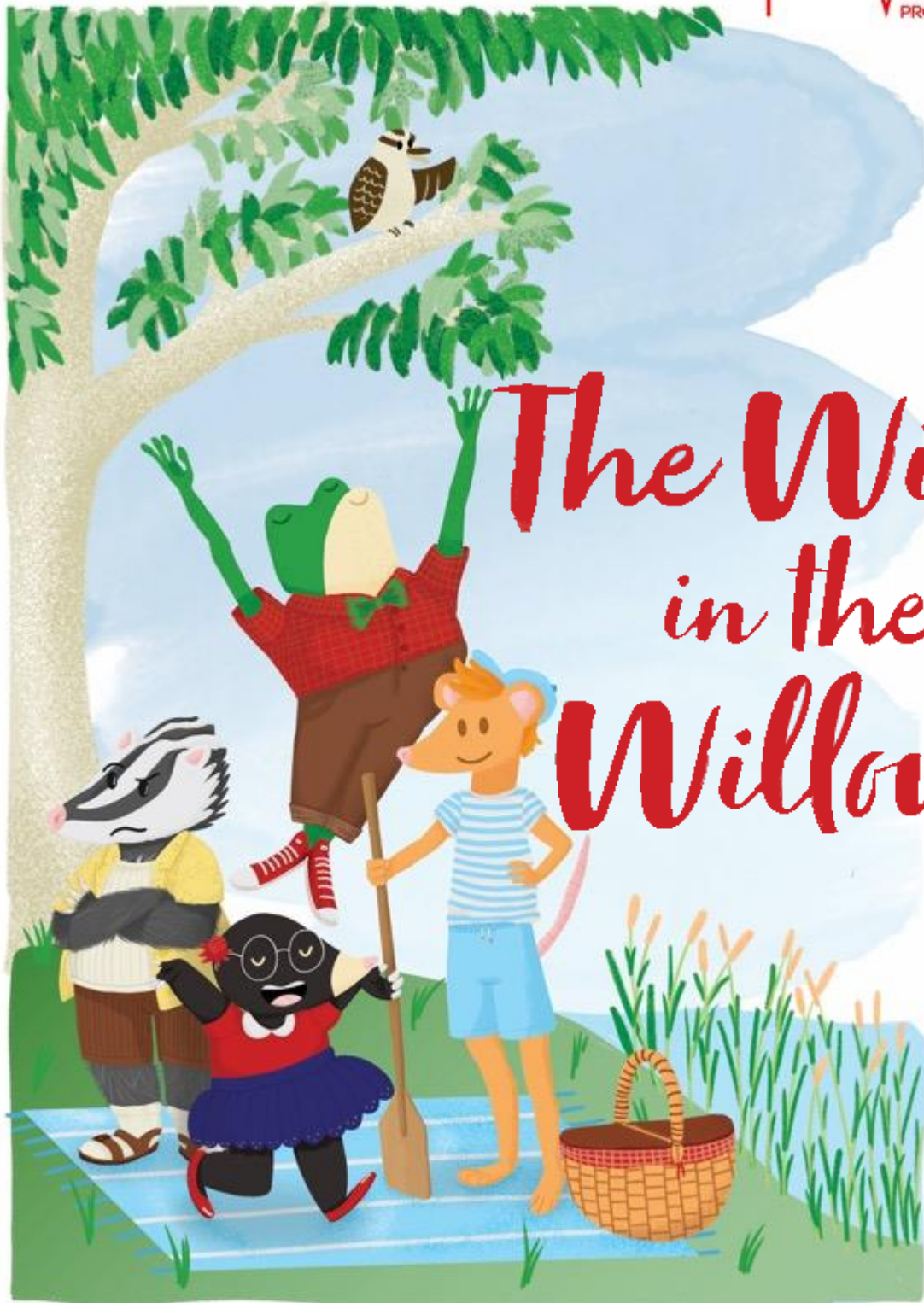


RAA
PRODUCTIONS



The Wind in the Willows

PRESENTER'S INFORMATION

About *The Wind in the Willows*

The Wind in the Willows is a delightful story about animal friends; Mole, Rat, Badger and the often-mischievous Mr Toad.

With original music and playful whimsical characters, *The Wind in the Willows* is bursting with imagination and excitement. This classic story is re-imagined by RAVA Productions for 21 century audiences.

Mr Toad's insatiable need for speed triggers a daring adventure as he discovers motor cars and the thrill of the open road. His friends, Ratty, Moley and Badger try to stop his reckless and destructive ways encouraging him to be a sensible Toad.

