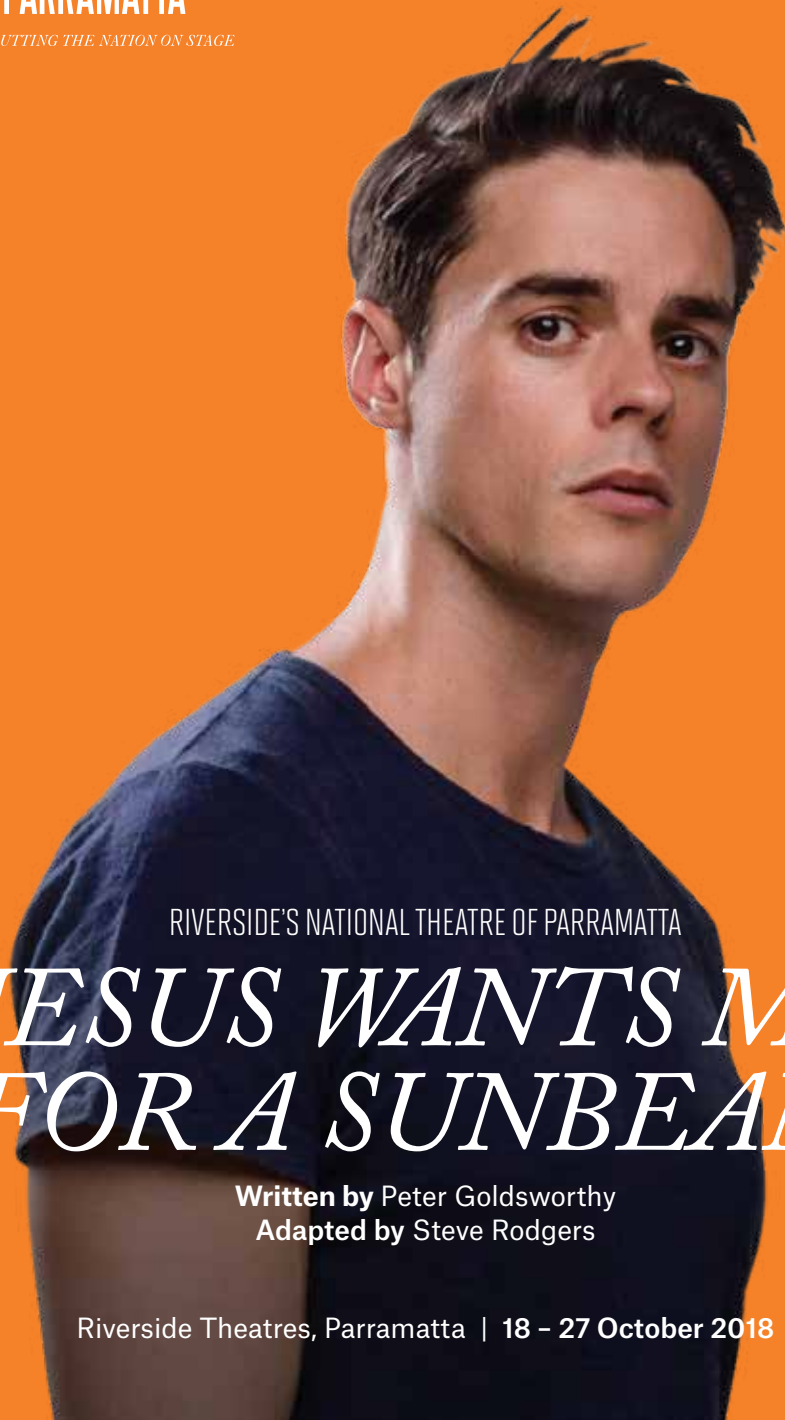


RIVERSIDE
NATIONAL THEATRE
OF PARRAMATTA
PUTTING THE NATION ON STAGE

WORLD PREMIERE



RIVERSIDE'S NATIONAL THEATRE OF PARRAMATTA

JESUS WANTS ME FOR A SUNBEAM

Written by Peter Goldsworthy
Adapted by Steve Rodgers

Riverside Theatres, Parramatta | 18 - 27 October 2018

RIVERSIDE'S NATIONAL THEATRE OF PARRAMATTA PRESENTS

JESUS WANTS ME FOR A SUNBEAM

Written by Peter Goldsworthy

Adapted by Steve Rodgers

PERFORMERS

Valerie Bader, Emma Jackson, Mark Lee, Liam Nunan, Justin Smith, Grace Truman

CREATIVE TEAM

Playwright

Steve Rodgers

Director

Darren Yap

Set and Costume Design

Emma Vine

Lighting Designer

Verity Hampson

Composition and Sound Design

Max Lambert and Sean Peter

Stage Manager

Cara Woods

Creative Futures

Erin Taylor

Chaperone

Julie Money

Set and Costume Design (intern)

Natasha Sommer

Jesus Wants Me for a Sunbeam opened Saturday October 20, 2018 at Riverside Theatres, Parramatta.

A NOTE FROM THE PLAYWRIGHT

Jesus Wants Me for a Sunbeam is about love and grief. Like all great stories, it revels in the grey areas of acceptability – what is too much love and how do we recover from an idyllic family love when it's cruelly and fatally interrupted?

I met Peter Goldsworthy's novel when Darren Yap first brought it to me as a child in relationship to my own parents, and now as a parent in relationship to my own children. It made me question life's great balancing act – how tightly do we hold onto each other and how hard it is to let go.

What's remarkable about this story is an identifiable family try to transcend life's fleeting reality. And even if we don't accept their actions, there's a moral confusion I've been wrestling with since beginning the adaption, which is something close to trying to understand them, me, and all of us.

