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Pulse



Laurence Leung

Funny how easily we can be deceived

IT'S an unlikely marriage between science and comedy, but Australian comic genius Laurence Leung is out to prove there's humour in the microscopic when he tours Tassie for National Science Week.

An actor, comedian, self-confessed sceptic and Rubik's cube enthusiast, Leung will headline a three-

night comedy tour of the state as part of the week-long festival next week.

"The idea that comedy and science can be put together, it's an odd pairing," he said.

"My comedy is about deception and how we lie to each other and how easy it is to be fooled by pseudoscience and medical misinformation. I'm quite fascinated with

how science is probably the best bullshit detector that humans have ever invented."

Leung specialises in projects that sit neatly where curiosity and comedy intersect. His most recent solo show, *Very Strange Things*, examines the techniques of fraudulent psychics and earned him a nomination for the 2018 Fringe World Best Comedy Award.

"My geeky interests — and there are many — always seem to be about the psychology of how we believe things," Leung said.

"My act takes the mickey out of how we humans fall for misconceptions and fakery very easily, including myself."

To help celebrate National Science Week, Lawrence Leung will perform at New

Town's Jokers Comedy Club on Wednesday, Funnies at Frank's in Franklin next Thursday (August 16), then at Launceston's Fresh Comedy next Friday (August 17).

Tickets are \$25 at the door or pre-book at www.tadaa.com.au/bookings

National Science Week runs from August 11-19.

— SUSAN OONG

Belle chimes in to make sure love wins out

ANIMATE objects will burst into song and dance when St Mary's and St Virgil's students bring the timeless love story *Beauty and the Beast* to life in Hobart next week.

The musical's director and St Mary's drama teacher Leah Smith said audiences at the Playhouse Theatre could expect "big characters and wonderful, bright costumes".

"Lots of people would already be familiar with the story from the recent live-action film, as well as the 1991 Disney animation," she said.

"To see that come to life with actors on stage I think will sweep the audience away into the magic that is *Beauty and the Beast*."

The musical's lead roles Belle and the Beast will be played by 14-year-old Cecelia Hutchinson and 16-year-old Will Morris.

Cecelia said the part of Belle had been one of her dream roles since she started musical theatre at eight years of age.

"I am really happy to be playing Belle. It's lots of fun," she said.

"Expect to be amazed because everyone is really hard-working and I think we have all put together a great show."

St Mary's and St Virgil's students from Grades 7-12 have roles in the production.

"We've been working since March and it has all come together very nicely since we have been in theatre," Mrs Smith said.

"They have had so much fun bringing it from a script on a page to what everyone will be seeing on stage."

There will be four performances of *Beauty and the Beast* at the Playhouse Theatre in Bathurst Street: 7pm next Thursday (August 16), 7pm next Friday (August 17), and 11am and 7pm next Saturday (August 18).

Tickets are \$25. Bookings and information are available from www.centertainment.com.au



DRESSED TO IMPRESS: Ready to bring *Beauty and the Beast* to life at the Playhouse Theatre in Hobart next week are cast members including Cecelia Hutchinson as Belle and Will Morris as the Beast (centre).

Picture: SAM ROSEWARNE

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THEATRE ROYAL

Documentary turns focus on human rights

ACCLAIMED documentary filmmaker Judy Rymmer will present her new film *Border Politics* and hold a Q&A session in Hobart on Sunday.

The Australian production follows human rights barrister Julian Burnside as he travels the world examining the harsh treatment of refugees by most Western democracies.

Burnside said many of the screenings of the film around Australia had been selling out.

"I think that says something about the community at large thinking there is something odd about what's going on and that maybe it's time to have another look," he said.

The film is being described as a contemporary story about the threat to human rights, the loss of democratic



Julian Burnside

values, and our increasingly heartless treatment of "the other".

Through the film, Burnside questions whether the West has lost its moral compass and undermine democracy.

Burnside stumbled into human rights legal work when he was asked to work on the controversial 2001 Tampa litigation between the Australian and Norwegian governments.

"As a result of that I have found myself being asked to do more and more refugee cases," he said.

"What I learnt about what was going on while doing those really appalled me. I was shocked."

Burnside said the Australian Government was hiding the truth about refugees from the public and misleading them by calling refugees illegal.

"It's a post-human-rights world we are living in, which is a tragedy," he said.

Burnside said he found Tasmanians to be encouragingly open to the idea of accepting refugees.

"I think Tasmania is a great example of the way Australia can be," he said.

Border Politics will be screened at the State Cinema in North Hobart at 6.30pm on Sunday.

A question-and-answer session with director Judy Rymmer will follow the movie's screening.

— PATRICK GEE