

Case study

My Name is Jimi – APAM 2018 showcase

A landmark production shared Queensland's unique Indigenous culture with the world and was the only exclusively Torres Strait Islander theatre work presented at the 2018 Australian Performing Arts Market.

What

An excerpt from *My Name is Jimi*, starring charismatic Torres Strait actor Jimi Bani, was presented at the 2018 Australian Performing Arts Market (APAM) to attract interest and offers for the production. APAM is Australia's largest international trade market for performing arts, hosting an estimated 1200 delegates from 39 countries.

My Name is Jimi made its world premiere at the Centre of Contemporary Arts Cairns in July 2017, presented by Queensland Theatre and the Cairns Indigenous Art Fair, followed by productions in Brisbane, Thursday Island and at the 2018 Sydney Festival.

The show is a mixed-media, multilingual performance about preserving the culture and language of Mabuiag Island in the Torres Strait, and combines dance, stand-up and fireside storytelling

Queensland Theatre received national and international interest in the lead-up to APAM and afterwards. An international tour would be the first cultural export of Torres Strait Island theatre from a major Australian arts organisation.

When and where

February 2018, Brisbane



My Name is Jimi. Photo: David Kelly

Key stats

- 350 delegates attended the presentation at APAM
- 4 Torres Strait Islander performers
- Potential touring destinations: 4 interstate and 5 international

Arts Queensland investment

\$11,769 through [Queensland Arts Showcase Program](#) (QASP) Arts Ignite. QASP supports vibrant and accessible arts and cultural experiences.

Queensland Theatre received \$82,313 through Arts Queensland's Playing Queensland Fund to tour *My Name is Jimi* to Cairns and Thursday Island.

Northern Peninsula Area Regional Council received \$70,000 through the Playing Queensland Fund to present the production as part of the 2018 NPA Cultural Festival.

Find out more

queenslandtheatre.com.au

[Queensland Theatre production information](#)

Outcomes

- As Queensland Theatre's inaugural Torres Strait Island commission, *My Name is Jimi* marked new territory and represented a milestone success, confirming a worldwide market exists for Queensland arts and cultural experiences.
- *My Name is Jimi* shared first-hand cultural knowledge from the Wagadagam tribe and promoted the authentic representation of Torres Strait Island culture.
- As one of Queensland's flagship arts companies, Queensland Theatre has taken a leadership role in mentoring Jimi Bani's company, Lone Star Productions. Jimi Bani's professional development was a priority. He expanded his skills as a producer through experience gained at APAM.
- Queensland Theatre engaged in a number of scoping conversations to identify interested parties prior to APAM. This ensured the time at APAM was well spent and targeted.
- Queensland Theatre is keen to further develop regional engagement, with Cairns being a priority.



Agnes Bani, Jimi Bani, Petharie Bani
Photo: Veronica Segrado

Artist comments

We spoke about the challenges of taking the show over there [China] and how we could solve those challenges. Now I know just how big my show is and what it takes to tour overseas. Jimi Bani, APAM 2018

There are few Torres Strait Island-led productions in the Australian theatrical cannon, and even fewer make it to major state theatre companies – we say Esso (thank you) to Queensland Theatre for allowing us to tell our story, and in doing so, pass our traditions to our audiences in the hope they will stand as bastions of our culture beside us. Jimi Bani



Conwell Bani, Dmitri Ahwang-Bani, Richard Bani
Photo: Veronica Segrado

Reflections and learnings

Queensland Theatre's relationship with Jimi Bani has highlighted the importance of finding new ways to create Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander work.

As the company's Senior Producer and main representative at APAM 2018, Sophia Hall, is non-Indigenous, it was imperative that Jimi, the custodian of the Wagadagam language and culture shared in the production, was present at all meetings to safeguard against any accidental misrepresentation.

It was a privilege to pitch this show and to join Jimi as he spoke passionately and articulately about his work to each of the interested presenters. Sophia Hall, APAM 2018

Queensland Theatre staff and creatives have a strong understanding of the personal and cultural impacts of placing First Nations' artists at the core of both creative and management processes.

Tips for others

APAM limitations meant only an excerpt from the production could be presented at APAM, so preparing additional support material can help relay the production's full impact.

What next?

Queensland Theatre is now pursuing national interest in *My Name is Jimi* and there is significant potential for an international presentation in 2019 or 2020.

My Name is Jimi will be presented at the 2018 NPA Cultural Festival in Far North Queensland.