**What is your background as a director, and how did you come to work on CORANDERRK?**

I have been directing theatre for about 10 years now. I started with directing short monologue performances for community events and worked my way up to fully supported large productions. I have co-directed the last six large scale, end of year productions with the graduating students of the Certificate 4 in Aboriginal Performance course at WAAPA (Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts). I have done a lot of directing with Yirra Yaakin in Perth and independently and when I relocated from Perth to Hobart I was very honoured to accept a position directing ILBIJERRI’s educational piece, NORTH WEST OF NOWHERE by Kamarra Bell-Wykes. This began my formal relationship with ILBIJERRI and once again I am honoured to have the privilege of directing CORANDERRK as the continuation of that.

**Were you aware of the true history of CORANDERRK before this production?**

Honestly, having mostly worked in WA until now, I had only heard of the show but not the true event until recently. As a director I think that is a good thing, it gives me a chance to research, discuss and learn about CORANDERRK and the people involved before I go in to rehearsals.

**Why is this production looking back at the story of CORANDERRK now in 2017?**

Australia has a very misinformed view of history and it doesn’t incorporate many of the atrocities and injustices suffered by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander nations. It is our hope to rewrite history with honesty so that Australia can learn from its past mistakes and stop repeating them. Also it is important to this country’s future that we learn to acknowledge and treasure the traditional cultures. The story of what happened at Coranderrk is one of those that needs to be told often and everywhere so the average Australian audience can learn the true history of how resilient and strong the first nation people of this country are.

**What does the use of verbatim testimonies from the 1881 inquiry add to the work?**

By using verbatim testimonies in the theatrical adaptation of such a valuable story we are exposing the honest but out-dated opinions of the time: what white Australia thought of Aboriginal people and how we were treated because of those thoughts. By being honest about the history we can show the world how much we have grown as a nation.

**Is there any tension between staying faithful to the history you’re telling and creating a piece of theatre?**

It is always hard to transfer a true event into theatre. It is always tricky to dramatise with honesty; we are taught as theatre makers to ‘never let the truth get in the way of a good story’ but culturally we have a responsibility to tell our stories with accuracy and integrity, to show what it was like and what has and hasn’t changed. The writers of CORANDERRK have done a fantastic job of juggling these responsibilities and the result is both enlightening and entertaining.

**What would it have meant for the indigenous community if the CORANDERRK self-determination experiment had been allowed to continue?**

It could have meant so much! It could have been a beacon of strength for the blackfullas around the entire nation. It could have been the beginnings for a much better standing for Australia’s first nations in the present and the future. The possibilities are endless.

**What does it mean for you to put the words of dead white men in the mouths of your all-indigenous cast?**

It actually means a lot to me because the actors have to justify their characters’ choices. We have to get into the minds of these dead white men and try and understand why they thought and behaved the way they did. I think this honesty and understanding will strengthen the storyline and help to highlight contemporary bigotry and what needs to be done to move forward.

**How do you feel about your upcoming tour of CORANDERRK?**

I am so incredibly excited to be able to work on this piece and prepare it for a national tour. I truly believe that this is a story that needs to be told as many times as it takes for every Australian to hear it.