

For immediate release

## Stars Shine as 'The Ocean' Lights up the Darkness in Celebratory Same-Sex Love Dance

*New Australian/Irish music video, directed by Sinéad McDevitt  
for award-winning artist Wallis Bird*



*Media Release, (Sydney) 17<sup>th</sup> December 2018* – A love letter to the global **LGBTQ+** community, award-winning Irish artist **Wallis Bird** has released music video, *The Ocean*, an intimate lesbian love story that pays tribute to love over fear through contemporary dance.

Directed by Sydney-based Dublin born filmmaker **Sinéad McDevitt**, *The Ocean* stars choreographer and *So You Think You Can Dance* finalist **Yukino McHugh**, alongside **Sydney Dance Company** trained artist **Olivia Kingston**, as they celebrate the story of one woman's universe expanding the more she connects with her lover. As the camera ebbs, flows and orbits with their deepening connection, a vast universe of stars light up the darkness around them.

Premiering this month to coincide with the first anniversary of the legalisation of marriage equality in Australia, the 3.5-minute music video was completed as part of McDevitt's placement with FINCH, awarded by the ADG and Screen Australia inaugural **Gender Matters** initiative for emerging female directors. Produced by Bryce Lintern at the Oscar-nominated FINCH, visual effects were provided by sister company Nakatomi.

Commenting on the film's genesis, Wallis Bird says: "We made *The Ocean* as a gift, in part, to our younger selves who struggled with our sexuality. Growing up in Ireland, we never saw

same-sex love stories depicted on MTV and therefore never had access to powerful narratives that celebrated or represented the love stories that we could really relate to.

“We would love for this film to reach our LGBTQ+ family in the 72 countries where being gay is still illegal so we can try to shine a light on the darkness by giving a voice to the LGBTQ+ voiceless. In doing so, we're showing that, while we're divided by social, religious or cultural barriers, we're all bound by our aspirations towards true love.”

Director Sinéad McDevitt adds: “When Wallis first mentioned *The Ocean* – a new devotional song to her partner Tracey – I prodded her on the inspiration behind it. ‘Looking at Tracey is like looking out on an ocean of planetary systems’, she mused. The image wouldn’t budge from my brain. I began to see the film play out in a mini universe of magical realism; feeling both expansive and intimate. I felt there should be a gravitational pull of sorts, a dance between camera and lovers. Building in strength to a crescendo as their connection matures from fantasy into reality... darkness into light... fear into love.

“My hope is that *The Ocean* connects with a wide audience, maybe even cutting through opposition to same-sex relationships with the beauty of the lovers’ connection. Mostly, we’d love for our LGBTQ+ family and straight pals around the world to enjoy a celebration of lesbian intimacy onscreen – one that’s directed with a queer female gaze. Perhaps *The Ocean* can also be used as an antidote to any invisible fear or shame we carry around inside of us. The kind **Hannah Gadsby** so brilliantly described in *Nanette* earlier this year.”

*The Ocean* has made its premiere via Wallis Bird’s social channels this December 2018.

**Watch the music video here:**

On Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/306126612>

On YouTube: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wx1lC5vs\\_PY&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wx1lC5vs_PY&feature=youtu.be)

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/138575834440/posts/10156834367744441/>

**Other links:**

Wallis Bird on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/wallisbird/>

Wallis Bird on Insta: [@wallisbirdofficial](https://www.instagram.com/wallisbirdofficial/)

Sinéad McDevitt on Insta: [@sinead\\_mcdevitt](https://www.instagram.com/sinead_mcdevitt/)

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**For a selection of high res images from the film, and of the artists, please visit:**

<https://www.sineadmdevitt.com/theocean>

For more information or further quotes contact:

Larissa Meikle – Catfish Media

[larissa@catfishmedia.com.au](mailto:larissa@catfishmedia.com.au)

+61 (0) 401 508 601

## About Sinéad McDevitt

Sinéad McDevitt is a Sydney-based director with an award-winning background in art direction and design. Originally hailing from Dublin, her belief is that film has the power to cut through the barriers that divide us and shoot straight to the imagination. The best stories stick and refuse to budge. They pull us in with a visually delicious magnet and hold us there, hinting that we're far from alone in our human idiosyncrasies.

In 2017/2018, Sinéad was awarded placement at Oscar-nominated company FINCH as part of the inaugural 'Gender Matters' initiative by Screen Australia and the ADG (Australian Director's Guild). Her focus is on crafting finely-tuned and visually compelling stories with heart; short films and commercials that infuse her distinctive pared-back design aesthetic into the DNA of the world she's bringing to life.

Since graduating from AFTRS in Dec 2014, Sinéad has directed multiple short-form pieces; both narrative and non-fiction. Short film *Ballsy* has screened on the international film festival circuit with nominations for Best Documentary at Sheffield Doc/Fest, the Academy-accredited Flickerfest and Fastnet Film Festival. Juxtaposing fly-on-the-wall cinematography with designed overhead stop-motion sequences, *Ballsy* aims to contrast the darkness of the hero's reality with moments of brighter hope. Alongside the premiere of *Ballsy*, Sinéad won the prestigious KB Myer award for multiplatform series *The Alchemy Project*, which went on to be selected for the digital marketplace at Sheffield Doc/Fest.