Steve Rodgers



Photo by Chris Pavlich

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

'But when the Gods fail us, religion fails us, we've got to worship something right?' (Dr Eve)

In 1997, my friend, the late Nick Enright, gave me a copy of Peter Goldsworthy's novella *Jesus Wants Me for a Sunbeam*. Nick said it would make a great play. I was deeply moved but disturbed by the story. And I never guessed the ending. Now, 21 years later, thanks to Nick and my friend Stevie who adapted this novella, you are about to see this complex play. Stevie's adaptation is tender, confronting and thrilling.

Jesus Wants Me for a Sunbeam is about family. Rick and Linda have to make a decision to protect their little girl Emma and their son Ben has to deal with the consequences of his parent's decision. They create a cocoon to protect their children from a harmful world but, as we know in life, it doesn't work. *Sunbeam* asks us – if there is a God, why would he allow so much suffering? And the bigger question for me – to what lengths would a parent go to protect their child?

We sometimes turn to the theatre to explain ourselves to ourselves. It's neither a documentary nor an essay, but a long form dialogue that explores the value of life. *Sunbeam* is a uniquely Australian play but its themes are universal.

So thank you Robert Love and

Joanne Kee for programming *Sunbeam*. My gratitude goes to Emma, Verity, Max, Sean, Erin and Cara who have weaved such detail and love into this production. And my deepest respect to Emma, Justin, Liam, Grace, Valerie and Mark who brought their souls and imagination to create this deeply moving story. A story full of pain and full of love, where family is everything.

