



CURIOUS ARTS PRESENTS
RAVA PRODUCTION'S

Christmas Crackers



*A sparkling celebration of the
Season's favourite songs, to
warm hearts and lift spirits.*

UNWRAP THE MAGIC WITH
MUSICAL DIRECTOR,
MELISSA BUCHHOLZ
JAMES LENNOX, LAURA FOIS
AND THE
DANCE CENTRAL VELOCITY DANCERS



VENUE INFORMATION

ABOUT THE SHOW

Christmas Crackers – A sparkling celebration of the season's favourite songs!

Unwrap the magic of Christmas with singers Laura Fois and James Lennox, led by Merry Musical Director Melissa Buchholz.

Bursting with beloved carols, festive showstoppers, and the toe-tapping talents of the Dance Central Velocity dancers, this joyful concert will fill your stockings with music, laughter, and holiday cheer.

ESSENTIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

LOGOS:

Curious Arts Inc.
RAVA Productions
MB Backing Tracks and Entertainment
Dance Central

Queensland Government and
Goondiwindi Regional Council

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: This project is funded by the Regional Arts Development Fund, a partnership between the Queensland Government and Goondiwindi Regional Council to support local arts and culture in regional Queensland.

CREATIVES

Director: Alison Vallette

Musical Director: Melissa Buchholz

Performers:

James Lennox and Laura Fois

Dance Central Velocity dancers

Special Guests from Goondiwindi community, Gun Syngers

Technician: Simon Janetzki

Creative Producer: Ruth Atkinson

Produced by RAVA Productions for Curious Arts Inc.

CURIOUS ARTS INC - COMPANY PROFILE

Established in 2018, Curious Arts Inc. is a Toowoomba based arts organisation with aims to celebrate and showcase the remarkable depth of creativity in our region influencing local arts practice and participation through projects, tours and workshops with respected professional artists.

Through collaboration with creative artists and companies, Curious Arts develops and supports projects and opportunities that showcase professional artists and deliver arts experiences for audiences and encourage participation in the Arts.

Curious Arts Inc. has produced a number of tours including *Queens of Song* and *Perfectly Imperfect*. Recently it supported the creation and premiere of a new children's theatre work by RAVA Productions, *Fractured Fairy Tales*.

RAVA PRODUCTIONS - COMPANY PROFILE

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 performing experiences, and connecting them to industry career pathways.

Since 2018, RAVA Productions has premiered *Charlotte's Web*, *The Wind in the Willows*, *Love Sick*, *Stages of Dating* and *Fractured Fairy Tales*. *Charlotte's Web* toured three times to 43 communities (2019, 2021, 2022) and *The Wind in the Willows* toured twice to 22 communities (2022 & 2023) playing to over 16,000 children and facilitating over 120 schools' workshops.

In May 2025, RAVA Productions premiered its latest children's theatre production, *Fractured Fairy Tales* and is currently developing a regional Queensland tour for Term 2 and 3 in 2026.

MB BACKING TRACKS AND PERFORMANCE - COMPANY PROFILE

Melissa Buchholz (Philp) is managing director of MB Backing Tracks and Performance. She trained at DDIAE and graduated with the award for Best Performer and the Deans' Trophy for Solfege. She was awarded an AMusA (piano) with distinction and studied violin and woodwind instruments. Melissa went on to achieve her Licentiate with Trinity College London and later was awarded the prestigious Fellowship of Trinity College London. She holds qualifications for the Archbishop's Certificate in Church Music and a bachelor's degree in education.

Melissa developed a unique music program at Cowper Public School creating 'Opera with the Cows' bringing professional opera singers to perform alongside the school children and a community orchestra. This music program was a finalist in the prestigious ABC Flame Awards. Melissa directed the 10th Australian Flute Convention accompanying some of the world's leading flautists at this event. She went on to direct the Australian Instrumental Convention, Opera with the Cows, James Morrison in concert and the Gary Schocker Australian Tour.



Melissa is an experienced repetiteur and keyboardist working for musical productions including *Kinky Boots*, *We Will Rock You*, *Mamma Mia*, *Pirates of Penzance*, *Titanic*, *Oliver*, *The Boy from Oz* and more.

In 2023 Melissa was appointed to the examination panel of Trinity College London. She is in demand as an adjudicator and travels internationally as well as across Australia.

Melissa now directs and performs 'Queens of Song' with Meg Kettle and tours it across Queensland and NSW. She has a particular passion for working in rural areas delivering encouragement and support to both students and their teachers located in regional regions.

PERFORMANCE SPECIFICS

DURATION

One Act no interval – 85 mins (including encores)
or two x 40 mins halves (plus a 20 minute interval)

MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PERFORMANCES PER DAY

Up to 2 performances per day (Matinee/Morning Melodies – Evening)

MINIMUM BREAK BETWEEN PERFORMANCES

60 minutes (after any audience engagement activities post-show)

COMPANY PERSONNEL

Name	Role
Laura Fois	Female Vocalist
James Lennox	Male Vocalist
Melissa Buchholz	Musical Director/Accompanist piano
Dancers	Dance Central Velocity
Alison Vallette	Director
Simon Janetzki	Audio technician
Ruth Atkinson	Curious Arts & RAVA producer

MARKETING

MARKETING COPY

One sentence

Christmas Crackers – A sparkling celebration of the season’s favourite songs!