Meanwhile, his home Toad Hall is invaded by the wild-wooders. His friends step up to help, going into battle to evict the invaders and recapture Toad Hall.

Featuring a multi-talented cast - Harrison Paroz (Toad), Angela Ponting (Moley), Michael Escobar (Badger) and Jacob Watton (Ratty) – to deliver this heart-warming story perfect for family audiences.

The Wind in the Willows focuses on themes of friendship, being responsible and the consequences of actions, adventures contrasted with the importance of home, understanding differences and mentorship relationships.

Play Duration:
60 mins approx

Suitability: Ideal for students
from pre-school and Years 1 to
3,

Suitable for children and their
families



Acknowledgements

Director: **Alison Vallette**

Performers:

Harrison Paroz as Toad: an aristocratic and wealthy fellow drawn to new adventures. He is erratic and unreliable, often acting on impulse without regard to the consequences of his actions. A complex character, Toad is generous towards his friends who help him learn to act sensibly.

Jacob Watton as Rat: a kind, social animal with a strong sense of hospitality, manners and inclusion. While he has a comfortable life close to home, he is loyal as travels with his friends, and becomes mentor to Moley.

Angela Ponting as Mole: a young and trusting animal, generous and extremely loyal. An underground animal by nature, Moley explores the world above the surface maturing into a self-reliant, brave, and clever companion.

Mike Escobar as Badger: a wise and patient animal who lives in the Wild Wood. He seems gruff and serious at first, although proves he deeply cares for his friends and works hard to improve Toady's habits.

Character & Graphic Design: Charlotte Fountain

Audio-Visual and Sound Design: Ruth and Ralph Atkinson

Design and Set construction: Kerry Saul

Costumes and Props: Alison Vallette

Creative Producer: Ruth Atkinson

Produced by RAVA Productions

RAVA Productions' *The Wind in the Willows* premiered at the Empire Theatre Armitage Centre in March 2021 with the support of Toowoomba Regional Council.



About the Author

Kenneth Grahame



Scottish novelist Kenneth Grahame enjoyed a moderate literary career best known for his children's novel *The Wind in the Willows*. The characters and stories of Toad, Moley, Ratty and Badger were created during nightly bedtime stories for his only child Alastair. His son, nicknamed mouse, was born premature and suffered health issues including blindness in one eye.

Grahame's home in Berkshire in England provided the pastoral setting for the stories. He was inspired by human characteristics he observed in his son attributing them to Toad's behaviours. Consequences of Toad's adventures and choices he made were meant as moral lessons for his son.

After taking early retirement, Kenneth Grahame adapted his bedtime stories into the manuscript that was published as *The Wind in the Willows* in 1908. Kenneth Grahame was born in Edinburgh on 8 March 1859 and died 6 July 1932.

About RAVA Productions

RAVA Productions is a collaboration between arts industry professionals Ruth Atkinson and Alison Vallette who join forces to produce live theatre readily accessible to audiences in regional and remote Queensland and suitable for a variety of venues.

RAVA Productions works to identify emerging professional artists connected to the Darling Downs area, building opportunities for them to extend their experience, and connecting them to industry career pathways.

Alison Vallette is a director/choreographer with professional dance credentials, having danced internationally and performed in music theatre productions that toured the United Kingdom, Europe and Australia. She has directed major musicals including *Mary Poppins*, *Wicked* and *Kinky Boots*. Alison is Principal of Dance Central in Toowoomba.

Ruth Atkinson is a creative producer and presenter with experience across venue management, programming, and marketing for the Empire Theatre Toowoomba, QUT Gardens Theatre, as Director of the Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts in Brisbane and most recently, as Co-Director for the Curious Arts Festival.

CAST BIOGRAPHIES



HARRISON PAROZ

Role: Mr Toad

Harrison is a professional musician, born and raised in Toowoomba. With a musical family regularly involved in the local arts community, it's not surprising he performed his first musical at age 5. He has been gigging professionally all-around South-East Queensland for the last five years. In 2019, he released his first original single "Certain", receiving playback via Triple J

Unearthed and during COVID lockdown, Harrison regularly played live-streamed concerts from his couch. Along with music, he is a multi-skilled artist, dabbling in workshop facilitation, stage management, magic, clowning, juggling, stand-up comedy, MC-ing and theatre-making.

