

In its 25th year, Adelaide's No Strings Attached Theatre of Disability stages the Australian premiere of the uplifting *I Forgot to Remember to Forget*, a sell-out at Singapore's 2018 True Colours Festival. Director **Alirio Zavarce** of Northfield shares his thoughts on how the show came about, while Mawson Lakes performer **Cassie Litchfield** talks about her role.

A show to stick in the memory

DIRECTOR

When I became artistic director of No Strings Attached in 2016 it was a great opportunity to ask its amazing performers what they wanted to create.

What were their hopes and dreams as artists?

One thing that stuck me was that all the performers identified with having had memory loss, and wanted to create a theatre show about it.

We started to explore resilience, how we deal with and accept change, how sometimes we have to re-learn everything, and how sometimes we forget it all.

We have brilliant performers in the show like Michaela Cantwell.

Michaela has been recovering from a stroke and we started talking about creating a piece that would share with an audience what it's like to have to reinvent yourself, and re-learn things.

I love working with autobiographical material, so everything in the show has

been co-created and designed by the artists.

Everything is based on their voices and, in true collaboration, we feel we have created a world of "I forgot".

What's it like to forget things?

It's something we all do but there are things which exacerbate it, such as medication, illness or accidents.

Kathryn Hall shared how there are moments when she forgets things. She might be on the bus and think, "Oh, am I going to the city, or am I coming from the city?"

We all forget things – the keys, the mobile phone.

And we all remember things – and that is the starting point, to emphasise and evoke memories in the audience.

What I gained most from the process was the idea that if you don't remember, it is my responsibility to remind you of things, to help restore your identity. For we all live in each other's memories.

The cast – Michaela, Kathryn, Cassie Litchfield, Kym Mackenzie and Duncan Luke



No Strings Attached Theatre of Disability's artistic director Alirio Zavarce of Northfield.
PICTURE: AAP/EMMA BRASIER

– are all brilliant. It was great developing a performance that allowed us to play with

forgetting in a world of theatre, where everything is about remembering.

Guaranteeing serenity and authenticity from a night at the theatre

PERFORMER

No Strings Attached is a company pushing the boundaries of live theatre performance while redefining disability.

One of the most unique and valuable things about the company is its ability to create confronting art in a heart-warming way.

Many people are unsure of what to expect from theatre of disability – what audiences can expect from No Strings Attached is serenity and authenticity.

I joined No Strings in 2016 as a teacher, creator and actor.

In 2017 I began collaborating on *I Forgot to Remember to Forget*, a show dealing with the realities of memory loss.

I was privileged to travel with the show to the True Colours Festival in Singapore in 2018.

As a collaborator and actor in the piece, I needed to reflect on what "memory" meant to me. I reflected on my childhood and the different phases of growing up.

Memories came back to me



that I had not been conscious of for years.

I reflected a lot on my relationship with my father, and how it changed when he was diagnosed with bipolar when I was 12 years old.

In *I Forgot to Remember to Forget* I perform a monologue that plays with projections of old photographs, and demonstrates how overwhelming memories can become.

I explore the idea that some memories can bring great joy, while others, great sorrow.

I emphasise the importance of accepting the past and allowing ourselves to make new memories.

I Forgot to Remember to Forget, Space Theatre, July 3-6. Bookings at adelaidefestival-centre.com.au