

# Workshop Presenters



**Cem Alfar** hails from Istanbul, Turkiye from a corporate background, discovering storytelling during the pandemic. Stories have helped him in his personal and professional growth, and he enjoys sharing Turkish Tales to a wide audience. He is particularly inspired by Nasruddin and Jelaleddin Rumi. A nature lover and avid hiker, Cem was the organiser for the Lycian Way Tour in Turkiye, the first cultural storytelling and hiking tour for FEAST (the Federation of Asian Storytellers) in May 2022.



**Colin Urwin** is a modern-day Seanachai. He writes, sings, performs monologues, and tells beautifully woven stories drawn from the local legend and folklore of his beloved Glens of Antrim. He has performed and facilitated workshops at festivals all over Ireland, UK, and much further afield. He has recorded several albums of his own songs, recitations and stories, and his first book of folk tales is due for publication with Orkneyology Press in early 2023, with others due for release later in the year.



**Dee (Durgah Devi) Palanisamy** is a passionate storyteller who is fascinated by stories from across the world. As a Speech and Drama Educator with more than a decade of experience in the field, she is constantly striving to create spaces and programs that use stories to encourage discovery, educate, and entertain. After migrating to Melbourne in 2016, Dee founded Deelightfultales, which aims to renew the oral traditions of the spoken word. Born and raised in Singapore, Dee is proficiently bilingual in English and Tamil. As a versatile performer, she connects with her audience through the stories and believes in the magic of storytelling.



**Donna Jacobs-Sife** is one of Australia's best-known storytellers. She is also a published writer, educator and social activist. For nearly three decades she has traveled widely throughout the world teaching and telling stories that speak to the perennial challenges of humanity. For 12 years she was the program director for Together for Humanity, a diversity educational organisation. She was awarded the national award for original storytelling in 1997.



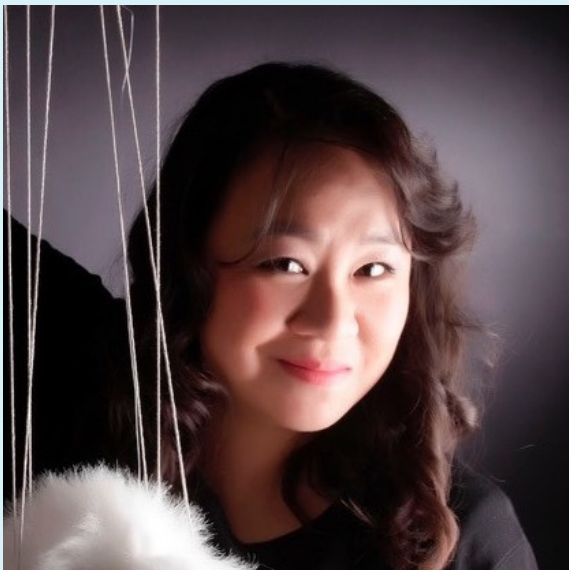
**Em Chandler** (she/they) is a queer and trans theatre-maker, storyteller, and magician. During her Bachelor of Music Theatre, Em worked with a range of theatre-makers including Declan Greene, Ash Flanders, Anthony Crowley, and Alister Smith. After graduating in 2019, Em completed Honours and has since begun a PhD. They were shortlisted for the 2023 Queer Playwriting Award for her play Numa and Karl: Extraordinary Man That He Was. Their work has been described by the Sydney Morning Herald as "pure enchantment". Em is passionate about social justice, fairy tales, and connecting with others through imagination, wonder and play.



**Jackie Kerin** is an award-winning Australian storyteller and author of non-fiction picture books for children. She was President of Storytelling Australia Victoria for several years and continues to facilitate storytelling gatherings, under the auspice of the Newport Fiddle and Folk Club. Jackie has travelled extensively to festivals and conferences around Australia and to Rome, Singapore, India and Sarawak. She is the co-founder of the Australian Kamishibai Association. She thinks deeply about storytelling as a way of connecting people to each other and to nature, and about giving agency, especially to children, to be confident advocates for a healthier, kinder world.