Harrison is in creative development for a 2-hander cabaret show "Please Swipe Right" featuring original music with plans to premiere in 2022. Harrison is always looking to add strings to his bow, working as a guitar teacher, drama facilitator, karaoke host and regular acoustic singer/songwriter at venues across the Darling Downs. Highlights of his theatrical life include playing 'Barféé' in The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee and Aaron's mate in First Date, both by Shoebox Theatre Company, and involvement with the Empire Theatre's IMPACT Ensemble (2012 to 2016). In March 2021, he played Mr Toad and was Musical Director for RAVA Productions newly imagined version of The Wind in the Willows.



ANGELA PONTING

Role: Mole

Angela loves to perform onstage, singing and making people laugh. In 2017, Angela wrote and performed her own cabaret, Smiling at Strangers for the Empire Theatres Homegrown Series. She performed as Ruth in the Empire Theatre's Pirates of Penzance opposite Michael Cormack, and for Shoebox Theatre Company, took roles in First Date,

in Avenue Q (and its 2021 return season) and in *The 24th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*. She is working on a new cabaret show *Please Swipe Right* with Harrison Paroz with plans to premiere in 2022.

Angela is skilled behind the scenes with regular professional work as a Stage Manager for QPAC, the Empire Theatre and the Curious Arts Festival. She completed her Bachelor of Theatre Arts in Stage Management and Technical Production at the University of Southern Queensland in 2007.



JACOB WATTON

Role: Water Rat

Jacob Watton is a Queensland-based choreographer and performer working primarily in Brisbane and Toowoomba. In 2016 Watton graduated with distinction from a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance Performance from the Queensland University of Technology (QUT). He went on to attain a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Honours) with first class honours also from QUT in 2017.

Jacob's premiered work 'and JULIET' (2017) for Brisbane's SUPERCELL Contemporary Dance Festival showcased to a sold-out audience. He went on to secure funding to tour 'and JULIET' alongside two smaller works to perform at Toowoomba's Empire Theatres. He presented '1:1', a dance and technology performance about the onstage relationship between a human and a robot at the Ars Electronica Festival in Linz, Austria (2017).

Jacob Watton performed 'Turbine' with Collusion Music and Dance as part of the Brisbane Powerhouse's Melt Festival (2018). He returned to this role when Collusion toured 'Turbine' to China later that year. Watton also secured a bursary to professionally develop his skills with internationally acclaimed choreographer Crystal Pite and her company Kidd Pivot in Perth under the tutelage of Kidd Pivot company member Sandra Marin Garcia, and Perth's STRUT Dance Company.

Jacob has danced in works by Richard Causer (*We Are Schadenfreude*), Gareth Belling (*Before*), Yolande Brown (*The Tipping Point*, *The Tipping Point: Beijing Dance Tour*), Jen Murray (*Brief Encounters*, *Vacancies of the Heart*), Matthew Lawrence (*A Short History of Life*), Csaba Buday (*Pack*), Lucas Jervies (*Smile*), and Jack Chambers (*Until Late*).

Jacob worked with theatre director Angela Chaplin on 'If Only I Could', a performance partnering with old age care practitioners and residents of aged care facilities to unpack the themes of age and dance. He explored circus with director Chelsea McGuffin during a creative development of a circus and contemporary dance hybrid, *Small Town Stuff*. Jacob Watton danced in *The Play of Light* choreographed by Elise May (Expressions Dance Company) for its premiere at the Curious Arts Festival 2019 and travelled to perform his choreography at the Busan International Dance Festival in South Korea.

Jacob has a vested interest in regional centres as vibrant hubs for creative and innovative art making. Providing opportunities for young artists to engage with new ideas and networks outside of their existing connections and opportunities is a major reason for touring regionally.

In 2020, he premiered *Alexa, Turn the Lights On*, a performance installation and interaction between technology and humans for the Curious Arts Festival Toowoomba. In 2021, he will play Ratty in RAVA Productions new children's production *The Wind in the Willows*.





MIKE ESCOBER

Role: Badger

Michael is a frequent contributor to the Toowoomba stage. He performed the role of Boq in *Wicked* and Sam Carmichael in *Mamma Mia* (both for Empire Theatre Productions) and Chip Tolentino in *The 24th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (Shoebox Theatre Company). Michael works as a teacher in Toowoomba primary schools to pay the mortgage. Charlotte's Web provides a great opportunity for him to feature a range of characters and to present one of his favourite stories to a broader community. In March 2021, Mike takes on the role of the wise Badger in the classic story *The Wind in the Willows* and has co-composed original songs for the new production by RAVA Productions.