Darren Yap

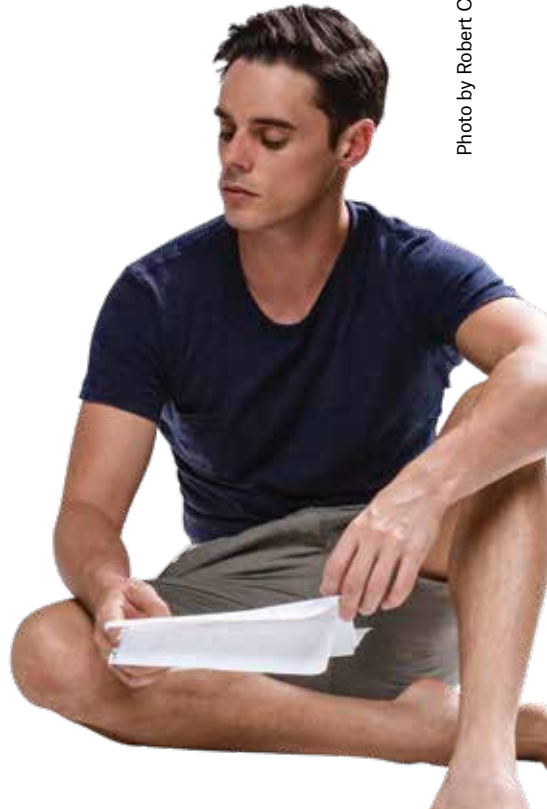


Photo by Robert Catto

BIOGRAPHIES



**STEVE
RODGERS**
PLAYWRIGHT

Steve was born in Newcastle, grew up in Tasmania and trained as an actor at Theatre Nepean in Western Sydney. He has worked as an actor in film, theatre and television for the last twenty years. Steve's play *Ray's Tempest* was shortlisted for the Patrick White Playwrights' Award and nominated in the Best New Australian Work category of the Sydney Theatre Awards following productions at both Belvoir and Melbourne Theatre Company. His second work *Savage River* played at the Griffin Theatre Company, Melbourne Theatre Company and the Tasmanian Theatre Company and was also nominated for Best New Australian Work at the Sydney Theatre Awards. *Nothing to Lose* was Steve's second collaborative effort with *Force Majeure* following the successful Belvoir co-production and tour of his play *Food*. In addition to producing a group devised feature film in 2014, he began adapting his play *Savage River* for film and completed adapting the Peter Goldsworthy novella *Jesus Wants Me for a Sunbeam* for stage. The play was the winner in the 2015 Griffin Lysicrates

Prize. Steve's most recent play *King of Pigs* was workshopped at the 2016 National Playwrights' Conference and premiered at The Old Fitz Theatre in 2018. He has also commenced co-writing a feature film for Liz Kearney with Jub Clerc and has a new play under commission for Belvoir.



DARREN YAP
DIRECTOR

Darren's recently directed *Ghost the Musical* (Theatre Creation) in Tokyo and in October will direct the world premiere of *All Out of Love* (the music of Air Supply) in Manila. Recent productions include the national tour of *Letters to Lindy* (Merrigong Theatre Company) and *Miracle City* (The Theatre Division) at Sydney Opera House which received a Glug award nomination for Outstanding Mainstage Musical and Outstanding Mainstage Production 2017, *Diving for Pearls* (also nominated for the same award) which won him the Broadway World Regional Award for Best Director of a Play 2017 and *Ladies Day* for Griffin Theatre Company, and *The Serpent's Table* with Lee Lewis presented by CAAP and Sydney Festival at Carriageworks. Other directing credits include the

world premiere of *The Great Wall, One Woman's Journey* (Glowsticks Productions) in Singapore, *Miracle City* (Luckiest Productions) at the Hayes Theatre and *A Murder is Announced* (Louise Withers and Associates). In Singapore he has also directed *The Admirals Odyssey* (Action Theatre), *Man of Letters* and *Pinocchio the Musical* (Singapore Repertory Theatre) and *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change* (VizPro International). He was Associate Director of *King Kong* for (Global Creatures), *Miss Saigon* (Cameron Mackintosh) in the West End, Tokyo, Korea, Holland and Australia. Darren's large scale events include *The City of Sydney's Chinese New Year Parade* for two years, *Sponge Bob Parade Pants* for Nickelodeon, Segment Director of the *Closing Ceremony of the 15th Asian Games* in Qatar, and Artistic Festival Consultant for the Opening of the National Gallery of Singapore's celebrations.



