



**BELVOIR ST
THEATRE**

LOSE TO WIN



By
Mandela Mathia
Directed by
Jessica Arthur

25 Apr - 19 May

LOSE TO WIN

RUN TIME: 1 hour 10 minutes (no interval)

CAST

Mandela Mathia

Performer

Yacou Mbaye

Musician

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

Stage Manager

Jen Jackson

WARNING

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



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!



Mandela Mathia, Keerthi Subramanyam,
Jessica Arthur, Jen Jackson



Jessica Arthur

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.



Mandela Mathia



Yacou Mbaye



Kate Baldwin



Jen Jackson



Yacou Mbaye, Mandela Mathia



Brendon Boney, Jessica Arthur



Mandela Mathia, Kate Baldwin



Jessica Arthur, Yacou Mbaye



Mandela Mathia, Jessica Arthur, Kate Baldwin, Keerthi Subramanyam



Brendon Boney, Jessica Arthur, Yacou Mbaye, Jen Jackson



**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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