PERFORMANCE SPECIFICS

DURATION

One Act no interval – 1 hour

Option: Q&A session by the artists with audiences can be facilitated immediately post-performance. Duration approx. up to 15 mins

MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PERFORMANCES PER WEEK

10 performances (up to two per day preferred)

MINIMUM BREAK BETWEEN PERFORMANCES

60 minutes (after end of audience/post-show engagements)

TOURING PERSONNEL

The touring party consists of 5-6 people.

Name	Role
Harrison Paroz	MrToad
Angela Ponting	Mole
Jacob Watton	Rat
Mike Escobar	Badger
TBA Technical	AV / Audio Technician & SM Lighting operation

PERFORMANCE HISTORY

Year	Venue	Number of performances
March 2021	Empire Theatre Armitage Centre Toowoomba	3

AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

OVERVIEW

The cast includes experience facilitators and a teacher who can present workshops and activities to engage with the community and schools.

Q&A sessions: Post show, the cast will return to stage to answer questions from the audience. With their teaching background, cast members can deliver a quality learning engagement to enhance the experience of young people attending the production.

A comprehensive Teachers Resources Pack and Workshop Menu are available to prepare children for their theatre experience.



TEACHERS & SCHOOLS WORKSHOPS

The touring cast have experience and skills to share through various workshop possibilities in Theatre, Dance and Music practice suited to children. RAVA will work with presenters to design the workshop content best suited to the proposed group (eg: children's primary, secondary, for teachers, community members etc)

A specialist theatre workshop can be delivered to Primary Teachers as Professional Development. RAVA issues certification for Teachers that align to the Professional Teachers Standards for Queensland.

MARKETING

MARKETING COPY

One line

The Wind in the Willows bursts with imagination and excitement telling the tale of the often-mischievous Mr Toad and his friends, Mole, Rat and Badger.

Short

The Wind in the Willows is a delightful story about animal friends; Mole, Rat, Badger and the often-mischievous Mr Toad. With original music and playful whimsical characters, *The Wind in the Willows* is bursting with imagination and excitement. This classic story is re-imagined by RAVA Productions for 21 century audiences.

Extended

The Wind in the Willows is a delightful story about animal friends; Mole, Rat, Badger and the often-mischievous Mr Toad.

With original music and playful whimsical characters, *The Wind in the Willows* is bursting with imagination and excitement. This classic story is re-imagined by RAVA Productions for 21 century audiences, focusing on themes of friendship and understanding consequences of reckless behaviours.

Mr Toad's insatiable need for speed triggers a daring adventure as he discovers motor cars and the thrill of the open road. His friends, Ratty, Moley and Badger try to stop his reckless and destructive ways encouraging him to be a sensible Toad.

Meanwhile, his home Toad Hall is invaded by the wild-wooders. His friends step up to help, going into battle to evict the invaders and recapture Toad Hall.

Featuring a multi-talented cast - Harrison Paroz (Toad), Angela Ponting (Moley), Michael Escobar (Badger) and Jacob Watton (Ratty) – to deliver this heart-warming story perfect for family audiences.

MARKETING MATERIALS

Marketing materials including images and graphics are available here:

https://www.dropbox.com/sh/zh6hgd9mrh3pmfp/AACehQzXqQU2xMQicnaFQo_Da?dl=0

A tour marketing package will be developed to expand on existing images, hero graphic, templates for e-mailable and printable posters, social media templates, newsletter inserts, biographies of performers and sample media releases.

Video footage exists of the premiere performance. Short promotion clips suitable for social media can be made for venues on a tour. Existing segments about the artists and aspects of the production are available.

A Teachers Resource Kit and colour in characters are available in the Education folder.

CONTENT WARNINGS / AUDIENCES TO AVOID

None! Totally family friendly



PRODUCTION DETAILS

TECHNICAL SUMMARY

The production has been designed to be quick to set up with suitable flexibility for small to large venues. The company tour the set which is a fast-fold rear projection screen with a flat-panel tree façade providing a window for video images. The Company tours the large venue projector and the fast-fold screen.

Portable set blocks become the imaginative building materials for the cast to create story elements supported by the soundtrack and changing projected screen images.

Lighting is very simple with only 10 cues. A venue standard wash for day and night, focused in front of the set and a leafy break up to enhance the set tree are the fanciest it gets.

The soundtrack and the AV projection elements are programmed and played via Qlab off a toured laptop with playback through the in-house PA system.

