



**BELVOIR ST
THEATRE**

HOLDING THE MAN

9 Mar – 14 Apr

Adapted by
Tommy Murphy

From the book by
Timothy Conigrave

Directed by
Eamon Flack

HOLDING THE MAN

9 Mar – 14 Apr

RUN TIME: 2 hours 20 minutes (incl. 20 minute interval)

CAST

Danny Ball

John

Tom Conroy

Tim

Russell Dykstra

Ensemble

Rebecca Massey

Ensemble

Guy Simon

Ensemble

Shannen Alyce Quan

Ensemble

CREATIVES

Playwright

Tommy Murphy

Original Author

Timothy Conigrave

Director

Eamon Flack

Set Designer

Stephen Curtis

Costume Designer

Mel Page

Lighting Designer

Phoebe Pilcher

Composer &
Sound Designer

Alyx Dennison

Choreographer

Elle Evangelista

Fight/Movement Director

Nigel Poulton

Vocal & Accent Coach

Laura Farrell

Associate Sound Designer

Matthew James

Aerial Consultant

Finton Mahoney

Assistant Director

James Elazzi

Community Engagement
Coordinator

Thinesh Thillainadarajah

Stage Manager

Luke McGettigan

Assistant Stage Manager

Mia Kanzaki

WAAPA Stage Management
Secondment

Sam Rechichi

Supported by



WARNING

Holding The Man contains strong language, adult themes, nudity and explicit sexual references. Theatrical haze and herbal cigarettes are in use.



Tommy Murphy

PLAYWRIGHT'S NOTE

TOMMY MURPHY

One of our scenes is set here in this theatre, on this very stage. Tim Conigrave, actor and playwright, received a grant to develop his play *Thieving Boy* in the early 1990s. He chose Belvoir for the rehearsed reading. He describes a pleasure - one that I know well - of working in concert with the scrutiny of brilliant actors, director, and dramaturg. He was to miss out on the next joy: sitting amid the audience to witness their connection with the work. It is a privilege I have sometimes enjoyed on Tim's behalf. Many artists have helped shape my adaptation of Tim's ultimate work, his memoir, across its numerous productions since 2006. My gratitude extends to the current Belvoir team led by Eamon Flack who have reinvigorated *Holding the Man* with their inventiveness and wit, repositioning it in today's context.

Tim's life story is shaped by two intertwining passions: his love for John Caleo and a keen need for self-expression. Theatre is a setting for many of the major turning points: a force that unites and separates our star-crossed lovers. In early correspondence with his publisher, Tim refers to "scenes" from his book. This wanted to be a play.

In 2005, I sat down with the originator of this project, David Berthold, then artistic director of Griffin. We chose the nearby Tropicana café for me to pitch my stage version of a book that includes this scene:

...the artistic director of the [Griffin Theatre] company [and I met] among the black leather jackets at the Tropicana Café... 'I've read the play and I think it's really good, but it definitely needs more work'.

In the moments when my play definitely needed more work, I convinced myself that I was collaborating with Tim. He remains my best writing teacher. His chief lesson is to tell the truth. Nick Enright, Tim's own mentor and fellow writer, described him as "a stranger to tact". Of the many people I interviewed in my research, most wanted to back that up, sometimes in hushed tones. "You should know, Tommy, Tim could be a bit of an arsehole". Well yeah. That is why we have his lasting, unflinching memoir, replete with its unapologetic queer detail.

James Waites, a journalist and theatre critic, interviewed Tim for The National Library Oral History Project on January 13th 1993. That day Tim had been to an "AIDS funeral" of a friend who was unable to finish a creative project. Tim had his own underway. "In the last twelve months... I have lost my lover; I've lost my house... I don't work anymore. I'm now on the pension. So there are all these fairly major changes in my life. ...My T-Cells are zero... So, basically I'm available to any disease that wants me. ...I don't think I'm waiting to die. I don't think it's very far away. ...It's a bit hard when you're in pain like I was yesterday... It's actually sometimes very hard to just sort of get your spirits up. This morning I woke up and I felt so fantastic that I got up and, you know, did some writing..."

Other memoirists would be tempted to boast about this period of courage. "I feel like I'm looking down the barrel of my own life at the moment." Tim did not write his book self-aggrandisement. His focus is John. "The only thing I have to live for is these two things that I am writing, which I'd like to finish both of. One's a play that involves stuff about AIDS but it's not really about AIDS, and the other one is the book that I'd like to write about my lover and I, which I've started."

Before his diagnosis and at the beginning of the crisis, Tim conducted his own interview of an AIDS patient for his play *Soft Targets*. "I posed the question we had decided to ask all the people we interviewed. 'Is there a message about living with AIDS that you want the world to know?'" In the National Library interview, a decade later, James Waites poses something similar to Tim. "It's just a question I've made a promise to ask everybody... What tips do you have for anybody recently diagnosed. What have you learnt?" Tim laughs, then summons his response. "You have to demand stuff in AIDS... Information is power. Language is power."

A foot(y)note: The phrase 'holding the man' is not explained in the memoir or the play. It is not just that it comes from John's sport. In Australian Rules Football 'holding the man' is an offence that incurs a penalty; in this case, a cruel and undeserved one.



Guy Simon, Danny Ball, Tom Conroy, Russell Dykstra, Rebecca Massey & Shannen Alyce Quan



Eamon Flack & Guy Simon

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

EAMON FLACK

One bright Saturday afternoon after Little Athletics I was playing handball with H.S. while the parents packed up. I won a rally and H.S. went after the tennis ball. As I watched him running past the long jump pit in his maroon athletics shorts the same thought hit me that hits Tim at the end of the opening scene of this play. It was 1991 and I was 12 years old. But this being Brisbane, plus *God is everywhere*, I quickly put this exciting and terrifying thought away and went on with my little life. That summer the year before I started high school was filled with misplaced pre-pubescent fantasies of playing handclapping games with H.S., though in truth we only ever played Sonic the Hedgehog and backyard cricket. That summer I also developed a kind of persistent sick feeling in my stomach which I can only describe as the sensation that *something is wrong with me*. The family doctor prescribed milkshakes to keep my weight up and off I went to Nudgee College* with my dirty secret safe

**That's right, after twenty years in the closet I'm coming out as a Nudgee Boy. If you're from Brisbane you'll know what this means.*

from God, the world, and myself. All I had to do was drink milkshakes.

