BELVOIR

SAMI IN PARADISE





Yalin Ozucelik

Belvoir presents

SAMI IN PARADISE

Based on *The Suicide* by **NIKOLAI ERDMAN**
Adapted by **EAMON FLACK** & **THE COMPANY**
Directed by **EAMON FLACK**

This production of Sami in Paradise *opened at Belvoir St Theatre on Sunday 1 April 2018.*

Set & Costume Designer **DALE FERGUSON**
Lighting Designer **VERITY HAMPSON**
Musical Direction, Sound Design & Composer **JETHRO WOODWARD**
(in collaboration with **MAHAN GHOBADI** & **HAMED SADEGHI**)
Movement Director **NIGEL POULTON**
Dialect Coach **AMY HUME**
Assistant Director **CARISSA LICCIARDELLO**
Stage Manager **LUKE McGETTIGAN**
Assistant Stage Manager **BROOKE KISS**
Stage Management Secondment **KATHERINE MOORE**

With
PAULA ARUNDELL as Fima/Fairuz
FAYSSAL BAZZI as Abu Walid
NANCY DENIS as Adnan/Sanda
CHARLIE GARBER as Charlie Gerber
VICTORIA HARALABIDOU as Maria
MARTA KACZMAREK as Gita
MANDELA MATHIA as Owke
ARKY MICHAEL as Father Arky
YALIN OZUCELIK as Sami
HAZEM SHAMMAS as Hazem
VAISHNAVI SURYAPRAKASH as Vaish/Boy/Waiter

Musicians
MAHAN GHOBADI Percussion
HAMED SADEGHI Strings

Sami in Paradise *is supported by Nelson Meers Foundation.*

We acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora nation who are the traditional custodians of the land on which Belvoir St Theatre is built. We also pay respect to the Elders past and present, and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

PHOTOGRAPHY Brett Boardman
DESIGN Alphabet Studio



ADAPTOR & DIRECTOR'S NOTE

This is a comedy set in a refugee camp. There are more than 65 million displaced people in the world today – refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced people. They have been driven from their homes by war, environmental crisis, persecution, economic collapse. Millions of them live in camps, and their lives and fates are ruled by a weird mix of international and domestic law, managerial rule-making, and NGO patronage. Some of these camps are generations old (for example, the Palestinian camps in Lebanon, which date back to the 1940s), some are very new (the now-closed Calais Jungle, Zaatari in Jordan). Some are small, spontaneous affairs (on Lesvos in Greece, for example), some are large towns in their own right (Dadaab in Kenya has a population of about 250,000). Some camps have thriving grey-market economies, university campuses, healthcare, sports teams, even theatres. Some have almost nothing. Some people are grateful for refuge, some are undone by their incarceration. Some find that their lives have new horizons, many (most) find that they are living a permanent existence of temporariness, unable to think about the lives they have lost and unable to conceive of any kind of future. Some just want to go home, some want to make new lives where they are, some want to get out of there and keep going. Life here is philosophical, essential, desperate, raw, naked, ancient and frequently ridiculous.

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Sami in Paradise is based on a Soviet comedy called *The Suicide*. It was written by Nikolai Erdman in 1928, ten years after the Bolshevik Revolution (really it was a coup) had put a marginal group of political oddbods in charge of one of the largest countries on earth. By 1928 enough time had passed for Erdman and many others in the Soviet Union to see the Revolution for what it was: a weird experiment that could only work if humans were less human than they are. Two things could happen at this point: one, the Revolution could give up and admit its analysis of the situation was wrong, or two, it could set about trying to change humans to fit the analysis. Stalin chose the latter, and a regime of bizarre brutality was born. Erdman's brilliant insight was to see that this regime was not just violent, it was also ridiculous. The logic of the Revolution was bonkers. Erdman's basically saying, if you want to show the Revolution naked for what it was, write a comedy.

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We've made this show together. I wrote the adaptation in the sense that I did most of the typing, but the research and ideas that went into it have come from everyone involved. Over a period of several months we gathered hundreds of pages of research and


Eamon Flack

dozens of hours of video content from a variety of sources, including self-made media projects within the camps. Everywhere we looked in the research we found quotations, people, events which bore an uncanny similarity to lines, characters and situations in the play. Why would life as a refugee bear such a resemblance to life in Stalin's Russia? Perhaps because both regimes seek to treat people as a problem to be solved...

In terms of what's Erdman's and what's ours, I'd say about 15% of the play is new material and the rest is a restating of Erdman in a different setting. We've changed the time and place of the play but the plot, structure and characters (with some exceptions) are all more or less Erdman's. We've changed all the names except Maria's. The big changes we've made have been to some of the characters. Charlie Gerber in the Erdman was a member of the Russian Intelligentsia; here he is the CEO of his own NGO, and his scenes were co-written by Charlie Garber and I. Fairuz in the original was a figure of Russian romanticism who was driven entirely by jealousy; we've invented a slightly different plot for her here (the love plot with Hazem) based on our research and our desire to write a more rounded character. Adnan the security guard is almost entirely our invention, and he replaces a very different, untranslatable character in the Erdman. Vaish's character the student doesn't appear at all in Erdman's play – she is a collaboration between Vaish and myself, and her big speech in Act 4 is based on quotations from real students in various camps in the Middle East and North Africa. Similarly Sami's big Act 5 speech is based on dozens of different verbatim sources mixed with Erdman's original. Hazem's terrific Act 3 speech was written by him based on Erdman's original, and reworked in rehearsals. The camp announcements are our invention. The omnipresence of toilets in the play is entirely a strange and spontaneous product of our own research and process (World Toilet Day is real – 19 November). I have to say a special thanks to Vaish and Charlie who both dug me out of ruts at various points in the writing process. Thanks Vaish and Charlie! Also thanks to Tessa Leong who did great work for us in the research phase.

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We wanted the show to be something of an act of solidarity, so we've been deliberately frugal. The idea was to make a show that could be picked up and carried away and put down and set up again in any available space – a bit like the life of a refugee family. Almost the entire set has been scavenged from what's around in the building here.

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Comedy is a technique that allows us to acknowledge things that we're otherwise too embarrassed to acknowledge. Because we're so embarrassed in Australia by the existence of refugees we always need them to be demons or saints – murderous terrorists or piteous supplicants. This play is an attempt instead to lend this group of people the same privileges of silliness, joy, pettiness and ridiculousness that we get to enjoy. (I've seen people behave like Sami in the box office queue at Belvoir.) We all have a minimum amount of dignity, and when it runs low we get desperate and ridiculous. It can be appalling to watch and it can be funny to watch, but it also lays bare a fundamental political question: how much can we take from people in the name of policy or economic growth? Who the hell do we think we are?