VALERIE BADER
GRANDMA /
DR EVE

Valerie's extensive acting career encompasses theatre, film and television. Recent screen appearances include the feature film *Wish You*

Were Here, the award-winning *Black & White & Sex* and *Rip Tide* which debuted at the 2017 Sydney Film Festival. Television work includes *The Crew's Ship*, *Devil's Playground*, *Dead Lucky*, *The Let Down*, *The Chuck In*, *All Saints*, *East of Everything*, *Come in Spinner*, *True Believers*, *Murder Call* and *GP*. Valerie has worked for just about every main stage theatre company in the country appearing in numerous memorable productions for Sydney Theatre Company, Melbourne Theatre Company, Griffin Theatre Company, Bell Shakespeare, Belvoir, Playbox and Nimrod theatre companies, and garnering nominations for Helpmann, Sydney Critics' and Glug awards along the way. Recent theatre credits include *Thomas Murray and the Upside Down River* (Critical Stages), *TALK* and *Children of the Sun* (Sydney Theatre Company), *M Rock* (Sydney Theatre Company/Australian Theatre for Young People), *Australia Day* (Melbourne Theatre Company) and *The Floating World* (Griffin Theatre). Valerie is a proud member of MEAA.



**EMMA
JACKSON**
LINDA

Emma's career has spanned theatre, film and TV since her graduation from NIDA. Theatre credits include *The Effect* (Red Line Productions), *Vale* (State Theatre Company South Australia), *Sunset Strip* and *Stoning Mary* (Griffin Theatre Company), *Once In Royal David City* (Queensland Theatre Company/Black Swan State Theatre Company), *The Blind Giant is Dancing* (Belvoir), *Food* (Force Majeure including the national tour), *Fool for Love* (B Sharp/Savage Productions), *The Long Way Home* (Sydney Theatre Company), *Nothing Personal* and *Let the Sunshine* (Ensemble Theatre), and *Dead Man's Cell Phone* (Melbourne Theatre Company). Emma won the Marten Bequest Travelling Scholarship in 2006 and relocated to New York to train with the SITI Company and intern with The Wooster Group. In the US, Emma appeared in *The Bird*, *Reader*, *Windows and Bed* (One Year Lease Theatre Company) and *C4* *The Chekhov Project* (Prospect Theatre). She also performed in *Reasonable Doubt* (Theatre Tours International) in London and at the Edinburgh Festival. Screen credits include *The Beehive*

(*Enigma Machine*), *House of Bond* (Nine Network), *The Killing Field* (Seven Network), *Crownies* (ABC), *Killing Time* (Fremantle Media), *The Alice and Rescue* (Southern Star). Emma is a proud member of MEAA.



MARK LEE
GRANDPA /
PRIEST

Born in 1958 in Sydney, Mark has an impressive and extensive career spanning over thirty years. He is arguably most recognised from his role in the 1981 classic film *Gallipoli*. Debuting his directorial skills in 2007 Australian film *The Bet*, he has gone on to direct several screen and stage productions since. 2012 saw Mark reprise his role in the one man show *The Time Machine*, adapted from H.G. Wells' classic at The Old 505 Theatre. In 2013/14, he performed and toured in the theatrical production of *A Murder is Announced* by Agatha Christie. He currently goes between his long lasting passion for music and featuring in roles on Australian theatre and screens including *Paper Giants: Magazine Wars* and *A Place to Call Home*. Mark is proud member of MEAA.