A few years later during a game of Trivial Pursuit I learnt that the famous Irish writer Oscar Wilde was a homosexual. Here, out of the blue, and in a board game, was a sign from the universe: *Gays are real!* Nothing trivial about it. I tucked this fabulous fact away with the terrifying thought from 1991 until some years later, in a pit of despair at uni, spending far too much time with my straight friend C.S., sick to the stomach large amounts of the time, still with the milkshakes but still underweight and semi-terminally repressed, I chanced on an ad in the Courier Mail for a play about Oscar Wilde. It was called *The Judas Kiss*, by David Hare, on tour from some theatre in Sydney called Company B Belvoir. Curious and desperate I borrowed a friend's credit card and went along to the Queensland Performing Arts Centre to see it. There my life was overthrown. Not all the milkshakes in the

world could sublimate what I saw on that stage. Up came that unsinkable thought from 1991 as clear and fresh and eager as it had ever been. Soon after, and after all sorts of drama, I slipped the noose of straight life and went to acting school in Perth, where I almost immediately pashed a fellow student and fell into the arms of homosexuality like a shipwrecked sailor on a wild and gorgeous beach. I'm not sure I'd be here without that flimsy trail of fabulous gay luck. Thanks Trivial Pursuit! Thanks Oscar Wilde. Thanks Belvoir. Thanks theatre.

• • •

The flimsy trail of fabulous gay luck by which you might make your place in the world is not, even today, a clear path - though it's clearer than it was, for some at least. It's easy to lose the way, or get stranded somewhere in the middle of the ungay world. You pick your way along, from crush to crush, from foyer to nightclub, from gay website to queer book... Like a shit-ton of other gays, Tim's memoir was a crucial waymarker for me. I remember where I was when I read it: about 5 rows from the back of a 747 to Perth. We landed as Tim and John went home to Melbourne for Christmas. They died later that day in my boyfriend's Ford Laser in a carpark in Leederville, then I drove to City Beach and cried and cried and cried.

But I'd started crying long before they started dying. It was their living that got me going, before we even flew over Griffith. They found each other at 15: what was unimaginable for me was real for them. That alone was worth a good sob. But more than anything it was the sense that you're not alone, that there is a path, many paths, completely different and yet also very much same, that the paths get clearer with each open gay life, each retelling of a gay life, each retelling even of the same two gay lives of Tim and John, who have come to stand in for thousands of Tims and Johns. Of course I cried. Reading *Holding the Man* was like the sun coming out. As gay.

• • •

When Tim and John fell in love in 1974 there was no clear path. They had to make it up, sniff it out, explore, discover, experiment. Their lives became political. Love and lust drove them on. In the thirty-odd years since their deaths they have become like mythical figures. What is it about their lives and Tim's telling of

them? In many ways their story is a common one. Their falling in love at 15 and staying together is less common. Tim's compulsive frankness gives their story not just some of its drama but also its breathless close-up-ness. There's the big picture their story evokes - the massive social change of the 70s and 80s, the intergenerational unfolding of migrant Australia. There's the natural poetry of their characters and fates: one quiet, one hyper-verbal; one grounded, one with his head in the stars; one actor, one chiropractor; John's moral beauty, and Tim's morally messy addiction to life. They taught each other how to live, and then how to die. Its a naturally beautiful story.

Then there's the Passion of Christ...

• • •

Like Tim and John I was raised Catholic. I fled the Church for a bunch of reasons, many of them to do with how hateful and dishonest Catholicism is about homosexuality. I don't know that I can ever forgive the Church (sorry Jesus!) but I still love a lot of what Catholicism taught me about things like love, struggle, truth - which are what *Holding the Man* is really about. And I love a lot of what it taught me about story. Here's the outline of the story some of us know as The Passion of Christ:

An outcast figure, having revealed his true nature to the world, makes a triumphal entry into a sinful metropolis. Here he feasts with the men in his circle, after which he is hauled through a mortifying ordeal which leads to his early death, followed by his resurrection and afterlife in story.

It's story of many gay men, from Oscar Wilde to Tim Conigrave. And it remains the story of many LGBTIQ+ people around the world. We re-tell it to remember those who have been lost - but also to remember what has been won, and what still stands to be won or lost. The path forwards continues the path taken.

Here, then, with all our love, we offer you The Passion of Tim and John. Welcome to our gay church.



Mel Page, Mia Kanzaki, Shannan Alyce Quan, Russell Dykstra, Eamon Flack, Danny Ball, James Elazzi, Tom Conroy, Tommy Murphy, Rebecca Massey & Guy Simon

A REFLECTION ON HOLDING THE MAN

NIC DORWARD

“Not everything has to be political, Tim.”

Of all the cracking lines in Tim Conigrave’s memoir, and Tommy’s enduring adaptation, this is the one that will never leave me. It usually comes to me moments before I’m about to crash headfirst into a decidedly political situation that would no doubt benefit from a cooler head, or less skin in the game.

When you’re a queer person living with HIV, often ‘everything’ does appear political. And when one side of that political debate is arguing against you and your community’s right to move freely through the world safely, and with equality, it’s almost impossible for that ‘political’ to not feel personal.

That line, and indeed all of Tim’s classic story of love in a changing Australia, means a great deal

to me. When I was diagnosed with HIV in the spring of 2012, my mind quickly turned to Tim and John. Like for so many of us, *Holding the Man* was for me the quintessential Australian AIDS-era novel. I also had the privilege of being the assistant director to David Berthold for the original Griffin production in 2006, an experience that changed the trajectory of my life.