Yalin Ozucelik, Arky Michael & Nancy Denis

NIKOLAI ERDMAN

1900 – 1970

Nikolai Erdman had a remarkable impact on Russian theatre, despite writing only two full-length plays, of which one was banned before it even made it to the stage. Critics and contemporaries agree that he is one of the greatest Russian playwrights since Chekhov, and his two plays are regarded as classics of 20th-century comedy.

Erdman was born in Moscow on 16 November 1900, the son of a Baltic-German father and a Russian mother. Before he was even 20, the young writer had witnessed failed uprisings against the corrupt and backward administration of Tsar Nicholas II, Russia's disastrous experience in the First World War, the Tsar's abdication, the Bolshevik Revolution, civil war, and the consolidation of a communist government. This social and political turmoil fuelled Erdman's passion for writing, particularly comedy and satire.

As a teenager, Erdman was an avid poet, drawing inspiration from Vladimir Mayakovsky's satirical works. Erdman made his literary debut in 1919, publishing a few well-crafted poems. He became a member of a group of like-minded poets who called themselves the Imaginists, led by famed provocateur Sergei Yesenin. At just 19, he was drafted into the Red Army where he served as a scribe. When the poet returned home, he found a very different Moscow. Tsarist repression was over and Stalin's tyranny was yet to come – and Russia was entering the extraordinary period of the New Economic Policy (NEP).

Due to the commercial freedoms permitted by the NEP, a host of small theatres began to crop up in Moscow. There was suddenly a demand for dramatic texts, particularly satirical parody, and Erdman seized the opportunity to demonstrate his comedic flair. His first major success came when he was asked to co-author a revue for the newly-founded Moscow Academic Theatre of Satire. *Moscow from a Point of View* premiered in October 1924 and quickly became one of the hottest tickets in the city. Soon, the young writer came to the attention of the great theatre director Vsevolod Meyerhold. When he heard that Erdman had been putting the finishing touches on his first full-length play, Meyerhold secured the rights to it and *The Mandate* premiered in the director's new theatre in 1925.

The play was an immediate success and Erdman became the talk of the town. Set in Moscow during the early days of Stalin, *The Mandate* (also known as *The Warrant*) attacks the sinister loss of individual identity in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution, but does so with hilarity. It was praised by Anatoly Lunacharsky, the Commissar for Culture, as "the first truly Soviet play" and Erdman was compared to every great Russian playwright or comic writer of the past including Gogol, Sukhovo-Kobylin and Chekhov. Pavel Markov, one of Russia's finest theatre critics and scholars of the 20th century, called *The Mandate* "the beginning of a new theatre".

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Nikolai Erdman continued...

Along with stellar reviews, *The Mandate* also proved one of Meyerhold's biggest box office hits. The production took less than one year to reach its 100th performance, which was unheard of at the time and the director was unsurprisingly keen to commission another play from Erdman. Meyerhold had some competition with the celebrated director Konstantin Stanislavsky also vying to direct Erdman's next work. However, bigger challenges would emerge.

When Erdman completed his second play in 1928, the atmosphere in the country had changed dramatically. Joseph Stalin seized power and the NEP was dissolved, with social and economic life in Russia shifting towards totalitarian control. It was in this context that Erdman delivered *The Suicide*, a comic drama about a man whose declaration to kill himself is hijacked by those around him. With its assertion of individual power, the subversive work ended up being Erdman's own tragic artistic suicide note of sorts.

The Suicide was first banned by the censor on 25 September 1930 following initial readings in early April. However, support for the play endured and Stanislavsky wrote to Stalin in an effort to overturn the decision. Stalin eventually agreed, but noted that some of his "closest comrades consider it empty and even harmful". Stanislavsky took the hint and abandoned rehearsals, but Meyerhold's theatre seized the challenge and rehearsed the play throughout the summer of 1932. At a dress rehearsal to a closed audience of high-placed officials, Lazar Kaganovich, one of Stalin's right-hand men, nonchalantly told Meyerhold afterwards that "there's no need to work on this play". Production ceased and *The Mandate*, which had been playing to packed houses, was also closed down.

A year later on 10 October 1933, Erdman was arrested along with Vladimir Mass, his frequent writing partner. The official explanation was that they had written a series of anti-Soviet fables, but it's clear that the real culprit was *The Suicide*. Erdman was sentenced to three years' exile in Siberia, and a further ten



years' banishment from the capital. Some have reflected that Erdman was fortunate to be exiled so early, before Stalin's truly brutal repressions really got underway. Tragically, Meyerhold, perhaps Erdman's greatest champion, was executed in 1941 as a "foreign spy".

Following his sentence, Erdman was not permitted to reside in Moscow or associate with his former circle of artistic comrades, but he did not stop writing. While he never wrote another stage play, Erdman turned his talents to screenwriting, penning some of Russia's most popular features and animated films from the 1930s to the 1960s.