LIAM NUNAN
BEN

Originally from Brisbane, Liam studied at The Actors Workshop before working as a children's television presenter for Network Ten's national preschool program, *Puzzle Play* and as a guest host for Toasted TV. In 2009, he debuted in Queensland Theatre Company's Queensland Premier Drama award winning play, *25 Down* by Richard Jordan. In 2010, he began his studies at the National Institute of Dramatic Art acting in plays *Pool: No Water*, *Waiting for Lefty*, *The Winter's tale*, *Last Days of Judas Iscariot*, *Electronic City*, *The Illusion*, *The Lieutenant of Inishmore* and *Caligula* before graduating in 2013. He was awarded an Artstart grant in 2014 and travelled to New York and studied at the Atlantic Acting School. Liam has worked on Sydney Theatre Company's production of Louie Nowra's *The Golden Age*, and Sydney Theatre Company and Malthouse Theatre Company's co-production of Michael Gow's *Away*. Other credits include feature films *Dartworth* and *Rise of The Tomboy*, TV series *k9*, *Miracle City* (The Theatre Division) at Sydney Opera House, *D.N.A* (Last One Standing) at Kings Cross Theatre, a national tour of

Alice in Wonderland (Rapidfire International Inc), *Orphans* (Redline Productions) at the Old Fitz, *The Bald Soprano* (Twisted Tree Theatre Company), *Machina* (La Boite Indie) *MinusOneSister* (Griffin Indie), *Shivered* (Mad March Hare Theatre Company), *Keep Everything You Love* and *Titus Andronicus* (Nash Theatre Company), as well as *A Butcher of Distinction* and *Details Unknown* (Unhappen). Liam is proud member of MEAA.



JUSTIN SMITH
RICK

Justin Smith has starred in numerous stage productions most recently *The Long Forgotten Dream* directed by Neil Armfield, *A Flea in Her Ear* and *Arcadia* (Sydney Theatre Company), and *A Strategic Plan* (Griffin Theatre Company). Previous theatre work includes Simon Stone's *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, Benedict Andrews' *The Threepenny Opera* and *Svetlana in Slingbacks* (Belvoir), *The Winter's Tale*, *Just Macbeth*, *The Servant of Two Masters* and *Shakespeare's R and J* (Bell Shakespeare), *The Floating World*, *The New Electric Ballroom*, *Clark in Sarajevo* (Griffin Theatre Company), the Australian tour of Agatha Christie's *The Mousetrap*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

(Railway Street Theatre) and Marion Potts' *The Wonderful World of Dissocia*, Howard Davies' *The Cherry Orchard* and Andrew Upton's *Ruby Moon* (Sydney Theatre Company). Justin's musical theatre credits include *Billy Elliot: The Musical*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *Rent* and *Tick Tick Boom*. For TV Justin recently appeared in *Blue Murder: Killer Cop* and currently can be seen on new Stan comedy *The Other Guy*. Previous credits include Foxtel's *Secret City* with Jacki Weaver and Alan Dale, *Deadline Gallipoli*, *Home and Away*, *Devil's Playground*, *The Moodys*, *Underbelly: Badness*, *Howzat! Kerry Packer's War*, *The Straits*, *Tricky Business*, *Spirited*, *My Place*, *Queen Kat Carmel* and *St Jude*, *White Collar Blue*, *Backberner*, *Stingers* and *Bastard Boys* for which he was nominated for an AFI Award for Best Guest or Supporting Actor in a Television Drama. He featured in *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales*. Other feature film credits include Fred Schepisi's *The Eye of the Storm*, *Around the Block*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Burning Man*, *Being Venice* and *Angst*. Justin is a Sydney Theatre Award winner and has been a proud member of Actors Equity since 1990.



**GRACE
TRUMAN
WOL (EMMA)**

Grace began her performing career before she was two, appearing in numerous *Through the Windows* films for ABC's *Play School*. Her first theatre role was in *Blackbird* at the Sydney Fringe Festival. She is the lead actress in the web series *amazing Grace* as well as co-writer and songwriter. The series is about her life and follows her as she grows up. Her work in the series has been recognised internationally having been nominated for Best Actress – Miami Web Fest, Best Rising Star – Asia Web Awards and Best Starlet – Seriesland Bilbao. *Jesus Wants Me for a Sunbeam* is her professional theatre debut.