I literally moved to Sydney, from Queensland, to work on the original production. As a newly arrived baby queer, I took full advantage of the nation’s gay capital, visiting the many landmarks Tim references in the book (*vale*, Ken’s at Kensington). But it was spending time immersed in Tim and John’s world, in the heart of Kings Cross, that had the greatest impact.

I describe working on *Holding the Man* as my political awakening. Through it, I became tethered to my history, to my people. So when I was searching for a way to find meaning in the traumatic event of my HIV diagnosis, my deep knowing of Tim's book and Tommy's play became my liferaft.

Not long after my diagnosis, I co-founded* a grassroots movement for people living with HIV. We named that movement The Institute of Many, or TIM, in memory of Timothy Conigrave and his vital place in our shared history.

TIM quickly grew into the largest grassroots movement of its kind in Australia, and thanks to its thousands of dedicated members, helped improve the lives of people living with HIV in Australia. One of the great honours of my life as an HIV activist was meeting Tim's mother, Mary-Gert, and his sister Anna, at an HIV discussion panel where they got to hear about TIM's impact, and how the fight against HIV stigma continues to this day, fought by those still with us from the earliest days, and newer generations.

When we started TIM, I was younger and angrier than I am now. Tim's brashness and

urgency inspired much of my early activism. While I will never give up on the ongoing fight to ensure all people living with HIV are given the respect we deserve, today I also make space for honouring Tim's other great legacy. His great love letter to John Caleo.

I was lucky enough to find my 'John' a few years ago, after my HIV diagnosis and a turbulent period of HIV activism that took over my life. Nowadays, I return to *Holding the Man* not just for political inspiration, but for a beautiful reminder that a deep, lifelong love is something queer people not only deserve, but should cherish, and fight for as fiercely as we defend our rights.

Thank you, Tim and John x

*TIM's other co-founder is Jeff Lange, a gay man living with HIV who had to leave Australia in part because of the discriminatory barriers to migration that people living with HIV still experience.

Nic (Holas) Dorward is a writer, activist, and recovering theatremaker.



RESOURCES

Tim and John met at school in the 1970's, but their lives were cut short when they were both diagnosed with HIV in 1985, a time before successful treatments were available.

John Caleo died on January 26 1992 aged 31, his partner Tim died on October 18 1994 aged 34.

Since the first diagnosis in Australia in 1982, the introduction of HIV testing in 1985, and the peak of newly diagnosed infection in 1999, the experience of testing and living with HIV has changed significantly.

Please take the time to find out more about what living with HIV looks like in our resources, how you can assist in reducing stigma, and support services if you need to talk to someone.

SUPPORT LINES

If you or someone you know needs information or support, these organisations are there to help:

Q Life 1800 184 527

Beyond Blue 1300 224 636

Lifeline 13 11 14

INFORMATION

DID YOU KNOW?

People living with HIV now live long, happy, healthy, and connected lives - [Read More](#)

ARE YOU AWARE?

When people who are living with HIV are on treatment's they can't pass HIV onto anyone else - [Read Here](#) and [Here](#)

THERE'S STILL WORK TO DO.

We've made great progress in reducing HIV transmission within the last ten years- particularly in inner city Sydney - but we still have a way to eliminate HIV transmission for all in our communities - [More!](#)

ORGANISATIONS

We are so grateful for the generosity and time from the below

organisations in educating and informing the Belvoir team, and hope you will support; you will support;

ACON who brilliantly support the LGBTQ+ community, and provided us so much time, knowledge, engagement and encouragement. And lots of resources!

POSITIVE LIFE NSW who do magnificent work as the largest peer-led and run representative body of all people living with HIV in Australia based in NSW.

NAPWHA as Australia's peak non-government organisation representing people living with HIV - they are so important to the community!

TIM (The Institute of Many) is a grassroots movement for people living with HIV, named in memory of Timothy Conigrave and his vital place in our shared history.

BIOGRAPHIES



Tommy Murphy Playwright

Tommy's theatre credits include *Packer & Sons*, *Mark Colvin's Kidney*, *Peter Pan* and *Gwen in Purgatory* (Belvoir St Theatre), *Troy's House* (SUDS, ATYP), *Strangers in Between* (Griffin Theatre Company, Trafalgar Studios West End), *Blood Wedding* (Royal and Derngate Northampton Theatre, UK), *On the Beach* and *Saturn's Return* (Sydney Theatre Company). He created and was the Head Writer and Script Producer for the ABC original television series *Significant Others* (Fremantle, nominated for the 2023 Logie for Outstanding Drama). Tommy has also written episodes on *The Twelve*, *Bloom*, *Fighting Season*, *The Devil's Playground* and *Offspring*. Tommy wrote and was Associate Producer on the feature film *Holding The Man* (Goalpost Pictures) directed by Neil Armfield. He won the AWGIE Award for Best Writing in a Feature Film and Critics Circle Award for Best Screenplay. Tommy's long association with Tim Conigrave's memoir *Holding The Man* began with his 2006 stage adaptation for Griffin Theatre Company which travelled to the West End. Tommy was the recipient of Sydney Theatre Company's Patrick White Playwrights Fellowship (2016), The Writers' Guild and Screen Australia Creators Program in Hollywood (2023), and Australia Council National Award for Theatre (2020). His other notable awards include winner of the 2022 AWGIE Award for Audio Fiction for his radio play *Call You Back* and winner of the N.S.W. Premier's Literary Awards for Best Play for both *Holding The Man* and *Strangers In Between* and the W.A. Premier's Prize for *Gwen in Purgatory*.



Eamon Flack Director

Eamon Flack is the Artistic Director of Belvoir St Theatre in Sydney. He is a director, writer, dramaturg and script developer for stage and screen.