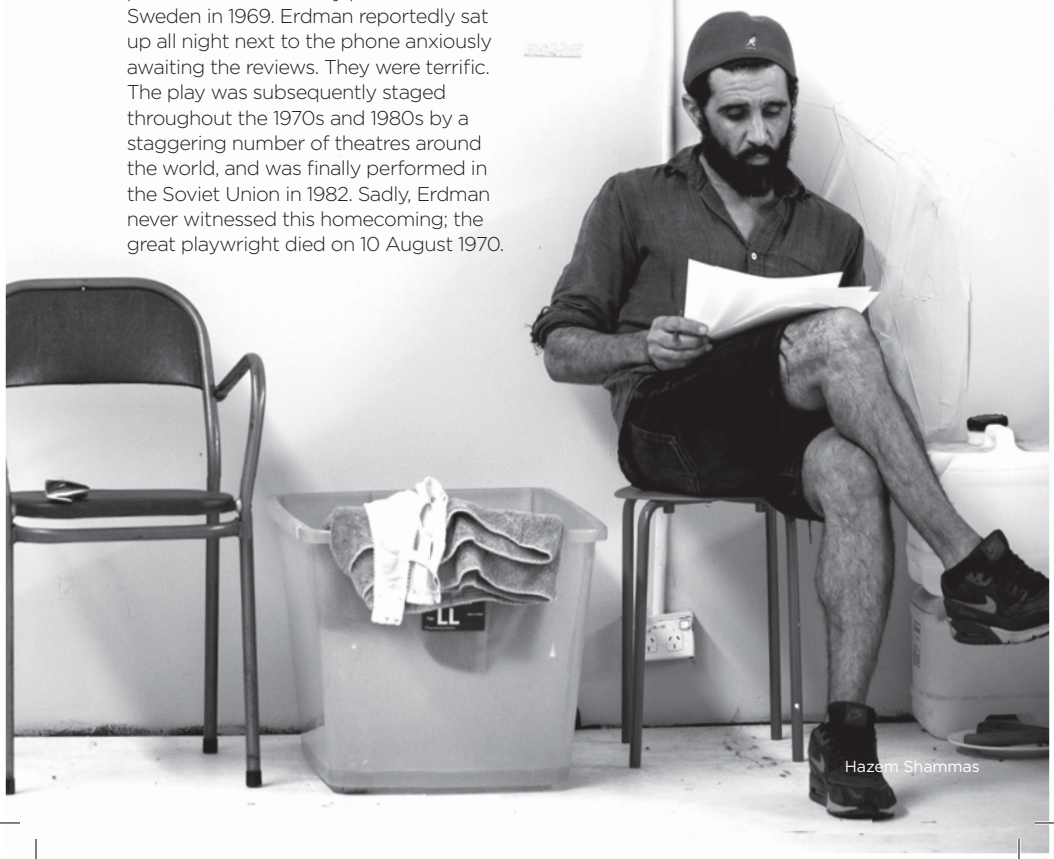
The Suicide had to wait 40 years to be performed, but it finally premiered in Sweden in 1969. Erdman reportedly sat up all night next to the phone anxiously awaiting the reviews. They were terrific. The play was subsequently staged throughout the 1970s and 1980s by a staggering number of theatres around the world, and was finally performed in the Soviet Union in 1982. Sadly, Erdman never witnessed this homecoming; the great playwright died on 10 August 1970.

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Hazem Shammas

BIOGRAPHIES



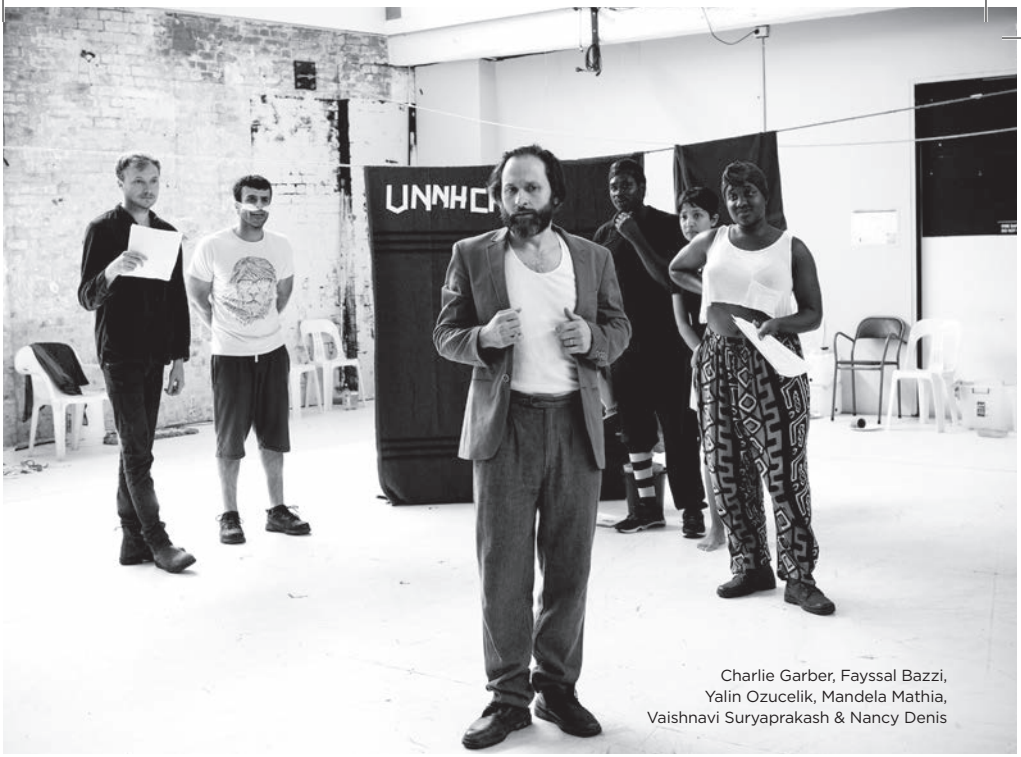
EAMON FLACK Director

Eamon is Belvoir's Artistic Director. He was born in Singapore and grew up in Singapore, Darwin, Brisbane and Cootamundra. He trained as an actor at West Australian Academy of Performing Arts from 2001 to 2003 and has since worked as a director, writer and dramaturg, from Milikapiti on the Tiwi Islands to Geraldton and Melbourne. For Belvoir, Eamon has directed *Ghosts*, *The Rover*, *Ivanov*, *Angels in America Parts One* and *Two*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Babyteeth*, *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night or What You Will*, *The Blind Giant is Dancing* and *The End*. He co-adapted Ruby Langford Ginibi's memoir *Don't Take Your Love to Town* with Leah Purcell, and co-devised *Beautiful One Day* with artists from ILBIJERRI, version 1.0 and Palm Island. His dramaturgy credits for Belvoir include *Neighbourhood Watch*, *The Wild Duck* and *The Book of Everything*. His adaptations include *Ghosts*, *Ivanov*, *Summerfolk* and *Antigone*. *Ivanov* won four Sydney Theatre Awards in 2015 including Best Mainstage Production and Best Direction. Eamon's productions of *The Glass Menagerie* and *Angels in America* both won Best Play at the Helpmann Awards.



