

RIVERSIDE

NATIONAL THEATRE
OF PARRAMATTA

PUTTING THE NATION ON STAGE

GIRL IN THE MACHINE

Written by Stef Smith



Riverside Theatres, Parramatta

20 - 29 June, 2019

Illustration by Aidan Roberts

A NOTE FROM THE PLAYWRITER

Stef Smith

Stef Smith is an Associate artist (writer) at the Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh, Scotland.

Girl in the Machine was first part of a series of Traverse Breakfast Plays that saw all the associate artists at the Traverse responding to the theme of 'technology'. It's funny at that point I didn't feel like I was a natural match to the theme, in fact, most of my work actively avoids looking at technology. But it turned out to be a really joyful if not a vaguely terrifying thing and I've ended up with a play I might not have otherwise written.

My starting point was to look at how technology affects human connection which led to me writing a love story. There are classic elements of a love story in there with thriller elements of will-she-won't-she and I enjoyed looking at

all these tropes through the lens of love and science-fiction. It was also very important to me that the play touched on our political future - controlling citizens, mass unrest, increased social inequality. I didn't think we could talk about the future without looking at the political ramifications. I also wanted to touch on aspects of addiction that weren't specifically about an experience with drugs or alcohol. In a way, this play looks at both chemical addiction and behavioural addiction and for me, that's one of the most interesting aspects of this play. Addiction is so human - so what happens when it collides with the digital?

(From Traverse Theatre blog interview with Stef Smith)

ABOUT RIVERSIDE'S NATIONAL THEATRE OF PARRAMATTA

Riverside's National Theatre of Parramatta (NTofP) based in Sydney's geographical heart, launched in November 2015. It reflects the diversity of Australia today through contemporary and bold performances, 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 that resonate in Western Sydney and beyond and is *Putting the nation on stage.*

As a principal arts organisation based in Western Sydney, NTofP contributes to Sydney's vibrant artistic community by fostering the creation of new works, building capacity in the arts.

Riverside's National Theatre of Parramatta presents

GIRL IN THE MACHINE

Written by Stef Smith

Performer

Chantelle Jamieson

Brandon McClelland

CREATIVE TEAM

Playwright Stef Smith

Director Claudia Barrie

Set and Costume Design Ella Butler

Lighting Designer Benjamin Brockman

Sound Design Benjamin Pierpoint

Stage Manager Claire Ferguson

Creative Futures Pippa Ellams

Intimacy Coach Shondelle Pratt

Fight Choreographer Scott Witt

Girl in the Machine opened Saturday 22 June, 2019
at Riverside Theatres, Parramatta.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Riverside's National Theatre of Parramatta acknowledges the Traditional Owners of this land, the Darug people.

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PUTTING THE NATION ON STAGE

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Claudia Barrie

Girl in the Machine is a play addressing the power and temptation of technology and the danger present in allowing technology to play an increasing role in our lives. It is also a play about love.

Set in the not too distant future, we meet a young married couple, Owen and Polly. Both of whom work long hours. Polly represents the cerebral; a top attorney for a large firm and Owen represents the visceral; the passionate nurse dedicating his life to helping others at the end of their lives. We begin the day as a delivery arrives (from ambiguous sources) to Owen's work. A promise of relief from emotional and physical pain. It seems the perfect quick fix answer. It is seductive and addictive. While the theme of technology and dependence on devices was intriguing, the Guardian describes the playwright's approach: *"Smith tunes in to several of our contemporary concerns, including the centralising control of big data and the blur between work and home in an always-on digital world. She anticipates the ethical dilemmas that lie ahead when we cross the divide between man and machine. We're already in thrall to our computers; how soon before we start preferring a digital version of ourselves?"*

I was also interested in exploring the theme of addiction and the impact it has on the family and loved ones. Smith has created a world which deteriorates quickly. Our humanity is the thing that tears us apart, this play suggests it is also the one thing capable of putting us back together. The audience is invited to witness as Owen tries desperately to keep Polly from succumbing to the temptation of Black Box's utopia. It is my hope that the audience can enjoy both the cerebral argument of how far is too far in this fast-moving technology-based world of ours, as well as viscerally experience the love one human has for another.



STEF SMITH
Playwright

Stef Smith is a playwright whose work includes: *Enough* (Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh, 2019); *Nora : A Doll's House* (Citizens Theatre, Glasgow, 2019); *Girl in the Machine* (Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh, 2017); *Human Animals* (Royal Court Theatre, London, 2016); *Swallow* (Traverse Theatre, 2015, Riverside's National Theatre of Parramatta 2016); *Remote* (NT Connections 2015); *And The Beat Goes On* (Random Accomplice/Horsecross); *Cured* (The Arches, Glasgow); *Woman of the Year* (Óran Mór); *Grey Matter* (Lemon Tree, Aberdeen); *Falling/ Flying* (Tron, Glasgow); *Roadkill* (Edinburgh Festival Fringe, 2010 and 2011). Awards include: Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in an Affiliate Theatre, Critics Award for Theatre in Scotland for Best New Production, Amnesty International Expression of Freedom Award, Herald Angel Award, Total Theatre Award for Innovation, The Scotsman Fringe First Award (*Roadkill*); Scottish Arts Club Theatre Award for Drama, The Scotsman Fringe First Award (*Swallow*).

