

BELVOIR



WAYSIDE BRIDE

2 APR – 29 MAY

By Alana Valentine



LIGHT SHINING IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

7 APR – 28 MAY

By Caryl Churchill



REP
SEASON

REP
SEASON

WAYSIDE BRIDE &

LIGHT SHINING IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

by Alana Valentine
Co-directed by Eamon Flack
and Hannah Goodwin

RUNNING TIME

2 hours 35 minutes
(incl. 20 minute interval)

CONTENT WARNING

Wayside Bride uses coarse
language and strobe lighting

by Caryl Churchill

Co-directed by Eamon Flack and Hannah Goodwin

First performed at the Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh,
in September 1976, and subsequently on tour and
at the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs.

RUNNING TIME

2 hours (no interval)

CONTENT WARNING

Light Shining in Buckinghamshire includes
loud noises, violence and uses strobe lighting.

CAST

Arkia Ashraf
Maggie Blinco
(*Wayside Bride* only)
Rashidi Edward
Marco Chiappi
Emily Goddard
Sandy Greenwood
Sacha Horler
(*Wayside Bride* only)
Rebecca Massey
Brandon McClelland
Angeline Penrith

UNDERSTUDIES/ STANDBYS

Ákos Armont
Matilda Ridgway
Christopher Stollery
Contessa Treffone
Charles Wu

CREATIVES

Costume Designer Ella Butler
Set Designer Michael Hankin
Lighting Designer
Damien Cooper
Sound Designer & Composer
Alyx Dennison
Choreographer Elle Evangelista
Fight Director Nigel Poulton
Vocal Coach Danielle Roffe
Costume Design Associate
Nell Ferguson
Set Design Associate
Keerthi Subramanyam
Production Manager
Ren Kenward
Costume Supervisors
Belinda Crawford and
Lisa Mimmocchi

Special Effects Engineer
Tom Houghton
Assistant Director
Matilda Ridgway
Andrew Cameron Fellow
Abbie-lee Lewis
Stage Manager
Cecilia Nelson
Assistant Stage Managers
Amelia Grindrod and
Alexandra Logiudice

MUSICIANS

(*Light Shining* only)

Alyx Dennison
Marcus Whale

NOW S HOWING !

Two great plays about power and change.

Wayside Bride by Alana Valentine

Light Shining in Buckinghamshire by Caryl Churchill

For the first time in Belvoir's history we're offering a repertory season – that's to say, the same cast, on the same set, in alternating performances of two different plays, by two legendary women writers.

They're each very different works – a new Australian play by one of our finest writers about a very Sydney institution. And a classic by perhaps our language's greatest living dramatist, a play bursting with energy and provocation. Together "in rep" they present a big picture and a local picture of the age-old struggle for a fairer society.

Supported by **Nelson Meers Foundation & COVID-19 Arts Sustainability Fund – an Australian Government initiative**

PRODUCTION THANKS

Nicole Artsetos	Diana Jalo
Georgia Atwell-Moore	Leia Loisa
Garnett Brownbill	Valerie Motelb
Jane Cleary	Sidonie Pitot
Zoe Davis	Jodi Rabinowitz
Lewis Dean	Joseph Raggatt
Bella Debbage	Anne-Louise Sarks
Corinne Fish	Erin Shaw
Steve Francis	Jemima Snars
Margaret Gill	Helen Thatcher
Penny Greenhalgh	Amanda Torrisi
Steve Hendy	Megan Ven Hoek

Visit our website for the full list of credits.

We acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora nation who are the traditional custodians of the land on which we share our stories. We also pay our respect to the Elders past and present, and all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Sandy Greenwood



Alana Valentine & Sacha Horler

WRITER'S NOTE WAYSIDE BRIDE

ALANA VALENTINE

Matt Noffs contacted me during rehearsals to let me know about the passing of his grandmother, Margaret Noffs, Ted Noff's wife. She died in December 2021 at 95 years old, and was apparently lucid to the end. When I told the cast of the play there was a collective exclamation of grief, a deep understanding that this was the passing of a great Australian, a compassionate, extraordinary person who, no less than Ted, was responsible for the establishment of the remarkable Wayside Chapel. We had been rehearsing with the line, 'Margaret Noffs is still alive' for so long, but now she was gone. A brochure called *The Wayside Chapel, The Biggest Little Church in the World* claims that between 1964 and 1986 Ted married 24,000 couples from 132 different nations. My own mother, Janice Powell was among those married at the Chapel

and was the inspiration for this work. One of the great delights of conducting interviews from this play has been the continuing radicalism of the people who were married at Wayside - the sense that by defying religious convention at one of the most important moments of their life, their marriage, they continued to carry with them a general scepticism about institutions and authority. One of the pains, of course, is that I interviewed and heard from many more people than I could possibly put in my play. To those whose incredible stories I had to leave out please accept my apology.