PAULA ARUNDELL Fima/Fairuz

For Belvoir, **Paula** has appeared in *Atlantis*, *Mr Burns*, *Mother Courage and Her Children*, *Angels in America Parts One* and *Two*, *Peter Pan*, *Death of a Salesman*, *Gethsemane*, *Scorched*, *Snugglepot and Cuddlepie*, *Paul*, *Peribanez* and *The Threepenny Opera*. Other theatre credits include *Top Girls*, A *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Disgraced*, *Suddenly Last Summer*, *Macbeth*, *Under Milk Wood*, *The Mirage*, *Honour*, *Blackbird*, *Love Lies Bleeding*, *Life is a Dream*, *The Three Sisters*, *The White Devil*, *Attempts on Her Life*, *Love for Love*, *Julius Caesar* (Sydney Theatre Company); *The Bleeding Tree* (Sydney Theatre Company/Griffin); *The Real and Imagined History of The Elephant Man* (Malthouse Theatre); *Clybourne Park*, *Interactive World Theatre*, *Are You There?* (Ensemble); *Clark in Sarajevo* (Griffin); *Oedipus Rex*, *Symphony of Psalms* (Sydney Festival); *Three Furies* (Sydney Festival/Auckland Festival); *Spiders from Mars* (Australian Museum); *Elegies for Punks*, *Angels and Raging Queens* (Mardi Gras); *The Torrens*, *Night Letters* (State Theatre Company South Australia); *The Servant of Two Masters*, *Hippolytus*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Henry V*, *The Tempest*, *Much Ado About Nothing* (Bell Shakespeare); *Company* and *Measure For Measure* (Melbourne Theatre Company). Paula has won numerous awards including a 2016 Helpmann Award for Best Female Actor for her performance in *The Bleeding Tree*.



Charlie Garber, Fayssal Bazzi,
Yalin Ozucelik, Mandela Mathia,
Vaishnavi Suryaprakash & Nancy Denis



Vaishnavi Suryaprakash



FAYSSAL BAZZI Abu Walid

Fayssal's theatre credits for Belvoir include *Back at the Dojo*, *Ivanov*, *The Government Inspector*, and *Food*. Other theatre credits include *The Merchant of Venice* (Bell Shakespeare); *Woyzeck* (B Sharp/ Arts Radar); *Timeshare* (Malthouse Theatre); *Look the Other Way*, *The Other Way* (Sydney Theatre Company); *The Motherf**ker With the Hat* (Black Swan State Theatre Company); *I Only Came to Use the Phone* (Darlinghurst Theatre); *The Pigeons*, *Lord of the Flies* (Griffin); *Don Juan in Soho* (New Theatre); *Redemption*, *This Blasted Earth: A Christmas Miracle with Music*, *Poster Girl*, *Sprout* (Old Fitzroy); *All the Blood and All the Water* (Riverside Theatre); *Cross Sections* (Sydney Opera House); *To the Green Fields Beyond* and *Love*, *Madness and Poetry* (Seymour Centre). Fayssal's film credits include *Down Under*, *6 Days*, *Emulsion* and *Cedar Boys*, as well as *The Merger* and the voice of Mr Todd in *Peter Rabbit*, both due for release this year. His television credits include *Wake in Fright*, *Top of the Lake: China Girl*, *Chosen*, *Crownies*, *The Strip*, *East West 101*, *Double the Fist*, *Stupid Stupid Man* and *All Saints*.



NANCY DENIS Adnan/Sanda

Nancy began her career at an early age, appearing alongside Anthony Warlow in John Frost's production of *Annie*. She has performed in sold-out seasons of the critically acclaimed play *The Baulkham Hills African Ladies Troupe*, which originated at Belvoir before being remounted in 2015 at the Sydney Opera House and touring to London and the UK. In 2017 Nancy co-adapted and appeared in Urban Theatre Project's *Home Country*, presented as part of Sydney Festival. She also performed in *One The Bear* last year with the Black Honey Company. Nancy recently acted opposite Cate Blanchett in the feature film *Truth* and opposite Michiel Huisman in the feature *2:22*, as well as a recurring role in the first season of the ABC TV series *Clevermen* opposite Frances O'Connor. Nancy has a background in dancing and trained at Sydney's Brent Street Studios. During her time there, she secured a role in the Australian production of *Hairspray: The Musical*, directed by David Atkins. Following the national tour of *Hairspray*, Nancy appeared in Baz Luhrmann's *The Great Gatsby*. Nancy is Haitian-Australian and in 2010, she and her family organised the 'Hearts for Haiti' benefit, raising much needed funds for the earthquake disaster relief. Nancy currently has a writing residency with Urban Theatre Projects.



DALE FERGUSON Set & Costume Designer

Dale has designed many Belvoir productions including *The Blind Giant is Dancing*, *Radiance*, *Brothers Wreck*, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, *Neighbourhood Watch*, *The Seagull*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Power of Yes*, *Antigone*, *Exit the King*, *Peribanez*, *The Sapphires*, *The Chairs*, *The Dreamers*, *The Marriage of Figaro*, *The Judas Kiss* and *A Cheery Soul*. Dale's other credits for theatre include *The Glass Menagerie* (Daniel Schlusser Ensemble); *Away*, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, *The Convict's Opera*, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, *Summer Rain* (Sydney Theatre Company); *Di & Viv & Rose*, *Born Yesterday*, *Skylight*, *The Weir*, *The Speechmaker*, *The Crucible*, *Top Girls*, *Life Without Me*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *God of Carnage*, *August: Osage County*, *The History Boys* (Melbourne Theatre Company); *The Riders* (Opera Victoria); *Timeshare*, *Dance of Death*, *Night on Bald Mountain*, *Woman-Bomb* (Malthouse Theatre); *Rapture*, *Nightfall* (Playbox Theatre Company); the Sydney productions of *Anything Goes*, *An Officer and a Gentleman* (GFO); *Titanic the Musical* (Seabiscuit Productions); and *The Beast* (Ambassadors Theatre Group). For opera, Dale has designed *The Magic Flute* (Lyric Opera of Chicago); *Otello* (Cape Town Opera/Opera Queensland/Western Australian Opera); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Houston Grand Opera/Lyric Opera of Chicago/Canadian Opera Company); *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *The Marriage of Figaro* (Welsh National Opera); *The Marriage of Figaro* and *Eugene Onegin* (Opera Australia). Dale received a Helpmann Award for *August: Osage County*, and Tony and Drama Desk nominations for the Broadway season of Belvoir's *Exit the King*.



CHARLIE GARBER Charlie Gerber

Charlie began his career in drama as an actor, writer and director at the University of Sydney. For Belvoir, he has appeared in *Gethsemane*, *Neighbourhood Watch*, *As You Like It* and *Peter Pan*, which also toured to New York. Recent theatre work includes *As You Like It*, *Tartuffe*, and *The Merchant of Venice* (Bell Shakespeare); *Julius Caesar* (Sydney Theatre Company); *The Glass Boat*, *Simply Fancy* and *Parties4Eva* (Pig Island), and *Masterclass 1 & 2* in which he starred, along with co-writing, with Gareth Davies. Television credits include *Sisters* alongside Barry Otto and Lucy Durack, *Here Come the Habibs!*, *Brock*, *Party Tricks* and he recently reprised his guest role in the popular series *Rake*. Charlie has also pursued a career in screen writing, including *Offspring*, *Squinters*, *No Activity*, *Here Come the Habibs!*, and *Sando* of which he is co-creator and writer.