Short

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Unwrap the magic of Christmas with singers Laura Fois and James Lennox, led by Musical Director Melissa Buchholz.

Extended

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Unwrap the magic of Christmas with singers Laura Fois and James Lennox, led by Merry Musical Director Melissa Buchholz.

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MARKETING MATERIALS

A package of Marketing Materials will include hero images, versions of social media, artist biographies and headshots.

CONTENT WARNINGS / AUDIENCES TO AVOID

G rated for the whole family to share

PRODUCTION DETAILS

TECHNICAL SUMMARY

The production has been designed to be flexible for small to large venues. It aims to be as simple as a Morning Melodies concert, using standard rigs and minimal staging elements. Preference is supply of a baby or grand piano by the venue, but the artists can supply and be accompanied by keyboard.

Lighting relies on the standard rig, using warm and cool colour washes. When possible, specials focused for the piano, a Christmas tree stage set and an area at centre stage to highlight the performers.

Audio: A computer with Qlab plays backing tracks, operated by the musical director from on stage at her piano. The piano or keyboard is usually set on OP side downstage and can be mic'd up. Two vocalists have headset radio mics and there is a handheld on a stand as backup. The company can provide the Mics as needed.

The in-house PA and desk is used with inputs for mics, backing music and pre-show general music. Two sends to foldback are used – one at the piano and one for the vocalists. Audio is operated by the touring technician and lighting can be operated by an in-house technician or when physically possible, by the touring technician.

SCHEDULE EXAMPLE

4pm – Company arrive and bump in

- Costumes, Props and stage pieces (a Christmas tree) are set up by touring personnel.
- Company sets up toured keyboard and shell. Or when possible, the venue provides a tuned grand piano on OP side of stage and two stools (or a piano stool and small table for a computer upstage)
- LX Tech to be provided by the venue or access to lighting desk provided
- Audio technician is touring with Company

By 5.30pm – Cast mic up – Sound Check with MD and singers. Dancers check.

6pm – Break

6.30pm – Pre-show set up and house opens

7pm or 7.30pm. Performance commences

85 minutes or two x 40mins sets, encore plus 20 min interval

8.30pm - Company bumped out / depart venue by 9pm approx

DRESSING ROOMS

All performer costumes and accessories are provided by the Company.

Minimum two dressing room required, when possible.

3 adult performers and 2 dancers require dressing rooms.

Venue to supply

Dressing room/s with mirrors please

Access to bathroom facilities from backstage

Access to drinking water and facilities for hot water (tea/coffee) preferably backstage

Access to a refrigerator when possible

Access to an iron and ironing board when possible.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

A workshop with community members, or choral groups or young musicians is available. Ideally, participants will workshop a number of songs that can be incorporated into the performance.

The Company can invite emerging artists from your community to prepare and rehearse featured songs to be performed on stage during the production. The Musical Director works one-on-one with emerging performers to ensure confidence and integration into the production.

BIOGRAPHIES

MELISSA BUCHHOLZ:

Musical Director, Christmas Crackers



Melissa is an experienced performer in many genres of music. She has worked as accompanist for some of the finest musicians in the world and has been an associate artist in many concerts. She is in demand for eisteddfodau, exams and concerts, and travels extensively delivering workshops and supporting instrumentalists and vocalists.

Melissa has performed on many occasions in the Sydney Opera House and toured the UK with Breimba Flute Trio. Contemporary music is a passion with 20 years playing keyboard for groups including Shades of Blue, Shed Banned and The Jaxx Connection. As keyboardist and repetiteur Melissa has worked on many productions, including *Pirates of Penzance*, *Kinky Boots*, *Oliver*, *Titanic*, *Mamma Mia*, *Boy from Oz*, *We Will Rock You* and more.

Melissa is one half of the acclaimed duo, Queens of Song, with Meg Kiddle (vocalist) and tours with Julee-ann Bell, blind singer from *The Voice*.



JAMES LENNOX



LAURA FOIS

James Lennox grew up performing with Darling Downs based productions. Now Brisbane based, James been working in the industry since age 15. James' theatre credits include *Wicked*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Pirates of Penzance*, *Fiddler on the Roof*, *Hello Dolly*, *Kinky Boots*, *Big Fish*, *My Fair Lady*, *Rock of Ages*, *Mamma Mia* & *Avenue Q*.

James was critically acclaimed for his role as Higgins in the revival of *My Fair Lady* and a finalist in the Gold Palm Theatre Awards.

Laura is a multilingual vocalist, performing in six languages. Her theatre credits include *Tina* in *Motherhood the Musical* (2024), *Lady of the Lake* in *Spamalot*, *Magda* in *Ladies in Black*, and *Lucy* in *Jekyll and Hyde*.

Her original works include *Triple Threat* (PIP Theatre, 2023), *Power, Language and Love*, *Did You Hear Something Funny?* (Short+Sweet), and the jukebox musical *It Is What It Is*, winner of Best Play at the Act1 Theatre Fest (2022).

**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. She has been a Director for Curious Arts Inc since 2018. She is currently Deputy Chair of the Matilda Awards and Creative Producer for RAVA Productions.

In 2021/22, she is appointed as a Creative Business Champion for the Regional Arts Service Network an initiative of Arts Queensland.

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.