



BELVOIR ST
THEATRE

TIDDAS

12 – 28 Jan

By **Anita Heiss**

Co-Directed by
Nadine McDonald-Dowd
& **Roxanne McDonald**

Co-presented with



Indigenous
theatre
at Belvoir
supported by



TIDDAS

12 – 28 Jan

RUN TIME:

1 hour & 30 minutes

CAST

Louise Brehmer Nadine
Lara Croydon Izzy
Sean Dow Richard, Asher,
Spencer, Craig & Rory
Jade Lomas-Ronan Xanthe
Roxanne McDonald
Grandma & Mum
Anna McMahon Veronica
Perry Mooney Ellen

CREATIVES

Writer **Anita Heiss**
Co-Directors
Nadine McDonald-Dowd
& **Roxanne McDonald**
Set & Costume Designer
Zoe Rouse
Associate Designer **Grace Deacon**
Lighting Designer
Jason Glenwright
Sound Designer & Composer
Wil Hughes
Fight & Intimacy Director
Nigel Poulton
Performance Psychologist
Shona Erskine
Song License **Letetia Harris**
Stage Manager **Mia Kanzaki**
Assistant Stage Manager
India Lively

Tiddas was originally
commissioned and produced by

LA BOITE

**BRISBANE
FESTIVAL**

Qpac
QUEENSLAND
PERFORMING
ARTS CENTRE

Co-presented by

**Sydney
Festival**

Indigenous Theatre at Belvoir
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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.

Cover image by **Morgan Roberts**
Rehearsal photography by
Morgan Roberts & Siluni Kumarapperuma

Lara Croydon, Roxanne McDonald
& Perry Mooney



Sean Dow & Louise Brehmer

WRITER'S NOTE

ANITA HEISS

Over a glass of wine at QPAC's Green Jam with Executive Producer Nadine McDonald-Dowd in November 2019, saw the beginning of an incredible, unexpected writing journey for me. My long-time, talented tidda, would soon become my patient dramaturg, and then deadly director of my first play. It was on that day, that Nads invited me to consider adapting my novel *Tiddas* (Simon & Schuster) for the stage.

I was originally inspired to write the novel on a visit to Mudgee back in 2010. I wanted to showcase a group of women friends who came from Wiradyuri country, but I also wanted to pay tribute to my many women friends in Brisbane, through a story that reflects contemporary sistahood, the challenges of life-long friendships, and the unconditional support we have for the women we care about most in our lives.

Tiddas was also an offering of gratitude to Magandjin / Meanjin, for the sense of peace it offered me whenever I would visit. I had such fond memories of many walks along Maiwar, time with friends in the thriving writing community, and the cultural precinct that had always offered something for everyone. *Tiddas* is a story wrapped up in a love letter to the city that blooms jacarandas in springtime.

With my original inspiration in mind, I sat at QPAC again two months later, this time with Nadine and the wonderfully supportive Sanja Simić, then Creative Producer at La Boite, and there was no turning back. We immediately became a vibrant trio determined to bring the rich complex lives of the five tiddas from Mudgee to Brisbane audiences. And now the tiddas are here with you in Sydney. I hope you love them as much as I do.

Writing my first play was fascinating, challenging, life enhancing. It was very different to writing solo at the library. I had to learn to write as a team in a room with other creatives, a collective of brilliant minds with decades of combined theatrical experience. We discussed monologues and duologies and spotlights. There was a lot gasping, sometimes tears, and an inordinate amount of laughter about things that should never be made public. All the while, the white noise of a pandemic rang in our ears back then.

We did reads over zoom when borders were closed, and I acknowledge and thank all those who were part of the creative development during that time. We premiered in 2022 at La Boite with thanks to the Brisbane Festival.

And here we are at Belvoir St in 2024. This season, I've had the privilege of working on the script with and learning from the experience and wisdom of another long-time tidda, Kodie Bedford, and I've watched Nadine McDonald-Dowd and Roxane McDonald in the rehearsal space, weaving their magic to bring this Sydney Festival co-production to you with another brilliant cast. The journey is still one of growth and amazement for me.

I remain incredibly grateful to you all for your dedication and genius.

Belvoir is a space where I've been an audience member many, many times in the last three decades, never imagining I would one day see some of the country's finest directors and actors bringing my own story to life on the stage.

My ask to you as an audience member: if you are inspired by the play, please reach out to the deadly tiddas in your own life (a simple text will do it), and tell them how important, valued and loved they are. Sometimes something so simple can have an extraordinary impact.

