

**Vulnerable Joy** is inspired by the self-sacrifice, commitment and humility of the mother Humpback whale. As a mammal, baleen whale, she grows to approx. 16m (52 ft) and lives at the ocean's surface in order to breathe. She travels up to 6, 500km (approx. 4,000miles) from her feeding ground to birth her calf in warmer tropical waters. Once she leaves the feeding grounds of Antarctica or the cooler oceans of the Northern Hemisphere, she will not feed again until she returns some 8-9 months later. All the while, nursing her newborn calf with up to 600 litres (132 gallons) of milk per day.

In realising the enormity of this feat, my mind turned to the whales who are closest to me, those who migrate along the East coast of Australia from Tonga to Antarctica. I imagined the sheer relief she must feel in that moment when the cool waters of the Southern Ocean rub her skin for the first time. She is tired and hungry but in that moment (in my imagination), I feel her joy, her intense, overwhelming joy.

During the opening and closing of the performance, you may hear the instrumentalists murmuring some words. This 'chant' is made up of word fragments from eight different languages. The fragments used come from translations of the following words/phrases: "Welcome", "Peace be with you", "Live long and prosper", "Love". The colour and beauty of these translated words has been used not to create a direct translation of these English phrases, but to provide a link between the humpback whales' intelligent communication capability and our inability to understand them. For if we could, I feel sure they would be sending us a very clear message: please allow us to live our lives in peace, love, prosperity and beautiful, awe-inspiring, vulnerable joy.