Matt Noffs told me that almost every day of his life, strangers who hear that his surname is Noffs will ask if he is related to Ted and then say quickly that their brother, father, uncle, sister-in-law etc were married by Ted. That has been my

experience too in working on this play. It's the thing I love most about being a playwright who draws their work from living testimony – it is the experience of hitting a rich seam of memory and pride and pain that is connected specifically to this city of Sydney but, I hope, says something unique about the flavour of religious radicalism when it is expressed in an Australian context. In Mike Willesee's 'This is Your Life' TV program about Ted Noffs there is a parade of astonishing visionaries who embrace him, among them Charles Perkins, the nation-changing First Nations activist who says of Ted Noffs 'I suppose he's probably one of the greatest living Australians and he made a man out of me, he made me see good things in people'. The two embrace warmly as they discuss the Wayside Chapel's breakfast program for Aboriginal children.

Thank you to Karen Rodgers, Ben Winspear, Lee Lewis, the City of Sydney, Graham Long, Louise Gough, Sue Donnelly, Aaron Beach, Eamon Flack, Hannah Goodwin, Wendy Howell,

Dom Mercer, Vicki Gordon and this astonishing cast and creative team. Thank you to all at the present Wayside Chapel for their support and love (it's what you continue to do). I hope that whether you are of the generation who knew and admired Ted Noffs for his heretical stances, who know that a family member or cherished friend was married there, or are a young person who just needs to believe that change is possible, you will find sincere hope in this play, genuine belief in the legacy and vision for a society that cares for its vulnerable and leaves no-one behind. Ted was a great smiler, a great laughter, a big cryer as were so many of my interviewees....so please feel free to be copious in your response to the work of this amazing cast. Margaret Noffs, I dedicate this play to you.

Alana Valentine

www.alanavalentine.com

Alana Valentine's full list of contributors, interviewees and assistance thanks can be found on [Belvoir's website](http://Belvoir.com.au).



Maggie Blinco &
Alana Valentine



Alyx Dennison, Marcus Whale, Rebecca Massey & Emily Goddard

WRITER'S NOTE

LIGHT SHINING IN BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

CARYL CHURCHILL

*Published in the first edition of
Light Shining in Buckinghamshire, 1978*

"You great Curmudgeons, you hang a man for stealing, when you yourselves have stolen from your brethren all land and creatures."
More Light Shining in Buckinghamshire, a Digger pamphlet 1649

A revolutionary belief in the millennium went through the middle ages and broke out strongly in England at the time of the civil war. Soldiers fought the king in the belief that Christ would come and establish heaven on earth. What was established instead was an authoritarian parliament, the massacre of the Irish, the development of capitalism.

For a short time when the king had been defeated anything seemed possible, and the play shows the amazed excitement of people taking hold of their own lives, and their gradual betrayal as those who had led them realised that freedom could not be had without property being destroyed. At the Putney Debates Cromwell and Ireton argued for property; Gerrard Winstanley led Diggers to take over the

common land: 'There can be no universal liberty till this universal community be established.' The Levellers and Diggers were crushed by the Army, and many turned in desperation to the remaining belief in the millennium, that Christ would come to do what they had failed in. The last long scene of the play is a meeting of Ranters, whose ecstatic and anarchic belief in economic and sexual freedom was the last desperate burst of revolutionary feeling before the restoration.

The simple 'Cavaliers and Roundheads' history taught at school hides the complexity of the aims and conflicts of those to the left of Parliament. We are told of a step forward to today's democracy but not of a revolution that didn't happen; we are told of Charles and Cromwell but not of the thousands of men and women who tried to change their lives. Though nobody now expects Christ to make heaven on earth, their voices are surprisingly close to us.

Caryl Churchill, 1978



Eamon Flack



Hannah Goodwin

DIRECTORS' Q&A

HANNAH GOODWIN & EAMON FLACK

View the full Directors' Q&A [on our website.](#)

What made you consider programming the Rep Season?

EF: The idea of doing two plays in rep is something I've thought about for a long time, and the impetus became very real during that first lockdown in 2020 when the whole artform was suddenly in peril. We were forced to question everything - which is not necessarily a bad thing. Terrifying, but interesting.

One of the things I found myself thinking a lot about was the relationship between process and outcome, and the fact that if you always work in the same way you'll always get the same kind of theatre and the same kinds of stories. The world had just changed very suddenly at that time, and theatre was going to have to change too, there was no choice.

So the idea of rep came from that fact that we had to find new ways to work, and from the sense that we had to find new kinds of stories and forms that might reflect the new realities we're living in.

A way forward that is about artistic collaboration, about a wider view of a changing world, about an idea of theatre-going not as a one-off night of entertainment but as a returning act of shared imagination...

Why these two particular plays, and why right now?

HG: The great link between these two plays for me is also the reason to stage them right now. It's that both are fundamentally about a struggle to hold faith - in an idea, in a mission, in a vision, in each other... Both explore what it costs to believe in and to fight for a better, fairer world. They honour and celebrate the forgotten people who kept up that fight. The people who, at great personal cost, made space in society so that we can think, speak, act, and love in different ways. Together, these two plays show us that the pursuit of change like that is a rebellion that has sustained over hundreds of years and continues today. From a civil war in the 1600s, to Kings

Cross in the 70s, to us at Belvoir now. My hope is that the Rep project as a whole raises a placard in the mind that says, 'I can't believe we're still fighting this sh*t'.