MAHAN GHOBADI Percussion

Mahan graduated from the University of Sydney in 2017. In 2008, Mahan collaborated with the Iranian national media's orchestra as a percussionist. In 2011, he worked with Sohrab Pournazeri on a music video for BBC Persian Television. In 2013, he performed with Madakto in Australia and the following year, he was invited to perform for an international student award event in the Theatrette at Parliament of New South Wales. From 2007 to 2011 he collaborated with many bands, such as Tarz, Dervish band, and many other percussion groups under the supervision of Rashid Kakavand.



VERITY HAMPSON Lighting Designer

Verity is a lighting and projection designer for theatre, dance, opera, and television. Verity has designed over 120 productions, working with many of Australia's leading directors and choreographers. For Belvoir, 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*. Other recent productions include *Hamlet: Prince of Skidmark*, *Machinal*, *Little Mercy* (Sydney Theatre Company); *The Bleeding Tree*, *The Boys*, *The Floating World*, *Angela's Kitchen* (Griffin); *A Midsummer's Night Dream* (Bell Shakespeare); and *The Literati* (Griffin/ 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 in 2012, 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* at Sydney Theatre Company. This year Verity's designs include *An Enemy of the People* (Belvoir); *Blackie*, *Blackie Brown* (Sydney Theatre Company); *Julius Caesar* (Bell Shakespeare); *Flight Paths* and *Jesus Wants Me for a Sunbeam* (National Theatre of Parramatta), as well as remounts of *Faith Healer*, *The Bleeding Tree* and *Hamlet: Prince of Skidmark*.

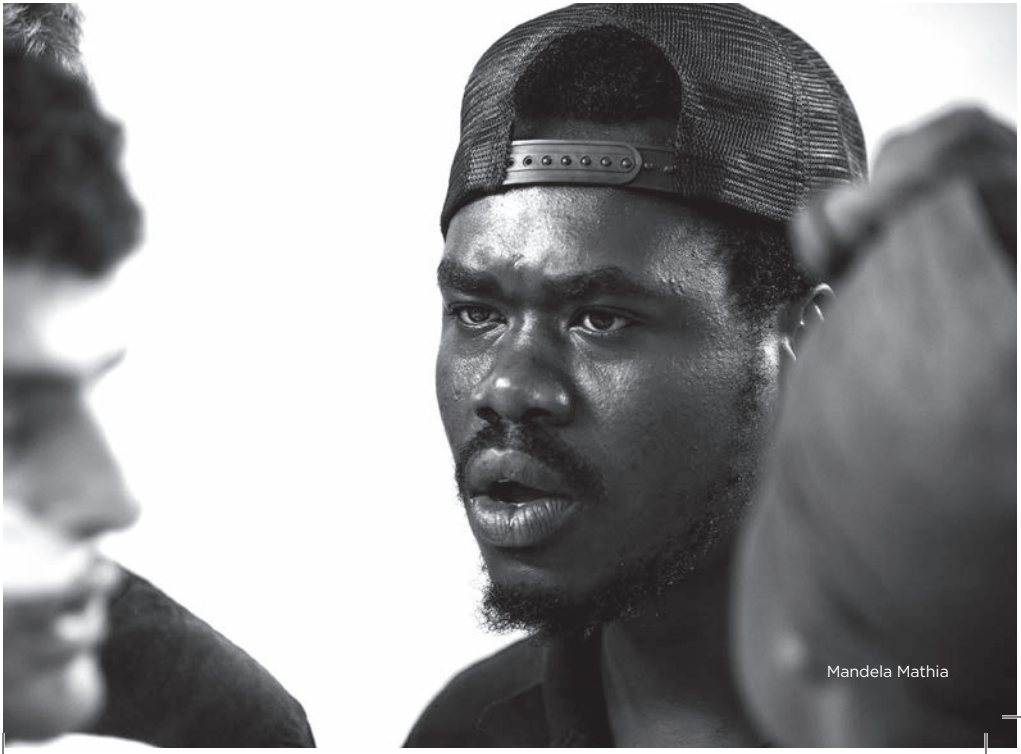


VICTORIA HARALABIDOU Maria

Born in St Petersburg, Russia, **Victoria** has studied cinematography and theatre in Russia and Greece. For Belvoir, she has appeared in *Stuff Happens*. Other Australian theatre work includes Mitzi in Agatha Christie's *A Murder Is Announced* presented by Louise Withers. Victoria has also worked as dramaturg, assessor and writer at Sydney Theatre Company and Griffin, among other theatre companies in Sydney. In 2012 she started her own production company, VHS Productions, dedicated to producing and supporting new Australian work by culturally diverse female artists. Her own play *One Scientific Mystery or Why did the aborigines eat Captain Cook?* was one of five scripts selected for the 2012 National Play Festival. Staged by director Iain Sinclair, she played the lead, alongside Aaron Jeffery and Dallas Bigelow in April 2013. Victoria has appeared extensively on both film and television, including Martin Scorsese's *Brides,* and *Barracuda* directed by Robert Connolly and written by Christos Tsiolkas, for which she received a Logie Award nomination for Outstanding Supporting Actress. Other film work includes *Thirst*, *Blessed*, *With Heart and Soul*, and short films *Deszcz*, *Apricot* and *The Lovesong of Iskra Prufrock*. Television work includes *The Leftovers*, *The Informant*, *My Place*, *East West 101*, *Home and Away*, *All Saints*, *The Strip*, *The Code*, *Deep Water* and *Hyde & Seek*.



Fayssal Bazzi &
Marta Kaczmarek



Mandela Mathia



AMY HUME Dialect Coach

Amy is a Designated Linklater Voice Teacher and a graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts' Post-Graduate Diploma in Voice with First Class Honours. For Belvoir she provided voice support on *The Rover* and *Ghosts*. Other theatre credits include Voice/Dialect Coach at the Sydney production of *Matilda the Musical* (RSC/Louise Withers); Voice Coach for *Measure for Measure* and *The Servant of Two Masters* (Sport for Jove); Dialect Coach for *The Kitchen Sink* (Ensemble); and Dialect Coach for *Stones in his Pockets* (Critical Stages). In New York she has worked on productions with Shakespeare & Co, The Shakespeare Forum and Columbia Stages. Amy is a voice teacher at the National Institute for Dramatic Art, voice and accents tutor at Australian Theatre for Young People and is Creative Director of one of Sydney's leading voice studios, Viva Voice. Through Viva Voice, she regularly facilitates corporate voice and communication training for organisations across different industries.



