

LOSE TO WIN

RUN TIME: 1 hour 10 minutes (no interval)

CAST

Mandela Mathia Performer Yacou Mbaye Musician

Stage Manager **Jen Jackson**

CREATIVES

Writer
Mandela Mathia
Director
Jessica Arthur
Set and Costume Designer
Keerthi Subramanyam
Sound Designer & Composer
Brendon Boney
Lighting Designer
Kate Baldwin
Dramaturgical Assistant
Ayah Tayeh
Vocal Coach
Laura Farrell

WARNING

Lose to Win includes references to death and violence, the use of strobe lighting and haze.

Cover photography by **Daniel Boud** Rehearsal photography by **Brett Boardman**

Mandela Mathia



WRITER'S NOTE

MANDELA MATHIA

It's a given. Whether we like it or not, life is like a glasshouse that throws rocks at us and hides its hand. It's up to us how we reply when rocks are thrown at us. Either we make jewels out of them or throw them back at the glasshouse. Coming of age, having to reflect on the tragedies that have happened to my family and the South Sudanese community for twenty-seven years, is the reason I had to write Lose To Win. I saw many individuals within my community as well as myself turn these rocks into jewels, through building character, resilience, and the ability to move forward despite everything we have gone through. Lose To Win is a celebratory story of those of us who are living in the west and those back in South Sudan. It is a celebratory story of

empowerment, of everyone who had to deal with the rocks life threw and continues to throw at them, but still chose, and continue to choose, to turn these rocks into jewels and move forward.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention and thank important people who I consider friends and mentors, and who have helped bring this story to life. To the wonderful storyteller and filmmaker, Genevieve Clay-Smith, who has been on this project from the genesis of the idea and the early stages of writing, thank you.

To another wonderful director, Jessica Arthur, who saw something in my heart, believed in the story and helped me bring the writing to completion. Thank you.

To the dramaturgs, Dom Mercer and Ayah Tayeh, who brought their skills and abilities to refine and develop the script. Your contribution has been substantial in this work. So, thank you.

To Red Line Productions and its staff who helped provide space for me to share *Lose to Win* with the Sydney audiences for the first time, my family and I are indebted to you. So, thank you.

And finally, to Belvoir St Theatre and my Belvoir family — I am thankful to you for providing a place which helped to introduce me to Sydney

audiences as a performer, and for giving me opportunities to nurture my craft as an actor. Furthermore, my family and I thank you for giving this story a voice and a home for Australia to come and see and hear what really happened!

This story is also dedicated to my late mother Joska Acii Lela. Thank you!





DIRECTOR'S NOTE

JESSICA ARTHUR

I met Mandela in 2017 when he was in his final year of drama school. One day in rehearsal he walked up to me and asked, "in the future, will you make a play with me?" Jump forward to us emerging from lockdown four years later, we both had some time on our hands. Mandela and I would meet in our local park and he told me the story of his life, every single incredible detail.

Mandela is generous in his invitation to the audience. He shares his story in a way that invites curiosity and empathy towards our deeper selves. Through the exploration of his journey, he urges our own questioning of what it means to belong to this country - to be Australian.

Working with the creative team - Kate, Brendon, Keerthi - is a joy. Each member brings their own unique perspectives and experiences. Jen and Dana skilfully guide this show from page to stage. An essential part of the team is Yacou, an excellent musician who brings rhythmic intuition to Mandela's story.

Thank you to Rose Mulcare, everyone at Red Line Productions and the Old Fitz for their support of the work in 2022. Thank you to the team of *Nayika: A Dancing Girl* for sharing process, space and story. Thank you to all at Belvoir for bringing this play to life and to Eamon, Dom and Ayah for your collaboration.

The biggest thank you of all goes to my friend and collaborator Mandela Mathia, thank you for gifting me and audiences with the experience of getting to know you and allowing us into your world of story-telling.

We hope this play provides you with a sense of hope while exploring what it means to long for safety, acceptance and the space to dream.























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30 Apr - 19 May

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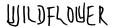






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