

MEDIA KIT 2016

# SEASON



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2016



# MTC Season 2016

## Melbourne Theatre Company Artistic Director Brett Sheehy AO today revealed MTC's 2016 Season – a year of remarkable theatre, entertainment and activity at Victoria's home of live storytelling.

'2016 marks the fourth Melbourne Theatre Company Season I've had the great privilege to curate,' **Brett Sheehy** said. 'Navigating a theatre company through this second decade of the 21st Century is both a joy and a challenge as we strive to achieve the right balance of stories and art which excites our loyal, intrepid subscribers and also speaks to new audiences about their lives in an arresting and compelling way.'

'In this 2016 program I believe we have found a perfect mix of works – a suite of plays which can speak with great meaning to any of the six million citizens of our State. The combination of exciting Australian premieres of the best new international plays, world premieres of fresh Australian works, and new productions of much-loved classics guarantees there is something on offer that will entertain, challenge and enlighten all our lives, and enable us to see the world in original and enriching ways,' **Mr Sheehy** said.

MTC's 2016 Season features 11 mainstage plays, a family production, **NEON NEXT**, an extensive **Education Program**, the **Cybec Electric** play reading series, a **Women in Theatre** program, regional and interstate touring, **MTC CONNECT** and a range of other artist development initiatives.

Gracing MTC's stages in 2016 are a host of celebrated actors including **Kat Stewart, Shaun Micallef, Colin Friels, Kate Atkinson, Bert LaBonté, Mark Leonard Winter, Sarah Peirse, Christen O'Leary, Bobby Fox, and Ash Flanders**; and award-winning directors including **Kip Williams, Nadia Tass, Simon Phillips, Clare Watson, Peter Houghton, Sarah Goodes**, MTC's Associate Artistic Director **Sam Strong** and Associate Director **Leticia Cáceres**.

These artists will be bringing to life works by some of the finest writers from Australia and abroad including **Joanna Murray-Smith, Kate Mulvany, Tom Holloway, Carolyn Burns, Young Jean Lee, Duncan Macmillan, Deborah Bruce, Ayad Akhtar, David Hare, Neil Simon** and **August Strindberg**.

MTC's 2016 Season opens in stylish fashion with **Ladies in Black**, a new musical which features music and lyrics by **Tim Finn** and sees the return of the creative masterminds behind **North by Northwest**, **Simon Phillips** and **Carolyn Burns**.

**Kate Atkinson** and **Bert LaBonté** star in the Australian premiere of **Lungs**, a funny, tender and profound two-hander by British writer **Duncan Macmillan**, directed by **Clare Watson**.

**MTC Associate Director Leticia Cáceres** leads the Australian premiere of **The Distance**, a smash-hit from London with big laughs and moral dilemmas that examine the emotional fallout when a woman walks out on her husband and children.

2015 Helpmann award-winning director **Kip Williams** brings the theatrical masterpiece **Miss Julie** to MTC for a modern revival, starring the inimitable **Mark Leonard Winter**, fresh from his acclaimed performance in **Birdland**.

**Straight White Men**, the razor-edged new comedy from one of American theatre's most acute observers of race and identity, **Young Jean Lee**, is taken on by **MTC Associate Director Leticia Cáceres**.

One of the greatest crime novels of our times, **Double Indemnity**, is given a brilliant stage adaptation by **Tom Holloway** with direction by **MTC Associate Artistic Director Sam Strong**.

Led by award-winning director **Dean Bryant**, **David Hare's** contemporary classic **Skylight** returns to MTC starring **Colin Friels** and **Anna Samson** as the estranged lovers who reunite and old passion sparks.



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# MTC

## Season 2016

The critically-acclaimed novel *Jasper Jones* is lovingly transformed into a rich and poignant stage production, adapted by **Kate Mulvany** and directed by MTC's Associate Artistic Director **Sam Strong**.

**Kat Stewart** and **Mitchell Butel** star in *Disgraced*, the 2013 Pulitzer Prize-winning drama that proves politics and dinner parties are never a good mix, directed by **Nadia Tass**.

**Joanna Murray-Smith's** acclaimed two-hander, *Switzerland*, comes to MTC with the stunning original Sydney Theatre Company team of actors **Sarah Peirse** and **Eamon Farren**, and director **Sarah Goodes**.

And MTC's 2016 mainstage season closes with **Shaun Micallef** and **Francis Greenlade** playing the famous mismatched duo in comedy classic *The Odd Couple*, directed by **Peter Houghton**.

In addition to the mainstage productions, MTC continues its commitment to family programming with *Egg*, a world premiere co-production with **Terrapin Puppet Theatre**, from acclaimed creative team **Angela Betzien** and **Leticia Cáceres**.

Also in 2016, MTC's NEON Festival evolves into **NEON NEXT** – an incubator for commissioning, developing and presenting independent works for the stage. NEON NEXT sees **Sisters Grimm** return to the Company with their new production *Lilith: The Jungle Girl*, commissioned and presented by MTC, and **Daniel Schlusser** and **Nicola Gunn** commence work on new commissions. Throughout the year NEON NEXT will also provide opportunities for independent theatre practitioners to take part in **free professional development workshops and masterclasses**.

MTC's award-winning **Education Program** continues with a brand new work for VCE students, along with a range of unique learning opportunities and resources for students and teachers. *Peddling* by Harry Melling will make its Australian premiere as MTC's Education production, and will tour to regional Victoria and Tasmania after its season at Southbank Theatre. In 2016, MTC's *Sharing the Light* initiative, supported by Crown Resorts Foundation, enters its second year, enriching the lives of young people throughout the state with subsidised \$5 tickets for eligible schools and families, an Indigenous Scholarship Program and a regional tour of MTC's Education production.

Alongside the work taking place on MTC's stages, the successful **Cybec Electric** play reading series returns, as do MTC's many initiatives designed to foster, develop and support the creative talent of Australian artists. These initiatives include the **Assistant Directors Program**, **MTC Commissions**, **MTC CONNECT** and the **Women in Theatre Program** – an expansion of MTC's Women Directors Program to embrace all areas of the theatre industry.

**Brett Sheehy** said, 'There's no shortage of remarkable theatrical experiences, activities and learning opportunities at MTC in 2016. In addition to presenting a program of exceptional theatre we continue to nurture the individuals who make up the creative industry we are so lucky to have in this country.'

'I invite you to join me on the theatrical journeys which our dozens of extraordinary artists - writers, directors, actors, designers and other creatives - are passionate about taking us on,' **Mr Sheehy** said.

**Subscription Packages** for MTC's 2016 Season are now on sale.

**Single tickets** for *Ladies in Black*, *Lungs* and *The Distance* go on sale on **Tuesday 1 December**, and single tickets for **all remaining shows** go on sale on **Tuesday 8 March 2016**.

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# MTC Season 2016

## Calendar



### Ladies in Black

book by Carolyn Burns,  
music and lyrics by Tim Finn

Southbank Theatre, The Sumner  
16 January – 27 February  
Opening Night: Wednesday 20 January



### Lungs

by Duncan Macmillan

Arts Centre Melbourne, Fairfax Studio  
5 February – 19 March  
Opening Night: Thursday 11 February



### The Distance

by Deborah Bruce

Southbank Theatre, The Sumner  
5 March – 9 April  
Opening Night: Thursday 10 March



### Miss Julie

by August Strindberg

Southbank Theatre, The Sumner  
16 April – 21 May  
Opening Night: Thursday 21 April



### Straight White Men

by Young Jean Lee

Arts Centre Melbourne, Fairfax Studio  
6 May – 18 June  
Opening Night: Thursday 12 May



### Double Indemnity

by Tom Holloway, adapted from the  
book by James M Cain

Arts Centre Melbourne, Playhouse  
30 May – 2 July  
Opening Night: Friday 3 June



### Skylight

by David Hare

Southbank Theatre, The Sumner  
18 June – 23 July  
Opening Night: Thursday 23 June



### Jasper Jones

based on the novel by Craig Silvey,  
adapted by Kate Mulvany

Southbank Theatre, The Sumner  
1 August – 9 September  
Opening Night: Friday 5 August



### Disgraced

by Ayad Akhtar

Arts Centre Melbourne, Fairfax Studio  
19 August – 1 October  
Opening Night: Thursday 25 August



### Switzerland

by Joanna Murray-Smith

Southbank Theatre, The Sumner  
16 September – 29 October  
Opening Night: Wednesday 21 September



### The Odd Couple

by Neil Simon

Southbank Theatre, The Sumner  
5 November – 17 December  
Opening Night: Thursday 10 November



### Egg

by Angela Betzien

Southbank Theatre, The Lawler  
29 June – 19 July  
Opening Night: Thursday 30 June



### Lilith: The Jungle Girl

A Sisters Grimm Production

Southbank Theatre, The Lawler  
1 September – 1 October  
Opening Night: Saturday 3 September

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# Ladies in Black

book by Carolyn Burns,  
music and lyrics by Tim Finn

based on Madeleine St John's novel,  
*The Women in Black*



Cast includes Andrew Broadbent,  
Carita Farrer Spencer, Bobby Fox,  
Kathryn McIntyre, Sarah Morrison,  
Christen O'Leary, Naomi Price,  
Greg Stone

Director Simon Phillips

Composer Tim Finn

Musical Director Isaac Hayward

Designer Gabriela Tylesova

Associate Designer Hana Sandgren

Lighting Designer David Walters

Orchestrations Guy Simon

'A new work from musical directing  
maestro Simon Phillips and songwriter  
extraordinaire Tim Finn.' Crikey

#### Venue

Southbank Theatre,  
The Sumner

#### Season dates

16 January – 27 February

#### Opening night

Wednesday 20 January, 8pm

#### Subscriptions

On sale from 9pm,  
Monday 7 September 2015  
03 8688 0800 (enquiries only)  
mtc.com.au

#### Single tickets

On sale Tuesday 1 December 2015  
Southbank Theatre Box Office  
03 8688 0800 or mtc.com.au



#mtcLadiesinBlack  
@MelbTheatreCo  
mtc.com.au/LadiesinBlack



A Queensland Theatre Company Production.  
Originally produced by Queensland Theatre Company  
in association with Queensland Performing Arts Centre

Melbourne Theatre Company opens its 2016 season in glittering fashion with the stylish musical *Ladies in Black*, a celebration of glamour, gowns and growing up in 1950s Australia. Adapted from the Madeleine St John novel *The Women in Black* and brought to life by director **Simon Phillips** with songs by **Tim Finn** (Split Enz, Crowded House), this QTC production opens on **Wednesday 20 January** at Southbank Theatre, **The Sumner**.