MARTA KACZMAREK Gita

Marta's stage debut as Natasha in *War and Peace* was followed by roles such as Viola in *Twelfth Night*; Winnie in *Happy Days* for which she received a best actress nomination; Estragon in *Waiting for Godot* (Black Swan Theatre); Joan in *Honey Bees* (Red Stitch); and Madam Raquin in Gary Abraham's adaptation of *Therese Raquin* (Theatre Works and the 2017 Critical Stages tour). In addition, her portrayal of Masha in the fortyfivedownstairs production of *Café Scheherazade* won her a Green Room Award for Best Actress in Independent Theatre. In 2016, Marta toured a self-devised one-woman play in Polish, titled *Roza*. Marta's television credits include *Rake*, *Wentworth*, *Newton's Law*, *Underbelly*, *Mr & Mrs Murder*, *Offspring*, *The Circuit* and *Blue Heelers*. Marta starred recently in the short film *Beast*, which won Best Australian Film at the 2017 Flickerfest International Film Festival. She also played Rachel Helfgott in Scott Hicks' award-winning feature *Shine*. Marta graduated from the Ludwik Solski Academy for the Dramatic Arts in Krakow, Poland. For 25 years, she lived in Perth where she co-founded the iconic Theatre Zart and published her book of poems, *Ziemia Przybrana (Adopted Earth)*. She is now Melbourne-based. In 2014, Marta was awarded a Knight's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta by the Polish Government for her longstanding efforts in the cultivation of Polish culture in Australia.



BROOKE KISS Assistant Stage Manager

Brooke graduated from the Technical Theatre and Stage Management course at the National Institute for Dramatic Art in 2016. For Belvoir, Brooke has been the rehearsal stage manager on *Barbara and the Camp Dogs*, as well as working on *Mr Burns*, *Atlantis* and *Mother*. Other recent roles include stage manager for *You Animal, You* (Force Majeure); stage manager for *Bengal Tiger at the Baghdad Zoo* (Mad March Hare Theatre Company); production manager for *The Crucible* (Barker College); stage manager for *The Australian Tenors* and *An Afternoon at the Proms* (Australian Global Entertainment); and assistant stage manager on *Testament of Mary* (Sydney Theatre Company).



CARISSA LICCIARDELLO Assistant Director

Carissa is Belvoir's Andrew Cameron Fellow for 2018. She graduated from the National Institute for Dramatic Art's (NIDA) Master of Fine Arts Directing Course in 2017. Since completing her studies, she has directed *The Telescope* (The Old Fitz), *The Chapel Perilous* (New Theatre), *A Period Piece* by Glitterbomb (Old 505), and *The Cold Child* (KXT's KXTeethcutting program), and was Assistant Director on *Ghosts* (Belvoir). Other directing credits include for NIDA, *All That Glitters* (with Glitterbomb), *#KillAllMen* (as Assistant Director), *Huis Clos (No Exit)* (with Actors Centre Australia); for Old 505, *Femme Fatale*; and for RockSurfers, *Reindeer Games* (Bondi Feast 24-Hour Party Playwright). She was also selected for the Theatreworks' Director's Lab, Playwriting Australia's inaugural Director's Studio, Australian Theatre for Young People's National Studio, and the PACT Collective. In 2018, Carissa will direct *No Wonderland* (Brand X's The Flying Nun Season), *The Maids* (25A) and *The Hysteric* (KXT) for her company Glitterbomb.



MANDELA MATHIA Owke

Mandela was born in South Sudan and spent the majority of his childhood in the north of the country and in Egypt, due to the civil war in Sudan. He arrived in Australia in 2009. Having shown skills in various hobbies such as dancing, singing, playing musical instruments and rap, Mandela also has an interest in musical and cabaret-style performance. He speaks three languages: his native language Acholi, Arabic and English. Throughout his upbringing, Mandela was involved in local theatre in productions such as *Hotel Hibiscus*, *Welcome to the Moon* and a devised work at PACT Centre for Emerging Artists, *The Harvest.* Mandela successfully auditioned for the National Institute of Dramatic Art (NIDA) in 2015 and has been pursuing his acting career passionately ever since. During his time at NIDA, Mandela appeared in *Realism*, *Eurydike + Orpheus*, *The Season at Sarsaparilla* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream.* Mandela makes his professional debut in *Sami in Paradise*.



LUKE McGETTIGAN Stage Manager

Luke is Belvoir's Resident Stage Manager. For Belvoir, he has stage managed *Barbara and the Camp Dogs*, *Ghosts*, *The Rover*, *Mark Colvin's Kidney*, *Faith Healer*, *Twelfth Night or What You Will*, *The Great Fire*, *Mortido*, *Seventeen*, *Elektra/Orestes*, *Radiance*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Brothers Wreck*, *Once in Royal David's City*, *Miss Julie*, *Forget Me Not*, *Peter Pan* (including New York tour), *Private Lives*, *Death of a Salesman*, *Babyteeth*, *Summer of the Seventeenth Doll*, *Neighbourhood Watch*, *The Wild Duck* (including UK and Europe tours), *Namatjira* (Belvoir/Big hART), *Page 8*, *The End*, *That Face*, *The Promise*, *Scorched*, *Antigone*, *Keating!*, *The Little Cherry Orchard* and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*. His other credits include *The Pig Iron People*, *The Give and Take*, *Bed*, *La Dispute* (Sydney Theatre Company); *Like a Fishbone* (Sydney Theatre Company/Griffin); *The Government Inspector*, *The Tempest*, *The Servant of Two Masters*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Taming of the Shrew* (Bell Shakespeare); *Paradise City*, *Through the Wire* (Performing Lines); *Alive at Williamstown Pier* (Griffin); *Scam*, *Abroad With Two Men* (Christine Dunstan Productions); *Flexitime*, *Market Forces*, *Shoe Horn Sonata*, *Blinded by the Sun* (Ensemble); and *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* (Spirit Productions).



ARKY MICHAEL Father Arky

Arky graduated from the National Institute for Dramatic Art in 1982. For Belvoir, he has appeared in *The Tempest*, *The Alchemist*, *The Small Poppies*, *Ubu*, *Summerfolk*, *The Underpants*, *Measure for Measure*, *Love Me Tender*, *Baghdad Wedding* and *Mother Courage and Her Children*. Recent work includes *The Tempest* (Bell Shakespeare); Patti Smith and Sam Shepherd's *Cowboy* Mouth (Hibernian House); Enda Walsh's *Penelope* (Siren Theatre Company); and *CLUBSINGULARITY* (Theatre Kantanka) which he co-devised. Arky has co-produced/written half a dozen short films, of which *Australian Summer* won both Best Film and Best Actor at the 2005 Tropfest Film Festival. Recent work for television includes *Janet King* for the ABC. He has just finished writing his first feature screenplay, *Mrs* Burswood, which won the long form category of the AWG's 2018 Monte Miller awards.



