



May 1<sup>st</sup> 2005

## 4play is hotting up at Yirra Yaakin

Yirra Yaakin's annual intensive writers workshop gets underway today with four national emerging playwrights from Brisbane, Melbourne, Ipswich and Perth. This is the second stage of a year long development program. 4Play is an intensive hands-on creators workshop, nurturing emerging artists from seed concept to public outcome. This Yirra Yaakin created workshop formula has been devised so as to work towards a strong intensive skills development for the Indigenous Community to develop new work for theatre.

This week each writer will have the opportunity to see their play come alive with the support of professional Aboriginal actors and directors. As an authentic Aboriginal theatre industry, contemporary Aboriginal scripts are crucial to our work; therefore it is essential that we continually nurture emerging playwrights on a national level.

Yirra Yaakin's 4play programme was inspired by the success of the Indigenous Women's Writers workshop, an initiative between Yirra Yaakin and Stages. This workshop turned out three world premieres, ALIWAH, ONE DAY IN 67 and ALICE which opened to all critical acclaim, some of which toured nationally and internationally.

We've had a huge response to our call for entries and are proud of the four emerging playwrights we have invited to work with us. The bar has certainly been raised since David Milroy 2003 Patrick White award for WINDMILL BABY, and we look forward to this talented group of writers offering audiences exciting, contemporary Aboriginal theatre.

**PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES:** Playwrights, Actors and Directors at YY theatre.

**INTERVIEWS:** Sam Cook EP of Yirra Yaakin, Lois Olney, Sam Conway, Kamarra Bell-Wykes, Sam Watson emerging playwrights, and David Milroy.

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## 2004/05 – 4PLAY WRITERS

### **Sam Watson**

Sam Watson is a writer, filmmaker and political activist who teaches a course in Black Australian Literature at the University of Queensland. He learnt his politics at the feet of the “Giants” of the civil rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s and is active in Indigenous rights issues. Sam is also a familiar face on the literary circuit and was involved with the Honouring Words tour of Indigenous writers from Canada, New Zealand and Australia.

### **Sam Conway**

Sam Conway has extensive experience in theatre and film, in acting, directing and producing. His recent film credits include assessor/consultant for the Ch 10 production Jessica and script editor of Hemispheres. Acting credits include: THE CHERRY PICKERS, THE DREAMERS, CUTTING A RUG and TV productions Wildside and Cybergirl.

### **Lois Olney**

Taken from her parents at 8 months and adopted, Lois grew up with white culture, knowing little of her Indigenous past. She attended a private school in the western suburbs growing up with white culture, knowing little of her Indigenous background. As an adult she began a search for her birth parents, only to find that her mother had passed before her search began. Music began at 13 when she heard a Billie Holiday recording. Credits include THE COOLABAROO CLUB and BLUE SKY, RED EARTH.

### **Kamarra Bell-Wykes**

Kamarra is a proud Jagera and Dulingbara woman from the South East of Queensland. She has been freelancing as an actor and writer for the past couple of years and is currently based in Melbourne Victoria. Credits include; STOLEN, SHRUNKEN IRIS, SMACK HAPPY and the TV series Halifax F.P.