To my own tiddas, thank you being there for the joyful times in life, but more importantly, thank you for lifting me from life's moments of darkness into the light again. This play is for you, for all of us.

Yindyamarra bu ngurrbul (respect and love),
Anita Heiss





Roxanne McDonald

CO-DIRECTOR'S NOTE

ROXANNE MCDONALD & NADINE MCDONALD-DOWD

Tiddas premiered in 2022 at La Boite Theatre as part of the Brisbane Festival. Here we are again in 2024 presenting this joyous, feel-good yarn about women, sisterhood and the celebration of women for the 2024 Sydney Festival.

Tiddas is a shared Aboriginal word for sisters. Sisters are not just by blood but are created by the strong bonds of friendship and love, and often over years of lived experiences and travelled journeys. Women are incredibly important in our culture. They are the backbone and the heart of our ways – old and new – and no matter the changing world around us, Tiddas shape us, build us and grow us with every breath.

The Tiddas – Izzy, Xanthe, Ellen, Nadine and Veronica – are dealing with issues we all find ourselves heading towards in our 40's. We have

partied in our 20's, started to form relationships and work commitments in our 30s and the 40's just seems like a time when we should have everything under control. Where everything seems, it should fall into place. And yet, it doesn't and that's okay.

How do you decide between a career and starting a family?

What do you do when your life suddenly changes, leaving you floating?

Where do you go when home holds no place for you anymore?

When the tight circle of friendship created in their childhood years begins to crumble around them and uncovered secrets shatter the truth, they risk walking away from each other forever.

Yet, the Tiddahood (Sisterhood) holds them strong.

Tiddas 2024 marks the directorial debut for Roxanne McDonald with La Boite, and she is very excited and honoured to be working on this beautiful play with her co-director and artist-in-crime Nadine McDonald. It is with great respect to Anita for trusting us to co-direct her story of these five incredible women whose strength and resilience takes us on a journey through self-discovery, of family and the unbreakable bond between friends and family we call our Tiddas.

As First Nations artists we believe telling stories can strengthen our community and generate a greater understanding of us mob and the issues that are our everyday reality. We as a nation need to continue the conversation together with truth-telling at the forefront and how we can achieve great

change through the arts on the nation's psyche, cultural identity, heart and soul.

We are extremely proud of our deadly cast and creatives who are completely invested in this production and are honouring this story. The vibe, openness, support and guidance in the rehearsal room have been so deadly!

Directing Anita's play has been a real privilege, we get to work with some extremely talented actors where our rehearsal room was filled with raucous laughter, joy, good tears and most importantly FUN as we honour the sisterhood!

It is our hope audiences will fall in love and relate to these characters who we think you're going to connect on so many levels. We can't wait for you to enjoy *Tiddas*!

Love

Aunty Rox & Nadine



Anna McMahon & Sean Dow



Jade Lomas-Ronan, Lara Croydon & Perry Mooney



Sean Dow, Louise Brehmer & Roxanne McDonald



Sean Dow



Louise Brehmer



Anna McMahon



Roxanne McDonald



**BELVOIR ST
THEATRE**

2024 SEASON

TIDDAS

12 – 28 Jan

The comedy smash of the Brisbane Festival, for a three-week Sydney season.

TINY BEAUTIFUL THINGS

1 Feb – 3 Mar

A tiny, beautiful, and life-affirming play based on the book by Cheryl Strayed.

HOLDING THE MAN

9 Mar – 14 Apr

The love story which defined a generation, and a classic of the Australian stage, in a brand new production.

LOSE TO WIN

25 Apr – 19 May

An extraordinary journey from South Sudan to the Belvoir stage.

NAYIKA A DANCING GIRL

30 Apr – 19 May

A virtuosic solo performance mixing storytelling, live music, and Bharatanatyam dance.

NEVER CLOSER

25 May – 16 Jun

An astonishing debut play in a production direct from our Downstairs Theatre.

COUNTING AND CRACKING

28 Jun – 21 Jul

The internationally-acclaimed epic returns to Sydney, this time at Carriageworks.

THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME

17 Aug – 22 Sep

The hit adaptation of the hit book in a brand new, very Belvoir production.

WELL-BEHAVED WOMEN

28 Sep – 3 Nov

A musical feast celebrating the women who refused to behave.

AUGUST: OSAGE COUNTY

9 Nov – 15 Dec

One of the monumental plays of the 21st century, up close and personal.



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