Eamon was born in Singapore and grew up in Singapore, Darwin, Cootamundra and Brisbane. He has a BA (English and History) from the University of Queensland, and trained as an actor at WAAPA from 2001 to 2003. He has worked around Australia and internationally, from the Tiwi Islands to Sri Lanka and the UK. He has led Belvoir's new work development in various guises since 2006, and has commissioned and developed many of the company's most acclaimed new works over the last 15 years.

His productions of *The Glass Menagerie*, *Angels in America* and *Counting and Cracking* won the Helpmann Awards for Best Play in 2015, 2016, and 2019.

His key directing credits include: *Counting and Cracking* (with Associate Director S. Shakthidharan, winner of the Helpmann Award for Best Direction of a Play and nominated for the Sydney Theatre Award Best Direction of the Mainstage Production), *The Jungle and the Sea* (co-directed with S. Shakthidharan, winner of Best New Work and Best Production at the Sydney Theatre Awards), *Angels in America*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *Into the Woods*, Tommy Murphy's *Packer & Sons*, Rita Kalnejais's *Babyteeth*, Alana Valentine's *Wayside Bride* (co-directed with Hannah Goodwin), Tom Wright's adaptation of Brecht's *Life of Galileo*, Eamon's own adaptations of Henrik Ibsen's *Ghosts* and Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* and *Ivanov* (Sydney Theatre Awards Best Production and Best Director), as well as *The Rover*, *The Blind Giant is Dancing*, *As You Like It*, and Beckett's *The End*. His other directing credits include *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Bob Presents/B Sharp) and *Wulamanayuwi and the Seven Pamanui* by Jason de Santis (Darwin Festival).

His writing and adaptation credits include: Associate Writer of S. Shakthidharan's *Counting and Cracking* (winner of the Nick Enright Prize for Playwriting at the NSW Premier's Literary Awards, the Victorian Literary Prize and the Victorian Premier's Award for Drama, Helpmann for Best New Work), co-writer with S. Shakthidharan of *The Jungle and the Sea* (Winner, Best New Work, Sydney Theatre Awards 2022); a stage adaptation of Christina Stead's *The Man Who Loved Children*; Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* and *Ivanov*, Gorky's *Summerfolk*, Sophocles' *Antigone* and Ibsen's *Ghosts*; co-adapter with Leah Purcell of Ruby Langford Ginibi's memoir *Don't Take Your Love To Town*; and co-deviser of *Beautiful One Day* with artists from ILBIJERRI, version 1.0, and the community of Palm Island.

For orchestral concert he has adapted and directed *A Midsummer Night's Dream* alongside Mendelssohn's score for the Sydney Symphony Orchestra and Belvoir St Theatre conducted by Simone Young, and directed and co-created *Beethoven and Bridgetower* with Anna Goldsworthy, Rita Dove and Richard Tognetti for the Australian Chamber Orchestra.



Tom Conroy



Danny Ball



Danny Ball John

Danny Ball is an actor, writer and producer. He grew up in Melbourne to Italian-Australian parents before moving to Sydney, graduating from NIDA with a BFA (Acting). Previous theatre credits include *The Italians* and Darwin's *Reptilla* (Belvoir 25a). Other theatre credits include *Loaded* (Malthouse Theatre), *Cleansed* (Old Fitz), *The Making of Sasha Fein* (ARA Theatre), *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Players* (Bell Shakespeare). Screen credits include *Totally Completely Fine* (STAN), *A Beginner's Guide to Grief* (SBS), *Home & Away* (Seven Network). Danny's debut play *The Italians* premiered at Belvoir 25a in 2022 to a sold-out critically acclaimed season, and was subsequently filmed by Australian Theatre Live. His play *Scab* was the 2022 winner of the ATYP Foundation Commission and in 2024 will be published by Playlab.



Tom Conroy Tim

For Belvoir, Tom's credits include *The Master & Margarita*, *Tell Me I'm Here*, *My Brilliant Career*, *Ghosts*, *Jasper Jones*, *Mortido*, *Mother Courage and Her Children*, and *Small and Tired*. Tom's other theatre credits include *1984*, *Hay Fever*, *Spring Awakening* (Sydney Theatre Company); *The Mousetrap* (John Frost/Crossroads Live national tour); *The Wider Earth* (Queensland Theatre Company/Sydney Festival and 2022 Tour); *Cock* (Melbourne Theatre Company/La Boite); *Romeo and Juliet* (State Theatre Company of South Australia); *Moth* (Malthouse Theatre/Arena Theatre Company); *Romeo and Juliet* (Bell Shakespeare); *Land & Sea* (Brink Productions). His screen work includes *Bump* on Stan and *Hamlet* for Bell Shakespeare/ABC Splash Content. Tom's performance in *Something Natural But Very Childish* (La Mama) garnered him a Green Room Award for Best Male Performer in Independent Theatre. He is a graduate of the Victorian College of the Arts.



Russell Dykstra Ensemble

Russell's Belvoir credits include *Babyteeth*, *Toy Symphony*, *Stuff Happens*, *Yibiyung*, *Ray's Tempest*, *The Ham Funeral*, *The Underpants*, and *The Laramie Project*; *Born Yesterday*, *Twelfth Night* for Melbourne Theatre Company; *God of Carnage*, *Wonderful World of Dissocia*, *The Unlikely Prospect of Happiness* for the Sydney Theatre Company; *Not Like Beckett* for Malthouse Theatre; and *Below* for Griffin Theatre Company.

Russell appeared in the ABC television series *Rake* (Series 1- 4). Other TV credits include *Fires*, *Why are You Like This?*, *Spirited*, *Wild Boys*, *My Place*, *Scorched*, *Loot*, *Black Jack*, *Irreverent*, *The Last King of the Cross* and *In Limbo*. Some film credits include *Romulus My Father*, *Slam*, *Oranges and Sunshine*, *Clubland*, *Lantana*, *Garage Days*, *Ned Kelly*, *View From Greenhaven* and *Hey Hey it's Esther Blueburger*.