MAX LAMBERT
COMPOSITION
AND SOUND
DESIGN

Max is a composer and musical director whose theatre credits include work for the Sydney, Melbourne and Queensland Theatre Companies as well as Sydney Dance Company and The Australian Ballet. Max has recorded with Kate Ceberano, Wendy Matthews, Grace Knight, Vince Jones, Renee Geyer, Paul Kelly, Iva Davies and Icehouse. Feature film work includes *Happy Feet* and *The Last Days of Chez Nous* and notable musical theatre credits are *Hot Shoe Shuffle* (which he co-wrote) and *The Boy from Oz*. Max was the musical director on the Opening and Closing Ceremonies of The XXVII Olympiad, the Commonwealth Games (2002) and the Asian Games (2006). He was Musical Supervisor on *Hairspray*, *Fame*, *King Kong Live* and *Strictly Ballroom – the Musical*. The revival of Max's musical *Miracle City* was a critical success in 2014 and has just played at Sydney Opera House prior to a national tour. Recently Max composed music (with Roger Lock) on the critically acclaimed productions *Ladies' Day* and *Diving for Pearls* (Griffin Theatre Company), *Letters to Lindy* (Merrigong Theatre Company), and *The*

Literati (Bell Shakespeare and Griffin Theatre Company). His musical *Darlinghurst Nights* was critically acclaimed following a season at the Hayes Theatre in January 2018.



SEAN PETER
COMPOSITION
AND SOUND
DESIGN

Sean is a multi-award winning composer and lyricist. He has created words and music for Disney, Nickelodeon, the ABC and all of Australia's commercial TV stations. He is the musician behind the current *Play School* titles, *Giggle and Hoot*, as well as music for both the US and Australia's *So You Think You Can Dance* amongst many others. His original theatre works have been performed around Australia, as well as in New York and London. He has performed with Sydney Symphony Orchestra, The Seekers and William Shatner.



**VERITY
HAMPSON**
**LIGHTING
DESIGNER**

Verity is a lighting and projection designer for theatre, dance, opera and television. She has designed over 120 productions working with many of Australia's leading directors and choreographers. Verity's designs include *Faith Healer*, *The Drover's Wife*, *Ruby's Wish*, *The Blind Giant is Dancing*, *Ivanov*, *Is This Thing On?*, *Small and Tired*, *The Business*, *That Face* and *The Gates of Egypt* (Belvoir), *Machinal* and *Little Mercy* (Sydney Theatre Company), *The Boys*, *The Floating World*, *Angela's Kitchen* (Griffin Theatre Company), *A Midsummer's Night Dream* (Bell Shakespeare), and *The Literati* (Griffin Theatre Company and Bell Shakespeare). For television Verity was lighting director for ABC's *Live at the Basement* and *The Roast*. She was awarded the Mike Walsh Fellowship, which took her to Broadway to work with projection designers, 59 Productions. Verity won a Sydney Theatre Award for Best Mainstage Lighting Design for *Machinal* with Sydney Theatre Company. This year her designs include *Sami in Paradise*, *An Enemy of the People* (Belvoir), *Blackie*, *Blackie Brown*, *Hamlet: Prince of Skidmark* (Sydney Theatre Company), *Julius*

Caesar (Bell Shakespeare); *Faith Healer* (State Theatre Company South Australia); *Flight Paths* (Riverside's National Theatre of Parramatta) as well as a national tour of *The Bleeding Tree* (Griffin Theatre Company). View Verity's designs at verityhampson.com.



