

Award-winning autobiographical show about living with autism *ARCO Jnr* makes its way to Arts Centre Melbourne



Photo credit: James Campbell

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, 7 FEBRUARY 2023 – [ARCO Jnr](#), performer Adam Kelly's compelling story of living with autism, will have its Victorian debut at Arts Centre Melbourne's creative learning hub **The Channel** on **Saturday 1 April**. Touring for the first time outside of Western Australia, the autobiographical show is filled with both yearning and optimism.

Adam, in his words, is an autistic gentleman. His friend Finbar is a fish. Adam thinks that asking someone what it feels like to live with autism is pretty much like asking a fish if it knows it's in water – which is pretty funny if you think about it.

ARCO Jnr is Adam Kelly's award-winning autobiographical show about living with autism, or, in Finbar the fish's case, living in water. The show takes a heartfelt look at the life and struggles of a young man trying to make connections with the people and world around him. Along the way, Adam asks gently of his audience to consider life from his perspective.

"Autism itself is really difficult to explain. It's not simply something that effects how I function; it is... how I am wired. This is my story of endurance, learning, adaptation, and optimism. Everyone can identify with it and have some fun at the same time," said Adam.

Adam is a performer to watch. As an elder of the [WA Youth Theatre Company](#), *ARCO Jnr* is his transition from youth performer to mainstage artist as he enters the next phase of his career.

ARCO Jnr, the supercharged version of the original show for children and families, incorporates exciting animation from Perth-based neurodiverse artist Ben Hollingsworth inviting audiences to join Adam and Finbar as they dance, draw, fly and joke their way into the hearts of everyone.

"*ARCO Jnr* is a unique and beautiful show and I feel very proud to be able to share it with others. It'll be awesome sauce in Melbourne!" said Adam.

Both session times for *ARCO Jnr* are relaxed performances which means the atmosphere is non-judgmental, noisy enthusiasm is embraced and it's okay to move during the performance space at any time. Those who require their own

access methods are welcome to bring in and use their own headphones, sunglasses and stimming devices or fidget toys. The lights will also remain on at a dim level and a quiet area will be available, if needed, to take a break. To help audiences prepare for their visit, a visual story will also be provided with information about the venue and the show.

This production will be presented as part of Arts Centre Melbourne's year-round Families and Children program. Launched in August 2009, it has grown in reputation to become a highly respected program nationally and internationally. Featuring intimate and large-scale theatre from some of the world's most esteemed companies and a diverse range of interactive workshops, the program is robust and growing in size, scale and scope.

The Channel is Arts Centre Melbourne's education hub and intimate performance space designed to develop and explore the creative side of our young people. A leader in music, sound and media technology, The Channel serves up creative workshops, community events and alternative ways to engage with the arts for schools, families and the general public. Each year, thousands of Victorian school students and emerging creatives take advantage of the programs offered at The Channel, ensuring Arts Centre Melbourne is playing its role in nurturing the creative future of our young people by encouraging them not only to be spectators, but also – and importantly – to be makers.

“A beautifully constructed, personal perspective of life on the autism spectrum that leaves... a rare feeling of connection to the protagonist” – **Seesaw**

“Optimism shines through” – **The Age**

“Extremely illuminating” – **Malti Media**

ARCO is a [WA Youth Theatre Company](#) production by Adam Kelly and James Berlyn. The *ARCO Jnr* creative development was supported by the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts, its arts funding and advisory body. The world premiere of the work was commissioned and presented by AWESOME Festival. The 2022 Regional Tour of ARCO has been supported by Playing WA as part of the State Government's Regional Arts and Cultural Investment Program.

Images can be found [here](#).

Creative Team

Co-writer & Performer: Adam Kelly
Co-writer & Director: James Berlyn
Lighting Designer: Pete Young
Sound Designer: Tristen Parr
Animator: Ben Hollingsworth
Arts Mentor: Johanna Keyser
Dramaturg: Alex Desebrock
Stage Manager: Catherine O'Donoghue

Arts Centre Melbourne presents
ARCO Jnr
By Adam Kelly & James Berlyn
Produced by WA Youth Theatre Company

The Channel, Arts Centre Melbourne (enter via the Riverside Terrace)
Saturday 1 April
10:30am* & 1:00pm



Media Release

Duration: 50 minutes (35 mins performance + 15 mins Q&A)
Age Recommendation: 7+

***This performance will be Auslan interpreted**

For more information visit artscentremelbourne.com.au

Arts Centre Melbourne acknowledges the traditional owners of the land on which we stand, the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people, and pays respect to their Elders, past and present.

For more information including: our current health and safety policies; bookings for free and ticketed events; and other digital content and experiences, please visit artscentremelbourne.com.au or phone 1300 182 183.

Connect with Arts Centre Melbourne on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#) and [Tik Tok](#).

For further media information and interviews, please contact Media & Communications Advisor Kara Bertoncini on 0438 423 308 or kara.bertoncini@artscentremelbourne.com.au.