**Jo Henwood** is an Accredited Storyteller, tour guide, education officer, museum theatre creative, workshop leader, public speaker, and President of the Australian Fairy Tale Society. She has a Master of Cultural Heritage, and qualifications in library science, museum studies, tour guiding, and gifted education. Jo organised World Storytelling Day in Sydney for several years, was a mentor for heritage site storytellers for FEAST, winner of the 2022 AFTS Award, and delivered the 2021 George Schipp lecture for WEA. She performed in the Salonline webseries, the FEAST Lycian Way storytelling tour, and in group online performances for FEAST and NSN



**Kay Yasugi** is a puppeteer, puppet maker and teacher based in Sydney, Australia. She has a background in teaching and illustration and trained at the London School of Puppetry (UK). She is a freelance puppeteer through Pupperoos, focusing on education and children's projects. She also runs Digital Seagull, which provides professional puppetry and digital media for adults and corporate clients such as Tourism Australia and ABC iView. Kay is also the current General Secretary and Councillor of the puppetry organisation UNIMA Australia. She has appeared on ABC's 'Play School' ('Through the Window' segments) for their episodes on puppetry.



**Kim Billington** is a counsellor and author of Amazon #1 Bestselling book: A Counsellor's Companion: Creative adventures for child counsellors, parents and teachers. Her passion is sharing creative therapeutic interventions that can bring people renewed hope and understandings about themselves, and fresh ideas about how they want to live in the world. Kim has previously worked with child and adult survivors of refugee trauma, family violence, divorce, out-of-home care, bereavement, and more. Her therapeutic approach includes Mindfulness, Narrative Therapy, Somatic Therapy, Creative Expressive Arts, Existential Therapy, using metaphors and storytelling, Tree of Life work and creative timelines to understand the life-long emergence of identity.



**Lillian Rodrigues-Pang** is an internationally acclaimed, award-winning storyteller who has taught and performed internationally on main-stages, theatres, schools and in community. Her performances intertwine oral tradition with percussion, movement, and improvisation. She is a cultural events producer – Refugee Week. Reconciliation Week, Fireflies Multilingual storytelling festival and works to provide inclusive, creative, and joyous spaces. She works with storytelling as a connective, teaching and healing art with over 20 years experience working in mental health settings and in community cultural development. She has a Masters in Teaching English as a Second Language and delights in teaching through storytelling to all ages and abilities.



**Liz Weir** is an Irish storyteller with an international reputation. She has performed on five continents appearing in venues from the Vanderbilt Hall of New York's Grand Central Station to libraries in Australia, from prisons in Canada to London's Royal Albert Hall. As a Children's Librarian for Belfast City she saw first-hand the healing power of storytelling to bring communities together. Liz was the first winner of the International Storybridge Award, National Storytelling Network and was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for her services to the arts and education. She is supported by Arts Council of Northern Ireland.



**Noa Baum** was described by the Washington Post as someone who "spreads cultural truths that eclipse geopolitical boundaries...". Born and raised in Jerusalem, Noa is an internationally acclaimed storyteller, author, and coach, focusing on the power of storytelling to heal across divides of identity and build peace. She is the author of the award-winning memoir *A Land Twice Promised* and a picture book *How the Birds Became Friends*. Presentation highlights include: The World Bank, Kennedy Center; US Department of Defense; Mayo Clinic; The National Storytelling Festival, Fabula Festival, Sweden and many festivals, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, organizations, and congregations, and schools.



**Rona Leventhal** has been a teller of tales, storytelling teacher, and an improvisational theatre/movement specialist for three decades. Her workshops are hands-on and fun, safely guiding people to explore and walk away with skills that are immediately applicable with the motivation to use them! She has presented workshops at storytelling, education, and library conferences nationally and internationally. Rona produced The Summer Storytelling Institute Program and has taught storytelling graduate courses for educators. She has an award winning CD: *Into the Dark: Stories from the Shadows* and is co-editor of the award winning book *Spinning Tales, Weaving Hope: Stories of Peace, Justice and the Environment*.



**Sheila Wee** is a Singaporean storyteller, who has been living and breathing storytelling since 1998. Because of her work to pioneer the movement to revive the use of storytelling, she has been described as a Godmother of Singapore storytelling. Through her role as a Founding Director of the Federation of Asian Storytellers (FEAST) she is helping to support storytellers throughout Asia. She loves to tell, but most of her work is in teaching storytelling across a broad range of applications; from using storytelling in all levels of education, from preschool to university, to the use of storytelling in organisations and cultural institutions.



**Dr. Tamas Oszvald** is an emerging performer storyteller with a PhD in community development with art and performing. His *Roaming Trees* Storytelling platform has captured audiences on the international stages of Europe and Australasia, re-telling folk tales, myths and legends in his uniquely engaging way. He says he tells stories so that he can nurture his audience as a community, but even better, can create with them something transient that also has the power to make a long-term imprint. His end goal is not to just tell a great story, but to learn with his listeners about what it means to be human.