

This summary is part of research on performance training in Australia undertaken by Professor Peta Tait and Dr Melanie Beddie in 2017 funded by La Trobe University. It researched the influences on, and the training of, prominent teachers working within key training institutions circa 1980 to 2010.

Kim Durban

Associate Professor Kim Durban has been head of program at the Performing Arts at the Arts Academy, Federation University Australia in Ballarat since 2001. Previously she was the director of the National Theatre Drama School, Melbourne from 1997 to 2000. Her PHD investigates the work of 17th century playwright Richard Brome, and Kim also researches the work of female directors.

Durban trained initially as a drama teacher at the SA College of Arts and later as director in the three-year course at The Victorian College of the Arts (VCA) graduating in 1985. She returned to VCA in 1986 where she worked as a director of student productions whilst also pursuing a career as a director at mainstream theatre companies including the Melbourne Theatre Company (MTC). She was taught and mentored by Roger Hodgman during this period. She was also a close associate of actor and VCA teacher, June Jago, from whom she first learnt an approach to Shakespearean text that focused on detailed examination of meaning and rhythm.

She was a tutor and Board Member of St Martins Youth Theatre from 1988 to 1993 and Artistic Associate at Playbox Theatre from 1994 to 1997. At Playbox, Durban worked with many new plays and with Australian playwrights including Nick Enright who was an important colleague for her.

Durban was one of six directors to work with Mike Alfreds in Melbourne in 1987. This began a working relationship with Alfreds that was extended when Kim worked with him in the 1990s in the UK. She continues to develop her own version of the Alfreds' process applying it to both contemporary work and to Classical text. Durban was taught the Laban technique by Meredith Bowman in Adelaide and Durban frequently incorporates this work into her teaching and direction. Another important mentor in Adelaide was Frank Ford, head of the Department of Drama at the University of Adelaide, who established both the Adelaide Fringe and Cabaret Festivals.

Durban believes Shakespeare is a necessary part of an actor's education as it imparts a love and respect for language on stage. She is a world leader in her direction of the plays of Richard Brome.

Teachers

Frank Ford
Meredith Bowman
June Jago (VCA)

Collaborator
Roger Hodgman (MTC)

Mike Alfreds
Workshops and books

Colleague
Aubrey Mellor
(Playbox)
Nick Enright

Teaching and Leadership
National Theatre School
VCA
Arts Academy, Federation University Australia

KIM DURBAN