With a stellar cast including **Christen O'Leary** (*The Boy from Oz*) and **Bobby Fox** (*Jersey Boys*), *Ladies in Black* brings writer **Carolyn Burns** and director **Simon Phillips** back to MTC fresh from their triumphant stage adaptation of *North by Northwest*.

Director **Simon Phillips** said, 'It's always great to work on a brand new piece, but this one has so many ingredients that I love, that it promises to be really special. The original novel is a rare jewel, a funny and life-affirming tale that turns small lives into a captivating page-turner and Carolyn's adaptation perfectly and economically catches its charm and the poetry of its intertwining narratives. Add to that the wonderful, witty melodies of Tim's score – from laconic bush ballads to soaring, romantic odes to fashion and possibility – and you have a heady mix, a theatrical event with its own beguiling, twinkly-eyed style.'

In 1950s Sydney when the city is on the cusp of becoming cosmopolitan, young high school graduate Lesley takes a holiday job at Goodes, the most prestigious department store in town. In that summer of innocence, a world of possibilities opens up as she befriends the ladies of the women's frocks department – including her new mentor, the exotic European Magda, mysterious mistress of the gowns.

**Carolyn Burns** began her career in New Zealand, devising and writing the comedy-thriller for children, *The Retrievers*. Her first play for adults, *Objection Overruled*, was performed in all major New Zealand theatres. After moving to Australia, she worked as a journalist with SBS, before attending the screenwriting course at AFTRS and writing for ABC TV. She later wrote four plays, including adapting both *Haxby's Circus* and *High Society* for the stage. Since then, Carolyn has worked as a dramaturg and script editor, and is currently collaborating on a number of new works for the stage.

**Tim Finn OBE** is a highly acclaimed singer and songwriter whose illustrious career began with the group he co-founded in the early 1970s, Split Enz. Tim has also enjoyed great success as a solo artist and as a collaborator with his brother Neil Finn, both during his tenure with Crowded House and as musical duo Finn Brothers. In 2009, Tim collaborated with playwright Matt Cameron on *Poor Boy* which premiered at MTC. It was directed by Simon Phillips, and featured songs taken from a range of Tim's albums. Tim is currently under commission by the Western Australian Opera, Victorian Opera and New Zealand Opera to write *Star Navigator*, which will tour throughout Australia and New Zealand in 2016.

Award-winning director **Simon Phillips** was MTC's Artistic Director from 2000 to 2011. Among his many MTC credits are *North by Northwest*, *Pennsylvania Avenue*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Hamlet*, *Richard III*, *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *August: Osage County*, *Festen*, *The Blue Room*, *Proof*, and *High Society*, which also had a successful UK production. Simon has also worked extensively with companies internationally and around Australia, including STCSA where he was Artistic Director from 1990 to 1993. On the commercial stage, his productions include *Priscilla – Queen of the Desert*, *the Musical*, Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Love Never Dies* and *Eat, Pray, Laugh* – Barry Humphries' farewell tour, all of which have had various international seasons.

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# Lungs

by Duncan Macmillan

Australian Premiere

Cast Kate Atkinson and Bert LaBonté  
Director Clare Watson  
Set Designer Andrew Bailey  
Costume Designer Kate Davis  
Lighting Designer Richard Vabre  
Composer & Sound Designer  
Russell Goldsmith

★★★★

'Both uproariously funny and unbearably poignant.'

Exeunt Magazine

★★★★★

'It is the most beautiful, quietly shattering play of the year.'

Sunday Express

#### Venue

Arts Centre Melbourne,  
Fairfax Studio

#### Season dates

5 February – 19 March

#### Opening night

Thursday 11 February, 8pm

#### Cast and Artist Q&A

Monday 1 February, 6pm

#### Subscriptions

On sale from 9pm,  
Monday 7 September 2015  
03 8688 0800 (enquiries only)  
mtc.com.au

#### Single tickets

On sale Tuesday 1 December 2015  
Southbank Theatre Box Office  
03 8688 0800 or mtc.com.au  
Arts Centre Melbourne  
1300 182 183  
artscentremelbourne.com.au



#mtcLungs  
@MelbTheatreCo  
mtc.com.au/Lungs

**Kate Atkinson** (*Wentworth*, *The Waiting Room*) and **Bert LaBonté** (*Birdland*, *The Mountaintop*) star in *Lungs*, a funny, tender and profound new play by British writer **Duncan Macmillan**. Bringing our uncertainties and unspoken thoughts about the future into full voice, *Lungs* makes its Australian premiere on **Thursday 11 February** at **Arts Centre Melbourne, Fairfax Studio**.

**Clare Watson** returns to MTC following the success of *What Rhymes with Cars and Girls* to direct this modern romantic drama that proves parenthood is not for the fainthearted.

Director **Clare Watson** said, 'I'm thrilled to be returning to MTC with *Lungs*, it's a play that is both hilarious and devastating. This couple are biting witty, they banter and riff off one another but their fundamental question is bleak: if the planet stands a chance, shouldn't humans stop making more humans?'

In Ikea – of all places – a man tentatively suggests to his partner that perhaps they should start a family, and whoosh – out fly all her pent up anxieties for the future. What follows is months of this couple's unending questioning of their impending parenthood compressed into one seamless, funny conversation. And while they fret and bicker over the biggest decision of their lives, the real question becomes whether there's enough love in the mix to hold things together.

**Clare Watson** made her MTC mainstage directing debut with the critically acclaimed *What Rhymes with Cars and Girls* in 2015. Previously, she had worked with the Company as Assistant Director on *Rupert* in 2013 and directed *On the Production of Monsters* for the 2012 Lawler Studio season. Clare is the Artistic Director of St Martins Youth Arts Centre. In 2014, she was director in Residence at Malthouse Theatre and she is an MTC Women Directors Program alumna. Her stage credits include *I Heart John McEnroe* (Uninvited Guests/Theatre Works); *The Man with the September Face* (Full Tilt/Arts Centre); *Smashed* (Stables); and *Hotel* (Melbourne Fringe Festival).

**Duncan Macmillan** is a UK-based, multi-award-winning writer, who has written extensively for theatre in addition to working in radio, television and film. His work for the stage includes *Monster*; the acclaimed adaptation of George Orwell's *1984*, which will play at the 2015 Melbourne Festival; and adaptations of *Reise durch die Nacht*, *Don Juan Comes Back from the War* and *Eugene Onegin*. For radio Duncan's work includes *I Wish to Apologise for My Part in the Apocalypse*, *So Say All of Us* and *Family Tree* (all BBC).

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# The Distance

by Deborah Bruce

Australian Premiere



Cast includes Susan Prior  
Director Leticia Cáceres  
Set & Costume Designer  
Tracy Grant Lord  
Voice & Dialect Coach Geraldine Cook

'Deborah Bruce's lively, funny play explores the fallout of a major domestic upheaval.' *The Guardian*

'Shot through with big emotions, moral dilemmas and, best of all, quiet truths.' *TimeOut London*

'A great play about female friendship. Punchy, observant and funny.' *The Arts Desk*

#### Venue

Southbank Theatre,  
The Sumner

#### Season dates

5 March – 9 April

#### Opening night

Thursday 10 March, 8pm

#### Cast & Artist Q&A

Monday 29 February, 6pm

#### Subscriptions

On sale from 9pm,  
Monday 7 September 2015  
03 8688 0800 (enquiries only)  
mtc.com.au

#### Single tickets

On sale Tuesday 1 December 2015  
Southbank Theatre Box Office  
03 8688 0800 or mtc.com.au

MTC Associate Director Leticia Cáceres directs *The Distance* by Deborah Bruce, a play with big laughs and moral dilemmas that expose one of society's final taboos. Starring Susan Prior, this smash-hit from London makes its Australian premiere on **Thursday 10 March at Southbank Theatre, The Sumner.**

Drawing similarities to Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, *The Distance* explores society's revered view of motherhood and the emotional fallout of a major domestic upheaval when a woman walks out on her husband and children.

