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# THE ROVING PARTY

Rohan Wilson

—Winner of the Australian/Vogel Literary Award—  
—Winner, 2013 Tasmanian Literary Awards - Margaret Scott Prize—  
—Winner, 2012 NSW Premier's Literary Awards—  
—Winner, 2012 *Sydney Morning Herald* Best Young Australian—  
—Shortlisted, 2011 Victorian Premier's Literary Awards Vance Palmer Prize for Fiction—  
—Shortlisted, 2012 Adelaide Festival Awards for Literature Fiction Award—  
—Shortlisted, 2012 Indie Awards, Debut fiction category—

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Soho Press • Hardcover/eBook • **PUB DATE:** February, 25<sup>th</sup> 2014 • **PRICE:** \$25.00 •  
**Page Count:** 288 • **ISBN:** 9781616953119 • **eISBN:** 9781616953126 • **Agent:** Nathaniel Jacks

"A grim and bloody tone poem."

—*Kirkus Reviews*

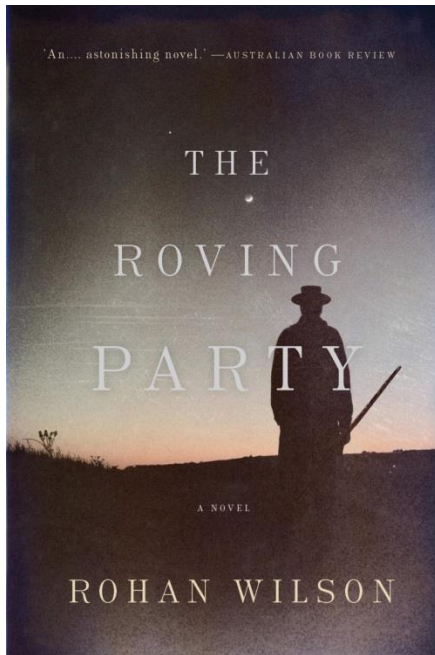
**They whistled for Black Bill through the foredawn and called his old clan name behind it, a name he had no good use for.**

So begins Tasmanian author Rohan Wilson's bleak yet powerfully moving tale of a "roving party" as it ventures deep into Van Diemen's Land. Set in 1829 and featuring a cast of historical personages, places, and events, Wilson's grim novel tells the story of Melbourne-founder and fringe lawman John Batman, who before brokering a lopsided treaty with Aborigines led countless roving parties to terrorize and hunt the indigenous people.

Batman's party is populated by criminals and bounty hunters—desperate men each—who are willing to traverse harsh landscapes and commit unspeakable crimes for the Governor's promise of money and land-grants. Among their number is something of an anomaly; an aborigine name Black Bill who was raised like a white man and therefore cares for the same things: money and property. In this group of hardened roustabouts Black Bill is head and shoulders the toughest of all.

Using Black Bill to decipher one of his country's most shameful and violent eras, Rohan Wilson has managed to write a novel that is as moving as it is disturbing.

**THE ROVING PARTY (Soho Press | February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014)** is a dusty and terse historical that lends to Tasmania the stern language of Cormac McCarthy's *All the Pretty Horses* and the fascinating historical detail of Peter Mathieson's *Shadow Country*.



## About the Book

"[A] grim and astonishing novel."

—**Australian Book Review**

John Batman, ruthless, single-minded; four convicts, the youngest still only a stripling; Gould, a downtrodden farmhand; two free black trackers; and powerful, educated Black Bill, brought up from childhood as a white man. This is the roving party and their purpose is massacre. With promises of freedom, land grants and money, each is willing to risk his life for the prize. Passing over many miles of tortured country, the roving party searches for Aborigines, taking few prisoners and killing freely, Batman never abandoning the visceral intensity of his hunt. And all the while, Black Bill pursues his personal quarry, the much-feared warrior, Mannalargenna.

## Praise for *The Roving Party*

"A grim and bloody tone poem."

—**Kirkus Reviews**

"Australian first-novelist Wilson writes beautifully, equally expert in describing the magical land as he is with Aboriginal dialect."

—**Booklist**

"An extremely skilful book telling a horror story, and the young writer's maturity takes your breath away ... not for the fainthearted ... Wilson writes in spectacularly beautiful prose."

—**Courier Mail**

"*The Roving Party* is distinguished by Wilson's tactful and restrained account of a brutal episode in the history of the conflict between European newcomers and the original inhabitants of Van Diemen's Land. His restraint renders the horrors he depicts far more vivid and their ethical implications much more telling than other melodramatic, at times tub-thumping, approaches ... evocative and impressive."

—**Sydney Morning Herald**



## About the Author

Rohan Wilson lived a long, mostly lonely, life until a lucky turn of events led him to take up a teaching position in Japan, where he met his wife. They have a son who loves books, as all children should. They live in Launceston, Tasmania, but don't know why. Rohan holds degrees and diplomas from the universities of Tasmania, Southern Queensland and Melbourne. This is his first book.