Her second short film *How to fall in love with a stranger* – inspired by a famous 1996 psychology experiment on empathy and filmed in a Wes Anderson-esque, dimly lit 'lab' – premiered at TEDxSydney and was published by The Guardian and The Sydney Morning Herald, with features on live TV and radio. Sinéad followed this with the development of TV series *The Love Experiment*, based on the film. Working with Media Stockade, the series was selected for FACTory at the AIDC. Other milestones have included mini musical *Edie* landing in the top five finalists for the ABC's *Girls* series; two short docs for BBC World; and a number of commercials drawing heavily upon her design background including the most recent – a minimalist colour/neon tribute to Monty Python, *The New Fit*, for Rebel. Sinéad also just created the first original short film series for TED Talks, collaborating with filmmaking teams in London (Mother), Edinburgh (BAFTA-winning director Duncan Cowles), NYC (SpecialGuest) and LA (Shane Griffin). The films premiered live onstage at TED2018 in Vancouver.

[www.sineadmdevitt.com](http://www.sineadmdevitt.com)

## About Wallis Bird

"The intensity of Wallis Bird's sound will pin you to the wall." – Sydney Morning Herald  
"The sheer visceral energy of Wallis Bird could kick-start an entire economy." – The Irish Times  
"It's her humour and bold honesty that makes Bird so special." – The Guardian

Irish artist Wallis Bird has been enrapturing audiences for over a decade. The two-time Meteor award winner (Ireland's national music prize) and two-time Irish Choice Prize nominee (equivalent of UK's Mercury Awards) has supported the likes of Rodrigo y Gabriela, Billy Bragg and Emilliana Torrini – and also became the first non-German citizen to win the German Music Prize (Deutsche Musikautorenpreis) for Rock/Pop 'Composer of the Year' in 2017. Now based in Berlin, Wallis released her fifth studio album *Home* in September 2016 on Mount Silver Records / Caroline International, and has been touring relentlessly all over the world since its release. The *Home* tour encompassed over 70 shows, with Wallis playing to over 30,000 fans across Europe, Japan and Australia.

On the Australian leg of the tour, Wallis gained a new fan in cult artist Amanda Palmer, who tweeted repeatedly to her million-plus followers to go and catch a show. "*Discovery of the year .... Wallis Bird at Woodford folk festival fucking destroying it...*" Palmer testified. Wallis's irrepressible energy on

stage is one of her trademarks. One cold January afternoon in 2016, she stepped onto the stage of Berlin's Auster club at 1.30pm and played to the crowd for 12 hours straight, raising money for refugee charities at the same time. Incredibly, she even found the energy to play two encores.

Bird is currently focused on making her next record, which will be heavily soul-influenced – set to be released in 2019. Once the album is done, Wallis will be eager to get out on the road again. It's unlikely that her shows will last 12 hours again, but of one thing you can be sure: few can enrapture an audience the way Wallis Bird can.

[www.wallisbird.com](http://www.wallisbird.com)

### **About Yukino McHugh**

Yukino McHugh is a performing artist from Sydney, currently living in London. Yukino is well-known from the TV show *So You Think You Can Dance*, in which she was placed in the top 12 dancers of Australia. Featuring on the show gave her the chance to work with world-class artists such as Paula Abdul and Robbie Williams.

Featuring as a dancer on show *The X Factor* for guest artists Aston Merrygold and Jason Derulo in Australia, Yukino also performed with Ellie Goulding for *The X Factor UK* Grand Finale.

In recent times, Yukino has collaborated with MTV and Adidas to feature on their *MTV Fit Series* as a dance instructor for GG Magree. She also features in music videos *See Right Through Me* by Set mo, *Amber* by KLP, *Go* by AIYA and *Cherry Blossom* by Horrorshow which she choreographed and starred as lead performing artist. Most recently, Yukino choreographed film clip *Carry* by Sietta, starring as lead dancer/actress. The clip aired on MTV, Channel V and Rage and was nominated for The Best Dance Film award at the DFM Festival in LA.

Yukino has worked under the direction of Franko Dragone and choreographer Giuliano Peparini in De NotenKracker in Belgium. She was also invited to dance with Kate Prince for *Zoo Nation* in the UK. She then had the opportunity to work with the company Karul Projects for the show *[MIS]CONCEIVE in the Living Ritual*; International Indigenous Performing Arts Festival in Canada and also the Commonwealth Games Australia.

[www.yukinomchugh.com](http://www.yukinomchugh.com)

### **About Olivia Kingston**

From Uki, Northern NSW, Olivia attended Professional Ballet Coaching Academy on the Gold Coast. In 2014, after completing her HSC and two years full-time ballet, she moved to Sydney to further her full-time study at Sydney Dance Company Pre-Professional. After two years, in 2016, Olivia joined Limitless Dance Company where she performed *Both Sides*, then again in May 2017 premiering *Se7en*.

Late 2016 & 2017, Olivia became an Associate Artist with Sydney Dance Company. She performed *Nude Live*, a collaboration between Sydney Dance Company & AGNSW 2017 as part of the Sydney Festival.

Throughout 2017, Olivia has danced with Expressions Dance Company in Opera Australia's *Aida on the Beach* & model/dancer in *The Strand Arcade Digital Lookbook*, a collaboration between singer/songwriter Sloan Peterson & designers in The Strand Arcade, Sydney. She was also a featured dancer in a collaboration work between award-winning artist Sara Black, Opera & Sydney Symphony, titled *Out of the Shadows*. In 2018, Olivia danced with Opera Australia and performed Davide Livermore's take on *Aida*. She is currently working with Opera Australia on an upcoming 2018/19 season of *Turandot*.