Director Leticia Cáceres said, 'With great humour and emotional intelligence, Deborah Bruce has written one of the best new plays to come out of Britain in the past year. Whether you are a parent or not, *The Distance* has universal themes of friendship, family and the anguish of adult responsibilities that everyone can relate to. It's a wild ride of emotions, laughs and surprising honesty.'

Turn to your friends in times of trouble. That's sound advice and just what Bea does after leaving her marriage in Australia and returning to Britain. All her friends sympathise with her until she announces that her two small children will stay in Melbourne with their father. She's not cut out for motherhood. Doesn't like it one bit. So why should she pretend? She's flown the coop and there's no way this pigeon is flying back.

Deborah Bruce is a celebrated director-turned-playwright from London whose career spans 20 years. Her contemporary works include *Godchild* (Hampstead Theatre), and *Same* (National Theatre Connections Festival). She has also directed many pieces of new writing for theatres across Britain, including *Scarborough* (Edinburgh Fringe and the Royal Court) and *Blame* (Arcola Theatre). *The Distance* was shortlisted for the 2013 Susan Smith Blackburn Award.

MTC Associate Director Leticia Cáceres has been lauded as one of the most exciting talents in the country. For MTC she has directed *Death and the Maiden*, *Birdland*, *The Effect*, *Cock*, *Constellations*, *Yellow Moon*, *Helicopter* and *Random* (nominated for three Green Room Awards). She has also directed for Belvoir (*Miss Julie* and *The Dark Room*, nominated for seven Sydney Theatre Awards); La Mama (*Tall Man*); Creative Regions (*Tales of the Underground*); Queensland Theatre Company (*The Orphanage Project*, *Far Away*, and *The Memory of Water*); Sydney Opera House (*Random*, *Hoods*, and *Children of the Black Skirt*); La Boite Theatre/Brisbane Festival (*Kingswood Kids*); Arts Centre Melbourne and Brisbane Powerhouse (*Hoods* and *Children of the Black Skirt*). She is the co-founder of nationally acclaimed independent theatre company RealTV whose seminal work *Hoods* won the 2009 Matilda Award for Best Independent Production. In late 2015, STCSA and Belvoir will present the latest RealTV commission, *Mortido* starring Colin Friels.



#mtcTheDistance  
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# Miss Julie

by August Strindberg



Cast includes Mark Leonard Winter  
Director Kip Williams  
Lighting Designer Paul Jackson

'Kip Williams is confirmed as a major directing talent.' The Guardian

'Themes of class, clout, cash, gender, love and lust.' Crikey

'As astonishing a feat of acting as I have seen.' ABC Arts  
(on Mark Leonard Winter in *Birdland*)

#### Venue

Southbank Theatre,  
The Sumner

#### Season dates

16 April – 21 May

#### Opening night

Thursday 21 April, 8pm

#### Cast and Artist Q&A

Monday 11 April, 6pm

#### Subscriptions

On sale from 9pm,  
Monday 7 September 2015  
03 8688 0800 (enquiries only)  
mtc.com.au

#### Single tickets

On sale Tuesday 8 March 2016  
Southbank Theatre Box Office  
03 8688 0800 or mtc.com.au

One of Australia's most exciting and innovative young directors, **Kip Williams** brings the theatrical masterpiece *Miss Julie* to MTC for a modern revival, starring the inimitable **Mark Leonard Winter** (*Birdland*). This classic story of desire and class warfare opens on **Thursday 21 April at Southbank Theatre, The Sumner**.

*Miss Julie* marks the MTC debut of **Kip Williams** who, as Sydney Theatre Company's Resident Director, has received critical acclaim for his recent revivals of *Macbeth* and *Suddenly Last Summer*, for which he won the 2015 Helpmann Award for Best Director of a Play.

Director **Kip Williams** said, '*Miss Julie* is one of the canon's great psychological thrillers. It drips with an intoxicating sexual tension and a dangerous power play. For generations, theatre makers have been drawn to it to reinvestigate questions of class, gender, and sexuality.'

*Miss Julie* is wild again tonight. Midsummer's Eve is her time, a night when rules are broken, when class barriers are set aside and the young mistress of the manor can dance with whomever she pleases. She chooses Jean, her father's valet, and for a few hours, through the long twilight, they play a dangerous game of What If? But the enchantment cannot last and soon the dawn will break.

**Kip Williams** has earned a reputation as one of the most inspiring young directors in the country. He has directed for theatre, opera and film, and is currently Resident Director at Sydney Theatre Company. While at STC he has directed *Suddenly Last Summer*, *Macbeth*, *Children Of The Sun*, *Romeo And Juliet*, *Under Milkwood* and was Associate Director with Andrew Upton on *Cyrano De Bergerac*. During this time he has directed some of Australia's leading actors including Hugo Weaving, Jacqueline McKenzie, Richard Roxburgh, Justine Clark, Robyn Nevin and Jack Thompson. For Malthouse Theatre's *Helium* and US-A-UM he directed an all-female production of *Lord of the Flies*; for Tamarama Rock Surfers he directed *Fallout* and for the Sydney Writers' Festival he directed *1001 Nights*. His other credits include *Fifth Of July* (Princeton Theatre, New Jersey); *One for the Road* (for National Theatre, Melbourne), and *Cloud 9*, *Lord of the Flies* and Samuel Beckett's *Not* (NIDA). In 2015, Kip directed Caryl Churchill's new play *Love And Information* in a co-production for Malthouse Theatre and Sydney Theatre Company.

**August Strindberg** was a writer and artist of Swedish origin and considered a master of early modern drama for his daringly realistic plays. His career spanned four decades, during which time he wrote over 60 plays and more than 30 works of fiction, autobiography, history, cultural analysis, and politics. In his plays *The Father* (1887), *Miss Julie* (1888) and *Creditors* (1889), he created naturalistic dramas that often drew directly on his personal experience.



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# Straight White Men

by Young Jean Lee

Australian Premiere



Cast includes Steve Mouzakis, Luke Ryan  
Director Leticia Cáceres  
Voice & Dialect Coach Geraldine Cook

'Arguably one of the hottest playwrights  
in America right now.' NPR

'Both emotionally satisfying ... and  
unflinching in its critique of white-  
driven social justice.' New York Times

#### Venue

Arts Centre Melbourne,  
Fairfax Studio

#### Season dates

6 May – 18 June

#### Opening night

Thursday 12 May, 8pm

#### Cast and Artist Q&A

Monday 2 May, 6pm

#### Subscriptions

On sale from 9pm,  
Monday 7 September 2015  
03 8688 0800 (enquiries only)  
mtc.com.au

#### Single tickets

On sale on Tuesday 8 March 2016  
Southbank Theatre Box Office  
03 8688 0800 or mtc.com.au  
Arts Centre Melbourne  
1300 182 183 or  
artscentremelbourne.com.au



#mtcStraightWhiteMen  
@MelbTheatreCo  
mtc.com.au/StraightWhiteMen

*Straight White Men* is the razor-edged new comedy from one of American theatre's most acute observers of race and identity, **Young Jean Lee**. Poking fun at the luckiest social group in modern society, *Straight White Men* was one of the most talked-about plays of recent New York seasons and will now have its Australian premiere on **Thursday 12 May** at **Arts Centre Melbourne, Fairfax Studio**.

**MTC Associate Director Leticia Cáceres** takes on this study of social identity with a cast including **Steve Mouzakis** (*Death and the Maiden, The Cherry Orchard*) and **Luke Ryan** (*Yellow Moon, Clybourne Park*).

Director **Leticia Cáceres** said, 'In *Straight White Men* Young Jean Lee has created an intriguingly tongue-in-cheek study of social identity, privilege and the unsettling habit of holding whole social groups accountable for the acts of individuals. From work-to-work Young Jean Lee refuses to settle for a single theatrical form, pushing boundaries and earning her the reputation of one of America's most exciting contemporary theatre makers. This is perhaps her most conventional play to date but no less fearless in the themes it tackles.'

Christmas is for family, and brothers Matt, Jake and Drew gather at their Dad's house for the usual observances of the holiday season, adding a few rituals of their own, such as playing politically-correct board games and worrying about what Mum would think. Although she's been dead for some time now, their liberal, feminist mother still casts a vast shadow. She taught them how being heterosexual white males gives them an unfair advantage in America, but, as carefree youth gives way to mid-life anxiety, privileged is the last thing they feel.

Multi-award-winning writer, director and filmmaker, **Young Jean Lee** has been called 'the most adventurous downtown playwright of her generation' by *The New York Times* and 'one of the best experimental playwrights in America' by *TimeOut New York*. She has written and directed ten shows in New York with Young Jean Lee's Theater Company, and toured her work to over thirty cities around the world including Melbourne, where she performed her work *We're Gonna Die* as part of the 2012 Melbourne Festival. She is known for challenging herself with inherently personal works which include *Untitled Feminist Show, Lear, The Shipment* and *Church*. Her first short film, *Here Come the Girls*, was presented at The Locarno International Film Festival, Sundance Film Festival, and BAMcinemaFest.