YALIN OZUCELIK Sami

Since graduating from the National Institute of Dramatic Art in 2007, **Yalin** has worked extensively with Belvoir on such productions as *The Great Fire*, *Ivanov*, *The Kiss* and *Baghdad Wedding* for which he received a Sydney Theatre Award nomination. Yalin has appeared on stages across Australia, most recently in the 2017 national tour of *1984* (Headlong/State Theatre Company South Australia). Other stage credits include *Othello*, *Henry IV*, *King Lear* (Bell Shakespeare); *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Vere [Faith]*, *Gross Und Klein*, *Blood Wedding* (Sydney Theatre Company); *Frost/Nixon* (Melbourne Theatre Company); *When The Rain Stops Falling* (Brink Productions); *Reflections on Gallipoli* (Australian Chamber Orchestra); *Servant of Two Masters*, *Measure for Measure* and *Cyrano de Bergerac* (Sport for Jove), receiving a Sydney Theatre Award for playing the titular role. Yalin will soon appear in Season 5 of the award-winning series *Rake* and also appeared in the television series *Gallipoli* and *Deadline Gallipoli*. He helped voice the computer game *Rome: Total War* and is also the central character in award-winning independent comic *Burger Force*.



Fayssal Bazzi,
Arky Michael &
Charlie Garber



Victoria Haralabidou



NIGEL POULTON Movement Director

Nigel is an award-winning, internationally renowned fight director, weapon and movement specialist, stunt performer and actor with expertise in classical, historical and adaptive swordplay, firearms, edged weapon use, kinaesthetic movement processes and combat systems. In theatre, opera and ballet, Nigel works as a fight and movement director with companies such as The Metropolitan Opera, Washington Opera, Opera Australia, New York City Ballet, Cameron Mackintosh, Dainty Group International, Sydney Theatre Company, Melbourne Theatre Company, Queensland Theatre, Bell Shakespeare, Belvoir, La Boite, Circus Oz and Kooemba Jdarra. Nigel's film and television work includes: *Pirates of the Carribean V*, *Deadline Gallipoli*, *The Water Diviner*, *The Bourne Legacy*, *Vikingdom*, *Winter's Tale*, *The Good Wife*, *Person of Interest*, *One Shot*, *Boardwalk Empire*, *Salt*, *I Am Legend*, *Sopranos*, *30 Rock* and *Law & Order: Criminal Intent*. Nigel's awards include a Green Room Award for Outstanding Contribution to the Melbourne Stage. Nigel has received grants from the Australia Council for the Arts and Queensland Arts Council. This year, Nigel's work includes: *Spartacus* (The Australian Ballet); *Romeo and Juliet* (New York City Ballet); *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Romeo and Juliet* (Bell Shakespeare); *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* (Sydney Theatre Company); *Carmen* and *Tosca* (Opera Australia); and *Prizefighter* (La Boite).



HAMED SADEGHI Strings

Hamed is a World Music specialist with an Iranian classical music background. He studied music performance at Jahad Daneshgahi Tehran Art University in Iran and completed his Master of Sound Engineering at Uniten University in Malaysia. He collaborated and toured in Iran, Malaysia, Indonesia, Taiwan, the US and Singapore, playing at the Penang Folk Music Festival, Kuala Lumpur Performing Art Centre, Yilan Music Festival, as well as appearing on television in Malaysia. He has performed in venues around the world in a rich variety of cross-cultural collaborations. Hamed's passion for research led him to collect all the musical compositions of Maestro Ali Akbar Khan Shahnazi, who is a reference for students of Iranian traditional music, and Hamed published the pieces as a book for Tar players. He plays these compositions with the Eishan Ensemble both in Australia and around the world. He has also collaborated with well-known Iranian Kurdish singer Aziz Shahrokh, as well as world-class singer Maestro Shahram Nazeri on an Australian tour, which featured a western string ensemble along with Iranian traditional musicians.



HAZEM SHAMMAS Hazem

Since graduating from West Australian Academy of Performing Arts, **Hazem** has worked with many theatre companies in Australia. His theatre credits for Belvoir include *Atlantis*, *Mother Courage and Her Children*, *Scorched*, *Antigone*, *Paul*, *Gates of Egypt*, *Peribanez*, *Stuff Happens*. Other theatre credits include *Disgraced* (Melbourne Theatre Company); *Othello* (State Theatre Company South Australia); *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Tempest*, *A Comedy of Errors*, *Macbeth* (Bell Shakespeare); *The Call* (Griffin); *Criminology* (Malthouse Theatre); *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Arts Radar); *The Tribe* and *Buried City* (UTP/Belvoir/Sydney Festival). Hazem's television credits include *Underbelly*, *East West 101*, *At Home With Julia*, *All Saints* and the mini-series *Safe Harbour*. His feature film credits include *X*, *The Tumbler* and *Alex and Eve*. Hazem is also a founder and director of Poetry in Action, a touring theatre-in-education company that teaches poetry, literacy and the arts to high school students.



VAISHNAVI SURYAPRAKASH Vaish/Boy/Waiter

Vaishnavi is one of the National Institute of Dramatic Art's most exciting recent graduates. She makes her theatre debut with *Sami in Paradise*. In her final year performance, Vaishnavi played the lead role of Jess in *Love and Money* directed by Judy Davis. She has also appeared in *Realism*, *Spring Awakening*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and the music video 'Find You' by Tim Ayre as part of *Triple J Unearthed*. Vaishnavi has trained and performed professionally in Bharatha Natyam, a classical Indian dance style, and has a double degree in Arts and Law from the University of Sydney.



JETHRO WOODWARD
Musical Direction, Sound Design & Composer

Jethro is a Melbourne-based composer, musical director, arranger, musician and sound designer recognised for his expansive and highly layered film, theatre and dance scores. A multi Green Room Award winner and Helpmann nominee, he has worked with some of Australia's leading major and independent companies including Malthouse Theatre, Melbourne Theatre Company, Sydney Theatre Company, Belvoir, Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, Opera Victoria, Chamber Made Opera, Back to Back, Chunky Move, Lucy Guerin, Australian Dance Theatre, Aphids, Stuck Pigs Squealing, Rawcus, KAGE and more. Jethro regularly tours his work internationally and has won Green Room Awards for his work on *The Bloody Chamber* (Malthouse Theatre), *Moth* (Malthouse Theatre/Arena Theatre), *Goodbye Vaudeville Charlie Mudd* (Malthouse Theatre/Arena Theatre) and *Irony Is Not Enough* (Fragment 31).