EMMA VINE
**SET AND
COSTUME
DESIGNER**

Emma is a designer for theatre, opera, musical theatre, dance, television and film. Emma's stage credits include *The Sugar House* costume (Belvoir); *The Maids* design (Belvoir 25A); *Turquoise Elephant* costume, *Sunset Strip* design (Griffin Theatre Company); *Only Heaven Knows* costume (Hayes Theatre), *The Mystery of Love and Sex* design (Darlinghurst Theatre); *Heathers: The Musical* set (national tour), *The Waiting Room* and *Water Angel* design (Sydney Opera House), *All Good Things: The Voices Project* design (Australian Theatre for Young People), *Three Sisters* costume, (Sport for Jove), *Choreography and Khandahar Gate* costume (NIDA). Screen credits include *Dead Lucky* (production design placement), *Slam* (art department), *Quietus* (production design), *The Fall* (costume design) and *Into*

My Arms (production design). Emma received Sydney Theatre Award nominations for best costume design in both 2017 and 2018 and was nominated as Best Emerging Designer at the 2017 Australian Production Design Guild Awards. Emma is a NIDA graduate. Upcoming work includes set and costume design for *The Overcoat* (25A Belvoir), *The Man with the Iron Neck* (Legs on the Wall) and *Possum Magic* (Monkey Baa Theatre Company).



CARA WOODS
STAGE
MANAGER

Cara attended the Actors College of Theatre and Television where she studied an Advanced Diploma of Stage Management and has since worked in theatre management throughout Sydney. Cara's most recent shows include Company Manager on *Calamity Jane*, Stage Manager on *Gypsy* at the Hayes Theatre, *Alice in Wonderland* with Sydney Festival, *Diving for Pearls* and *Ladies Day* (Griffin Theatre Company), *MAME* (Neglected Musicals), *Fawltly Towers Live* national tour, *Leaves* at Kings Cross Theatre, the regional tour of *The Shoe Horn Sonata*, *Political Children* at

Australian Theatre for Young People and *The Very Hungry Caterpillar Show* (Michael Sieders Presents).



ERIN TAYLOR
CREATIVE
FUTURES

Erin is a dramaturg, director and theatre maker. In 2018, she directed *Everything You Ever Wanted* by Rachel Roberts (Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre) and *A Girl is a Half Formed Thing* by Eimear McBride (Kings Cross Theatre). In 2017, Erin was a mentee in Melbourne Theatre Company's Women in Theatre Program. Her directing credits include a sell-out return season of *Slut* by Patricia Cornelius at The Old Fitz which was nominated for a Sydney Theatre Award and *BU21* by Stuart Slade at Old 505 Theatre in 2016. As a dramaturg Erin works regularly with Playwriting Australia as a script assessor and has read for Sydney Theatre Company's Patrick White Award. A Graduate of the University of Wollongong Faculty of Creative Arts, Erin established the arts Collective Rue de Rocket with fellow graduates.

RIVERSIDE

NATIONAL THEATRE OF PARRAMATTA

PUTTING THE NATION ON STAGE

ABOUT RIVERSIDE'S NATIONAL THEATRE OF PARRAMATTA

Riverside's National Theatre of Parramatta, based in Sydney's geographical heart, launched in November 2015. It reflects the diversity of Australia today through contemporary and bold performance, education programs and its audiences. As the producing arm of Riverside Theatres, NTofP is raising the profile of performance and engaging the imagination and creative ideas of Western Sydney and beyond, across the nation and ultimately internationally and is *Putting the nation on stage*.

As a principal arts organisation NTofP contributes to Western Sydney's vibrant artistic community by fostering the creation of new works, building capacity in the arts, facilitating education and development through performance, and engaging audiences.

