

Simon Abrahams

Simon Abrahams is a dynamic and strategic cultural leader with experience as a performing arts producer, programmer and performer working at some of the world's leading arts and cultural centres. He is currently employed as Head of Programming at The Wheeler Centre for Books, Writing and Ideas.

Most recently serving as Arts Centre Melbourne's Program Manager, Artistic Development, Simon held responsibility for developing a program for artists that incorporated 18 new commissions, a live art artist-in-residence program, artistic critical conversations, an arts industry card and professional masterclasses presented in collaboration with leading local and international artists. Nicola Gunn's acclaimed *In Spite of Myself* (Melbourne Festival 2013) was the most recent work to premiere from this program.

Previously, Simon served as Executive Producer/General Manager and co-CEO of Polyglot Theatre, where he produced *How High The Sky*, *Tangle*, *Sticky Maze*, *Paper Planet*, *La Ji Da Bian Shen*, *City of Riddles* and *The Big Game* (all directed by Sue Giles). He produced 17 international tours of Polyglot's works to the world's leading arts centres and festivals, including the Kennedy Center in Washington, the Royal National Theatre in London for LIFT, the National Theatre of Korea, Sydney Opera House as well as a Chinese language co-production which premiered at the Chinese National Center for the Performing Arts in Beijing.

Prior to joining Polyglot, Simon worked at Gasworks Arts Park as Marketing and Development Manager and as a Producer, where his projects included the Art of Difference international conference and arts program. Simon has also worked at the Melbourne University Student Union at Union House Theatre, and was Festival Producer of Mudfest, Australia's leading student arts and cultural festival.

Simon is also a performer and has performed in *Mysteries of the Convent*, *The Peepshow of Lost Puppets* and *Hansel and Gretel* for Peepshow Inc, *Emergency Exits* at the New York International Fringe Festival, *A Superhero Story* at the Fun4Kids Festival, *Lally Katz's Pirate Eyes*, and cabaret performances at The Butterfly Club and Chapel off Chapel. Most recently, Simon's original comedy cabaret show *Saturn Returns* (created with Lachlan MacLeod) sold out its season at The Butterfly Club, toured to the Brisbane Cabaret Festival alongside Tripod and received a string of four star reviews at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival 2013. For Polyglot, he performed in *We Built This City* across Australia, America, Korea, England, Ireland and Scotland.

He also works as a freelance facilitator, guest speaker, peer assessor and arts consultant and is currently Chair of Theatre Network Victoria, a peak body organisation which develops the theatre sector to build its capacity

and sustainability, including producing the biennial Australian Theatre Forum. He sits on the Theatre panel for the Helpmann Awards and the Alternative and Hybrid Arts Panel for the Green Room Awards. Simon is currently developing a project with the Australia Council exploring the export of Australian theatre for young people into key European markets.

Simon's work has been awarded with the 2011 Governor of Victoria Export Award for arts and entertainment, three AbaF Awards, and together with his Polyglot colleague Sue Giles, Simon was named among Arts Hub's Top Ten Arts Leaders of 2010. In 2009, Simon was awarded a Margaret Lawrence Bequest Scholarship to attend the Senior Managers' Program at the Melbourne Business School, and Simon was a member of the 2012 Australia Council for the Arts Emerging Leaders' Development Program. He also holds a Bachelor of Commerce and Diploma of Arts (Cultural Studies) from Melbourne University, and a Diploma of Creative Arts (Theatre Studies) from the Victorian College of the Arts.