Original songs have a soundtrack playback. An audio send to foldback at side stage is required. For large venues, additional mics may be required at front of stage to provide sound reinforcement. All audio equipment (eg portable PA system) can be toured if required.

EXAMPLE SCHEDULE

Bump in – 2-3 hours

Performance – 1 hour plus Q&A segments as an option

Touring Technician operates the AV & Audio and calls the show
Venue can provide one multiskilled bump in technician who will operate lights for the show. For community presenters, a second technician can be included in the touring party for simple lighting operations.

Bump out - 1 hour maximum

Two shows can be scheduled in one day (eg: 9.30am and 11.30am)

A longer season could include bump in and afternoon or evening performance on day 1 and schools shows on day 2 etc.

Please allow 1 hour between performances (allow 60 mins turnaround time after any scheduled Q&A session post performance)

CREW REQUIRED FROM VENUE

One multiskilled Technician for bump in who will also operate lighting for the performance (if venues are unmanaged, a second technician will tour with the company)

Venue to provide Ticketing, Marketing and Front of House arrangements

Duty technician if required by venue



STAGE

Flexible in size but optimal stage width is 8m and stage depth is 6m.

All sets, costumes and hand props required are toured by RAVA

LIGHTING

Standard colour wash rig plus specials

Some floor specials for the web are toured

Portable lighting equipment can be toured for unmanaged/small hall venues

SOUND

The Soundtrack tours via RAVA computer running Qlab, requires 3.5mm 2 channel output to audio desk

One send from audio desk to side-stage speaker foldback

Two radio microphones are toured

Pre-show stereo input for music (children appropriate)

RAVA can tour a PA system, foldback wedge and audio mixer if required

Additional microphones can be used for larger venues for reinforcement

Venue to supply

In-house PA System and mixer with minimum 8 channels and one send for Qlab outputs and at least 2 and up to 6 microphones.

PROPS AND FAST CHANGES

Two trestle tables each off-stage and position on either side in wings is required for various props. Costume racks also positioned either side stage. Performers coordinate and supply all props and costumes required.

WARDROBE

All performer costumes and accessories are toured by the Company.

Venue to supply

Minimum 1 dressing room for 6 persons with mirrors (2 dressing rooms where available)

Access to bathroom facilities backstage

Access to water and hot water/refreshments backstage

Access to a refrigerator appreciated (props include vegetables etc)

Access to an iron and ironing board

BIOGRAPHIES



ALISON VALLETTE:

RAVA Productions Director/Choreographer

Alison has a long background in classical ballet and musical theatre commencing her professional career at aged 10. She has danced in many productions both in Australia and overseas, including working for Cameron Macintosh in Oklahoma both National tour and London West End. Alison returned to Australia where she toured with "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" for Bill Kenwright Productions.

Her dramatic credits include Gwennie – "Under Milk Wood" Louise – "Carousel", Alice – "Go Ask Alice" Louise Beauchamp – "Night of the Ding Dong" U/S Ado Annie and Aunt Ella - "Oklahoma!" Justine – "Cosi" and Kate in "Sylvia". Her choreographic credits to date include "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat", "West Side Story", "Oklahoma", "Jesus Christ Superstar", "Sweet Charity", "Beauty and the Beast", "Cabaret", "25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee", "Singin in the Rain", "Spamalot" "The Boy from Oz", "Phantom of the Opera" & Esgee's Pirates of Penzance. Her directorial credits include "Cats", "Hairspray", "The Wizard of Oz", "Mary Poppins" and "Wicked" for Empire Theatre.



RUTH ATKINSON:
RAVA Productions Creative Producer

Ruth wears several professional hats. In 2021, she is appointed as a Creative Business Champion for the Regional Arts Service Network. She has been a Director for the Curious Arts Festival since 2018.

Ruth was Director at the Judith Wright Centre of Contemporary Arts (2008-2016), where she founded the Fresh Ground artist-in-residence program aimed at the development of contemporary performances by Queensland artists.

Ruth's career began directing television productions and radio programming before segueing to performing arts tour management for the Northern Australian Regional Performing Arts Centres Association (NARPACA now known as Stage Queensland). Her career continued to grow through arts marketing, venue programming and event management roles at Empire Theatre Toowoomba, QUT Garden's Theatre and QUT Art Museum.

She is a business partner/CEO for Visual Focus, an audio-visual integration company based in Toowoomba. She holds an MBA and Post Graduate qualification in Arts and Cultural Management from Uni SA and a Bachelor of Business (Marketing) from CQU.

Connect with RAVA Productions

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