BELVOIR

THEATRICALITY. VARIETY OF LIFE. FAITH IN HUMANITY.

Belvoir is a theatre company on a side street in Surry Hills, Sydney. We share our street with a park and a public housing estate, and our theatre is in an old industrial building. It has been, at various times, a garage, a sauce factory, and the Nimrod Theatre. When the theatre was threatened with redevelopment in 1984, over 600 people formed a syndicate to buy the building and save the theatre. More than thirty years later, Belvoir St Theatre continues to be home to one of Australia's most celebrated theatre companies.

In its early years Belvoir was run cooperatively. It later rose to international prominence under first and longest-serving Artistic Director Neil Armfield and continued to be both wildly successful and controversial under Ralph Myers. Belvoir is a traditional home for the great old crafts of acting and storytelling in Australian theatre. It is a platform for voices that won't otherwise be heard. And it is a gathering of outspoken ideals. In short: theatricality, variety of life, and faith in humanity.

At Belvoir we gather the best theatre artists we can find, emerging and established, to realise an annual season of works – new Australian plays, Indigenous works, re-imagined classics and new international writing. Audiences remember many landmark productions including *The Drover's Wife, Angels in America, Brothers Wreck, The Glass Menagerie, Neighbourhood Watch, The Wild Duck, Medea, The Diary of a Madman, Death of a Salesman, The Blind Giant is Dancing, Hamlet, Cloudstreet, Aliwa, The Book of Everything, Keating!, The Exile Trilogy, Exit the King, The Sapphires*, *The Rover, Faith Healer* and many more.

Today, under Artistic Director Eamon Flack and Executive Director Sue Donnelly, Belvoir tours nationally and internationally, and continues to create its own brand of rough magic for new generations of audiences.

Belvoir receives government support for its activities from the federal government through the Australia Council and the state government through Create NSW. We also welcome and warmly appreciate all philanthropic support.

belvoir.com.au

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PURSUE THE EPIC

Creative Development is a big part of what we do at Belvoir. We believe in supporting our artists to pursue epic ideas and to present engaging and daring theatre.

But in order to realise this vision, we need your support towards the **Creative Development Fund**.

What is the Creative Development Fund? It supports bold new productions that require the kind of artistic time and space that sits outside our normal operating budget. This can include funding emerging artists, script development, longer rehearsal periods, or specialist artists or craftspeople who can create work that sits well outside the box.

And that's where you come in.

Belvoir's Creative Development Fund needs to raise $250,000 annually – to make sure our artists and creatives can pursue epic ideas, and present the daring to you.

Your donation is an investment in the future of Australian theatre.

For further information contact our Development team on **02 8396 6209** or **development@belvoir.com.au**



Image: Ursula Yovich, co-writer and star of *Barbara & the Camp Dogs*

BELVOIR BRIEFINGS

Belvoir Briefings are your chance to hear directly from the artists about every show before it hits out stage.

For each production in 2018, the creative team will sit down to talk about why they wanted to tackle the story, how it's evolved in the rehearsal room, and what audiences can expect from the show. It's your ticket backstage.

Of course, there will also be time for you to ask your questions, and we'd love to continue the discussion in the bar afterward.

Belvoir Briefings are FREE but we'd like you to book online at **belvoir.com.au/events/belvoir-briefings** so we can save you a spot.

The Sugar House
6.30pm, Thursday 26 April

Bliss
6.30pm, Thursday 14 June

A Taste of Honey
6.30pm, Thursday 12 July

Calamity Jane
6.30pm, Thursday 9 August

An Enemy of the People
6.30pm, Thursday 27 September

The Dance of Death
6.30pm, Thursday 1 November



Nancy Denis

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We would like to acknowledge Cajetan Mula, Len Armfield and Geoffrey Scharer. They will always be remembered for their generosity to Belvoir.

We also thank our Life Members, who have made outstanding contributions to Belvoir over more than thirty years. They have changed the course of the company and are now ingrained in its fabric: Neil Armfield AO, Neil Balnaves AO, Andrew Cameron AM, David Gonski AC, Rachel Healy, Louise Herron AM, Sue Hill, Geoffrey Rush AC, Orli Wargon OAM and Chris Westwood.

These people and foundations supported the redevelopment of Belvoir St Theatre and purchase of our warehouse.

Andrew & Cathy Cameron
(refurbishment of theatre & warehouse)

Russell Crowe
(redevelopment of theatre)

The Gonski Foundation & Nelson Meers Foundation
(Gonski Meers Foyer)

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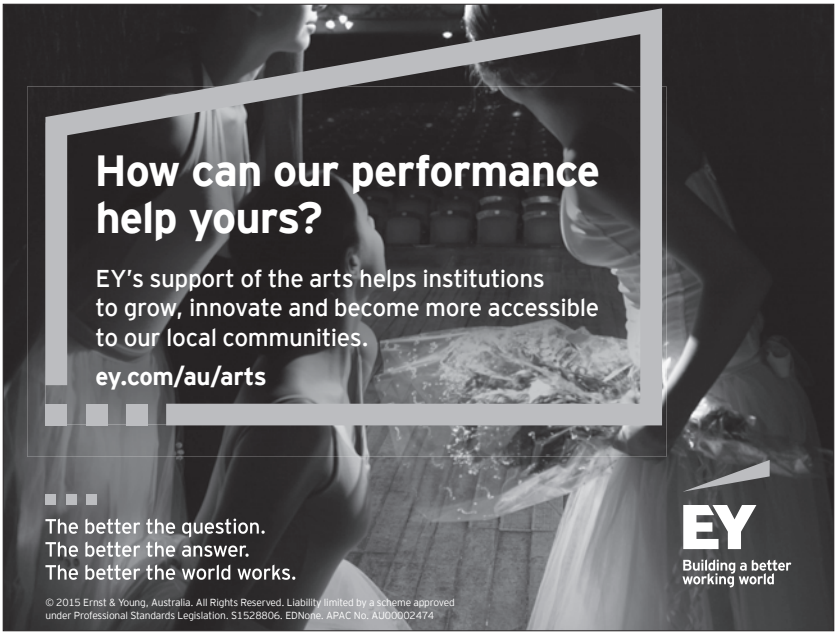
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