**MTC Associate Director Leticia Cáceres** has directed *Death and the Maiden, Birdland, The Effect* (nominated for three Green Room Awards), *Cock*, and *Constellations* for the Company, as well as the MTC Education shows *Yellow Moon* (winner of a Drama Victoria Award and nominated for four Green Room Awards), *Helicopter*, and *Random*. She has also directed for Belvoir (*Miss Julie* and *The Dark Room*; nominated for seven Sydney Theatre Awards); La Mama (*Tall Man*; nominated for two Green Room Awards); Creative Regions (*Tales of the Underground*); Queensland Theatre Company (*The Orphanage Project, Far Away*, and *The Memory of Water*); Sydney Opera House (*Random, Hoods*, and *Children of the Black Skirt*; all recipients of Drama Victoria Awards); La Boîte Theatre/Brisbane Festival (*Kingswood Kids*), Arts Centre Melbourne and Brisbane Powerhouse (*Hoods* and *Children of the Black Skirt*). She's the co-founder of nationally-acclaimed independent company RealTV who will present *Mortido* at STCSA and Belvoir in late 2015.

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# Double Indemnity

by Tom Holloway, adapted from  
the book by James M Cain

World Premiere

Cast includes Lachlan Woods  
Director Sam Strong  
Set Designer Andrew Bailey  
Costume Designer Esther Marie Hayes  
Lighting Designer Paul Jackson  
Composer Kelly Ryall  
Voice & Dialect Coach Leith McPherson

'Truly an astonishing style, rippling  
in a nervous sort of way, the writing  
vivid and direct.'

The New York Times Book Review

'Film noir is the most intoxicating of  
Hollywood cocktails, and none is more  
potent than *Double Indemnity*.'

The Telegraph (UK)

## Venue

Arts Centre Melbourne,  
Playhouse

## Season dates

30 May – 2 July

## Opening Night

Friday 3 June, 8pm

## Cast and Artist Q&A

Monday 23 May, 6pm

## Subscriptions

On sale from 9pm,  
Monday 7 September 2015  
03 8688 0800 (enquiries only)  
mtc.com.au

## Single tickets

On sale Tuesday 8 March 2016  
Southbank Theatre Box Office  
03 8688 0800 or mtc.com.au  
Arts Centre Melbourne  
1300 182 183 or  
artscentremelbourne.com.au



#mtcDoubleIndemnity  
@MelbTheatreCo  
mtc.com.au/DoubleIndemnity

One of the greatest crime novels of our times is given new life thanks to a razor-sharp stage adaptation by award-winning writer **Tom Holloway**. Under the expert direction of MTC Associate Artistic Director **Sam Strong**, *Double Indemnity* promises twice the ordinary payout in passion and intrigue when it makes its world premiere on **Friday 3 June** at **Arts Centre Melbourne, Playhouse**.

With its pitch-perfect dialogue, ultimate femme fatale and the almost perfect crime, *Double Indemnity* is the undoubted masterpiece of James M Cain's sensational thrillers of the thirties and forties. Now, it is brought to MTC's stage, performed by a cast including celebrated actor **Lachlan Woods** (*North by Northwest*).

Director **Sam Strong** said, 'Some of my most cherished theatrical experiences have been collaborating with Tom Holloway as writer and director, so I'm delighted to be bringing one of our mutual favourite stories to life for Melbourne audiences. Tom's adaptation of James M Cain's classic novel captures the cracklingly sharp dialogue, the twinkle-in-the-eye sense of humour, and the evocative Californian Noir setting. But Tom has also added a layer of psychological complexity to the galloping edge-of-your-seat plot. This version of *Double Indemnity* will be a morality tale for an immoral age – a play that thrillingly dissects just how far we will go to get what we want. Devious, dangerous, compelling and sexy as hell, the characters of *Double Indemnity* are a treat for actors and audiences alike.'

Insurance agent Walter Huff has nosed around the business long enough to smell a scam, so when he meets Phyllis Nirdlinger to talk about her husband's insurance coverage he gets a perfumed whiff of trouble. But she has a persuasive way of putting things. Can't a wife fix a little security for herself? After all, a beloved husband can suffer a fatal accident just as easily as an honest guy can fall hard for a dame who's no good.

**Tom Holloway** and **Sam Strong** have a history of successful collaborations having worked together on the acclaimed productions of *And No More Shall We Part* and *Red Sky Morning*.

**Tom Holloway** is a multi-award-winning playwright whose work has been staged extensively both in Australia and Europe. His plays include *Dead Centre*, *Beyond The Neck*, *Red Sky Morning*, *Don't Say The Words*, *Love Me Tender*, *And No More Shall We Part*, *Fatherland*, and *Faces Look Ugly*. He wrote the libretto for *Make No Noise* – an adaptation of the film *The Secret Life of Words*, produced by the Bavarian State Opera at the 2011 Munich Opera Festival, and collaborated with Matthew Lutton on a staging of Schubert's *Die Winterreise* for Thincie, Malthouse Theatre and the Brisbane International Festival the same year.

MTC Associate Artistic Director **Sam Strong** is one of Australia's pre-eminent theatre directors and arts leaders. His directing credits include *The Weir*, *Endgame*, *The Sublime*, *The Speechmaker*, *Private Lives*, *The Crucible*, *Other Desert Cities* and *Madagascar* (MTC); *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* (Sydney Theatre Company); *Masquerade* (Sydney Festival/Melbourne Festival/STCSA/Griffin); *The Boys* (Sydney Festival/Griffin); *The Floating World*, *Between Two Waves*, *And No More Shall We Part* and *Speaking in Tongues* (Griffin); *The Power of Yes* (Company B Belvoir); and *Red Sky Morning* and *Faces in the Crowd* (Red Stitch). He has been nominated for multiple Best Director and Best Production awards at the Helpmann Awards, Sydney Theatre Awards and Green Room Awards and won the 2013 Sydney Theatre Award for Best Direction of a Mainstage Play.

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# Skylight

by David Hare



Cast includes Colin Friels, Anna Samson  
Director Dean Bryant  
Lighting Designer Matt Scott  
Composer & Sound Designer Mathew Frank  
Voice & Dialect Coach Leith McPherson

★★★★★

'Full of guts and heart.'  
London Evening Standard

'Luminously beautiful and wildly truthful.'  
New York Post

#### Venue

Southbank Theatre,  
The Sumner

#### Season dates

18 June – 23 July

#### Opening night

Thursday 23 June, 8pm

#### Cast and Artist Q&A

Monday 13 June, 6pm

#### Subscriptions

On sale from 9pm,  
Monday 7 September 2015  
03 8688 0800 (enquiries only)  
mtc.com.au

#### Single tickets

On sale Tuesday 8 March 2016  
Southbank Theatre Box Office  
03 8688 0800 or mtc.com.au

David Hare's contemporary classic *Skylight* returns to Melbourne Theatre Company's stage 20 years after its Australian premiere. Led by award-winning director **Dean Bryant** (*I'll Eat You Last*, *Next to Normal*), *Skylight* opens on **Thursday 23 June at Southbank Theatre, The Sumner**.

**Colin Friels** (*Endgame*, *Red*) and **Anna Samson** (*Birdland*, *The Sublime*) feature as estranged lovers who reunite and old passion sparks. But just as quickly as they are reminded of what brought them together, they realise their opposing ideologies and mutual desires are as incompatible and self-destructing as ever.

Director **Dean Bryant** said, 'Rarely do the personal and political come together in such an exciting and theatrical evening. It's a thrilling opportunity to experience actors on fire up close. *Skylight* is funny, sexy, sad and even more relevant to who we are as a society now than it was twenty years ago.'

A few years ago, Kyra broke off her relationship with a wealthy married man, having caused more hurt than she could bear, and settled for a more meaningful life as a teacher in a disadvantaged school. But is it idealism that drives her or her need for repentance? When her former lover Tom tracks her down to her cold London flat to rekindle their relationship, she must decide whether she could ever again be the person she once was.

**Dean Bryant** returns to MTC having previously directed *I'll Eat You Last* and *Next to Normal*. He worked at the Company as Associate/Assistant Director on *The Drowsy Chaperone*, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* (and STC), *Urinetown* (and STC) and *Hitchcock Blonde*. Dean directed *Sweet Charity* for Hayes Theatre Company, receiving the 2014 Helpmann Award for Best Director of a Musical – this production toured the country in 2015. Recently he directed *Anything Goes* for Opera Australia/GFO, *Gaybies* for Darlinghurst Theatre Company (also writer), *Once We Lived Here* (2014 London premiere) and *La Cage Aux Folles* (Production Company). Other credits include *Straight* (Red Stitch), *DreamSong* (Theatreworks), *Prodigal* (45Downstairs), *The Last Five Years* (Stables) and for The Production Company; *The Producers*, *Pirates of Penzance* and the upcoming *Jerry's Girls*. Dean won a Green Room Award for writing *Prodigal* and *Once We Lived Here*, and is a graduate of WAAPA.

**David Hare** is one of Britain's most internationally performed playwrights. Born in Sussex in 1947, he had a long association with Britain's National Theatre, which produced eleven of his plays successively between 1978 and 1997. He is the author of 29 plays for stage, including *Plenty*, *Racing Demon*, *Amy's View*, *The Blue Room*, *The Secret Rapture*, *The Breath of Life* and *Stuff Happens*. His many screenplays include *The Hours* and *The Reader*.



