

MEDIA RELEASE

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Kim Hardwick to direct the NIDA production of **STARSTRUCK – The Stage Musical** for performances from 30 October

Garry McQuinn and NIDA (Australia's National Institute of Dramatic Art) are pleased to announce a collaborative partnership to produce the musical **STARSTRUCK**. Both organisations are keen to support the development of new Australian musicals: NIDA assisted as a platform to workshop the draft material in 2018 with students engaged with industry practitioners in a studio presentation. Following further development from writer **Mitchell Butel** and **Hilary Bell**, the piece will be realised under the direction of **Kim Hardwick** as a fully-staged performance as part of the **NIDA October 2019 Season of Student Productions**, co-produced with Garry's company **RGM Productions** in association with **Palm Beach Pictures**.

STARSTRUCK The Stage Musical is based on the 1982 film **STARSTRUCK** which was billed as "a modern musical comedy". It was splashy, colourful and bold, and established a new style of Australian filmmaking. The film earned three AFI Award Nominations, including for Best Original Music Score, Best Achievement in Costume Design and Best Achievement in Production Design.

Kim Hardwick is a stage director and theatre producer. She directed *I Love You Now* (Darlinghurst Theatre Company) and produced and directed the *Blackrock* (Seymour Centre) and *Hurt* (Old 505), which was nominated for a Sydney Theatre Award for Best Independent Production. In 2015, she was the Resident Studio Artist for Griffin Theatre Company and directed the lauded production of *The House on the Lake*. Kim's other credits include *The Shadow Box* (The Old Fitz), *Unholy Ghosts* (Griffin Independent), *BANG* (B Sharp), *Time Stands Still* and *Love Song* (both at Darlinghurst Theatre Company), *Love Bites* (Seymour Centre), *The Hatpin* (Seymour Centre, which then played at the New York Music Theatre Festival), *The Memory of Water* (Darlinghurst Theatre Company & NSW regional tour), *A Moment on the Lips* (Darlinghurst Theatre Company, The Old Fitz and The Stables in NSW, and the Old Council Chamber in Carlton, VIC), *Sprung!* (National tour), and *A Day In The Death of Joe and Dinner With Friends* (both at Darlinghurst Theatre Company). She is a graduate of VCA and WAAPA.

Kim Hardwick said "How wonderful to be collaborating with emerging artists on this stage adaptation of such a significant piece of Australian cinema. For many years *Starstruck* and Jackie Mullins in particular was my inspiration. As a young woman the movie taught me that it was OK to be different and that being true to myself was a sure path to happiness."

Garry McQuinn is the lead producer of *PRISCILLA Queen of the Desert*, Australia's most successful theatrical export that has played 135 cities in 30 countries around the world, said "The collaboration between the national theatre school, a commercial producer and key industry partners in the development of new Australian musicals is both obvious and timely. This partnership will provide us with the time and space to nurture new work, insulated from the rush to production and exorbitant expense that characterises many new productions. This is a new vision of sustainable development. NIDA is a place that fizzles with youthful exuberance and energy ... what better place to launch **STARSTRUCK – The Stage Musical**, an iconic movie about young people pursuing their ambition and finding their place in the world?"

"And what an opportunity for these young people, to work with experienced and talented theatre practitioners - artists such as **Brian Thomson, Hilary Bell** and **Mitchell Butel**. And now Kim Hardwick, one of our most exciting female directors. We have been immediately supported by **Foundation Theatres, Destination NSW, Origin Theatrical** and **Mushroom Music Publishing**, a pretty good indication of industry support. We all hope that **STARSTRUCK – The Stage Musical** is the first in a development pipeline" McQuinn said.

Jennifer Bott, CEO of NIDA, said "Nine months ago, we embraced the **STARSTRUCK – The Stage Musical** project, when our Musical Theatre students had the unique opportunity to workshop this new adaptation with some of Australia's most talented and experienced theatre-makers. We are now eager to see this flamboyant, energetic, unashamedly Australian work brought to life for the first time by our Acting, Design and Technical students on a NIDA stage, and to celebrate the result of this pioneering approach to collaboration with industry heavyweights."

Set in the shadow of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, *STARSTRUCK* the film was written by **Stephen MacLean**, designed by **Brian Thomson** and featured an uplifting, catchy soundtrack, including *Body and Soul* by **Tim Finn**, the title song *Starstruck* by **Phil Judd**, and *The Monkey in Me!* by **Dennis Nattrass**.

Described by The Guardian as "a neon lightning bolt with all the makings of a classic", *STARSTRUCK* is a cinematic love letter to Sydney. It came as a startling contrast to the pioneering Gillian Armstrong's earlier work, the internationally-acclaimed period film *My Brilliant Career*.

STARSTRUCK – The Stage Musical is centred on the loveable and quirky Jackie Mullens, a teenager who works in her mother's failing harbour-side pub but dreams of becoming a rock star while her cousin Angus aspires to be her manager and get her on the national TV talent series, 'The Wow Show'.

STARSTRUCK – The Stage Musical will perform at NIDA from **Wednesday 30 October**.

The partnership of **Garry McQuinn** and **NIDA** is supported by **Mushroom Music Publishing**, the **Owner of Foundation Theatres**, **Stephen Found**, **Destination NSW**, **Origin Theatrical** and **David Elfick of Palm Beach Pictures**.

For further information about NIDA Productions - nida.edu.au/productions

[For further information about Garry McQuinn and his company -](#)

www.rgmproductions.co.uk

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