

now showing

The Breaker Upperers (M)
The premise of the raucous New Zealand comedy *The Breaker Upperers* is not in itself particularly funny – in fact, it's rather cruel. Melanie (Madeleine Sami) and Jen (Jackie van Beek) are platonic partners and roommates who earn a living from the unhappiness of other people. In the opening sequence we meet the pair disguised as police officers who arrive at the home of suburban housewife Annie (Celia Pacquola) to tell her that her husband has gone missing, presumed drowned. Annie is understandably devastated but her spouse isn't really dead – he just wants to be rid of her. On paper none of this sounds very amusing but it works on screen thanks to the talents of Sami and van Beek, who also wrote and directed the film. It's a small film but – despite the dubiousness of its premise – a frequently hilarious one.

David Stratton ★★★★★

The Equalizer 2 (MA15+)
Denzel Washington returns as former CIA black-ops agent turned vigilante Robert McCall in *The Equalizer 2*, directed by Antoine Fuqua and written by Richard Wenk, as was the 2014 original (based on an 1980s TV series starring Edward Woodward). McCall works as a private taxi driver, which brings him in touch with strangers who need his kindness. He also has a friend at the CIA, Susan (Melissa Leo), who helps him with less random jobs, such as the rescue of an American child abducted by her abusive Turkish father. It is Susan who becomes the centre of this movie, with the action swinging from McCall's home town of Boston to Washington, DC, to Brussels. Cinematographer Oliver Wood brings a tense elegance to what unfolds, in the loud scenes but also the quiet ones. The climax, in a storm-ravaged American township, is superb.

Stephen Romei ★★★★★

See You Up There (Au revoir la-haut) (MA15+)
The French film *See You Up There (Au revoir la-haut)* is a skilful adaptation of a prizewinning novel of the same name by Pierre Lemaitre, who collaborated with director and leading actor Albert Dupontel on the very well-constructed screenplay. Set in the period immediately after World War I, the film explores themes such as the way in which the burial of the many thousands who were killed in combat was handled and the creation of memorials to the fallen. But that makes the film sound darker than it is. Dupontel's touch is light and the film is so beautifully designed and photographed that watching it is sheer pleasure. It's an epic tale of friendship and family conflict, and the expensive-looking production has been lavishly assembled, with production design, costumes and, above all, Vincent Mathias's very fluid camerawork, all outstanding.

David Stratton ★★★★★

pick of the week**music****Spanish Nights**

Pianist Steven Osborne, pictured, is the featured soloist for this Sydney Symphony Orchestra concert conducted by Ludovic Morlot. The program opens with Debussy's *Gigues*, then continues with the Australian premiere of Julian Anderson's piano concerto *The Imaginary Museum* and Falla's *Nights in the Gardens of Spain* before concluding with Debussy's *Iberia*.
Sydney Opera House, Concert Hall, Bennelong Point. Tickets: \$39-\$112. Thursday, 1.30pm. Bookings: (02) 8215 4600 or online. Until August 4.

**NSW****opera****Aida**

For Davide Livermore's new take on *Aida*, Opera Australia has employed integrated digital technology to achieve what traditional staging has partially failed to do. But Livermore's production goes beyond mere spectacle or display. His confronting choreography, in particular, interrogates the underlying brutality and militarism of Pharaonic Egypt. And listening to the luscious, seductively coloured voice of soprano Amber Wagner as Aida, one can almost understand Radames's choice. Firm and flexible across her tessitura, she sustains exceptional agility, focused clarity and sinuous line. As Radames, tenor Riccardo Massi sings with impassioned fervour while mezzosoprano Elena Gabouri's richly coloured timbre is ideally suited to her role.

Murray Black

Sydney Opera House, Joan Sutherland Theatre, Bennelong Point. Today, 7.30pm. Tickets: \$46-\$348. Bookings: (02) 9318 8200 or online. Until August 31.

music**Mahler Six**

Simone Young, pictured below, conducts the Sydney Symphony Orchestra through Mahler's Symphony No 6. The program includes Britten's *Les Illuminations* performed by tenor Steve Davislim, a longstanding collaborator.
Sydney Opera House, Concert Hall, Bennelong Point. Tickets: \$39-\$112. August 8, 8pm. Bookings: (02) 8215 4600 or online. August 8-11. Duration: 2hr, including interval.

**The Legendary Count Basie Orchestra**

The 18-piece Count Basie Orchestra will perform at the Sydney Opera House alongside special guest vocalist Carmen Bradford. Directed by Scotty Barnhart, the jazz orchestra has previously worked with such musicians as Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra. The orchestra presents this performance as a tribute to Ella Fitzgerald and Louis Armstrong.
Sydney Opera House, Concert Hall, Bennelong Point. Thursday, 8.30pm. Tickets: \$109.90-\$159.90. Inquiries: (02) 9250 7777 or online.