#mtcSkylight  
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mtc.com.au/Skylight

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# Jasper Jones

based on the novel by Craig Silvey  
adapted by Kate Mulvany



Director Sam Strong  
Set and Costume Designer  
Anna Cordingley

'*Jasper Jones* is our next *Cloudstreet*.'  
The West Australian

'A riveting tale, studded with laugh-out-loud and life affirming moments.'  
Adelaide Advertiser

Venue  
Southbank Theatre,  
The Sumner

Season dates  
1 August – 9 September

Opening night  
Friday 5 August, 8pm

Cast & Artist Q&A  
Monday 25 July, 6pm

Subscriptions  
On sale from 9pm,  
Monday 7 September 2015  
03 8688 0800 (enquiries only)  
mtc.com.au

Single tickets  
On sale Tuesday 8 March 2016  
Southbank Theatre Box Office  
03 8688 0800 or mtc.com.au



#mtcJasperJones  
@MelbTheatreCo  
mtc.com.au/JasperJones

Opening Friday 5 August at Southbank Theatre, The Sumner, award-winning novel *Jasper Jones* is brought to life in a rich and poignant new production directed by MTC Associate Artistic Director Sam Strong. Recalling a past Australia that's neither as simple nor as innocent as we'd like to remember, the coming-of-age story by Craig Silvey has been lovingly adapted for the stage by Kate Mulvany.

*Jasper Jones* attracted widespread accolades upon its release in 2009 and is quickly becoming a quintessential Australian classic studied in schools across the country. Often described as Australia's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the thoughtful, funny and heartbreaking story about outsiders and what it really means to be a hero has been transformed into a play that will resonate with younger audiences and adults alike.

Director Sam Strong said, 'After working with Kate on *Masquerade*, I'm thrilled to be teaming up with her again to give her adaptation of *Jasper Jones* a lavish mainstage production. Kate has a remarkable talent for imaginatively transforming novels into theatrical works of art in their own right. In Craig Silvey's novel, she has rich material to play with. *Jasper Jones* is a coming of age story for all ages, so it's little wonder the novel has already captured the hearts of a generation of Australians. I can't wait to create a production that is every bit as charming, haunting, playful, and tender as the story of *Jasper Jones*.'

Late one summer night in 1965, young Charlie is startled by fierce rapping on the window of his sleep-out. It's Jasper Jones, the baddest kid in the wheatbelt town of Corrigan. Steer clear of him, parents say, he's nothing but trouble. And now he's outside Charlie's window asking for help, begging him to come see something, something awful, something that'll change his life.

Kate Mulvany and Sam Strong most recently collaborated on the Helpmann Award nominated *Masquerade* for Sydney and Melbourne Festivals, Griffin and STCSA.

Kate Mulvany is an award-winning writer and actor. Her plays include the acclaimed adaptation of *Masquerade*, *The Web*, *The Wreath*, *Blood and Bone*, *Story Time*, *The Danger Age*, *Vaseline Lollies*, and *Naked Ambition*. She also collaborated with Tim Minchin on the musical *Somewhere* at Q Theatre and with Pip Branson on *Embalmer! – the Musical*, produced by Tamarama Rock Surfers. For Bell Shakespeare, Kate adapted *Julius Caesar* and *Macbeth*, as well as an award-winning adaptation of *Medea* for Belvoir in 2012. After winning the 2004 Phillip Parsons Young Playwright's Award for *The Seed* it was performed at MTC in 2012 in which she played the role of Rose.

MTC Associate Artistic Director Sam Strong is one of Australia's pre-eminent theatre directors and arts leaders. His directing credits include *The Weir*, *Endgame*, *The Sublime*, *The Speechmaker*, *Private Lives*, *The Crucible*, *Other Desert Cities* and *Madagascar* (MTC); *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* (Sydney Theatre Company); *Masquerade* (Sydney Festival/Melbourne Festival/STCSA/Griffin); *The Boys* (Sydney Festival/Griffin); *The Floating World*, *Between Two Waves*, *And No More Shall We Part* and *Speaking in Tongues* (Griffin); *The Power of Yes* (Company B Belvoir); and *Red Sky Morning* and *Faces in the Crowd* (Red Stitch). He has been nominated for multiple Best Director and Best Production awards at the Helpmann Awards, Sydney Theatre Awards and Green Room Awards and won the 2013 Sydney Theatre Award for Best Direction of a Mainstage Play.

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# Disgraced

by Ayad Akhtar

Cast includes Mitchell Butel, Kat Stewart  
Director Nadia Tass  
Set Designer Shaun Gurton  
Composition & Sound Design  
Russell Goldsmith & Daniel Nixon

★★★★★

'A sparkling and combustible contemporary drama.'

Bloomberg News

'Bristles with wit and intelligence.'

The New York Times

#### Venue

Arts Centre Melbourne,  
Fairfax Studio

#### Season dates

19 August – 1 October

#### Opening night

Thursday 25 August, 8pm

#### Cast and Artist Q&A

Monday 15 August, 6pm

#### Subscriptions

On sale from 9pm,  
Monday 7 September 2015  
03 8688 0800 (enquiries only)  
mtc.com.au

#### Single tickets

On sale Tuesday 8 March 2016  
Southbank Theatre Box Office  
03 8688 0800 or mtc.com.au  
Arts Centre Melbourne  
1300 182 183  
artscentremelbourne.com.au

**Kat Stewart** (*Offspring*, *The Speechmaker*) and **Mitchell Butel** (Belvoir's *Angels in America*) star in *Disgraced*, the 2013 Pulitzer Prize-winning drama by **Ayad Akhtar**. Opening on **Thursday 25 August** at **Arts Centre Melbourne, Fairfax Studio** and directed by **Nadia Tass** (*The Other Place*), this expertly observed contemporary drama proves that politics and dinner parties are never a good mix.

**Ayad Akhtar** received critical acclaim for his insightful study into social constructs and political ideologies, portraying how lives can be torn apart over the course of a single evening.

Director **Nadia Tass** said, 'For me, this is a story of our new world - of one man wrestling with his Islamic roots and the consequences of denial and suppression. As Ayad Akhtar's emotionally charged scenario explodes before our very eyes, we see the veneer of social nicety stripped away to reveal that little has changed, and racism, infidelity, ambition and self-loathing loom large. It is a fine piece of relevant, insightful writing that I am proud to present to a Melbourne audience.'

Amir is an American living the American Dream. On track to make partner in his law firm, he lives with his artist wife Emily in their spacious Upper East Side apartment, where occasionally they'll throw a dinner party. Tonight's guests are Jory, a work colleague, and her husband, Isaac, an art dealer, and, with so much in common, the conversation flows easily. Then, as it inevitably does in today's conflicted America, the topic turns to race, religion and identity. Now, how quickly things fall apart.

**Ayad Akhtar** is an American novelist, playwright and screenwriter. His book *American Dervish* has been published in over twenty languages worldwide and was named Best Book of the Year by a number of publications in 2012. His plays include *Disgraced*, which premiered in New York in 2012 and won the 2013 Pulitzer Prize for Drama; and *The Who & The What*. For *The War Within*, Ayad was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award for Best Screenplay.

**Nadia Tass** is one of Australia's internationally acclaimed film, TV and theatre directors. For MTC she has directed *The Other Place*, *Summer of the Aliens*, *Cosi* and *Miss Bosnia*. Her other theatre credits include *Promises*, *Promises* for The Production Company; *The Aliens*, *The Gronholm Method*, *Out of the Water* and *The Flick* for Red Stitch; and *The Lion*, *The Witch* and *The Wardrobe* which toured Australia and New Zealand and was honoured with a 2003 nomination for Best Direction of a Musical. She first gained recognition as a director for her internationally acclaimed feature film, *Malcolm*. Her other film credits include *Rikky and Pete*, *The Big Steal*, *Mr Reliable*, and *Amy*. Together, Nadia's films have garnered over 50 international awards. In 2011 Nadia was honoured with the Best Director award at Milan International Film Festival for *Matching Jack*, where the film also received Best Film and Best Screenplay awards.



#mtcDisgraced  
@MelbTheatreCo  
mtc.com.au/Disgraced

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# Switzerland

by Joanna Murray-Smith



**Cast** Eamon Farren, Sarah Peirse  
**Director** Sarah Goodes  
**Set and Costume Designer**  
Michael Scott-Mitchell  
**Lighting Designer** Nick Schlieper  
**Composer and Sound Designer**  
Steve Francis

**'A gripping psychological thriller. Creeps up on you and then has you on the edge of your seat.'**

The Sunday Telegraph

**'Two outstanding performances.'**

The Daily Review

**'Scintillating, mesmerising, sexy, and more than a bit heady.'**

ArtsHub

#### Venue

Southbank Theatre, The Sumner

#### Season dates

16 September – 29 October

#### Opening night

Wednesday 21 September 8pm

#### Subscriptions

On sale from 9pm,  
Monday 7 September 2015  
03 8688 0800 (enquiries only)  
mtc.com.au

#### Single tickets

On sale Tuesday 8 March 2016  
Southbank Theatre Box Office  
03 8688 0800 or mtc.com.au

Joanna Murray-Smith's acclaimed two-hander, *Switzerland*, comes to MTC with the stunning original cast of Sarah Peirse and Eamon Farren. Under the direction of Sarah Goodes, this Sydney Theatre Company production opens at Southbank Theatre, The Sumner on Wednesday 21 September.