THANK YOU TO

Sämi Lightfoot

Isabel Hess

Stephen Lightfoot

Dr Luce Dalla-Pozza, Maureen Taylor and the Doctors and Oncology team at Westmead Hospital

Anne Maree

Shane McNeil

Karen Rodgers, Bill Harris, Gemma and Edie

Kate Bradford

Mary Benn and Howard

Barry McGrath

Xanon Murphy

Alex Fensham

Judy Tanner

Paul Miller

Dr Martin Hocknell

Dr Joyce Leong



Photo by Robert Catto



Photo by Rene Vaile

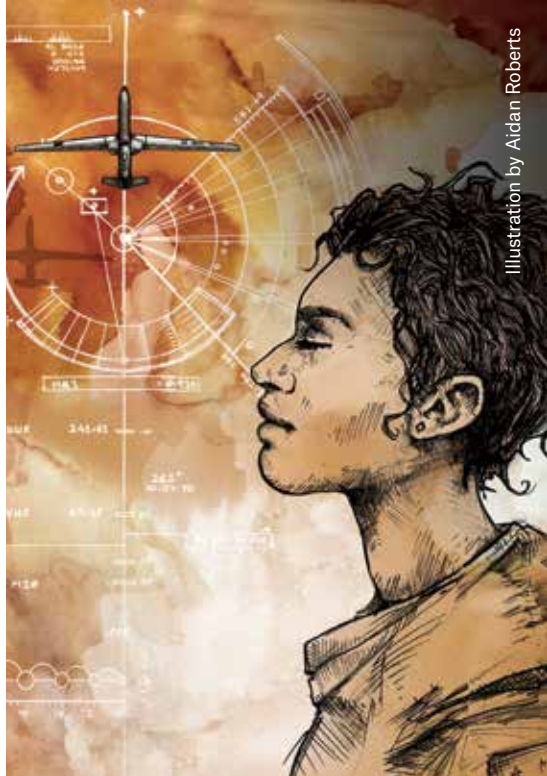


Illustration by Aidan Roberts



Illustration by Aidan Roberts

SEASON 2019

Quite fittingly as National Theatre of Parramatta finds its place in the world, in 2019 we are looking at identity, from physical versus virtual and the issues that fall from that, to mistaken identities and what defines us from the head to the heart. Our season of four plays run the gamut with comedy and sharp observations of actions motivated by sex, obsession and greed, yet they are counterbalanced by love and humanity. Along the way you can laugh and cry and be transported to other worlds.

To kick off the year we explore the human psyche, and how love changes our perceptions. We tie into modern society and the unanticipated consequences of new technologies in our first multi-award winning play **Grounded** by George Brant.

Stef Smith's **Girl In The Machine** explores the yearning for bliss and asks the ultimate question "*Do you want to live forever? Is love enough in our brave new world?*". We explore a point in our world where a dystopian future is actually here. Yet within these scenarios, humanity plays its role uncovering strength from adversity, speaking to our history and our future, of resilience and hope.

From there we jump to the sheer joy and craziness of life with a delightful adaptation of Shakespeare's **Comedy of Errors** from Hilary Bell. Aimed at younger audiences, a gloriously funny theatrical experience for any age.

We wrap up the year with our first co-production with Sydney Theatre Company **White Pearl** by Anchuli Felicia King. A sassy and biting hilarious piece focussing on an Asian multinational cosmetics corporation. Based in Singapore, this play looks at cultural identity, perceptions of beauty, power, money, social media with some sex and "eurotrash" thrown in for good measure.

Riverside's National Theatre of Parramatta proudly brings a premiere filled season to our stages. Once again, we look forward to sharing these stories with you and hope that they touch your heart and soul, as we continue to present work that resonates with the world around us.

PUTTING THE NATION ON STAGE.

nationaltheatreofparramatta.com.au

STAFF

DIRECTOR

Robert Love AM

BUSINESS MANAGER

Pamela Thornton

EXECUTIVE PRODUCER, NATIONAL THEATRE OF PARRAMATTA

Joanne Kee

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

Jonathan Llewellyn

OPERATIONS MANAGER

Linda Taylor

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER - PRODUCTION

Romy McKanna

MARKETING COORDINATORS

Claire Cornu and Leigh Russell

ADMINISTRATOR

Cassandra Bayley

VOLUNTEER

Arran Munro

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