Russell's awards include AFI Award Best Actor in a Leading Role (*Soft Fruit*), Helpmann Awards (*The Lion King*, *The Addams Family*, *Stuff Happens*, *Toy Symphony*), Brisbane Theatre Critics Matilda Award (*Children of the Devil*). His nominations include AACTA Award (*Rake*, Season 4), AFI Awards (*Romulus my Father*), Sydney Theatre Award (*The Lion King*, *Toy Symphony*), Victorian Green Room Award (*Children of the Devil*) and Film Critics Circle of Australia (*Soft Fruit*).

Russell will soon be appearing in the highly anticipated ABC TV series *Ladies in Black*.



Rebecca Massey Ensemble

Rebecca Massey is considered one of Australia's most versatile and accomplished film, television and theatre actresses. She's been nominated and won numerous awards including a Green Room Award for Best Actress, and two Helpmann nominations.

Rebecca has appeared in starring roles for flagship theatre companies all over Australia. Her company Club House Productions produced *44 Sex Acts in One Week*, as part of this year's Sydney Festival. She performed *Dance Nation* for the State Theatre Company of South Australia, *The Misanthrope* for The Bell Shakespeare Company, *Kill Climate Deniers* for Griffin Theatre Company, and *Chimerica, Dinner, After Dinner, Perplex* and *Travesties* for the Sydney Theatre Company. Belvoir credits include *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*, *The Book of Everything*, *Exit the King*, *It Just Stopped*, *Stuff Happens*, *The Underpants*, *Macbeth*, *Cloudstreet*, *The Small Poppies* amongst others.

Rebecca has a string of both comic and drama television credits in award winning shows including, *Metro Sexual* (Seasons 1 & 2), *Deep Water*, *Total Control*, *Upright*, *The Principal*, *Chandon Pictures* (Seasons 1 & 2), *Lowdown*, (Seasons 1 & 2) and *Utopia* (Seasons 2 - 4). Her film work includes *Bad Girl*, *Accidents Happen*, *The Black Balloon* and *Backyard Ashes*. She is soon to be seen in ABC's yet to be released *Barons* and Del Kathryn Barton's feature, *Blaze*.

She is the voice of 'Mary' in the Kate's serial podcast *Slushy* and 'Special Agent Maddie Rigs' for Working Dogs' adult animation, *Pacific Heat*.



Guy Simon Ensemble

Guy Simon is a proud Birripi, Worimi, Waddi Waddi and Walbunga man and is the 2024 Balnaves Fellowship recipient. His theatre credits include: *My Brilliant Career* (Belvoir), *Jasper Jones* (Belvoir- Return Season & NSW Tour,) *The Visitors* (STC), *Jacky* (MTC), *The Tempest* (STC), *White Yella Tree* (Griffin Theatre Company), *The Return* (Malthouse Theatre), *Grand Horizons* (STC), *Playing Beatie Bow* (STC), *First Love is the Revolution* (Griffin Theatre Company), *Cloudstreet* (Malthouse Theatre), *The Harp in the South* (STC), *Strangers in Between* (Cameron Lukey Presents), *Bright World*, (Theatre Works), *Jasper Jones* (MTC), *Blaque Showgirls* (Malthouse Theatre), *The Battle of Waterloo* (STC), *The Myth Project: Twin* (Arthur, A Theatre Company), *Black Diggers* (QLD Theatre Company), *This Fella*, *My Memory* (Mooghalin Performing Arts), *Yellamundie* (Mooghalin Performing Arts), *Junction* (Bakehouse Theatre), *Stolen* (STC), *Lucky* (IPAN Productions).

Film: *Undertow*, *Around the Block*. **TV:** *The Secret She Keeps S2*, *Wakefield*, *The Wrong Girl*, *Redfern Now 2*. **Other:** Online Series: *A Chance Affair*. **Training:** NIDA. **Pronouns:** He/Him

Awards: 2017 Helpmann for best Male Actor in a Supporting role in a Play



Shannen Alyce Quan Ensemble

Shannen Alyce Quan (they/she) graduated from WAAPA in 2014 with a Bachelor of Arts (Music Theatre).

Shannen is excited to return to Belvoir this year, after previously performing in *Fangirls* (2021). Other theatre credits include *The Dismissal* (Squabbalagic), *Metropolis* (Hayes Theatre), *City of Angels* (Joshua Robson Productions), *Six The Musical* (Sydney Opera House), *Spring Awakening* (CPCA) and *Priscilla Queen of the Desert - The Musical* (Michael Cassel Group), *The Gathering* (Vic Theatre Company), *Post: A New Musical* (Something Blue Productions), *Boat People* and *Tejas Verdes* (Theatre 451) and *Romeo and Juliet* (Australian Shakespeare Company).

Shannen recently finished filming the highly anticipated 6-part limited Netflix series *Apple Cider Vinegar*, based on the true story of Belle Gibson.

Shannen won two Performing Arts WA Awards: Best Actor and Best Newcomer in *Next to Normal* (Black Swan State Theatre Company). They were also nominated for Best Performance in a Supporting Role in a Musical at the 2023 Sydney Theatre Awards for their performance in *Metropolis*.



Guy Simon



Russell Dykstra



Shannen Alyce Quan



Rebecca Massey



Stephen Curtis Set Designer

Stephen's extensive design career spans four decades and embraces set and costume design for features, short films, dance, drama, opera, physical theatre and musicals, including major collaborations with Australia's leading directors, choreographers, festivals and performance companies. He designed the sets for Company B Belvoir's first production *Signal Driver* and has subsequently designed sets and or costumes for *Cursed!*, *Things I Know To Be True*, *Barbara And The Camp Dogs*, *The Drover's Wife*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Business*, *Gwen In Purgatory*, *Scorched*, *The Adventures Of Snugglepot & Cuddlepie And Little Ragged Blossom*, *The Cake Man*, *It Just Stopped*, *In Our Name*, *The Underpants*, *Svetlana In Slingbacks*, *Emma's Nose*, *The Small Poppies*, *Cosi*, POPULAR MECHANICALS 1 & 2, THE HEADBUTT, *Picasso At The Lapine Agile*, *The Alchemist* and *The Blind Giant Is Dancing*.