Inspired by renowned master crime novelist Patricia Highsmith, *Switzerland* is an original thriller that begins with a knock at the door and spirals into a calculated contest of wits and words. An earnest, clean-cut young man sent from Highsmith's publisher's office turns up at her alpine retreat to convince her to write a final book. But Patricia decided long ago that she didn't like people, and she certainly doesn't like this young man. But he's wiler than she first supposes and their confrontation soon turns into a cat-and-mouse game – but who is cat and who is mouse?

Highsmith created some of the greatest suspense novels in modern literature, writing dozens of works that would become notorious for their startling violence and unstable, morally ambiguous characters. She became best known for the Ripley series and its eponymous criminal hero; a seductive, amoral libertine who gets away with murder. Patricia Highsmith was born in Texas in 1921 and died alone in Switzerland in 1995.

Director Sarah Goodes said, 'Joanna Murray-Smith's *Switzerland* is a thrilling ride into the dark centre of one of the great writers of our time. A thriller at its heart it is also a journey into a psychological space that explores transformation and the act of creativity.'

Joanna Murray-Smith has achieved international success as an Australian playwright. Her work has been nominated for many awards including the Olivier Award for Best Comedy for *The Female of the Species*. Her other plays include *Pennsylvania Avenue*, *Fury*, *True Minds*, *Day One*, *A Hotel*, *Evening*, *The Gift*, *Rockabye*, *Ninety*, *Bombshells*, *Honour*, *Redemption*, *Love Child*, and the smash-hit, *Songs for Nobodies*. She has been awarded two Victorian Premier's Literary Awards for Drama, the Braille Book of the Year Award, Edinburgh Fringe First Award 2004 and the London Theatregoers Choice Award. She was also a finalist for the 2006 Miles Franklin Award and was nominated for the 2004 International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award.

Sarah Goodes is a Resident Director at Sydney Theatre Company. In 2015 she directed *Battle of Waterloo* by Kylie Coolwell and in 2014 her production of *The Effect* was seen in Sydney and Brisbane. She has previously directed STC's *Vere (Faith)*, *The Splinter* and *Edward Gant's Amazing Feats of Loneliness*. Other directing credits include *The Sweetest Thing*, *The Small Things*, *Black Milk*, *Elling*, *The Colour of Panic*, *The Schelling Point*, *Vertigo and the Virginia*, *Hilt*, *What Happened Was* and *The Unscrupulous Murderer Hasse Karlson Reveals the Gruesome Truth about the Woman Who Froze to Death on a Railway Bridge*.



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SYDNEY  
THEATRE  
CO

A Sydney Theatre Company Production

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# The Odd Couple

by Neil Simon



**Cast includes** Francis Greenslade,  
Shaun Micallef  
**Director** Peter Houghton  
**Set & Costume Designer** Christina Smith  
**Lighting Designer** Matt Scott  
**Composer & Sound Designer**  
J David Franzke

**'Scarcely a moment that is not hilarious.'** The New York Times

**'Wildly, irresistibly, incredibly, and continually funny.'**  
New York Daily News

**'The laughs come early and often in this non-stop comedy.'**  
NY Theatre Guide

**Venue**  
Southbank Theatre, The Sumner

**Season dates**  
5 November – 17 December

**Opening night**  
Thursday 10 November

**Cast and Artist Q&A**  
Monday 31 October, 6pm

**Subscriptions**  
On sale from 9pm,  
Monday 7 September 2015  
03 8688 0800 (enquiries only)  
mtc.com.au

**Single tickets**  
On sale Tuesday 8 March 2016  
Southbank Theatre Box Office  
03 8688 0800 or mtc.com.au

**Shaun Micallef and Francis Greenslade** star as the famous mismatched duo in comedy classic *The Odd Couple*. Directed by **Peter Houghton**, *The Odd Couple* opens on **Thursday 10 November** at **Southbank Theatre, The Sumner**.

In **Neil Simon's** unforgettable play, opposites attract in the most hilarious way when the grouchy slob Oscar Madison and the pernickety neat-freak Felix Ungar find themselves living under the same roof. Countless plays, films and TV series have drawn on this iconic story, demonstrating its enduring appeal and earning it a place amongst the great seminal comedies of our time.

Director **Peter Houghton** said, 'It is rare to be given a piece to direct that you've always loved. When I first saw the film as a kid the precision comic writing of Neil Simon blew me away. Every line was a pearl, every exchange was a gem and the characters were cut like crystal. I walked around dropping one-liners like Walter Matthau and Jack Lemmon for months afterwards. So directing this is like coming home – the play is without doubt, a work of comic genius. My goal is to let the play sing, to allow it to be its magnificent self and with the cast we're putting together it will raise the roof. I'm lucky, with **Shaun Micallef** and **Francis Greenslade**, to have a comic duo that will bring Felix and Oscar into rib-shattering life.'

Everything's set for the regular poker game at Oscar's place, but where's Felix? He's never late. A call to his wife reveals that she and Felix have split up and he's taken it pretty hard. When he finally arrives, in shock, distraught, with thoughts to end it all, Oscar makes a proposal. Why not move in here with him? Think about it – two bachelors living together, fancy free, no wives getting on their nerves. It'll be paradise!

**Peter Houghton** is an award winning Australian actor, writer and director. His directing work includes *Noises Off* for Marriner Theatres; *True Minds*, *The Recruit*, *Hinterland*, *Art and Soul* and *The Boy at the Edge of Everything* for MTC; *Footprints on Water* for Griffin Theatre; *No Man's Island* for the Melbourne Festival; *Svetlana in Slingbacks*, *God's Last Acre* and *The China Incident* for Playbox/Malthouse; and *Day One a Hotel Evening* for Black Swan. He has won multiple Green Room Awards for directing, acting and writing and produced a critically acclaimed trilogy of solo shows; *The Pitch*, *The China Incident* and *The Colours*, all of which he wrote.

**Neil Simon** is a Pulitzer Prize and multiple Tony Award-winning American playwright and screenwriter who penned some of America's most popular plays including *Barefoot in the Park* and *The Odd Couple*. Simon's first Broadway play, *Come Blow Your Horn*, opened in 1961. He went on to write over 30 plays, including *The Last of the Red Hot Lovers*, *The Sunshine Boys*, *Chapter Two*, the autobiographical trilogy of *Brighton Beach Memoirs*, *Biloxi Blues*, *Broadway Bound*, *Lost in Yonkers* and *The Goodbye Girl*.



#mtcTheOddCouple  
@MelbTheatreCo  
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# Egg

by Angela Betzien

World Premiere Family Production

Cast includes Genevieve Morris  
Director Leticia Cáceres

From the winner of the Australian  
Writers Guild Award for Theatre for  
Young Audiences

'Betzien and Cáceres are one of  
the most exciting theatrical pairings  
in the country.'

Sydney Morning Herald

#### Venue

Southbank Theatre,  
The Lawler

#### Season dates

29 June – 15 July  
(school holiday performances)  
16 July – 19 July  
(school term performances)

#### Opening night

Thursday 30 June, 7pm

#### Subscriptions

On sale from 9pm,  
Monday 7 September 2015  
03 8688 0800 (enquiries only)  
mtc.com.au

#### Single tickets

On sale Wednesday 23 September 2015  
Southbank Theatre Box Office  
03 8688 0800 or mtc.com.au

Melbourne Theatre Company and Terrapin Puppet Theatre join forces to present *Egg*, a brand new family production that mashes together puckish pranking and wide-eyed wonder in an eco-adventure about hope and the promise of renewal. Silly and funny and a little bit cracked, *Egg* opens on **Thursday 30 June** at **Southbank Theatre, The Lawler**.

The acclaimed creative team of writer **Angela Betzien** and director **Leticia Cáceres** reunite for this quirky story for ages eight to eighty, starring comedy favourite **Genevieve Morris**.

**MTC Associate Director Leticia Cáceres** said, 'It is a joy to be working with my long-time collaborator Angela Betzien and the wonderful **Terrapin Puppet Theatre** on this exciting new commission. *Egg* will capture the imagination of audiences young and old when it takes over the Lawler next July, and transport them into this futuristic tale with an important message at its core.'

Across a dry and dusty desert, two tinkers, Clyde and Horse, drag an enormous egg. They can't remember how long they've been dragging it, or why they've been dragging it, or where they are dragging it to. All they know is that it's really important. Life on their big bald egg of a planet depends upon it. So there's nothing to be done but to go on. Let's tug this great big googy into the future. And who knows? Maybe something wonderful will hatch.

**Terrapin Puppet Theatre** is Australia's premier contemporary puppet theatre, led by Artistic Director Sam Routledge. The company creates world-class performances for young people and their families, playing to ten thousand children in Tasmania each year, as well touring nationally and internationally.

**Angela Betzien** is a multi-award-winning writer and a founding member of independent theatre company RealTV whose work has toured widely across Australia and internationally. Her play *The Dark Room* won a 2010 AWGIE Award and the 2011 Sydney Theatre Award for Best New Australian Work. For *Hoods*, Angela was awarded the inaugural Richard Wherrett Prize for Excellence in Playwriting; and her play *War Crimes* won the 2012 Kit Denton Disfellowship and the QLD Literary Award for Playwriting, and was nominated for a NSW Premier's Literary Award in 2012. Angela's play *Children of the Black Skirt* toured Australian schools for three years and won the 2005 Drama Victoria Award for Best Performance by a Theatre Company for Secondary Schools.