Wayside Bride pays tribute to a community of local heroes, outsiders, and rebels. And it's about love - real, pure and simple. Before rehearsals I read an email from the Wayside Chapel, written by their current pastor Jon Owen. In it he wrote about a wedding, a couple's third attempt following a number COVID cancellations. Upon finally seeing his partner as a bride the groom was made speechless. Jon writes, 'Their union is a gentle reminder of a divinity that still exists in an all too often cynical world'. And that's what this play is to me. If a union is a kind of spell, a charm to keep people together, then this play is full of that magic. A magic that hopes to prevent the cynical, the narrow-minded and pessimistic forces that would have us believe that we are not connected to one another.

In *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* Caryl Churchill takes as her subject the people that the history books don't write about. I read a book that Churchill read while she was writing this play, *The World Turned Upside Down* by Christopher Hill. One quote from the book I have returned to repeatedly comes from Richard Hooker, a priest and theologian. He described the people of the period as, 'men whose minds are of themselves as dry fuel'. There is a fire that catches in this play, and it is in the minds and imaginations of the people. Fuelled by speech, vision and action it grows into an inferno that spreads across a nation until it is all but suffocated by those who were supposed to lead their people to freedom. But a small ember did survive and sustain itself, to be reignited later to finish what they started. As Churchill says in her introduction, '...their voices are surprisingly close to ours'. We still have unfinished business here on this stolen land.

How do you approach working with two plays from two very different periods in time, two different countries, simultaneously, with a large group of actors, musicians, creatives, and two directors? How did this affect the design process and outcome?

HG: I think the project has only been possible because there are two directors. The scope and scale of what we are trying to speak to artistically is so enormous and multifaceted, that only having one mind to helm the ship (so to speak) would be dishonest. I am enormously

grateful to have had a co-director to talk it out with, to collaborate with on the many challenges we've been faced with staging these two plays. But we'd be nowhere without our team. The thinking we did with Michael and Ella in those early days on the set and costume design really set the agenda for work to continue. A Rep Season is an enormous design task that stretches you into unfamiliar territory, Mikey and Ella have helped us immeasurably to extend our ideas for these productions. I love Alyx's music, it acts as a time machine, a rallying call, an elegy and much more across both shows (one of which she also performs in). Our stage management team performs miracles daily to keep us all on task. The cast have been heroic. And of course, all of it wouldn't have been possible if Alana hadn't taken the leap of imagination with us.

Is there something audiences should keep a particular eye/ear out for in these two plays?

EF: The very first line of *Light Shining* talks about "action, word, thought or faint motion less than any of these", which describes a sort of layer-cake of the faculties that make up a human being. The faint stirrings of something within, brought to thought and then to speech, lead to action in the world. It's a wonderful description, and two wonderful ideas follow from it.

First, the idea that intuitions and imaginings can make the world. As the late and great David Graeber said, "the ultimate, hidden truth of the world is that it is something that we make, and could just as easily make differently."

Second, the idea that a person needs to be allowed to exercise the full gamut of their being, from faint motion right up to action and back again.

Too many people are forced down into bottom layers of their own existence. Both plays take very seriously the idea that we have a responsibility to make space for all people to be able to come out into word and action. These are both plays about people breaking through into thought and action. In doing so those people are remaking themselves, and they are remaking the world. I find their courage and imagination inspiring and beautiful.

Do you have a favourite?

EF: Yes but it changes every other day.

HG: Ditto.

Has there been a particular challenge in working together on this project? How did that affect the dynamic between the two of you or in the room?

EF: Two imaginations are always better than one. There are sort of two parts to directing a show – there's the work in the rehearsal room, doing the scene work, on the floor, with the actors; and there's the work before and around the rehearsal room, with the creatives and the production team, where you're solving the staging and the worlds of the plays. That second part of the work is quite challenging on these plays – both writers really set some real staging challenges. So opening that work up into a broader collaboration than normal has been exciting, and I think it has probably allowed us to be more intrepid than if there were just one director. In terms of the rehearsal room, we work with a kind of pilot/co-pilot setup – Hannah leads the work for *Wayside* and I lead the work for *Light Shining*. It remains a collaboration, and we talk very openly about everything, but we keep the actual scene work and text work quite focused.

If you have only seen one of these plays, why should you see the other?

HG: Because they are both so different! And it is genuinely thrilling to watch these artists test themselves against the style and scope of these two plays. I think it will be a real treat for audiences to see that.

Throughout the process we have talked about how *Light Shining* is a work that targets the head and the gut, whereas *Wayside* goes for the heart. Together, you get a total experience.

[View the full Directors' Q&A on our website.](#)



Rashidi Edward



Brandon McClelland



Michael Hankin



Emily Goddard



Sacha Horler



Rashidi Edward



Rebecca Massey



Brandon McClelland & Arkia Ashraf



Marco Chiappi



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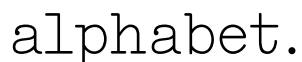
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