Other theatre credits include *Platee* for Pinchgut Opera; *The Secret River* for Sydney Theatre Company/London/Edinburgh Festival; *I Am Eora* for Sydney Festival; *Lulu*, *The Cunning Little Vixen* and *La Boheme* for Opera Australia; *Der Ring Des Nibelungen (The Ring Cycle)* for State Opera of South Australia; *The Hypocrite*, *Two Brothers* and *The Blue Room* for Melbourne Theatre Company; *The Winter's Tale* and *Henry Iv* for Bell Shakespeare Company; *Once In Royal David's City*, *Black Diggers* and *Pygmalion* for Queensland Theatre Company.

As a production designer Stephen's film credits include *Looking For Alibrandi*, *Bedevil* and *Night Cries*. Stephen has published two books, *Staging Ideas: Set And Costume Design For Theatre* as a guide to the art of theatre design, and *The Designer: Decorator Or Dramaturg?* as a Platform Paper interrogating the contemporary role of the performance designer.



Mel Page Costume Designer

Mel is a set and costume designer.

Costume designs for Belvoir St Theatre include: *Japser Jones*, *Ivanov*, *Kill The Messenger*, *Seventeen*, *Nora*, *The Glass Menagerie*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Elektra/Orestes*, *The Government Inspector*, *Hamlet*, *Angels In America*, & *Strange Interlude*. Set & Costume designs include: *Taste Of Honey*, *Enemy Of The People*, *Back At The Dojo*, *Medea* and *Small & Tired*.

Opera designs include costumes for *Lear & Médée* for Salzburg Festival; *Die Tote Stadt* for Bayerisch Staatsoper & Theater Basel and *Pelleas Et Melisande* for Den Norske Opera & Ballet.

Other theatre credits include costumes for *Engel In Amerika* for Theater Basel; *Drei Schwestern* for Theater Basel & L'Odeon; *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof*, *Mary Stuart* *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* and *Baal* for Sydney Theatre Company; *La Pompeii* for Malthouse Theatre and *Complexity Of Belonging* for Chunky Move. Set and costume designs include: *Lethal Indifference* for Sydney Theatre Company; *Night Maybe* for Theatreworks; *Minnie & Liraz* and *The Apocalypse Bear Trilogy* for Melbourne Theatre Company.

Mel was the proud recipient of the 2016 George Fairfax Memorial Award and has won a Sydney Theatre Award.



Phoebe Pilcher Lighting Designer

Phoebe Pilcher is lighting designer with an interest in new work and collaborative processes. Phoebe is a graduate from WAAPA (Production and Design) and NIDA (MFA Design for Performance). Recent credits include: *The Italians* (Belvoir 25A), *Never Closer* (Belvoir 25A) *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Redline Productions at the Old Fitz), *La Cage Aux Folles* (State Theatre and Arts Centre Melbourne), 2024 will see Phoebe make her mainstage debut with *Holding The Man* directed by Eamon Flack and the transfer production of *Never Closer* directed by Hannah Goodwin, both for Belvoir.



Alyx Dennison Composer & Sound Designer

Alyx Dennison is a singer, composer and sound designer living and working on Gadigal Land. She is a fierce advocate for equality in education and the arts, with a particular interest in work which illuminates (and works to dissolve) systems of class, power and hierarchy.

She cut her teeth on experimental pop duo kyū, who toured extensively and released two critically acclaimed albums (Popfrenzy/Inertia) before disbanding in 2012. She continued her study of classical and experimental vocal traditions abroad as well as some studies in Interactive Composition at the VCA before joining Nick Wales' ensemble for Shaun Parker Company's *Am I* (as vocalist and multi-instrumentalist) which toured internationally. In 2015, she released and toured her self-titled solo LP (Popfrenzy/Caroline) which was lauded as an evolution from her previous work.

She has performed at Meredith Music Festival, Mona Foma, Carriageworks, The State Theatre and played with acts such as LAMB (UK), Sarah Blasko, Juana Molina (Argentina), Xiu Xiu (US) and Deradoorian of The Dirty Projectors (US).

Alyx's composition and sound design credits for stage include; *Grey Rhino* by Charmene Yap and Cass Mortimer Eipper for Sydney Festival/Carriageworks 2022, *Limbic* by Cass Mortimer Eipper for Australasian Dance Collective 2022; *The Mother Project* a multi-disciplinary work directed by Clemence Williams 2022; for Agatha Gothe-Snape; *The Outcome is Certain* 2020 and *Wet Matter* 2020 (lead by Evelyn Morris) for MUMA, *Double Beat* by Sara Black for Form Dance Projects 2019-2022; for Griffin Theatre Company: *Splinter* by Hilary Bell and directed by Lee Lewis 2019 and *Superheroes* by Mark Rogers and directed by Shari Sebbens 2020 (associate to Dave Bergman); for Karul Projects: *Mi:wi* by Taree Sansbury for Next Wave Festival 2018, *WOLLUMBIN // WARNING* 2017 and *CO_EX_EN* by Thomas E.S. Kelly for Dance Massive 2019, *Story Club Solo* by Zoe Norton-Lodge for Sydney Opera House 2017. Film credits include; *Nataptedi* by Yolanda Lowatta for Art_Apart 2022; *Liminal* for Australasian Dance Collective 2020 and *ID* for Transit Dance Company 2020 - both choreographed and directed by Cass Mortimer Eipper; a series of short films born of Liverpool Girls' Highschool's Refugee Art Project, and *Outbreak Generation* by Brooke Goldfinch which premiered at Sydney Film Festival in 2017.