**MTC Associate Director Leticia Cáceres** has been lauded as one of the most exciting talents in the country. For MTC she has directed *Death and the Maiden*, *Birdland*, *The Effect*, *Cock*, *Constellations*, *Yellow Moon*, *Helicopter* and *Random* (nominated for three Green Room Awards). She has also directed for Belvoir (*Miss Julie* and *The Dark Room*, nominated for seven Sydney Theatre Awards); Queensland Theatre Company (*The Orphanage Project*, *Far Away*, and *The Memory of Water*); Sydney Opera House (*Random*, *Hoods*, and *Children of the Black Skirt*); Arts Centre Melbourne and Brisbane Powerhouse (*Hoods* and *Children of the Black Skirt*). She is the co-founder of nationally acclaimed independent theatre company RealTV whose seminal work *Hoods* won the 2009 Matilda Award for Best Independent Production.

Commissioned and developed by MTC and Terrapin Puppet Theatre with the assistance of the Australia Council Interconnections Program.  
A co-production with Terrapin Puppet Theatre

TERRAPIN  
PUPPET THEATRE



#mtcEgg  
@MelbTheatreCo  
mtc.com.au/Egg

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# NEON X NEXT

In 2016, MTC continues its commitment to supporting and showcasing the exceptional work of Melbourne's independent artists through **NEON NEXT** – the evolution of MTC's Festival of Independent Theatre into an incubator for new independent works.

**NEON NEXT** sees MTC deepen the relationships it has established with the independent sector over the past three years and shift the focus towards commissioning, developing and presenting independent works for the stage.

'NEON has become synonymous with MTC's commitment to collaborating with and showcasing work from the independent theatre sector and the incredible artists behind it,' **MTC Artistic Director Brett Sheehy** said. 'NEON NEXT marks a new phase of this relationship, and recognises the importance of initiatives like NEON adapting and changing over time to ensure they remain relevant, fresh and meaningful to those they are directly trying to support.'

'As Victoria's flagship theatre company, we strive to provide opportunities for independent companies and artists to develop their skills to help further their careers and ensure their work has longevity and sustainability. We believe that this iteration of NEON is the next step in that journey and are excited about the new opportunities it will generate and the works that will result from it,' **Mr Sheehy** said.

For NEON NEXT 2016, **Sisters Grimm** stage their new production, *Lilith: The Jungle Girl*, commissioned and presented by MTC, and **Daniel Schlusser** and **Nicola Gunn** commence work on new MTC commissions.

'Sisters Grimm, Daniel Schlusser and Nicola Gunn represent some of the best independent artists in Melbourne. MTC audiences were treated to their work in the first two years of NEON, and it is a pleasure to be welcoming them back to the Company in 2016,' **Mr Sheehy** said. 'It is our wish that MTC annually facilitates the commissioning, development and presentation of new work by the independent and small-to-medium sector.'

NEON NEXT also sees MTC continue to provide a range of **free professional development workshops and masterclasses** for independent theatre practitioners throughout the year.

Since 2013 MTC's NEON has captivated the attention of Melbourne's theatre scene with 15 productions, as well as special events, panel discussions, readings, workshops, open rehearsals, masterclasses and a keynote address. So far, this important initiative has introduced the work of 17 companies and over 260 theatre makers to MTC and new audiences.

**Further details about all NEON NEXT activities will be released in early 2016.**

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# Lilith: The Jungle Girl

## A Sisters Grimm Production

World Premiere

Cast includes Ash Flanders,  
Genevieve Giffre  
Director Declan Greene  
Set and Costume Designer Marg Horwell  
Lighting Designer Benjamin Cisterne  
Composer and Sound Designer  
THE SWEATS  
Dramaturg Nakkiah Lui

'Flanders proves himself an obscenely funny and evnily talented performer.'  
The Age

'Extremely important, albeit insane, theatre.'  
Inpress (On *Cellblock Booty*)

'Sisters Grimm tread the line between the frivolous and the furiously political better than anybody making theatre in Australia right now.'  
The Daily Review

### Venue

Southbank Theatre,  
The Lawler

### Season dates

1 September – 1 October

### Opening night

Saturday 3 September, 8pm

### Subscriptions

On sale from 9pm,  
Monday 7 September 2015  
03 8688 0800 (enquiries only)  
mtc.com.au

### Single tickets

On sale Tuesday 8 March 2016  
Southbank Theatre Box Office  
03 8688 0800 or mtc.com.au

Having won the hearts of audiences around Australia, **Sisters Grimm** return to MTC after the runaway success of their award-winning NEON Festival production, *The Sovereign Wife*. In *Lilith: The Jungle Girl* they take audiences on an epic, genre-defying journey which opens on **Saturday 3 September** at Southbank Theatre, The Lawler.

Directed by **Declan Greene** and starring **Ash Flanders** as Lilith, this NEON NEXT production is equal parts *The Elephant Man* and *She's All That*.

Director **Declan Greene** said, '*The Sovereign Wife* was one of the biggest, wildest shows we've ever made and it's really exciting to be coming back to the Lawler three years later, a little older and a little wiser, to make another mess. It was a crazy-amazing honour to be part of the first season of NEON, alongside some of the best, bravest theatre artists in the country, and we're delighted MTC has invited us to kick off its next incarnation.'

When a young wild girl is captured in the rainforests of Borneo, all of Holland is set abuzz. The year is 1861, and pioneering neuro-scientist Charles Penworth is called upon to raise the child from the pit of her animal nature. But as Lilith learns to tame her feral heart and live amongst the glitterati of colonial Amsterdam, she begins to wonder, who, indeed, is the real savage?

As **Sisters Grimm**, collaborators **Ash Flanders** and **Declan Greene** create fiercely smart, anarchic comedies that fearlessly question the world we live in. Known for taking inspiration from well-known classics and pop-culture, then reconstructing them through a playfully distorted lens, Sisters Grimm have made a name for themselves as one of the country's most exciting independent theatre companies. Their critically acclaimed works include *Calpurnia Descending*, *Summertime in the Garden of Eden*, *Little Mercy*, and *The Sovereign Wife*. In 2015 Sisters Grimm are presenting *La Traviata* at Belvoir.



#mtcNEON  
@MelbTheatreCo  
mtc.com.au/Lilith

Commissioned and presented by Melbourne Theatre Company as part of NEON NEXT.

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# MTC Community

## Education

Melbourne Theatre Company's award-winning **Education Program** provides access to first-class productions and learning opportunities for thousands of young Victorians each year. MTC delivers a comprehensive program that aims to broaden the experience of students, inspiring them to nurture a passion for theatre.

MTC Education offers a unique learning program, including the **Youth Scholarship Course**, **MTC Ambassador Program**, pre-show talks, tailored teaching resources and **VCE Drama and Theatre Studies workshops**.

In 2016, MTC's Education production is ***Peddling***, a one-man show by Harry Melling that follows the story of a young man on the fringes of society. Directed by **Susie Dee**, *Peddling* will make its Australian Premiere at **Southbank Theatre, The Lawler in April 2016** before going on a tour to regional Victoria and Tasmania.

Full details about MTC's Education Program can be found at [mtc.com.au/education](http://mtc.com.au/education)

*'Being part of this program has shown me already that there is such a colourful, innovative world in the theatre, and I can't wait to be a part of it.'*  
Ambassador 2015

## Sharing the Light

MTC is passionate about making theatre accessible for all, and with our *Sharing the Light* initiative, disadvantaged students throughout Victoria and outer urban communities are enjoying greater opportunity to engage with theatre thanks to the generous support of the Crown Resorts Foundation.

Our subsidised \$5 Student Tickets and \$5 Family Show Tickets are already playing a role welcoming thousands of brand new audience members to the theatre, while the Regional Tour project is taking our Education production to young people all across Victoria and Tasmania.

In the first six months of the initiative, over 60 schools around Victoria have taken up the \$5 ticket offer, resulting in 2,500 tickets for students to attend MTC productions. Additionally, MTC has provided travel subsidies for more than 1,000 students from outer-metro and regional areas to get to the theatre.

Through *Sharing the Light*, MTC is also offering Indigenous Scholarships to help create career pathways for young Indigenous people. These scholarships take the form of an intensive work experience program tailored to each recipient's areas of interest within the field of theatre and live performance production.

MTC's *Sharing the Light* initiative is accompanied by a longitudinal study facilitated by the School of Culture and Communication at the University of Melbourne.

Full details about *Sharing the Light* can be found at [mtc.com.au/sharingthelight](http://mtc.com.au/sharingthelight)

*'What an incredibly generous offer! I am literally lost for words and cannot thank MTC enough. The students will be absolutely thrilled; most have never been to a theatrical performance and your willingness to subsidise the entire cost of transport will have a huge impact on securing full numbers.'*  
Teacher, Leongatha College

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# MTC Community

MTC has a proud history as a leader and supporter of Australian artists and their work. We see our role in the community not just as a destination for great performance, but as a creative hub where artists are nurtured and developed, and new Australian writing is championed. MTC provides a range of artist access programs and initiatives each year including the **Women in Theatre Program**, the **Assistant Directors Program**, **MTC CONNECT** and **Cybec Electric**, as well as having a number of secondment and internships available and a host of Australian writers under commission.