**musical theatre****Yarramadoon**

Sixteen-year-old Shelly wants nothing more than to escape her town of Yarramadoon. As she waits for the bus to the city, an old man crosses her path. Written and directed by Hannah (pictured above left) and Eliza (right) Reilly, the work, set in the 2000s, follows the elderly man trying to persuade Shelly to stay by revealing the unexpected history of the town.
Belvoir St Theatre, Downstairs Theatre, 25 Belvoir St, Surry Hills. Today, 8.15pm. Tickets: \$25. Bookings: (02) 9699 3444 or online. Until August 11.

theatre**Stomp**

Using unconventional instruments such as plastic bags and sinks, the eight-member ensemble Stomp returns to Sydney after a sold-out international tour. Originating in Brighton in England, the group combines

music, pantomime and acrobatics in a performance suitable for all ages. Presented at the Capitol Theatre.
Capitol Theatre, 13 Campbell St, Haymarket. Tuesday, 7pm. Tickets: \$89.90-\$119.90. Bookings: 1300 558 878 or online. July 31-August 5. Duration: 1hr 40min, no interval.

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time

The National Theatre's production of playwright Simon Stephens's adaptation of the Mark Haddon novel follows maths-minded Christopher, 15, as he struggles through everyday life. Once Christopher finds the body of a neighbour's deceased dog, he ventures to answer the unearthed questions, which lead him on a life-changing journey.
Roslyn Packer Theatre, 22 Hickson Road, Walsh Bay. Today, 2pm and 8pm. Tickets: \$99.90-\$149.90. Bookings: (02) 9250 1999 or online.

A Taste of Honey

Eamon Flack directs Shelagh Delaney's *A Taste of Honey*. In the play, neglected teenager Jo finds herself alone and pregnant after a fling with an itinerant African sailor. Jo manages to set up a happy if unconventional household with a gay art student whose landlady has thrown him out because of his sexuality. This domestic arrangement is up-ended as Jo's glamorous, self-centred mother, Helen, played by acclaimed veteran Genevieve Lemon, storms back into her daughter's life. Flack argues that Delaney "was writing about the breakdown of categories that we're still dealing with now – what a man is, what a woman is, what sexuality is, what gender is."

Rosemary Neill

Belvoir, Upstairs Theatre, 25 Belvoir Street, Surry Hills. Today, 2pm and 8pm. Tickets: \$37-\$77. Bookings: (02) 9699 3444 or online. Until August 19.

exhibition

I am the old and I am the new
John Mawurdjul's retrospective illustrates the

stories from his home in western Arnhem Land, sculptures and bark paintings depicting tales of the Kuninjku culture. Stringybark eucalypt skins from the previously mentioned regions are used throughout the works. Inspired by the sacred Mardayin ceremony, a ritual that creates connections between the past and present, Mawurdjul explores the future of the Kuninjku culture, acknowledging and accepting the old and the new.

Museum of Contemporary Art, Level 3, 140 George St, The Rocks. Thurs-Tues, 10am-5pm. Wed, 10am-9pm. Free event. Inquiries: (02) 9245 2400 or online. Until September 23.

ReminiSCENT

ReminiSCENT exhibits contemporary artists who explore olfactory experiences. Strongly connected to emotion and memory, the bodily sense of smell portrays a contrast to our highly visual digital world. These scent-based works enforce a sense of intimacy between them and the audience, an added dimension of sensorial engagement. Featured artists include Liz Henderson, Jayne McSwiney and Archie Moore. Curated by Megan Fitzell.
May Space, 409b George Street, Waterloo. Free event. Tues-Sat, 10am-5pm. Inquiries: (02) 9318 1122 or online. Until August 11.

ACT**dance****Dark Emu**

Bangarra Dance Theatre, 30 years old next year, has spent its existence opening doors to this country's ancient past. The audience has its knowledge of First Nations history and culture enlarged on every occasion. *Dark Emu* also offers fresh insights into Aboriginal experience and customs, although with less force. As designed by Jacob Nash (set), Jennifer Irwin (costumes) and Sian James-Holland (lights), the production looks gorgeous: whenever was that not the case with

Bangarra? Its impact, however, is blunted by too much sameness in the dance language. The reason is surely that *Dark Emu*'s choreography is credited to Stephen Page, Daniel Riley, Yolande Brown and the Bangarra dancers. That's a lot of cooks.

Deborah Jones

Canberra Theatre Centre, Canberra Theatre, Civic Square, London Circuit, Canberra. Today, 1.30pm and 7.30pm. Tickets: \$30-\$69. Bookings: (02) 6275 2700 or online.

children's theatre**Hamlet: Prince of Skidmark**

Comedy duo the Listies (Richard Higgins and Matt Kelly) has adapted *Hamlet* for children.
Canberra Theatre Centre, The Playhouse, Civic Square, London Circuit, Canberra. Friday, 6.30pm. Tickets: \$40. Bookings: (02) 6275 2700 or online. August 3-4.

theatre**The Judas Kiss**

After the mass popularity of his play *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Oscar Wilde's romantic life became public knowledge, the social ignorance of his context resulting in his imprisonment. Unwilling to compromise his steadfast moral compass, David Hare's play *The Judas Kiss* follows Wilde as he chooses to stay in England despite the legal consequences of his sexuality and his lover's betrayal.

Canberra Theatre Centre, The Courtyard Studio, Civic Square, London Circuit, Canberra. Today, 2pm and 7.30pm. Tickets: \$44.95. Bookings: (02) 6275 2700 or online. Until August 5.

Event contact

Out & About editor:
Sophia Morrison.
Email your information to lists@theaustralian.com.au at least three weeks before the event.

To be considered for publication, information must include a contact name and daytime telephone number.

The Out & About guide also appears in *The Australian* weekdays on the Arts pages.