She has performed in works by internationally renowned artists such as Agatha Gothe-Snape, Oliver Beer (UK), Patricia Piccinini, Lauren Brincat; and has performed alongside legendary new music vocalist Joan La Barbara (NY), and has appeared in works presented at The Art Gallery of NSW, The Biennale of Sydney, Liveworks Festival of Experimental Art, National Gallery of Australia, MONA and Opéra National de Paris.



Elle Evangelista Choreographer

Elle Evangelista loves dancing. Her Belvoir choreography credits include *The Master & Margarita*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *The Boomkak Panto*, *The Rep Season* and *A Midnight Summer's Dream* with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. Her other theatre choreography credits include *Twelfth Night* (Bell Shakespeare), *A Very Expensive Poison* (NIDA) and *How To Catch A Star* (Australian Chamber Orchestra).

As a dancer she has worked for Force Majeure, KAGE Physical Theatre, Opera Australia and she has been awarded residencies to create new work by Ausdance NSW, DirtyFeet, Critical Path, March Dance, Brand X and Supercell Festival of Contemporary Dance. From 2019 - 2021, Elle was an Artist Representative on the Board of Critical Path and in 2022 a Belvoir Artistic Associate.

Elle has a Bachelor of Arts in English from UWA and a Bachelor of Arts in Dance from WAAPA. She was raised on Boorloo/Perth by her Filipino and Burmese family and currently lives on Garigal Land in Sydney with her partner and their young son.



Nigel Poulton Fight/Movement Director

Nigel is an award-winning movement director, fight and intimacy coordinator, SAG-AFTRA/MEAA stunt performer and actor, with over 25 years of professional experience. Selected theatre credits include: for Belvoir St Theatre, *The Master and Margarita*, *Miss Peony*, *Packer and Sons*, *Things I Know To Be True*, *Stop Girl*, *Blessed Union*, *At What Cost?*, *The Jungle and the Sea*; for Sydney Theatre Company, *Oil*, *On The Beach*, *Do Not Go Gentle*, *Fences*; for Bell Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Macbeth*; for Melbourne Theatre Company, *Bernhardt/Hamlet*; for Ensemble Theatre, *Memory of Water*, *Mr Bailey's Minder*, *Suddenly Last Summer*. Nigel's film and television work includes: *Deadloch*, *Nautilus*, *Poker Face*, *Thor: Love and Thunder*, *Spiderhead*, *Ding Dong I'm Gay*, *Occupation 2*, *Pirates of the Caribbean V*, *Deadline Gallipoli*, *The Water Diviner*, *The Bourne Legacy*, *Vikings* and *Winter's Tale*.

In 2021, Nigel was awarded the status of Fight Master with the Society of American Fight Directors, as one of only two recipients outside the US with this accolade. He has also won a Green Room Award for outstanding contribution to the stage.



Laura Farrell Vocal & Accent Coach

Laura Farrell (she/her) is a Voice and Dialect Coach living and working on Gadigal land. She holds a Masters of Fine Arts in Voice from NIDA; a Post Graduate Diploma in Voice from the Victorian College of the Arts; and a Bachelor of Music Theatre from the Victorian College of the Arts. A current lecturer for NIDA's BFA, Laura has also taught on multiple Sydney actor training programs, including NIDA's Diploma of Stage and Screen and Diploma of Music Theatre, Actors Pulse, Sydney Acting Studio, Actors Centre Australia and The University of Wollongong.

For Belvoir, Laura's coaching credits include *Into The Woods*, directed by Eamon Flack (2023), *Blue*, directed by Deborah Brown (2023), *Jungle And The Sea*, directed by Eamon Flack (2022), *Tell Me I'm Here*, directed by Leticia Caceres (2022), *Fangirls*, directed by Paige Rattray (2022) and *Counting And Cracking*, directed by Eamon Flack (2022).

Other credits include *Pear Shaped*, directed by Miranda Middleton (Rogue Projects, 2023), *F*** It Bucket*, directed by Alyssa McClelland (LeftBank Productions UK, 2022), *Reluctant Sea Shanty* for UNHCR, directed by Kyra Bartley (FINCH, 2022), *Picnic At Hanging Rock*, directed by Claudia Osbourne (NIDA, 2022), *Paper Stars*, directed by Miranda Middleton (Salty Theatre, 2021) and *Revolt. She Said. Revolt Again.*, directed by Heather Fairbairn (NIDA, Sydney 2021).



Matthew James Associate Sound Designer

Matty James is a Sydney-based sound designer, engineer and composer practising and creating on Gadigal land. Matty is an alumni from the Australian Institute of Music, a trained recording engineer and lover of heavy vintage synths. A familiar face in the Belvoir family, Matty has mixed a range of shows for the company and brings a wealth of technical and creative expertise to any production.

Matty's Belvoir credits include *The Master and Margarita* (FOH Mix Engineer), *Robyn Archer* (Technical Sound Designer, Lady Day at Emerson's Bar and Grill (FOH Mix Engineer), *The Weekend* (FOH Audio Engineer), *Miss Peony* (FOH Audio Operator), *Into The Woods* (Microphone Tech).

Other Theatre credits include *INDance* (Sydney Dance Company) as an audio programmer; as a Sound Designer *Lohengrin* and as Sound Engineer *Aida*, *Madame Butterfly*, *Le Juive*, *La Traviata*, *Marriage of Figaro*, *La Boheme*, *Turandot*, *Attila*, *Aida* (Opera Australia).