## Women in Theatre Program

In 2016 MTC expands its successful Women Directors Program to **Women in Theatre**. Building on relationships already established and broadening the scope of mentoring opportunities available, the Women in Theatre Program will help create practical pathways for those interested in a range of areas across the business from production to artistic and executive management.

MTC's Women in Theatre program will include the opportunity for alumni of the Women Directors program and new applicants to be mentored by senior MTC staff; access leadership training, practical career advice and coaching across a wide range of business and commercial aspects of the theatre industry; and have the opportunity to gain insights to the daily operation of MTC.

Applications for the MTC Women in Theatre Program will open in late 2015 with the program due to commence in early 2016.

## Assistant Directors Program

MTC's Assistant Directors Program provides the opportunity for emerging or mid-career artists to work on an MTC Mainstage production. These paid positions aim to enable directors to learn from senior theatre directors about the process of developing shows for large scale companies. During each project, participants will shadow the director in rehearsal, attend weekly production meetings, and observe the bump-in of a show to the theatre through to opening night.

Applications for the 2016 MTC Assistant Directors Program will open in late 2015.

## MTC Connect

MTC CONNECT is a partnership with Multicultural Arts Victoria that was established in 2014 to broaden the range of voices informing Melbourne Theatre Company's theatre making and programming processes.

A first for an Australian state theatre company, MTC CONNECT is a tailored program where theatre artists of diverse backgrounds act as cultural and artistic ambassadors, advocates and facilitators between MTC and their communities.

The program facilitates an open dialogue between MTC and the participants as they engage with the Company through individual masterclasses, one-on-one sessions, programming updates and debriefs from members of the MTC Artistic team, and longer-term initiatives.

## Cybec Electric

MTC's annual Cybec Electric play reading series celebrates theatre in its essence: great stories, electric writing and brilliant acting all working to ignite the audience's imagination. With scripts in hand, professional actors present new works-in-progress with the assistance of directors and dramaturgs. Cybec Electric is a rare opportunity for audiences to be part of the important development stage of new Australian plays.

For full details about MTC Artist Access initiatives, visit [mtc.com.au/artistaccess](http://mtc.com.au/artistaccess)

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# MTC Foundation

Established to assist the Company in attracting major philanthropic support, the MTC Foundation is chaired by Jane Hansen, director of The Little Group and MTC Board member.

The MTC Foundation was set up in 2014 to provide a mechanism to receive, consolidate and distribute all donations to MTC across four key areas of the business – Innovation, Community, Education and Southbank Theatre; and to build an endowment fund that will provide an ongoing secure revenue stream for the Company.

Along with Foundation Chair Jane Hansen, the other trustees to date are Terry Bracks, Fiona Griffiths, Janette Kendall, Tiffany Lucas, Virginia Lovett and Leigh O'Neill.

Many important MTC programs and initiatives such as education workshops, play readings, family shows and new commissions are primarily funded by donors. The Foundation ensures transparency for MTC donors and that all donations are used for the purposes agreed.

The endowment fund was initially seeded with \$500,000 to encourage further endowed donations and bequests. In 2014 the MTC Foundation received its first major leadership gift of \$2.5 million for its five-year *Sharing The Light* initiative supported by Crown Resorts Foundation.

MTC is a registered not-for-profit organisation. Approximately 70% of the Company's revenue comes from ticket sales; 20% from other income such as donations and corporate partnerships; and only 9.8% (net of government duties) from Government funding.

The four key areas of MTC's business receiving support through the Foundation are:

## Innovation

Supporting local artists and writers to create ground-breaking works with stories that need to be heard.

## Community

Making the magic of theatre accessible through family shows, ticket subsidies for underprivileged youth, and regional touring.

## Education

Inspiring thousands of Victorian students each year with VCE-related productions, scholarships, workshops and school tours.

## Southbank Theatre

Preserving and ensuring a sustainable Southbank Theatre as a dynamic, contemporary iconic landmark in the Melbourne cultural landscape.

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# MTC Leadership

## Brett Sheehy AO Artistic Director



Brett Sheehy AO is one of Australia's most accomplished and acclaimed artistic directors. He is Artistic Director and CEO of Melbourne Theatre Company. He is the only person ever to be appointed to direct three of the five international arts festivals in Australia's state capital cities, having been Artistic Director of four Melbourne Festivals, two Adelaide Festivals and four Sydney Festivals.

He was also Artistic Director of the cultural program for the 5th Biennial World Summit on Arts and Culture in 2011. Brett has also been a mentor for the Australia Council's Emerging Leaders Development Program and a judge for the Sidney Myer Performing Arts Awards since 2012. From 2009-2012 he was selector and mentor for the Harold Mitchell Foundation Fellowships and a member of the Artists' Advisory Panel at Bell Shakespeare Company. He has been Founding Ambassador for Australia Council's We All Play a Part initiative encouraging nation-wide community involvement in the arts since 2008. He has also been a member of the Power Panel of the Australian Financial Review Magazine and a member of the Arts Advisory Group of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. He was a member of the Committee for Sydney from 2001-2005.

In the 2012 Queen's Birthday Honours Brett was appointed an Officer of the Order of Australia (AO) for "distinguished service to the performing and visual arts as a director of national festivals, to international artistic exchange, and through mentoring roles."

## Virginia Lovett Executive Director



Virginia Lovett took up the role of MTC's Executive Director from January 2013. Prior to this she was General Manager of the Melbourne International Comedy Festival where she delivered a funding increase of \$5 million and in 2011 achieved record attendance levels. A highly experienced and well-respected arts manager, she successfully designed a range of strategic and audience development initiatives through her roles at Melbourne International Comedy Festival and Sydney Festival.

In addition, Virginia has extensive marketing and communications experience gained in a range of different organisations including Zoos Victoria, Sydney's Powerhouse Museum, the Art Gallery of New South Wales and Sydney Theatre Company. She has also worked as a media advisor for state ministers in Victoria and New South Wales.

In 2006 she was awarded a Churchill Fellowship. She is currently Chair of Arena Theatre Company and a member of the Executive Council of Live Performance of Australia. She was formerly Deputy Chair of Force Majeure.

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# Melbourne Theatre Company

**Melbourne Theatre Company is one of Australia's flagship performing arts companies and has been enriching lives through the storytelling power of the finest theatre imaginable for 63 years. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Brett Sheehy AO and Executive Director Virginia Lovett, MTC produces classic and contemporary Australian and international theatre with style, passion and excellence to entertain, challenge and engage audiences.**

As one of the largest theatre companies in the English-speaking world, MTC employs over 500 artists and industry professionals each year (with approximately 90 full time staff), producing over 600 performances a season. It has a subscriber base of almost 20,000 people, and annually welcomes more than 200,000 people to its productions.

MTC produces a subscription season of up to twelve productions ranging from classics to new Australian works; plus an extensive Education Program; a Women in Theatre Program; a multicultural artists program; a family theatre program; regional, national and international tours; and regularly collaborates with companies and artists from the independent and small-to-medium sector through NEON and other initiatives.

In 2016 MTC is working with a host of outstanding talent including actors Kat Stewart, Shaun Micallef, Colin Friels, Kate Atkinson, Bert LaBonté, Mark Leonard Winter, Sarah Peirse, Christen O'Leary, Bobby Fox, and Ash Flanders; and award-winning directors including Kip Williams, Nadia Tass, Simon Phillips, Clare Watson, Peter Houghton, Sarah Goodes, MTC's Associate Artistic Director Sam Strong and Associate Director Leticia Cáceres.

These artists will be bringing to life works by some of the finest writers from Australia and abroad including Joanna Murray-Smith, Kate Mulvany, Tom Holloway, Carolyn Burns, Young Jean Lee, Duncan Macmillan, Deborah Bruce, Ayad Akhtar, David Hare, Neil Simon and August Strindberg.

MTC's home, Southbank Theatre, is located in the heart of Melbourne's Southbank Arts Precinct. Each year around half of the mainstage season is performed in the 560-seat Sumner, with smaller-scale works and other activities in the 150-seat Lawler. The balance of the mainstage season is staged at nearby Arts Centre Melbourne's 882-seat Playhouse and 376-seat Fairfax Studio, with the four theatres enabling MTC to present works of a wide variety and scale.

MTC is a semi-autonomous department of the University of Melbourne. Approximately 70% of MTC's revenue comes from ticket sales; 20% from sponsorship and donations; and, as a designated Australian Major Performing Arts Company, MTC receives approximately 9.8% (net of government duties) of its funding from the Australian Government through the Australia Council for the Arts and the Victorian Government through Creative Victoria.

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MTC is a member of Live Performance Australia and the Australian Major Performing Arts Group.



If you would like to join our corporate family or host a private event, please contact our Corporate Partnerships Manager on 03 8688 0952 or [partnerships@mtc.com.au](mailto:partnerships@mtc.com.au)

Details in this media kit are correct at the time of publication. MTC reserves the right to add, withdraw and substitute artists and vary the program should the need arise. Season photography: John Laurie, Garth Oriander. Design: Emma Barrett, Helena Turinski.



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