She has been awarded the New Playwright Award by Playwrights Studio, Scotland. Stef was a member of the Royal Court National Writers Group in 2013. She is an Associate Artist at the Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh.



CLAUDIA BARRIE
Director

Claudia is a 2004 graduate of the University of Western Sydney's late Theatre Nepean. As a producer, Claudia has mounted several successful Australian and International plays under the names Bareskin Productions (2005 - 2007) and Mad March Hare Theatre Company - MMH (2011 - present). As a director Claudia's credits include: 2018: *Eurydice* (MMH - Old Fitz) *You Got Older* (MMH - KXT), *DNA* (L.O.S.T - KXT), 2017: *The Martin Lysicrates Prize*, (Griffin Theatre), *Time Stands Still* (Eclipse Productions - Tap Gallery), *Dry Land* (MMH/Outhouse - KXT), *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* (MMH / Red Line Productions - Old Fitz), 2016: *Belleville* (MMH - Old Fitz), 2015: *Those Who Fall in Love Like Anchors Dropped Upon the Ocean Floor* (Loud Mouth) *Shivered* (MMH), *Scrub:24 Hour Playwright Project - Bondi Feast* (Rock Surfers), *The Diary of Anne Frank* (New Theatre - AD) and *Slut - The Play* (ACTT Graduates). Claudia began the year back on stage for The Ensemble in David Williamson's newest work, *The Big Time*. This winter she is also directing *The Cripple of Inishmaan* for the Old Fitz.



**CHANTELLE
JAMIESON**
Performer - Polly

Chantelle Jamieson has enjoyed a flourishing career in film, theatre and television. Since graduating from WAAPA in 2009, she has appeared in feature films *Eddy and Viv*, *Crushed* and *Rip Tide*. She will next be seen in *Peter Rabbit 2*, starring Rose Byrne and the voice of James Corden and the Australian feature *June Again*. Her television credits include Nine Network's audience favourite *House Husbands*, Screentime's telemovie *Underbelly Files: The Man Who Got Away*, and the Tony Tilse directed telemovie *Panic at Rock Island*. Chantelle was a regular in the ABC's legal drama *Crownies*, in the role of Julie. 2019 will see Chantelle in *Frayed*, *Reckoning* and *Diary of an Uber Driver*. On stage Chantelle was most recently seen in the Sydney premiere of *Fierce* at the Old Fitz and Sport for Jove's epic retelling of *War of the Roses*, *Rose Riot*. Prior to that she was in Sydney Theatre Company's critically acclaimed *Still Point Turning: The Catherine McGregor Story* and Don't Look Away/Theatreworks production of Lally Katz's *Frankenstein* in the role The Creature. Other productions include *Fallen* for Sport for Jove, *Look Back in Anger* and *Belleville* for Redline Productions, *The Importance of Being Earnest* with Darlinghurst Theatre Company, *Macquarie* with The Alex Buzo Company and Human Sacrifice's production *The Last Days of Judas Iscariot*.

Chantelle has also written and produced the web series *Ang Wilson: Your man at the scene*.



**BRANDON
McCLELLAND**
Performer - Owen

Brandon previously appeared at Riverside in *Flight Paths* for National Theatre of Parramatta. Other stage credits include *A Cheery Soul*, *Saint Joan*, *Three Sisters*, *The Present* (on Broadway), *A Midsummers Night Dream*, *The Golden Age* and *Suddenly Last Summer*, (Sydney Theatre Company), *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* (Ensemble Theatre), *Fracture* (New Ghosts Theatre Company), *A Town Named War Boy* (ATYP) and *Little Borders* (Old 505 Theatre). Film credits include *Truth* and the Japanese feature film *Star Sand*. Short film work includes *Setaceous*, *Waking Moon*, and *Walk Right In*. His television credits include *ANZAC Girls*, *Love Child*, *Here Come the Habibs*, and *The Devils Playground*. For *ANZAC Girls* Brandon received a Logie Award nomination for the Graham Kennedy Award for Most Outstanding Newcomer, and was included in The Equity Award for an Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Drama Series. Brandon graduated from the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) in 2012.



ELLA BUTLER
*Set and Costume
Designer*

Ella is a Sydney-based designer for theatre, film and live performance.