James Elazzi Assistant Director

James is an award-winning playwright, screenwriter and director. His plays have been nominated in the NSW Premier's Literary Award three years consecutively, shortlisted twice in the Rodney Seaborne Award, four-time award winner in the Sydney Theatre Awards and is a three-time Silver Gull Playwriting Award shortlist. *Son of Byblos* 2022 Belvoir 25. In 2023-2024, James wrote, directed and produced his second short film about Lebanese migration, *Seeds of Gold*. In 2022, James directed and produced his short film *Yannis* which has officially been selected in more than 17 Film Festivals around the world including Los Angeles, Poland, Lebanon, Greece and Italy. It has since won Best Performances in the 2022 LGBTQI+ Los Angeles Film Festival and nominated 7 times in the Made in The West Film Festival, including best director and screenplay, winning best Lead Actor. James' sold-out theatre stage plays include *Lady Tabouli*, *Queen Fatima* and *Omar and Dawn*.



Luke McGettigan Stage Manager

Luke is Belvoir's Resident Stage Manager. For Belvoir, he has stage managed *The Jungle and the Sea*, *Tell Me I'm Here*, *Opening Night*, *The Boomkak Panto*, *Stop Girl*, *My Brilliant Career*, *A Room of One's Own*, *Packer & Sons*, *Things I Know To Be True*, *Counting and Cracking*, *The Dance of Death*, *A Taste of Honey*, *Sami in Paradise*, *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* (STC / 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); and *Alive at Williamstown Pier* (Griffin).

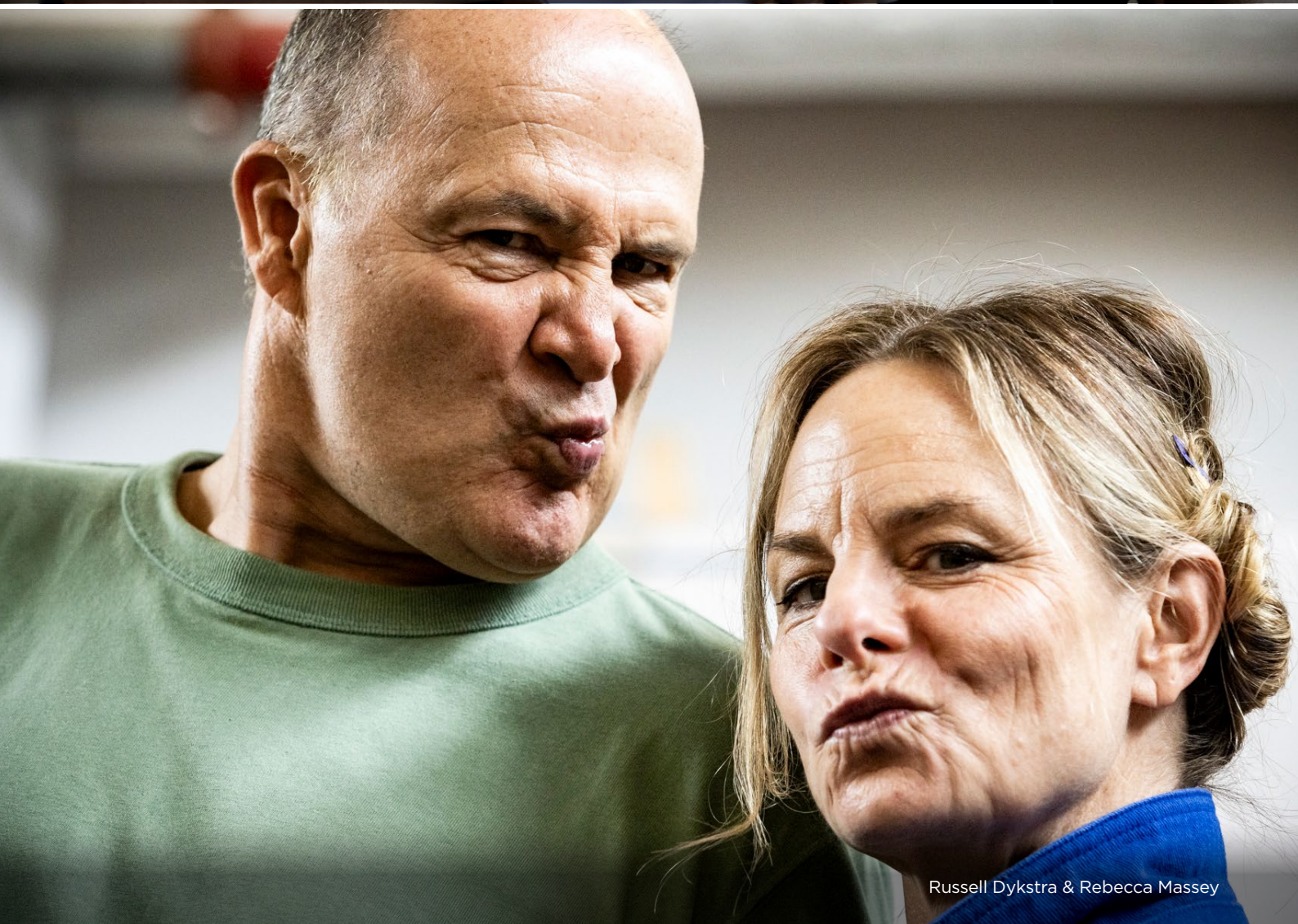


Mia Kanzaki Assistant Stage Manager

Mia Kanzaki is a Sydney based stage manager who is passionate about diverse stories and inclusive practices in the arts. She is a graduate of WAAPA's Bachelor of Performing Arts (Stage Management). As Stage Manager, her credits include Tiddas (Belvoir) and The Face of Jizo (Red Line Productions). As Assistant Stage Manager, her credits include Blessed Union, the At What Cost? National Tour, The Weekend (Belvoir), and Summer of Harold (Ensemble Theatre).



Tom Conroy & Danny Ball



Russell Dykstra & Rebecca Massey



Shannen Alyce Quan, Russell Dykstra, Guy Simon, Tom Conroy & Danny Ball



Russell Dykstra, Mel Page, Guy Simon & Tom Conroy



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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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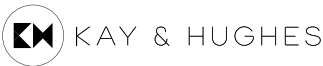
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