With a detailed approach to framing, Ella strives to create liminal spaces that focus on feeling, association and mood. Ella's recent credits include as Designer for Darlinghurst Theatre Company: *LOVE*; for The Hayes Theatre Co Neglected Musical: *Big River*; as Costume Designer for Jungle Entertainment: *15 Minutes* by Tim Minchin; and as Assistant Designer: for Griffin Theatre Company *The Feather in The Web*. Ella recently styled Tim Minchin and his band for his return to the stage with the National Tour of *Back*. Ella's work in theatre has been seen internationally after designing *Enter the Underworld* as part of the Piccolo Spoleto Festival in Charleston, South Carolina. Ella is a graduate from the National Institute of Dramatic Art with a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Design for Performance).



**BENJAMIN
BROCKMAN**
Lighting Designer

We are pleased to have Ben back after Riverside's National

Theatre of Parramatta production of *The Girl/The Woman* in 2018. Ben's lighting design credits include for Griffin Theatre Company: *Replay, Diving For Pearls, 2016 Season Launch, 2018 Season Launch*; for Ensemble Theatre: *Tribes, The Big Dry, The Plant, Neville's Island, Baby Doll*; for Darlinghurst Theatre Company: *Broken, Detroit, Mother Fucker With a Hat, Tinder Box*; For Sport For Jove: *Away, Macbeth*; for *Mad March Hare: Bengal Tiger at Baghdad Zoo, Belleville, Dark Vanilla Jungle, Shivered*; For Bakehouse Theatre Company: *Dresden, Visiting Hours, The Laden Table, Jatinga, Straight*; for *Bontom Chamber Pot Opera* (Sydney Adelaide Fringe and Edinburgh Festival Fringe); For Apocalypse Theatre Company: *Metamorphoses*; for New Theatre: *The Cherry Orchard, When the Rain Stops Falling, That Eye the Sky*; for Spark Youth Theatre: *Political Children*; for Performance 4a: *Through a Distant Lens*; For *Unhappen: Mr. Kolpert, Awkward Conversations with Animals I have Fucked, Cough, Animal/People*.



**BENJAMIN
PIERPOINT**
Sound Designer

We are pleased to have Ben back after Riverside's National

Theatre of Parramatta production of *The Girl/The Woman* in 2018. Ben is a theatre maker, live performance producer/director, composer and sound designer. The recipient of a Sydney Theatre Award for his work on *Metamorphoses* (Apocalypse), Ben began composing and sound designing with Clockfire Theatre Company as an artistic associate in 2013, collaborating on their shows *The Grief Parlour*, *A Hunger Suite*, *The Natural Conservatorium for Wise Women* and *We, the lost company*. Other credits include *Angels In America*, *Doubt: A Parable*, *Lady Tabouli* and *Asylum* (Apocalypse), *Jess and Joe Forever* (Sugary Rum), *Fierce* (Mophead), *Black Birds* (The Joan), *Dry Land* (Mad March Hare/Outhouse Theatre), *Degenerate Art* (Redline Productions), *The Maids* and *Extinction of the Learned Response* (Glitterbomb), *A Little Piece of Ash* (JackRabbit), *Home Invasion* (An Assorted Few), *You Got Older* (Mad March Hare) and *Cyprus Avenue* (Empress Theatre). Since 2015 Ben has worked with NGAIIRE on multiple projects including as film producer - *Once/Diggin'*, film director - *Diggin'* and producer of her touring live show.

He also works in the management teams of the internationally acclaimed indie darlings Little May and the future-soul vocalist Wallace.



**CLAIRE
FERGUSON**
Stage Manager

Claire is a Sydney based stage manager, writer and emerging theatre maker. In 2017, Claire graduated from Charles Sturt University with a Bachelor of Communications Theatre/Media (with Distinction). Her management credits include *Mr Melancholy* (Bathurst Arts Theatrical Society 2016), *The Fox* (Cycle Productions 2017), *Anything to Declare?* (Sprung Festival 2017), *You Got Older* (Mad March Hare 2018), *Whose Uterus is it Anyway?* (Bite Productions 2018) and *Boy Out of the Country* (Company of Rogues 2018).



**PIPPA
ELLAMS**
Creative Futures

Pippa is a writer/performer from Western Sydney. Her credits include *The Carousel* which was shortlisted for the Rodney Seaborne Playwright Award, resident Artist at Shopfront Arts Co-op (2016). It went on to be produced at Shopfront Arts Co-op, Belvoir, as part of Merrigong X's 2018 Season and at KXT. Pippa was selected as part of The Propel Initiative, (Q Theatre and ATYP), a participant of National Theatre of Parramatta's Playwrights of Parramatta program, and in ATYP's 2017 National Studio Program. *#Nofilter* - ATYP's *Intersection 2018: Chrysalis* and ATYP's 2018 Fresh Ink Program. *The Sorry Mum Project* - Bondi Feast Festival 2018, Adelaide Fringe Festival 2019. In early 2019, Pippa was a resident artist for Q Theatre.

Creative Futures provides hands on opportunities for creative, production and backstage personnel with on the job learning and networking opportunities, enabling each participant to advance their careers within their nominated fields.



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